

AG BENAJMIN: POLICE, FIRE DEP'T TO BE SEPARATED

Story on Page 2



Several people were awarded by Governor General Sir Rodney Williams on Thursday for their contributions to Antigua and Barbuda. *Story on page 4* Photo Credit: Government House

Major changes ahead for police, fire department

Major changes are in store for the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda (RPFAB) and its sister agency, the Fire Department, as the government moves to update the existing laws that govern their operations.

Speaking at the Graduation and Awards Ceremony for Course 48 of the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda, Public Safety Minister, Steadroy “Cutie” Benjamin said these are among several changes that will take place within the organisations.

“We shall be looking at certain improvements this year, so by the end of July we are going to make three important changes.

“It was 1957, January 1st, that the Police Act was passed. We are now in 2022, that Act will be taken to Parliament, and we will have a new Police Act, 2022. That Act would have in place all the updated procedures necessary for a police force in 2022.

“In addition, the new bill will make provisions for an independent tribunal to hear complaints made against police officers,” Benjamin disclosed.

This, Benjamin continued, is to ensure that the RPFAB is a force of order, discipline that carries out its duties without fear or favour, malice or ill-will. This will be done with the blessings of Police Commissioner Atlee Rodney, senior officers and the rest of the force.

The changes in store for the fire department include provisions for the separation of the fire department from the police, a move which the fire department long advocated for.

“With respect to the fire department, this year also, at the end of July, we are going to Parliament and we are changing the name from the Fire Bri-



Constable Shania Samuel was presented a special award from Associate Vice President of AUA, Marlon Destin

gade to the Fire, Rescue and Services Act,” he revealed.

He explained that the Act governing the fire department was passed in 1956 and, like the Police Act, is in dire need of revisions that will allow it to meet present challenges.

“We will be the last country in the region to separate the police force from the fire brigade. It is my duty, my honour and my distinct privilege to lead that discussion for the separation. It is only a matter of time that has to happen. It must happen, it must take place,” he declared.

During the Graduation and Awards Ceremony for Course 48, thirty-eight persons who completed training were welcomed to the ranks of the force. Ten of the graduates will join the Fire Department.

Special awards were presented to several recruits including the Commandant's Award which went to Constable Robert Azille; the Baton



Minister of Public Safety, Steadroy Benjamin

of Honour Award and Valedictorian, Constable Brandon Charles and the Malcolm Nicholas Axe of Excellence, Constable Anna Cabey of the Fire Department.

A special award from the American University of Antigua (AUA) Public Safety Officer Scholarship, was presented to Constable Shania Samuel by the university's Associate Vice President, Marlon Destin.

Immigration amnesty has ended

The four-month immigration amnesty in which non-nationals were invited to regularise their status in Antigua and Barbuda has now ended.

Chief Immigration Officer, Katrina Yearwood, reported that people were submitting applications for amnesty as late as Thursday afternoon when the amnesty ended.

She has promised a full update on the number of persons who came forward seeking amnesty as early as next week.

The amnesty was originally to last for two months – March to April - this year. However, due to the number of people who came

forward as the end of April approached, the programme was extended for an additional two months, ending on 30th June.

Midway through the amnesty, a report was presented indicating that as many as four thousand people had applied for amnesty.

According to Yearwood, in addition to citizens from

CARICOM states and the Dominican Republic, applications were received from individuals from nations as far away as India and the Middle East.

Yearwood said the next step for approved applicants will involve collecting their certificates, which is required to move forward with applications for permanent resi-



dence or citizenship.

These certificates are now available at the Immigration Department on the Sir George Walter Highway.

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More homes delivered to Barbudans

Ten Barbudan families are today settling into their rehabilitated, climate resilient homes after receiving their keys on Wednesday this week.

The Housing Support to Barbuda Project is an initiative led by the government of Antigua and Barbuda and funded by the European Union with oversight from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean.

Under the programme, €5 million was pledged to rehabilitate or construct a total of 104 homes for families on Barbuda who were impacted by the destruction caused by Hurricane Irma in 2017.

The ten homes turned over on Wednesday are part of phase two of the project which will see a total of eighty-four being given to Barbudans.

Head of the Office of



A proud recipient of an EU funded home stands outside with keys in hand following the turnover of several homes in September, 2021.

the National Authorizing Officer (ONAO), Ambassador Dr. Clarence Henry was present when the keys were handed over.

“We are happy to have played an important role in improving the quality of life for beneficiaries who met the criteria. The EU funds could not bring relief to everyone, but the assistance was greatly welcomed by recipients,” he said.

“Many lessons were

learnt,” Ambassador Henry continued, “and the Beneficiary Selection Committee (BSC) performed admirably in concert with the UNDP and the contractor.

“We remain grateful to the EU for responding to the Administration’s request for assistance to combat the numerous housing challenges in the aftermath of devastating hurricane Irma on Barbuda.”

About 95 percent of all

structures on Barbuda were damaged in some way by hurricane Irma. Most of those that were residential were classified as “uninhabitable”.

Ambassador Malgorzata Wasilewska, who spoke on behalf of the EU said, “The European Union engagement with the region remains strong. Providing shelter and rebuilding stronger houses for those who lost them as a result of climate events is for us a way to add on to the resilience that the region has always shown.”

Also present was Ugo Blanco, Deputy Resident Representative for UNDP.

“With the support of a steadfast partner like the European Union, we continue to support the Government’s goal of building forward and boosting the resilience of Antigua and Barbuda.

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Governor General Williams recognises several nationals for their contributions

A ceremony was held at Government House on Thursday to honour the efforts of several Antiguan and Barbudans for their part in nation building.

Governor General Sir Rodney Williams praised the efforts of the awardees who included Rupert Edwards, Dr. Edda Hadeed, Nicholas Hadeed, George Jonas Jr., Lester Jonas and Ludwig Reynolds who received the Governor Gen-

eral’s Faithful and Meritorious Service Medal-Gold, for their contributions to music development, public health and cultural and community development. Four young people also received the Halo Hero Humanitarian Award for their volunteerism.

They were Esquire Henry, Kristine Louisa, Rheikecia Manning and Tashawn Thomas (Posthumously).



Photo courtesy Government House

CBH apologises for officer's actions at graduation ceremony

The Central Board of Health (CBH) has apologised for the actions of one of its senior officers who interrupted a secondary school graduation on Wednesday.

Senior Health Inspector, Emile Floyd, who was up until Wednesday acting as Chief Health Inspector, marched towards the lectern and grabbed the microphone away from a student who was introducing the guest speaker at the Antigua Girls' High School's graduation ceremony at Spring Gardens Moravian Church.

Floyd claimed that COVID-19 protocols were not being followed.

His actions left those in attendance shocked, since he appeared to have had complete disregard for Governor Gen-

eral Sir Rodney Williams and his wife, Lady Sandra Williams, Minister of Education, Daryll Matthew, Director of Education, Clare Browne and everyone else who bore witness to the incident.

Now with condemnation of the incident growing, the CBH issued a statement in which it strongly condemned Floyd's behaviour.

According to the CBH, Floyd's contention that there had been a breach of COVID-19 protocols was "not in keeping with the revised protocols".

"The Ministry of Health, and by extension the Public Health Inspectorate, strongly condemns this behaviour and wishes to indicate that the actions displayed do not reflect in any way, shape or form, the collective behaviour and

attitude of the department.

"The Central Board of Health would like to take this opportunity to publicly apologise to His Excellency the Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams, the dignitaries, principal, members of staff, graduates, students, parents, guardians and well-wishers who were in attendance at the graduation ceremony and witnessed the ordeal."

Photos and mobile phone videos that captured Wednesday's incident have gone viral.

It took approximately fifteen minutes before the graduation ceremony continued.

Since the incident, reports are that Emile Floyd was reverted to his former position of senior health inspector.

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Local News



Police officer freed on rape charge

A policeman who was accused of rape by a female officer has been acquitted in the High Court.

A jury of seven women and two men returned a not guilty verdict after hearing all the evidence.

It was revealed that the virtual complainant took over a year to report the alleged incident.

The alleged rape happened in 2017, but the po-

licewoman complainant waited for 16 months to make a report which she claimed occurred in the cyber lab beneath the Langfords Police Station.

During the trial, the presiding judge, the jury, the virtual complainant, and defendant visited the scene where the assault was said to have taken place.

In her testimony, the



policewoman admitted that there she had previously kissed and engaged in other sexual activity with the defendant but had not had intercourse with him on

any occasion prior to the alleged attack.

Lawrence Daniel of Daniel, Phillips and Associates represented the defendant.

cont'd from pg 4

For the region to continue on its path to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, improving regional resilience is paramount to ensuring the Caribbean can move forward despite its intrinsic vulnerabilities.”

Also on hand at the ceremony were representatives of the Department of

Environment.

More than 100 fruit trees have been distributed to the beneficiaries of the homes under the “greening” aspect of the programme.

In addition to the loss of property, weather systems often cause significant damage to the flora of the countries they impact, therefore, it is critical

to restore plant life which, in addition to their aesthetic value, has invaluable positive environmental impact.

The fruit tree options included cherry, pomegranate, sugar apple, golden apple, custard apple, sweet tamarind, soursop, mango, Malay apple, guava, raspberry, papaya and ackee.

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MCII and Anjo Wholesale announce Carnival sponsorship

Anjo Wholesale has been trading in Antigua for over 100 years and is no stranger to civic duty and giving back to the community.

The company is well known for supporting reputable organisations such as the Sir Lester Bird Medical Center, St. John Hospice, the Red Cross, Chefs of Antigua, Breast Friends, the Lions Club of Antigua, the Antigua Sports Fishing Association, the Good Shepherd Home for Girls, the St. Vincent de Paul Society and others.

