



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

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# GOV'T CONFIRMS NO CITIZENS IN UKRAINE

*Story on Page 2*

Civilians shelter in a metro station in Kharkiv, Ukraine, in a photo taken by Victoria Vota. "We are trying to stay strong," she said. [Photo credit: Victoria Vota] *Story on Page 18.*



# Gov't says no citizens in Ukraine

The government says it has no record of any of its citizens living in Ukraine.

This word comes on the heels of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on Thursday.

However, Chief of Staff in the Office of the Prime Minister, Ambassador Lionel 'Max' Hurst, confirmed there are Antiguan and Barbudan citizens who are pursuing higher education in the Russian Federation.

Chairman of the Prime Minister's Scholarship Committee, Maurice Merchant, said there are six students in Russian universities and they are all



Ambassador Lionel Hurst doing fine.

He related that to date, there have been no discussions about them returning home, even as the conflict escalates between the two nations.

At least one CARICOM state, Jamaica, has more than one dozen of its

citizens - mainly medical students - in Ukraine. They were expected to leave that country between Wednesday and yesterday.

Ambassador Hurst said at Thursday's Post-Cabinet Press Briefing that the developments in Europe are a cause for concern since they risk affecting Antigua and Barbuda.

"We continue to take an interest because we know that war in Europe can be very disruptive, and can in fact affect significantly, the economic output of Antigua and Barbuda, especially in so far as tourists coming from Europe are concerned," he stated.

# New system at airport aims to reduce waiting time

The development of a Travel Information Portal for use at the country's main gateway is aimed at improving efficiency in processing incoming passengers.

Once installed, it will allow for the electronic submission of documents, including vaccine passports, to authorities in St. John's. This will reduce waiting periods on arrival into the country, specifically at port health, Ambassador Lionel 'Max' Hurst told reporters yesterday.

"That document as well as others that are usually shown to port health upon your arrival here in Antigua. The object is to have that document in electronic format so that it could reduce significantly the amount of minutes one spends in front of the port health authorities



V.C. Bird International Airport

here in Antigua," he stated.

"For example, you may not think that two extra minutes will make a difference, but two extra minutes with 700 people or 500 people disembarking from an aircraft on a Saturday afternoon would make a significant difference to the person who is at the back of the line, or for the airline that has just discharged 350 pas-

sengers.

"So we want to reduce the time they spend in front of the port health authority figures, so that the movement of people from port health, to the immigration, and to customs can be swifter, and also more efficient."

The chief medical officer and the airport's CEO appeared before the Cabinet on Wednesday to discuss the

development of the portal.

Yesterday's Cabinet Notes detailed "every possible method that could be utilized to make entry into Antigua and Barbuda more efficient is being explored by those who have responsibility for that part of the tourism experience".

No date was given by which the Travel Information Portal will be activated.

## National minimum wage under review

The group charged with reviewing and making recommendations regarding Antigua and Barbuda's minimum wage will begin working today.

The committee is comprised of members of the Chamber of Commerce, the Employers' Federation and the Hotels and Tourism Association.

This is the word from Minister of Labour and Legal Affairs, Steadroy Benjamin.

According to the labour minister, a significant reason behind the decision to review the national minimum wage is the spike in the cost of living, which in part, is a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It is my intention to call the committee together to look at all the factors because the cost of living has increased and inflation is on the rise. COVID-19 would have wreaked hav-

oc in every other Caribbean island as well," he added.

Benjamin disclosed that in addition to an across the board increase to the national minimum wage, the committee will also consider the implementation of minimum wages within specific industries.

"Instead of having one national minimum wage across the board, the thought may be given to having different categories of workers, including hoteliers, persons of skills like contractors, masons et cetera.

"In the past, it was thought it would be most prudent to have one national minimum wage across the board.

"We are concerned that the history in our increases appears to be one minimum wage throughout all facets and sectors and this position cannot continue," Benjamin said.



The working group has been given the latitude to seek the expertise of professionals including accountants, economists and other stakeholders, to help them formulate their recommendations.

"They can invite whoever they believe can help them come up with a realistic national minimum wage. They will look at the conditions of work, cost of living and examine all these factors against the background of the

*cont'd on pg 4*

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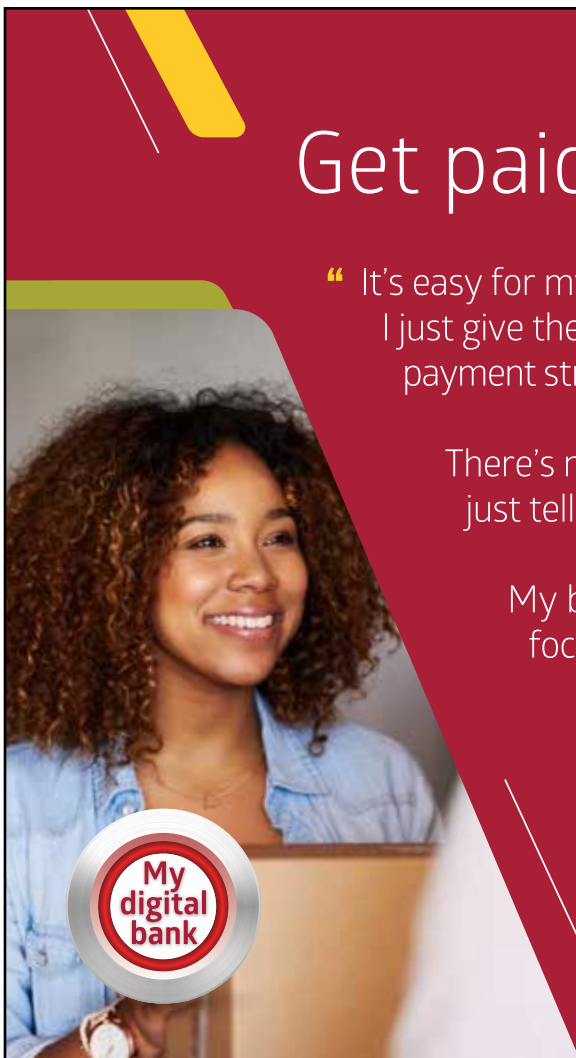
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# PM Browne, Works Minister Weston tour Jolly Harbour

Prime Minister Gaston Browne and Minister for Works, Lennox Weston, on Tuesday toured the Jolly Beach property in St. Mary, earmarked by government for acquisition and renovation.

During his budget presentation on February 3, Prime Minister Gaston Browne told the nation that his government would acquire the Jolly Beach property, which has fallen into disrepair, and renovate the hotel which had previously employed over 450 Antiguan and Barbudans.

During the Budget presentation, the Prime Minister also announced the commitment of his government to paying the severance due to the Jolly Beach workers upon successful acquisition of the property.

The Government of Prime Minister Browne explored a number of options to secure resources needed to boost the recovery and transformation of the economy. A US\$200 million bond was issued on the international capital market and has been fully subscribed.

This financing provides an incredible opportunity for the Government to re-profile its debt, to ensure sustainability going forward, and to invest in



Prime Minister Browne and Minister Weston toured Jolly Harbour on Tuesday.

strategic projects that will drive economic growth, create employment, and generate increased revenue to finance government operations.

According to Prime Minister Browne, the proceeds from the bond will be used to implement projects that will stimulate the economy and secure growth of 8 per cent this year. Two of these projects are the acquisition and renovation of the Jolly Beach Hotel and the construction of a hotel resort at Morris Bay.

Upon being granted the green light

to proceed with the renovation and redevelopment work at Jolly Beach, Works Minister the Hon. Lennox Weston, who was accompanied on the tour by engineers and architects, said that his team is ready to move forward with the project and will commence work immediately.

Prime Minister Browne said that upon completion of the project which he said will transform the hotel into a four-star property with over 200 rooms; over five hundred persons will gain employment at the facility.

Fri 25 | Day

81° 

7%  
E 10 mph

Sunny skies. High 81F. Winds E at 5 to 10 mph.

Humidity  
64%

UV Index  
Extreme

Sunrise  
6:27 am

Sunset  
6:12 pm

Fri 25 | Night

73° 

21%  
E 9 mph

A mostly clear sky. Low 73F. Winds E at 5 to 10 mph.

Humidity  
77%

UV Index  
0 of 10

Moonrise  
1:53 am

Moonset  
1:11 pm

Waning Crescent

cont'd from pg 3

economy," Benjamin said.

Since 2015, Antigua and Barbuda's minimum wage has been fixed at \$8.20 per hour.

