

FRIDAY 1ST APRIL 2022

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GOV'T PROBES VESSEL SUSPECTED TO BELONG TO ROMAN ABRAMOVICH



GPS trackers aboard the Garçon indicated the vessel was located in Antigua and Barbuda's waters at Falmouth Harbour at 5pm on 31st March, 2022 according to Marine Tracker®. *Story on Page 2.*

Local News



Ownership of vessels moored in Falmouth Harbour linked to Roman Abramovich being investigated

A mega yacht support vessel with suspected ties to sanctioned Russian Billionaire Roman Abramovich is under investigation by local authorities while moored in Falmouth Harbour.

A second vessel with suspected ties to the Russian is also in Antigua and Barbuda.

Earlier this month, the Antigua and Barbuda government pledged to uphold international sanctions against Russians who had been blacklisted. Abramovich, Chelsea football club's disgraced owner, is among them as he is known to have close ties to Russian presi-

dent Vladimir Putin.

Pointe Xpress confirmed on Thursday that the Garçon, a 67-metre explorer vessel, through its GPS position, is located just off Falmouth. Sources at the Falmouth Marina have confirmed the presence of the vessel. They also disclosed that contact has been made and those in charge have denied connections with Abramovich.

Based on information available about the vessel, its purpose is to transport submarines and jet skis, land helicopters at sea and support the other luxury toys owned by the ultra-wealthy



The GPS location of the Garçon, in blue, according to Marine Tracker on Thursday afternoon placed it at Falmouth Harbour in Antigua and Barbuda's waters.

who own mega yachts.

On Tuesday, the Financial Times reported that ownership of the vessel was transferred to a British Virgin Islands-domiciled company called Wenham Overseas Limited in January 2021, according to maritime database Equasis. Reports at the time said the last known asking price before the sale was €24 million.

Suspicious about the ownership of the vessel arose after further investigation of the company Wenham Overseas Limited revealed that an aircraft owned by the company, a Boeing 787 private jet, belonged to the Russian oligarch.

Abramovich is also named as the owner of Wenham in a private plane ownership database.

Abramovich, who is for the time being only sanctioned by the United Kingdom and European Union, is the owner of two mega yachts.

This week, senior Antigua and Barbuda diplomat, Sir Ronald Sanders, said the country was conducting its own investigation into the ownership of the Garçon.

"We have sought assistance from other jurisdictions to determine the ownership of the boat. We have tried our best to see whether this thing is indeed owned by Abramovich. We have consulted widely, and we haven't come up with the answers. We can't find a link and no one can tell us if there is a link to Abramovich," said Sir Ronald.

But on Wednesday, Foreign Affairs Minister E. P. Chet Greene wrote to the UK government seeking its assistance in identifying the 'beneficial ownership' of the vessel.

Both governments have agreed to cooperate in order to remove the vessel from Antigua and Barbuda's waters, however, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has indi-

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To: Her Worship
License Magistrate
Magistrates Court
High Street
St. John's
Antigua

To: Her Worship
Magistrate for District "A"
Magistrates Court
High Street
St. John's
Antigua

To: The Commissioner of Police
Police Headquarters
American Road
St. John's
Antigua

I, **KERRI BENJAMIN** of Fitches Creek in the Parish of Saint George in the State of Antigua and Barbuda **DO HEREBY** give **NOTICE** that is my intention to apply at the Next Special Sitting of the Liquor Licensing Court to be held at the Magistrates Court, Grays Farm, St. John's Antigua on the 7th day of April, 2022 next ensuing for a Tavern License in respect of my premises known as "**The Noodle Bar (Antigua) Limited** situated in No.10 Twist Mall, Redcliffe Street in the Parish of Saint John in the State of Antigua and Barbuda.

DATED the 31st day of March, 2022


DAMIEN BENJAMIN
BENJAMIN LEGAL SERVICES
Solicitors for KERRI BENJAMIN

cont'd from pg 2

cated that it is pursuing the matter cautiously as any action taken without concrete proof of the ownership of the vessel could expose it to costly litigation. But pressure is mounting for Antigua and Barbuda to expel the explorer vessel which the UK government says it has confirmed is owned by Abramovich.

The Garçon was under management by Isle of Man-based Döhle Yachts as of August 2021, according to Equasis records, however it is believed that Döhle recently resigned from the contract.

According to the Financial Times, a source of theirs has said that the Garçon is

owned by Abramovich who may be seeking to transfer beneficial ownership of the vessel. Abramovich did not respond to a request for comment.

The Garçon was previously owned by Ukrainian billionaire Yuriy Kosiuk, the founder and chief executive of MHP, Ukraine's leading food supplier. Kosiuk also sold his other












yacht, an 87-metre vessel called ACE, which the Garçon was built to support, last year.


The Garçon is "capable of accommodating various helicopter models including a Bell 365 and an armada of water toys including a 4-person submarine, jet ski and tenders.

She can accommodate extra crew and has vast

amounts of toys and storage space for extra provisioning," according to marketing material by yacht brokerage Fraser.

The whereabouts of Abramovich's superyachts have come under scrutiny after two of his vessels - the 163-metre hull Eclipse and the 140-metre Solaris - sailed to Turkish ports last week.

Fri 01 Day		Fri 01 Night	
81° 	22% E 17 mph	75° 	22% E 15 mph
Partly cloudy skies. High 81F. Winds E at 15 to 25 mph.		Partly cloudy skies. Low around 75F. Winds E at 10 to 20 mph.	
 Humidity 69%	 UV Index Extreme	 Humidity 79%	 UV Index 0 of 10
 Sunrise 6:02 am	 Sunset 6:20 pm	 Moonrise 6:21 am	 Moonset 6:51 pm
		 New Moon	



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2002 - 2022

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Local News



CARICOM foreign ministers hold crucial talks with Canada

Foreign Affairs Minister E. P. Chet Greene will join his CARICOM counterparts today for a virtual meeting with the Canadian government to discuss issues of mutual interest.

A CARICOM Secretariat statement lists the issues as regional security and stability, multilateral cooperation, and building a resilient and sustainable economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today's meeting will be co-chaired by Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, and Eamon Courtenay, the Minister of Foreign Affairs,



Foreign Trade and Immigration of Belize.

Courtenay is also the Chairman for the CARICOM Council for Foreign and Community Relations.

CARICOM Secretary General, Dr. Carla Barnett

will also address the meeting.

Ministers are expected to deliberate on rebuilding their COVID-affected economies with emphasis on areas such as agriculture, food security, trade, investment and CAR-

ICOM-Canada cooperation.

They are also expected to discuss action to fight climate change and to address climate financing, financing for development, as well as justice and citizen security.

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Fernandez gives Expo Dubai two thumbs up

Tourism Minister Charles Fernandez has expressed satisfaction at Antigua and Barbuda's participation in Expo Dubai 2020.

The six-month trade show that brought together more than one hundred countries ended yesterday.

While the direct benefits from participating in Expo Dubai are yet to be realized, the tourism minister is pleased that the country accepted the offer to promote its tourism product on a major stage.

"All in all, I think it has been a phenomenal experience.

"When you consider the cost, we spent [Tourism Authority] under US\$100,000 to get this kind of exposure is nothing short of I think tremendous. A tremendous opportunity well worth it.

"It's difficult to measure everything at this point of time. I can tell you there's been tremendous feedback, a number of persons have been very anxious to find out more about

Antigua and Barbuda, so that has been important for us," Minister Fernandez remarked.

Tourism officials are working to convince the authorities in the UAE to establish an air link between the two destinations.

Minister Fernandez is optimistic that the country's participation in the six-month long event will pique their interest.

He said the work began several years ago, and the trade show was the ideal setting to create awareness among the "movers and shakers".

The tourism minister has heaped praise on those who contributed to the country's successful participation in Expo Dubai 2020.

"The reports that I personally have had are heart warming.

"They have done a tremendous job. The persons that have visited the booths have actually responded, a number of them, saying how great our people were in terms of the hospitality,



Tourism Minister Charles Fernandez

and explaining the whole aspect of what Antigua and Barbuda is like.

Minister Fernandez noted that emphasis was placed on ensuring "everything that was produced in Antigua was exhibited at the booth and a lot of it sold".

This the minister believes showed the world what the country is capable of producing, even though the products were from cottage industries.

