

CIPS MUST PROVE THEIR SECURITY TO SURVIVE

Story on Page 2



Young sailors aged 14 - 25 will have the opportunity to hone their seafaring skills during this year's Antigua Sailing Week in the Axxess Marine Y2K Race Day. *Story on page 8.*

EU must be assured CIPs are safe if they are to survive, say experts

European Public Affairs and political expert, Jacobo Truan Aguirre, says the nations impacted by the recently passed European Parliament legislation must act immediately and raise their concerns with the European Commission for consideration.

According to Aguirre, who recently addressed the threat to Caribbean Citizenship by Investment Programmes (CIPs, time is of the essence as the EU Commission could take as many as three years or as little as months to move to end its CIPs within the grouping and penalise those nations which continue to promote them by revoking their visa free access to EU member nations, a move which would spell the end of CIPs around the world.

On Tuesday, during an international forum which discussed the future of CIPs, Aguirre said how quickly this all transpires depends on the motivation of EU member nations to act. He stressed, however, that despite the EU's actions to address CIPs and Residency by Investment Programmes within the grouping, it would take very little effort to revoke the visa waivers third countries now benefit from.

All is not lost however; as he said there are avenues affected nations can band together to lobby and fight back.

“If third countries do have a concern, as regards this resolution the European Parliament has adopted, what they need to do right now is start engaging the European Commission from this very moment, because they are going to start looking at it and say what is the political cost of the European Commission not to agree with the European Parliament.

“What they need to do is to start showing the European Commission why these programmes should be



European Public Affairs expert, Jacobo Truan Aguirre

kept, they need to start showing the European Commission how they guarantee maximum security and establish safety nets for these programmes to be actually safe; safe for the third country itself and also the European Union.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Gaston Browne, who also participated in the forum on Tuesday says beyond the socio-economic benefits of CIPs to participating OECS nations, these programmes have also played a significant role in the stability of foreign reserves in the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank which ensured stability for all members of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union, some of which do not have CIPs.

“I have no doubt that it's primarily because of the foreign exchange earnings under CBI, and especially considering too that within the last decade, we've had two significant, exogenous shocks.

“We have had, for example, the financial crisis then subsequently COVID. If it wasn't for the CBI Programmes, I mean, these countries be-

cause of how vulnerable they are, they would have been in significant financial problems.”

In light of the unique circumstances of OECS nations, Prime Minister Browne insisted that a ‘broad brush approach’ cannot be taken by the EU when taking action that threatens the stability of the Caribbean region.

“I think there ought to be a carve out for the OECS/Caribbean, recognising our vulnerabilities, recognising the fact that we are susceptible to both endogenous and exogenous shocks. And the shocks are not limited to pandemics and natural disasters.

“So, this one size fits all approach will not work. We understand that in the European Union, they have every right to phase out, to regulate as they deem appropriate, but in the case of the Caribbean CBI Programmes, it would be good if we can have a carve out. But we understand too that we have to give them certain undertakings to at least reassure them of the safety of our programmes,” said Prime Minister Browne.



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State Insurance Company Limited and its Board of Directors announce that effective **March 15, 2022**, after 35 years, Mrs. Lyndell Francis-Butler, our Chief Executive Officer, has left to start the next chapter of her career.

The Board of Directors of State Insurance Company Limited would like to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation to Mrs. Butler for her leadership and numerous achievements over the many years as our Chief Executive Officer. The Company has experienced a phenomenal period of growth and local expansion under her direction, and we continue to build on the solid foundation that was created. The Board of Directors' wishes Mrs. Butler every success in all her future endeavors.

Mr. Andre Knight, State Insurance Company Limited's Chief Financial Officer, has been appointed as Acting Chief Executive Officer to continue the progress that the company has made and to ensure that the company continues to live up to its mandate. Mr. Knight has been with the company for 20 years and will be supported by the Board of Directors and a highly experienced team of Management, Staff and Partners.

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2021 driest season in more than 90 years

Antigua and Barbuda's driest season was recorded last year since record keeping began in 1928.

The revelation was made by Climatologist Orvin Paige who described 2021 as the "worst year for rainfall at V.C Bird International Airport".

Speaking on the observance of World Meteorological Day yesterday, Paige told state television that the country's average rainfall is in the region of 39.5 inches. However, 2021 records reflected only 18.5 inches.

Antigua and Barbuda has been experiencing drought conditions for several years, resulting in dried up water catchments and the introduction of water rationing as APUA struggles to meet the demand of its consumers.

As the government takes urgent steps to ease the burden being felt nationwide with the commissioning of reverse osmosis plants,

Paige issued a stark warning that the situation is unlikely to let up anytime soon.

"This year, we've started pretty well. Right now, we are little ahead of where we're really supposed to be so that is good news. But because we're talking about 18.5 inches last year, you can easily appreciate we are in deficit territory with a makeup," Paige pointed out.

"So far, we are looking good, but we are in deficit territory, and so the drought conditions, which started, I would even say before 2021, certainly continuing and it's not really easing, because we're not making up the shortfall as yet."

The climatologist attributes the struggles to climate change and cautioned if Antigua and Barbuda does not play its part in reducing greenhouse emissions, it will be a contributor - albeit a small one - to the problem.

Paige, who is attached to the Antigua and Barbuda



Climatologist Orvin Paige

Meteorological Service at V. C. Bird International Airport, said with the situation worsening, everyone must play a role in identifying the threats and taking corrective measures that will lessen the impact on vulnerable states. These measures include planting trees and reducing dependency on fossil fuel.

Additionally, he stressed the importance of the public being able to identify

threats.

"We are in a zone where tropical cyclones become a real threat, as well as extreme events like flooding. We just have... to make sure to stay alert, listen to official information coming from the Met Office. We are committed to ensuring that the public would receive the relevant information to guide decision making.

"Our focus is not just what the weather will be, but we're shifting focus to make sure the public is aware what the weather will do, and what specific actions are required of residents, so that they can take the necessary actions to reduce loss of life and property. So that's our commitment, we want persons to be aware of that," he concluded.

<p>Thu 24 Day</p> <p>82°   17%  E 17 mph</p> <p>Mostly sunny. High 82F. Winds E at 15 to 25 mph.</p>	<p>Thu 24 Night</p> <p>75°   18%  E 16 mph</p> <p>A few clouds from time to time. Low near 75F. Winds E at 10 to 20 mph.</p>
<p> Humidity 67%</p> <p> UV Index Extreme</p>	<p> Humidity 75%</p> <p> UV Index 0 of 10</p>
<p> Sunrise 6:08 am</p> <p> Sunset 6:18 pm</p>	<p> Moonrise --</p> <p> Moonset 11:05 am</p> <p> Waning Gibbous</p>

Barbuda officials aim to boost tourism

The Barbuda Council intends to upgrade the environs where one of its historic sites is located as it seeks to boost the tourism industry on the sister isle.

Earlier this week, the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) announced a partnership with the Barbuda Council and UK creative agency Motel, with the aim of promoting the island as an off the beaten track island escape.

Expressing delight with the recent development, Barbuda Council's Tourism and Culture Chairperson Calsey Joseph said in addition to

the new development, they are exploring other ways to draw visitors there.

"We've started some discussions to rehabilitate the Martello Tower surroundings. That way, we can once again feature this historical landmark in a magnificent way. As we are aware, this landmark was utilized in the past, as a wedding destination site...we are anticipating that historical areas such as these can receive more support to be well established."

According to the tourism and culture chair, the Frigate Bird Sanctuary attracted 1,575 visits in 2021

from people around the world, and that number will likely increase this year.

"This year so far, from the 1st of January to the 11th of March, we've had 853 persons visiting the Bird Sanctuary. That is actually more than half of the amount of persons who visited last year.

"It is clear that we are off to a successful year, and from all indications, the numbers are very impressive. The tourism and culture department is excited for what lies ahead, and we look forward to expanding the industry in many other ways."



Customer Update

Customer facing services to be centralized at the **ACB Caribbean Retail Service Centre**

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ACB Caribbean is in the process of consolidating customer facing services in downtown St. John's to our **Market & High Street** location, the **ACB Caribbean Retail Service Centre**.

This will be implemented in phases, commencing on March 23rd 2022.