Last Friday, Minister of Creative Industries and Innovation, Dr. Michael Browne signed off on a deal with Kiz Johnson, Group Marketing Manager of Anjo Wholesale, as the company came on board as a sponsor of Anti-



gua's Carnival 2022. This was a pivotal moment for Anjo Wholesale, stepping into the Carnival sector for the first time in its century long history in Antigua and Barbuda.

MCII has confirmed that Anjo

Wholesale's level of sponsorship has made it a Gold Tier partner under their brands Grace and Heineken.

Grace and Heineken will power the Band meets Band and Celebrating the Monarch pre-Carnival events.



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ABTA launches summer marketing campaign

The Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) has launched a new global summer advertising campaign that they hope will bring more visitors to the country.

On Monday, the ABTA launched the campaign which focuses on the luxury and authenticity the country offers.

The campaign focuses heavily on the word “AND” to highlight the breadth and depth of the travel experiences available on Antigua and Barbuda.



The campaign focuses heavily on the word “AND” to highlight the breadth and depth of the travel experiences available on Antigua and Barbuda.

Every digital and social media asset of the campaign is set around the themes: 'Enjoy Carnival', 'Stunning Islands', 'Gorgeous Beaches' and 'Gourmet Seafood'.

Charles “Max” Fernandez said, “It was vital for us to launch a campaign for the summer which communicates our unique offering as a holiday experience and so we are delighted that this is reflected in the look and feel of our new digital and social advertising imagery.

“It has all been carefully curated so that the consumer can be in no doubt that Antigua and Barbuda offers the perfect combination of luxury and value - experiences which create priceless memories within a relaxing and authentic environment.”

The ABTA’s Chief Executive Officer, Colin James added, “The campaign shows how much Antigua and Barbuda has to offer as a destination in a totally ownable and memorable way. The answer was in the name - and the logo. The ‘AND’ provides us with a vehicle to showcase the islands’ many sides - and say 'why compromise when you can have everything?'”

The eye-catching advertisements will primarily target Antigua and Barbuda’s major source markets, North America and Europe.

COVID-19 cases continue downward trend

The most recent report received by the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment revealed sixteen (16) new laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda as of Saturday 25th June, 2022 at 6pm.

Four (4) cases were recorded on June 23rd, seven (7) on June 24th and five (5) on June 25th.

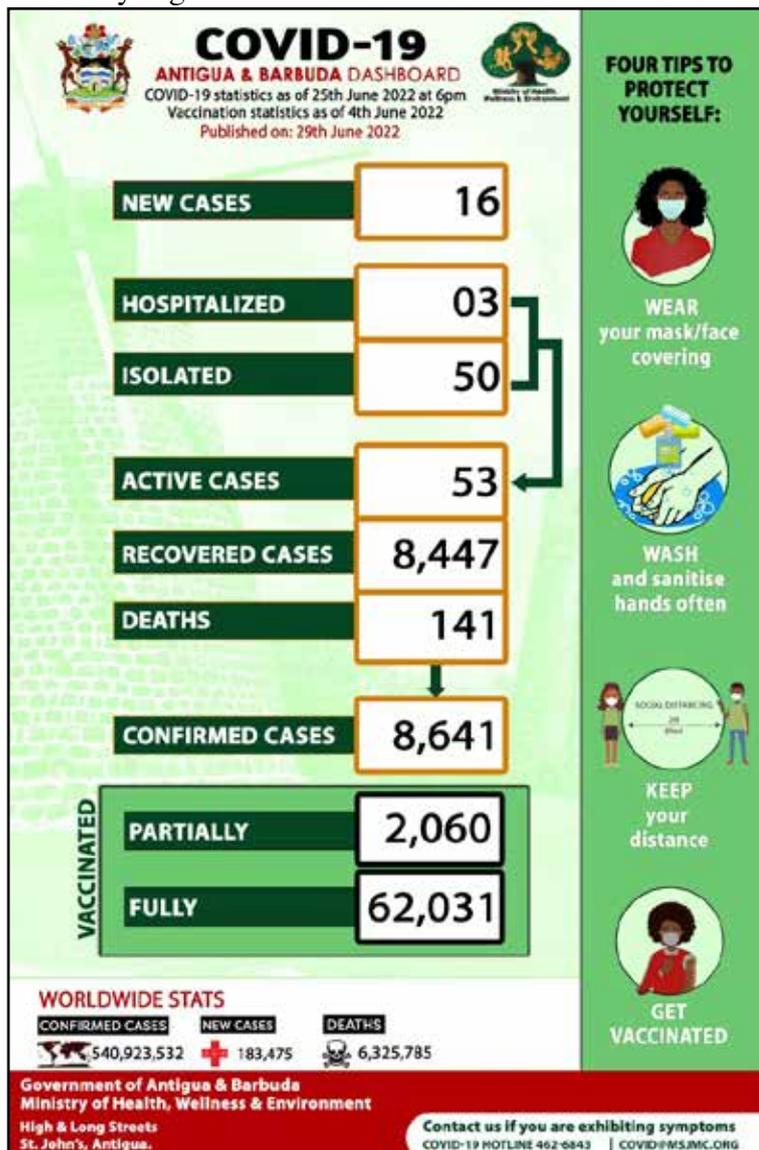
Seventy-one (71) sam-

ples were processed.

Twenty-one (21) recovered cases were recorded.

Consequently, the total number of persons with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda is eight thousand six hundred and thirty-six (8,636); which is inclusive of fifty-three (53) active cases.

There are three (3) hospitalised cases; one (1) moderate and two (2) mild.



Dust off the Commonwealth SG elections

By Sir Ronald Sanders

(The writer is Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the United States of America and the Organization 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)

Much has been written in the Caribbean media about the contest surrounding the post of Commonwealth Secretary-General that was decided on Friday, June 24 at an election in Kigali, the Capital of Rwanda.

Many statements and claims were made that require clarification, particularly as some of them convey misleading impressions.

One of these claims is that relations between CARICOM countries that supported one or other of the two rival female candidates, are now irreparably harmed. No credence should be given to that assertion. This is not the first time that the Caribbean has had rival candidates for international posts. Indeed, in 2015 the region had rival candidates for both the posts of Commonwealth Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS). In the latter case, it was Belize and Guyana.

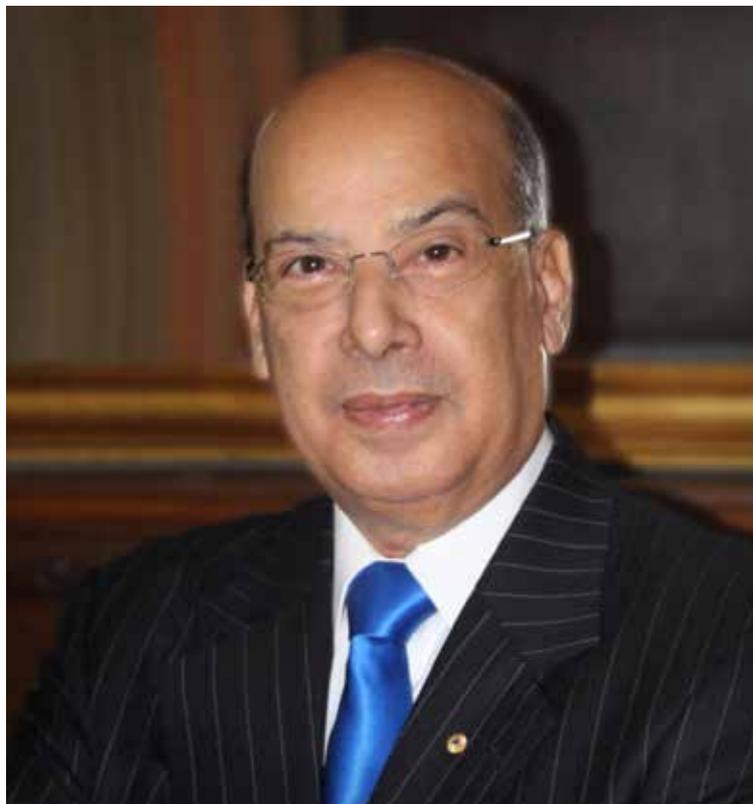
Once the elections were concluded and a candidate

was chosen by all the members of the two organizations (not just the Caribbean states), CARICOM governments continued in their inter-governmental relations, focussing on the issues of government for which they were elected. Exactly the same thing will happen again.

The other fallacy associated with the Kigali election is that CARICOM had to agree on a single candidate. In reality, every Commonwealth country has the right to field a candidate. Jamaica was under no obligation to support the British Baroness, who is a member of the British Parliament (on leave). Like every other Commonwealth country, Jamaica had the intrinsic right to field or support the candidate of its choice.

CARICOM countries may have an obligation under the CARICOM Treaty to co-ordinate their foreign policy positions, but none to harmonize them. Jamaica had no duty to support a candidate proposed by any other country if in its own deliberate judgement, it felt there was good reason to support another.

There is ample precedent for this, set in 2015, when, although the majority of CARICOM countries had settled on the candidate of Antigua and Barbuda (me) for the post of Commonwealth Secretary-General,



Sir Ronald Sanders

the Dominica government insisted on inserting the candidature of the British Baroness and member of the British Parliament because she was born in Dominica.

Jamaica ought not to be pilloried, in this instance, for doing what others have done with impunity in the past – that is to maintain the candidacy of the person it favoured.

Allegations have also been made that the Jamaica Foreign Minister, Kamina Johnson, was the choice of the British Government, and that Jamaica was encouraged to field her candidature at the behest of the British Prime Minister, who had made his disapproval of Scotland well-known.

