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PM GASTON BROWNE PRESENTS \$1.64 BILLION BUDGET



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Prime Minister Gaston Browne presents \$1.64 billion budget

Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and Minister for Finance, the Hon. Gaston Browne in announcing a budget of 1.64 Billion dollars has stated that there will be no new taxes in the 2022 budgetary year.

“This Government is a caring government. We recognize that, after almost two years of economic difficulty caused by the pandemic, persons and companies need an ease to recover, to rebuild and to reinvigorate.

“We also know that, once they have sufficiently rebuilt their lives, livelihood and business, they will both restore their savings and spend on the things they have gone without in the last 24 months,” Prime Minister Browne said.

He said that this will help to rejuvenate the economy, and accelerate the achievement of 8 per cent growth or more.

Noting that the Budget projections are based on a bold and deliberate strategy for economic growth, job creation, and transformation of the country, the projects

and initiatives will be implemented this year, to accelerate the pace of economic recovery and to give benefits to all citizens and residents.

The Budget provides for an overall resource requirement of \$1.64 billion which represents an increase of 9 per cent, or approximately \$130 million, over the estimated total spend of \$1.51 billion in 2021.

Prime Minister Browne said that It indicates the Government’s targeted expansionary fiscal policy that is intended to stimulate the economy and propel a resurgence in domestic output.

The budgetary and fiscal position points to an overall deficit of 2.6 percent of GDP or \$110 million with a marginal primary surplus for 2022.

Prime Minister Browne said that the primary balance is the overall fiscal balance less interest payments on public sector debt and is an indication of the Government’s ability to meet its obligations in a fiscal year without incurring additional debt.

Recurrent Revenue is



Prime Minister Gaston Browne estimated at \$975.6 million for 2022, which is a 23% increase over the \$790.9 million generated in 2021.

The components of recurrent revenue are:

- Indirect Tax Revenue - \$689.5 million
- Direct Tax Revenue - \$124.6 million
- Non-Tax Revenue - \$161.5 million

The amount budgeted for capital receipts is \$7 million, while grant funding for Fiscal Year 2022 is budgeted at \$50.2 million.

On the expenditure side, estimated recurrent expenditure, excluding principal payments, is \$961.1 million.

A current account surplus of \$14.5 million is therefore

projected for 2022.

The components of recurrent expenditure are:

- Wages and Salaries - \$410.6 million
- Transfers and Grants - \$159 million
- Pensions and Gratuities - \$73.4 million
- Goods and Services - \$167.6 million
- Interest Payments - \$110.1 million
- Statutory Contributions - \$40.4 million

The Government’s Capital Budget for 2022 is \$181.8 million.

The Prime Minister said that it more than doubles the almost \$80 million spent on capital projects in 2021.

“No economy that has experienced the constraints that ours has, consequent to the impact of the pandemic, can withstand further constraint if it is to grow and expand.

“We are opening up the country, opening up the economy, and opening up the opportunity for all to advance and prosper,” Prime Minister Browne concluded.

<p>Fri 04 Day</p> <p>80° </p> <p>54% ENE 8 mph</p> <p>Cloudy with showers. High near 80F. Winds ENE at 5 to 10 mph. Chance of rain 50%.</p> <p>Humidity 76% UV Index 9 of 10</p> <p>Sunrise 6:37 am Sunset 6:04 pm</p>	<p>Fri 04 Night</p> <p>72° </p> <p>51% ENE 10 mph</p> <p>Cloudy with occasional rain showers. Low 72F. Winds ENE at 5 to 10 mph. Chance of rain 50%.</p> <p>Humidity 83% UV Index 0 of 10</p> <p>Moonrise 9:18 am Moonset 9:32 pm</p> <p>● Waxing Crescent</p>
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Antigua and Barbuda's economy grew by 5.3 percent in 2021

Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne has reported to the nation of Antigua and Barbuda that the country has bounced back after being battered by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Speaking in the House of Parliament on Thursday during the presentation of the 2022 Budget Presentation, Prime Minister Browne said that the economy is growing at a rapid pace with tourism recovering and employment increasing.

“Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 pandemic battered our economy in 2020 and 2021, as it did every country in the world without exception. But we bounced back, through solid leadership, to achieve 5.3 per



cent economic growth in 2021, as assessed by the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank. This is robust growth accomplished in a time of adversity,” Prime Minister Browne said.

The country’s leader also stated that while the country was challenged by COVID-19, the people of

Antigua and Barbuda were not burdened with new and huge debt. He however stated that in order to further stimulate the economy in 2022, there will be the need to increase borrowing.

The country’s leader said that propelled by the recent economic growth, the Budget statement is being

presented under the theme: “Setting the Stage for Economic Rejuvenation”.

He also gave a commitment that his government will continue to put people at the front and centre of its policies and programmes.

“Our people’s well-being comes first, second, last and always. As a people, we can be proud that our management and response to the pandemic resulted in far less deaths than in most countries of the world. This outcome was due to swift and responsible action by your government, which put the health and well-being of all our people first. That, Mr. Speaker, is good, effective governance,” said Prime Minister Browne.

Finance Minister underscores importance of stable financial sector

During the 2022 Budget Statement Presentation, Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne highlighted the importance of a stable financial sector whilst mitigating against the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The country’s leader commended the financial intuitions for their immediate response to the pandemic.

“Banks, credit unions, and finance companies played a crucial part in decreasing the adverse effects of the pandemic by offering moratoria to their customers and clients. This could only have been achieved by institutions whose balance sheets were strong and reinforced by sufficient reserves to absorb the shockwaves ensuing from crippled businesses, lost income, and economic



Prime Minister Gaston Browne addressing parliament.

uncertainty. In this regard, the timely and effective responses of the financial institutions and the regulatory support offered by the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank must be recognized.” Prime

Minister Browne stated.

Browne noted that the decisions made by the government, to ensure the domestic market had acquisition oppor-

cont'd on pg 4

Government continues to make active contributions to Social Security, despite challenges

During the 2022 Budget Statement delivered under the theme, "Setting the Stage For Economic Rejuvenation" Prime Minister Gaston Browne indicated that his government has continued to fulfil its obligation to the Antigua and Barbuda Social Security Board (ABSSB).

He acknowledged that the pandemic did result in some regrettable, but unavoidable delays in payments, however, this did not cause the government to shirk its responsibility to the ABSSB.

"With regard to Social Security, its ongoing challenge is the collection of sufficient contribution-income to fund payments, which has been made all the more difficult owing to the pandemic," Prime Minister Gaston Browne disclosed during the 2022 Budget Statement Presentation.

The country's leader indicated that the government made its required contributions of nearly \$40 million in

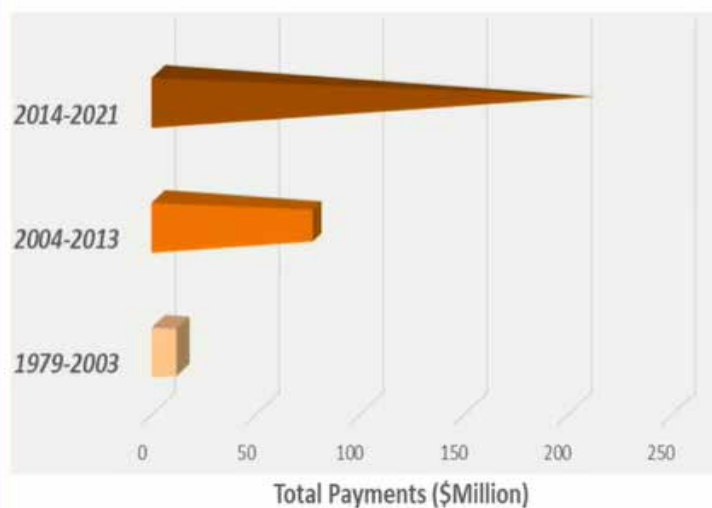
2021, however private sector contributions plummeted.