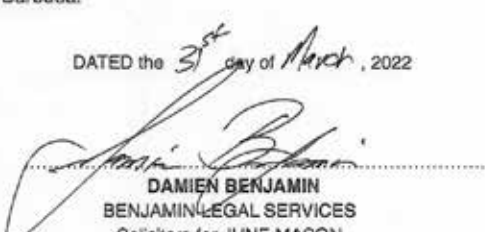
To: Her Worship
License Magistrate
Magistrates Court
High Street
St. John's
Antigua

To: Her Worship
Magistrate for District "A"
Magistrates Court
High Street
St. John's
Antigua

To: The Commissioner of Police
Police Headquarters
American Road
St. John's
Antigua

I, **JUNE MASON** of Belmont Estate in the Parish of Saint John in the State of Antigua and Barbuda **DO HEREBY** give **NOTICE** that is my intention to apply at the Next Special Sitting of the Liquor Licensing Court to be held at the Magistrates Court, Grays Farm, St. John's Antigua on the 7th day of April, 2022 next ensuing for a Tavern License in respect of my premises known as "SHAKE HUT (Antigua) Limited situated in No.40 Heritage Quay in the Parish of Saint John in the State of Antigua and Barbuda.

DATED the 31st day of March, 2022


DAMIEN BENJAMIN
 BENJAMIN LEGAL SERVICES
 Solicitors for JUNE MASON

NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY given that **SANTOS MEDINA CIPRIAN** of **Newgate Street** is applying to the Minister for Naturalisation and that any person who knows any reason why Naturalisation should not be granted should send a written and signed statement of the facts to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs.

Local News

Government to purchase new fire trucks

Government is actively pursuing the purchase of new fire trucks to replace at least three trucks which have been decommissioned by the Fire Department as they have passed their usefulness.

Chief Fire Officer, Elvis Weaver, told the Cabinet this week that there is an urgent need for new fire trucks to enhance the work of the department.

Weaver also used the opportunity to explain why the fire trucks had been relegated to the Burma Dump.

The Fire Chief reported that one truck was 39-years-old, another 29-years-old while two were 27-years-old.

Each of them had been deemed unusable and beyond repair by the fire department.

He further explained that the life of a fire truck is usually ten years,



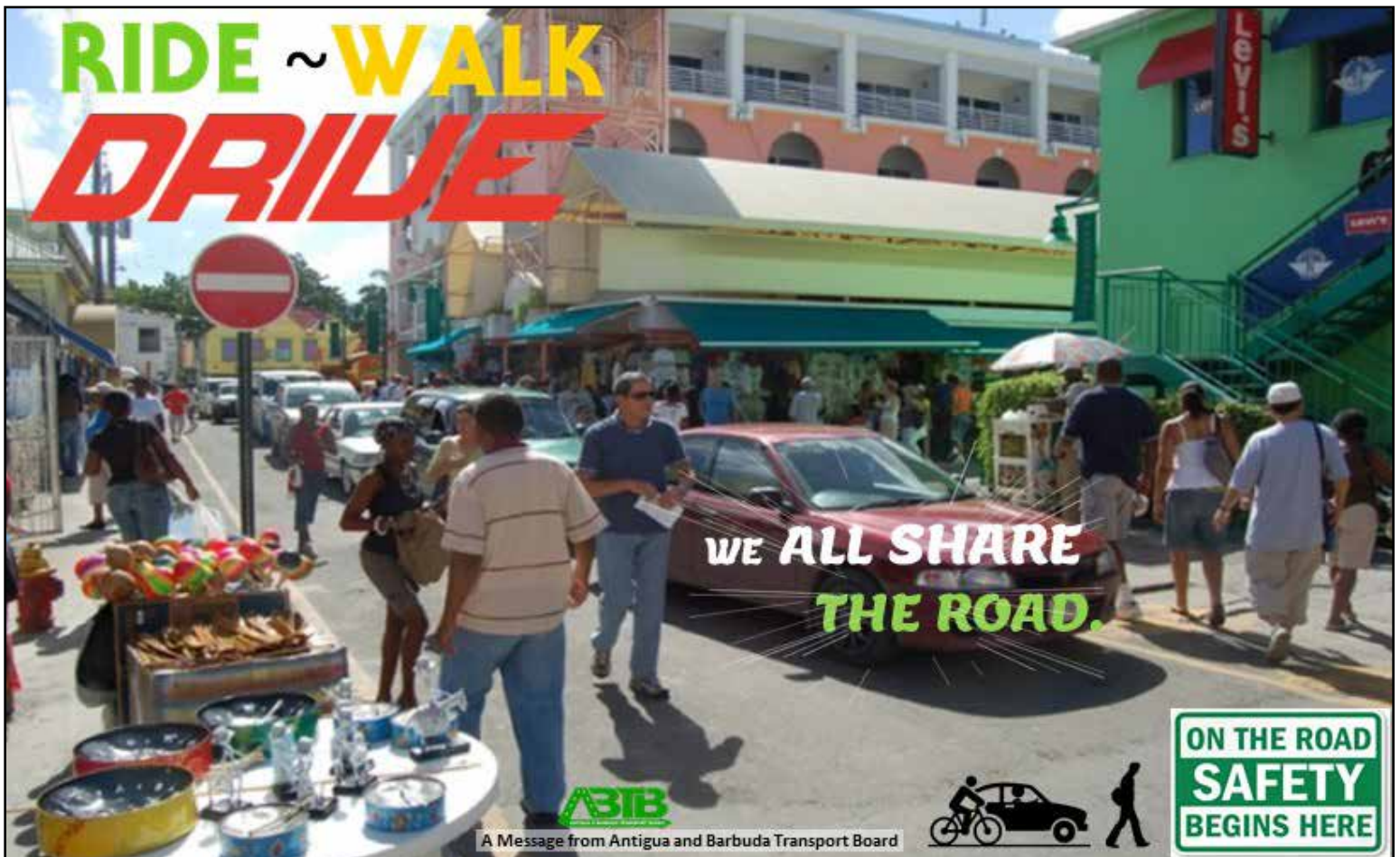
depending on the frequency of use.

In the case of Antigua and Barbuda, fire trucks respond to more than 600 fires per year and are subjected to rugged terrain and unpaved roads when called to extinguish bushfires.

Following Chief Weaver's presentation, Cabinet agreed that the new fire tenders will be purchased from a firm that certifies local fire

truck mechanics. These trained mechanics will be stationed at the Government Workshop.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet used the opportunity to congratulate Assistant Commissioner of Police Weaver for his outstanding service as Chief of the Fire Department, and for his four decades of service to the people of Antigua and Barbuda.



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ATB
 Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board

A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board

IICA representative visits local farmers

This week, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) Representative for Eastern Caribbean States, Gregg Rawlins, toured key agricultural stakeholders and farmers to observe the IICA's interventions in Antigua and Barbuda.

Mr. Rawlins was accompanied by the IICA National Specialist for Antigua and Barbuda, Craig M. Thomas and Communication's officer in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs (MAFBA), Attieke DeSouza.

The first stop was at the Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development Centre (GARDC) where the IICA representative toured the Vetiver Grass Propagation Nursery, which is a collaboration between IICA and the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund on Ecosystem-based (EBA). This was facilitated by the Executive Director of GARDC, June Jackson.

Next, he visited the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), which was facilitated by CARDI representative Paul Lucas and CARDI technician, Bradbury Browne. There, Rawlins was able to see the extensive research being carried out at the field station, and particularly ongoing research into the West Indian Red pepper for seed production.



Craig Thomas, left, Gregg Rawlins, centre, and Paul Lucas right.

Ricky Christopher, a beneficiary farmer of the IICA's interventions, owns and operates a mixed vegetable farm in Table Hill Garden. His main income generator however, is his coconut grove.

Mr. Rawlins was amazed to see that Mr. Christopher heavily invested in the use of drip irrigation to administer water to his coconut grove.

The rehabilitation of the Antigua and Barbuda Beekeepers' Cooperative Headquarters located in Belmont commenced in March 2021.

This was a result of collaboration between the Australian Aid Programme (DAP), Antigua Beekeepers Corp., IICA and MAFBA. Mr. Rawlins was able to tour the facility with

President of the Beekeepers Corp., Brent Georges.

