

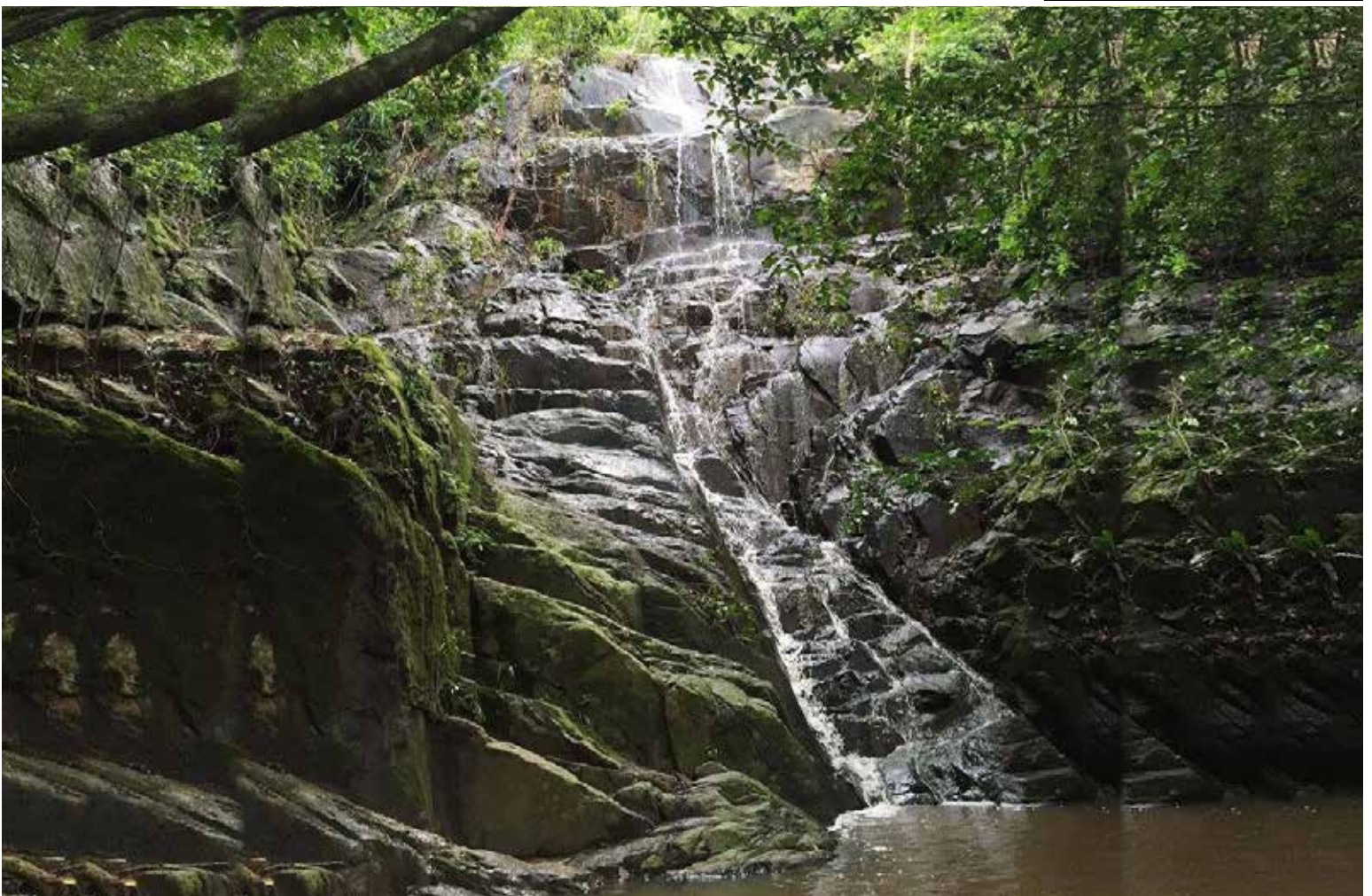
TUESDAY 22ND MARCH 2022

| VOLUME 3 ISSUE 57 |

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RECALL ISSUED ON CONTAMINATED JERGENS LOTION

Story on Page 2



Today we join the commemoration of World Water Day under the theme, "Groundwater – Making the Invisible Visible". While the Christian Valley Waterfall is not a groundwater source, it certainly is one of the nation's hidden aquatic gems, whose pristine beauty can only be truly appreciated after abundant rains. [Photo: Rediscover Antigua Barbuda]

Local News

Recall on Jergens Ultra Healing lotion

The Prices and Consumer Affairs Division has announced a recall of contaminated bottles of Jergens Ultra Healing Moisturizer.

On Monday, the consumer protection agency said warnings had been issued by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that the popular skin care brand's 3 ounce and 10 ounce Ultra Healing Moisturizers could be contaminated with the *Pluralibacter gergoviae* bacteria.

Although the bacterium typically poses little medical risk to healthy people, the FDA noted *pluralibacter gergoviae* can cause infections in those who are immunocompromised.

The affected Jergens Ultra Healing Moisturizer products were manufactured between October 1, 2021 and October 18, 2021. They've been already removed from the company's warehouses and Kao USA is working with stores to remove them from shelves.

Customers can find out if their moisturizer is affected by looking for



the lot codes on the back of the bottles. Each begins with "ZU."

Lot codes for the 3 ounce size (UPC 019100109971 for single bottles and 019100267114 for pack of 3) include: ZU712851, ZU712871, ZU712911, ZU722881, ZU712861, ZU712881 and ZU722851.

Affected lot codes for the 10 ounce size (UPC 019100109988) include ZU722741, ZU722781, ZU732791, ZU732811, ZU722771, ZU732781, Z

U732801 and ZU732821.

Consumers who have products affected by the recall in their possession are asked to discontinue using them and to report it to the Prices and Consumer Affairs Division so that the Central Board of Health can arrange to safely remove and discard the product.

Prices and Consumer Affairs is also advising consumers that they may also return the product to the place of purchase for a refund.

Herberts woman reported missing

Police are now investigating the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of 39-year-old Savitree "Sabo" Dineyal.

The Herberts woman was last seen on Saturday 19th March 2022 when she

left home at about 11:15pm driving a purple Nissan Serena van registration number C16135.

She was wearing a light purple dress and sandals the last time she was seen.

The Criminal Investiga-

tions Department took the missing person report from concerned family members on Monday morning.












Savitree, a national of Guyana, is described as, fair in complexion, five feet tall, medium build with long

black hair.

Anyone with knowledge of her whereabouts is asked to call the nearest Police Station or the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) at 462-3913/14.



Savitree "Sabo" Dineyal

Tue 22 Day		Tue 22 Night	
81°		74°	
22%	E 13 mph	22%	ENE 12 mph
A few clouds from time to time. High 81F. Winds E at 10 to 20 mph.		Mostly clear. Low 74F. Winds ENE at 10 to 15 mph.	
 Humidity 71%	 UV Index Extreme	 Humidity 78%	 UV Index 0 of 10
 Sunrise 6:09 am	 Sunset 6:18 pm	 Moonrise 10:43 pm	 Moonset 9:18 am
 Waning Gibbous			

PM Browne congratulates A&B baseballer signed to Boston Red Sox

On Monday, Prime Minister Gaston Browne met with young Antiguan and Barbudan baseball pitcher, Ovis Portes, to congratulate him on his major sporting success.

Portes, 17, was recently signed by the Boston Red Sox to play minor league baseball in the United States.

Prime Minister Browne encouraged the young baseball player to work hard, stay focused and remain vigilant throughout this next stage of his sporting career.

PM Browne also assured the baseball athlete of his government's commitment and support.

Portes represented Antigua and Barbuda in 2017 at the Caribbean Pre World Series Little League Baseball Tournament played at the Coolidge Cricket Grounds.

During the meet and greet with PM Browne, Ovis was accompanied by his mother Rodiel Portes, and the President of the Antigua and Barbuda softball and baseball team, Manuel Melenciano.

Earlier this month, Portes' manager, Alex Isaac Quallis, President and CEO of the US-based 340 Sports Management, explained the next steps for the young Antiguan and Barbudan.