Tourism and allied industries such as restaurants, transportation, and wholesale distributors account for a significant portion of active contributors to Social Security. The pandemic and resultant lockdown, along with health management protocols reduced contributions to Social Security by \$8.8 million for industries such as these.

PM Browne further broke down the contribution income generated by Social Security which amounted to \$163.5 million in 2019, \$146 million in 2020, and is estimated to be \$158 million in 2021.

"In some months, the contraction in the labour market effectively resulted in the underfunding of the pension and other welfare benefits by as much as \$6 million. Accordingly, the real dependence ratio fell to 3:1 during the pandemic where 10:1 is needed to ensure full and

PAYMENTS TO SOCIAL SECURITY BOARD



timely monthly payment of pensions and benefits. The consequence was that, by September 2021, pension payments were delayed by two months," Browne explained.

Despite the cash flow challenges, the prime minister disclosed that the government provided \$10 million to Social Security, bringing the payment cycle current by the end of October 2021.

Speaking in Parliament on Thursday, Prime Minis-

ter Browne stated, "As the economy is rejuvenated, Social Security's cash flow will improve thereby eliminating the negative impact on pension payments. Moreover, the Social Security Board and the government have embarked on an ambitious plan to fund pensions throughout 2022. This funding plan involves the monetizing of key assets of the corporation and offering investment instruments on the regional securities exchange."

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tunities for the two foreign banks who sought to withdraw from the Caribbean, was a historic and successful move.

"Mr. Speaker, it will be recalled that, when two foreign-owned banks decided to withdraw from the Caribbean, having made huge profits for decades, our government insisted that their assets should not pass to banks in which Antiguans and Barbudans did not have significant ownership.

"Instead, we approved vesting orders which led to the acquisition of The Bank of Nova Scotia by the Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank Lim-

ited (ECAB), and the purchase of the Royal Bank of Canada by the Antigua Commercial Bank Limited (ACB), now ACB Caribbean. It is worth reflecting on the historic nature of these two transactions," Browne explained.

Browne continued, "We should never underestimate the power of skillful and informed leadership and of courage. Small size is not always an obstacle to success.

A clear vision, a financially astute plan, and determination can triumph over those entities who seek to exploit circumstances for their own advantage. That is the leadership our Government

gave, not only to Antigua and Barbuda but to the entire OECS sub-region, in expanding domestic ownership of the financial sector. The benefits are there now, for all to see."

The Prime Minister, during his presentation, revealed that evidence of success is clear based on last year's economic growth of 5.3 percent and an expanded money supply in the banking system, amid the challenges of the pandemic.

"This is achievement. This is good governance manifested. That is progressive action in the interest of our Nation," the nation's leader declared.

\$125 million spent on healthcare in 2021, PM Browne

The viability of the Medical Benefits Scheme (MBS) and the challenges it faced during the last two years were placed on display during the 2022 Budget Presentation.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne disclosed that the past two years proved particularly challenging for financing healthcare because of increased demands for pharmaceuticals and medical supplies to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The decline in revenue by 20 percent during the same period further exacerbated the situation.

PM Browne noted that in 2021, MBS spent an additional \$8.0 million on pharmaceuticals and medical supplies required by the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre to cope with an increased level of infections brought on by COVID-19.

“This additional spending, together with a much lower level of contributions from workers and companies in the private sector, created severe challenges across the healthcare system.

“That funding gap of \$8 million in 2021 was covered by this Government



just as it was in 2020.” Prime Minister Browne stated during his 2022 Budget Statement Presentation.

The Prime Minister continued by indicating that in 2021, approximately \$125 million was spent on healthcare, financed by MBS and Central Government, compared with \$115 million spent in 2020.

The prime minister explained, “Our Government astutely prioritized its spending, despite its own reduced revenues, to ensure that everyone in our society, and more especially pensioners and vulnerable persons, were able to continue to get access to medical attention and medicines.”

Browne reminded the House that

the government continues to promote and protect the best interest of the people.

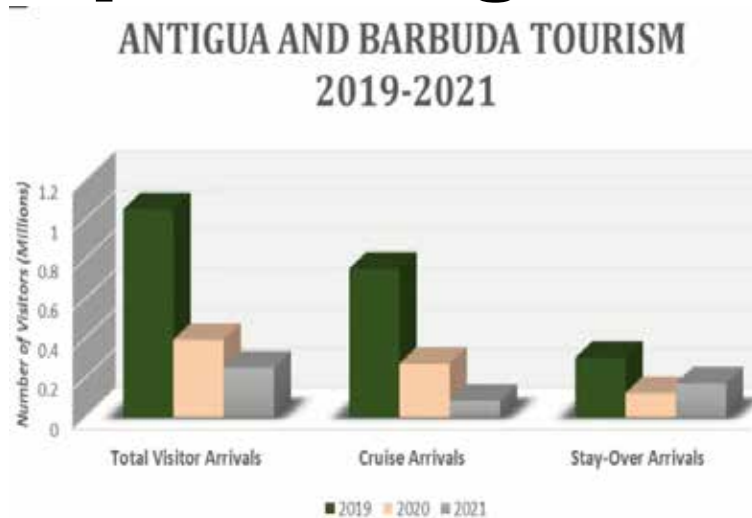
While healthcare remains a key priority for the government, PM Browne indicated that it is the government’s short-term goal to offer Universal Healthcare for the entire population and to transform MBS into a National Health Insurance company.

“We have experienced setbacks because of the pandemic, but we continue to engage the UWI-Health Economics Unit and other stakeholders to assist us in completing the technical aspects of the work that will allow us to fully implement a National Health Insurance system by 2023,” Browne stated.

Tourism largely responsible for A&B’s 5.3 percent growth in 2021

The Minister and staff of the Ministry of Tourism have come in for high praise from Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne during his 2022 Budget presentation, noting that the sector was the catalyst for growth in 2021.

The figures for 2021 show total stay-over visitor arrivals were 169,469 compared to 125,089 at end December 2020 – an increase of 35.48 per cent. Stay-over arrivals recorded for 2021 were 55 percent of stay-over arrivals in 2019 and played a significant role in producing



[Photo Credit: Office of the Prime Minister]

the 49.2 percent expansion in output from the hotel sector in 2021 compared to the 69 per cent decline in 2020. Prime Minister Browne said that growth of the tour-

ism sector, as represented by hotels and restaurants in the GDP numbers, is expected to be 16 per cent. This he said is a significant turnaround from the decline of 63.6 percent that the sector experienced in 2020.

The country’s leader said that the performance of the tourism team is exceptional and must be commended for the hard work they have put in to ensure that the sector continues to be a major driver of the economy despite the challenges posed by COVID-19.

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PM Browne: “Not one public servant dismissed!”

The people of Antigua and Barbuda have been commended by Prime Minister Gaston Browne for their role in the growth of the Antigua and Barbuda economy in 2021 despite the difficult economic circumstances and the reduction in revenues throughout 2020 and 2021.

Prime Minister Browne stated that his government’s astute management of difficult economic circumstances has resulted in all public servants remaining employed.

“This was part of our caring strategy, by which we ensured that there should be at least one wage earner in each household, even while the private sector was forced to lay off employees. It was not an easy undertaking,” Prime Minister Browne said.

He noted that wages, salaries, and pensions absorb almost 60 per cent of government revenues.

