

FRIDAY 9TH DECEMBER 2022 | VOLUME 3 ISSUE 237 | WWW.POINTVILLE.AG

US\$100 MILLION REDEVELOPED DEEPWATER HARBOUR OPENS!

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Antigua and Barbuda's beloved Father of the Nation, the Rt. Hon. Sir Vere C. Bird, had he been alive today to commemorate his 112th birthday would no doubt have been elated to see his dream for the country to establish itself as an island giant one step closer to fulfillment with the official opening of the US\$100 million redeveloped Deepwater Harbour under the leadership of his successor, Prime Minister Gaston Browne. It was Sir Vere's visionary leadership that set the foundation for the establishment of a harbour that would allow for the smooth movement of both people and cargo. Prime Minister Browne has built upon this vision and made Antigua and Barbuda's dream of becoming the only port in the OECS that can claim the title of being able to offer services as a major shipment hub.

Local News



“Visionary” new Deepwater Harbour OECS’ first transshipment hub

Visionary.

This was the word used on Thursday throughout the opening ceremony of the redeveloped Deepwater Harbour to describe the monumental achievement of the Gaston Browne-led administration in modernising the country’s half century old main seaport.

First opened in 1968 under the leadership of Father of the Nation, Rt. Hon. Sir Vere Cornwall Bird Sr., the Deepwater Harbour has served the country well.

Initially developed to facilitate the movement of cargo into the country, over the decades, and with the transition of the economy from agriculture to tourism, it also became the main entry point for tourists entering the country by sea.

As Antigua and Barbuda evolved, so too did its need for a port facility that would meet its new and expanding needs, but the prime minister of the day, Gaston Browne said he had a much larger vision for the harbour and its role in the economic development of the nation.

With the launch of the redeveloped Deepwater Harbour Port Facility on Thursday, Antigua and Barbuda claimed its place as the leading and most pro-



gressive nation in the OECS.

The modernised port now has the capacity to offer transshipment and centralised shipping services and is the largest cargo port in the OECS.

Speaking at the launch on Thursday, the prime minister also noted that the opening was possible because his government took bold action in reopening the country and restoring normalcy earlier than any other nation in the region.

“My cabinet took the strategic decision to continue the works to ensure that the two projects (the fifth berth and Deepwater Harbour) would have been

completed within the timelines, and certainly, within budget. And you will be pleased to know that there have been no cost overruns.

“Already, I’m aware that several shipping lines have been negotiating with the management to provide logistics as well as transshipment services for the subregion and even beyond. And we’re also holding discussions with other destinations to include Panama and even Guatemala to determine whether or not we could have some level of co-operation in order to enhance the level of transshipments that will take place here at our port facility,” said Browne, who has ministerial portfolio responsibility for ports.

The timing of the port’s relaunch is auspicious as already in 2022, revenue generated at the facility has surpassed its last successful pre-pandemic year.

In 2018, the port generated more than \$40 million in revenue. At the end of October this year, the port had outdone itself, reporting \$53 million in collected revenue.

It was noted that as the port does not itself offer a specific service beyond the movement and handling of cargo, its financial success provides an accurate

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gauge of the health of the local economy, as its revenue is inexorably linked to the volume of business it conducts, in respect of imports and exports with the public.

The prime minister also noted while the impressive revenue turnover does not necessarily translate to large profits, the port has recovered from its formerly dire position of being unable to pay its employees on time to now being able to settle outstanding backpay and offer its staff a holiday bonus.

“The port management paid \$3.8 million in backpay and they’re now poised to make another payment of \$1.2 million in the form of a

cont'd on pg 4



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Local News



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bonus," Browne said.

Meanwhile, addressing the gathering, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Antigua Barbuda Port Authority, Senator Mary Claire Hurst, said the occasion represented a particularly proud moment for her.

"My dad was the minister when the first port was commissioned and today I am honoured to be here as chairman of the Antigua [Barbuda] Port Authority."

She continued, "The design of the port facility has enabled a remarkable revolution in the quality of the port.

"These changes are manifested in the following areas: infrastructure, multipurpose berth, warehouse development, administrative building, marine operations, terminal operations, port



services."

Hurst also noted that the expanded and improved port will also foster many spin-off benefits for the country including increased economic activity and job creation.

Ambassador to the People's Repub-

lic of China, Brian Stuart-Young, also offered remarks in which he underscored the careful thought and negotiation that went into the planning of the port.

"It took the Ministry of Finance, the port leadership and accountants and my office many, many months of negotiations with China's Ex-Im Bank to arrive at a workable funding arrangement.

"Nobody tried to offer us this facility; we had to work for it.

"I remember submitting and having it rejected and going back to the table and working again and resubmitting.

"Indeed, the loan was originally considered to be for both the commercial side...and the cruise tourism services, but it was the prudent decision of Prime Minister Browne that it should be reduced to only the commercial side of the port. He was not inclined to take on the larger debt and was of the view that government would seek alternative arrangements for cruise tourism."

The port project was completed with the support of the government of the People's Republic of China and was financed through a concessionary 2 percent loan made available from The Export-Import Bank of China.

It was constructed by China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation which has been in operation in Antigua and Barbuda for 18 years and is behind other major development projects including the new terminal at the V. C. Bird International Airport and Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium.

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More "next level" projects to follow launch of redeveloped Deepwater Harbour

Prime Minister Gaston Browne described the upgraded port facility at Deepwater Harbour as a perfect example of 'next level development' as his administration advances its vision to transform the country into an economic powerhouse.

Addressing a large gathering at the opening ceremony, the head of government said all across the country, the evidence of transformation is clear.

These positive advancements, he continued, have occurred despite the scepticism of many in his vision.

"Next level is not a cliché; it is demonstrative of a new frontier of development.

"We had the audacity of establishing a vision of transforming Antigua and Barbuda into an economic powerhouse in the Caribbean. Again, there are many who scoffed at it, but we believe that we are well on our way to becoming an economic powerhouse," the prime minister declared.

Prime Minister Browne recalled that upon entering politics in the late 1990s, he

outlined a billion-dollar development plan for St. John's City West that raised eyebrows.

In the 23 years since he was first elected in 1999, Browne said he has not been daunted by naysayers and has refused to "limit his ambition".

He credited this determination and tenacity for the tangible benefits the entire country now reaps.

"\$540 million dollars between the cruise and cargo ports, another US\$100 million to be invested at Fort James by RCL [Royal Caribbean Cruises], and then you look around in this constituency, housing, polyclinic, upgrade of Villa school."

The City West MP stated those named projects represent only a fraction of the plans that are in place for his constituency.

He revealed that there are other projects that will soon commence that will see development in Dredge Bay and others that will extend as far as Perry Bay.

"You'll recognise that the St. John's Harbour is in the



shape of a horseshoe, so we'll be going on the other side - going right down to Hatton Bay - to develop the entire coastline to make it into the finest, the marquee cruise destination in the Caribbean."













The prime minister added the plan for Dredge Bay is to create an enterprise zone that will include facilities to complement the services offered at the Deepwater Harbour port.

Despite the challenges the

country has endured, Prime Minister Browne is satisfied with Antigua and Barbuda's accomplishments, which are all designed to improve its global standing.

"Notwithstanding the daunting circumstances of COVID and many other structural problems associated with a small island state, we have made significant progress and I have no doubt that, provided we remain with the unity of purpose and we embrace that vision to transform this country into an economic powerhouse, that we'll achieve it.

"However, I say to you; achieving that vision requires continuity, achieving that vision requires competence. We cannot risk any form of retrogression at this time," he cautioned.

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		○ Waning Gibbous	

Local News



Redeveloped port poised to attract increased business

Port officials are certain that the redevelopment and expansion of the facility at Deep Water Harbour will serve as a major transshipment hub for the sub-region.

Chief Executive Officer of the Antigua and Barbuda Port Authority, Darwin Telemaque said with an upgraded port, Antigua and Barbuda stands ready to engage its neighbours in large scale business.

