

# SENIOR DIPLOMAT CALLS FOR US-CARICOM TALKS

*Story on Page 2*

## AT&LU/ABLP's Labour Queen Show is back! - Pg 5



# Local News



## Ambassador Sanders calls for early US-CARICOM talks

Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the United States, Sir Ronald Sanders, has called for an early meeting between US President, Joe Biden and leaders of Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries.

Ambassador Sanders made the call during a webinar meeting on Thursday, April 28th, organized by Florida International Uni-

versity and the Latin American and Caribbean Centre in Washington.

Sir Ronald pointed out that it has been seven years since the last US-CARICOM Summit was held in Jamaica. He said during that time, the US has not formulated an effective Caribbean policy. He described the US policy during the Trump presidency as one of



*Ambassador Sir Ronald Sanders*

“divide and rule” particularly with regard to Cuba and Venezuela.

Ambassador Sanders also lamented that since President Biden has come to office, no high-level consultation has been held on a US policy for the Caribbean. He said that instead, the US has focused on continuing policies of isolating Cuba and trying to dissuade CARICOM countries from relationships with the People's Republic of China.

He said that focus on these two issues is unhelpful while CARICOM countries are struggling to recover from the economic and financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including huge burdens of debt caused by Climate-Change induced natural disasters and paying for enlarged health services to save their peoples' lives through the spread of the Coronavirus.

Noting that US authorities repeatedly acknowledge the Caribbean as its ‘third border’, he said that “the

US ought to be seeking to strengthen its relations with CARICOM countries, including by helping them to address challenges – some of which are directly attributable to the US, such as Climate Change”.

The webinar meeting discussed a paper, produced by Ambassador Sanders on “US-Caribbean Relations in the first year of the Biden Administration”. Two of the panelists were a former top US State Department official, Ambassador Tom Shannon, and Pulitzer prize journalist with the Miami Herald, Jacqueline Charles.

The meeting endorsed Ambassador Sanders' view that an early meeting between US President Biden and CARICOM leaders is necessary for refocusing the US-Caribbean relationship on mutually beneficial terms.

The entire webinar discussion can be seen on the websites of Florida International University and the Latin American and Caribbean Center.

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## Jonas: Minimum wage increase will be done through consultation

Cabinet has agreed in principle that there must be an increase of the national minimum wage for Antigua and Barbuda.

However, this can only be possible once the National Minimum Wage Advisory Committee completes its work and makes recommendations.

Labour Minister, Steadroy Benjamin, has tasked the committee with investigating the conditions of work, extent of unemployment, the cost of living and the general conditions of the economy of Antigua and Barbuda.

No specific timeframe was given by which the

committee is expected to complete its assignment, but Social Transformation Minister, Dean Jonas, says those who were selected to carry out the survey have begun working and will then report to Cabinet when they are through.

"It is not just a government decision only," Jonas told reporters yesterday at the Post-Cabinet Press Briefing.

"The government employs I believe the majority of persons, but the minimum wage affects the entire country, all employers. Therefore, we have to get feedback; we have to consult with unions and so

that work is going on and so we expect that before the end of the year, we will be able to come back and report on this."

According to the social transformation minister, increasing the national minimum wage is a process that cannot be rushed.

At least one union, the A&BWU, has suggested the committee considers a sectoral approach to the minimum wage, as opposed to "having one national minimum wage across the



*Social Transformation Minister, Dean Jonas*

board". The current minimum wage is \$ 8.20 an hour and was introduced on 1st January, 2015.

### AUCTION NOTICE

<u>REGISTRATION SECTION</u>	<u>BLOCK</u>	<u>PARCEL</u>
OTTOS NEWTOWN	610 1791B	21

Instructed by **The Antigua & Barbuda Social Security Board of Control**, Long Street, St. John's, Antigua, I shall sell by **PUBLIC AUCTION** on **Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2022 at 11:00 a.m.** the above described property located at Ottos New Town, Antigua. The development in which the property is located is zoned as middle income residential. The area has all the infrastructures in place such as, Electricity service, Water, Telephone and paved road.

The property is registered under the absolute proprietorship under the ownership of **Christian Faith Academy Limited**. There are two single storey wooden constructed buildings. The roof covering of the buildings are constructed from galvanize sheeting; the ceiling is T1-11 plywood ceiling on 2" x 6" timber rafters. The interior walls are finish with cement plaster and paint. The land has an area of parcel 6,534 sq.ft.

The layout of the room is satisfactory.

Building No. 1 approximately 1,100 SF has the following rooms: Administration Office, toilet facility and class room.

Building No. 2 approximately 2,000 SF has the following rooms: Class room and toilet facilities.

The windows and doors – Metal entrance doors and wooden doors on the interior. Wooden shutter windows.

The Auction shall be held on site.

Additional details of the Auction and Property may be obtained from the **Mr. Trevor "Teddy" Santos, Public Auctioneer, Tel: 562-7653 / 464-7653. Website: [HYPERLINK "http://www.go-going-gone.com/"](http://www.go-going-gone.com/) "blank" www.go-going-gone.com / Instagram: [tts\\_auction\\_antigua](#) / Facebook: [Auction Antigua](#)**

Dated the 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2022

### NOTICE

TO: HER WORSHIP  
The Licensing Magistrate  
Magistrate's Court  
Gray's Farm  
St. John's  
Antigua

TO: COMMISSIONER OF POLICE  
Police Headquarters  
American Road  
St. John's  
Antigua

### NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A TAVERN LICENCE FOR BUSINESS REGISTERED AS RITE YA SO

I, **Susanne Nicola Shaw**, DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE, that it is my intention to apply at the next sitting of the Liquor Licence Court to be held at the Magistrate's Court, Grays Farm, St. John's Antigua on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2022 next ensuing for a Tavern license in respect of premises known as "Rite Ya So" situated Belmont Estate, in the Parish of St. John's, Antigua pursuant to Section 11 (5) of the Licensing (Intoxicating Liquor) Act Cap 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda, Revised Edition 1992.

Dated the 19<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2022

  
Susanne Nicola Shaw  
268-784-2911



## Agreement reached on salary increase for school bus drivers

School bus drivers are expected back at work today after they refused to perform their duties on Thursday, leaving hundreds of students across the island stranded.

Their strike action was over the Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board's failure to incrementally increase their salaries by ten percent, as part of a three-year collective bargaining agreement that ends next year.

The drivers walked from the motor pool yesterday to the A&BTB located at Herberts, to bring awareness to

the matter and to hear from management on the next step.

President of the Antigua and Barbuda Workers' Union, Kem Riley, said the Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board did not respond to a recommendation made by the Labour Department on the salary increase and their failure to do so resulted in industrial action.

It was not until yesterday's meeting with General Manager Hubert Jarvis that it was determined the proposed ten percent increase

was rejected by management. The Labour Department reportedly proposed seven percent, which Jarvis reportedly accepted.

Though displeased, the workers through their representatives have accepted the seven percent increase in salaries. One employee said adjustments in salaries can come within the next two week, but this is yet to be confirmed.



Workers were also agitating for risk allowance for conductors that was also rejected by A&BTB. But their

union is focused instead on health benefits for its members.

"No risk allowance can save a life, so even if you get hit getting a risk allowance and you die... so we rather put things in place and we put a medical plan in place, that in the event certain things happen and you go and check your health and those kind of things, rather than looking at a risk allowance. So, preventative health is what we're looking at," Kem Riley stated.

Another vexing issue for drivers is receiving only half of their salaries when the government implemented a lockdown and whenever schools are on break. There is an undertaking that the matter will be addressed by the A&BWU and the Transport Board's management.

Yesterday's strike by school bus drivers was the second in five months.

Fri 29   Day		Fri 29   Night	
<b>81°</b>		<b>75°</b>	
52% E 10 mph		58% SE 6 mph	
Overcast with rain showers at times. High 81F. Winds E at 5 to 10 mph. Chance of rain 50%.		Cloudy with occasional rain showers. Low around 75F. Winds SE at 5 to 10 mph. Chance of rain 60%.	
Humidity <b>77%</b>	UV Index <b>9 of 10</b>	Humidity <b>86%</b>	UV Index <b>0 of 10</b>
Sunrise <b>5:43 am</b>	Sunset <b>6:26 pm</b>	Moonrise <b>4:56 am</b>	Moonset <b>5:36 pm</b>
		● Waning Crescent	



## AT&LU/ABLP's Labour Queen Show is back!

The annual Labour Queen Show organized jointly by the Antigua Trades and Labour Union in association with the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party returns after a two-year hiatus caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pageant organizer, Sharilyn James said eight young women representing several of the seventeen constituencies will vie for the coveted title of Miss Labour Queen, 2022.

The contestants are; Miss St. John's Rural West, Jennifer Medina, Miss St. George Kessy-Ann Samuel, Miss St. John's City West, Shareef Warren, Miss All Saints East and St Luke, Daryn Thomas, Miss St. Peter Keena Charles, Miss St. Paul, J'Dinique Prince, Miss St. John's City West, Charity Henry, and Miss St Mary's North, Brianna Anthony.

The show takes place at the Dean William Lake Cultural Centre on Saturday night.

The winner will receive a host of prizes donated by members of the local business community as well as lead the 2022 Labour Day parade organized by the AT&LU/ABLP combination, which moves off from the V.C Bird Bust on Lower Market Street on Monday, Labour Day.

The Labour Queen Show forms part of a host of activities planned to mark Labour Day, 2022. These

include a church service on Sunday 1st May, starting at 12 noon at the Grace Apostolic Church on Union Road, Hatton.

