

FRIDAY 11TH MARCH 2022

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FIVE HOMES RAZED IN HORRIFIC VILLA FIRE



Story on Page 2

Local News



Five families homeless following massive fire in Villa



Several families are homeless after a fire broke out on Lower Saint George's Street, Villa last evening.

The origin of the blaze that destroyed several homes, and threatened others, is now the subject of an investigation.

Pointe Xpress learned that the All Saints Fire Department responded to the fire. Supposedly, the tenders at the St. John's Fire Station are out of order, however, this has not been confirmed.

It took some time before firefight-

ers got the rapidly spreading blaze under control. Their task was more challenging last evening as they were forced to contend with high winds that fanned the flames.

There were no reports of injuries at the time of going to press.



SHERO

THE ULTIMATE ARTIST



Heather Doram is an Antiguan artist, actor, activist and educator, who is the designer of Antigua & Barbuda's National Dress. **She** has appeared in **film**, television and stage roles that include, The Sweetest Mango, No Seed and The Vagina Monologues : In 2002 she was awarded the Grand Cross of the Most Illustrious Order of Merit (Antigua & Barbuda) in recognition of her lifetime achievements.

Heather Doram



A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board

Women's History Month




Observer editor begs Cabinet to reconsider boycott

The managing editor of Observer Media Group (OMG) has appealed directly to Chief of Staff in the Office of the Prime Minister, Ambassador Lionel 'Max' Hurst, to convince the ABLP administration to revisit its decision to boycott the media house and its reporters.

The Cabinet's boycott of Observer Radio is in response to OMG's Managing Director, Algernon 'Serpent' Watts' decision to end Hurst's appearance on their prime time show on Monday mornings.

Watts said he would ban Ambassador Hurst from the radio station, a statement that attracted the ire of Prime Minister and leader of the ABLP Gaston Browne.

Last Saturday, Browne said "Serpent" would not dictate who speaks on behalf of the government or ABLP and continued that as a senior government official who has vast knowledge on a range of issues, Ambassador Hurst is uniquely qualified for the task of spokesman.

Earlier this week, ABLP Chairman E. P. Chet Greene condemned Watts' position calling it a "serious violation of media freedom" and insisted the move constituted a ban on the chief of staff.



Managing Editor of OMG, Gemma Handy

Greene continued that instead of banning Ambassador Hurst, Observer's management ought to use the government's spokesman's appearances to challenge any of the "lies" he has been accused of promulgating.

The Observer manager, who is a UPP candidate in the upcoming general elections, appeared to back-pedal on the issue following widespread media coverage on the issue and heavy criticism from the public. Watts claimed that Ambassador Hurst was not banned from appearing on Observer Radio and was "free to call in and make contributions like any other resident". However, he would be barred from appearing during the station's Monday morning prime time programme.

The Cabinet's latest move boycotting OMG is the strongest yet in response to last weekend's development.

cont'd on pg 4



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Local News

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Managing Editor of OMG, Gemma Handy, said their newsroom has been hit hard by the news of the boycott and she wants the Cabinet to exclude them from the fallout of the war of words between the government and Serpent.

"Media is a cornerstone of democracy. I know I don't need to tell you that, but this stance does the entire nation a disservice," Handy asserted.

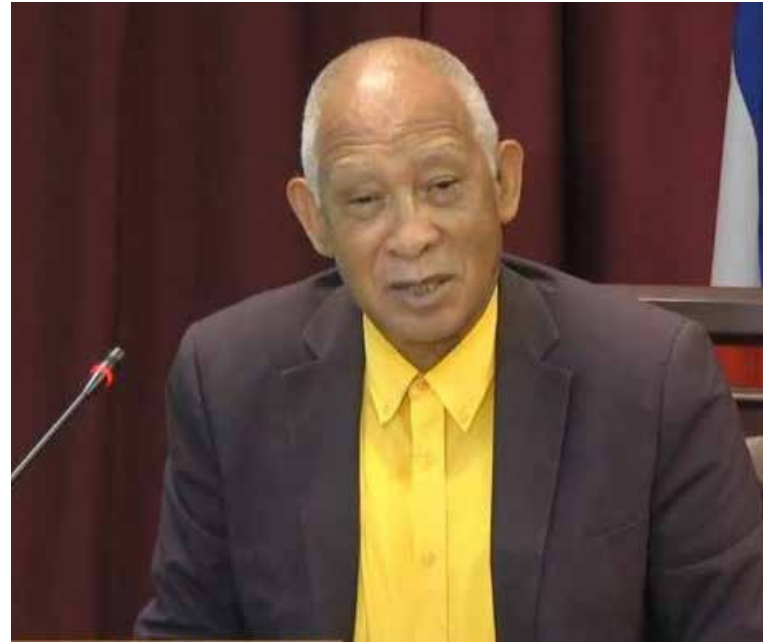
"I'm asking very politely and respectfully for the ABLP administration to please not extend this stance to our news reporters, who appear from where I am sitting at least, to be unwitting pawns, caught in a political game of chess which has nothing to do with them."

During Thursday morning's Post-Cabinet Press Briefing, Handy argued that she had no control of what transpired, and that the newsroom should not be made to pay. She stated while the ABLP administration has viewed Watts' decision as censorship, their reaction can also be viewed in the same light.

"Regarding your removal from that show, that was a decision outside my remit, not one I would have made personally. But it's very important to note that our newsroom operates separately to the hosted shows, and fundamentally, our reporters are decent, honourable, hard working young people, doing their best to report the news in a fair and balanced manner. The politics frankly is irrelevant to them."

"I disagree with censorship on principle, but denying our reporters the ability to deliver balanced news is also censorship, and this is very important. It stymies the professional development of young, aspiring, predominantly Antiguan, trying to do a decent job in a country where the media industry is still very much in its infancy."

"It denies ABLP members the opportunity to comment and give balance on matters of importance, not to mention critical information that only they are privy to. Most important of all, it robs the Antiguan and Barbudan public of their



Government Spokesman, Ambassador Lionel Hurst.

right to fair and balanced journalism," the managing editor said.

In retort, while acknowledging Handy's position, Ambassador Hurst told her those concerns were better directed at her boss.

"We didn't start this! We know when democracy is threatened. Here is someone who is seeking to become a part of government, who is making decisions that are harmful to our democracy, and we clearly want that message conveyed that even though the Observer Media Group is a private enterprise oper-

ation, it still must interact with government in order to make it a success, and we believe that any attempt on its part to dictate to the government who should or should not speak on its behalf, is not a position that the government can accept as being fully democratic," Ambassador Hurst asserted.

He restated the government's position and pledged they will fight the decision and emerge victorious.

The chief of staff said the relationship that once existed between government and OMG can be restored only if Watts overturns his decision.

"Let him be the first to reverse his stand, and let Darren Matthew-Ward do what Darren Matthew-Ward does best. He should not be interfering in the programming, we agree. I'm afraid that collateral damage to the young reporters will be part of the end result, something that we abhor."

Fri 11 Day		Fri 11 Night	
82°	☁️	75°	☁️
24%	ENE 19 mph	24%	E 17 mph
Partly cloudy skies. High 82F. Winds ENE at 15 to 25 mph.		Partly cloudy. Low around 75F. Winds E at 15 to 25 mph.	
Humidity 71%	UV Index Extreme	Humidity 80%	UV Index 0 of 10
Sunrise 6:18 am	Sunset 6:16 pm	Moonrise 12:35 pm	Moonset 1:21 am
		☾ Waxing Gibbous	

Cabinet lifts mask mandate

It is now confirmed; come 16th March, mask wearing in public spaces will be optional.

The well received news from Cabinet on Thursday came as no surprise, however, as Minister of Health and Wellness, Sir Molwyn Joseph announced during a press conference earlier this week, that additional COVID-19 restrictions would be relaxed in response to falling case numbers.

Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Ronda Sealy-Thomas, also hinted that changes could be coming as the scientific and medical data and recommendations concerning the management of COVID-19 are updated.

While mask wearing will become optional next week, people are still being encouraged to wear their masks as a measure of continued protection against infection from the virus.



Those people working in or visiting high traffic locations including restaurants, supermarkets, banks, churches, bars and clubs are still strongly advised by health authorities to wear a mask for their protection and that of others.

Public transportation as well is

positively impacted by the Cabinet decision announced on Thursday as they can now return to offering service at full capacity.

The mandate related to frequent hand washing and sanitisation remains unaffected by the coming change.