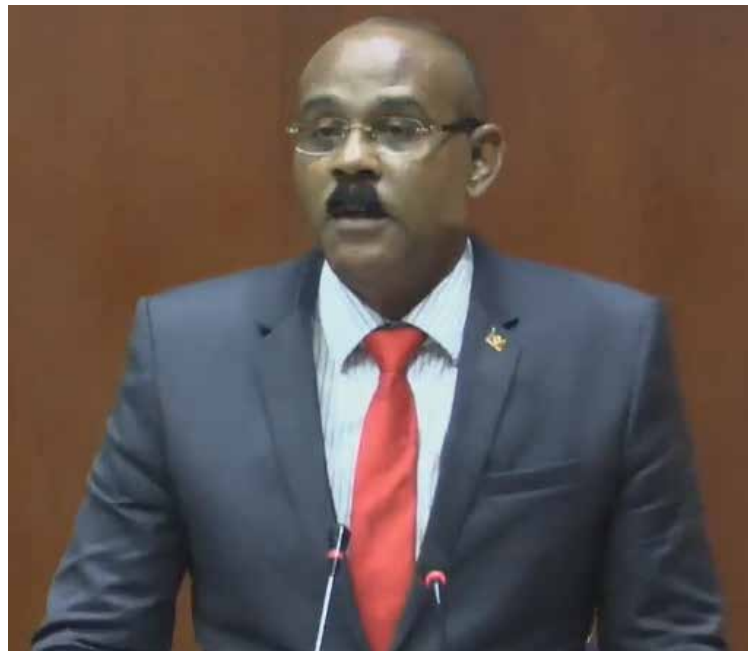
He said that despite this, his government put the people first by paying public servants and deferring

some expenditure on capital projects in 2021.

The prime minister noted, however, that even as his government ensured public servants had their full salaries and wages to care for themselves and their families, the administration still managed to increase spending to contain the Coronavirus and provided additional funds to the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre.

“The residents of Antigua and Barbuda – all of them – come first, second, last and always in our government’s policies and programmes. Our people must be commended for their sustained resilience and exceptional performance in 2021. It represented the single largest rebound of the economy in a twelve-month period,” stated the country’s leader.

The country’s economy contracted by 20.2 per cent in 2020. In nominal terms, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contracted from \$4.5 billion in 2019 to \$3.7 billion in 2020.



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

Prime Minister Browne said that despite this, the policies and initiatives of his government delivered growth of 5.3 per cent in 2021.

“By any objective standard, Mr. Speaker, turning around the economy by more than 25 percentage points from a contraction of 20.2 per cent in 2020 to growth of 5.3 per cent in 2021 is a phenomenal feat,” he said.

PM Browne said that the government, in cooperation with the private sec-

tor, oversaw an increase in economic output of \$270 million to bring the GDP to approximately \$4 billion in 2021, - \$500 million short of the 2019 figure of \$4.5 billion.

The country’s leader told the House of Representatives that this extraordinary feat was accomplished by astute management of scarce resources, throughout a period of gravely reduced income and exceptionally high expenditure to safeguard the health of the people.

Driver charged with death of pedestrian gets bail

Diondre Samuel was granted bail when he appeared in the St. John’s Magistrates’ Court today.

The Belmont resident is charged with causing death by dangerous driving after he struck Jamaican national Lashauna Bridgen on Friars Hill Road on 20th January.

Appearing before Magistrate Dexter Wason, Samuel was granted bail in the sum of \$ 30,000, with a cash com-

ponent of \$ 5,000. As part of his bail conditions, he must provide two sureties and surrender his travel documents.

He is also required to report to the All Saints Police Station Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 6am and 6pm.

Committal proceedings are set for 26th April.

Diondre Samuel is being represented by Attorney Wendel Robinson.

According to reports, Bridgen, who was a security guard, was on her way to work walking from west to east of Friars Hill Road, when she was struck by a car travelling from south to north in the vicinity of Village Walk.

The woman was transported by EMS to Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre and was being treated for her injuries when she passed away at 10:23 am the same day.

St. Lucian to face High Court over murder of Steve Pablo Francis

The man accused of the July 2021 stabbing death of St. Johnson's Village resident, Steve Francis will appear before the High Court later this year to answer the charge of murder levelled against him.

In Alfred Delice's fifth appearance before the St. John's Magistrates' Court on Wednesday, he was committed after it was determined that sufficient evidence exists to allow the matter to proceed to the High Court.

Delice, who is on remand at Her Majesty's Prison, will make his first appearance before the High Court some time in May this year when he will be required to enter a plea of guilty or stand trial.

During the committal proceeding presided over by Magistrate Conliffe



Steve Francis was stabbed to death in July 2021 by Alfred Delice

Clarke, the prosecution entered eight pieces of evidence and indicated their intent to present fifteen witnesses to the High Court should the matter proceed to trial.

Delice, 42, who is represented by Wendel Robinson, is alleged to have gotten into a heated verbal dispute with Francis, 42, on 14th July, 2021 at about 8:45pm. Delice then armed himself with a screwdriver which he used to attack Francis, delivering a mortal wound to the left side of the victim's neck.

Witnesses say the men were quarrelling at the St. Johnson's playing field over a woman they had both been involved with.

Delice turned himself in to police following the incident and was charged with attempted murder, but that charge was upgraded to murder when Francis succumbed to his injury at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre seven days later.

Francis' killing was the 5th homicide of 2021.

Master's scholarships offered by Thailand

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced that the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) in cooperation with Thai universities/academic institutions, is offering scholarships for master's degrees under the Thailand International Postgraduate Programme (TIPP) for the year 2022.

The TIPP scholarship is a framework under TICA, aiming at providing opportunities for Thailand and its partners to exchange their experiences and best practices that would contribute to sustainable development for all, through postgraduate scholarship programmes in five (5) key areas namely:

- Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP)

- Climate Change
- Food Security
- Public Health and,
- other topics related to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Details of the TIPP programmes and the application form may be found at the

following links: <https://bit.ly/TIPP-2022-Ottawa> and <https://bit.ly/TIPP-2022-Ottawa-Application>.

Completed application forms should be submitted to the Prime Minister's Scholarship Office or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



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In addition, the Prime Minister said that the construction sector also contributed to the strong economic growth of 2021. He said that it is projected to improve by 12 per cent in 2021 after a decline of 26 per cent in 2020. Meanwhile, the sector for Transport, Storage and Communication is expected to grow by 5.7 per cent for 2021 compared to a decline of 25.2 percent in 2020. Other sectors experiencing growth include: Agriculture, Livestock and Forestry sector - 1.9 per cent; Fishing - 2 per cent; and Wholesale and Retail Trade - a remarkable 10 percent.

Prime Minister Browne said that these represent solid evidence that growth is return-

ing to the economy, that tourism is bouncing back, that employment is rising, and that the business sector has confidence in the government's policies to rejuvenate the economy.

"The figures speak for themselves. The foundation for a further take-off, as the world takes all the precautions to deny spread of the coronavirus, has been laid effectively and well.

"As a nation, we can all be proud of the patience and endurance that all our people displayed. And we can be doubly proud of the readiness of our people to get back to work; to confront the COVID-19 challenge and stop it from impeding our progress," stated Prime Minister Browne.

Sir Isaac Vivian Alexander Richards

Sir Isaac Vivian Alexander Richards KNH, OBE was born on 7 March 1952 to Malcolm and Gretel Richards.

He attended St. John's Boys Primary School and then Antigua Grammar Secondary School.

The Antiguan retired cricketer represented the West Indies cricket team between 1974 and 1991.

Batting generally at number three in a dominant West Indies side, Richards is widely regarded as one of the greatest batsmen of all time.

Richards made his first-class debut in January 1972 at age 19 followed by his test debut in 1974 against India.

His best years were between 1976 and 1983 where he averaged a remarkable 66.51 with the bat.

