

THURSDAY 20TH OCTOBER 2022 | VOLUME 3 ISSUE 201 | WWW.POINTVILLE.AG

TO CATCH A KILLER: POLICE SEEK HELP CRACKING PILLAR ROCK MURDERS

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To mark World Food Day this year, the Ministry of Agriculture has been busy hosting a series of food security-related awareness activities. On Tuesday, several local farmers, including Michael Seelal of the Southeast District, pictured here with some of his produce, generously donated their crops to the ministry's "Feed the Needy" initiative. Also included was a "Bring A Can and Come" campaign. The donations were distributed among the Antigua and Barbuda Association for Persons with Disabilities, Fiennes Institute, Adopt- A- Family Foundation, and the Clarevue Psychiatric Hospital. [Photo credit: Ministry of Agriculture]

Local News



Police seek public's help in solving Pillar Rock murders

The murder of two Royalton Resort employees earlier this year remains an active investigation, even though police are working on very little information, Commissioner of Police, Atlee Rodney, has revealed.

The Royalton Resort's Accounting Manager, Ronaldo Emmanuel Sandoval Stone, and Human Resource Manager, Cesar Santos Ramirez were discovered murdered at their Pillar Rock residence early last month.

While praising investigators for the work done so far, Commissioner Rodney said they are seeking more information that will help to crack the case.

"I am looking at what the investigators are doing and we have been doing a tremendous job. We are just hoping that



Commissioner of Police, Atlee Rodney

we will put our hands on some credible information and evidence that can lead us to an arrest," the top cop said. He said in these instances, information shared by the public with the police is important in solving such gruesome crimes.

"We will continue to appeal to the public, anybody who saw anything in

that area, you can talk to the police, or if you just want to talk to the TIP (800 8477) number, that would assist us because we need some additional information.

"Yes, we have some information we're working with, we have some theory we are following, but we are still hoping that we can get some more credible information that can assist us in the investigation."

Police responded to a report of gunshots at one of the villas at Pillar Rock on the evening of 7th September, where they discovered a body floating in the swimming pool.

The second man was discovered at the bottom of the same pool the next day.

Both men were nationals of Mexico.



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Air Transportation, ECSC budget on OECS Summit agenda

Heads of Government from across the OECS countries are entering day-two of the 72nd Meeting of the OECS Authority in Little Bay, Montserrat.

Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister Gaston Browne is leading the country's delegation at the meeting which will consider a number of matters critical to the development of the sub-region.

On day-one of the meeting on Wednesday, the gathering considered regional air travel which has become a vexing region-wide issue following the near collapse of LIAT 1974 Ltd. in 2021.

The Gaston Browne-led administration has moved to revive the airline until a more comprehensive plan is put in place to recapitalise the airline and revamp its operating schedule.

LIAT currently operates a reduced schedule and this has led to significant frustration among travelers who face many hurdles when trying to arrange intra-regional transportation.

This has led several Caribbean leaders to express the



need to reestablish reliable airline service in the sub-region.

Many have now warmed to the idea of the revival of a new LIAT 2020 Ltd., a proposal that has been floated by Prime Minister Browne.

Other items on the agenda on day-one of the meeting included the 2022/23 Budget for the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court which was presented by Chief Justice Dame Janice Perriera, St. Maarten's bid for full membership in the organisation, a status update on the Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority's efforts to return to Category 1 status and the aftermath of the recent political crisis in the British Virgin Islands.

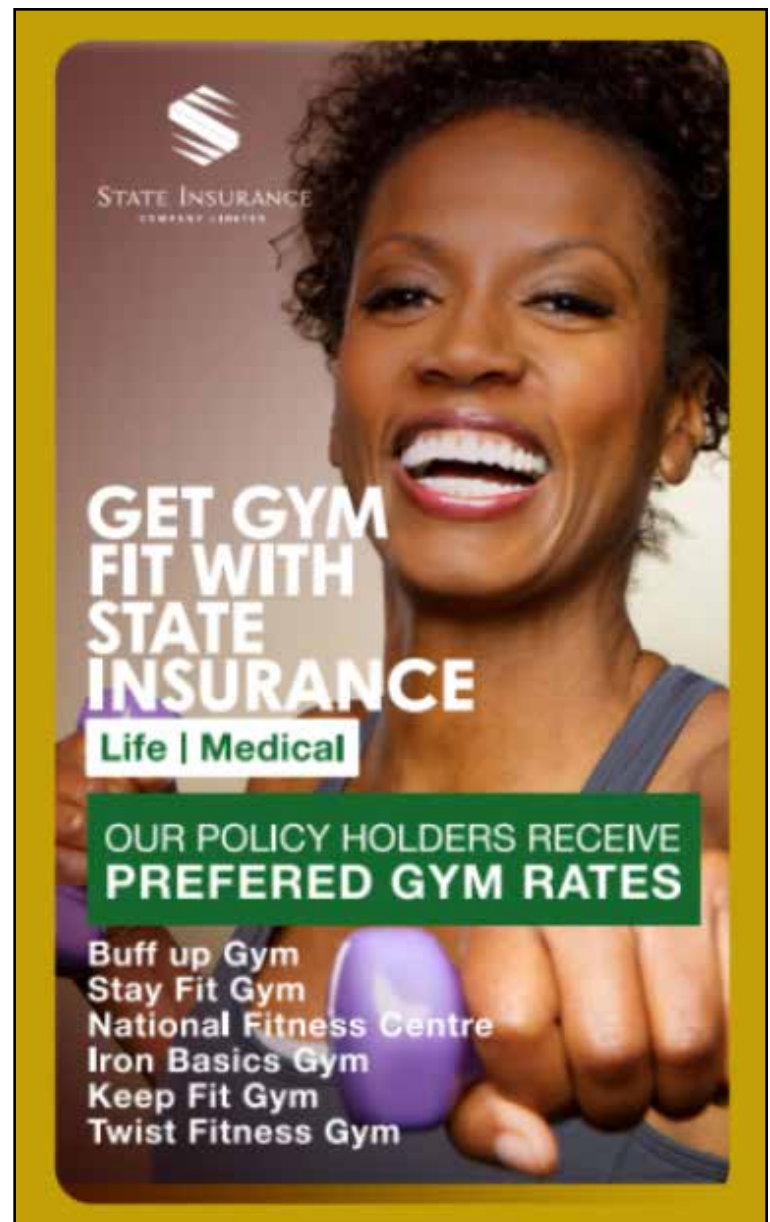
Today's session will see discussions on a number of reports, including those from

the conference of health ministers and the conference of education ministers.

Prime Minister Browne is expected back in St. John's later today.

NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY given that ROSALBA CABREIRA GONZALEZ of Potters Village, St John's, Antigua is applying to the Ministry for Naturalization and that any person who knows any reason why Naturalization should not be granted should send a written and signed statement of facts to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs.



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Local News



Health Minister calls on regional colleagues to “learn from the COVID pandemic” as Caribbean Health Conference gets underway



The regional health officials will be engaged in three days of discussions.

“We must not waste the lessons of COVID.”

This was the admonition of Antigua and Barbuda’s Health Minister, Sir Molwyn Joseph, as he addressed dozens of regional health officials at the opening ceremony at the 14th Caribbean Conference on National Health Financing Initiatives at the Royalton Antigua Resort and Spa on Wednesday.

“COVID was devastating, but COVID did something well for the Caribbean; I know I speak for this

healthcare system that it graphically exposed the weaknesses of our system. Every Caribbean Island discovered that they were not prepared for COVID,” Sir Molwyn said.

His words were fitting as the theme of this year’s forum is “Confronting the financing challenges of COVID-19 and the unfinished universal coverage agenda”.

The Health Financing Conference is intended to share knowledge, test ideas, identify best practices and develop regional networks of institutions and experts for ongoing collaboration.

The health minister said through these discussions, a path can be mapped to address all of the weaknesses that the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted.

Echoing Sir Molwyn’s sentiments was Dr. Anton Cumberbatch, Advisor for the Centre for Health Economics at the UWI St. Augustine.

Dr. Cumberbatch noted that the timing of this year’s conference is crucial as the region continues to rebuild and strengthen its healthcare services.

He too affirmed that the pandemic revealed shortcomings in regional healthcare and added that the discussion and plans developed coming out of them will be

cont’d on pg 5



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SLBMC to stage paediatric clinic in Barbuda

The health needs of children on the sister isle will be attended to when a team from the Paediatric Department of the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLBMC) travels to Barbuda next week.

The initiative is being welcomed with open arms by Nurse Carly Jones, who is based in Barbuda.

She explained during a recent media appearance that the clinic will provide relief to parents in Barbuda who cannot make more frequent visits to Antigua to access better care.

“It is very important for us because good health begins in early childhood.

“The earlier we are able to get persons on track with good health, following a good diet, is the bet-

ter in the long-run, and for us, it’s very timely because our situation here in Barbuda, we don’t have a paediatrician here on island, so persons would have to travel to the mainland in order to see a paediatrician.

“So, parents are now saving that cost, saving that inconvenience trying to find the time to get to Antigua while trying to get an appointment, because the paediatricians are coming right to us and our children can be assessed and the necessary care given,” Nurse Jones explained.

The SLBMC Paediatric Department staged a paediatric clinic in Barbuda earlier this year which focused on the general health of the island’s children.

cont’d from pg 4

paramount.

“A greater effort must be given and the best way to improve upon the regional healthcare system is first through improving on health financing” he said.

The pandemic, and manoeuvring past it, are among several topics the officials will focus on during their time in Antigua.

Other areas of focus will be policy changes in the Universal Health Coverage Agenda and mapping coping skills, post-COVID, for the region’s nations.