In the afternoon after

the Labour Day March on Monday, a major concert will take place at Fort James that will be headlined by Red Hot Flames and LSA Band. Other artists who

will appear include King Obstinate, Young destroyer, Drastic, Menace, Tian Winter, Ricardo Drue, Claudette Peters and Rattigan. Show time is at 5:00pm.



**MON MAY 02**

**ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**

# LABOUR DAY PARTY

**JAMMING TO FORT JAMES:  
LSA BAND | RED HOT FLAMES**

---

**PERFORMING AT FORT JAMES AT 5PM**

**GEE BEE | REDDING | YOUNG DESTROYER | KING OBSTINATE  
BLADE | YOUNG LYRICS | DRASTIC | RATTIGAN | ZAMONI  
MENACE | SUPER D | CLAUDETTE PETERS  
TIAN WINTER | RICARDO DRUE**

**SPECIAL GUEST ARTIST  
MASICKA**



# Local News

## Prosecution still unprepared to move forward on Nigel Christian homicide case

After two years and three arrests, the office of the Director of Public Prosecution still isn't prepared to move forward with committal proceedings in the Nigel Christian murder case.

The latest delay occurred on Wednesday in the All Saints courtroom of Magistrate Ngaio Emanuel-Edwards, when the prosecution, for a fifth time, indicated to the court that they were not ready to proceed with the case against the men accused of the

brutal shooting death of the ex-Customs officer.

Lasean Bully, 30, of Cashew Hill, Wayne Thomas, 28, of Hatton and Saleim Harrigan, 30, of Greenbay, are charged with the 10th July 2020, kidnapping and murder of 44-year-old Nigel Christian.

Christian was kidnapped at gunpoint from his McKinnons home in the early evening hours of his death.

Several hours later, his body was found near Thibous.



He was shot multiple times about his body.

Defence attorney, Wendel Robinson, who represents Thomas, expressed frustration

with the ongoing delays in the accused men's pursuit for justice.

Robinson called on Magistrate Emanuel-Edwards to dismiss the case, which he asserted the prosecution should have moved forward within six months of the charges being filed.

Andrew O'Kola, who represents Bully and Harrigan, was absent from court on Wednesday, but according to Robinson, who held for him, he too shares a similar position regarding the prosecution's delays.

Robinson asserted that the court should dismiss the case against the three men and, if in the future the prosecution is prepared to move forward, charges can be brought against them again.

In response, Magistrate Emanuel-Edwards said while she understood the defence's position, she would not dismiss the case. In what will hopefully be the final adjournment, the matter will return to the court on 24th August.

Before then however, the defence has been given a deadline of 27th June, to file their submissions in the matter. The prosecution must file their response by 8th August.

## Pointe Xpress Weekend Puzzle

### ACROSS

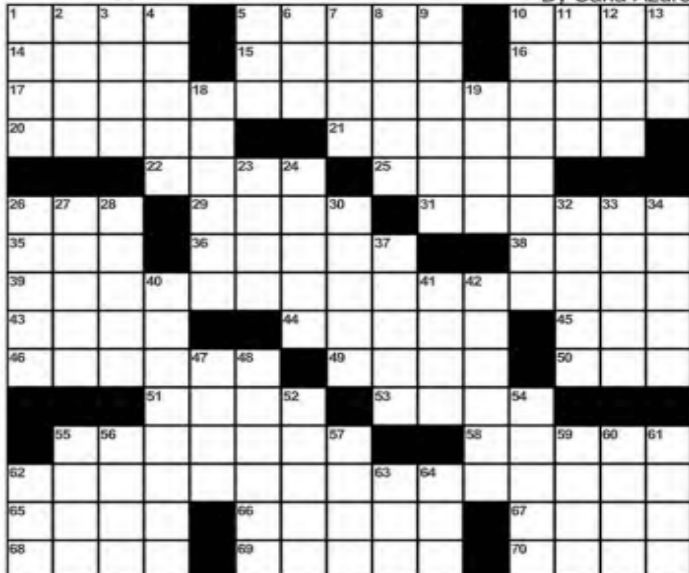
- |                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1) Aesop character                  | 43) Long, long time              |
| 5) Assume to be true                | 44) "Par ____" (airmail stamp)   |
| 10) Head light?                     | 45) What "it" plays              |
| 14) Departure                       | 46) Mockeries                    |
| 15) Pawl grabber (Var.)             | 49) Freudian topics              |
| 16) "Ars amatoria" poet             | 50) Guileful                     |
| 17) One's child, typically          | 51) Cries of triumph             |
| 20) Costa del Sol feature           | 53) Blood-related                |
| 21) All together                    | 55) Either of two continents     |
| 22) Hilo feast                      | 58) Robot of Jewish legend       |
| 25) Rod at a pig roast              | 62) Another chance for happiness |
| 26) Telekinesis, e.g.               | 65) Unadorned                    |
| 29) Indoor sports facilities        | 66) Salmon do it                 |
| 31) Accommodates, in a way          | 67) Army insects                 |
| 35) "At Seventeen" singer Janis     | 68) Did Daytona                  |
| 36) Nun's attire                    | 69) Crow's home of old           |
| 38) "I had no ____!"                | 70) Snack                        |
| 39) Not to be fooled with, in a way |                                  |

### DOWN

- 1) "S.O.S.!"
- 2) Angle between stem and stalk
- 3) Baltic capital
- 4) Type of alcohol
- 5) Old hand
- 6) Stumblebum
- 7) Eyelid bump
- 8) Desktop pictures
- 9) Thuds
- 10) Dairy breed
- 11) "We try harder" company
- 12) This puzzle's theme word
- 13) Flowery poem
- 18) Instructed
- 19) Commuter line
- 23) Nursemaid in India
- 24) Blackest part of a shadow
- 26) Seasoned rice dish
- 27) Fat-nosed antelope
- 28) Read between the lines
- 30) It doesn't hold water
- 32) Cleans up prose
- 33) Kind of code
- 34) Drooping
- 37) Evergreen-forested landscape
- 40) Avoided
- 41) Captured
- 42) Naval Academy grad
- 47) Viscount's superior
- 48) Least extroverted
- 52) Suffix with "sea" or "moon"
- 54) Director Christopher
- 55) Take \_\_\_\_ (snooze)
- 56) \_\_\_\_ mortals
- 57) "... and make it fast!"
- 59) Prefix with "type"
- 60) Semiaquatic salamanders
- 61) Fit together, as gears
- 62) Stomach muscles, briefly
- 63) Ram's ma'am
- 64) Low digit

### LIVE IT UP

By Carla Azure







# ANTIGUA SAILING WEEK 2022 SCHEDULE

SCAN ME



**ALL ACTIVITIES AT THE ANTIGUA YACHT CLUB UNLESS INDICATED.**  
We invite you to visit our **BAR & RESTAURANT** partners after the daily prizegivings.

## THURSDAY APRIL 28

9:00 AM Committee Desk Open

## FRIDAY APRIL 29

9:00 AM Registration & Committee Desk Open

3:00 PM Racing Rules of Sailing Seminar

3:00 PM **LAWN BARS OPEN**

## SATURDAY APRIL 30

8:00 AM Peters & May Round Antigua Race

9:00 AM Registration & Committee Desk Open

3:00 PM Bareboat Skipper Briefing @ Nelson's Dockyard

3:00 PM **LAWN BARS OPEN**

5:00 PM Steelpan recital from Original Steel Orchestra.  
Impressions are everything, so represent your crew in your best team outfits

7:00 PM 53rd Antigua Sailing Week Welcome and Peters & May Round Antigua Race Prize Giving

## SUNDAY MAY 1

8:00 AM Committee Desk Open

8:00 AM Shirley Heights Lookout Breakfast @ Shirley Heights Lookout

9:00 AM Chase the Race with Wadadli Cats @ Falmouth Harbour Marina

10:00 AM English Harbour Rum Race Day 1 Starts

3:00 PM **LAWN BARS OPEN**

4:00 PM English Harbour Rum Cocktail Bartender Competition

*Enter teams at Committee Desk or  
[www.info@sailingweek.com](mailto:www.info@sailingweek.com)*

5:00 PM English Harbour Rum Race Day 1 Prize Giving

6:00 PM DJ Nez

## MONDAY MAY 2

8:00 AM Committee Desk Open

10:00 AM ASW Race Day 2 Starts

3:00 PM **LAWN BARS OPEN**

5:00 PM ASW Race Day 2 Prize Giving

## TUESDAY MAY 3

8:00 AM Committee Desk Open @ Antigua Yacht Club

9:00 AM Chase the Race with Wadadli Cats @ Falmouth Harbour Marina

10:00 AM Axxess Marine Y2K Race Day 3 Starts

3:00 PM **LAWN BARS OPEN**

5:00 PM Axxess Marine Y2K Race Day 3 Prize Giving

6:00 PM 11th Edition Reggae in the Park  
(Gates open at 5:00PM)

*Tickets available on Ticketing APP*

## WEDNESDAY MAY 4

10:00 AM Committee Desk Open

12:00 PM Lay Day @ Pigeon Point – Dinghy Racing, Team & Individual Beach Game Competitions including Tug of War!