A visit to the installation site under the CBF-EbA project at the Cooks Landfill was done to observe the vetiver grasses which were propagated and planted along the base of the old landfill.

These grasses will act as a natural filtration mechanism to reduce the flow of harmful chemicals and sewage from the landfill which affects the Hanson's Bay Flashes.

The field tour ended at Anointed Farms in McKinnons which is owned and operated by Neil Gomes, a beneficiary of a crowdfunding project entitled, "Mitigating the Impacts of Covid-19 Through the Supply of Fresh Food to Rural Households" which was an

IICA initiative in collaboration with MAFBA and CARDI.

The project aimed to assist farmers in Antigua and Barbuda to boost production on their farms and contribute to national food nutrition and security.

Under this initiative Mr. Gomes received drip lines to support his onion production - a priority crop for MAFBA - of which he has successfully harvested over 4,000lbs.

Mr. Rawlins expressed how pleased he was with the collaborative work being done in Antigua and Barbuda with the IICA's support. He pledged the IICA's continued support in Antigua and Barbuda as there is great potential for growth in the agricultural sector.

Local News



Osagyefo fined for illegal firearm and ammunition

A Rastafarian elder is one of two people fined by the Court for illegal possession of a gun and ammunition.

Magistrate Conliffe Clarke yesterday morning fined Glasford Mack, popularly known as 'Osagyefo' \$ 10,000, after he pleaded guilty to the weapons charges.

A search of the Rastafarian elder's home at Creekside by police on Tuesday, unearthed a 9mm Ruger gun, 10 matching rounds and 49 rounds of .45 ammunition.

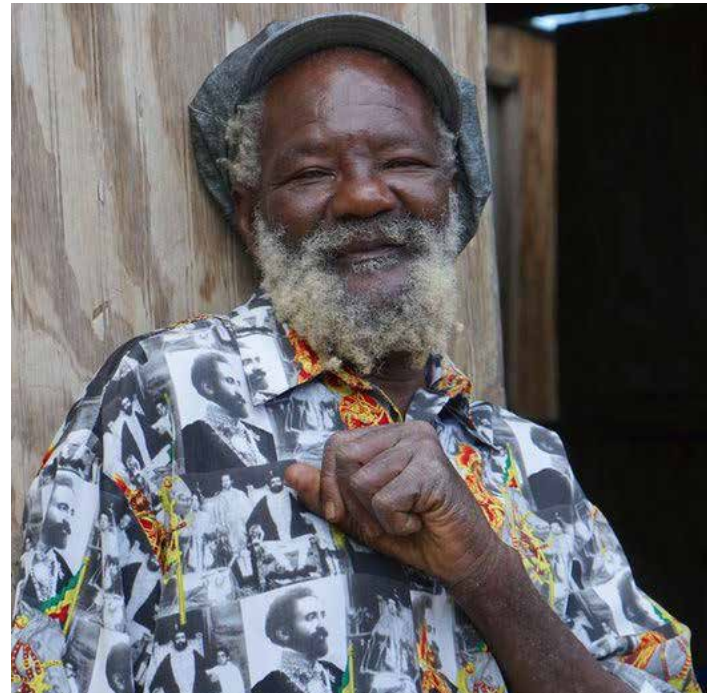
Mack, in his defence, told the Court he was in posses-

sion of the illegal firearm and ammunition to protect his family, noting that unknown people entered his property and discharged several shots at him.

He decided to obtain the gun and bullets while his application for a firearm license was being processed.

Magistrate Clarke has given Osagyefo until July to pay the \$10,000 fine. In default, he will spend one year in prison.

The other Rastafarian, Ronell Browne, who also pleaded guilty, was fined \$5,000.



Glasford 'Osagyefo' Mack

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Ghosting: What it is, why it hurts, and what you can do about it

By Susan McQuillan, MS, RDN

You're in a relationship. Suddenly, and maybe without any warning at all, your partner seems to have disappeared. No calls, no text messages, no connection made on social media, no responses to any of your messages. Odds are, your partner hasn't unexpectedly left town because of a family emergency, and isn't lying dead in a ditch somewhere but, rather, has simply ended the relationship without bothering to explain or even let you know. You've been ghosted.

Who Ghosts and Who Gets Ghosted?

Why would someone choose to simply disappear from another person's life, rather than plan, at minimum, a conversation to end a relationship? You may never know for sure why you were ghosted.

While more studies need to be done specifically on the ghosting phenomenon, past research has looked at different types of attachment personalities and choice of breakup strategies; it's possible that people with an avoidant type personality (those who hesitate to form or completely avoid attachments to others, often as result of parental rejection), who are reluctant to get very close to anyone else due to trust and dependency issues



and often use indirect methods of ending relationships, are more likely to use ghosting to initiate a break-up.

Other research found that people who are believers in destiny, who think that relationships are either meant to be or not, are more likely to find ghosting acceptable than people who believe relationships take patience and work. One study also suggests that people who end relationships by ghosting have often been ghosted themselves. In that case, the ghoster knows what it feels like to have a relationship end abruptly, with no explanation, no room for discussion. Yet they seemingly show no empathy toward the other and may or may not experience any feelings of guilt over their ghosting behaviour.

What it Means to Ghost and Be Ghosted

Ghosting is by no means limited to long-term romantic relationships. Infor-

mal dating relationships, friendships, even work relationships may end with a form of ghosting. For the person who does the ghosting, simply walking away from a relationship, or even a potential relationship, is a quick and easy way out. No drama, no hysterics, no questions asked, no need to provide answers or justify any of their behaviour, no need to deal with someone else's feelings. Certainly, while the ghoster may benefit from avoiding an uncomfortable situation and any potential drama, they've done nothing to improve their own conversation and relationships skills for the future.

For the person who is ghosted, there is no closure and often deep feelings of uncertainty and insecurity. Initially, you wonder "what's going on?" When you realize the other person has ended the relationship, you're left to wonder why, what went wrong in the relation-

ship, what's wrong with you, what's wrong with them, how you didn't see this coming.

What to Do If You're Ghosted

Ghosting hurts; it's a cruel rejection. It is particularly painful because you are left with no rationale, no guidelines for how to proceed, and often a heap of emotions to sort through on your own. If you suffer from any abandonment or self-esteem issues, being ghosted may bring them to the forefront.

In this age of ever-advancing technology, your ghoster is likely to appear on your various forms of social media and, if that's the case, this person who is now physically gone from your life, is still quite visible. How do you move on? Unfortunately, there's no magic bullet or proven advice to quickly guide you into recovery from a ghosted heart, but there is common sense.

"Avoid reminders of your ex," advises Gwendolyn Seidman, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology and Chair of the Psychology Department at Albright College in Pennsylvania. "They're likely to cause painful emotions to resurface, and they won't help you get emotional closure or insight into why they broke up with you."

After you stop tortur-
cont'd on pg 10

Technology



Facebook resorts to old smear tactics against TikTok

Eleven years ago, Facebook was caught red-handed after it hired a prominent public relations firm to try to plant stories harshly criticizing Google's privacy practices in leading news outlets.

In 2018, it hired the PR firm De-finers to do opposition research on the company's critics, including billionaire philanthropist George Soros. The company's long-time head of communications, Elliot Schrage, took the blame for approving the hiring of De-finers and similar firms and left Facebook.

On Wednesday, The Washington Post reported that Meta, Facebook's parent company, is using similar tactics to go after another rival TikTok. Meta, the Post reported, hired a Republican consulting firm called Targeted Victory to "orchestrate a nationwide campaign" against TikTok.

Targeted Victory, according to the Post, contracted with dozens of public relations firms across the U.S. to help "sway public opinion against TikTok" by planting local news stories and helping place op-eds targeting TikTok around the country, the story says.

Meta confirmed that it has hired Targeted Victory.

"We believe all platforms, including TikTok, should face a level of scrutiny consistent with their growing success," spokesman Andy Stone said



Facebook's Meta logo sign is seen at the company headquarters in Menlo Park, Calif., on Oct. 28, 2021. Meta, Facebook's parent company, hired a Republican consulting firm called Targeted Victory to "orchestrate a nationwide campaign" against TikTok, The Washington Post reported on Wednesday, March 30, 2022. (AP Photo/Tony Avelar, File)

in a statement.

Zac Moffatt, the CEO of Targeted Victory, said the company "manages bipartisan teams on behalf of our clients."

