

# COURT MAKES RARE ADMISSION OF ERROR IN HARRY JOSIAH CASE



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# Local News



## Harry Josiah case takes rare legal twist

In a seldom heard instance, a High Court Justice has acknowledged that he erred in handing down a decision.

Following Justice Stanley John's favourable 4th March decision in respect of the No Case submission filed in the Harry Josiah corruption and fraud trial, the written judgement, made public on Wednesday substantiated the Director of Public Prosecution's notice of appeal filed with the Court of Appeal on Tuesday.

The learned Justice John, who served his last day on the bench Wednesday, said in his written decision, "In light of the evidence relating to counts 1, 2 and 3, and upon further analysis of same, the court is now of the view that it fell into error in upholding the no case submission in respect of counts 1, 2 and 3".

One of the counts referred to in the judgement relates to corruption in relation to a Toyota Corolla while the other two relate

to forgery in respect of the same vehicle.

Pointe Xpress spoke with seasoned barristers who all indicated that an admission of this sort by a sitting judge is exceedingly rare.

On 4th March, Justice John ruled on a No Case submission entered by Harry Josiah's legal team led by Queen's Counsel Dane Hamilton Sr. that the Crown had not established their case against his client. The learned justice at the time agreed stating he was not "satisfied that the Crown discharged that burden and placed before me evidence upon which I can reasonably act."

The prosecution, led by contracted Attorney Andrew Okolo, immediately expressed their intention to appeal the judge's decision.

This abruptly cuts short Josiah's celebration rally, which went as far as the political platform of the opposition United Progressive Party. Josiah and his attorney, QC Hamilton



Harry Josiah

Sr., have both openly stated that they believed that his prosecution was politically motivated.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has vehemently denied this, however, he said following Josiah's short-lived acquittal, that former chairman of the Antigua Barbuda Transport Board, Dean Jonas engineered the chain of events that led to the police investigation, which resulted in Josiah being charged with crimes under the Preven-

tion of Corruption Act and Forgery Act.

Prime Minister Browne said back in 2014, when Josiah's legal troubles began, his Cabinet was unaware of the investigation and did not lend its support. He added that Sir Robin Yearwood, who was minister with portfolio responsibility for the Antigua Barbuda Transport Board at the time, was also unaware of the actions of former chairman Jonas.

With these new and intriguing developments, one thing is clear; the former Antigua Barbuda Transport Board general manager's seven-year-long legal battle is far from over as he must now ready himself - and his pockets - for round two of this saga, which Pointe Xpress' legal advisors say could take several years more to conclude.

Thu 31   Day		Thu 31   Night	
<b>81°</b>	42% ENE 18 mph	<b>75°</b>	17% E 16 mph
Showers in the morning, then partly cloudy in the afternoon. High 81F. Winds ENE at 15 to 25 mph. Chance of rain 40%.		Mainly clear skies. Low around 75F. Winds E at 10 to 20 mph.	
Humidity <b>71%</b>	UV Index <b>Extreme</b>	Humidity <b>75%</b>	UV Index <b>0 of 10</b>
Sunrise <b>6:02 am</b>	Sunset <b>6:20 pm</b>	Moonrise <b>5:44 am</b>	Moonset <b>6:00 pm</b>
		● New Moon	



## ABS staff case delayed, appeal filed to remove panel

Employees of state-owned television ABS are appealing to Attorney General Steadroy Benjamin to drop the appeal filed against their case before the Industrial Court.

ABS staff walked off the job yesterday after they were informed that their court claim for overtime, which they say they have been owed since 2014, was halted after Minister Benjamin filed an appeal against the Industrial Court panel presiding over the case.

It is alleged that the AG claims that the panel showed favour to ABS' employees against the station's management.

The years-old case that began with ABS workers filing a complaint with their union, is now likely to be further delayed as the matter must now be heard by the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court's Court of Appeal.

Expressing frustration over the turn of events, the workers walked off the job and their Shop Steward, Kerrio Adams, has served notice that they will continue their industrial action until the appeal is withdrawn and the case is allowed to proceed before the Industrial Court.

"Last year, they moved a motion to have them recuse themselves, and the panel decided to strike that down," Adams explained.



"Based on that strike down, we decided we would go into a negotiating/reconciliation phase, where we would meet with them, submit our information of when we would have worked the overtime and the dates, and meet and sit down and hash out the figures, which staff would be paid."

But that plan was derailed when the Industrial Court, according to the shop steward, informed the employees' representatives yesterday morning of the appeal which was filed on 3rd March, 2022. However, it was not until Wednesday morning that the court was informed.

"The president of the court [Charlesworth Browne] explained the ramifications if they would have to recuse themselves, which is a starting over of the trial, and a long delay until

they can find a new panel of judges to oversee it," Adams recalled.

He said the employees are dissatisfied that the matter, which has been before the court for more than a year, will be further delayed.

"The appeal will hinder our cause, our efforts so far that we have made. We are hoping the AG sees it fit to remove the appeal. The staff is troubled by the appeal, because this is the second time they are asking the judges to recuse themselves from this case. I think their reasons are they find the panel of judges are favouring the staff, which is far from reality.

"We have been very frustrated after the panel has given the employer time and time and time to get documents and we've just been patient. Today, the straw that broke the camel's back

was asking the panel to remove themselves," Adams stated.

He is of the opinion ABS' staff are receiving unfair treatment and is appealing to Attorney General Benjamin to reconsider his position.

The overtime owed to employees is believed to be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. During the case, ABS' management was called upon to provide crucial documents to the court to justify their claim that the workers were not owed that much and that many had been compensated. Those documents included photocopied cheques, logbooks and vouchers. However, reports suggest that ABS' management encountered difficulty producing all the documentation the Industrial Court required they submit.

# Mechanism finalised for voucher system

Arrangements have been finalised for members of the transportation sector to benefit from the voucher system implemented for reduced prices for gasoline and diesel.

The fuel subsidy to provide relief to transportation providers was announced by the Cabinet last week.

According to a highly placed government source, both the taxi and bus associations, along with

the Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board (ABTB), have been involved in discussions with senior government officials concerning the effective and smooth operation of the system.

It was agreed that in order to regulate the system guaranteeing a 25 percent reduction in fuel to legitimate bus drivers and taxi operators, vouchers will be distributed at the cost of 5 gallons and 10 gallons.

These vouchers will be distributed to the bus drivers and taxi operators who carry an ID, which connects them with the vehicle for which the subsidy is being claimed.

The source said bus drivers will be allowed to purchase up to 50 gallons weekly while taxi operators will have a 40-gallon weekly limit.

Three petrol stations have been identified where these vouchers will be ac-

cepted.