Overall, Richards scored 8,540 runs in 121 Test matches at an average of 50.23, including 24 centuries. He also scored 1281 runs in World Series Cricket with four tons at an average of over 55 which was regarded as the highest and most difficult cricket ever played.

As a captain, he won 27 of 50 Test matches and lost only 8. He also scored nearly 7,000 runs in One Day Internationals and more than



Sir Isaac Vivian Alexander Richards KNH, OBE

36,000 in first-class cricket.

He was knighted for his contributions to cricket in 1999. In 2000 he was voted one of Wisden's five Cricketers of the Century by a 100-member panel of experts and in 2002 the almanack judged that he had played the best One Day International innings of all time. In December 2002, he was chosen by Wisden as the greatest One Day International batsman who had played to that date and as the third greatest Test cricket batter.

In 2009, Richards was inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame.

International records

- In 1986, Richards became the first batsman to score a Test century at a strike rate of over 150.

- Richards scored the fastest century in Test history (56 balls) in 1986, being sole record holder until his feat was first equalled by Misbah-ul-Haq in 2014 and then eclipsed by Brendon McCullum's 54-ball ton in 2016.

- Richards set a record for being the fastest batsman to 1,000 ODI runs (21 innings); this record has subsequently been equalled by Kevin Pietersen, Babar Azam, Jonathan Trott and Quinton de Kock.

- Along with Michael

Holding, Richards holds the record for the highest ever 10th wicket partnership in ODI history.(106*)

- Sir Vivian also holds the record for the highest individual ODI score when batting at number 4 position (189*)

- He became the first player to score a fifty and to take a five wicket haul in the same ODI. He also became the first cricketer to score a century as well as to take a five wicket haul in the same ODI match.

- Richards was the first player to complete the double of scoring 1000 runs and taking 50 wickets in ODI history.

Make mental health care a reality

The rising prevalence of mental health conditions in the Caribbean Region is a serious public health concern, and as COVID-19 continues to affect persons across the Region, there is a need for urgent action to promote good mental health.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as a “state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”.

In the Caribbean and worldwide, mental health disorders are now recognised as the fifth major non-communicable disease and a major threat to health and economic development in the 21st century.

According to the World Health Organization one in four persons globally will be affected by a mental disorder or neurological disorder in their lifetime and 450 million are affected by these disorders, such as, depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, dementia and substance (e.g. alcohol, nicotine) dependency.

Mental health disorders are a leading cause of disability and a major contributor to the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the region.

In Jamaica for example, the burden of mental illness is predicted to cause US\$2.76 billion in lost economic output from 2015-2030.

“Lives have changed considerably due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as we are faced with the realities of unemployment, working from home, closure of schools and not being able to socialise as we used to.

Over the last two years the pandemic has had a major impact on people’s mental health especially healthcare and other front-line workers, children, women, families, homeless, people living alone, and those with pre-existing mental health conditions,” stated Dr. Tamu Davidson, Head of Chronic Diseases and Injury at CARPHA.

In the Americas, depression continues to be the leading mental health dis-

order, and is twice as frequent in women as in men.

Mental and neurological disorders in the elderly, such as Alzheimer’s disease, other dementias, and depression, contribute to the burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). Mental disorders can also contribute to unintentional and intentional injury. Patients who are depressed are less likely to take their medicines, and persons with chronic NCDs and disability are more likely to be depressed.

Many mental health conditions can be effectively treated at relatively low cost, yet the gap between people needing care and those with access to care remains substantial.

A 2020 survey conducted by the WHO indicated that services for mental, neurological and substance use disorders had been sig-

nificantly disrupted during the pandemic.

Achieving mental health care a reality for all, calls for a whole of society approach. Civil society, faith-based organisations and private sector and community-based organisations can support and promote mental well-being and prevent mental and substance-related disorders.

- Health professionals are reminded of their duty of care to all persons, whether they have physical and/or mental issues.

- Governments are urged to ensure equitable access to mental health services for all who need it.

- Civil society organisations are encouraged to support public education and awareness about mental illness.

- The private sector can provide support for mental health services in employment packages and ensure that workplace policies do not discriminate against persons with mental illness.

Most of all, we as individuals need to take time for ourselves. We need to practice healthy living to preserve mental well-being. That includes self-care, healthy eating, physical activity, positive thinking, practicing mindfulness, connecting with friends, family or pets and mindfulness, or taking time to do something we enjoy.



World Cancer Day 2022: Date, Theme, History and Significance



World Cancer Day 2022: Every year on February 4 people across the world observe World Cancer Day in order to create awareness, inspire change and reduce the global impact of cancer.

The aim is to reduce misconceptions surrounding cancer and the prejudices associated with it, to help people in getting the right information about it. It also offers a chance to make an impact in the betterment of the life of cancer patients and survivors.

The Union of International Cancer Control (UICC) has declared World Cancer Day to be a «global uniting initiative.»

World Cancer Day 2022: Theme
The theme of World Cancer Day

2022 is ‘Close the Care Gap’. It is all about understanding and recognising the inequities in cancer care around the globe.

The theme revolves around identifying and recognising global disparities in cancer care, that prevents people from certain economic strata full access to essential healthcare services and facilities. Inequity in cancer care costs lives.

World Cancer Day: History

The day came into existence on February 4, 2000, during the World Cancer Conference for the New Millennium in Paris, France.

Every year since then, people across the world observe World Cancer Day with a different theme to improve the quality of lives of cancer patients and to continue spreading

awareness on cancer, its prevention and treatment.

World Cancer Day: Significance

The main aim of the day is to raise awareness and reduce the social stigma associated with the disease. Cancer is the second leading cause of death globally.

The top cancers that affect the Indian population are lung, breast, cervical, head and neck and colorectal cancer (CRC).

On World Cancer Day, everyone comes together with an agenda to achieve a healthier and brighter world free of cancer.

On this day, numerous events are planned, where it is discussed to educate and aware people of cancer and its early detection, treatment and more.



ECSE DAILY NEWS REPORT

Welcome to the Eastern Caribbean Securities Exchange's daily update for 3 February 2022 providing the latest trading information and financial tip for the investor.

There were no trades on the Eastern Caribbean Securities Market Thursday.

Here are the latest closing prices for the equities listed on the ECSE:

The Bank of Nevis Ltd	.....	\$3.50
Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines Ltd	.....	\$9.26
Cable & Wireless St Kitts & Nevis Ltd	.....	\$3.88
Dominica Electricity Services Ltd	.....	\$3.50
East Caribbean Financial Holding Company Ltd	.....	\$3.75
Grenada Co-operative Bank Ltd	.....	\$9.51
Grenada Electricity Services Ltd	.....	\$11.00
Grenreal Property Corporation Ltd	.....	\$5.40
Republic Bank (Grenada) Ltd	.....	\$45.00
St Kitts Nevis Anguilla National Bank Ltd	.....	\$2.80
St Lucia Electricity Services Ltd	.....	\$20.00
S. L. Horsford & Company Ltd	.....	\$2.00
TDC Ltd	.....	\$1.25

And today's financial tip:

What is meant by Sovereign Debt?

The term sovereign debt is often used to refer to government securities like bonds and treasury bills, but it also refers to government debt of any kind, such as loans from a commercial bank.

Rihanna shares new baby bump photo on Instagram

Rihanna has given us another glimpse of her pregnancy.

The singer and beauty mogul this week revealed that she and her boyfriend, rapper A\$AP Rocky, are expecting their first child.

On Wednesday, Rihanna shared previously published photos of her baby bump -- plus a new one.

"How the gang pulled up to black history month," she wrote in the caption on a series of photos which in-

cluded one of her in profile with her belly bared.