The three-day forum is being hosted by the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment and the Medical Benefits Scheme in partnership with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

It is the first time the conference has been held since it last took place in Anguilla in 2019.



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Local News



Free vision screenings and glasses for St. Paul's residents

Up to one thousand people from St. Paul's, most of whom are students attending schools from the area, will benefit from an eye-care initiative that starts today at the St. Paul's Community Centre in Liberta.

The event forms part of the annual Health Month organised by St. Paul's MP, E. P. Chet Greene.

This year, seventeen eye-care specialists are visiting to conduct the clinic.

The St. Paul's community group, Synergy, is partnering with the OneSight, a foundation under the umbrella of the eye-wear giant EssilorLuxottica and the HALO Foundation whose patrons are Governor General Sir Rodney Williams and Lady Williams.

The foundation's Global Head of Knowledge: Advocacy and Partnerships, Kristan Gross, said an estimated six hundred students from the Cobbs Cross, Liberta, New Bethel and other neighbouring schools will receive free eye exams over the next two days.

On Saturday, the clinic concludes with hundreds of adults expected to attend.

Gross explained that following the examinations, those requiring glasses will be able to select frames which will be sent to the United States for processing. When the glasses have been completed, they will be returned to Antigua and handed over to the patients, free of cost.

"I want to return to Antigua sometime soon with the glasses, hand them out and see the smiles on the faces of the recipients," Gross said.

She explained that OneSight has set a goal of eliminating poor vision in one generation and has pledged to do whatever is necessary to eliminate uncorrected refractive vision by 2050.

"Refractive errors are those errors in your vision that are correctable with a pair of glasses. One in three of these cases go untreated today, which amounts to 2.7 billion people worldwide who don't see clearly as



EssilorLuxottica OneSight Foundation's Kristan Gross (right) and Judith Marciano Williams (left) flank St. Paul's MP E.P. Chet Greene.

they really should.

"These are for reasons of lack of awareness that a solution is available, or that they don't see the eye

doctor for economic or social reasons, or it could be the affordability of the eyeglasses themselves," she remarked.

Her colleague, Judith Marciano Williams, head of Advocacy and Partnerships for the Americas, said the OneSight team travels the world to stage clinics which are similar to the one that opens in St Paul's today.

The team includes optometrists, opticians and other technicians.

Thu 20 Day		Thu 20 Night	
85°		78°	
23%	E 12 mph	22%	ENE 10 mph
Sunshine along with some cloudy intervals. High around 85F. Winds E at 10 to 15 mph.		Mostly clear skies. Low 78F. Winds ENE at 10 to 15 mph.	
Humidity 75%	UV Index Extreme	Humidity 81%	UV Index 0 of 10
Sunrise 6:01 am	Sunset 5:42 pm	Moonrise 1:44 am	Moonset 2:50 pm
		Waning Crescent	

Primary school students tour CARDI

Students of the Potters and St. Andrew's primary schools were given a tour of the Caribbean Agriculture Research and Development Institute (CARDI) ahead of World Food Day on 16th October.

During their visit, led by CARDI's Representative for Antigua and Barbuda and Montserrat, Paul Lucas, the children toured the facility's seed bank, weather station and greenhouse.

The fourth and fifth graders also visited the farm where they learned about various varieties of sweet potato grown in Antigua and Barbuda.

Both schools were beneficiaries of the Ministry of Agriculture's Extension Division Backyard Unit's



Potters Primary School students posed for a group photo.

"Plant A Seed" initiative.

This initiative, conducted in recognition of World Food Day 2022, saw the students receive a variety of plant seeds and cassava and sweet potato slips.

CARDI is a regional research station that is geared towards research interventions with respect to agricultural water use, water resource management and water harvesting. CARDI also specialises in seed production and the many varieties of sweet potato and cassava.



St. Andrews: St. Andrew's Primary School students [Photos courtesy the Ministry of Agriculture]



Paul Lucas shows students what will happen in a few months to the cassava cuttings they planted at their school.

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Business



Bahamas Retail Grocers Association speaks out on plans to expand list of price controlled items

The Retail Grocers Association of the Bahamas says the recently announced plans to expand the number of items now subject to price controls will be detrimental for many businesses.

In a letter to Prime Minister Davis, the association said the effect of the “unilateral decision will be devastating” to its members, especially owners of smaller, family-owned businesses.

They said the changes do not represent 38 items, but 38 categories of items, and will

result in 40 to 60 percent of their sales volumes falling under price control.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs has since said that while the changes to the price control regulations took effect this week, it and the Price Control Commission recognize the need for an extended period to phase in the price control adjustments and will forgo any penalties and enforcement during the adjustment period.

The association says its members will not imple-

ment changes as gazetted by the government and some will be forced to start layoffs and store closures if the price margins are instituted as planned. But Prime Minister Davis told reporters “I’m disappointed in those things and I’m not going to address that. I’ll speak to them and hear what they say and see what happens from there.”

Last week, Prime Minister Davis said as Bahamians continue to grapple with the high cost of living compounded by inflation, 38 new



Prime Minister Phillip Davis

items will be subject to price controls. He said this means the government will limit the wholesale and retail markup on items like diapers, and food including chicken, eggs, bread, bananas, apples, oranges, broccoli, onions, and potatoes.

Davis said these items are being added for at least a six-month period, following which the government will review and evaluate the impact on businesses and consumers. He said the profit margin on price-controlled drugs is also being reduced to provide additional relief to Bahamians.

“Our goal for the Bahamian economy goes beyond recovery. The goal simply can’t be to return to the way things used to be because, let’s be honest, there has never been a time when our economy created enough opportunity for Bahamian advancement and ownership. Returning to the past economy isn’t the goal, creating a new more inclusive economy is the goal,” he said. (CMC)

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Environment

Caribbean Coral reefs continue to be under bleaching conditions

The coral reef in the entire Caribbean region continues to be under bleaching watch conditions and warning conditions are becoming more prevalent according to the Barbados-based Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH).

In its latest edition of the Caribbean Coral Reef Watch, CIMH said the bleaching outlook for the Caribbean indicates that the Windward Islands – Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines – as well

as the Leeward Antilles including Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts-Nevis, Montserrat, Anguilla and Trinidad and Tobago, will be experiencing Alert Level 1 and 2 conditions from October, extending into December.

It said waters around the Windward Islands are at Alert Level 1, which means bleaching is expected. According to CIMH, Alert Level 2 means there is widespread bleaching, and some mortality is expected.

In its four-month out-



look, CIMH predicts coral bleaching heat stress will be at bleaching levels from October to December

“Heat stress conditions are now predicted to be at

Alert Level 1 and 2 throughout the Caribbean basin, October and November,” the CIMH added.

When corals are stressed by changes in conditions such as temperature, light, or nutrients, they expel the symbiotic algae living in their tissues, causing them to turn completely white. When a coral bleaches, it is not dead. Corals can survive a bleaching event, but they are under more stress and are subject to mortality.

Increased Ocean temperature caused by climate change is the leading cause of coral bleaching. Runoff and pollution storm-generated precipitation can rapidly dilute ocean water and runoff can carry pollutants — these can bleach near-shore corals.

When temperatures are high, high solar irradiance also contributes to bleaching in shallow-water corals. Additionally, exposure to the air during extreme low tides can cause bleaching in shallow corals according to the NOAA’s Coral Reef Conservation programme. (CMC)



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**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE
CARIBBEAN CONFEDERATION OF CREDIT UNIONS (CCCU)
ON THE COMMEMORATION OF
INTERNATIONAL CREDIT UNION DAY 2022**

Fellow Co-operators and citizens across our Caribbean countries and the diaspora, it is once again my distinct pleasure to extend greetings to you all on the commemoration of International Credit Union Day 2022.

As we celebrate International Credit Union Day across the Globe, under the Theme: **“EMPOWER YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE WITH A CREDIT UNION”**, I want to speak directly to the over 2.7 million members, spread across the Caribbean and the diaspora and invite them to join us at the CCCU as we engage on a missionary journey to spread the Gospel of the Co-operative Business Model across the region. This year’s theme gives us the most appropriate impetus and platform to begin this most important and necessary mission to preach Co-operative Credit Unionism from Genesis to Revelation. We must engage on a mission to ensure that the supreme benefits of Credit Unionism ultimately triumph over the ills of greed and individualism.

Having originated from a resolution passed at an Annual General Meeting, way back in 1972 and grown to a Movement encompassing some 2.7 million members belonging to some 230 Credit Unions across sixteen (16) Caribbean countries, we are adequately poised to spread the enlightening message of our growth, development, evolution, success, resilience, relevance and values-based Business Proposition. We have developed, inter alia, a diverse slew of modern service delivery channels, such as ATM’s, Mobile Banking, Mobile Wallets, Cloud Computing, Digital Banking Mobile Apps, APIs, Microservices and Remittance Payments for Diaspora members. We have also been the champion of Financial Inclusion over the years which is now being championed by our Global Parent Body as one of the pillars for the expansion of the Credit Union Movement.

While we are aware of all these achievements and benefits, what we need to engender across the region is that bold, confident deep-seated belief within ourselves about the virtues of the Credit Union Movement that would make us crusaders and missionaries of Credit Unionism. We can certainly achieve the noble goal, aim and aspiration of this year’s theme of empowering people’s future with a Credit Union, when we arm ourselves proudly with words of the Credit Union Gospel and go throughout our region and encourage citizens to be part of this mission to bring about Financial Independence and Inclusion for all our Caribbean people.