They are located at the West Bus Station, on Factory Road and Old Parham Road.

To ensure the system is properly managed, the ABTB will assign officers at each of the participating service stations.

Under the voucher system, fisher folks will also benefit, however, they will get the reduction when they purchase fuel at The Point Wharf.



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## New look ARG for Carnival 2022

Antigua and Barbuda's oldest multi-purpose venue – the Antigua Recreation Grounds – may be in for a major upgrade in time for Carnival 2022.

The matter is now under serious consideration at the highest level of government.

A recent report indicated that after two years of inactivity due to the coronavirus pandemic, the ARG is currently in serious disrepair.

According to the report, the popular venue for carnival, football, cricket and other social and cultural events now 'requires significant upgrading'.

An informed source said Works Minister, Lennox Weston, has agreed that his ministry will examine the state of the ARG and make every effort to ready it for this year's car-



*Antigua Recreation Ground during Carnival in days gone by.*

nival festivities.

It was noted that the Double Decker ARG Stand, which had been previously condemned, is

likely to be removed within a few weeks, creating new space for special seating during Carnival.

"Contemplation is be-

ing given to razing the Sir Vivian Richards Stand in order to make way for a superior modern facility.

The food vendors within the ARG will soon move into the completed temporary space, directly outside the ARG.

APUA will next install running water and proper disposal for the runoff," the source added.

The ARG has been the home of carnival for several decades.

Meanwhile, as planning for carnival moves into top gear, the government is again urging all revellers to vaccinate themselves, or be prepared to be tested for COVID-19, before participating in troupes or other group activities.



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# Local News



## Jennings man fined for causing death of teenaged friend

Nicholas Augustine got a second chance after his dangerous driving cost his 17-year-old friend his life two years ago.

On 10th January 2020, Augustine, now 21, was driving a rented Honda Fit along Valley Road when he lost control of the car and crashed into a utility pole.

One of the Jennings resident's passengers, Theophilus Dyett, was killed as a result of the accident. A second passenger walked away from the accident with minor injuries.

While Augustine will have to live the rest of his life dealing with the

consequences of his actions, his matter before the High Court is now at a close as he was fined \$5000 for Causing Death by Dangerous Driving.

Justice Stanley John, who presided over the matter, also ordered Augustine, who pled guilty, to undergo counselling.

His licence has also been suspended for three years.

Augustine was given until the end of May to pay the fine. Should he fail to do so, he will spend six months in prison.

According to evidence presented to the court, the three young people

made plans to go out on the fateful night.

Augustine, a newly licenced and inexperienced driver, was unable to maintain control of the car on the road which was wet that night when the collision took place near Big Creek.

Dyett, who was in the back seat, was not wearing a seat belt at the time of the accident.

He remained unconscious following the accident, a patient of the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre, until he finally passed away on 18th March, 2020.


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## Displeasure over light sentence for man who raped young daughter

There is public outrage following the sentencing of a man to 18 years in prison for unlawful sexual intercourse with his then 11-year-old daughter.

His name and that of the girl have been withheld.

The man was sentenced on Tuesday after he pleaded guilty to three counts of the offence and was sentenced to three 18-year sentences to run concurrently.

This means they will run simultaneously, however a prison year is approximately nine months so he will serve approximately 13.5 years in prison.

This has caused many

people to express outrage over the short amount of time he will serve for such a heinous act.

Many have called the sentence a mere slap on the wrist.

The victim, then 11-years-old was placed, along with her brother, in the custody of their father following allegations of physical abuse by their mother in 2018.

The first sexual encounter occurred in 2018 while the child was sleeping in her room.

On that occasion, he assaulted her while she was sleeping on her stomach and



threatened to beat her if she told anyone of the incident.

A second incident took place in 2019 in the same bed where the child's step-mother was asleep.

The child admitted to the woman what was taking place when she was con-

fronted, but the step-mother never reported the matter to law enforcement. Instead, she chose to move out of the home.

It was the child's mother who found out what had transpired and reported the matter to the police.



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# Into the wild: Animals the latest frontier in COVID fight

By Laura Ungar

To administer this COVID test, Todd Kautz had to lie on his belly in the snow and worm his upper body into the narrow den of a hibernating black bear. Training a light on its snout, Kautz carefully slipped a long cotton swab into the bear's nostrils five times.

For postdoctoral researcher Kautz and a team of other wildlife experts, tracking the coronavirus means freezing temperatures, icy roads, trudging through deep snow and getting uncomfortably close to potentially dangerous wildlife.

They're testing bears, moose, deer and wolves on a Native American reservation in the remote north woods about 5 miles from Canada. Like researchers around the world, they are trying to figure out how, how much and where wildlife is spreading the virus.

Scientists are concerned that the virus could evolve within animal populations – potentially spawning dangerous viral mutants that could jump back to people, spread among us and reignite what for now seems to some people like a waning crisis.

The coronavirus pandemic has served as a stark and tragic example of how closely animal health and human health are linked. While the origins of the virus have not been proven, many scientists say it likely jumped from bats to humans, either directly or through another species that was being sold live in Wuhan, China.

And now the virus has been confirmed in wildlife in at least 24 U.S. states, including Minnesota. Recently, an early Canadian study showed someone in nearby Ontario likely contracted a highly mutated strain from a deer.

"If the virus can establish itself in a



*A wildlife team covers a young buck's head with a cloth to help calm it before testing the deer for the coronavirus and taking other biological samples in Grand Portage, Minn. on Wednesday, March 2, 2022. Scientists are concerned that the COVID-19 virus could evolve within animal populations – potentially spawning dangerous viral mutants that could jump back to people, spread among us and reignite what for now seems like a waning crisis. (AP Photo/Laura Ungar)*

wild animal reservoir, it will always be out there with the threat to spill back into the human population," said University of Minnesota researcher Matthew Aliota, who is working with the Grand Portage Reservation team.

E.J. Isaac, a fish and wildlife biologist for the reservation that's home to the Grand Portage Ojibwe, said he expects the stakes to get even higher with the start of spring, as bears wake from hibernation and deer and wolves roam to different regions.

"If we consider that there are many species and they're all intermingling to some extent, their patterns and their movements can exponentially increase the amount of transmission that could occur," he said.

## INTO THE WILD

Their research is meant to ward off such unwelcome surprises. But it carries its own set of risks.

Seth Moore, who directs the reservation biology and environment depart-

ment, recently almost got bitten by a wolf.

And they sometimes team with a crew from the Texas-based company Heliwild to capture animals from the air. One chilly late-winter afternoon, the men climbed into a small helicopter with no side doors that lifted above the tree-tops. Flying low, they quickly spotted a deer in a forest clearing. They targeted the animal from the air with a net gun and dropped Moore off.