## THURSDAY MAY 5

8:00 AM Committee Desk Open

9:00 AM Chase the Race with Wadadli Cats @ Falmouth Harbour Marina

10:00 AM Locman Italy Women's Race Day 4 Starts

3:00 PM **LAWN BARS OPEN**

5:00 PM Prize Giving Locman Italy Women's Race Day 4 Prize Giving

7:00 PM Seafood Thursday @ Nelson's Dockyard

## FRIDAY MAY 6

8:00 AM Committee Desk Open

9:00 AM Chase the Race with Wadadli Cats @ Falmouth Harbour Marina

10:00 AM Antigua & Barbuda Tourism Race Day 5 Starts

2:00 PM **LAWN BARS OPEN**

4:00 PM Antigua & Barbuda Tourism Race Day 5 Prize Giving

6:00 PM Antigua & Barbuda Tourism Final Awards & After-party @ Nelson's Dockyard. LIVE MUSIC!

## SATURDAY MAY 7

12:00 PM Dockyard Day - Harper's Office Depot School Art Competition Awards @ Nelson's Dockyard



# Local News

## Another COVID-19 death recorded, one hospitalised

The most recent report received by the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment revealed thirty-three (33) new laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda as of Monday 25th April 2022 at 6pm.

Five (5) cases were recorded on April 20th, three (3) on April 21st, eleven (11) on April 22nd and seven (7) on April 23rd and seven (7) on 25th April.

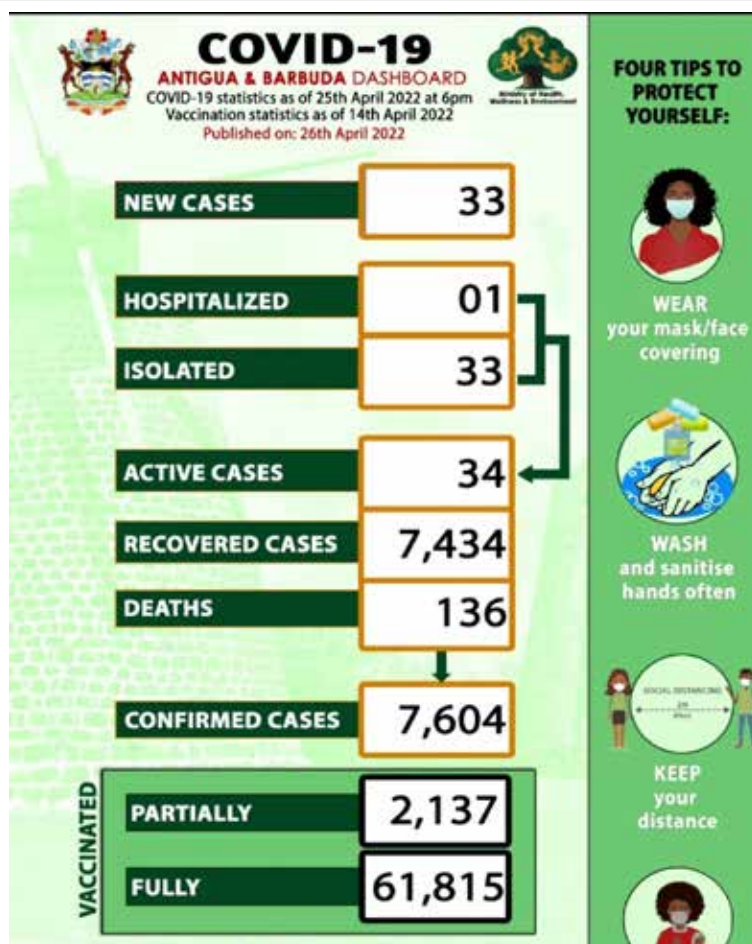
One hundred and forty-seven (147) samples were processed.

Thirty-two (32) recovered cases were recorded.

One (1) COVID-19 related death was recorded on 25th April.

Consequently, the total number of persons with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda is seven thousand six hundred and four (7,604); which is inclusive of thirty-four (34) active cases.

There is one (1) moderate hospitalised case.




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## Standing up to Daniel Ortega's excesses

**By Sir Ron Sanders**

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

Largely unreported by the media in the Caribbean and making no headlines, a very serious blow was delivered to diplomacy and international relations on Sunday, 24 April.

The Government of Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua sent Police to enter the diplomatic premises of the Organization of American States (OAS) forcibly, and to confiscate its documents and other property.

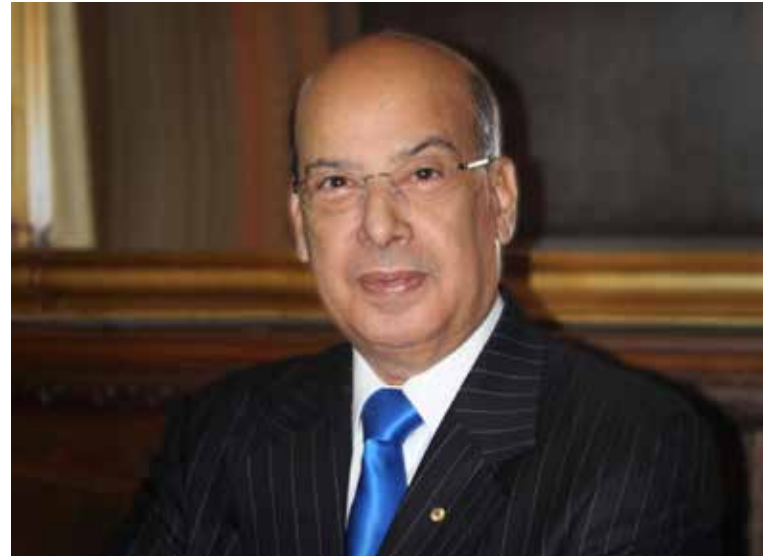
This may appear to be of no concern to the people of Caribbean countries, particularly persons who are not involved in government. But the act strikes at the heart of a long-established norm of relations between States and inter-governmental institutions. It could have undesirable and serious consequences for small countries if it passes unchecked.

The norm is that States accept embassies, consulates and other diplomatic missions on the basis that they are 'inviolable' which means that no agent of the receiving State may enter them, except without the consent of the head of the mission.

This norm is enshrined in the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations which defines a framework for behaviour between independent countries and international institutions. The Convention facilitates friendly relations through a set of practices and principles that all States have accepted. Very importantly, it codifies the longstanding custom of diplomatic immunity, in which diplomatic missions are granted privileges that enable diplomats to perform their functions without fear of coercion or harassment by the host country.

The Vienna Convention is a cornerstone of modern international relations and international law. Adherence to its provisions have been respected and upheld by States because governments understand and accept that diplomacy is fundamental to finding solutions even in war.

As the OAS Secretary-General, Luis Almagro, told the member states of the organization on April 25th after the Nicaragua Police seized the diplomatic premises and confiscated its property, "this has never happened before, even in times of the region's worst dictatorships, including those experienced by Nicaragua. This is a violation of the most elementary norms governing relations between States and international organizations, setting



*Sir Ron Sanders*

a precedent hitherto unheard of in the region".

What makes the action of the Nicaragua government even worse is that the OAS is a collective of all its member states. Therefore, its diplomatic premises belongs to all of them, including the 14 independent countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

This fact could not have been overlooked by the government of Nicaragua when its police force illegally entered the premises, occupied it and seized the property within it.

It is worth noting that the Vienna Convention makes it absolutely clear that, along with the premises of missions being inviolable, the receiving state is under a special duty to take all appropriate measures to protect the premises of the mission and to prevent any disturbance of the peace of the mission or impairment of its dignity.

The Article also states

that the premises of the mission and its property shall be immune from search, requisition, attachment, or execution. It is this norm - a bedrock of international relations - that the Government of Nicaragua has assaulted.

Worse yet, beyond disregarding the Vienna Convention, the OAS and the Government of Nicaragua had a written agreement, signed in 1989, which recognizes the privileges and immunities of the OAS mission, including the prohibition of any type of procedure, entry, search, seizure, or any other measure, without the consent of the Secretariat.

For small countries, such as those in CARICOM, the norm of inviolability of diplomatic premises is sacrosanct for two important reasons.

First, CARICOM countries want to welcome diplomatic missions to their countries, both for the in-

*cont'd on pg 10*

# Opinion



*cont'd from pg 9*

ternational recognition that the presence of such missions signify, and the services that they provide. However, in light of the Nicaraguan action, governments and other international institutions might now reconsider the safety of their foreign missions and reduce them considerably.

Second, CARICOM countries presume the inviolability of their own missions in other States that the Vienna Convention accords to them. Therefore, they do not spend scarce financial resources on protecting their diplomatic premises, particularly from the host government. But after the egregious action of the Nicaragua government, inviolability can no longer be taken for granted. The Nicaragua government has cast a long-held norm of international relations into grave and serious doubt.

So, why did the Nicaragua government take this egregious action? It is

discomfited that the Permanent Council of the OAS condemned its serious and persistent abuse of human rights, including the arbitrary arrest and jailing of political opponents; shutting down media criticism; and the use of lethal force by the Police against protestors resulting in hundreds of killings.

It should be noted that, amongst the persons that the Ortega government arbitrarily arrested and jailed, were his comrades in the revolutionary Sandinista government. One of them, Hugo Torres, died after being imprisoned with no access to his medication.

Nicaragua's own Ambassador to the OAS, Arturo Macfields, dramatically denounced the abuses of the government in a live webcast of an OAS meeting. He accused the Ortega government of atrocities about which he "could not be silent".

Nothing can justify the violation of an international norm that has long been accepted and respected by every

government in the world. If the Nicaraguan government's action is seen to be acceptable by the absence of a strong expression and display of disapproval by the OAS member states, other insecure regimes, such as that in Nicaragua, would be given a license for similar behaviour.