It appears to be forgotten that, in 2015, the British

Baroness, Patricia Scotland, was not only chosen by the British Government but her candidature was openly promoted and advanced by every British agency throughout the Commonwealth.

In any event, at the contest in Kigali, at which Scotland received 27 votes to Johnson's 24, a deep schism was revealed in the Commonwealth. Scotland clearly does not command the support of almost half of the Commonwealth members, notably the main financial contributors to the organization – Australia, Britain, and Canada – all of which have reduced their financial contributions over their concern with Scotland's stewardship. Scotland has been elected to serve out

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Opinion

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the two remaining years of a four-year term into which she drifted, because the COVID-19 pandemic prevented a Heads of Government meeting.

The Kigali contest was not won by Scotland. It was won by Africa which put all its votes behind her for a simple reason – Africa plans to field a candidate for the job in 2024. Had Kamina Johnson been elected, it would have been for a four-year term, ending in 2026 with the possibility of another term to 2030. Africa was not about to wait.

In part, this was why Kenya was persuaded to withdraw the candidature of Energy and Petroleum Minister, Dr. Monica Juma, which its President Uhuru Kenyatta, announced in August 2021.

It was brought to Kenya's attention that Dr. Juma might end up only with finishing the 2020 to 2024 term that COVID-19 allowed Scotland to

start.

It was better for Africa to leave the British Baroness in place as a lame duck Secretary-General until 2024, when Dr. Juma could look forward to at least a 4-year term, with the possibility of a further four years, giving her the post until 2032.

The election of an African candidate in 2024 is now almost a foregone conclusion, especially as, at Kigali, two more African states – Gabon and Togo - were admitted to membership, creating a bloc of 21 states.

Even if Africa does not agree on a single candidate, what is certain is that the candidates for the post will all come from Africa.

Based on the “turn” notion, which seems to have become wrongly embedded in the minds of some governments, rather than choosing the best person for the job based on their qualifications and commitment, the Caribbean will not be considered for the

job of Secretary-General until other regions have had a turn.

With Europe, Asia, and the Pacific ahead of the Americas (Canada/Caribbean), it could be 2056 until anyone from the Caribbean might be considered. But even then, it could be Canada which hasn't held the post since 1965.

Caribbean countries must dust off the election of the Commonwealth Secretary-General and concentrate on working, through the councils of the Commonwealth, on making the organization relevant to their own people, and meaningful to the peoples of the world.

The big issues remain: poverty and unemployment, climate change, inequality, access to financing and development. The Commonwealth confronted these problems in the past; it must be fashioned to do so again.

Responses and previous commentaries: www.sirronaldsanders.com

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CARPHA and PAHO sign subsidiary agreement to improve regional public health

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) on Wednesday committed US\$750,000 to support programmes of the region's public health agency over the next 18 months.

This came as PAHO and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) signed a subsidiary agreement to improve regional public health, including health security.

"These agreements not only provide structure to our alliance but also symbolise the commitment we share to working together to advance public health in the Caribbean region, in support of our member states and the Caribbean people," said Sub-regional Programme Director, PAHO Caribbean, Dean Chambliss.

He praised the work of CARPHA and expressed his appreciation for the critical role the agency plays in regional public health.

"Since it began operations in 2013, CARPHA has evolved into the public health leader it is today," he said. "Along with enhancing national capacities to deliver public health goods and services and providing laboratory support for disease surveillance to its member states, CARPHA coordinates responses to public health crises in the Caribbean."

CARPHA Executive Director Dr. Joy St. John acknowledged and thanked PAHO for its continued support over the last ten years of operation and said the Trinidad-based agency looked forward to the "con-

tinued collaboration with PAHO as one of its long-standing partners, both as a funding partner and a technical partner in the delivery of care to the citizens and visitors of CARICOM."

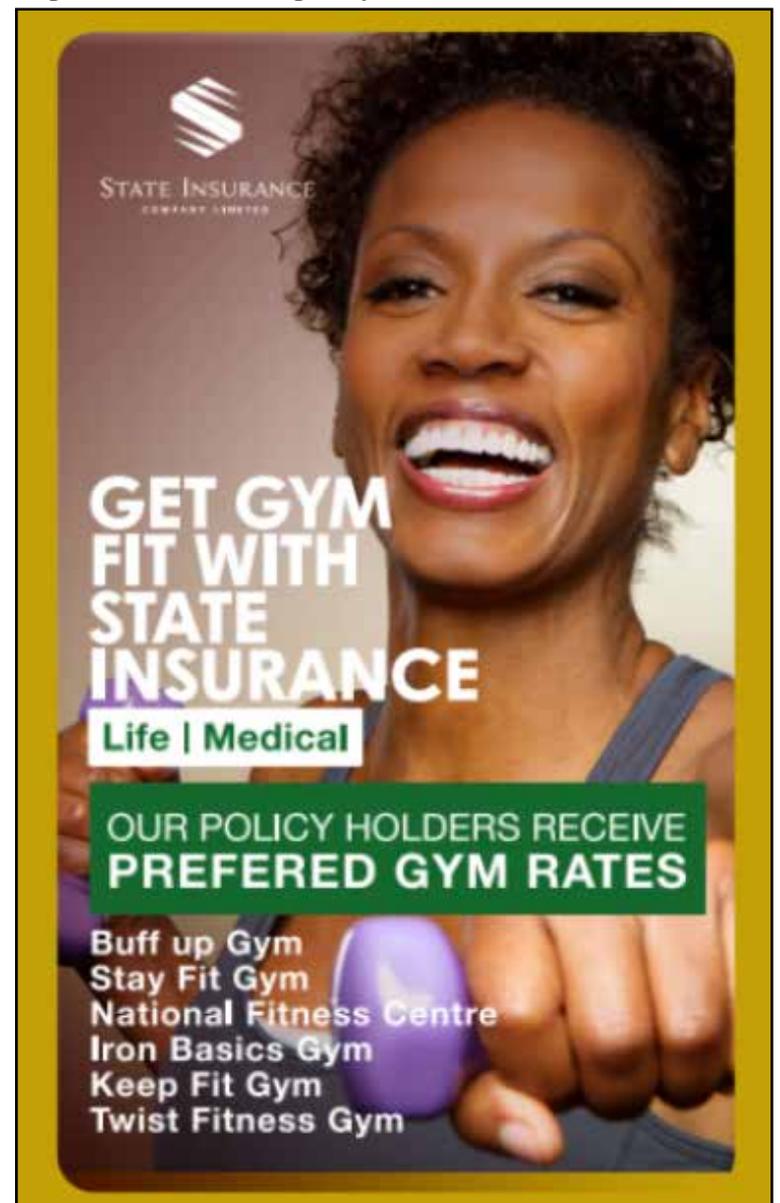
Projects under the CARPHA PAHO work plan for the years 2022-2023, which will benefit from funding provided under this subsidiary agreement, include improving access to safe and affordable medicines, the implementation of policy

for healthy food environments, and strengthening the capacities of countries for the surveillance of communicable and non-communicable diseases.

Dr. St. John said CARPHA's mandate to improve public health to the region will continue to remain a priority as the agency continues to align its activities to its strategic objectives and the overall vision of the Caribbean Cooperation in Health.



CARPHA Executive Director, Dr. Joy St. John and PAHO Sub-regional Programme Director share an elbow bump after signing a Subsidiary Agreement to improve regional public health, including health security.



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Energy

OPEC+ may not be much help with high oil, gasoline prices

By Cathy Bussewitz

Oil prices are high, and drivers are paying more at the pump. But the OPEC oil cartel and allied producing nations may not be much help as they decide Thursday how much more crude to send to world markets.

That's because the 23-member OPEC+ alliance, which includes Russia, is struggling to produce enough oil to keep up with the rebounding demand for fuel since the COVID-19 pandemic. Plus, Western buyers are shunning barrels from Russia over its war in Ukraine, meaning there's less oil on the market to go around.

OPEC, led by Saudi Arabia, and its allies will decide whether to boost production in August beyond the increase of 648,000 barrels per day that the group agreed to at its last meeting. That boost was a modest step at providing some relief to soaring prices. Before, OPEC+ had been adding about 432,000 barrels per day monthly to put oil back on the market after cutting production dramatically during the height of the pandemic.

Gasoline prices around the world have reached painful highs. In the U.S., they surpassed \$5 a gallon for the first time this month before dipping in recent days as global oil prices fell on fears of a recession. U.S. President Joe Biden has been under pressure to do whatever he can to reduce gasoline prices for struggling Americans, including urging Congress to suspend gas and diesel taxes, although many experts say there's little he can do.

OPEC, on the other hand, could help lower prices by increasing production — in theory. But that doesn't mean it will, even as Biden has urged the group to do so.



The logo of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is seen outside of OPEC's headquarters in Vienna, Austria, Thursday, March 3, 2022. Oil prices are high, and drivers are paying more at the pump. But the OPEC oil cartel and allied producing nations may not be much help at their meeting Thursday, June 30. The OPEC+ alliance, which includes Russia, is having trouble meeting its announced production quotas. (AP Photo/Lisa Leutner, file)

Production has fallen substantially behind OPEC+ quotas. Angola and Nigeria have long standing shortfalls, among others, and questions have arisen about how much spare production capacity Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have in reserve.

There's also little incentive for OPEC+ countries to boost production even if they are able, said Heather Heldman, managing partner at Luminae Group.

"At the end of the day, they're worried about their economic bottom line, not the political fortune of a foreign leader," Heldman said.

