

# PM BROWNE: LOVELL-LED UPP CAN'T UNSEAT ABLP!

*Story on Page 2*



*For 36 years, Long Island has been home to the world's longest running research programme for critically endangered hawksbill turtles. The programme is funded by the residents of Jumby Bay. Since 1996, the hawksbill turtle, which calls Antigua and Barbuda's waters home, has been listed as critically endangered with only about 25,000 nesting females left in the world. The danger to the species is exacerbated as they do not reach reproductive maturity until about age 15. Added to this is the fact that of every 1,000 turtles that hatch, only 1 makes it to adulthood. (Photo: Greg Sullivan)*

# Local News



## ABLP Leader: No comparison between A&B and Grenada

Speculation that there could be an electoral upset in Antigua and Barbuda at the next general election, similar to that which was witnessed in Grenada last week, has been dismissed by the Political Leader of the ruling Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party, Gaston Browne.

Speaking with Pointe Xpress, Prime Minister Browne said the situation in

Antigua and Barbuda differs greatly from that of Grenada.

“I don’t know that the UPP is in a position to say that they have younger leadership than the ABLP. Their leader is a retired person, Harold Lovell, who is on his way out. I don’t think they will have that kind of hope in Harold Lovell who is on his way out of politics.

“Contrast that with Gre-



*Political Leader of the ruling Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party, Gaston Browne*

nada where we saw a 44-year old coming up against a 75-year old Dr. Keith Mitchell,” he opined.

The prime minister said it is clear that the Grenadian people voted for the future, but he can’t see that voting for the Lovell-led UPP would have the same result in Antigua and Barbuda.

He expressed the view that his government has been far more impactful on the lives of Antiguan and Barbudans than the deposed New National Party government in Grenada.

“You’re not comparing similar conditions. In fact they are quite contrasting in favour of the ABLP.

“I believe too, that the quality of the team led by young Mitchell in Grenada is far superior to what Harold Lovell has presented. We all know that what they have presented is a group of losers and charlatans, individuals with not much to contribute to national development,” Browne observed.

He maintains that the people of Antigua and Barbuda are intelligent and have demonstrated great wisdom in making decisions in their best interest.

“You have a government that has performed, has made some major decisions such as bringing the UWI campus here as well as growing the national economy by an average of over 5 percent for the last eight years, except for the year impacted by the pandemic,” he stated.

Based on the performance of his government, PM Browne is confident that the people of Antigua and Barbuda will demonstrate continued support for the ABLP when the polls are called.

The ABLP’s political leader revealed that the party’s manifesto will not contain “mundane plans”. Rather, it will deliver what he termed a “next level” development vision for the country.

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## PM Browne: Gov't spends \$50M on tertiary education annually

Providing educational opportunities to residents is a key priority of the Gaston Browne Administration and this is evidenced by the \$50 million spent annually to support tertiary education for nationals.

That was the pronouncement of Prime Minister Browne on Tuesday as he addressed the Education Expo at the Villa Community Centre.

The expo was held under the theme, "Youth on the Move".

The fair brought together several educational institutions which offered information at their booths to the scores of young people in attendance.

According to the prime minister, education has received the largest slice of the annual budget since his government took office eight years ago.

According to Browne, at any one time, as many as sixteen hundred people who all receive government assistance are abroad pursuing tertiary level education.

The assistance offered includes scholarships, student loans and other forms of assistance.

Coupled with those who attend local institutions, the number of people pursuing higher education represents as much as 2 percent of the nation's population.

Browne asserted that

Antigua and Barbuda spends more, per capita, on education than any other Caribbean nation.

"Let me give you some valuable details about my administration's commitment to education. On an annual basis my administration spends no less than \$50 million to support tertiary education. This is primarily for scholarships for those studying abroad as well as those who are registered on online programmes.

"So from the Prime Minister's Scholarship Fund in 2021, we gave grants totaling \$21 million," he revealed.

He disclosed that the Board of Education awards an additional \$8 million which includes the economic costs paid to the University of the West Indies.

The National Student Loan Fund offers assistance to the tune of \$3 million annually, and over the past two years, the government has spent \$15 million annually to finance the UWI Five Islands Campus.













Prime Minister Browne watches on in the background as a young man gets information from a booth at Tuesday's Education Expo at the Villa Community Centre.

"When you look at the amount of money spent, especially in 2021, considering that our revenues were down by as much as 40 percent because of COVID-19, this speaks volumes about the commitment of my government to education," he remarked.

The prime minister acknowledged that there have been times when funds were not readily available because of cash flow issues, however, the government has never wavered in its commitment to assist residents achieve

their goals in education.

In attendance at the Education Fair were UWI FIC, the Antigua State College, Youth Education and Empowerment Programme, the Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education, the Antigua and Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute, UWI Open Campus, Antigua and Barbuda International Institute of Technology, the National Student Loan Programme and the Anti-Money Laundering and Financial Crimes Institute.

Thu 30   Day		Thu 30   Night	
<b>86°</b>		<b>79°</b>	
21% ☁ ENE 18 mph		23% ☁ ENE 15 mph	
Partly cloudy. High 86F. Winds ENE at 15 to 25 mph.		A few clouds. Low 79F. Winds ENE at 10 to 20 mph.	
 Humidity <b>71%</b>	 UV Index <b>Extreme</b>	 Humidity <b>80%</b>	 UV Index <b>0 of 10</b>
 Sunrise <b>5:37 am</b>	 Sunset <b>6:45 pm</b>	 Moonrise <b>6:42 am</b>	 Moonset <b>8:15 pm</b>
		● Waxing Crescent	

# Hotels get greenlight to install RO plants

Six hotels operating locally have received the go-ahead from the government to install their own reverse osmosis plants to help improve their water supply.

This comes against the backdrop of the continuing challenge that APUA faces in providing an adequate water supply to commercial and domestic users caused by, among other things, the prolonged drought that has affected the country.

Tourism Minister, Charles “Max” Fernandez did not name the hotels involved, however, he con-

firmed that they sought permission from the Cabinet to operate the plants and were given the greenlight.

Hotels consume significant quantities of potable water. Government sources also note that hotels have long had standby electricity plants on their properties; several have utilised non-renewable energy sources to substitute for fossil fuel generated power.

Meanwhile, as the nation continues to face water challenges, the Cabinet invited the General Manager of APUA, Esworth Martin,

along with the two supervisors who are responsible for managing the 52 valves that determine where and for how long water flows, for discussions.

At the end of these talks, under advice from APUA’s general manager and with his agreement, the decision was taken to increase the number of persons on each shift responsible for water valve operation from two to eight. Shift employees will be sourced internally from APUA.

“Despite production that has increased by more than

6.2 million gallons per day, the demand for water has continued to increase because of the drought. Several plants have been upgraded, changing membranes and filters, thereby increasing the amount of potable water available. Until such time that rain showers provide surface water relief, APUA will have to produce more,” the Cabinet Notes stated.

It was also revealed that six additional storage tanks have been received from Venezuela. Two that have not yet been connected will be commissioned shortly.

# Royal Caribbean to host job fair next week

More than 500 jobs will be made available to Antiguan and Barbudans when the Royal Caribbean Group (RCG) holds its job fair next week.

Holders of valid Antigua and Barbuda passports will be given the opportunity to apply for various positions during the 4th - 7th July recruitment drive at the Multi-Purpose Cultural and Exhibition Centre at Perry Bay from 9am to 4pm daily.

The job fair is a partnership between the Government of Antigua and Barbuda and RCG.

The initial three days will be used to screen prospective candidates, while the most suitable candidates will be interviewed on the final two days.

RCG offers job opportunities around the world with contracts lasting six months or more, depending on the position and department a candi-



date is engaged in.

Selected positions may be offered on the spot during the recruitment drive; however, candidates must successfully complete a medical evaluation and must be fully vaccinated or have begun the vaccination process.

Interested persons who are 18 or older are invited to complete an online registration at <https://forms.gle/gV2svbBMpMo1utHh7>

Similar job fairs have been held in The Bahamas, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago.





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- ★ Drue's Day

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**Sat 30 Jul**

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- ★ Emancipation Watch Night Celebrations

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- ★ J'ouvert
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# Local News



## MEDIA RELEASE

Dateline: St John's Antigua

On Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021, representatives of the Antigua and Barbuda Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) met with officials of the Inland Revenue Department (IRD): Ralph Warner – Commissioner; Jermain Jarvis – Deputy Commissioner; and Craig O'Marde – Deputy Commissioner, to address some concerns aired by some Chamber members.

The Chamber was represented by Dr Errol Samuel – Quality Consultant and President, Profiles Consulting Inc; Bertram Alexander – Consultant/Founder AccuServe Financial Solutions; Yves Ephraim – Managing Director, Pegasus Technologies Inc.; Mrs. Marsha Prince – Tax Manager, Grant Thornton; and Martin Cave – Executive Director of the Chamber.