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Local News



Chinese donate sewing machines to foster women's empowerment

The donation of 140 sewing machines to the Government of Antigua and Barbuda from the All-China Women's Federation of the People's Republic of China will be used for the empowerment of women and girls.

Minister of Housing, Lands and Urban Renewal, Maria Bird-Browne, accepted three varieties of sewing machines from Chinese Ambassador Zhang Yinling, during a ceremony yesterday morning.

Minister Bird-Browne said the displacement caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has made it incumbent upon the government to seek out ways in which it can bring about relief, especially for women, that will give them the opportunity to develop new skills and increase their earning power.

It was agreed that the sewing classes supported by the Gender Affairs Division, and other departments

needed a boost due to the high public interest in the programme. It is on this basis that Bird-Browne approached the Chinese diplomat.

"I was pleased when she said the All-Women's Federation of China would be able to donate the 140 sewing machines. And I'm sure we're going to be placing them throughout the communities in Antigua and Barbuda so that they are easily accessible through classes, and not only for the women, but also for girls, because there's a large amount of young girls who are interested in getting into sewing," she said.

"We encouraged them to get involved in these classes, so that they are able to, not only make a living for themselves, but also to have something else to do, just in case their main source of income becomes diminished."

Chinese Diplomat



Minister of Housing, Lands and Urban Renewal, Maria Bird-Browne, left, and Chinese Ambassador Zhang Yinling

Zhang Yinling said the ACWF, which advocates for policy changes on behalf of women, was delighted to make the donation. She underscored the importance of addressing the special needs of women as part of the post-COVID economic recovery process.

"It is our hope that these

machines would assist in increasing women's employment, and achieve their better development here. China stands ready to work together with Antigua and Barbuda to further our cooperation in promoting women's education and empowerment, and jointly support their efforts in economic, social and cultural development, so as to build a gentle, equal world, where all women will fully enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms."

Jamie Saunders, acting director of the Directorate of Gender Affairs, described the donation as the embodiment of mutual support and respect between the two countries. He assured the sewing machines will make a difference and "the beneficiaries will reap dividends as a result".



BOC job fair attracts over 1,000 applicants

The Barbuda Ocean Club Job Fair hosted earlier this week at the Police Recreation Grounds was a resounding success.

This is the word from its organisers, who added that more than 1,000 individuals turned out to apply for jobs across several fields that will soon open up in Barbuda.

Latechia Thomas, Barbuda Ocean Club's Human Resource Manager, outlined some of the vacancies that were up for offer.

"We are looking in utilities; we are self-sufficient there with our own generators and RO (Reverse Osmosis) plants.

"We are looking for construction because we have various construction companies that are contractors for us, and in those areas we are looking for general labourers, masons, carpenters, project engineers, office assistants.

"We're looking for drivers, quantity surveyors, hospitality services – that's housekeeping, food and beverage – very, very many areas."

Justin Wilshaw, Project President, said local recruitment is a priority for the company as its operations in Barbuda continue to expand.

"We currently engage over 300 Barbudans on a daily basis. We have another 200 Antiguanians that catch a ferry back and forth to participate in the



workforce, but in our view we will need upwards of 700 staff in the next six months, so that does need more people."

In addition to direct employment, Wilshaw noted that work opportunities have been created indirectly for 21 Barbudan businesses that provide services to the Barbuda Ocean Club and its interests.

This has also meant the growth of these local businesses, many of which are also hiring their own staff to meet the demands of the Barbuda Ocean Club.

While many applicants will begin working right away, mainly in construction and grounds keeping, others who applied for clerical and administrative jobs and were successful will begin working between April and May when accommodations for those who will be required to relocate to Barbuda, and

transportation for those who will commute between the islands, are finalised.

The Barbuda Ocean Club is owned by the Peace Love and Happiness (PLH) Partnership.

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Local News



Tourism Authority sets sights on Montreal

The Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) says it is redoubling efforts to stimulate travel between Canada and Antigua and Barbuda.

This comes as the ABTA Chief Executive Officer, Colin C. James joined ABTA Canada Director of Tourism (Ag) Tameka Wharton and the Canadian sales team, on a marathon of important meetings with key airline executives and partners within the French district of Montreal Quebec, this week.

Key on the agenda for the ABTA CEO during his visits, was reigniting the conversation on the need

for direct airlift out of the Montreal region. Trade partners were also updated, on the destination's successful management of the covid-19 pandemic, the demand for Antigua and Barbuda amongst consumers, and new tourism developments.

CEO of ABTA, Colin C. James remarked "We are working assiduously to rebuild our Canadian airlift and Canadian business particularly out of Montreal. We are looking towards regaining direct flights from Montreal to Antigua in the near future."

The two-day blitz yielded positive results as



it was the first face-to-face meeting from a Caribbean destination since the pandemic for many of the agencies who were visited.

Tameka Wharton, Director of Tourism (Ag) said, "We are focused on building stronger relationships with our trade and travel

agent partners, so opted for face-to-face visits over an online meeting as a means of showing our commitment to supporting our partners, as well as to make sure they are effectively equipped with the most accurate information needed to sell the destination."



ACP Cruise Ship

Calendar

Updated on February 25, 2022

March

Date	ETA	ETD	Cruise Ship	Cruise Line	Capacity*	Type	Assigned Berth*
06-Mar-22	8:00AM	9:00PM	Sea dream 1	SeaDream Yacht Club	110	T	Falmouth
06-Mar-22	9:00AM	6:00PM	Club Med 2	Club Med	239	T	Falmouth
07-Mar-22	7:30AM	7:00PM	Mein Schiff 2	TUI	2,900	T	Heritage Quay
07-Mar-22	10:00AM	6:00PM	Norwegian Dawn	Norwegian Cruise Line	2,244	T	Heritage Quay
08-Mar-22	6:00AM	5:00PM	Star Legend	Windstar Cruises	343	T	Nevis Pier
08-Mar-22	10:00AM	6:00PM	Grandeur of the seas	RCI	1,950	T	Nevis Pier
08-Mar-22	7:00AM	5:00PM	Britannia	P&O Cruises	3,611	T	Heritage Quay
08-Mar-22	9:00AM	6:00PM	Royal Clipper	Star Clippers	227	T	Falmouth
09-Mar-22	6:30AM	5:00PM	Wind Surf	Windstar Cruises	376	T	Heritage Quay
09-Mar-22	9:00AM	6:00PM	Star Flyer	Star Clippers	170	T	Barbuda
09-Mar-22	8:00AM	5:00PM	Explorer Of The Seas	RCI	3,282	T	Heritage Quay
10-Mar-22	9:00AM	6:00PM	Royal Clipper	Star Clippers	227	T	Barbuda
10-Mar-22	8:00AM	2:00PM	Silver Moon	Silversea Cruises	691	T	Heritage Quay
10-Mar-22	7:00AM	6:30PM	Star Flyer	Star Clippers	170	T	Falmouth
11-Mar-22	7:00AM	5:00PM	Marella Discovery	Marella Cruises	1,800	T	Heritage Quay

UHSA donates piano to CHSS

The University of Health Sciences Antigua (UHSA) has donated a piano to the Clare Hall Secondary School to support its music programme.

President of UHSA, Dr. Adedayo Akande commented that he was happy his organisation was in a position to allow young musicians to foster their passion.

“Much like the rest of the world, our island has experienced many difficulties during the past few years. However, music always brings joy and entertainment to any situation.

“This is no different. I hope that our donation can provide happiness, joy, and education of music in the classrooms for many generations of students to come.” said Dr. Akande.

The piano has a long history



serving lovers of music. Many years ago, the piano was presented as a gift to UHSA by former Cabinet Secretary, Lionel Stevens, and his family.

“There, it served the university’s





students and faculty well. UHSA said it is their hope that it will continue to do the same for Clare Hall Secondary School’s students for years to come.

9:00am-10:30am

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Guest Opinion



The Commonwealth at a time of threat to the international legal order

By Sir Ronald Sanders

The Commonwealth, made up of 54 nations of which 32 are small states, should be deeply concerned at the grave threat to the international legal order caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and should act together to show strong disapproval.

This was the theme of a lecture I delivered at the Royal College of Defence Studies in London, on March 7, to over 100 high-level government and military participants from 47 countries, 14 of which were Commonwealth members. This week's commentary is a brief outline of some of the points in a 45-minute lecture.

Russian military forces have invaded the sovereign territory of Ukraine in violation of the agreed principles of the United Nations and of international law.

In the words of a distinguished group of international lawyers and academics, on March 4: "President Putin's decision to launch attacks on Ukraine poses a grave challenge to the post-1945 international order. He has sought to replace the rule of law and principles of self-determination for all peoples by the use of force".