He told an audience at the Caribbean Maritime University 2022 Industry/Academic Conference held in Kingston, Jama-

ica in late September that it would be economically practical and more strategic to develop one, and no more than two major ports to serve the needs of the subregion.

He said it would appear more economically viable to centralise cargo operations to one or two ports in the OECS, adding Antigua and Barbuda's new St. John's Harbour, with its improved facilities and expanded capacity, positions it well to serve as a shipping base for the OECS.

"Today I want to say we built a transshipment



hub; we want to extend that to other markets and hope that the other players do not act in a similar fashion.

"We are hoping that we do not see a proliferation of similar type facilities throughout the region, but that we can integrate what we built here at Rat Island into Basseterre, into Roseau, into Castries and to other parts of the Caribbean so that we can share this very significant investment with our friends and families around us," the CEO told yesterday's opening ceremony.

In anticipation of increased activity, the CEO highlighted the importance of adequate equipment, technology and human resource that will give the port a competitive advantage, in addition to helping reduce logistical and supply chain issues being experienced within the region.

"The maritime structure and the administration of port development and port management in Antigua has certainly advanced itself to a place where few have yet arrived at," Telemaque noted.



Primary school student struck in latest hit and run

On Thursday morning, a J. T. Ambrose primary school student became the latest victim of a hit and run driver.

According to reports, the 12-year-old child was struck by a white SUV in the vicinity of CMM Neighbourhood Supermarket at about 8am as he travelled to school with his siblings.

The children's agonising screams alerted neighbours to their distress.

The driver sped away, without stopping to see what harm they had caused.

The student is now a patient of the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre.

At news time, it was still unclear how extensive the little boy's injuries were.



Antigua and Barbuda and the USA agree to strengthen relations

Antigua and Barbuda and the United States of America have agreed to strengthen their already close ties.

The renewed commitment came on Thursday during a courtesy call on Foreign Affairs Minister, E. P. Chet Greene, by the US Ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Linda Tagliatela.

Greene thanked the ambassador for her country's assistance in counter-ing Trafficking in Persons (TIP).

The minister noted that the US provided the services of an expert in TIP to

liaise with the TIP Unit in St. John's in a collaboration that saw the exchange of best practices.

The issue of climate change also came up during the discussion with both the US and Antigua and Barbuda confirming their resolve to tackle the "existential threat" to all life on earth.

Greene also acknowledged the involvement of the US company, Eagle LNG Partners, which is collaborating with Antigua Power Company Ltd. to establish Antigua and Barbuda's first LNG (Liquid
cont'd on pg 8



US Ambassador, Linda Tagliatela greets Foreign Minister, E. P. Chet Greene


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Local News



Charter flights to continue for Antigua Airways

Travellers interested in flying Antigua Airways to the Motherland, Africa, will have to wait a bit longer as there is still no definitive date when commercial flights will begin.

During the Post-Cabinet Press Briefing yesterday, Chief of Staff in the Prime Minister's Office, Ambassador Lionel "Max" Hurst explained that the airline's operators are still awaiting approval for the Air Operator Permit (AOP) that will allow them to commence offering commercial flights.

Efforts are, however, being made to ensure that the airline meets the strict requirements needed to receive the green-light.

"The problem has been that although submissions have taken place, the issuing authority here, the Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation, requires far more



information for it to issue the licence. At least this is what we have been told by the ECCA.

"It looks as though Antigua Airways is moving towards meeting those guidelines so that ECCA can in fact issue the licence so that it can become a regular carrier," Hurst explained.

Antigua Airways is a privately owned company whose Nigerian investors enjoy the full support of the

government of Antigua and Barbuda.

Once fully operational, the airline which was launched earlier this year will provide the twin island nation's first direct air connection to West Africa.

Antigua and Barbuda is a shareholder in the company and will receive 20 per cent of the profits generated by the airline.

The newly established airline's first flight to the

country was a charter which landed at the V. C. Bird International Airport on Independence Day.

Over 100 passengers were on board, including the Chief Executive Officer of Euro Atlantic Airways, Eugenio Fernandes, whose company is a partner in the enterprise, and Founding President of the Nigeria Antigua and Barbuda Chamber of Commerce, Emmanuel Samson.

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Natural Gas) power plant. He said the plant will help to advance Antigua and Barbuda's transition to a low-carbon, greener economy.

The foreign affairs minister also raised the prospect of further collaboration with the West Indies Oil Company and Eagle LNG Partners for bunkering and servicing cruise ships.

Haiti's ongoing instability also came up for discussion.

Minister Geene highlighted the escalating danger of the situation in

the north Caribbean nation which is now firmly in the grasp of warring, well-armed gangs, who are kidnapping and massacring residents and foreign officials with impunity.

"There is an urgency to reestablish the rule of law and security in the country so that the Haitian people can start living normally again," he remarked.

Greene disclosed that during a recent meeting of CARICOM Foreign Ministers and US Under Secretary of State, Victoria Noland, the dispatch of a joint mission to Haiti to include

CARICOM, US and Canadian personnel was discussed with a view to initiating support for Haiti and ascertaining the situation on the ground with a view to making recommendations for follow-up action.

According to Greene, CARICOM preferred an independent mission given Haiti's troubled history with foreign intervention.

Antigua and Barbuda has signaled its willingness to work along with its CARICOM partners to facilitate meaningful dialogue that would help bring peace and stability to Haiti.

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Opinion

Protecting school children and ending gang violence: no time to waste

By Sir Ronald Sanders

(The writer is Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the United States of America and the Organization of American States. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London and Massey College in the University of Toronto)

Gang violence, particularly in schools, and directed at school children, is fast becoming a grave concern throughout the Caribbean.

Recent reports of school children being attacked by hooded gangs with knives and cutlasses and suffering serious injuries, have alarmed parents in Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, St Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. Especially troubling, is an observation, made in November 2021, by the Commissioner of Police of St Lucia, Milton Desir, that criminals have been targeting school children for recruitment into gangs and a life of crime.

In The Bahamas, concerns heightened about school safety earlier this year, following several stabbings and violent encounters between students at public schools. This led to the Education Minister, Glenys Hanna-Martin, telling Parliament that there will be "zero tolerance" for school violence.

In Barbados, after 2 years of incidents at schools, including stabbings, and sever-

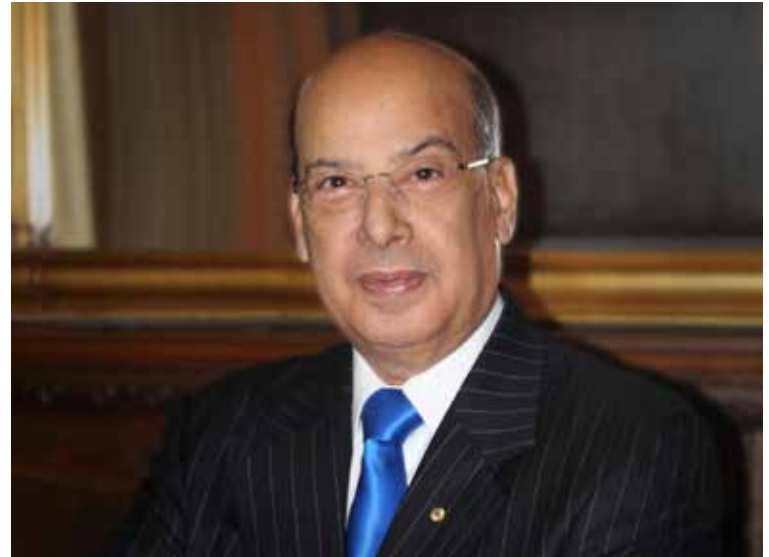
al violent crimes that resulted in many deaths, the popular on-line publication, Barbados Today, in an Editorial on October 14, warned that if "authorities do not get in front of this issue it will fester and grow".