"My role would be to facilitate his transi-



From left: PM Gaston Browne, Rodiel Portes, Ovis Portes and President of the Antigua and Barbuda Softball and Baseball team, Manuel Melenciano

tion throughout the Minor League and then get him onto the Major League. It's a complex system once you get drafted into a process where you have to work through the Minor League for about a three to four-year process and make your name.

"He's going to have a lot of training to do, a lot of development, a lot of getting used to in terms of some of the things that are happening professionally around him, both in the game and outside of the game. These things are going to come at you fast, so as his agent or his representative, you want to be on the side of the player to sort of help him through some of these challenges," Quallis said.



NOTICE

Kindly note that on **MARCH 22nd, 2022**, KFC Antigua Ltd. will be offering limited services at all branches.

1pm to 5pm we will be providing **DRIV-THRU** service only.

This is to allow for members of staff to attend a funeral.

We apologize for any inconvenience caused and appreciate your understanding in this matter.

Signed Management



First-ever Barbuda-specific tourism campaign launched

A major multi-media tourism campaign designed specifically to promote the sister isle, Barbuda, was launched in a ceremony held on Monday in Codrington, Barbuda. The campaign came out of intense discussions between the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) and the Barbuda Council over the several months.

A team from the ABTA journeyed to Codrington for the launch of the campaign that was carried live across several social media platforms.

Tourism Minister, Charles 'Max' Fernandez, said it was with resolve that the Ministry of Tourism, through the ABTA, partnered with the Barbuda Council to deliver the first ever tourism advertising campaign exclusively for Barbuda with the key involvement of Barbudans.

"Today we are pleased to share with you, the underpinnings of the campaign to promote increased visits to Barbuda - from visitors in our core markets, principally the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada that are holidaying in Antigua - along with our own nationals in Antigua, many of whom have never visited Barbuda," he noted.

Details of the campaign were provided by ABTA Chief Executive Officer, Col-

in C. James, who revealed that the ABTA has three specific objectives in executing this campaign:

- * To increase awareness of Barbuda and the distinctive personality of the island, as part of the overall Antigua & Barbuda proposition

- * To promote increased visits and visitor nights to Barbuda both from foreign tourists (principally from US and UK) to A&B, and local Antiguan

- * And to begin to lay the groundwork in terms of the island's promotion and positioning, in advance of Barbuda in the mid-longer term being considered as a destination in its own right

According to James, this centers on the fact that Barbuda, while as a destination is highly desirable, is not readily attainable.

"First, using 'scarcity' - a powerful marketing tool - where we are suggesting that opportunities to visit are limited so as to increase Barbuda's appeal to our target group. Second, the campaign is designed to help manage expectations - if potential stay over visitors can't book a flight or room, they will certainly understand why.

"Third, the idyllic look and feel of the campaign captures the uniqueness and warmth of the people of Barbuda and is tactically in keeping with our strategy to show the world the unsurpassed



MP for Barbuda, Trevor Walker with Tourism Minister Charles 'Max' Fernandez at the launch of the Barbuda tourism campaign on Monday.

beauty of Antigua's sister island," he explained.

He added that these three tactics are specifically designed to appeal to high value potential visitors who like experiences 'off the beaten track' and 'exclusive escapes' in un-spoilt locations.

Chair of the ABTA Lorraine Headley-Raeburn noted that the involvement of the Barbuda Council was critical to the design of the campaign as its members were involved in every aspect; from concept to final roll-out.

Also speaking at Monday's launch was the parliamentary representative for Barbuda, Trevor Walker, who fully endorsed the campaign.

He said Barbuda is a unique island and added that

any tourism campaign developed for the island should highlight this fact.

Additionally, Walker said it is important that Barbudans benefit from the developing tourism industry which caters to a high-income clientele who will stimulate the local economy through spending when visiting the island.

In support of the strengthening relations between the ABTA and the Barbuda Council, the Council's Marketing Officer, Anreka Geness, will take up a one-year assignment working at the ABTA offices in St. John's.

Her presence there will ensure Barbuda's input in all future promotional campaigns developed for the twin-island state.

Fire Chief Weaver retires after four decades of sterling service

Having given 43-years of selfless service to his country and the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda, Fire Chief Elvis Weaver is today hanging up his cap and entering retirement.

Certain media outlets sensationalised his departure last week claiming that he was being forced to resign. However, the Assistant Commissioner of Police explained that the decision to go was his as he has attained the age of retirement.

“I enlisted in the Royal Police Force of Antigua and



Fire Chief Elvis Weaver

Barbuda on the 1st February 1979 at the age of 18 years and ten months. I was born on the 23rd March, 1960. That meant that I would be 60 years old in 2020.

Therefore, I did attain the retirement age. However, the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda gave me two more years to continue working from 23rd March 2020 to 22nd March 2022,” Weaver said recently.

In one of the last firm stands taken before the announcement of his retirement, Chief Weaver called on the Antigua Barbuda Transport Board and Traffic Department to collaborate on adjusting parking throughout the country to make it easier for fire ten-

cont'd on pg 6



CRAZY TUESDAY

Leg and Thigh, Biscuit, Medium Drink
\$13.99

WOW WEDNESDAY

6 WHOLE WINGS
\$20.00

KFC

Local News



Police investigate Friday night shooting

Following the weekend shooting of Urlings resident, Wolde Benjamin, police are turning to the public for help.

Benjamin, 37, the manager of Underdog bar in Jolly Harbour, narrowly escaped death when he was set upon by armed attackers on Saturday at about 3am.

He was attacked by a group of men as he was leaving the popular nightlife spot Dre's Bar on Kentish road.

During the scuffle, Benjamin was shot in the back of the head, but managed to fend off the shooters and drive himself to the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre.

There, he was treated, and subsequently released, with what doctors described as serious but non-life-threatening injuries.



At least three shots were discharged in the incident.

His female passenger, said to be his employee, was unharmed.

Police suspect the attack may have begun as an attempt to rob Benjamin.

Investigators are now seeking the public's help in apprehending the armed bandits. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Criminal Investigations Department at 462-3913 or the nearest police station.

cont'd from pg 5

ders to access narrow roads.

He said far too often, parking on both sides of narrow streets has delayed the fire department's ability to respond to emergencies. Tenders have had to resort to pushing parked cars out of the way to get to the scenes of fires.

This, he told Pointe Xpress, was also the case in the recent devastating fire in Point that left eleven families affected and five homes destroyed.

Promoted to the rank of Assistant Commissioner of Police in 2015, Chief Weaver explained his decision to enlist with the police and his desire to serve the fire department in an interview on the occasion of his 40th year of service to the force.

"When I enlisted in the

force, I was enlisted in the regular force and to me, I said it was a divine revelation when I asked to be transferred to the fire department.

"I did not know anyone in the fire department, I was not trained in firefighting, but I just felt like the fire department was the better place for me to work and over the years I have seen how important it is to be a firefighter.

"Our main goal is to save lives and to protect the property of the citizens of the people of Antigua and Barbuda. It is good when you help people and you see the smiles and their gratitude and that's what the fire department brings to the citizens of Antigua and Barbuda.

"It is really a good feel-

ing and that is why I chose it and I am very happy that I chose to be in the fire department. It's a very rewarding job, it's like a brotherhood. I can leave Antigua and go to any island and I can just be taken care of by firefighters in any country in this world. We just love each other as fire fighters, and I have no regrets really of serving as a fire officer."

As for the most memorable moments of his career he said, "There have been many highlights of my career. Of course, the first promotion, that was very important for me. Then my first trip overseas was just after I became a Corporal, I was chosen to go to Canada.

"It was the first time I was travelling on a firefighting course and of course all my promotions over

the years from Corporal, Sergeant, Senior Sergeant, Inspector, ASP [Assistant Superintendent of Police], Superintendent and of course the Fire Chief, Assistant Commissioner."

Chief Weaver added, "I want to be remembered as someone who made a positive contribution to the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda and to the Fire Department.

"I would like my name to be called whenever the police force, fire department is mentioned and when someone may have called my name it's to say that I have made a positive contribution, I have been a role model to someone, I have helped someone and have made Antigua and Barbuda a better place through my service."

Antigua and Barbuda to compete in PanoGrama 2022

By Jodia Givans

PanoGrama made its mark on the entertainment scene, when the COVID-19 pandemic brought physical events to a screeching halt in 2020.