In almost every international forum, the actions of the Russian government have been roundly con-

demned, and many governments have instituted measures not only to register their strong disapproval, but also to penalize the Russian government.

However, the response of the 54 Commonwealth countries to Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has not been uniform.

Commonwealth countries are located across the globe. Nineteen of them are in Africa, 8 are in Asia, 13 are in the Americas and the Caribbean, 3 are in Europe and 7 are in the Pacific.

The most telling evidence of the differing positions of the 54 Commonwealth countries is the vote, on March 2, in the United Nations General Assembly on a Resolution that condemned the Russian invasion.

Forty-three of the 54 Commonwealth member states voted in favour of the Resolution; and eleven of them abstained or absented themselves.

Of the 11 Commonwealth countries that abstained or stayed away from the vote 7 were African and 4 were Asian.

The three other regions – the Americans and the Caribbean, the Pacific, and Europe – comprising 23 countries, all voted in favour.

To be clear, there was no meeting of governments under a Commonwealth umbrella before the United



Sir Ronald Sanders

Nations General Assembly Special Emergency Session on March 2, or at any time, concerning the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Each Commonwealth country voted at the Session, or stayed away from it, either on the basis of its own government's conviction, or in harmony with other non-Commonwealth organisations of which it is a member. Every small state voted for the Resolution of condemnation.

These small countries would almost automatically oppose any military aggression toward any country or invasion of it. Lacking the military means to defend themselves against a powerful aggressor, and also deficient in economic strength to apply sanctions,

these countries depend on respect for the rule of international law and adherence to the principles of the UN Charter to safeguard their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

When the walls of international law are breached, these small and militarily powerless nations become even more vulnerable to aggression from others.

The arbitrary and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine demanded their immediate condemnation in what they would have considered to be their own interests.

The Commonwealth's greatest benefit to each of its leaders is that it puts them in close contact with each other at first hand, and privately at their retreats, when the

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leader of the smallest country can talk with the leader of the largest or richest nation as an equal, in frank discussion.

As a practical matter, no other association of countries brings together governments and non-governmental organisations from every continent in the world that have a voice in almost all regional and multilateral groupings, including the G7, the G20, NATO and a host of multilateral organisations such as the Organisation for Co-operation in Economic Development, the Organisation of American States, the African Union, the Association of South East Asian Nations and the Caribbean Community and Common Market.

The potential of a collective Commonwealth outreach into these and other international groups remain of enormous value.

In the present dispensation of international politics and military and

economic alliances, it would be impossible to form the Commonwealth today.

That it already exists as a forum for international dialogue and debate in an atmosphere of intimacy is a gift to its members.

In this regard, events in Ukraine and the precedent that Russia has now set by discarding international law and replacing it with force to invade and subjugate the country, should remind the Commonwealth that it, too, has disputes that threaten its member states.

Among these are: India and Pakistan over Kashmir; Guatemala which claims all of Belize; Venezuela that claims two-thirds of Guyana; Argentina and Britain over the Falklands Islands; and issues with Turkey over Cyprus.

As early as 1971, in their Declaration of Commonwealth Principles, Commonwealth countries stated that

they were “convinced that the Commonwealth is one of the most fruitful associations” for “international co-operation (that) is essential to remove the causes of war, promote tolerance, combat injustice and secure development among the peoples of the world”.

That declaration remains valid today, with even greater urgency.

The nations of the world are now engaged in a struggle to safeguard the international legal order, which has been gravely threatened by Russia's invasion of a sovereign State.

No states are more vulnerable than small ones which are usually the first victims.

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



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Will the US crack down on cryptocurrency?

The US is moving to craft new rules to govern cryptocurrencies amid rising concerns that the fast-growing industry is a haven for criminals and poses risks to financial stability.

The White House said its goal was to protect consumers, while maintaining America's technological leadership.

The executive order comes as investment in digital assets such as Bitcoin has exploded, up from an estimated \$14bn to more than \$3tr in five years. Some fear regulation has not kept pace.

More than 100 countries, including China, are currently exploring or piloting the use of digital currencies by central banks, for use both domestically and in cross-border transactions. White House officials said this had "implications for the centrality of the US dollar in the global financial system".

While different parts of the US government have studied the issue, including the central bank, there has been little action.

An executive order signed by President Joe Biden on Wednesday calls for officials to develop proposals within 180 days.

"This is a way to organise ourselves with urgency so that we have a coherent and coordinated view on digital assets," administration officials said in a briefing with reporters.

Officials said they want stronger anti-money laundering protections and controls, among other changes.

The US Treasury Department has also signalled it wants to see greater oversight of firms that offer digital currencies that bill themselves as backed by the dollar.

Surveys suggest that 16% of adult Americans have invested in cryptocurrency, including many in minority



[Photo credit: Reuters]

communities who have historically had less access to banks.

The issue has also gained urgency amid the Ukraine war, as politicians raise concerns that cryptocurrency could be used to evade financial sanctions on Russia.

Many in the industry have pushed for the government to clarify what kind of rules and regulation might be coming, while hoping to shape whatever may come.

Jeremy Allaire, chief executive of Circle - one of the biggest companies involved in trading dollar-backed digital coins - wrote on Twitter on Wednesday that the order marked a turning point in US policy and "opportunity to engage".

"The proverbial doors of policy-makers are WIDE OPEN, this is now a NATIONAL conversation in the US," he said.

Some analysts say the threat of a crackdown has weighed on crypto prices in recent weeks. On Wednesday, Bitcoin's value surged more than 8%, and other cryptocurrencies also gained.

On Twitter, the founder of crypto trading company Abra Global, Bill Barhydt, called the order "a big noth-

ing burger with a side of psychobabble. So Bitcoin is rallying".

While stopping short of action, the order does provide some clarity on which part of the government will be regulating what, said Gina Pieters, a lecturer at the University of Chicago who studies crypto.

It also provides more insight into what kind of activity is likely to be targeted as illegal in the future, she said. The threat of a future crackdown will look be different depending on what kind of crypto activity is in question, she noted.

"This is going to potentially start laying the groundwork so that people stop thinking about crypto as this gelatinous blob and start thinking about this as different market segments with different amounts of regulation put in place," she said.

While some countries have moved faster to regulate, she said the US has benefited from a slower wait-and-see approach that has allowed the industry to mature, she added.

"The industry is still very rapidly growing ... but I think we can see the form and shape of it now in a way that might not have been obvious four years ago," she said.

Drought robs Amazon communities of 'life-giving' river

By Megan Janetsky

Orlando Rufino stands in the bed of the river that he says has been "life-giving" for his people for hundreds of years.

"It's life, because it's what gives us everything," he explains.

A key source of transport, food and income for families like Mr Rufino's, the river has always snaked through dense jungle in southern Colombia, eventually linking up with the mighty Amazon.

But instead of wading through water, his feet sink into dry sand. Wooden boats that normally travel along its steady current sit forgotten next to him.

"Even during droughts, it has always gone up to here," Mr Rufino, 43, says, holding his hand over his head. "Right now, it's critical."

Historically, the dry season in the region runs from July to December. While the river level goes down during this time, it almost always remains deep enough for boats to travel, Mr Rufino says.

But over the past five years, the droughts have gradually worsened. This year, it has stretched for months longer than normal.

Usually metres deep, right now the river is little more than a trickle.



Boats sit on sandy soil where a river in Colombia's Amazon region would normally be flowing [Photo: Fernanda Pineda]

Such low water levels pose an existential threat to the estimated 30 million people that call the Amazon basin home, including Mr Rufino's indigenous Ticina people.

The director of the Foundation for Conservation and Sustainable Development, Rodrigo Botero, says that climate change is to blame for the increased frequency of the droughts.

"And the ones who suffer are the people with the fewest resources," he adds.

Mr Botero, a scientist working across Colombia's Amazon region, has documented the destruction over the past decades.

Dubbed "the lungs of

the planet", the Amazon basin's 6.9 million square kilometres (2.7m sq. miles) of rainforest - land more than twice the size of India - has suffered rampant deforestation, which fuels climate change.

Roughly 15% of that forest has been destroyed across Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, French Guiana, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela since 1978, data gathered by the non-profit conservation news platform Mongabay suggests.

"Between deforestation and these massive droughts... local communities face more new problems every day," warns Mr Botero.

Deisi Sánchez Parente Bóatakü is one of those affected by the dropping river levels.

The 33-year-old who lives in San Pedro de los Lagos - deep in Colombia's Amazon region, near the border with Peru and Brazil - normally sends her children to school by boat.