The services to be centralized at this location are as follows:

- Cash services (deposits and withdrawals)
- Non Cash Services (Drafts, New Accounts, Debit Card Applications)
- Retail Loans / Credit Card applications

As of April 1st 2022, all customer facing services in downtown St. John's will be accessible at this location only.

Limited Customer parking is available at the Thames Street ACB Caribbean parking lot and is on a first come first serve basis.

Village Walk Branch continues to offer all services and is not impacted by these changes.

Local News



A&B to participate in ECCB Growth & Resilience Dialogue

The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank and its partners will host the 6th Annual Growth and Resilience Dialogue on 6th and 7th April under the theme Climate Resilience: Securing the Future of Small Island Developing States.

Antigua and Barbuda will be among the Caribbean nations participating in the event.

The conference will engage experts, business professionals and thought leaders on their perspectives and solutions to climate change challenges for the region's economy, tourism and health

sectors.

While the public is encouraged to register and participate in the dialogue, the conference targets, among others, parliamentarians, CEOs, students, technocrats, entrepreneurs and other service providers in agriculture, fishing, tourism, construction, technology, finance, health, and academia.

On day one the dialogue will explore:

- * Accelerating the Transition to Renewable Energy to Drive Climate Change Resilience and Mitigation;
- * Climate Resilience and Health and Nutrition; and



* Global Climate Change and Tourism – The Way Forward for Mitigation and Resilience

Day two will showcase Data Challenge applications and the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) to reveal deep insights from data sets and inform policy and deci-

sion making.

The ECCB's Senior Project Specialist, Sybil Welsh, explained the importance of this year's theme.

"When we speak about climate change, we speak about the resilience of issues that impact our small island states.

"Many leaders for other countries have called it climate change, but for our countries it's really a climate crisis. Many of our economic sectors that drive our economies are really very climate sensitive. We're speaking about agriculture, our fisheries, our construction, our insurance, our tourism sectors, all of these are critical industries and when they're impacted by climate change – climate crisis – then we have to look at how we confront those challenges...because we have to focus on securing lives, livelihoods and the economies of our Small Island Developing States," said Welsh.

Registration for the event is free and can be completed by visiting the ECCB's website.

British Government maintains support of Customs Department

The UK Border Force through the British High Commission in Saint John’s has donated \$ 12,000 worth of equipment to the Customs and Excise Division to aid officers in combating the illicit drug trade while protecting the country’s borders.

Resident British Commissioner, Lindsay Thompson, on behalf of her government, made the donation to Comptroller of Customs, Raju Boddu, during a brief ceremony on Tuesday.

According to the British diplomat, the equipment was handed over ahead of a training programme focusing on shipping containers, scheduled for later this year. High



Photo Courtesy: British High Commission St. John’s

Commissioner Lindsay stated the donation is further proof of the UK’s continued support of the Customs Department’s efforts to strengthen border security.

ment’s efforts to strengthen border security.

“This is the third donation of equipment from the UK government to Antigua and Barbuda Customs since August, 2020. I’m sure you will agree, esteemed guests, that is a further sign of the high regard the UK has for the challenging work customs officers have to undertake here. But it’s also a further sign of the commitment to working closely with Antigua and Barbuda on the threats, which affect both our countries and our customs staff as well,” High Commissioner Thompson noted.

Accepting the equipment, Comptroller of Customs Raju

Boddu, credited the British government for its continued support geared at improving the work of the Customs Division. He related that the equipment will be put into use to improve the technical skills of officers, when the container training programme facilitated by the U.S Customs and Border Protection commences, following the arrival of two examination containers by June, 2022.

“This partnership continues. There are so many things to which I can enumerate, but still they have been very, very supportive and faithful partners for a long time, for the last almost seven, eight years now,” Boddu said.

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Local News



Axxess Marine Y2K Race Day returns to ASW

Antigua Sailing Week has welcomed Axxess Marine as sponsors of the Youth to Keelboat (Y2K) Race Day.

Launched in 2018, the Youth to Keelboat programme in its first two years saw 65 Antiguan youths race as part of Antigua Sailing Week, and founder of Axxess Marine, Dennis Henri is humbled at the prospect of supporting the continuation of this grass-roots endeavour.

Axxess Marine is a leading provider of connectivity and communication solutions, operating from locations across the Caribbean, Europe and USA. Specialising in VSAT, 4G/5G LTE-A, and Satellite TV services, and supported by a unique on-demand software platform, Axxess Marine serves and supports a growing number of marine clients across a variety of maritime sectors.

As a leading maritime communications provider, their core focus is creating and deploying technical solutions with over a decade of experience within the industry.

Dennis Henri shared his motivation for getting involved in this community touch point of the regatta.

"Community development has always been a key focal point for our team, especially the English Har-



bour Community, the home of our Main office branch.

"We are indeed honoured to be the 2022 sponsor of Y2K Race Day, and supporting collaboration between the National Sailing Academy, the Antigua and Barbuda Sailing Association and Antigua Sailing Week as it is geared towards the development of youth sailing, both recreationally and professionally.

"Sailing provides a great deal of aspiration for young people towards future career opportunities. We also believe that in a commercial organisation you can also do good deeds as well as doing good business," Henri said.

Although many youths have been placed over the years through contacts of the Antigua Yacht Club and its members, this structured approach was an initiative of the Caribbean Sailing Association (CSA) development programme which sought to bridge the gap between dinghy sailing and keelboat sailing.

It gives those youths without access to the yacht

club and family network to advance them in the sport, the opportunity to be part of a race team for Antigua Sailing Week.

While Antigua Sailing Week has been in hiatus, many Antigua youths have been lucky enough to race in weekly 'Saturday Sailing Sessions' hosted by the Antigua and Jolly Harbour Yacht Clubs. Many of those youths will now racing as part of homegrown teams. In some cases youth teams will be part of the fleet including the crew on Ashley Rhodes' Whiplash, Jules Mitchell's Spirit and Rocco Falcone's Scia.

Additionally, a new crop of dinghy sailors will undertake a short keelboat dinghy course and be ready to join willing boats entered in Antigua Sailing Week.

Alison Sly-Adams President of ASW and General Manager of the National Sailing Academy said, "Wearing both hats with this initiative, I am truly excited that we can again offer students from the National Sailing Academy and Antigua Yacht Club Pro-

grammes the opportunity to experience competitive sailing at such a young age.

"We know this experience has already inspired past students with examples such as Alesea Charles and Junella King who race on board Sir Peter Harrison's Sojana, and are now employed on the Round the World Tour on board Tracy Edwards Maiden Factor."

Youths wishing to participate in the programme must have significant dinghy sailing experience and be in, or previously participated in, an existing programme, be aged 14 - 25 and be able to take part in the five race days of ASW.

Boats who would like to support the Programme by taking a youth on board can email info@sailingweek.com to opt in or log into yachtscoring.com and answer the special questions section, which now, since the repeal of some COVID-19 restrictions, includes the option to take a youth on board.

The Axxess Marine Y2K Race Day will take place on 3rd May, 2022.

Why Africa does not appear to be 'standing with Ukraine'

By Patrick Gathara

'Stand with Ukraine' is not just a humanitarian statement. It's a political one, too.

There have been many comments about Africans' reactions to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the horrific violence it has unleashed on Ukrainians and the humanitarian catastrophe it has created.

Many people, including on this continent, have been aghast at what they see as the moral failure not just of African governments, but also of individual Africans, to outrightly condemn Russia for its clear and unwarranted aggression, as well as its imperial and colonial designs on another people's land, with which they should be all too familiar.

Africans, including myself, who have pointed out the racist hypocrisies of Western media, governments and societies evident in the response have been accused of a convenient whataboutism which blinds us to the suffering of Ukrainians.

Further, others have suggested that Africans are guilty of similar hypocrisies to those they accuse the West of, seemingly more concerned about events and crises thousands of miles away but happy to ignore the many crises on their own doorstep.

Much of this is true. At the UN General Assembly, African countries formed a significant proportion of countries either abstaining from or opposing a resolution to condemn the Russian actions.

On social media, one regularly encounters posts expressing explicit support for Russia, even though while reciting talking points such as NATO expansion and that the West has done similar things, most seem unable to articulate why that justifies the killing and maiming of thousands of civilians, the

MORAL COMPASS



Photo: [Patrick Gathara]

destruction of lives and livelihoods, and the displacement of millions.

