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SALARY INCREASE FOR PUBLIC SERVANTS BY XMAS

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PM says pay increase for public servants by Christmas

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has made the commitment that public sector workers will receive increases on their salaries and wages as early as December this year.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Browne told state media that the government completed all the arrangements necessary to ensure that money to cover the increases is available. The only delay that could occur would be if the government's negotiation team is unable to reach agreements with the unions representing public service employees.

"I would not want to preempt the negotiating committee as this committee was established in 2018 when we gave a 5 percent increase and it is now negotiating the final amounts," he explained.

Browne said this time around, a 7 percent increase was proposed, but that this was rejected by the unions.

"We have since asked our negotiating team to increase the amount, so, I am hoping that within the upcoming weeks they will come to some agreement and that there will be a formal proposal placed before the Cabinet which we stand ready to accept," he stated.

The prime minister continued that the increases will be retroactive and confirmed that arrangements have also been made to ensure out-



standing back pay is covered as well.

Once the negotiations are completed in a timely manner and the Cabinet receives the recommendations, the prime minister said public sector workers can expect to enjoy a particularly good Christmas.

To make good on this promise to public servants, the Browne administration will pursue financing from various sources including from the balance of a US\$25 million loan which had been secured by the government from the Caribbean Development Bank.

"We are pursuing different sources of funding. As for this year's budget, we did include provisions for salary and wage increases for public sector workers. This issue now is funding it.

"You will recognise that we have not fully recovered from the decreases in reve-

nues caused by the pandemic. We are still 10 percent down from where we were in 2019. We therefore have to borrow to fund their expenditures," he explained.

He noted that a bond was floated earlier this year from which the government hoped to raise US\$200 million. Unfortunately, the initial subscriber did not offer a "good deal", according to Browne.

That bond was transferred to another subscriber last week however, and, once that is completed smoothly, an agreement should be signed within a matter of weeks.

"On the basis of this agreement taking effect, we should be able to begin drawing down funds within fourteen days and we will then be in a position to finance these obligations," he declared.

Creditors to benefit too

Scores of government creditors, including private

contractors who provide diverse services including garbage removal, are likely to benefit from the US\$200 million bond that is now being finalised.

This was another of Prime Minister Browne's disclosures as he informed that the government is moving to reduce its liability to creditors.

To this end, a portion of the bond that is being negotiated will be used to clear some of the arrears to creditors.

The country's finance minister said his administration is intent on making a significant dent in its arrears to creditors. The government will therefore explore creative means to achieve this goal, including asking creditors to take a "hair-cut" or accept a part of the balance owed, with the understanding that the balance will be paid in full over time.

PM Browne unphased by the IMF's lukewarm post-COVID economic outlook for A&B

Despite a mixed bag report on Antigua and Barbuda's post-pandemic economic recovery by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the country's finance minister, Prime Minister Gaston Browne remains confident that the country has passed the worst.

On Sunday, in a live interview on state media, Prime Minister Browne said while major setbacks had been suffered because of the pandemic, Antigua and Barbuda enjoyed economic growth of 7.4 percent in 2021, with 7.5 percent growth projected when the 2022 analysis is complete.

This exceeded the IMF's broad economic performance projections for tourism dependent economies in the Caribbean of 2.8 percent in 2021 and 3.2 percent in 2022 and its specific Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimates for Antigua and Barbuda of 5.3 percent growth in 2021 and 6 percent in 2022.

According to the IMF, while the country could continue to suffer "long-term scarring effects" due to labour market disruptions, loss of tourism capital stock and school closures resulting from the pandemic, the quick rebound of tourism and a spike in construction drove the country's economic rebound from 2020's GDP contraction of 20 percent.



Prime Minister Gaston Browne gave a live interview on state media on 9th October, 2022 which covered several issues concerning the country's performance, economic recovery post-COVID and the way forward under his ABLP administration. [Photo: Office of the Prime Minister/Maurice Merchant]

According to Prime Minister Browne, this promising trend is likely to continue.

"I think that we have shown a level of resilience never before seen because, as you know, the COVID pandemic has been the most impactful challenge that any country, any government, would have experienced in the last hundred years.

"So, I am very pleased with the recovery, and I would say that by the end of 2023 we should exceed the value of the economy as at the end of 2019.

"So, whereas the IMF is suggesting that the recovery will be completed in 2025, I am of the view that by the fourth quarter of 2023 that we would have surpassed

the level of growth and the size of the economy as at the end of December 31st, 2019."

The most recent IMF outlook for Antigua and Barbuda stated that the country's economy will be driven by the strong recovery of tourism, foreign direct investment in the hospitality sector and public sector projects, but this was tempered with a word of caution.

"Commodity price shocks can dampen domestic demand and entrench inflation. A growth slowdown in main tourism source markets and/or renewed COVID-19 outbreaks and travel restrictions could stall the tourism recovery and deepen scarring effects,"

said the report, which was the end result of an IMF visit to the country led by Varapat Chensavasdijai from 20th September to 3rd October in connection with a 2022 Article IV consultation.

The Chensavasdijai report added that more frequent and intensive natural disasters, due to climate change, pose an "ever-present risk" to the country's recovery and growth.

Prime Minister Browne, whose academic background is in finance and banking, has made projections for the country which are in line with those of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) which has projected 7 percent growth.

ECLAC's outlook, once realized, would position Antigua and Barbuda as the fifth strongest economy in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The finance minister continued that the country's rapid economic recovery is also evidence of the performance of his administration, which in the aftermath of the most calamitous event of the last century, has managed to expand economic performance from 5 percent in 2019 to over 7 percent since 2021.

"You can see again that you have a highly perform-

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Local News



Clare Hall Secondary School vandalised

Clare Hall Secondary School was hit by vandals over the weekend.

The discovery was made on Monday at the start of the school week.

The perpetrators apparently targeted the school with the intention of committing theft, but their plan was thwarted when they were unable to gain entry because of the burglar bars that had been installed on the windows of the administrative building.

With no way in which to

get inside, the incensed perpetrators destroyed all the glass windows on the office building.

Several windows in the staff room were also broken.

Additionally, the vandals used what is believed to be a long stick to throw items on Principal Ashworth Azille's desk to the floor.

At the start of the investigation into this latest incident yesterday, Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force (ABDF) officers visited Clare Hall Secondary School



where they received a tour of the campus from Principal Azille.

Operation "Static Sentry" has now likely come into effect after last week's emergency meeting between the government and the Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers (A&BUT).

Operation Static Sentry, which was crafted by the Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force, involves a joint operation between the ABDF and Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda (RP-FAB) to provide additional security on public school campuses.

The A&BUT has threat-

ened strike action if the government and education authorities do not get a handle on the break-ins and incidents of vandalism that have plagued public schools.

According to the A&BUT, the increase in crime targeting schools has caused significant trauma and inconvenience for both teachers and students.

For now, however, industrial action has been averted as all the stakeholders involved have agreed to short and medium-term measures to address the security issues, while plans for permanent solutions to the problem are implemented.



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ing administration that continues to preside over the expansion of the country's economy, lifting people out of poverty, and at the same time providing lots of opportunities for entrepreneurship, opportunities for homeownership, opportunities for car ownership...literally empowering of people

to control the commanding heights of the country's economy, and at the same time, making Antiguan and Barbudans wealthier and obviously to restore the losses of 2020 and to go beyond those losses and to position Antigua and Barbuda to become an Economic Powerhouse in the Caribbean," Browne said.

IMF says A&B's economic recovery will be slow, but sure

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says the economy of Antigua and Barbuda is recovering but output remains “well below” pre-pandemic levels.

The Washington-based financial institution said labor market disruptions, loss of tourism capital stock and school closures during the pandemic may contribute to “long-term scarring effects.”

Following a decline of 20 percent in 2020, real gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have expanded by 5.3 percent in 2021, buoyed by tourism – which remained robust despite some real exchange rate appreciation – and construction activity. Real GDP is projected to grow at 6 and 5½ percent in 2022 and 2023, respectively.

The IMF said risks to the outlook are on the downside. It said output is expected to return gradually to its pre-pandemic level by 2025 supported by strong tourism recovery and foreign direct investment in the hospitality sector and public sector projects.

“However, commodity price shocks can dampen domestic demand



and entrench inflation. A growth slowdown in main tourism source markets and/or renewed COVID-19 outbreaks and travel restrictions could stall the tourism recovery and deepen scarring effects,” the IMF said after a team led by Varapat Chensavadijai, visited St. John's, September 20 to October 3, to hold a 2022 Article IV consultation, adding that more frequent and intensive natural disasters, due to climate change, pose an “ever-present risk.”

“A further appreciation of the US dollar would weaken competitiveness through the currency peg. Tighter financial conditions may put additional strain on public finances and lead to further domestic arrears accumulation.”

Despite arrears resolution during

2021, the IMF said arrears to domestic and external creditors stood at 19 percent of GDP. Public debt peaked at 102 percent of GDP and is projected to decline to 91 percent of GDP in 2022.

The lending agency has urged the Antigua and Barbuda government to continue to prioritize spending on social safety nets to protect the vulnerable against rising living costs.

It also encouraged authorities to expedite efforts to centralize and digitize information and payment systems for social transfer programs, to improve their coverage and targeting.

It said coordination amongst government agencies implementing social transfer programs should be enhanced in line with the objectives of the Social Protection Act.

“A comprehensive social safety net program, including cash transfers to lower-income households, could then be used to replace the temporary gas voucher program, which needs to be monitored to avoid abuses,” the IMF said.

