

TUESDAY 22ND NOVEMBER 2022 | VOLUME 3 ISSUE 224 | [WWW.POINTVILLE.AG](http://WWW.POINTVILLE.AG)

# BODY FOUND IN COUNTRY POND

*Story on Page 2*



*Team Antigua Barbuda's Rocco Falcone, Junella King and Filippo Amonti, achieved the incredible feat of securing victory in the first leg of the 69F tournament in Pensacola, Florida, overcoming top international competitors. Over the course of two years, the team, sponsored by prestige brand Locman and the Ministry of Tourism, will battle against competitors from around the world as the 69F challenge continues. Pointe Xpress had the opportunity to speak with Junella and Rocco in an exclusive interview that will be published in tomorrow's issue of the newspaper. (Photo: Antigua Barbuda 69F)*



# Local News



## Body pulled from Country Pond identified

Police have identified the body of the man who was pulled out of a watercourse yesterday morning near the Ministry of Agriculture.

He is Alpha Tonge, formerly of Urlings. The circumstances surrounding his death are unknown at this time, however, police have already ruled out foul play.

Tonge, clad in a red t-shirt and long brown pants, was found floating in East Country Pond after 9am.

It is believed that a passerby made the discovery, but this could not be confirmed.

A medical doctor arrived on the scene around mid-morning and pronounced him dead before ordering his body removed to a funeral home.



A postmortem examination is expected to be conducted on Tonge, who is believed to be in his seventies, to determine his cause of death.



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## Government says ABWU's claims on severance payments incredibly inaccurate

The Office of the Prime Minister has responded to the Antigua and Barbuda Workers' Union's (ABWU) accusation that the prime minister was being untruthful when he stated that the union has received the money set aside for the payment of severance to Jolly Beach workers.

The ABWU's deputy general secretary, Chester Hughes, has accused Prime Minister Gaston Browne of making inaccurate statements to the effect that the ABWU was in possession of the money allocated to compensate the former employees for their years of service.

"Our recent conversation with attorneys representing the company informed us that the funds were received by them early last week. Further, they were waiting on documents to be sent from the Survey Department, which they should receive today [Monday]."

"Therefore, when they receive those documents, they would be in touch with us to have the matter expedited," Hughes said in a recorded statement released by the ABWU yesterday.

The government issued a swift rebuttal challenging Hughes' statements which were described as "spreading untruthful and incredibly inaccurate claims regarding the payments to be made to former workers of the Jolly Beach Hotel".

"A cheque by Gov-



*Chester Hughes*

ernment, made payable to the law firm appointed by the court, in the amount of EC\$12.9 million, was handed over to the firm weeks ago, in full settlement of the payments due to former Jolly Beach workers.

"The ABWU representative is further fully informed that the cheque has been paid over to the law firm, weeks ago, not last week as he has asserted, for onward payment to the former workers of Jolly Beach. The ABWU has sought to delay the severance payment by wrongly including ineligible former workers. The information that has been conveyed to the union representative has been confirmed by Lake & Kentish, the law firm in receipt of the \$12.9 million in excess of a week ago," the statement from the Office of the Prime Minister detailed.

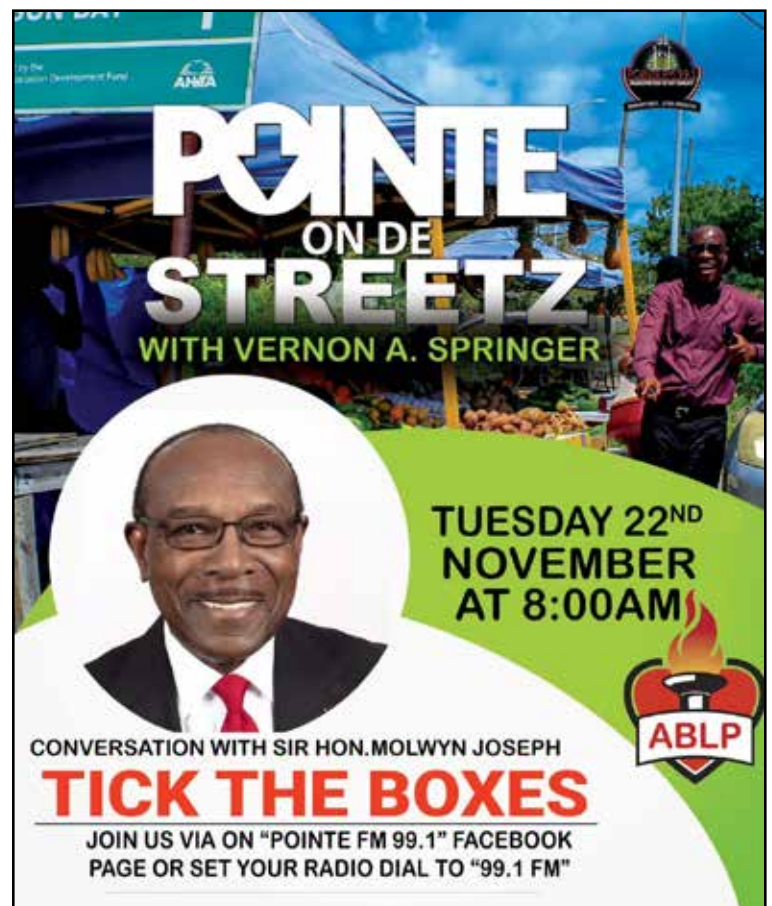
As a result, the government has made it clear that it has lived up to its obligation

to the Jolly Beach workers.

"The use of outright lies and untruthful public statements is the hallmark of the United Progressive Party (UPP) and its operatives. There is never "a silly sea-

son"; always, the re-election of a government is the most important business that a country can undertake in a democracy. Trying to persuade citizens and electors to believe that the Head of Government is engaged in prevarications, requires more than the propaganda and dissembling of the Assistant Secretary General of the ABWU.

"The availability of \$12.9 million for former Jolly Beach workers has been paid over for weeks; evidently, the government has discharged its responsibility to settle the severance due to the former Jolly Beach workers. The matter is now solely within the domain of ABWU and their agent."



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## Antigua and Barbuda plays key role in positive COP27 Loss & Damage outcome

Antigua and Barbuda, as Chair of AOSIS, is celebrating its vital role in lobbying for the world's largest environmental offenders to be held accountable for their role in contributing to climate change and its devastating impact on Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Ahead of the conclusion of COP27 in Sharm-El-Sheik, Egypt, world leaders agreed to the establishment of a Loss and Damage Fund for island nations vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Describing the accomplishment as "A mission 30 years in the making, accomplished" Minister of Environment, Sir Molwyn Joseph told the influential gathering that the decision to establish the Loss and Damage Fund had restored faith in the international community's commitment to actively fight climate change.

"AOSIS promised the world we would not leave Sharm El Sheikh without achieving the establishment of a loss and damage response fund. A mission thirty years in the making has been accomplished.

"Today, the international community has restored global faith in this critical process that is dedicated to ensuring no one is left behind.

"The agreements made at COP27 are a win for our entire world. We have shown those who have felt neglected that we hear you, we see you, and we are giving you the respect and care you deserve.

"Now we must solidify our ties across territories. We must work even harder to hold firm to the 1.5C warming limit, to operationalise the loss and damage fund, and continue to create a world that is safe, fair, and equitable for all," Sir Molwyn said.

Celebrating the decision as herald-



*U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry, (left) speaks with Minister of Environment, Sir Molwyn Joseph in Sharm-El-Sheik, Egypt during COP27.*

ing "the start of a new paradigm that truly accounts for the burdens of climate change", the minister made the sobering observation that other challenges lay ahead.

"Establishing this fund signals to the world that loss and damage will no longer solely be borne by those governments and people least responsible. Today is a step towards climate justice.

"Consensus does not mean harmonious agreement and we acknowledge the flexibility shown by all Parties. In particular, we commend the Group of 77 and China and its Chair and 194 members for the solidarity and resolve that made this momentous outcome possible."

He continued, "We call on Parties to work constructively to design and operationalise this fund over the next 12 months. It must be ready by the next COP. Parties should elect members to the Transitional Committee immediately and give clear mandates for them to get their work done.

"This loss and damage fund must

become the lifeboat that we need it to be.

"But it is just a lifeboat, nonetheless, in a brewing hurricane."

He also urged the international community to remember that the initial goal is to avoid hitting the critical 1.5°C temperature increase by 2025 which scientists suggest will trigger extreme heatwaves, oceans rising, and the destruction of 70 to 90 percent of coral reefs.

These apocalyptic impacts will be most detrimental to AOSIS' 39 SIDS members.

If greenhouse emissions are not drastically reduced, it is projected that global temperatures could rise by as much as 3.2°C by the end of the century. This outcome would spell certain disaster for the planet and all life that exists on it.

The only way to stave off this preventable outcome and irrevocable damage is to actively work to achieve negative emissions as quickly as possible.



## A&B, UK collaborate to strengthen border security

Antigua and Barbuda and the United Kingdom have joined forces to strengthen border security in both countries.

During an intense training workshop, currently taking place at the Trade Winds Hotel, specially selected officers from the immigration department, the police and two officers from neighbouring Montserrat, will be given the opportunity to improve their skills and broaden their knowledge base under the guidance of two highly skilled security specialists on loan from the UK High Commission in Jamaica.

