

# KING SHORT SHIRT RECEIVES TITLE TO HALCYON COVE LAND



Sir McLean "King Short Shirt" Emmanuel's struggle for ownership of the land his beach bar has occupied for more than half a century came to an end on Monday when Prime Minister Gaston Browne presented him with the title to the land as a gift of the Government and People of Antigua and Barbuda. *Story on Page 2.*

# Local News



## PM Browne gifts Sir McLean land at Halcyon Cove on his 80th birthday

Timed to coincide with his 80th birthday, Sir McLean “King Short Shirt” Emmanuel received the title of ownership to the land at Halcyon Beach his business, Shorty’s Beach Bar, has occupied for more than half a century.

On Monday, Prime Minister Gaston Browne presented the title to Sir McLean to mark a moment he described as being “long overdue”.

PM Browne commented on Sir McLean’s decades long fight to own the land which his business occupies at Halcyon Cove and, at long last, this has been resolved.

“The King has fought for over sixty years to get

ownership of this parcel of land here at Halcyon Cove. He would have sang about it; in fact his sentiments are well enshrined in the song “Vengeance”.

And I’ll say to you today Sir, that this matter has finally been resolved, and I’m hoping that you could probably do a song of forgiveness, a song of absolute!” said Browne.

Prime Minister Browne continued that the land was being presented to Sir McLean as a gift to him from the Government and People of Antigua and Barbuda in recognition of his stellar contributions to his country through music and the formation of the “collective consciousness” of the people.



*Prime Minister Gaston Browne on 28th February, 2022 presenting the Land Certificate giving absolute title of property at Halcyon Cove to Sir McLean Emmanuel on his 80th birthday.*

The land transferred to Sir McLean this week, according to the prime minister, may be worth as much as a million dollars as it sits on one of Antigua’s most coveted beach fronts. Halcyon Beach has on several occasions secured a prestigious place on the world and Caribbean’s most pristine beaches.

“This beach has been voted among the most beautiful beaches in the world, and no one can doubt the fact that having operated here for over sixty years, that the King has a significant amount of equity.

“As the Cabinet deliberated whether or not he should pay a token sum, we said, you know what? After sixty years, he’s earned it, and that is why we have gifted it to him,” explained PM Browne.

Sir McLean noted that he was pleased that after so many years, his fight for

ownership of the land was at a close. He expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Browne and his administration for their efforts in expediting the matter as well as the people of Antigua and Barbuda for their support of him through the years.

“I want to thank you very much, Honourable Prime Minister, not only for doing this, but for what you are doing for our country.

“I want to thank the people of Antigua for supporting me, and this particular government for what they are doing for me after sixty years.

“This land is not mine. I give thanks for receiving the title, but it belongs to my family and my pledge is that it should stay within the family for the rest of their life. I may not enjoy the benefit, but my children’s children will take it over and may God bless them,” said King Short Shirt.

### TAKE ME HOME



This handsome young man is available for adoption at the Humane Society’s Animal Shelter in Bethesda. He is just 2 years old and a bit too lively for his elderly owner who asked us to find Maxi a new home., The \$100 adoption fee includes vaccination and treating for parasites. We are open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 am to 3 pm. For further details call 461-4957.



## Immigration amnesty commences, thousands expected to benefit

As many as several thousand foreign nationals are expected to converge on the Immigration Department's headquarters starting today as the amnesty programme commences.

Directed at those whose immigration status has lapsed and, as a result, have lost their eligibility to reside and work in the country, the Gaston Browne administration said the amnesty will give non-nationals the opportunity to regularise their stay without the fear of harsh penalties.

Browne acknowledged that many people fell on hard times due to the COVID-19 pandemic and may have encountered difficulties in fulfilling the immigration mandate.

In preparation for the influx of foreign nationals, a shift system will be introduced at the immigration headquarters to facilitate the process until 30th April,



Immigration officers with Minister of Foreign Affairs & Immigration, E. P. Chet Greene, centre right, and Chief Immigration Officer, Katarina Yearwood, centre left. (File photo)

2022. The Immigration Department will also operate during extended hours Monday through Friday, from 2:00pm to – 8:00pm.

Last week, the Cabinet agreed that the amnesty will take a two-tiered approach.

“To regularise residency of anyone who has resided in Antigua more than four years but less than seven; and the other for those who have been resident in An-

tigua for more than seven years and would therefore qualify for citizenship.”

A decision was also made to reduce the fees associated with extensions and other requirements associated with the process.

“The amnesty processing fee will be EC \$200.00 per person which will accompany the application form; and, an extension fee will be EC\$150.00 for CARICOM nationals and

EC\$300.00 for non-CARICOM nationals.

“Those CARICOM Nationals who are seeking citizenship will have an additional base fee of \$2,000.00 and a processing fee of \$200.00; and, for non-CARICOM nationals a base fee of \$3,500.00 and a processing fee of \$200.00 will apply,” the Cabinet Notes outlined.

The amnesty has been touted as a political ploy by detractors of the governing ABLP, but the Gaston Browne government insists they are acutely aware of the hardships some people have endured, including loss of livelihood. As a result, a plan was developed which would allow foreign nationals to regularise their status, which will allow them to remain here and to contribute to the development of Antigua and Barbuda.

Tue 01 | Day

82°


 19%  
 E 14 mph

Mostly sunny. High 82F. Winds E at 10 to 20 mph.

 Humidity  
 72%

 UV Index  
 Extreme

 Sunrise  
 6:25 am

 Sunset  
 6:13 pm

Tue 01 | Night

75°


 22%  
 ESE 11 mph

A few clouds from time to time. Low near 75F. Winds ESE at 10 to 15 mph.

 Humidity  
 80%

 UV Index  
 0 of 10

 Moonrise  
 5:44 am

 Moonset  
 5:24 pm

Waning Crescent



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## Browne adamant Michael will not run on ABLP ticket

Just over a week after Justice Jan Drysdale denied an application by Antigua Barbuda Labour Party General Secretary, Mary-Clare Hurst, and Chairman of the ABLP disciplinary tribunal, Lionel 'Max' Hurst, to strike out the proceedings brought by Asot Michael and discharge the long-standing injunction against the executive members of the ABLP, the party's leader, Gaston Browne, says the ruling was no win for Michael.

Browne also remains adamant that Michael, who was forced to resign from his Cabinet over allegations of corruption in May 2018, will not contest upcoming elections on the ABLP ticket.

According to the court order entered on 21st February 2022, "the application to Strike Out is hereby denied" and "the interim injunction shall continue until the

determination of the substantive matter or until set aside".

However, the ABLP's Gaston Browne said over the weekend that there are other mechanisms the party can employ to push forward with replacing Michael that will not contravene the order of the court.

The ABLP has indicated that the party's St. Peter's branch has indicated their preference to move forward with newcomer Rawdon Turner as their representative.

Until then, Browne said he has no issue, nor has the party tried to block Michael, from carrying out his function as the Member of Parliament for St. Peter.

"That doesn't stop Mr. Michael from operating or, let's say, functioning in his role as the duly elected representative for St. Peter. That continues until the next general election ...



*ABLP Leader, Gaston Browne*

and whoever wins the seat — most likely Turner — will then emerge as the new representative," said Browne on his Pointe FM talk programme on Saturday.

Michael's political woes began in 2016 when he was arrested in the UK over allegations that he had requested bribes from billionaire investor Peter Virdee.

Michael was released by UK authorities, however, Gaston Browne indicated that he would not be welcome in his Cabinet until he had cleared his name of the accusations leveled against him.

While no further action was taken by the British against MP Michael, he has, to date, been unable to satisfy the prime minister's requirement.

Whether or not he had may likely not have mattered as the personal relationship between Michael

and Browne deteriorated in the aftermath of his resignation. Since 2018, rift has often spilled over outside the walls of the ABLP's halls and into the public.

Browne contends that despite Michael's legal tactics, which he says can only delay the St. Peter's MP's inevitable replacement, it is only a matter of time before the ABLP's disciplinary tribunal will be able to move forward and consider the party's internal charges against the long-time politician.

"It's just a matter of time. We have to allow for due process because, you know, [Asot Michael] loves to go to court. We just have to ensure that we do not make any mistakes in the actual selection or confirmation, for that matter, of Turner by the central executive of the party and the screening committee," Browne explained.