"It is public knowledge we have worked with Meta for several years and we are proud of the work we have done," he said in a statement.

The Post obtained internal emails from Targeted Victory that outlined a campaign to undermine TikTok, which is owned by the Chinese company ByteDance. The firm used a mix of "genuine concerns and unfounded anxieties" about TikTok in order to try

to turn public and political sentiment against it.

According to the report, Targeted Victory was also working to get "proactive coverage" about Facebook into local media, including "submitting letters and opinion pieces speaking glowingly of Facebook's role in, for instance, supporting Black-owned businesses."

"We are deeply concerned that the stoking of local media reports on alleged trends that have not been found on the platform could cause real world harm," TikTok said in an emailed statement. (AP)

cont'd from pg 9

ing yourself by going over old photos, saved old texts, new social media postings, and anything else you think might give you insight into the mind and current whereabouts of your ghoster (and let's face it, you're bound to

be doing that even if you're not normally an obsessive person), try to find a new distraction. Perhaps most importantly, know that this probably isn't about you or anything you did wrong.

"You should realize that if your ex chose the strategy

of ghosting to break up with you, it likely tells you something about them and their shortcomings, rather than indicating that the problem lies with you." Dr. Seidman adds.

In other words, try to move on as quickly and com-

pletely as you can. Maintain your dignity and stay focused on your own health, happiness and future, leaving the ghoster to deal with the ultimate repercussions of their own immaturity and lack of courage in the context of a relationship.

Chris Rock's first comments since Oscars slap

Chris Rock has made his first public appearance since Will Smith slapped him during Sunday night's Oscars ceremony.

Hosting the latest leg of his US tour in Boston, the comic told fans that he is "still processing what happened".

Rock, who was greeted with a standing ovation by fans, also denied some reports in US media that he had spoken to Smith since the incident.

It comes as the Oscars organisers revealed that Smith was asked to leave after hitting Rock but refused.

Smith slapped the comedian after he made a joke about his wife Jada Pinkett Smith's shaved head, a result of the hair-loss condition alopecia.

"How was your weekend?" Rock jokingly greeted the crowd at his show at Boston's Wilbur Theatre, before saying he did not



Chris Rock arrives for the first of two Boston shows [Getty Images]

plan to address the incident at length.

The 57-year-old, who is currently starring in his "Ego Death" tour of the US, told fans that he had written the "show before all this nonsense happened," but promised to address the incident in the near future.

"I'm still kind of processing what happened, so at some point I'll talk about that," Rock said. "And it'll be serious and it'll be funny, but right now I'm going to tell some jokes."

He also denied claims made by some, including by rapper P. Diddy, that the pair had cleared the air following the show.

"I haven't talked to anyone, despite what you heard," Rock said.

Steve Sarro, who attended the show in Boston, told BBC Breakfast that fans had shown their support of the star.

"As soon as he got on stage, we immediately broke into a standing ovation," Sarro said.

"He couldn't get a word out for a few minutes. And we saw him wipe the tears from his eyes, which, you know, it made him feel good, obviously."

Rock's comments come as Oscars organisers the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences revealed that Smith was asked to leave the event after the incident.

"Mr Smith was asked to leave the ceremony and refused, [but] we also recognise we could have handled the situation differently," the statement said.

It also announced it had "initiated disciplinary proceedings against Mr Smith for violations of the Academy's Standards of Conduct" and apologised to Rock.

The Academy said action may be taken at its next board meeting on 18 April. That may include "suspension, expulsion, or other sanctions", the statement said. (BBC)

'Game of Thrones' prequel 'House of the Dragon' will premiere this summer

By Scottie Andrew

Devotees of all things Westeros, our long night of pining after the new "Game of Thrones" series is nearly over -- "House of the Dragon" is finally hatching this summer.

The highly anticipated prequel to HBO's fantasy megahit will premiere August 21, the network announced this week, after months of teasing photos and clips to rabid fans. (CNN and HBO share parent

company WarnerMedia.)

The prequel, set some 200 years before the events of the original series, follows House Targaryen, the blonde, dragon-riding clan from which Khaleesi herself, Daenerys Targaryen, descended.

"Thrones" viewers will also remember the long line of Targaryens driven mad, resulting at one point in a civil war called the "Dance of the Dragons."

Starring Matt Smith, Olivia Cooke, Rhys Ifans and many more (plus some CGI dragons), "House of the Dragon" already has the stamp of approval from author George R. R. Martin, whose book "Fire & Blood" provides the basis of the new series.

In a March blog post, he wrote that he'd seen snippets of the 10-episode season and "loved" what he'd watched so far.

cont'd on pg 12

Bruce Willis, diagnosed with aphasia, steps away from acting

By Jake Coyle

Bruce Willis is stepping away from acting after a diagnosis of aphasia, a condition that causes loss of the ability to understand or express speech, his family said Wednesday.

In a statement posted on Willis' Instagram page, the 67-year-old actor's family announced that Willis was recently diagnosed with aphasia and that it is impacting his cognitive abilities.

"As a result of this and with much consideration, Bruce is stepping away from the career that has meant so much to him," read the statement signed by Willis' wife, Emma Heming Willis, his ex-wife Demi Moore, and his five children, Rumer, Scout, Tallulah, Mabel and Evelyn.

"We are moving through this as a strong family unit, and wanted to bring his fans in because we know how much he means to you, as you do to him," they said. "As Bruce always says, 'Live it up' and together we plan to do just that."

There are many potential causes of aphasia. It often occurs after a stroke or head injury, but can also develop

gradually due to a slow-growing brain tumour or a disease that causes degenerative damage, like Alzheimer's disease. It's treated primarily with speech therapy and learning non-verbal means of communication.

Willis' family didn't divulge what caused his aphasia. Representatives for the actor declined to comment.

The news about Willis, one of Hollywood's most beloved actors, immediately spread online as fans reacted. His four-decade career has amassed more than \$5 billion in box office worldwide,

Willis had been working steadily and frequently. Renowned for films like "Die Hard," "Pulp Fiction" and "The Sixth Sense," Willis has in recent years churned out straight-to-video thrillers. Last year, he starred in a staggering eight films. Most came and went quietly, including titles like "Cosmic Sin," "Out of Death" and "Deadlock."

Most recently, Willis starred in February's "Gasoline Alley" and "A Day to Die," released in early March. Willis has already shot at least six



Actor Bruce Willis appears at the premiere of "Glass" in New York on Jan. 15, 2019. Willis is stepping away from acting after a diagnosis of aphasia, a condition that causes the loss of the ability to understand or express speech, his family announced Wednesday. In a statement posted on Willis' Instagram page, the 67-year-old actor's family said Willis was recently diagnosed with aphasia and that it is impacting his cognitive abilities. (Photo by Evan Agostini/Invision/AP, File)

more films due out in 2022 and 2023, including "Die Like Lovers," "Corrective Measures" and "The Wrong Place."

cont'd from pg 11

Fans of "Thrones" who took issue with its final season (in which fan favourite Daenerys, like her ancestors, went mad, torched King's Landing and murdered its residents with dragon fire before her nephew/lover Jon Snow ended her brief reign of terror) may take heart in knowing that the original series' creators, David Benioff and D.B. Weiss, are not involved in "House of



Viewers will meet Paddy Considine's King Viserys Targaryen when "House of the Dragon" premieres August 21.

the Dragon."

filmmaker Ryan Condal

Instead, Martin and are credited as the pre-

quel's creators, and Miguel Sapochnik, who directed essential "Thrones" episodes like "The Battle of the Bastards," is among its executive producers.

What will those dragon riding Targaryens get up to this time?

Martin's readers may know, but hopefully it'll involve less genocide than Daenerys' arc did.

"We'll find out on August 21, when "Game of Thrones" Sundays return.

Grenada: No plans to appeal ruling on public pensions, says gov't

CMC - The Grenada government Wednesday denied reports that it was in the process of appealing a High Court ruling that could result in it having to pay a significant amount of money to public servants who were disqualified from receiving a pension following the enforcement of the Pension Disqualification Act in 1983.