And it is true that even as Africans point to the preferential treatment accorded to Ukrainians over migrants from less white parts of the world, there is much less talk about what African states themselves are doing to welcome refugees and the displaced from conflicts closer to home.

You do not, as a rule, hear about private efforts by Africans such as myself to organise convoys to ferry Tigrayans to Kenya, or people taking Somali refugees into their own homes, as many across Europe are doing with regard to Ukrainians (though many will, I'm sure, point out that significantly fewer of these good white people were sending convoys or opening up homes when it was darker folks at the border).

Many Africans have also failed to see the commonalities between their struggles against imperialism and that of the Ukrainians, preferring to instead conflate the Ukrainians with their benefactors in Western Europe. Indeed, many, including myself, are almost entirely ignorant of the history of Russian colonialism in Eastern Europe and the fear it still inspires in the region. Worse, even today's conflict, in which Ukrainians are trapped and dying in what

increasingly looks like a proxy conflict between the West and Russia, of the sort Africans should be intimately familiar with, struggles to be recognised given that the victims are of a lighter hue than has been the case previously.

However, it is also true that many who rightfully criticise African responses themselves fail to recognise that African governments are making many of the same calculations that Western ones are.

Just as the West is unwilling to sever its energy ties to Moscow for fear of what it means for their own economies and citizens, Africa will hedge its bets, especially countries in the eastern part of the continent like Kenya which gets up to 90 percent of its wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine.

Further, they seem unable to recognise that what the world looks like to a large extent depends on where one is standing. And that many here are responding not so much to the invasion itself, but rather to Western reactions to it, which have rekindled long-running grievances that much of Africa has had with the West.

The minimising of the Ukrainian state's racism against African students trying to flee the conflict (with the Ukrainian ambassador to the UK even suggesting that Black people in Ukraine should be "less visible"), has rankled as has the hypocrisy in welcoming Ukrainian refugees while shutting out African and Middle Eastern ones.

Ditto the gnashing of teeth over Ukrainian suffering and lionising their resistance, while pledging unconditional support to invaders like Israel and demonising the similar resistance of Palestinians, whom a UN rapporteur acknowledges are victims of an apartheid regime.

cont'd on pg 10

Opinion



cont'd from pg 9

Sure, none of this justifies what Russia is doing, but it does sadly make standing with Ukraine, which the West is now presenting as a reflection of itself and its own values, rather less palatable.

An example of this was the valorisation by the West of the Kenyan Ambassador's speech at the UN Security Council at the launch of the invasion which, while correctly condemning it, used language that appeared to endorse the Western colonial project in Africa, as I argued here.

Similarly, many may fear that standing with Ukraine could be conflated with standing with the West (as indeed many in Western media seem to think it is).

Delving a bit deeper, I think there is also a reaction in these parts to a perception that we in "underdeveloped" societies have been fed for a long time (since the days of the "civilising mission") about the locations of dysfunction.

It was a perception evident in the

pearl-clutching reporting of Western journalists shocked that such senseless death and destruction could be visited on civilised Europe and the visceral reaction this provoked.

Maybe, after centuries of being treated as the dregs of humanity, many are simply relieved that "Europe" (here again, there is much ignorant conflation of what European and whiteness are) is getting a taste of what they have wreaked elsewhere.

Finally, I think there is also a conflict between those who see the global attention and Western reactions to Ukraine as an opportunity to also talk about other issues, and those who say that with Ukraine fighting for its life, such whataboutism should be parked for another time.

Yet does anyone think that once the fighting ends, the West will look more favourably upon the people in places like Gaza? Or on the plight of non-Ukrainian asylum-seekers in Europe? Or the rac-

ism faced by Black students, which did not begin with this conflict?

If we cannot talk about the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement to end international support for Israel's oppression of Palestinians at the time when the West is imposing wide-ranging sanctions on Russia for doing the same to Ukraine, when can we do it? Why shouldn't countries at the General Assembly when pushed to stand with Ukraine ask: "What about Palestine?"

There will be those who will say whataboutism costs Ukrainian lives by diluting international resolve. But doesn't silence cost Palestinian lives?

From a human standpoint, I doubt that anyone would disagree that the Russian invasion is an unmitigated catastrophe. But "Stand With Ukraine" is not just a human statement. It is a political one, too. And so far, the political conversation, on both sides, appears to be winning out.

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COVID-19 increases risk of type 2 diabetes

DZD - People who have had COVID-19 are at increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes. This is the result of a study by DDZ, DZD and IQVIA, which has now been published in *Diabetologia*.

Studies show that the human pancreas can also be a target of the SARS-CoV-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus type 2 virus). Following a COVID-19 infection, reduced numbers of insulin secretory granules in beta cells and impaired glucose-stimulated insulin secretion have been observed.

In addition, after COVID-19 disease, some patients developed insulin resistance and had elevated blood glucose levels although they had no previous history of diabetes. SARS-CoV-2 infection may lead to a strong release of pro-inflammatory signaling substances (cytokines). Activation of the immune system may persist for months after a SARS-CoV-2 infection and impair insulin effectiveness (muscle, fat cells, liver).

To date, however, it is unclear whether these metabolic changes are transient or whether COVID-19 disease increases the risk of persisting diabetes. To investigate this question, researchers from the German Diabetes Center (DDZ), German Center for Diabetes Research (DZD) and IQVIA (Frankfurt) conducted a retrospective cohort study.

The cohort study included a representative panel of 1,171 physician practices across Germany (March 2020 to January 2021: 8.8 million patients). Follow-up continued until July 2021.

“The aim of our study was to in-

vestigate the incidence of diabetes after infection with SARS-CoV-2,” said first author Wolfgang Rathmann, head of the Epidemiology Research Group at the DDZ.

As a control group, the researchers selected people with acute upper respiratory tract infections (AURI), which are also frequently caused by viruses. The two cohorts were matched for sex, age, health insurance, month of COVID-19 or AURI diagnosis, and comorbidities (obesity, hypertension, high cholesterol, heart attack, stroke). Patients on corticosteroid therapy were excluded from the study.

During the study period, 35,865 people were diagnosed with COVID-19.

“Our analyses showed that patients with COVID-19 developed type

2 diabetes more frequently than people with AURI. The incidence of diabetes with COVID-19 infection was 15.8 compared to 12.3 per 1000 people per year with AURI. Statistical analysis resulted in an incidence rate ratio (IRR) of 1.28. Put simply, this means that the relative risk of developing type 2 diabetes was 28% higher in the COVID-19 group than in the AURI group,” Rathmann said, summarizing the results.

Although type 2 diabetes is unlikely to be a problem for the vast majority of people with mild COVID-19 disease, the authors recommend that anyone who has recovered from COVID-19 be alert to the warning signs and symptoms, such as fatigue, frequent urination and increased thirst and seek immediate treatment.



As sanctions bite Russia, fertilizer shortage imperils world food supply

By Tom Polansek and Ana Mano

Sky-high fertilizer prices have farmers worldwide scaling back its use and reducing the amount of land they're planting, fallout from the Ukraine-Russia conflict that has some agricultural industry veterans warning of food shortages.

Western sanctions on Russia, a major exporter of potash, ammonia, urea and other soil nutrients, have disrupted shipments of those key inputs around the globe. Fertilizer is key to keeping corn, soy, rice and wheat yields high. Growers are scrambling to adjust.

The pivot can be seen in agricultural powerhouse Brazil, where some farmers are applying less fertilizer to their corn, and some federal legislators are pushing to open protected indigenous lands for the mining of potash. In Zimbabwe and Kenya, small farmers are reverting to using manure to nourish their crops. In Canada, one canola farmer has already stockpiled fertilizer for the 2023 season in anticipation of even higher prices ahead.

Farmers elsewhere are making similar moves. Reuters spoke with 34 people on six continents, including grain producers, agriculture analysts, traders and farm groups. All expressed concern about the cost and availability of fertilizer.

In the United States



Bags containing ammonium nitrate fertilizer are displayed in an agricultural trader in France, October 7, 2016. REUTERS

alone, fertilizer bills are expected to jump 12% this year, after rising 17% in 2021, according to American Farm Bureau Federation and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) data.