Wind whipped at his face as he worked in deep snow to quickly swab the deer's nose for COVID, put on a tracking collar and collect blood and other biological samples for different research.

The men capture moose in much the same way, using tranquilizer darts instead of nets. They trap wolves and deer either from the air or on the ground, and trap bears on the ground.

They knew of the young male bear

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they recently tested because they had already been tracking it. To get to the den, they had to take snowmobiles to the bottom of a hill then hike a narrow, winding path in snowshoes.

When Kautz crawled part-way into the den, a colleague held his feet to pull him out quickly if necessary. The team also gave the animal a drug to keep it sleeping and another later to counteract the effects of the first.

To minimize the risk of exposing animals to COVID, the men are fully vaccinated and boosted and get tested frequently.

The day after testing the bear, Isaac packed their samples to send to Aliota's lab in Saint Paul. The veterinary and biomedical researcher hopes to learn not just which animals are getting infected but also whether certain animals are acting as "bridge species" to bring it to others. Testing may later be expanded to red foxes and racoons.

It's also possible the virus hasn't reached this remote location — yet. Since it's already circulating in the wilderness of Minnesota and nearby states, Aliota said it's only a matter of time.

## LOOKING FOR MUTANTS

Close contact between humans and animals has allowed the virus to overcome built-in barriers to spread between species.

To infect any living thing, the virus must get into its cells, which isn't always easy. Virology expert David O'Connor likens the process



*A bear hibernates in a den in Grand Portage, Minn. on March 2, 2022. (AP Photo/Emma H. Tobin)*

to opening a "lock" with the virus' spike protein "key."

"Different species have different-looking locks, and some of those locks are not going to be pickable by the key," the University of Wisconsin-Madison scientist said.

But other locks are similar enough for the virus to enter an animal's cells and make copies of itself. As it does, it can randomly mutate and still have a key that fits in the human lock. That allows it to leap back to humans through close contact with live animals, scientists believe.

Although spillback is rare, it only takes one person to bring a mutated virus into the realm of humans.

Some think the highly mutated omicron variant emerged from an animal rather than an immune-compromised human, as many believe. Virologist Marc Johnson of the University of Missouri is one of them, and now sees animals as "a potential source of pi," the Greek letter that may be used to designate the next dangerous coronavirus variant.

Johnson and his colleagues found strange coro-

navirus lineages in New York City sewage with mutations rarely seen elsewhere, which he believes came from animals, perhaps rodents.

What scientists are most concerned about is that current or future variants could establish themselves and multiply widely within a reservoir species.

One possibility: white-tailed deer. Scientists found the coronavirus in a third of deer sampled in Iowa between September 2020 and January 2021. Others found COVID-19 antibodies in a third of deer tested in Illinois, Michigan, New York and Pennsylvania. Infected deer generally have no symptoms. Testing in many other wild species has been limited or absent.

"It's possible that the virus is already perhaps circulating in multiple animals," said virology expert Suresh Kuchipudi of Pennsylvania State University, an author of the Iowa deer study. If unmonitored, the virus could leave people "completely blindsided," he said.

## CAN IT BE STOPPED?

Ultimately, experts say the only way to stop viruses

from jumping back and forth between animals and humans — extending this pandemic or sparking a new one — is to tackle big problems like habitat destruction and illegal wildlife sales.

"We are encroaching on animal habitats like we have never before in history," Aliota said. "Spill over events from wild animals into humans are, unfortunately I think, going to increase in both frequency and scope."

To combat that threat, three international organizations — the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Organization for Animal Health and the World Health Organization — are urging countries to make COVID surveillance in animals a priority.

In Grand Portage, Aliota's collaborators continue to do their part by testing as many animals as they can catch.

With icy Lake Superior sparkling through the evergreens, Isaac slipped his hand beneath the netting of a deer trap. A colleague straddling the animal lifted its head off the snowy ground so that Isaac could swab its nostrils.

The young buck briefly lurched its head forward but kept still long enough for Isaac to get what he needed.

"Nicely done," his colleague said as Isaac put the sample into a vial.

When they were finished, they gently lifted the trap to let the deer go. It bounded into the vast forest without looking back, disappearing into the snowy shadows.

## What is alopecia? It's no laughing matter for millions of Black women

**By Danita Peoples, Clinical Associate Professor of Dermatology, Wayne State University**

*The Oscar slap that overshadowed the Academy Awards ceremony was sparked by a joke about Jada Pinkett Smith's lack of hair – with husband Will Smith objecting violently to comedian Chris Rock mocking the actress's shaved head.*

*Away from the recriminations over what could be perceived as a mean-spirited jibe and a disproportionate response, many people will sympathize with Pinkett Smith. As millions of women will attest, hair loss is no laughing matter.*

*Dermatologist Danita Peoples of Wayne State University's School of Medicine addresses alopecia and why certain forms of it can disproportionately affect Black women.*

### 1. What is alopecia?

Alopecia is a medical word that refers to hair loss generally. And there are descriptors added which can refer to where the hair loss is occurring, or to the cause of it. Traction alopecia, for example, is hair loss from trauma or chronic inflammatory changes to the hair follicles.

### 2. What causes alopecia?

Traction alopecia happens when there is trauma to the scalp, where the hair is being pulled or rubbed on a regular basis, causing inflammation around the hair follicles. This can lead to hair loss or thinning.

Alopecia areata describes hair loss to a particular area. It has different levels of severity, so there might be just a coin-sized area of hair loss on the scalp, or it could affect large areas. It can occur any place on the body.

Or it might result in complete hair loss on the scalp, alopecia totalis. Some people lose eyebrows or see a thinning



of their eyelashes.

People can even have alopecia universalis, which is a loss of hair on the entire body.

Alopecia areata is considered an “immune-mediated” type of hair loss. The immune system is attacking the hair follicles. It has to do with T cells, the important white blood cells in the immune system.

And then other autoimmune disorders can have alopecia associated with them. This is the form of alopecia that Jada Pinkett Smith has said she has.

Lupus is an autoimmune disorder that can lead to hair loss. One type is systemic lupus erythematosus. Another type, discoid lupus erythematosus, primarily affects the skin and can cause hair loss with scarring on the scalp.

Thyroid abnormalities can be related to hair loss as well. In fact, when patients come to me with hair loss, the first test that I may order is a thyroid study.

### 3. Who does it affect?

Anyone can get alopecia. Alopecia areata can show up at any age, from children to adults, and both men and women. But it's more likely to affect people of African descent than white or Asians.