One of the CCCU’s partners in our Next Generational Leadership Development Thrust, Alex Ihama, said in his book **“Welcome to Greatness”** that **“encouragement means ‘to be inspired with courage, spirit, or confidence. It means to be promoted, advanced or fostered by something or someone. Encouragement is inherent in who we are and what we do.’ It is yet another acute imperative in our journey enroute to fulfillment. It is the fuel that is required for us to arrive at the ultimate destination.”**

So, as we celebrate International Credit Union Day 2022, and seek to empower the financial future of our Caribbean people through Credit Unions, we invite you, our 2.7 million members across our 230 Credit Unions, to be encouragers, to be soldiers of the Co-operative Credit Union movement, to be missionaries, and arm yourself with the belief in the Credit Union Business Model; the spirit of our founding fathers; the courage of our past leaders and the confidence of our virtues and spread the Gospel of Credit Unionism throughout every community throughout the Caribbean. Our mission is the revelation of the profound benefits of being a member of a Credit Union and the ultimate inspiration of all citizens across our region to be empowered through Credit Unions, so that they would feel the benefits of Financial Inclusion and have access to useful, affordable, and sustainable financial services, that would enhance their livelihoods.

This year’s message, **“EMPOWER YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE WITH A CREDIT UNION”**, is a message of hope, belief and a call to action. I wish to join with all Credit Unionists across the Caribbean as we celebrate and promote the Gospel of the Co-operative Credit Union Movement on Thursday, October 20th, International Credit Union Day.

Let us empower our Region’s Financial Future through Credit Unions, as we pursue Financial Inclusion and Independence for all citizens of our beautiful Caribbean Region.

HAPPY INTERNATIONAL CREDIT UNION DAY TO YOU ALL.

Why short-sightedness is on the rise

By Jessica Mudditt

Continued from yesterday's issue of Pointe Xpress

Children and teachers in a 2017 study by Zhongshan Ophthalmic Center, where Congdon also works, preferred the bright classrooms that resemble a glasshouse, as compared with a traditional classroom. However in summer and on sunny days, the light intensity was at the "practical upper limit for routine use". The bright classroom is also twice as expensive to build as a regular classroom, partly because cooling mechanisms are required.

This complex problem – myopia as a bad side effect of an otherwise positive trend – also shows up in another area: income levels. Like education, a higher income is generally associated with greater wellbeing in children – but not when it comes to eye health. Instead, myopia is associated with higher socioeconomic status.

As Congdon explains: "The richer we get, the better we are at protecting our children from ever going outdoors, because they've got more things to do. They've got to play the piano and learn saxophone and watch TV, and so forth."

The literacy effect

In low- and middle-income countries, myopia rates still tend to be lower – Bangladesh and India for example report rates of about 20-30percent in adults – but this is changing. In Africa, for example, myopia used to be comparatively



A classroom in China, where short-sightedness has been on the rise among children and teens (Credit: Getty Images)

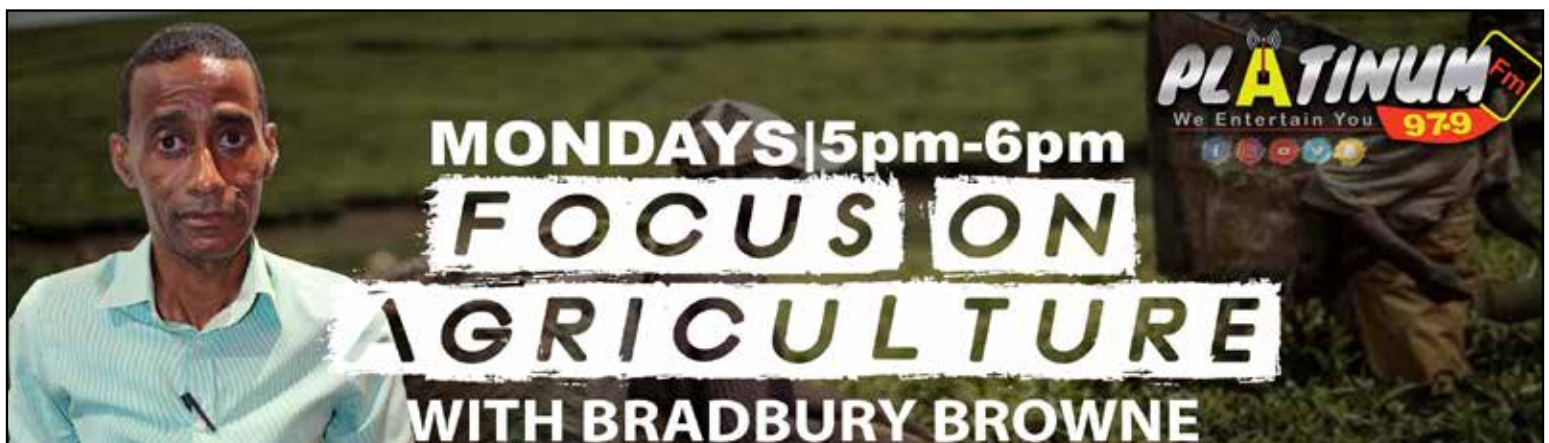
uncommon, but over the past ten years the prevalence of childhood myopia has been rising fast. In addition, lower-income countries may lack the resources to diagnose and correct short-sightedness in children, with a massive impact on their lives and education. Some communities in Africa have reported having no access to spectacles at all, and very little access to eye care. Being unable to see properly means children can't follow what their teacher writes on the board, and may also find it hard to participate in other routine school activities.

As literacy rates improve in those countries – an otherwise welcome development – that problem could grow, unless there is a big effort to also provide eye tests and glasses, experts warn.

"We can expect myopia rates to continue to climb because countries like India are getting more kids into school," says Congdon. "And if kids are spending more time in school, they're spending more time reading and less time outdoors."

School time in itself is, however, not necessarily the root of the problem, as the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns have shown. It is staying indoors that appears to be. During the lockdowns, schools shut down all over the world – but children's eye health became even worse. Typically, they stayed inside during the lockdowns, and spent hours staring at screens, either following classes or watching TV, as other forms of learn-

cont'd on pg 14



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Health & Wellness



cont'd from pg 12

ing and entertainment disappeared.

Lockdown vision

Because of the legacy of the lockdowns, China's biggest concern at the moment is for children aged between four and six. "We're worried that due to Covid-19, children were spending even

more time indoors and that rates have gone up," says Chia. "We're waiting for our data to find out."

Data from China already shows that the lockdowns did in fact deal a blow to young children's eye health. One study compared myopia rates among children, measured by

annual screenings. Before the pandemic, in the years from 2015-19, the highest myopia rate measured among six-year-old children was 5.7percent. In June 2020, after 5 months of home confinement, researchers measured children's eyesight in that age group and found that the rate that shot up to 21.5percent, says David C. Musch, one of the study's co-authors and a professor of ophthalmology and visual sciences, and epidemiology, at the University of Michigan.

Researchers have referred to this effect as "quarantine myopia" – basically, lockdown-induced short-sight-

edness. Due to pandemic lockdowns, myopia is also becoming a concern in countries that were not much troubled by it before. This can be particularly noticeable in countries where children generally roamed outdoors before the pandemic – but found themselves suddenly confined.

"In countries with outdoor lifestyles, there may be a dramatic increase in myopia rates due to pandemic lockdowns," says Chia. "In countries like Singapore, where we don't go outdoors much, the change caused by the pandemic may not be as big."

Protecting children's eyesight

Faced with these facts, many parents may be wondering what they can do to protect their child's eyesight. And since eye health is a global issue, many countries have made it a priority, too. China, for example, is pursuing a slew of different strategies, warning that widespread near-sightedness could cause labour shortages in a slew of industries.

"A majority of the interventions that exist to stop short-sightedness getting worse were developed or tested in China," says Ghorbani-Mojarrad.

The results have been mixed. Eye exercises, which were previously recommended as a low-cost health strategy, were found to be insufficient in preventing myopia in the long-term. China has limited children's video gaming to a set amount of time per week – but this was largely directed at concerns over the perceived negative influence of gaming, rather than screen time itself. As for the potential link between screen time and myopia, the evidence is not conclusive. If your child really likes screentime, just sit them outside while they do it – Neema Ghorbani-Mojarrad

"There are many different types of screens and so many variables, so it is difficult to get accurate risk data," says Ghorbani-Mojarrad. "As a parent, it's probably worth being cautious about screens particularly because the evi-

cont'd on pg 15



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cont'd from pg 14

dence shows that it might be a factor. If your child really likes screentime, just sit them outside while they do it."

Other solutions hinge on technological advances. Singapore's myopia strategy, for example, includes special contact lenses or glasses. Its researchers have found no evidence to suggest that treatments such as oral supplements, eye exercises, eye relax machines, acupressure or magnetic therapy, are effective. Simple eye drops, however, may help.

A new red-light therapy may also hold promise. "The machine emits a red light into a child's eye for a few minutes a day for five days a week. It has been shown to slow the amount of short-sightedness developing. But we do not fully understand why," Ghorbani-Mojarrad says.

Ultimately, the right treatment depends on the child, experts say. If parents are worried, they should speak to an optometrist. But for now, some of the most powerful solutions – be it to manage or prevent myopia – are surprisingly simple.

Healthy lives, healthy eyes

In many parts of the world, providing an ordinary pair of glasses can be life-changing. Congdon has been working in China since the early 1980s, together with ORBIS International, a charity that has provided low-cost glasses to 2.5 million children in China and India. He undertook the first trial to find out whether glasses would im-

prove educational outcomes. His study of 20,000 children in Guangdong, China found that the impact of giving a \$4 (£3.70) pair of glasses outstripped the impact of parental education or family income.