*MP Asot Michael*

# Local News



## Ambassador Boustany focused on diplomatic duties

Despite being thrust into the spotlight over failed financial dealings with an investor between 2013 and 2014, Ambassador Gilbert Boustany appears to be very busy promoting the interests of Antigua and Barbuda in the Middle East.

Over the weekend, the Resident Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) reported that he has been occupied with negotiating partnerships between Antigua and Barbuda and Middle Eastern nations that will support local efforts toward greater food security and education opportunities.

“What we’re moving forward on is the food security issue, agriculture and so on. That is increasingly at the forefront, and one of the things that the government has given us the mandate for, is not only the push for the agricultural, but the push in seeing international avenues [for cooperation] in terms of the ocean, in terms of fishing, and try to



*Ambassador Gilbert Boustany*

create food security using that avenue. And we’re making really good headway with the Middle East and the UAE to create a really good food security source. That’s number one.

Number two is education. Education is key to everything, especially with where we’re heading in the digital technology era, our youth [should] have the same opportunities as you would have sitting in the United States in the digital era once you are well ed-

ucated in that industry,” said Ambassador Boustany.

Boustany was thrust into the lime-light last week when the UPP’s Algenon “Serpent” Watts claimed he was in possession of an explosive document that revealed the exchange of large sums of money between the ambassador and a foreign investor.

Ambassador Boustany, who has since described the issue as “moot”, said on Saturday that the dispute between the investor and himself was simply an “accounting issue” that is being resolved.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has said, however, that his personal desire is for the nine year old issue between Ambassador Boustany and the investors to be settled quickly.

“As far as practical I would like to see this issue resolved amicably, and as soon as possible,” said Browne over the weekend.

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## Col. Telbert Benjamin says public underestimates Coast Guard's responsibilities

The Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force's Chief of Defence Staff, Colonel Telbert Benjamin says the incredibly large scope of responsibility of the Coast Guard is sorely underestimated by the public.

In a recent appearance on Pointe FM, Col. Benjamin said one of the factors affecting the public's inability to appreciate the true magnitude of the work the Coast Guard undertakes, is most people have no idea of the actual territory - both land and sea - that make up the nation of Antigua and Barbuda.

Most children are taught in school that Antigua is 108 square miles and Barbuda is 62 square miles, for a total land space of 170 square miles, but this figure does not include the many outlying islands that belong to the territory.

What is not taught however is that the maritime space belonging to Antigua and Barbuda covers a massive 110,000 square kilometres or 42,471 square miles. All of this space - its protection and security and that of those who travel and otherwise use it, whether for pleasure or their livelihood - is the responsibility of the Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force Coast Guard.

"The Antigua/Barbuda Defence Force, through the Coast Guard, has a mandate to provide security and safety within the maritime environment. That means we not only ensure that opera-

tions are safe in that environment for the sea bather, for the small boat operator or the fisherman, but we also have to ensure that the yachts that come in, we also have to make sure the environment for those vessels are safe.

"We also have to ensure the environment for those huge ships we see in St. John's Harbour is safe as well.

"In addition to that, we have to make sure that our maritime assets are safe. That in particular refers to our fishing. We have to make sure that our fishermen can go out and ply their trade safely.

"A lot of Antiguan are ignorant of the fact that we have a lot of people venturing into our waters taking, by right, what is Antigua and Barbuda's or impinging on our territorial integrity," Col Benjamin explained.

Another little known, but very important function of the Coast Guard is in maintaining vigilance for oil spills in the nation's waters.

While resources are scarce, Col. Benjamin acknowledged that the government has made efforts to ensure that the ABDF has the ability to carry out its functions as effectively as possible.

Late last year, this was evidenced when the ABDF Coast Guard commissioned its first aircraft, ABDF Airwing Unit - Alpha1, which will be used to bolster air surveillance of Antigua and Barbuda's maritime space.



*ABDF Chief of Defence Staff Col. Telford Benjamin*

"In recent times we would have acquired a small Islander aircraft. That has been added to the complement of our maritime surveillance and will be introduced into the force, proper, in short order, allowing us to - where and when necessary - to conduct necessary surveillance to secure vessels in the event that somebody [or a] vessel goes missing, in the event that there's an incident at sea, in the event that there are poachers, that we need to be paying attention to.

"The government is quite aware of the need for additional resources in terms of surface vessels to support the work of the coast guard," the Chief of Defence Staff went on.

The efforts of the Coast Guard will increase further as there is now a thrust to make Barbuda an official port of entry to the country. This is viewed as a crucial step in completing the ongoing development of the island. Barbuda's development will result in an increased population and greater demand for more convenient air lift and ocean access to the island.

Notwithstanding the challenges, Col. Benjamin says the ABDF and its many branches remain committed to serving and protecting Antigua and Barbuda and its people.



*The ABDF's newest surveillance asset, Airwing Unit - Alpha1*

# Local News



## Rotary Club of Washington donates laptops to MoE

Education officials have recognised the continued efforts of the Bellview Breakfast Rotary Club of Washington State and the Rotary Club of Antigua for their continued support of Information Communication Technology in schools.

More than 600 laptops were donated recently by the U.S. based club to the Ministry of Education and Sports as part of their 'Computers for the World' programme.

The donated devices will be used to replace older devices that were issued to public and private primary schools.

In a meeting with Ro-

tarians on Friday, Minister of Education and Sports, Daryll Matthew, acknowledged the role of the service organisation in society and said the computers will assist students greatly as remote learning continues.

"We're going through a lot of remote learning in our schools now, so everyone is a lot more aware of the need for computers and access to devices in our schools.

"It's really not a new project [Computers for the world] for Rotary, nor is it a new initiative that Rotary is doing in the community. Rotary has just simply always been here identifying the needs of the community, and has always put its hand



Director of Education, Clare Browne accepted the laptops on behalf of the Ministry of Education.

up to say yes we will," Minister Matthew stated.

Director of Education, Clare Browne, extolled the

existing partnership between his department and the Rotary Club in the advancement of education that also includes the training of teachers in ICT integration and the use of Google Classrooms.

"It has to take tremendous effort to sit down and prepare grants that are going to be accepted by the donors, and so John Martinka, I want to say thank you for the efforts that you would have put out in the past and the efforts you certainly will put out in the future."

John Martinka of the Bellview Breakfast Rotary Club of Washington State has pledged to further strengthen the relationship that was forged between his organisation and Antigua and Barbuda more than a decade ago.

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**UPDATED SCHEDULE**



## Prices & Consumer Affairs to host consumer awareness forums

Antigua and Barbuda will join the rest of the world in celebrating World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) on 15th March.

WCRD is an annual occasion for celebration, impact and global solidarity within the international consumer movement.

Each year, consumer organisations mark WCRD by raising awareness about an issue that is important to consumers around the world.

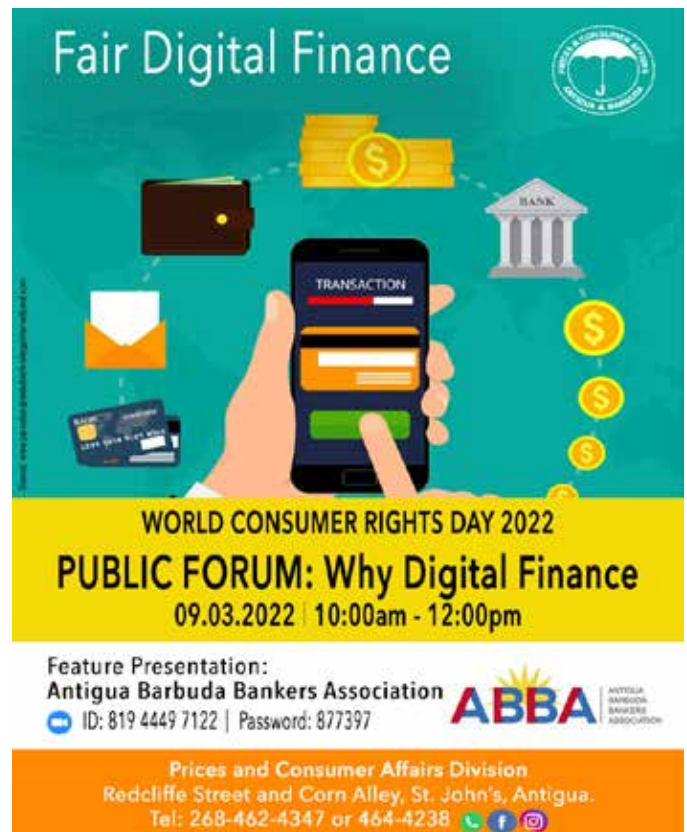
The theme this year is "Fair Digital Finance".