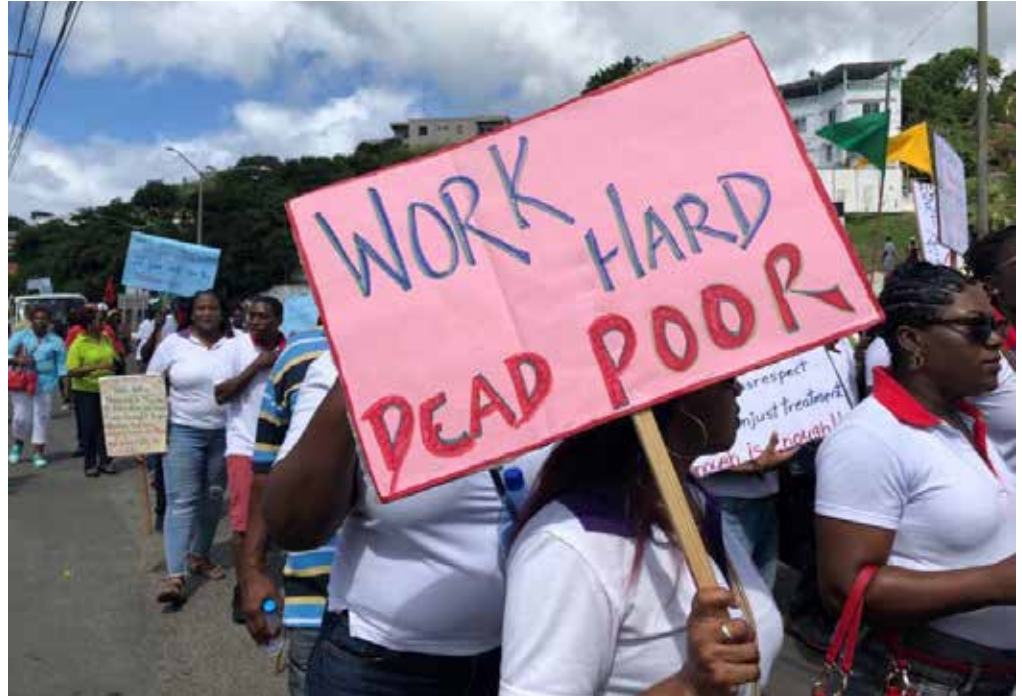
The High Court is yet to provide its written ruling in the matter that was handed down on Tuesday, but it ruled that the Pensions (Disqualification) Act Cap 230A as amended, is unconstitutional, null and void, insofar as it sought to modify pre-independence/constitution pension laws.

"As such, the Court held that the pre-independence pension laws continue to be the pension scheme applicable for the payment of pension to public officers joining the service after February 1985," the government said in a statement.

According to the legislation that came into force on April 4, 1983, any person who is appointed to a post in the service of the Government of Grenada on or after the appointed day shall not be entitled to any pension gratuity or other allowance. It applied to Pensions Ordinance; Pensions (Prison Officers) Ordinance; Pensions (School Teachers) Ordinance and Police Pensions Ordinance.

Labelling the report as "a contemporary misrepresentation", a statement Legal Affairs Minister Kindra Maturine-Stewart said that representatives of the government are yet to discuss at Cabinet or at legal levels, much less to come up with a decision, on what its reaction should be on the matter.

"As it stands right now, the Government awaits the written judgment and a full legal briefing. Any attempted representation of the Government's



Public servants protested in support of the restoration of pensions in Grenada

reaction is premature and largely speculative, if not in some instances mischievous," said the statement.

The government said that it is committed to finding a permanent solution to the entire pension issue, denying reports on social media and in at least one newspaper that it intends to challenge the High Court ruling.

It said that the only firm decision it has taken in the 24 hours since the ruling is to declare its intention to invite the trade unions to have a discussion on the latest developments.

"As it has been, especially since 2018, the Government not only stands for open dialogue but has initiated it on many occasions, as part of its consultative approach on matters of national interest," the statement said, noting the court case is part of an extensive process that has been in train for years and encompasses many aspects.

"If the solutions were simple and easy, it would have been dealt with at some point during the last 38 years by alternating NNP (New National Party) and NDC (National Democratic Con-

gress) governments.

"It must be noted that while some previous governments shut the door on even discussing the issue of pension, it was this current Government that invited the trade unions, without being prodded, to begin to explore ways in which we can solve this complex issue," the statement added.

As it stands, currently, public servants who retire are paid a monthly pension of 70 per cent of their last salary, which is a combination of contributions from the government and the National Insurance Scheme (NIS).

The pension issue surfaced with the collapse of the 1979-83 People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) of left-wing prime minister Maurice Bishop, who had come to power by overthrowing the government of Sir Eric Williams in the first-ever coup in the English-speaking Caribbean.

During its term in office, the PRG established the NIS and replaced the pension scheme for public servants that had been enshrined in the Grenada Constitution.

St. Lucian PM presents EC\$1.8 billion budget to Parliament

CMC – Prime Minister Phillip J. Pierre has presented an EC\$1.84 billion budget to Parliament, providing salary increases for public servants and improving the various social safety nets in the aftermath of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The government said out of this amount, EC\$1.349 billion is proposed to be spent on Recurrent Expenditure.

Pierre, presenting his first national budget since leading the St. Lucia Labour Party (SLP) to victory in the July 26, general elections last year, said that with the resurgence in economic activity that is expected during this fiscal year, the draft estimates have targeted total revenue and grants in the sum of EC\$1.328 billion.

He said that at the projected level, total revenue and grants are forecast to increase by EC\$248.1 million or 23 per cent per cent above the preliminary outturn for the fiscal year 2021-2022.

Pierre said that the Recurrent Revenue, inflows are projected to increase by EC\$148.6 million relative to the approved estimates for 2021-2022 to reach a total of EC\$1.150 billion for the fiscal year.

He said the increase stems from slow but sustained recovery during the latter part of the fiscal year 2021-2022 and the continuation of the recovery anticipat-



Prime Minister Phillip Pierre

ed in the tourism, construction, and agricultural sectors during the new fiscal year.

Pierre said that the total projected recurrent revenue comprised tax revenue of EC\$1.016 billion and EC\$133.9 million in non-tax revenue. Pierre said that tax revenue is forecast to increase by

9.5 per cent in comparison to the outturn for 2021-2022 while non-tax revenue is expected to increase by 34.2 per cent compared to the Revised Estimate for the preceding year.

Pierre said that the increase in tax revenue is influenced by the continuation of the recovery in economic activity resulting from the easing of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

“The significant increase

in non-tax revenue is projected as a result of the higher anticipated Citizenship by Investment (CBI) inflows expected to be deposited in the St. Lucia National Economic Fund pursuant to the St. Lucia National Economic Fund Act,” Pierre said, adding that he hopes the CBI programme does not suffer from any adverse international events, an apparent reference to moves by the European Union and the United States to have the programme terminated in the Caribbean.

Pierre said that taxes on income and profits are projected to amount to EC\$256.1 million, up by EC\$20.7 million reflecting expected increases in all the components of this category of revenue, namely income tax from corporations, income tax from

individuals, withholding tax, and arrears.

He said the revenue from corporation taxes is expected to generate EC\$73.1 million reflecting an upward trend as corporate profitability rebounds, as a result of the higher economic activity expected from relaxing and or adjusting the restrictions on social events, end of curfews, and discontinuation of confinement which have been implemented to manage and control the in-country spread of COVID-19.

He said the government is also expecting increased revenue from individual income tax, estimated at EC\$114.8 million as the number of individuals projected to return to full-time employment is expected to increase, particularly in the tourism, and construction sectors.

Prime Minister Pierre is also projecting an increase in income tax arrears, which he estimates at EC\$49.8 million, an increase of \$10.9 million or 28.27 per cent from the outturn in 2021-2022.

“The projected increase in corporate profitability, along with the increase over the medium term in the employment rate and collection of arrears in Withholding tax will positively influence the revenue outcome for this line.”

Pierre said that taxes on international trade are pro-

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jected to increase by 13.15 per cent to reach EC\$236.4 million while taxes on domestic goods and services are expected to generate EC\$515.7 million which is 8.43 percent above the revised figure in 2021-2022.

He said regarding non-taxes revenue, the projection for the fiscal year is EC\$133.9 million, or a 34.18 per cent increase over the 2021-2022 outturn.

"The main contributor to the increase in inflows during the current fiscal year is expected to be the contribution by the National Economic Fund, in-transit fees, and sale of goods and services."