"It means that a simple, low-cost intervention can reverse a lot of the disadvantages that a kid might come into the world having vis-a-vis their parent's education or a low family income. We found this exciting," adds Congdon.

The most effective, evidence-based prevention strategy is also surprisingly low-tech, and applies to all countries regardless of their

wealth or resources: more time outdoors.

Researchers are still investigating exactly why being outdoors, and being in natural light, helps prevent myopia – but for now, their perhaps most important conclusion is that it does. The challenge is to ensure that children make use of this natural boost.

In Singapore, outdoors time at preschools was doubled to one hour as part of the broader national myopia-fighting strategy. Exams for the youngest students have been scrapped, to reduce the time spent doing homework. "We want to increase outdoor time for older students,

but the curriculum is quite packed," says Chia. "We're a small island, so some schools don't have the room for the kids to go out and they're not close to a park or anything."

"While many uncertainties remain about myopia, she is encouraged by the progress made during decades of research: "Three years ago, we did not know how important sunlight is."

Ultimately, a child's eyesight is part of their general wellbeing, she says: "We don't just want the focus to be on the eyes: it's about the whole body and good mental health. We want our kids to lead healthy lives."



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Regional News



T&T nationals remanded in St. Vincent following drug seizure

CMC - Four Trinidad and Tobago nationals were remanded after they appeared in the Serious Offences Court on Monday on drug and ammunition-related charges after their 29 foot pirogue was intercepted by the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Coast Guard last Friday.

The four – Kerry Keller, a 26-year-old labourer, as well as fishermen Joel Medina, 31, Dion Harry, 22, and

45-year-old Andre Lee, were arrested after the coast guard seized 330 grams of cocaine and 69 rounds of ammunition within the territorial waters of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The men were jointly charged with possession of a controlled drug with intent to supply it to another; possession of a controlled drug for the purpose of drug trafficking; attempting to import a controlled drug within the

territorial waters as well as possession of 69 rounds of prohibited ammunition without the authorization of the minister and possession of ammunition without a licence issued under the Firearms Act.

When they appeared in court on Monday, Dion Harry pleaded guilty to all charges while the other accused pleaded not guilty. They have all been remanded pending a review.

Government tables legislation that could replace the Belize Constitution

CMC - Opposition Leader Shyne Barrow says while he supports legislation promoting a new constitution or amending the existing Belize Constitution, he remains cautiously optimistic in what the bill seeks to do.

Government earlier this week tabled the People's Constitution Commission Bill that will allow for a commission to draft and guide the process of promoting a new constitution for Belize or amendments to the existing Constitution.

Education Minister, Francis Fonseca, told legislators that there is need for educating on what the Constitution stands for as well as the options.

"This is a historic bill, a historic opportunity for us as a people. I think it provides a unique opportunity for us, for all Belizeans to engage in this process, to have your voices heard. We



say it a lot of times that we have people on social media who complain about different areas of governance and that's been the case for years and years," Fonseca told legislators.

"Now we have an opportunity to engage in sharing your views on how you would like to see Belize better governed. All of us as citizens of this country should recognize this oppor-

tunity, embrace it, take full advantage of it. Let us not squander our opportunity to make meaningful change in the governance structures of our country.

"We now have an opportunity to look at the Constitution and the structures that underpin that constitution and make fundamental change if that is what we desire to do," the Education Minister said.

But while he expressed support for the initiative, Barrow told legislators, the "goal is to protect rights and to expand rights, so that we don't find ourselves in a position where rights are being taken away because we live in a democracy.

"We live in a nation of freedom, a nation where the rule of law trumps everything. So it really has to be that we are looking at how

cont'd on pg 17

Guyana: Commission of Inquiry into 2020 elections to begin next month

CMC - The Commission of Inquiry (COI) into the controversial March 2, 2020 regional and general election that brought the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/CO) into office in Guyana will begin its work on November 3, according to an official statement issued. It said that the terms of reference have been completed and published in the official gazette and that the COI is expected to be completed within seven months.

President Irfaan Ali announced the Commission, chaired by retired Justice of Appeal from Trinidad and Tobago, Justice Stanley John, that will "inquire into and report upon the relevant circumstances and events leading up to, and the procedures following, the Regional and General Elections".

The Commission is to inquire into the counting, ascertaining and tabulation of votes polled and the public declaration of those results by the Returning Officer of Electoral District No.4, and other election officers, as prescribed by the Representation of the People Act



(ROPA),

It will also seek to establish what attempts, if any, were made to obstruct, frustrate, subvert, and prevent the counting, ascertainment and tabulation of votes polled and a declaration of the true results of Electoral District No.4.

According to the terms of reference, the Commission will, among other things, also investigate what attempts, if any, were made to obstruct, frustrate, subvert, and prevent a decision of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) made on March 14, 2020 "to

conduct a national recount of the votes polled at the General and Regional Elections from being executed and implemented...including inquiring into the conduct of the Chief Election Officer, other elections officers, and others in respect of the discharge and execution of the statutory duties of the Chief Election Officer prescribed by the ROPA Act.

Last month, Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Anil Nandlall, S.C, told the media that the COI would in no way influence election petition proceedings before the courts

here as well as the Trinidad-based Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) because the CCJ has already heard one election petition appeal.

"They are not connected, [with] those matters ([because they] are already in the court, they were filed two years prior to the commission and there is absolutely no nexus between the two," he said then.

Last month, opposition legislator Ganesh Mahipaul wrote to the Commissioner of Information (COI), retired Justice Charles Ramson seeking to find out how much money will be paid to the Commissioners.

The opposition coalition, A Partnership for National Unity and the Alliance For Change (APNU+AFC), has already said there was need for consultation with the opposition in an effort to secure broad-based acceptance of the Commission.

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best we can protect the rights of all of our citizens – equal rights, all of their rights to end discrimination, to make access to justice as the Minister of Education mentioned earlier," Barrow said.

He reminded Parliament that during the House Committee meetings he had raised issues with the committee "and

the Minister of Political Reform (Henry Charles Usher) was there and I am satisfied, cautiously, that the committee will follow through in ensuring that there is as much inclusion as practical."

The Constitution of Belize came into force on September 21, 1981 when the country gained its political independence from Britain.

Regional News



US offers hurricane assistance to Cubans amid blackouts

AP - The United States said Tuesday it has offered critical emergency humanitarian assistance to the people of Cuba to recover from the devastation caused by Hurricane Ian, an unusual but not unprecedented move after years of bilateral tensions.

The assistance includes \$2 million in provisions and supplies that will be delivered through independent non-governmental organisations that have experience and are already working on the island directly with the affected populations, said a senior administration official who asked to remain anonymous following government policies.

“We are responding to a disaster by working with our international humanitarian assistance partners to deliver critical assistance directly to those most in need,” she said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press before the official announcement. “We stand with the Cuban people and will continue to seek ways to improve their political and economical well-being.”

The emergency aid will be provided through “trusted international partners,” like the Red Cross, by way of the United States Agency for International Development, or USAID.

The announcement comes after Ian hit the western part of the island in late September, causing extensive



Jaro and his father Andres collect grass for their horse as the sun sets in La Coloma, in Pinar del Rio province, Cuba, Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022, one week after Hurricane Ian. (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa, File)

damage to its power grid. The hurricane left large swathes of Cuba with blackouts, fueling discontent on the Caribbean island, especially in rural areas where the blackouts are the worst.

Cuba already faced a deep energy crisis and economic turmoil before Ian, especially after a fire in August devastated an oil deposit 60 miles (97 kilometres) from Havana that was a key source of energy.

The protests sparked by the blackouts are the biggest since mass demonstrations in 2021 triggered by similar problems. Detentions of protesters by Cuban authorities have repeatedly generated human rights complaints from international observers, including the U.S.

While the two countries have long had a tense relationship, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez expressed his gratitude for the offer from the Biden administration immediately

after the announcement and confirmed that it will come through the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Rodríguez said on his Twitter account that the aid will contribute to recovery efforts and support those affected by Hurricane Ian.

After the storm, U.S. officials spoke with the island’s authorities to find out what their needs were and how they could help, the official said in the interview with AP. The assistance, however, will not go to the Cuban government, but rather to the population directly, she said. She said through the conversations the administration learned that the greatest needs are in shelter restoration and food.

On some occasions, the Cuban authorities have accused the United States of approving aid for NGOs that are a cover for Cuban dissidents in Florida, whom they allege have appropriated the money.

This is not the first time that the U.S. government has provided humanitarian assistance to Cuba in the wake of natural disasters. It did it in 2008, in the wake of Hurricane Gustav; and from 2004 to 2006, in the wake of Hurricanes Charley, Dennis and Wilma.

The current move represents a small step in thawing icy relations between the two nations.

For more than six decades, the United States has imposed various levels of embargo on Cuba. During the Obama administration, such restrictions were eased but came back into full force under the Trump administration. While President Joe Biden has made efforts to ease a few of the measures – like travel and remittances to bring families closer – he’s left many Trump-era restrictions in place, which have significantly affected the Cuban economy. The administration also announced it would resume visa services after previously closing the embassy following a series of health incidents.

The full embargo can only be lifted with an authorization from the U.S. Congress, and the official said the aid will be consistent with the U.S. laws and regulations.

The official said the U.S. will continue its demands for the release of political prisoners and respect for human rights on the island.

Florida flesh-eating illness cases spike after Hurricane Ian

CMC - The Florida county that was devastated by Hurricane Ian last month has seen a surge in cases of flesh-eating bacteria illnesses and deaths.