Interestingly enough, that photo appeared to be taken in a less than opulent bathroom, leading writer Tammie Teclemariam to tweet: "Whose normal bathroom is this!"

Rihanna, 33, and A\$AP Rocky, also 33, went public with their romantic relationship in May 2021. They have not shared her due date. (CNN)



Rihanna

India Arie says she's pulling her music from Spotify over Joe Rogan's comments on race

India Arie is the latest prominent artist to announce she'll be removing her music from Spotify because it platforms Joe Rogan, a podcast host who has repeatedly made false claims about the Covid-19 vaccine. Arie's departure from the service is over a different set of comments Rogan made.

The R&B singer said in an Instagram post that Rogan's "language around race" was "problematic," referring to a recent interview on Rogan's podcast in which he made offensive comments about African nations and said it was "weird" to use the term "Black" as an identifier.

"Neil Young opened a door that I MUST walk through," Arie wrote on Monday.

Young announced in an open letter last week that he wanted to remove his mu-



India Arie

sic from Spotify because Rogan continued to share vaccine misinformation on "The Joe Rogan Experience," Spotify's most popular podcast of 2021. Days later, Joni Mitchell and Nils Lofgren announced they'd join Young and pull their music from the platform for the same reason. In response, Spotify said it would add a content advisory to podcast episodes in which Covid-19 is discussed.

Other artists who've voiced support for Young include his former bandmates David Crosby and Graham Nash of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young. Variety reported Tuesday that Nash requested that his solo recordings be removed from the platform. Since Crosby sold the rights to his music, he can't control whether it's removed from Spotify.

Arie said in her post that while she believes in

freedom of speech, she finds Rogan "problematic for reasons OTHER than his Covid interviews ..."

Rogan brought up race in an episode of his podcast last week with guest Jordan Peterson, a Canadian psychologist and climate change skeptic. After a brief discussion of the "spectrum of shades of people," Rogan said it was strange to call someone Black or White based on their skin tone.

"Unless you're talking to someone who is like 100% African, from the darkest place, where they're not wearing any clothes all day, and they've developed all that melanin to protect themselves from the sun, you know, even the term 'Black' is weird," Rogan said on the podcast.

Arie went on to say in her Instagram post that her gripe was with "RESPECT-
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Machel Montano & Chris Gayle receive Republic Day greetings from India's Prime Minister Modi

By **Nekisha Neicy Cyrus**

Machel Montano and Chris Gayle were among world's distinguished public figures to receive a Republic Day greeting from India's Prime Minister Narendra Damodardas Modi.

Narendra Modi, who is the 14th Prime Minister of India, extended a personalized Republic Day greeting to a list of eminent personalities around the world which included the King of Soca Machel Montano, Jamaica & West Indies Cricketer Chris Gayle, South African Professional Cricket commentator Jonty Rhodes, American Novelist Ashley Rindsberg and Canadian Behavioral Scientist Gad Saad.

Republic Day in India is celebrated on 26th January every year. The day marks the sovereignty of the country, as on this day in 1950, the Constitution of India was adopted.

PM Modi explained that this year is even more special because it is hap-



India's Prime Minister Narendra Damodardas Modi.

pening at a time when India marks 75 years of freedom from colonial rule.

Taking to social media Machel Montano expressed his gratitude by sharing the letter and the following sentiments: "I would like to thank the Honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the High Commissioner of India T&T and the people of India for this honor. I receive this letter with the utmost gratitude, humility and joy. Traveling to India and learning Yoga under the guidance of @sadhguru has been truly transformational and is an experience



Machel Montano

that I plan to share in order to inspire and motivate others. I would like to send out congratulations to India and wish them a Happy 73rd Republic day."

In the letter, PM Modi expressed to Machel: "You have been a singer and performer par excellence. I have come to know that you are also drawn to India's spiritual ethos. The ancient civilization of India offers a multitude of sources that can give answers to the questions asked by humanity since the beginning of existence. Hope you enjoyed Indian delicacies



Chris Gayle

during your last visit to India. You should visit more often and explore India even more."

Chris Gayle also tweeted thanking PM Modi for his personalized letter: "I would like to congratulate India on their 73rd Republic Day.

"I woke up to a personal message from Prime Minister Modi reaffirming my close personal ties with him and to the people of India. Congratulations from the Universe Boss and nuff love."

PM Modi also shared in his letter to Gayle, the following sentiments: "It is very heartening to know that you also understand Hindi and Punjabi. You are a true entertainer both on and off the field. With ambassadors like you, it is certain that Indian Jamaican ties will deepen even further."

cont'd from pg 12

who gets it and who doesn't."

"Paying musicians a Fraction of a penny? And HIM \$100M?" she wrote, referring to Rogan's overall deal with Spotify thought to be worth more than \$100 million, according to a 2020 report from the Wall Street Journal.

"This shows the type of company they

are and the company that they keep," she concluded. "I'm tired."

Musicians have long criticized Spotify for what they believe are insufficient royalties. According to a 2021 report from New York Times, industry estimates place Spotify's payout rate at a half-cent per stream, a rate often divided among record companies and artists.

4 charged after overdose death of actor Michael K. Williams

(AP) - Four men face charges that they were members of the drug distribution crew that supplied a deadly mix of narcotics to Michael K. Williams, the renowned actor from "The Wire" who overdosed just hours after buying fentanyl-laced heroin in a deal recorded on security camera video.

The man seen on camera handing Williams the drugs on a Brooklyn sidewalk, Irvin Cartagena, was charged with directly causing the actor's death, authorities said.

Williams' death was investigated by the New York City police department, but the charges were brought by federal prosecutors in Manhattan, who revealed that the suspects had been under surveillance even before the actor's fatal overdose last September.

It was a sting that bore a striking resemblance to the kind depicted on "The Wire," where Williams gained fame playing the bandit Omar Little.

For months, a paid informant working for the NYPD had been making controlled buys of heroin on the same block where Williams purchased his drugs. An undercover police officer made one buy just days before the actor copped his fatal dose, court papers said.

The vials of drugs found with Williams when his body was discovered on Sept. 6 bore the same label, "AAA Insurance," as the vials purchased by the officer.

The day after the actor's death, the NYPD's informant went back to buy more drugs from the same group, recording a conversation in which some members of the crew talked about Williams' overdose. One denied selling any drugs containing fentanyl.

Cartagena and the three other men in the case were arrested Tuesday. Three made initial appearances Wednesday in



Michael K. Williams

Manhattan federal court. Cartagena's initial court appearance is scheduled for Thursday in Puerto Rico, where he was arrested.

It was not immediately clear who would represent him or who could comment on his behalf.

U.S. Attorney Damian Williams, who announced the charges with New York City Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell, called overdose deaths a "public health crisis."

"And it has to stop. Deadly opioids like fentanyl and heroin don't care about who you are or what you've accomplished. They just feed addiction and lead to tragedy," Williams said.

Sewell said police detectives in Brooklyn "lived this case, never relenting in their investigation until they could bring a measure of justice to Michael K. Williams and his family."

Williams, 54, was found dead in his penthouse apartment in Brooklyn Sept. 6. At that time, the medical examiner's office ruled Williams' death an accident.

Police pieced together Williams' movements in the hours before his death using data from his mobile phone and li-

cense plate readers.

A security camera on the block recorded the drug deal, police said.

Williams talked with the group, and one of the people placed his hand on the actor's shoulder in an apparent gesture of recognition, according to the complaint. Cartagena then walked around a row of trash cans, retrieved a plastic bag and handed it to the actor, the court papers said.

The men continued to sell fentanyl-laced heroin in broad daylight amid apartment buildings in Brooklyn and Manhattan even after knowing that Williams had died from one of their products, authorities said.