Traction alopecia can affect people in certain professions, like ballerinas, who wear their hair up in buns all the time. The pressure and friction from

sports headgear, like helmets or baseball caps, can also cause hair loss. And in some parts of northern Europe, where it is common for people to pull their hair back tight on a regular basis, there are higher rates of traction alopecia. Traction alopecia affects one-third of women of African descent, making it the most common type of alopecia affecting Black women.

### 4. Why is traction alopecia so common among Black women?

That is due to certain hair styling practices that Black women use on their hair – wearing tight weaves or extensions, straightening with heat, that sort of thing. Hair is a big deal among Black women in a way that it isn't for others. When I was growing up, my older relatives told us girls that our hair was our “crowning glory.” And they made a big deal about us keeping our hair looking stylish and well groomed, and that usually meant straightening it.

But I believe there's less pressure than there used to be for Black women to keep our hair straightened, in the workplace or elsewhere.

### 5. How is alopecia treated?

It depends on the cause. There are injected or topical corticosteroids for alopecia areata. If it's due to a nutritional deficiency, like iron or protein, obviously you simply need to correct the deficiencies with supplements or by changing the diet. When it is caused by traction or discoid lupus, if you don't treat the inflammation on the scalp soon enough, the hair loss can become permanent.

When it comes to traction, though, it's much more about eliminating the practices that cause the problem in the first place. What's happening now is more people are aware of the downsides of chemical or heat applications to straighten the hair and are using those damaging processes less.



## What would paying for natural gas in rubles mean?

Europe's already high gas prices have gyrated since Russian President Vladimir Putin announced plans to have importers pay for Russian natural gas in rubles instead of dollars and euros.

Here's a look at some of the implications of such a move:

### WHAT IS PUTIN PROPOSING?

Europe imports large amounts of Russian natural gas to heat homes, generate electricity and fuel industry, and those imports have continued despite the war in Ukraine.

Around 60% of imports are paid in euros, and the rest in dollars. Putin wants to change that by requiring foreign gas importers to purchase rubles and use them to pay state-owned supplier Gazprom.

Putin told the Russian central bank last Wednesday to come up with a workable system.

### WHAT EFFECTS COULD THAT PLAN HAVE?

Importers would have to find a bank that would exchange euros and dollars for rubles. That could be cumbersome because some Russian banks have been either blocked or cut off from the SWIFT messaging system that facilitates international payments.

Still, there are some banks that haven't been cut off, and for now, sanctions imposed by the U.S. Treasury barring bank transactions contain exceptions for energy payments.

That's a concession to European allies that are much more reliant on Russian oil and gas and fear a total cut off could throw their economy into recession.

Russia getting paid for gas in their currency would at best help marginally in getting around financial sanctions, propping up the ruble's value or



protecting the Russian economy, said Eswar Prasad, professor of trade policy at Cornell University and a former official at the International Monetary Fund.

"Either Putin is getting terrible economic advice, or he is going further off the rails in his hatred for the West," Prasad said. "It would be cheaper for foreign importers to pay for Russia's exports in a currency that is collapsing in value, but it is difficult to acquire rubles and make payments in a manner that avoids the sanctions."

He warned that the move "could further roil global energy markets by exacerbating current supply disruptions and adding to uncertainty about future supplies, which could all add up to more price spikes."

### HOW IS PUTIN'S DEMAND BEING RECEIVED IN EUROPE?

European governments and energy companies are rejecting the idea, saying gas import contracts specify the currency and that one side can't change it overnight. They say they intend to keep paying in euros and dollars.

More broadly, the Group of Seven major economies including Japan, the U.S. and Canada as well as Germany, France, Italy and Britain have agreed to reject Moscow's demand. The European Union's energy commissioner also agreed, a G-7 statement said.

German Vice Chancellor Robert Habeck told reporters Monday that "all G-7 ministers agreed completely" that such a step would be "a one-sided and clear breach of the existing contracts."

### WHAT'S PUTIN'S MOTIVE?

In theory, requiring ruble payments could support demand for the currency and its exchange rate. But not by much, Prasad says. As it stands, euros and dollars are already being used to purchase rubles when Gazprom exchanges its foreign earnings.

The Center for Eastern Studies in Warsaw has suggested that by moving the flow of foreign currency from Gazprom to the largely state-controlled banking system, the Kremlin will gain added control over foreign currency that has become scarcer since West-

*cont'd on pg 12*

# The World Around Us



*cont'd from pg 11*

ern countries froze much of Russia's reserves abroad.

However, that would leave Gazprom without hard currency to make foreign debt payments or purchase supplies abroad. As it stands, the gas supplier already has to sell 80% of its foreign currency to Russia's central bank.

The ruble dispute has raised concerns it could lead to an interruption in natural gas supply. That could open Russia to charges of not adhering to long-term energy contracts, which it has done so far.

Europe's pipeline system is highly connected, so any attempt to restrict flows

to some countries would affect the others, according to analysts at Rystad Energy. Beyond that, energy sales are a key source of revenue for Russia.

Asked by reporters if Russia could cut gas supplies to European customers if they reject the demand to pay in rubles, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said in a conference call Monday that "we clearly aren't going to supply gas for free."

"In our situation, it's hardly possible and feasible to engage in charity for Europe," Peskov said.

**HOW REAL IS THAT THREAT?**

The ruble proposal led

Germany's utilities association, the BDEW, to call on the government to declare an "early warning" of a severe energy shortage.

That's the first of three stages of energy emergency in EU and German law, the highest being a shortage so severe that the government must shut off gas to industry to protect households.

The German government does not see the need for such a declaration, a spokeswoman said Monday.

It's possible Putin is bluffing. This month, Russia threatened to use rubles to pay foreign investors who hold government bonds dominated in dollars. It went through with a dollar

payment after ratings agencies said paying in rubles would put Russia in default.

When it comes to gas payments, "Putin may demand rubles, but the contracts are clear," said Carl Weinberg, chief economist and managing director at High Frequency Economics in White Plains, New York.

"His only option to force change is to refuse to deliver products, and that cannot happen: He can't keep oil and gas from coming out of the ground without capping wells, and storage capacity will get filled very fast if shipments stop cold."

"So, let's call it a bluff," Weinberg said. "Russia cannot stop shipping product any more than Germany and the EU can stop buying it."

**WHY IS ENERGY AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE WAR?**

The European economy remains heavily dependent on Russia for 40% of its gas imports and 25% of its oil.

While the U.S. and the United Kingdom have said they will stop buying Russian oil, European leaders have shied away from a total boycott of Russian oil and gas.

Instead, they have focused on reducing their imports over the next several years through conservation, other sources and switching to wind and solar as fast as they can.