Resident British High Commissioner to St. John's, Lindsay Thompson, said both Antigua and Barbuda and the UK have common interests in maintaining safe and secure borders.

"Despite the Atlantic Ocean being so vast, our nations effectively share a border. What affects you affects us, your threats are ours.

"We already experience some strong cooperation on immigration matters. In recent years A&B has worked with the UK to stop several irregular migrants transiting its nation en route to the UK. This is extremely welcome," she said.

The UK Representative continued, "The benefits to my country are, I'm sure, obvious but this has huge benefits to Antigua and Barbuda too, sending a clear message to the organised immigration crime groups using Antigua and Barbuda as a transit point that law enforcement will not tolerate this activity through its borders.

"The safer and more secure you are, the safer and more secure we all are."

Thompson explained that the participants will learn more about the



*Minister responsible for Immigration, E. P. Chet Greene*

immigration risks and threats within the Caribbean which impact the UK, and be provided with the tools and guidance to improve their ability to address those risks.

Minister responsible for Immigration, E. P. Chet Greene said the training offers one way to ensure that the immigration department stays a step ahead of those who intend to use the country's borders for "less than desirable" purposes.

"The same way we pride ourselves in what we do, it's the same way that criminals pride themselves in what they do. Every time that we are able to nab them, catch them or deal with them, it's the same way they go away training to perfect their trade to beat the system.

"Effectively, what we are doing this morning is making sure we stay a step ahead of the game, a step ahead of criminals and those who would want to use our borders for nefarious purposes," Greene said.

He thanked the UK government



*Resident British High Commissioner to St. John's, Lindsay Thompson*

for partnering with Antigua and Barbuda to facilitate the training which comes "at a most important junction in world history and our own developmental thrust".

Greene noted that Antigua and Barbuda has taken a decision to broaden its global footprint which includes visa waivers and the expansion of the tourist trade into South America and Africa and other areas of the world.

"This means that you will now be exposed to a different type of clientele, different types of people coming to Antigua and Barbuda.

"So, with every different group that comes we know that there will be some variances or variations in what we look for or what we will see and how we will treat things that come our way," Greene stated.

Noting that immigration officers are the first point of contact when travellers arrive at the border, Greene said the continuous training of immigration officers is all the more important.

# Local News



## AIG/FHM chair calls on gov't for greater investment in yachting sector

Chairman of the Antigua Investment Group/Falmouth Harbour Marina (AIG/FHM), Sir Gerald Watt, is urging the government to give greater attention to the lucrative and growing yachting sector.

At the opening of the FHM's new superyacht pier last week, Sir Gerald said while the government has been very supportive of the efforts of the locally owned investment group over its 28-years of operation, he appealed to the government to place greater priority on the development of the local yachting sector.

"While we thank the government for your continued support, we must also impress upon our decision makers that more attention must be paid to the

yachting sector.

"It is time that yachting gets a seat at the tourism decision making table. The industry is too important to our national economy to continue to be ignored," said Sir Gerald.

Minister of Tourism, Charles Fernandez, who was also present, acknowledged while there is work to be done to improve support for yachting in Antigua and Barbuda, positive steps have been taken by the government in this direction.

"I will admit, that although I repeatedly advocate that yachting is one of the pillars of our tourism product, along with cruise and air arrivals, we've not spent as much attention, or money, on this important sector.



Sir Gerald Watt KC

"As a matter of fact, during our COVID lockdown, it is the yachting sector that contributed to keeping some semblance of business for our country.

"There are over 200 yachts, provisioning, buying fuel and persons onboard were going to restaurants, buying food, whenever allowed to do so.

"In addition, it is a fact that yachties spend more than either cruise or airline tourists. As a result of this, we have started to wrap up our attention to this important sector," said Minister Fernandez.

As part the move to reprioritise its attention on the yachting sector, Fernandez said the government has increased its budgetary allocation for marketing the national yachting industry and is working more closely with industry stakeholders like

FHM.

Additionally, the country's international tourism marketing team now includes a permanent member who will promote Antigua and Barbuda's yachting industry.

Beyond its association with leisure and luxury, yachting is also a popular sport.

Minister Fernandez noted that the government of Antigua and Barbuda is a major sponsor of Team Antigua Barbuda who claimed victory in the 69F tournament in Florida.

Two of the three members of the team are national athletes, Junella King and Rocco Falcone. Along with their Italian teammate Filippo Amonti, the trio are fresh off their remarkable victory at the American Magic Select Sailing series which ran from 10th - 13th November in Pensacola Bay.



Team Antigua and Barbuda beam as they pose with their trophy following their surprise victory at the 69F tournament in Florida earlier this month.



## Another DNA candidate quits

Opposition party the Democratic National Alliance has taken a swipe at its departing member Kelton Dalso who tendered his resignation.

Dalso was the party's candidate for the constituency of St. George in the upcoming general election. But he submitted his resignation as the fallout continues between the party's leadership and some of its candidates.

Though a date was not given when the resignation took effect, the DNA con-



*Kelton Dalso*

firmed Kelton Dalso's departure in the most unusual manner.

"We wish to thank Col. Kelton Dalso for doing the party a favour by formally submitting his resignation

given his general open hostility, aggression and uncooperativeness towards colleagues since his appearance on the Dave Lester Payne's show on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 along with Bruce Goodwin and Malaka Parker in which they called for a merger of the DNA with the UPP, or that the DNA be subsumed within the UPP".

The statement has ignited

reaction on social media, with many expressing amazement and amusement at the parting punch that was delivered to Dalso.

This is the fourth resignation in recent times and follows the earlier departures of Malaka Parker, Bruce Goodwin and Gatesworth James, all former members of the main opposition United Progressive Party.

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### NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY given that YONATAN DANIEL CARRASCO ROSARIO of Yorks 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



## Gov't refutes MP Walker's "reckless" claims

Describing the claims as “reckless” and “malicious” the government has completely rejected MP Trevor Walker’s accusation that money allocated for Barbuda relief efforts was inappropriately handled by the government.

During a political rally hosted by the UPP last week,

Walker reportedly said that the Antigua Barbuda Labour Party government had used “half of Barbuda relief money” to construct billboards.

A government statement on the weekend rejected Walker’s statements, and condemned them as being “maliciously dishonest”

and designed to “whip-up political passion” ahead of constitutionally due general elections.

According to a government statement issued in response to the spurious accusation, “...the claim comes from a person who is an elected member of the national House of Assembly.

As such, Mr. Walker must be aware of two basic tenets of law; first, he who accuses must prove, and second that any person who has knowledge of any violation of the law has a duty to report it to the Police, or that person can be charged with withholding evidence, which, itself is a crime.”

The government went on to challenge MP Walker to provide the evidence of his claims to the police.

Failing to do so, the ABLP administration said Walker would have revealed himself “as a political opportunist intent on inflaming anti-government sentiment in Barbuda”.

Tue 22   Day		Tue 22   Night	
<b>84°</b>		<b>77°</b>	
21% ENE 17 mph		24% E 16 mph	
Mostly sunny skies. High 84F. Winds ENE at 15 to 25 mph.		Mostly clear skies. Low 77F. Winds E at 10 to 20 mph.	
Humidity <b>72%</b>	UV Index <b>9 of 10</b>	Humidity <b>80%</b>	UV Index <b>0 of 10</b>
Sunrise <b>6:15 am</b>	Sunset <b>5:31 pm</b>	Moonrise <b>4:46 am</b>	Moonsset <b>4:31 pm</b>
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# Parenting



## Bounce-back culture: Why new mums are expected to 'snap back'

By Amanda Ruggeri

*Continued from yesterday's issue of Pointe Xpress*

Celebrity culture is both a symptom and a cause. Some celebrities, like model Emily Ratajkowski, seem to have had flat abs just days after giving birth. Other high-profile stars have shared details of their weight loss publicly, down to their diet and workout plans. And when celebrities haven't immediately returned to their pre-baby bodies, the media often spotlights these women as different or exceptional. That constant focus means post-partum bodies endure as a topic of conversation – sometimes becoming the centre of public opinion, regardless of the context in which these articles are presented.

"You see Rihanna at the moment being called out for not losing her baby weight, or being praised for not losing the baby weight," says British television presenter and social-media influencer Ashley James, who gave birth to her first child in January 2021. "Why is it even the main topic of conversation?"

Some experts believe that, while originating in predominantly white, Western societies, bounce-back culture has gone global. Surabhi Veitch, a physiotherapist and postpartum fitness coach



based in Toronto, Canada, says she increasingly sees the pressure to lose weight experienced by clients of all ethnicities and nationalities.

This, says Veitch, "stems from white supremacy culture, where whiteness or Eurocentric standards of beauty are the norm. I see this impacting white women, Asian women, Indian women, black women". When India-born Veitch was a child, she says it was "better to be a bit bigger, to be curvier... But now, as India has absorbed more of these Western ideals, there's this pressure there to be thin, to have those flat abs". She adds she's also observed this for other Asian cultures, such as with the Korean, Chinese and Japanese women she works with.