The others charged were identified as Hector Robles, 57, Luis Cruz, 56, and Carlos Macci, 70, all of Brooklyn. Their lawyers did not immediately return messages seeking comment. It wasn't clear whether they were the men seen in the surveillance video.

All three were ordered detained at their initial court appearances.

The conspiracy charges against all four carry a mandatory minimum of five

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Spike Lee to direct Colin Kaepernick docu-series for ESPN

Spike Lee will direct a multi-part documentary for ESPN on Colin Kaepernick that features extensive interviews with the former San Francisco 49ers quarterback and access to his personal archive.

ESPN Films announced Tuesday that Lee would weave never-before-seen footage from Kaepernick's archive to provide "a full, first-person account of his journey."

Kaepernick last played pro foot-

ball in 2016, the same year he started kneeling during the national anthem to protest racial injustice. Although the NFL has encouraged teams to look at Kaepernick, he has yet to receive another pro contract.

No title or release date for the docu-series was announced.

Lee directed the 2009 film, "Kobe Doin' Work," on Lakers great Kobe Bryant. That film examined Bryant's work ethic and basketball prowess



Colin Kaepernick

through a single Lakers game against the San Antonio Spurs. (AP)

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years in prison and a maximum sentence of 40 years. The charge against Cartagena accusing him of causing the actor's death carries a mandatory minimum of 20 years in prison and a maximum of life.

Cartagena had been arrested in February 2021 on state drug charges in Brooklyn after selling four small waxy paper bags to an undercover investigator, according to a federal complaint against him. At the time, he was on pretrial release from a gun charge arrest in August 2020.

He pleaded guilty Aug. 26 to disorderly conduct in both crimes and was sentenced to time served, the complaint read.

Williams' "stick-up boy" Omar Little on "The Wire" — a fictionalized look at the underpinnings of Baltimore that ended in 2008 but remains popular in streaming — was based on real-life figures. He created another classic character as Chalky White in HBO's "Boardwalk Empire" and appeared in the films "12 Years a Slave" and "Assassin's Creed."

He had spoken frankly in interviews about his experiences with addiction.

Pointe Xpress Weekend Crossword

ACROSS

- 1) Groundwork
- 6) Churchill's symbol of triumph
- 11) Chesapeake in Maryland
- 14) Without substance
- 15) Place for the highborn?
- 16) Finished food
- 17) Financing
- 19) Words starting many park signs
- 20) Pauline's woes
- 21) Stew server
- 23) Like fillets
- 26) Aquamarines and emeralds
- 27) Makes joyful
- 28) Bygone Toyota model
- 30) Charged atoms
- 31) Lapwing
- 32) Mentalist's claim
- 35) Luxury hotel feature
- 36) Small upright pianos
- 38) Sticky stuff
- 39) Royal flush necessity
- 40) Elbow to the ribs, perhaps
- 41) Fever and shivers
- 42) If everything goes right
- 44) Most congenial
- 46) Mix of two songs into one
- 48) Noisy insects
- 49) Printing press part
- 50) Produced, as a play
- 52) What one dots?
- 53) Ostracisms
- 58) "Fat ___ and Little Boy" (1989)
- 59) Not for minors
- 60) Like some Pennsylvania buggy drivers
- 61) "___ no use"
- 62) To the manor born
- 63) Maiden of mythology

DOWN

- 1) Lobster-house wear
- 2) Collected sayings
- 3) Diego's start
- 4) Calligrapher's containers
- 5) Composed
- 6) Sound, as reasoning
- 7) Successfully pitch
- 8) Eye part containing the pupil
- 9) Martini component
- 10) Overlooks
- 11) Curving outward at the knees
- 12) Ring-shaped reef
- 13) Some invitation replies
- 18) Smelters' raw materials
- 22) Art, today
- 23) Believer of a sort
- 24) Become one on the run?
- 25) Slippery peels
- 26) Londoner
- 28) Guiding principle
- 29) Fancy washstand vessel
- 31) Sloppy critters
- 33) Big name in marches
- 34) Erato is their Muse
- 36) Beyond the city limits
- 37) Type of school
- 41) West Point or Annapolis
- 43) Fill in ___ blank
- 44) Near in time or place
- 45) Pat of an O'Neill title
- 46) Florida city
- 47) Small Highland village
- 48) Society division
- 50) Give the cold shoulder
- 51) Cashier's responsibility
- 54) Ruckus
- 55) Matchstick-removing game
- 56) One-sixth of a fl. oz.
- 57) Finger-to-lips sound

VOID WHERE PROHIBITED

By Kyle Kelly



Man charged with human trafficking denied bail

Trinidad Express - A man who was arrested as he allegedly tried to flee Trinidad and Tobago to reach Colombia, has been charged with human trafficking.

Samuel Weekes was denied bail when he appeared virtually before a Chaguanas magistrate on Wednesday.

Weekes, 44, of Duke Street, Port of Spain faced charges of trafficking of persons, rape and being a gang leader.

The charges were laid by constable Richards.

The matters were adjourned to February 7.

A release from the TTPS stated that, based on an ongoing human trafficking investigation, where 27 Latin American women were rescued on December 31 2021 on an operation conducted by police and Immigration Officers, the members of the Special Investigations Task Force (SITF) of the Special Investigations Unit (SIU), under ACP Deosaran of the Central Intelligence Bureau, recorded statements



Samuel Weekes has been charged with human trafficking [Photo credit: Trinidad Express]

and conducted intense and meticulous inquiries.

Following this, Weekes was arrested by officers of the SIU at the Piarco International Airport while allegedly attempting to board a Copa Flight to Panama destined for Colombia. Fur-

ther, inquiries and searches were conducted by the SITF and Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), and the suspect was interviewed.

Consultation was then held with the Director of Public Prosecutions Roger Gaspard SC, instructions were given and on February 1, three charges were laid against Weekes.

The investigation was spearheaded by ACP Cooper and coordinated by Supt Veronique and ASP Haynes of the Multi-Agency Task Force, in collaboration with the Director of Counter-Trafficking, Alana Wheeler, and Legal Officer, Zaheer Ali. Ag Cpl Antoine of the Special Investigation Task Force supervised the investigation.

Inquiries are continuing into the matter.

Acting Commissioner of Police Mc Donald Jacob praised the in-depth investigative work and tireless collaborative effort of the agencies involved that led to the arrest and subsequent charges being laid.

2-way probe now on in nursing home case of seniors fighting

LOOP - Officials from the Ministry of Local Government and Ministry of Health in Jamaica have launched an investigation into the case where two senior citizens were seen fighting at a nursing home in the presence of health care workers.

Sources have told Loop News that the probe is now on to find out which of the

ministries has responsibility for the particular nursing home housing the seniors.

An explanation given by sources is that there are some nursing homes that are the responsibility of the local government ministry and there are others, based on location, that are monitored by the health ministry.

A source from one of



Checks underway to determine which ministry is responsible for entity

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Dominica, Martinique hold talks on geothermal energy

CMC - Martinique is to send a technical team to Dominica as the two islands seek to further enhance cooperation in the area of geothermal energy, according to a statement issued by the Office of the Prime Minister.

It said that Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit held talks with the President of the Executive Council of Martinique, Serge Letchimy, on Monday, “to further explore cooperation on geothermal energy development” and that the meeting also discussed proposals for a commercial agreement with Martinique for the sale of renewable energy.

“Dominica is developing a geothermal plant in the Roseau Valley to increase the use of renewable energy in the provision of cheaper electricity, through the responsible exploitation of the island’s geothermal resource,” the statement said.

It said that Prime Minister Skerrit assured Letchimy



of Dominica’s technical capacity to share the valuable resource with the neighbouring French territory at a competitive price.