Prior to this, there were increases in 1998 when the minimum wage increased to \$5.75 per hour from \$4.60. In 2002 it was raised to \$6 per hour. In 2006 it increased to \$6.75 cents and in 2008 to \$7.50.

## Family Court dress code sparks social media debate

A press release issued by the Family Court on Thursday to announce a change of location for the collection of child maintenance funds sparked debate on social media for a very unusual reason.

Yesterday morning, the Family Court revealed that beginning 1st March, 2022, the collection of all Child Maintenance Funds will be relocated to its High Street location upstairs Ryan's Building.

The the Disbursement of Maintenance Payments, however, will remain at the Magistrates' Court.

The release went on that persons can visit the office to submit payments from 8:30am. to 3:00pm, Monday to Thursday and 8:30am to 2:00pm on Friday.

However it was what followed that



triggered debate that ranged from comical to quite considered.

The Court listed a lengthy and very specific list of clothing which visitors to the complex will be denied access to if worn.

According to the press release, "All visitors to the Family Court are kindly asked to observe the dress code which includes the following:

NO SPAGHETTI STRAPS  
 NO SLEEVELESS ATTIRE  
 NO HALTER TOPS

NO TUBE TOPS  
 NO SHORT PANTS  
 NO DRESS ABOVE THE KNEE  
 NO SLIPPERS  
 NO TIGHTS  
 NO TIGHT FITTED TOPS  
 NO SHORT TIGHT FITTED SKIRTS  
 NO VESTS  
 NO TORN/RIPPED CLOTHING  
 NO RIPPED WASHED COLORED JEANS  
 NO REVEALING OR EXPOSING OF BODY PARTS."

Many said the fact that people have to be reminded to dress appropriately in and of itself is quite telling and rather sad, while others believed that the list, which is not exhaustive, went a bit overboard and left too much room for

*cont'd on pg 6*

## STUDENT SAFETY POLICY





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# Major tourism event returns

Tourism stakeholders have announced the return of Showcase Antigua Barbuda. The travel trade business to business destination event is hosted by the Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association (ABHTA) and the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA).

The event, which has been absent for the past two years due to the pandemic, has been re-designed with a focus not only on the business aspect of the one-on-one meetings with Tourism related businesses, but also presenting the destination's offerings of Culture and Heritage, Wellness and Romance in addition to Yachting & Sailing.

Patrice Simon, Executive Director of the ABHTA remarked, "Giving our partners the opportunity to experience the destination firsthand is important now



ABTA CEO, Colin C. James

more than ever. We are looking forward to welcoming our partners from the US, UK & EU, Canada and the Caribbean for face-to-face meetings with our members. As travel continues to rebound, we cannot miss an opportunity to showcase Antigua and Barbuda to the key decision makers in the travel industry."

Colin C. James, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority wants travel partners

to continue to keep Antigua and Barbuda top of mind.

James said, "Antigua and Barbuda has incredible new product offerings that have come on stream since 2020 and we are more than ready to wow our travel partners, some of who will be making their first visit back to Antigua and Barbuda since the pandemic."

The 7th edition of Showcase Antigua Barbuda will include a welcome event on 8th June, a full day of business meetings on the 9th and the opportunity to play and explore the destination on the 10th. Travel partners and local stakeholders can also look forward to a new element being added to this year's event which will include sessions of consultations on the destination and exploring avenues for growth and development of the industry.

## cont'd from pg 5

interpretation by overzealous security personnel or court staff.

One person said, "The dress code! Wow! I do understand dress properly, yes, but you're not going into the courtroom, you're collecting something and leave."

Another individual remarked, "People have become so disrespectful in going to places of [reverence] that this is necessary for them to understand.

"I feel the pain of all who are talking about the dress above the knee, but [if] you don't specify and leave it to their discretion, some will come in dresses way above the knee that you can see the glory land and [they will think] they're dressed appropriately."

Yet another person com-

mented, "Like really? People going to church in anything, never mind courthouse! Give me a break!"

While another said, "You can go church in all them attire. In other words, only nuns and monks are allowed!"

Arguing on the side of reason, one woman remarked, "If you see the way some persons dress to even collect money [at the court], it's appalling. Hence the reason they see it fit to specify.

Why would you go into a business place with all your stomach or breast or back exposed? Come on!"

One particularly humorous woman had a much simpler solution to the problem all together: "Ladies stop choose waste man! Then you won't have to go in the people them place for them to tell you how to dress at all!"



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## NODS Director, Philmore Mullin, retiring

After more than two decades of service to the people of Antigua and Barbuda, the Director of the National Office of Disaster Services (NODS), Philmore Mullin, is heading into retirement.

Sherrod James, who has worked with NODS for many years, will likely be appointed as the department's new boss.

Mullin originally indicated that he was heading into retirement three years ago, but he has only now indicated that he will finally leave after rendering 22 years of service.

Speaking of his successor, James, Mullin said, "“Sherrod has been well prepared. He has to find his own feet. I wouldn't want him to be like me. I want him to be his own person.”"

He added while he is moving on to enjoy his later years more peaceful-



*Director of the National Office of Disaster Services (NODS), Philmore Mullin*

ly, his knowledge and expertise will always be available to NODS and the people of Antigua and Barbuda.

““I will not be serving in the capacity as director but if asked to do

specific disaster management things, I will be more than happy so to do,” he indicated.

Mullin also noted while much has been achieved in the area of national disaster management over the last twenty years, there still remains a lot more work to do.

“When I joined this office, disaster management certainly wasn't what it was years ago. We have gone through several plans, we have developed a sound community disaster management programme. We can be proud of such a system.

“We still have work to do with various ministries and departments and I would like to see a little more ownership.

“The various ministries need to take more responsibility and ownership of disaster management.”



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## Athea Henry's killer committed to May assizes

The Jamaican man accused of the brutal 2021 killing of his former girlfriend, and the attempted murder of her son, has been committed to the May assizes.

Linsome Boyd, 53, a former resident of Cashew Hill, was charged after he chopped Althea Henry, 47, to death in her home on 20th June 2021.

Boyd then attacked Henry's son, Tajma Francis, who was 21 at the time. Boyd allegedly used a machete to deal a number of life threatening blows to Francis, who for several days teetered on the brink of death in the Intensive Care Unit of the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre.

On Wednesday, Magistrate Conliffe Clarke determined that the prosecution had gathered sufficient evidence for Boyd to stand trial before the High Court or admit guilt and learn his fate.



*Linsome Boyd*

The prosecution indicated that they have as many as ten witnesses who are prepared to give evidence if the matter goes to trial.

It is alleged that Boyd, and Henry, who was a very well liked employee of the Passport Office, had a turbulent history that was marred by several incidents of domestic violence.

The nation was plunged into mourning over the news of Henry's



*Althea Henry*

death and conversations were sparked once again over whether or not authorities should take decisive action against the perpetrators of domestic violence, even if the victim is unwilling to cooperate.

After killing Henry and critically wounding her son, Boyd went into hiding, but later surrendered himself to police.

Henry was a mother of three.

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## The world will pay a high price for Russian aggression

By Sir Ronald Sanders

*(The writer is Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the United States of America and the Organisation of American States. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London and Massey College in the University of Toronto)*

The invasion by the Russian Federation of the sovereign state of Ukraine has been roundly condemned by most countries of the world.

However, Venezuelan President, Nicolas Maduro, announced his support of it. Had President Maduro stopped short at his statement that: "We repudiate and reject all plans to surround Russia militarily and strategically. Russia has to be respected as all the peoples of the world have to be respected", that would have been, at least, understood to be ideological and strategic support in his Government's interest. But, by swiftly and unequivocally supporting the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which is a clear violation of the basic tenets of the UN Charter and international law,

President Maduro raises questions.

It is to be hoped that the Venezuelan government does not regard the Russian aggression against Ukraine - in violation of Article 2, paragraph 4 of the United Nations Charter - as encouragement for similar action against its neighbours.

In this connection, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries were right to issue a statement in the immediate aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine that the "hostilities against Ukraine go counter to the principles of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the prohibition on the threat or use of force, and the peaceful resolution of disputes, which are the bedrock of this Community". All countries should understand that CARICOM countries are small states that depend on the rule of international law, including the illegality of aggression and the prohibition of the threat or use of force in disputes.

At the time of writing, both the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) are working on issuing strong resolutions, condemn-



Sir Ronald Sanders

ing not only the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but also the earlier recognition, on February 21, by the Russian government of two provinces of Ukraine - Donetsk and Luhansk - regions of Ukraine as a violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and inconsistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

When this crisis began to loom, there was, in some Caribbean circles, the view that countries of the region should stay-out of "the white boys war". However, as I have argued in previous commentaries, any march by the Russian government into Ukraine and any attempt to annex parts of it by recognition of break-away regions within it, would have grave repercussions for the world, including the Caribbean.