Some growers are contemplating switching to crops that require fewer nutrients. Others plan to cultivate less acreage. Others say they'll simply use less fertilizer, a strategy crop experts predict will hurt yields. Production is most at risk in developing nations, whose farmers have fewer financial resources to weather the storm, said Tony Will, chief executive of Illinois-based CF Industries Holdings, a leading producer of nitrogen fertilizer.

"My concern at the moment is actually one of a food crisis on a global basis," Will said.

On Saturday, Peru declared a state of emergency in its agriculture sector over fears of food insecurity.

The decree said the nation's planted areas have fallen 0.2% since August due to rising fertilizer prices, and that the volume of grain Peru imports for animal feed has likewise declined over cost concerns. The government is now drafting a plan to increase the country's food supply.

Double Whammy

Global fertilizer prices were already high prior to Russia's Feb. 24 invasion of its neighbour, as record natural gas and coal prices forced some fertilizer makers to cut output in that energy-hungry sector. Ukraine's cities have been besieged by missiles, tanks and troops in what Moscow has dubbed a "special operation" to demilitarize the country. Russia denies targeting civilians in the conflict.

Western nations responded with tough economic sanctions on Russia, while the United States and the Eu-

ropean Union imposed new sanctions on Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, who has provided support for Russia's offensive.

Combined, Russia and Belarus accounted for more than 40% of global exports of potash last year, one of three critical nutrients used to boost crop yields, Dutch lender Rabobank said this month. Additionally, Russia accounted for about 22% of global exports of ammonia, 14% of the world's urea exports and about 14% of monoammonium phosphate (MAP) - all key kinds of fertilizers.

Sanctions have disrupted sales of fertilizer and crops from Russia. Many Western banks and traders are steering clear of Russian supplies for fear of running afoul of the rapidly changing rules, while shipping firms are avoiding the Black Sea region due to safety concerns.

It all amounts to a double whammy for the global food supply.

Russia and Ukraine are major grain producers. Together they account for about 30% of global wheat exports and 20% of corn exports. Grain shipments through the Black Sea have already been disrupted. Stalled deliveries from those two countries have helped spur galloping global food inflation. The World Bank said last week that several developing countries face near-term wheat supply

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shortages due to their high dependence on Ukrainian exports. [read more](#)

But the fertilizer crisis is in some respects more worrying because it could inhibit food production in the rest of the world that could help take up the slack, said Maximo Torero, chief economist for the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization.

“If we don’t resolve the problem of fertilizer, and trade of fertilizers doesn’t continue, then we’ll have a very serious problem of [food] supply next year,” Torero said.

Brazil At Risk

Brazil, the world’s biggest soybean exporter, relies heavily on imported fertilizers such as potash, which accounted for 38% of the crop nutrients it used last year. Russia and Belarus were the source of half of those shipments.

Prior to the Ukraine-Russia conflict, Brazilian farmers were already reducing corn plantings due to rising fertilizer prices. Soybean cultivation will likely be impacted as well, with growers expanding more slowly than in previous years, according to Agroconsult, a Brazilian agriculture consulting firm.

In the west-central state of Mato Grosso, farmer Cayron Giacomelli told Reuters he has already reduced fertilizer use on his current corn crop. He said he’ll do the same when he plants soybeans later this year, a move he reckons might shrink his harvest by at least 8%.

Giacomelli said fertilizer is hard to get and that some dealers won’t finalize sales until cargo ships dock in Brazil. He’s still kicking himself for not closing a purchase he was negotiating just before Russia invaded Ukraine.

“I got distracted and now am paying more,” Giacomelli said.

Lawmakers from Brazilian farm states, meanwhile, are pushing for legislation that would open indigenous lands in the Amazon to potash mining. That measure is opposed by members of the local Mura tribe, who say mining would

despoil the natural habitat upon which they depend. The bill is still making its way through the nation’s congress.

In Zimbabwe, scarce and pricy imports have forced corn growers such as Boniface Mutize to make their own fertilizer. “We mix cow dung or chicken waste with zinc,” he said.

It’s the same in rural Kenya. Farmer Mary Kamau said she, too, has slashed purchases of commercial fertilizer and is using manure to nourish the coffee and avocados she grows on 12 acres in Murang’a County. She worries about the consequences for her family.

“If I don’t get a good harvest, I don’t get good prices. And that will affect me for the next two years – it’s not just this season,” Kamau said.

Fewer Acres, Less Fertilizer

In the United States, fifth-generation New Mexico farmer Mike Berry has similar worries. He recently paid \$680 a ton for liquid nitrogen to fertilize his corn crop, an “exorbitant” price he said was 232% above last year’s price.

Berry said he plans to cut his spring plantings of corn for livestock feed to about 300 acres from his usual 400 to 600 acres. Berry said he will also reduce applications of liquid nitrogen by about 30%, which could drop his yields by 25%.

Bottom line: “We’re going to produce less,” he said.

That might seem short-sighted considering commodity prices have jumped sharply in recent weeks. But the cost of growing crops is outpacing potential revenue for many farmers.

“Planting decisions are increasingly being made not on market fundamentals but rather on the cost of production driven by the price and supply of fertilizer,” dozens of U.S. lawmakers wrote in a March 17 letter to the U.S. International Trade Commission.

They were seeking relief from duties on fertilizer imports from Morocco and Trinidad and Tobago.

U.S. farmer Don Batie described the

stressful process of securing enough fertilizer for this year’s planting.

“It’s nuts,” said Batie, who grows corn and soybeans on 1,500 acres in Lexington, Nebraska. “By the time they get a price and they quote it to you, the price changes.”

Where To Buy?

Asia is struggling, too.

India, which imports fertilizer for its sprawling agriculture sector, is increasingly turning to Canada and Israel to replace its Russian supplies.

Thailand, meanwhile, is facing pressure on its signature rice crop. Russia and Belarus accounted for about 12% of its fertilizer imports last year, Thai government data show. But buying from elsewhere could prove tricky, in part because domestic price controls on fertilizer are squeezing Thai importers as global market prices explode, according to Plengsakdi Prakaspesat, president of the Thai Fertilizer and Agricultural Supplies Association.

“If you’re a merchant, and you’re absolutely going to lose money, will you still import more stuff?” Plengsakdi said.

China last year imposed fertilizer export curbs to protect its own farmers as global prices soared due to strong demand and high energy prices.

Beijing was expected to ease those restrictions this year, potentially boosting world supply, said Gavin Ju, principal fertilizer analyst in the Shanghai office of commodities consultancy CRU. But he said that’s less likely now with the global market in chaos.

Concerns over rising inflation and a protracted Ukraine war have some farmers planning well ahead.

In Manitoba, Canada, corn and canola farmer Bert Peeter recently agreed to spend more than \$500,000 Canadian dollars buying 80% of the fertilizer he’ll need – for 2023. Although prices are soaring, he figured things could still get worse.

This “might not be over after one year,” Peeter said.

Regional News



Barbados and Guyana working to improve food security

St. Lucia Times - Barbados and Guyana continue to strengthen their relationship by working to secure greater access to food supplies through boosting this island's agriculture sector and by ensuring the continuation and expansion of imports from Guyana to help meet local needs.

Last Saturday, a joint meeting between the two countries was held at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Nutritional Security with Barbadian importers of rice, fruit and vegetables to listen to their needs and address concerns, while outlining future plans between Barbados and Guyana.

Minister Indar Weir, Permanent Secretary, Terry Bascombe, and Chief Agriculture Officer, Keeley Holder, met with a Mission from Guyana, which was jointly led by Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, and Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Oneidge Walrond, as part of a follow-up of the Guyana-Barbados St. Barnabas Accord.

Other participants included Special Envoy to Suriname and Guyana, Alpheia Wiggins, and Ambassador to CARICOM, David Comissiong.

Minister Weir and Ms. Holder both stressed the need for Barbados to be as self-sufficient as it could be, seeking to supplement any shortages from within CARICOM.

They noted that Guyana has a key role to play as it can provide Barbados with pest-resistant planting material, especially where there is heavy demand for such, as is the case with cassava, avocados, citrus fruit, peanuts and coconuts.