It also recommended that excise duties be introduced on alcohol and tobacco products. (CMC)

Commonwealth officials engage disability stakeholders

Two representatives from the Commonwealth Secretariat's Human Rights Unit (HRU) are in Antigua and Barbuda to assess the needs of persons with disabilities and mental health conditions and to help ensure their inclusion in public policy and society and the fulfilment of their rights.

Head of the HRU, Dr. Shavana Haythornthwaite and Human Rights Adviser Dr. Justin Pettit are meeting with stakeholders, including the Antigua and Barbuda Association of Persons with Disabilities to hear of their successes and concerns as persons with disabilities.

“Disability is a cross-cutting issue that requires long-term, comprehensive approaches. Antigua and Barbuda has a longstanding commitment to protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. The Human Rights Unit is pleased to be here, supporting the government in iden-

tifying further sustainable steps it can take to ensure that Antigua and Barbuda is an accessible and inclusive society for everyone.

“This needs assessment will provide an important evidence base upon which we will develop, in collaboration with the government,

cont'd on pg 6

Local News



High-level ABMCA team visits SVG

A team from Antigua and Barbuda's Medicinal Cannabis Authority recently travelled to St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) to engage with their counterparts.

The delegation included Director of Commercial Diplomacy and Compliance, Joy-Marie King and Operations Manager Veldon Ragguette.

The team engaged their counterparts in the exchange of best practices and explored opportunities for industry cooperation between both authorities.

The highlights of the mission included high-level engagements with SVG's Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, Saboto Caesar, visits to medicinal cannabis cultivation sites, processing facilities, dispensaries, lounges, and lab facilities.

The technical team from Antigua



and Barbuda also engaged with the SVG Medicinal Cannabis Authority Board of Directors and staff.

According to King, "The mission was a resounding success as the opportunity was taken to discuss successes, potential challenges and formulating solutions all towards building a sustainable and resilient industry both domestic and region-

ally."

Ragguette, meanwhile, indicated that, "The opportunities for cooperation are numerous and should be pursued and operationalised soonest."

At the conclusion of the mission, both nations expressed the desire to cooperate further and pledged that steps would be taken to formalise the collaboration.



Bernard Warner, president of the Antigua and Barbuda Association of Persons with Disabilities in discussion with Shavana Haythornthwaite and Justin Pettit of the Commonwealth's HRU.

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a multi-year programme to strengthen frameworks to protect the rights of persons with disabilities," said Shavana Haythornthwaite.

The Human Rights Unit's planned project in Antigua and Barbuda will support the inclusion of disabilities as a central concern in all emergency communications and that persons with disabilities are con-

sulted and fully involved in the development and implementation of emergency response, disaster management and disaster risk reduction policies.

Approximately 15% of people globally have a disability and an estimated 1 billion are living with mental health conditions.

In the Caribbean, there are over a million persons living with some form of disability and the vulnerability of the region to climate disasters creates a disproportionate risk to this group.

According to a UN survey, across the globe, only 20% of persons with disabilities could evacuate immediately and without difficulty in the event of a sudden disaster.

Tue 11 Day		Tue 11 Night	
86°	23% E 15 mph	78°	33% E 12 mph
Partly cloudy skies in the morning will give way to cloudy skies during the afternoon. High 86F. Winds E at 10 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy skies early followed by mostly cloudy skies and a few showers later at night. Low 78F. Winds E at 10 to 15 mph. Chance of rain 30%.	
Humidity 76%	UV Index 10 of 10	Humidity 83%	UV Index 0 of 10
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Local News



Airport Authority addresses fuel operations at the V.C. Bird International Airport

The Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority wishes to set the record straight on the handling of fuel operations at the V.C. Bird International Airport in an effort to dispel any misleading notions resulting from information shared in the media on the weekend.

To place the matter in proper context, the authority notes that the Fuel Farm at the VCBIA was formerly owned under a joint agreement between RUBIS West Indies and Sol Aviation, the Joint Operator (JO). That arrangement no longer exists and the Fuel Farm is currently solely owned and operated by RUBIS.

Aviation fuel sold at VCBIA is Jet A1 and AVGAS. AVGAS accounts for less than 1% of fuel sales at VCBIA and is the type of fuel used mainly by the

smaller aircraft.

With the Construction of a new terminal and parking apron, ABAA opted to construct and own the new underground Fuel Hydrant System that connects to the Fuel Farm. Previously, the old system was owned and operated by the Joint Operator (JO).

In March 2015 following months of negotiations, ABAA entered into an Exclusive Lease and Concession Agreement with the JO for use of the new system and the continuation of the exclusive rights to supply all Aviation Fuel at VCBIA.

During these negotiations, the JO asked that the agreement provide for the continuance of an existing arrangement with Bizjet-to-Yacht which allowed the retail sale of all AVGAS fuel to be han-

dled through the group.

In August 2014, the rights enjoyed by Bizjet-to-Yacht under this agreement were transferred to Signature Flight Support Limited under the sale agreement of FBO 2000 and related entities.

VCBIA prides itself as a Hub airport and as such, we are very concerned with the issues related to the recent un-serviceability of the AVGAS Fuel dispensing operations. A NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) was immediately published once the fuel operator reported its challenges.

ABAA intends to reenter dialogue with RUBIS West Indies to ensure contingencies are designed and promptly introduced to limit any future disruptions in the provision of AVGAS supply at VCBIA.

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Four health-conscious cities putting pedestrians first

By Lindsey Galloway

Inspired by Covid-19's long lockdowns and safety concerns, cities are implementing pedestrian-friendly initiatives and pushing for more car-free spaces.

When the initial wave of Covid prevented indoor gatherings in most countries around the world, many cities responded by quickly reimagining what life could look like outside. Some introduced pedestrian-only streets, turned parking spots into pop-up restaurants and added more bike lanes – transforming once car-filled areas into walking- and cycling-friendly spots.

The changes paid dividends, not just in increased economic activity, but studies also showed the virus may spread less quickly in highly walkable neighbourhoods. And while many places have now rolled back these initiatives as life returns to the new normal, some cities have held fast to their pedestrian improvements and have been pushing for even more car-free spaces.

We're profiling four cities around the world that made some of the boldest and fastest pedestrian-friendly changes during the pandemic – and are keeping many of those initiatives to encourage residents and visitors to get around on foot.

Paris, France

Even before the pandemic, Paris had a head start in becoming more pedestrian-friendly. As part of a city-wide effort to reduce the number of cars, the lower quays that run along the Seine river were fully pedestrianised in late 2016, a move that was made permanent in 2018. In 2020, Mayor Anne Hidalgo was re-elected in part due to her support of the "15-minute city": a new urban planning concept that allows res-



idents to complete all their daily tasks – from shopping to schooling to work – within the distance of a 15-minute walk or bike ride.

I've lived in Paris for 14 years, and I can confidently say that I've never seen a greater, city-wide transformation than the one that's happened most recently to encourage cyclists

The pandemic, paired with numerous public-transportation strikes prior to lockdown, only strengthened the popularity of these human-centric and environmentally sustainable initiatives. "The beauty of getting around by foot in Paris is highlighted more since Covid," said Kathleen Peddicord, founder of Live and Invest Overseas. "Public transportation was a no-go for a long time and was also more uncomfortable having to wear masks. So, more people started using their feet."

Additional bike lanes have also been introduced to alleviate car traffic. In fact, the city plans to add an additional 180km of bike lanes and 180,000 bike parking spots by 2026. "I've lived in Paris for 14 years, and I can confidently say that I've never seen a greater, city-wide transformation than the one that's happened most recently to en-

courage cyclists," said Sadie Sumner, who runs the Paris branch of bike touring company Fat Tire Tours.

Major thoroughways like the Rue de Rivoli in central Paris have been reduced to one lane, while cyclist paths have been expanded to the width of three car lanes. The city also plans to plant 170,000 trees by 2026, with the intention of cooling Paris to make it more comfortable and enjoyable for pedestrians. In anticipation of the city's hosting of the 2024 Olympics, the bridge between the Eiffel Tower and Trocadero will be fully pedestrianised, too.

Overall, residents have appreciated the widespread changes, and look forward to even more. "The locals really like it, there are less cars and people seem to be a bit more relaxed," said Paris native Roobens Fils, who blogs at Been Around the Globe. He had suggestions for walking-minded travellers: the Parc Rives de Seine, a 7km-long stretch by the river; rue Montorgueil in the heart of Paris for its cheese, wine and flower shops; rue Saint Rustique in Montmartre for its ancient cobblestones (this is the oldest street in Par-

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is); and Cour Saint Emilion for its boutiques, cafes and restaurants.

Bogotá, Colombia

While Bogotá (and Colombia in general) has always had a strong bi-cycling culture, with cycling as the country's national sport, the pandemic accelerated many car-free changes. In 2020, Mayor Claudia Lopez designated an additional 84km of temporary bike lanes to the city's existing 550km Ciclorruta bike path network – already one of the largest in the world – and they have since become permanent.

Bogotá was among the first cities globally to add "pop-up" cycle lanes during the pandemic, and residents have noticed the permanent changes have been for the better. "The city has really started to develop a noticeable Amsterdam and Copenhagen vibe over the last few years," said Alex Gillard, founder of Nomad Nature Travel blog and who lived in Bogotá on and off during the pandemic. "There are so many bikes on the streets at all hours of the day, it is quite inspiring."

On Sundays and public holidays, cars are completely banned from certain routes in a programme known as the Ciclovía, attracting more than 1.5 million cyclists, pedestrians and joggers each week.