But with river levels too low to navigate, their half-hour journey has turned into a two-hour trek on foot through dense jungle terrain.

Every day, she wakes her children up at 03:30 to make it to school in time. "Sometimes they tell me: 'Mommy, I don't want to go to class, it's too far.'"

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Environment



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For Mr Rufino, a fisherman and farmer, the drought means that half of his work has evaporated. Fish have moved to deeper waters and the community struggles to water its crops, he explains.

And even when he and his fellow farmers manage to grow something, they cannot take it to market

without boats.

"You lose money because there is no way to sell anything. There's no transport," he says.

Mr Botero says that in some extreme cases he has seen livestock die due to lack of water. Wild animals that communities normally hunt for food migrate to places where water is more abundant.

He warns that food scarcity could increase further in populations that already face disproportionately high rates of malnutrition.

Indigenous communities have repeatedly sounded the alarm about the effects the drought could have on approximately 350 different ethnic groups in the region.

"We don't want any more speeches.

"We are facing an Amazon that's at the point of no return," the head of the Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin, José Gregorio Díaz, told a press conference recently, as United Nations leaders met to discuss the issue.

To make matters worse, large swathes of Colombia's Amazon region have been ravaged by forest fires since the beginning of the year.

While data on the fires is still not available, the country's environmental ministry published a memo in January saying they appeared to be the worst the region had experienced in a decade.

"What is happening is unheard of," says Mr Botero.

"It's one of the biggest fires that I've seen in 10 years. Really, it's an apocalyptic situation."

The fear is that in the long term the fires will contribute to changing climate conditions, thrusting the region into a vicious cycle of burns and drought.

Back in her small community, Ms Sánchez Pariente is feeding her baby in her small brick home. She says she worries about what the future may look like for her children.

"It never used to be like this," she says. "They're things that make you sad, because everything has changed so much."

Pointe Xpress Weekend Puzzle

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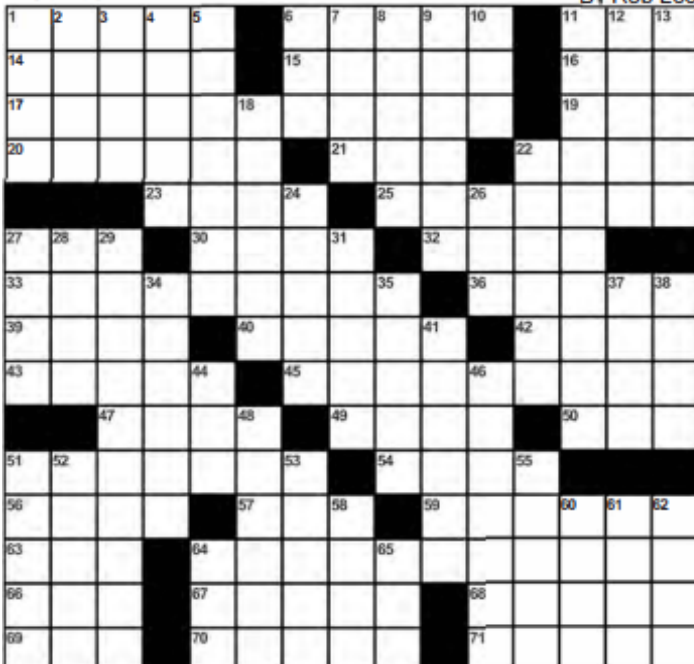
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1) Range rope | 42) Ornamental notions case |
| 6) Haul with tackle | 43) Bookcase unit |
| 11) What a gentleman tips | 45) Prompt willingness |
| 14) Regarding | 47) Economic and social misfortunes |
| 15) Sub in WWII | 49) Baseball quota |
| 16) "The Mikado" dress part | 50) Like Gen. Powell |
| 17) Parting words | 51) More than bothered |
| 19) It's right under your nose | 54) Polio vaccine pioneer |
| 20) Tried one's hand (at) | 56) Improvise musically |
| 21) Lodge brother | 57) Air show formation |
| 22) Puts two and two together | 59) "Praying" insect |
| 23) Restrooms, in Britain | 63) Hour on a grandfather clock |
| 25) Boxing legend Jack | 64) "See what I mean?" |
| 27) "Say ____" (doctor's order) | 66) Word with "Angelo" or "Antonio" |
| 30) Click it to drop it | 67) Center of the action |
| 32) Carey or Barrymore | 68) Bjorn Borg, for one |
| 33) Like a certain childhood friend? | 69) Simon's couple |
| 36) Excessive blarney | 70) Broadcast again |
| 39) Etna spew | 71) Provide funds for |
| 40) Ann ____, Mich. | |

DOWN

- 1) Cardinal number (fifth power of 10)
- 2) Over the bounding main
- 3) Went lickety-split
- 4) Calyx component
- 5) Paper-folding art
- 6) Objector's word
- 7) High-pitched instrument
- 8) "____ I lie to you?"
- 9) Pink-slipped
- 10) Suffix for ordinal numbers
- 11) Stands up to scrutiny
- 12) Follow the law
- 13) Slightly drunk
- 18) Nine-day Catholic prayer
- 22) Tarzan and others
- 24) Part of a drum kit
- 26) Post-wedding title
- 27) Is under the weather
- 28) Asian maidservant
- 29) Think about
- 31) Word before renewal or sprawl
- 34) Racehorse gait
- 35) A famous bear and a famous catcher
- 37) Deceptive maneuver
- 38) Light fog
- 41) Change the title of
- 44) Pesky insect
- 46) Medical disappointment
- 48) Harshly extreme
- 51) Dispatch boat
- 52) River nymph
- 53) Ward off
- 55) Well-recognized
- 58) Active European volcano
- 60) Even, scorewise
- 61) Opening to China?
- 62) Ratatouille, e.g.
- 64) Long-nosed fish
- 65) Solo of "Star Wars"

GOT IT!

By Rob Lee



Add Lobster to the menu this Lent

For the period of Lent, people practise various forms of abstinence. Whether it's giving up chocolate, alcohol or baked treats, many make an effort to deny themselves indulgences.

However, giving up eating meat on Fridays is a widespread Lenten practice, especially if you're Catholic.

Historically, there has been a bit of consternation regarding what you can eat on Friday during Lent. Of course, there's fish, but what about other seafood?

In his 1966 apostolic constitution on penance, Pope Paul VI used the Latin word "*carnis*" to clarify what followers of the faith should abstain from eating during Lent. *Carnis* refers to mammals and birds.

With this in mind, the ocean is filled with options that can add some variety to your menu while allowing you to hold firm to your convictions during the season.

Easy Pan Seared Lobster Tails

Ingredients:

- 4 6oz lobster tails
- 1 tablespoon seafood seasoning
- 1 tablespoon cracked pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, divided
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 4 large cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh chopped parsley to garnish

Method:

Fully thaw lobster tails and pat dry with paper towels.

Using sharp kitchen shears, butterfly each lobster tail.

To butterfly: cut the top shell down the centre of the back to the end of the tail, leaving the tail fan intact.

Remove vein or shell shards,

if any. Run your finger between the meat and the shell to loosen it. Spread the flesh slightly open.

Pull and lift the lobster meat off the bottom of the shell, being careful not to pull the tail out completely.

Season lobster tails with your favourite seafood seasoning and cracked black pepper.

Heat olive oil and two tablespoons of the butter in a skillet placed over medium-high heat. Ensure that the butter doesn't brown before the lobster touches the pan.

Add a tablespoon of lemon juice and sear lobster, flesh side down, for two minutes until the edges are golden.

Flip the lobster tails, cover the skillet and cook for another two minutes, or until the flesh is just cooked through, is plump, firm to the touch, and looks opaque.

Use tongs to rotate the lobster in the hot pan juices until the flesh thoroughly cooks.

Melt the remaining butter in the centre of the pan; add the garlic and



sauté for a minute.

Squeeze in the remaining lemon juice and spoon pan juices over the lobster.

Immediately remove from heat and garnish with parsley.

Serve with steamed vegetables drizzled with the remaining pan juices and rice or potatoes.

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UPDATED SCHEDULE

Black Panther director mistaken for bank robber

BBC - The director of hit superhero film Black Panther was mistaken for a bank robber as he tried to take money out of his own account in the US, a police report has revealed.

Ryan Coogler was briefly arrested after trying to withdraw \$12,000 (£9,100) from the Atlanta bank in January.

The teller had reportedly told her boss she suspected an attempted robbery after misinterpreting the situation.