In addition, Biden is planning his first trip to Saudi Arabia as president, and both countries will want something positive to announce after that summit next month, Heldman said.

"From the Saudi perspective and Emirati perspective, there's really no need to make any meaningful gesture

now," she said.

Russia's war in Ukraine has contributed to high oil prices fuelling. At a summit of the Group of Seven leading economies this week, the U.S. pushed for a price cap on Russian oil imports to try to blunt the price spikes and reduce money from oil sales flowing into the Kremlin's war chest.

The G-7 agreed to explore imposing the cap by tying it to services needed to sell oil such as insurance and shipping. Service providers would face sanctions if they facilitate the sale of oil over the cap. But the proposal left many important aspects open and will be the subject of talks in the weeks ahead.

The European Union, a key importer of Russian oil, also has approved a ban on 90% of Russian oil imports by year's end.

As of May, surplus production
cont'd on pg 13

Belize lobster stock dwindling

A week-long assessment of Belize lobster stock has found that the crustacean is in short supply.

The survey was conducted by the Belize Fisheries Department, together with the Environmental Defense Fund and The Fisheries Research Center of Cuba (El Centro de Investigaciones Pesqueras of Cuba) with technical input from the Toledo Institute for Development and Environment, the Belize Audubon Society, the Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association, the Wildlife Conservation Society, and the Nature Conservancy.

Last month, fisherfolk expressed concern at the new fishing regulations for lobster with one of the requirements being that lobster tails need to weigh four point five ounces, as opposed to four ounces previously.

Lobster is Belize's primary fisheries commodity that generates over BDZ\$30 million (One Belize dollar=US\$0.49 cents) annually.

But there are fears that a combination of factors has depleted the healthy stocks to a dwindling amount that



could thrust the country's revenues from this important marine product into jeopardy.

"Belize is experiencing a fishing level that is not sustainable at this time and we think it is as a result of other economic sectors not performing particularly well, that is why you have a number of fishers joining the industry," said Mauro Gongora, the Fisheries Officer at the Belize Fisheries Department.

"It is important for the government to put in place management measures that will prevent – avoid going into overfishing of a very important fishery resource."

Acting Fisheries Ad-

ministrator, Rigoberto Quintana, of the Belize Fisheries Department, said one of the factors has been high demand on the international market.

"Mostly the production is linked to the export market, and you saw the prices last year for the lobster was up to BDZ\$36 a pound, compared to conch which is like 14 dollars a pound. There's a high demand and the high price (inaudible) will increase those fishing prices on lobster commodities."

The senior scientist with the Fishery and Oceans Programme, Dr. Kendra Karr, said that they have analysed inputs from technicians in

various parts of the country to come up with a plan to salvage the industry.

"Someone from Turneffe Atoll has a different interpretation or might have a different idea of what we're seeing compared to someone from Punta Gorda. So we took all the information of the experts that were in the room to really get an idea of what's been happening to fishing over time in order to make some recommendations."

The recommendations have not been made public, but media reports said it is thought that patrolling the seas is one of the most effective methods to deter illegal or over-fishing.

cont'd from pg 12

capacity in non-OPEC countries decreased by 80% compared with 2021, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Surplus capacity is oil production that can be brought online within 30 days and sustained for at least 90 days. In 2021, about 60% of

the surplus production capacity was in Russia, but much of that was eliminated as of May 2022 due to sanctions, the agency said.

High gasoline prices in the U.S. aren't just about rising oil prices and less oil on the market. Most American refineries are operating at capacity, so

even if there was more oil produced, they wouldn't be able to alleviate high prices by quickly turning it into gasoline, jet fuel and diesel. U.S. crude traded down 0.2% at \$109.70 per barrel ahead of the meeting, while international benchmark Brent dropped 0.6% to \$115.35 per barrel.

Nipsey Hussle murder suspect attacked with razor in holding cell

By Doha Madani

The man accused of killing rapper Nipsey Hussle was attacked with a razor the day before jurors were expected to begin deliberations in his murder trial.

Eric R. Holder Jr. was attacked by “multiple individuals” while he awaited transportation to the Los Angeles courthouse Tuesday morning, his attorney Aaron Jansen said. The back of Holder’s head was injured after he was assaulted with a razor.

“He was taken to the hospital and received an MRI and staples in the back of his head,” Jansen told NBC News in a statement Wednesday.

The attack pushed back closing arguments, which are now scheduled for Thursday.

No motive was given. Jansen said plans to ensure Holder’s safety were discussed with the judge.

Holder is accused of shooting and killing Hussle, whose real name was Er-



Rapper Nipsey Hussle performs in 2018. [Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times via Getty Images file]

mias Asghedom, on March 31, 2019. Hussle was shot at least 10 times in the parking lot outside his South Los

Angeles store, known as The Marathon.

Holder, Hussle and two other people were at The Marathon. Holder had been angered over accusations he was a snitch, Los Angeles County Deputy District Attorney John McKinney said during the trial.

The prosecutor’s office cited numerous witnesses who said Holder returned later that day, walked up to Hussle and shot him in a premeditated attack.

Jansen told the jury that Holder attacked Hussle in a fit of “heated passion,” reacting to the conversation before he had time to cool off. He alleged that the charges were excessive because there was no premeditated plan to kill Hussle.

Holder was charged with one count of first degree-murder, along with two counts of attempted first-degree murder in connection with two other people who were injured in the shooting. He faces a maximum of life in prison if convicted.



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Trinidadian Canadian actress Mishael Morgan is first black actress to win Best Actress at Daytime Emmys

By Jovani Davis

It's all about her! Trinidad and Tobago-born actress Mishael Morgan has created entertainment history as the first Black woman to win an Emmy award for best lead actress in a drama.

The 35-year-old who was born in San Fernando, plays the role of Amanda Sinclair on *The Young and the Restless*.

In her acceptance speech at the 49th Annual Daytime Emmy Awards held recently she stated, "I was born on the tiny island, Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean and now I'm standing on an international stage, and I am being honoured regardless of the colour of my skin. Regardless of my passport, for being the best at what I do."

Morgan emphasised that little girls around the world are seeing another step forward, knowing despite their industry of choice or vocation, they can strive to be the best at what they do.

"I am so immensely proud of our generation. We are breaking glass ceilings left, right and centre, and I am so honoured to be a vessel and experience this moment," she said. "It's because of everybody who is out there today who is proving to the world that we can, and we will do this thing called equality and unity to-



Mishael Morgan poses in the press room with the award for outstanding performance by a lead actress in a drama series for her role in "The Young and the Restless" at the 49th annual Daytime Emmy Awards on Friday, June 24, 2022, in Pasadena, Calif. (Photo by Jordan Strauss/Invision/AP)

gether."

Morgan, who is in her second-year stint on *The Young and the Restless*, first joined the show in 2013 and stayed until 2018. She returned in 2019 as a different character.

The actress landed the role when she moved to the US as the character Hilary Curtis who was killed off. However, she returned to the show as Hilary's twin sister, Amanda, a criminal lawyer.

The actress who migrated to Canada with her parents when she was five has appeared in many shows including the Canadian teen series *The Best Years* and

Family Biz. She was also featured in R&B singer Trey Songz's *Wonder Woman* music video.


 A promotional graphic for a radio show. It features a microphone icon at the top with the text "POINTE FM 99.1 BROADCASTING FROM THE POINT COMMUNITY" and "COMMUNITY BASED... GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE". Below this, it says "HOSTED BY" and shows two circular portraits: one of a man in a suit labeled "AZIZA" and one of a man in a white shirt labeled "KAMAULE". The main title "PERSPECTIVES" is in large red letters, followed by "TIME : 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM" and "ON SATURDAYS". At the bottom, there are social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and Snapchat.

R. Kelly survivors detail abuse in impact statements

Some of the women who were abused by singer R. Kelly described how he had “destroyed so many people’s lives” as they addressed him in court before he was sentenced to 30 years in prison on Wednesday.

“You made me do things that broke my spirit. I literally wished I would die because of how low you made me feel,” one survivor told the disgraced star in the New York hearing. “Do you remember that?”

Another sobbed as she told the court that Kelly victimised her after she attended one of his concerts at the age of 17.

“I was afraid, naïve and didn’t know to handle the situation,” she said, explaining why she didn’t speak up at the time. “Silence is a very lonely place.”

The singer, who was previously best known for chart-topping songs like Ignition (Remix) and I Believe I Can Fly, heard seven impact statements from his victims in court shortly before he was jailed for racketeering and sex trafficking crimes.

Some women used their real names, while others were only known by their first name or a pseudonym, and several became emotional as they spoke.

Lizzette Martinez described how Kelly had promised to be a mentor when she was pursuing a singing career at 17.

“I am now 45, a mother, and I struggle with mental health,” she told the court. “Robert, you destroyed so many people’s lives.”

Speaking after the sentencing, she told the BBC: “I was a very young girl, under-age girl, who had a lot of dreams and he cut my dreams short and abused me mentally, physically,



Jovante Cunningham (centre) was among the survivors who spoke outside the court on Wednesday

emotionally, any way that you can imagine.

“I just wanted to just live a normal life and just kind of try to heal, but it could take me a lifetime to heal. Just because he’s sentenced doesn’t mean it goes away for us.”

Prior to the sentencing, a lawyer for Kelly blamed the singer’s “hypersexual” behaviour on being repeatedly sexually abused himself as a child.

But Ms Martinez said: “There are so many people that are abused in this world and we don’t turn around and abuse others. He had all the resources. We don’t have resources like that. He could have gotten help. So many things he could have done to stop himself. It’s the power of celebrity.”

Another survivor, Stephanie, said Kelly had left a “permanent stain” on her life. “I felt special, because someone who was special to the world was interested in me,” she said.