The city's new SITP buses, which run on electricity and gas, have also improved the public transportation system significantly, according to locals. "The vibe of Bogotá has changed. It's much easier, calmer and safer to move around in the city now," said resident Josephine Remo, who writes an eponymous travel blog.

She recommends travellers check out the historical neighbourhood of La Candelaria where the city was born more than 400 years ago; they'll find plenty of museums about the city's rich history, as well as restaurants housed in centuries-old buildings. She also suggests Usaquén Park for its weekend

open-air market, where visitors can check out local Colombian food, crafts and music events.

Milan, Italy

Italy was one of the countries hit hardest initially in the pandemic, and its cities had to adapt quickly to provide alternatives to densely populated public transportation. In summer 2020, Milan embarked on an ambitious plan to widen pavements and expand cycling lanes along 35km of roads previously centred on car traffic. The changes have transformed the city, bringing with it more outdoor dining, open-air markets and urban gardens.

"It's not the Milan I remember from 10 years ago during my college days," said resident Luisa Favaretto, founder of living abroad site Strategistico. "I love the concept of the 15-minute city [a plan Milan has also explored] and was drawn by the city's evolving infrastructure that prioritises people over cars." She's seen a growth in what she calls an "old world" sense of community, as there are more reasons to be outdoors and to meet in communal spaces.

The new CityLife district is not only Milan's largest car-free area but one of the largest car-free zones in Europe.

"It is filled with public green spaces along with tons of bike lanes, and offers a glimpse into the future of a sustainable Milan," said Favaretto. She also recommends strolling the canals of Navigli and enjoying the neighbourhood's outdoor dining options and nightlife. The north neighbourhood of Isola has been transformed from an industrial district to a walkable and bikeable area full of hip cafes, galleries and boutiques.

Travellers also don't have to worry about finding a bike to enjoy the cycling lanes. The city's bike sharing service, BikeMI, has 300 stations across the city and offers both regular and e-bikes.

San Francisco, US

This northern California city moved quickly during the early pandemic to launch Slow Streets – a programme that used signage and barriers to limit car traffic and speeds on 30 corridors in an effort to make them more pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly.

According to data collected by the city, the programme saw a 50% reduction in vehicle traffic, a 17% increase in weekday pedestrian traffic and a 65% jump in weekday cyclist traffic. It is lovely for pedestrians and bikers to be able to share the streets

Though many of the streets have since been returned to pre-pandemic status, residents pushed to make four sections permanent, including those on Golden Gate Avenue, Lake Street, Sanchez Street and Shotwell Street. In September, a vote will be held on the future of the other corridors.

"It is lovely for pedestrians and bikers to be able to share the streets," said resident Leith Steel on the roads that are still closed. "You see families out walking, kids playing – it is a much different experience."

She also notes that the city has put money and effort into building better bike routes throughout the city, and they are more clearly marked than previously. She recommends really exploring each neighbourhood in San Francisco, since they each have their own feel and character.

She likes the tree-lined Hayes Valley for its upscale and modern vibes; Outer Sunset for its laid-back surfer vibe and 3.5-mile stretch of white sand beach; and North Beach for its lively street cafes (and the 4th most walkable neighbourhood in the city).

Though there's still much to be done to change San Francisco into a truly pedestrian-friendly city, history shows it can be done. One of the city's most walkable areas – the Embarcadero along the waterfront – was once a freeway until a 1989 earthquake rendered it unusable for vehicles.

Relationships



Emotional infidelity: The flirtation that undermines couples

By Katie Bishop

Most people have strong ideas about what constitutes 'cheating' in a relationship. Couples who follow conventional monogamy generally think any sexual contact with a third party is a betrayal, while many couples with more open relationships often have clear rules about what does and doesn't count as physical infidelity.

But while physical infidelity might be easy to define, emotional infidelity can be something of a minefield. Although the phrase is well known, people tend to have different ideas of what it means to be emotionally unfaithful. Is it a drink with a colleague whom you might be attracted to? How about exchanging frequent messages with someone your partner perceives to be a threat? Or what about leaving mildly flirty comments on a stranger's social-media post?

Grappling with different definitions of emotional infidelity can be a challenge for couples, and a mismatch in expectations could threaten a relationship. But it hasn't always been this way. The concept of emotional fidelity is relatively new – the product of social changes that have shaped what people expect from relationships, beyond basic needs. Today, people generally expect partnership to mean a



shared emotional intimacy exclusive to the relationship. And as the digital age creates more ways for us to communicate, understanding which interactions outside the relationship cross the line into dangerous territory has become more difficult than ever.

A modern concept

Broadly, emotional infidelity describes a situation in which an individual in a relationship develops an important emotional connection with someone other than their partner, in a way that crosses a line without necessarily becoming physical. This is based on the idea that certain types of intimacy should only be shared with a significant other, and that by investing emotionally in a third party, a person can undermine their relationship and the exclusive emotional connection within it.

Each partner has their own specific view of what constitutes cheating – Marisa Cohen Just like physical cheating, emotional infidelity can tear couples apart.

But the idea that emotional infidelity might be the death knell for some relationships is fairly new. According to Michelle Janning, a professor of sociology at Whitman College, Washington, US, who specialises in social roles, family and relationships, the belief that one can be emotionally unfaithful is a relatively modern concept.

Janning believes that today's framing of long-term partnership – as "a lifetime of monogamous companionship between two people with emotional connectedness as the superglue that holds them together" – is the product of recent shifts. Historically, she points out, a spouse wasn't expected

to meet their partner's emotional needs. Marriage was often based around economic security, geography, family ties and reproductive goals; in marriages that were not founded in love, it was understood that people might find emotional fulfilment elsewhere.

But throughout the past 200 years, our understanding of relationships has changed. In developed nations, love matches have become the norm, and within the last century the rise of individualism has meant that people have started to prioritise self-care and self-fulfilment.

Today, people want their partner to meet their emotional needs – meaning that fulfilling a third party's emotional needs could, for the first time, be seen as a betrayal. Being physically faithful may no longer be

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Relationships

enough; now, many couples believe that turning to a third party for some aspects of happiness and emotional wellbeing can be a kind of betrayal.

Defining emotional infidelity in a digital age

Before technology became embedded in our lives, emotional infidelity might have meant striking up an inappropriately close friendship with a colleague, sharing feelings or thoughts that a partner might assume only they were privy to. It might also have meant meeting up with an ex behind a partner's back, hiding aspects of life from a partner who expected their loved one to be an open book.

But the digital revolution has offered up many more ways for people to connect, blurring the lines between what is and isn't a meeting or interaction, as well as offering a more anonymised way of communicating via screens that can enable people to feel that no rules are being broken.

"Social media in general has changed the way we meet and interact with others," says Amira Johnson, a mental- and behavioural-health expert at Berman Psychotherapy, Atlanta, US. With smartphones and social media platforms, she says, it's easy to engage in behaviour that might lead to emotional infidelity – such as liking or commenting on another person's picture, contacting old friends or engaging strangers in debate.

Of course, people will have different views on what is and isn't allowed. While some might consider liking a particular person's social media post to be infidelity, others might think this is nothing to worry about. In some relationships, there is a general understanding that deeply personal conversations should stay between partners, while for others, emotionally vulnerable friendships are something that everyone should enjoy. Flirting with someone over text message could be harmless to some couples, while for

others it would be relationship-ending.

"Each partner has their own specific view of what constitutes cheating, which can range from creating connections with others, to spending time with another individual that the partner may perceive to be a threat, even if that relationship is completely platonic," says Marisa Cohen, a relationship scientist at dating app Hily.

Split or survive?

In general, research shows people find sexual infidelity more troubling than emotional infidelity. But a 2015 YouGov study of 1,660 British adults showed 44% of respondents believed forming an emotional (rather than physical) relationship with someone who wasn't their partner constituted cheating. Meanwhile, 15% of respondents said they had engaged in this kind of behaviour while in a relationship.

According to Johnson, it is precisely the blurry nature of emotional infidelity that leads to its prevalence. With physical infidelity, it is often clear when a line has been crossed. Emotional infidelity might begin much more gradually, with behaviour that an individual can initially justify to themselves.

"Most people who commit emotional infidelity are not intentionally trying to," says Johnson.

"If a person feels that their significant other does not value them, or have time for them, they will seek that feeling elsewhere. They may invest in a friendship that gives them that support or emotional affection, which unintentionally leads to the brewing of feelings."

Yet while some emotional affairs might be the first step on the path to physical infidelity, for others building relationships outside coupledness is a way to find support, intimacy and connection without relying on just one person forever.

Having friendships and support

systems outside a relationship is a positive thing that can boost our wellbeing. The issue comes when a friendship develops into something that we suspect our partner would be unhappy with.

Cohen says, in most cases, emotional infidelity comes from a place of distance between partners. If someone is already unhappy in a relationship or has grown apart from their significant other, perhaps because they have started to want different things in life, then they may start to seek connection with someone who more closely matches them in terms of their goals, values and beliefs. Initially innocuous interactions could then shift over time to something which would constitute an emotional affair.

Janning believes that couples' abilities to weather this kind of event is linked to whether they can talk through, and agree on, boundaries. "I think it's also about people's willingness to

continually redefine what commitment may mean, and thus redefine what infidelity means," she says. "The trouble for couples lies when they don't align in their definition of commitment."

Evidence suggests that some people are becoming more open-minded when it comes to non-traditional relationship structures and consensual non-monogamy.