The Ministry of Social Transformation in Antigua and Barbuda is clearly so anxious about the emergence of gangs and violence against school children, that one of the remedial actions it proposed in late November, is "developing legislation that makes gang membership and [gang]activity illegal".

There are strong reasons for this anxiety, and good cause for a national consultation on how the issue of gang violence should be handled, involving all stakeholders in the society. The problem won't be solved by governments alone, though they must organise national consultations.

Gang violence in school is not only a threat to the safety of children, it has the potential to grievously disrupt the education system, and, also, to feed the development of gangs, which foment criminal activities that terrorizes societies and stunts economic growth.

Haiti is a deeply disturbing example of how armed gangs have taken control of large parts of the country, confronting police, kidnapping persons for ransom, "barbecuing" people they



Sir Ronald Sanders

regard as enemies, and completely disregarding any form of the rule of law.

Of course, the dastardly and awful conditions of Haiti, which have consigned the majority of its population to abject poverty, and little opportunity for social and economic improvement while a small elite profits, are at the root of the emergence of gangs. But Haiti's disorder is also a warning to other Caribbean countries that social, political, and economic circumstances should not deteriorate to the point where remedying them become a mammoth, costly and difficult task.

The illegal entry of weapons into Caribbean countries, in support of drug trafficking and other criminal activity, is growing. If this trend continues, along with an increase in gangs which recruit which recruit and groom school children, the implications for peaceful and sustained stabil-

ity and growth are worrying.

Just four months ago, the U.S. Department for Homeland Security (DHS) disclosed that they had found a substantial increase in the number of weapons being illegally trafficked to the Caribbean. A spokesman for the DHS said, "In the wrong hands, these weapons could cause mass casualties", adding that "guns trafficked from the U.S. have been linked to a surge of gang-related and reprisal murders in The Bahamas this year".

The problem of school violence, therefore, has two dimensions. The first is the safety of children and the impact on the education system. The second is the looming prospect that gangs would become so emboldened, that they would seek to control countries, challenging law enforcement bodies in the process.

Apart from Haiti, de-
cont'd on pg 12

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Opinion

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velopments in two Central American countries – El Salvador and Honduras – should be closely studied by Caribbean authorities, such as the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, for the lessons they present.

In El Salvador, between March 25 and 27, eighty-seven people were murdered in violence that Salvadoran authorities blamed on two of the country's most notorious criminal gangs – both of them had migrated from Los Angeles in the U.S. The victims varied widely demographically and most of them had no known connection to any gangs.

In response, the government declared a thirty-day state of emergency that curtailed several constitutional rights, including freedom of assembly and the right to legal counsel. The President of the country also authorized the national police to conduct warrantless raids and mass arrests; as of April 26,

more than seventeen thousand suspected gang members had reportedly been arrested. Almost 60,000 suspected gang members have been arrested since March.

The Salvadorian government was criticised for its methods by international human rights bodies. However, the government's actions resulted in a considerable drop in homicides, and a significant easing of fear in the society.

In neighbouring Honduras, the government, also faced the criminal activities of gangs that held sway over businesses in the capital, Tegucigalpa, and the northern hub of San Pedro Sula. Taking a leaf from the El Salvador playbook, on December 5, the Honduras government imposed a 'state of exception' suspending some constitutional rights to help fight street gangs. A former Police Commissioner said, "The intent is to penetrate these criminal structures to get to the leaders,

noting that it would also be important to go after lesser criminals, as well as repeat offenders".

Armed gangs are already an unwelcome phenomenon in Caribbean countries. This is not a problem that can afford delays.

The approach of the governments of El Salvador and Honduras came after the activities of gangs were so grave that they could not be ignored. Consequently, draconian measures were introduced which encroached on civil liberties. Those governments would argue that, in fulfilment of their duty to keep their populations safe, they had no choice.

Caribbean countries, except Haiti, still have time to address this growing problem within the rule of law. Dealing with it, based on national consultations and consensus, is urgent.

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Reparations Talks

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CARICOM reparation plan gets support at inaugural forum of People of African Descent

Delegates attending the inaugural United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent in Geneva have supported the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) ten-point reparation plan, calling for its adoption globally.

Bahamian, Gaynel Diana Curry, one of the five experts appointed earlier this year to serve on the United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, outlined the priorities for CARICOM, including reparatory justice, climate justice, systemic racism, and socio-economic opportunities, faced by vulnerable and marginalized groups of people of African Descent, especially women, children and migrants, and LGBTQI persons.

Barbados Ambassador and Permanent Representative-Designate to the United Nations and the World Trade Organization (WTO), Matthew Wilson, said, 'what we have collectively launched today is for our ancestors and for our descendants still to come. It is brave. It is necessary. It is a long time coming.'

"In the Caribbean there was a long history of advocating, articulating, and agitating around issues of racism and the injustices inherent in post-colonial societies. In CARICOM these



issues have been placed very high on its agenda, with the prime ministerial sub-agenda on reparations being chaired by Barbados' Prime Minister, Mia Mottley, with its core members, Guyana, Haiti, St. Vincent, and Suriname".

The CARICOM Reparations Commission (CRC) argues that European governments were owners and traders of enslaved Africans, Instructed genocidal actions upon indigenous communities, and created the legal, financial, and fiscal policies necessary for the enslavement of Africans.

Professor Verene Shepherd, the Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial

Discrimination (CERD), said she is pleased that the forum had become a reality, after having held the post as a member of the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (WGEPAD) from 2010-2015, then served as Chair from 2012-2014, during which time she helped to draft the Programme of Activities for the UN's International Decade for People of African Descent from 2015-2024 and made for its establishment part for advocacy of the international decade.

Using the Pan Africanist Marcus Garvey as an inspiration, she expressed hope that there would be the imple-

mentation of the unfulfilled aspects of the Durban declaration for permanent action as it relates to the search of reparatory justice.

The forum comes two years shy of the International Decade for People of African Descent coming to an end and follows the General Assembly that in August 2021, adopted resolution 75/314, which operationalized the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent as "a consultative mechanism for people of African descent and other relevant stakeholders" and "as a platform for improving the safety and quality of life and livelihoods of people of African descent". (CMC)

Aidonia, wife thank fans; request privacy after son's passing

The Gleaner - Khalif Lawrence, the nine-year-old son of deejay, Sheldon 'Aidonia' Lawrence and his wife Kimberley, died in hospital last Saturday following a three-year battle with cancer. The family is appreciative of the tributes that have been pouring in; however, they are also asking for their privacy to be respected at this challenging time and also emphasise that no interviews will be granted at this time.

The shocking news of the youngster's passing broke on the weekend when those in the know took to social media to publicly send their condolences.

In a press release from Burke/Bodley Monday night, it was stated that Khalif, who was described as "brave", had been diagnosed with cancer in August of 2019. Notably, however, neither Aidonia nor his wife has ever taken to social media or any other media to speak publicly about their son's illness.

Aidonia has posted uplifting messages here and there, including one on October 17, which stated, "Even on the darkest days there's still hope! #Faith." This message was against the backdrop of a grey sky with a ray of light beaming through. Then, on November 23, the 4th Genna deejay posted a picture of himself



Aidonia and son Khalif

with praying hands and another with his hand partially covering his face, along with the caption: "Ask.Believe.Receive.Faith. God's Timing!"

Ten days later, young Khalif passed away.

"The brave nine-year-old took his final breath in his parents' arms," the release stated.

The press release continued, "One of the most tragic events is the loss of a child and both Sheldon and his wife Kimberley Lawrence are grief-stricken at the loss of their only child."

Since Sunday, there has

been a constant outpouring of love for Aidonia from the music fraternity and from fans across the globe.

Bounty Killer called the news "heart-wrenching".

"Only Jah know how, mi likkle bredda. Life is so unfair bcuz this is extremely heart-wrenching. Youth, can't question God, but this can be real? Yo, my deepest sympathy and condolences to you and the entire family on both sides," Bounty said.