First, it would embolden governments with contentions with their neighbours, territorial and otherwise, to act in a similar fashion. The consequence would be to create hostilities and instability in almost every region of the world. Second, Ukraine is the bread-basket of Europe. Disruption of its food production and supply would cause not only food shortages but also an increase in the cost of food globally as Europe seeks other sources of supply. Third, oil and gas prices would increase as action is taken against Rus-

**cont'd on pg 10**



Ukrainian servicemen sit atop armored personnel carriers driving on a road in the Donetsk region, eastern Ukraine, Thursday, Feb. 24, 2022. [Photo credit: AP]

# Opinion

*cont'd from pg 9*

sia by stopping its sales of oil to Europe. Europe, too, would have to buy oil in the same markets as Caribbean countries, forcing up prices at a time when the region is barely beginning to recover from the adverse effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic. No sector would be spared and especially affected would be tourism, the supply of energy and water, and food production.

The US has tried and failed to convince large oil producers, such as Saudi Arabia, to pump more oil to cater for Europe's needs. But long before the hostilities in Ukraine, Russia had already tied up a deal with member states of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) not to increase oil production in order to keep prices at a high level.

What was happening in Ukraine was, therefore, always a peril to the world community. The person who knew this best was UN Secretary-Gen-

eral, António Guterres. He told the UN special general assembly meeting on 23 February that "Our world is facing a moment of peril", and even as the Russian government had already indicated its intention to launch a military offensive against Ukraine, he said: "If the conflict in Ukraine expands, the world could see a scale and severity of need unseen for many years".

These circumstances now face the world. It is unlikely that the Russian Federation President, Vladimir Putin, will heed the urgings to stop the hostilities and withdraw troops from Ukraine immediately. It is also unlikely that even though it is a violation of international law and the UN Charter, that he will drop his recognition of Donetsk and Luhansk which are part of the Ukraine. He will regard these as bargaining chips with the member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the European Union (EU).

This situation will therefore continue for some time while bargaining takes place both behind the scenes and in public. NATO and EU countries are not without leverage of their own. Apart from what British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, called a "barrage" of sanctions, coming from the US, the EU and the UK, there are other ways in which Russia could be isolated. The sanctions on Russian oil companies and banks are already in place, putting pressure on Russia's economy about which its own people will eventually complain.

In the meantime, the global community will pay a high price for Russia's violation of the principles of international law that have, largely, underpinned peace and protected small states.

That's why, CARICOM was right to speak out as it did. CARICOM leaders were safeguarding the interest of Caribbean people.

*Responses and previous commentaries:* [www.sirronaldsanders.com](http://www.sirronaldsanders.com)

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**WEEKEND**

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Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board  
A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board



## Carnival authorities to consult with mas troupe leaders

The Ministry of Creative Industries and Innovation is hosting a special town hall meeting in order to engage with T-Shirt and Mas Troupe leaders later today.

Carnival Monday and Tuesday band leaders have also been invited to attend the meeting.

During the meeting, it is expected that issues related to the planning of the limited schedule of Carnival events that have been approved to take place this year will be discussed.

Last week, minister with responsibility for Carnival, Michael Browne indicated that all stakeholders would be involved in the process of planning the return of Antigua's Carnival, which was suspended for the last two years as a result of the pandemic.

The Gaston Browne-led Cabinet also indicated that limited activities will be staged for fully vaccinated revelers to enjoy.

It is very unlikely however, that fetes and other mega events will be allowed as Cabinet has rejected the return of "super spreader" events.

The meeting will take

place this afternoon upstairs the KFC building on Old Parham Road at 5pm.



## Pointe Xpress Weekend Puzzle

### ACROSS

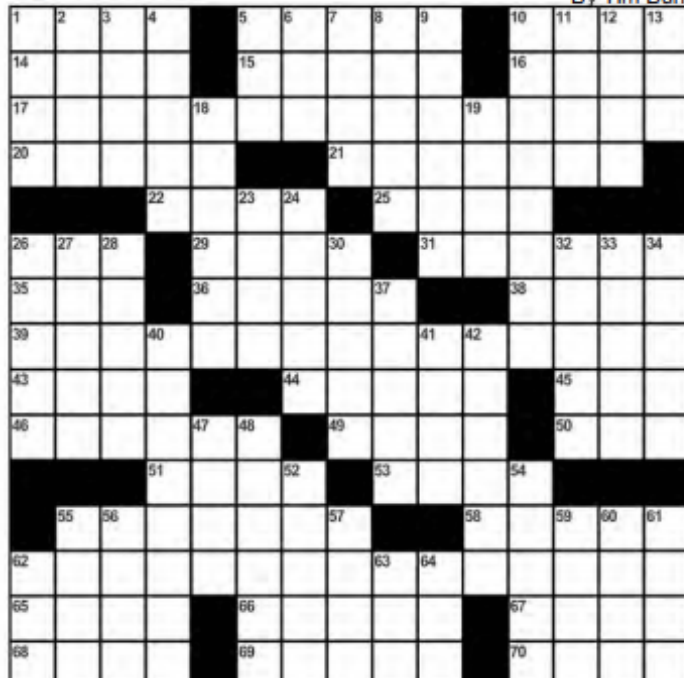
- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1) "And another thing ..."      | 43) Double-decker part                    |
| 5) Book with maps               | 44) Musical drama                         |
| 10) Leopard feature             | 45) Time span                             |
| 14) Salon work                  | 46) Roller coaster reaction               |
| 15) Grandiose or flashy         | 49) Bygone despot                         |
| 16) Strip a fruit               | 50) Scheider of "Jaws"                    |
| 17) Radius, to diameter         | 51) Svelte                                |
| 20) Put in                      | 53) Barbecue accessory                    |
| 21) Tempts                      | 55) Chains of connected ideas or passages |
| 22) Pinch of seasoning          | 58) Recessed area                         |
| 25) Hackman of "Hoosiers"       | 62) Complete account                      |
| 26) Do one's part?              | 65) Having sufficient skill               |
| 29) Where the worm turns        | 66) Cleverly avoid                        |
| 31) Villain                     | 67) Type of candy or cider                |
| 35) Long scarf                  | 68) Onetime Turkish governors             |
| 36) Overpromoted                | 69) Asian goatlike animal                 |
| 38) Cotton-pickin' contraptions | 70) Ages upon ages                        |
| 39) What landlords hate         |   |

### DOWN

- 1) Feel sore
- 2) Bit of bank business
- 3) River deposit
- 4) Killed, mobster-style
- 5) Baseball bat material
- 6) \_\_\_ Lord's Prayer
- 7) Valuable vein
- 8) On \_\_\_ and a prayer
- 9) Gambler's claim to beating the odds
- 10) Period beginning with Sputnik
- 11) Window square
- 12) Middle-Earth menaces
- 13) Golf prop
- 18) Like some novels
- 19) Pitchfork prong
- 23) Tofu bean (Var.)
- 24) Zoo heavyweight, briefly
- 26) Assists in a crime
- 27) Laughable
- 28) Grow narrower
- 30) Was a boulder?
- 32) San Fran pro
- 33) Foreword, briefly
- 34) English-class assignment
- 37) Bride's purchase
- 40) Railroad bridges
- 41) Keep from escaping
- 42) Boat harbor
- 47) Downwind, nautically
- 48) Saucy misses
- 52) Syrup source
- 54) One-tenth payment
- 55) Die
- 56) Country friendly to yours
- 57) Speak unclearly
- 59) "See you, signore"
- 60) It's hit in traffic jams?
- 61) Loose things to tie up?
- 62) "Incredible!" to Beatle fans
- 63) Rapid bustling movement
- 64) In mint condition

### GET YOUR FILL

By Tim Burr



# 'America's Got Talent' contestant Nightbirde dies after cancer battle

CNN - Jane Marczewski, a singer known by her stage name Nightbirde, who earned a legion of followers after being a contestant on NBC's "America's Got Talent," has died after a battle with cancer, her family confirmed.

"We, her family, are devastated by her passing and unimaginable loss," the Marczewski family said in a statement, provided by NBC.

Marczewski fought cancer for four years and died Feb. 19, her family said.

The singer caught the attention of many after delivering a stunning audition last year on "America's Got Talent," performing an original song called "It's OK." During her performance, she disclosed to the judges that she was battling cancer that had spread to her lungs, spine and liver. She impressed judge Simon Cowell with her positivity and



Host and judges pay tribute to 'America's Got Talent' contestant who lost battle to cancer [Photo credit: Perez Hilton]

resolve.