“Martinique will send a technical team to Dominica for further talks and to observe the geothermal development. Mr. Letchimy also signalled his intention to make a case for a “Declaration of Intention to Cooperate” to the Martinique Assembly by the end of March,” the statement added.

“We are ready to receive the delegation on this important visit. We have enjoyed

very long and mutually beneficial relations with Martinique and we are very keen on partnering on geothermal energy,” Skerrit said.

In 2019, the World Bank approved US\$27 million project to support the construction of a seven MW small geothermal power plant in Dominica, which aims to increase the share of renewables, diversify the country’s energy matrix, and identify a clear road map for private sector investment in geothermal development.

The Geothermal Risk Mitigation Project is expect-

ed to significantly lower electricity costs in Dominica and increase the share of renewable energy in the country’s energy mix from 25 to 51 per cent, reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 38,223 tons of CO2 per year. It will also assess the potential to export home grown geothermal energy to its neighbours, the World Bank noted.

The project will be implemented by the Dominica Geothermal Development Company Ltd and is financed by a US\$17.2 million credit from the International Development Association (IDA), US\$9.95 million from the Clean Technology Fund (CTF), as well as grants from the UK’s Department for International Development – US\$10 million from DFID and US\$2 million the Small Island Developing States DOCK Initiative – and technical assistance from the Government of New Zealand and the Agence Française de Développement.

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the ministries, who was not authorised to speak to the media on the topic, told Loop News that when the preliminary probe has been completed, further action will be taken.

In a 30-second video of the incident, an elderly man is seen seated on a bed while using a walking stick to hit another elderly man. Both men were wearing adult diapers.

As the altercation continued, several adults — some appearing to be

health personnel — are heard and seen laughing at the action.

The conflict intensified when one of the seniors grabbed the other and continued beating him with the walking stick.

He then fell to the ground and the beating continued amid one female cheering on the men. The videographer also laughs hysterically at the fight. Social media users have since reacted with disgust at the actions in the video.

“Nasty behaviour! Dem fi lock up di workers. Where is Christopher Tufton [Minister of Health and Wellness]?” questioned one woman.

Shared another: “This is disgraceful man! How u (sic) fi allow dis type a behaviour to happen and jeer on di sick men? Where are di authorities to intervene?”

Others called for the nursing home personnel in the video, who failed to intervene, to be relieved of their duties.

Guyana: 16 year old girl one of two killed in “police crash”

Three police officers were injured in the accident.

Dead are Christopher Bhagwandat of Mon Repos, East Coast Demerara and his 16-year-old girlfriend, Sheereda Persaud.

According to investigators, Bhagwandat was stopped at a roadblock and sped off when police officers asked him to present his driver’s permit.

A high speed chase ensued, resulting in an accident involving two cars and a truck. According to eyewitness accounts, the police vehicle involved in the



The people who were killed after an accident involving police have been identified.

chase, collided with another vehicle in the vicinity of the Mahaica Bridge, which then crashed into another

car, causing the driver to lose control and slam into a truck.

Both Bhagwandat and

his girlfriend who were in a passenger in the car, are said to have died instantly.

In a brief statement issued hours after the fatal accident, police said three officers were injured. They were taken to the Georgetown Public Hospital for treatment.

One of Bhagwandat’s relatives who spoke with reporters at the scene said he had travelled to Berbice to pick up his girlfriend to celebrate his mother’s birthday.

Investigations are ongoing.

Happy Friday

#drivesafeantigua

WE STRIVE WE THRIVE

LET'S TALK

WHAT DOES BLACK HISTORY MONTH MEAN TO YOU?

Tell us in the comments below

PUT IT DOWN FOCUS ON DRIVING

ATB

A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board

ISIL leader killed in US raid in Syria, Biden says

Al Jazeera - US president says Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi blew himself up, killing several members of his family.

United States President Joe Biden has said the leader of ISIL (ISIS) has been “taken off the battlefield” following an overnight raid in Syria that also killed children and women.

A senior US administration official told reporters on Thursday that ISIL leader Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi was killed in the raid.

Later on Thursday, Biden confirmed al-Qurayshi’s death and lauded the operation in a brief speech. He blamed the civilian deaths on the ISIL leader, whom he said blew himself up in an “act of desperate cowardice” as US forces approached.

“He chose to blow himself up – not just with a vest, but to blow up that third floor – rather than face justice for the crimes he has committed, taking several members of his family with him,” Biden said.

Biden said the operation shows the United States’s “reach and capability to take out terrorist threats” around the world.

“I’m determined to protect the American people from terrorist threats, and I’ll take decisive action to protect this country,” the US president added.

Biden had said in a statement earlier that the raid in northwest Syria was undertaken to protect the American people and US allies and “make the world a safer place”.

“Thanks to the skill and bravery of our Armed Forces, we have taken off the battlefield Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi—the leader of ISIS,” Biden said.

The White House released a photo of Biden and other top officials early on Thursday that it said was taken while the US president was observing the “counterterrorism operation”.



[Photo credit: Al Jazeera]

Meanwhile, the senior US official also said that at least some of the civilian deaths were the result of al-Qurayshi detonating a bomb.

“At the beginning of the operation, the terrorist target exploded a bomb that killed him and members of his own family, including women and children,” the official said.

The Pentagon said there were no US casualties in the raid.

ISIL named al-Qurayshi as its head in 2019 after confirming the death of former leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who was killed by US special forces days earlier.

In 2020, the US Department of State’s Rewards for Justice Program offered \$10m for information leading to the identification or location of al-Qurayshi, who went by many names and aliases, including Hajji Abdallah and Amir Muhammad Sa’id Abdal-Rahman al-Mawla.

“Born in Mosul, Iraq, in 1976, al-Mawla was a religious scholar in ISIS’s predecessor organization, al-Qaeda in Iraq, and steadily rose through the ranks of ISIS to become the deputy emir,” the Department of State said in a statement at that time.

Al-Qurayshi took over leadership of the role at a time when ISIL was particularly beleaguered, largely reduced to scattered sleeper cells after being territorially defeated in Syria months earlier.

However, there have been recent clashes between the group and US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), including an attempt in January by ISIL to break thousands of followers out of a prison near Hassakeh in northeast Syria in a coordinated attack that started days of heavy fighting.

A US-led coalition carried out air raids and deployed US personnel in Bradley Fighting Vehicles to support the Kurdish forces in repelling the attack. Hundreds were killed and tens of thousands fled in ISIL’s most brazen attack in years, and fighting has continued.

SDF has said the assault was part of a wider plot of resurgence by the group.

The overnight raid in Atmeh, a densely populated town in rebel-held Idlib province near the Turkish border, left at least 13 people dead including six children and four women, first responders said.

As winter storm moves across US, ice becomes bigger concern

CHICAGO (AP) — A major winter storm with millions of Americans in its path spread rain, freezing rain and heavy snow further across the country on Thursday, knocking out power to more than 100,000 homes and businesses and disrupting flights at the busy Dallas Fort Worth International Airport.

A long stretch of states from New Mexico to Maine remained under winter storm warnings and watches and the path of the storm stretched further from the central U.S. into more of the South and Northeast. Heavy snow was expected from the southern Rockies to northern New England, while forecasters said heavy ice buildup was likely from Texas to Pennsylvania.

“We have a lot of real estate covered by winter weather impacts this morning,” Andrew Orrison, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in College Park, Maryland, said early Thursday. “We do have an expansive area of heavy snow, sleet and freezing rain occurring.”

Parts of Ohio, New York and northern New England were expected to see heavy snowfall as the storm moves to the east with 12 to 18 inches (30 to 45 centimeters) of snow possible in some places through Friday, Orrison said.

Along the warmer side of the storm, strong thunderstorms capable of damaging wind gusts and tornadoes were possible Thursday in parts of Mississippi and Alabama, the Storm Prediction Center said.