Estimates vary of the impact of a total gas shutoff in Europe, but they generally involve a substantial loss of economic output. (AP)



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10:00AM-3:00PM**



## Haitians protest rising insecurity; some burn a plane

AP – Haitians took to the streets Tuesday to protest rising insecurity, with demonstrations turning violent in the southern city of Les Cayes where people stormed the airport and attacked and burned a small plane owned by a U.S. missionary group.

At least one person died and five others were injured, including four police officers, in the confrontation between protesters and authorities in Les Cayes, said Gedeon Chery, a National Police inspector assigned to the city's airport.

Chery told The Associated Press the person killed was a protester who was shot, but he didn't say whether police were responsible.

A second small plane was burned at the local airport of the city of Jacmel, but it wasn't clear if it was also part of an attack by some protesters, said Garry Desrosiers, the National Police spokesman.

The aircraft was non-operational and had been stationed there for a while, he added.

The protests coincided with the 35th anniversary of Haiti's 1987 Constitution and follow other protests and strikes in recent weeks amid a spike in gang-related kidnappings and complaints about Prime Minister Ariel Henry's inability to con-



*A woman guides a child past a demonstration against increasing violence in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Tuesday, March 29, 2022. The protest coincides with the 35th anniversary of Haiti's 1987 Constitution and follows other protests and strikes in recent weeks in the middle of a spike in gang-related kidnappings. (AP Photo/Odelyn Joseph)*

front gangs. On his Twitter account, Henry condemned the violence in Les Cayes and said he has ordered authorities to look for the people behind it.

Chery, the police inspector, said a group of people had gotten onto the terminal's tarmac, attacked the plane and set it on fire.

A video posted in social media showed some people on the plane's fuselage while the red-and-white aircraft was moving on the tarmac, and others running alongside it. Chery said he didn't know why they attacked it.

Agape Flights, a Christian ministry transporting supplies to missionaries in Haiti, the Dominican Re-

public and the Bahamas, said in a statement that "Our team is safe."

It said Agape's Chieftain aircraft was destroyed and they are preparing to bring the ministry's team back to the U.S.

"Our missionary affiliates are hearing that they thought it was a politicians plane they were destroying," the statement said.

People also protested in Haiti's capital of Port-au-Prince, where some burned tires. Protesters also criticized how Henry has not been able to control insecurity.

"He has nothing left to offer but words and more baseless words," said Marie-Andre Michelle, one of

the people who marched in Port-au-Prince.

Violence has increased over the past year despite the prime minister's pledges to crack down on insecurity.

Kidnappings in Haiti increased 180% in 2021, with 655 of them reported to police, according to mid-February report by the U.N. Security Council. Authorities believe the number could be higher since many kidnappings go unreported.

Along with violence, Haiti has been also dealing with the ongoing sluggish investigation of President Jovenel Moïse's killing last July 7, and a magnitude-7.2 earthquake that killed over 2,200 people in the country's south last August.

# Regional News



## Barbados: Haitians not being held against their will, government says

CMC – The Barbados government says it is satisfied that approximately 30 Haitians, who arrived in the country last month were not being held against their will or in substandard accommodation.

The Ministry of Home Affairs and Information issued a statement following recent media reports regarding the presence of the Haitians on the island.

The statement said that the Haitians, who arrived here between February 20 and 25, this year “were granted the regular six months stay as visitors, as provided for under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, and in keeping with the Caribbean Community (Movement of Skilled Nationals)” adding in “that regard, they have not contravened the Immigration law”.

The statement said that Immigration Minister, Wilfred Abrahams, and a team from the Barbados Immigration Department, had on Tuesday visited the area where the Haitians were being held “to verify that they were not being held against their will or in substandard accommodation and are satisfied that this is not the case.

“The primary spokesperson for



the Haitians informed officials that they voluntarily came to Barbados en route to Guyana. The Minister informed them that his primary concern was their well-being and assured them that all efforts are being made to resolve the situation,” the statement said.

The online publication Barbados TODAY, which said it was present when Abrahams visited the Haitians, reported Wednesday that “more than a dozen Haitians, including young children, sat in a room on the second-floor apartment” as they were being quizzed about the circumstances under which they arrived here.

It said apart from the state-owned Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) “no independent media organisations had been invited.

“In the basement, scores of young adults and children made way for

Government officials to enter the apartment. It was unclear exactly how many bedrooms, bathrooms or kitchen spaces were made available to the nearly three dozen Haitians.

“There was one inflatable bed in what appeared to be the living area of the apartment, but no indication of where so many people would rest their heads at night,” media outlets in Barbados reported.

It said that there were no one-on-one interviews between state officials and the Haitian residents, except for a question from the Home Affairs Minister.

“Is anybody here being held against their will? All who are here came to Barbados voluntarily and you are leaving to go somewhere else voluntarily? Are you being forced to stay in Barbados or being kept in Barbados against your will?”

“No,” replied the young man who spoke English.

Last Friday, Barbados TODAY reported that the Haitians were awaiting visas to enter Guyana through a process involving an agency called MPH. The agency was paid an undisclosed sum to cover transportation costs, in-transit accommodation and visas.

## Guyana: Prisoner stabbed to death over bed space

CMC – The Guyana Prison Service Tuesday confirmed that an altercation between two prisoners both of whom were facing murder charges has resulted in the death of one of them.

In a statement, the Prison Service said that Mahash Rajpaul was stabbed to death on Monday by Rajkumar Singh after the men got into

an argument after Rajpaul accused his fellow remand prisoner of walking on his bed space at the Lusignan jail in East Coast Demerara.

The statement said that the prisoner was stabbed in the chest with an improvised weapon and was taken to the prison infirmary where he died.

The authorities said that



they have recovered the murder weapon and that the assailant has been moved to

another section of the prison as the investigations continue.



## German diplomats seeking access to citizen jailed in Cuba

AP - Germany's Foreign Ministry said Tuesday its diplomats are working to get access to a German citizen imprisoned in Cuba since last year.

Supporters say Luis Frómeta Compte, a resident of Dresden who has both German and Cuban citizenship, was arrested on July 11, 2021, after filming an anti-government demonstration during a vacation in Cuba.

According to the International Society for Human Rights, Frómeta Compte was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment in December for causing public outrage and inciting unrest. The group said the 59-year-old plans to go on hunger strike to protest his incarceration.

"The German embassy in Havana is dealing with the case and is in close contact with the Cuban authorities, the



lawyer and the relatives of the person concerned," the Foreign Ministry said.

The ministry and the embassy "are

making intensive efforts to gain consular access to the person concerned," it added.

### STUDENT SAFETY POLICY



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## Putin demands Mariupol surrender to end shelling

BBC - Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that shelling of the besieged Ukrainian city of Mariupol will only end when Ukrainian troops surrender.