Officials say Lee County, where the category four storm made landfall on 28 September, has recorded 29 illnesses and four deaths owing to the bacteria.

All but two cases were diagnosed after the hurricane. *Vibrio vulnificus* infections can be caused after bacteria enters the body through open cuts. The bacteria live in warm brackish water, like standing flood-waters.

"The Florida Department of Health in Lee County is observing an abnormal increase in cases of *Vibrio vulnificus* infections as a result of exposure to the flood-waters and standing



waters following Hurricane Ian," a spokesperson at the county health department said on Monday.

The statement called on residents to "always be aware of the potential risks associated when exposing open wounds, cuts, or scratches on the skin to warm, brackish, or salt water".

"Sewage spills, like those caused from Hurricane Ian, may increase bacteria levels," the statement

continued. "As the post-storm situation evolves, individuals should take precautions against infection and illness caused by *Vibrio vulnificus*."

Collier County, just south of Lee County, has also recorded three confirmed cases that officials say are storm-related.

Across Florida, there have been a record 11 confirmed deaths attributed to the bacterium this year, and a total of 65 cases, accord-

ing to state health data. Officials estimate that nearly half are related to Hurricane Ian. In 2021, 10 deaths were recorded and 34 cases in Florida. Seven deaths were attributed to the bacteria in 2020.

Vibrio vulnificus is known as "flesh-eating" because it can develop into necrotising fasciitis, a condition that causes tissue to break down. It is not the only bacteria that can cause necrotising fasciitis.

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, around one in five *Vibrio vulnificus* patients dies, sometimes within only a day or two of becoming ill. It can cause sepsis if it enters the bloodstream, and can sometimes lead to amputations to prevent its spread to other parts of a patient's body.

Russia ramps up relocation of civilians in Kherson; may soon lose one of the biggest prizes of its war

CNN - The Russian-installed leaders in Ukraine's Kherson region on Wednesday began massively ramping up the relocation of up to 60,000 people amid warnings over Russia's ability to withstand a Ukrainian counter-offensive.

Ukrainian officials have accused Russia of generating "hysteria" to compel people to leave. Residents in the city of Kherson began to receive text messages on Wednesday morning from the pro-Russian administration.

"Dear residents," it read. "Evacuate

immediately. There will be shelling of residential areas by the Armed Forces of Ukraine. There will be buses from 7:00, from Rechport [River port] to the Left Bank." Meanwhile on Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that he had signed a law introducing martial law in Kherson and three other Ukrainian regions the Kremlin claims to have annexed, in violation of international law. The other regions are Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk.

In his first outing on Russian state

television as the Kremlin's new commander for Ukraine, General Sergey Surovikin said Tuesday evening that the situation in Kherson was "far from simple" and "very difficult."

"Our further plans and actions towards the city of Kherson will depend on the military and tactical situation on the ground," he said.

Ukrainian forces have been advancing through several parts of the Kherson region in recent weeks, capturing villages and farmland along the

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International

AROUND THE WORLD



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western bank of the Dnipro River, also known as the right bank.

Russia's ability to re-supply its troops in Kherson has been severely hampered by frequent Ukrainian missile and artillery strikes on Russian-controlled bridges crossing the Dnipro. The explosion earlier this month that badly damaged the Kerch bridge, which connects Russia to Crimea, further bottlenecked Russia's logistics.

Last week the head of the Russian-backed administration appealed to the Kremlin to help with the evacuation of civilians near the frontline.

On Tuesday, the rhetoric hit a new level. Just past 11 p.m. local time (4 p.m. ET), Kirill Stremousov, the deputy head of the Russian-backed administration, posted a video to his Telegram channel.

"The Ukrainian Nazis pushed by the West will start their attack on Kherson very soon," he said. "We are strongly advising to leave the right bank area."

This morning, just after 8 a.m., he followed that up with: "Cross as quickly as possible onto the left bank [the eastern side] of river Dnipro." Hours later, the Russian-backed administration went so far as to close off all entry to the right bank of the Dnipro River for seven days.

Ukrainian officials believe that fewer than half of Kherson's civilian pop-



This village, located in the border of the Kherson region, was recently retaken by Ukrainian forces.

ulation are left in the city – around 130,000 people.

Vladimir Saldo, the Russian-backed leader in the Kherson region, told Russian state television on Tuesday evening that they planned to move 50,000 to 60,000 people from the right to the left bank of the Dnipro River.

The Ukrainian leaders-in-exile of the Kherson region accuse the Russia leaders of drumming up "hysteria" to intimidate the population and enact "voluntary deportations" to Russia, where they've been promised help with housing.

"On the one hand, we understand that the Armed Forces of Ukraine will liberate Kherson and the region – accordingly, there may be active hostilities, and this is a risk for the local population," Yuri Sobolevskyi, deputy head of Ukraine's regional council for Kherson, told CNN on Wednesday.

"On the other hand, there are no guarantees that the evacuated people will be safe there and far from the front line. Now people

make their own decisions – to leave or stay. It is difficult to say what decision they will make."

The "massive deportation of civilians" by Russia could, along with other alleged abuses, constitute crimes against humanity, according to a July report by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). In September, the UN Security Council also said Russia's forcible deportation of 2.5 million people from Ukraine – including 38,000 children – constitutes human rights violations.

Ukraine denounced Russia's "filtration" scheme at a United Nations Security Council meeting last week. Deputy Ukrainian Ambassador to the UN Khrystyna Hayovvshyn said Ukrainians forced to head to Russia or Russian-controlled territory are being killed and tortured.

Hayovvshyn told the Security Council that thousands of Ukrainian citizens are being forcefully deported to "isolated and de-

pressed regions of Siberia and the far east.

Ukrainian citizens are terrorized, under the pretense of a search for "dangerous" people by Russian authorities, Hayovvshyn said. Those who have different political views or are affiliated with the Ukrainian government or media disappear into a gray area. Children are ripped from the arms of their parents, the Ukraine representative declared.

Vital strategic city

In the heady early days of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, when confusion reigned, the capture of the southern city of Kherson was a key strategic and propaganda victory for the Kremlin.

On just the seventh day of the war, Kherson's mayor announced that Russian soldiers had entered his office, and the city had fallen.

Geographically, it was vital: Kherson lies on the mouth of Ukraine's central artery, the Dnipro River, and not far from the canal that supplies water to Crimea. Ukraine's government had shut that canal down in 2014, when Russia illegally annexed the peninsula.

It was the first major city Russia captured, and the only regional capital taken since February. (In addition to Crimea, Russian-backed forces have controlled Donetsk and Luhansk cities since 2014.) It's the second-biggest population centre that Russia has captured

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Indonesia bans all syrup, liquid medicines after 99 child deaths

AlJazeera - The Indonesian government has announced a ban on all syrup and liquid medicine prescription and over-the-counter sales following the deaths of nearly 100 children from acute kidney injury this year.

The ban announced on Wednesday comes as the Southeast Asian country's health authorities probe an unexplained rise since January in the number of children's deaths from acute kidney injury (AKI). "Until today, we have received 206 reported cases from 20 provinces with 99 deaths," the health ministry's spokesperson Muhammad Syahril Mansyur told a press briefing.

"As a precaution, the ministry has asked all health

workers in health facilities not to prescribe liquid medicine or syrup temporarily... we also asked drug stores to temporarily stop non-prescription liquid medicine or syrup sales until the investigation is completed," he said.

The rise in childhood AKI fatalities in Indonesia comes as The Gambia's government probes the death of 70 children from AKI linked to paracetamol syrups used to treat fever, which contained excessive levels of diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol, in a scandal linked to four Indian-made cough syrups.

Officials at Indonesia's food and drug agency said those products identified in The Gambia were not available locally and the ingredi-

ents they were comprised of had now been banned from all child medicinal syrups sold in the country.

The rise in Indonesia's cases of AKI began in January this year, and accelerated further since late August, Mansyur said, adding that a probe was launched last week.

"Since late August 2022, the ministry and the paediatrician association have received increasing reports of acute kidney injury. The jump is sharp," he said, noting that 65 percent of cases had been treated in Jakarta. Most of the cases involved children aged under 18, mainly toddlers under five years old, the ministry said.

Before the recent rise, the ministry typically saw one or two cases of AKI a

month.

The ministry has purchased specialist medicines for AKI to address the spike, Mansyur said, while an investigation into the cause continues. Indonesia has also formed an expert team to look into the AKI spike among children, comprised of local health and paediatrics officials and World Health Organization (WHO) representatives.

A health ministry letter dated October 18, and seen by Reuters, requested hospitals collect all medicines that families had given to those children admitted with AKI, so toxicology tests could be conducted. Chemists should halt the sale of syrup-based medicine until further notice, the letter stated.

Chairman of the Indonesian Paediatrician Association (IDAI) Piprim Basarah Yanuarso told Indonesia's Tempo news organisation on Wednesday that there had been 192 cases of chronic kidney disease since January, with the children affected ranging in age from one to five years old.

The IDAI and the ministry of health are working to identify the cause of the spike in cases, Piprim said, noting that the consumption of medicine containing ethylene glycol is being investigated.

"We are examining this," he said, according to Tempo.

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after Mariupol.

Seventh months later, the Kremlin considers the Kherson region to be part of Russia, after claiming to annex it last month. And yet, everyone from Russia's designated leaders in the region to the new commander of its entire Ukrainian war effort are sounding the alarm on their ability to withstand a Ukrainian offensive in the region.

Russia's puppet administration has promised that there is no plan to abandon Kherson city, and that once the military "solve all of the tasks," normal life will return.