Yet at the same time there's broad consensus that, however you define it as a couple, crossing the line into cheating harms relationships. It's possible that increased scrutiny of what modern monogamy really means, combined with a need to find answers to new questions raised by the social media age, could be opening up conversations around emotional infidelity. "Partners still want clarity and parameters, but they want to decide these for themselves, more than ever before," says Janning.

PAHO launches new campaign to curb stigma against mental health

CMC- The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has launched a new campaign seeking to curb the stigma and discrimination experienced by people with mental health conditions and promote positive interactions that improve their search for help.

PAHO said numerous studies show that stereotypes, prejudices, and discriminatory behaviors toward people with mental health problems are common.

Through messages on social media, PAHO said by using “#DoYourShare,” people are “invited to break the silence, share their stories, and have an open and honest conversation about how one really feels, and thereby, provide mental health support and reduce stigma and discrimination.” “The more we talk about our mental health, the closer we get to reducing the stigma that surrounds it,” said Renato Oliveira e Souza, chief of PAHO’s Mental Health unit,

adding “and when the stigma diminishes or disappears, seeking and receiving support becomes more feasible.”

PAHO said mental health conditions, which are common around the world, have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, “which had a general impact across the population”.

It pointed to a study published in the medical journal, The Lancet, which estimates a 35 percent increase in depressive disorders and a 32 percent rise in anxiety disorders in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2020, due to the pandemic. “It is possible for most people to recover from mental health conditions if they receive the necessary care,” Oliveira e Souza said. “For that to happen, health professionals must ensure a safe environment and provide quality, inclusive care that is free of labels.”


Teacher Sahar Vasquez, who experienced a mental health condition firsthand and is now a member of PAHO’s

High-level Commission on Mental Health and COVID-19, said PAHO’s campaign is “crucial to helping people understand that any of us can face a mental health condition at some point in our life, and that this doesn’t have to block our goals and dreams in life.”

In addition to ending the stigma and discrimination that stand in the way of recovery, PAHO’s campaign urges national authorities to guarantee funding for mental health care, train more professionals in this area, and distribute them appropriately, “so that everyone who needs them can access them.”

More than 30 countries in the region of the Americas have joined the initiative so far and will conduct various awareness-raising activities. The campaign was launched on the eve of World Mental Health Day, which is celebrated annually on October 10 to raise awareness about mental health issues around the world.

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Guyana gov't appoints team to investigate accident at historic bridge

CMC - The Guyana government has appointed a Board of Inquiry to investigate the circumstances that led to a fuel vessel crashing into the Demerara Harbour Bridge during the early hours of Saturday morning causing what the authorities termed a national emergency.

Public Works Minister, Bishop Juan Bishop Edghill, said that the seven-member board will be issued with their instruments of appointment and will commence work on Sunday.

"We have heard preliminarily some things that occurred but we have just completed a meeting with the board of directors along with other stakeholders and we have established a board of inquiry into this," Edghill told reporters.

The pilot of the vessel, a Guyanese national, was arrested and released. He tested negative for drugs and alcohol.

The vessel will not be allowed to depart port Georgetown until the matter is resolved, the authorities said. He has also been instantly suspended from piloting any ship.

The Maritime Administration and the Demerara Harbour Bridge Corporation have started the legal procedure to deal with the matter.

"Is this terrorism, is this madness, because what's



An aerial view of the damaged Demerara Harbour Bridge after a fuel tanker crashed into it early on Saturday morning [Photo: Department of Public Information]

going on here because people are affected and that is why we have moved swiftly to put in place such a comprehensive board of inquiry," Edghill said.

The authorities said that the vessel, the MV Tradewinds Passion, which transports fuel for the Guyana Oil Company, crashed into the Demerara Harbour Bridge, despite desperate calls to drop anchor from the Shift Supervisor, Andy Duke.

Duke, who was in one of the lookout towers, tried to communicate with the pilot without success.

He eventually had to jump from the booth in an effort to save his own life. He fractured his leg in the process and is hospitalised.

The other men who were working at the bottom of the

bridge including mechanical maintenance engineer, Ahmad Khan, had to run for their lives.

"We had to run for over lives because was a big ship and we done know the impact that this thing will cause, I tell everybody to start moving off, come off the span, move off because people was conducting welding on the bridge, repairing deck plates so everybody start coming off immediately...within a minute's time, cause we already see it coming towards us," Khan said. The vessel was the last of five to transit the bridge during the retraction.

An early morning assessment showed that the bridge was shifted at a 45-degree angle and Edghill voiced the government's

appreciation to the stakeholders involved in lending assistance in getting the bridge back in operation.

"The government of Guyana President Ali and his entire cabinet would like to record our deep appreciation for the private sector... and the other stakeholders of the state that responded ... to this situation in lending support to ensure that we respond in a manner that could ensure that the country is secure, people are able to move, goods and services are continuing to be provided and at the same time in the shortest possible time to finish this bridge and reopen it to traffic," Edghill said.

He noted that with help from the private sector some materials needed to repair the bridge are being manu-

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Regional News

Former president urges support for coalition as Suriname battles socio-economic problems

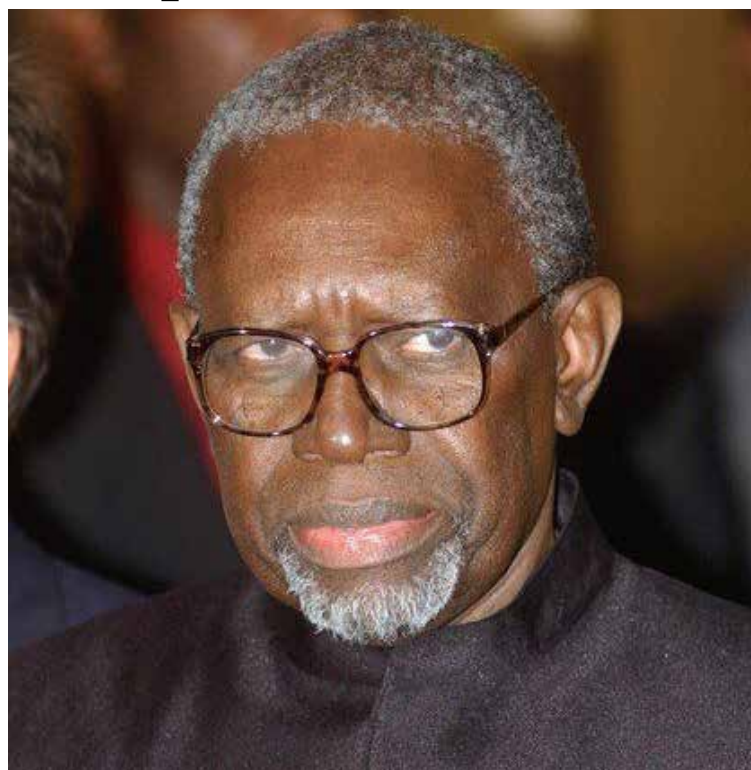
CMC - Former president, Ronald Venetiaan, is calling on the National Party of Suriname (NPS) not to abandon the coalition government of President Chandrikapersad “Chan” Santokhi as the country is going through a socio-economic crisis. “Let me be specific. The NPS has chosen to be in this coalition and support this president. NPS has chosen to be in this coalition in a strange way. I understand that in congress people will consider whether they should stay or leave,” said Venetiaan, the honorary NPS president.

“Let it not be that what in 1996 led to the severing of efforts to bring a better condition for the people... let it not be that it will be credited to the NPS,” said the 86-year-old, who served three times as head of state between 1991 and 2012. But

NPS Assembly member, Patricia Etnel does not share Ronald Venetiaan’s position and is insisting that the party must leave the coalition.

Writing on her Facebook page, she called on party members to vote in favour of leaving the coalition when the NPS holds its congress at the end of this month. Following the May 25, 2020 general election, the coalition consisting of the Progressive Reform Party (VHP), the General Liberation and Development Party (ABOP), The Pertjajah Luhur (PL) and the NPS was formed.

VHP leader Santokhi was named president with ABOP leader, Ronnie Brunswijk, vice president and the coalition’s candidate for chairman of the National Assembly. The NPS, which is a social democratic polit-



Former President Ronald Venetiaan

ical party founded in 1946, is led by Gregory Rusland, who succeeded Venetiaan. In her Facebook statement, Etnel wrote that this attitude of Venetiaan is the reason the party did not do well in the

last general election.

“NPS must choose the future of the NPS and continue as an independent party in parliament and in political Suriname,” she said, adding “the NPS needs to get bigger and that will only be possible with seats, not with partners.”

Venetiaan, who was part of a panel discussion on Friday night, on the theme “Survival in the current crisis situation” argued that Suriname is still struggling with issues such as the availability of foreign currency, the value and stability of the local currency as well as the size of the earning capacity of the production and export sectors.

cont'd from pg 15

factured and will be delivered shortly.

The authorities are hoping to get the bridge up and running by Monday night, with light traffic at first. “We want to assure the public and the government of Guyana we are doing everything humanly possible. We are sparing no resources.

“We are taking no shortcuts but we want to deliver to you a service that so many thousands of people depend on daily and that is the usage of this bridge, and this would be a good time for all of us to remind ourselves that we were absolutely right...and correct when we went out for a

tender for a new high span four-lane concrete bridge...so we don’t have a situation like what we have here today and what we had just some weeks ago,” Edghill said.

Some immediate interventions were made, and the water taxis that operate across the Demerara River have been allowed to operate for 24 hours. An additional point of entry was opened at the Boat House next to the Stabroek wharf. The Demerara Harbour Bridge was built in 1975 and it is the longest floating bridge in the world. It is the main access for persons travelling from Regions Three, Seven, One and Two.