Beenie Man's message was simple, "Condolences to the Lawrence family @aidonia4thgenna @kimberly_megan @lalojop. Send-

ing prayers and strength."

Shaggy wrote: "My condolences to @aidonia4thgenna and his wife Kimberly ... who lost their only child, Khalif, earlier today... My heart aches for their loss ... It's unimaginable the loss of a child. Sending prayers."

Macka Diamond was at a loss. "I'm trying to process this news. Condolences to Aidonia and family," she wrote, along with a slew of crying and praying hands emojis.

I-Octane was devastated and he wrote: "Me feel it @aidonia4thgenna. Bredda my prayers go up for you and you wife. Sorry Brenda, Well it mi G."

For DJ Alozade, the news hit on a different level. He, too, is mourning the loss of a child.

"My sincere condolences my Bro. Sorry to hear of your nine-year-old son's passing. God's intervention upon you, the mother, likewise the family and beloved friends.

"Today the 4th Dec marks two months since my three-year-old daughter died and she was buried on Nov/04/22. God is in control. He is the only strength and in God we should put our faith and just trust in Him, because God is still God," Alozade wrote under a post on Aidonia's Instagram.

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Veronica Ryan wins Turner Prize for evocative sculptures

Artist Veronica Ryan has won the prestigious Turner Prize for work that transforms materials including fruits, seeds and volcanic ash into elusive and evocative sculptures.

The Montserrat-born British artist was awarded the 25,000-pound (\$30,000) prize at a ceremony in Liverpool, England on Wednesday evening. She won for work including public sculptures in London's Hackney area in the shape of tropical fruits – custard apple, breadfruit and sour-sop — that honor the contribution to Britain of post-World War II immigrants from the Caribbean.

“Better late than never,” said Ryan, who at 66 is the oldest artist ever to win the prize.

The Turner Prize judges praised the “personal and poetic way she extends the language of sculpture” through found and often forgotten objects and materials including fruits, plants, seeds and volcanic ash from the Caribbean island where



Sculptor Veronica Ryan after being announced the winner of the Turner Prize at St George's Hall in Liverpool, England, Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2022. (Danny Lawson/PA via AP)

she was born.

Work by Ryan and three other finalists is on display at the Tate Liverpool museum in northwest England until March 19.

Named for 19th-century landscape painter J.M.W. Turner, the award was founded in 1984 and

helped make stars of potter Grayson Perry, sculptor Anish Kapoor, shark-pickling artist Damien Hirst and filmmaker Steve McQueen.

But it has also been criticized for rewarding impenetrable conceptual work and often sparks debate about the value of modern art. In

2019, all four finalists were declared winners after they refused to compete against one another. Last year all five finalists were collectives rather than individual artists. The 2021 winner was the 11-member Array Collective from Northern Ireland.

cont'd from pg 14

Epican Jamaica wrote on social media: “Our most heartfelt condolences to our brother and brand ambassador Aidonia and his wife Kim as they grieve the loss of their son King Khalif. We are devastated by this terrible new and pray for comfort in this difficult moment.”

In the press release, the family ac-

knowledge the support.

“Khalif’s entire family deeply appreciates your outpouring of prayer, love and support during this their most difficult time.

“They are also grateful that you will continue to respect their privacy and understand that absolutely no interviews will be granted during this sad time.”

Aidonia, who is a brand ambassador for both Campari Caribbean and Epican Jamaica, emerged on the dancehall scene in 2004 when he got his break as a member of the Bounty Killer-led Alliance. Among his big songs are Hot Tool, Banga, Breeze, Pretty Please, Yeah Yeah, Nuh Boring Gyal, Big Baller (Benzema) and Tip Pon Yuh Toe.

Harry and Meghan slam British tabloids in new Netflix series

By Danica Kirka and Jill Lawless

Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, made a sweeping indictment of Britain's media and the racism they believe has fueled coverage of their relationship in a new Netflix series that promises to tell the "full story" of the couple's estrangement from the royal family.

Relying on interviews with the couple, as well as their friends and experts on race and the media, the first three episodes of "Harry and Meghan" dissect the close relationship between tabloid newspapers and the royal family while discussing the history of racism in the British Empire and how it still pervades society. The episodes do not include dissenting voices and there is no response from any of the media organizations mentioned. Buckingham Palace has declined to comment.

"In this family sometimes, you know, you're part of the problem rather than part of the solution," Harry says in one of the episodes, which were released Thursday. "There is a huge level of unconscious bias. The thing with unconscious bias is that it is actually no one's fault. But once it has been pointed out, or identified within yourself, you then need to make it right."

The media's treatment of Meghan — and what



Office workers in London, watch the Duke and Duchess of Sussex's controversial documentary being aired on Netflix Thursday, Dec. 8, 2022. Britain's monarchy is bracing for more bombshells to be lobbed over the palace gates as Netflix releases the first three episodes of a new series. The show "Harry & Meghan" promises to tell the "full truth" about Prince Harry and his wife Meghan's estrangement from the royal family. The series debuted Thursday. (Jonathan Brady/PA via AP)

the couple felt was a lack of sympathy from royal institutions about the coverage — were at the heart of their complaints when they walked away from royal life almost three years ago and moved to Southern California. Promoted with two dramatically edited trailers that hinted at a "war against Meghan," the series "Harry & Meghan" is the couple's latest effort to tell their story.

The series comes at a crucial moment for the monarchy as King Charles III tries to show that the institution still has a role to play after the death of Queen Elizabeth II, whose personal popularity dampened criticism of the crown during her 70-year reign. Charles is making the case that the House of Windsor can help unite an increas-

ingly diverse nation by using the early days of his reign to meet with many of the ethnic groups and faiths that make up modern Britain.

Harry's 2018 marriage to the former Meghan Markle, a biracial American actress, was once seen as boosting the royal family's effort to move into the 21st century, making it more representative of a multicultural nation. But the fairy tale, which began with a star-studded ceremony at Windsor Castle, soon soured amid stories that Meghan was self-centered and bullied her staff.

Netflix released the first three hour-long episodes on Thursday, with three more due Dec. 15. The program includes video diaries recorded by Meghan and Harry — apparently on their

phones — in March 2020, amid the couple's acrimonious split from the royal family. It's "my duty to uncover the exploitation and bribery" that happens in British media, Harry says in one entry.

"No one knows the full truth," he adds. "We know the full truth."

The series begins by telling the story of Harry and Meghan's courtship and the initial enthusiasm that greeted their relationship. But the tone shifts as Harry recounts the intense media scrutiny faced by Meghan, reminding him of the way his mother, Princess Diana, was treated before she died in a car crash while being trailed by photographers.

"To see another woman in my life who I loved go through this feeding frenzy — that's hard," Harry says.

"It is basically the hunter versus the prey."

Harry and Meghan said they initially tried to follow palace advice to remain silent about the press coverage as other members of the royal family said it was a rite of passage they all had to go through. But the couple said they felt compelled to tell their story because there was something different about the way Meghan was treated.

"I said, 'The difference here is the race element,'" Harry said.

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CXC announces dates for regional examinations

The Barbados-based Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) has announced the dates for its 2023 regional examinations beginning in January.

In a statement, the institution that provides regional and internationally recognized secondary school leaving examinations, said the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) will be held between January 4 and 31, followed by the Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA), May 4 and 5.

In addition, students will sit the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) from May 8 to June 23, with the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) again taking place between May 8 and June 16.



The Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence (CCSLC) will be held between June 19 and 22.

CXC said 2023 Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) assessments will be conducted between April and September, with specific dates to be determined in collaboration with participating Ministries of Education.

Regarding School-Based Assessments (SBA), the CXC said stakeholders are also asked to note that concessions for the SBAs will be maintained for 2023 CSEC candidates who commenced SBAs during the 2021/2022 academic year.

“Concessions for 2023 CSEC candidates will once again include the removal of Section 1/Situation Responses from CSEC Modern Language orals. For 2023 CAPE candidates and 2024 CSEC candidates, however, there will be a return to the full SBA requirements,” it added.