It was also noted that knowledge sharing, skills transfer and other



forms of technical assistance from Guyana, especially in adopting climate-resistant approaches to farming would help Barbadian farmers drive greater efficiencies and diversity into new areas of food production, while creating opportunities for established and new farmers.

They pointed out, however, that there is an immediate need for consistent high-quality agricultural products at competitive pricing, which can be sourced from Guyana.

Minister Zulfikar Mustapha agreed that Guyana could support Barbados' thrust for self-sufficiency and could help fill any gaps where local production did not meet demand.

He noted that he visited a Farmers' Market early that Saturday morning to see the market demand; to better understand the source of the products being sold on the market, and to interact with those selling to get their feedback on needs.

He stated that Guyana could supply much of the produce that he saw on sale, of consistent quality and at good pricing, including rice, avocados, citrus fruit, peanuts, coconuts, oranges, pineapples, and even shrimp.

Mr. Mustapha was, however, quick to indicate that shipping costs

continue to rise exponentially and are now more than the food costs; noting that shipping would continue to increase.

The Minister stated that farmers in Guyana were experiencing increased efficiencies and passing them on in the form of lower pricing, but shipping had been offsetting the improved pricing.

He added that direct shipping between Guyana, Suriname and Barbados could be arranged, with similar arrangements made for the Eastern Caribbean, which would help control the cost of freighting.

Minister Mustapha said the planned establishment of the Barbados Food Terminal at Lears would bring about significant process improvements and cost efficiencies in the importation and distribution of food supplies to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, with the Guyana Marketing Corporation (GMC) playing a critical role as a consolidation point in Guyana. The GMC would also help to guarantee supply, quality and the best pricing.

Ambassador David Comissiong affirmed that the planned food terminal would benefit CARICOM and bring needed efficiencies to member states as well.

British royals' Jamaica visit stirs demands for slavery reparations

Britain's Prince William and his wife Kate arrived in Jamaica on Tuesday as part of a week-long Caribbean tour, hours after activists protested to demand reparations for slavery amid growing scrutiny of the British Empire's colonial legacy.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge arrived in Belize on Saturday to start the tour that coincides with Queen Elizabeth's 70th year on the throne and will conclude it over the weekend with a visit to The Bahamas.

They were received by Jamaican foreign affairs minister Kamina Johnson-Smith and Defense Force Chief Antonette Wemyss Gorman at Kingston's Norman Manley airport.

They then left to meet Governor General Patrick Allen, who represents the British crown in Jamaica.

Earlier, dozens of people gathered outside the British High Commission in Kingston, singing traditional Rastafarian songs and holding banners with the phrase "seh yuh sorry" - a local patois phrase that urged Britain to apologise.

"There are historical wrongs and they need to be addressed," said Dr. Rosalea Hamilton, an economist and activist who helped organise the rally where demonstrators read out 60 reasons for reparations.



Protesters gather outside an office of the British government to demand that the United Kingdom pay reparations for centuries of slavery, in advance of a visit by Prince William and Catherine, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, in Kingston, Jamaica March 22, 2022. The writing on the banner reads, "Say you (are) sorry." REUTERS/Kate Chappell

tions.

Jamaica celebrates 60 years of independence in August.

"Part of the conversation is how we begin a new dispensation and (discussion) of actions for the new generation," said Hamilton, dressed in a T-shirt printed with the phrase "seh yuh sorry."

The royal visits to Caribbean nations are seen as an effort to convince other former British colonies - including Belize and The Bahamas - to stay on as "realms" of the British monarchy amid a rising regional movement towards republicanism.

Dance hall singer Beenie Man in an interview with Good Morning Brit-

ain questioned the royal visit and expressed scepticism about the queen, saying "What are they doing for Jamaica? They're not doing anything for us."

Jamaican judge, Hugh Small, this month burned his ceremonial British judicial wigs in a symbolic protest of the fact that a London-based tribunal called Privy Council continues to be Jamaica's highest court of appeals.

William and Kate were scheduled to participate in a "sports activity" and a "cultural activity" on Tuesday as part of the tour that wraps up today.

The couple had to change their itinerary in Belize following a protest by indigenous villagers

upset that the couple's helicopter was given permission to land on a soccer field without prior consultation.

Marlene Malahoo Forte, who was Jamaica's attorney general until January, in December told the local newspaper Jamaica Observer that she had received instructions from Prime Minister Andrew Holness to reform the constitution to become a republic.

That process would require a referendum, per Jamaica's constitution, making it more complicated than in smaller Barbados - which was able to make the change via an act of parliament.

The government last year announced plans to ask Britain for compensation for forcibly transporting an estimated 600,000 Africans to work on sugar cane and banana plantations that created fortunes for British slave holders.

Jamaica lawmaker Mike Henry has proposed reparations package of 7.6 billion pounds (\$10 billion).

He has said the figure is derived from a £20 million payment that Britain's government made in 1837 to compensate slave owners in British colonies for the emancipation of enslaved people following the 1833 abolition of slavery.

Commonwealth Games protest planned in Bermuda over island's SSM stance

The Royal Gazette - The upcoming Commonwealth Games will be rocked by protests against the Government's ban on marriage equality, a leading human rights campaigner has stated.

Peter Tatchell, who has been widely lauded for his direct action against dictators such as Robert Mugabe and his condemnation of Vladimir Putin, said that British political circles were "shocked and dismayed" at the Privy Council's decision to uphold the ban on same-sex marriages.

The veteran campaigner stopped short of calling for a tourism boycott of the island, insisting that must be a decision made by Bermudian-based LGBTQ+ organisations — but said he knew people would shun the territory.

Mr Tatchell said the Commonwealth Games, due to be hosted in Birmingham, England, between July 28 and August 8, would see demonstrations against Bermuda's "homophobic" government, as well as other countries that discriminate against the LGBTQ+ community taking part in the sporting extravaganza.

Mr Tatchell condemned the stance of the Progressive Labour Party administration

led by David Burt, the Premier.

He told The Royal Gazette: "Britain has backed a homophobic government in Bermuda.

"Any government that doesn't support the rights of LGBTQ people is homophobic."

Mr Tatchell was scathing about the claim made by Walter Roban, the Deputy Premier, in the wake of the Privy Council ruling last week that domestic partnership and civil marriage were "virtually equal".

The human rights campaigner said: "Separate laws are not equal laws — that is the logic of the apartheid government in South Africa because they legislated separate laws for Black and White people.

"This is outrageous for a supposedly democratic country in the 21st century."

Mr Tatchell insisted homophobia was something the Commonwealth needed to deal with.

He said there would be protests at the Birmingham games about the situation in Bermuda and dozens of other countries in the group of nations.

The campaigner said it was up to locally based LGBTQ+ to decide whether to urge a boycott of the



Peter Tatchell

island, but he knew people who would not now visit Bermuda.

He said: "I know lots of people in the UK and US will not be holidaying in Bermuda because of the territory's opposition to marriage equality — they don't want to spend their tourist dollars there."

The comments came after a majority ruling by judges at Bermuda's highest court of appeal, the Privy Council, found that legislation confining marriage to between a man and a woman was not unconstitutional.

Four out of five judges on a Privy Council pan-

el agreed with the Attorney-General of Bermuda and ruled that the Domestic Partnership Act did not violate the Constitution.

Lord Sales reached a different conclusion to the majority and said that he would have dismissed the appeal based on a freedom-of-conscience argument put forward by lawyers for the respondents, who were Roderick Ferguson and others.

The Government revealed last month that \$411,627 was spent on outside lawyers and law firms on the various same-sex marriage court cases.

China plane crash: Search teams find flight's black box

BBC – Search teams have found a black box from the China Eastern flight which nosedived into mountains in southern China this week, state media report.

Chinese aviation officials announced the finding at a press conference on Wednesday, after two days of searching.

Authorities are still yet to report the number of dead, but it is feared none of the 132 people on board survived the high-altitude crash.

Investigators still do not know why the plane plummeted out of the sky.

Mao Yanfeng, director of the civil aviation accident investigation department, told reporters there had been “no dangerous weather” on the plane’s route at the time of the crash.

He added the plane’s crew and air traffic control had maintained normal communication until the plane’s sudden drop in altitude.