Now in its third year, the highly anticipated virtual steelpan competition is gearing up for more action.

This year's competition takes place from May 6 – June 12, 2022 and is set to feature 27 pannists from a total of 11 countries.

The competition has seen the return of several countries since its first and second staging, and welcomes newcomers St. Kitts & Nevis and Belize to the fold.

The two newcomers will join Antigua and Barbuda, Canada, France, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, the USA, and the US Virgin Islands when the event gets underway.

Belizean pannist Alexander Evans is extremely excited to be participating in his first soloist steelpan competition.

"It is a privilege and an honour to be the first Belizean to participate in this competition, and I hope to represent my country well and to remind the world that yes, Belize is here.

"We are strong in our Caribbean identity; and we

can stand proudly on any international stage."

Meanwhile, reigning champion, Keishaun Julien from Trinidad and Tobago, has opted out of defending his title, and will not feature this year.

Julien disclosed that winning PanoGrama, "...opened the door to many opportunities for which I am eternally grateful. However, for 2022 I've decided to focus my energy on other aspects of my brand."

He encourages all participants to be strategic, be creative and most importantly, to have fun adding that he looks forward to seeing this year's amazing talent.

This year's winner will walk away with over USD \$6,000.00 worth of prizes, which includes an all-expenses-paid trip to the Bahamas, a brand-new

Perfect Steel tenor pan and case, USD \$1,000.00 cash, and a private session with a world-renowned steel pannist.

Professor Liam Teague, Dr. Mia Gormandy-Benjamin and adjunct Professor Victor Provost will have the difficult task of adjudicating the pannists, while Ojay Richards and Andy Chichester stand ready as judges' substitutes.

The competition will take place virtually from May 6 – June 12, 2022, and will be streamed on YouTube.

The preliminaries are set for May 6-8, the semi-finals on May 29, while the curtains will fall with the finals on June 12.

With over a month to prepare, the participants are in high gear for competition.

The 2022 participants

are:

Antigua & Barbuda - Maurisha Potter, Malik Smith, Jawan Henry

Belize - Alexander Evans

Canada - Gabriel Chartrand, Thadel Wilson

France - Olivier Wiren, Mathieu Borgne

Grenada - Mikiel Smith

Jamaica - Kraig Bisnott

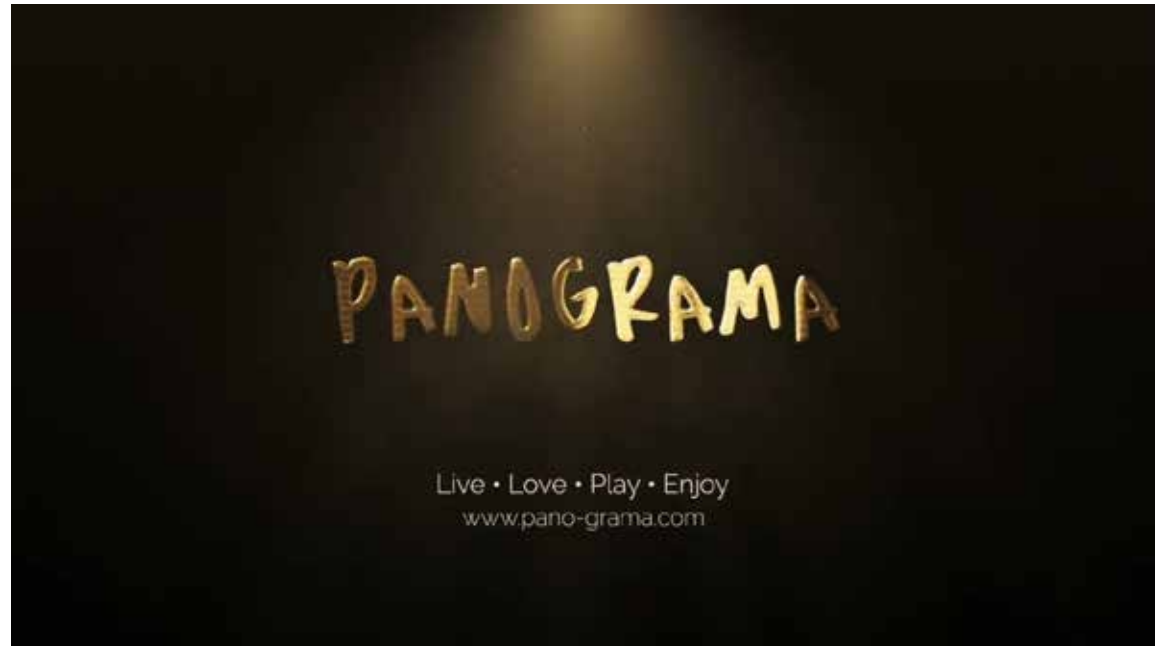
St. Kitts & Nevis - Aaron Mentos

St. Lucia - Al Alexander

Trinidad & Tobago - Shaquille Forbes, Marcus Prince, Sachelle Thomas, Devon Atherley, Jamel Cadette, Deja Cain, Simeon Superville, Aquila Pereira, Tevin Shockness, Christopher Neale, Hanif Goodridge, Emmanuel Joseph, Jaron Woodsley

USA - David Yundi

US Virgin Islands - Miguel Bougouneau



Local News



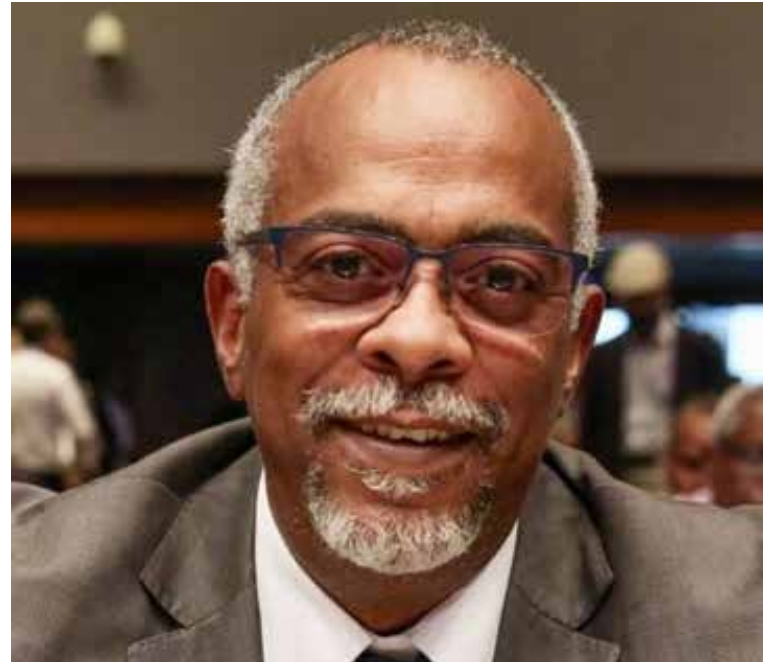
The UWI mourns the passing of Dr. Hugh Sealy

The University of the West Indies has been plunged into mourning at the passing of former lecturer, Dr. Hugh Sealy who was attached to its Barbados, Cave Hill Campus.

“Dr. Hugh Sealy served our University and Caribbean region with distinction. He put his mind and heart into tackling the climate crisis facing the Caribbean. His teaching, research, scholarly publications, and expert contributions to technical advisory boards reflected his passion and commitment to both advancing the science on climate change issues faced by small states

of the Caribbean. He also shared his knowledge and expertise with younger generations. The UWI family feels a tremendous loss,” said Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, Vice-Chancellor of The UWI, as he expressed the University community’s sadness at the sudden loss of Dr. Sealy, who died on 18th March.

Lecturer on climate change and water resources management at The UWI’s Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) at its Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, Dr. Sealy nurtured young minds—teaching in



Dr. Hugh Sealy

the areas of Climate change impacts: Adaptation & mitigation, Policy response to climate change, Water and wastewater management, Water management and the environment, and Field studies skill. Dr. Hugh Sealy was also a notable consultant, project manager, professional engineer, environmental scientist, and most recently led technical advisory support at Glasgow’s COP26.