Mothers are expected to be able to erase any physical

evidence of ever having children, while devoting their 'all' to their children – Sophie Brock

Product marketing also plays a role in creating pressure. Social media and Google are awash in advertisements for bootcamp workout classes and diet plans aimed at mothers. There are even physical products positioned as 'solutions' to restoring pre-baby bodies.

Margo Kwiatkowski, an orthopaedic and pelvic floor physiotherapist in Ventura, California, points to the popular use of belly binders – compression belts for the abdomen that some women use after birth. "They're not going to shrink your belly," she says. But her dislike goes beyond that. "A lot of the belly binders that are sold online and marketed to post-partum

people are legitimately like a corset", she says, which can potentially make a prolapse worse.

As much as any individual person might not want to 'buy in' to bounce-back culture, it is hard not to be affected at all, says sociologist Brock. She compares the ubiquitous messaging that surrounds us to living in a 'fish-tank' of motherhood. "We can't 'jump out' or make ourselves immune from its influence," she says. "Culture plays out through our families, relationships, careers, institutions, what media we're exposed to, etcetera. So, some will be able to build/develop/have more 'immunity' to this messaging than others."

One person who has found that these messages took a toll is Lucy Kingsford

*cont'd on pg 12*



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# Parenting



*cont'd from pg 10*  
of Cambridge, UK.

When her son was born in January 2022, Kingsford had an episiotomy, a common procedure where the perineum is cut during childbirth to make way for the baby.

The stitches became infected. The pain was so excruciating she couldn't sit down without an inflatable ring. "I couldn't even lie down properly. If I would walk for more than five minutes, it would open the stitches up. I was on three different rounds of antibiotics and had to stop breastfeeding because they were making the baby ill," says

Kingsford. Let alone return to her pre-baby body, it took four months for her to start walking again.

Despite all she's been through, she also feels barged by cultural pressure to snap back – a reality that's left her feeling defeated, now eight dress sizes larger than she was pre-pregnancy.

"These new-born days are hard enough as it is. And then you've got the media just churning out article after article, saying, 'Oh, these celebrities look great just a few weeks post-baby'.

"But the worst ones are from 'normal' people, not celebrities, saying 'I've lost all this weight – you should,

too'," she says. "I had post-natal depression quite badly, and I don't think seeing these articles on Facebook helped."

In the case of Alley and others, bounce-back culture is often reflected back to them even by close family members, who emphasised Alley's weight throughout her pregnancy. "No-one should feel like they have to bounce back so quickly after having a baby. I know that I went too hard to fast," she says. "I think that if I had had a more supportive community, or a community at all, in general, who told me 'Hey, everything's going to be fine' – I think I would have been a

better mother, sooner."

Another woman who has been vocal about the consequences of bounce-back culture on women's physical and mental health is influencer James.

"I remember I was like, 'Six weeks is done, I'm going to get my GP check and I'm going to go for a run again'," she says.

"My pelvic health physio said, 'Can you just come and see me before you start running again?' ... And that was when she diagnosed me with prolapse. She said if I'd have carried on running, it would have actually been dangerous, because I'd have made the prolapse worse."

Fortunately, says James, she went into pregnancy and postpartum having already worked on her relationship with her body – largely due to reaching a prior low period, around 2014, where she had panic attacks before events because she was worried she looked "enormous".

"When I got pregnant, I was excited, because I was like, 'Bring on the changes'," she says. "I've got lines on my tummy from where the skin is stretched, but I actually quite like them ... I like the idea that your body is almost like a tapestry by mother nature, and all the little scars you have from different stories of your life, and bearing your child."

But sentiments like James' remain the exception, not the norm.

'My husband actually took away the scales'

*cont'd on pg 13*

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## Jay Leno: Comedian released from hospital after being burned in fire

AP - US comedian Jay Leno has been discharged from hospital after receiving treatment for burns suffered in a fire at his California garage.

Leno, 72, spent 10 days at a Los Angeles hospital after suffering injuries to his face, chest and hands.

He will continue to receive follow-up care and "is very appreciative of all of the well wishes" he has received, the Grossman Burn Center said.

Leno's doctor said he was pleased with his patient's progress.

Dr Peter Grossman, a burn and cosmetic surgeon, said he was optimistic the



former Tonight Show host would make a full recovery.

The hospital also released a photo of Leno smiling with hospital staff, with injuries visible to his jawline, neck and hands.

Leno suffered serious and significant second-degree burns on 12 Novem-

ber in an explosion sparked while he was working underneath a vintage car in his garage.

He received two skin graft surgeries while at the burn centre but Dr Grossman has said Leno remained in good spirits, even making jokes and once handing out

cookies to children also being treated at the burn unit.

Leno "is looking forward to spending Thanksgiving with his family and friends and wishes everyone a wonderful holiday", the hospital said on Monday.

The comedian left The Tonight Show in 2014. In 2015 he launched a TV programme called Jay Leno's Garage, where he drives rare and vintage cars with famous people.

In an episode last month, US President Joe Biden featured on the show, racing a 1967 Stingray Corvette at speeds of up to 118mph (190km/h).

### *cont'd from pg 12*

Of course, there is another reality: for many women, no matter how much they exercise or diet, their bodies will not return to how they were before pregnancy.

This is normal, says Veitch. "I often talk about postpartum as puberty. We don't go through puberty and expect our bodies to look like they did when we were nine or 10. We know our bodies have changed permanently," she says. "In pregnancy or post-partum, we're not changing as drastically, but there is a massive change. And most women will not go back to looking exactly how they did."

It's nine months of growing a baby where everyone tells you how glowing you are and how lovely you are. And then afterwards, they're a bit like, 'Ew' – Ashley James

But in a culture that prizes the snap-back and makes it sound as if bouncing

back is accessible and healthy for every woman, not having a slim physique and a body capable of everything it was before pregnancy can feel like failure.

Even women who prioritised bouncing back and think it was, overall, positive have mixed feelings. Before falling pregnant, Hannah Lucy Galliers of Gloucestershire, UK, had always made fitness a "big priority". But among Covid-19 lockdowns, gym closures and pregnancy, she says, "I didn't recognise who I was anymore – I didn't recognise my face in the mirror." After healing from a C-section, she was immediately back at the gym.

"I'd always use exercise to regulate my mental health and it was really important to me to get that back," she says. But, she says, she's been motivated by wanting to look thin, too.

It's been hard to find a happy medium. "When I started to get upset that the scale hadn't gone down, or had in-

creased slightly, my husband actually took away the scales because he didn't want me to make myself more ill," she says. "It can become very obsessive, because we live in a society where women's values are determined by the number on the scales."

James, who has been part of the resistance to snap-back culture on social media with posts celebrating her body's changes, points out that the focus on a post-partum person's weight isn't just risky for mental and physical health. It's also a bizarre reversal of how women tend to be treated during pregnancy.

"It's nine months of growing a baby where everyone tells you how glowing you are and how lovely you are. And then afterwards, they're a bit like, 'Ew'," she says.

"It shouldn't matter how you look on the outside. It should be like, 'Wow, thank you for bringing life into this world.' Like, 'Are you okay?'"

# Zimbabwe without Robert Mugabe: What has changed?

By Shingai Nyoka

A climate of fear still lingers in Zimbabwe, five years after long-time ruler Robert Mugabe was deposed. As the country marks this milestone, few people are willing to speak openly about whether the government that took power has honoured its promise of transformation, either in terms of raising living standards or guaranteeing human rights.

"I mind my own business," one street vendor tells the BBC, who does not want to be named. "People who speak their minds - some end up in prison. So, I keep things to myself and do what I have to do to survive."

Little has changed in this regard since President Mugabe's departure. Many ordinary people and critics still face arrest for insulting the president, say human rights lawyers.

Tendai (not his real name) sells groceries out of his car boot - washing powder, deodorant, snacks, and cooking oil are all neatly stacked up. Even though he is a university graduate with a double major in marketing and human resources management, he says being a street vendor is the only way he can earn his living because there are no jobs available.

"Things are the same or even worse since Robert Mugabe left. But while it might sound far-fetched, I still have hope about the future," he adds.

Inflation today is 268% - many times higher than it was when Mr Mugabe left office, according to data from Zimbabwe's national statistics body. Meanwhile, the proportion of Zimbabweans in extreme poverty has almost doubled - from 30% in 2017 to 50% during the coronavirus pandemic, says the World Bank.

This has driven more people into desperation.

Harare is teeming with informal



Robert Mugabe

traders, including more and more middle-class people selling goods from their cars. One woman sells fresh meat out of plastic bins in her van, to customers who arrive on foot or by car for smaller and smaller rations of meat - some paying as little as \$0.50 (£0.42) at a time.

"Personally, I wasn't one of the people who was happy when Mugabe resigned. People didn't know that they were celebrating coming disaster," the meat vendor said.

"They thought after he left they would have bread with margarine and jam, eggs and milk - but that isn't what has happened."

Praise and promises

Harare's streets erupted as people celebrated Mr Mugabe's resignation on 21 November 2017. A week earlier tanks had rolled onto the capital's streets as the military seized the public broadcaster and placed the 93-year-old president under house arrest.

Mr Mugabe's former vice-president, Emmerson Mnangagwa, emerged as the hero who stood up to the strongman. He vowed to end poisonous and polarising domestic politics, to turn around the

economy and repair fractured relations with Western nations.