“I hope you go to jail for the rest of your life.”

‘Shameless and disgusting’

One woman, Addie, recalled meeting the singer at a concert where he



R. Kelly sexually assaulted her. “I never knew that going to that concert in September of 1994 was going to change me forever,” she said.

“These last four years have been a rude awakening of how my silence has hurt others. I hope Robert Kelly cannot sleep at night, knowing this is what he’s done.”

Angela (a pseudonym) detailed the singer’s “deplorable and inexplicable” behaviour.

She referred to the fact that Kelly was known as the self-styled “pied piper of R&B” - a title which she said applied “both in music and in technique and in approach”.

“Success and love... you present-

cont’d on pg 17

cont'd from pg 16

ed these glittering gems as if they were gold," she told him. "You used your fame and power to groom and coach under-age boys and girls for your own sexual gratification."

She continued: "With every addition of a new victim you grew in wickedness, cockiness, diminishing any form of humanity or self-awareness, which soon became the breeding ground for your God-like complex."

"You were doing, saying and encouraging despicable things that no-one should be doing. We reclaim our names from beneath the shadows of your afflicted trauma."

At one point, a woman known as Jane Doe number two told the singer: "You are an abuser, you are shameless, you are disgusting."

Several women testified that they were at the mercy of Kelly's perverse and sadistic whims while they were under the legal age of consent.

They said they were ordered to sign non-disclosure agreements, which prevented them from going public with their experiences.

Some also referred to "Rob's rules" - which, if broken, saw them subjected to threats and violent punishments.

'I was scared for my life'

As Kelly was sentenced, Kitti Jones said "many of us have been waiting for this day to come", while Faith added: "I hope you get some

help, as well as ask God for forgiveness."

Another survivor, Sonja, told the court: "There were numerous times I was scared for my life, scared for my daughter's life. I hope and I pray to God that we can all heal."

Jovante Cunningham, a former backing singer for Kelly, said: "We are starting

to see justice and we still have more litigation to go."

Ms Cunningham took part in the docuseries *Surviving R. Kelly*, where she talked about witnessing the adult singer having sex with Aaliyah when the late R&B star was under age.

Referring to his sentencing, Ms Cunningham said: "You know, the Bible says

that what you do in secret, God will reward you openly. He did all of this in secret, so now he gets rewarded openly."

Lawyers for the singer, whose full name is Robert Sylvester Kelly, said he would appeal against his sentence. Further prosecutions are set to take place in Chicago and Minnesota.

Pointe Xpress Weekend Puzzle

ACROSS

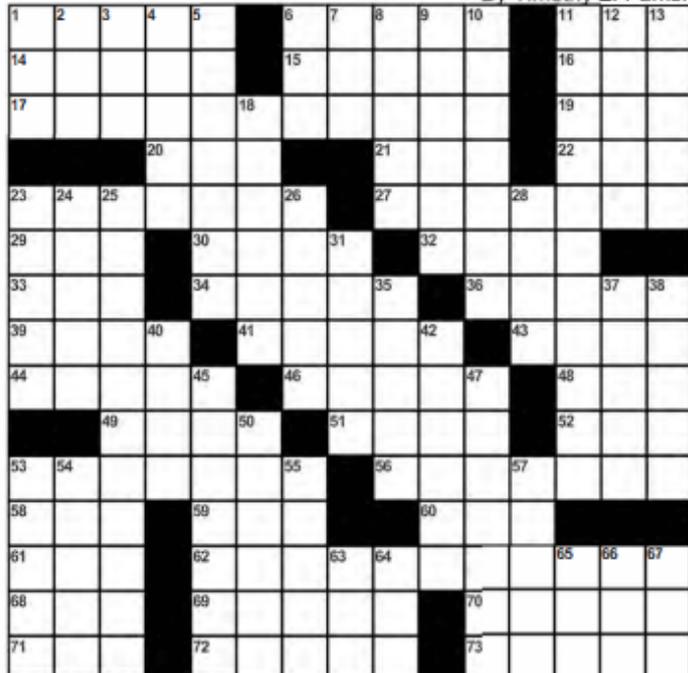
- 1) Tub activities
- 6) Flat-necked snake
- 11) It may be skipped in alphabetization
- 14) "I, Robot" author Asimov
- 15) Head piece?
- 16) Bottom seam
- 17) "Pronto!"
- 19) Monte Rosa, e.g.
- 20) United Kingdom brew
- 21) Psychology 101 topic
- 22) Trike rider
- 23) International agreement
- 27) Mass-to-volume ratio
- 29) Outburst from Homer Simpson
- 30) Cows' chew
- 32) Some bread loaves
- 33) ___ few rounds (box)
- 34) Susan Lucci character
- 36) Lauer and LeBlanc
- 39) Carpenters and harvesters
- 41) Cause of some food poisoning
- 43) Ill-mannered one
- 44) Send for consultation
- 46) Fabric with patterns
- 48) Not to be trusted
- 49) Curtain that no longer exists
- 51) Hand part
- 52) Feel feverish
- 53) Surgically ties
- 56) Class within a class
- 58) Flightless bird
- 59) Android offering
- 60) Chairman in The Beatles' "Revolution"
- 61) Damage superficially
- 62) Now-or-never time
- 68) Store in casks, as wine
- 69) Kind of silence
- 70) Crystal-bearing rock
- 71) They are not positive
- 72) Searched for bugs
- 73) Old-fashioned music hall

DOWN

- 1) Power-drill accessory
- 2) Type of pile at a campground
- 3) Mai ___ (tropical beverage)
- 4) Hurriers make it
- 5) High school subject
- 6) "Elementary" network
- 7) Dinner table crumb
- 8) Emulated a sheep
- 9) Horseshoe score
- 10) Contrary word?
- 11) "What I meant was ..."
- 12) Old serf
- 13) Ready for a refill
- 18) Kind of study or trail
- 23) ___ Allan Poe
- 24) "There's ___ here but us ..."
- 25) "Makes sense"
- 26) Formal proclamation
- 28) "Clapping" animal
- 31) Ice-cream utensil
- 35) Name on a wanted poster
- 37) Early spring bloom
- 38) What the rich live in?
- 40) Evening, in Milan
- 42) Light
- 45) Spins, as the earth
- 47) Commerce stoppage
- 50) Certain male relative
- 53) Lake ___ (Lake Geneva)
- 54) Adult insect
- 55) Church steeple
- 57) Teased (with "with")
- 63) Tentative taste
- 64) Animal doc
- 65) Bambi's mother, for one
- 66) Shakespeare's "Much ___ About Nothing"
- 67) Tokyo cabbage?

THOSE?

By Timothy E. Parker



Sir Shridath Ramphal's papers, covering 72 years of public life, released on the Internet

Caribbean and Commonwealth elder statesman, Sir Shridath Ramphal, has released papers on the Internet, covering 72 years of public life in the Caribbean, the Commonwealth and internationally.

In his distinguished career, Sir Shridath 'Sonny' Ramphal has served as Assistant Attorney-General of the West Indies Federation, Minister of Justice and Foreign Affairs of Guyana, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, and concurrently Chancellor of the University of Guyana, the University of the West Indies and Warwick University.

He is the only person to have served on all the Global Commissions that produced pioneering reports on the environment, development and disarmament, between 1980 and 1995. He was also Chair-

man of the West Indian Commission, whose 1992 report, "Time for Action", is still regarded today as the seminal blueprint for Caribbean Development.

Sir Shridath was called to service in many other capacities, including President of the World Conservation Union, Special Adviser to the UN Conference on Environment and Development, Chief Negotiator for the Caribbean on External Economic Relations and as a mediator and facilitator in elections and constitutional crises.

As the longest-serving Commonwealth Secretary-General from 1975 to 1990, Sir Shridath played a lead role in ending institutional racism in Southern Africa, particularly in terminating Apartheid in South Africa. Nelson Mandela said of him: "He is



Sir Shridath Ramphal

one of those men who have become famous because, in their fight for human justice, they have chosen the whole world as their theatre".

The website, giving free access to Sir Shridath's speeches and other submissions from 1950 to 2022, is available to the public of the international community, including universities, libraries, researchers and academics as well as interested readers at: www.sirshridathramphal.com

IMF says Haiti staff-monitored programme may lead to loan deal

Reuters - The International Monetary Fund said on Wednesday its management had approved a staff-monitored programme for Haiti to establish a track record of policy implementation that could lead to an IMF-supported loan programme.

The monitoring programme, which does not include financial assistance and does not require Executive Board approval, runs through May 31, 2023, the IMF said.

The IMF said in a statement that shocks to the Caribbean country, including assassination of its presi-



Women walk along the roadside as they head towards a market in Fermate, Haiti, October 26, 2021. REUTERS/Claudia Daut

dent in 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic, an earthquake and a surge in gang violence have weakened institutional

frameworks and the government's administrative capacity.

The monitoring pro-

gramme is aimed at improving governance in Haiti, the poorest country in the West-

cont'd on pg 19

Suriname updates visa policy for USA, EU, others



Street with old colonial buildings in Paramaribo, capital of Suriname. Photo: iStock

Loop – Travellers from French Guiana, USA, Europe and parts of Asia will no longer need a visa to enter Suriname.

That is because a new policy will come into effect today and it will allow travellers from the countries that are not exempted to pay an entry fee of €25 or \$25.

The French Foreign Ministry said residents of its Guiana territory can pay the

entry fee via the VFS portal, at the Consulate General of Suriname in Cayenne or the consular office in Saint-Laurent du Maroni and at the Canawaima Management NV in Southdrain, Nickerie for passengers arriving from Guyana.