"You can't wait until life isn't hard anymore before you decide to be happy," she told the judges.

Cowell awarded Marczewski a coveted "golden buzzer," which advanced her to the next round of competition.

She ultimately had to drop out, but during a virtual interview aired on the show, Marczewski said it was "beautiful to see the

world welcome that song into their own dark night."

"I'm overwhelmed by it," she said, of the reaction to "It's OK."

"Your voice, your story, and your message touched millions. Nightbirde will always be a member of the 'AGT' family. Rest In Peace, Jane," the show said in a statement to CNN.

Host Terry Crews and judges Heidi Klum and Simon Cowell also paid

tribute on their own social media accounts.

"Heart breaking news to hear about @\_nightbirde, she was an extraordinary person, so brave, so talented," Cowell wrote on Twitter. «She made a huge impact on AGT and the world. Her determination to fight this terrible illness was remarkable. Rest in peace, Jane. I am sending my love to her family."

Her family added in their statement that those who knew Marczewski "enjoyed her larger-than-life personality and sense of humour."

"She had a witty joke for every occasion -- even if the joke was on her," her family added.

"Her lasting legacy will be the gift of hope she gave to so many through her music and the strength she found in Jesus. We thank everyone for their messages of love and support."

## Montserrat launches writing competition to promote Arrow's legacy

Young Montserratians will have a chance to learn about the life and work of one of the island's national heroes in a new essay competition.

Discover Montserrat is accepting essay submissions from students of the Montserrat Community College, Montserrat Secondary School and the three local primary schools about the life and work of Alphonsus "Arrow" Cassell.

This learning experience will be vi-

tal for the younger students since most would not have been born or old enough to witness Arrow performing his popular Soca tracks such as "Long Time" and "Hot, Hot, Hot" before his death in September 2010.

Essays can be submitted at arrowwmrat@gmail.com until March 8 and winners will be announced 10 days later.

The grand prize for each age group is EC\$500.



Alphonsus "Arrow" Cassell [Photo credit: AP]



# Tommy Lee back in prison

Tommy Lee Sparta is back at the Tower Street Adult Correctional Centre in Kingston after being discharged from the Kingston Public Hospital on Tuesday, according to his attorney-at-law Donahue Martin.

The dancehall deejay had been admitted to the medical facility on Monday, after being involved in an alleged brawl with warders at the facility, where he's currently serving a three-year sentence for an illegal firearm.

"He did not undergo any surgical procedure. I see some stuff on Instagram about him allegedly doing surgery. I don't know anything about that," Martin told the Jamaica Observer on Wednesday.

The attorney said he is awaiting the outcome of the Independent Commission of Investigation (INDECOM) probe to decide on how to move forward on his client's behalf.



Tommy Lee Sparta

Meanwhile, Zavia Mayne, minister of state in the Ministry of National Security, said the officers at the Tower Street Adult Correctional Centre (TSACC) involved in Monday's incident are still conducting normal duties.

"Based on preliminary reports, Mr Russell became aggressive and, in keeping with their training, the officers were reasonably forced to restrain Mr Russell. Based on the preliminary report, this is the subject of an investigation, but we

have a report. Based on the report that we have received, we were not of the view that the circumstances of the incident necessitated the removal of the officers from their duties," he told journalists at the Lecture Theatre, University of the Commonwealth Caribbean (UCC), in Kingston, on Wednesday.

Mayne was at the signing of the memorandum of understanding among the Department of Correctional Services, advocacy group Stand Up for Jamaica, and the University of the Commonwealth Caribbean for the new cohort of scholarships for incarcerated persons.

According to a release from the Department of Correctional Services on Monday, a dispute ensued between the embattled entertainer and a correctional officer after he failed to follow instructions to return to his cell.

"Reports received from the acting

*cont'd on pg 14*

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# 'Law & Order' reawakens a dozen years later without missing a beat

The new "Law & Order" serves notice right away that it hasn't lost its ripped-from-the-headlines edge, kicking off its 21st season with the murder of a famous singer just released from prison after raping 40 women. While the disclaimer assures everyone the story is fictional, those who might see parallels to a sitcom star once featured on NBC's Thursday-night lineup are forgiven.

Beyond that attention-getting flourish it's very much the same old show, only with Sam Waterston's Jack McCoy promoted to the role of District Attorney -- now seeming very Steven Hill-like, for those old enough to remember the office's first occupant -- and Anthony Anderson back as detective Kevin Bernard.

Otherwise, the formula remains unchanged, just with new pieces plugged into the machinery, among them Camryn Manheim as Bernard's boss. And given the longevity of Dick Wolf's

creation and its various spinoffs, why mess with success?

That's not to say the series doesn't make a few concessions to the passage of time or acknowledge current realities. Bernard's new partner, Frank Cosgrove ("Burn Notice's" Jeffrey Donovan), expresses his contempt for cellphones, which members of the public brandish when he threatens to manhandle a suspect. A bit of a dinosaur, Cosgrove complains, "Should I have offered him a croissant and invited him to tea at the St. Regis?" later telling the prosecutor, "I catch 'em. You cook 'em. That's how this is supposed to work."

There's also a reference to defunding the police, and a fleeting discussion about whether the accountability and heightened scrutiny of law enforcement in recent years -- in part due to the ubiquity of cellphones -- represents progress.

The characters' person-



Anthony Anderson and Jeffrey Donovan in 'Law & Order.'

alities and power dynamics are thus already pretty clear, following series creator Dick Wolf's maxim to flesh out details about the regular players with an eye-dropper, not a ladle. In "Law & Order," the focus is and always has been on the cases, not the personnel.

Hugh Dancy ("Hannibal") plays that aforementioned prosecutor, with Odelya Halevias as the other assistant district attorney. Carey Lowell, among those who sat in that second chair, also turns up in a cameo that provides yet another link to the program's past.

Before Wolf took over

a sizable chunk of NBC's primetime real estate with his "Chicago" shows, "Law & Order" anchored the network, serving up neatly self-contained cases and the TV equivalent of comfort food without the multi-episode commitments associated with streaming.

Although the flagship "Law & Order" has been off for a dozen years, its progeny have lingered, and the revival feels as polished and familiar as if it had never left.

The police and the prosecutors. These are their stories, ad infinitum. Cue the "Ka-chung" sound.

*cont'd from pg 13*

superintendent on duty are that the inmate refused to re-enter his cell following the distribution of breakfast. Upon repeat of the command, the inmate hurled his breakfast at the staff officer in retaliation," the statement read in part.

"He was subdued by the officer and both parties received injuries. The inmate was taken to the medical orderly on the compound of the institution for examination and was later transferred to a public hospital for further treatment,"

the statement continued.

In March 2021, Tommy Lee Sparta was sentenced to three years in prison for illegal possession of a firearm and two years for illegal possession of ammunition in the Gun Court Division of the Home Circuit Court in Kingston.

He will, however, serve three years as the sentences are to run concurrently. According to the police report, on December 14, 2020 the entertainer — whose given name is Leroy Russell — was arrested after a vehicle in which he

was travelling was intercepted by members of the Jamaica Constabulary Force. The men in the vehicle were searched and a 9mm Glock pistol with an extended magazine containing 18 rounds of ammunition was found in the dancehall artiste's waistband.

A former member of Vybz Kartel's Portmore "Gaza" Empire, Tommy Lee Sparta got his break in 2012. He is known for songs including Spartan Soldier, Power Struggle, Some Bwoy, and Rich Badness.



## 'The Wendy Williams Show' is ending; Sherri Shepherd to take time slot

CNN - A spokesperson for Williams confirmed the news to CNN in a statement on Tuesday.

"It's been a challenging time for Wendy as she deals with her health issues. She is incredibly grateful to Debmart-Mercury, to Sherri and everybody else who has supported the show through this time," Williams' rep Howard Bragman said. "She, more than anyone, understands the reality of syndicated television -- you can't go to the marketplace and sell a show that's the 'Maybe Wendy Show'. She understands why this decision was made from a business point of view, and she has been assured by Debmart-Mercury that should her health get to a point where she can host again and should her desire be that she hosts again that she would be back on TV at that time."

Taking Williams' time slot will be talk show veteran, Sherri Shepherd, who made the announcement on Williams' show this morning. Shepherd's new show will be called "Sherri."

She was previously a co-host on "The View" from 2007 to 2014.

Williams' departure comes as she has been absent from her hosting duties since the premiere of the 13th season of "Wendy." Williams was recovering



Wendy Williams, here in 2019, is leaving her talk show after 13 seasons.

from a breakthrough case of Covid-19 at the beginning of the season, according to the show.