In a rapidly changing marketplace, World Consumer Rights Day will spark the first-ever global conversation, making the case for solutions that put consumer rights at the core of meaningful and long-last change.

To mark the occasion the Prices and Consumer Affairs Division will be hosting two Zoom forums. The first will be held on Wednesday 9th March 2022 from 10am to noon and will explore the topic "Why Digital Finance". The feature presentation will be made by the Antigua Barbuda Bankers Association

The Zoom: ID: 819 4449 7122 Password: 877397

The other will be held on World Consumer Rights Day, 15th March, from 10am to noon. This forum will enlighten attendees on the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank's recently introduced "DCash" e-cash system. The Zoom: ID: 833 5158 6780 Password: 329431.



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# Think Russian aggression is limited to Europe? Think again!

**By Dr. Sanjay Pooran**

The past two years have redefined our meaning of the word crisis, all the way from COVID to Crimea and everything in between.

As we wait with baited breath for the COVID foghorn call to endemicity, Vladimir Putin has been strategically planning an invasion of Ukraine.

That happened this week and with it ushered in Europe's and darkest hour since World War II. The attack brought a disastrous end to weeks of failed diplomatic efforts by Western Leaders, as their worst fears about the ambitions of Putin have been realised.

Putin, the former KGB spy with 16 years of foreign intelligence experience, is rewriting history by launching an all-out attack to erase the democratic freedoms and independence of a sovereign nation.

The collapse of the USSR left him traumatised and obsessed by revenge, as he saw democracy to be an evil tool for the advancement of Western objectives.

He sees Ukraine as a vast stretch of land, whose heartbeat circulates the red blood of USSR, and anything less is tantamount to disobedience, to which the highest penalties must be paid and pose a challenge to the U.S.-led world order and what was once known as the free world.

Today we stand on the precipice of another world war, knowing all too well the threat of nuclear ambitions could result in global calamity.

It's too early in the war to judge Putin's end game, but a quick look

at history and we can see that global dominance features high on his list of priorities.

If you think the crisis in Ukraine is far from home, then take a moment of pause because the history of Russian ambitions through the lens of Vladimir Putin is about to repeat itself and shake the entire global order.

The Caribbean has flirted in the past with Russian ambitions of driving a communist agenda on the doorsteps of America.

The 1962 Cuban missile crisis and the 1983 Grenada invasion serve as reminders that Russian aggression towards the Western hemisphere represents a clear and present danger, and the unfolding of events today in Ukraine, should resurrect feelings of concern and alarm.

Take, for example, the recent visit of Russian Deputy Prime Minister Yury Borisov to Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba earlier this month to discuss trade and economic cooperation.

While the West was focused on urgent diplomatic efforts to avert war, Russian diplomacy was getting a vote of confidence from Latin American partners in an effort to subvert any sanctions that will most definitely follow its invasion of Ukraine.

If a new proxy war breaks out between Washington and Moscow through some sort of U.S.-funded insurgency in Ukraine, then you can certainly bet that Moscow would hedge its bets against such actions, by leveraging its influence with corruptible



*Dr. Sanjay Pooran*

Latin American governments who harbour anti-American sentiments.

Such leverage could take the form of joint military exercises and the establishments of Russian military outposts.

Russia has become a crucial ally of Venezuela's dictatorship by propping it up with some 200 agreements and could resort to placing military infrastructure not just there but also in Cuba, much to the agitations of America and its allies.

This week's invasion of Ukraine caught many by surprise, with those hoping for a last minute reprieve sitting uneasy.

Latin America and the Caribbean could add to that sense of unease if exploited by renewed Russian aggression.

As we have now seen, Putin is not bluffing and our response to his ambitions needs to be measured accordingly and not blurred along the lines of international relations ambiguity.



## Having certain health conditions in adolescence may be linked with faster ageing in adulthood, study says

By Kristen Rogers

If you were obese, smoked or had a psychological disorder in adolescence, you might age faster than your peers as an adult, new research has found.

Adolescents ages 11 to 15 who were obese, smoked cigarettes daily, or had a psychological disorder, such as anxiety, depression or ADHD, biologically aged nearly three months faster every year than their peers, according to a study published Monday in the journal *JAMA Pediatrics*.

The research used data from 910 people who were part of the Dunedin Study, a long-term investigation that tracked the health and behaviour of participants born between April 1972 and March 1973 in Dunedin, New Zealand, following them from age 3 until they were 45 years old.

By age 45, the new study found that participants who had two or more of those three general health concerns -- smoking, obesity or psychological disorders -- as adolescents walked 11.2 centimetres per second slower, had an older brain age by two and a half years, and had an older facial age by nearly four years than those who didn't.

The factors researchers used to measure ageing included body mass index, waist-to-hip ratio, blood tests, hormones for appetite regulation and fat storage, blood pressure, cholesterol, tooth decay, periodontal disease, cardiorespiratory fitness, and brain MRIs.

The study also examined a fourth health concern, with very different results. Participants who had asthma during adolescence -- most of whom



*Smoking during adolescence is one of a few health concerns a new study has linked with accelerated ageing in adulthood. [Photo credit: CNN]*

were treated -- weren't biologically older at age 45, compared with those without asthma. These findings remained constant even when the authors considered possible confounders such as socioeconomic disadvantages or adverse childhood experiences.

"This adds to that past research by expanding it to these four conditions, of which we only found that three were associated with accelerated ageing," said the study's first author Kyle Bourassa, a clinical psychology researcher and advanced research fellow at the Durham VA Health Care System. This study "shows that these have independent effects, so each of them is exerting their own association with later ageing."

The researchers hoped that identifying health conditions in adolescence that are associated with faster ageing could help medical professionals slow ageing and prevent poor health later in life, according to the

study.

### Factors behind faster ageing

There are several reasons why smoking, psychological disorders and obesity could accelerate ageing, the authors said: All can impact factors linked with accelerated ageing, such as greater inflammation and oxidative stress, an imbalance between free radicals and antioxidants in the body. Free radicals are unstable molecules from environmental sources like cigarette smoke or pesticides, which can damage the body's cells.

"There's a long history of that kind of research in terms of how smoking is damaging at the cellular level but also can result in the kinds of health conditions that we associate with biological ageing, like (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), lung cancer, things like that," Bourassa said.

People with mental health problems are more likely to exercise less

*cont'd on pg 12*

# Health & Wellness



*cont'd from pg 11*

or have a poor diet, which have been associated with faster ageing, Jasmin Wertz, a postdoctoral associate with the Moffitt & Caspi team at Duke University in North Carolina, told CNN last year.

"We think about depression as a disease that originates in the brain with chemical disturbances and things like that. But depression probably is a systemic illness that affects the entire body," said Dr. Brent Forester, chief of the Division of Geriatric Psychiatry at McLean Hospital in Massachusetts, in a previous interview with CNN.

"The longer I've done this work, and the longer that I've worked with older adults in particular, the more I think of psychiatric illness as not a brain disorder, but as a whole-body disorder," said Forester, who wasn't involved in the new study.

One potential reason participants

with asthma fared better than those with other conditions could be that, in the 1980s, asthma was better managed than the other three conditions, the study authors said.

"No participants in this cohort were prescribed stimulants for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors were not yet in use for adolescent depression and anxiety during the study period," the authors wrote.

"Whereas 81.1% of the adolescents with asthma received some type of treatment, which could have mitigated the implications for biological ageing."

"The hope is if we were to study a cohort now, a much higher proportion of those children and adolescents are actually going to be treated for these things, which will reduce the risk of accelerated ageing later in life," Bourassa said. "Our paper reaffirms that those are important treat-

ments and those kinds of investments younger in the lifespan could net big benefits in terms of both health and the cost of health care later on as well."

## Counteracting faster ageing risk

Getting treatment early for adolescents experiencing any of these conditions can benefit both their mental and physical health, Bourassa said.

"We know that accelerated ageing is associated with poor health across a wide array of conditions," Bourassa said.

Those effects, he added, can include greater risk for cognitive decline, early mortality, developing chronic diseases and those diseases progressing at a quicker rate.