In these landmark global climate summit discussions, The UWI scientist anchored the Barbados delegation, providing technical advisory support, as the technical lead of the Barbados delegation and lead negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). He championed AOSIS positions on matters related to raising the mitigation ambition of all countries to limit global warming to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius and was a

co-facilitator of the negotiations under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

In recognition of his work at CERMES, Dr. Sealy was also selected to serve on the Management Committee for The UWI’s flagship Global Institute for Climate Smart and Resilient Development. This first-of-its-kind virtual UWI climate hub for the Caribbean, harnesses The UWI’s research and teaching on climate change, disaster risk reduction, resilience and sustainable development and was launched in October 2021.

Commenting on Dr. Sealy’s invaluable contributions, Pro Vice-Chancellor Global Affairs, Dr. Stacy Kennedy said, “We are all deeply saddened and will miss our dear colleague. Dr. Sealy was committed to the vision of a one-UWI approach to advancing climate

cont’d on pg 9

NOTICE

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

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

Dear Sir/ Madame,

Re: Notice- Application for Bottle License

I, Charles Worrel Joseph of Bolans, with registered business situated at Bolans St. Mary’s Antigua and Barbuda **DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE** that it is my intention to apply at the next sitting of the liquor licensing Court to be held at the Magistrate’s Court, Gray’s Farm, St. John’s, Antigua on Thursday 7th April, 2022 next ensuring for a Bottle License Pursuant to section (11) (5) of the Licensing (intoxication Liquor) Act Cap. 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda 1992 Revised Edition, in respect of premises known as “**N&C.W Joseph Superette**” situated at Bolans in the parish of St. Mary’s, Antigua and Barbuda.

Dated the 19th day of March 2022
Tel#780-0401 785-6165

cont'd from pg 8

action and was steadfast in his dedicated contributions to the success of our Global Climate-Smart Institute. He was always very willing to share his knowledge and experience leading climate negotiations at the international level and to build awareness of the multiple vulnerabilities of Caribbean SIDS as well as the need for urgent action by global players.”

Dr Sealy's life's work superbly intersected the spheres of civil service, private sector and academia. He earned his first degree in chemical engineering from McGill University (Canada) and his M.Sc. and Ph.D. from Brunel University (UK) and the University of Liverpool (UK) respectively. He

also served as Director of the Environmental and Occupational Health Track in the Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine in the School of Medicine at

St. George's University in Grenada, worked for Intel (Barbados Ltd.), was the regional manager for Stantec (a large Canada-based engineering firm) and Managing

Director of New Water Inc., a firm specialising in wastewater treatment technology; and was a Past President of the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association.



BARBUDA EXPRESS

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SATURDAY
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BA 10:00

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Lifestyle

Research shows healthier supermarket layout improves customers' food choices

New research from the University of Southampton shows that removing confectionery and other unhealthy products from checkouts and the end of nearby aisles and placing fruit and vegetables near store entrances prompts customers to make healthier food purchases.

The study, led by Dr. Christina Vogel, Principal Research Fellow in Public Health Nutrition and Janis Baird, Professor of Public Health and Epidemiology at the University's MRC Lifecourse Epidemiology Centre, was conducted in partnership with the national supermarket chain Iceland Foods Ltd.

The trial took place in a selection of Iceland stores in England and monitored store sales as well as the purchasing and dietary patterns of a sample of regular customers.

The results showed store-wide confectionery sales decreased and fruit and vegetable sales increased when non-food items and water were placed at checkouts and at the end of the opposite aisles, and an expanded fruit and vegetable section was repositioned near the store entrance.

Beneficial effects were



also observed for household fruit and vegetable purchasing and individual dietary quality. The full details were presented in the open-access journal PLOS Medicine from August 24th, 2021.

When talking about the results of the study Dr Vogel said "Altering the layouts of supermarkets could help people make healthier food choices and shift population diet towards the government's dietary recommendations.

The findings of our study suggest that a healthier store layout could lead to nearly 10,000 extra portions of fruit and vegetables and approximately 1,500

fewer portions of confectionery being sold on a weekly basis in each store."

This research is more comprehensive than previous studies testing whether placement strategies can promote healthier food purchasing which have been limited in scope, for example including only a single location (i.e. checkouts) or placing healthy and unhealthy products together.

This study went further, aiming to reduce customers' exposure to calorie opportunities by placing non-food items at checkout and aisle-ends opposite and measuring effects on store sales, customer loyalty card purchasing patterns, and

the diets of more than one household member.

Matt Downes, Head of Format Development at Iceland said "We have been pleased to support this long-term study and the evaluation of how product placement in supermarkets can affect the diets of our customers.

"We know that childhood obesity is a growing issue, and the retail industry has its part to play in tackling this.

"We hope that the outcomes of the study provide insights for the wider retail industry and policymakers about the impact of store merchandising on purchasing decisions."

Lab study finds AstraZeneca drug beats Omicron

Drugmaker AstraZeneca said on Monday that its antibody-based cocktail to prevent and treat COVID-19 was shown to retain neutralising activity against Omicron coronavirus variants, including the highly contagious BA.2 sub-variant, in an independent lab study.

Data from the study by the Washington University showed the therapy reduced the amount of virus detected in samples of all tested Omicron sub-

variants in mice lungs, the London-listed drugmaker said on Monday. The study has yet to be peer-reviewed.

The therapy, Evusheld, was tested against the BA.1, BA.1.1, and BA.2 subvariants of Omicron and it was also shown to limit inflammation in the lungs.

“The findings further support Evusheld as a potentially important option to help protect vulnerable patients such as the immu-



nocompromised who could face poor outcomes if they were to become infected

with COVID-19,” senior AstraZeneca executive John Perez said.

The World Health Organization said last week figures showing a global rise in COVID-19 cases could herald a much bigger problem, as the Omicron and BA.2 variants spread amid the easing of restrictions and testing.

Vaccines rely on an intact immune system to develop targeted antibodies and infection-fighting cells, but Evusheld contains lab-made antibodies designed to linger in the body for months to contain the virus in case of an infection.

The results come after Britain last week approved the therapy for preventing infections in adults with poor immune response. Evusheld is currently under a European review and has been authorised in the United States.

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Technology



Russia finds Meta guilty of 'extremist activity', says WhatsApp can stay

By Susan Fenton,
Jonathan Oatis and
Emelia Sithole-Matarise

A Moscow court on Monday found Meta Platforms Inc (FB.O) guilty of "extremist activity" but said its decision would not affect the WhatsApp messenger service, focusing its ire on the company's already banned Facebook and Instagram social networks.

Moscow's Tverskoi District Court upheld a lawsuit filed by Russian state prosecutors on banning the activities of Meta on Russian territory, the court's press service said in a statement.

Meta did not respond to requests for comment.

The U.S. company's lawyer, Victoria Shagina, had said in court earlier on Monday that Meta was not carrying out extremist activities and stood against Russophobia, the Interfax news agency reported.

TASS cited judge Olga Solopova as saying the decision would be enforced immediately.

It was not immediately clear whether Meta would appeal.

The court said the activities of Facebook and

Instagram in Russia were banned "on the grounds of realising extremist activity".

Russia has in the past designated groups such as the Taliban and Islamic State as "extremist" but later expanded this to the Jehovah's Witnesses and jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation.

The implications of Monday's ruling remain unclear.

Meta's flagship platforms, Facebook and Instagram, are already banned in Russia and the court said WhatsApp would be unaffected by the ruling.

"The decision does not apply to the activi-

ties of Meta's messenger WhatsApp, due to its lack of functionality for the public dissemination of information," the court said.

Russia banned Facebook for restricting access to Russian media while Instagram was blocked after Meta said it would allow social media users in Ukraine to post messages urging violence against Russian President Vladimir Putin and troops Moscow sent into Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Russia calls the conflict in Ukraine a "special military operation" to disarm Ukraine and protect it from people it describes as dangerous nationalists.

Meta has since nar-

rowed its guidance to prohibit calls for the death of a head of state and said its guidance should never be interpreted as condoning violence against Russians in general. [read more](#)

But the perceived threat to Russian citizens angered Russian authorities and led to the launch of a criminal case against the company.

WhatsApp's fate

It was not immediately clear how the WhatsApp messaging service would be able to continue operating now that the court has put a stop to Meta's commercial activities.