The CXC examinations had been affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that led to the closure of schools across the region. (CMC)

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That bias has deep roots in the history of the British empire, which was enriched by the enslavement of Black people and the extraction of wealth from colonies in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, said historian and author David Olusoga in the program. It is only since World War II that large numbers of Black and Asian people moved to Britain, changing the face of the nation.

Those changes are reflected in the British media. While Black people make up about 3.5% of Britain's population, they account for just 0.2% of the journalists, Olusoga said.

“We have to recognize that this is a white industry...,” he said. “So people who come up with these headlines, they are doing so in a newsroom that's almost

entirely white, and they get to decide whether something has crossed the line of being racist.”

King Charles III was asked if he had watched the series as he carried out an engagement on Thursday in London. He did not reply.

Race became a central issue for the monarchy following Harry and Meghan's interview with American talk show host Oprah Winfrey in March 2021. Meghan alleged that before their first child was born, a member of the royal family commented on how dark the baby's skin might be.

Prince William, the heir to the throne and Harry's older brother, defended the royal family after the interview, telling reporters, “We're very much not a racist family.”

But Buckingham Palace

faced renewed allegations of racism only last week when a Black advocate for survivors of domestic abuse said a senior member of the royal household interrogated her about her origins during a reception at the palace.

Coverage of the issue filled British media, overshadowing William and his wife Kate's much-anticipated visit to Boston, which the palace had hoped would highlight their environmental credentials.

Media attention was also diverted by Netflix's decision to release the first trailer for “Harry & Meghan” in the middle of the trip.

Whatever the series ultimately reveals palace officials hope to deflect the storm by portraying William and Kate as forward-looking young royals who are

tackling difficult issues such as climate change and early childhood education, in contrast to Harry and Meghan, who are described by critics as merely celebrities selling their story to the media.

The BBC and the Daily Telegraph, one of Britain's most influential newspapers, picked up on this theme in their coverage of William and Kate's three-day trip to Boston, where they handed out environmental prizes, met with anti-violence campaigners and went to a basketball game.

“While Prince Harry and Meghan continued to paint themselves as victims, heads in hands, tearing their hair out at the unfairness of it all, the Prince and Princess were simply getting on with the job,” the Telegraph wrote.

Regional News



Confusion over Dutch apology for slavery

CMC - The Suriname government says it has not formally received any apology from the Netherlands regarding slavery.

Media reports had said Dutch Minister of Legal Protection, Franc Weerwind, who will be on a working visit to the Dutch-speaking Caribbean Community (CARICOM) country would offer an apology.

Justice and Police Minister, Kenneth Amoksi, speaking in the National Assembly on Tuesday, said while a work program has been agreed for the December 15-20 visit, it does not include an apology on December 19 about slavery.

"Nothing has been reported about apologies on December 19," Amoksi said, amid criticisms about



Kenneth Amoksi.

the unilateral decision of the Netherlands, with several legislators questioning Amoksi on the issue.

But the government has said that everything concerning apologies on December 19 has been in the press, with the Minister of Spatial Planning and Environment, Silvano Tjong-Ahin saying the government nonetheless is not ignoring the signals.

"A position will be tak-

en by the government. The council will also be involved in taking the position and as much as possible the community," he added.

The leader of the opposition National Democratic Party (NDP) in the National Assembly, Rabin Parmessar, said while he agreed with Amoksi's statement, it has not escaped his attention that it has been made public that Weerwind is coming here to apologize for the

slavery of the past.

"Has it been accepted? How is the government dealing with this? You know how sensitive the matter is among those involved in Suriname, have they been consulted? This concerns the government. We want the government's view on this," Parmessar said.

Another legislator, Patricia Etnel, of the National Party of Suriname (NPS) said that as a descendant of the enslaved, she would like to make it clear that she and many others are against the fact that apologies will be offered in Suriname on December 19.

"We descendants will not accept that and you as a descendant should not accept that either," Etnel told the National Assembly.

PM Roosevelt Skerit sworn into office for record sixth time



Prime Minister and DLP leader. Roosevelt Skerit speaking on the state-owned DBS radio following his party's electoral victory. (CMC Photo)

CMC - Roosevelt Skerit was sworn in Tuesday as prime minister of Dominica for a record sixth consecutive term, promising to forge ahead with the "reset" plans that provided the blueprint for calling a general election two years ahead of the constitutional deadline.

Skerit, 50, Tuesday led his ruling Dominica Labour Party (DLP) to a convincing 19-2 majority in the 21-seat parliament in an election that had been boycotted by the main opposition political parties, complaining about the lack of electoral reform and a clean voters list.

"Citizens, friends and residents, I am truly humbled by this opportunity to resume and properly conclude my stint," said Skerit, who first came to office in 2004, but has already hinted of stepping down in two years' time.

"I want you to understand that whatever it shall bring, I shall always remain an ambassador for the growth and development of Dominica, and I underscore a true ambassador," Roosevelt Skerit said in a brief speech after he was sworn into office by President Charles Savarin at the State House on the outskirts of the capital.

"I thank you once again for this expression of confidence and I pledge to do all in my power to propel our glorious nation to sustain growth, progress and prosperity for all in a peaceful and idyllic environment," Skerit said, indicating that his Cabinet will be sworn into office on December 13.

He told the ceremony that his DLP had taken its case to the voters and "was rewarded...with a resounding victory in elections I am confident shall be deemed credible, free

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Montserrat's civil servants protest for pay increase

Public servants in Montserrat engaged in a public demonstration in protest of the non-commitment of the government to approve a salary increase.

President of the Montserrat Civil Service Association (MCSA) Nyota N.C. Mulcare, in a letter to members on Tuesday, December 6, 2022, called on its membership to start go-slow action in protest of the non-commitment of the government to approve a pay increase.

In a letter to the members on Tuesday, Mulcare encouraged "full participation so that we can make a great impact."

According to Discover Montserrat in a publication on December 6, 2022, the last salary increases for civil servants in Montserrat took effect April 1, 2017.

Mulcare said in the no-

tice that their most recent request to government was for a 10 percent salary increase to take effect April 1, 2023.

As no firm commitment has been received, the association is called on its members to participate in industrial action.

On Tuesday civil servants were asked to "turn the volume off on the office phones and allow all calls to ring out" and "go slow in performing your duties".

On Wednesday, members were encouraged to "turn the volume off on the office phones and allow all calls to ring out", "go slow in performing your duties" and instructed to "report sick for duty".

On Thursday the action escalated with a well attended public demonstration.

Public servants were



asked to "dress in full 9:45am (placards will be black; assemble at the provided). Sickout action Governor's Office at should continue".

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and fair reflecting the will of the people of Dominica.

He said he had sought a fresh mandate to help rebound the economy of the island, battered in previous months by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and natural disasters as well as ongoing global acts of terror and economic warfare.

"To me this is the ultimate expression by the people of Dominica of their continued confidence in the philosophy, policies and programs of the Dominica Labour Party. I wish to

assure voters, residents and citizens home and abroad that we are eternally grateful for this show of support. And I shall strive to honor and meet their expectations."

He said this support has given the incoming government the opportunity to pursue "with vigor the national reset I indicated in my address to the nation on November 6 when I announced the calling of general elections in Dominica".

As he did, following the election results on Tuesday night, Skerrit said he will be meeting with all the can-

didates who contested the election as well as the political leader of the United Workers Party (UWP), Dr. Thompson Fontaine, as he seeks to bring all stakeholders together for the future socio-economic development of the country.

The opposition parties had been calling for electoral reform, including a clean voters list and identification cards ahead of the poll that was monitored by observer teams from the Caribbean Community, the Organization of American States, and the Commonwealth.