Mr Coogler told US outlet TMZ, the "situation should never have happened".

However, the 35-year-old said Bank of America had since "worked with me and addressed it to my satisfaction and we have



Ryan Coogler, pictured in 2019, was mistakenly arrested briefly [Photo: Getty Images]

moved on".

According to the police report, which was obtained by the entertainment website, Mr Coogler - reportedly wearing a COVID face mask, as well as sunglasses and a hat - handed the teller a withdrawal slip with a note saying he wanted \$12,000 from his checking account.

The note also asked for

the money to be counted somewhere else, ending "I'd like to be discreet". He also showed identification.

The New York Times reported that he told police he was paying for a medical assistant who worked for his family and sought discretion over safety concerns due to the cash amount he requested.

The teller, who is black,

as is Mr Coogler, was pregnant and worried about her safety at the time, according to the newspaper.

The transaction triggered an automatic notification as it was over \$10,000, at which point the teller told her boss she suspected a robbery, and the police were called.

The director, who has been working on the sequel to 2018's Black Panther, was briefly handcuffed and detained before proving his identity and being released.

A Bank of America spokesperson told US magazine Variety: "We deeply regret that this incident occurred. It never should have happened and we have apologised to Mr Coogler."

Marvel changing comic book character after Indigenous people criticised it for being demeaning

Marvel is changing the name and design of a character that debuted in a recent issue of the comic miniseries "King Conan" after it was criticised for its portrayal of an Indigenous woman.

The third issue of "King Conan," published on February 16, finds its protagonist stranded on an island with a scantily clad princess named Matoaka. The princess, as it turns out, has a dark past: She hails from "a land far to the west," and once fell in love with a

man who tried to colonise her people. When the man ransacked her home, she killed him, but her father nonetheless exiled her to the island, where she's now cursed to lure other would-be colonisers away from her native land.

To people in Indian Country, Matoaka's name and backstory were a clear reference to the real-life Pocahontas, who privately went by the same name.

For centuries, Pocahontas has been romanticised and mythologised as a woman who defied her father to save the English colonist John Smith from execution. In reality, she was around 11 or 12 when she first met Smith, and historians have disputed Smith's claims that she rescued him at all. Later, she was kidnapped by the English and raped in captivity, according to the Mattaponi tribe's oral history.

cont'd on pg 17

cont'd from pg 16

Given that history, some Indigenous comic book artists and fans found the character in “King Conan” -- and the hypersexualized way she was depicted -- to be demeaning and disrespectful.

“The real Matoaka was a pre-teen girl who suffered at the hands of her English captors,” Arigon Starr, a comic book artist who is an enrolled member of the Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma, wrote in an email to CNN.

“What’s even more shocking is that most of this information is online; a quick search would have informed the writer, artist, editor and publisher that it was a poor choice to give this character the name of a famous victim of violence.”

Kayla Shaggy, a Two-Spirit comic book artist who is Diné and Anishinabe, said she felt that the character reduced Indigenous women to an offensive stereotype.

“The fact that they depict an Indigenous woman as this nubile prize to be won by non-natives in stereotypical, fetish-y clothing contributes to the current, ongoing harm and ignorance of missing and murdered Indigenous women,” she wrote to CNN.

In light of the criticism, writer Jason Aaron apologised for the character, calling his decision to use the name Matoaka “ill-considered.”

“This new character



Princess Matoaka, whose name was used by the real-life Pocahontas, appeared in the third issue of “King Conan.” Some Indigenous comic book artists and fans found the character’s depiction disrespectful.

is a supernatural, thousand-year-old princess of a cursed island within a world of pastiche and dark fantasy and was never intended to be based on anyone from history,” he said in a statement shared by Marvel.

“I should have better understood the name’s true meaning and resonance and recognized it wasn’t appropriate to use it. I understand the outrage expressed by those who hold the true Matoaka’s legacy dear, and for all of this and the distress it’s caused, I apologise.”

Aaron added that he had donated the money he made from the issue to the National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center. A spokesperson for Marvel said that Matoaka’s name and appearance would be changed in future printings,

upcoming issues and digital editions, though the details were still being finalised.

Still, Shaggy was disappointed that the company didn’t pull the issue from stands and halt distribution altogether.

“The character is still an Indigenous stereotype, her story is a rehash of racist narratives, and overall continuing the story still puts money in the company’s pocket at the expense of native people,” she said.

Native Americans have long been marginalized and misrepresented in comic books, “from the blood-thirsty barbarians and noble savages of dime novels, to formulaic secondary characters and sidekicks” as Michael Sheyahshe explored in his book “Native Americans in Comic Books: A Critical

Study.”

“To paraphrase from Michael’s work -- Native people have been relegated to the sidekick, shaman, overly sexualized or super tracker characters,” Starr said. “We are rarely the main character or the hero.”

In recent years, however, projects helmed by Native artists and writers have provided more authentic representation in the comic book world.

Starr and Shaggy said they hoped the “King Conan” controversy would result in more opportunities for Indigenous creators in the industry.

“The support for authentic Native characters and comics is out there,” Starr added. “Maybe one day, Marvel and DC will catch up to us.”

Batman casts a long shadow, especially among his most outspoken fans

By Brain Lowrey

In Batman lore, the police summon the hero by projecting a magnified Bat-signal across the night sky. That's a fitting metaphor for the character's much-debated history in movies, which has cast an unusually large shadow thanks to fans convinced, in their minds, precisely how the Dark Knight should be depicted.

Created in 1939, Batman isn't the first superhero or even necessarily the best. But different approaches to adapting him for the screen have provoked inordinate passion among fans, including knee-jerk reactions that border on the hysterical. That included the howls that greeted casting Michael Keaton in the 1980s (admittedly an unorthodox choice) and perhaps especially Ben Affleck in 2013.

In a December interview with Howard Stern, Affleck admitted feeling "hurt" by an online petition that circulated opposing him starring in "Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice." For his part, Stern pointed out that Batman aficionados have a track record of complaining "no matter who gets that role."

Through the years, fans seeking fidelity to the comics have had reason to be wary and suspicious of Hollywood.

The key window for



James Pattinson as Batman

Batman in comics came in the 1970s, which marked shift from the lightness and camp that characterized the 1960s "Batman" TV show -- with its "Wap! Bam! Pow!" graphics -- to a darker vision of the caped vigilante.

"The Batman," starring Robert Pattinson, represents the latest screen incarnation of the character, and in many ways feels designed to tap into the desires of that ardent fan base.

"Brooding and serious, the film caters to those weaned on Batman as a creature of the night, an image honed by comic-book artists Marshall Rogers and Neal Adams in the '70s, and Frank Miller in the landmark graphic novel "The Dark Knight Returns."

Director/co-writer Matt Reeves has cited another comic written by Miller, "Batman: Year One," which captures an early stage in his crime fighting career, among his inspirations.

Those comics evolved Batman's profile toward

a more adult tone that informed director Tim Burton's 1989 movie. Yet even with its success, sequels directed by the late Joel Schumacher -- starring Val Kilmer, and then George Clooney -- revived the kind of broader camp that many comics fans saw as the bad old days.

Christopher Nolan rectified that with his trilogy of "Batman Begins," "The Dark Knight" and "The Dark Knight Rises," which featured Heath Ledger's Oscar-winning take on the Joker -- the kind of prestige that usually eludes superhero fare.

But reinvention has always been a part of Batman's screen incarnations. Toby Emmerich, chairman of the Warner Bros. Picture Group (like CNN, part of WarnerMedia), recently told the New York Times that Reeves' challenge was to "create a Batman that is compelling and dynamic and thrilling, but different than anything we've seen

before."

While the movie is assured of a big opening weekend, how well it lasts will be determined not just by how committed fans respond, but whether those less invested join them in marching back to theatres.

When Affleck was selected, CNN's Jake Tapper jokingly introduced a segment on the overheated response as "the debate tearing this country apart: Batfleck." The next year, Affleck conceded to Entertainment Weekly that Warner Bros. warned him about possible blowback, quoting studio brass as saying, "Are you sure you want to get into this? This is part and parcel of these movies now. There's a lot of active fans with a lot of opinions."

Social media has fuelled that dynamic, creating echo chambers where those holding "a lot of opinions" can commiserate with like-minded souls, or conversely, argue with dissenters.

The loudest voices, of course, aren't always the most representative, especially with something like Batman. But they do reflect why that Bat-signal occupies such a distinctive place in pop culture: Because so many people think they know what's right for the character, believing that he -- no matter who wears the costume -- belongs to them.