The matter under discussion was the way that the policy of the IRD's application of Section 11(i) of the Income Tax Act Cap 212 calculated, and made allowable deductions for salaries, and other emoluments due to "Related Parties" in other words, owners, directors, or persons related to beneficial owners of companies who are in the employment of the businesses concerned.

According to the "Interpretation, Ruling, and Opinions Inland Revenue Department, 1 of 2018" issued January 2019, by the Commissioner of the IRD, Mr. Ralph Warner. The above cited document sought to curb potential abuses which might be attempted by Related Parties or "The Group", by inflating salaries, other emoluments, and benefits to minimize their tax liability. Consequently, the IRD issued a policy document to quantify what percentage of those emoluments would be allowable tax deductions, or how much of salaries and or benefits would be tax free; as well as to seek to plug any gaps left bare by the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016, abolition of Personal Income Tax, and Pay As You Earn (PAYE).

The primary concern tabled by the Chamber was that in the cases where family-owned incorporated businesses were being run/operated by members of that family, they (the Related Parties or The Group) were not being adequately compensated from their businesses without their income being heavily taxed, given that the amount allowed as non-taxable income was 25% of net income or profits.

The case was made by the Chamber that non-related senior level employees within a company could potentially earn a salary package comparable to that of the employed beneficial owner/or Related Party, without having made any investment of capital; time; risk; or any similar inputs.

The IRD advised that much work had been put into the law, and in its interpretation, and while there might seem to be cases where such disparities may arise, the purpose was not to seek to penalize the compliant, but to ensure that the would-be abusers should not escape, and consequently, cases where the purpose was inconsistent with the spirit of the law, those would be considered individually. The IRD also advised that even though there was an appearance of disparate treatment, that the law was being evenly applied. In fact, it was mooted that given that Related Parties or The Group was able to claim 25% of the profits as non-taxable income, this should serve as an incentive for the businesses to be more profitable so that the Related Parties, or The Group could earn more.

In the Chamber's view this does indeed serve larger companies well, however incorporated SMEs would not receive the same benefits, given likely smaller profits. And in the case of Unincorporated Businesses, which is where most SMEs would fall, any annual income above \$42,000.00 was subject to a minimum of 8% Income Tax.

The result of the meeting was that the Chamber would seek to ensure that its members would continue to be compliant where their tax status was concerned in accordance with the laws, rules, and regulations, and fair policies. The IRD agreed that the law would always be applied evenly across the board, and would work in conjunction the Chamber to bring continual awareness of issues within the private business, so that they both could collaborate on solutions.

Both acknowledged that each had a responsibility to ensure the continued economic growth of the country, and that while the IRD sought to carry out the mandate of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda's Ministry of Finance in tax administration and collection; the Chamber had a responsibility to its members to seek to ensure that the business environment was a fair one, in which businesses could thrive, and the costs of doing business was contained.

END



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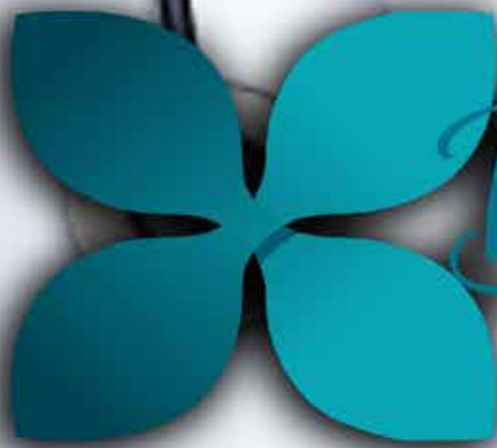






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# Local News



## DNA replaces candidate



Mario Thomas

The Democratic National Alliance (DNA) has introduced a new political candidate who will vie for the St. Phillip's North Constituency seat in general elections which are constitutionally due next year.

Mario Thomas, who is described as a charismatic, competent, focused and humble young man, has roots that are well entrenched in the constituency.

The DNA said its previously announced candidate, TShaun Lewis, withdrew for personal reasons.

Lewis, who was presented when DNA launched its candidates in April, flubbed his first public appearance which went viral on social media.

DNA thanked Lewis for his ongoing contributions to the party and for his support of the new candidate.

Joanne Massiah, DNA's president, stated, "Politics is dynamic and fluid and I am excited and encouraged that young people continue to offer themselves for leadership positions within our organisation and our country."

"In 2017, at the launch of the DNA we declared emphatically that our goal is to build a cadre of leaders who are committed to our party's transformational leadership philosophy."

"I am confident that Mario has the qualities required to excite the constituents to embrace the different kind of politics and the new style of leadership which the DNA brings to the political landscape of Antigua and Barbuda and to persuade them to elect him as their member of Parliament at the upcoming general elections."

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## Lumumba's tooth returned, racist logic of colonisation endures

By Nanjala Nyabola

*That it took so long for Belgium to hand over murdered Congolese independence hero's stolen tooth is a symptom of the moral decay that continues to fester and poison the coloniser.*

Patrice Lumumba's gold tooth has finally been returned to his family after 61 years. Collected as a trophy by Belgian soldiers who oversaw or were party to the dissolution of the African leader's body in acid following his removal from office in a coup, the macabre artefact was finally returned to his family, not with a formal apology but only with an acknowledgement that a great harm had been done.

In the weeks prior, the Belgian king had participated in a tour of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) that merely acknowledged the great harm that had been done to ordinary people during the colonial era in that country, but stopped short of offering an apology. It's taken more than six decades but finally, there is growing acknowledgement by those who hold power in Europe of at least some of the barbarous acts committed against Africans in the name of imperial European power.

There is certainly a crucial conversation to be had about why Belgium saw fit to retain Lumumba's tooth for so long. What moral justification could there be for not only the cruelty that preceded the act but the act itself? What rationale can be offered for waiting more than 60 years to reunite a family with the remains of a loved one? What could possibly be the political significance of not only keeping the tooth but doing so with the public's full knowledge?

The only reason that can be offered for keeping a man's tooth for 61 years knowing that it was obtained through torture and murder is that the cruelty



*A photo of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's first Prime Minister Patrice Emery Lumumba is pictured at a ceremony after his remains were symbolically handed over to the murdered leader's children and to an official delegation, in Brussels, Belgium on June 21, 2022 [Johanna Geron/Reuters]*

is the point. Colonisation was, after all, a projection of power through cruelty, rationalised by pseudo-intellectual arguments about racial superiority and difference. The fate of Lumumba's tooth shows that the point of European imperialism was not just economic or social but to offer an outlet for the unchecked cruelty that was increasingly constrained by political change in Europe. Arguably, the ability to project cruelty elsewhere made it possible to contemplate and pursue a different way of organising political life in Europe after several centuries of intense conflict.

In his searing *Discourse on Colonialism*, Aimé Césaire argues that the barbarism of colonialism was driven purely by contempt and that this contempt and hatred of "the native" transforms the person who is practising the acts of contempt. Césaire argues that the coloniser can only make peace with the brutality that he inflicts on the other by becoming inhumane himself – the boomerang of colonisation.

Whatever justifications are offered

for retaining these macabre trophies only underscore the fact that the act of colonisation has altered moral calculations in the colonising countries and that attempting to defend retaining these artefacts as trophies is a symptom of moral decay that continues to fester and poison both the coloniser and the colonised.

Indeed, the case of Lumumba's tooth is a high-profile example of a practice that all imperial powers, including the United States, conducted well into the first half of the 20th century.

European and North American museums are full of macabre exhibits of the body parts of people killed and kept as trophies that some of these museums have refused to restore to families or allow to be buried in dignity. For instance, in 1905 when the British colonial administration was consolidating its rule in the territory that is now Kenya, a British soldier requested a meeting with the Nandi chief, Koitalel Arap Samoei,

*cont'd on pg 10*

# Opinion



*cont'd from pg 9*

ostensibly to discuss peace. Instead, the soldier shot and killed Samoei at point-blank range, beheaded him, and returned his head to London as a trophy.

The skull is currently part of the collection at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, despite numerous demands from Nandi leaders to have it returned to Kenya for a proper burial.

Meanwhile, a 2011 audit of German museums found at least 50 heads and skeletal remains of Maori people in German museums. And recently, Harvard University denied a request by Native American communities to have the human remains of their ancestors held in the university's collection re-

turned. Dehumanisation of non-white people and the collection of their bodies as trophies was a near-universal practice across imperial countries that cannot be justified in the modern era, even though Western historians and anthropologists continue to defend keeping these human remains as an effort to preserve human history.

It may well be, but it's worth interrogating what aspect of human history they are preserving. By papering over the macabre provenance of these items, the museum preserves a macabre view of humanity that affirms its complicity in the cruelty of colonisation; as the eventual site for the sanitisation and propagation of the racist logic of colonisation.