She was supposed to return in October but then cited her ongoing issues with Graves' disease. The autoimmune disorder is something that caused Williams

to leave on several occasions over the years, including an incident in which she fainted on live television during a Halloween episode in 2017.

Williams has also been open about her previous struggle with addiction. In 2019, she told viewers she

was living in a sober house after seeking treatment for drug use. She filed for divorce from her husband, Kevin Hunter, the same year.

"The Wendy Williams Show" was created by Williams and debuted in 2008 from studios in New York City.

She began her career in radio and developed a reputation for her quick wit and no-filter interviews. Fans fell in love with Williams' candour, which also ruffled feathers among those in entertainment along the way.

Last year a biopic about her life, "Wendy Williams: The Movie" debuted on Lifetime and detailed her rise to talk show success.





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## CARICOM signs declaration on roaming with telecom providers

CMC – Grenada's Prime Minister Dr Keith Mitchell Wednesday called for the elimination of roaming charges within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Mitchell made the call as the regional grouping moved one step closer to that initiative by signing the St George's Declaration on Roaming with two of the telecommunication providers in the Caribbean.

"Today is a day of immense significance for the Caribbean Community. It signals a period of extensive collaboration between CARICOM and two of the major telecommunications operators within the region.

"At the same time, today signals the beginning of new opportunities for the region, opportunities that we should readily embrace," Mitchell said at the ceremony with Digicel and Cable and Wireless that was held at the Trade Centre on the outskirts of the capital and broadcast live across the region.

Mitchell, who has led responsibility for Science and Technology within the quasi CARICOM Cabinet, said that regional governments have long recognised the value of collaboration and cooperation as core principles of regional integration.

"It is in this spirit that regional leaders agreed in 2014 to establish a CARICOM Single Information Communication Technology (ICT) Space, having recognised the critical role that information and communication technology play in our social, cultural and economic development."

He said essentially the Single ICT Space represents the digital arm of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) that allows for the free movement of skills, goods, ser-



*Prime Minister of Grenada, Dr Keith Mitchell, addressing the signing ceremony for the St George's Declaration on Roaming on February 23, 2022. [Photo: CMC]*

vices and labour across the 15-member regional integration grouping.

The Grenada Prime Minister said that the roadmap for the CARICOM Single ICT Space was approved by regional leaders at their summit in 2017 and it was envisaged that early adoption by governments would lead to accelerated and widespread use of ICT across all sectors.

"Progress has not been as fast as we would have liked, but this interim solution gives renewed impetus to our efforts to advance key aspects of the Single ICT Space.

"We are encouraged by the milestone being recorded today as we sign The Declaration of St George's – Towards the Reduction of Intra CARICOM Roaming Charges. However, our eyes are set firmly on the ultimate goal which is to achieve the total elimination of roaming charges within CARICOM."

Mitchell said that the declaration essentially means that Caribbean citizens will have options to use their mobile phones as they move free-

ly within the CARICOM at reduced costs.

"Our citizens will be able to travel without the fear of incurring the normal exorbitant charges for voice and data usage as they conduct business or keep in touch with loved ones.

"We firmly believe that this critical reduction in roaming charges will help drive digital commerce, regional integration and economic development, and will have an even greater impact when total elimination is achieved.

"The current unpredictable cost of mobile roaming deters CARICOM citizens from using their mobile phones as they travel throughout the region. Therefore, citizens and policymakers welcome today's declaration as it would make roaming charges more transparent, predictable and affordable within this Single Space."

Mitchell said that CARICOM must continue to deliver "real and tangible", benefits for the citizens of the community and that it must facilitate a space that is conducive to business and leisure.

He said parties to the declaration have agreed on an implementation timeframe between the second and third quarter of this year, giving consideration to the technical aspects of the implementation and the public awareness campaigns that must take place.

"Today, on behalf of my colleague Heads of Government and the people of the Caribbean community, I thank them for that commitment to significantly reduce roaming rates in the region, but I stress again that there is much more to be done as we seek to deliver on our original objective."



## CARICOM condemns Russian invasion of Ukraine

CMC – The 15-member Caribbean Community (CARICOM) grouping on Thursday joined the global community in strongly condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

CARICOM has called for an immediate and complete withdrawal of military forces from the Eastern European country.

Russian President Vladimir Putin Thursday launched the military operation in Ukraine, with explosions being heard across the country and Ukraine's foreign minister warning a "full-scale invasion" was under way.

Weeks of intense diplomacy and the imposition of Western sanctions on Russia failed to deter Putin, who had massed between 150,000 and 200,000 troops along



*The CARICOM Secretariat in Georgetown, Guyana.*

the borders of Ukraine.

Russia has demanded an end to NATO's eastward expansion and said Ukrainian membership of the US-led Atlantic military alliance was unacceptable.

CARICOM, which last week had urged "all parties involved to act responsibly", said that Moscow should withdraw its troops and the "cessation of any further actions that may intensify the

current perilous situation in that country.

"The recognition by The Russian Federation of the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk represents a violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine," CARICOM said.

It argued that the hostilities against Ukraine go counter to the principles of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-inter-

ference in the internal affairs of another sovereign state and the prohibition on the threat or use of force and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

"CARICOM maintains that the principles of universal respect and adherence to these norms and principles of international law are fundamental to the maintenance of the international system and global peace and security.

"CARICOM calls for all parties involved to urgently embark on intensified diplomatic dialogue to immediately de-escalate hostilities and work towards a sustainable peace," it added.

Western countries have reacted to the invasion by imposing economic sanctions on Russia and its leadership.

## Dominica looking to improve bi-lateral relations with Saudi Arabia

CMC - Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit says he remains confident that the visit of a delegation from Saudi Arabia will lead to improved relations between the two countries.

The delegation, which arrived on Monday, is led by Tourism Minister Ahmad Agil Alkhateeb and Skerrit said Dominica has great admiration for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and is looking forward to areas in which the two countries can collaborate.

"I am very confident in the strengthening of the relationship.

"We have been in contact with Saudi Arabia for some time, this is the first visit of a high ranking official to Dominica and so it is a good indication of the seriousness and sincerity of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in advancing its bilateral relationship with Dominica"

Skerrit said that there are a number of areas his island is interested in developing a relationship with the oil-rich country including tourism and agriculture, adding "we believe we can collaborate with the Kingdom".



*Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit (right) met with Saudi Minister of Tourism Alkhateeb at the Kempinski Hotel on Monday*

# Russia attacks Ukraine; peace in Europe 'shattered'

AP — Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Thursday, unleashing airstrikes on cities and military bases and sending troops and tanks from multiple directions in a move that could rewrite the world's geopolitical landscape. Ukraine's government pleaded for help as civilians piled into trains and cars to flee.

President Vladimir Putin ignored global condemnation and cascading new sanctions as he unleashed the largest ground war in Europe in decades, and chillingly referred to his country's nuclear arsenal. He threatened any country trying to interfere with "consequences you have never seen."

Ukrainian officials said their forces were battling Russians on multiple fronts, and had lost control of the decommissioned Chernobyl nuclear power plant, scene of the world's worst nuclear disaster.

"Russia has embarked on a path of evil, but Ukraine is defending



Police officers inspect area after an apparent Russian strike in Kyiv Ukraine, Thursday, Feb. 24, 2022. Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday announced a military operation in Ukraine and warned other countries that any attempt to interfere with the Russian action would lead to "consequences you have never seen." [Photo credit: AP]

itself and won't give up its freedom," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy tweeted.

Later, he offered Russia an end to

the hostilities.

"It wasn't Ukraine that chose the path of war, but Ukraine is offering to go back to the path of peace," he said.

In Washington, U.S. President Joe Biden announced a new round of sanctions targeting Russia, charging that Putin "chose this war" and that his country would bear the consequences of his action. He said the sanctions target Russian banks, oligarchs, and high-tech sectors.

Zelenskyy, who earlier cut diplomatic ties with Moscow and declared martial law, described Russian forces advancing on a series of fronts, including a "difficult situation" developing in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, just over 20 kilometers away from the eastern border with Russia, and Russian troops slowly advancing from the north on the city of Chernihiv.



A woman walks past the debris in the aftermath of Russian shelling, in Mariupol, Ukraine, Thursday, Feb. 24, 2022. [Photo credit: AP]

**cont'd on pg 19**



*cont'd from pg 16*

He said a Russian airborne unit at an airport just outside Kyiv, the capital, was being destroyed.