Rapid fall from power, arrest for embattled Peru president

AP - In just three tumultuous hours, President Pedro Castillo went from decreeing the dissolution of Peru's Congress to being replaced by his vice president, but the threats against his government had been building throughout his nearly 17-month presidency.

The former school teacher and center-left political novice, who won a runoff election in June 2021 by just 44,000 votes, stepped onto a no-holds-barred political battlefield in Peru, the South American country now on its sixth president in six years. By nightfall Wednesday, after a day of high political drama, prosecutors had announced Castillo was under arrest, facing charges of rebellion.

From the start, Castillo's presidency seemed destined to be short-lived, said Flavia Freidenberg, a political scientist at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and a member of the university's Latin America Political Reform Observatory.

"He is a president who took office with a very low level of support, he didn't have a political party, he had a hard time putting together a Cabinet, the Cabinet has changed constantly and there has been a constant power struggle with Congress," she said.

Castillo, a rural school teacher from an impoverished district high in the Andes, was considered a clear underdog when he joined the race to replace President Francisco Sagasti, who had



Peru's ousted President Pedro Castillo is escorted by police at the police station where he is being held in Lima, Peru, Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2022. Castillo was ousted by Congress and arrested on a charge of rebellion Wednesday after he sought to dissolve the legislative body and take unilateral control of the government, triggering a grave constitutional crisis. (AP Photo/Renato Pajuelo)

been appointed by Congress in November 2020. Sagasti was the last of three heads of state Peru cycled through in one week that November.

Castillo campaigned on promises to nationalize Peru's key mining industry and rewrite the constitution, gaining support in rural Peru. But upon taking office in July 2021, Castillo immediately struggled with his Cabinet choices, a number of whom have been accused of wrongdoing.

"He didn't unify the country," said Eric Farnsworth, vice president of the Council of the Americas. "He doesn't even seem to make much of an effort along those lines."

"He didn't have much of a mandate, and so he did not promote policies somehow that were easily identifiable as for the good of the majority of the people," Farnsworth said. "Instead, he became

embroiled in intrigues, corruption and battles with Congress."

The first attempt to impeach Castillo came last December. At the time, a relatively small group of opposition lawmakers cited an investigation by prosecutors into illicit financing of the governing party. To remove the president requires two-thirds of the 130 lawmakers to vote in favor. Only 46 voted in favor.

Congress tried to impeach Castillo again in March for "permanent moral incapacity," a term incorporated into Peruvian constitutional law that experts say lacks an objective definition and that Congress has used more than a half dozen times since 2017 to try to remove presidents. The effort failed, this time with only 55 votes in favor.

Each time, Castillo defended himself, arguing he had done nothing wrong.

"I salute that common sense, responsibility and democracy prevailed," Castillo tweeted after the second attempt.

He benefited from the fact that the unicameral Congress was deeply divided. Castillo's party had the most seats, but with only 37, it alone could not protect him.

On Wednesday, Peru was girding itself for a third impeachment vote. Perhaps Castillo feared this time there would be enough votes to oust him.

The night before, the president said in an unusual midnight address on state television ahead of the vote that a certain sector of Congress had it out for him and that he was paying for mistakes made due to inexperience.

Shortly before noon Wednesday, Castillo went on state television and announced the dissolution of Congress. He said elections would be held to choose new lawmakers and a new constitution would be written.

Various members of his Cabinet resigned immediately. Vice President Dina Boluarte said via Twitter that the move only contributed to Peru's political crisis. The Supreme Court, Constitutional Tribunal and national ombudsman rejected it as an attempted coup.

Castillo was driven from the presidential palace through Lima's historic downtown to a police station.

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Officials predict more arrests over German far-right plot

AP - German officials say they expect more people to be detained in connection with an alleged far-right plan to topple the government that saw 25 people rounded up Wednesday, including a self-styled prince, a retired paratrooper and a judge.

The plot was allegedly hatched by people linked to the so-called Reich Citizens movement, which rejects Germany's postwar constitution and the legitimacy of the government.

Georg Meier, the top security official in Thuringia state, told public broadcaster Deutschlandfunk on Thursday that he expects a second wave of people being detained as authorities review evidence.

Meier accused the far-right Alternative for Germany party of fueling conspiracy theories like those that allegedly motivated the plotters detained across the country this week.

Those held include a former Alternative for Germany lawmaker, Birgit



A suspect, second right, is escorted from a police helicopter by police officers after the arrival in Karlsruhe, Germany, Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2022. Thousands of police officers carried out raids across much of Germany on Wednesday against suspected far-right extremists who allegedly sought to overthrow the government in an armed coup. Officials said 25 people were detained. (AP Photo/Michael Probst)

Malsack-Winkemann, who is also a Berlin judge. The party condemned the alleged coup plans.

Also detained was Heinrich XIII Prince Reuss, whom prosecutors consider one of the two ringleaders of the plot. The 71-year-old member of the House of Reuss continues to use the title of 'prince' despite Germany abolishing any formal role for royalty more than a century ago.

Some in Germany have questioned whether the sus-

pected extremists would actually have been able to pull off any serious attack.

But Germany's top security official, Interior Minister Nancy Faeser, said it would be wrong to underestimate such groups, especially if their members include people who are trained to use firearms, such as soldiers or police officers.

The head of Germany's Federal Criminal Police, Holger Muench, said officers searched about 150 locations across the country.

At about 50 locations they found weapons, he told public broadcaster ZDF late Wednesday, without elaborating.

Muench said he expected the raids and detentions to continue in the coming days.

Thomas Haldenwang, who heads Germany's domestic intelligence agency BfV, said authorities had been monitoring the group since the spring of this year.

The threat posed by the group had gradually become more concrete as members had obtained weapons, he said.

Germany is highly sensitive to far-right extremism because of its Nazi past and repeated acts of violence carried out by neo-Nazis in recent years, including the killing of a regional politician and the deadly attack on a synagogue in 2019.

Two years ago, far-right extremists taking part in a protest against the country's pandemic restrictions tried and failed to storm the Bundestag building in Berlin.

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Hours later prosecutors announced that Castillo had been arrested on a charge of rebellion.

Two hours after his announcement, lawmakers who had ignored Castillo's decree voted to remove him. This time they had the votes: 101 in favor, six against and 10 abstentions.

At 3 p.m., Dina Boluarte, a 60-year-old lawyer, was sworn in as Peru's first female president.

Boluarte said her first order of business would be to address government corruption, ostensibly what led to Cas-

tillo's downfall. She had been expelled in January from the Marxist Free Peru party, which Castillo rode to power, for what she said was not sharing the ideas of its secretary general.

"There has been an attempted coup ... that has not found an echo in the institutions, nor in the street," Boluarte said. She called for a political truce to install a national unity government.

"What I ask for is a space, a time to rescue the country," she said.

Freidenberg, the political scientist, said Boluarte's swearing in was a hopeful sign. "It is a singular opportunity to

show Peruvians women's abilities in a country that is chauvinist, misogynist, discriminatory and where women have had so much trouble trying to access government."

But Boluarte also takes office with a weak mandate and no party.

"She has to begin to govern in a way that outreaches to political opponents and also seeks to unify a coalition of supporters," said Farnsworth of the Council of the Americas. "In order to have a working government, you have to have a coalition big enough to advance policies and legislators behind you."

South Korea's truth commission to probe foreign adoptions

AP - South Korea's Truth and Reconciliation Commission will investigate the cases of dozens of South Korean adoptees in Europe and the United States who suspect their origins were falsified or obscured during a child export frenzy in the mid- to late-1900s.

The decision Thursday opens what could be South Korea's most far-reaching inquiry into foreign adoptions yet, after frustration over broken family connections and laundered child statuses and identities grew and demanded government attention.

The adopted South Koreans are believed to be the world's largest diaspora of adoptees. In the past six decades, about 200,000 South Koreans — mostly girls — were adopted overseas. Most were placed with white parents in the United States and Europe during the 1970s and 80s.