These objects, held as trophies in museums and private collections, are physical proof of the enduring racist logic of colonisation – and that meaningful decolonisation is urgent and necessary. No logic can be provided to justify their continued presence in these spaces except for the continued contempt of non-white populations all over the world. Whatever justifications are offered for retaining these macabre trophies only underscore Césaire's argument: "No one colonises innocently ... a nation which colonises or which justifies colonisation is already a sick civilisation." Césaire continues that "the museum means nothing ... when secret contempt for others withers the heart".

There is no pedagogical value that can absolve the practice of collecting and displaying human remains. Its only justification is racist weaponisation of the body of the other in order to titillate and entertain white audiences.

Patrice Lumumba's wife Pauline Opango, herself an activist, only died in 2014, reminding us both of how young he was when he was murdered (only 35), and how recent the cruelty that these institutions are justifying was perpetrated. Merely acknowledging it is not enough. Restitution and return are only a start. Without apology, the poison remains in the system and continues to fester in both the perpetrators and the victim.

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## The complex reasons why more black women are relaxing their hair again

By **Escher Walcott**

The dead-straight hairstyles that multiple Black women rocked throughout the '00s have slowly but surely been usurped by natural hair. Among millennials in particular there has been a shift as the rise of the natural hair community allows Black women everywhere to champion their afro textures.

The continual politicisation of Black hair has further elevated natural hair into a global beauty movement. In some instances, afro hair is still deemed 'improper' and said to go against the Eurocentric standards set in some schools and even the workplace. Whether intentional or not, how Black women wear their hair often divides opinion but advocating natural hairstyles above all else has asserted the message that Black hair is beautiful.

The natural hair community's popularity is also largely thanks to a strong online presence. On YouTube alone, there are thousands of natural hair tutorials and honest product reviews, and the demand has led to a boom in hair care brands. Melanin Haircare by natural hair blogger Whitney White (aka Naptural85) and Winnie Awa's Antidote Street are just a couple of recent arrivals making a mark on the hair industry. The same goes for modern social media platforms like TikTok, where the #naturalhair hashtag boasts an enormous 3.5 billion views and counting. But lately there has also been some movement in the opposite direction: relaxer is back.

**Why are more women opting for relaxer?**

In July a tweet about hair relaxer went viral. Challenging the natural hair movement, it read: "Just watched a TikTok with the headline 'relaxers are back!' What ya'll think about



that? Would you consider it again?" It wasn't long before the tweet amassed hundreds of replies and triggered heated discourse. Some Black women showed their support for relaxer while others rejected its return, but the discussion highlighted the dichotomy that exists in regard to Black hair.

Lots of women spoke about how long and healthy their hair has become without relaxer and many mentioned that transitioning from relaxed to natural hair was the best decision they'd ever made. Others felt differently. "I personally stepped away from the 'community' years ago because it felt cult-ish/click-ish," said one Twitter user, referring to the natural hair campaign. Another claimed that "women are burnt out from the natural hair movement" and plenty of women took to the comments in agreement. "I also think many women were tired of all the 'rules'," wrote one. Another said: "I feel like there's a lot of pressure to have defined curls and laid baby hairs and a particular final texture or look... rather than embracing one's \*actual\* natural hair. It's no wonder folks feel

stressed."

**Why is hair relaxer popular again?**

Replies suggest that some Black women are feeling the pressure applied by the natural hair movement, particularly those with coarser 4C textures. They claim that certain hair types are not represented enough within the natural hair community. Others have hinted at the regimented nature of hair tutorials and costly routines made up of lots of different products, tools and techniques.

Is the vast amount of information surrounding natural hair care perhaps a factor in the resurgence of relaxer? Maybe so, considering that texturism has been referenced within the natural hair movement. Online, multiple treatments and styles move away from kinkier, afro textures, while methods which 'define' curls, 'smooth' hair using gel and 'slick' edges are common. The suggestion is that certain types of afro hair should appear a particular way.

For Ruth, 26, relaxer simplifies  
*cont'd on pg 12*

# Beauty



*cont'd from pg 11*

hairstyle. "Relaxers made taking care of my hair more manageable," she told me. "I have natural 4C hair, which is more fragile than other hair textures. With a busy schedule, I need quick styles for my hair so I ended up relaxing it at one point, just so it was easier for me to comb through." Ruth isn't the only one leaning towards relaxed rather than natural hair.

Relaxed styles have been seen on Black women in the spotlight, from Rihanna and Ryan Destiny to Gabrielle Union. Among celebrities, there is a distinct lack of natural hair worn above 3C textures, which only adds to the influence and appeal of relaxer. Meanwhile on TikTok, many women are sharing why they choose to opt for relaxer, including the frustration of being unable to replicate natural styles more than once, having to spend more money on products, or simply not enjoying it, like content creator @its\_alaboutash.

## Is hair relaxer safe?

On TikTok, emerging hashtags like #relaxedhairstyle and #naturalnomore suggest relaxer provides a lot more flexibility. But it's important to look at both sides. The main critique of relaxing hair is health.

Recent research has highlighted a potential cancer risk linked to certain relaxers containing lye, which is fueling further discussion around safety in the afro hair community. Then there's the permanent change in texture. Done badly, relaxer can inflict serious damage, such as breakage and slow hair growth.

Though relaxed hair is increasingly popular among Black women today, encouraged by apps like TikTok, it is often met with disapproval from natural hair wearers.

Some see relaxed hair as too dramatic a change and link it to deeper, more alarming concerns. When natural hair is referred to as 'difficult' it

perpetuates a negative view. It suggests relaxer is the only way to make hair maintainable, which is simply not true.

"For the longest time, I was conditioned to believe my hair in its natural state was unmanageable," says Sophia Husbands, lifestyle writer and founder of Love Happy Body. Personally, she wasn't happy with relaxed hair, and she isn't the only one. Back on TikTok, there are hundreds of women who have ditched relaxer and prefer to show off their curls and coils, like @thecurlyqueen.

Of course, the decision to relax your hair or wear it natural is an independent choice. Ruth says: "I was not well versed in taking care of my natural hair; it required much more time and care to maintain." She adds that it was personally easier for her to manage her hair in a relaxed state.

There is lots of support on social media, too, which emphasises that it is a Black woman's right to decide which hairstyle works for her. Ruth agrees: "I understand why Black women choose to have their hair relaxed but I also see why others prefer their hair natural — if they're able to spend the time to care for it."

On TikTok, hair enthusiasts assure others that healthy hair management with relaxer is possible by sharing aftercare and tips on how to style relaxed lengths. Contrary to popular belief, though, relaxed hair isn't an easy route to hair maintenance. Like most hairstyles for Black women, it requires specific management.

If not done by a professional or looked after adequately post-treatment, hair can get damaged. Celebrity hairstylist Dionne Smith touches on the perceived risks: "When I first started in hairdressing over 20 years ago, relaxers were the norm and most of us as professionals didn't question the chemicals that went into making them," she says.

"Now, we're having more open discussions about the ingredients that are often found in them and I give my clients as much advice as possible. I allow them to make their own informed decisions."

## How to care for relaxed hair

Although it's mostly TikTok's Gen Z and millennial users who are in support of relaxers, Alicia McLaughlin at Bad Apple Hair says her main clientele is the older generation. "They have worn their hair relaxed for many years," she says, "and the thought of going back to natural hair is very daunting."

They feel it's easier to maintain or do their hair themselves this way." It appears that young women are doing relaxing treatments themselves at home rather than in the salon, further adding to the appeal.

If this is the case for you, Dionne advises applying a deep conditioning treatment every two weeks to prevent dryness. "I love the Cantu Grow Strong Strengthening Treatment," she says. "It rebuilds damaged strands and protects from heat."

Dionne also hits home the importance of trimming your hair every eight to 12 weeks to maintain healthy ends. Nightly treatments are a must when your hair is relaxed, too. "Every evening, apply a light oil and wrap hair up using a smoothing brush and headscarf to keep it smooth and nourished," she says.

When it comes to Black hair, there is so much information on individual textures, products, styling and potential risks involved with treatments like relaxer.

Essentially, it's down to the individual to explore every avenue when choosing a hairstyle that suits them best. Consider your reasons behind opting for permanent change like relaxer but remember that whether natural hair is for you — or not — the choice is ultimately yours.



## In a Nigerian leprosy colony, residents endure stigma and neglect

By **Pelumi Salako**

There are 64 leprosy settlements across Nigeria, but most are in varying states of disrepair with little to no funding.

Abigail Olaiya's meal schedule has been unpredictable for as long as she can remember. Sometimes she snacks twice a day and at other times, she eats nothing all day because she cannot afford it.

It is a situation the 70-year-old has become used to at Oke Igbala (Yoruba for "hill of salvation"), a leprosarium in Omu-Aran in Nigeria's central Kwara state, which she has called home for almost three decades.

As a person living with leprosy, she is unable to get stable work and a lack of familial or institutional support is pushing her to the brink of starvation.

