

DISMISSED!

COURT REJECTS ASOT'S BID TO HOLD ELECTION OFFICIALS IN CONTEMPT

Story on Page 2



Representatives from the Commonwealth, Organization of American States and CARICOM paid a courtesy call on Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams, at Government House yesterday. The three organisations have deployed observers to Antigua and Barbuda to monitor tomorrow's general elections. *Story on page 5.*

Local News



Asot Michael's attempt to have election officials held in contempt of court fails

Independent candidate, Asot Michael suffered a crushing legal defeat on Monday when Justice Dia Forrester dismissed his attempt to have the Supervisor of Elections, Dame Lorna Simon, and the Returning Officer for St. Peter, held in contempt of court for allowing Rawdon Turner to be nominated as the Antigua Barbuda Labour Party's (ABLP) candidate last month.

Michael has argued for nigh on a year that Turner's candidacy was invalid and, based on the ABLP's own constitution, improper after he

was deemed "unsuitable" to run as a candidate on the party's ticket in Wednesday's election.

This resulted in Michael leveraging his considerable financial resources to wage war on the ABLP in a bid to have the court block the party from proceeding with Turner as their candidate.

Despite winning several battles, Michael now appears to have lost the proverbial war as Justice Forrester dismissed his motion to hold the senior Antigua Barbuda Electoral Commission officers in contempt of court.

Chairman of the ABLP, E. P. Chet Greene said on Monday evening following the court's decision: "The ABLP welcomes the learned Judge's decision which validates the Party's determination to continue, free of any hindrance, with Rawdon Turner as the legitimate and only Labour Party candidate for the St. Peter constituency.

"The ABLP acts only within the law. That is why we were always confident of the position we took in this matter, despite the assertions of Mr. Asot Michael."

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KEEP ANTIGUA CLEAN

ABLP St. John's City East constituency office torched; arson suspected

The Antigua Barbuda Labour Party's Melford Nicholas' birthday got off to a disappointing start as he was greeted in the wee hours of Monday with the news that his Fort Road constituency office was on fire.

The blaze occurred mere hours after Nicholas and his campaign team had concluded a political strategy meeting.

Now, police have launched an investigation into the fire that did considerable damage to Nicholas' St. John's City East branch building.

As police work to pinpoint the cause of the blaze, credible information reaching Pointe Xpress suggests that the incident may have been an act of arson.

At press time, fire officials would not confirm or deny this allegation.

At about 4:30am on Monday, the fire department received a call that



the office was on fire.

When firefighters arrived at the scene, the blaze was at its worst in a room located in the back of the building.

Due to the quick response of the fire brigade, the fire, and resulting damage, were contained to that section of the structure.

No estimate has yet been given for the damage caused to the uninsured building.

Residents in the area claim they saw three people running away from the direction of the building moments before it went up

in flames.

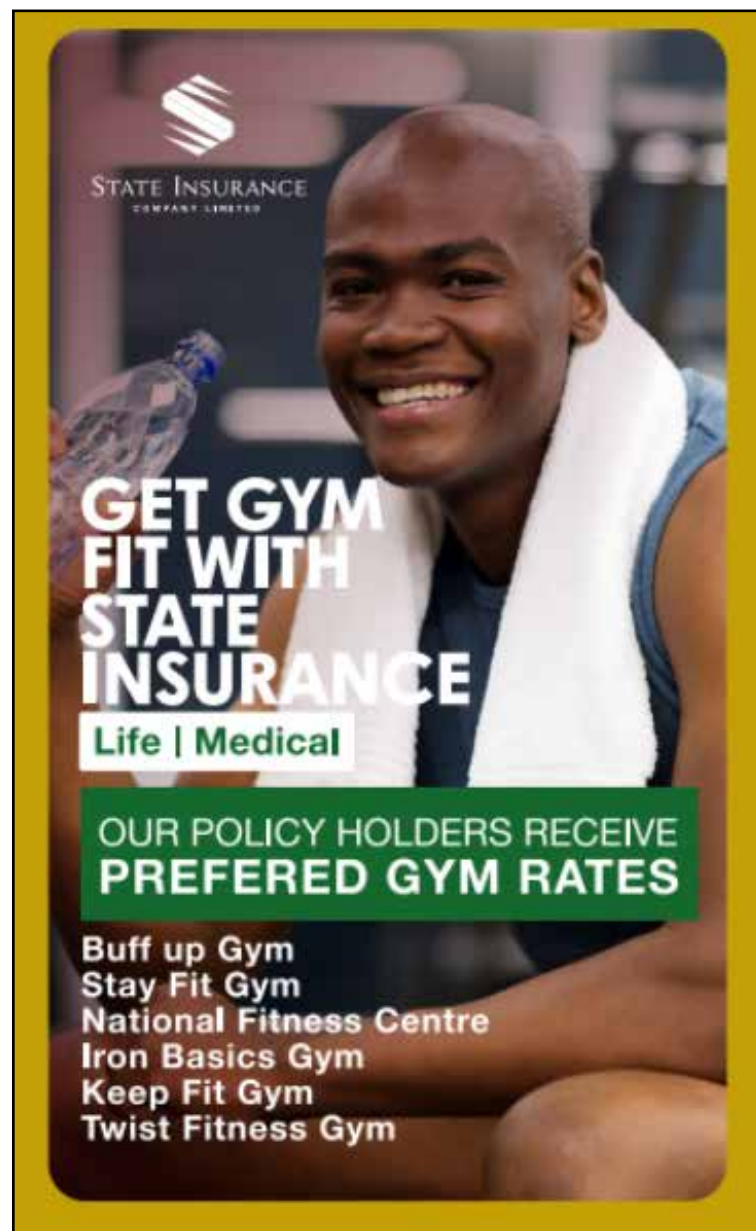
This is the second fire

to affect Nicholas' campaign in the past few weeks.

Previously, two political billboards belonging to the ABLP candidate were also set on fire.

This was quickly extinguished, and no significant damage was caused.

Nicholas has strongly denounced the acts of arson and has urged his supporters not to take retaliatory action.



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Election Countdown:

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Local News

Government to sign off on US\$80 million UWI FIC expansion agreement today

The US\$80 million (EC\$216 million) loan agreement for the expansion of the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus (UWI FIC) will be signed today.

A grand ceremony has been planned to mark the occasion that will signal the first step in expanding the campus which has been in operation for just over three years.

UWI FIC spokesman, Shavar Maloney, explained that there was a change in the date of the ceremony due to delays in the arrival of the Saudi Development Fund's (SDF) delegation.

SDF is providing the loan which will be used to further develop the university's campus.

Originally scheduled to arrive on Monday, the SDF delegation will now arrive this afternoon, however, the morning ceremony will continue as planned.



Several speakers will address the ceremony. They include Prime Minister Gaston Browne, Education Minister Daryll Matthew, UWI Vice Chancellor, Sir Hilary Beckles and Campus Chairman, Aziz Ha-deed.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Saudi Development Fund, His Excellency Sultan Abdul Arahman Almarshad's speech

will be read during the ceremony.

In the afternoon following the delegation's arrival, the agreement will be signed at the UWI FIC. It will be followed by a cocktail reception at the Hodges Bay Club.

Maloney said the campus' team has already developed a master plan for the expansion of UWI FIC which has received the ap-

proval of the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda and the Campus Finance and Development Committee.

The plan has also received a nod of approval from members of the public who participated in a town hall consultation that was hosted by the government.

"We are just waiting for the availability of the funds to begin to put the master plan into effect.

"It is a 5-year development plan for the 50-acres of land that will be made available to the university.

"It will see the construction of state-of-the-art classrooms, amphitheatres, dormitories, learning resource centre, students' facilities as well as sporting facilities," Maloney disclosed.