But Pierre said that the budget targets an overall deficit of EC\$394.57 million and when added to the principal repayment for the year a financing gap of EC\$505.1 is anticipated which will be financed by a blend of foreign and domestic financing resources.

He said in addition to total revenue and grants of EC\$1.327 million, it is anticipated that the government will have to borrow a total of EC\$505.12 million comprising \$425.4 million, equivalent to 84.2 per cent of the total financing requirement for the year from external sources.

"Domestic financing is expected to be moderate given that much lower amounts are programmed from primary bonds.

"This is entirely in keeping with my government's strategy of relying on external borrowing on concessional terms rather than the market debt which bears higher interest rates."

Pierre said that the domestic financing requirement amounts to EC\$79.7 million which is expected to be sourced through various means including Treasury Bills, Treasury Notes and Bonds.

Pierre also announced that employee compensation represents on average approximately 33.25 per cent of the annual total budget.

He said in this year's fiscal package,

a total provision of EC\$590.7 million has been set aside for wages and salaries including EC\$30.13 million to cover compensation and other benefits.

In addition, a sum of EC\$108.55 million has been allocated to retiring benefits, of which \$14.15 million is in respect of employer contributions to NIC.

"Overall, employee compensation is programmed to increase by 11.88 per cent relative to the outturn for the current financial year. The allocated amount also makes provisions for in-year promotions and other salary and wage allowances," Pierre said, adding that public servants will be pleased to note that government will keep the promise made by the former administration and pay the increase in salaries by the end of April.

He said the increase to public servants will become effective as of April this year with the payment of the first tranche in arrears owed to them being paid in December, followed by the second tranche in March 2023.

Pierre said that debt service payments total EC\$285.03 million for the fiscal year, a reduction of 5.3 per cent relative to the approved estimates for 2021-2022.

He said a total of EC\$150.7 million has been set aside to service domestic debts while EC\$133.83 million has been provided for foreign debt servicing.

"As the allocation programmes in this budget indicate we intend to tackle the challenges with boldness and confidence. We remain optimistic, assured and rooted in our resolve to maintain economic stability and chart a path to sustainable growth," Pierre told legislators.

He said the budget is designed to "bring the economy into a state of recovery" adding this year "we are trying to increase employment.

"However, what is important is that the spending in the budget is spending that is for projects that are going to increase the level of employment in the country, create wealth and most of all, there are expenses to improve the social safety nets so the underprivileged and people who suffered under COVID, they are going to get relief from this budget".

Pierre said that his administration will pursue the initiatives and programmes funded in this budget "to bring transformative change that would impact lives and livelihoods for our people and put the people first".

BARBUDA EXPRESS

SUNDAY
AB 12:00
BA 3:45

MONDAY
AB 7:00
BA 10:00

TUESDAY TO FRIDAY
AB 7:00
BA 3:45

SATURDAY
AB 7:00
BA 10:00

TYPHOON EXPRESS

WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY
(FROM CRABBS)

AB 10:30
BA 3:45

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THANK YOU!

UPDATED SCHEDULE

International

AROUND THE WORLD



Burkina junta resists pressure to return to democracy in less than 3 years

Reuters – Burkina Faso's military junta on Thursday resisted pressure from West African regional union ECOWAS to relinquish power in less than three years, saying its priority was to restore security in the country.

The military seized power in late January, deposing President Roch Marc Christian Kabore in a coup and citing what they described as his inability to contain Islamist insurgents who control swathes of territory.

"To establish a viable democracy the first thing we need to do is to clear the territory (of Islamists), to allow peace to return," junta spokesman Lionel Bilgo told a news conference in Ouagadougou.

The junta had previously said it was aiming for a 36-month transition to democracy.

ECOWAS leaders last week de-



Burkina Faso's ousted President Roch Marc Christian Kabore speaks during the 75th anniversary celebrations of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France, November 12, 2021. Julien de Rosa/Pool via REUTERS

mandated that it shorten that period to "a more acceptable timeline", but there was little sign of that on Thursday.

Foreign Minister Olivia Rouamba, who was appointed by the junta, said 36 months was "realistic" given the

stated objective to restore security.

The junta also said discussions were under way about allowing Kabore, who has been under house arrest since the coup, to return to a residence of his choice. ECOWAS had called for his immediate and unconditional release.

"Talks ... are ongoing, with a view to allowing the former president to return to a family residence of his choice whilst guaranteeing his security," the junta said in a statement.

It did not specify who was taking part in the discussions.

ECOWAS has imposed sanctions on Mali and Guinea, whose military rulers are dragging their feet over a return to constitutional order.

Burkina Faso has so far been spared but could be next if it makes no concessions.

China to restrict visas of U.S. officials, says foreign ministry

Reuters – China on Thursday blamed the resignation of two senior British judges from Hong Kong's highest court on "British pressure" against a sweeping national security law which makes dissent in the former British colony a crime punishable by jail.

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam also said the resignations were politically motivated, adding that she was confident all levels of the judiciary in the Chinese-ruled city would be free from political interference.

The judges resigned from the Hong Kong Court

of Final Appeal (CFA) on Wednesday, saying they could not support an administration that had "departed from values of political freedom" and freedom of expression.

Hong Kong returned to Chinese rule in 1997 with the guarantee of a high degree of autonomy, including an independent judiciary and freedom of speech.

Britain says the national security law is a breach of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration that paved the way for the city's return to China under a "one country, two systems" formula.



Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam speaks during a news conference at the government headquarters in Hong Kong, China March 9, 2022. Peter Parks/Pool via REUTERS/File Photo

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin expressed "strong dissatisfaction" with the resignations and said British pressure had been exerted on the judges in order "to defame the Hong Kong

National Security Law and interfere in China's internal affairs".

"The British side flagrantly interfered in and undermined the administration of justice in the territory by

cont'd on pg 17

Russian forces leaving Chernobyl after radiation exposure

AP - Russian troops began leaving the Chernobyl nuclear plant after soldiers got “significant doses” of radiation from digging trenches at the highly contaminated site, Ukraine’s state power company said Thursday as heavy fighting raged on the outskirts of Kyiv and other fronts.

Energoatom, the operator, gave no immediate details on the condition of the troops or how many were affected. But it said the Russians had dug in in the forest inside the exclusion zone around the now-closed plant, the site in 1986 of the world’s worst nuclear disaster.

The troops “panicked at the first sign of illness,” which “showed up very quickly,” and began to prepare to leave, Energoatom said.

The Russians seized the Chernobyl site in the opening stages of the Feb. 24 invasion, raising fears that they would cause damage or disruption that could spread radiation. The workforce at the site oversees the safe storage of spent fuel rods



A Ukrainian soldier stands on top of a destroyed Russian tank on the outskirts of Kyiv, Ukraine, Thursday, March 31, 2022. (AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd)

and the concrete-entombed ruins of the exploded reactor.

The pull out came amid continued fighting and indications that the Kremlin is using talk of de-escalation as cover while regrouping and resupplying its forces and redeploying them for a stepped-up offensive in eastern Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Ukraine is seeing “a build-up of Russian forces for new strikes on the Donbas, and we are preparing for that.”

Meanwhile, a convoy of buses headed to Mariupol in another bid to evacuate

people from the besieged port city after the Russian military agreed to a limited cease-fire in the area. And a new round of talks aimed at stopping the fighting was scheduled for Friday.

The Red Cross said its teams were headed for Mariupol with medical supplies and other relief and hoped to take civilians out of the beleaguered city. Tens of thousands have managed to get out in the past few weeks by way of humanitarian corridors, reducing the city’s population from a pre-war 430,000 to an estimated 100,000 as of last week,

but other efforts have been thwarted by continued Russian attacks.

At the same time, Russian forces shelled Kyiv suburbs, two days after the Kremlin announced it would significantly scale back operations near both the capital and the northern city of Chernihiv to “increase mutual trust and create conditions for further negotiations.”

Britain’s Defense Ministry also reported “significant Russian shelling and missile strikes” around Chernihiv. The area’s governor, Viacheslav Chaus, said Russian troops were on the move but may not be withdrawing.

Russia’s Defense Ministry also reported new strikes on Ukrainian fuel stores late Wednesday, and Ukrainian officials said there were artillery barrages in and around the north-eastern city of Kharkiv over the past day.