Every year, more than 200,000 people are infected with leprosy globally; Nigeria records 1,000 new cases annually, according to a statement by the health minister this February. But there is no available data on the total number of people living with leprosy in Nigeria because "there is no actual curation", according to the Leprosy Mission Nigeria.

A representative for the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control also told Al Jazeera they do not have that figure.

There are 64 leprosy settlements across Nigeria but

most are in varying states of disrepair as government support dries up, leaving them to their own devices.

Founded in 1943 by Canadian missionaries who ran it till the late '70s, the Omu-Aran facility is now in the trust of the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) mission. Given the individual and institutional neglect of people with leprosy, the 65 people it houses continue to stay there in perpetuity.

Before discovering the

leprosarium, Olaiya said she "suffered a great deal".

"My father and mother were already dead and my siblings just neglected me," she told Al Jazeera.

After first experiencing ulcers and swelling – symptoms of leprosy – in 1973, she had no idea where to go for treatment and tried random recommendations as remedies. Nothing worked.

By then, the ulcer in her right leg had spread so much that it had to be amputated. Until 2019 when a non-prof-

it donated a prosthetic leg to her, she had to rely on crutches and a locally made wheelchair for mobility.

### 'A dark age'

Olaiya and other residents say the leprosarium has long offered them a deep sense of safety and communal belonging they no longer enjoyed in society.

The facility is still responsible for their food, shelter and allows each resident the autonomy to choose religion, even though it is

*cont'd on pg 14*



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# The World Around Us



*cont'd from pg 13*

run by a church. It houses a church, mosque and hospital including an extension with living quarters.

But after the exit of the missionaries, the leprosarium entered a “dark age” due to a paucity of relief materials and medical expertise, according to Samuel Abiodun, the administrator employed by ECWA to oversee the facility. The intervention of ECWA gave it a new lease of life, albeit not like before.

An end-of-year party used to brighten the faces at the leprosarium but none has been held for about six years now. “They eat and are merry and are happy during the party but we are no longer buoyant enough to do such. The NGOs that assist in such capacities have dried up, too,” said Abiodun.

The church employed him to look after the community and supervise the hospital staff but managing the facility with a small budget is a tall order. If the hospital could acquire an x-ray machine and a full blood analyser, it might attract more outpatients, he added.

Some residents of the sanctuary are affected by sicknesses associated with leprosy, including hearing dysfunction, poor eyesight and deformity of body parts, says Ajayi Kayode, a community health officer working at the leprosarium’s hospital.

“They suffer from what we call nerve damage which brings about impairment, deformity and disability,” he said.

Like many other people living with leprosy across Nigeria, Olaiya has long battled hunger and discrimination. With no gainful employment or support from relatives or the government, she is now forced to beg for money.

“If I do not do it, I would have nothing to eat,” she told Al Jazeera. “The drugs at the hospital are not free. If I don’t do it, that means I will die.

“Sometimes, I only make enough money to transport me to and from Ilorin, Omu-Aran and other neighbour-

ing towns,” she added. “When I get back home, I start to look for what to eat. Other times, I have just 50 (\$0.12) or 100 naira (\$0.25) left after deducting the transport fare. On such days, I buy bread.”

She and the others are now dependent on the generosity of Omu-Aran residents. But even when they are cured, the stigma lingers.

During electoral seasons, local politicians visit Oke Igbala and Omu-Aran to canvass support and make paltry donations and promise to improve their lives when they assume office.

But the pledges remain unfulfilled.

“You know the politicians in Nigeria and how they act,” Abiodun said. “They come during the election period but after that, they just disappear and we don’t see them until the next election. That is how they do,” he said.

## Need for support

The centre’s capacity to provide care has greatly suffered, says Abiodun.

ECWA gives the management between N2,000,000- N4,000,000 (\$4,800 to \$9,600) as a yearly grant and they receive N100,000 (\$240) monthly from the state government for use of the facility as a referral centre for tuberculosis and leprosy.

But the funds are barely enough so Oke Igbala now has to generate revenues from the treatment of other patients to pay employees.

“We cannot afford to pay the standard rate to our staff,” Abiodun told Al Jazeera in April. “Presently, we are owing the staff about two months’ salary. Yesterday, somebody submitted her resignation letter, we keep employing them and they leave.”

Although Oke Igbala has support from non-profits, it usually comes in the form of drugs and some food. One NGO, the Damien Foundation, renovated houses for some, but many of the patients still live in dilapidated buildings. When the residents fall sick with

illnesses that require drugs not on the donation list, they must pay for their medication – and most of them cannot afford to.

“They [residents] compare themselves to lepers living in Ago-Ireti in Ondo state because the government gives those ones a stipend of about 10,000 naira (\$24) monthly,” said Abiodun.

## Uplifting the standards

Tanimola Akande, professor of public health at the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital said the dilapidated living conditions in leprosariums across Nigeria are representative of how government at all levels treat the citizenry.

“On their own, they do not earn income that can make their situation better,” he said. “The way forward is for government to play its role in uplifting the living standard of these people.”

According to Akande, there is little to no government funding committing to helping people living with leprosy in Nigeria and treatment is largely donor-driven. The level of expertise in the treatment of leprosy has also declined over the years.

“There are very few committed front-line health workers [for leprosy]” he added. “The older ones playing those roles have largely retired and treatment of leprosy is very unlikely to attract health workers from the gross shortage of human resources for health in Nigeria.

“There is very little political commitment to the treatment of leprosy in Nigeria, this is why most of the facilities used as leprosariums are in very bad condition with dilapidated buildings,” Akande said.

For Olaiya, a lack of the basics is the most saddening.

“Look at me, what I need the most is food so that I do not die of hunger,” she lamented. “The government and everyone who is touched by my condition should help me.”



## Bahamas PM wants sanctions against Venezuela lifted as energy prices continue to rise

CMC – Bahamas Prime Minister, Phillip Davis, has joined his Antigua and Barbuda colleague, Gaston Browne, in calling on the United States to remove its embargo that prevents Venezuela exporting its oil and energy products so as to help deal with the impact of the significant increase in energy prices on the global market.

“Once the valve is released for Venezuela to provide the fuel we will see a very significant downward trend on the cost of fuel,” Davis told reporters, adding that small island developing states like The Bahamas have agitated at both the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Rwanda and at the Summit of America’s in Los Angeles to lift the sanctions on Venezuela.

Davis said more factors than the Russian invasion on Ukraine have led to the increase in fuel prices and that the sanctions on Venezuela played a vital role in the rising cost of fuel.

Last week, Prime Minister Browne, criticising the trade embargo placed on Venezuela by the United States, called on Caribbean Community (CARICOM) leaders to approach Caracas for assistance in dealing with the rising costs of energy products.

Browne said the sanc-



*The Bahamas' Prime Minister Phillip Davis*

tions by Washington against the South American country are negatively impacting the wider region and personally he is unperturbed by the consequences of defying US threats against those who deal with Venezuela.

The sanctions restrict the Venezuelan government’s access to US debt and equity markets. It also includes the state-run oil company, PDVSA.

In August 2019, President Donald Trump imposed additional sanctions on Venezuela, ordering a freeze on all Venezuelan government assets in the United States and barred transactions with US citizens and companies.

Browne said given the escalating price of oil on the global market, a PetroCaribe initiative that Venezuela had in place since 2005 could be helpful in allowing the region to navigate the current situation.

Under the PetroCaribe, energy initiative launched by the late Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez in 2005, Venezuela supplied crude oil to countries in the Caribbean region at discounted prices with those countries paying for a certain percentage of the oil, depending on world oil prices within 90 days, and the remainder is paid over a period of 25 years with an interest rate of one percent annually. Part of the cost also may be offset by the provision of goods or services,

Prime Minister Davis, speaking to reporters on his return from Rwanda where he attended the CHOGM, said “as you would have heard me earlier speak about the energy crisis and what we’re doing as small island developing states at these conferences is to have the United States and the industrialised world to remove sanctions in partic-

ular for Venezuela, which is now working, that we hope would be a step in relieving the cost of fuel to Bahamians.

“In respect to our meetings with the petroleum dealers we did make some movements during the budget exercise particularly to assist Family Island dealers and we are still working out what else we can do recognizing that most of the cost related to fuel is not within our control.

“So, if those sanctions are lifted it helps and so we have been agitating. We have had two major meetings in respect to that – one at the Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles a couple weeks ago and one at CHOGM now where Canada and the UK were present in there where we made our voices known,” Davis told reporters.

Davis told reporters that from the Summit of the Americas “you would have noted that since then the Americans have allowed Venezuela to export to the European Union.

“The next step now is to deal with our situation in the Caribbean and hopefully we just have to follow through with that.

“We are to deal with that this weekend in Suriname. That’s high on the agenda – energy security,” he added.