Tue 17 Day		Tue 17 Night	
80°	23% E 7 mph	74°	19% E 9 mph
Partly cloudy. High around 80F. Winds E at 5 to 10 mph.		Mostly clear skies. Low 74F. Winds E at 5 to 10 mph.	
Humidity 77%	UV Index 9 of 10	Humidity 80%	UV Index 0 of 10
Sunrise 6:40 am	Sunset 5:54 pm	Moonrise 2:10 am	Moonset 1:41 pm
		Waning Crescent	



Five observer teams to monitor general elections

The Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission (ABEC) has confirmed that five observer teams will monitor Wednesday's general elections.

The Commonwealth Secretariat, Organization of American States and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) will join national observers the Free and Fair Elections League and United Evangelical Alliance.

The teams, many of whom have already commenced working, will dispatch representatives to each of the seventeen constituencies to monitor the operations of the general elections during the day.

At the end of the process, the teams will produce their preliminary findings on the conduct of the elections, which will be followed by comprehensive reports containing recommendations based on their observations

of how the electoral system can be improved.

On Sunday, ABEC chaired a meeting with the organisations "who also shared preliminary feedback based on their missions to date. It was mutually agreed that the session was welcomed and productive", a brief statement from ABEC outlined.

Yesterday, the visiting delegations met with Prime Minister Gaston Browne and later paid a courtesy call to Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams.

The Commonwealth team is headed by former president of Seychelles, Danny Faure.

The OAS' Chief of Mission is former Jamaican prime minister, Bruce Golding, and the CARICOM team is led by Angela Taylor, Chief Electoral Officer of the Electoral and Boundaries Commission of Barbados.



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Local News



Bolans mother seriously injured in freak accident

While many exuberant people waved their flags and honked their horns in support of the Antigua Barbuda Labour Party (ABLP) during Sunday's Next Level Megacade, one family received the devastating news that a loved one who was participating in the event was crushed by a truck.

Bolans resident, Sonja Henry, was one of several passengers on the truck.

According to reports, Henry sustained injuries when she jumped from the vehicle as it travelled through Fig Tree Drive.

Although the reason Henry and her companions

jumped from the vehicle is unclear, what has been confirmed is that the mother of one's lower body became trapped under the truck and was run over.

Both her legs were broken, and she sustained other serious injuries.

Henry was rushed to the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLBMC) where she received treatment and was operated on on Monday morning.

She is presently warded in the Intensive Care Unit.

The news of her ordeal shocked the nation as family, friends and supporters on both sides of the political



Sonja Henry

divide wished the Jennings Secondary School alumna a speedy recovery.

On Monday, the ABLP's incumbent representative for St. Mary's South, Samantha Marshall issued a statement on the incident.

"My thoughts and prayers of healing are with Sonja Henry and her family at this time following an accident last evening.

"Sonja is an incredible, talented, beautiful and blessed young woman who has shown nothing but love to all in her community. It is heartwarming that the love, support and togetherness shown have been outpouring. Yet, as a community, our continued prayers for her healing and recovery are critical at this time. The ABLP SMS Branch Office, and by extension, the community, will provide the

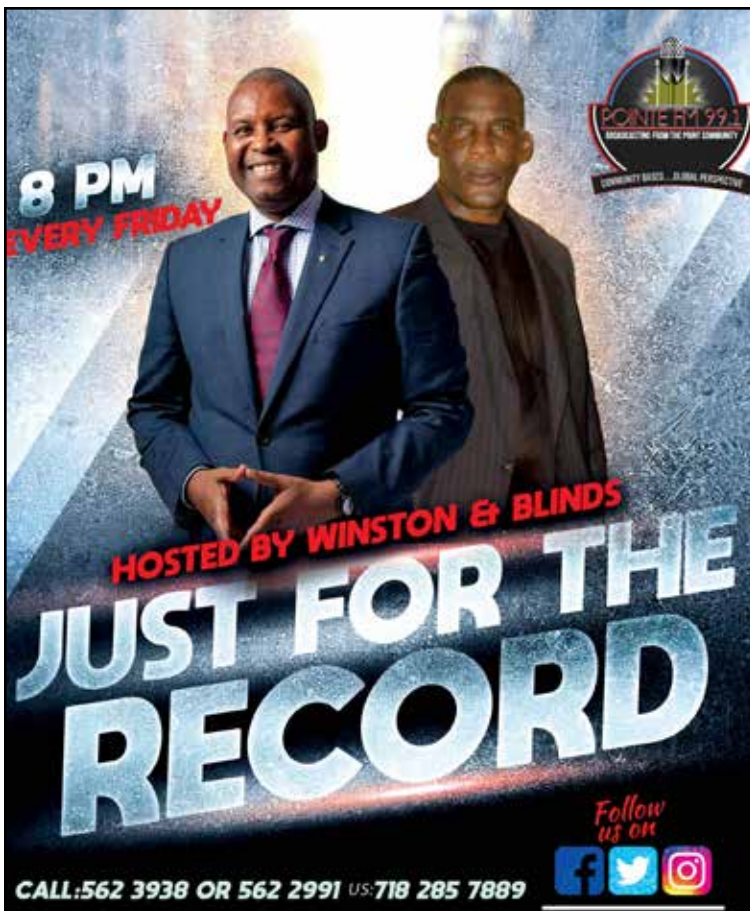
necessary support.

"I want to express gratitude to the Emergency Medical Service and the team of nurses and doctors at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre for their valiant service. Again, let's lift Sonja and her family in our prayers," said Marshall.

Marshall's well wishes were followed by similar sentiments from the United Progressive Party candidate for St. Mary's South, Kelvin "Shuggy" Simon.

"Wishing you a speedy recovery hun. We have our differences where politics is concerned but love and respect doesn't change. Life is bigger than politics, so the wellbeing of every person surpasses all else.

"May the healing hands of God be upon you and see you through this tragedy," he said.



Mental health advocate recovering following brutal attack

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and Environment employee who was stabbed multiple times during a home invasion last Friday continues to recuperate at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre.

Monifa St. John was stabbed at least fourteen times by the attacker who broke into her Ebenezer home sometime after 1am on Friday.

On Sunday, St. John, a mental health advocate, issued an update on her health on Facebook.

“Hello everyone. Thank you for your prayers and well wishes calls and text messages ...I am doing ok. Nothing physically life threatening, by the Grace of God,”

the post read.

She added, “A doctor mentioned that my fat saved my life.... just wanted you all to know although painful, I am recovering well. Thank you again, your prayers really plays a part in my continued recovery,” she concluded.

During the ordeal, it is reported that several personal documents were stolen along with the government owned vehicle that was assigned to her.

Law enforcement officials have not officially commented on the incident, however, an investigation into the attack has commenced.



Monifa St. John

State Insurance celebrates 46 years in operation

One of the most successful indigenous companies – State Insurance Company Ltd. (SIC) – is celebrating 46 years of service to the people of Antigua and Barbuda this week.

Under the theme New Beginnings, State Insurance is looking to the future with its eyes on solidifying its gains in the local market as it prepares to explore opportunities to expand its operations in the region.

Public Relations Offi-

cer, Dornalyn Beazer, said the company has a mandate to expand its operations into the regional markets.

She added that the company’s executives are working assiduously to make this a reality.

State Insurance Company Ltd. has two branches on Antigua; the main office at Redcliffe Street and a satellite branch at South Mall in Ebenezer, and in May 2022, a branch was opened on Barbuda.

“We’re a solid organ-

isation doing well here in our current operations. We came through the difficult times caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and we are doing even better than before the pandemic.

“Our long term plans are to see this company with branches in other islands and that is one of our primary objectives.

“That’s one of the reasons why we established a company instead of continuing as a corporation as this move will facilitate the

regional thrust,” Beazer explained.

As part of its New Beginnings, SIC named a new Chief Executive Officer, Aarion Nicholas, last March.

The 46th anniversary is being celebrated with a week of activities that includes Customer Appreciation Day today and a social for the staff on Saturday.

Next Thursday and Friday, a team will travel to Barbuda to engage in celebrations there.

Letter to the Editor



I promise to promise more promises (Redux)

By Traycee L.