"If we can treat these conditions, slow people's ageing, then that's going to have health benefits across the lifespan and basically through their entire body," he said.

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## T&T: Missing underwater welders presumed dead, Paria says

CMC - The chairman of the state-owned Paria Fuel Trading Company, Newman George, said the rescue mission to find four underwater welders who went missing while working on a 36-inch underwater crude oil pipeline in Point-a-Pierre, south of here, over the weekend, has now moved to one of recovery of the bodies.

"The operation has now moved from rescue to recovery," George told a news conference on Sunday night, adding "this has not been an easy decision".

The four missing divers are – Fyzal Kurban, Rishi Nagassar, Kazim Ali Jr and Yusuf Henry- while a fifth diver, Christopher Boodram, was rescued on Friday. He is reported to be in a stable condition at the San Fernando General Hospital.

Paria had said that the five employees of LMSC Ltd, a private contractor, were conducting an underwater maintenance exercise at No 36 Sealine riser, berth six, when "an incident occurred."

It said it resulted in "the loss of sight" of the five-member team who were being monitored from the shore.

The decision to move to a recovery of bodies follow consultation between Paria, the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard, the company that had employed the div-



ers and other stakeholders after it was determined the probability of the men's survival was low.

"We did not take that decision unilaterally," George said, adding that it is possible that the bodies could be retrieved on Monday when sufficient water pressure is built up inside the pipeline to ease the bodies along.

Paria managers Mush-taq Mohammed and George announced that an investigating team will be assembled to determine the cause of the incident.

The main opposition United National Congress (UNC) has called on the government to "come clean and account to the people and families about what really happened in this tragic situation"

Leader of the Opposition Business in the Parliament, Dr David Lee criticised Paria's management, the government for the "disrespect" he perceived in

day afternoon.

On Sunday, the families were joined by members of the small opposition Movement for Social Justice (MSJ), the Oilfield Workers Trade Union (OWTU) in picketing the main gate of the Heritage Petroleum administrative building.

"We want justice! We want answers." Some of them held placards with these and other messages. Two placards read "Daddy when are you coming home?" and "Save our fathers."

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# Regional News



## Machel Montano to perform to millions at MahaShivRatri celebrations

Loop - Machel Montano has for years spoken about his destiny to spread soca to the four corners of the globe.

Today, Trinidad and Tobago would have celebrated Carnival Tuesday, the king of soca will perform for millions all over the world.

Montano will perform at the biggest event of his career, the MahaShivRatri celebrations, at the Isha Yoga Center in India.

MahaShivRatri is one of the largest and most sacred festivals in India, and the gathering at Isha Yoga Center attracted more than 120 million people, in person and online in 2021.

For Montano, this will not be just another stage appearance, as it is deeply



*Machel Montano*

connected to his own spiritual journey, upon which he has embarked with his wife, Renee, and his manager, Che Kothari.

In fact, for the past seven months, Montano has been in India participating in a yoga programme (Sadhanapada) at the Isha Yoga Center, under the tutelage of

Sadhguru, Yogi, mystic, and one of the most influential visionaries of our time.

At MahaShivRatri, Sadhguru leads the night-long festival of meditation, music and dance. On the night, Montano will perform new music from his label MONK music, a collaboration between himself

and Marge Blackman titled "Touch The Ground" which is featured on the Save Soil Riddim produced by DJ Private Ryan.

"It is one of the most profound moments of my life, to be performing at this festival. After 40 years in the music industry, I am overwhelmed with joy and gratitude for this opportunity and for what it represents on a global level," Montano said when asked about the performance.

He was referring, as well, to partnering on the Conscious Planet Save Soil movement, which is led by Sadhguru, to raise global awareness and encourage government policy action to revitalise soil.

*cont'd on pg 15*

## Anguilla: Missing woman found dead, 26-year-old man assisting police

Loop -The body of missing woman, Kimberly Fleming has been found.

This was confirmed by police in Anguilla, who said her remains were found in the South Cove area on Friday.

The 37-year-old was last seen leaving her West End home around 9pm on February 20, 2022.

The police department has since issued a statement that said: "Our family liaison officer continues to provide support to the family of Kimberly Fleming during this difficult time. We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all those persons who assisted with our efforts to locate Kimberly Fleming. Though the outcome



*Kimberly Fleming's body has been found* of the search was not one that all had hoped for, your time and efforts were greatly appreciated."

A 26-year-old male is currently in police custody and is assisting us with the investigation into her death.



## Jamaican government fully funding students' return from Ukraine

CMC - Foreign Minister Kamina Johnson Smith says that 23 Jamaican students in Ukraine, have arrived safely by train in the city of Lviv and are set to be in Poland by Sunday as the Government of Jamaica fully funds their return to the island.

Speaking during a virtual press conference on Saturday, Johnson Smith said that the Andrew Holness led administration has been working feverishly in the aftermath of the escalation of violence in the Eastern European nation.

Johnson Smith announced that the Government has been fully engaged with the students and their parents. In what are very difficult circumstances, the Minister said that the Government managed to make arrangements for all the students to get to Poland, where further arrangements will be made for their return to Jamaica.

She said the Government will underwrite all the costs for the students' transportation and accommoda-



*23 Jamaican students granted free return to home island.*

tion until they arrive in Jamaica and there is no loan involved.

The Foreign Affairs Minister added that Jamaica is working with contacts in Ukraine and Poland to ensure that all the arrangements appropriate to the circumstances are made given that the movement of cash is difficult at this time.

She also said that the Charge d'Affaires of the Jamaican Embassy in Berlin, Deniese Sealey has been dispatched to Poland and will receive the students upon their arrival.

"She will be working with friends of Jamaica

and members of the Jamaican community [as well as] the Honorary Consul of Jamaica to Poland, to receive our nationals on their arrival. She will provide general support to the process, including settling arrangements made for their accommodation and subsistence," she said.

"The Jamaica Tourist Board in Germany is already engaged to finalise arrangements for air travel from Poland, through Frankfurt and on to Montego Bay, as soon as circumstances allow," the Minister stated.

Johnson Smith stated that three of the students

who were on the train to L'viv did not disembark.

"Our understanding is that they were advised by their parents to remain on the train but we are seeking to procure further information about their arrangements, including their final destination," she explained.

Meanwhile, Johnson-Smith commended the decision of Poland and other European countries to temporarily lift Covid-19 restrictions for immigration requirements, in anticipation of the movement of persons.

"It is understood that the areas are crowded, lines are long and conditions are cold. Many are making this journey on foot, so challenges abound. We will continue to need your prayers for [our] nationals," she stated.

The city of L'viv is two hours away from the Polish border, and according to the Foreign Affairs minister, the names of the students have been given to the guards for their entry into the country.

*cont'd from pg 14*

"Touch the Ground" is a call to action for Caribbean people and the world to find ways to protect the world's soil from further degradation.

In addition to this global performance at MahaShivRatri, Montano will collaborate with the students of the Isha Home School on March 5 in a musical performance to raise aware-

ness of the Save Soil movement.

The performance will take place on Montano's Instagram Live at 8:30 am AST / 6:00 pm IST.

Later, in mid-March, Montano will join Sadhguru on a visit to the Caribbean including visits to Antigua & Barbuda, Guyana and Belize where they will meet with government leaders from across the region to dis-

cuss and collaborate on the Save Soil movement.

The visits will form part of a global tour led by Sadhguru to launch Save Soil. Sadhguru said: "No matter how much wealth, education, and money we have, our children cannot live well unless we restore the soil and water. Conscious Planet, the only way forward."

## How Mexico's lucrative avocado industry found itself smack in the middle of gangland

By Jeffrey Miller

To the relief of avocado lovers from coast to coast, the recent drama between the United States and Mexico was fleeting.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture banned imports of the fleshy fruit from Mexico on Feb. 11, 2022, after an employee of its Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, who was working in Mexico, received threats after refusing to certify a mislabeled shipment of avocados.

With only a two- to three-week supply stored in American warehouses, any extended disruption to the avocado pipeline would have been quickly felt.

Eight days later, the ban was lifted, and cooks could resume smashing avocados into guacamole, blending them into smoothies and smearing them onto bread without trepidation.

Yet to me, this disruption – however brief – reveals just how reliant the U.S. has become on its neighbour for a product that has seen its demand soar.