## Guyana protest: President Ali claims his life has been threatened

CMC - President Irfaan Ali Tuesday said that the protest by residents over the alleged release of a police officer linked to the murder of a young man, "is not all about justice" and that "a man threatened my life".

President Ali in an earlier broadcast had urged residents on the East Coast Demerara to allow the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) to do its work as the Guyana Police Force (GPF) denied reports that a policeman who allegedly shot and killed a resident several days ago had been released.

"I am assured by the Chairman, retired Justice Ramlall, who has advised me that by very early in the new week, he is hoping that by Monday, he will be in a position to present his report to the DPP", President Ali said in a televised statement from State House. .

Ali told the nation that he had also been informed that a second police officer is now in custody assisting the investigators with the probe. He maintained that the two police officers are still in custody and the probe ongoing and therefore sees no basis for the protests. But as the protests continue, Ali in a statement on his Facebook page wrote: "Today, a man threatened my life. And, the Member of Parliament who filmed it did not denounce the statement".

But he said while he has been receiving an "outpouring of love and support" he would be "asking for the Parliament to pass a unanimous resolution decrying political violence and threats of assassination.

"Because, in order to build one Guyana for all, we must speak with one voice that threats of political violence and assassination will not be tolerated in our democratic society.

"Regarding the underlying issue, I



*Quindon Bacchus was shot by police four times in the back and once in the chest according to the results of a post mortem.*

am assured that the police officer who allegedly shot and killed the young Quindon Bacchus remains confined to Police HQ and is under active and expedited investigation. We encourage justice to be done."

Ali wrote that the police must protect people's lives and properties and that "it is now obvious this is not all about justice for Quindon Bacchus.

"It is now barefaced theft, damage to property and outrageous lawlessness by some. The police must arrest those who are openly damaging public and private properties and stealing from citizens. Those instigating this lawlessness must also be brought to justice. As a democratic society and country, we must never allow this. Our collective voices must condemn it now," President Ali said.

Earlier, the police called on the members of the public "to desist from this illegal act" of blocking the road.

"The Guyana Police Force would like to debunk the false claims being made that the policeman involved in

the shooting death of Quindon Bacchus was released from police custody. In fact, the police rank in question is under open arrest and confined to Police Headquarters. The matter is still under investigation," the police said in a statement.

It warned residents against blocking the road "which is disrupting the flow of traffic" and is also "urging persons to desist from this illegal act and clear the roadway".

Media reports said that a senior police officer and a traffic policeman were forced to beat a hasty retreat by angry residents, who blocked the road at several other points with old wooden stalls, wooden planks, posts and concrete objects.

Bacchus was shot several times and killed on June 10, this year. There are two accounts- one that Bacchus attempted to sell the undercover policeman a handgun and the other that the two had had a previous misunderstanding.

Bacchus was buried last Sunday.



## BVI Premier denounces circulation of video about police in BVI

CMC - Premier Dr. Natalio Wheatley says he has been given the assurance by Governor John Rankin that he will hold talks with Police Commissioner Mark Collins after a video began circulating on social media about the police in the British Virgin Islands (BVI).

"This is a very unfortunate depiction of the BVI, highly damaging to our image as a tourist destination," Wheatley said in a broadcast.

He said that the video entitled "Police in Paradise", is produced by the United Kingdom media house ITV, profiling the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force tackling crime in the BVI.

"The video has unsettled many persons in our local and business community because of its highly distorted portrayal of the British Virgin Islands, which gives the impression that our islands are an unsafe tourist destination infested with drugs and crime. This is not true."

Wheatley said that he had already spoken to the Governor of the British Overseas Territory, who has overall responsibility for the police.



*Premier Dr Natalio Wheatley*

"He fully agreed that the video is inappropriate and stated he would address the matter with Police Commissioner Mark Collins. Mr Collins has since issued a written apology to the British Virgin Islands public"

In his statement, the Police Commissioner in offering his apologies to the police said the "incomplete video...was intended to be a tool for recruiting officers from the Caribbean and the UK and aimed at capturing the benefits and challenges of policing in the BVI.

"While permission was sought in advance from the relevant authorities specifically for the intended purpose, this raw footage in circulation lacked an introduction and a conclusion

and was never intended for public consumption."

Collins said that he had received the video in its incomplete form and circulated it to a small group of officers within the Force to receive feedback to help with its completion.

"None of the violence, drug trans-shipments or the seizures in this video would ever be appropriate to be viewed by the public," he said, adding that he is "saddened by the actions taken to bring me and the Force into disgrace.

"I am even more disheartened that the people of this Territory have to endure additional distress and trauma in this already very difficult time," Collins said.

Wheatley said that in his

capacity as Tourism Minister, he wanted to assure "all of our current guests who are right now enjoying the security of our Territory, as well as those persons planning to come to visit our shores to enjoy our white sand beaches, calm sailing waters and friendly people, that the British Virgin Islands is one of the most secure places in the Caribbean and world to vacation and spend your holiday.

"We look forward to welcoming you here to our home that is one of the most beautiful and safest places on earth. To everyone who calls the British Virgin Islands home, let us all continue to do our part to promote tourism, which is everybody's business."

# Twenty people found dead in Libyan desert

AlJazeera – The bodies of 20 people who got lost in the Libyan desert have been found, according to rescuers, who presume the group died of thirst.

The bodies were discovered by a truck driver travelling through the desert and were recovered on Tuesday about 320 kilometres (198 miles) southwest of Kufra and 120km (74 miles) from the border with Chad.

“The driver got lost ... and we believe the group died in the desert about 14 days ago since the last call on a mobile phone there was on June 13,” Kufra ambulance chief Ibrahim Belhasan said by phone on Wednesday.

The sparsely populated region regularly sees summer temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

The ambulance service published a video on Facebook showing decomposing bodies in the desert sand near a pick-up truck.

Two of the bodies were Libyans



*Recovered bodies of migrants lie in bags in the area between Kufra city and Chadian border with Libya [Reuters]*

and the others were believed to be migrants from Chad crossing into Libya, Belhasan said.

Since the 2011 NATO-backed uprising that removed and killed long time leader Muammar Gaddafi, Libya has emerged as the dominant transit point for people fleeing war and poverty in Africa and parts of the Middle East, hoping for a better life in Europe

via the dangerous route across the desert and over the Mediterranean.

But many die en route, including in the harsh Sahara desert.

According to the International Organization for Migration, at least 1,500 refugees have drowned in numerous boat mishaps and shipwrecks in the Central Mediterranean route last year.

# Biden announces US military reinforcements across Europe

AlJazeera – President Joe Biden has announced the deployment of United States military reinforcements across Europe in an effort to counter Russia amid its invasion of Ukraine.

Meeting with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in Madrid on Wednesday for the opening of the 30-nation alli-

ance’s annual leaders summit, Biden said “the United States will enhance our force posture in Europe and respond to the changing security environment as well as strengthening our collective security”.

The president said the US is establishing a permanent army headquarters in Poland, sending two addi-

tional F-35 fighter jet squadrons to the United Kingdom, and adding “more defence and other capabilities” in Germany and Italy.

Biden also said he is adding a “rotational brigade” in Romania, consisting of 5,000 troops, and enhancing rotational deployments in Baltic countries.

A day earlier, he had

announced that the US is boosting its fleet of naval destroyers from four to six in Rota, Spain.

Biden said on Wednesday the step up in military backing for US allies comes at a time when Russian President Vladimir Putin has “shattered peace in Europe and attacked the very

*cont'd on pg 19*



## Fire kills 51 after apparent riot attempt at Colombia prison



*Inmates' relatives push police's shields outside a prison where there was a deadly fire in Tulua, Colombia, Tuesday, June 28, 2022. Authorities say at least 51 people were killed after the fire broke out during what appeared to be an attempted riot early Tuesday. (AP Photo/Andres Quintero)*

AP — A fire at a prison in southwestern Colombia has killed at least 51 people and injured more than 20 others, authorities said Tuesday.

The director of the national prison system, Tito Castellanos, told Radio Caracol that it's not clear if all of the dead were prisoners. He initially said 49 had died, but the Justice Ministry later raised the toll to 51.

He said the fire broke out during what appeared to be an attempted riot early Tuesday at the medium security prison in the city of

Tulua.

But Justice Minister Wilson Ruiz said two inmates had a fight and one of them set fire to his mattress, starting the fire.

Ruiz added that more than 20 inmates were being treated for injuries in hospital, and said that two prison guards sustained minor injuries.

President Iván Duque expressed condolences to the families of those who died and said he had ordered investigations into the cause.

*cont'd from pg 18*

tenants of rule-based order”.

“We’re stepping up, proving that NATO is more needed now than it ever has been and it’s important as it ever has been.”

The US currently has more than 100,000 service members deployed across Europe, up by about 20,000 since before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine began four months ago.

The announcement comes as Biden predicted the NATO gathering would mark a “history-making summit” since leaders are set to approve a new strategic framework, announced a range of steps to boost their defence spending and capabilities, and cleared the way for historically neutral Finland and Sweden to join the alliance.



*NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg greets US President Joe Biden as he arrives at the start of the NATO summit in Madrid, Spain [File: Jonathan Ernst/Reuters]*

“Putin was looking for the Finland-isation of Europe,” Biden said. “You’re gonna get the NATO-isation of Europe. And that’s exactly what he didn’t want, but exactly what needs to be done to guarantee security

for Europe,” Biden added.

Turkey, the last remaining holdout to approve the Nordic countries’ accession into NATO, reached an agreement on the eve of the summit late on Tuesday to support adding them to the

alliance.

The US was not a direct party to the negotiations that led to Turkey’s turnaround, but a senior administration official said Biden spoke with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Tuesday to encourage him to clear the way for Sweden and Finland to join the alliance.

The two leaders were set to hold a bilateral meeting Wednesday afternoon on a range of issues, the White House said.

Biden is also scheduled to meet with South Korean President Yoon Seok-youl and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the NATO summit as the alliance looks to strengthen its ties in the Indo-Pacific region and address challenges from China.

## CWI confirms West Indies contracted players for 2022-2023

Cricket West Indies (CWI) has confirmed the international retainer contracts for the West Indies Men's and Women's players for the 2022-2023 season. A total of 36 players have been offered contracts for the period – which runs from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

This is in addition to 90 players across the region who are contracted to Territorial Board Franchise Squads.

The West Indies Men's contracted player list sees fast bowler Jayden Seales, left-arm seamer Obed McCoy and allrounder Odean Smith awarded international retainer contracts for the first time.

The West Indies Women's contracted player list sees all rounders Mandi Mangru and Jannillea Glasgow along with batter Rashada Williams awarded international retainer contracts for the first time, all of which are development contracts.

For 2022-23, CWI has changed the Men's retainer contract structure to offer player contracts across all formats of cricket, compared to specific red or white-ball contracts in previous years.

The offer of retainer contracts to all players follows an Evaluation Period of performances from



1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, which is also supported by statistics from the previous 2019 - 2020 Evaluation Period.

This allows for all players to be appraised immediately after the Evaluation Period and provides a notice period before new contracts start on 1 July 2022. The system is designed to reward hard work and performance results.

West Indies Men's Lead Selector, The Most Honourable Dr Desmond Haynes said, "Congratulations to all the players who have been offered contracts.

"We think this is a dynamic group, with the right mixture of experience and youthfulness to properly represent the people of the

Caribbean.

"With general retainer contracts, it gives us a pool of talented and dedicated cricketers, who can take West Indies cricket forward in years to come."

West Indies Women's Lead Selector, Ann Browne-John said, "The selectors have placed a great focus on the young developing players because these are the ones who will help to build the team as we look towards the future.

"The panel believes that the combination of experienced players and the emerging players will give a good base as we continue to prepare teams for international matches and the T20 World Cup early next year."

CWI Director of Crick-

et, Jimmy Adams stated, "I am delighted for all the players who have been offered retainers for the upcoming period.

"This represents a significant investment in the ongoing development of our international players whilst also ensuring our best players are available for selection."

Full list of contracted players:

West Indies Men

Jemaine Blackwood, Nkrumah Bonner, Kraigg Brathwaite, Joshua Da Silva, Jason Holder, Shai Hope, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Brandon King, Kyle Mayers, Obed McCoy, Nicholas Pooran, Rovman Powell, Kemar Roach,

*cont'd on pg 21*



## French Open runner-up Ruud loses in second round at Wimbledon

AP – Yet another of the highest-ranked players on the men's tour is out of the tournament at Wimbledon. Novak Djokovic or Rafael Nadal are not among them.

Casper Ruud, the runner-up to Nadal at this year's French Open, became the seventh of the top 11-ranked male players to be out of the grass-court Grand Slam for either losing early, injury, illness or being banned.

Ruud, who was seeded third but ranked sixth, lost to Ugo Humbert of France 3-6, 6-2, 7-5, 6-4 on Wednesday in the second round.

Djokovic, a six-time Wimbledon champion who is looking for his fourth straight title at the All England Club, beat Thanasi Kokkinakis of Australia 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 to reach the third round. Nadal advanced to the second round on Tuesday.

The third-ranked Djokovic, No. 4 Nadal, No. 5 Stefanos Tsitsipas and No. 7 Carlos Alcaraz are the only players in the top 11 remaining in the draw. Top-ranked Daniil Medvedev is out because of a ban on Russians over the war in Ukraine, No. 2 Alexan-



Norway's Casper Ruud plays a return to France's Ugo Humbert in a second round men's singles match on day three of the Wimbledon tennis championships in London, Wednesday June 29, 2022. (AP Photo/Alberto Pezzali)

der Zverev is injured, No. 8 Andrey Rublev of Russia is also banned, No. 9 Felix Auger-Aliassime and No. 10 Hubert Hurkacz lost, and No. 11 Matteo Berrettini withdrew after testing positive for COVID-19.

In the women's tournament, second-seeded Anett Kontaveit and 2017 Wimbledon champion Garbiñe Muguruza were also eliminated. Kontaveit lost to Juke Niemeier of Germany 6-4, 6-0, while the ninth-seeded Muguruza was beaten by Greet Minnen 6-4, 6-0.

Kontaveit said she had

COVID-19 in recent months and has struggled to get her energy back.

"I had it a couple, two months ago, I think, or something like that. Then I tried to come back very quickly. I started training. It was low intensity, but I was still training every day. I think that was where I went wrong," the 26-year-old Estonian said. "Just thinking back at it, I probably should have given myself more time to recover."

Among the winners were No. 6 Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic,

who beat Tereza Martincova 7-6 (1), 7-5 in a match that started Tuesday, No. 8 Jessica Pegula of the United States and No. 12 Jelena Ostapenko of Latvia.

Ruud was making his third appearance at the All England Club. His victory over Albert Ramos-Vinolas on Monday was his first at the grass-court Grand Slam.

He became the first Norwegian player to reach a Grand Slam final when he made the championship match at Roland Garros, but he lost to Nadal in straight sets. He had withdrawn from the Australian Open with an ankle injury.

No. 23 Frances Tiafoe of the United States, No. 25 Miomir Kecmanovic of Serbia and No. 32 Oscar Otte of Germany all advanced to the third round.

### cont'd from pg 20

Jayden Seales, Romario Shepherd, Odean Smith, Hayden Walsh Jr.

West Indies Women

\*Denotes developmental contract

Aaliyah Alleyne, Shemaine Campbell, Shamilia Connell, Deandra Dottin,

Afy Fletcher, Cherry Ann Fraser \*, Shabika Gajabi, Jannillea Glasgow \*, Chinnelle Henry, Mandy Mangru \*, Hayley Matthews, Anisa Mohammed, Chedean Nation, Karishma Ramharack, Kaysia Schultz \*, Shakera Selman, Stafanie Taylor, Rashada Williams \*



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## Bodybuilders to compete in pro qualifier in St. Martin

After participating in the national championship last weekend, some of the Antiguan and Barbudan bodybuilders will now be focusing their attention on attaining an International Federation of Bodybuilders (IFBB) Pro Card.

With federations not allowed to give cash prizes at the amateur level, gaining an IFBB Pro Card not only means the athlete is now elevated to elite status, but it also gives the athlete the opportunity to follow a genuine career as a professional bodybuilder where they are now allowed to earn

income by competing and winning.

Therefore, four of the nation's bodybuilders will be seeking to gain their IFBB Pro Card by traveling to French St Martin this weekend to compete in an invitational pro qualifier, which is the Inter-Island Bodybuilding Fitness & Physique Championship on 3rd July.

Seeking to gain their Pro Cards will be Kimberly Greenaway and Yvette Butler in Bikini Fitness along with Kenroy Christian and Brad Benjamin in Men's Physique.

Five Antiguan and Barbudan bodybuilders competed in last year's competition in French St Martin. The nation's five bodybuilders were impressive in all categories entered, with Anthony Nurse gaining an IFBB Elite Pro Card and becoming Antigua and Barbuda's first men's physique IFBB Pro.

In addition, Ambassador Kimberly Percival took top honours in the Bikini pro category, thereby qualifying for the world championships in Spain in September 2021, where she became the first athlete from the country to claim the top prize at the prestigious international bodybuilding event, the Arnold Classics Europe in Sevilla, Spain.

Percival was crowned the overall winner in the Bikini Fitness category, beating fellow Antiguan Michelle Seaforth for the top prize in the Arnold Classic.

Following her achievements, Percival was conferred the title of Ambassador at Large, receiving her instruments of appointment from Governor General Sir Rodney Williams, during a brief ceremony at Government House on 31st January, 2022.