Mr Putin made the comments during an hour long phone call with French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday night, the Kremlin said in a statement.

But French officials said the Russian leader had agreed to consider plans to evacuate civilians from the city.

It comes as new satellite photos showed the destruction caused by the shelling.

The images, released by the Earth observation company Maxar, showed that residential areas have been reduced to rubble and highlighted Russian artillery

cannons in firing positions on the outskirts of the city.

Officials from France's Elysee palace called the situation in the city "catastrophic" and added that "civilian populations must be protected and must leave the city if they wish to. They must have access to food aid, water and the medicines they need".

"This very degraded humanitarian situation is linked to the siege of the city by the Russian armed forces," the statement said.

France, along with Turkey, Greece and several humanitarian groups, have presented Mr Putin with a plan to evacuate the city.

Officials said that Mr Putin told Mr Macron that he will "think about" the proposal.



But in its readout of the call, the Kremlin appeared to suggest that Mr Putin has provided no such assurances.

Russian officials said Mr Putin told the French leader that "in order to resolve the difficult humanitarian situation in this city, Ukrainian nationalist militants must stop resisting and lay down their arms".

The statement added

that Mr Putin had given Mr Macron "detailed information about measures taken by the Russian military to provide emergency humanitarian assistance and ensure the safe evacuation" of civilians from the besieged south-eastern city.

Ukraine has accused Russia of forcibly relocating thousands of people from Mariupol to Russian-held territory.

## Some Americans are going to Mexico for cheaper petrol

BBC - As petrol prices across the US continue to rise, Americans are looking for cheaper ways to fill their tanks - and some are even seeking deals in another country.

In the US state of California, which consistently ranks among the highest in the nation for petrol prices, some are heading across the US-Mexico border in search of savings.

Even before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February, the cost of gas in the US was ticking upwards. According to the US Department of Labour, petrol prices rose 40% from January 2021 to January 2022.

Russia is the world's third-biggest oil producer and the conflict sent petrol prices soaring in the US and elsewhere. Earlier this month, the average



cost of a retail gallon of gasoline hit \$4.33 (£3.31) - reaching 14-year highs - according to the American Automobile Association (AAA).

The average price of petrol in California is currently \$5.91 per gallon and \$4.24 per gallon nationally, AAA data says.

It's a different story in Mexico, where earlier this month President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador promised

to control petrol prices by subsidising fuel.

On TikTok, Julio Vaquero, a resident of San Diego, just 17 miles (23km) from the border, posted a video showing how he filled up his Honda Civic in Tijuana for \$40.

"Eight hundred pesos, filled it up. Full tank," he said, showing the petrol station's pump display and his car's full fuel gauge.

The short TikTok has over 1,900 likes.

He told the BBC that one week later it cost him \$70 to fill up in California.

Mr Vaquero lives about 20 minutes from Tijuana and tends to visit every other month, but he said if prices keep

*cont'd on pg 17*



## UN experts seek to verify mass graves for migrants in Libya

AP - Investigators commissioned by the U.N.'s top human rights body on Wednesday painted a grim picture for migrants in Libya, just days after saying they were looking into claims that mass graves have been found at a human trafficking centre in the country's northwest.

Chief investigator Mohamed Auajjar, a former Moroccan justice minister, said the team of investigators had documented "consistent patterns of serious human rights violations" against migrants in government-run detention centres and trafficking hubs.

Libya has in recent years emerged as a popular, if extremely dangerous, route toward Europe for those fleeing poverty and conflict in Africa and the Middle East. The North African nation plunged into turmoil following the NATO-backed 2011 uprising that toppled and killed long time dictator Moammar Gadhafi.

In the north western town of Bani Walid, the fact-finding experts commissioned

by the U.N.-backed Human Rights Council found that "migrants were held captive, murdered, tortured and raped."

In interim findings presented to the council this week, the investigators said at least eight migrants had spoken about mass graves in the town, something the investigators said they needed to verify.

Speaking to The Associated Press on the side lines of the council session in Geneva, Auajjar said his office "received information about other sites as well, where there may be mass graves, but the investigations are ongoing."

Auajjar said his team of about 15 investigators, based out of the Tunisian capital of Tunis, are going over all of the cases and vetting the information received.

"We receive a lot of information from NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and authorities, and we want to check them — with ethics and rigor," he said.

Alluding to the coun-



cil's next session, when his office will present a full written report, Auajjar said: "In June, we will be able to announce concrete results and if necessary, if we have the necessary evidence, we will name those responsible for these claims."

He told the council earlier that investigators were also examining the existence of secret detention facilities including some controlled by armed militias.

In the report, investigators said they continued to receive reports of detainees "being threatened with sexual violence against them or their relatives, being stripped naked for prolonged periods of time or subjected to intrusive body search amounting to rape."

The investigators said in an October report that they had evidence of possible crimes against humanity and war crimes in Libya. Many of the alleged crimes, they say, were committed against civilians and migrants detained in the country while trying to get to Europe.

Hundreds of thousands of migrants hoping to reach Europe have made their way in recent years through Libya, where a lucrative trafficking and smuggling business has flourished.

The country has been without a functioning government and fragmented for years between rival administrations in the east and west, each backed by armed groups and foreign governments.

Human traffickers have benefited from the chaos in the oil-rich nation, smuggling migrants through the country's lengthy border with six nations. They pack desperate migrants into ill-equipped rubber boats, then embark on risky voyages across the Mediterranean Sea.

Many of those who have been intercepted and returned to Libya — including women and children — are held in government-run detention centres where they suffer from abuse, including torture, rape and extortion, according to rights groups.

*cont'd from pg 16*

going the way they are, he's going to start making weekly trips to Mexico for cheaper petrol.

When he calculated the gallon price, he said \$3.75 per gallon at a Chevron in Mexico was a steal compared to nearly \$6 per gallon in San Diego.

The price at Pemex, a state-owned Mexican company, he noted, was even cheaper at \$3.30 per gallon.

# Sports News



## Tiger Woods' Masters return stories fuelled by Augusta round

BBC – Tiger Woods has prompted speculation he will return to competitive action at next week's Masters by completing a practice round at Augusta.

The former world number one, 46, has been recovering from leg injuries suffered in a car crash 14 months ago.

Social media reported Woods arrived at Augusta Regional Airport on Tuesday morning before making the short journey to the home of the Masters.

He walked 18 holes with his son Charlie and fellow PGA Tour pro Justin Thomas.

"He played every one of them," a source told ESPN. "He looked good to me."

Woods is named among 91 participants for next week's Masters, a tournament he has won five times, most recently in 2019, but it had been thought the hilly Augusta National course might prove too demanding for the 15-time major champion.