Analysis of mobile internet traffic on Monday

cont'd on pg 13



cont'd from pg 12

showed that Telegram, popular in Russia for a long time, has overtaken WhatsApp to become the country's most popular messaging tool in recent weeks.

The prosecution sought to allay fears that people who find ways around bans on Meta's services may face criminal charges for liaising with an extremist group.

"Individuals will not be prosecuted simply for using Meta's services," TASS cited the prosecutor as saying in court.

But human rights lawyer Pavel Chikov said neither the court, nor the prosecutor could guarantee the safety of Facebook or Instagram users, warning that any public displays of Meta symbols - on websites, shop entrances, on business cards -

could be grounds for administrative charges and up to 15 days in jail under Russian law.

"Buying adverts on both social networks or trading Meta's shares may qualify as financing extremism activity - this is a criminal offence," he wrote on Telegram.

Facebook last year had an estimated 7.5 million users and WhatsApp 67 million, according to researcher Insider Intelligence.

Way back for META?

Russia's military operation in Ukraine has added fuel to a simmering dispute between foreign digital platforms and Moscow.

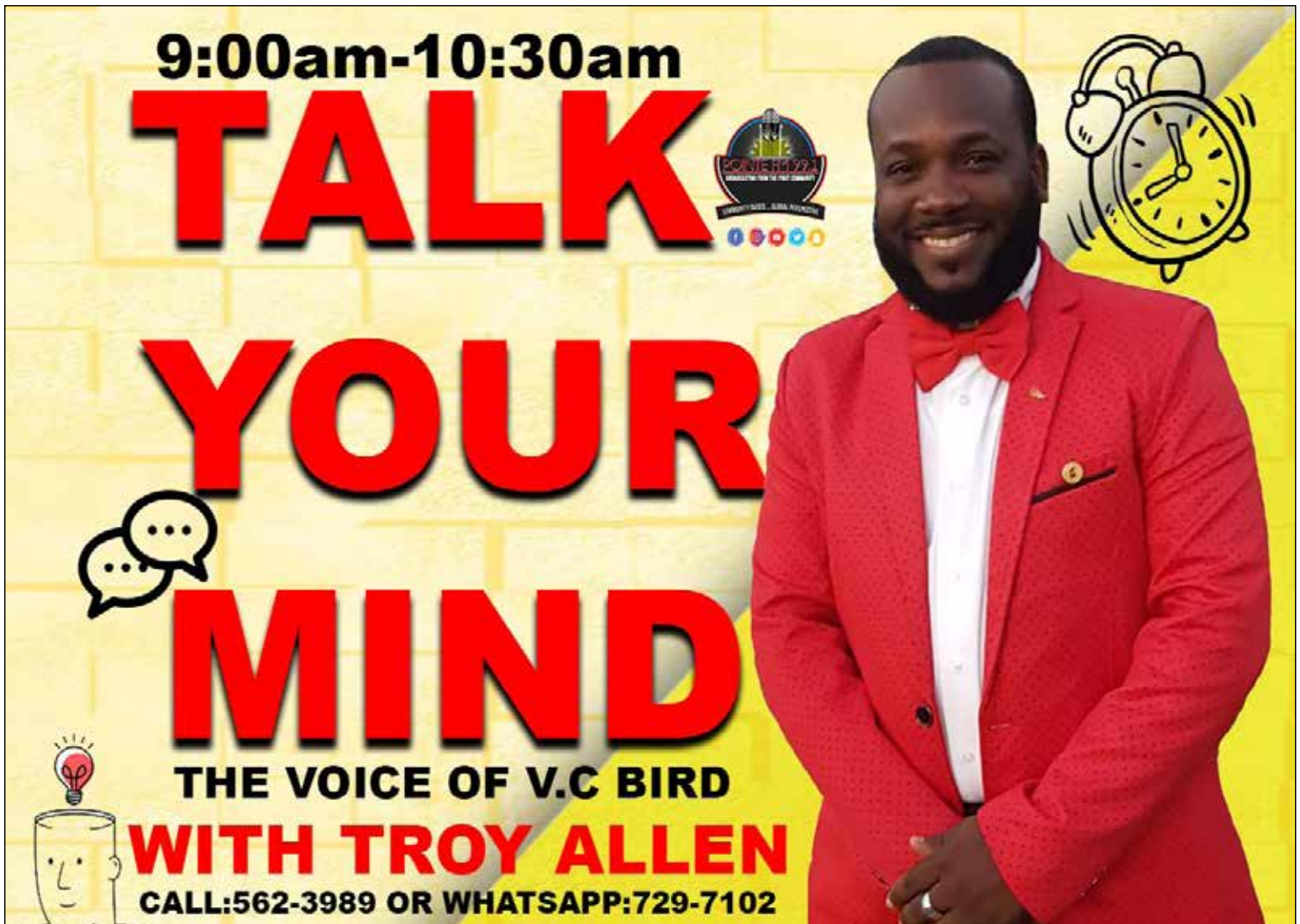
Access to Twitter has also been restricted and on Friday communications regulator Roskomnadzor demanded that Alphabet Inc's Google stop spreading what it called threats

against Russian citizens on its YouTube video-sharing platform.

Anton Gorelkin, a member of Russia's State Duma committee on information and communications who has fiercely criticised foreign firms, while championing domestic alternatives, said the Russian market could be opened to Meta again, but only on Moscow's terms.

"These are an immediate end to blocking Russian media, a return to the policy of neutrality and strict moderation of fakes and anti-Russian comments," Gorelkin said on Telegram.

Another condition, Gorelkin said, was that Meta comply with a Russian law demanding that foreign companies with more than 500,000 daily users open representative offices in Russia.



9:00am-10:30am

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Jamaicans shun UK royal visit, demand slavery reparations

AP - Dozens of well-known leaders in Jamaica including professors and politicians are demanding an apology and slavery reparations as the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge prepare for a trip to the former British colony.

The group is rejecting the visit of Prince William and Kate scheduled for today, part of a larger trip to the Caribbean region that coincides with the 60th anniversary of Jamaica's independence and the 70th anniversary of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

"We see no reason to celebrate 70 years of the ascension of your grandmother to the British throne because her leadership, and that of her predecessors, have perpetuated the greatest human rights tragedy in the history of humankind," read a letter published Sunday ahead of the couple's visit and signed by 100 Jamaican leaders.

The weeklong royal tour of Central America and the Caribbean that began on Saturday was taken at the behest of the queen, who is William's grandmother.

The trip aims to strengthen Britain's ties with Commonwealth countries, but it's off to a rocky start and comes as some countries consider cutting ties to the monarchy like the eastern Caribbean island of Barbados did in November.



Prince William and Kate Middleton.

Local opposition forced the royal couple to cancel a visit to a cacao farm in Belize that was planned for Saturday, while the upcoming trip to Jamaica has angered some who say they are still waiting for an apology and slavery reparations.

Jamaica lawmaker Mike Henry, who has long led an effort to obtain reparations that he estimates at more than 7 billion pounds, told The Associated Press in a phone interview that an apology is only the first step for what he described as "abuse of human life and labor."

"An apology really admits that there is some guilt," he said.

Hundreds of thousands

of African slaves toiled in Jamaica under more than 300 years of British rule and faced brutal conditions. There were numerous bloody rebellions, with one woman called "Queen Nanny" leading a group of formerly enslaved Africans known as Jamaican Maroons whose guerrilla warfare became renown and battered British forces. "Queen Nanny" remains the sole female of Jamaica's eight national heroes.

During their two-day stay in Jamaica, Prince William and Kate are expected to celebrate Bob Marley's legacy, a move that also has riled some Jamaicans.

"As a Rastafarian, Bob Marley embodied advocacy

and is recognized globally for the principles of human rights, equality, reparations and repatriation," stated the letter of those demanding an apology.

The group said that it would be celebrating 60 years of freedom from Britain, adding that it is saddened "that more progress has not been made given the burden of our colonial inheritance."

"We nonetheless celebrate the many achievements of great Jamaicans who rejected negative, colonial self-concepts and who self-confidently succeeded against tremendous odds. We will also remember and celebrate our freedom fighters."

Acting Prisons Commissioner orders review after 5 T&T inmates escape

T&T Newsday - An investigation as well as a review of current security measures in the nation's prisons has been ordered by Acting Prisons Commissioner Deopersad Ramoutar in the wake of the escape of five inmates on Sunday night from the Golden Grove prison in Trinidad.