The system of international order, including the rules of diplomatic practice and international relations, would be weakened even more than it has been by Russia's war on Ukraine.

The world would be brought closer to the precipice of disregard for the norms and practices that have safeguarded peace and development for over seven decades. Small states would be the first to suffer, as usual. That's why the Nicaraguan violation of a fundamental norm matters to small countries, and why it should not pass without a strong response.

**Responses and previous commentaries: [www.sirronaldsanders.com](http://www.sirronaldsanders.com)**

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## FDA to issue plan banning menthol in cigarettes, cigars

By Matthew Perrone

The U.S. government on Thursday will lay out its long-awaited plan to ban menthol cigarettes and flavoured cigars, which have taken a disproportionate toll on Black smokers and other minorities.

Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Robert Califf previewed the announcement in congressional testimony, saying the proposal would reduce disease and death by helping current smokers quit and stopping younger people from starting.

Menthol accounts for more than a third of cigarettes sold in the U.S., and the mint flavour is overwhelmingly favoured by Black smokers and young people.

The FDA has attempted several times to get rid of menthol but faced pushback from Big Tobacco, members of Congress and competing political interests under both Democratic and Republican administrations.

The agency has been under legal pressure to issue a decision after anti-smoking and civil rights groups sued the FDA for “unreasonably” delaying action on earlier requests to ban menthol. Menthol’s cooling effect has been shown to mask the throat harshness of smoking, making it easier to start and harder to quit smoking.

The FDA will also seek to ban menthol and dozens of over sweet and fruity flavours from small cigars, which are increasingly popular with young people, especially Black teens.

The agency’s proposals on both cigarettes and cigars will only be initial drafts. FDA will take comments before issuing final rules, which then could face years of legal challenges from tobacco companies.

Menthol is the only cigarette fla-



*Menthol cigarettes and other tobacco products are displayed at a store in San Francisco on May 17, 2018. The U.S. government is set to release its long-awaited plan to ban menthol cigarettes and flavoured cigars. On Thursday, April 28, 2022, Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Robert Califf previewed the announcement in congressional testimony, saying the proposal would reduce disease and death among smokers and help many quit. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu, File)*

avour that was not prohibited under the 2009 law that gave the FDA authority over tobacco products, an exemption negotiated by industry lobbyists. The act did, though, instruct the agency to continue to weigh a ban.

Last April, the Biden administration pledged to try to ban menthol within the year, responding in part to African American groups who say menthol has led to lower quit rates and higher rates of death among Black people. Menthols are used by 85% of Black smokers.

“Black folks die disproportionately of heart disease, lung cancer and stroke,” said Phillip Gardiner of the African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council. “Menthol cigarettes and flavoured cigars are the main vectors of those diseases in the Black and brown communities, and have been for a long time.”

In 2020, Gardiner’s group and several others sued to compel the FDA to

make a decision on a ban.

The FDA made several efforts to begin eliminating menthol under both the Obama and Trump administrations, but has never previously released a formal roadmap of how the process would work.

“This is the first time there’s been support from an administration,” said Mitch Zeller, who recently retired after nine years leading FDA’s tobacco centre. “If these rules are finalized they become the law of the land and it becomes illegal for menthol cigarettes and flavoured cigars to be sold.”

In recent weeks, dozens of interest groups — for and against the ban — met with Biden administration officials to try and influence the proposed rule, which would wipe out billions in tobacco sales.

For decades, tobacco companies focused menthol advertising and promotions in Black communities, spon-

*cont’d on pg 12*

# Workplace



## Ideas on mute? Study: Remote meetings dampen brainstorming

By **Seth Borenstein**

Video meetings dampen brainstorming because we are so hyper-focused on the face in that box that we don't let our eyes and minds wander as much, a new study found.

Staring isn't good for creativity. While it's rude to stare at someone in real life, it's expected when on a video call, researchers said.

When it comes to evaluating those new ideas, though, that focus, at least in one-on-one chats, seems to make remote meetings slightly better than in-person chats, Wednesday's study in the journal *Nature* said.

Researchers watched 745 pairs of engineers in five different countries try to come up with creative ideas for using a Frisbee or bubble wrap. Those in the same room generated on average one more idea, which is about 17% more than those in remote meetings. And those in-person ideas were judged by outside experts to be more creative, the study found.

Study author Melanie Brucks, an applied psychology professor at Columbia University's business school, said it was the outcome she expected — but not the reason she expected.

At first she figured it had to be the social and physical distance — maybe the two people just didn't connect as well or people didn't know who speaks when. But several different tests for social connectedness found that the remote meeting pairs were connecting with each other in the same way as people in the same room.

Then the eyes gave it away. When Brucks tracked eye movement she found that people in the same room gazed away more often, looked around. But the remote meeting pairs didn't.

"They were too focused on specifically the task at hand and that made them narrower in their thinking," Brucks said — in an interview over Zoom.

This makes sense because faces draw our focus, said Georgetown University



*A study published Wednesday, April 27, 2022 in the journal Nature says if you want to brainstorm during a meeting, it works better in person than over remote video conferencing. (AP Photo/Martin Meissner)*

psychology professor Adam Green, who wasn't part of the research.

"Faces really matter to our brains and we devote a lot of attention to looking at faces," said Green, president of the Society for the Neuroscience of Creativity. "When we are with someone in person, it is not considered polite to stare directly at their face for an extended period of time."

Remote meetings work otherwise, Brucks said.

"It's not that Zoom's bad, everything's worse. It

seems like (the problem) is unique to the more generative, creative process," Brucks said.

When it was time to evaluate those options, the remote meeting engineers picked out the better choice -- as judged by a team of outside experts -- slightly more than those in person, the study found.

The experiment started before the pandemic and was done using WebEx with one company in offices in Portugal, Israel, Finland, Hungary and India. The results were about the same across the different locations.

"When I brainstorm now on Zoom, I turn off my camera," Brucks said. She notes that's no different than talking on the telephone, except she establishes a personal connection by starting with the camera on.

### *cont'd from pg 11*

soring music festivals and neighbourhood events. Industry documents released via litigation show companies viewed menthol cigarettes as a good "starter product" because they were more palatable to teens.

Menthol's elimination would be a huge blow to tobacco companies, including Marlboro-maker Altria and Reynolds American, which sells the leading menthol

brands, Newport and Kool. With the slow decline of smoking, tobacco companies have been diversifying into alternative products, including electronic cigarettes and tobacco pouches. But those ventures still account for a tiny slice of industry sales.

More than 12% of Americans smoke cigarettes, with rates roughly even between white and Black populations.



## “King of Soca”: Machel Montano’s biography to be released next month

By **Laura Dowrich-Phillips**

As “the ultimate insider”, Lady Montano reveals the making of soca music’s foremost ambassador in her new book set for release in June 2022. The forthcoming publication of the aptly titled *King of Soca* biography is at once the latest in a list of firsts for soca’s top brass, Machel Montano, on his 40th anniversary in the music industry, and the jewel in the crown of achievements for its first-time author, businesswoman and king maker, Elizabeth ‘Lady’ Montano.

*King of Soca* is the debut publication of Lady’s very own EESM Publishers imprint. It covers the evolution of Machel – the man and artist – over four decades. From her extraordinary vantage point as “the ultimate insider”, Lady details the characteristics and stories of the various eras of Machel’s artistry. She shares the highs and lows of her son’s journey against the backdrop of the soca legend’s ever-evolving interior world shaping his outer expression.

The book is based on Lady’s 2018 MPhil dissertation titled “The making of Monk Monte: Creativity and Commodification in Trinidad and Tobago Popular Culture”. At first, Lady was tempted to build on it for a PhD, but decided against the academic route when she understood that

her intention was to make it accessible to everyone.

An educator by training, Lady views storytelling as a vital part of knowledge sharing, which she deems essential to growth and development. *King of Soca* therefore embodies a comprehensive record of the 40-year history of 47-year-old Machel which, according to the former ‘momager’, is not well known, and much less so among the nation’s youth.

Even with the solid foundation of her 2018 thesis, it has taken Lady two years to bring the work to fruition. Commenting on the process, she says, “I started writing the book itself in 2020, at the start of the pandemic when everything was shut down and I was in Toco.

“I thought I would finish it quickly because it was all in my head and I simply had to adapt my Master’s dissertation. However, once it ceased to be an academic project, the possibilities for what I could include were now suddenly endless.”

The Montano matriarch’s enduring desire to document her son’s story is manifest in her compulsive collection of Machel memorabilia, which in 2015, constituted a full exhibition at the historic Boissiere House in Port of Spain. She admits to her relentless pursuit to preserve evidence of all as-



*Elizabeth “Lady” Montano with her son Machel*

pects of his life since what she describes as “his miracle birth” in 1974, and more so from 1982 when he officially entered the entertainment arena.

Her vision for the project was clear: “I was always able to see what the book would be like. I was disappointed when I could not include all the pictures, anecdotes, imagery and other special things I wanted in my dissertation. So seeing the book actually taking shape really created a renewed vision of what it would be like. I’m really thankful to the various teams working with me to bring my words to life.”

Lady Montano believes this biography will resonate with anyone interested in knowing more about Machel.

“I am very conscious of Machel’s continuous trans-

formation and the extent to which he has opened my mind about inclusion”, she says. “So while it is said that you must work with a set target audience, or a specific niche or population in mind for your product, I am satisfied that this work will deliver an authentic, revelatory, impactful account of my son’s life in music to anyone open to receiving it”, she adds.