At the same press conference, China Eastern Airlines chairman Sun Shiyong said the plane had been deemed airworthy and had met required maintenance standards, reported Xinhua.

The crash is likely China’s most deadly aviation incident in three decades and has prompted a nation-



Families of the victims arrived at the crash site on Wednesday.

al outpouring of grief.

President Xi Jinping has called for a full-scale investigation, and the government has dispatched hundreds of rescuers, soldiers, experts and other workers to the site in the remote hills of Guangxi province.

On Wednesday, the devastated families of the 123 passengers and nine crew on board the flight also arrived at the crash site, gathering in the small village closest to the scene.

They were escorted by officials carrying umbrellas as they entered Lu village. One 57-year-old man, whose sister-in law was on the flight, told the waiting media: “All I want is hope, the hope of survival.”

Hundreds of search workers have been scouring the forested region of

Wuzhou, in search of the plane’s black box recorders amid the wreckage and charred debris.

Authorities have said that they have not found any survivors so far, and rescue crews have yet to find any bodies.

However, teams have recovered many personal items belonging to passengers and crew, including purses, wallets and even identity cards.

Flight MU5735 had been in the air for more than an hour on Monday and was nearing its Guangzhou destination when it suddenly dropped from its cruising height.

Air controllers had repeatedly called the aircraft during its descent but had received no response, authorities said on Tuesday.

Flight tracker data

showed the Boeing 737-800 jet dropped thousands of metres in under three minutes.

According to FlightRadar24, the plane was cruising at 29,100ft (about 9,000m), but two minutes and 15 seconds later it was recorded at 9,075ft. The last sourced information on the flight showed it ended at 14:22 local time, at an altitude of 3,225ft.

Aviation experts say the Boeing 737-800 model has a strong safety record, with thousands in service around the world. The aircraft that crashed was less than seven years old.

Investigators are expected to look at several possible causes - including deliberate action, pilot error, or technical issues such as a structural failure or mid-air collision.

Russia's Putin gets Chinese backing to stay in G20

Reuters - Russian President Vladimir Putin plans to attend the next G20 summit in Indonesia later this year and received valuable backing from Beijing on Wednesday in a pushback to suggestions by some members that Russia could be barred from the group.

The United States and its Western allies are assessing whether Russia should remain within the Group of Twenty major economies following its invasion of Ukraine, sources involved in the discussions told Reuters.

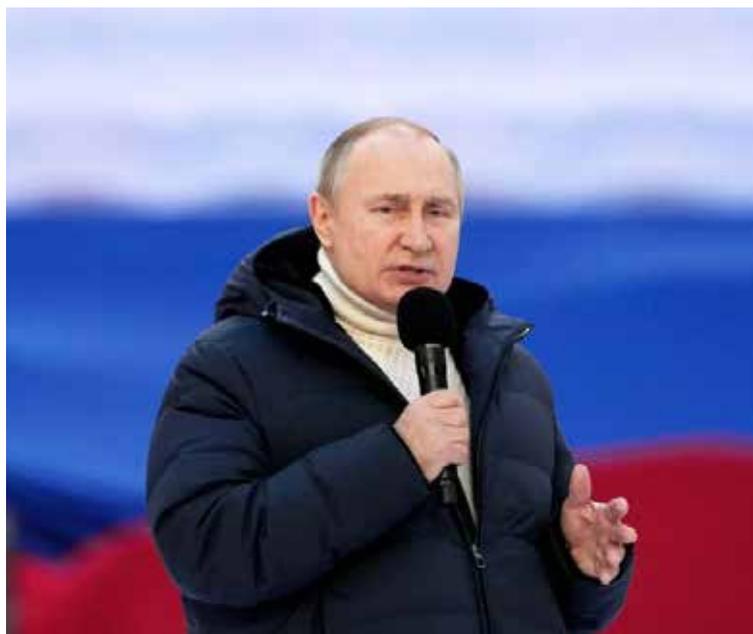
But any move to exclude Russia would probably be vetoed by others in the group, raising the prospect of some countries instead skipping G20 meetings, the sources said.

Russia's ambassador to Indonesia, which currently holds the rotating G20 chair, said Putin intended to travel to the Indonesian resort island of Bali for the G20 summit in November.

"It will depend on many, many things, including the COVID situation, which is getting better. So far, his intention is... he wants to," Ambassador Lyudmila Vorobieva told a news conference.

Asked about suggestions Russia could be kicked out of the G20, she said it was a forum to discuss economic issues and not a crisis like Ukraine.

"Of course, expulsion of Russia from this kind of forum will not help these economic problems to be



Russian President Vladimir Putin delivers a speech during a concert marking the eighth anniversary of Russia's annexation of Crimea at Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow, Russia March 18, 2022. RIA Novosti Host Photo Agency/Alexander Vilf via REUTERS/File Photo

resolved. On the contrary, without Russia it would be difficult to do so."

China, which has not

condemned Russia's invasion and criticised Western sanctions, defended Moscow on Wednesday, calling Russia an "important member" of the G20.

The G20 is a group that needs to find answers to critical issues, such as economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said.

"No member has the right to remove another country as a member. The G20 should implement real multilateralism, strengthen unity and cooperation," he told a news briefing.

Indonesia's foreign ministry declined to comment on calls for Russia to be excluded from the G20.

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UPDATED SCHEDULE

Somali forces kill two gunmen trying to enter Mogadishu army base, state TV says

Reuters - Somali security forces shot dead two armed attackers who tried to burst into an army base near Mogadishu's international airport on Wednesday, state media said.

Earlier in the day, state TV had said security forces were battling a "terrorist incident" at the camp's gates. A witness said gunmen had forced their way in and started shooting.

State radio reported later that the two attackers had been stopped at the base gates.

"Security Forces have shot dead two armed terrorists who attempted to force their way into the army base near #Mogadishu's Adan Abdulle International Airport on Wednesday and police will give details shortly," state TV said.

Al Qaeda-linked al Shabaab said it was behind the attack, and had fired mortars into the camp, where African Union (AMISOM) peacekeeping troops, United Nations and other international organisations are based.

Abdiasis Abu Musab, an al Shabaab spokesman, said the group's fighters had gained entry to the base and inflicted casualties, but he did not provide proof.

Videos and photos



A general view shows smoke billowing from shipping containers near the Adan Abdulle International Airport international in Mogadishu, Somalia March 23, 2022. REUTERS/Feisal Omar

shared on social media showed black smoke billowing from an area near the airport runway.

Mahad Hirsi, a witness at the compound, told Reuters that he saw the attackers force their way through the gate and start shooting, and that "a number of injured AMISOM soldiers (were) lying on the ground".

Spokespeople for AMISOM and the United Nations' Somalia office did not immediately respond to Reuters calls and messages requesting comment.

Due to the gunfire near the airport flight traffic had been halted, a travel agent said.

Al Shabaab aims to topple Somalia's central government and impose its own severe interpretation of Islamic law.



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TICKETS ON SALE AT GYMS SOON

Brathwaite hoping for pace respite in Grenada

Captain Kraigg Brathwaite hopes the pitch for the third Test will be helpful to his four-pronged pace attack, as West Indies chase victory in the final game in Grenada this week.

The preceding Tests in Antigua and Barbados were played out on turgid surfaces, both resulting in tame draws with batsmen enjoying the better of the conditions and seamers struggling to make an impact.

“We haven’t been there (Grenada National Stadium) for a while, so we have to see what we get there. Obviously, the guys are looking forward to the third Test match,” Brathwaite said.

“They (pitches) didn’t offer much to the pacers but there’s not much I can do. I was expecting at least some assistance for the pacers. Let’s hope that with Grenada we get some more assistance for the pacers.”

All three Tests staged have proved to be competitive affairs, with the last two—against Bangladesh and England—ending in results for the visitors.

In the last Test seven years ago, West Indies managed totals of 299 and 307—with Brathwaite getting a second innings hundred—but England pulled off a nine-wicket win after posting 444 in their first in-



West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite plays a defensive shot against England on day five of the 2nd Test at Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados, on Sunday. Brathwaite scored 160 in the first innings and 56 not out in the second. The match ended in a draw. —Photo: AP

nings. Pacers snatched 18 of the 31 wickets to fall in that match, raising hopes that the third Test could see the faster bowlers coming in to their own, but Brathwaite said it was important his side batted properly regardless of the surface.