It appears he used his practice

round with Thomas, a close friend of the Woods family, as a fitness test to see whether he will be able to make a sensational return at the first men's major of the year.

He suffered serious injuries to his right leg and right foot in the single-vehicle incident on 23 February, 2021. He had open fractures in the upper and lower portions of the right tibia and fibula.

Woods subsequently said doctors nearly had to amputate his right leg.

Since the accident in the outskirts of Los Angeles, Woods has only competed in the 36-hole PNC Championship, where he partnered his 12-year-old son and rode in a buggy.

He was videoed playing in the company of his caddie Joe LaCava at the Medalist Golf Club in Florida last weekend.

"I wish I could tell you when I'm playing again," Woods said on 16 February this year, while hosting the Genesis Invitational tournament on the PGA Tour. "I want to know, but I



*Tiger Woods, pictured in February, when he last gave an update on his fitness [Getty Images]*

don't. My golf activity has been very limited."

Woods added: "It takes time. What's frustrating is it's not at my timetable. I want to be at a certain place, but I'm not.

"I've just got to continue working. I'm getting better, yes. But as I said, not at the speed and rate that I would like.

"You add in the age factor, too. You just don't quite heal as fast, which is frustrating."

Woods has until next week to decide whether he will compete at the Masters.

## Egypt: Players were subjected to racism before Senegal match

BBC - Egypt claim players were subjected to racism before World Cup play-off against Senegal

Sadio Mane's winning shootout penalty sealed Senegal's World Cup place with his Liverpool team-mate Mohamed Salah among those to miss for Egypt.

Egypt captain Salah was one of several visiting players targeted by green laser pointers during the shootout.



*Salah was one of several players targeted by laser pens shone from the crowd as he prepared to take his penalty.*

It is also claimed the tacked, causing injuries.

Egypt team bus was at-

In a statement, the Eryp-

tian Football Association [EFA] said it had lodged a formal complaint against its Senegalese counterpart before the match, filing this with FIFA, the Confederation of African Football [CAF], the match observer and the security official.

"The Egyptian team was subjected to racism after the appearance of offensive banners in the stands aimed at the players, specifically

**cont'd on pg 19**



## Shane Warne: Sir Elton John and Ed Sheeran lead tributes at emotional memorial

BBC – Sir Elton John, Ed Sheeran and a host of former cricketers led the tributes to Australian cricketing legend Shane Warne at an emotional memorial service.

The service, held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, remembered Warne who died suddenly aged 52 this month.

His father, brother and three children all gave moving speeches in front of thousands of people in attendance.

The service ended with the unveiling of the Shane Warne Stand at the MCG by Warne's children.

Elton John performed Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me via video while there were similar musical performances from Ed Sheeran, Robbie Williams and Coldplay's Chris Martin.

Australians Kylie Minogue and Hugh Jackman were among the other celeb-



*Sir Elton John, Ed Sheeran, Robbie Williams and Coldplay's Chris Martin all performed via video [Getty Images]*

rities to pay tribute.

Warne's father Keith said the former Australia international packed more into his life "than most people would in two lifetimes".

He added: "Shane said of himself, 'I smoked, I drank, and I played a little cricket'.

"Mate, your mother and I can't imagine a life without you. You have been taken too soon and our hearts are broken."

Warne's daughter Summer said: "It has been exact-

ly 26 days since you went to heaven and I miss you more than anything in the whole world.

"I would do anything just to have one more of your cuddles and to hear your voice tell me how proud of me you were and how much you loved me.

"I know you will be forever watching me and be by my side the whole time."

Warne is regarded as one of the greatest cricketers of all-time, having claimed 708 Test wickets in

145 matches across a stellar 15-year international career.

Former England skipper Nasser Hussain joined Warne's former Australia captains Mark Taylor and Allan Border, plus former West Indies batter Brian Lara and ex-Australia bowler Merv Hughes on stage to pay tribute to the spin bowler.

"Shane, it was an absolute privilege to be with you on a cricket pitch," Hussain said.

At the start of the ceremony the Australian national anthem was sung by Gretta Bradman, granddaughter of legendary Australia batter Sir Donald Bradman.

A number of Warne's other Australia teammates, bowler Glenn McGrath, wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist and ex-captain Steve Waugh, were also in the audience, along Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

*cont'd from pg 18*

Mohamed Salah," the statement added.

"Moreover, the Senegalese fans terrorised the Egyptian players by throwing bottles and stones at them during the warm-up, as well as attacking the Egyptian team bus, which caused glass shattering and some injuries, which was documented with pictures and videos attached to the complaint."

The EFA shared images of the damage to the team bus on Instagram, along with images of the offensive

banner directed at Salah.

Dakar's new 50,000-seater Stade Me Abdoulaye Wade was filled to capacity as Senegal beat Egypt 1-0 to make the score 1-1 on aggregate after extra-time in the World Cup play-off match.

The Africa Cup of Nations champions once again got the better of Egypt in a shootout, six weeks on from their triumph in the Afcon final, winning 3-1 on penalties to secure a place at the Qatar tournament in November.

As Liverpool forward Salah stepped up to take his penalty, green

lasers could be seen shining on his face before he fired his effort over the crossbar.

At full-time, the 29-year-old had to be escorted down the tunnel by security personnel as supporters threw objects from above.

FIFA's disciplinary body is analysing reports from the game before deciding on any next steps to be taken.

President of the Senegalese Federation, Augustin Senghor - who is also the vice-president of CAF - said he would await official reports on the incidents.

## Beginner volleyball competition begins after Easter break



*Sir Novelle Richards Academy athletes in action during a girls division game in the Inter-schools Volleyball Competition at the indoor facility at the YMCA Sports Complex. (Photo: Elwin Francis)*

Coordinator of the Inter-Schools Volleyball Programme, Rosalie Lewis, has said beginning in April, more attention will be given to players who are just starting the sport.

The more experienced volleyball players in the secondary schools are currently participating in advanced boys' and girls' championships. Lewis said beginners' competitions, however, are expected to begin after the schools return from the one-week Easter holiday break.

Lewis, a former national player, said due to limited practice time available for coaches to work with beginners, both competitions could not be held simultaneously.

"Almost all the schools that are taking part in the advanced competitions also have players who are pretty new to the game and we always want to include them. Usually, whenever we have school volleyball competitions for advanced players, we also have one for the beginners. So, we have two tournaments in one. However, the beginners were not given the chance to play at this time because they did not get enough time to

practice for the competition.

"Normally, when school re-opens after the Easter break, it is usually a very slow period for sports in school because everybody's whole focus at that time is about end of term exams as well as CXC exams. So sporting activities, competition-wise, are pretty slow during that time.