UN mulls quick foreign troop deployment to ease Haiti crisis

AP — The United Nations Security Council was evaluating options including the immediate activation of foreign troops to help free Haiti from the grip of gangs that has caused a scarcity of fuel, water and other basic supplies.

Such a force would “remove the threat posed by armed gangs and provide immediate protection to critical infrastructure and services,” as well as secure the “free movement of water, fuel, food and medical supplies from main ports and airports to communities and health care facilities,” according to a letter U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres submitted to the council on Sunday.

The letter, which was seen by The Associated Press and has not been made public, said one or several member states would deploy the force to help Haiti’s National Police. It also states the secretary-general may deploy “additional U.N. capacities to support a ceasefire or humanitarian arrangements.”

However, the letter notes that “a return to a more robust United Nations engagement in the form of peacekeeping remains a last resort if no decisive action is urgently taken by the international community in line with the outlined options and national law en-



A protester carries a piece of wood simulating a weapon during a protest demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Ariel Henry, in the Petion-Ville area of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Oct. 3, 2022. Haiti's government has agreed to request the help of international armed forces as gangs and protesters paralyse the country and basic supplies including fuel and water dwindle, a top ranking Haitian official told The Associated Press on Friday, Oct 7. (AP Photo/Odelyn Joseph, File)

forcement capacity proves unable to reverse the deteriorating security situation.”

The letter was submitted after Haiti Prime Minister Ariel Henry and 18 high-ranking officials requested from international partners “the immediate deployment of a specialised armed force, in sufficient quantity,” to stop the “criminal actions” of armed gangs across the country.

The request comes nearly a month after one of Haiti’s most powerful gangs seized control of a key fuel terminal in the capital of Port-au-Prince, where some 10 million gallons of diesel

and gasoline and more than 800,000 gallons of kerosene are stored.

Tens of thousands of demonstrators also have barricaded streets in Port-au-Prince and other major cities in recent weeks, preventing the flow of goods and traffic as part of an ongoing protest against a spike in the prices of gasoline, diesel and kerosene. Gas stations and schools are closed, while banks and grocery stores are operating on a limited schedule.

Protesters are demanding the resignation of Henry, who announced in early September that his admin-

istration could no longer afford to subsidise fuel.

The deepening paralysis has caused supplies of fuel, water and other basic goods to dwindle amid a cholera outbreak that has killed several people and sickened dozens of others, with health officials warning that the situation could worsen.

On Sunday, Haitian senators signed a document demanding that Henry’s “de facto government” defer its request for deployment of foreign troops, saying it is illegal under local laws. A spokesman for Henry could not be immediately reached

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Regional News



Cayman Opposition Leader plans boycott of Parliament should McKeeva Bush remain as Speaker

CMC-Opposition Leader Roy McTaggart, says opposition legislators will boycott Parliament should the Speaker, McKeeva Bush, fail to demit office even though he has reportedly submitted his resignation. “Over the past week the entire country has witnessed first-hand what can be considered a government that has become increasingly desperate and heavy-handed and willing to ignore proper procedure and rules,” McTaggart said in a statement.

Flanked by several opposition legislators, he said, “we are concerned that the Speaker has resigned and is expecting to continue in the chair and is being enabled to do so by the Government.

“Regardless of any purportedly effective date the fact is that Mr. Bush has resigned as Speaker and must demit the chair immediately and the Deputy Speaker sit as the presiding officer as required under section 4(1)(b) of the Standing Orders,” he added.

McTaggart, who had filed a motion of ‘Lack of Confidence’ in Bush, said not only has the government “banded



Opposition Leader Roy McTaggart

together” to prevent the motion being debated “but they have done so on a false premise.

“This refusal of a valid motion is inexcusable and a violation of all democratic principles of Parliament,” he added. In his motion, the Opposition Leader said Bush, who was elected Speaker following April 14, 2021

general election, had prior to the polls pleaded guilty before the Summary Court on December 3, 2020, to two charges of assault and one charge of disorderly conduct and was sentenced to two months imprisonment, which was suspended for two years. McTaggart said the incident led to “an investigation by the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service and has been reported in the local and international press” and that even the Governor, Martyn Roper, had publicly called on the Speaker to resign from the role.”

“I regret to say that under this Government we are rapidly becoming a ‘kangaroo parliament.’ We take our oaths seriously when we swore to serve the people of the Cayman Islands in the House of Parliament. “We would be abdicating our duty to the country to participate in the sham that today’s meeting of Parliament has become,” said the Opposition Leader, who had earlier said he had hoped that the motion of no confidence which he had also field against the premier would have been dealt with when the Parliament met on October 5.

cont’d from pg 17
for comment.

Haitian officials have not specified what kind of armed forces they’re seeking, with many local leaders rejecting the idea of U.N. peacekeepers, noting that they’ve been accused of sexual assault and of sparking a cholera epidemic that killed nearly 10,000 people during their a 13-year mission in Haiti that ended five years ago.

The letter that the U.N. secretary-general submitted

Sunday suggests that the rapid action force be phased out as Haitian police regain control of infrastructure, and that two options could follow: member states establish an international police task force to help and advise local officers or create a special force to help tackle gangs “including through joint strike, isolation and containment operations across the country.”

The letter notes that if member states do not “step forward with bilateral sup-

port and financing,” the U.N. operation may be an alternative. “However, as indicated, a return to U.N. peacekeeping was not the preferred option of the authorities,” it states.

The letter also says the Security Council could decide to strengthen the police component of the current United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti known as BINUH, and to call on member states to provide additional equipment and training to local police,

which are understaffed and lack resources. Only about a third of some 13,000 are operational in a country of more than 11 million people.

The secretary-general said the issue is a matter of urgency, noting Haiti “is facing an outbreak of cholera amid a dramatic deterioration in security that has paralyzed the country.” The U.S. Embassy has granted temporary leave to personnel and urged U.S. citizens to immediately leave Haiti.

Hurricane Julia hits Nicaragua with torrential rainfall

Hurricane Julia hit Nicaragua's central Caribbean coast on Sunday after lashing Colombia's San Andres island, and a weakened storm was expected to emerge over the Pacific. Julia hit as a Category One hurricane early Sunday with maximum sustained winds of 85 mph (140 kph), though its winds had dipped to tropical storm force, 70 mph (110 kph), by late morning as it pushed across Nicaragua with heavy rains.

The US National Hurricane Center said Julia was centred about 65 miles (105 kilometres) east-northeast of Managua, the capital, and was moving west at 15 mph (24 kph).

It said life-threatening flash floods and mudslides were possible across Central America and southern Mexico through Tuesday, with the storm expected to bring as much as 15 inches (38 centimetres) of rain in isolated areas.

Colombia's national disaster agency reported Sunday that Julia blew the roofs off at least five houses and knocked over trees, but there were no reported casualties as it blasted past San Andres Island east of Nicaragua.

In Nicaragua, Vice President Rosario Murillo told TN8 television that there had been no reports of deaths so far, but power and communications were cut in some areas. She said that 9,500 people



This Saturday, Oct. 8, 2022 satellite image made available by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shows Tropical Storm Julia, bottom right, at 4 p.m. EDT. Julia is gaining strength heading westward in the southern Caribbean, and authorities are preparing for a possible hurricane on Colombian islands and in Nicaragua. (NOAA via AP)

had been evacuated to shelters.

Local news media showed images of trees toppled across roads.

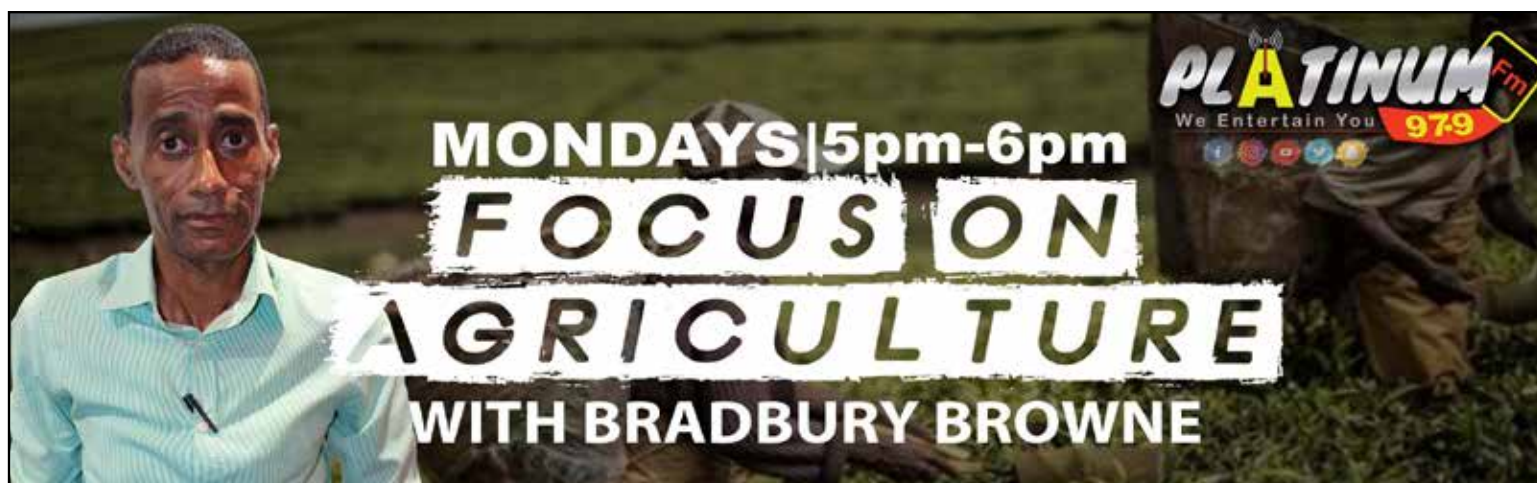
Guillermo González, director of Nicaragua's Disaster Response System, told official media that people at high risk had been evacuated from coastal areas by noon Saturday. The army said it delivered humanitarian supplies to Bluefields and Laguna de Perlas for distribution to 118 temporary shelters.