One of the escapees, Kevin Jagdeo, was arrested shortly after the jailbreak but up to press time, the other four remained at large.

The inmates: Kurien Douglas, 26, Theon Thomas, 23, Anthony Seepersad, 28, Shaquille Drayton, 30, and 32-year-old Jagdeo, got out of their dormitories at around 10.30 pm and escaped from the facility.

Jagdeo was arrested at Trincity Boulevard near the Dinsley Government school shortly after.

Contacted for comment on Monday, Ramoutar said initial investigations showed the men broke through the roof of the dormitories. He said a review of current security arrangements will be done in order to prevent another jailbreak.

"The inmates breached the roof of the dormitory and this gives us something to think about in what we can do to strengthen the integrity of the existing roof structure.

"Like everything else in the country, finances are



Four of the escaped prisoners remain at large

at its lowest and later today I'll be having a meeting with my executive to find ways of improving the security integrity of the dormitories.

"What is totally under my command is officers' performance while on duty and that is one of my focuses moving forward as newly appointed acting commissioner."

Ramoutar said while the escape was unfortunate, he was pleased with the response of the police and citizens which led to the arrest of one of the escapees not too long after the incident.

He added that while investigations into the escape are continuing, thus far, there was no information to suggest prison officers on

duty were negligent.

"The (prison) officers gave a good account of the overnight activities. The enquiry is ongoing but there hasn't been anything pointing to negligence so far."

Newsday understands the men were expected to be released next year and were brought to the prison from the Carrera Island prison to begin a course of study in auto body straightening, painting and repairs in order to improve their job prospects on release.

Contacted for comment, president of the Prison Officers' Association Ceron Richards said while the situation was unfortunate it could have been avoided. He described the prison dormitories as derelict.

He said despite repeated calls from the association to have these dormitories refurbished, no remedial work was done.

"I can't help but think about all the years we've asked for those dormitories to be broken down and refurbished and once you have inmates housed in these kinds of facilities, they will be a thinking of how old and aged the buildings are.

"Once you are trying to maintain security in an institution it is critical to keep infrastructure updated, once that is done the whole notion of wanting to escape will be deterred. "When these things are lacking it's easy to see why escapes are possible," Richards said.

Regional News



Russians have \$3b of assets in Bahamas, central bank says

Reuters - Financial institutions in the Bahamas have around \$3 billion in assets whose owners are linked to Russia, the Caribbean nation's central bank said late on Friday.

The Bahamas on March 12 ordered a halt to all transactions with Russian entities that have been put under sanction by Western nations.

The central bank found \$420 million in deposits and \$2.5 billion in custody or trust assets "with ultimate beneficial owners



from or connected to Russia" in Bahamian financial institutions that are licensed to serve foreign clients.

Those figures apply only to the international banking and trust sector, which serve clients outside the country, and do not in-

clude any Russian assets that could be held in Bahamian banks that serve the local population, the central bank said.

It did not say what portion of those assets were held by Russians under sanction.

The Bahamas nation has vocally condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but appears to remain conflicted over how aggressively it can participate in sanctions efforts without damaging its relatively small economy.

Barbados switching to polymer banknotes this year

Barbados Today - By the end of the year, Barbadians will be using new-look banknotes made of polymer. This was announced today by the Central Bank of Barbados on Monday.

In announcing the new notes, Governor Cleviston Haynes said, "The Bank remains committed to reducing the use of cash and ensuring that Barbadians have a range of payment options available to them. At the same time, however, we recognise that cash remains popular.

"There are still many Barbadians for whom cash is their principal means of payment, and others who continue to use it in combination with other options."

Polymer banknotes have become increasingly common in recent years as banknote manufacturers have found ways to incorporate novel and varied

security features in them. The Governor confirmed that this functionality was the rationale for the change.

"With this transition to polymer, we will be able to offer Barbadians banknotes that are highly secure, with features that are harder to simulate yet easy to authenticate." He added that while counterfeiting was not a major issue at present, the Bank has chosen to take a proactive approach.

Haynes also revealed that the banknotes would have a new design, but that some familiar elements would not be changed.

"The change in material will mean that the new notes have a different feel in addition to the new look, but some things will remain the same, among them the denominations, the colours, and the noted Barbadians who are featured on them. The value of the notes



Governor Cleviston Haynes

will also remain the same."

While he did not give a specific date for the launch, the Central Bank Governor confirmed that the public would soon get a look at the new notes.

"We will unveil the designs of the new banknotes in early May to give Barbadians a chance to get to know both the design and security features before they are issued at the end of the year."

Chinese Boeing jet crashes in mountains with 132 on board, no sign of survivors

Reuters - A China Eastern Airlines (600115.SS) Boeing 737-800 with 132 people on board crashed in mountains in southern China on a domestic flight on Monday after a sudden descent from cruising altitude. Media said there were no signs of survivors.

The airline said it deeply mourned the passengers and crew, without specifying how many people had been killed.

Chinese media showed brief highway video footage from a vehicle's dashcam apparently showing a jet diving to the ground behind trees at an angle of about 35 degrees off vertical. Reuters could not immediately verify the footage.

The plane was en route from the southwestern city of Kunming, capital of Yunnan province, to Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong, bordering Hong Kong, when it crashed.

China Eastern said the cause of the crash, in which the plane descended at 31,000 feet a minute according to flight tracking website FlightRadar24, was under investigation.

The airline said it had provided a hotline for relatives of those on board and sent a working group to the site. There were no foreigners on the flight, Chinese state television reported, citing China Eastern.

Media cited a rescue official as saying the plane had disintegrated and caused a fire destroying bamboo trees. The People's Daily quoted a provincial firefighting department official as saying there was no sign of life among the debris.

State media showed a piece of the plane on a scarred, earthen hillside.



There was no sign of a fire or personal belongings.

The aircraft, with 123 passengers and nine crew on board, lost contact over the city of Wuzhou, China's Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) and the airline said.

The flight left Kunming at 1:11 p.m. (0511 GMT), FlightRadar24 data showed, and had been due to land in Guangzhou at 3:05 p.m. (0705 GMT).

The plane, which FlightRadar24 said was six years old, had been cruising at 29,100 feet at 0620 GMT. Just over two minutes and 15 seconds later, data showed it had descended to 9,075 feet.

Twenty seconds later, its last tracked altitude was 3,225 feet.

Crashes during the cruise phase of flights are relatively rare even though this phase accounts for the majority of flight time. Boeing said last year only 13% of fatal commercial accidents

globally between 2011 and 2020 occurred during the cruise phase, whereas 28% occurred on final approach and 26% on landing.

"Usually the plane is on auto-pilot during cruise stage. So, it is very hard to fathom what happened," said Li Xiaojin, a Chinese aviation expert.

Online weather data showed partly cloudy conditions with good visibility in Wuzhou at the time of the crash.

President Xi Jinping called for investigators to determine the cause of the crash as soon as possible, state broadcaster CCTV reported.

A Boeing spokesperson said: "We are aware of the initial media reports and are working to gather more information."

China Eastern grounded its fleet of 737-800 planes after the crash, state media reported. China Eastern has 109 of the aircraft in its fleet, according to FlightRadar24.

UN rights expert urges North Korea to reopen to aid, food

Reuters - A U.N. human rights investigator called on North Korea on Monday to reopen its borders to aid workers and food imports, saying that its further self-isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic may have left many facing "hunger and starvation."

Tomas Ojea Quintana, addressing the U.N. Human Rights Council, said chronic food insecurity was already widespread before the pandemic began two years ago. Only 29% of children aged 6-23 months receive the minimum acceptable diet, he said.

"Now with the country still in the grip of strict COVID-19 measures, there are serious concerns that the most vulnerable segments of the population may be facing hunger and starvation," he said.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has not reported any COVID-19 cases and has imposed strict anti-virus measures since the onset of the pandemic, including border closures and domestic travel curbs.

Foreign aid agencies and embassies largely left the country after the restrictions made it hard maintain a presence there.

Ojea Quintana urged North Korea to "gradually open its borders and urgently allow for the return



People wearing protective face masks walk amid concerns over the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Pyongyang, North Korea May 15, 2020, in this photo released by Kyodo. Mandatory credit Kyodo/via REUTERS

of United Nations agencies, other international organisations and the diplomatic community, and for economic activity and movement of people".