Once again Harold Lovell and the United Progressive Party (UPP) have unleashed the usual and expected bundle of promises on the electorate, hoping to entice the Antiguan and Barbudan public that they can bring water from the moon and turn stone to bread.

As fate would have it, the electorate was not fooled by Lovell and the UPP in 2014 and 2018 when they attempted to hijack the national consciousness but were repudiated for their insult of the electorate's intelligence.

This election cycle, the same combination of Lovell and the UPP has returned with a barrage of promises, and if you thought 2018 was bad, what is being promised in 2023 makes 2018 look like dolly house.

The promises made by Lovell and the UPP in 2018 convinced many that he had gone stark raving mad.

If that was so at that time, what would any reasonable person think of his proposals this time around?

Admittedly, some people have been lured into his Venus fly trap like a

fly captivated in a rapture of spilled honey, but it is time to be awakened by a healthy dose of reality.

Lovell has given the public a sober reminder of why he has distinguished himself as the country's least successful finance minister.

This is really not my own opinion of the man; it is just what the records conclude.

The country never experienced such a decline in all sectors of the economy in its recorded history until Lovell was assigned the portfolio of finance.

The truth is the UPP's policies and mismanagement were already leading to a decline, but Lovell was given the job to push it over the precipice and he gladly accepted.

Now, I am by no means an economist, nor am I trained in accountancy or any of those academic disciplines that could better explain how the economy works, but like the average person I know simple reasoning and mathematics.

If you cut your fees for the services that you provide, then you cut your revenue as a consequence. This is quite basic.

The only thing that can compensate for that loss of revenue is increased volumes of business or

reduced expenditure. As I said, this is as basic as it gets.

I believe Lovell has some training in geology or geography and law, but numbers should not elude him so easily.

When you reduce revenue and maintain all other costs and debt obligations how do you compensate for that? It is not as if you can increase the number of vehicles that are licensed since there is only one service provider.

The customer base is therefore already fixed. Unless there are additional subventions from central government there is no way that Lovell can make up any deficit that he will create.

The rhetoric worries me greatly because I hear echoes of his former revenue reform manager and advisor that served in the Ministry of Finance with Harold Lovell—the same advisor who has more experience in changing bank jobs than any competent banker in Antigua.

In fact, I recall the advisor boldly telling Antigua and Barbuda not to worry of the sub-prime housing market because it will have no effect on this nation, and then his former boss later cites that as one of the main reasons that he

failed at his job.

All of a sudden, Harold Lovell and his merry band of advisors have answers that he did not or, rather, could not eight years ago. He was once blind, but now he can see.

This appears to be a game of Russian roulette with the lives and livelihood of the people of this country in a quest to satisfy a thirst for power.

While I can accept that democracy is what we strive for and fight to maintain, it is quite another story when desperation forces aspiring leaders to make promises that they know cannot be fulfilled.

But it is even more troubling when those aspiring leaders are totally lost and do not understand that they have committed to unrealistic and unrealizable pledges.

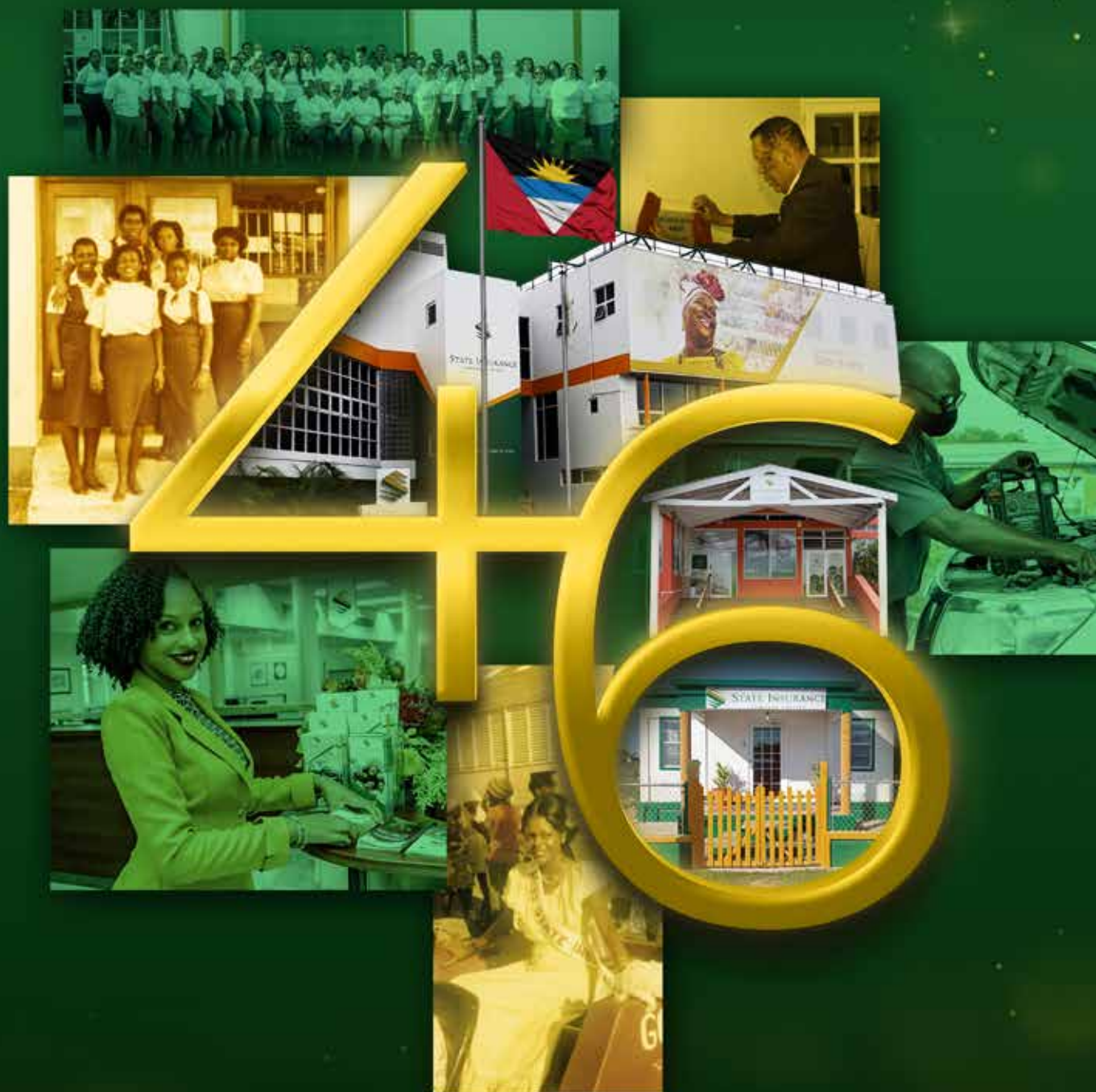
Many of us have become indifferent to the things that politicians say because so much of it is reduced to entertainment and frivolous banter that we subconsciously tune out to the point that some of the most life altering decisions escape us.

However, the time has come to wake up and to act and to make more than our voices be heard. When the time comes do the right thing!



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Caribbean countries to benefit from new PAHO initiative piloted in Trinidad & Tobago

CMC — The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) says it has developed a digital platform to bring telehealth services to remote populations in Latin American and Caribbean countries, making telemedicine the “new normal” for healthcare workers and patients managing chronic diseases.

It said based on open-source technology, PAHO’s All-in-ONE Telehealth platform was developed in 2022 thanks to the financial contribution from the United States government and initially piloted in Trinidad and Tobago.

“The aim of the platform is to improve patient outreach and follow-up, with an emphasis on continuity of care for people with non-communicable diseases (NCDs),” said Sebastian Garcia Saiso, PAHO’s Director, Department of Evidence and Intelligence for Action in Health.

NCDs are the leading cause of death and disability in the world, accounting for 71 percent of all deaths globally. In the Region of the Americas, 5.5 million deaths are due to NCDs, which include cancers, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and chronic lung disease.