The storm was forecast to emerge over the Pacific and skirt the coasts of El Salvador and Guatemala, a region al-

ready saturated by weeks of heavy rains.

In Guatemala, storms since early May had already caused at least 49 confirmed deaths, with six people missing. Roads and hundreds of homes have been damaged, Guatemalan officials say.

In El Salvador, where 19 people have died this rainy season, the worst rainfall was expected Monday and Tuesday, said Fernando López, the minister of environmental and natural resources. Officials said they had opened 61 shelters with the capacity to house more than 3,000 people.



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Dutch activists sue government over assisted suicide

AP — Activists calling for the decriminalization of assisted suicide in the Netherlands took the Dutch government to court Monday, arguing that its ban on helping a person end their life breaches human rights.

The case at The Hague District Court is the latest legal battle in a long-running debate around end-of-life issues in the country that in 2002 became the first in the world to pass a law that decriminalized euthanasia.

A group called Cooperative Last Will asked the court to declare that the Dutch state is “acting unlawfully by denying its citizens the right to die with dignity under their own control.” Its chairman, Jos van Wijk, said he wants the Netherlands to again take a leading role in legislation that governs people’s lives. “The Netherlands has been a trailblazer when it comes to abortion, when it comes to same-sex marriage and when it comes to euthanasia legislation. And now we are once again a trailblazer with regard to your own control over the end of life,” he said.

Euthanasia involves doctors — under strict conditions — actively killing patients with an injection of drugs. In assisted dying, patients are provided with a lethal substance that they take themselves. Cooperative Last Will, which says it has nearly 30,000 members, wants the case to force a change in the Dutch law to decriminalise assistance for people who want to take their own life at a time of their choosing and for a lethal substance to be made available under strict conditions.

The Dutch government argues that many people who want to end their lives can make use of the existing euthanasia law. “However, the state is not obliged — and that is what this is all about — to facilitate assisted sui-



Campaigners take their hat off in a show of respect for people who took their own lives in The Hague, Netherlands, Monday, Oct. 10, 2022, where they calling for the decriminalization of assisted suicide in the Netherlands took the Dutch state to court, arguing its ban breaches human rights norms. The case at The Hague District Court was brought by a group called Cooperative Last Will, which has long urged a change of the law to allow people to help relatives end their lives. (AP Photo/Peter Dejong)

cide, let alone allow it under all circumstances,” government lawyer Erik Koppe told a three-judge panel.

Lawyers for the cooperative argued that the European Court of Human Rights enshrines a right to die at a time and place of a person’s choosing. The government lawyers disputed that assertion. “No right to die assisted by a third party or a public authority can be derived from the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, or a right to assisted suicide,” Koppe said.

The court said it would issue a decision on Dec. 14.

Prosecutions for assisted suicide are rare in the Netherlands. The offence carries a maximum sentence of three years in prison. Prosecutors last year charged Van Wijk with “participation in a criminal organization whose object is to commit and/or plan the crime of assisted suicide.”

Van Wijk, who denies the charges, told judges Monday that authorities in

the Netherlands enforce and uphold the ban to the extent that witnesses and next of kin are “intimidated and criminalised.” He said the strict enforcement of the ban and the prohibition on making a deadly substance available “are measures that we say should be organised in another way in a civilised society.” As the hearing ended, one plaintiff, Marion van Gerrevink, told the court that she found the body of her 21-year-old son Rob after he hanged himself in 2010.

“I still suffer daily from the feeling that I abandoned my son. In his last very depressive period, he had to find a way on his own to take his life and he had to take his last step alone,” she said. It would have been easier for her family to accept Rob’s death “if we could have accompanied our beautiful, dear son and brother on this last journey and that he could leave life behind in a dignified, humane way,” she added.

Russia unleashes biggest attacks in Ukraine in months

AP - Russia retaliated Monday for what it claimed was a Ukrainian terrorist attack on a critical bridge by unleashing its biggest and most widespread attacks against Ukraine in months. The lethal barrage against multiple cities smashed civilian targets, knocking out power and water, shattering buildings and killing at least 11 people.

Ukraine's Emergency Service said 64 people were wounded in the morning rush hour attacks that Russia launched from the air, sea and land against at least 14 regions, spanning from Lviv in the west to Kharkiv in the east. Many of the attacks occurred far from the war's front lines.

Though Russia said missiles targeted military and energy facilities, some struck civilian areas while people were heading to work and school. One hit a playground in downtown Kyiv and another struck a university.

Andriy Yermak, a senior adviser to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, said the strikes had no "practical military sense" and that Russia's goal was to cause a "humanitarian catastrophe."

Russian President Vladimir Putin said his forces used "precision weapons" to target key energy infrastructure and military command facilities in retaliation



An injured woman reacts after Russian shelling, in Kyiv, Ukraine, Monday, Oct. 10, 2022. Two explosions rocked Kyiv early Monday following months of relative calm in the Ukrainian capital. (AP Photo/Efrem Lukatsky)

for Kyiv's "terrorist" actions — a reference to Ukraine's attempts to repel Moscow's invasion forces, including an attack Saturday on a key bridge between Russia and the annexed Crimean Peninsula that Putin called a "terrorist act" masterminded by Ukrainian special services.

Putin vowed a "tough" and "proportionate" response should Ukraine carry out further attacks that threaten Russia's security. "No one should have any doubts about it," he told Russia's Security Council by video.

The Russian president has been under intense domestic pressure to take more aggressive action to stop a largely successful Ukrainian counteroffen-

sive and to react forcefully to Saturday's attack on the Kerch bridge, whose construction he used to cement his 2014 annexation of Crimea.

Putin's increasingly frequent descriptions of Ukraine's actions as terrorist could set the stage for even more bold and draconian actions. But in Monday's speech, Putin — whose partial troop mobilisation order last month triggered an exodus of hundreds of thousands of men of fighting age from Russia — stopped short of an expected escalation from what he calls a "special military operation" to a counterterrorism campaign or martial law.

Moscow's war in Ukraine is approaching its eight-month milestone, and

the Kremlin has been reeling from humiliating battlefield setbacks in areas of eastern Ukraine it is trying to annex.

The head of Ukraine's law enforcement said Monday's attacks nationwide damaged 70 infrastructure sites, of which 29 are critical.

The Ukrainian General Staff said 84 cruise missiles and 24 drones were used. Ukrainian forces shot down 56 aerial targets, it said.

Blasts struck in the capital's Shevchenko district, a large area in the centre that includes the historic old town and government offices, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said.

Some of the strikes hit near the government quarter in the capital's symbolic heart, where parliament and other major landmarks are located. A glass-covered office tower was significantly damaged, with most of its blue-tinted windows blown out.

Zelenskyy, in a video address, referred to the rush hour timing of Monday's attacks, saying Russia "chose such a time and such targets on purpose to inflict the most damage."

The strikes sent residents of Ukraine's two largest cities — Kyiv and Kharkiv — into bomb shelters, including subway stations.

Sports News



Enock Mwepu: Brighton midfielder forced to retire with heart condition

Brighton midfielder Enock Mwepu has been forced to retire from football at the age of 24 because of a hereditary heart condition.

The Premier League club said Mwepu would be at an "extremely high risk of suffering a potentially fatal cardiac event" if he continued playing. Mwepu had recently fallen ill on a trip with the Zambia national team to Mali. He was unable to train after arriving in West Africa last month and spent four days in hospital. Mwepu had tests on his return to England and Brighton said the results meant the "only option" was for him to retire.

"These tests have concluded that his illness is due to a hereditary cardiac condition, which manifests later in life and was not previously evident on regular cardiac screening," Brighton said in a statement.



Enock Mwepu last played for Brighton in their win against Leicester in September

"Sadly, this can be exacerbated by playing sport so Enock has been advised that the only option, for the sake of his own safety, is for him to stop playing football."

Mwepu said he was retiring with


"sadness", adding he had lived his dream by reaching the Premier League but that "some dreams come to an end". "This is, however, not the end of my involvement in football, I plan to stay involved in some capacity," he said in a statement on Twitter. The versatile player joined Brighton from Red Bull Salzburg on a four-year deal for a fee reported to be £18m in July 2021. He scored three goals in 27 appearances for the club and last played in the 5-2 win over Leicester City in September.

Brighton's head of medicine and performance Adam Brett said: "It is a terrible blow for Enock, but he has to put his health and his family first and this is the right choice, however difficult it is to quit the game he loves."

"Given this is Enock's career and a decision which can't be taken lightly, we have taken our time to be as thorough as possible, completed advanced cardiac investigations and collaborated with clinical experts to gain the best second opinions for Enock."

"We will be helping him make sure the condition is managed with the appropriate treatment for him to otherwise live a long and healthy life." Mwepu's

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
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Azeem Rafiq, Andrew Gale among five cricketers sanctioned for historic social-media posts

CricInfo - Azeem Rafiq says that his reprimand from the Cricket Discipline Commission (CDC) is "deserved" and that he will "fully accept" the panel's judgement, after he and four other cricketers were punished for historic and prejudicial social media posts.