When I was working on my book “Avocado: A Global History,” I was struck by the extent to which this lucrative trade has evolved over the past 25 years, making it an attractive business possibility for both legitimate and criminal enterprises.



Members of a self-defence group guard an avocado plantation from drug cartels in the state of Michoacán, Mexico. [Photo credit: Jose Castanares/AFP via Getty Images]

### Mexico's cash crop

Avocados from Mexico have been fueling America's taste for the fruit since 1997, when the U.S. Department of Agriculture lifted a 1914 import ban, which originally was implemented due to fears over pests like seed weevils infesting U.S. crops.

At the time, Southern California produced about 90% of the avocados eaten by Americans.

Since then, per capita avocado consumption in the U.S. has ballooned from 2 pounds in 2001 to nearly 8 pounds in 2018.

This increase in the popularity of avocados, coupled with the limitations of domestic sources, has allowed Mexican avocados to dominate the American market.

Today, Mexico – specifically, the Mexican state of Michoacán, which is the

only state certified to sell the fruit to the U.S. – supplies about 80% of the 60 million pounds of avocados eaten north of the border each week.

Avocados are sometimes referred to as “green gold” because of the price they command in international commodity markets. Exports of avocados from Mexico were valued at nearly US\$3 billion in 2021, ahead of both tequila and beer, two other popular Mexican exports. The average price of an avocado is up 10% from a year ago; during the brief ban, the price of a carton of the fruit catapulted to nearly \$60, up from around \$30 a year ago.

Currently, less than 1% of avocados eaten in the U.S. come from places other than Mexico and the U.S. Countries like Peru and Colombia also produce

the fruit.

### Cartels want their piece of the pie

In Mexico, the high profit margins of the avocado trade attracted the interest of crime cartels, and those operating in Michoacán began to infiltrate the avocado business more than 20 years ago.

As various cartels have vied for control of the avocado industry, violence and extortion have escalated in the region. In the beginning, cartels were content to extort farmers, packers and exporters – in essence, taxing them for the ability to do business without interference from the cartels.

But a bloody turf war has intensified in recent years.

In 2019, the Jalisco New Generation Cartel killed nine people in Uruapan, Michoacán's hub of avocado distribution, hanging their corpses from a prominent overpass in the city. They dumped seven more bodies on the side of a road, leaving a banner at the scene that taunted a rival gang, the Viagras. There are even reports of cartels using drones to drop bombs as part of their efforts to control the economy of the region.

Threats directed at inspectors have happened before. While no individual cartel has been directly tied to a specific threat, U.S.

*cont'd on pg 17*



*cont'd from pg 16*

officials seem to think the threats are linked to increased cartel participation in the avocado trade.

In 2019, a team of USDA inspectors working in Ziracuaretiro, a city just west of Uruapan, were robbed and threatened with violence. Later that year, the USDA wrote a memo stating it would suspend inspection activities if threats of physical violence and intimidation against inspectors continued. After the most recent threat, the USDA referenced this memo when announcing the temporary import ban.

### **The Hass holds all the cards**

Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador dismissed the notion that the suspension was due to cartels associated with the avocado trade. Instead, he blamed unspecified political interests in the U.S. and pressure from other countries who want a share of the lucrative American

avocado market.

One of the reasons the U.S. began allowing Mexican avocados to be imported over the objection of domestic growers was NAFTA. The U.S. wanted the ability to send corn and other agricultural goods to Mexico under the rules of the 1994 free trade agreement. But the Mexican government demanded some sort of agricultural export quid pro quo to help balance trade between the two countries, and avocados were ripe for the job.

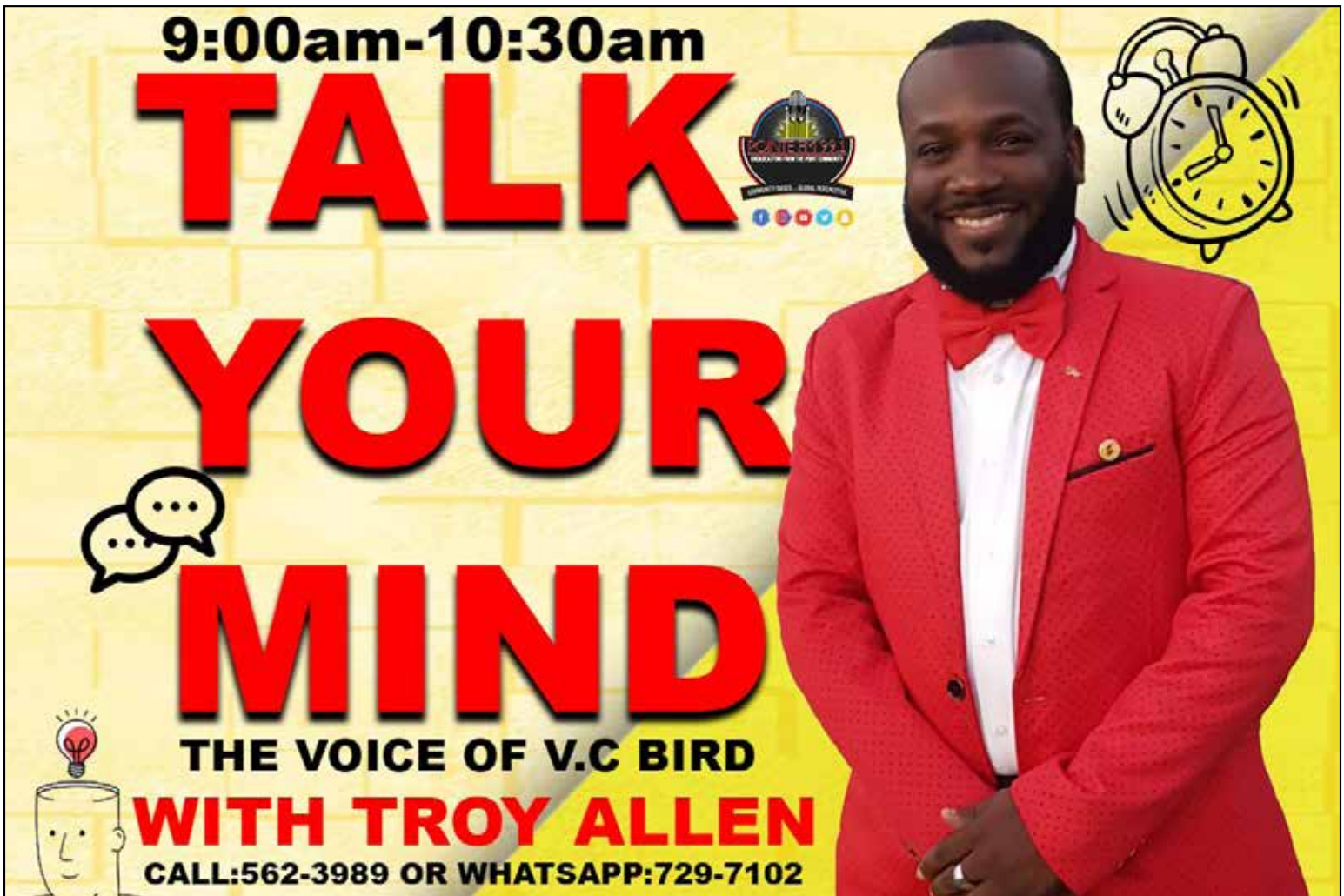
The recent brief disruption underscores the risks of being so heavily reliant on a product that comes from one region in one country that's rife with violence and corruption.

Yet it isn't easy to simply open up an avocado spigot from another country. Americans really prefer just one variety of avocado: the Hass, which is the type imported from Mexico. While the U.S. allows Hass avocado imports

from Peru and Colombia, wholesalers prefer not to sell them because they're thought to be lower quality. Hass is the dominant variety grown in California, too, but American growers can't grow nearly enough to meet the demand.

Greenskin avocados, which are grown in Florida and the Caribbean, along with many other countries, aren't nearly as popular with consumers due to textural differences and the fact that they don't change colour to indicate when they are ripe. Greenskin avocados could ease U.S. dependence on Mexican avocados, but until they gain acceptance by avocado eaters, they won't help wean Americans off the Hass avocados grown in Michoacán.

Avocados might be a source of political tension, but their unicorn status as a creamy, delicious food that's considered healthy makes most people willing to put politics aside and pass the guacamole.