PAHO said as they are chronic, they require continuous care and worsening conditions, if left un-



PAHO platform brings health monitoring of chronic diseases to remote populations (PAHO Photo)

checked, can take a huge toll on individuals and their families.

The platform can assist diabetic or hypertensive patients in managing and monitoring their disease. It also allows health workers at remote points to create an “advance triage” to refer patients before they undertake necessary travel to a health centre.

“The health facility where I receive care called me to ask me questions. How am I feeling? Do I need medicine?”

“When I’m ready, they have a prescription in my file and there is no need to travel to the health centre, my prescription will be sent to me,” said Sue Ann Peters, a telehealth patient managing a chronic condition in Trinidad and Tobago.

“The instalment of the telehealth platform at key referral points will change the lives of patients who in the past had no access to health monitoring when they most needed it,” said Marcelo D’Agostino, Senior Advisor, Information Systems and Digital Health at PAHO.

Training for health technicians and professionals, including in simulation and role-playing exercises, is also a key component of the platform. This allows authorities to offer health workers diverse learning strategies, and to best judge when to use telemedicine or hybrid care, with the patient receiving a combination of telehealth and in-person attention at a local clinic or hospital.

The platform integrates applications such as instant messaging, conversational bots (chatbots), patient medical records and digital prescriptions. It can also send an alert when a patient’s test results are outside a normal range.

“The All-in-One platform is a vital component of the digital transformation in health in our region, not only in preventing and controlling major NCDs and their risk factors but improving the quality of life of patients with chronic disorders,” said Garcia Saiso.

This year, a rollout of the All-in-One platform is planned for The Bahamas, El Salvador, Honduras, Peru, Suriname, Dominica, Uruguay, Panama, and Nicaragua.

Guyana President invites China to bid for oil blocks

CMC — Guyana President Dr. Irfaan Ali has invited investors from China to capitalise on the country's oil industry with 14 oil blocks being auctioned this year.

The president, during an interview with China's state-run CGTN, pointed to the deep ties between the two countries, noting that China has been a key developmental partner for years.

Ali also stated that Guyana seeks to ramp up activity in its nascent oil and gas sector while supporting other sectors of the economy.

Part of those efforts include the auction of oil blocks offshore this year.

"We encourage China to participate in the public process... the bidding process," President Ali said.

"We will be auctioning off a number of new blocks and we hope that many firms around the world will participate in that process."

The bid round for 14 new oil blocks was launched last December and is expected to close by April 2023.

Guyana's government hopes to award contracts by the end of May 2023.

The oil blocks on auction are for shallow and deep-water areas.

Outside of the auction, President Ali said Guyana is developing its natural gas

resources and it hopes Chinese investors will be part of that process.

The president also noted that the government does not believe development of Guyana's oil and gas resources conflict with the country's low carbon ambitions.

He also said Guyana is keen on avoiding the resource curse- though it doesn't really believe the problem to be concerned

about is having abundant resources. Instead, he said it is the mismanagement of those resources that is a problem. Guyana, he said, is keen on managing these resources well.

"You must go on a wild spending spree. You have to exercise good judgement (and) good fiscal responsibility.

"It is not a resource curse, it is a blessing," he said.



Dr. Irfaan Ali



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Regional News



Grenada: Peter David giving “consideration” to lead opposition party

CMC — Just over 10 years after he was expelled from the now-ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC), attorney Peter David is giving “active consideration” to be among candidates seeking to replace Dr Keith Mitchell as the leader of the main opposition New National Party (NNP).

Mitchell, 76, who served as Grenada’s prime minister from 1995 to 2008 and from 2013 to June 2022 when he lost the general election, has already indicated that he would be stepping aside as political leader of the NNP that was founded in 1984.

Speaking on the Bubb Report aired on WPG 10 on Sunday, David, who was among a number of NDC stalwarts expelled from the party on September, 30, 2012, told viewers that Dr Mitchell was “pellucidly



Peter David

clear, both in the campaign and after the election that this is his last election run and ...at the swearing ceremony for the Leader of the Opposition he did say he was not going to be participating or putting himself up for leadership at the next convention”.

David, who held several ministerial portfolios in

the last NNP administration as well as being elected assistant general secretary of the party in 2017, the NNP has taken Dr Mitchell at his word and “that there will be other persons putting themselves up for the leadership.

“Under the party’s constitution, a member of the party in good standing can put themselves up for lead-

ership,” he said, telling his interviewer “I am giving active consideration to it.

“Of course, I have paid my dues, I go back a long way...in politics, so I am giving active consideration to it. Like I told Dr Mitchell some time ago, once the party confirms the convention, once the party determines when the convention is going to be then I am going to make a public statement on it.

“But to be fair, I can’t say other than I am giving very much active consideration to the issue of leadership of the party,” he said, adding “Dr Mitchell said he is leaving and certainly I am considering it”.

David said that the last convention was held in February last year and the party hopes to hold its next convention by June this year.

Two killed in shootout with federal agents near Puerto Rico

AP — Two suspected drug traffickers were killed early Sunday in a shootout with federal agents off Puerto Rico’s northeast coast, officials said.

The incident occurred shortly after midnight, when authorities detected a suspicious boat at sea and a chase ensued, Jeffrey Quiñones, spokesman for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, told The Associated Press.

The chase ended when the suspected drug traffickers shot at the federal agents, who returned fire, Quiñones said. Two of the six suspects aboard

were killed and the remaining four were arrested, he said. No federal agent was injured.

Quiñones said drugs were found aboard the boat and in the water, but no further details were immediately available.

The nationalities of the suspects had not been confirmed, he said.

The deadly chase comes two months after a U.S. Customs and Border Protection agent and a suspected drug smuggler died in a shootout off Puerto Rico’s southwest coast. Two

other agents were injured and hospitalised in that incident.

The FBI is investigating the latest deadly shootout. A spokeswoman did not immediately return a message for comment.

Puerto Rico is a popular transit point for drugs coming out of South America. Agents seized \$26 million worth of cocaine in October near the island of Vieques and a cargo worth \$9 million aboard a boat in December during a routine cargo inspection in the capital of San Juan.

President knocks health care calls for visionary leadership

Daily Express — Outgoing President Paula-Mae Weekes says the country's health system is in need of visionary leadership.

She made the comment yesterday as she bemoaned the problems and challenges facing the public health sector.

She was delivering the feature address at the Presidential Symposium hosted by the Trinidad and Tobago Medical Association (TTMA) and The University of the West Indies (The UWI) at the university's St Augustine campus.

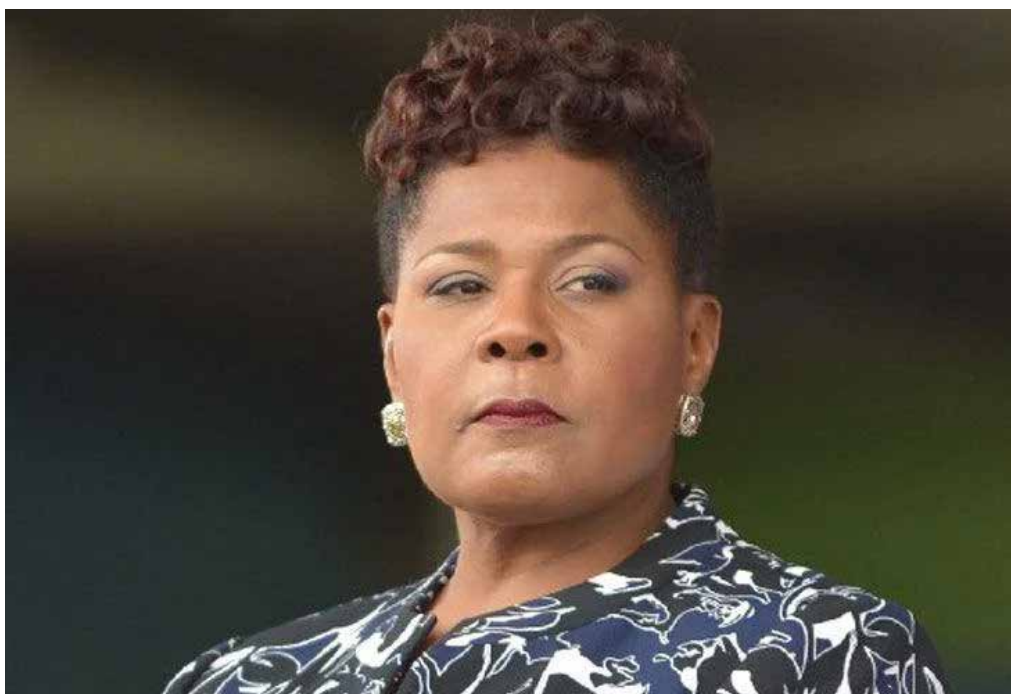
The theme of the symposium was "Visionary Leadership in Medicine", which Weekes said was a significant and persistent issue, made even more glaring by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"If ever visionary leadership is needed in the medical fraternity, it is now," she said. "Even before Covid-19 reared its ugly head, Trinidad and Tobago faced considerable challenges in and to its health apparatus... Lengthy wait times in hospitals, unreasonable delays in receiving critical diagnoses, results and reports, and confusing and unnecessarily complex administrative processes are among the many issues experienced by patients at our institutions."