However, sceptics pointed out that he had worked closely with Mr Mugabe for many years and had been accused of playing an instrumental role in some of the worst atrocities of the Mugabe era, and wondered whether he was really the man to deliver change. Mr Mugabe's Zanu-PF party remained in power.

"I went into government because I loved my country and not the coup," said award-winning author and lawyer Petina Gappah, during an online discussion held by political think-tank SAPES Trust to review the post-coup era.

She had been recruited as an advisor on international re-engagement in the ministry of foreign affairs but lasted just 18 months. She says she left in sorrow, not in anger and in disappointment, not bitterness.

"Some leaders called it a miracle, we had a sense that something fresh was coming - unfortunately it didn't come," she said.

Last week's visit by a Commonwealth delegation considering Zim-  
*cont'd on pg 15*



*cont'd from pg 14*

bwe's readmission suggests there has been a positive shift since President Mugabe left. Such a visit would previously have been unthinkable.

Zimbabwe pulled out of the body in 2003 blaming what it called an "Anglo-Saxon unholy alliance against Zimbabwe". The year before, Zimbabwe had been suspended for human rights violations including violent takeovers of white-owned farms and the persecution of opposition members.

Zimbabwe's re-entry to the Commonwealth would be a symbolic win for President Mnangagwa's government - a sign that its quarrel with the UK over land was over, analysts have told Gappah.

The main opposition party - the Citizen's Coalition for Change (CCC) - wants pre-conditions set before Zimbabwe before it can re-join, citing the continuing persecution of its members, journalists and other government critics.

In the week of the Commonwealth visit, 15 CCC members including member of parliament Godfrey Sithole were finally released on bail after spending five months in jail for allegedly inciting public violence in clashes with government supporters in Nyatsime, south of Harare, which they say are politically motivated. Job Sikhala, another legislator, remains behind bars on the same charges.

While the Commonwealth delegation led by assistant secretary general Luis

Franceschi said Zimbabwe had made "very impressive progress" in meeting the conditions, member countries will have to consider whether economic, human rights and electoral reforms are sufficient for readmission.

At this stage, the Zimbabwean government remains hopeful. "We have done everything that is possible to be readmitted - there are countries in the Commonwealth that are comparable to us," says Zanu-PF spokesman Nick Mangwana.

Sensitive to bigger business

However, some businesses say there has been a positive shift. GDP is up from \$17.5bn (£14.8bn) in 2017, to \$20.2bn last year.

"This government is more sensitive to the needs of business. They could do more but you can't compare it to the previous government," says Kurai Matsheza, who is the president of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries manufacturing lobby.

He says there are fewer company closures than in the Mugabe era, adding, "the policy shifts, the price controls are not at the same level they used to be".

The government has attracted hundreds of millions of dollars in investment, mainly in mining. Platinum giant Zimplats will invest \$1.8bn over the next 10 years, following negotiations with the government. Meanwhile, Chinese miner Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt is set to invest \$300m in its lithium mine.

A steel project that stalled under Mugabe has been revived. The horticulture industry that had collapsed is now back following investment in irrigation. Wheat production is at a 17-year high. Roads and dams are being repaired and constructed.

However, this is not yet translating into enough jobs to prevent young Zimbabweans from doing everything they can to go elsewhere to make lives for themselves.

So what is the government doing about it?

"Now 50% percent of revenue is going into capital investment - to improve lives you have to improve outcomes so the government had to put in enablers, which is infrastructure," says government spokesman Mr Mangwana.

wana.

"The World Bank says the country has reached middle-income status, which means incomes have improved. We have not arrived at our destination, what we have is work in progress," he adds.

But Ranga Mberi, editor of business news website Newswire, says more is needed. "While it is good to talk about growth and investment in mining, what matters is what's on the food table and in people's pockets."

"Inflation is the big issue that people will judge him [Mnangagwa] by," he adds.

"The test is that everything has to translate to full stomachs. And that is the big test for Mr Mnangagwa going into 2023."



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# Regional News



## Canada imposes new sanctions on Haitian politicians

CMC - Three Haitian politicians have been slapped with sanctions imposed by the Canadian government.

Ottawa has accused those sanctioned of aiding gang leaders and laundering their illicit earnings.

"These individuals are using their status as current or previous public office holders to protect and enable the illegal activities of armed criminal gangs, including through money laundering and other acts of corruption," said a government statement.

Today's sanctions are intended to stop the flow of illicit funds and weapons and to weaken and disable Haiti's

criminal gangs," said the statement, issued by the foreign ministry on the weekend.

The sanctions will freeze any assets held in Canada by Senator Ronny Célestin, former Senator Hervé Fourcand, and former president of the Chamber of Deputies Gary Bodeau.

Haiti's gangs have expanded their power since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021, and Prime Minister Ariel Henry has faced difficulties in restoring order to the country.

The sanctions, which implement a U.N. Security Council resolution

and build on earlier actions imposed by the United States and Canada, aim to stop the illegal flow of money and weapons into Haiti that help criminal gangs

This follows sanctions imposed on president of the Senate, Joseph Lambert, for his alleged involvement in "significant corruption" and "gross violation of human rights."

Lambert said he will challenge the decision of the United States and Canada for imposing sanctions against him for his alleged involvement.

"On November 4th, the US Treas-

*cont'd on pg 17*

## PM Skerrit says UWP hellbent on ruining Dominica's reputation

CMC - Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit said the will of Dominicans will be reflected on December 6 when votes are counted.

At a political meeting last evening in St Joseph, he told Dominica Labour Party (DLP) supporters that majority of people on the island are not supportive moves by the opposition to destabilise the country.

"They summoned all 70,000 residents to the Bay Front and just about 320 people showed up...they spent the last two weeks making the arguments and other submissions and the people of Dominica handed down their verdict [last] Thursday. Dominicans follow who they want and this is a free country," he said.

He noted that while the opposition United Workers Party (UWP) has boycotted the election on paper, their party members and machinery are working to support independent candidates as well as Team Unity Dominica (TUD).

Skerrit views this as an endorsement of the credibility of the General Election.

He claims that the opposition's main goal is to convince many of Dominica's over 40,000 eligible voters to stay away from the polls to affect its credibility in the eyes of international observers.

But the prime minister said he expects Dominicans to show up at the polls in large numbers on Election Day to cast their votes in fa-



Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit

vour of their preferred candidate.

Skerrit, who was re-elected unopposed on Thursday for the Vieille Case constituency, lamented that his hometown will not get to vote for him in

his final term as an elected official.

The Dominica Electoral Office confirmed on Saturday that 39 candidates will compete for the 15 seats in Parliament at the December 6 General Election.



## US Coast Guard offloads more than US\$101 million in illegal drugs seized in Caribbean Sea

CMC - The United States Coast Guard says the crew of its cutter Northland (WMEC 904) on Friday offloaded in Port Everglades, Florida, about 5,363 pounds of cocaine seized in the Caribbean Sea. The cocaine is worth an estimated US\$101 million.

The Coast Guard said 11 suspected smugglers, who were apprehended, face prosecution in US federal court by the Department of Justice.

The drugs were interdicted, during five separate cases.

Coast Guard Cutter Valiant (WMEC 621); and Coast Guard Cutter Venturous (WMEC 625), embarked Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Squadron helicopter.

"We are proud of the drug seizures the crews



*A crewmember from Coast Guard Cutter Northland offloads illegal narcotics in Port Everglades, Florida*

of our sister ships recently completed," said Commander Andrew Dennelly, commanding officer of Northland. "We are honoured to share a role in helping remove narcotics from US streets and delivering justice to those attempting to bring illicit

substances to U.S. shores.

"We are always ready to protect those on the sea, protect America from threats delivered by the sea and protect the sea itself," he added.

The US Coast Guard said Northland's 57-day patrol of the Windward

Passage, Old Bahama Channel and South Florida Straits primarily focused on deterring dangerous and irregular maritime migration.

Initially, a suspect vessel is detected and monitored by allied, military or law enforcement personnel coordinated by Joint Inter-agency Task Force-South based in Key West, Florida, the US Coast Guard said.

It said once an interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the US Coast Guard throughout this phase.

The coast guard said interdictions in the Caribbean Sea are performed by its members under the authority and control of the Coast Guard's Seventh District, headquartered in Miami.

*cont'd from pg 16*

sury Department indexed me unfairly. Together with Canada, they imposed sanctions on me. I affirm that they were wrong and I will fight this unfounded decision," Lambert said in a brief statement.

He said he had already given a mandate to an unknown law firm to pursue the matter insisting that "law and justice are put to the test between the USA, Canada and I, Joseph Lambert".

US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, said Lambert "abused his public position by participating in corrupt activity that undermined the integrity of Haiti's government.

"Further, there is credible information of Lambert's involvement in a gross violation of human rights, namely an extrajudicial killing, during his government tenure," added Blinken, adding that the State Department is also designating Lambert's wife, Jesula Lambert Domond.

He said under this authority — Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2022 — designated officials of foreign governments and their immediate family members are "generally ineligible" for entry into the United States.

In a separate but similar action the US Department of the Treasury designated Lambert for his alleged involvement in international drug trafficking.