Rafiq, along with former Yorkshire coach Andrew Gale, Somerset seamer Jack Brooks and prominent women's players Danni Wyatt and Eve Jones were charged earlier this year for respective breaches of ECB Directive 3.3 which pertains to bringing the game of cricket into disrepute.

Brooks, Jones and Wyatt also admitted a breach of ECB Directive 3.4, which requires that all players abide by the ECB Anti-Discrimination Code. However, the CDC Adjudicator, Chris Tickle, decided that a reprimand would suffice in all five cases.

The cases came to light in the midst of the racism scandal that beset English cricket last year, and Rafiq - whose revelations of an institutionally racist culture at Yorkshire ultimately led



Azeem Rafiq, Andrew Gale

to him testifying before a parliamentary select committee - reiterated after the CDC's decision that he was "ashamed and embarrassed" for his own anti-Semitic actions in a social media exchange dating back to 2011.

In a Facebook exchange, reproduced in full in the CDC judgement, Rafiq and his former England Under-19 team-mate Ateeq Javid joked about how a third, unnamed, team-mate was a "jew" for failing to pay his share of a bill at a restaurant.

The messages were first published in the Times on November 18, 2021, leading to a same-day apology from Rafiq on social media, and confirmation that they had subsequently been deleted

from his profile. "This summer, I unequivocally accepted a charge from the ECB regarding my antisemitic social media post from 2011," Rafiq wrote in the wake of the judgement. "You will hear no complaint from me about the CDC's decision today. It is deserved and I fully accept this reprimand. I want to repeat my apology to the Jewish community. I remain ashamed and embarrassed."

Rafiq met with Holocaust survivors after the incident, including on this year's March of the Living at Auschwitz.

"I hope I have demonstrated over the past 10-11 months that I am trying to educate myself about the horrors and prejudice the

Jewish community has historically - and continues - to face," he added. "I will keep trying and I thank the Jewish community for the forgiveness and kindness that has been shown to me so far."

Gale, who has said that he is "moving on with his life" and will "not engage" with the ECB's disciplinary process, after being sacked by Yorkshire at the height of the racism scandal, was found in November 2021 to have used an anti-Semitic slur in a Twitter exchange with Paul Dews, the then-head of media relations at Leeds United.

Wyatt and Jones were photographed in "blackface" at a Caribbean-themed party dating back to 2013, while Brooks was found to have used a racially offensive term in two tweets from 2012 during an exchange with the England fast bowler Tymal Mills and Stewart Laudat, who played minor counties cricket for Oxfordshire.

Following their disclosure, Brooks confirmed in a statement that he "deeply regretted" using the term and apologised "wholeheartedly".

cont'd from pg 22

younger brother Francisco, 22, is also a professional footballer for Austrian side Sturm Graz. Heart problems affecting professional athletes are unusual but not unheard of. Manchester City's all-time record goalscorer Sergio Aguero retired from football aged 33 after experiencing

chest discomfort, fewer than six months after joining Barcelona.

Former Manchester United defender Daley Blind was diagnosed with a heart condition in December 2019 but returned to playing after having an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) fitted. Manchester United mid-

fielder Christian Eriksen also has an ICD fitted following his cardiac arrest while playing for Denmark at Euro 2020. Fabrice Muamba collapsed when his heart stopped during a game in 2012, while Cameroon midfielder Marc-Vivien Foe died after collapsing during an international match in France in 2000.

Sports News



West Indies batsman Campbell gets 4-year anti-doping ban

Reuters - West Indies batsman John Campbell has been slapped with a four-year ban for violation of an anti-doping rule, according to a Jamaica Anti-Doping Commission (JADCO) decision seen by Reuters. Friday's 18-page decision by a three-member independent panel followed a charge of evading, refusing or failing to submit to sample collection.

Campbell played 20 test matches, six one-day internationals and two Twenty20 internationals for the West Indies, before JADCO accused him of refusing to provide a blood sample at his home in Kingston in April.

"The ... panel is persuaded to a comfortable degree of satisfaction that the athlete committed an anti-doping rule violation, namely breach of JADCO rule 2.3. ...," the decision read in part.

"The panel does not find, on the evidence presented, that the athlete's anti-doping violation was not intentional.



Cricket - Second Test - West Indies v England - The Kensington Oval, Bridgetown, Barbados - March 20, 2022 West Indies' John Campbell in action. Action Images via Reuters/Jason Cairnduff

"In the circumstances of this case the athlete is ineligible for a period of 4 years," it added, citing the applicable JADCO rule 10.3.1, with the ban backdated to start from notification of the violation on May 10 this year.

LIV Golf: Inaugural champion Dustin Johnson receives £16.2m in prize money

BBC - Two-time major winner Dustin Johnson has received \$18m (£16.2m) after being announced as the winner of the inaugural LIV Golf championship. The American, 38, claimed victory at the LIV Golf Invitational in Boston in September among five top-10 finishes in the six events of the series to date. The individual competition concludes in Jeddah from 14-16 October.

Johnson's 16th place finish in Bangkok at the weekend left him with an insurmountable 42-point lead.

South Africa's Branden

Grace sits behind the former world number one in the individual standings going into the final event of the Saudi-backed competition. "Locking up the individual competition is big," said Johnson.

"It's an honour to be LIV's first individual season champion."

LIV Golf chief Greg Norman said: "The first chapter of LIV Golf's history could not be written without Dustin Johnson's name. "By any measure, Dustin Johnson is among the elite players in the world. From the start, he's

been a LIV Golf cornerstone. "He has more than lived up to his billing and he deserves immense credit for clinching LIV's first individual season title."

The runner-up in the final individual standings will earn \$8m (£7.2m), with \$4m (£3.6m) awarded to third place. Patrick Reed, the 2018 Masters winner, currently sits in third, ahead of 2022 Open Champion Cameron Smith. But 14 players could yet finish immediately behind Johnson.

Johnson won \$4m (3.6m) for his only victory of the se-

ries in Boston alone.

The controversial LIV Golf series, which offers a \$25m purse at its events, has caused deep division in the sport. There are currently no world ranking points on offer for those that have chosen to join the series and LIV golfers have been banned from the US PGA Tour. Following the final individual competition in Jeddah, a season-ending team championship event will be held in Miami between 28-30 October.

That will see LIV Golf's 12 teams compete for a \$50m (£45.2m) prize.

Waiving Djokovic ban would be 'slap in the face' for Australia - Ex-minister

Reuters - Waiving Novak Djokovic's visa ban to let him play the Australian Open would be a "slap in the face" for Australian people who vaccinated for COVID-19, opposition lawmaker and former Home Affairs Minister Karen Andrews said on Monday.

Serbian Djokovic was deported from Australia in the leadup to the Grand Slam in January for declining to be vaccinated. The former world number one is barred from the country until 2025 but can have his three-year visa ban waived by the government. Australia in July scrapped a rule that required international travellers to declare their COVID vaccination status, and Djokovic has said he was hoping for "positive news" on his bid to play



Serbian tennis player Novak Djokovic arrives at Nikola Tesla Airport, after the Australian Federal Court upheld a government decision to cancel his visa to play in the Australian Open, in Belgrade, Serbia January 17, 2022. REUTERS/Christopher Pike

next year's Australian Open.

Andrews said, however, that the rule change should have no bearing on Djokovic's case. "There would have been other people in similar circumstances that have also had their visas cancelled," the lawmaker told ABC Radio on Monday.

"So if immigration now chooses to make a special allowance for Novak Djokovic the obvious question is what are they going to do about anyone else who may be in similar circumstances?" No comment was immediately available from Djokovic. Australia's Home

Affairs ministry reiterated that it does not comment on individual cases. Andrews said lifting Djokovic's ban would be a "slap in the face" for those people in Australia who did the right thing (and) got vaccinated."

"(Why should) Novak Djokovic be allowed back into the country simply because he's a high-ranking tennis player with many millions of dollars?" she added. "It shouldn't be just one rule for (him) and a different rule for everyone else."

Djokovic, who has won the Australian Open a record nine times, was unable to travel to New York for the recent U.S. Open because he was not vaccinated but said he had no regrets about missing two of the year's four Grand Slams.

Galley Bay remains winless in Business Basketball League

Galley Bay Resort's quest for their first victory in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Cool and Smooth Business League was unsuccessful at the JSC Sports Complex on Sunday evening.

Galley Bay tumbled to their ninth loss in as many matches when they fell 48-61 to the Board of Education in the last game of Sunday's triple-header.

Molefi Joseph scored a game-high 23 points and Allister Nibbs sank 14 points for Galley Bay, while Bruce Whyte had 18 points, Raymond Dickenson converted 13 points and Jahwan Miller chipped in with 10 points for

the Board of Education to record their fifth win in nine outings.

Mill Reef didn't fear much better as they slipped to their eighth loss in nine encounters when they were beaten 43-39 by Health First Pharmacy Fearless Crew in the second game on Sunday.

Ariel Quallis produced a game-high 20 points and Kacey Williams scored 12 points for Mill Reef, while Rickie Willock converted 15 points for Fearless Crew who recorded only their third win in 11 encounters.

Graphic Impact Shooters secured their sixth win in eight outings by

coasting to a comfortable 80-64 victory against Vendors in Sunday's opening affair.

Tavarus Benta sank 23 points, Jaheem James scored 20 points, Yannick Samuel had 15 points and Nickon McGregor chipped in with 14 points for Graphic Impact Shooters.