President of the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Bodybuilding and Weightlifting Federation (ABABWF) Hazel Went Def-



*Kenroy Christian will be contesting the Men's Physique category at the Inter-Island Bodybuilding Fitness & Physique Championship in French St Martin on 3rd July. (Photo courtesy ABABWF)*

reitas, is hopeful of more success for Antiguan and Barbudan bodybuilders in French St Martin this weekend.

"There is an invitational pro qualifier in St Martin this weekend. Last year a team from Antigua went out to that competition and we are hoping to get as successful a result as we did last year," Went Defreitas said.

"We got two competi-

*cont'd on pg 24*

Join The Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda

## Police Week Committee Luncheon

FRIDAY, JULY 1ST 2022  
On Church Street from 11:30am to 2pm

BBQ Chicken, Stewed Chicken, Fish Pigtail, Seasoned Rice and More....

Tickets are available \$20.00

Tickets can be purchased by any member, or contact the nearest Police Station




# Sports News



## cont'd from pg 23

tors being very successful last year. One was Anthony Nurse who won his pro card category and Kimberly won her pro section of that same competition.

"So, they both got their pro cards there in St Martin. So we are hoping that we

will do just as well."

Both Butler and Christian are fresh from successfully retaining their titles at the national championships, which was hosted by the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Bodybuilding and Weightlifting Federation (ABABWF) at the Dean

William Lake Cultural Centre on Saturday, 25 June.

Christian successfully defended his Class C or Tall Class crown to capture the overall Men's Physique title, while Butler also retained her Masters Bikini Fitness title. Butler also won the Bikini Fitness

Class B title.

Went Defreitas said last Saturday's national championship was also a successful venture.

"The show was quite successful. We had showcased over 30 competitors who presented great muscle development, exceptional conditioning and they all did it very well," she said.

"Of course only one person can win first place so although there were so many participants, we ended up with just a few winners."

Went Defreitas was also happy with the crowd support as the competition returned to being staged before a live audience following a virtual contest without spectators was held in 2021.

"We were also able to welcome back our patrons to in-person viewing, which we were unable to do last year and it was quite good," Went Defreitas said.

"I think most people prefer to watch bodybuilding in person. It's different when you see it on a screen. The details are more definitive when you are in person so yes all of them were quite happy to be able to see it in person.

"We are pleased with the turnout of patrons as well because the athletes like to be cheered on in terms of what they need to do.

"So yes we are very happy with the crowd that turned out, the only drawback is that we had limited space because the auditorium can only hold so many."

**SUMMER TENNIS CAMP 2022**

**Venue: Starfish by Halcyon Resort**  
**Date: July 4th - August 5th, 2022**

**Time 9am - 2pm Daily**  
**Age 4 - 11 years**

**Time 3pm - 5pm Daily**  
**Age 12 - 18 years**

**Registration begins June 13th 3pm - 6pm Monday - Friday**

**Tennis racquets, Water & Gatorade will be provided**

**FREE Face Towel**

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**| 268-774-7331 | 268-772-4642**



## Gayrall likely to contest only road racing at Caribbean Games

Antigua and Barbuda's sole representative in cycling, Emmanuel Gayral, will be focusing mainly on competing in the road race at the inaugural Caribbean Games, which officially got on the way with the parade of teams and opening ceremony in Guadeloupe last night (Wednesday).

Gayrall and Team Manager St Clair Williams are part of a 15-member Antigua and Barbuda delegation attending the 29th June to 3rd July Caribbean Games in the French island.

Gayral, who is fresh from winning the Inet National Individual Time Trial and attaining a third place finish in the Top Ranking National Road Race last weekend, said he hopes to perform well in Sunday's Road race at the Caribbean Games in Guadeloupe.

"It will be a great experience. I am looking forward to a great performance over there in Guadeloupe because I like climbing and the race will more or less involve some climbing, so I am looking forward to doing very good," Gayral said.

Williams, who is also President of the Antigua and Barbuda Cycling Federation (ABCF), said Gayrall is unlikely to participate in the Individual Time Trial in Guadeloupe, since he will be utilizing one bike instead of two.

"We were primarily looking at the road race in particular to try to channel most of our energies as he is best suited for the terrain in Guadeloupe, and what we would want to do is to make sure that we could maximize him in the road race," Williams stated.

"So we would probably stick to the road race part of the event instead of the Time Trial, because if you are going to be doing the time trial, and you only have one bike, that would in-

volve breaking down that one bike for the time trial, and then setting it back up to do the road race.

"Gayral doesn't have a specific bike for the time trial, so when we get there, he will have to do a lot of work. So we will stick to the road race and will be focusing primarily on the road race aspect of the cycling at the Caribbean Games. I think he will prefer that style of racing in Guadeloupe and give it his best shot."

More than 800 under-23 athletes are expected to converge in Guadeloupe for the inaugural Caribbean Games.

Thirty countries and territories are expected to attend, including Central American nation Belize and South American countries Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana.

The Caribbean Games, which are organised by the Caribbean Association of National Olympic Committees (CANOC), commenced with the opening ceremony in the Stade René Serge Nabajoth before a seven-sport programme is played out.

The build-up to the event began on May 27 as the Caribbean Games Conch Shell embarked on a journey across 32 towns in Guadeloupe.

The Conch, like the Olympic Torch, is intended to transmit a message of peace and friendship along its route and heralds the start of the event.

Its journey began on the chosen date as it coincided with the abolition of slavery in Guadeloupe 174 years prior.

Noca, a Raccoon, is the mascot of the Games and was chosen as it is said to be an emblematic species for the Guadeloupe National Park.

Williams said the Caribbean Games will provide him with the op-



*Antigua and Barbuda's sole representative in cycling, Emmanuel Gayral, will be focusing mainly on competing in the road race at the inaugural Caribbean Games in Guadeloupe. (File photo)*

portunity to assess where cycling in Antigua and Barbuda is, in comparison to the other regional islands.

"For me, whenever there is a one-off or the first staging of an event, it is always good to have someone in the management capacity to go to these games and analyze what's going on because there are a lot of things you can take away when you go to these

**cont'd on pg 26**

# Sports News



## Three teams to battle for last two ABCA Two Day semi-final spots

Three teams will be vying for the two remaining semi-final places in the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) Two-Day competition in the final round of preliminary matches this weekend.

Defending champions Pigotts Crushers, All Saints Pythons and New Winthorpes Lions are the teams in contention with leaders PIC Insurance Liberta Black Hawks on 75 points and current second place holders Empire Nation with 61 points already assured of a place in the semi-finals.

In the final round of preliminary matches this weekend, Pigotts Crushers will host PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks at Pigotts.

Bolans Blasters will face All

Saints Pythons at Bolans. Jennings Tigers will meet Rising Sun Spartans at Jennings.

Caribbean Union Bank (CUB) Bethesda Golden Eagles will tackle Empire Nation at King George V Ground and New Winthorpes Lions will take on Combined Schools at Factory.

Pigotts Crushers, currently in third place on 59 points and All Saints Pythons, who are in fourth position with 57 points, have the best chances of securing the final two semi-finals places.

Once Pigotts and All Saints avoid defeat and take first innings points in their final encounters, both sides will be assured of their places in the

semi-finals.

New Winthorpes Lions' task is much harder since they must beat Combined Schools outright in their final preliminary game and hope that either Pigotts or All Saints loses their final encounter to sneak into the semi-finals.

Jennings Tigers on 43 points, Bolans Blasters with 39 points, Bethesda Golden Eagles and Rising Sun Spartans with 27 points each and bottom team Combined Schools on three points, have all been eliminated already from reaching the semi-finals.

The semi-finals will be contested on 9th and 10th July, with the two winners advancing to the final on 16th and 17th July.

### *cont'd from pg 25*

games or championship," he stated.

"So you can see what is happening there and you can also take back some things back to Antigua for the development of the sports here in Antigua and Barbuda. So primarily, that is my view in terms of why we should send officials overseas.

"Sometimes you could have some officials going to an event, not only when we have cyclists or other athletes competing, I think we should be exposed to what is going on outside of Antigua because that is on a bigger scale and if we can implement a portion of it year after year, I think the development of sports on a whole in Antigua would be a lot better.

"So for me, this opportunity now is for us to see where our other cycling bodies are around the Caribbean in terms of their development. So we will look and see where we can develop best practices and we will bring them back.

Williams is hoping that along with Gayrall, the other athletes who will be representing Antigua and Barbuda in track and field, swimming and eSports at the Caribbean Games, will perform creditably in Guadeloupe.

"Moving into Guadeloupe for the inaugural Caribbean Games, I am hoping that the Antiguan contingent will represent the 268 (Antigua and Barbuda's Area Code) well, not only in cycling, but in the other dis-

ciplines that will be there," Williams said.

"However the competition goes on Sunday, I know for sure Gayral will take that experience and come back home and he will know exactly what he needs to do to get to where he needs to go.

"So I am hoping Antigua and Barbuda's reps will walk away holding our heads high to know that we would have represented our flag, our country and our disciplines well. So we are looking forward to a good meet."