Last September, the President presented Chief Medical Officer Dr Roshan Parasram (CMO) the nation's highest award, the Order of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (ORTT), at the national awards at NAPA in Port of Spain.

The medical team also received the Chaconia Medal (Gold) for their work during the Covid-19 pandemic.

They were Dr Avery Hinds, Dr Maryam Abdool-Richards, Dr Mi-



President Paula-Mae Weekes

chelle Trotman and Prof Christine Carrington.

The President also noted yesterday the problems healthcare professionals faced.

"On the other side of the coin, healthcare professionals grapple with inadequate compensation, unacceptable working conditions, unavailability of critical equipment and overwork, among other grievances, and must also bear the brunt of patients' frustrations with a flawed system."

She said while there are calls for more funding, more staff, more training and more innovation in the public healthcare system, these would not be enough without consistent, effective leadership.

Weekes also called for the modernisation of healthcare institutions.

"Our health institutions which supply lifesaving care and treatment to citizens should be modern, functional and well-run, as access to comprehensive health services promotes and maintains good health, reduces unnec-

essary disability and premature death and achieves a better quality of life for all individuals," she said.

"It is critical that we work assiduously towards strengthening and upgrading our health systems in order to improve the well-being of the nation and ensure further growth and stability..."

"Our medical institutions must strive diligently to keep abreast of the times, as being left behind will result in immediate and dire consequences that we can ill afford."

Weekes said the Covid-19 pandemic has underscored the "critical importance of carefully and deliberately building resilient, responsive and flexible health and social systems".

Health Minister Terrence Deyal Singh, who also delivered an address at the symposium, spoke on the importance of integrity in leadership.

"In visionary leadership... you must have personal and professional integrity," he said. "People will not follow you if you have no integrity."

Italy's most-wanted Mafia boss Matteo Messina Denaro arrested in Sicily

BBC - Italy's most-wanted Mafia boss Matteo Messina Denaro has been arrested in Sicily after 30 years on the run.

Messina Denaro was reportedly detained in a private clinic in Sicily's capital, Palermo, where he was receiving treatment for cancer.

He is alleged to be a boss of the notorious Cosa Nostra Mafia and he was tried and sentenced to life in jail in absentia in 2002 over numerous murders.

More than 100 members of the armed forces were involved in his arrest.

Italian media reported that Messina Denaro was captured just before 10:00 (09:00 GMT) and taken to a secret location by the Carabinieri. He was reportedly visiting the clinic under a fake name for a course of chemotherapy.

A video circulated by Italian media appears to show people standing in the street and applauding the Italian police as Messina Denaro is led away.

Among the murders he was convicted over are the 1992 killing of anti-mafia prosecutors Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, the deadly 1993 bomb attacks in Milan, Florence and Rome, and the kidnapping, torture and killing of the 11-year-old son of a mafioso turned state witness.

Messina Denaro once



Matteo Messina Denaro was reportedly detained in a medical clinic

boasted he could "fill a cemetery" with his victims.

The Mafia boss also oversaw racketeering, illegal waste dumping, money-laundering and drug-trafficking for the powerful Cosa Nostra organised crime syndicate. He was reportedly the protégé of Totò Riina, the head of the Corleone clan, who was arrested in 1993 after 23 years on the run.

Clans nicknamed Messina Denaro "Diabolik" - the name of an uncatchable thief in a comic book series - and "U Siccu" (Skinny).

He is thought to be Cosa Nostra's last "secret-keeper". Many informers and prosecutors believe that he holds all the information and the names of who were involved in several of the most high-profile crimes by the Mafia, including the bomb attacks that killed magistrates Falcone and Borsellino.

Although Messina Den-

aro had been a fugitive since 1993, he was thought to have still been issuing orders to his subordinates from various secret locations.

Over the decades, Italian investigators often came close to catching Messina Denaro by monitoring those closest to him. This resulted in the arrest of his sister Patrizia and several other of his associates in 2013. Police also seized valuable businesses linked to Messina Denaro, leaving him increasingly isolated.

However, few photos of Messina Denaro existed and police had to rely on digital composites to reconstruct his appearance in the decades after he went on the run. A recording of his voice was not released until 2021.

In September 2021, a Formula 1 fan from Liverpool was arrested at gunpoint in a restaurant in the Netherlands after being mistaken for Messina Denaro.

Italians were glued to the

screens on Monday morning when news of the arrest of the mafia boss broke.

For years, Messina Denaro had been a symbol of the state's inability to reach the upper echelons of the organised crime syndicates. His arrest will be an unexpected sign of hope that the Mafia can be eradicated even in the southern regions of the country, where the state is perceived as largely absent and ineffective.

University of Essex criminology professor Anna Sergi told the BBC that Messina Denaro's arrest was "symbolic not just because he was the boss of Cosa Nostra, but because he represents the last fugitive the Italian state really wanted to get its hands on. That's why we saw people clap in Palermo and why the state is triumphant - because the news feels like closure."

However, questions are likely to arise over the timing of the arrest.

"It is yet unclear how the Monday morning raid on the clinic came about, who tipped off the authorities or - crucially - how it was possible for Messina Denaro to run around Sicily, presumably protected, for 30 years," Prof Sergi said.

"We now know Messina Denaro was being cured for cancer so is quite sick. That is why people are saying someone within the crime

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Biden classified files: Republicans accuse president of hypocrisy

BBC — Republicans have accused US President Joe Biden of hypocrisy following the discovery of more classified documents at his Delaware home.

"If you live in a glass house, don't throw stones," Nebraska congressman Don Bacon told ABC's This Week.

At least 20 documents related to Mr Biden's time as vice-president have been found at his private residence and at an office he used in Washington.

He criticised Donald Trump when his home was raided for classified files.

"How could anyone be that irresponsible?" he said at the time.

Mr Trump is being investigated by a special counsel, in his case over the hundreds of classified files found at his Mar-a-Lago resort last year.

An FBI raid was carried out because archivists said his team was not handing over all the documents they



US President Joe Biden had identified as missing.

Mr Biden is also being investigated by a special counsel, Robert Hur, who was appointed by the US Department of Justice to conduct an independent probe into the president's handling of the classified documents.

It is not clear what was in the documents found in Mr Biden's possession but CBS News has reported that some of them were marked "Top Secret", which is the highest level of classification.

By law all White House files should be handed over

to the National Archives at the end of a presidency.

On Sunday a number of Republicans took to the airwaves to accuse Mr Biden of double standards.

James Comer of Kentucky, the new chair of the House oversight committee, told CNN's State of the Union: "While he was doing this [accusing Trump], he knew very well that he himself had possession of classified documents so the hypocrisy here is great."