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## Ukraine seeks to join EU as round of talks with Russia ends

AP — An embattled Ukraine moved to solidify its bond with the West on Monday by applying to join the European Union, while the first round of Ukraine-Russia talks aimed at ending the fighting concluded with no deal but an agreement to keep talking.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy posted photos of himself signing the EU application, a largely symbolic move for now that could take years to become reality and is unlikely to sit well with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has long accused the West of trying to pull Ukraine into its orbit.

Russian and Ukrainian officials held their meeting on Day Five of the war under the shadow of Putin's nuclear threats, and with Moscow's invasion of Ukraine running into unexpectedly fierce resistance and Western sanctions beginning to wreak havoc on the economy at home.

A top Zelenskyy adviser, Mykhailo Podolyak, said the talks, held near the Ukraine-Belarus border, were focused on a possible cease-fire and that a second round could take place "in the near future."

A top Putin aide and head of the Russian delegation, Vladimir Medinsky, said that the discussions lasted nearly five hours and that the envoys "found certain points on which common positions could be foreseen." He said they agreed to continue the talks in the coming days.

As the discussions wrapped up, several blasts could be heard in Kyiv, though no details were immediately known. Russian troops, who are attacking Ukraine on multiple fronts, were advancing slowly on the capital city of 3 nearly million people and were about 25 kilometers (15 miles)



*A woman reacts to sirens sound announcing new attacks, outside a supermarket in central Kyiv, Ukraine, Monday, Feb. 28, 2022. [Photo credit: (AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti)]*

from the city center, according to a senior U.S. defense official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military assessments.

Messages aimed at the advancing Russian soldiers popped up on billboards, bus stops and electronic traffic signs across Kyiv. Some used profanity to encourage Russians to leave. Others appealed to their humanity.

"Russian soldier — Stop! Remember your family. Go home with a clean conscience," one read.

Meanwhile, social media video from Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv, showed residential areas being shelled, with apartment buildings shaken by repeated, powerful blasts. Authorities in Kharkiv said at least seven people had been killed and dozens injured. They warned that casualties could be far higher.

"They wanted to have a blitzkrieg, but it failed, so they act this way," said 83-year-old Valentin Petrovich, using just his first name and his Russian-style middle name because of fear for his safety. He described watching the shelling from his downtown apart-

ment.

The Russian military has denied targeting residential areas despite abundant evidence of shelling of homes, schools and hospitals.

For the second day in a row, the Kremlin raised the specter of nuclear war, reporting that its land, air and sea nuclear forces had been put on high alert following Putin's weekend order. And stepping up his rhetoric, Putin denounced the U.S. and its allies as an "empire of lies."

For many, the nuclear high alert stirred up memories of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and fears that the West could be drawn into direct conflict with Russia.

However, a senior U.S. defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the United States had yet to see any appreciable change in Russia's nuclear posture.

As the sanctions on Russian banks and other institutions took hold, Russia's Central Bank scrambled to shore up the tanking ruble, and Putin signed a decree on foreign currency, in a bid to stabilize the ruble.



## Taliban conducting house-to-house sweep across Afghan capital

Al Jazeera - The Taliban are conducting a huge security sweep of Kabul and other Afghan cities, their spokesman said on Sunday, going house-to-house in search of weapons and criminals blamed for a recent spate of robberies and kidnappings.

The operation, which started on Friday, has alarmed many who fear being targeted because of their association with the previous Western-backed regime or the US-led foreign forces who finally withdrew on August 31.

Some irate residents posted videos on social media showing homes they said had been trashed during Taliban searches, but several people told AFP their encounters had been polite and cursory.

"It was just my nephew

at home when they came and they made a big mess," said one resident, who asked not to be named, showing AFP a series of pictures that revealed considerable disruption.

The Taliban called the sweep a "clearing operation".

"We are trying to take steps against those kidnappers, thieves and looters who have weapons in their hands and threaten the lives of the people," spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told a news conference.

He said authorities had discovered two kidnap victims during the operation, and also freed two teenage girls who they found chained in a basement.

Mujahid said light and heavy weapons, explosives, radio equipment and drones had been seized, as well as

vehicles belonging to the military or government.

Six people suspected of being members of the ISIL (ISIS) group had been arrested, he said, along with nine kidnappers and 53 "professional thieves".

"We want to assure the residents of Kabul that these operations are not against the common people," Mujahid said.

"The residents of the city should be confident the

search is going on carefully."

The Taliban have also stepped up street patrols in the capital and established temporary roadblocks at key intersections, where they search vehicles at random or check the identities of those inside.

Dozens of newly trained policewomen were involved in the sweep in case there were no men at houses being searched, Mujahid said.



"We are trying to take steps against kidnappers, thieves and looters," spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said. [Photo credit: Hussein Malla/AP Photo]



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## In rare stand, South Korea, Singapore unveil sanctions on Russia

Al Jazeera - Russia's attack on its European neighbour has generated relatively little condemnation in Asia compared to the West.

South Korea and Singapore have unveiled sanctions to punish Russia for invading Ukraine, offering rare pushback against Moscow in a region that has largely avoided taking sides in the conflict.

Seoul will ban exports of strategic items, join other countries in blocking some Russian banks from the SWIFT international payments system, and boost aid to Ukraine, the country's foreign ministry said in a statement on Monday.

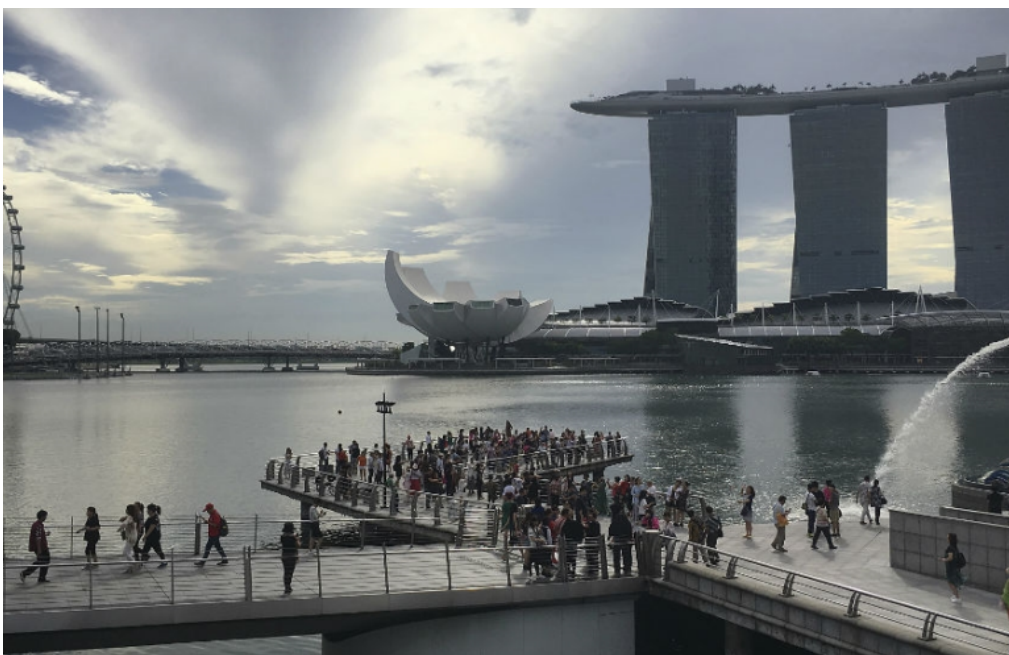
The restricted items will include electronics, semiconductors, computers, information and communications, sensors and lasers, navigation and avionics, and marine and aerospace equipment.

South Korea will also promote the release of more strategic oil reserves to help stabilise the global energy market and consider other measures, including the resale of LNG to Europe, the ministry said.

"The Korean government condemned Russia's armed invasion of Ukraine and, as a responsible member of the international community, decided to actively participate in the international community's efforts, including economic sanctions, for a peaceful resolution of the situation," the statement said.

Seoul, a close US ally, announced earlier it would support Western-led sanctions against Moscow, without drawing up unilateral measures of its own.

Singapore said it would impose "appropriate sanctions and restrictions," including financial measures and export controls on items that could



*Singapore is among the few Asian countries to announce sanctions against Russia following its invasion of Ukraine.*

be used as weapons against the people of Ukraine.

The Asian financial centre follows UN Security Council resolutions but rarely issues its own sanctions against countries. The city-state and Indonesia were last week the only Southeast Asian countries to condemn Russian President Vladimir Putin's military assault against Ukraine.