Forty years in any industry is no small feat, but it is a particularly remarkable milestone in the music business, and more so in the context of the Caribbean and Trinidad and Tobago, specifically. Quite apart from Lady’s unquestionable attentiveness to legacy-building, there is, for her, a sense of urgency in sharing the first 40 years of Machel’s story now. She

*cont’d on pg 14*

# Prince Andrew stripped of 'freedom of city' by York council

By Danica Kirka

Prince Andrew has lost another ceremonial honour as groups throughout Britain cut ties to the royal disgraced by allegations of sexual misconduct.

The council in the northern city of York on Wednesday night voted unanimously to withdraw the prince's "freedom of the city." The honour was awarded to Andrew in 1987 after Queen Elizabeth II made him the Duke of York.

Andrew is the first person to be stripped of the status, a purely ceremonial honour that dates back to medieval times when "freemen" enjoyed special privileges. Honourees include the actress Judi Dench and Princess Anne, Andrew's sister.

Andrew was stripped of his honorary military roles in January amid the furore surrounding a lawsuit alleging he had sex with a 17-year-old girl and fears that the scandal would



*Britain's Prince Andrew appears at the Royal Chapel at Windsor, following the death announcement of his father Prince Philip, April 11, 2021, in England. Prince Andrew has lost another ceremonial honour as groups throughout Britain cut ties to the royal disgraced by allegations of sexual misconduct. Councillors in the northern city of York on Wednesday night, April 27, 2022 voted unanimously to withdraw the prince's status as a "freeman of the city." The honour was awarded to Andrew in 1987 after Queen Elizabeth II made him the Duke of York. (Steve Parsons/Pool Photo via AP, File)*

taint the House of Windsor. The queen also removed his honorary leadership of various charities, known as royal patronages, and barred him from using the title "his royal highness" in official settings.

Andrew later settled the lawsuit, agreed to pay his accuser an undisclosed sum

that the British media has suggested could be as much as 12 million pounds (\$15 million). He denies the allegations.

York City Councillor Darryl Smalley said the city was just following the example set by the queen in removing Andrew's titles.

"She saw that it was

doing serious reputational damage to those military institutions and charities and so stepped in to remove him from those positions," Smalley told ITV News. "We believe very strongly, and many residents agree with us, that we should be removing all links between our city and Prince Andrew."

Smalley and other local leaders have argued that Andrew should also lose the title of Duke of York.

"York has a fantastic relationship with the monarchy going back hundreds of years. It's something we cherish," he said. "We can't cherish it whilst we have Prince Andrew as our most senior royal."

**cont'd from pg 13**

sees this 40th year marking "the end of an era, and the beginning of a new one; one that is still taking form."

"Celebrating 40 years in music is unbelievable for me and to have a book chronicling this journey was something I didn't imagine in my wildest dreams", says Machel about the book's 2022 release. In recognition of Lady's unique place in this project he adds, "I am honoured that it's happening and truly excited for this story

to be told by the one person who knows me best. My mother and I have been so closely connected on every twist and turn of this remarkable ride that I know her account will be quite vivid and be an inspiration to all. Thank you my 'Lady' – the best mother, manager and friend."

The official launch of the King of Soca biography, scheduled to take place in Trinidad in June 2022, is one of a number of initiatives planned to commemorate Machel Montano's 40th year in music.



## Kim Kardashian cries as Kanye West retrieves rest of sex tape

By Lisa Respers France

We now have more insight into how Kanye West helped Kim Kardashian get the remaining footage of her infamous sex tape.

On the most recent episode of her family's new Hulu reality series "The Kardashians," the mogul broke down in tears after West - who now goes by Ye - met up with her ex-boyfriend, singer and entrepreneur Ray J, to get the computer containing the hard drive which had the footage.

The 2007 tape, filmed when Kardashian and Ray J were dating at the time, gave rise to what would become her family's E! reality show, "Keeping Up With the Kardashians."

Kardashian said West retrieved the footage not just for her, but also for the four young children they share.

"I want to shield them from as much as I can," she said. "And if I had the power to or if Kanye has the power to, like that is just the most important thing to me. And I'm just so emotional because of it."



This all happened last year, before Kardashian hosted "Saturday Night Live," where she appeared with her now boyfriend, cast member Pete Davidson.

Their relationship seemingly motivated West to share during an interview with "Hollywood Unlocked" in January that he had gotten the rest of the recorded footage for Kardashian, who filed for divorce from West in February 2021.

"How you gonna bring me to 'SNL' and kiss the dude you dating right in front of me?" West said during that in-

terview. "And everybody's like, 'Oh, that's, that's cool.' After I went [and] got the laptop from Ray J myself that night, right?"

Kardashian was declared legally single in March.

On the reality show episode, West said he didn't pay anything for the remainder of the tape, which Kardashian said did not contain any additional scenes of intimacy, only footage of her and Ray J being out at a club and a restaurant.

## 'Avatar 2' debuts footage from movie at CinemaCon and gets official title

By Marianne Garvey

"Avatar 2" is finally closer to reality.

Director James Cameron returns to direct the long-awaited sequel to the 2009 hit, officially titled "Avatar: The Way of Water."

Disney unveiled new footage of the movie at CinemaCon at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas on Wednesday, with guests reportedly given 3D glasses for the viewing.



"Avatar: The Way of Water" will follow the Sully family as they fight to stay alive.

The film's first trailer

will debut in theatres before Marvel's "Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness" on May 6.

The sequel stars Sam

Worthington, Zoe Saldana, Giovanni Ribisi, Sigourney Weaver, Stephen Lang, Kate Winslet, Vin Diesel, Michelle Yeoh, Edie Falco, Cliff Curtis and Jemaine Clement.

To build anticipation of the film, Disney is set to re-release "Avatar" in theatres on Sept. 23.

"Avatar: The Way of Water," the first of four planned sequels, is scheduled to release Dec. 16.

# Regional News



## 20 dead, thousands flee homes as gangs battle in Haiti

AP – Criminal violence in Haiti worsened this week, with fighting among gangs in part of the capital chasing thousands from their homes and killing at least 20 people, including children.

Haiti's Civil Protection Agency said the fighting began Sunday in four neighbourhoods in Port-au-Prince, north of the international airport. At least a dozen homes were burned down and many of those who fled initially took shelter in the yard of a local

mayor's office.

The eruption comes amid a spike in violence and kidnappings as gangs grow more powerful and seek to control more territory amid the power vacuum following the July 7 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse.

The situation has angered and frustrated Haitians, who are demanding action from Prime Minister Ariel Henry's administration, which is receiving international help to boost an underfunded and understaffed police force.

A family of eight, including six children, was among those killed since Sunday, authorities said Wednesday. Schools and businesses in the area remain closed as thousands of families with children are camping in a park near a local mayor's office.

"They need water, food, supplies," said Jean Raymond Dorcelly, who runs a small grassroots community organization. "They had to leave with nothing in their hands."

*cont'd on pg 17*

## Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela's Maduro gov't unlikely to be invited to regional summit

Reuters – Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's government are likely to be excluded from the U.S.-hosted Summit of the Americas to be held in June in Los Angeles, a senior State Department official said on Wednesday.

"They are unlikely to be there," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Brian Nichols told a small group of reporters, saying the summit of regional leaders would focus on the Western Hemisphere's democracies.

The comments marked the clearest message that those three governments, all on bad terms with Washington, will be snubbed once the White House releases the invitation list. That announcement, Nichols added, would come soon.

On Monday, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez said the United States



Cuba's President Miguel Diaz-Canel and Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro as they attend a two-day meeting with ALBA group representatives at the Revolution Palace in Havana, Cuba, December 14, 2021. Alberto Roque/Pool via REUTERS/ File Photo

decided to exclude Cuba from summit preparations, a setback for relations just days after the long-time rivals held their first high-level talks in four years.

Nichols also said there was unlikely to be a role for Maduro's government at the 9th Summit of the Americas but said it would be up to the White House to decide whether to invite Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido in his place.

Washington and doz-

ens of other countries have recognized Guaido as Venezuela's rightful leader and shunned Maduro, a Socialist, after accusing him of rigging his 2018 re-election.

Nichols expressed "deep respect" for Guaido's "interim government" and said Venezuela's political situation would be addressed at the summit. Despite U.S. sanctions, Maduro has held onto power, backed by the military and Russia, China and Cuba.

Relations have remained tense with Cuba's Communist government under U.S. President Joe Biden, whose administration has alleged human rights violations against those who protested in widespread rallies on the island last July.

The United States has also been at odds with Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, a former Marxist guerrilla, who won a fourth consecutive term in November after jailing political rivals and cracking down on critical media.

Cuba participated in the 2015 summit in Panama and the 2018 gathering in Peru. Maduro was excluded in 2018 due to regional censure of his democratic record.

Nichols said at least 27 countries were expected at the June 6-10 summit, held every three or four years since 1994.



## St. Vincent PM Ralph Gonsalves returns home after being hospitalized in Venezuela

CMC – Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves returned to St. Vincent on Tuesday, after spending four days in a hospital in Venezuela.

“I want to thank all the doctors and nurses and the government and people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for their kind assistance in helping me restore my health very much,” said Gonsalves, adding that his days in the hospital were spent doing “a battery of tests and having other treatment.”

Gonsalves, who turns 76 in August, flew to Caracas on Easter Sunday after complaining of a pain in his right side a few days earlier.