Some Democrats have also raised concerns about the files, including House representative Adam Schiff

who told This Week that he wants to know "if there was any risk of exposure and what the harm would be" to national security as a result of the documents being misplaced.

The White House has not said how long Mr Biden knew the documents were in his possession but they insist his lawyers handed them over as soon as they found them.

It is unclear what penalties Mr Biden may face, but experts have said that criminal charges are unlikely as prosecutors would have to prove the president and his aides knowingly removed and held the files.

Mr Biden himself said it came as a surprise to learn they had been found there and that he takes the handling of sensitive material very seriously.

The first batch in his former office was found on 2 November, days before the midterm elections, but it was not until last week that this was made public.

Marc Short, a former top aide to Mr Trump's Vice-President Mike Pence, on Sunday suggested the news was deliberately withheld to avoid the final days of the election campaign.

Several Republicans have demanded visitor logs to Mr Biden's residences be made public, to see who might have had access to the material.

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world decided he was no longer useful. This means he was likely still part of [a] structure where there is an exchange of favours between the mafia and state, and where one can be given up in return for something," he added.

In the wake of the arrest, tributes to the work of the armed forces poured in from across the political spectrum.

Gian Carlo Caselli, a judge and former prosecutor general, said that the arrest of Messina Denaro was an "exceptional...

simply historical event" that might lead to significant developments in the ongoing inquiries into the 1993 bomb attacks that killed 10 people across Italy.

Italy's president, Sergio Mattarella, whose brother Piersanti was killed by Cosa Nostra in 1980, congratulated the minister of the interior and the Carabinieri.

Italy's PM Giorgia Meloni also thanked the armed forces for their work in detaining the "most important member of the mafia criminal group", adding: "This is a great victory for the state."

Met Police officer David Carrick admits to being serial rapist

BBC - A Metropolitan Police armed officer who used his role to put fear into his victims has admitted dozens of rape and sexual offences against 12 women.

David Carrick, 48, who met some victims through dating websites, pleaded guilty to 49 offences, across two decades.

The Met has apologised after it emerged he had come to the attention of police over nine incidents, including rape allegations, between 2000 and 2021.

A senior officer said his offending was "unprecedented in policing".

Assistant Commissioner Barbara Gray, the Met's lead for professionalism, said: "We should have spotted his pattern of abusive behaviour and because we didn't, we missed opportunities to remove him from the organisation."

"We are truly sorry that being able to continue to use his role as a police officer may have prolonged the suffering of his victims."

"We know they felt unable to come forward sooner because he told them they would not be believed."

Carrick, who admitted 24 counts of rape, was suspended from duty when he was arrested in October 2021.

His offences spanned 2003 to 2020 and most took place in Hertfordshire, where he lived.

Carrick, from Stevenage, would control what the women wore, what they ate, where they slept and even stopped some of the women from speaking to their own children.

Jaswant Narwal, the chief crown prosecutor for the Crown Prosecution Service, said: "Carrick held a role where he was trusted with the responsibility of protecting the public, but yet



David Carrick has been suspended from duty at the Metropolitan Police over 17 years, in his private life, he did the exact opposite.

"This is a man who relentlessly degraded, belittled and sexually assaulted and raped women."

"As time went on, the severity of his offending intensified as he became emboldened, thinking he would get away with it."

She said the "scale of the degradation Carrick subjected his victims to is unlike anything I've encountered in my 34 years with the Crown Prosecution Service".

Carrick, who served with the Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection Command, met some victims through online dating sites such as Tinder and Badoo, and used his role as a police officer to gain their trust.

He admitted four counts of rape, false imprisonment and indecent assault, relating to a 40-year-old woman in 2003, at Southwark Crown Court on Monday.

It can now be reported that Carrick had already pleaded guilty to 43

charges, including 20 counts of rape, in December.

Carrick admitted raping nine women, some on multiple occasions over months or years, with many of those attacks involving violence that would have left them physically injured.

Speaking outside court, Det Ch Insp Iain Moor, from Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Major Crime Unit, said: "The details of David Carrick's crimes are truly shocking."

"I suspect many will be appalled and sickened by his actions but I hope the victims and the public more widely are reassured that no-one is above the law and the police service will relentlessly pursue those offenders who target women in this way."

He said he expects even more victims to come forward.

Carrick admitted to false imprisonment offences, having on a number of occasions forced one of his victims into a small cupboard under the stairs at his home.

Det Ch Insp Moor, the senior investigating officer, said: "I have seen bigger dog crates."

After Carrick's first guilty pleas, the Met stopped his pay and began an accelerated misconduct process, with a hearing due to take place on Tuesday.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said he was "absolutely sickened and appalled" by Carrick's crimes.

He said "serious questions must be answered about how he was able to abuse his position as an officer in this horrendous manner".

The Prime Minister's official spokesman said it was "an appalling case" and that Rishi Sunak's "thoughts are with all of [Carrick's] victims".

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Australian Open 2023: Daniil Medvedev and Stefanos Tsitsipas through on first day

BBC — Two-time runner-up Daniil Medvedev reached the second round of the Australian Open with a straight-set win over American Marcos Giron.

The Russian seventh seed breezed past Giron 6-0 6-1 6-2.

"Great memories of last year, but I want to have better ones this year," Medvedev, who lost to Rafael Nadal in last year's final, said.

Third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas also advanced on the opening day's play at Melbourne Park.

Medvedev lost just three games against Giron - the fewest he has ever dropped in a Grand Slam match.

Greece's Tsitsipas, a three-time semi-finalist in Melbourne, beat France's Quentin Halys 6-3 6-4 7-6 (8-6).

"It was challenging, he came up with some good tennis in the third set, I kind of lost my rhythm in the serve," said Tsitsipas.

"So I had to find ways to get out of the difficult situation. I think my fighting spirit showed towards the end, I wasn't going to give up."

He will face Australia's Rinky Hijikata next while 2021 US Open champion Medvedev will take on John Millman.

Elsewhere in the men's singles, teenager Shang Juncheng became the first male Chinese player to win an



Daniil Medvedev (left) lost just three games against Marcos Giron at Melbourne Park Australian Open main draw singles match.

The 17-year-old qualifier, the youngest player in the men's draw, beat Germany's Oscar Otto 6-2 6-4 6-7 (2-7) 7-5.

"I think it's huge for Chinese men's tennis. We have had really good players from the women's side but not really big names in the men's," said Shang.

He will face Frances Tiafoe after the American 16th seed beat Germany's Daniel Altmaier 6-3 6-3 6-7 (5-7) 7-6 (7-8).

Tiafoe's kit - a squiggly pink, blue and red number - divided opinion on social media, with one user comment-

ing the outfit "deserves to get to the second week minimum".

Former champion Stan Wawrinka fell in the opening round, with the Swiss losing 6-7 (3-7) 6-3 1-6 7-6 (7-2) 6-4 to Slovak Alex Molcan.

American wildcard Christopher Eubanks beat the in-form Kwon Soon-woo over five sets to claim his first main-draw win in Melbourne.

Meanwhile, Polish 10th seed Hubert Hurkacz cruised past Spaniard Pedro Martinez in straight sets and sixth seed Felix Auger-Aliassime overcame a poor first set to beat Canadian compatriot Vasek Pospisil 1-6 7-6 (7-4) 7-6 (7-3) 6-3.

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"We have been clear, there is no place in our police forces for officers who fall so seriously short of the acceptable standards of behaviour and are not fit to wear the uniform."

Sal Naseem, from the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), said

no opportunities to stop Carrick earlier had been identified by police so far.

Two retired Met officers who dealt with a 2002 allegation of assault and harassment against Carrick may have committed misconduct, but as they cannot face misconduct proceedings, the IOPC decided it was not in

the public interest to take further action.