"But because a lot of these beginners are first and second formers, we believe we can arrange at least a two-week competition amongst them. I don't think it will be a lot, because only about five schools will have players that will be ready to take part in the competition.

"I know that Antigua Girls' High School will have over 60 players because whenever I go to the YMCA to coach Antigua Girls' High School, I have difficulties in organising a practice session because there are so many players.

"...Then we will have teams from Sir Novelle Richards Academy, Jennings and Princess Margaret...all these schools have beginners so we can do a little competition for them because we don't

want them to feel left out," she said.

Meanwhile, action continued on the courts on Tuesday with Clare Hall Secondary losing both their matches in the advanced competitions at the indoor volleyball facility at the YMCA Sports Complex.

Clare Hall lost in three sets to Sir Novelle Richards Academy in the girls' division. After taking the opening set 25-16, Clare Hall were beaten in the other two sets, losing 21-25 and 14-16.

Clare Hall were also beaten by Princess Margaret 25-10 and 26-24 in the boys' division. Pares Secondary also claimed a 25-21, 25-13 victory over Island Academy in another boys' division encounter on Tuesday.

Twenty four hours earlier, All Saints Secondary had mixed fortunes in their encounters. All Saints defeated Jennings Secondary 25-14, 25-22 in the boys' division, but All Saints girls went under 18-25, 16-25 to Ottos Comprehensive.

Antigua Girls' High School prevailed 25-20, 21-25, 15-11 against Clare Hall Secondary in the other girls' division affair on Monday.



## Andrew slams century to lead ASG to victory in schools' cricket

Wicketkeeper/batsman Jewell Andrew slammed a century to lead Antigua Grammar School to a 78-run victory over Clare Hall Secondary in the latest round of matches in the Inter-schools' Cricket Competition.

Andrew hammered 102 to lift Antigua Grammar School to 176 for 8 with Captain Shamar Pereira getting 22 and Matthew Miller 18.

Tyree Moore bagged 3 for 21 and Kimberly Anthony picked up 2 for 13.

In reply, Clare Hall could only muster 98 all out with Amos Christian scoring 29 and Dougan Yaw getting 20.

Xanden Hobson snapped up 3 for 8, Xavin Peterson claimed two for five and Anthony Pierre captured two for 13.

A fine all-round per-



Wicketkeeper/batsman Jewell Andrew. (Photo: ABS)

formance by Wilden Cornwall inspired All Saints Secondary to a crushing 96 run victory over Glanvilles Secondary School.

Cornwall hammered 81 in All Saints total of 136 for 4 in 12 overs with Watson picking up 2 wickets for 20 runs.

Joseph then grabbed 5 wickets for 10 runs and

Cornwall snapped up three wickets for 12 runs as Glanvilles Secondary were bundled out for 40.

Ottos Comprehensive School defeated Sir Novelle Richards Academy by nine wickets. Batting first, Sir Novelle Richards Academy were dismissed for 83 in 17 overs with Jared Jno-Baptiste getting a

top score of 32.

Xaveek Tappin grabbed 3 for 11, Jahheem Joseph snatched 3 for 15 and Yohance Marcellin claimed 2 for 24.

Ottos Comprehensive then coasted to victory, reaching 84 for 1 in just 7.3 overs. Zaeem Scott hit an unbeaten 32 while Joseph chipped in with 28.

Jennings Secondary prevailed by 18 runs over Princess Margaret School (PMS) in the other encounter.

Set 95 to win in 12 overs, Princess Margaret were restricted to 76 for 4 off their allotted overs.

Watley scored 31 and Bruney got 18 for PMS, while Bassanio Joseph captured 2 for 14.

Tanez Francis and Tavis Austin each scored 27 in Jennings' total of 94 for four in their 12 overs.

### cont'd from pg 22

cost of US\$5,000, Oar Sponsorship of US\$12,000 for a single oar and US\$18,000 for a pair of oars.

There is a bronze sponsorship package of US\$10,000, Silver US\$25,000, Gold US\$50,000, Diamond US\$75,000 and Platinum for a fee of US\$100,000.

Francis said in addition to the packages, TAIG has launched a GoFundMe accessible through their social media outlets and has opened an account at Caribbean Union Bank where donations can be made.

"You can find us on Facebook

and Instagram at TeamAntiguaIslandGirls and you can message us there. We also have our website AntiguaandBarbudaIslandGirls.com and we have a GoFundMe set up where you can donate. Locally, we have a bank account TeamIslandGirlsAtCU," she said.

Francis added that sponsors will be able to receive some benefits in return for partnering with TAIG.

"The boat is an international floating billboard and the Pacific Challenge offers partners the opportunity to raise their brand and profile on an international stage," she said.

"Team Antigua Island Girls will issue press releases for each sponsorship; we will also attend PR (public relations) events before and after the race.

"There will be endorsement exposure of their organisation's brand via social media.

"They will also get royalty free content such as photos and videos that the sponsors can use for marketing and promotional means and the Atlantic Campaigns' media team distributes media assets, including videos and photos of each team, around the world."

## Team Antigua Island Girls seek support for Pacific Challenge

Team Antigua Island Girls (TAIG) are seeking to forge partnerships with individuals or members of the corporate community who can provide sponsorship to facilitate their participation in the inaugural Atlantic Campaigns' Pacific Challenge next year.

Following their participation in the 2018 Talisker Whiskey Atlantic Challenge, also organised by Atlantic Campaigns, TAIG - Kevinia Francis, Samara Emmanuel, Elvira Bell and Christal Clashing - are already well into their preparations for the Pacific Challenge which sets off on 12th June, 2023.

TAIG will require major financial assistance to conquer the Pacific Challenge which covers 2,800 miles of ocean starting in Monterey Bay, California and finishing at Kauai Island, Hawaii.

According to TAIG, the first phase of sponsorship will be geared towards covering the cost of the boat, which is US\$150,000.

Additionally, as was the case with the Atlantic Challenge, participants in the Pacific Challenge are required to raise aware-



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

ness and funds for charity. TAIG will be raising funds to assist girls in Antigua and Barbuda who have legal issues. The project will aim to provide shelter for women and girls who are placed on remand in prison because of the absence of other accommodations and to provide services and

counselling to this underserved population.

There are a number of packages that have been arranged for sponsors to partner with TAIG. The lowest level of sponsorship is the booster that will give the sponsors the opportunity to have their names inscribed on the TAIG's

vessel in the Pacific Challenge.

"It's only US\$750 and we will put your name on our boat. That's the lowest level of sponsorship to get your name on the boat," Kevinia Francis said.

Other packages include Row Essentials at a

*cont'd on pg 21*