## US supply chain under threat as unions, railroads, clash

AP - Railroad engineers accepted their deal with the railroads that will deliver 24% raises but conductors rejected theirs, threatening the health of the economy just before the holidays and casting more doubt on whether the industry will be able to resolve the labour dispute before next month's deadline without the help of Congress.

Even the threat of a work stoppage could tangle the nation's supply chain as railroads will freeze shipments of chemicals and other goods that could create hazards if disrupted midway to their destination.

A split vote Monday from the two biggest railroad unions follows the rejection by three other unions of their deals with the railroads that the Biden administration helped broker before the original strike deadline in September. Seven smaller unions have approved the five-year deal that, on top of the 24% raise, includes \$5,000 in bonuses.

But many union members have voted to reject the contracts because, they say, they fail to address demanding schedules and quality of life issues for employees.

All 12 must approve the contracts to prevent a strike that could cripple supply chains and hamper a stressed U.S. economy still emerging from the pandemic.



*This April 2, 2021, file photo shows freight train cars and containers at Norfolk Southern Railroad's Conway Yard in Conway, Pa. Railroad engineers accepted their deal with the railroads that will deliver 24% raises but conductors rejected the contract casting more doubt on whether the industry will be able to resolve the labour dispute before next month's deadline without Congress' help. The votes, Monday, Nov. 21, 2022, by the two biggest railroad unions follows the decision by three other unions to reject their deals with the railroads that the Biden administration helped broker before the original strike deadline in September. (AP Photo/Gene J. Puskar, File)*

The Retail Industry Leaders Association said a rail strike "would cause enormous disruption to the flow of goods nationwide" although retail stores are well stocked for the crucial holiday shopping season.

"Fortunately, this year's holiday gifts have already landed on store shelves. But an interruption to rail transportation does pose a significant challenge to getting items like perishable food products and e-commerce shipments delivered on time, and it will undoubtedly add to the inflationary pressures already hitting the U.S.

economy," said Jess Dankert with the group that represents more than 200 major retailers.

The unions that rejected their deals agreed to return to the bargaining table to try to hash out a new agreement before a new strike deadline early next month. But those talks have deadlocked because the railroads refuse to consider adding paid sick time to what was already offered.

It appears increasingly likely that Congress will have to step in to settle the dispute. Lawmakers have the power to impose con-

tract terms if both sides can't reach an agreement. Hundreds of business groups have urged Congress and President Joe Biden to be ready to intervene if needed.

Workers frustrated with the demanding schedules and deep job cuts in the industry pushed to reject these contracts because they don't resolve workers' key quality-of-life concerns. The deals for the engineers and conductors did include a promise to try to improve the scheduling of regular days off and negotiate the details of those schedules further

*cont'd on pg 19*



*cont'd from pg 18*

at each railroad. The unions that represent engineers and conductors also received three unpaid days off a year to tend to medical needs as long as they were scheduled at least 30 days in advance.

The railroads also lost out on their bid to cut crew sizes down to one person as part of the negotiations. But the conductors in the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers union still narrowly rejected the deal with roughly 51% voting against it. A smaller division of the SMART-TD union that represents about 1,300 yardmasters did approve the deal.

"The ball is now in the railroads' court. Let's see what they do. They can settle this at the bargaining table," SMART-TD President Jeremy Ferguson said. "But, the railroad executives who constantly complain about government interference and regularly bad-mouth regulators and Congress now want Congress to do the bargaining for them."

The railroads maintain that the deals with the unions should closely follow the recommendations made this summer by a special panel of arbitrators Biden appointed. That's part of the reason why they don't want to offer paid sick time. Plus, the railroads say the unions have agreed over the years to forgo paid sick time in favour of higher pay and strong short-term disability benefits.

The unions say it is long overdue for the railroads to offer paid sick time to workers, and the pandemic highlighted the need for it.

The group that negotiates on behalf of the railroads said Monday that the unions that rejected their deals shouldn't expect to receive more than the Presidential Emergency Board of arbitrators recommended. The National Carriers Conference Committee said businesses could start to be affected by the threat of a strike even before the deadline because railroads will start curtailing shipments of dangerous chemicals and perishable cargo days ahead of the deadline.

"A national rail strike would severely impact the economy and the public. Now, the continued, near-term threat of one will require that freight railroads and passenger carriers soon begin to take responsible steps to safely secure the network in advance of any deadline," the railroads said.

It's unclear what Congress might do given the deep political divisions in Washington D.C. and a single lawmaker could hold up a resolution. But the head of the Association of American Railroads trade group, Ian Jefferies, said "if the remaining unions do not accept an agreement, Congress should

be prepared to act and avoid a disastrous \$2 billion a day hit to our economy."

Republicans may try to impose a deal that includes only what the Presidential Emergency Board recommended while Democrats who still narrowly hold control of both the House and Senate during this lame-duck period might be willing to force the railroads to make additional concessions.

The unions that voted Monday represent more than half of the roughly 115,000 rail workers involved in the contract dispute with Union Pacific, Norfolk Southern, BNSF, Kansas City Southern, CSX and other railroads.



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## Strong quake topples houses in Indonesia's Java; 162 dead

AP - Rescuers on Tuesday struggled to find more bodies from the rubble of homes and buildings toppled by an earthquake that killed at least 162 people and injured hundreds on Indonesia's main island of Java.

More heavy equipment reached the hardest-hit city of Cianjur in the country's most densely populated province of West Java, where the magnitude 5.6 land-based quake struck Monday afternoon. Terrified residents fled into the street, some covered in blood and debris.

Damaged roads and bridges, power blackouts and lack of heavy equipment previously hampered Indonesia's rescuers after the quake set off a landslide that blocked streets and buried several houses and motorists.

Power supplies and phone communications have begun to improve in the quake-hit areas on Tuesday.

Many of the dead were public school students who had finished their classes for the day and were taking extra lessons at Islamic schools when the buildings collapsed, West Java Gov. Ridwan Kamil said as he announced the latest death toll in the remote, rural area.

Hospitals were overwhelmed by injured people,



*Earthquake survivors are treated outside of a hospital in Cianjur, West Java, Indonesia, Monday, Nov. 21, 2022. An earthquake shook Indonesia's main island of Java on Monday damaging dozens of buildings and sending residents into the capital's streets for safety. (AP Photo/Kholid)*

and the toll was expected to rise. No estimates were immediately available because of the area's far-flung, rural population, but many structures collapsed, and residents and emergency workers braced for grim news.

Operations were focused on about a dozen locations in Cianjur, where people are still believed trapped, said Endra Atmawidjaja, the Public Works and Housing spokesperson.

"We are racing with time to rescue people," Atmawidjaja said, adding that seven excavators and 10

large trucks have been deployed from neighbouring Bandung and Bogor cities to continue clearing trees and soils that blocked roads linking Cianjur and Cipanas towns.

Cargo trucks carrying food, tents, blankets and other supplies from the capital, Jakarta, were arriving early Tuesday for distribution in temporary shelters. Still, thousands spent the night in the open fearing aftershocks.

"Buildings were completely flattened," said Dwi Sarmadi, who works for an

Islamic educational foundation in a neighbouring district.

Roughly 175,000 people live in the town of Cianjur, part of a mountainous district of the same name with more than 2.5 million people. Known for their piety, the people of Cianjur live mostly in towns of one- and two-story buildings and in smaller homes in the surrounding countryside.

Kamil said that more than 13,000 people whose homes were heavily damaged were taken to evacua-

*cont'd on pg 21*



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tion centres.

Emergency workers treated the injured on stretchers and blankets outside hospitals, on terraces and in parking lots. The injured, including children, were given oxygen masks and IV lines. Some were resuscitated.

Hundreds of people gathered outside the Cianjur regional hospital building, waiting for treatment

"I was working inside my office building. The building was not damaged, but as the quake shook very strongly, many things fell. My leg was hit by heavy stuff," Sarmadi said.

Sarmadi was waiting near a tent outside the hospital after some overwhelmed clinics were unable to see him. Many people were coming in worse shape.

"I really hope they can handle me soon," he said.

Hasan, a construction worker who, like many Indonesians, uses one name,

is also one of the survivors that is being taken to the hospital.

"I fainted. It was very strong," said Hasan. "I saw my friends running to escape from the building. But it was too late to get out and I was hit by the wall."

The magnitude 5.6 quake was at a depth of 10 kilometres (6.2 miles) below the Earth's surface, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. It also caused panic in the greater Jakarta area, about a three hour-drive away, where high-rises swayed and some people evacuated.

In many homes in Cianjur, chunks of concrete and roof tiles fell inside bedrooms.

Shopkeeper Dewi Risma was working with customers when the quake hit, and she ran for the exit.

"The vehicles on the road stopped because the quake was very strong," she said. "I felt it shook three times, but the first one was the strongest one

for around 10 seconds. The roof of the shop next to the store I work in had collapsed, and people said two had been hit."

Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysical Agency recorded at least 25 aftershocks.

The country of more than 270 million people is frequently struck by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tsunamis because of its location on the arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin known as the "Ring of Fire."

In February, a magnitude 6.2 earthquake killed at least 25 people and injured more than 460 in West Sumatra province. In January 2021, a magnitude 6.2 earthquake killed more than 100 people and injured nearly 6,500 in West Sulawesi province.