Despite the fighting raging in those areas, the Russian military said it committed to a cease-fire along the route from Mariupol to the Ukraine-held city of Zaporizhzhia.

cont’d from pg 16

political means,” he told reporters.

British judges have long served among the foreign jurists appointed to the CFA, an arrangement to maintain confidence in a separate legal system widely seen as the bedrock of the city’s social and commercial freedoms.

Businesspeople and diplomats are watching particularly closely, given

the importance of legal independence to Hong Kong’s status as a global financial hub.

Robert Reed, the head of Britain’s top judicial body, on Wednesday said he and colleague Patrick Hodge would relinquish with immediate effect their roles as non-permanent judges on the CFA. Reed’s statement said the move was made in agreement with the Brit-

ish government.

Lam said she regretted their decision, adding that foreign judges were much valued to help safeguard judicial independence.

“I remain very confident that we still have very fine judges in the judiciary, both local and from overseas. Hong Kong will continue to benefit significantly,” she said.

Sports News



Qatar and FIFA criticized harshly ahead of World Cup draw

AP – World Cup host Qatar and FIFA received scathing criticism from within soccer on Thursday, a day before the tournament's draw.

On their own territory. In their own house. By a member of soccer's extended family.

The president of Norwegian soccer — one of the few women ever to lead a FIFA member federation — stepped up on the stage at the governing body's congress to air her concerns at the same venue that will host Friday's draw.

Lise Klaveness, a judge and former national team player, spoke about Qatar's record of protecting the rights of migrant workers — who have built tens of billions of dollars of projects needed for the World Cup — and its criminalization of homosexuality.

It was a rare show of dissent and tension in the typically tightly scripted annual meeting of soccer's 211 member countries. Klaveness targeted issues that have dogged Qatar and FIFA's controversial choice of the Middle Eastern country for more than a decade only three weeks after she was elected in Norway with a mandate to pressure the



Norwegian soccer official Lise Klaveness speaks during the FIFA congress at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Center in Doha, Qatar, Thursday, March 31, 2022. (AP Photo/Hassan Ammar)

World Cup organizers.

"In 2010, the World Cup was awarded by FIFA in unacceptable ways with unacceptable consequences," Klaveness, who is gay, said in a six-minute speech. "There is no room for employers who do not secure the freedom and safety of World Cup workers. No room for hosts that cannot legally guarantee the safety and respect of LGBTQ+ people coming to this theatre of dreams."

FIFA had worked this week in Doha to keep the Norwegian's speech off the main Congress agenda, and then gave the floor to rebuttals from a Latin American soccer official and the head of Qatar's organizing committee.

tar's organizing committee.

"This is not the right forum and not the right moment," Honduras soccer federation general secretary Jose Ernest Mejia said in translated comments.

Still, there was some warm applause for Klaveness before she walked the length of the arena floor past the mostly male delegates to return to the Norwegian delegation seats.

Klaveness was then chided by Hassan Al-Thawadi, who fronted Qatar's bid more than 12 years ago and has led the organizing committee ever since.

"You did not attempt to contact us and did not attempt to engage in dialogue before addressing congress today," he said, adding that Qatar's door was open for people to "educate themselves before passing any judgement."

Qatar and FIFA have consistently said taking the World Cup to the country, and to the Middle East for the first time, accelerated positive changes in the nation's laws and society.

Al-Thawadi said the month-long tournament could be an antidote to "stereotypes and assumptions" about the region.

Sebastian Vettel: Aston Martin driver fit for Australian GP after Covid-19

BBC – Four-time world champion Sebastian Vettel will begin his Formula 1 season at the Australian Grand Prix after recovering from Covid-19.

The Aston Martin driver was ruled out of the season-opening Bahrain Grand Prix, then failed to produce a negative test in time for the second race in

Saudi Arabia.

Reserve driver Nico Hulkenberg replaced Vettel in the Aston Martin, but was unable to score any points, finishing 17th in Bahrain and 12th in Saudi Arabia.

Vettel, 34, will line up alongside team-mate Lance Stroll in Melbourne for the 2022 season's third grand prix on April 8-10.



Vettel returns to one of his favoured tracks having won two of the previous three races at Albert Park

Premier League teams agree to 5 subs starting next season

AP - Premier League teams will be able to use five substitutions per game beginning next season in a change announced following Thursday's shareholders meeting.

The switch to five subs — up from three — brings the Premier League in line with other major competitions in Europe.

The league had used five subs as a temporary measure when play resumed in 2020 following the league's mid-season suspension because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The International Football Association Board had extended the changes before a permanent decision was made in October to keep the option of using five substitutes in place.

The Premier League, however, had decided against using the IFAB recommendations for the 2020-21 season and instead reverted back to three substitutions.

"Clubs agreed to change the rules relating to substitute players," the league said Thursday.

"From next season, clubs will be permitted to use five substitutions, to be made on three occasions

during a match, with an additional opportunity at halftime.

"A total of nine substitutes can be named on the team sheet."



Manchester United's interim manager Ralf Rangnick, centre, speaks with Manchester United's Harry Maguire, left, and Manchester United's Diogo Dalot at the end of the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur, at the Old Trafford stadium in Manchester, England, Saturday, March 12, 2022. (AP Photo/Rui Vieira)

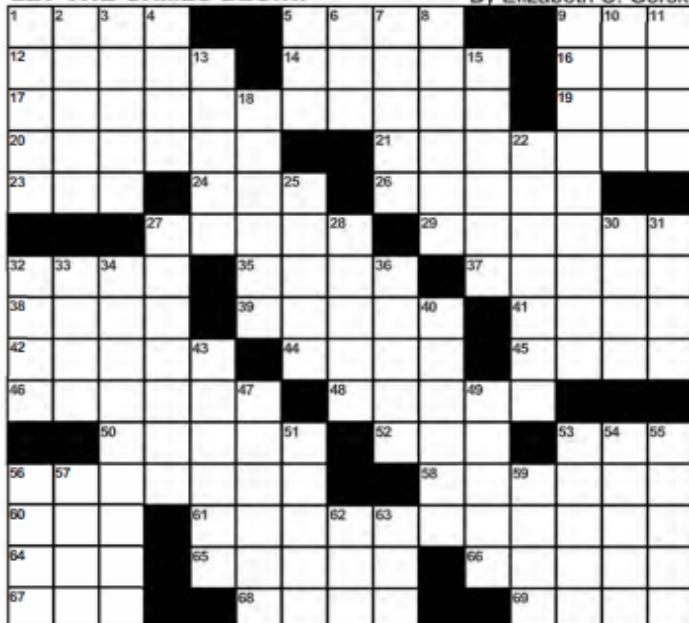
Pointe Xpress Weekend Puzzle

ACROSS

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1) Streisand, to friends | 41) Grant and Lee: Abbr. |
| 5) Sunni or Shia | 42) No longer available |
| 9) Stir-fry pan | 44) Seized vehicle |
| 12) Throat dangler | 45) Aspiring JD's exam |
| 14) Bahrain bigwigs | 46) Serengeti scavengers |
| 16) \$5 bill, slangily | 48) Spread salt on, maybe |
| 17) Cocktail often garnished with lime | 50) Naive sorts |
| 19) Eggs on sushi | 52) Nestle ___-Caps |
| 20) Royal bride of 1981 | 53) McGraw of country |
| 21) Candy apple coating | 56) Overlooked |
| 23) Tolkien tree creature | 58) Illinois city |
| 24) Bailout key | 60) The whole shebang |
| 26) "___ Billie Joe" | 61) Short-term bank offerings |
| 27) Sacred song | 64) Wharton deg. |
| 29) Turn on a stool | 65) "Rabbit food" |
| 32) Baseball's David Ortiz, AKA "Big ___" | 66) Horse fathers |
| 35) Drops from the sky | 67) Reassuring touch |
| 37) Indirectly insulting | 68) Till stack |
| 38) Victorious shout | 69) ___ a soul (no one) |
| 39) "Va Va Voom" rapper Nicki | |

LET THE GAMES BEGIN!