He appealed to global leaders, saying that “if you don’t help us now, if you fail to offer a powerful assistance to Ukraine, tomorrow the war will knock on your door.”

Both sides claimed to have destroyed some of the other’s aircraft and military hardware, though little of that could be confirmed.

Hours after the invasion began, Russian forces seized control of the zone around the now-unused Chernobyl plant after a fierce battle, Zelenskyy adviser Myhailo Podolyak told The Associated Press.

A Ukrainian official said Russian shelling hit a radioactive waste repository and an increase in radiation levels was reported. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive matter.

A nuclear reactor at the plant 130 kilometers (80 miles) north of Ukraine’s capital, Kyiv, exploded in 1986, sending a radioactive cloud across Europe. The damaged reactor was covered by a protective shelter several years ago to prevent radiation leaks.

“This is one of the most serious threats to Europe today,” Podolyak said.

The chief of the NATO alliance said the “brutal act of war” shattered peace in Europe, joining a chorus of world leaders who decried



*A local citizen stands between debris of his house following Ukrainian shelling in the territory controlled by pro-Russian militants, eastern Ukraine, Thursday, Feb. 24, 2022. [Photo credit: AP]*

the attack, which could cause massive casualties, topple Ukraine’s democratically elected government and upend the post-Cold War security order. The conflict was already shaking global financial markets: Stocks plunged and oil prices soared amid concerns that heating bills and food prices would skyrocket.

Condemnation rained down not only from the U.S. and Europe, but from South Korea, Australia and beyond — and many governments readied new sanctions. Even friendly leaders like Hungary’s Viktor Orban sought to distance themselves from Putin.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said he aimed to cut off Russia from the U.K.’s financial markets as he announced sanctions in response to the invasion.

As the first major world

leader to make a big move, Johnson announced a freeze on the assets of all large Russian banks and plans to bar Russian companies and the Kremlin from raising money on British markets.

Johnson said of Putin: “Now we see him for what he is — a bloodstained aggressor who believes in imperial conquest.”

A senior U.S. official said the U.N. Security Council was expected to vote Friday on a resolution condemning Russia for the attack and demanding the immediate withdrawal of its forces.

The vote will proceed even though the legally binding measure will almost certainly be vetoed by Russia, said the official, who wasn’t authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

While some nervous Europeans speculated about a possible new world war, the U.S. and its NATO partners have shown no indication they would send troops into Ukraine, fearing that would risk a larger war.

They instead mobilized troops and equipment around Ukraine’s western flank — as Ukraine pleaded for defense assistance and help protecting its airspace.

NATO also reinforced its members in Eastern Europe as a precaution.

“Make no mistake: We will defend every ally against any attack on every inch of NATO territory,” said NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg.

The attacks came first from the air. Later Ukrainian authorities described ground invasions in multiple regions, and border

*cont'd on pg 20*

*cont'd from pg 19*

guards released footage showing a line of Russian military vehicles crossing into Ukraine's government-held territory. European authorities declared the country's airspace an active conflict zone.

It wasn't until late Thursday afternoon that Russia confirmed that its ground forces had moved into Ukraine, saying they'd crossed over from Crimea, the southern region that Russia annexed in 2014.

After weeks of denying plans to invade, Putin launched the operation on a country the size of Texas that has increasingly tilted toward the democratic West and away from Moscow's sway.

The autocratic leader made clear earlier this week that he sees no reason for Ukraine to exist, raising fears of possible broader conflict in the vast space that the Soviet Union once ruled. Putin denied plans to occupy Ukraine, but his ultimate goals remain hazy.

Ukrainians who had long braced for the prospect of an assault were urged to shelter in place and not to panic.

"Until the very last moment, I didn't believe it would happen. I just pushed away these thoughts," said a terrified Anna Dovnya in Kyiv, watching soldiers and police remove shrapnel from an exploded shell. "We have lost all faith."

With social media amplifying a torrent of military claims and counter-claims, it was difficult to determine exactly what was happening on the ground.

AP reporters saw or confirmed explosions in the capital, in Mariupol on the Azov Sea, Kharkiv in the east and beyond. AP confirmed video showing Russian military vehicles crossing into Ukrainian-held territory in the north from Belarus and from Russian-annexed Crimea in the south.

Russia and Ukraine made com-



A woman holds her baby inside a bus as they leave Kyiv, Ukraine, Thursday, Feb. 24, 2022. [Photo credit: AP]

peting claims about damage they had inflicted. Russia's Defense Ministry said it had destroyed scores of Ukrainian air bases, military facilities and drones, and confirmed the loss of a Su-25 attack jet, blaming "pilot error." It said it was not targeting cities, but using precision weapons and claimed that "there is no threat to civilian population."

Ukraine's armed forces reported at least 40 soldiers dead, and said a military plane carrying 14 people crashed south of Kyiv.

Poland's military increased its readiness level, and Lithuania and Moldova moved toward doing the same. Border crossings increased from Ukraine to Poland, which prepared centers for refugees.

Putin justified his actions in an overnight televised address, asserting the attack was needed to protect civilians in eastern Ukraine — a false claim the U.S. predicted he would make as a pretext for invasion.

He accused the U.S. and its allies of ignoring Russia's demands to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO and for security guarantees.

He called the military action a

"forced measure" stemming from rising security risks for Russia.

Anticipating international condemnation and countermeasures, Putin issued a stark warning to other countries not to meddle.

In a reminder of Russia's nuclear power, he warned that "no one should have any doubts that a direct attack on our country will lead to the destruction and horrible consequences for any potential aggressor."

Among Putin's pledges was to "denazify" Ukraine. World War II looms large in Russia, after the Soviet Union suffered more deaths than any country while fighting Adolf Hitler's forces.

The Kremlin has painted members of Ukrainian right-wing groups as neo-Nazis, exploiting their admiration for WWII-era Ukrainian nationalist leaders who sided with the Nazis.

Ukraine is now led by a Jewish president who lost relatives in the Holocaust and angrily dismissed those claims.

Hours before the invasion, Zelenskyy rejected Moscow's claims that Ukraine poses a threat to Russia and made a passionate plea for peace.



## Hong Kong starts vaccine requirement for restaurants, stores

AP — Hong Kong launched a vaccination requirement to enter shopping malls, restaurants and a host of other places on Thursday as it battles an expanding omicron outbreak and tries to overcome vaccine hesitancy in parts of its population.

Businesses posted a QR code at their entrances for people to scan with a smartphone app to check their vaccine status before entering.

Everyone aged 12 and over must have at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine to enter these places. Beginning April 30, those aged 18 and above will be required to have two doses. Booster shots will be required for some starting June 30.

Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous Chinese city, is struggling to impose a zero-COVID strategy patterned on the tough measures mainland China has implemented to keep the virus at bay.

A sharp rise in cases driven by the omicron variant has left the city short of the hospital beds and isolation rooms needed for a zero-COVID approach.

Mainland experts have been brought in to help put up temporary testing facilities and new isolation wards to handle a mass testing of the entire population of 7.4 million people



Residents queue up to get tested for the coronavirus at a temporary testing center for COVID-19 in Hong Kong, Thursday, Feb. 24, 2022. [Photo credit: AP]

ple next month, similar to what China does in cities hit with even relatively small outbreaks.

The city of Hohhot in China's Inner Mongolia region launched a sixth round of citywide testing Thursday in an outbreak with 277 confirmed cases.

In Hong Kong, the Health Department reported 8,798 new cases of people testing positive in the latest 24-hour period, the highest daily total since the start of the pandemic.

The ongoing outbreak, along with the new requirement to be vaccinated to enter certain premises, has driven more people to get a shot.

About 5.9 million people, or 87% of the population 12 years old and older, have gotten at least one dose, according to the government.

Nearly 45,000 people received their first dose of vaccine in the 24 hours through 8 p.m. Wednesday, and more than 43,000 got either their second or third dose, the city government said.

The vaccine requirement also applies to fresh food markets, gaming centers, gyms, beauty parlors and barbershops, swimming pools, department stores and nightclubs.

Exceptions are made for people making a deliv-

ery or picking up an item, including takeout food.

At restaurants, an employee is required to check each customer's vaccine status and scan it with their smartphone.

At many other places, including shopping malls, there is no required check.

The government said that police may conduct spot checks.

Link, an operator of 75 shopping centers and 52 fresh food markets, said it had set up the QR codes at the entrances and passageways to car parks and housing complexes, and reminded workers that they need to be vaccinated, too.