Carrick's full list of offences are:

- 24 counts of rape
- nine counts of sexual assault
- five counts of assault by penetration
- three counts of coercive and controlling behaviour

• three counts of false imprisonment

• two counts of attempted rape

• one count of attempted sexual assault by penetration

• one count of causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent

• one count of indecent assault.

Sports News



Australian Open: Emma Raducanu and Cameron Norrie through in Melbourne

By Jonathan Jurejko

BBC — Emma Raducanu made a positive return to court after her injury scare, moving into the second round of the Australian Open with a straight-set win.

On the opening day in Melbourne, the British number one won 6-3 6-2 against Germany's Tamara Korpatsch.

Raducanu, 20, rolled her ankle in Auckland 11 days ago and a beaming smile after sealing victory showed her joy at coming through her first test.

British men's number one Cameron Norrie also advanced with a straight-set win.

Norrie, seeded 11th, progressed from the first round for only the second time in five attempts with a 7-6 (7-3) 6-0 6-3 success over teenage French wildcard Luca van Assche.

The 27-year-old left-hander had a short turnaround after playing in the Auckland final on Saturday, when he lost to French veteran Richard Gasquet.

"I was pretty nervous but I managed to relax in the second set there and close out a tough game. Not my best level but I'll build on it," said Norrie, who earned the biggest win of his career by beating Rafael Nadal at the United Cup earlier this month.

"I enjoyed the match after that tricky first set."

Norrie and Raducanu were the only two British players to win at Melbourne Park, with Raducanu now set to face American seventh seed Coco Gauff in round two.

Rising star Jack Draper was beaten by Spanish great Rafael Nadal, while Kyle Edmund lost 6-4 6-0 6-2 to Italian 15th seed Jannik Sinner.

Edmund, 28, reached the semi-finals in 2018 but is trying to rebuild his career after a knee injury which need-



Emma Raducanu is aiming to go beyond the second round at a Grand Slam event for the first time since she won the 2021 US Open

ed three operations before he returned to the tour last year.

Playing using a protected ranking, it was another tough draw at a Grand Slam for Edmund after he faced eventual runner-up Casper Ruud at last year's US Open.

Harriet Dart, Britain's only other representative in the women's singles, lost 7-5 6-1 to Swiss 32nd seed Jil Teichmann.

Gauff, 18, is among the favourites to win the women's singles at Melbourne Park and started with a 6-1 6-4 victory over Czech opponent Katerina Siniakova.

American third seed Jessica Pegula, Gauff's doubles partner and another favoured by many to win her first major singles title, made an even bigger statement with a 6-0 6-1 victory over Romania's Jaqueline Cristian which took just 59 minutes.

Comfortable start for Raducanu but bigger tests lie ahead

When Raducanu left the Auckland court in tears, her chances of playing at the first major of the season looked in serious doubt.

Physical issues have plagued the

Briton since she was catapulted to superstardom by winning the 2021 US Open as a teenage qualifier and, after employing Andy Murray's former fitness coach Jez Green, she worked hard in pre-season on building her body to withstand the rigours of the WTA Tour.

So it was a bitter blow when she rolled her left ankle in what she described as a "freak accident".

Raducanu's movement improved in practice at Melbourne Park as last week went on, but the real indication of her condition would only be apparent in a match scenario.

"Everything I've done has been quite controlled the last week," she said.

"So I had to test it out in a real match, with the unpredictability and just getting used to it in the beginning. It felt good.

"You know it's there and if anything, it kind of alleviates any pressure.

"That's because you're, like, I've done so well to get myself on to the court, and my team has done so well. It's a great achievement for all of us."

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NFL playoffs: No lead safe, drama abounds in wild weekend

AP — The Buffalo Bills blew a 17-point advantage before recovering to win Sunday. That narrow escape came less than 24 hours after the Jacksonville Jaguars overcame a 27-point deficit and pulled off one of the most stunning comeback victories in playoff history.

No lead is safe and the drama abounds so far in the NFL playoffs.

A loaded Sunday schedule saw the Bills escape with a 34-31 win over the Miami Dolphins, the New York Giants upset the Minnesota Vikings 31-24 and the Cincinnati Bengals hang on to beat the Baltimore Ravens 24-17 as wild-card weekend continued.

One more game in the round remains: Tom Brady and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers host Dak Prescott and the Dallas Cowboys on Monday night.

All three of Sunday's games were decided in the final minutes. In the night-

cap, Sam Hubbard returned Baltimore quarterback Tyler Huntley's fumble 98 yards for a tie breaking touchdown in the fourth quarter in a stunning turn of events that led the Bengals to their win.

Huntley tried to go over the top of the line for the go-ahead score. But he was stood up by Germaine Pratt and stripped by fellow linebacker Logan Wilson.

The ball went right to Hubbard at the 2, and the defensive end took off down the field for the longest fumble return for a touchdown in NFL postseason history. It also was the longest go-ahead TD in the fourth quarter in the postseason.

In Sunday's opener, Bills quarterback Josh Allen shrugged off a three-turnover outing by throwing two touchdown passes 3:11 apart in the third quarter. He finished 23 of 39 for 352 yards and three TDs, but also threw two interceptions



Cincinnati Bengals defensive end Sam Hubbard (94) and quarterback Joe Burrow celebrate following an NFL wild-card playoff football game against the Baltimore Ravens in Cincinnati, Sunday, Jan. 15, 2023. The Bengals won 24-17. (AP Photo/Jeff Dean)

and lost a fumble.

Cole Beasley scored the go-ahead touchdown with a 6-yard catch, and Gabe Davis extended the lead to 34-24 with a 23-yard TD reception after Buffalo squandered its early 17-0 advantage.

Giants quarterback Daniel Jones became one of the stars of wild-card weekend by leading sixth-seeded New York to its road win

over No. 3 Minnesota. Jones — playing in his first playoff game — threw for 301 yards and two touchdowns and ran for 78 yards in a stellar all-around performance. Saquon Barkley rushed for two scores, including the tiebreaker midway through the fourth quarter.

On Saturday, rookie Brock Purdy and the San Francisco 49ers beat the Seattle Seahawks 41-23 while the Jaguars capped their comeback by beating the Los Angeles Chargers 31-30.

The No. 1 overall seed in the AFC was claimed by Kansas City with its 31-13 win over Las Vegas in Week 18. The NFC's top spot was taken by Philadelphia. Those teams got the weekend off before playing in the divisional round next week-end.

WHAT'S THE FOR-
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With strapping on the ankle, Raducanu initially looked cautious when she stretched out to the backhand side and had to put weight on the affected foot.

A poor quality start littered with unforced errors saw the pair exchange five breaks of serve before Raducanu began to grow in confidence.

Korpatsch, 27, is ranked a place higher than Raducanu but does not have the same pedigree and was making her Australian Open main-draw debut.

A double fault from the German - who

is more comfortable on clay and looked nervous throughout - brought up a match point which Raducanu took when Korpatsch hit a forehand long.

Raducanu twirled on the court in celebration, but knows a much tougher test lies ahead when she plays Gauff on Wednesday.

"I might as well just enjoy all the hard work we've done to get myself here," said Raducanu.

"If anything, it's not mental, it's more physical and just playing, seeing how it is."

Sports News



Indonesia soccer disaster trial begins for five charged

By Trisnadi and Niniek Karmini

AP — An Indonesian court began trial Monday against five men on charges of negligence leading to the deaths of 135 people after police fired tear gas inside a soccer stadium, setting off a panicked run for the exits in which many were crushed.

The deadly crowd surge Oct. 1 in East Java's Malang city was among the world's worst sporting disasters. Police officers fired tear gas when fans flooded the pitch after Arema FC was defeat-

ed in a home match for the first time in 23 years by rival Persebaya Surabaya.

The match at Kanjuruhan stadium was attended only by Arema fans, as organisers had banned Persebaya supporters because of Indonesia's history of violent soccer rivalries.

Police described the pitch invasion as a riot and said two officers were killed, but survivors accused them of overreacting. Videos showed officers using force, kicking and hitting fans with batons, and

pushing spectators back into the stands.