OECS Assembly to meet later this month

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Assembly will convene on March 18 for its sixth sitting, the St. Lucia-based OECS Commission announced on Wednesday.

It said that the Assembly will be held under the theme “The Shift: Embracing New Platforms and Innovative Models for Leadership in Sustainability” and will be a hybrid event with the members of the Assembly participating virtually as well as in-person, at the seat of the Assembly in Antigua and Barbuda.

The OECS Assembly is a deliberative forum that brings together both government and opposition



ORGANISATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES

members of the parliaments and legislatures of the 11 OECS member states, to consider and seek common solutions to issues that affect the OECS region.

The OECS region, comprising island states, is susceptible to climate change events. At the recently concluded United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) (Nov 21), OECS and other Caribbean states addressed their concerns to

the Conference attendees.

The Caribbean islands have been identified as one of the world's top biodiversity hotspots, with both a high level of regionally unique species and a severe degree of habitat loss and vulnerability to extinction.

“Unfortunately, conservation and sustainable management is often hampered by institutional challenges and competing goals of economic growth and nation-

al development, which are often perceived as being at odds with environmental protection and conservation.

“This Assembly will elevate the discourse on the health, productivity and diversity of the region's ecosystems and biological resources as essential to economic viability and overall prosperity,” the Commission said, adding that Assembly later this month “provides an avenue for further discourse on common issues and positions for the region, proposed initiatives and follow up actions for the UN Climate Change COP 27 in Egypt and the UN Biodiversity COP 15 in Kunming, China this year”.

Tributes paid to former Bermuda MP found dead

Tributes have been paid to Darius Tucker, a former politician who was found dead in St David's.

Police divers discovered a body in Mr Tucker's company van, which was submerged in the water off Marginal Wharf.

Mr Tucker had been missing since Sunday evening.

Police had not officially confirmed that the body was that of Mr Tucker by press time, but did acknowledge that it was his van.

Assistant Commissioner Antoine Daniels said: “At 8.40am we re-

ceived a 911 call of a potential sighting of a van.

“We called out the marine police unit who came down with two divers.

“They dove under and unfortunately and tragically they located the white van we have been looking for with an individual inside.”

Mr Daniels added that family members had been informed of the discovery.

He said: “I had a difficult conversation with the family and my sin-



cont'd on pg 20

Darius Tucker

Regional News



Attorney suggests Barbados Marriage Act may not prohibit same-sex marriage

Attorney-at-law Lalu Hanuman believes the time has come to test Barbados' Marriage Act to see if same-sex unions would be allowed under the existing law.

He contended that even if it is resisted in the local courts, a recent ruling by the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) suggests it could succeed there.

Speaking during Monday's launch of *Intimate Conviction 2 Volume – Affirming Peace, Truth, and Justice for LGBTQ People* at the St Michael's Cathedral, he made reference to a CCJ ruling last month, that overturned a local court's contention that the crime of rape did not extend to non-consensual anal intercourse between men.

The CCJ ruled that the Sexual Offences Act is gender-neutral and not discriminatory.

Hanuman said a similar case could be made for same-sex marriage since the relevant law is gender-neutral.



Attorney Lalu Hanuman

"Most of the Marriage Act is also gender neutral. Except for that one section – which I think is Section 3 – which speaks about void and prohibited marriages in terms of categories, there is no other reference in that Act saying that only a man and a woman can marry," the attorney said.

"It does not say in the prohibited or void sections that a man can't marry a man or a woman can't

marry a woman. I think it ought to be considered a test case where an LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer] person approaches the magistrate to get the bands published ... and tries to get married to someone of their same gender.

"I am confident it will be refused at the Magistrate's Court level, but then challenge it all the way up to the Caribbean Court of

Justice and I think it could well succeed."

Hanuman insisted that several of Barbados' laws are outdated and require immediate amendments to ensure people are treated equally under the law.

He identified buggery as among those that should be amended or repealed if discrimination against LGBTQ persons is ever to be eliminated in the region.

"A lot of the outlooks and views that we have in the Caribbean can be traced back to slavery; a lot of people don't appreciate that and don't know that.

"But it's my personal view that a lot of the homophobia that exists in the Caribbean is directly linked to the legacy of slavery, where slave masters and slave owners did not want to have gay slaves, because imagine having gay cattle, you will not be a productive farmer.

"Unfortunately, people were viewed in that way by the plantocracy," he said.

cont'd from pg 19

cere condolences go to the family.

"I don't want to say too much because obviously that family has to speak to the wider family members. It's a tragic ending."

Mr Daniels said that there was no indication of foul play, but added: "However, it's early in the investigation and we're doing some forensic examination now before we extract

the body and extract the van from the water."

Mr Tucker was last seen leaving St George's in his white van on Sunday evening. CCTV footage later showed him travelling towards St David's.

On Monday, police launched an appeal for the public to help find Mr Tucker, and the coastguard was drafted in to search the waters in the

east end.

Members of Mr Tucker's Freemason lodge, and staff at Renaissance Re – where Mr Tucker's wife works – also came out in large numbers to assist in the search.

Mr Tucker, 56, was elected as the United Bermuda Party MP for Hamilton South in December 2007, having served as branch chairman for the previous four years.

Russia hits back at Western sanctions with export bans

BBC - Russia has hit back at western sanctions for invading Ukraine by imposing export bans on a string of products until the end of 2022.

The ban covers exports of telecoms, medical, vehicle, agricultural, and electrical equipment, as well as some forestry products such as timber.

The economy ministry said further measures could include restricting foreign ships from Russian ports.

It said: "These measures are a logical response to those imposed on Russia."

The ministry added that the bans on countries that have "committed unfriendly actions" were "aimed at ensuring uninterrupted functioning of key sectors of the economy".

Governments in the

west have imposed a string of sanctions on Russia, notably on buying oil, and against billionaire oligarchs seen as close to President Vladimir Putin.

About 48 countries will be affected, including EU and the US.

Russia's Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin said the ban would include exports of goods made by foreign companies operating in Russia. Items include cars, railway carriages, and containers.

It comes as Russia's former president Dmitry Medvedev warned that assets owned by western companies that have pulled out of Russia could be nationalised.

Firms have been leaving en masse or halting investment, including industrial and mining giants



[Photo credit: Getty Images]

such as Caterpillar and Rio Tinto, Starbucks, Sony, Unilever and Goldman Sachs.

On Wednesday, Moscow approved legislation that took the first step towards nationalising assets of foreign firms that leave the country.

And in a statement on Thursday Mr Medvedev said: "The Russian government is already working on measures, which include bankruptcy and national-

isation of the property of foreign organisations.

"Foreign companies should understand that returning to our market will be difficult." He accused foreign investors of creating "panic" for ordinary Russians who could now lose their livelihoods.

According to the most recent figures, Russia is the UK's 19th largest trading partner, with trade between the two nations totalling £15.9bn.

Kamala Harris says US and Poland 'united' after jets controversy



US Vice President, Kamala Harris

AlJazeera - US Vice President Kamala Harris has stressed that the United States and Poland are "united" on policy towards Ukraine during the Russian invasion after Washington rejected an offer by Warsaw to transfer its MiG-29 through an American airbase in Germany.

Harris told reporters at a joint news conference with Polish President Andrzej Duda in Warsaw on Thursday that US military and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine is an "ongoing

process".

"I want to be very clear: the United States and Poland are united in what we have done and are prepared to do to help Ukraine and the people of Ukraine, full stop," she said.

Earlier this week, officials in Washington rejected the public Polish proposal to help deliver the Russian-made MiGs to Ukraine, saying that the move risked escalation with Moscow.

"Polish generosity is clearly on

cont'd on pg 22

Fuel shortages disrupt domestic flight schedules in Nigeria

AlJazeera - Fuel shortages in Nigeria, Africa's largest oil producer, have caused two of its largest domestic airlines to cancel some internal flights and delay others this week.

In a statement released on Wednesday, Air Peace, Nigeria's biggest carrier by passenger numbers, flying to Dubai and Johannesburg, said it was likely to experience flight disruptions on Wednesday and in the coming days due to jet fuel scarcity.

"Unfortunately, the fuel scarcity is starting to seriously impact our operations," it said.

Another carrier, Arik Air, delayed almost all its flights on Tuesday and cancelled others, it said, adding that there was no certainty on the situation in the coming days.

Three other airlines, Dana Air, Ibom Air and United Airlines, also released statements about facing challenges in sourcing jet fuel after their customers complained on social media.