North Korea does not recognise Ojea Quintana's mandate as U.N. special rapporteur for human rights in DPRK or allow him to visit. Its delegation did not take the floor during the debate.

Diplomatic efforts aimed at getting Pyongyang to abandon nuclear weapons should also focus on long-standing rights concerns, Ojea Quintana said.

This included the need to release people held in its system of 'kwanliso' or political prison camps which he said constituted crimes against humanity - a charge Pyongyang has rejected.

North Korea appeared to have fired a short-range multiple rocket launcher on Sunday, South Korea's military said, amid heightened military tensions on the peninsula after a spate of larger missile launches by the nuclear-armed North.

Ojea Quintana, noting that North Korea has allocated 15.9% of its national budget for defence, said: "The Government has an

obligation to prioritize the right to adequate food when allocating state resources".

North Korea's coercive system of governance deprives people in the country of fundamental freedoms, Ojea Quintana said, citing repression including arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and the practice of forced labour.

During the pandemic, "draconian measures have further strengthened the State's control over the population, such as the policy of shooting individuals who attempt to enter or leave the country", he said.

Mali's ex-Prime Minister Soumeylou Maiga dies in detention

Mali's former Prime Minister Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga died on Monday in the capital, Bamako, a close relative of his family announced.

Maiga, who served as prime minister of Mali from 2017 until 2019, was 67.

He remained an influential figure in security policy in Mali and the surrounding Sahel region and had been detained since August 2021 when the country was taken over by a military junta. His requests for medical evacuation had been refused by the military rulers of the West African country.

Maiga's state of health deteriorated sharply a few days ago and approval for him to be moved from Mali for treatment was being considered but did not happen in time, according to a relative who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the press on the situation. Maiga died in a clinic, he said.

The information has been confirmed by several other people close to him. Some heads of state in West Africa have confirmed the account as well.

Niger President Mohamed Bazoum reacted in a tweet, saying that the denial of overseas medical care for Maiga was similar to an assassination



Mali's former Prime Minister Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga

"I have just learned with dismay of the death of Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga, former Prime Minister of Mali. His death in prison recalls that of President Modibo Keita in 1977. I thought that such assassinations belonged to another era. My condolences to his family and friends," he said in the tweet.

The president of the political party Alliance for Solidarity in Mali - Convergence of Patriotic Forces ASMA-CFP, Maiga was a journalist by training. In the 1990s he was appointed the director of intelligence services by President Alpha Oumar Konaré.

Critics accused him of being behind the creation of the ethnic Gandakoy militia that is accused of abuses against civilians of the Tuareg ethnic minority in northern Mali.

He went on to occupy

Amadou Toumani Touré and then Minister of Defense under President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita before serving as Prime Minister from 2017 to 2019. Maiga resigned from that post in after the killings of more than 160 Fulani civilians and protests against the state for continued insecurity.

Keita was overthrown in a coup by a military putsch in August 2020. Maiga was later arrested in Bamako in 2021 on allegations of fraud related to his time as minister of defense between 2013 and 2014.

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Thomas Tuchel celebrates Chelsea's victory against Lille OSC

Chelsea: Centricus bid to buy club intends to 'maintain existing management'

Global investment firm Centricus is funding another British bid to buy Chelsea, saying it wants to "maintain and support existing management".

The Premier League club was put up for sale by Russian owner Roman Abramovich before he was sanctioned following his country's invasion of Ukraine.

This latest bid, backed by Centricus - which has £29bn in assets - features several Chelsea season-ticket holders.

At least four consortiums have said they have bid to buy the Blues,

There is a group featuring Sir Martin Broughton and Lord Coe, and one headed by British property investor Nick Candy.

Candy increased his bid on Monday after the addition of another large international backer, a statement from his Blue Football Consortium said.

The lifelong Chelsea fan is said to have improved on his £2bn bid after a large Korean financial institution

joined his consortium over the weekend.

Proof of funds have been sent to the American investment firm Raine Group, who are handling the sale.

United States interest comes from the Ricketts family, while a group consisting of Swiss billionaire Hansjorg Wyss and Los Angeles Dodgers part-owner Todd Boehly has also bid.

There are also reports that a bid from Saudi Media Group has been lodged with the Raine Group.

It is understood that those bidding will be whittled down to a shortlist this week with a sale expected before the end of the month.

Centricus co-founder Nizar Al-Bassam and chief executive Garth Ritchie are heading the bid, which also includes hedge fund manager Jonathan Lourie of Cheyne Capital and Bob Finch of Talis Capital.

In a statement, the group said it "will be committed to supporting [Chelsea] and its key stakeholders to

ensure its continued success".

It added: "Our financing for the deal includes funding for the completion of the transaction and funding for working capital required for the day-to-day operations of the CFC Group, funds required to maintain an elite global brand, investment in grassroots and in-community football initiatives such as the Chelsea Academy, the women's team, the youth development programme and the Chelsea Foundation and strategic real estate investment.

"The intention is to maintain and support existing management on both the business and sporting operations of the CFC Group. We intend to maintain the existing strategy direction.

"Clearly, the CFC Group has been operating in challenging conditions and we appreciate the importance for the CFC Group, the fans and other key stakeholders of ensuring a smooth and stable ownership transition."

Pakistan shock West Indies for first World Cup win in 13 years

AP - Off-spinner Nida Dar took four wickets for 10 runs as previously winless Pakistan beat the West Indies by eight wickets Monday in a match shortened to 20 overs per side at the Women's Cricket World Cup.

Pakistan's battery of spin bowlers came into its own in sticky conditions at Seddon Park to deal a blow to the West Indies' hopes of reaching the semi-finals.

The West Indies managed only 89-7 from its 20 overs and Pakistan surpassed that total with seven balls to spare, led by opener Muneeba Ali's 37 from 43 balls in her first innings at the tournament.

Pakistan captain Bismah Mahroof made 20 and Omaira Sohail 22 in an unbroken partnership of 33 for the team's first win at a World Cup in 13 years.

"We wanted that one badly," Bismah said. "We know we have been doing well but we didn't cross the line and win one. Now we want to think ahead and move forward in our efforts."

Torrential rain fell for much of the day and deep pools of water collected on the outfield. The rain abated about an hour after the scheduled start at 2 p.m. and the ground staff worked to dry the ground and to allow a 40-over match to begin by



7 p.m.

The pitch had been covered and protected from the rain, but it still was altered by the conditions; it gripped and turned and batting was difficult, made harder by a damp outfield that yielded boundaries reluctantly.

The West Indies' power-hitting game almost was neutralized by those conditions. Opener Deandra Dottin scored 27 from 35 balls with five fours before becoming Dar's first victim. The remainder of the innings contained only five more boundaries.

Dottin hit three fours in the third over, bowled by the medium pacer Diana Baig, and helped the West Indies to 19-0 at the end of the four-over play. But the West Indies' momentum

slowly ebbed as the Pakistan spinners bowled with accuracy, taking advantage of any turn.

The West Indies lost wickets regularly — three wickets in consecutive balls in the 16th and 17th overs — and wasn't able to keep runs flowing. They were 38-2 after 15 overs and the team 50 came up in the 13th over. After 15 overs, they were 62-4 and the last five overs saw the addition of only 27 runs.

The West Indies' defence began promisingly when Hayley Matthews bowled a first over maiden. But from then on Pakistan was able to keep up a steady run rate with singles. There were no more maidens and Pakistan was able to take singles when batters hit to

fielders inside the circle.

There were only six boundaries in the innings.

"Once I got in, I realized 110 to 115 would have been a good target," West Indies captain Stafanie Taylor said. "Somehow we just couldn't get to there."

"When we played Bangladesh, the spinners trumped us a bit and we couldn't rotate the strike and the same thing happened today."

The West Indies came into the match in third place behind unbeaten Australia and South Africa. Its loss on Monday sets back its hopes of reaching the semi-finals and brings India, New Zealand and Bangladesh back into top-four contention.

Australia and South Africa meet today.

Police extend unbeaten run in Parish League

Police maintained their 100 percent winning record when the Antigua Commercial Bank (ACB) Parish League's Dave Joseph Limited Overs Competition continued last weekend.