A powerful Indian Ocean quake and tsunami in 2004 killed 230,000 people in a dozen countries, most of them in Indonesia.



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## Auditors in Iraq uncover staggering \$2.5 billion tax fraud

AP - Auditors in Iraq have uncovered a massive scheme in which a network of businesses and officials embezzled some \$2.5 billion from the country's tax authority, despite layers of safeguards.

The scandal poses an early test for Iraq's new government, which was formed late last month after a prolonged political crisis. Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani has vowed to crack down on corruption, but few expect any senior officials or political leaders to be held accountable.

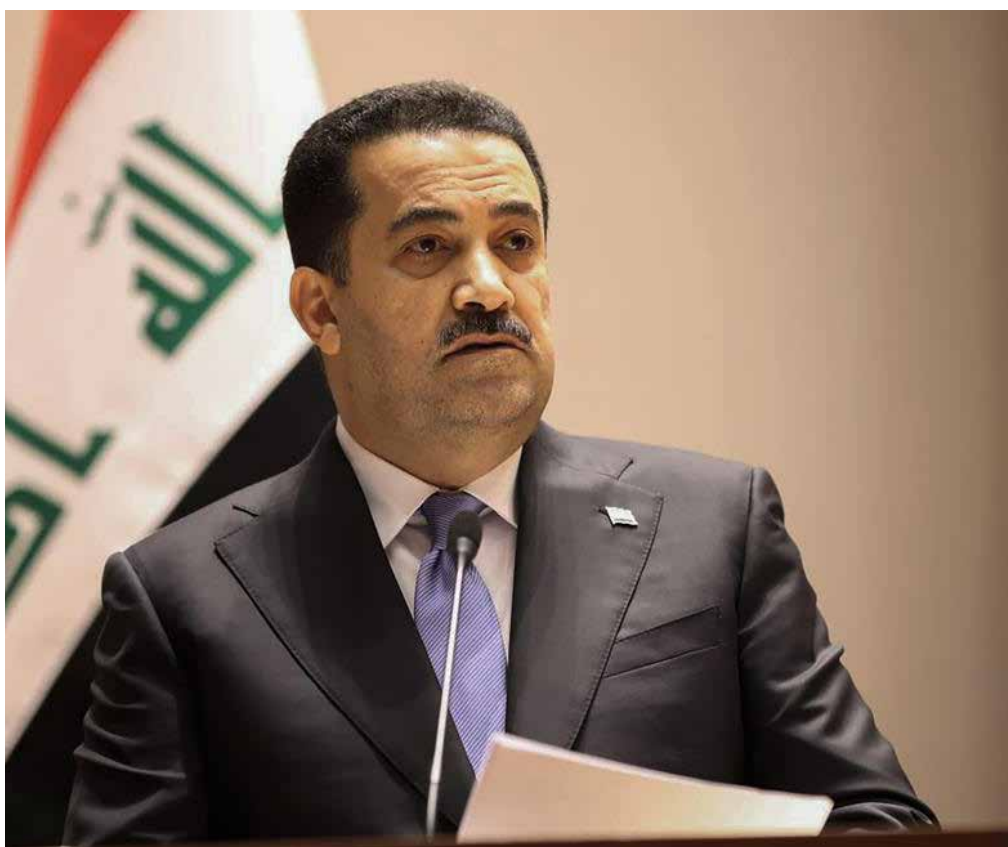
The scale of the embezzlement is remarkable, even for an oil-rich country where corruption has been rampant for decades. Transparency International, a global watchdog, rated Iraq 157th out of 180 countries on its 2021 index for clean governance.

The auditors' report, obtained by The Associated Press and first reported by the Guardian, suggests the theft was orchestrated by a broad network of officials, civil servants and businessmen. In Iraq's deeply-rooted patronage system, such individuals often have links to powerful political factions.

"It was a very organised and agreed upon process of theft," said Jamal al-Asadi, a legal expert and retired judge familiar with corruption cases.

Three officials confirmed details of the scheme to the AP. All spoke on condition of anonymity, fearing reprisal.

The scheme came to light last month when an internal audit by the Finance Ministry alleged that the General Commission for Taxes — Iraq's Internal Revenue Service — had fraudulently paid some 3.7



*This photo provided by the Iraqi Parliament Media Office shows Mohammed Shia al-Sudani speaking during the parliamentary session to vote on the new government in Baghdad, Iraq, Oct.27, 2022. (Iraqi Parliament Media Office via AP)*

trillion Iraqi dinars, or around \$2.5 billion, to five companies.

The payments were made through 247 checks cashed between Sept. 9, 2021 and Aug. 11 of this year, from a branch at the state-run Rafidain Bank located within the tax commission.

The account held billions of dollars in deposits made by companies that were supposed to be returned to them once taxes had been deducted and the companies had presented updated financial statements. The five companies are alleged to have fraudulently drawn refunds without depositing anything.

An audit was launched by the acting finance minister at the time, Ihsan Abdul Jabbar, who also served as oil minister. He discovered the theft after receiving complaints from

an oil company unable to retrieve its tax deposits, according to a senior official close to the investigation.

When the minister inquired as to the remaining balance in the account, the tax authority said it held around \$2.5 billion, but further inspection revealed the actual balance had been drained down to \$100 million, the official said.

That was the first indication of the massive theft. A subsequent audit presented to parliament's finance committee revealed the rest. The AP obtained a copy of that report this week.

Well before the audit, the money laundering department in the bank had expressed concern to the Finance Ministry over the high vol-

**cont'd on pg 23**



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ume of cash withdrawals. Abdul Jabbar's predecessor, former Finance Minister Ali Allawi, had asked that his office approve any large withdrawals, but key managers in the tax authority ignored the request, the official said.

Allawi resigned in August in protest over corruption and foreign interference in Iraqi affairs.

Weeks before the first checks were cashed, authorities removed a key layer of oversight, ostensibly because companies had complained of long wait times. The decision to remove the Federal Board of Supreme Audit from the process was triggered by a request from lawmaker Haitham al-Jibouri, who was then head of the parliamentary finance committee.

The audit found that the companies, three of which were established just weeks before the payments were made, submitted fake documents to be able to claim the payouts. Auditors were unable to follow the money further because it was withdrawn in cash.

"There is no doubt that these amounts were stolen," the report concludes.

The findings suggest a broad network of tax officials and businessmen must have conspired.

The claim process requires lengthy paperwork and signoffs from at least three departments within

the tax authority, as well as the director and deputy director of the financial department. Rafidain Bank contacted the tax authority to verify the checks before cashing them, as it was required to do.

But the money vanished anyway, and it's unclear who — if anyone — will ultimately be held accountable.

Nour Zuhair Jassim, a well-connected businessman, was arrested in late October at Baghdad International Airport. He was named as the CEO of two of the companies and obtained over \$1 billion from

the account, according to the audit. His lawyer did not respond to a request for comment.

Two officials at the tax authority have also been detained, and the judiciary says it has seized several properties and millions of dollars in assets.


But officials say it's unlikely that an embezzlement scheme of this scale could unfold without the knowledge of higher-ups.

Political factions in Iraq have long jockeyed for control of ministries and other government bodies, which they then use to provide jobs and other fa-

vours to their supporters. A number of factions are linked to different government bodies implicated in the tax scheme.

The current government only came together in late October, more than a year after early elections. Bickering among powerful factions boiled over into deadly street fighting earlier this year, and the largest party in parliament, headed by an influential Shiite cleric, was consigned to the opposition.

Any attempt to hold political leaders accountable for the fraud could spark further unrest.



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   **MON-SAT**

## FIFA threat makes World Cup teams nix 'One Love' armbands

AP - FIFA's threat of on-field punishment for players pushed World Cup teams to back down Monday and abandon a plan for their captains to wear armbands that were seen as a rebuke to host nation Qatar's human rights record.

Just hours before the first players with the armbands in support of the "One Love" campaign were to take the field, soccer's governing body warned they would immediately be shown yellow cards — two of which lead to a player's expulsion from that game and also the next.

That changed the calculus for the seven European teams, which may have expected merely to be fined. The displays are a violation of FIFA rules.

No player had the "One Love" armbands Monday, although England's Harry Kane wore the FIFA-approved "No Discrimination" armband that was offered as a compromise in the match with Iran.

It was the latest dispute that threatened to overshadow play on the field. Since being awarded the World Cup hosting rights in 2010, conservative Muslim Qatar has faced a raft of criticism, including its treatment of low-paid migrant workers and women and its suppression of free speech. It came under particular fire for its



England's Harry Kane wears a rainbow armband as he takes the knee prior to the Euro 2020 soccer championship round of 16 match between England and Germany at Wembley Stadium in England. The captains of seven European nations will not wear anti-discrimination armbands in World Cup games after threats from FIFA to show yellow cards to the players. The seven soccer federations say "we can't put our players in a position where they could face sporting sanctions." (Justin Tallis, Pool Photo via AP)

criminalization of homosexuality.

The decision came three days after beer sales at stadiums were suddenly banned under pressure from the Qatari government and two days after FIFA president Gianni Infantino delivered an extraordinary tirade defending the host nation's

human rights record.