Despite being Africa's



Dana Airline ground staff signal to the pilot during a demonstration Lagos-Abuja flight with celebrities, journalists and airline executives at the Murtala Muhammed Airport in Lagos [File: Sunday Alamba/AP Photo]

largest producer, Nigeria imports nearly all its jet fuel, which has nearly doubled to as high as 625 naira (\$1.50) a litre since December, Arik Air said.

Global jet fuel prices have hit a near-14-year peak as Russia's invasion of Ukraine triggered a

surge in the crude oil market, hitting airlines and passengers with steep cost increases.

The latest crisis marks a further blow to an airline sector still recovering from the effects of COVID-19 restrictions.

Airline passengers in

Nigeria pay their fares in naira, which has weakened sharply due to devaluations. Fuel suppliers, however, are paid in dollars, a scarce currency in Africa's top economy.

The fuel crisis has also been exacerbated by imports of sub-standard petrol and created a ripple effect for small businesses nationwide.

It has especially angered motorists, who have been spending hours in lines to fill their tanks, while some public transport fares have gone up.

cont'd from pg 21

display for the whole world to see," Pentagon spokesperson John Kirby said on Wednesday. "But at this time, we believe that provision of additional fighter aircraft provides little increased capabilities at high risk."

In Warsaw, Harris reiterated the US

commitment to defend "every inch of NATO territory" under the alliance's collective defence treaty. Poland joined NATO in 1991, but Ukraine is not a member of the US-led bloc.

"The United States takes seriously that an attack against one is an attack against all," Harris said.

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Sports News



Bonner's determined century put Windies on top

On a slow day, Nkrumah Bonner eked out 123 from 355 balls as his side reached 373-9 at the close with a lead of 62.

England's new-look attack, albeit on a docile pitch and hampered by losing fast bowler Mark Wood to injury, again found wicket-taking hard.

Ben Stokes had Jason Holder caught behind for 45 early on and Jack Leach trapped Joshua da Silva lbw for 32.

But the tourists were held up for almost 30 overs by a stand between Bonner and number nine Kemar Roach, who made 15 from 89 balls.

Roach was run out in the final session, only for number 10 Veerasammy Permaul to frustrate England further with an 87-ball 26.

Bonner, who could have been caught on 73, batted patiently throughout. He finally

fell in the third to last over of the day when the third umpire judged he had tickled a catch down the leg side off part-time off-spinner Dan Lawrence.

That wicket gave England some cause for celebration but the hosts still sit in a strong position with two days to go.

Any criticism of England's bowlers must come with the caveat that this pitch at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium is slow and has offered minimal support to pace or spin bowlers.

But, with the dropped Stuart Broad and James Anderson again notable by their absence, England's attack lacked threat once more in an innings that has now lasted 157 overs.

Stokes bowled admirably, giving England with the wicket of Holder with only four runs added to the over-



Nkrumah Bonner acknowledges the crowd after reaching his second Test century. (Photo credit: Getty Images)

night score.

But the new ball, taken soon after the start with West Indies five down and still 84 runs behind, came and went with little effect. Craig Overton often bowled below 80mph and Chris Woakes showed little sign of overturning his poor overseas record.

The loss of Wood hurt England badly. He left the field with an elbow issue after one over with the new ball

and only bowled five all day.

Without their quickest bowler, England struggled to remove West Indies batters who rarely showed aggression. It took a misjudged run and a good throw by substitute fielder Ollie Pope to eventually see off Roach, ending his stand with Bonner.

This hundred is right-hander Bonner's second in 10 Tests, both of which have come on this ground.

World Athletics to impose further sanctions on Belarus



Sebatian Coe

World Athletics will implement further sanctions against the member federation of Belarus following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the ruling body's President Sebatian Coe said on Thursday.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has led to sanctions across global sport, and Belarus, a key staging area for the full-scale invasion, has also been punished.

World athletics initially responded by banning the two countries' athletes, support staff and officials from all events for the foreseeable future, and following a Council meeting it decided to impose harsher sanctions on Belarus.

"These sanctions include no hosting of any international or European athletics

events," Coe told a news conference.

"No representation at congress or in decisions which require congressional votes. No accreditation to attend any world athletics events and no involvement of federation personnel in any official World athletics development, or professional programmes.

"None of us came in the sport to prevent athletes from competing, but this is of such a different scale," Coe said.

The council was unanimous about the view that it would be inconceivable to have athletes from Ukraine being excluded for being unable to compete or train, in an environment that is beyond compare, and have athletes from the two aggressors nations being given the full panoply.

Tiger Woods breaks down during Golf induction speech

The greatest golfer of his generation became visibly emotional while delivering his acceptance speech for his World Golf Hall of Fame induction.

After being introduced by his 14-year-old daughter Sam, Tiger Woods joked that he had already lost a bet that he would not cry.

As he was ushered into golf's most revered club on Wednesday night, the 82-time PGA Tour winner and 15-time major champion told those gathered how his love for the game had been ignited when he was just six years old.

By the time he was eight, he was using his skills to win quarters and then dollars off other children at weekend tournaments. From the very beginning his mother and late-father had been supportive, Woods said, to the point of taking a second mortgage on their home so he could play the junior circuit in California.



Tiger Woods

"This passion to play the game of golf (drove me). I was never going to be denied to play. I loved it. I had this burning desire to be able to express myself," the 46 year old said.

His father's ethos had been the foundation for what would become Woods' mantra, both in golfing and in life: "Train hard, fight easy".

Woods recalled the thrill he felt the first time he began playing on the soft greens of a country club and how it was spoiled by the fact that was denied access to the club-

house because of the colour of his skin.

Woods subsequently became the first player of black and Asian heritage to win a major at the 1997 Masters at age 21.

As Woods spoke of the sacrifices his mother and father made so he could join the AJ Tour, he became choked up.

"They instilled in me this work ethic to fight for what I believe in, to chase after my dreams, (to understand that) nothing is going to be given to you (and that) everything

has to be earned," he said.

"That defined my upbringing, that defined my career."

Woods was the headliner of the 2022 induction class which included eleven-time LPGA Tour winner and three-time US Women's Open champion Susie Maxwell Berning, and retired PGA Tour Commissioner Tim Finchem. Also inducted on Wednesday night was the late Marion Hollins who was the first woman to design prominent golf courses.

The night, which was held at the PGA Tour headquarters in Florida, included tributes to Woods from fellow sporting greats Serena Williams, Tom Brady, Michael Phelps, Jerry Rice, Annika Sorenstam and Jack Nicklaus.

Woods, who won the Players Championship in 2001 and 2013, was still recovering from the injuries he suffered in a horrific car accident in Los Angeles in February last year.

Roman Abramovich sanctioned by UK

BBC - Chelsea FC owner Roman Abramovich has been sanctioned by the UK government as part of its response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

He is one of seven oligarchs to be hit with fresh sanctions, including asset freezes and travel bans.

The list also includes billionaires Igor Sechin and Oleg Deripaska, both seen as allies of Vladimir Putin.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said "there can be no safe havens" for those who have supported the invasion.

Chelsea FC cannot sell any more

tickets for games, its merchandise shop will be closed, and it will be unable to buy or sell players on the transfer market.

The government said it would issue a special licence that allows fixtures to be fulfilled, staff to be paid and existing ticket holders to attend matches.

Ministers have come under pressure to sanction Mr Abramovich, who said he had made the "difficult decision" to sell Chelsea FC earlier this month.



Roman Abramovich [Photo: Reuters]

The football club is among the assets frozen as part of the sanctions against Mr Abramovich and its sale has now been stalled.

Sports News



Cyclists to contest Pan Am Base Circuit Race

The nation's cyclists will take to the streets again this weekend when the Antigua and Barbuda Cycling Federation (ABCF) stages its second race of the 2022 season.

The cyclists will vie for supremacy in the Pan Am Base Circuit Race on Sunday at 3pm.

Among the competitors will be the Wadadli Cycling Academy's (WCA) Tahje Browne and Ghery Coates who recently returned home after capturing second place finishes at a three-stage road race in Aruba.

Tahje Browne came second in the Pre-Junior Category and while Ghery Coates emerged runner-up in the Elite Class of the 8th Edition Warm-up Race 2022 which was hosted by the Velocity Cycling Team Association in Aruba from March 4th to 6th.

Browne recorded a third place finish in the criterium race before capturing second positions in both the Indi-

vidual Time Trial and Road Race to finish with a total of 66 points.

Coates finished second in his class, which was won by Tribike Club's Paul Cremers, who was the only other competitor in the Elite Men Division in Aruba.