"Singapore intends to act in concert with many other like-minded countries to impose appropriate sanctions and restrictions against Russia," Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan told parliament.

Balakrishnan said the sanctions were warranted due to the "unprecedented gravity" of the situation and Russia's veto last week of a draft Security Council resolution, which Singapore co-sponsored.

"In particular, we will impose export controls on items that can be used directly as weapons in Ukraine to inflict harm or to subjugate the Ukrainians," he said.

"We will also block certain Rus-

sian banks and financial transactions connected to Russia," he added.

Meanwhile, Japan, a major US ally, on Monday said it was working with the international community to inflict "maximum cost to Russia", after Tokyo last week unveiled a raft of sanctions that include freezing the financial assets of Putin and other top government officials.

Russia's attack on its European neighbour has generated relatively little condemnation in Asia, where many countries' foreign policy involves balancing relations between major powers.

China, one of Russia's closest partners, has refused to term Putin's offensive an "invasion" and expressed opposition to "all illegal unilateral sanctions", while military-ruled Myanmar has strongly backed Moscow.

Countries including Cambodia, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam have expressed concern or called for dialogue to resolve the crisis without condemning Moscow.



## Cricket: Australia arrive in Pakistan for first tour in 24 years

Al Jazeera - Australia's cricket team has flown into Pakistan on their first tour of the country in nearly a quarter of a century – and into a security bubble that will envelop them throughout their six-week stay.

Pakistan have struggled to attract visiting sides since a fatal terror attack on the visiting Sri Lanka team's bus in 2009.

Australia pulled out of a tour five years earlier after a suicide blast at a Lahore church.

They last played in Pakistan in 1998, winning a three-Test series 1-0 and blanking the hosts in the three one-day internationals.

"They have landed," a Pakistani security official said while Australia batsman Steve Smith posted a picture on Twitter saying

the team had arrived.

Australia will play three Tests, three one-day internationals, and one Twenty20 match before leaving on April 6.

Having been forced to play their home games abroad – mainly in the United Arab Emirates – Pakistan appeared to have reassured international cricket authorities last year, with both New Zealand and England scheduled to tour.

But the Black Caps hastily departed in September just minutes before their first match was due to start, citing security fears. England postponed tours by their men's and women's teams soon after.

The decisions incensed Pakistan cricket authorities, who felt they had done everything possible to ensure safety and security.

They say they are again



Vehicles carrying Australian cricket team pass by in Pakistani capital, Islamabad [Photo credit: Waseem Khan/Reuters]

leaving nothing to chance, with nearly 4,000 police and military personnel guarding the team hotel in Islamabad and the cricket stadium in the nearby garrison city of Rawalpindi.

"The squad will be given 'head of state-level security'," a spokesman for Pakistan's interior ministry told the AFP news agency.

"Such arrangements are

only made for high-level foreign delegations, [and] the president and prime minister of Pakistan."

Roads will be blocked off when the Australians make the 15km (9-mile) commute, with their team bus shadowed by army helicopters.

Snipers will be positioned on buildings sur-

*cont'd on pg 22*

## ICC plans to streamline men's, women's calendar to avoid clashes

The International Cricket Council (ICC) plans to work in the future on the men's and women's calendars to avoid fixture clashes that can undermine events like the Women's World Cup, chief executive Geoff Allardice said on Monday.

The tournament, which begins in New Zealand on March 4, clashes with three major men's series-Pakistan v Australia, India v Sri Lanka and England v West Indies.

"Complimentary fixtures between



men's and women's events is something, in an ideal world, that we would love to have greater control over in terms of making sure there's quality

cricket on most days of the year," Allardice told reporters.

"But in practice, issues on the ground in each country make that a challenge. Even Pakistan-Australia fixtures have moved by a day or two, as different arrangements come into force, so I don't think it will impact interest in the women's World Cup.

"But the way the men's calendar and the women's calendar interact is something we're trying to work around a lot more closely in the future."

# Sports News



## Coach wants swimming added to school's curriculum

Managing Director and Head Coach of the Antigua Vipers Swim Club, Wayne Mitchell, says while Antigua and Barbuda is a long way from being able to host inter-school swimming competitions, swimming should become part of the curriculum.

Vipers is one of five clubs with membership in the Antigua and Barbuda Swimming Federation (ABSF). The others are Storm Antigua Aquatic Club, Wadadli Aquatic Racers Swim Club, Marlin Swim Club and Antigua Swim School.

Making a case for his position on Sports Overflow, Mitchell, who is also a coach with the national swimming association, said, "Competition within the schools, I would say we are a long way away from that, however, I would like to see swimming becoming a part of the syllabus."

"It can be done where it's part of the syllabus where they learn from a young age and they come down to the pool during a school day. It could be at least once a week, with different age groups."

Mitchell said the ABSF has already approached the

Ministry of Education about incorporating swimming into the curriculum.

"The swimming federation did approach the Ministry of Education but they have put it on hold since COVID-19 started.

"Right now the federation is focusing on getting pool facilities for the other clubs, and once that is done, I think the clubs will get together," Mitchell said.

"I think that is something within the schools that would interest the clubs, and obviously, the swimming federation and the Ministry of Education would be a big part of that."

Mitchell also disclosed that ABSF clubs now only have access to the Vipers Swim Club pool for training as the pool at the Antigua Athletic Club (AAC) is in need of repairs.

"I cannot elaborate much on that because there is a lot going on behind the scenes. I do know it is a work in process at this point.

"I think the last I heard about it was the government or the Ministry of Sports have concerns about it because it is not just like your average sport.

"It has a pretty large



Swimmers train in the pool at the Antigua Vipers Swim Club in Antigua on July 5, 2018. (Photo: Vipers Swim Club)

overhead and the concern is that the clubs will not be able to manage the facility and keep it maintained while paid staff need to be there, et cetera.

"So that's where we are at this point. We were running the swimming federation's operation out of two pools, and obviously, one of them, the AAC, is down at

this point.

"(Allen) Stanford built that maybe almost 20 years ago, and it had a little bit of issues with leaking of water and stuff.

"So with water being so precious in Antigua, I think that they (the owners) needed to get that fixed first.

The Antigua Athletic Club, and the adjacent Coolidge Cricket Grounds, have been purchased by Cricket West Indies in partnership with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda.

### cont'd from pg 21

rounding the stadium, while nearby shops and offices have been ordered to close on match days, the interior ministry said.

Similar arrangements will be in place

for matches in Karachi and Lahore.

The Australians will be confined to quarters for 24 hours after arrival for COVID-19 tests, before intense training ahead of the first Test starting March 4.



## IOC asks all sports to ban Russia

The International Olympic Committee has urged the heads and governing bodies of all sports to refrain from allowing athletes or officials from Russia or Belarus to participate in any organised international competitions.

The move comes amid increased numbers of associations and nations refusing to either play against teams or individuals from the countries, or to allow them to visit, for international events.

Formula One have cancelled the Russian Grand Prix this season and a wave of sporting teams are cancelling Russian-linked sponsors, including Manchester United's near-decade-long association with Aeroflot. Schalke's Gazprom shirt deal and F1 team Haas Uralkali livery sponsorship.

Now the IOC have spoken out to advise that no Russian or Belarusian individual's should be allowed to partake in events at all, including those already arranged.

A statement from the IOC read. "In order to protect the integrity of global sports competitions and for the safety of all the participants, the IOC EB recommends that International Sports Federations and sports event organisers not invite or allow the participation of Russian and Belarusian athletes and officials in international competitions.

"Wherever this is not

possible on short notice for organisational or legal reasons, the IOC EB strongly urges International Sports Federations and organisers of sports events worldwide to do everything in their power to ensure that no athlete or sports official from Russia or Belarus be allowed to take part under the name of Russia or Belarus. No national symbols, colours, flags or anthems should be displayed."

Tennis stars and Olympic mixed doubles gold medalist winners Andrey



Rublev and Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova have both hit out against Russia's actions and called to "stop the

war" as sports voices continue to play an increasingly prominent role in the opposition of Putin.