He spent ten days in the South American country and returned on Conviasa, the flag carrier and largest airline of Venezuela, which will be flying to Argyle International Airport from Caracas



*Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves* once weekly. Gonsalves thanked citizens and other persons from around the world whom he said had expressed solidarity with him in “the time of my brief incapacitation” and for their prayers and their support.

“Equally, I am sorry to disappoint, or maybe I am pleased to disappoint those who don’t quite have my interest at heart and who had me dead. I am sure that you notice that the reports of my death have

been greatly exaggerated. I am in good health.

“The questions which my doctors in St. Vincent posed ... were interrogated thoroughly in Venezuela and other queries about my health were interrogated and I am pleased to say they all have been answered favourably toward me. Those who anticipate that I am about to kick the bucket, I am around; very much around. Thank you, very much, almighty God.”

Gonsalves said nothing about a bandage on his left hand on his arrival at the airport. The prime minister missed the visit of Prince Edward, Earl of Essex, and his wife who visited St Vincent for one day on Saturday,” The royals went on behalf of the Queen, who is celebrating her Platinum Jubilee — 70 years on the throne.

### *cont’d from pg 16*

He said that the neighbourhood is usually quiet and that his child often plays in the park now turned into a makeshift outdoor shelter.

“I can see kids crying because they’re hungry and families don’t have anything to provide to them,” he said, adding that needs were growing as the fighting continued. “I don’t know what it’s going to be like tomorrow.”

Authorities said that along with the dead, two dozen people had been injured in the violence, and that one bullet hit an empty United Nations Humanitarian Air Service helicopter stationed near the airport.

“The conflict is likely to escalate in the coming days, leading to further casualties

and new population migrations,” the Civil Protection Agency said.

Officials warned that main roads leading to Haiti’s northern region could be cut off as a result of the fighting.

Gang violence in the Martissant community in southern Port-au-Prince already has cut off access to the country’s southern region, which is trying to recover from last year’s deadly earthquake.

The Martissant violence displaced thousands of families last year that have spent months in overcrowded, unhygienic government shelters in Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas. It wasn’t immediately clear where the newly displaced families would be staying.



The Civil Protection Agency blamed this week’s violence on a fight between the Chen Mechan gang and the rival 400 Mawozo gang, which was involved in the kidnapping of 17 U.S. missionaries last year.

Haiti’s ombudsman-like Citizen Protection Office released a statement condemning the violence. It criticized political leaders,

saying their inaction and silence has brought “a form of cynicism or contempt for human rights, particular the right to life and security.”

The office also questioned whether the area known as Plaine du Cul de Sac was becoming another Martissant and called on authorities to assume their responsibility to protect citizens.

# Regional News



## Premier of British Virgin Islands charged in Miami in cocaine smuggling scheme

The premier of the British Virgin Islands and the director of the small Caribbean territory's ports were arrested Thursday at a Miami-area airport by federal agents on charges of conspiring to import cocaine into the United States and money laundering, according to U.S. authorities.

Andrew Alturo Fahie, BVI's premier, and Ole-anvine Maynard, manager director of the port authority, were taken into custody by Drug Enforcement Administration agents at Miami-Opa-locka Executive Airport.

The foreign officials were arrested after they met with undercover DEA agents posing as cocaine traffickers to check out an alleged shipment of \$700,000 in cash on an airplane that they believed was destined for the British Virgin Islands, authorities told the Miami Herald. The DEA agents were posing as members of the Mexican Sinaloa cartel.

Both government officials, who were in Miami for a cruise convention, went to the airport Thursday morning to see the alleged load of cash after DEA agents told them that the money was a payoff for allowing the cartel's future cocaine loads to be transported through the British territory to the United States, authorities said.

The British territory, an archipelago, has a population of only 30,000 and is adjacent to the U.S. Virgin Islands.

A third person, Kadeem Maynard, the son of BVI's port director, was also arrested Thursday in connection with the undercover DEA case, but not in Miami, authorities said.

All three defendants were charged with conspiring to import more than five kilos of cocaine into the United States and conspiring to commit money laundering. A DEA criminal complaint and affidavit were expected to be filed in Miami federal court on



Andrew Alturo Fahie, the premier of the British Virgin Islands, along with the territory's port director were taken into custody by Drug Enforcement Administration agents at Miami-Opa-locka Executive Airport.

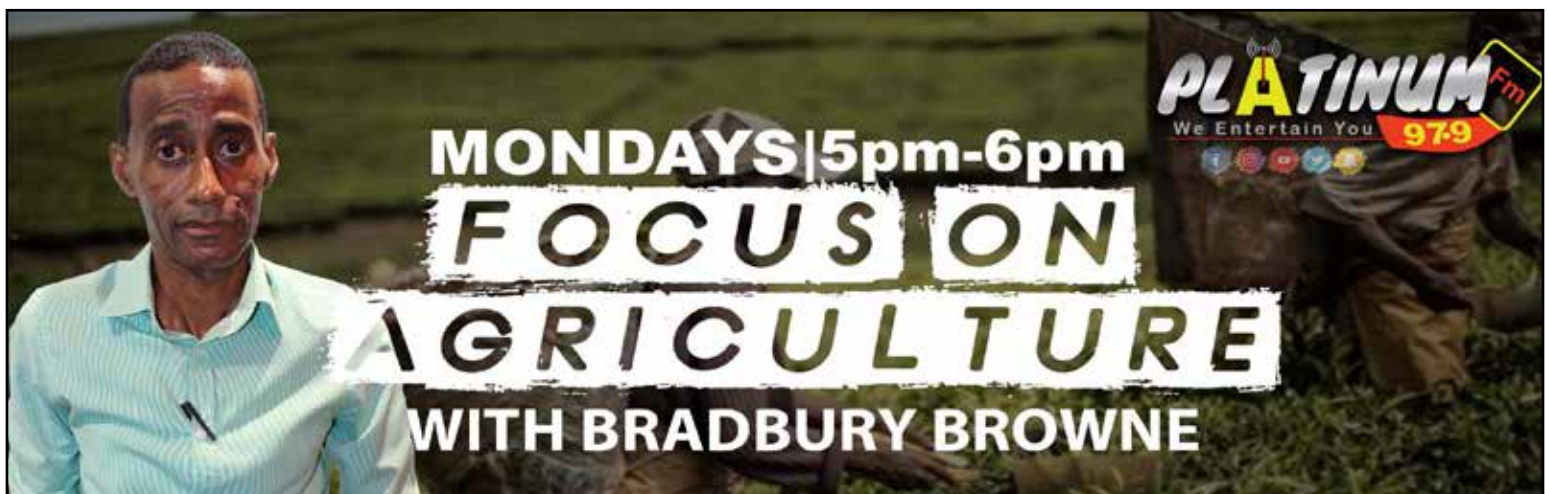
Thursday afternoon.

It was not immediately clear if any of the three men had retained defense attorneys.

In response to the arrests of the premier and the others, BVI Governor John Rankin issued a statement saying the U.S. government

informed United Kingdom officials of the drug-trafficking case in Miami.

"As this is a live investigation I have no further information on the arrest nor can I comment any further on it," said Rankin, who was appointed BVI's governor by the United Kingdom.





## Biden announces \$33bn to help Ukraine in war

BBC – President Biden is asking Congress for \$33bn (£27bn) in military, economic and humanitarian assistance to support Ukraine “for the next five months”.

Mr Biden said it was “critical” for US lawmakers to approve the package.

The package includes more than \$20bn in military aid, \$8.5bn in economic aid and \$3bn in humanitarian aid.

He said it was “not cheap”, and added that the US could not “stand by” – but insisted that his country was not “attacking” Russia.

The White House has also proposed making it easier for the US to seize and sell Russian oligarchs’ assets, and transfer their proceeds to Ukraine.

The proposals released



*“Russia is the aggressor...we must and will hold them accountable,” President Biden said on Thursday [Reuters]*

on Thursday are a significant ramping up of US aid to Ukraine. in direct economic assistance.

Mr Biden’s first funding request after the war began, which was approved by Congress last month, was less than \$14bn.

Last week, President Biden authorised a second \$800m (£642m) military aid package in as many weeks, as well as \$500m (£401m)

sels and aircraft worth over \$1bn, while the EU has collectively frozen over \$30bn.

But the new plans laid out by the administration go further, calling for streamlined inter-agency collaboration between the Treasury Department, Justice Department, State Department and Commerce Department.

Thursday’s sanctions measures would allow the US to use the funds from confiscated assets “to remediate harms of Russian aggression in Ukraine”.

The package will “establish new authorities for the forfeiture of property linked to Russian kleptocracy, allow the government to use the proceeds to support Ukraine and further strengthen related law enforcement tools,” the White House said in a statement.

## Africa sees rise in measles as pandemic disrupts vaccines

AP – Africa is seeing a surge of outbreaks of preventable diseases as a result of disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the World Health Organization said on Thursday.

The continent recorded a 400% increase in measles, to more than 17,000 cases between January and March, compared to the same period last year, Dr. Benido Impouma, a WHO expert in Africa, told a press briefing.

Two years of disruptions by the coronavirus pandemic have had “major effects on the provision of routine health services, with immunization being seriously affected” in many countries, he said.

Twenty-four countries confirmed  
*cont’d on pg 20*



*A baby receives a polio vaccine during the Malawi Polio Vaccination Campaign Launch in Lilongwe, Malawi, on March 20, 2022. The World Health Organization said on Thursday, April 28, 2022 that Africa is seeing a surge of outbreaks of preventable diseases as a result of disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic. (AP Photo/Thoko Chikondi, File)*

## Workers strike to pressure Sri Lankan president to step down

AP – Businesses were closed, teachers absent and public transportation interrupted as Sri Lankans heeded a call for a general strike Thursday to pressure the president to step down over a growing economic and political crisis.