In his remarks on Russian television, Surovikin, the Russian commander, repeated what has become a bit of a trope in Russian circles: That the Ukrainian mili-

tary was preparing to shell Kherson's city centre, of even to strike the dam that's part of a hydroelectric plant at Nova Kakhovka, and unleash floodwaters on low-lying areas downstream.

Ukrainian officials have dismissed that idea as Russian propaganda. It will not be easy for Ukraine to retake Kherson city if Russia seriously contests it, and the Ukrainian military will be reluctant to attack an urban centre where tens of thousands of civilians could remain.

But Ukraine's military brass remain bullish over the Kherson offensive.

"We will make significant progress by the end of the year," the head of Ukraine's Defence Intelligence Agency, Major General Kyrylo Budanov, said on Tuesday.

"These will be significant victories. You will see it soon."

Sports News



Super League soccer company gets new CEO to revive plan

AP - The Super League project that aims to revolutionise European soccer has hired a new top executive to steer a revived plan after a failed launch last year.

German former television boss Bernd Reichart is the new CEO of A22 Sports Management, the Madrid-based company said Wednesday. The company worked with 12 elite clubs from Spain, England and Italy to create a breakaway league in April 2021.

Reichart's hiring comes as A22 and Super League holdouts Real Madrid, Barcelona and Juventus await a European Court of Justice ruling in their challenge to the alleged monopoly control they say Champions League organiser UEFA has over international competitions.

A revamped Super League plan — likely involving more clubs from more countries in a multi-tier competition with promotion and relegation — is expected regardless of the Luxembourg court's final ruling next year.

The "Super League" brand that proved so toxic last year would likely also change, Reichart said Wednesday in an interview with reporters from German news agency DPA. "The name Super League is not set," Reichart said.

His role was described



Barcelona's Sergi Roberto and Ansu Fati, right, fall to the ground in front of Real Madrid's Ferland Mendy during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Barcelona at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid, Sunday, Oct. 16, 2022. (AP Photo/Manu Fernandez)

by A22 as "to initiate an active and extended dialogue with a comprehensive group of football stakeholders including clubs, players, coaches, fans, media and policy makers."

Reichart worked in commercial rights in the sports industry with the Sportfive agency and was CEO of German commercial broadcaster RTL from 2019 through 2021.

The Super League was first planned as a 20-team breakaway with 15 founding members given protected places and guaranteed extra income. The top Champions League teams currently earn up to about 130 million euros (\$127 million) per season in prize money from

UEFA.

The breakaway league launched despite failing to persuade German powers Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund to sign up, nor influential Paris Saint-Germain whose Qatari ownership has close ties to UEFA. "I am looking forward to talks in every European territory and obviously in Germany too," Reichart told DPA.

The original project collapsed within 48 hours amid a fierce backlash from UEFA, plus fans and lawmakers in England where clubs that were key to its success pulled out.

The Super League was perceived then as an elitist power and money grab that

would deny or limit chances for teams in other countries to join, potentially in breach of European Union competition laws. "The clubs involved have taken the concept of a permanent membership off the table," Reichart said.

Reichart earlier said in a statement he supported the presidents of Madrid, Barcelona and Juventus. "I believe they are asking the right questions and am personally keen to listen to many diverse voices so that the European football community can jointly find the right answers," Reichart said of club leaders including Madrid's Florentino Pérez and Andrea Agnelli at

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T20 World Cup: West Indies beat Zimbabwe to boost qualification hopes

Alzarri Joseph starred as West Indies boosted their chances of advancing in the Men's T20 World Cup with a 31-run win over Zimbabwe.

Fast bowler Joseph took 4-16 to help dismiss Zimbabwe for 122 with 10 balls remaining in Hobart. The Windies had earlier reached 153-7 after a mid-innings collapse saw them lose four wickets for 11 runs. The result means all four teams in Group B have two points after Ireland beat Scotland earlier on Wednesday. Friday's deciding final round of matches sees Ireland face West Indies at 05:00 BST, before Scotland take on Zimbabwe at 09:00.

The top two sides from each group will qualify for the Super 12s, which start on Saturday. The winner of

Group A and runner-up from Group B will go into a group including England. With rain forecast for Hobart on Friday, if both matches are washed out then Scotland and Zimbabwe will progress. Scotland top the table courtesy of their superior net run rate ahead of Zimbabwe, with West Indies third and Ireland fourth.

After winning the toss and choosing to bat, West Indies looked in a strong position at 90-2 after 12 overs, but the innings turned into a chaotic 11-ball spell.

First, captain Nicholas Pooran shuffled down the track and gifted Sean Williams a simple routine caught and bowled chance, before a terrible mix-up saw Johnson Charles run out for 45 five balls later.

The impressive Sikandar Raza, who took 3-19, then trapped Shamarh Brooks bang in front, before Jason Holder chipped straight to the Zimbabwe spinner to leave West Indies reeling on 101-6. The Windies had Rovman Powell (28 off 21 balls) and Akeal Hosein (23 not out off 18) to thank for a spritely partnership worth 49 from 28 balls to drag them up to a competitive total.

Powell, who was dropped on 11, brought up the West Indies 150 in the final over with two meaty sixes, the second of which went out of the stadium. In reply, Zimbabwe raced to 29-0 after two overs to put them ahead in the chase.

An awful fumble by Charles summed up West

Indies' early efforts in the field and the body language of the players suggested they were contemplating defeat. But Joseph dragged them back into the game with the wickets of Regis Chakabva and Tony Munyonga in the powerplay.

Zimbabwe then collapsed, losing five wickets for 32 runs, including the dangerous Raza for 14, to slump to 79-6.

Luke Jongwe's lively 29 from 22 balls gave Zimbabwe hope, but when he became the fourth batter to be clean bowled by Joseph the game was up, with Holder taking the final wicket to complete figures of 3-12. "Since the beginning of the year Alzarri Joseph has been our best bowler in T20 cricket," said Pooran. "He's our leader, getting wickets for us and bringing that energy."

Chakabva, who led Zimbabwe in place of the ill Craig Ervine, said: "Credit to West Indies and Alzarri Joseph. He really opened up the gates for them and bowled brilliantly. "The boys are still pretty confident. We're disappointed how short we ended up being after such a good start but we'll look to bounce back on Friday."

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Juventus.

They became the public faces of trying to tear down the traditional pyramid structure of European soccer that can allow clubs from the grass roots to rise through domestic leagues to compete in the Champions League.

That so-called European sports model and UEFA's authority have been protected by the European Union, which views soccer and its clubs as having a key role in their communities and wider society.

Madrid has flourished during the turmoil of the past 18 months, winning a re-

cord 13th European title and another Spanish league trophy last season

However, Barcelona and Juventus have seen their financial and sporting success decline and both now risk failing next month to reach the knockout rounds of the Champions League. Both have reported record losses since the failed Super League launch, though also blamed the COVID-19 pandemic.

The European court in Luxembourg set a Dec. 15 target to give a non-binding opinion on the Super League case that was heard by 15 judges over two days in July. The full ruling is due next year.

Sports News



Iran's Elnaz Rekabi, who competed without hijab, returns to Tehran

AP - Iranian climber Elnaz Rekabi returned to Tehran early Wednesday after competing in South Korea without wearing a headscarf, an act widely seen as support for anti-government demonstrators amid weeks of protests over the Islamic Republic's mandatory hijab.

After landing, Rekabi gave a careful, emotionless interview to Iran's hard-line state television, saying that going without a hijab had been an "unintentional" act on her part. However, hundreds gathered outside Imam Khomeini International Airport — including women not wearing the hijab — and cheered for "Elnaz the Champion," casting Rekabi as an inspiration for their continued protests.

The future Rekabi faces after returning home remains unclear. Supporters and Farsi-language media outside of Iran have worried about Rekabi's safety after her return, especially as activists say the demonstrations have seen security forces arrest thousands so far.

The differing reception for Rekabi shows the growing fissures in Iranian society as nationwide protests sparked by the Sept. 16 death of a 22-year-old woman are in their fifth week. Mahsa Amini was detained by the country's morality police over her clothing — and her death has prompted women to remove their hijabs in public.

The demonstrations, drawing school-age children, oil workers and others to the streets in over 100 cities, represent the most-serious challenge to Iran's theocracy since the mass protests surrounding its disputed 2009 presidential election.

That Rekabi, 33, competed without her hijab in Seoul during the finals of the International Federation of Sport Climbing's Asia Championship



In this image taken from video by Iran's state-run IRNA news agency, Iranian competitive climber Elnaz Rekabi speaks to journalists in Imam Khomeini International Airport in Tehran, Iran, Wednesday, Oct. 19, 2022. Rekabi received a hero's welcome on her return to Tehran early Wednesday, after competing in South Korea without wearing a mandatory headscarf required of female athletes from the Islamic Republic. Rekabi has described her not wearing a hijab as "unintentional" after Farsi-language media abroad raised concerns about her safety. (IRNA via AP)

prompted her immediate embrace by those supporting the demonstrations that increasingly include calls for the overthrow of the country's theocracy.

But sports in Iran, from soccer leagues to Rekabi's competitive climbing, broadly operate under a series of semi-governmental organisations. Women athletes competing at home or abroad, whether playing volleyball or running track, are expected to keep their hair covered as a sign of piety. Iran, as well as Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, make such head coverings mandatory for women.

That made Rekabi's public appearance on Sunday without one a lightning-rod moment. On landing at Imam Khomeini International Airport early Wednesday, she wore a black baseball cap and a black hoodie covering her hair. A man handed her flowers.

At first, Rekabi repeated an expla-

nation posted earlier to an Instagram account in her name, saying her not wearing the hijab was "unintentional." The Iranian government routinely pressures activists at home and abroad, often airing what rights groups describe as coerced confessions on state television — the same cameras she addressed on her arrival back home.