# Israel rejects Palestinian accusations of 'apartheid'

AP — The Palestinian U.N. ambassador, wearing a mask saying "End Apartheid," accused Israel of engaging in "apartheid" in nearly a dozen ways on Wednesday, and Israel's ambassador accused him of regurgitating claims from the Palestinian Authority, which he said "promotes hate, incitement, violence and terror."

The exchange at the U.N. Security Council's monthly meeting on the Middle East reflected the huge chasm between Israel and the Palestinians, and the immense challenge to ending decades of conflict with a two-state solution that would see the antagonists live side-by-side in peace, as the United Nations and many others have sought for years.

Palestinian envoy Riyad Mansour described as "apartheid" a number of Israeli actions, including its denial of Palestinians who were uprooted from their homes 70 years ago the right to return, its different laws for Palestinians and Israeli settlers, and its restrictions on land where Palestinians can live and build.

He said Israeli Ambassador Gilad Erdan brought a stone into the Security Council chamber last month so members could visualize the violence that Israelis confront from Palestinians.

"I am so sorry, but the doors of this chamber could not fit Israeli F16s, tanks, warships, military jeeps, drones, bombs and missiles," Mansour said.

He said the Security Council may not be ready to use the word "apartheid." But he said it is, and has been, "our reality," and while Israel may be outraged by Palestinians using the



Israeli Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan speaks during an interview with The Associated Press in his office in Bnei Brak, east Tel Aviv, on Thursday, October 26, 2017. [Photo credit: AP Photo/Ariel Schalit]

word, "everyone else should be outraged by the policy."

Israel's Erdan responded first by attacking the U.N. Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other rights groups for launching "a Jihad war against the only vibrant democracy in the Middle East."

Their recent reports, he said, "have attempted to brand Israel with absurd claims and heinous accusations."

"You can see the campaign that started here today on the mask of my counterpart," Erdan said, referring to Mansour's mask.

"But make no mistake, this is a joint campaign between these organizations and the Palestinians with the mission of delegitimizing Israel as a Jewish democratic state," he said.

Erdan asked whether anyone could say Israel "is guilty of systematic injustice," pointing to its Arab doctors, members of parliament and ministers serving alongside their

Jewish counterparts. He added that this week a Muslim judge was elected to the Israeli Supreme Court, and he said an Israeli-Arab member of parliament was appointed Israel's consul-general to Shanghai.

U.N. Mideast envoy Tor Wennesland told the council that this month has seen "a worrying continuation" of "the destabilizing deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories."

He cited daily violence in the West Bank, mounting tensions in east Jerusalem and Palestinian refugee camps, settler violence, and "a fragile calm" in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.

"There is no substitute for a legitimate political process that will resolve the core issues driving the conflict," Wennesland said.

"I urge Israelis, Palestinians, regional states and the broader international community to take firm action to enable the parties to re-engage on the path towards meaningful negotiations" leading to a two-state solution.



# UEFA to move Champions League final from Russia - source

Reuters - UEFA will move this year's Champions League final from St Petersburg in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a source with knowledge of the situation told Reuters on Thursday.

UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin has called an extraordinary meeting of the Executive Committee on Friday morning and it is expected to agree on moving the final.

The showcase match in European club football was set to be held at Zenit St Petersburg's stadium on May 28 - an event that would have normally drawn thousands of fans from across the continent.

The stadium is known as the Gazprom Stadium after a sponsorship deal with Russia's state energy company, which also sponsors UEFA's Champions League and UEFA's Euro 2024 national team competition.

"Following the evolution of the situation between Russia and Ukraine in the last 24 hours, the UEFA President has decided to call an extraordinary meeting of the Executive Committee for Friday 25 February at 10:00 CET, in order to evaluate the situation and take all necessary decisions," UEFA said in a statement.

"We are dealing with this situation with the ut-



UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin speaks during a news conference in Minsk, Belarus September 19, 2019. [Photo caption: REUTERS/Vasily Fedosenko]

most seriousness and urgency. Decisions will be taken by the UEFA Executive Committee and announced tomorrow," the organisation added in a further statement.

Zenit St Petersburg are in action in the Europa League on Thursday, playing in Spain against Real Betis, and UEFA said that game would not be impacted.

"UEFA can confirm that all tonight's games will be played as scheduled," the organisation said.

A group of European lawmakers wrote to UEFA on Thursday, asking it to change the venue and to stop considering Russian cities for international football competitions.

The 2023 Champions League final is due to be held in Istanbul with Wembley in London hosting the following year and Munich's Allianz Arena the venue for the final in 2025.

UEFA's later statement

"UEFA shares the international community's significant concern for the security situation developing in Europe and strongly condemns the ongoing Russian military invasion in Ukraine," the organisation said.

"We remain resolute in our solidarity with the football community in Ukraine and stand ready to extend our hand to the Ukrainian people."

condemned the Russian invasion.

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# Sports News

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## CWI selectors keep an open mind

Dr. Desmond Haynes, Cricket West Indies lead selector, says the selection of new talent for the first Test of the Apex series against England, scheduled to bowl off in Antigua, should send a clear message to all players participating in the regional championship that once they perform, their chance of selection is positive.

Some of the top performers in the first two rounds of the West Indies Four-Day Championship have been included in the squad. John Campbell is back in the set-up after im-



Dr. Desmond Haynes

pressing selectors with an up.

average of 53.25 runs and 127 for Jamaica Scorpions against Barbados Pride, and fast bowler Anderson Philip received his maiden call-

Dr. Haynes, speaking to the media on Tuesday, said regional cricketers who do well at that level could have a place on the West Indies

team. The message is being especially related to batters because of the team's poor batting displays over the past year.

The West Indies cricket legend, who last month replaced Roger Harper as lead selector, said they were also considering players for upcoming limited overs competitions.

"We are looking at Test cricket now, but also we've got some 50-over games coming up and we have to be preparing for 50-over competition with the World Cup in 2023 as well.

## French star turns down record breaking contract



Paris-Saint Germain forward  
Kylian Mbappe

Paris-Saint Germain forward Kylian Mbappe has reportedly turned down the Ligue 1 club's latest contract offer.

Emerging as one of the best young talents in the world at Monaco, the 23-year-old has been in the French capital since 2017.

In 204 outings he has contributed 231 goals for PSG and has secured three League 1 titles and three French cups with the club. His current employers are desperate to keep a hold of him, however his contract expires at the end of the season.

Real Madrid are interested in securing Mbappe's services and made a reported 170m pound bid for the player last summer,

an offer that PSG failed to respond to.

PSG reportedly offered Mbappe a record breaking contract, worth close to \$1m per week in order to fight off interest from Madrid.

According to Marca, the French international has turned down the offer after serious consideration.

Mbappe was humbled by the huge offer, but eventually decided to turn the proposal down.

Madrid remain confident that he will move to Santiago Bernabeu in the summer as they leave him alone to make his final decision.

## Former Australia cricketer suffers a heart attack

Former Australia wicketkeeper Rod Marsh is in critical condition after suffering a heart attack.

The 74-year-old effected 355 dismissals in 96 Test appearances for Australia. Marsh also played 92 one day internationals before retiring in 1984 and served as Australia men's chairman of selectors until 2016.

"Rod is an influential figure in

Australian cricket and has been so for more than 50 years," the Australian Cricketers Association said.

Marsh reportedly fell ill while on his way to a charity cricket match in Queensland.

He is third on Australia's all-time dismissals list behind Adam Gilchrist, with 416, and Ian Healy's 395. His tal-

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# ABABWF postpones online Training for Success seminar

The Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Bodybuilding & Weightlifting Federation (ABABWF) has postponed its first 2022 online Training for Success Seminar which was scheduled for 7pm on Saturday via Zoom.

The ABABWF indicated in a press release that due to unforeseen circumstances, the Train for Success seminar would be postponed to 19th March, 2022.

Consequently, the deadline for registration for the event has been extended to 16th March, 2022.

The release noted, however, that the ABABWF's next event, its powerlifting competition, will be held at Buff Up Fitness on 5th March.

Public Relations Officer of the ABABWF and national bikini fitness athlete, Melissa Seaforth, said this year's powerlifting

show is highly anticipated as it will mark the return of the competition to the federation's calendar.

"We have the return of powerlifting. This show is going to be a highly anticipated show. We have not been able to put on powerlifting for the last few years. I believe the last time we had powerlifting was in 2017," Seaforth said on Sports Overflow.

"This show would normally be held towards the end of the year, but this time around, we are putting it first on the calendar so we are starting off 2022 with powerlifting.

"It is going to be at Buff Up Fitness, which is Turbo's Gym and so we just want to say a big thank you to Turbo. He is collaborating with us in putting on this competition.