From July 1 to September 30, 2022, the entrance fee can also be paid at the consular office at Zanderij and Zorg en Hoop airports.

UNICEF urges accelerated national response to violence against children in Jamaica on heels of brutal slaying

CMC – UNICEF has expressed alarm at the upsurge in violence in Jamaica, particularly incidents with child victims, and called for an accelerated national response to address violence against children in the country.

The United Nations children’s agency made the call in a statement issued on the heels of the slaying of Kemisha Wright and her four children in the central parish of Clarendon last week.

Wright and her three daughters – ages 15, 10, and 5 – and 23-month-old son were found with their

throats slashed last Tuesday morning.

“This horrific and brutal attack against the most vulnerable members of our society has shocked the entire nation. It also highlights the need for the Government of Jamaica to accelerate commitments made to protect our children under the 2019 National Plan of Action for an Integrated Response to Children and Violence (NPACV),” it said.

Those commitments include investing in programmes addressing conflict resolution, anger management, safety in the homes and community



Kemisha Wright’s mother (centre) being consoled after the bodies of her only daughter and four grandchildren were found slaughtered at their Clarendon, Jamaica home on 21st June, 2022.

safety, and developing and improving partnerships to strengthen community resilience in relation to vio-

lence.

“UNICEF is ready to continue our support to these efforts. UNICEF urges every member of society to take action to help protect our children from all forms of violence and abuse,” it added.

A 23-year-old man has since been detained in connection with the deaths of 31-year-old Wright and her children.

cont’d from pg 18

ern Hemisphere, and strengthening its public finances and anti-corruption measures, the IMF said.

It added fuel subsidies have been absorbing at least one-third of Haiti’s domestic revenues, crowding out spending on investment, health and education.

The staff-monitored programme

(SMP) aims to rectify this and end central bank financing of fiscal deficits that have been fuelling inflation.

“Satisfactory performance under the SMP could lead to an IMF-supported programme under a multi-year arrangement that would require approval of the IMF’s Executive Board,” the IMF said in a statement on the programme.

UN envoy warns Congo's M23 rebels are acting like an army

AP - The U.N. special envoy for Congo warned Wednesday that the M23 rebel group has increasingly acted as a conventional army during escalating military action in the country's volatile east and could threaten the U.N. peacekeeping force charged with protecting civilians.

Bintou Keita urged the U.N. Security Council to fully back regional efforts to defuse tensions between Congo and Rwanda over M23 rebels and other armed groups that have raised fears of war between the neighbouring countries.

She also urged Congo and Rwanda to seize the opportunity to resolve their differences at an upcoming summit hosted by Angola's President Joao Lourenco in the capital, Luanda.

Eastern Congo, which borders Rwanda, lives with the daily threat from dozens of armed groups that jostle for a piece of the region's rich mineral wealth, which the world mines for electric cars, laptops and mobile phones. The M23, one of the most notorious rebel groups, surged into action this year and captured a key trading town in eastern Congo this month.

Congo has accused Rwanda of supporting the M23, which Rwanda has long denied. Each country has accused the other of recent incursions.

On June 20, east African leaders meeting in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, responded to the threat of war by instructing a new regional force to deploy in eastern Congo and ordering an immediate cease-fire.

Keita told the Security Council that "during the most recent hostilities, the M23 has conducted itself increasingly as a conventional army rather than an armed group."

"The M23 possesses firepower



Armed militiamen gather near Rutshuru, 70 kms (45 miles) north of Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, Wednesday June 22, 2022. Earlier in the week, East Africa's leaders have responded to the threat of war between Rwanda and Congo by instructing a new regional force to deploy in eastern Congo and ordering an immediate cease-fire. A statement after the meeting in Kenya's capital does not give details on the date of deployment of the force or its composition. (AP Photo/Moses Sawasawa)

and equipment, which is increasingly sophisticated, specifically in terms of long-range fire capacities, mortars and machine guns as well as precision fire against aircraft," she said. "The threat that this poses both for civilians" and U.N. peacekeepers "who have a mandate to protect them is evident."

The M23 offensive has had a major impact on civilians, causing the death of 23 people including six children in May and June, and displacing more than 170,000, the U.N. special representative said.

Keita warned that if the M23 continues "its well-coordinated attacks" against the Congolese army and the U.N. peacekeeping force known as MONUSCO "with increasing conventional capabilities, the mission may find itself confronted by a threat that goes beyond its current capabilities.

She also cited threats from other armed groups.

As government forces and the U.N. peacekeeping body shifted troops to focus on the M23, Keita said other armed groups "sought to take advantage of the resulting security vacuum," increasing attacks in North Kivu and Ituri provinces that killed more than 150 civilians between May 28 and June 17.

Keita later told reporters that deployment of the regional force authorised at the Kenya meeting should complement U.N. peacekeepers: "The most important element and feature for us is coordination, coordination, coordination."

Fortunately, she said, the regional force will be based in Goma, eastern Congo's largest city, where U.N. peacekeepers have a coordination centre with the Congolese army. She also stressed the importance of the regional force's commitment to human rights.

Keita said MONUSCO has been informed that the regional force's head-

cont'd on pg 21

Marcos takes helm in Philippines, silent on father's abuses

AP – Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the namesake son of an ousted dictator, praised his father's legacy and glossed over its violent past as he was sworn in as Philippine president Thursday after a stunning election victory that opponents say was pulled off by whitewashing his family's image.

His rise to power, 36 years after an army-backed "People Power" revolt booted his father from office and into global infamy, upends politics in the Asian democracy, where a public holiday, monuments and the Philippine Constitution stand as reminders of the end of Ferdinand Marcos Sr.'s tyrannical rule.

But in his inaugural speech, Marcos Jr. defended the legacy of his late father, who he said accomplished many things that had not been done since the coun-



President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. stands with his mother Imelda Marcos, left, and his wife Maria Louise Marcos, right, during the inauguration ceremony at National Museum on Thursday, June 30, 2022 in Manila, Philippines. Marcos was sworn in as the country's 17th president. (AP Photo/Aaron Favila)

try's independence.

"He got it done, sometimes with the needed support, sometimes without. So will it be with his son," he said to applause from his supporters in the crowd. "You will get no excuses from me."

"My father built more and better roads, produced more rice than all adminis-

trations before his," Marcos Jr. said. He praised the infrastructure projects by his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, who ended his six-year term also with a legacy of violence, strong-man rule and contempt for those who stood in his path.

The new president called for unity, saying "we will go farther together than against

each other. He did not touch on the human rights atrocities and plunder his father was accused of, saying he would not talk about the past but the future.

Activists and survivors of the martial law era under his father protested Marcos Jr.'s inauguration, which took place at a noontime ceremony at the steps of the National Museum in Manila.

Thousands of police officers, including anti-riot contingents, SWAT commandos and snipers, were deployed in the bay side tourist district for security.

Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan and U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris's husband, Doug Emhoff, were among foreign dignitaries, who attended the event, which featured a 21-gun salute, a military parade and air force jet fly-bys.

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quarters will be deployed by the end of July and its troops should come sometime in August.

U.S. deputy ambassador Richard Mills told the council the United States insists that the regional force's deployment be closely coordinated with U.N. peacekeepers and conducted under international law and existing Security Council sanctions resolutions.

Keita said she was encouraged by the commitment of Congo's government to pursue consultations with armed groups and encourage them to lay down their arms and join a national disarmament programme, adding that several

groups expressed their willingness.

Julienne Lusenge, president of the Congolese organisation Female Solidarity for Integrated Peace and Development, told the council about the impact of the worsening conflict in the east on women, saying mothers are cooking "soil to feed their children instead of boiling corn or soya."

Lusenge also told the story of a woman whose family mortgaged land to pay \$700 to ransom a relative. She was kidnapped when she went to deliver the money, forced to cook the entrails of a man who had been killed that were fed to prisoners, and repeatedly raped. After being released, she was detained by

another group as she headed home, held as a sexual slave and forced to cook and eat human flesh. She escaped, returned to her village, and learned the family member she went to ransom had been murdered.

Lusenge urged the Security Council to end "any ambiguity of what is happening in the east," saying U.N. experts have shown Rwanda's involvement with the M23. And she urged increased protection for civilians to prevent deaths and sexual violence against women and girls, medical and psychological support for survivors, and strengthened dialogue to end the violence and restore stability to eastern Congo.

Israel's parliament dissolves, sets fifth election in four years

AP – Israel's parliament voted Thursday to dissolve itself, marking the end of a year-old experimental coalition government, and sending the country to the polls in November for the fifth time in less than four years.

Yair Lapid, Israel's foreign minister and architect of the outgoing coalition government, will become the country's caretaker prime minister just after midnight on Friday.

He will be the 14th person to hold that office, taking over from Naftali Bennett, Israel's shortest serving prime minister.

Following the vote, Lapid embraced Bennett before the two swapped chairs. He posted, "thanks, Naftali, my brother" on Twitter.

The government collapsed just over a year after it was formed in a historic move that saw long-time leader Benjamin Netanyahu ousted after 12 years in power by a coalition of ideologically diverse parties, the first to include an Arab faction.

The motion to dissolve passed with 92 lawmakers in favour, and none against, after days of bickering by coalition and opposition lawmakers over the date of new elections and other last-minute legislation.

New elections will be



Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, left, and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid react after a vote on a bill to dissolve the parliament at the Knesset, Israel's parliament, in Jerusalem, Thursday, June 30, 2022. Israel's parliament has voted to dissolve itself, sending the country to the polls for the fifth time in less than four years. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)

held on Nov. 1.