Athletics, 3x3 basketball, road cycling, futsal, judo, swimming and netball are all set to appear in the five-day event.

Track cycling was planned to be on the programme as well, but it was

removed after the proposed venue, Vélodrome Amédée Détraux, became unavailable.

An emergency meeting was called as venues for athletics and netball also pulled out and jeopardised the future of the games before the Roger Zami Stadium and the Laura Flessel Sports Complex were offered to stage the respective sports.

The Caribbean Games had first been scheduled to take place in 2009 in Trinidad & Tobago before being cancelled by the country's government at short notice due to fears about swine flu.

The Guadeloupe event was originally intended for 2021, but was postponed until this year because of COVID-19.

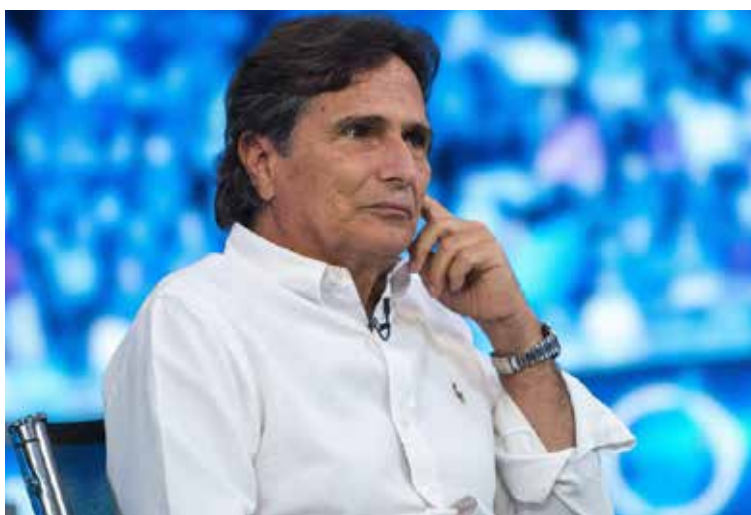


## Piquet apologises to Hamilton over 'ill thought out' comment

AP – Former Formula One champion Nelson Piquet apologised to Lewis Hamilton on Wednesday, saying the racial term he used about the Mercedes driver was “ill thought out” but was not meant to be offensive.

The 69-year-old Brazilian has faced heavy criticism this week over comments he made in Portuguese last November on a podcast where he referred to Hamilton as “neguinho,” which means “little Black guy.”

“What I said was ill thought out, and I make no defence for it, but I will clarify that the term used is one that has widely and historically been used colloquially in Brazilian Portuguese as a synonym for ‘guy’ or ‘person’ and was never intended to offend,” Piquet, who won three F1 titles in the 1980s, said in



Three-time world champion Formula One racer Nelson Piquet of Brazil attends the shooting of the Hungarian Television's Formula One magazine in Budapest, Hungary, July 23, 2015. (Janos Marjai/MTI via AP, file)

the statement. “I would never use the word I have been accused of in some translations. I strongly condemn any suggestion that the word was used by me with the aim of belittling a driver because of his skin colour.”

Piquet used the term three times during the interview as

he discussed a crash between Hamilton — a seven-time F1 champion and the only Black driver in the sport — and Max Verstappen during last year's British Grand Prix. His daughter Kelly Piquet is Verstappen's girlfriend

“I apologise wholeheartedly to anyone that was af-

ected, including Lewis, who is an incredible driver,” Piquet added.

“But the translation in some media that is now circulating on social media is not correct. Discrimination has no place in F1 or society and I am happy to clarify my thoughts in that respect.”

After Piquet's comments resurfaced this week, Hamilton called for “archaic mindsets” to change, while F1 and governing body FIA both condemned the use of racist language.

“It's more than language. These archaic mindsets need to change and have no place in our sport. I've been surrounded by these attitudes and targeted my whole life,” Hamilton tweeted on Tuesday. “There has been plenty of time to learn. Time has come for action.”

### cont'd from pg 28

Fans can watch live on ESPN Caribbean and listen to live radio commentary on the Windies Cricket YouTube channel.

#### Full Squads

##### T20 Internationals

Nicholas Pooran (Captain), Rovman Powell (Vice Captain), Shamarh Brooks, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Brandon King, Kyle Mayers, Obed McCoy, Keemo Paul, Romario Shepherd, Odean Smith, Devon Thomas, Hayden Walsh Jr. Reserve: Dominic Drakes

##### One-Day Internationals

Nicholas Pooran (Captain), Shai Hope (Vice Captain), Shamarh Brooks, Keacy Carty, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Jo-

seph, Brandon King, Kyle Mayers, Gudakesh Motie, Keemo Paul, Anderson Phillip, Rovman Powell, Jayden Seales, Reserve: Romario Shepherd

Match Schedule – Bangladesh tour of West Indies

Padma Bridge – Dream Fulfilled – Friendship Test Series, presented by Walton

June 16-20: 1st Test – Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, Antigua – West Indies won by 7 wickets

June 24-28: 2nd Test – Daren Sammy Cricket Ground, St Lucia – West Indies won by 10 wickets

##### T20 International Series

July 2: 1st T20I – Windsor Park, Dominica. Local start time

1:30pm/12:30pm Jamaica

July 3: 2nd T20I – Windsor Park, Dominica. Local start time 1:30pm/12:30pm Jamaica

July 7: 3rd T20I – Guyana Stadium, Guyana. Local start time 1:30pm/12:30pm Jamaica

CG United One-Day International Series

July 10: 1st CG United ODI – Guyana Stadium, Guyana. Local start time 9:30am/8:30am Jamaica

July 13: 2nd CG United ODI – Guyana Stadium, Guyana. Local start time 9:30am/8:30am Jamaica

July 16: 3rd CG United ODI – Guyana Stadium, Guyana. Local start time 9:30am/8:30am Jamaica

## West Indies squads named for T20Is and CG United ODIs vs Bangladesh

On Tuesday, Cricket West Indies' (CWI) Selection Panel announced the West Indies Men's squad for the upcoming three-match T20 International Series and the three-match CG United One-Day International Series against Bangladesh.

Rovman Powell has been announced as the new Vice Captain for the T20Is while left-arm fast bowler Obed McCoy returns after recovering from injuries. There are also recalls for experienced wicket-keeper batter Devon Thomas and allrounders Keemo Paul. In the CG United ODI Series squad, there is a call up for left-arm spinner Gudakesh Motie.

Lead Selectors the Most Honourable Dr Desmond Hayne said, "We know Rovman's history. He has captained the West Indies before and is also the captain of his CPL franchise. Our role is to look at future leaders as well and we have identified a few, including himself, who we will be putting programmes around to ensure we keep them involved in that aspect of the cricket."

"Thomas is a very versatile cricketer, who has been knocking on the door in all formats. He has been doing well in franchise cricket and with that level of talent, we must ensure we keep him interested. He brings a lot to the table and is basically a four-dimensional player, he can bat, bowl, he is brilliant in the field, and he can keep wicket as well. McCoy has done exceptionally well in the IPL and enjoyed a successful stint in England as well, so we are confident that he is back to his best in terms of playing and fitness,"



VS



Haynes added, "Generally, we have to start looking at the bigger picture of getting these players playing together as often as possible in preparation for the ICC T20 World Cup later down in the year. We need to ensure we are fielding a very strong side for that tournament."

The T20I Series opens with back-to-back matches on Saturday, 2 July and Sunday, 3 July at the Windsor Park in Dominica. This will see a return to international cricket at the fully refurbished venue, where international cricket is being hosted for the first time since the hurricane damage of 2017. The Series climaxes with the third and final match on Tuesday, 7 July at the Guyana National Stadium. The CG United ODI Series will be played at the Guyana National Stadium on Friday, 10 July, Monday 13 July and Thursday, 16 July.

Online ticket sales are now live via the new WINDIES TICKETS service, presented by Mastercard, at [www.tickets.windiestickets.com](http://www.tickets.windiestickets.com). Fans can purchase in advance without the need

to travel to box offices to save tickets to their mobile phones which can then be presented for scanning at the stadium entrance. Fans who register for the WINDIES TICKETS service and purchase tickets will also receive offers and promotions for future games.

In Dominica, there is great excitement on the Nature Isle for the return of international cricket with tickets available in three price categories providing a range of viewing positions for every budget. Ticket prices range from US\$6 (EC\$15) for the Mound/Grounds, to US\$15 (EC\$40) for the standard seats and US\$25 (EC\$70) premium seating in the Shillingford Stand.

In Guyana, the prices will range from US\$6 (GUY\$1200) for the Mound/Grounds, to US\$15 (GUY\$3000) for the Orange Stand or US\$25 (GUY\$5000) for the best seats in the Red and Green Stands, as the fans in Guyana welcome the busiest "Summer of Cricket" to the South American mainland.

*cont'd on pg 27*