After a meeting Tuesday, the commission decided to investigate 34 adoptees who were sent to Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, and the United States from the 1960s to the early 1990s. The adoptees say they were wrongfully removed from their families through falsified documents and corrupt practices.

They were among the 51 adoptees who first submitted their applications to



Peter Møller, center, attorney and co-founder of the Danish Korean Rights Group, submits the documents at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Seoul, South Korea on Nov. 15, 2022. (AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon)

the commission in August through the Danish Korean Rights Group, led by adoptee attorney Peter Møller. The applications filed by Møller's group have since grown to over 300, and dozens of adoptees from Sweden and Australia are also expected to file applications on Friday, which is the commission's deadline for investigation requests, Møller said.

Any findings by the commission could be used by adoptees to sue the adoption agencies or the government for damages.

The investigation will likely expand over the next few months as the commission reviews whether to accept the applications submitted after August. Cases

that are seen as similar will likely be fused to speed up the investigations, commission official Park Young-il said.

The commission said its decision to investigate the 34 cases came after it confirmed through records that the adoptees were sent to the West through manipulated records that falsely described them as orphans despite the existence of biological parents, or faked their identities by borrowing the details of a third person.

The commission said it also took into account a 2021 investigation by the Dutch government on foreign adoptions to the Netherlands, which then concluded that adoptions from South Korea and other or-

igin states involved major human rights infringements of children and their birth parents.

Adoptees are also calling for a full opening of their records and have asked South Korea's government to prevent any destruction or alteration of documents kept by the country's four adoption agencies.

The applications cite a broad range of grievances that allege carelessness and a lack of due diligence in the removal of scores of children from their families amid loose government monitoring.

During that time, the country was ruled by a succession of military leaders who saw adoptions as a

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way to deepen ties with the democratic West while reducing the number of mouths to feed and removing the socially undesirable. Those procured for adoptions during the 1970s and '80s were mostly children of poor families who ended up in orphanages and those of unwed mothers pressured into relinquishing their newborns at hospitals. South Korea's special adoption law allowed profit-driven agencies to manipulate records and bypass proper child relinquishment.

Most of the South Korean adoptees sent abroad were registered by agencies as legal orphans found abandoned on the streets, a designation that made the adoption process quicker and easier. But many of the so-called orphans had relatives who could be easily identified and found.

Some of the adoptees say they discovered that the agencies had switched their identities to replace other children who died or got too sick to travel, which often made it impossible to trace their roots.

The adoptees called for the commission to broadly investigate agencies for records falsification and manipulation and for allegedly proceeding with

adoptions without the proper consent of birth parents.

They want the commission to establish whether the government was responsible for the corrupt practices and whether adoptions were fueled by increasingly larger payments and donations from adoptive parents that could have motivated agencies to create their own supply.

The 34 adoptees whose cases were accepted by the commission had been placed through Holt Children's Services and the Korea Social Service. The commission's investigation would eventually include the Eastern Social Welfare Society and Korea Welfare Services if it accepts the cases expected to be submitted Friday by adoptees in Australia and Sweden.

The agencies didn't immediately issue any comments on the commission's decision to investigate foreign adoptions.

South Korea's government has never acknowledged responsibility over the human rights problems surrounding its foreign adoptions, which have long been portrayed as a welfare response to desperate children in need of a family.

But government and diplomatic

records obtained by The Associated Press indicate that officials knew that most of the children being sent abroad weren't really orphans.

Multiple records describing policy meetings between Health Ministry officials and agency representatives in the 1980s show that officials were aware that the country's adoption system was exposing children to the risk of trafficking.

However, the government didn't employ meaningful measures to eliminate what officials described as "intake problems," including payments agencies provided to hospitals and orphanages for the children they collected.

The special adoption law revised during the 1970s granted the heads of agencies extensive guardianship rights, including the ability to place children with foreign parents without the supervision of courts.

The adoption law is still in place but in 2013, South Korea's government began requiring foreign adoptions to go through family courts, ending a decadeslong policy of allowing private agencies to dictate child relinquishments, transfer of custodies and emigration.



Sports News



WNBA star Griner freed in swap for Russian arms dealer Bout

AP - Russia freed WNBA star Brittney Griner on Thursday in a dramatic high-level prisoner exchange, as the U.S. released notorious Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout. The swap, at a time of heightened tensions over Ukraine, achieved a top goal for President Joe Biden, but carried a heavy price — and left behind an American jailed for nearly four years in Russia.

“She’s safe, she’s on a plane, she’s on her way home,” Biden said from the White House, where he was accompanied by Griner’s wife, Cherelle, and administration officials.

The deal, the second such exchange in eight months with Russia, procured the release of the most prominent American detained abroad. Griner is a two-time Olympic gold medalist whose monthslong imprisonment on drug charges brought unprecedented attention to the population of wrongful detainees.

Biden’s authorization to release a Russian felon once nicknamed “the Merchant of Death” underscored the escalating pressure that his administration faced to get Griner home, particularly after the recent resolution of her criminal case and her subsequent transfer to a penal colony.

The Russian Foreign



Brittney Griner (15) runs up court during women's basketball gold medal game against Japan at the 2020 Summer Olympics on Aug. 8, 2021, in Saitama, Japan. Russia has freed WNBA star Brittney Griner in a dramatic high-level prisoner exchange, with the U.S. releasing notorious Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout. (AP Photo/Charlie Neibergall, File)

Ministry also confirmed the swap, saying in a statement carried by Russian news agencies that the exchange took place in Abu-Dhabi and that Bout has been flown home.

Russian and U.S. officials had conveyed cautious optimism in recent weeks after months of strained negotiations, with Biden saying in November that he was hopeful that Russia would engage in a deal now that the midterm elections were completed. A top Russian official said last week that a deal was possible before year’s end.

Even so, the fact that the deal was a one-for-one swap was a surprise given that U.S. officials had for months expressed their determination to bring

home both Griner and Paul Whelan, a Michigan corporate security executive jailed in Russia since December 2018 on espionage charges that his family and the U.S. government has said are baseless.

“We’ve not forgotten about Paul Whelan,” Biden said. “We will keep negotiating in good faith for Paul’s release.”

Whelan’s brother David said in a statement he was “so glad” for Griner’s release but also disappointed for his family. He credited the White House with giving the Whelan family advance notice and said he did not fault officials for making the deal.

“The Biden Administration made the right decision to bring Ms. Griner home,

and to make the deal that was possible, rather than waiting for one that wasn’t going to happen,” he said.

In releasing Bout, the U.S. freed a former Soviet Army lieutenant colonel whom the Justice Department once described as one of the world’s most prolific arms dealers. Bout, whose exploits inspired a Hollywood movie, was serving a 25-year sentence on charges that he conspired to sell tens of millions of dollars in weapons that U.S. officials said were to be used against Americans.

The Biden administration was ultimately willing to exchange Bout if it meant Griner’s freedom. The detention of one of the greatest players in WNBA history contributed to a swirl of unprecedented public attention for an individual detainee case — not to mention intense pressure on the White House.

Griner’s arrest in February made her the most high-profile American jailed abroad. Her status as an openly gay Black woman, locked up in a country where authorities have been hostile to the LGBTQ community, infused racial, gender and social dynamics into her legal saga and made each development a matter of international importance.

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Her case not only brought unprecedented publicity to the dozens of Americans wrongfully detained by foreign governments, but it also emerged as a major inflection point in U.S.-Russia diplomacy at a time of deteriorating relations prompted by Moscow's war against Ukraine.

The exchange was carried out despite deteriorating relations between the powers. But the imprisonment of Americans produced a rare diplomatic opening, yielding the highest-level known contact between Washington and Moscow — a phone call between Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov — in more than five months.

In an extraordinary move during otherwise secret negotiations, Blinken revealed publicly in July that the U.S. had made a “substantial proposal” to Russia for Griner and Whelan. Though he did not specify the terms, people familiar with it said the U.S. had offered Bout.