"We are going to have different categories, of course, separate for males



*Public Relations Officer of the ABABWF, Melissa Seaforth, who is also a national bikini fitness athlete. (Photo courtesy Melissa Seaforth Facebook)*

and females. We are actually adding multiple categories to separate the age gaps.

"We have juniors, which is for age 23 and under, we have seniors which is between the ages of 24 and 39 and we will have a new addition of the masters' category, which is for people who are over the age of 40."

"We will also be having

competition in the bench press, deadlift and the squat, which are basically the three compound lifts.

"In addition to that, we will have a new segment, which is the restricted curl. This is an exhibition segment that we have never done before so it's a wildcard. So we will see who will emerge champion of this new exhibition segment."

## *cont'd from pg 24*

ly of 355 dismissals was a world record at the time of his retirement.

"We are very concerned to hear the news about Rod and send him our best wishes," Nick Hockley, chief executive officer of Cricket Australia, said.

"Rod is one of the most iconic and popular figures in the game, we thank and acknowledge those who are caring for him."

# Simon hopes to resume warri workshops shortly

Antigua and Barbuda's International Warri Grand Master, Trevor "Simple" Simon, is hoping to resume teaching the game to interested persons at the Antigua and Barbuda Warri Academy shortly.

Although Simon announced his retirement from international competition in April 2021, the Antigua and Barbuda warri grandmaster has continued to pass on his knowledge of the game in workshops he conducts at the Antigua and Barbuda Warri Academy.

Widely regarded as one of the best to ever play the game, Simon said he must hold discussions with the manager of the national public library, which serves as the home of the Antigua and Barbuda Warri Academy, before the workshops resume.

"My focus really is to develop the youths and anyone from the various communities in Antigua and Barbuda who wants to learn the game of warri through the academy," Simon told Sports Overflow.

"So anyone who is interested in learning to play the game of warri can actually take part in our workshops that we have at the Antigua and Barbuda Public Library in St John's.

"However, we haven't started back those classes since we took a break because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. But I am being nagged almost everyday by the students about restarting the classes.

"We were scheduled to resume by the middle of last month, but we had a spike in the COVID-19 cases due to the presence of the Omicron variant, and so everything was put back on hold. So we are still waiting to get the greenlight that we can restart."

Simon and September Christian,



*Antigua and Barbuda's International Warri Grand Master, Trevor 'Simple' Simon, competes at an international competition in October, 2019. (Photo courtesy Trevor Simon)*

now deceased, started the Antigua Warri Academy in 2005 as part of their initiative to impart their knowledge and introduce the game to students across Antigua and Barbuda.

Simon, who is a member of the International Oware Players Association (IOPA), said a lot of his work is being quietly done behind the scenes.

"The warri academy was inaugurated in 2005 and we have been doing a lot of work behind the scenes, silently without much fanfare. We do a lot of workshops in various schools across Antigua," Simon said.

"St. Nicholas School is one of my favourites in terms of how involved they are with the game of warri. They normally have class tournaments when school closes for summer.

"We have a number of students

from New Winthorpes School, students from St. Anthony's, Clare Hall Secondary, Villa Primary, Jennings, Crabbe Hill... and so there are a number of students from across the schools in the country that are part of the academy.

"We also have a number of adults such as Dr. Hazra Medica and Peter Derrick who are a part of the academy. We have a good mix of seniors and school students that are involved in the academy.

"The public library is where we host our events. Our practicing and workshops are done right there in the public library. Outside of that, these students will play in their villages and invite you to come from time to time and either watch them or coach them. So there is constant activity where they are concerned."



# MP calls for Roman Abramovich to be banned

Labour MP Chris Bryant has called for Roman Abramovich to be banned from owning Chelsea following Russia's decision to invade neighboring Ukraine.

Bryant has also questioned whether Abramovich's \$152 million home should be seized. The billionaire owns other assets in the UK.

Russian dictator Vladimir Putin has sanctioned several missile strikes on Ukraine - a sovereign European state - and tanks have crossed the border.

Abramovich has owned Chelsea since 2003 and oversaw the most successful period in the club's history, winning countless trophies including the Champions

League twice, but he is rarely seen at Stamford Bridge nowadays.

There is no suggestion Abramovich is connected to terrorism or involved in any wrongdoing.

On reading this report, Bryant told the Commons on Thursday: Following some of the reports in The Sun and other newspapers today, I've got hold of a leaked document from 2019 from the Home Office which says, in relation to Mr. Abramovich as part of Her Majesty's Government's Russia strategy, aimed at targeting illicit finance and malign activity, Abramovich remains of interest to HMG due to his links to the Russian state and his public association with corrupt ac-



Roman Abramovich

tivity and practices.

"An example of this is Abramovich admitting in court proceedings he paid for political influence.

"That's nearly three years ago, and yet remarkably little has been done in relation. Surely Mr. Abramovich should no lon-

ger be able to own a football club in this country? Surely we should be looking at seizing some of his assets, including his \$152m home? And making sure that other people who've had tier one visas like this are not engaged in malign activity in the UK."



Head coach of the 2019 National Division One champions, F&G Trading Cutie's Ovals Ojays Bradbury Browne. (Photo courtesy Bradbury Browne Facebook)

*cont'd from pg 28*

(ABBA) and the Ministry of Sports rehabilitated the JSC Sports Complex prior to the start of the 2019 domestic season.

The remodelling work included cleaning and repairing the roof, seats and fence. The cement floor was replaced with a new rubber material that's more cushioned and resistant.

The work, done by an American enterprise, included the installation of a new surface with Versa technology that allows a better ball bounce, excellent traction and protects players' joints.

The court now portrays the national colours of the Antigua and Barbuda team (green and black), as well as the

basketball association's official logo.

While the improvements are appreciated, Browne feels more effort can and must be made to ensure Antigua and Barbuda acquires an indoor basketball facility.

"Tortola in the British Virgin Islands has two indoor basketball facilities and we don't even have half and that is killing certain aspects of the sport," Browne said.

"It is not all about money, in terms of what it will cost to erect an indoor facility in Antigua; it is about the willingness to get it done as well because if it is one thing I know about the people of my country, is that if we want something to get done, we get it done," he stated.

## Browne says lack of indoor facility limits sports tourism benefits

Head coach of 2019 National Division One champions, F&G Trading Cutie's Ovals Ojays, Bradbury Browne believes Antigua and Barbuda has failed to capitalise on basketball's sports tourism market due to the absence of an indoor playing facility.

Many in the basketball fraternity have long bemoaned the absence of an indoor basketball stadium, especially with the success and dominance in the sub-region achieved by the senior national team, the Wadadli Bulldogs, from the mid-1980s to early 2000s.

During the latter part of that period, Browne worked his way up the ladder to become the assistant to the Wadadli Bulldogs' head coach, Elijah Armstrong.

Browne, who is also an established coach in the national inter-schools basketball programme with well over 20 years of service, served as coach of the junior national team, the Antigua and Barbuda Pitbulls, in the 1990s.

He works as part of a cadre of coaches within the inter-schools' basketball programme from which most players are selected for the junior national team.

Annual summer tours to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Chicago, Illinois, in the United States to participate in the World Youth Basketball Festival were staples on The Pitbulls' calendar.

It was in these trips to the World Youth Basketball Festivals that Browne's eyes were opened to the benefits that could be achieved by Antigua and Barbuda as a sports tourism destination if an indoor basketball sta-



*The resurfaced basketball court at the JSC Sports Complex. (Photo courtesy ABBA)*

dium is constructed.

"Definitely, we need an indoor facility because if we had an indoor facility, for example, when we used to go to Chicago and Milwaukee for the World Youth Basketball Festival every summer, all of them wanted to come to Antigua.

"But there is a problem. A college coach coming to Antigua to play games, he has to put it in his schedule. He cannot go back to the United States and tell his college that when he came to Antigua rain came so the game did not play.

"They will not understand that, so unless you have an indoor facility where you can guarantee that the game is going to be played regardless of what the weather is, it is not going to happen," Browne told Sports Overflow.

"Plus, the indoor facility has to

have a specialised wooden floor. A lot of the colleges in the United States are interested in coming to Antigua, and it is good for the sports tourism as well because when the college teams come to visit, they are walking with an entourage.

"The parents come as well as alumni, especially in the winter when it is cold up there, and they are coming to a tropical country. It's something they welcome, but we don't have an indoor court to facilitate that," he added.

JSC Sports Complex, which was built in the 1990s, is now utilised as the nation's main basketball stadium.

Other sporting disciplines including netball and aerobics training, also use the paved, semi-enclosed facility with covered stands as well.

In a joint effort, the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association

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