Business districts in the capital, Colombo, were closed, and bankers, teachers and other professionals held parades and joined the main protest site opposite the president's office where demonstrators have gathered for weeks. Doctors and nurses said they would support the strike with demonstrations during their lunch break.

Workers on vital tea and rubber plantations and in garment factories also protested.

Sri Lanka is on the verge of bankruptcy with huge foreign debts and a lack of foreign currency, causing

shortages of essential imported goods such as fuel, food and medicine.

Doctors have warned of catastrophic shortages of medicines and equipment in hospitals.

Indonesia on Thursday announced a donation of \$1.6 million in medicines and hospital equipment, Sri Lanka's Foreign Ministry said.

Protesters who have crowded the streets since March hold President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his family — who have dominated nearly every aspect of life in Sri Lanka for most of the last 20 years — responsible for the crisis.

Sri Lanka earlier suspended repayment of its foreign debts, \$7 billion of which was due this year. It has foreign reserves of less than \$1 billion. The resulting shortages of imported essentials have forced



A Sri Lankan Muslim trader holds a placard demanding president Gotabaya Rajapaksa resign during a country wide strike in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Thursday, April 28, 2022. Businesses were closed, teachers absent and public transportation interrupted as Sri Lankans heeded a call for a general strike Thursday to pressure the president to step down over a growing economic and political crisis. (AP Photo/Eranga Jayawardena)

people to stand in lines for hours to buy limited stocks.

Government officials have blamed Russia's war in Ukraine and the coronavirus pandemic for the debt crisis and say they have been discussing rescue plans and loan repayment with the International Monetary Fund, China and others.

Rajapaksa reshuffled his Cabinet and offered a unity government in an attempt to quell the protests, but opposition parties refused to join a government headed by the Rajapaksa brothers. The weak, divided opposition has been unable to form a majority and take control of Parliament on its own.

*cont'd from pg 19*

outbreaks of polio last year, four times more than in 2020. Last year 13 countries reported new outbreaks of yellow fever, rising from nine in 2020 and three in 2019, according to WHO figures.

"The rise in outbreaks of other vaccine-preventable diseases is a warning sign," Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, the WHO regional director for Africa, said in a statement.

"As Africa works hard to defeat COVID-19, we must not forget other health threats. Health systems

could be severely strained not only by COVID-19 but by other diseases."

The continent of 1.3 billion people has reported 11.4 million COVID-19 cases, including 252,000 deaths, according to figures from the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Although the virus had been trending downwards since January, the WHO reported a rise in cases Thursday driven by a doubling of infection rates in South Africa, the African country most affected by the pandemic.

Impouma, the WHO official, said

that in the wake of the pandemic the agency seeks to support countries to scale up COVID-19 vaccinations as well as routine immunization services.

"The same is true for routine immunization as for COVID," said Helen Rees, executive director of a reproductive health and HIV institute at South Africa's University of the Witwatersrand.

"There is the direct health ... problem, but there's this spinoff in terms of adversely affecting poor development and contributing to poverty, which is absolutely critical for our region."





# MATCH SCHEDULE

MONDAY, APRIL 25 - SATURDAY, MAY 7

COOLIDGE CRICKET GROUNDS

## GROUP 1

1. LIBERTA BLACKHAWKS
2. NEW WINTHORPES LIONS
3. BETHESDA GOLDEN EAGLES
4. PIGOTTS CRUSHERS

## GROUP 2

1. EMPIRE NATION
2. RISING SUN SPARTANS
3. ALL SAINTS PYTHONS
4. JENNINGS TIGERS

## MONDAY, APRIL 25

- 4 PM** BETHESDA GOLDEN EAGLES  
VS. PIGOTTS CRUSHERS
- 7 PM** LIBERTA BLACKHAWK  
VS. NEW WINTHORPES LIONS

## TUESDAY, APRIL 26

- 4 PM** ALL SAINTS PYTHONS  
VS. JENNINGS TIGERS
- 7 PM** EMPIRE NATION  
VS. RISING SUN SPARTANS

## THURSDAY, APRIL 28

- 4 PM** NEW WINTHORPES LIONS  
VS. BETHESDA GOLDEN EAGLES
- 7 PM** PIGOTTS CRUSHERS  
VS. LIBERTA BLACKHAWKS

## FRIDAY, APRIL 29

- 4 PM** RISING SUN SPARTANS  
VS. ALL SAINTS PYTHONS
- 7 PM** JENNINGS TIGERS  
VS. EMPIRE NATION

## TUESDAY, MAY 3

- 4 PM** NEW WINTHORPES LIONS  
VS. PIGOTTS CRUSHERS
- 7 PM** LIBERTA BLACKHAWKS  
VS. BETHESDA GOLDEN EAGLES

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 4

- 4 PM** RISING SUN SPARTANS  
VS. JENNINGS TIGERS
- 7 PM** EMPIRE NATION  
VS. ALL SAINTS PYTHONS

## FRIDAY, MAY 6

- 4 PM** SEMI-FINAL 1
- 7 PM** SEMI-FINAL 2

## SATURDAY, MAY 7

- 4 PM** THIRD PLACE MATCH
- 7 PM** FINALS

# Sports News



## Ben Stokes: England name all-rounder as new Test captain to succeed Joe Root

BBC – Ben Stokes has been named England Test captain, taking over from Joe Root. All-rounder Stokes, 30, has scored 5,061 runs and taken 174 wickets in 79 Tests and had been vice-captain across two spells since 2017.

Batter Root, 31, stepped down after five years in charge earlier this month, having led England in a record 64 Tests.

“I am honoured to be given the chance to lead the England Test team,” said Stokes.

“This is a real privilege, and I’m excited about getting started this summer.”

Stokes’ first Test as per-



*Ben Stokes*

manent England captain will be against world champions New Zealand at Lord’s on 2 June.

He previously captained England in the first Test defeat by West Indies in 2020 when Root missed the match to attend the birth of

his second child.

“I want to thank Joe Root for everything he has done for English cricket and for always being a great ambassador for the sport all across the world,” added Stokes.

“He has been a massive

part of my development as a leader in the dressing room, and he will continue to be a key ally for me in this role.”

Stokes was appointed captain by new managing director of England men’s cricket Rob Key, in his first major act in the role.

“I had no hesitation in offering the role of Test captain to Ben,” said Key.

“He epitomises the mentality and approach we want to take this team forward into the next era of red-ball cricket. I am delighted that he has accepted, and he is ready for the added responsibility and the honour. He thoroughly deserves the opportunity.”

## Manchester United fined after fans throw objects at Atletico Madrid’s Diego Simeone

BBC – Manchester United have been fined £8,420 (€10,000) after fans threw objects at Atletico Madrid boss Diego Simeone following their recent Champions League defeat.

Simeone was pelted with missiles as he walked to the tunnel after United’s 1-0 loss at Old Trafford.

Ralf Rangnick’s side were knocked out the Champions League thanks to a 2-1 defeat on aggregate to Atletico.

Rangers (£38,900) and Liverpool (£8,420) were also fined by UEFA.

Rangers must pay a total of 46,250 euros after fans lit fireworks and the team was deemed responsible for a late kick-off in their 1-0 Europa League loss to Braga on 7 April.

Liverpool have been fined 10,000 euros for a late kick-off in the 3-1 Champions League win at Benfica on 5 April, with manager Jurgen Klopp



*Diego Simeone’s Atletico Madrid beat Manchester United to reach the Champions League quarter-finals*

given a warning.

Galatasaray received a partial stadium closure - subject to a probationary period of two years - after home fans threw bottles and plastic cups onto the pitch when Barcelona ran

down the clock towards the end of their Europa League win in Istanbul last month.

The referee stopped the game for several minutes while the Galatasaray players tried to calm things down.



# Action packed Labour Day weekend ahead

The battle for supremacy in the Ministry of Sports' Primary Schools' Cup is one of a number of competitions that will take place at venues across Antigua and Barbuda this weekend.

Four teams will clash in the Primary Schools Cup semi-finals at the Golden Grove playing field today.

Five Islands will face Jennings in the first semi-final at 3pm and Villa will clash with Golden Grove in the second encounter at 4pm.

The inaugural Antigua Over-40 Premier League, which is organised by 40Football268, will kick off at the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's Technical Training Centre on Sunday, 1st May, 2022.

The competition, which will feature some of Antigua and Barbuda's ex-national team players, will commence with four opening day matches.

Tun and Bang FC will face Up and Over FC in the first game of the competition at 3pm.

Turf Masters will meet Golden Grove Masters in the second game at 4:20 pm.

Dun Bar FC will challenge Extraordinary Men at 5:40pm and Legacy FC will take on West Ham FC in the final game on the opening



*Five Islands' goalkeeper made a brilliant save to deny a T. N. Kirnon School from scoring during their Primary Schools' Cup quarter-final match at the T. N. Kirnon playing field on 22nd April, 2022. (Photo: Elwin Francis)*

day at 7pm.

The Antigua and Barbuda Drag Racing Association (ABDRA) will also host its inaugural Prime Minister's Cup competitions at the North Sound International Raceway on Sunday.

Registration to enter is free and drivers will compete in the 11, 12 and 13 second categories for cash prizes totalling EC\$10,000.