### ICC WOMEN'S CWC 2022

ICC WOMEN'S CRICKET WORLD CUP NEW ZEALAND 2022

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### WEST INDIES SCHEDULE

3 MARCH	 	BAY OVAL ♀
8 MARCH	 	UNIVERSITY OVAL ♀
11 MARCH	 	SEDDON PARK ♀
14 MARCH	 	BASIN RESERVE ♀
17 MARCH	 	BAY OVAL ♀
20 MARCH	 	SEDDON PARK ♀
23 MARCH	 	BASIN RESERVE ♀



# Sports News



## Education an essential component of CAF GNFC Advance Academy

Education is an essential component in the administration of the Calvin Ayre Foundation (CAF) Generation Next Football Club (GNFC) Advance Academy.

Trials for the academy, now in its third year, began at the Fort Road Playing Field last Tuesday, and will conclude this week.

Players who are selected as part of any of the four teams which comprise the academy, will receive specialised training from top football coaches in Antigua and Barbuda as well as the opportunity attend Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) preparatory classes free of charge. These opportunities are being made available through the support of the academy's sponsor, the Calvin Ayre Foundation.

The SAT is a standardised examination used for college admissions in the United States. Since its debut in 1926, its name and scoring have changed several times, however, the purpose of the test, in any of its many incarnations, is to assess students' readiness for college.

President of GNFC, Ambassador Ricky Santos told Pointe Xpress last Thursday, "This is the third year of this Calvin Ayre Advanced Football Academy. It is to help develop the more elite footballers in and around Antigua so

they can come and get more specialised training.

"Once the teams are selected, then they would not only be afforded the training opportunities, but SAT classes will also be afforded to them.

"This comes at no cost to the players because the Calvin Ayre Foundation is the benefactor for this. The Calvin Ayre Foundation pays for everything."

Earlier this month, GNFC hosted the Calvin Ayre Foundation (CAF) Player Identification Combine at the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's Technical and Training Centre during which coaches and scouts representing high schools, colleges and universities from the USA, United Kingdom and other European countries, assessed the participants with a view to offering educational scholarships and football contracts.

"This (the SAT classes) is in addition to what the Calvin Ayre Foundation already does with us for the last three years, apart from last year when we were unable to have any event, due to COVID-19," Santos said.

"We do the university and player identification combines. This year we had an added option whereby we did for high schools, universities, pro and semi-pro, so we are trying to be as holistic as possible.

"Of course we have the educational component which is the SAT classes to help prepare them to get into the academic requirements for universities, particularly in the United States."

Santos said parents have an important role to play in their children's development in the programme.

The SAT classes are held at St. Anthony's Secondary School on Saturdays from 4pm to 5:30pm. The classes are conducted by Kevinea Francis.

Media Relations Specialist for the



*President of Generation Next Football Club, Ricky Santos, right, with Ayre Group Media Relations Specialist Jamilla Kirwan at the Fort Road Playing Field on February 24, 2022. (Photo: Elwin Francis)*

Ayre Group and Manager of the Calvin Ayre Foundation in Antigua, Jamilla Kirwan, said the current partnership between CAF and GNFC is likely to be long lasting.

"Our giving pillars are emergency response, education and sports and social development.

"Particularly for Generation Next and the Calvin Ayre Advanced Academy, we believe in the holistic approach, not just the physical but also the educational, so it's psychosomatic basically. The physical athleticism of a child.

"We already know that sports play an important role in providing balance as well as the educational component, so we are very happy with what Ricky Santos and his team are doing and we look forward to supporting him in very many years to come because we absolutely love what he is doing for the young people here in Antigua and Barbuda," Kirwan said.

Ambassador Calvin Edward Ayre was born in Canada but is also now a citizen of Antigua and Barbuda. The Antigua-based entrepreneur is the founder of the Ayre Group and Bodog entertainment brand.

The Ayre Group has business in-

**cont'd on pg 25**



*Calvin Edward Ayre is the founder of the Ayre Group and Bodog entertainment brand. (Photo courtesy coingeek.com)*



## FIFA and UEFA suspend all Russian clubs and national teams

Russian football clubs and national teams have been suspended from all competitions by FIFA and UEFA after the country's invasion of Ukraine.

The world and European football governing bodies said they would be banned "until further notice". It means the Russian men's team will not play their World Cup play-off matches next month and the women's team have been banned from summer's Euro 2022 competition. Spartak Moscow have also been kicked out of the Europa League and their last 16 opponents RB Leipzig will advance to the quarter-finals, UEFA also ended its sponsorship with Russian energy giant Gazprom.

"Football is fully united here in full solidarity with all the people affected in Ukraine," FIFA and UEFA said in a joint statement.

"Both presidents hope the situation



in Ukraine will improve significantly and rapidly so that football can again be a vector for unity and peace amongst people."

FIFA and UEFA decided to take action after Russia, supported by Belarus, launched a military invasion of neighbouring Ukraine last Thursday.

The Russian men's team had been scheduled to face Poland in a World Cup play-off semi-final on 24 March.

Russia's football's governing body, the RFU said it "categorically disagreed" with the decision and would challenge it "in accordance with international sports law".



Brazil legend Pele

## Pele discharged from hospital

Brazil legend Pele has been discharged from hospital after receiving treatment for a tumour and a urinary tract infection.

The three-time World Cup winner, 81, was admitted to Sao Paulo's Hospital Albert Einstein on 13 February for treatment on the colon tumour. Eight days after he was admitted, doctors detected a urinary tract infection, which extended his stay. However, the hospital said Pele was now in a stable clinical condition.

He will continue treatment for the tu-

mour which was first detected in routine tests in September.

Pele had prostate surgery in 2015 after he was admitted to hospital for the second time in six months, and he was back in again for a urinary infection in 2019. He was readmitted in December for treatment on the tumour but was discharged just before Christmas, Brazil's all-time leading scorer with 77 goals in 82 games, the former striker is one of only four players to have scored in four World Cup tournaments.

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terests across the world that span publishing, real estate, emerging technology and enterprise block chain ecosystem. Kirwan said working with GNFC and the Advance Academy has provided Mr. Ayre with the opportunity to

invest in the development of human resources in his adopted homeland via sports and education.

"We see this as a great opportunity. Gone are the days when we just play sports just for fun. Now there are so many opportunities that can

come out of sports, and football is playing a very important role as well.

"I especially like to see the development of sports with girls. We have a number of females now playing football also because of the holistic development that can

bring as well in terms of educational opportunities.

"So it is just a wonderful place to be to see these young people developing their skills in a sport that they love and also to see what will become of them in their educational pursuits," Kirwan noted.

## Antiguan cyclists to participate in Aruba road race

Two cyclists from the Wadadli Cycling Academy will be representing Antigua and Barbuda in a three-stage road race in Aruba this weekend.

Ghere Coates and Tahje Browne will be carrying the Antigua and Barbuda flag at the 8th Edition Warm-up Race 2022, which is being hosted by the Velocity Cycling Team Association in Aruba from March 4th to 6th.

The cyclists will be accompanied by the Wadadli Cycling Academy's

Coach, St. Clair Williams, who is also President of the Antigua and Barbuda Cycling Federation (ABCF).

The first stage of the event in Aruba will be a criterium race, starting at 6:30pm on 4th March. They will then take part in an individual time trial on 5th March at 7:30am.

The event will conclude with the cyclists contesting a circuit race at 7:30am on 6th March.

Coates will be contesting the Elite Men category while Browne will be vying for supremacy in the Pre-Junior division.

The participants will also seek top honours in the Sub-23 class, Junior Men, Master Men A, B and C; Elite Women, Junior Women and Master Women; Youth Category 4, 3 and 2; and Men Beginners, Women Beginners, Pre-Junior Male Beginners and Pre-Junior Women Beginners.

The cyclists must finish the three races. The top three finishers in each category will be awarded medals in each stage of the race.

The Antiguan and Barbudan cyclists will leave for Aruba on Thursday.

President Williams said he is hoping for a good performance from the twin-island nation's representatives.



*Ghere Coates will be contesting the Elite Men category at the 8th Edition Warm-up Race 2022 which is being hosted by the Velocity Cycling Team Association in Aruba from March 4th to 6th.*



*Tahje Browne will be vying for supremacy in the Pre-Junior division. (Photo: Wadadli Cycling Academy)*

"The race in Aruba is a club invitational, so by extension, we will be representing Antigua and we will be hoping that we can go over there and demonstrate our dominance in the various categories that we will be contesting," Williams said.

"After that we will be returning to Antigua to take part in our circuit race on 13th March so we have a packed calendar."