“I can’t obviously stress about the pitch. The pitch is whatever the groundsman produces. We’re just hoping to be on top so let’s hope in Grenada we’re on top at the end of the game,” he stressed.

“I think back-to-back now we’ve batted over 120 overs, especially [the first innings in the second Test]

after England made 500 and then we came and batted 180 overs. I thought that was remarkable and we can only get better from here. “We’ve obviously just got to keep learning different periods of the game and as a unit we’ll get a lot better.”

He added: “I thought it was a good job. Obviously, we have to keep improving as a team. Batting a last day is never easy but we’re heading in the right direction.”

England head coach Paul Collingwood said his side had played outstandingly on difficult pitches and believed they could fi-

nally find the elusive win in Grenada.

“To back that performance up in Antigua like we did [last] week in many ways is even more impressive,” Collingwood pointed out.

“Three back-to-back Test matches are pretty grueling and to play on pitches like that is hard work.

“We’re getting closer, we’re getting closer to that win if we continue with that same attitude and that same resilience ... and a lot of skill as well, we’re going to get close to that win.”

The final Test bowls off in Grenada today.

Roman Abramovich 'opens talks' to buy new European football team after quitting Chelsea

Roman Abramovich is said to have opened talks to buy a new football club in Europe after putting Chelsea up for sale - despite the Blues takeover not yet being completed.

The Russian oligarch was pushed into selling up at Stamford Bridge after being placed under sanctions by the UK government - and hasn't wasted any time in looking at future investments.

The 55-year-old billionaire said it was with a heavy heart that he put Chelsea up for sale after a hugely successful two decades, and he could be about to channel his passion into Turkish outfit Goztepe.

Turkish outlet Fanatik report that negotiations between outgoing Goztepe president Mehmet Sepil and Abramovich's representatives have already begun.

Sepil recently announced that he would be leaving his role as president but would keep hold of duties until a replacement was found.

They say that Super Lig outfit had their eyes turned towards the former Chelsea chief due to recent developments, and that market assessments have been made by both parties.

Abramovich, an intermediary businessman, Sepil and club executives are said to be planning a face-to-face meeting for the coming



Roman Abramovich could be about to use some of his funds elsewhere [Photo: Getty Images]

days, with Sepil holding the majority of club shares.

Although Abramovich wasn't likely to step away from football for good following his Chelsea departure, Goztepe wasn't the most obvious destination.

Founded in 1925, Goztepe play at the 20,040 capacity Gursel Aksel Stadium and played in the third division as recently as 2009.

Although they are known for having a large fanbase, Goztepe haven't won the first division since 1950 or the Turkish Cup since 1970.

Not only have they struggled of late, but Goztepe are in serious danger of relegation into the second tier - sitting eight points from safety with eight games remaining.

Despite Super Lig giants Fenerbahce, Besiktas, and most notably Galatasaray

a row.

Former Croatian international Stjepan Tomas is the current boss at Goztepe, their fourth coach since the start of 2021.

One reunion that could be on the cards for Abramovich is with Goztepe striker Franco Di Santo, who played for Chelsea between 2008 and 2010.

As reported by Business Insider, the net worth of Abramovich has slumped to £10.21 billion over the past few months - which is still more than enough to take control of a football club, with talks over the future of Chelsea ongoing.



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Island Girls start training for Pacific Challenge

Team Antigua Island Girls (TAIG) has started training for their second major open ocean rowing competition.

After representing Antigua and Barbuda in the 2018 Talisker Whiskey Atlantic Challenge, which is organised by Atlantic Campaigns, TAIG, whose members are Kevinia Francis, Samara Emmanuel, Elvira Bell and Christal Clashing, will compete in the inaugural Pacific Challenge next year.

Although the start of the Pacific Challenge, also organised by Atlantic Campaigns, is well over a year away, TAIG has commenced preparations for the event, which is expected to be more challenging than the Atlantic Challenge in 2018-19.

During the Atlantic Challenge, they rowed more than 3,000 miles from La Gomera in the Canary Islands to Nelson's Dockyard in English Harbour, Antigua, in 47 days, 8 hours and 25 minutes.

When they completed the crossing on January 28, 2019, the women became the first all-black team to row across an ocean and the first all-women team to represent the Caribbean in a transoceanic row.

TAIG is already anticipating the chance to conquer the Pacific Challenge, which will cover 2,800 miles of



Team Antigua Islands Girls, from left, Christal Clashing, Elvira Bell, Samara Emmanuel and Kevinia Francis. (Photo:TAIG)

ocean, starting in Monterey Bay California, and finishing on the 'Garden Island' of Kauai in Hawaii.

"We have already started in the gyms and we also row on the weekends, but we are expecting this time around to do a lot more head wind training," said Kevinia Francis during an interview on Sports Overflow.

"We are hoping to do more like inter-island training - not necessarily the circumnavigation that we did before - but maybe Montserrat this time because you know it gets pretty rough going across there and coming back as well."

Elvira Bell said TAIG will be training more intensely for the Pacific Challenge since they are expect-

ing tougher conditions.

"Training is pretty much similar, but a little bit more intense because the conditions are going to be more difficult this time around. The first two weeks are expected to be very tough," Bell said.

"The winds are going to be coming from the side and the tide is going to be just pushing us back. So we have to put in that extra work, especially for the first two weeks. We are hoping to do some overnight rows as well."

Bell said TAIG will also be investing more time into planning the meals they will eat during the Pacific Challenge.

"Diet is something that we are working on as well.

It is going to be interesting. The last time around I was pescatarian; now I am fully vegan. So, it is going to be an interesting challenge for me to not lose the weight. So far, I have been doing fine. I make up in great ways because I try to eat as healthy as possible," Bell said.

"For the girls as well, slowly but surely, we are kind of slicing things together. We are not trying to gain mass weight. I think that is a notion that some of the previous teams had, especially the guys, who think you should get fat because you are going to get slim.

"But that is not necessarily the case...also the race does have requirements as in the certain amount of calories that you have to take along with you. So it is a pretty good structured race.

"We already have some foods from the previous crews that were here so we are going to be testing the foods to see what we can tolerate. The last time around, one of the reasons that we did lose a lot of weight is that we just didn't like the food.

"But this time around we are really trying to be on point when it comes to the food so that we don't have that same situation again."

The Pacific Challenge is scheduled to begin on 12th June, 2023.

Police Commissioner refutes claims by ABCA official

Police Commissioner Atlee Rodney is dismissing claims that the Police cricket team was thrown out of the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) or First Class competitions because the lawmen were unable to field a full team of players on some occasions.

Police last contested the ABCA competition in 2015, when the team was sponsored by Diamonds International. However, Police have been playing Parish League cricket annually since joining in 2016.

During an interview with Sports Overflow on Point FM last week, First Vice President of the ABCA Kenny Lewis said Police were thrown out of the First Class competition because they were unable to provide the required number of players for matches due to the demands of their job.

"Yes, Police were in the ABCA programme several years ago, but there were some logistical issues with Police that we had to move on without Police.

"I know one of the challenges, and it may not have been the major, but one of the challenges for Police is that the Police guys are always on call, so you would schedule a game for Police and they may have 12 guys, and then there is something that happens and you find Police would be coming to a game short of players and stuff like that. So, it just didn't work out. We had to move on with other teams," Lewis said.

However, Commissioner Atlee Rodney claims that Police were removed from the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's competitions because they were unable to fulfill a request to produce a development youth programme in order to maintain their status in the competition.



Police Commissioner Atlee Rodney. (Photo courtesy RPFAB)

Commissioner Rodney said the Police communicated to the ABCA its unhappiness with the decision, which he claims was unfair. He said the Police always looked forward to playing first class cricket.

"For the players to play in the ABCA competition that is their goal, that is their desire but that is not within our control. I think the cricket association has made a decision and say we do not have a development programme, which we find is unfair," Commissioner Rodney told Sports Overflow.

"We are not a community, we are an organisation and, whereas a community might be in a position to have Under-13s and Under-15s, we don't have that luxury.

"We are an organisation that you must be at least 18 years of age to be a member. So to put the onus on us to have a development programme for the Under-13s, Under-15s and so forth, I don't think that is fair to our organisation.