Police coasted to an easy 10-wicket victory over host Freetown.

Damon Valentine grabbed five for 19 and James Cornelius snatched two for eight to dismiss Freetown for 58 in which Delon Wills hit 42 not out.

Malique Gerald struck and unbeaten 37 and fellow opener Jeron Jones made 13 not out as Police wrapped up the match by reaching their victory target of 59 without loss.

Police also secured an impressive 103 run victory over Mahico at the Police Recreation Grounds. Shavon Moore hit 67, Gerald chipped in with 22 and Jones contributed 21 to lift Police to 173 for eight off their allotted 35 overs. Dwaine Fordyce claimed two for 18.

Cornelius then snapped up 5 for 12 and Lashorn Banarde captured 2 for 17 to bundle out Mahico for 70. Stephen Fane made 19 and Ian Tittle scored 15.

Sea View Fam also won both matches last weekend. They prevailed by six



wickets against Willikies at Willikies.

Vishal Gobin bagged five for 19 and Essan Warner claimed 2 for 17 as Willikies were dismissed for 98 with Kerry "Arab" Skepple hitting a top score of 40.

Rolston Triss Phillip and Demari Benta both made 27 not out and opener Essan Warner contributed 25 to guide Sea View Farm to victory at 101 for 4. Dean Williams captured 2 for 40.

Playing at home, Sea View Farm defeated Newfield by 28 runs. Warner hammered 68 and there were 25 extras in Sea View Farm's total of 150 for 6 off 24 overs. Shacoy Floyd picked up 2 for 30 and Jew-

el Andrew had 2 for 32.

Kerry Burton then snapped up 4 for 13 and Alfred Jarvis claimed 2 for 32 as Newfield were dismissed for 122. Peter Bellanfanti top scored with 35 and Floyd chipped in with 22.

However, Newfield were able to record a nine run victory over Mahico. Edwin Jackson struck 28 and Demetri Lucas got 23 in Newfield's total of 122 all out. Dwaine Fordyce snatched 3 for 19 and Omarley Heliger captured 2 for 13.

In reply, Mahico crashed to 113 all out with the help of 41 extras while Fordyce and Daren Dunnuh each contributed 21. Azim Panlall captured 2

for 16.

Host Freetown defeated Willikies by 13 runs. Former national left-handed opener Austin Richards Jr. slammed an unbeaten 97 and opener Kenrick Scott scored 35 to propel Freetown to 188 for 9 off their allotted overs.

Jahve Walsh bagged three for 25, Kerry Skepple picked up 2 for 13 and Dean Williams captured 2 for 53.

Willikies were then restricted to 175 for 6 with Timothy Thomas getting 54, Omar Hazelwood chipped in with 38 and there was a contribution of 31 extras.

Geetesh Harrilall took 3 for 33 and Wesley Williams claimed 2 for 34.

Man City's owner criticised by UK government for meeting Syria's president

Manchester City owner Sheikh Mansour has been criticised by the UK government for recently meeting with Syrian president Bashar al-Assad.

In his first trip to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) since the Syrian civil war began 11 years ago, Assad met several influential figures last week.

He was photographed with Mansour, who is deputy prime minister of the UAE.

A spokesperson for the Foreign Office said such meetings "undermine the prospect" of peace in Syria.

Assad's trip marks a potential warming in Syria's relations with its Arab neighbours, which had previously isolated the Syrian president.

UAE rulers signalled a willingness to strengthen ties with Syria again.

In a statement to The Athletic, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) responded to the move by saying: "It is the UK's firm belief that - in the absence of a change in behaviour by the Syrian re-



Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad is pictured meeting the UAE's Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who owns Manchester City Football Club

gime - strengthening ties undermines the prospect of a lasting and inclusive peace in Syria."

Jonathan Hargreaves, UK special representative for Syria, posted on Twitter: "After 11 years of conflict Assad's unreformed and unrepentant regime continues to commit atrocities against the Syrian people."

"Without changes in behaviour, engagement only serves to undermine collective efforts to encourage Assad

to participate in the UN-facilitated political process in good faith...

"The UK remains opposed to any normalisation of relations with the Syrian regime."

Labour MP Chris Bryant, chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Russia, shared those concerns and, in an interview with The Telegraph, went on to question if Mansour was a "fit and proper person to be owning a football club".

cont'd from pg 24

Empire's coach, former national and Leeward Islands middle-order batsman, Ian Tittle, felt his team's performance was disappointing.

"Honestly, the performance wasn't up to par. When we started in the field, we gave away a lot of runs. The bowlers were not keeping a good line and length and Liberta were scoring very fast," Tittle said.

"At one point I felt Liberta were on course to score 300 runs, but our bowlers came back and pulled it back a bit."

Tittle also felt his team also failed to capitalise on a good start to their run chase when Empire batted.

"We started well; we had over 200 runs on the board for the loss of just two wickets, and then they allowed too much dot balls and I guess the guys started to get nervous and we ended up losing the game by four runs," Tittle said.

"But we put up a fight to the end and the better team won. I would like to say congratulations to the Liberta Blackhawks for winning the game and I would like to

wish them all the best in the final."

Twenty-four hours earlier, Pigotts Crushers booked their place in the final as host and favourites All Saints produced a disappointing display to tumble to an unexpected defeat.

Chasing a paltry victory target of 125, Pythons surprisingly tumbled to 119 all out in 26.5 overs against Crushers. Jaylen Francis got a top score of 24 for the home side.

Trevaughn Atley captured two for 20, Elroy Francis Jr had two for 21, Ka-

deem Henry claimed two for 23 and Demari Benta took two for 25.

A knock of 47 by Elroy Francis Jr. plus a healthy contribution of 33 extras had lifted Crushers to 124 all out in 27.3 overs. Michael Marcellin bagged three for 25, Larry Joseph took 3 for 31 and Kerry Mentore captured 2 for 16.

All Saints Pythons will meet Empire Nation in the third-place playoffs at Coolidge on Saturday. Liberta Blackhawks will clash with Pigotts Crushers at the same venue on Sunday.

Liberta to meet Pigotts in ABCA Super-40 final

PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks and Pigotts Crushers will clash in the final of the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) Super-40 competition at the Coolidge Cricket Grounds this weekend.

The Blackhawks snatched a four run victory over host Empire Nation in the second semi-final at King George on Sunday to book their spot into the final, while Crushers pulled off a five run win against host All Saints Pythons at the Mack Pond playing field on Saturday to secure their place into this weekend's championship decider.

An enterprising third wicket partnership between opener Juari Edwards, with 73 off 89 balls, and Shane Burton, who cracked 42 off 27 deliveries, put Empire on course for victory.

But the dismissal of Burton, followed by Edwards shortly after, triggered a late batting collapse which led to Empire losing the match.

Damian Lowerfield provided some late order enterprise with 37 off 42 balls to keep the home side's hopes alive as Empire only needed nine runs to win in the final



PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks leave the field following their victory over Empire Nation in the semi-finals of the ABCA Super-40 competition at King George on Sunday.

over.

But it was the Blackhawks who showed great composure on the field as they only conceded four runs in the last over bowled by captain Karima Gore to restrict Empire to 255 for 7 and secure their place in the final.

Avier Christian and Kadeem Phillip capped fine all round performances to claim 2 for 53 and 2 for 58 respectively for the Blackhawks.

Gore offered high commendations to his experienced players for coming to Liberta's aid in securing their hard-fought victory.

"To be honest, they had us under pressure for some time and we were able to stay in the game which allowed our more experienced guys to come back and finish the overs at the death.

"Our pace bowlers don't have much experience because we have a young team and a young bowling lineup, so it was really the more experienced guys that came through for us today," Gore said after the match.

Christian and Phillip had earlier struck half centuries to propel Liberta Blackhawks to a challenging 259 for eight off their allotted 40 overs.

Christian made 58 off 65 balls while Phillip hammered an unbeaten 53 of just 26 deliveries, including five sixes and three fours. Uri Smith chipped in with 46 off 46 balls.

Lowerfield captured 3 for 59 and Cleton Payne snapped up 2 for 7 for Empire.

cont'd on pg 23



PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks captain, Karima Gore. (Photos: Elwin Francis)