Such a public overture drew a chiding rebuke from the Russians, who said they preferred to resolve such cases in private, and carried the risk of weakening the U.S. government's negotiating hand for this and future deals by making the administration appear too desperate. But the announcement was also meant to communicate to the pub-

lic that Biden was doing what he could and to ensure pressure on the Russians.

Besides the efforts of U.S. officials, the release also followed months of back channel negotiations involving Bill Richardson, the former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and a frequent emissary in hostage talks, and his top deputy, Mickey Bergman.

Griner was arrested at the Moscow's Sheremet'yev Airport in February when customs officials said they found vape canisters with cannabis oil in her luggage. She pleaded guilty in July, though still faced trial because admitting guilt in Russia's judicial system does not automatically end

a case.

She acknowledged in court that she possessed the canisters, but said she had no criminal intent and said their presence in her luggage was due to hasty packing.

Before being sentenced on Aug. 4 and receiving a punishment her lawyers said was out of line for the offense, an emotional Griner apologized “for my mistake that I made and the embarrassment that I brought on them.” She added: “I hope in your ruling it does not end my life.”

Her supporters had largely stayed quiet for weeks after her arrest, but that approach changed in May once the State De-

partment designated her as unlawfully detained. A separate trade, Marine veteran Trevor Reed for Konstantin Yaroshenko, a Russian pilot convicted in the U.S. in a cocaine trafficking conspiracy, spurred hope that additional such exchanges could be in the works.

Whelan has been held in Russia since December 2018. The U.S. government also classified him as wrongfully detained. He was sentenced in 2020 to 16 years in prison.

Whelan was not included in the Reed prisoner swap, escalating pressure on the Biden administration to ensure that any deal that brought home Griner also included him.



UPDATED SCHEDULE

SCHEDULE UPDATE
TYPHOON EXPRESS

MONDAY
(FROM ST. JOHN'S)

AB 3:45 PM

OVERNIGHT IN BARBUDA

TUESDAY

BA 6:00AM

WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY
(CRABBS DEPARTURE)

AB 10:00AM
BA 3:00PM

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8:30AM**

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SJA and Clare Hall claim wins in school boys' Under-16 league

There were wins for St. Joseph's Academy (SJA) and Clare Hall Secondary in the Under-16 Boys' Division of the Ministry of Sports Secondary Schools' Football League at the Potters playing field on Wednesday, 7th December.

Goals by Zahiel Derrick and Joshua James gave St. Joseph's Academy a 2-0 win over St. Mary's Secondary School.

Clare Hall Secondary recorded a 4-2 win against Sir Novelle Richards Academy.

The secondary schools' league will continue with matches in the Under-16 and Under-20 Boys' Divisions on Monday, 12th December.

Clare Hall Secondary will take on St. Joseph's Academy



Antigua Grammar School will be one of the teams that can be crowned this year's Under-16 Boys' Division Secondary Schools' League champions on Monday, 12th December. (Photo by Elwin Francis)

in the opening game of an Under-16 Boys' Division double-header at King George V. Ground at 2:30 pm.

Antigua Grammar School will tackle the defending champions All Saints Secondary in the second encounter at the same venue at 3:30 pm.

The outcome of those two encounters will decide this year's Under-16 Boys' Division Secondary Schools' League champions.

Two matches in the East Zone of the Under-20 Boys' Division will also take place on Monday.

The Antigua and Bar-

buda Institute of Continuing Education (ABICE) will face Irene B. Williams Secondary at the Police Recreation Ground at 3pm.

Sir Novelle Richards Academy will oppose Clare Hall Secondary at Police Recreation Ground at the same time.

Opening game wins for Rebels and New Generation Slam

Rebels and New Generation Slam made successful starts to their campaigns in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division at the JSC Sports Complex on Wednesday, 7th December.

Rebels romped to an emphatic 79-50 victory over Fearless Crew2 in the opening game of a Zone 1 double-header.

Kirwan Peterson sank 19 points, Buel Henry had 17 points and 16 rebounds, Tindale Telemaque also scored 17 points, while Toriano Matthew contributed 12 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for Rebels.

Daysher Samuel produced 13 points and Takeem Martin had 12 points for Fearless Crew2.

New Generation Slam defeated

Raeburn Generator United 69-49 in the second game on Wednesday.

Captain and guard Keaddy Martin produced a game high 18 points, point guard Kim Casey scored 11 points and distributed 11 assists and John Rolland Jr. also contributed 11 points for New Generation Slam.

Guard Kwame Huntley scored 14 points and pulled down 13 rebounds, while fellow guard Desmond Spencer sank 11 points and grabbed 10 rebounds for Raeburn Generator United.

Galaxia Bar Spanish Heat had trounced Wadadli Elite2 83-53 in a Zone 2 affair in the opening game of the competition.

Rohland Hamilton shot a game high 17 points and grabbed 17 rebounds for Spanish Heat. He was supported by

teammates Antonio Cruzdehaa with 16 points, Steven Matthew with 14 points and Jesus Emmanuel with 10 points.

Orion Seraphine had 14 points and Beniah Mark scored 12 points for Wadadli Elite2.

The second division league will continue with two double-headers at the JSC Sports Complex this weekend.

In two Zone 1 encounters on Saturday, 10th December, Raeburn Generator United will face Rebels in the opening game at 6:45 pm and Ottos Coolers will meet New Generation Slam at 8:30 pm.

In Zone 2 on Sunday, 11th December, Honourable Daryll Matthew Clippers will clash with Honourable Gaston Browne Pointville Ballers at 6:45 pm and Flyers will take on Fearless Crew1 at 8:30 pm.

Big wins for SVF, Attacking Saints in Second Division football

Sea View Farm (SVF) and Attacking Saints recorded big margins of victories in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division league on Wednesday, 7th December.

Bertrand Chastanet scored a brace as Sea View Farm hammered Bethesda 6-0 in their encounter at the ABFA's Technical Centre.

Chastanet scored his first goal in the 13th minute and Azry Joseph had a conversion in the 26th minute to make it 2-0.

Chastanet scored for the second time of the match when he netted in the 36th minute and Chevron More scored in the 38th minute to give Sea View Farm a 4-0 halftime advantage.

Shortly after the interval, Azari Edwards netted in the 42nd minute to extend the lead and J'cory Lewis sealed Sea View Farm's victory with a 47th minute conversion.

Attacking Saints romped to a 4-0 win against Golden Grove at the Mack Pond playing field in All Saints.

Joshua Samuel scored twice, while Shakeem Lan-



Attacking Saints celebrate winning a competition in Old Road in September this year. Attacking Saints were big winners over Golden Grove in the second division on Wednesday, 7th December. (Photo courtesy Attacking Saints FC)

quedoc and Tinoy Andrew each converted once for Attacking Saints.

Freemans Village and Belmont also recorded wins in the Second Division on Wednesday.

Goals by Makai Lewis, Kevin Gregory and Leroy Hunte propelled Freemans Village to a 3-0 win over Tamo FC at the Golden Grove playing field.

An N'Jre Buckley conversion gave Belmont a 1-0 win over Young Warriors at the Mack Pond playing field in All Saints.

Domestic football action will continue today, Friday, 9th December. Bolans will face JSC Progressors in a first division affair at the ABFA's Technical Centre at 5 pm.

The premier division will resume this weekend with a triple-header at the ABFA's Technical Centre tomorrow, Saturday, 10th December.

Empire will take on Villa Lions at 4 pm, Old Road and Jennings Grenades will clash in a round south derby at 6 pm and Cedar

Grove Blue Jays will meet Liberta Black Hawks in the feature match at 8 pm.

Another premier league triple-header will take place at the same venue on Sunday, 11th December. Five Islands will challenge Willikies at 4 pm, Greenbay Hoppers will meet Tryum at 6 pm and Pigotts Bullets will clash with All Saints United at 8 pm.

Ottos Rangers will face Parham on Monday, 12th December, and Swetes will oppose SAP the following day.