"The record has shown the Police cricket team over the years, going way back to Mr. (Henry) Greer in the early days, has performed tremendously. We have placed a few players in the West Indies team, so it is not that the Police cricket team has not performed.

"There was a year when we won all the competitions so in terms of the performance and the skills set of the Police team, we have done well over the years. So, to create that criteria and then to eliminate us, I don't think that it is being fair for the history that we have and the capabilities that we have today."

Lewis, however, said the current ABCA executive is looking at ways to welcome the Police back into its programme in the future.

"I am not saying that Police have not improved over the years or so because we are also looking at structures where we could incorporate Police again in the system, but that's future talk," Lewis said.

Sports News



Florida governor Ron DeSantis refuses to recognise Lia Thomas' win

BBC – Florida governor Ron DeSantis has signed a proclamation recognising runner-up Emma Weyant as the winner of the highest US national college swimming title - an event she lost to transgender athlete Lia Thomas.

Last week Thomas became the first known transgender athlete to win the title.

She took victory in the women's 500-yard freestyle in Atlanta.

But on Tuesday Republican governor DeSantis said the result "undermined the integrity of the competition".

Thomas, who swims for the University of Pennsylvania, secured the title in four minutes 33.24 seconds in Atlanta.

Weyant, of Sarasota, Florida, who won 400m individual medley silver at the Tokyo Olympics, finished



In an Instagram post, US Olympic swimmer Erica Sullivan (second from right, pictured in cowboy hat) said this image - of transgender woman Lia Thomas (L) on the podium, with Sullivan and friends and team-mates Emma Weyant and Brooke Forde to the right of the podium - had been "misrepresented"

1.75secs behind in second.

DeSantis criticised the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) for allowing Thomas to compete.

He said: "The NCAA is basically taking efforts to destroy women's athletics; they're trying to undermine the integrity of the competition and they're crowning

somebody else the women's champion and we think that's wrong. They are putting ideology ahead of opportunity for women athletes and I think that there are just some people that are afraid to speak out and say what they are doing, but that is what they are doing."

Thomas swam for the

Pennsylvanian men's team for three seasons before starting hormone replacement therapy in spring 2019.

US swimming updated its policy in February to allow transgender athletes to swim in elite events, alongside criteria that aims to reduce any unfair advantage. The NCAA - which governs college-level swimming - ruled it would be wrong to implement the new rules mid-season, thus allowing Thomas to compete.

On Monday World Athletics president Lord Coe issued a warning over the future of women's sport if sporting organisations get regulations for transgender athletes wrong.

"I think that the integrity of women's sport if we don't get this right, and actually the future of women's sport, is very fragile," Coe said.

Ashleigh Barty: World number one makes shock call to quit tennis

BBC - World number one Ashleigh Barty has shocked the sporting world by announcing she will retire from professional tennis at just 25.

The Australian made the announcement on social media on Wednesday, saying she was leaving to "chase other dreams".

She said she was "absolutely spent" and "physically I have nothing more to give".

"I'm so happy and I'm so ready. I just know at the moment in my heart, for me as a person, this is right," she said.

"I know that people may not under-

stand it. I'm OK with that. Because I know that Ash Barty the person has so many dreams she wants to chase after that don't necessarily involve travelling the world, being away from my family, from my home, which is where I've always wanted to be."

Barty won three Grand Slam singles events, including this year's Australian Open in January.

In doing so she became the first home player to win the Australian Open men's or women's singles title in 44 years.

She says her success in becoming 2021 Wimbledon champion "changed



World number one tennis player Ashleigh Barty [Getty Images]

my perspective" because after achieving her ultimate personal goal in the sport, she still "wasn't quite fulfilled".

Barty's first singles Grand Slam arrived at the French Open in 2019 and

cont'd on pg 25

Michael Freeland to lead new ABBA executive

Michael Freeland has been elected as the new president of the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association (ABBA).

Freeland was elected unopposed during the ABBA's Annual General Meeting at the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium on Tuesday night.

Freeland, who is the head coach of ABBA Division One team Northside Stingers, will lead the organisation for the next four years.

He expressed satisfaction with attaining the post during an interview with state media shortly after the election.

"Just want to see basketball back on the road as a great confidence boost that the members gave to me. Even though I had no competition, we still had a voting process and I was unanimously voted in so it gives me a great feeling," Freeland said.

Also elected to serve on the new ABBA executive are First Vice-President Gilbert Findlay, Second Vice-President Vere Cornelius, General Secretary Jennell Willette and Treasurer Charmaine Weatherill.

The other executive members are Inga Francis, Assistant Secretary/

Treasurer, Public Relations Officer Carlena Knight and Floor Members Brian "Hollywood" Matthew and Jenae Spencer.

The new ABBA executive is expected to meet for the first time on Saturday when they will begin planning the 2022 domestic season.

President Freeland has confirmed early, however, that staging 3x3 tournaments will be a priority on this year's domestic basketball calendar.

He said the first 3X3 tournament, which is being staged by the Fearless Crew basketball team.

"I think the smaller tournaments, the 3x3 tournament, are going to be very important and very critical in getting people that are generating that feel to come back to basketball and the first of such tournaments will be held at Villa Park on April 3rd," Freeland said.

"I think that will kick start what we want to do for the basketball season. We are also looking at a 5x5 competition shortly thereafter in an effort to raise funds for Kenya."

National player Kenya Acham was among those who lost their homes in the recent devastating fire in Point.



Michael Freeland has been elected as the new president of the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association. (Photo courtesy Michael Freeland)

cont'd from pg 24

she became world number one in the same year, a position she has held for 114 consecutive weeks since.

Only Steffi Graf, Serena Williams (both 186 weeks) and Martina Navratilova (156) have enjoyed longer streaks as world number one in the women's game.

Williams is the only other active female player to have won major titles on clay, grass and hard courts, and at the time of her retirement, Barty has collected \$23.8m (£17.9m) in prize money.

"I am so thankful for everything this sport has given me and leave feeling

proud and fulfilled," added Barty, who also won a Grand Slam doubles title alongside American CoCo Vandeweghe at the 2018 US Open.

"I know how much work it takes to bring the best out of yourself. I've said it to my team multiple times, 'I just don't have that in me anymore.' Physically, I have

nothing more to give. I've given absolutely everything I have to this beautiful sport of tennis, and I'm really happy with that.

"For me, that is my success. Thank you to everyone who has supported me along the way. I'll always be grateful for the lifelong memories we created together."

National squad for CARIFTA Games announced



A seven-member team has been selected to represent Antigua and Barbuda at the 49th Junior CARIFTA Track and Field Games in Jamaica over the Easter weekend in April.

The squad includes Geolyna Dowdy of Phoenix Athletics Club. The sprinter will be contesting the Under-17 Girls 100 and 200 metres events.

Dwayne Flemming of Power Speed Endurance Track Club and the Princess Margaret School will also be contesting both sprints in the Under-17 Boys Division. Flemming will be seeking gold in the 100 and 200 metre events.

Osei Gardener of CPTSA Wings Sports Club and Princess Margaret School will be competing in the Under-17 Boys' 200 and 400 metres events.

Alyssa Dyett of Paramount Performance Track Club will represent the twin-island state in the Under-20 Girls' Triple Jump.

Mai McIntosh, also of

Paramount Performance Track Club and Princess Margaret School, is the sole competitor in the Under-20 Girls' Heptathlon.

Ajani Daley of Power Speed Endurance Track Club and Princess Margaret School will contest the Under-20 Boys' 100 and 200 metre races.

The other member of the squad is Craig Pendergast of School Calabar in Jamaica. He will vie for top honours in the Under-20 Boys' 400 metres hurdles.

The Antigua and Barbuda Athletics Association has not released the names of the coaches and other officials who will accompany the athletes.

Jamaica is set to host the Junior CARIFTA Track and Field Games from April 16-18 after the cancellation of the last two editions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2020 event was scheduled to be held in Bermuda but was postponed to 2021 before being cancelled.

Pictured left:

Osei Gardener of CPTSA Wings Sports Club and Princess Margaret School has been named in the Antigua and Barbuda squad who will attend the 49th Junior CARIFTA Track and Field Games in Jamaica next month. (Photo courtesy CPTSA Wings)