The move brings a formal end to a political experiment in which eight parties from across the Israeli spectrum tried to find common ground after a period of prolonged gridlock in which the country held four elections in two years.

The upcoming elections are an extension of Israel's protracted political crisis, at the heart of which sits Netanyahu and his ongoing corruption trial.

The four deadlocked elections in the previous three years were largely referendums on Netanyahu's fitness to serve while facing charges of accepting bribes, fraud and breach of trust. Netanyahu has denied any wrongdoing.

Lapid, a former talk-show host who heads a cen-

tre-left party, is expected to campaign as caretaker prime minister to keep the job as the main alternative to Netanyahu, and will likely get an early boost when he welcomes President Joe Biden to the country next week.

Polls by Israeli media show Netanyahu and his allies are projected to gain seats, although it is unclear whether they would have enough to form a 61-seat majority in the 120-member Knesset. If neither he nor anyone else succeeds in doing so, Israel could go to elections yet again.

On Wednesday, Bennett said he would be taking a hiatus from politics and would not be running in the upcoming elections.

His Yamina party was riven by infighting and

splintered following the formation of the government last year as its members broke away in protest of what they considered Bennett's excessive compromises to more liberal coalition allies.

The death blow came earlier this month, when the government failed to renew an emergency law that preserves the special legal status of Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank, legislation that most Israelis view as essential.

Because the Knesset was dissolved before the end of the month, the emergency law is automatically renewed until after the formation of a new government.

The outgoing governing coalition made history by being the first to include an Arab party.

Mansour Abbas, leader of the Islamist Ra'am faction, joined the coalition to secure better services and more government funding for Israel's Arab minority, which makes up some 20% of the population.

Israel's Arab citizens face widespread discrimination and are seen by many Jewish Israelis as a fifth column because they have close family ties to Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, and largely support their struggle for independence.

Striving for Excellence summer camp to tee off next week

The Striving for Success Academy will be continuing its junior golf programme by hosting a summer camp, which will commence at the Cedar Valley Golf Course on Monday, 4th July.

The Striving for Excellence Youth, Sports and Education Development Summer Golf Camp, which will conclude on Friday, 26th August, is open to young golfers or any youngsters interested in the sport.

Founder of the academy, Marlon “Boozie” George and coach Skey Anthony will be among the coaches that will be working to develop the young golfers at the summer camp.

“Our summer programme is geared towards growing and developing the game of golf in Antigua, while adding a few other sporting activities throughout the summer,” George said.

“Some of our sporting activities will be football and we will also be teaching participants the game of chess during a one-hour period every day.

“We also will be having pictures and videos of our summer camp posted on The Striving for Excellence Antigua instagram and TikTok page, as well as on Marlon George Golf on Instagram.”

Registration for the camp, which will start at 9 am on Monday, can be done on the same day.

“Our cost for our Summer programme this year will be \$480 per junior and if both junior golfers are of the same household, the registration fee will be \$760. Please remember that the registration fee is a one-time fee that covers all eight weeks,” George stated.

“If there is any parent that would like an early drop off, please let us



Striving for Success academy golf coach Marlon 'Boozie' George. (Photo courtesy Marlon George)

know so that one of our coaches will be available to receive the junior golfer.”

For the first two weeks, sessions will only be held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 am to 1:30 pm.

However, from the third week, there will be full week sessions from Monday through to Friday. Persons can contact coach George at 776-6606 or coach Anthony at 781-3331 for further information.

Meanwhile, the Striving for Excellence Junior Program will be teaming up with several sponsors to host a series of junior tournaments during the summer and Autumn (fall) calendar.

The organization will be partnering with Lockstone London in collaboration with Cedar Valley Golf Club, the Antigua and Barbuda Golf Association (ABGA), Cedar Valley Golf As-

sociation, Paradiso Water and Patricia Promotions to stage the summer and autumn series for golfers 18 years and under.

The summer series of competitions will commence with the Patricia promotions Junior Masters on 10th July, with first tee time or starting time slated for 11am.

The 18 +1 Junior Championship will take place on Saturday, 16th July with first tee time at 7am.

The Lockstone London Junior Match Play Championship will commence on Sunday, 24th July, with first tee time at 12 noon and it will end on Saturday, 30th July with a 27-hole final.

The Andy Hall & David Kenel Saturday Junior Championship will be staged on Saturday, 6th August, with first tee time at 9am.

cont'd on pg 24

Harden declines \$47M option with Philadelphia

AP – James Harden is taking less with hopes the Philadelphia 76ers can do more.

A person familiar with the situation said Harden chose not to exercise his \$47.4 million option for next season and will become a free agent — but with no designs on leaving Philadelphia.

Harden made the decision to allow the 76ers the flexibility they need to sign other players this summer, said the person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because neither side confirmed those plans publicly.

That will be a major factor when the NBA opens the free agency negotiating window at 6 p.m. Eastern on Thursday, with Philadelphia among the teams that will be expected to target Miami forward P.J. Tucker, among others.

The most likely scenario for Harden now is this:



Philadelphia 76ers' James Harden gestures during the first half of Game 3 of the team's NBA basketball second-round playoff series against the Miami Heat, May 6, 2022, in Philadelphia. A person familiar with the situation said Harden chose not to exercise his \$47.4 million option for next season and will become a free agent — but with no designs on leaving Philadelphia. (AP Photo/Matt Slocum, File)

The 10-time All-Star signs a new deal with Philadelphia, for something close to that \$47.4 million number, after the team has addressed other needs and

improved its chances of becoming a true championship contender in 2023.

If Harden had opted in before his Wednesday afternoon deadline, Phila-

delphia would have had a much more difficult time in finding financial pathways toward luring free agents.

His decision Wednesday backed up what Harden said May 12, when Philadelphia's season ended in the second round of the playoffs — a six-game loss to top-seeded Miami.

"I'll be here," Harden said that night when asked about his future.

"Yeah, I'll be here. Whatever makes this team, whatever allows this team to continue to grow and get better and do the things necessary to win and compete at the highest level."

Harden is a three-time scoring champion and averaged 22.0 points and 10.3 assists during his time with Brooklyn and Philadelphia last season.

The seven-time All-NBA player was the 2018 NBA MVP and a member of the league's 75th anniversary team.

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The Eyemobile/Pointe FM Junior Classic will be held on Sunday, 14th August with first tee time at 11 am.

The Kelton Dalso Clash of the Junior Open will be staged on Sunday, 21st August with first tee time at 11 am.

The Paradiso Water Junior Showdown is slated for 27th and 28th August, with first tee time at 7am on the Saturday and 11am on the Sunday.

The 2022 summer series will end with the Bryden's Back to School Championship on Sunday, 4th September, with first tee time at 11 am.

Striving for Success will also be hosting their fall junior tournaments later this year.

The fall calendar will tee off with the GolfZone/Wadadli Cats Junior 2 Person Scramble on Sunday, 30th October.

The ABGA Junior Antiguan Open

will take place on 5th and 6th November.

The Wally Haywood Junior Alternate Shots will be held on Sunday, 27th November and fall series of tournaments will conclude with the staging of the Cedar Valley Golf Association's Junior Christmas Hamper on Friday, 16th December.

The tournaments are open to all Junior golfers in Antigua and Barbuda.

Bridges happy to recapture national road race champion title

National cyclist Jyme Bridges is elated to once again be crowned national road race cycling champion.

Bridges, who is now based in Miami, Florida, returned home to capture the title when he won the Antigua and Barbuda Cycling Federation's (ABCF) Top Ranking Nationals Individual Road Race on Sunday, 26th June.

Bridges, who last won the event in 2018, held off a strong challenge from Shawn Weathered to win last Sunday's road race Sunday. He said winning the national title gives him the opportunity to showcase how proud he is to be a native of Antigua and Barbuda.

"For me personally, I always enjoy competing at home. Yes I do most of my work outside of Antigua, but I love the country, I love the flag and it's very exciting to be the national champion again because what that means for me, is for the next year, I get to wear the flag on basically any jersey that I am racing with to showcase the flag and the colours of my nation," Bridges stated.

"So it's a very proud moment and yes I have won it before, but there cannot be too many times of winning and taking your flag all around the world, so it is definitely a good feeling to have it again."



Winners of the Antigua and Barbuda Cycling Federation's Top Ranking Nationals Individual Road Race on Sunday, 26 June, 2022. From left to right: Runner-up in the Elite Men's Class Shawn Weathered, Overall and Elite Men's Class champion Jyme Bridges, center, and Cadets 14 to 17 Class winner Tahje Browne. (File photo)

Bridges had to use all his skills to hold off Weathered in a sprint finish and clinched victory by crossing the finish line just over a second earlier than Weathered to win the Elite Men's Division and overall title.

Bridges completed the 66-mile road race in a time of three hours, 17 minutes and 12.40 seconds, while Weathered of Team Terminix clocked three hours, 17 minutes and 13.45 seconds to take the runner-up position.

Emmanuel Gayral of Team Terminix finished third in a time of three hours, 17 minutes and 15.11 seconds.

Another United States based cyclist, Conor Delanbanque, who won the race last year, did not participate

in last Sunday's event, but Bridges said it was a good race.

"For me personally, it was a calculated race. I tried my best to just pay attention to what the guys were doing, monitor myself as well and just do what I needed to do to be on top at the end," he said.

"It wasn't really about trying to overdo or trying to prove anything on the roads, but just mainly going out there, have some fun and do my best to get back the title. But it was a good race altogether. The guys rode pretty well as well so I was happy to take part in the event.

Bridges left Antigua several years ago to take up residence in Trinidad & Tobago where he had access to a cycling track in his efforts

to work on his overall development as a cyclist.