Adrian Carnegie netted 16 points, Shamar Joseph contributed 11 points and Andre Edwards scored 10 points for the Vendors who slumped to their sixth loss in 11 appearances.

The Business Basketball League will continue with another triple-head-

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Sports News



Brysons Bullets capture Tape Ball T20 Summer Classic title

Brysons Shipping & Insurance Bullets are the champions of the LL Supply Limited IBSC Tape Ball T20 Summer Classic.

Bullets claimed the title by trouncing Rackaman Construction Strictly Business by 95 runs in the final at the Antigua Grammar School Grounds on Sunday, 9th October.

Bullets won the toss and batted, making 195 for five off their allotted 20 overs, with Essan Warner slamming 91 with 10 sixes and four fours (4x4).

Joshua Thomas scored an unbeaten 39, while Jewel Andrew claimed two wickets for 26 runs in his four overs.

Chasing 196 to win, Strictly Business were dismissed for 101 in 15.1 overs, with Andrew getting 17, Owen Graham 16 and Dillon Wills 14.

Warner snapped up three wickets for four runs in his four overs and Richie Thomas captured three for 17.

VIP overcame Dredgers by 16 runs in the playoff for third place at the same venue on Sunday.



Brysons Shipping & Insurance Bullets are the champions of the LL Supply Limited IBSC Tape Ball T20 Summer Classic. They won the title by beating Strictly Business in the final at the AGS playing field on Sunday, 9th October, 2022. (Photo courtesy Francis Swango Mark)

ue on Sunday.

In a game reduced to 15 overs, VIP made 108 for four off their allotted overs after winning the toss and opting to bat first.

Kadeem Josiah struck 33, Akeem Blackman made 27 and Shaquan Reifer was not out on 21.

Justin Athanaze grabbed three wickets for seven runs in his three overs.

In reply, Dredgers were all out for 92 in 13.4 overs.

Melvin Charles scored 21, Athanaze got 20 and Robin Bascus Jr. chipped in with 19.

Shaquan Reifer snapped up three wickets for seven runs in 2.4 overs, Demetri Lucas claimed two for 15, Blackman captured two for 20 and Josiah picked up two for 24.

During the presentation ceremony, Warner was named the Most Valuable Player of the final.

Michael Dover of VIP captured the Most Valuable Player of the Tournament award.

Dover's 350 runs were the highest aggregate which included two centuries and a half century.

He also had the highest score of 146 not out. He scored his runs at an average of 70 and also captured three wickets.

Elroy Francis Jr. of Brysons Shipping & Insurance Bullets was the leading wicket taker and also recorded the best bowling figures of the tournament.

Francis captured a total of 14 wickets and claimed the best figures of five wickets for nine runs in four overs.

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er at the JSC Sports Complex this evening, Tuesday, 11th October.

Graphic Impact Shooters will oppose Galley Bay Resort at 6:30 pm, unbeaten leaders Eye Mobile Antigua Vision Care will meet Vendors at 7:30 pm and Fitzroy Rewinding will clash with Sir Lester Bird

Medical Centre at 8:30 pm.

In tomorrow's (Wednesday) triple-header, Eye Mobile Antigua Vision Care will face Mill Reef at 6:30 pm, Pointe FM will tackle the Board of Education at 7:30 pm and Vendors will clash with the Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board at 8:30 pm.

SAP and Grenades claim last semi-finals spots in ABFA's Knockout Cup

SAP FC and Grenades FC recorded wins in the last two quarter-finals matches to complete the semi-final line-up in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Joma Caribbean Cool and Smooth Knockout Cup Competition on Sunday.

Ex-national striker Peter "Big Pete" Byers scored his second hat-trick of the competition to lead SAP FC to a 4-0 win over Garden Stars in the first match of a double-header at the ABFA's Technical Centre at Paynters.

Byers, who had scored a hat-trick in SAP's 6-1 drubbing of Greenbay Hoppers in the second round, repeated the feat to oust Garden Stars, who was the only first division side to reach the quarter-finals after knocking out premier division league side Libertas BlackHawks and Swetes FC in the previous two rounds.

Contesting the third quarter-final affair before a large crowd at the ABFA's Technical Centre, Byers showed he can still get the job done by producing an inspired performance.

Byers scored his first goal just before the interval, in the 44th minute,

to give SAP a 1-0 halftime advantage against a Garden Stars side that was putting up a resolute defense against the more illustrious premier league opponents.

After breaching the Garden Stars defense in the first half, the game got a little bit easier for SAP in the second half, as they were able to score three more goals to ease their way to victory and secured their place into the semi-finals.

Byers scored his second goal in the 59th minute and completed his hat-trick with a strike in the 68th minute to give SAP a 3-0 advantage. Tyrique Tonge sealed the victory when he converted SAP's fourth goal in the third minute of added on time (93rd minute).

Hanel Burrell scored a brace for Grenades FC who had to come from behind to pull off a 3-1 victory over Tryum FC in the last quarter-final affair, which was the second match of Sunday's double-header.

Jolanshoy McDonald had scored in the 20th minute to give Tryum a 1-0 lead, which lasted for 11 minutes before Rick Gordon got Grenades'

equalizer with a 31st minute conversion.

Burrell then scored his first goal just before the interval as his 44th minute conversion gave Grenades a 2-1 halftime advantage.

Burrell then scored his second goal in the 50th minute to seal Grenades' victory, which ensured they advanced to the final four and completed the semi-final line-up.

Grenades and SAP FC joined Willikies and Pigotts Bullets, who had won the first and second quarter-final matches respectively, into the semis.

Willikies FC defeated Old Road FC 2-1 and Pigotts Bullets FC beat Cedar Grove Blue Jays by the same score line in the first and second quarter-finals at the ABFA's Technical Centre on Saturday.

All semi-finalists are already guaranteed to take home at least EC\$5,000 at the end of the competition.

The fourth place finishers will walk away with EC\$5,000, the third place winners will get EC\$10,000, the runners-up will claim EC\$20,000 and the champion team will take home the grand cash prize of EC\$50,000.

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I am inviting the sponsors to double my offer."

In his address to the teams, Gomes disclosed that Anjo Wholesale, local agents for Dragon Stout, will be sponsoring the ABNDA's competitions during the 2022 season.

"We are pleased to announce that the 2022 domino season and tournaments are sponsored by Dragon Stout and its distributor

Anjo Wholesales," Gomes stated.

Serieux said Anjo Wholesale is happy to be involved with the sport and is looking forward for more collaborations with the ABNDA. The Dragon Stout logo will adorn the dominoes and tables that will be used during the 2022 season.

According the Second Vice-President of the ABNDA Michael Roach, who is

in charge of competitions, two new teams, Triple Dynamite and Unstoppables, have joined the national association and will be competing in the 2022 season.

"In addition to the Antigua State College, Bolans Revellers, Double Six, Dominatrixx, Legacy, Parham Strikers, Rising Stars, Royal Ramplers, Willikies Super Stars, both Triple Dynamite and Unstoppables clubs are the new addi-

tions," Roach stated.

The 2022 season will commence with the classics on Thursday, 13th October, with the staging of the first competition, which will be the Queen and King of Dominoes. The 2022 season started late and will last for a duration of 11 weeks long and will continue until end of year. The ABNDA is planning to begin the 2023 season during the second week in January next year.

ABNDA starts season with opening ceremony and pullarama contest

The Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Association (ABNDA) started their 2022 season with an official opening ceremony and a Pullarama competition at its headquarters, the former Ottos School, in Ottos Newtown on Saturday night.

Natasha Edwards, Lorraine Richardson and Anthony Bryan were winners of the pullarama in which 42 players competed. The pullarama, which was opened to the general public, was a fundraiser for the ABNDA as part of its plans to compete in the next World Domino Tournament, which will be hosted in Guyana in 2023.

Antigua and Barbuda was slated to host the tournament in 2020, but due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, it was postponed until next year.



Participants compete in the Pullarama competition during the official opening of the 2022 ABNDA's season at its headquarters, the former Ottos School, in Ottos Newtown on Saturday, 8th October, 2022. (Photos courtesy the ABNDA)



Commissioner of Sports Colin James, seated between, President of the ABNDA Sheldon Gomes, foreground, and Marketing Manager of Anjos Wholesale Germain Serieux, right, as they compete in a slam-off three-hand contest during the official opening of the 2022 ABNDA's season at its headquarters, the former Ottos School, in Ottos Newtown on Saturday, 8th October, 2022.

Antigua and Barbuda is the current world domino champions, having won back to titles in the biennial competitions in 2016 and 2018.

In delivering the feature address at the opening ceremony as the representative of the Ministry of Sports, Commissioner of Sports Colin James, who is a consistent supporter of the mind sport, complimented and congratulated the ABNDA for its hard work and efforts in providing a facelift to the building it has adopted as its headquarters in preparation for the start of the 2022 season.

James also thanked the ABNDA for keeping domino alive during the Covid-19 Pandemic and congratulated the national domino team for winning three regional tournaments this year against Jamaica, Barbados and Guy-

ana.

He also issued a challenge to the reigning world champions to threepeat by winning the upcoming world tournament in 2023.

James also contested the traditional Slam-Off three-hand competition that also involved President of the ABNDA Sheldon Gomes and Germain Serieux, who is the Marketing Manager of Anjo Wholesale, sponsors of the competitions being hosted by the national association during this season. Serieux won Saturday's competition to dethrone James, who had won the previous three-hand contest.

James also pledged his support to the ABNDA, saying, "I will personally give a monetary reward to the winning club of the 2022 tournament and

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