The winner of the 13 second group will receive EC\$1,000, 12 second, EC\$1,500 and EC\$2,500 will go to the winner of the 11 second category.

The first and second place finishers in each of the categories will go up against Helter Skelter in a bracket shootout for a grand prize of EC\$5,000 and the Prime Minister's Cup title.

The event will be held from 2pm to 10pm and the admission fee is EC\$10.

Meanwhile, the Antigua Commercial Bank (ACB)

Caribbean Parish League Richie Richardson Limited Overs competition continues this weekend. Four matches are scheduled for Saturday.

D&R Architecture Sea View Farm will take on PIC Insurance Liberta at Sea View Farm, with umpires Calvin Thomas and Dirk Schouten officiating.

St. Paul's will meet Mahico at Clare Hall.

The umpires for that match are Nigel Browne and James Trotman.

Police will host Newfield at the Police Recreation Grounds (PRG) and Freetown will entertain Willikies at Freetown.

Paget Samuel and Garfield Jacobs will officiate the game at the PRG, while Llewellyn Simon and Candace Butler umpire at Freetown.

On Sunday, Police will take on Sea View Farm at the PRG, Liberta will meet

Newfield at Ball Beef in Liberta, Mahico will host Freetown at Clare Hall and Willikies will clash with St. Paul's at Sea View Farm.

Calvin Thomas and Keller Joseph will umpire at the PRG, Llewellyn Simon and Fitzmore Jacobs will officiate at Liberta, Nigel Browne and Garfield Jacobs will be in charge at Clare Hall and Paget Samuel and Dirk Schouten will oversee the Sea View Farm encounter.

The Cool & Smooth T20 Explosion also continues at the Coolidge Cricket Grounds today.

Rising Sun Spartans will face All Saints Pythons at 4pm and Jennings Tigers will clash with Empire Nation at 7pm.

Meantime, the executive and members of the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association (ABCA) have extended condolences to former national player and selector, Cleve Joseph and his family on the passing of his mother, Eulysene Joseph.

Mrs. Joseph was also the mother-in-law of former ABCA president, Zorol Barthley.

In a media release, the ABCA stated, "We pray that you will be comforted and strengthened at this time of sorrow."

# Sports News



## Starz1 win second ABAVA League encounter

North Coast Hardware Starz 1 Nova continued the successful start to their campaign in the women's division of the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association's (ABAVA) Local League on Wednesday evening.

After beating defending champions 3-1 in their opening game on Saturday night, Starz1 made it two wins in as many matches by recording a 3-0 straight-set victory over Stoneville at the indoor facility at the YMCA Sports Complex.

In a one-sided affair, Starz1 prevailed 25-20, 25-23 and 25-20 against



North Coast Hardware Starz 1 Nova won their first two matches in the women's division of the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association's (ABVA) Local League. (Photo: ABAVA)

Stoneville, who also suffered a 3-0 loss to Jets in the opening game of the competition on 20th April.

High Flyers claimed

their first win in two outings when they beat Sharks in straight sets 25-09, 25-19 and 25-11 in their men's division affair at the same

venue on Wednesday.

It was the second loss incurred by Sharks, after they were beaten 3-0 by Renegades in their opening encounter on 21st April.

The female and men's competitions will continue with two matches at the YMCA Sports Complex on Saturday.

Jets will take on North Coast Hardware Starz 2 North in the female division at 6:30pm and Michael Freeland Enforcers will clash with defending champions Stoneville at 7:30pm in a match between teams that have both won their opening encounters.

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## ABCF distributes smart trainers to facilitate online competition

The recent distribution of three smart trainers to three cyclists by the Antigua and Barbuda Cycling Federation (ABCF) is part of the organisation's plans to help athletes improve their training and introduce e-cycling as a major part of the national programme.

A smart trainer or e-trainer is a tool that a bike is mounted on, which offers resistance like a normal trainer, but with the added benefit of allowing the resistance to be controlled by cycling apps like Zwift.

President, St. Clair Williams, said ABCF will distribute two additional smart trainers by the end of April, which will further allow national cyclists to compete on an online platform.

"We have distributed three smart trainers, so we have two more remaining and as we go along we will distribute them to persons who are in need of them in terms of wanting that additional training and to start to represent Antigua on the online platform, which we use... Zwift, Williams said.

"So that is what the plan is. It is to make our presence on the online market with respect to e-cycling."

The ABCF's distribution of the smart trainers took place in partner-

ship with the Solidarity Programme of the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI), the world governing body for cycling.

Williams also explained the push to involve more cyclists in e-cycling.

"Some persons don't like the whole idea of riding on a trainer indoors, but what we are doing with respect to the smart trainers, is that it is being geared to having the Antigua and Barbuda flag flying on the e-cycling platform," Williams said.

"We are hoping that we can continue to develop in that arena because most persons are not aware that they actually have championships going on using Zwift on the e-cycling platform. So we are trying to make sure that we could make our name on that platform as well as out on the road."

Like the Peloton at-home studio cycling boom for casual riders, e-cycling as an option for competitive cyclists has increased in popularity across the globe.

Created by Zwift, an online platform that serves as an indoor training/virtual community for cyclists, it has grown quickly since its launch in 2014.

Zwift added racing in 2018, and when the pandemic hit in 2020, interest grew among competitive cyclists



President of the Antigua and Barbuda Cycling Federation St. Clair Williams. (Photo: Wadadli Cycling Academy)

who embraced the opportunity to validate e-cycling as a legitimate category of the sport.

While other platforms have also offered e-cycling options, Zwift attracts the lion's share of users.

## Old Road claim another victory in ABNA League

Wadadli Events Old Road notched up another win in the Kess Imports Antigua and Barbuda Netball Association's (ABNA) Village and Community League on Wednesday night.

Old Road snatched a narrow 27-25 victo-

ry against Spencer's All Saints United 2 in one of two female division matches contested at the YMCA Sports Complex.

Tassia Luke netted 23 of her 26 attempts and Anajae Simon had a perfect shooting display by converting her 4 shots for

Old Road.

Kika Josiah scored 18 of her 29 tries and Aniyah Simon converted 7 of her 12 attempts for United 2.

Spencer's All Saints United 3 prevailed 12-10 against Ovals Flyballers Uprising in the other keenly contested female divi-

sion affair.

Alaina Elvin could only convert eight of her 22 attempts, while Attisha Thomas scored four of her eight shots for All Saints.

Mary Jane Grant netted five of her nine attempts and Danica Carlton scored four of her 10 tries.

## A&B cricketers arrive in the UK on exchange programme

Six young cricketers who arrived in London yesterday morning have become the latest local beneficiaries of a cricket and cultural exchange programme between the Government of Antigua and Barbuda and the Keyworth Cricket Club in the United Kingdom.

Michael Harilall, Chey Anne Moses, Glendon Williams, Jaylen Francis, Dahri Barrymore Hughes-Francis and Glen Williams travelled to London on Wednesday, where they will participate in the 17-week cricket and cultural exchange programme.

During this time, they will train with a number of sports clubs, meet with other young cricketers and tour London.

The programme was initiated in 2018 by Keith Williams, Chairman of East Midlands Lord's Taverners Charity and Director of Junior Cricket at Keyworth Cricket Club in Nottingham, England and Antigua and Barbuda's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Her Excellency Karen-Mae Hill, with the support of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda through the Ministry of Education and Sports.

Antigua and Barbuda's Ministry of Education and Sports has covered the cost of airfare, personal accident travel insurance and a stipend for the duration of their time in the United Kingdom from 27th April to 11th September, 2022.

In April 2021, five young cricketers - Essan Warner, Demari Benta, Elroy Francis, Uri Smith and Tonya Martin - visited England as part of the exchange programme.

In October 2018, Keith Williams visited Antigua and Barbuda. On this



*Antiguan & Barbudan cricketers arrive at Gatwick Airport in London, England, on 28th April, 2022.*

trip, he donated cricket gear to schools and small cricket clubs.

During Williams' visit he also met with ex-West-Indies wicket-keeper and batsman, Ridley Jacobs, who recommended several young cricketers who would benefit from a cricket and cultural exchange. Timmo Thomas, a 19-year-old fast bowling all-rounder and 16-year-old Essan Warner, a left-handed all-rounder, both from the Antigua/Barbuda Under-19 squad, became the first young people to benefit from the exchange programme.

In January 2019, Williams returned to Antigua to finalise the travel details for Thomas and Warner to travel to the United Kingdom. On this visit, Williams met with cricket legends, National Hero Sir Vivian Richards, Sir Richie Richardson and Sir Andy Roberts, who all endorsed the exchange programme.

In June 2019, the organisers were able to secure funding for the exchange after meeting with potential sponsors at

a fund-raising event during the ICC's Men's Cricket World Cup hosted by England from 30th May to 14th July in 2019. In October 2019, 19-year-old Sam Foster, a right-handed batsman, and 20-year-old Tom Rock, a right-handed all-rounder of Keyworth Cricket Club were selected for the Antigua and Barbuda leg of the exchange.

In November 2019, Sir Viv, High Commissioner Hill and Minister of Sports Daryll Mathew, attended the exchange programme's fundraiser at Keyworth Cricket Club in England.

At the end of February 2020, Williams travelled to Antigua and Barbuda with Foster and Rock at the beginning of their two-month exchange.

During their visit they were attached to the Combined Schools in the various competitions organised by the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association (ABCA). Due to the pandemic, however, Foster and Rock's stay in Antigua was cut short.