Rekabi said she was in a women-only waiting area prior to her climb. "Because I was busy putting on my shoes and my gear, it caused me to forget to put on my hijab and then I went to compete," she said. She added: "I came back to Iran with peace of mind although I had a lot of tension and stress. But so far, thank God, nothing has happened."

The sombre scene then gave way to one of a jubilant crowd outside the terminal. Videos online, correspond-

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Man United player Greenwood granted bail after rape charge

AP - Manchester United player Mason Greenwood was granted bail on Wednesday, four days after being charged with attempted rape, controlling and coercive behavior, and assault.

The 21-year-old Greenwood, who was remanded in custody on Monday, did not attend the bail application that was held in private in a court in Manchester.

Following the hearing, the court said bail had been granted to Greenwood, under the condition that he does not contact witnesses, including the complainant,



and resides at a specific address.

Greenwood is due to appear in court again on Nov. 21.

All three charges relate to the same woman.

Greenwood was first

held in January over allegations relating to a young woman after images and videos were posted online. He has been out on bail since but was arrested on Saturday for an alleged breach of conditions.

He has not played for United since January after being suspended by the Premier League club.

The attempted rape is alleged to have taken place in October 2021.

The controlling and coercive behaviour relates to a period between November 2018 and October this year, where he is alleged to have made threatening and derogatory comments toward the complainant, as well as accessing and monitoring her social media accounts.

The charge of assault causing actual bodily harm is dated December 2021.

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ing to known features of the airport, show those gathered chanting Rejabi's name and calling her a hero. Footage showed her waving from inside a van.

Rekabi left Seoul on a Tuesday morning flight. The BBC's Persian service, which has extensive contacts within Iran despite being banned from operating there, quoted an unnamed "informed source" as saying Iranian officials had seized both Rekabi's mobile phone and passport. BBC Persian also said she initially had been scheduled to return on Wednesday, but her flight apparently had been moved up unexpectedly.

IranWire, another website focusing on the country founded by Iranian-Canadian journalist Maziar Bahari who once was detained by Iran, suggested that Rekabi could immediately be taken to Tehran's notorious Evin Prison, where dissidents are held. A

massive fire there over the weekend killed at least eight prisoners.

Later on Wednesday, the International Olympic Committee said it held a joint meeting with the International Federation of Sport Climbing and Iranian officials. The IOC said it received "clear assurances that Ms Rekabi will not suffer any consequences and will continue to train and compete." However, other athletes have faced harassment amid the demonstrations.

The IOC described Rekabi as being with her family and said she joined a call with officials.

The Iranian Embassy in Seoul had denied "all the fake, false news and disinformation" regarding Rekabi's departure. But instead of posting a photo of her from the Seoul competition, it posted an image of her wearing a headscarf at a previous competition in Moscow, where she took a bronze medal.

Rekabi wore a hijab during her

initial appearances at the one-week climbing event in Seoul. She wore just a black headband when competing Sunday, her dark hair pulled back in a ponytail; she had a white jersey with Iran's flag as a logo on it. Footage of the competition showed Rekabi relaxed as she approached the climbing and after she competed.

On Wednesday, a small group of protesters demonstrated in front of Iran's Embassy in Seoul, with some women cutting off locks of their hair, like others have in demonstrations worldwide since Amini's death.

So far, human rights groups estimate that over 200 people have been killed in the weeks of protests and the violent security force crackdown that followed. Iran has not offered a death toll in weeks. Demonstrations have been seen in over 100 cities, according to the group Human Rights Activists in Iran. Thousands are believed to have been arrested.

Sports News



NFL says it's not backing down on protecting quarterbacks

AP - The NFL isn't backing down on protecting quarterbacks.

League executive Troy Vincent said there was a "healthy" and "spirited" conversation with owners about roughing-the-passer penalties at the league meeting on Tuesday.

"Everyone knows if your quarterback is not healthy, you don't have a chance to win," Vincent said. "We're not changing the philosophy around that call. ... We're not going to back off of protecting the quarterback."

A pair of disputed roughing penalties in Week 5 frustrated defensive players and had players, coaches and fans questioning what constitutes a legal hit. Rich McKay, chairman of the NFL's competition committee, said the conversation on making roughing-the-passer calls reviewable lasted about 30 seconds and needs more discussion.

"When you decide to review subjective fouls, then you're going to have subjective eyes on something that's already been viewed once," McKay said.

McKay pointed out the league's negative experience with reviewing pass interference in 2019.

Overall, roughing-the-passer penalties are down from previous years. Through Week 6, there were



NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell arrives for the NFL football owners meeting Tuesday, Oct. 18, 2022, in New York. (AP Photo/Adam Hunger)

53 in 2018, 59 in 2019, 43 in 2020, 52 in 2021 and 38 so far in 2022.

"We've had less calls than we've had in the past," Commissioner Roger Goodell said.

"There has been no change to the rule. We obviously, as in any officiating, officials make calls that we would rather not have be calls or we'd have calls that we prefer that they do make. We make that clear to the officials and make it clear to our coaches."

Goodell said the matter of who's paying Stan Kroenke's \$790 million settlement for moving the Rams from St. Louis to Los Angeles was resolved. He did not confirm reporting that Kroenke would be respon-

sible for \$571 million and the other 31 owners the rest, saying only the vote was unanimous.

"That was a matter for the ownership," Goodell said. "It was resolved as partners, and it's what the league does. I think it was incredibly positive."

BLACK FRIDAY FOOTBALL

Something new is coming to the day after Thanksgiving beyond discount holiday shopping: the NFL. The league is set to play a game on Black Friday in 2023, jumping into a window it had previously stayed away from. The game will be streamed on Amazon Prime Video and start at 3 p.m. ET.

"I would call that entire weekend a football week-

end," Goodell said. "We think there's room for the NFL on Friday, and we're excited about it. We think it's going to be a great thing."

DIVERSITY WORK ONGOING

The Diversity Advisory Committee, which was formed in March, updated owners on ongoing efforts with teams and the league office.

Among the improvements, the number of women in coaching positions continues to increase. The NFL said in training camp there were 15 women, including 40 percent women of colour, in coaching positions -- the highest number in league history and up from 12 a year ago.

Twelve athletes fulfilling scholarships offers via Generation Next FC CAF Player Identified Combined

A total of 12 student football athletes have so far attained partial athletic scholarships to learning institutions in the United Kingdom (UK) via the Generation Next Football Club's Calvin Ayre Foundation (CAF) Player Identified Combined, held earlier this year.

Four of the football scholarship recipients, including three from Montserrat, are enrolled at Hartpury University and College in Gloucestershire, England. Among them is Elandro Mota, who is a female player from Montserrat enrolled at Hartpury University. The other Montserratians are Jermahri Meade and Vashrin Roache, both enrolled at Hartpury College, along with Levi



Julian Joseph

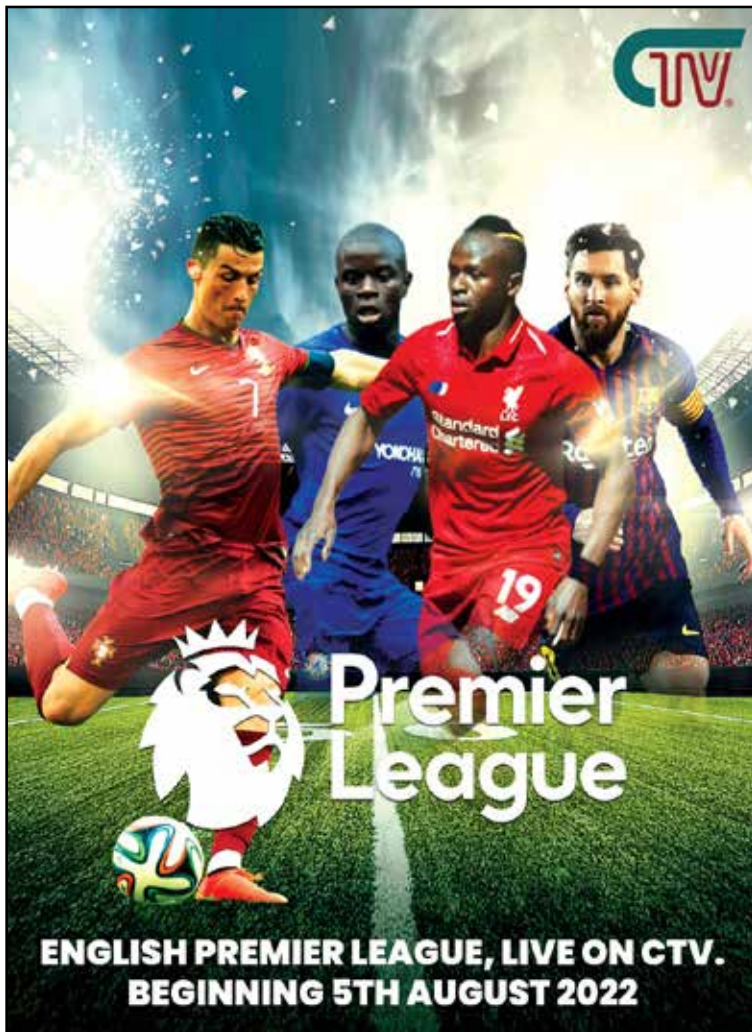
Smith of Antigua and Barbuda.

Kimani Joseph is the first Antiguan and Barbudan female to take up the partial scholarship offer at



Vaughn Jackson Jr. (Photos courtesy GNFC)

Brooke House College in Leicestershire, England. Vaughn Jackson Jr., *cont'd on pg 28*



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Julian Joseph, Carlito Papa, Jean-Marc DeGannes and Jayden Hector are also attending Brooke House College, a football school in England.