More than 20 inches (51 centimeters) of snow was reported in the southern Rockies, while more than a foot of snow fell in areas of Illinois, Indiana and Michigan.

The Midwest snowstorm is noth-



Snow falls on a ground crew working outside a parked plane at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport in Grapevine, Texas, Thursday, Feb. 3, 2022. [Photo credit: AP]

ing too unusual, except in some places it was so large that it had a bigger than normal path of intense snow, said Northern Illinois University meteorology professor Victor Gensini. With a warmer climate, people are forgetting what a Midwestern winter had long been like, he said.

“The only amazing winters I’ve been able to experience is through my parents’ photographs of the 1970s,” Gensini, who is 35, said. “This (storm) is par for the course, not only for the past, but winters current.”

Sleet and freezing rain were occurring early Thursday in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and in parts of Oklahoma and Arkansas. More than 100,000 homes and businesses were without power, mostly in Texas, Tennessee and Arkansas, according to the website poweroutage.us, which tracks utility reports.

“Unfortunately we are looking at enough ice accumulations that we will be looking at significant travel im-

pacts,” Orrison said.

Ice began accumulating Thursday in parts of West Tennessee including Memphis, Tennessee, causing power outages and dangerous road conditions during the morning commute.

Trees sagged under the weight of ice, resulting in fallen tree limbs and branches. Parked cars had a layer of ice on them and authorities in several communities around Memphis warned of some cars sliding off slick roadways.

Texas had about 70,000 power outages Thursday, far from the more than 4 million outages when the state’s power grid failed during the February 2021 freeze and caused one of the worst blackouts in U.S. history.

The return of subfreezing weather and ice in Texas was unsettling to many residents after last year’s catastrophic outages, but state and local officials stressed that the outages were local disruptions due to power

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Morocco well rescue for five-year-old grips nation

BBC - Morocco has been gripped by efforts to save a child who fell into a water well near the northern city of Chefchaouen.

The child, who local media have identified as a five-year-old boy named Rayan, was reportedly playing near the well in the town of Tamrout, 100km (62 miles) from Chefchaouen.

Rayan is believed to have fallen about 32m (104ft) through a narrow opening.

Rescue operations, led by Morocco's Civil Protection Directorate, have been ongoing since Tuesday evening.

Despite suffering a significant fall, footage from a camera lowered into the well showed that the boy remains alive and conscious, though he appeared to be suffering from some minor head injuries.

Rescue workers have lowered an oxygen mask,



Provincial authorities brought in heavy machinery in an attempt to rescue the child. [Photo credit: Getty Images]

food and water into the well and a medical team is also on site, ready to treat the boy. A helicopter has also arrived at the scene to bring him to hospital once he has been extracted from the well.

Thousands of people have been watching footage of the rescue on social media, and a large group of onlookers have gathered at the scene.

Local media reported that provincial authorities are overseeing rescue attempts and that dozens of

police, auxiliary forces, Royal Gendarmerie and civil protection officers are now involved in the operation.

Mohamed Yassin El Quahabi, president of the Chefchaouen Association of Caving and Mountain Activities, has been helping with the rescue and told the BBC that the narrowness of the well has hampered rescue efforts.

He added that several attempts by local volunteers and rescue workers to gain access through the

well's opening have already failed.

"The problem of this rescue is that the hole diameter is very, very small, about 25cm (9.8 inches)," Mr El Quahabi said. "At the depth of 28 metres it became smaller so we couldn't reach him."

Pictures from the scene show five bulldozers digging a large area parallel to the well's outer shaft to try and work around the narrow structure.

By Thursday afternoon officials told the local media outlet, Le360, that that rescue workers had less than nine metres (30ft) left to dig to reach the boy.

Mr El Quahabi told the BBC that this is now the only way rescue workers will be able to reach Rayan.

But authorities remain concerned that any interference with the well could accidentally hurt the five-year-old by triggering a landslide.

cont'd from pg 20

lines encrusted or downed by ice — not grid failures.

South Bend, Indiana, reported a record snowfall for the date on Wednesday with 11.2 inches (28.5 centimeters), eclipsing the previous record of 8 inches (20.3 centimeters) set on the date in 1908, said Hannah Carpenter, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service's office in Syracuse, Indiana.

Once the storm pushes through, she said temperatures will see a big drop, with Friday's highs mostly in the upper teens followed by lows in the

single digits in northern Indiana, along with bone-chilling wind chills.

"It's definitely not going to be melting real quick here," Carpenter said Thursday morning.

The frigid temperatures settled into areas after the snowy weather, with Kansas residents awakening to dangerous wind chills of around 15 below zero (26 degrees Celsius below zero). In New Mexico, schools and nonessential government services were closed in some areas Thursday because of the icy roads.

The disruptive storm began Tuesday and moved across the central U.S.

on Wednesday's Groundhog Day, the same day the famed groundhog Punxsutawney Phil predicted six more weeks of winter. The storm came on the heels of a nor'easter last weekend that brought blizzard conditions to many parts of the East Coast.

Airlines canceled nearly 7,000 flights in the U.S. scheduled for Wednesday or Thursday, the flight-tracking service FlightAware.com showed. More than 1,000 flights were canceled Thursday alone at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, and more than 300 were canceled at nearby Dallas Love Field.



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Costa Rica suspected of playing Covid-19 positive players

General Secretary of the Jamaica Football Federation (JFF) Dalton Wint has confirmed that three players and three officials from the Costa Rican team who played against the Reggae Boyz at the National Stadium on Wednesday, tested positive for Covid-19.

Wint, however, was unable to confirm if any of the three players were on the field of play during the Concacaf World Cup Qualifier match.

He noted six members of the Costa Rican group tested positive, and he suspected at least one or two



were on the field.

Wint said if it's confirmed that any of the Covid-19 positive players were allowed to play in Wednesday's match, it

would constitute a breach of games rules.

Wint said the breach needs to be investigated and dealt with.

"I don't know how the

governing bodies will rule after investigations, but the course of action can include a rematch, a fine or Jamaica being awarded the three points," he said.

The Reggae Boyz lost the game 1-0 to the Costa Ricans.

If Jamaica is awarded the three points from Wednesday's game, it would bring the Reggae Boyz up to ten points in the group.

Getting the points would not change the reality of Jamaica being eliminated eventually from the World Cup.

Djokovic's COVID tests were valid

Prosecutors in Serbia say there is no evidence to suggest that Novak Djokovic submitted a falsified COVID test certificate to Australian authorities.

A BBC report last week cast doubt over the tests, suggesting the serial numbers were out of sequence with others from a similar time. The tests were provided to exempt him from rules barring unvaccinated people.

His visa application was ultimately rejected and was unable to play in the Australian Open. But this was over Covid vaccination rules, not on the grounds that the documents were falsified.

Belgrade Public Prosecutor's office has now said that the Health Ministry confirmed the documents were authentic.



Novak Djokovic

The office said it inspected the electronic database" which contains details of tests and results and it

shows tha Djokovic's initial positive test and his later negative result were both valid.

South Africa victorious over West Indies in 3rd Women's ODI

South Africa defeated West Indies Women by 96 runs in the 3rd One Day International (ODI) to level the series at 1-1.

Playing at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg Thursday South Africa inserted West Indies after winning the toss and batting first. The Africans put the Caribbean ladies to the sword posting 299-8 off their 50 overs. Laura Wolvaardt was outstanding smashing 117 off 123 balls including 11 fours and a six and captain Sune Luus contributed 56 off 93 balls.

In response West Indies could only muster 203-9 off 43.5 overs. The decisive fourth ODI will take place on Sunday.



ICC U19 MEN'S
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