Bridges said he decided to move from Trinidad to Florida after the Covid-19 Pandemic brought cycling to a halt in the Caribbean twin-island republic. Bridges said he is still trying his best to keep improving his craft.

"I am still doing my best to make sure that, if not the best form of my life, at least be in some pretty good shape that any time I need to, I can come and compete and be competitive first of all, and then move forward trying to do like I did last weekend, where I was able to take part in the national championship and regained the national title once again," Bridges stated.

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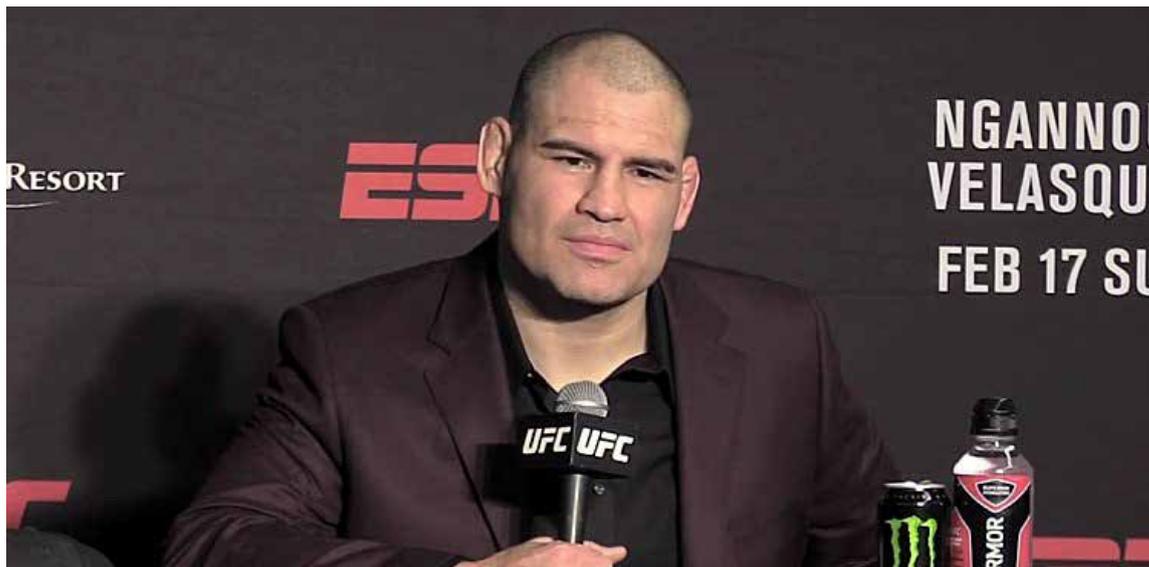
UFC star charged in shooting sues man over alleged molesting

AP – Cain Velasquez, the former UFC heavy-weight champion accused of trying to kill the man he claims molested his 4-year-old son, is suing the man and his family who own a day care where the alleged molestation occurred.

Velasquez was arrested in San Jose, California, last February after he shot at a pickup truck carrying the man through busy streets in three Silicon Valley cities, ramming the vehicle with his own truck during a high-speed chase, prosecutors said.

A judge in March denied bail to Velasquez, who faces attempted murder and multiple gun assault charges. His attorney, Mark Geragos, has said he plans on vindicating Velasquez in court.

Velasquez claims in a civil lawsuit that Harry Goularte sexually molested Velasquez's son while the boy was attending a



Cain Velasquez

day care run at a home by Goularte's mother, Patricia Goularte, the Los Angeles Times reported Wednesday.

The Times said the lawsuit was filed on behalf of a minor. Harry Goularte was living at the home and working for the day care during the time of the alleged molestation, according to the court filing.

Stephen Defilippis, an attorney for Goularte, didn't immediately respond

Wednesday to a call seeking comment on the lawsuit.

The child care business and its owners "fostered and maintained an environment" where the children could be molested, sexually abused and harassed, Velasquez said in the court filing. The lawsuit accuses Goularte and his family of negligence and sexual battery.

Goularte, 43, was charged with lewd and lascivious acts with a minor

by the Santa Clara County district attorney's office. He has pleaded not guilty and trial is scheduled for September.

Velasquez, 39, is due back in court in August, the Times said.

Velasquez transitioned to pro-wrestling after retiring from his MMA career in 2019. A former two-time UFC heavyweight champion, he earned title belts in 2010 and 2012.

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"For right now I am based in Miami, Florida. I was previously based in Trinidad where I was getting a lot of my track work done, but now I have shifted a little bit.

"The Covid-19 situation kind of killed cycling in Trinidad to a great deal that most of the guys that are still competitive are now outside of the country still trying to do something for themselves, so right now I am pretty much based in Miami where I am doing most of my work right now.

Bridges did point to one drawback

since moving to Miami. Bridges said the lack of hilly terrain where he is based in Miami is posing a major challenge for him to work on his climbing technique.

But he said there are other advantages to being based in Florida.

"Where I am based right now, there aren't any hills whatsoever, so I had some challenges trying to keep my technique and form where climbing is involved," Bridges stated.

"But other than that, the racing scene there is really tough. The level is really high. It keeps you sharp, it

keeps you fit and it most definitely has made me a faster rider.

"Cycling on the track is an aspect in the sport that helps with improving or developing your strength and your speed that will help you in road cycling.

"However, you cannot neglect the road work because both go hand in hand. It is something that can help you in road cycling if you are able to get to a place where you can utilize the track.

"Outside of that, training or riding on the track mainly helps with your strength and your speed."

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ment had put the work out to tender for construction companies to make an application to do the renovation.

But Williams was unable to give a timeline as to when work on the second phase of redevelopment will commence and be completed.

Daley, who is also a track and field coach of Power Speed and Endurance Athletics Club, said with the World Athletics certified track already in place, and the addition of proper infrastructure, will enable the YASCO Sports Complex to play a meaningful role in boosting the country's economy via sports tourism.

"In addition to the newly laid track, if all the infrastructures are put in place, we would now be able to host regional and sub-regional events once we are able to get the seating, proper fencing and other necessary infrastructures in place," Daley stated.

"We would also be able to invite athletes who live in the more northern countries to come to Antigua and train during the Winter months and that is going to help with our sports tourism.

"These athletes would also bring equipment with them and leave them here when they are going back home to their countries, so our local athletes will benefit by utilizing the same equipment to train.

"They will stay in hotels and guest houses, they will rent cars and they will buy food so they will be putting money into the Antiguan economy.

"The current track is definitely the best surface we have had at YASCO. It provides us with a place where the athletes can do their finishing work and by that I mean, by getting the athletes' competition ready. The new surface has been a tremendous help for us."

The absence of much needed infrastructure at YASCO has been a sore point for many and it has resulted in limited use of the facility to host major social or sporting events since 2017.

Since the resurfacing of the track, the use of the YASCO facility was also reduced due to the emergence of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

However, the staging of last weekend's national athletics championship was the third major track and field event held at YASCO this year.

Princess Margaret School brought in additional lighting, seating and barricades to host its sports day track and field event on 30 March and on 6th and 7th May, the Ministry of Sports followed suit and staged its first Inter-Schools' Track and Field competition at YASCO since 2017.



Power Speed and Endurance Athletic Club coach Ted Daley.

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

For more information contact 268-723-4936
| 268-774-7331 | 268-772-4642

Daley hopes redevelopment of YASCO can be completed soon

Executive Floor Member of the Antigua and Barbuda Athletics Association (ABAA) Ted Daley is hoping that the overall re-development of the YASCO Sports Complex can soon be completed.

The upgrading of the sporting facility started in 2017, but is yet to be completed.

The ABAA hosted its national track and field championships at the YASCO facility last weekend, with most of the nation's top overseas-based athletes returning home to compete during the two-day event on Saturday, 25th June and Sunday, 26th June.

Organisers of the meet, the ABAA, ensured there were adequate bathroom facilities, but there was a lack of seating to accommodate spectators at the event.

Daley is, however, hoping that the renovation of the facility can be completed by the start of the next track and field season in 2023.

"I would love to see us get the facility at YASCO up to speed so that we can put on some regional, sub-regional and even international events so that people can come out and see what top class track and field is like. They will be able to see the excitement live and in living colour," Daley stated.

"However, we are getting there slowly, but I just want to see that speed up a little bit so that we can get there sooner. Hopefully, by the next track season next year, all of these things will be in place and we will be in a position to put on some first class events up at YASCO."



An aerial view of the resurfaced track at the YASCO Sports Complex. (File Photos)

Activities at the facility were curtailed in 2017 to facilitate the relaying of a new Mondo track via a collaborative effort between the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, the Antigua and Barbuda National Olympic Committee (ABNOC) and to a lesser extent, the Antigua and Barbuda Athletics Association (ABAA).

A committee, comprising chairman Cleofoster Harris, who is a member of the ABAA, General Secretary of the ABNOC Cliff Williams, Michael Free-land, President of the ABAA, Everton Cornelius and Director of Sports Heather Samuel-Daley, was installed to oversee the resurfacing of the track and the improvement of some other facilities at the YASCO complex.

With the Ministry of Sports super-

vising the work and funding facilitated by the National Olympic Committee, the resurfacing was protracted, with Mondo officials eventually completing the relaying of the new track in March, 2021.

However, the second phase in the redevelopment of YASCO, involving the erection of stands, improving the lighting, repairing the perimeter fence and the building of proper bath and changing room facilities are yet to begin.

Last month, Cliff Williams disclosed that some funding has been secured via the Ministry of Environment to make some improvement to the infrastructure at YASCO.

He said the Department of Environ-

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