Meanwhile, Sean Weathered of Team Terminix will be hoping to continue his successful run on Sunday after an impressive start to 2022 domestic campaign when he produced a dominant display to capture the overall title in the ABCF's season opening Individual Time Trial Road Race on February 20th.

Weathered will once again hope to take top honours in the Elite Male Category over fellow competitors, Team Terminix colleague, Conroy Thomas, and Omari King of Team Independent.

Cyclists from Road Runners Cycling Club, Wadadli Cycling Academy, Terminix Cycling Club, Eastside



Tahje Browne of Wadadli Cycling Academy is will participate in the Pan Am Base Circuit Race on Sunday. (Photo courtesy ABCF)

Raiders, N&R Wheelers and Team Independent are expected to compete in several different categories.

They will vie for supremacy in Elite Male, Elite Female, Junior Male, Junior

Female, Masters, Sports Class, 13-16 Cadets and 12 and Under Cadets categories. The race organisers say COVID-19 protocols will be observed throughout the race.

Russian wants to continue promoting his sport

Russia's world number one Danill Medvedev says he wants to continue promoting his sport, but is not sure if he will be allowed to play.

Like all players from Russia and Belarus, Medvedev is no longer able to compete under his own flag following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. But tennis authorities say players can compete as individuals "at this time".

"It's always tough to talk on this subject because I want to play tennis; play in different countries," he said.

Speaking on the eve of the first Masters event of the year in Indian



Danill Medvedev

Wells, Medvedev added: "I want to promote my sport, I want to promote what I'm doing in my country for sure, and right now the situation is that that

is the only way I can play."

Russian athletes have been banned from athletics, badminton, canoeing and rowing and there are no Russian or Belarusian athletes competing at the Beijing Winter Paralympics.

Asked if he thought tennis would follow their lead, he replied: "We never know-some sports made this decision, especially the team sports.

"Tennis is probably one of the most individual sports we have in the world. Everyone's living in so many different places. "There's always a possibility, but I hope not."

Wings continues reorganisation

The Concerned Parents Teachers Sports Association (CPTSA) Wings Sports Club is continuing its reorganisation efforts.

Following the instalment of an Interim Executive Board to run its overall affairs until later this year, the Wings Sports Club's Track and Field Division has now joined the basketball branch in reorganising its sub-executive unit.

During a meeting in February this year, the Wings Youth Track and Field Committee was formed to administer the affairs of the club's athletics unit.

The club's track and field head coach, Randy Allen, will serve as the committee's chairman. Janio Harvey is secretary along side Pheona Browne, assistant secretary.

The other members of the committee are treasurer Pat Salmon and executive member Norvelle Williams.

The committee is charged with planning, executing and reviving the Wings



Coach Randy Allen will serve as chairman of the Wings Youth Track and Field Committee. (Photo: Randy Allen)

Sports Club's Easter Monday and Whit Monday Road Relay Races and the 9th edition of the Sir Reginald Samuel Track and Field Classic on 30th April.

The Easter Monday event is slated for 18th April, while the Whit Monday race is scheduled for 6th June.

The committee will also stage a raffle, which will be drawn on 7th May,

the proceeds of which will be used to purchase uniforms and track and field equipment for the development of its athletes.

Meanwhile, Wings Sports Club athlete, Osei Gardener, celebrated his 16th birthday on 6th March by winning the Boys Under-17 100 metres in the Antigua and Barbuda Athletics Association's (ABAA) 5th Development meet of 2022 at the YASCO Sports Complex.

Gardener clocked 11.4 seconds to win the race on his quest to attain a qualifying time which will allow him to represent Antigua and Barbuda at this year's CARIFTA Games in Jamaica from 16th to 18th April. Gardener hopes to achieve the qualifying standard for the 400 metre event, which is his strongest, when the next development meet is held.

Previously he recorded a time of 50.74 seconds, narrowly missing out on achieving the qualifying time for the 400 meter event of 49.80 seconds.

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"All the instructors at the academy, they all came through the school's programme. Most of them are from All Saints Secondary and we have instructors from Irene B. Williams as well. So they started learning how to sail there, then onto a programme we have for trained instructors, and now they are all qualified or certified instructors through the RYA," Thomas said.

"We are looking to start to choose more instructors now. We are also working with the Duke (of Edinburgh) programme and Girls Guides, so we might get some instructors out of those programmes as well."

The NSA also has a Sail-

ability Programme which offers the differently-abled in Antigua and Barbuda the opportunity to sail to the best of their abilities.

During the academic school year, students from the Adele School, the Victory Centre, the National Rehabilitation Centre and the Care Project attend weekday lessons from 10am to 12pm.

There are also spaces available for disabled adults and children who are not members of those organisations but would like to experience sailing.

Classes for the disabled are started after an individual assessment to determine the abilities and needs of each potential new student.

The Sailability Pro-

gramme is delivered by the NSA under the directorship of Bob Bailey who founded the programme in Antigua and Barbuda.

The fleet used for the programme includes three RS Venture Connect dinghies and four Hansa 303's which are specifically adapted for use by those with restricted abilities.

These boats are designated by the sport's governing body, World Sailing, as the most suitable equipment for disability sailing.

RS Zest dinghies are also used for those who are able with adaptations made.

The academy also offers one-on-one classes which are open to all members of the public for a fee.

The National Sailing Academy was founded by Elizabeth Jordan in 2010 and, for the first four years, operated from the Antigua Yacht Club before moving to its current headquarters on Dockyard Drive, English Harbour, in February 2014.

The NSA's mission is to change the lives of children and differently-abled children and adults in Antigua and Barbuda by introducing them to sailing both for sport and leisure, but as a career path as well.

The academy is funded by donations from individuals, groups and businesses based locally and abroad. It also generates revenue through fund raising activities staged on and off the water.

NSA to launch recruitment drive

The National Sailing Academy (NSA) is hoping to return to full swing as it embarks on a recruitment drive aimed at schools across the country. The hope is to increase the number of participants in its School's Sailing Programme.

Like most activities, the NSA's School's Sailing Programme was curtailed over the last two years as a result of the pandemic.

During an appearance on *Pointe On De Streetz* on *Pointe FM*, Chief Instructor at the National Sailing Academy, Sylvester Thomas, said efforts are being made to boost the number of students who participate in the sailing programme.

"COVID did give us a shot in the leg, so students numbers are reduced and we are trying to get that back up to standards at the moment. We are looking to start go around to the schools to make some presentations to boost the numbers again because it seems like things are going back to normal," Thomas said.

"Before COVID-19, we had about ten schools taking part in the programme, but now the numbers have dwindled right down.

"We still have students from the same ten schools, but the numbers are smaller,



Participants in training sessions at the National Sailing Academy in English Harbour on 2nd March, 2022. (Photo credit: National Sailing Academy)

with the exception of Golden Grove, Bolans and Clare Hall schools."

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the school's sailing programme operated on weekday afternoons with secondary schools arriving at 2pm and primary schools joining at 3:30pm.

Moving forward, the NSA hopes to have two schools participate in some sessions in order to increase the number of children who attend.

Thomas said children can also avail themselves of the free sailing and swimming lessons offered by the NSA on Saturdays.

"Saturdays have been really busy. Saturdays have been good to us. Normally, Saturdays are the days that we use to give free swimming and sailing lessons.

"That starts from 9:30am to 12pm for the smaller kids 8 to 12-years-old, and then the older kids will go from 12pm until 2pm. That is for practicing and for sailing lessons," Thomas said.

"The swimming lesson starts at 9:30am until 1pm on Saturdays. These lessons are free so feel free to contact us and get your child learning some of these important skills."

In July 2014, the National Sailing Academy gained accreditation as a Royal Yachting Association (RYA) dinghy sailing centre and began offering certified courses which are recognised worldwide.

Upon completion of RYA courses, participants receive a certificate and log book. The NSA is then required to complete an annual inspection

to ensure both the facility and the instructors remain up to par with the RYA standards required to deliver training to their students.

The RYA courses currently being offered to adults at the NSA are: RYA Dinghy Level 1 Start Sailing, RYA Dinghy Level 2 Basic Skills, RYA Dinghy Level 3 Better Sailing, Dinghy Sailing with Spinnakers, Dinghy Seamanship Skills and Dinghy Start Racing.

The academy's RYA courses on offer for youth sailing are: RYA Start Sailing Level 1, RYA Start Sailing Level 2, RYA Start Sailing Level 3 and RYA Start Sailing Level 4.

Thomas said each of the NSA's instructors are graduates of its School's Sailing Programme.

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