Ethan Thomas is attending Rossall Boarding School in Lancashire, England, while Jaiden Meyer is enrolled at Buckswood Boarding School in Sussex, England.

This is in addition to 15 students who have previously benefitted from athletic scholarships to attend junior colleges in the United States of America through efforts made by the Generation Next Football Club, which was established as a member of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association (ABFA) in 2018.

President of the Generation Next FC, Ricky Santos, said majority of the students who are already enrolled in learning institutions in the United Kingdom on the partial scholarships were, at some point, members of the club.

He said some of the scholarship recipients are also getting the opportunity to hone their skills by playing for the Generation Next Football Club, which was started in England last year, to give Antiguan and Barbudans in the UK, the opportunity to showcase their talent in the football leagues in England.

"Generation Next FC began our 2022/23 season several weeks ago and our enrollment is roughly the same of close to 100 youngsters from ages five to 17 that are in our club. I was away in the UK during this summer and Generation Next has a men's football club in the UK.

"That club was started just over a year ago and it is to create pathways for our youngsters here in Antigua to expose and showcase their talents in the UK.

"So, we started right at the bottom of the English football pyramid system and last year we had five boys

from the Caribbean, including three from Antigua, playing with us, not necessarily altogether at once, but over a period of time. We had two lads from Montserrat who played with us for the duration of the season," Santos said.

"In our first season, we were fortunate enough to get promoted from division two to division one in the Cheltenham Association Football League. We recently started the new season a few weeks ago and we would have won our first two matches, so it is looking promising once again.

"This year, we will be having three Antiguan again, but they will be playing full time for the duration of the season and we will also have two lads from Montserrat. Now those young footballers are also attending Hartpury University and College. They were awarded partial scholarships through the Calvin Ayre Foundation Player Identified Combined, which was held in February of this year.

"As a result of the same Calvin Ayre Foundation Player Identified Combined, we also have a further six youngsters attending Brooke House College on partial scholarships where they are furthering their career in academics and football.

"We have another one that is attending Rossall (Boarding School), another one attending Buckswood School just outside of London. So, we have these young footballers up there in England getting an education whilst pursuing their dreams of playing football at the highest possible level."

Santos is also expressing his sincere thanks to the government of Antigua and Barbuda who is facilitating the players in fulfilling their partial athletic scholarship offer via the Prime Minister's Scholarship Fund, which is led by Chairman of

the Scholarship Committee, Maurice Merchant.

"I would sincerely like to thank the Prime Minister's Scholarship Fund, and in particular Maurice Merchant, who has been very good in assisting these youngsters to access that fund. So, kudos to the Prime Minister's Scholarship Fund," he stated.

Santos said next year's CAF Player Identification Combined will feature scouts from professional and semi-pro football clubs who will be seeking new recruits.

"I would like to thank the Calvin Ayre Foundation for being the benefactor of the two programmes, the Player Identification Combined and CAF Advanced Academy.

"We will be hosting another such event here in Antigua in February, 2023 and we have a number of professional and semi-professional clubs that would be attending along with universities, colleges and high schools. So, it's going to be even bigger next year," he stated.

Santos said due to the success of the CAF Player Identification Combined, which was first held in 2018, but went on a two-year hiatus in 2020 and 2021 because of the Covid-19 Pandemic, Generation Next has been forging partnerships with a number of clubs in other countries across the world that have expressed interest and will be hosting similar exercises in some of those territories from the latter part of this year and next year.

"In terms of the combines, because of the success that we have had in getting youngsters off to colleges and universities in the United States and the United Kingdom, we are now doing combines in Jamaica, Trinidad and Canada.

"We have also been contacted by clubs in California, Zimbabwe, Ghana and South Africa to assist them in carrying out similar combines."

Antigua & Barbuda loses for fourth time in a row at Americas Netball Qualifiers

Antigua and Barbuda tumbled to their fourth consecutive loss at the Americas World Cup qualifiers at the National Indoor Sports Centre in Kingston, Jamaica, yesterday morning, Wednesday, 19th October.

Antigua and Barbuda went under 23-80 against hosts Jamaica Sunshine Girls, who continue to dominate the Americas Qualifiers by racking up their 4th straight win in the tournament.

Jamaica's senior netball team led in all four quarters in beating Antigua and Barbuda.

Despite the loss to the Jamaicans, captain of Antigua and Barbuda, Amey Lake, believes they are the true winners.

"I am pretty satisfied. We won even though the score says Jamaica won. We came into the game knowing we would not have won the game, but our target was to keep them below 100. We didn't want them to get 100 and they got 80, so we won the game in our minds," Lake said.

"It was basically every defensive tip we got, it was a win and every goal we scored, it was a win, so we had our own goals that we were going for. Yes, we had some turnovers, and we could have actually minimized those, but in the end, we got what we would have wanted."

The Jamaicans, who are the number three ranked team in the world, add yesterday morning's win to their previous triumphs over St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the USA and the Cayman Islands.

Stand in captain, Mischa Creary, said despite the score, coach Connie Francis will be disappointed with their execution of her game plan against Antigua and Barbuda.

"The instructions were simple - cut, drive, cut the long passes, strong on the ball and strong defense. We won yes, but the moments were hot and cold, so she will definitely be aggravated about that. But we are young, we are still learning and it can only get better from here," Creary stated.

The Sunshine Girls continued their assault on the rest of the Americas region after beating the Cayman Islands 81-27 in their World Cup qualifier at the National Indoor Sports Centre on Tuesday night.

The Jamaicans who dispatched St. Vincent and the Grenadines and United States in their first two games, had quarterly scores of 24-8, 45-14 and 62-23 before the 54-goal margin of victory over the Cayman Islands.

Goal shooter Gizzelle Allison, who was also captain for this game, scored 54 goals from 59 attempts for

the Sunshine Girls, while goal attack Amanda Pinkney chipped in with 21 from 27.

Goal shooter Kay Copeland had 25 goals from 30 attempts for the Cayman Islands.

Sunshine Girls head coach Connie Francis credited her team for another dominant display, while coach of the Cayman Islands Janet Letman said it was all about damage limitation for her team.

Meanwhile, in the top-of-the-table clash on Tuesday night, Trinidad and Tobago used a second-quarter surge to overpower Grenada 66-42, to remain at the top of the standings with eight points from winning their four games.

Afeshia Noel led the way with 45 goals for Trin-

idad and Tobago, while Lottyslaw Cato had 40 for Grenada, who were losing their first game of the tournament.

Trinidad and Tobago's head coach Kemba Duncan said there wasn't much of a change in their approach from Monday's 49-42 win over St. Vincent and the Grenadines, but that their execution had improved.

"I think it was about the players. They would have been a little more focused. They executed the game plan and maintained it," Duncan said.

St. Vincent returned to winnings ways with a 49-36 victory over St. Lucia, while Barbados defeated the United States 47-26 in their other matches that were played on Tuesday night.



All Saints and AGS claim second win in Under-16 School Boys' League

All saints Secondary and Antigua Grammar Schools continued their impressive form as they notched up their second consecutive win in the Ministry of Sports Under-16 Boys' Secondary Schools' Football League on Tuesday.

DaJaughn Anthony scored the only goal of the match for the second successive week to give defending champions All Saints Secondary another 1-0 win, this time, against Ottos Comprehensive School at the Mack Pond playing field in All Saints.

Antigua Grammar also made it two wins in a row, as Javere Joseph and Sadique Adams each scored a brace to propel their team to a comfortable 4-0 victory over St. Joseph's Academy at Princess Margaret School's (PMS) playing field.

Irene B. Williams, Clare Hall and Princess Margaret Schools all recorded their first wins of the competition on Tuesday.

Irene B. Williams hammered Glanvilles Secondary 5-0 at the Swetes Village playing field.

Ralique Browne scored a brace, while Antonie Campbell, Najae Morton and Ricardo Phillip each scored

once for the winners.

Clare Hall snatched a 3-2 victory against Sir Novelle Richards Academy in their encounter at the Clare Hall playing field.

Omar Thomas, Ryan James and Joseph James each netted for Clare Hall, while Nicholas Clarke converted both goals for Sir Novelle Richards Academy.

Princess Margaret also recorded a 3-2 victory against Jennings Secondary at the PMS playing field.

Howayne James, Greg Williams and Antwane Lewin each scored once for Princess Margaret, while Marius Andrew and Rafique Edwards each netted once for Jennings Secondary.

The Secondary Schools' Football League will continue today, Thursday, 20th October, with matches in the East Zone of the Under-20 Boys or Seniors' Division at 3 pm.

Pares Secondary will challenge Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education (ABICE) at the Police Recreation Grounds.

Irene B. Williams Secondary will oppose Glanvilles Secondary School at the Swetes playing field and All Saints Secondary School will clash with Clare Hall



Antigua Grammar School's striker Javere Joseph scored a brace against St Joseph's Academy in their Under -16 Boys Division match in the Secondary School League at the PMS playing field on Tuesday, 18th October, 2022. (Photo by Elwin Francis)

Secondary at the Mack Pond playing field in All Saints.

Three matches in the West Zone of the Under-20 Boys' Division League are scheduled to take place at 3 pm on Friday, 21st October.

Defending champions Ottos Comprehensive School will host Jennings

Secondary at Radio Range in Ottos.

St. Mary's Secondary School will take on Antigua State College at the Golden Grove playing field and Princess Margaret School will clash with Antigua Grammar School at the PMS playing field.