By Elizabeth C. Gorski



DOWN

- 1) "Taps" instrument
- 2) Bird-related
- 3) Ring-shaped cake
- 4) Leave rolling in the aisles
- 5) Match unit
- 6) Subgenre of punk rock
- 7) ___ de Mayo
- 8) Simple chords
- 9) "Saving Private Ryan" and "Platoon," e.g.
- 10) Bassoon's kin
- 11) Ship's backbone
- 13) Vicunas' range
- 15) Hinge fasteners
- 18) Render harmless, as a bomb
- 22) On pins and needles
- 25) "___ de Lune" (Debussy)
- 27) Pesto ingredient
- 28) Went for gold
- 30) "Hairspray" character ___ Turnblad
- 31) "___ we forget ..."
- 32) ___ helmet (safari wear)
- 33) On the road
- 34) Setting of a Bret Harte tale
- 36) Scruffs
- 40) "Let's do this together"
- 43) Movers and shakers
- 47) Georges of pointillism
- 49) Puts in the fridge
- 51) Subway gate
- 53) Bejeweled topper
- 54) Word before "child" or "circle"
- 55) Hard to clean up
- 56) Miner's hat attachment
- 57) Isle of exile
- 59) Pork or beef cut
- 62) Dapper one?
- 63) Mdse.

ABDRA's president appeals to drivers to use race track

President of the Antigua and Barbuda Drag Racing Association (ABDRA) Jerome 'Jerry' Roberts is calling on drivers who are racing on public roads illegally to desist from doing so.

His call comes on the heels of several horrific accidents which have caused four road fatalities this year.

Roberts, who was elected unopposed as president of ABDRA on 14th March, is inviting persons who want to race to do so at the North Sound International Raceway, the only venue authorised to legally engage in car racing in Antigua.

"The drag racing association, ABDRA, we have been given a facility to utilise where you can race legally. Stay off the streets and stop the illegal racing," Roberts said.

"I know you are young; you think you are invincible, nothing can happen to you, but it is illegal to race on the street. We have a track, use it. It will cost you \$20 to use the track; it may cost you your life on the street. Which one is worth more? So, we encourage everybody to use the facility."

Robert is also reminding people that they could face legal consequences if they are caught racing illegally.

"You will be caught and you will be hauled before the courts because there is no reason for you to be driv-



North Sound International Raceway on the 16 February, 2017, which is located next door to the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium in Antigua. (Photo: Antigua Streetz)

ing illegally," Roberts said.

"There comes a time when all of us will have to put our foot down, but with the amount of cars on the road nowadays, there are no reasons to be taking those kinds of chances. No reason whatsoever. We have a track and some islands would kill to have what we have.

"Successive governments have allowed us to use the North Sound Raceway, so let us use it. Become a member, race your car, test your car. Stay off the streets, please. Motorcyclists, riders and car drivers do not race on the streets. It is not worth it."

The latest road fatality occurred on 20th March, when a 32-year-old man from Golden Grove was killed after he lost control of his motorcycle and slammed into a utility pole in Bethesda.

A 25-year-old man succumbed to injuries sustained in a vehicular accident on the night of 15th February to become the country's third road fatality of 2022.

Reports are that the young man was driving a Toyota Vitz, from north to south on Sir George Walter Highway, when he lost control of the car and collided with a utility pole.

That incident followed a major accident on the morning of 14th February on the Valley Road that left a toddler in the Intensive Care Unit of the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre and the mother and another sibling nursing injuries.

Police say their initial investigations reveal that speeding was a factor in that accident.

This has caused the Traffic Department to also issue an appeal to motorists to be vigilant on the roadways, to exercise extreme caution while driving and to abide by the speed limits to

cont'd on pg 21



Pigotts (blue jersey) and Villa (green jersey) compete in the Primary Schools Cup at the T. N. Kirnon playing field on 25th March, 2022. (Photo: Elwin Francis)

Sporting action continues this weekend

A number of sporting activities will continue at venues across Antigua and Barbuda this weekend.

Youngsters will continue to exhibit their skills in the Primary Schools' Cup football competition.

Five Islands will hope to maintain their 100 percent unbeaten run when they face Greenbay Primary in their last Group B preliminary round match at the Golden Grove playing field at 4pm today.

Potters Primary will take on J. T. Ambrose in the other Group B encounter at 3pm at the same venue.

Bendals and Golden

Grove Primary will meet in a top of the table Group A clash at 4pm at Golden Grove today.

Jennings Primary and Urlings Primary will face off at 3pm in the other Group A affair at the same venue.

Unbeaten Villa and T. N. Kirnon primary schools will clash in another top of the table Group C encounter at 3pm today at the T. N. Kirnon playing field.

Parham Primary and Pigotts Primary will go in search of their first win in Group C when they clash at 4 pm at the same venue.

The top two teams in each group and two best

third place finishers at the end of the preliminaries will advance to the quarter finals of the Primary Schools' Cup.

In cricket, the top four teams at the end of the preliminaries of the Antigua Commercial Bank (ACB) Caribbean Parish League Dave Joseph Limited Overs Competition will contest the semi-finals this weekend.

Police will host Sea View Farm at the Police Recreation Grounds in the first semi-final tomorrow while Freetown will entertain Mahico at Freetown in the second semi-final on Sunday.

The opening round of matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association (ABCA) State Insurance Two-Day competition will commence on Saturday.

Bolans Blasters will host Rising Sun Spartans; CIP Insurance Liberta Black Hawks will entertain New Winthorpes Lions at Ball Beef; Caribbean Union Bank Bethesda Golden Eagles will face Pigotts Crushers at Bethesda and Jennings Tigers will take on Empire Nation at Jennings.

Meanwhile, Fearless Crew will stage their 3X3 basketball competition at the Blackburn Park in Villa on Sunday.

At least 16 teams are expected to vie for supremacy in the competition that is slated to tip-off at 2:30pm.

Food and drink will be on sale at the fundraising event, which is being hosted by the Fearless Crew basketball team.

cont'd from pg 20

prevent accidents and loss of life.

A 15-year-old boy was killed after he was knocked off his bike by a vehicle close to Bargain Centre in Liberta on 26th January. He became the second road fatality this year.

On 20th January, a 29-year-old Yorks woman became the country's first road fa-

tality of 2022. According to police reports, the woman was walking from east to west on Friars Hill road in the vicinity of Village Walk, when she was struck by a car travelling in the opposite direction.

Several other vehicular accidents have resulted in persons sustaining major injuries and causing significant damage to both the vehicles involved and property.

ABVA to host ECVA tournament later this year

Antigua and Barbuda will host the senior men's tournament of the Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Association (ECVA) later this year.

President Wilbur Harrigan said the Antigua and Barbuda Volleyball Association (ABVA) is making preparations to host the ECVA competition at its indoor facility at the YMCA Sports Complex from July 7th to 10th.

Harrigan said the ABVA is awaiting confirmation from two of the seven countries that have been invited to join host Antigua and Barbuda in the tournament.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is experiencing issues surrounding vaccination of their players and has been reluctant to confirm their participation.

The ABVA is also awaiting a response from Tortola.

Harrigan said, however, that St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Bermuda, St. Maarten and Anguilla have confirmed their participation.

"This is the ECVA tournament and it will be eight teams including us, Antigua

and Barbuda. They will all be here with us once they can meet all COVID-19 protocols. We may not get all eight, but if we get at least six teams taking part we will be happy," Harrigan said.

"But it may not be that some teams might not want to come; but there can be issues with quarantining when they get back home, so we are hoping that nothing serious happens that will affect the teams."

Harrigan admitted that planning is still in its initial stages, therefore sponsorship for the tournament has not yet been secured.

"We are still putting it together so requests for sponsorships have not yet gone out, but we are going to solicit sponsorship. Each team will have to pay something, but we are going to be putting in something as well," Harrigan said.

"I want to promote a fundraising activity that we are planning to raise funds for hosting the event. I came up with an idea to host a karaoke night sometime soon in the volleyball stadium.

"It will be for four hours



President of the Antigua and Barbuda Volleyball Association Wilbur Harrigan. (Photo: Wilbur Harrigan)

with a competition at the end of each hour for the best this or the best that."

Harrigan said the ABVA was able to refurbish its indoor facility during the pandemic which curtailed most sports.

"Our indoor volleyball stadium has been refurbished. Our four bathrooms

have been spruced up. They are all properly tiled and this was all done during the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"During that period, we just could not get the opportunity to bring the young people out to play volleyball so we decided to refurbish the place," Harrigan said.