The captains of seven European nations had vowed to wear armbands carrying the heart-shaped, multicoloured logo of the "One Love" campaign, which promotes inclusion and diversity in soccer and society. That set up the prospect of worldwide

viewers seeing a symbol of disapproval with the host country and defiance of FIFA on the arms of Kane, the Netherlands' Virgil van Dijk and Wales' Gareth Bale on Monday.

But in the end, the teams said they couldn't sacrifice success on the field.

*cont'd on pg 25*



*cont'd from pg 24*

"As national federations, we can't put our players in a position where they could face sporting sanctions, including bookings," the seven soccer federations said in a joint statement, referring to the yellow cards.

The captains of Belgium, Switzerland, Germany and Denmark had also pledged to wear the armbands in the coming days.

"Our No. 1 priority at the World Cup is to win the games," the Dutch soccer federation said in a separate statement. "Then you don't want the captain to start the match with a yellow card."

The risk of getting a second yellow, which would see a player sent off the field for the rest of the game and banned from the next, is particularly tricky in a tournament where teams play only three games before the knockout rounds begin.

"One thing is clear: We are not going to wear the armband if we are going to get a yellow card," said Netherlands coach Louis van Gaal. "And I think that we need to question whether this is a correct act on the part of FIFA. I think you can give the answer to that question."

National soccer federations and fan associations lashed out at FIFA for its decision to penalise the players. Danish soccer federation CEO Jakob Jensen told Danish broadcaster TV2 that the organisation was "extremely disappointed with FIFA," and German soccer federation president Bernd Neuendorf called it "another low blow."

"FIFA today prohibited a statement for diversity and human rights — those are values to which it is committed in its own statutes," Neuendorf told reporters in Qatar. "From our point of view, this is more than frustrating and, I think, an unprecedented action in World Cup history."

The global players' union FIF-

PRO called the FIFA move "disappointing."

"Players must have a right to express their support for human rights on and off the field of play and we will support any of them who will use their own platforms to do so," the union said. "We maintain that a rainbow flag is not a political statement but an endorsement of equality and thus a universal human right."

England's Football Supporters Association said it felt betrayed by FIFA.

"Today we feel contempt for an organisation that has shown its true values by giving the yellow card to players and the red card to tolerance," the FSA said.

The Belgium federation expressed frustration that FIFA didn't act sooner to resolve an issue that began two months ago, only to come to a head on the morning of matches for three teams. The Europeans "tried several times to avoid escalating this initiative ... but we have had no response," the Belgian federation said.

Manon Aubry of France, the president of the Left group at the European Parliament, wore the rainbow armband Monday during a debate on human rights in the context of the World Cup.

"Shame on those who did not allow armbands — 'One Love' armbands — to support the LGBTQI. I'm proud to wear that armband here," said Aubry, who was reprimanded for wearing it inside the Parliament, where such displays are not allowed during plenary sessions.

Gurchaten Sandhu, of the Geneva-based International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, said FIFA put "athletes in a very, very awkward" position.

"You've bound the hands of the national teams. They're there to compete," he said.

He also criticised Infantino's

speech Saturday in which the soccer chief defended Qatar and lectured Europeans who have criticised the emirate's human rights record. In that speech, Infantino said: "Today I feel Qatari. Today I feel Arab. Today I feel African. Today I feel gay. Today I feel disabled. Today I feel a migrant worker."

Sandhu took issue with Infantino's choice of words, saying: "You don't feel gay. You are gay."

It wasn't immediately clear what, if any, influence Qatar's autocratic government had on the armband decision. The government and its Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, which oversees the World Cup, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The European plans were in breach of World Cup regulations and FIFA's general rules on team equipment at its games.

"For FIFA final competitions, the captain of each team must wear the captain's armband provided by FIFA," its equipment regulations state.

The soccer body's proposal, announced Saturday, was for captains to wear armbands with socially aware, though generic, slogans. In that offer, armbands reading "No Discrimination" — the only one of its chosen slogan aligned with the European teams' wish — would appear only at the quarterfinal stage.

On Monday, it offered the compromise that captains of all 32 teams "will have the opportunity" to wear an armband with the slogan "No Discrimination" in the group games.

Brazil's players were not planning any type of protest but striker Richarlison said he would "support anything that other players or national teams were doing."

"We live in a dangerous world where you are not allowed to have an opinion," he said at Brazil's training camp. "I support any cause out there."

# Sports News



## Widow asks \$55M from NCAA for ex-USC football player's death

AP - Attorneys asked a jury Monday to award \$55 million to the widow of a former USC football player, in a landmark case accusing the NCAA of failing to protect him from repetitive head trauma that led to his death.

Matthew Gee, a hard-hitting linebacker who was on the 1990 Rose Bowl-winning squad, endured countless blows that caused permanent brain damage and led to cocaine and alcohol abuse that eventually killed him at age 49, his lawyers said in closing arguments.

In the first case of its kind to go to a jury, the attorneys told Los Angeles Superior Court jurors that the NCAA, the governing body of college athletics in the U.S., had known about effects of head trauma in sports since the 1930s but failed for decades to notify players of the risks or put rules in place to protect players.

"You cannot bring Matt back but you can say what the NCAA did to him was wrong," attorney Bill Horton said. "Put this on the NCAA's radar. ... This is the only way they will ever listen."

A lawyer for the NCAA said Gee experienced a sudden cardiac death brought on by long-standing hypertension and acute cocaine toxicity and he had a raft of other serious health problems.

"The NCAA had nothing to do with the things that tragically took Mr. Gee's life," attorney Will Stute said.

The issue of concussions in sports, and football in particular, has been front and centre in recent years as research has discovered more about long-term effects of repeated head trauma in problems ranging from headaches to depression and, sometimes, early onset Parkinson's

or Alzheimer's disease.

The month-long trial is one of hundreds of wrongful death and personal injury lawsuits brought by college football players against the NCAA in the past decade.

But Gee's is only the second case to go to trial with allegations that hits to the head led to chronic traumatic encephalopathy, a degenerative brain disease. A 2018 case in Texas settled a few days into the trial and long before it might have gone to the jury.

Gee was one of five linebackers on the 1989 Trojans squad who died before turning 50. As with teammate and NFL star Junior Seau, who killed himself in 2012, Gee's brain was examined posthumously at Boston University's Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy Center and found to have CTE.

CTE is associated with memory loss, depression and progressive dementia. It can only be diagnosed after death.

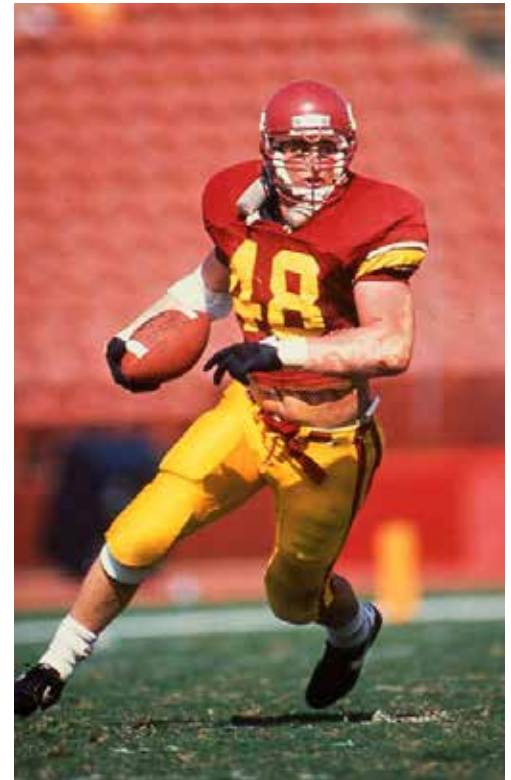
Boston University has found CTE in the brains of 110 of 111 deceased former NFL players and 48 of 53 former college players, according to a study in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Hall of Famers diagnosed after death include Ken Stabler and Mike Webster.

In his senior year, Gee was team captain and led USC in tackles, forced fumbles and fumble recoveries.

Gee married Alana, his college sweetheart, after graduating in 1992, and they lived a normal life for 20 years. They raised three children as he ran a successful insurance company in Southern California.

But things took a downturn around 2013 when he began to lose control of his emotions, the lawsuit said. He be-



Matthew Gee

came angry, confused and depressed. He drank heavily. He told a doctor days would go by without him being able to recall what happened.

Attorneys for Gee said that CTE, which is found in athletes and military veterans who suffered repetitive brain injuries, was an indirect cause of death because head trauma has been shown to promote substance abuse.

"Rarely do you find CTE on a death certificate," attorney Justin Shrader said.

Stute said the wrongful death case was about what caused Gee's death and not whether CTE exists. NCAA experts said CTE was still a hypothesis.

After years of denials, the NFL acknowledged in 2016 that BU's research showed a link between football. The league agreed to settle head injury cases covering 20,000 retired

*cont'd on pg 27*



## England in Pakistan: Injured Shaheen Afridi out of hosts' squad while Abrar Ahmed and Mohammad Ali called up

BBC - Pakistan have named an 18-man squad for the three-Test series against England next month.

Fast bowler Shaheen Afridi will miss the series after he underwent appendicitis surgery at the weekend.

Fawad Alam, Yasir Shah and Hasan Ali have all dropped out of the squad having been part of the Sri Lanka tour in July earlier this year.

Leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed and fast bowler Mohammad Ali have received their maiden Test call-ups.

Ahmed has taken 43 wickets at an average of 21.95 in the domestic tournament and Ali has claimed 56 in the last two domestic seasons.

Uncapped pair Mohammad Wasim and Zahid Mahmood, part of the squad for

the three Tests against Australia in March, are the other two players to come in.

Afridi is also recovering from a knee injury he suffered during Pakistan's defeat by England in the T20 World Cup final earlier this month.

The opening Test in Rawalpindi will be England's first in Pakistan in 17 years and the three Tests are part of the ICC World Test Championship.



Shaheen Afridi was injured while catching out Harry Brook as England beat Pakistan in the T20 World Cup final earlier this month

*cont'd from pg 26*

players providing up to \$4 million for a death involving CTE. It's expected to exceed \$1.4 billion in payouts over 65 years for six qualifying conditions.

In 2016, the NCAA agreed to settle a class-action concussion lawsuit, paying \$70 million to monitor former college athletes' medical conditions, \$5 million toward medical research, and payments of up to \$5,000 toward individual players claiming injuries.



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# Sports News



## Heron and Carter, George and Simmons claim domino pairs titles

Natalie Heron and her partner Shashawna Carter and the combination of Dwayne "Chemist" George and Manlight Simmons captured the Female and Male Pairs titles respectively in the Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Association's (ABNDA) latest Four Hand Competition at its headquarters in Ottos over the weekend.

Heron and Carter were crowned Female Pairs Champs after prevailing 3-2 in the final against the team of Francine Hector and Bernia Richards, who claimed the runner-up spot.

The pair of Sharon Matthew and Lorraine Richardson defeated the combination of Carol-Faye Bynoe and Natasha Edwards to capture third place.



Natalie Heron, right, and her partner Shashawna Carter captured the ABNDA's Female Pairs title over the weekend.

On their way to the final, Heron and Carter ousted the team of Matthew and Richardson, while Hector and her partner Richards prevailed against the combination of Bynoe and Edwards in the semi-finals.

In the female pair quarter-finals, the team of Heron and Carter defeated the pair of Marilyn Gayle and Seymone Parkes.

Hector and Richards combined their efforts to beat the duo of Isabella Benjamin and Lucille Mack.

The team of Matthew and Richardson ousted the combination of Sylene Brathwaite and Carolyn Joseph, while Bynoe and Edwards prevailed against the pair of Ariel Farrill and Britney Farrill.

Twelve registered pairs contested the female competition. Eight Pairs contested the opening round of matches, with the other four gaining byes into the quarter-finals.

In the opening round of female pairs matches, Carter and Heron defeated Vernacia Baron and Omone Brathwaite. Bynoe and Edwards prevailed against Joycelyn Potter and Ruth Ralph.

Matthew and Richardson defeated Kemecia Charles and Wendy Jackson, while Ariel Farrill and Britney Farrill overcame Patricia Lewis and Desiree Parker.

Gaining byes into the quarter-finals were the teams of Marilyn Gayle and Seymone Parkes, Sylene Brathwaite and Carolyn Joseph, Isabella Benjamin and Lucille Mack, along with the pair of Francine Hector and Bernia Richards.

Dwayne George and Manlight Simmons captured the Male Pairs title by defeating the combination of Rupert Davis and Jason King in the final.

The team comprising Kenny



Dwayne 'Chemist' George, left, and Manlight Simmons captured the ABNDA's Male Pairs title over the weekend. (Photos courtesy ABNDA)

Charles and Mervin LeFleur overcame the challenge posed by the team of Rene President and Phillip Simmons to claim third place.

On their way to the final, Dwayne George and Manlight Simmons ousted Charles and LeFleur, while Davis and King defeated Rene President and Phillip Simmons in the semi-finals.

In the male pairs quarter-finals, Dwayne George and Manlight Simmons defeated the duo of Sheldon Gomes and McClean Harve.

The team of Rupert Davis and Jason King ousted the pair comprising Glenford George and Noxford Hoyte.

The duo of Kenny Charles and  
*cont'd on pg 29*



## TG Welding extend unbeaten run in business softball league

TG Welding extended their unbeaten run by winning their latest match in the Mandy Premier League's Cool and Smooth Sherma Jackson Business Softball Cricket League on Sunday, 20th November.

TG Welding notched up their sixth win in as many matches by defeating PEL Desi Boys by 47 runs at the Potters playing field.

Batting first, TG Welding posted 97 for seven off their 10 overs with male player of the game Dillion Wills getting 54 and Vishal Gobin making 17. Sudeep Chanda picked up two wickets for 18 runs.

In reply, PEL Desi Boys were dismissed for 50 in 9.4 overs with Sudeep Chanda getting 17. Andra Samuel grabbed three wickets for eight runs and Kimberly Anthony captured one wicket for 12 runs. Stacy Bright was named the female player of the game.

There was success as well for Grill Box as they

coasted to an eight-wicket win over the Antigua and Barbuda Defense Force (ABDF).

The ABDF were restricted to 79 for four off their 10 overs with Sawandi Ambrose scoring 25 and Vaughn Charles making 23. Hezekiah Weston claimed two wickets for eight runs.

Grill Box then coasted to victory, reaching 86 for two in 6.2 overs.

Male player of the game Mervin Higgins slammed 53 not out and Hezekiah Weston struck an unbeaten 22. Quincie France captured two for 22.

Delise Glynn was named female player of the game.

However, the game between AFBHLUR United (Agriculture United) and Living Styles was abandoned as a no result due to a wet pitch.

After six rounds of matches, TG Welding lead the standings with 60 points.



Dillion Wills, right, and Stacey Bright of TG Welding captured the Male and Female player of the game awards following their encounter in the Mandy Premier League's Cool and Smooth Sherma Jackson Business Softball Cricket League on Sunday, 20th November. (Photo courtesy Mandy Weatherhead)

The ABDF are currently in second place with 30 points. They are followed by Living Styles and Grill Box with 25 points each, Time

of Victory with 20 points, AFBHLUR with 15 points and PEL Desi Boys are occupying the cellar position with five points.

### cont'd from pg 28

Mervin LeFleur, who had received a bye into the quarter-finals, overcame the team of Redfield Davis and Michael Roach, while the combination of Rene President and Phillip Simmons prevailed against the team of Devon Graham and Reynold Isaac.

A total of 15 male pairs contested the event. Fourteen pairs battled in their first round for seven spots into the quarter-finals where they were

joined by the team of Kenny Charles and Mervin LeFleur, who had received a bye.

In the opening round, Dwayne George and Manlight Simmons defeated Kaid Jarvis and Lionel Parker.

Rupert Davis and Jason King prevailed against Wendel Anthony and Rohan Cordis. Renee President and Phillip Simmons ousted Dale Henry and Lionel Gomes.

McClean Harve and Sheldon

Gomes overcame Allison Benjamin and Duhrannih Grant. Redfield Davis and Michael Roach defeated David Browne and Johnny Joseph.

Noxford Hoyte and Glenford George prevailed against Glenroy Farrill and Corey Richards, while Devon Graham and Reynold Isaac overcame Conrad Constant and Calvin Gordon.

The ABNDA will next stage its Mixed Pairs competition later this week.

## ABCUA initiates recruitment drive for female officiators

The Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Umpires Association (ABCUA) has started efforts to recruit more females into cricket umpiring across the twin-island state.

President of the ABCUA James “Son Son” Stevens said the recruitment drive is being undertaken to get more females to avail themselves of opportunities that could lead to officiating at the international level.

James said the ABCUA is undertaking the initiative in support of a mandate issued to all its affiliated members by the International Cricket Council (ICC), the world’s governing body for the sport.

In its effort to have all female officials conducting women’s cricket matches from 2025, the ICC has mandated all member associations to provide specific numbers of umpires and match referees to facilitate the transformation.

According to Stevens, the West Indies Cricket Umpires Association (WICUA) is working to facilitate the region’s governing body for cricket, Cricket West Indies, with 25 female umpires and 25 female match referees by 2025 as mandat-

ed by the ICC.

Stevens said the ABCUA has initiated a recruitment drive by sending out letters of invitations to a number of business establishments and schools across Antigua and Barbuda seeking persons to become female umpires and match referees.

“We have started the process by sending out letters to a number of business places and several schools such as All Saints Secondary, Antigua Girls’ High School and Jennings Secondary.

“These letters are basically asking the business establishments and schools to identify persons who may want to take up cricket umpiring,” Stevens said.

“We have to start somewhere and we as an association will not sit back and don’t make an attempt to get more young women involved in the administration of cricket umpiring.

“We have a few females here in Antigua already umpiring and we need quite a few more. With the ICC mandate for 2025, I would love to see at least a few umpires from Antigua and Barbuda getting the oppor-



Keller Joseph is currently one of two active qualified female umpires who are members of the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Umpires Association. (Photo courtesy ABCUA)

tunity to umpire at the international level.”

The ABCUA currently has 23 qualified umpires, including two females, who have successfully passed the West Indies Cricket Umpires Association’s oral

and practical exams.

The two female umpires are Candace Butler and Keller Joseph and they are currently among 10 qualified active umpires. The other 13 qualified umpires are inactive.