At least 11 officers fired tear gas — eight canisters into the stands and three onto the pitch — to prevent more spectators from taking to the field after the game.

An investigation team set up by Indonesian President Joko Widodo in response to a national outcry over the deaths concluded that the tear gas was the main cause of the crowd surge. It said police on duty had no knowledge that the use of tear gas is prohibited

at soccer stadiums and used it "indiscriminately" on the field, in the stands and outside the stadium, causing more than 42,000 spectators inside the 36,000-seat stadium to rush to the exits — several of which were locked.

It was among the deadliest soccer-related tragedies since a 1964 crush in Peru killed over 300 people.

Prosecutors charged the five men — three police officials who allowed or ordered officers to use tear gas

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MAT FOR PLAYOFFS?

This is the third straight year of the current playoff format, which includes the top seven teams from both the AFC and the NFC.

The four division winners in both conferences automatically get the top four seeds, regardless of record, and then the top three teams with the best record that didn't win their division are the wild-card selections. That's why it's fairly common for a wild-card selection to have a better record — but worse playoff seeding — than a team that finished as a division winner.

The No. 1-seeded team in each conference gets a bye into the second round — that's the Chiefs and Eagles — while No. 2 hosts No. 7, No. 3 hosts No. 6 and No. 4 hosts No. 5 during the wild-card weekend.

The NFL re-seeds teams after each playoff round. That means no matter how the bracket started, the lowest-seeded team will always travel to the highest-seeded team.

There are four rounds to the playoffs: The wild-card round is this weekend, the divisional round is Jan. 21-22, the conference championship games are on Jan. 29 and the Super Bowl is scheduled for Feb. 12 in Glendale, Arizona.

WHAT CHANGED WITH BILLS-BENGALS CANCELLATION?

Players and fans watched in horror on Jan. 2 as Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin collapsed on the field at Cincinnati when his heart stopped and he received CPR before leaving the field in an ambulance. Over the next week, those same players and fans reacted with joy at news of Hamlin's recovery.

Even better news came Saturday: Hamlin visited with teammates at the Bills' facility for the first time since being discharged from a Buffalo hospital.

A person with direct knowledge of Hamlin's schedule confirmed to The Associated Press the player's visit. The person spoke on the condition of

anonymity because Hamlin has kept his schedule and recovery private.

Hamlin's remarkable recovery has made it much easier to focus on the playoffs.

The cancellation of the Bills-Bengals game because of Hamlin's injury could lead to one big change to the AFC playoff format.

The AFC championship game would be played at a neutral site if the Chiefs and Bills reach that point under a rule adjustment approved by NFL owners last Friday. That's because Buffalo (13-3) played one fewer game than Kansas City (14-3) and missed out on a chance to earn the top seed. The Bills beat the Chiefs 24-20 on Oct. 16 and would have held the tiebreaker had the teams finished with the same record. Buffalo lost 42-36 at Kansas City in a divisional-round classic last season.

The Chiefs would host the AFC title game against any other team, including the third-seeded Bengals (12-4).

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and the Arema FC Organizing Committee chair and security chief — with criminal negligence causing death and bodily harm, which carries a penalty of up to five years in jail if found guilty.

Lead prosecutor Ari Basuki said the three police officers had given clear instructions to their subordinates to fire tear gas.

“They did not consider the risk factors,” Basuki said. “Their order to fire (tear gas) was a form of negligence and carelessness that built up the risk of a panicked crowd fleeing for exits of the stadium and a crush.”

The defendants ignored the 2021 safety and security regulations made by the national soccer association that firearms and mass dispersal weapons may not be carried into nor used in the stadium, he said.

Prosecutors said the crowd’s panic at the half-open stadium caused a buildup at exits 3, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14, where many fans were crushed and trampled.

They also said PT Liga Indonesia Baru, the organiser of the soccer league, had not verified the safety of the stadium since 2020 and Arema FC’s organising committee “did not prepare an emergency plan.”

Authorities in Surabaya, the capital of East Java province, deployed 1,600 security forces Monday, including police and soldiers, in and around the Surabaya



A man stands near a broken gate with graffiti "my brother was killed, investigate thoroughly," and "Goodbye my brother" at Kanjuruhan Stadium where a deadly crush broke out on Saturday night, in Malang, Indonesia, Monday, Oct. 3, 2022. An Indonesian court began trial Monday, Jan. 16, 2023, against five men on charges of negligence leading to deaths of 135 people after police fired tear gas inside the stadium, setting off a panicked run for the exits in which many were crushed. (AP Photo/Achmad Ibrahim, File)

District Court, and the trial is being held remotely for added security.

Arema fans, known widely as “Aremania,” are prohibited from coming to Surabaya during the trial to avoid possible clashes with Persebaya fans.

Rini Hanifah, a mother of three who is seeking justice for her son Agus Riansyah who died at the deadly crush, said she is disappointed by the fact that only five people went on trial for such a huge number of victims.

“I really hope that justice is truly upheld through this trial, for us little people who don’t understand why this could happen,” Hanifah said with tears running down her face.

National Police Chief Listyo Sigit Prabowo re-

moved the police chiefs of East Java province and Malang district and suspended 20 other officers over violations of professional ethics since the tragedy.

Listyo said several criminal experts have been involved in investigations and none of them concluded the case meets the elements of murder or premeditated murder.

The National Human Rights Commission said the Kanjuruhan tragedy was not a serious human rights violation.

Widodo’s fact-finding team, which included government officials, soccer and security experts and activists, also concluded the national soccer association PSSI had been negligent

and ignored safety and security regulations. They urged its chair and executive committee to quit.

A three-judge panel set the next hearing for Jan. 23, when the five defendants and their lawyers will respond to the prosecution.

Sumardhan, lawyer for defendant Abdul Haris, Arema FC’s organising committee chair, said they are still studying the prosecutors’ indictment.

“Of course we believe there is no wrongdoing made by our client,” said Sumardhan, who goes by a single name. “We are preparing facts to counter the prosecution against him.”

About 140 witnesses are expected to testify in the court hearings, prosecutors said.

Sports News



Black Hawks, Crushers lead Zone A in ABCA 10 Splash

PIC Insurance Liberta Black Hawks and Pigotts Crushers both claimed their third wins to share the top of the standings in Zone A of the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) 10 Splash on Sunday, 15th January.

Liberta Black Hawks snatched a 13-run victory over Rising Sun Spartans in the last game of a Zone A triple header at the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium.

Liberta made 78 for 5 off their 10 overs after winning the toss and deciding to bat.

Joshua Thomas top scored with 34 off 21 balls with 3 sixes and 2 fours. Opener Avier Christian contributed 25 off 19 balls.

In reply, Rising Sun Spartans could only muster 65 for 4 in their allotted overs with Amahl Nathaniel picking up 2 wickets for 13 runs.

Malinga Bruney hit an unbeaten 19 off 15 balls, Shaquan Hewlett made 11 not out and captain Kerry Mentore scored 10 for Rising Sun who succumbed to their second loss in five matches to remain third in the Zone A standings with 10 points.

Their third win in four matches lifted Liberta Black Hawks to 14 points to put them on par with Pigotts Crushers who beat Bolans

Blasters by seven wickets in Sunday's opening encounter.

Set 77 to win, Pigotts Crushers achieved victory by reaching the required target for the loss of 3 wickets with 7 balls to spare.

Jewel Andrew hit 22 off 19 balls. Opener Essan Warner scored 16 from 11 balls, Daren Benta struck 13 not out and Kadeem Henry scored 12.

Bolans Blasters, who won the toss and opted to bat, could only muster 76 for 4 off their 10 overs.

Dwayne Fordyce top scored with an unbeaten 29 off 18 balls with 3 sixes and a four.

Bolans' captain, Taeim Tonge, chipped in 17 off 18 balls and Crushers' skipper Elroy Francis Jr. picked up 2 wickets for 27 runs.

Their fifth loss in as many matches ensured Bolans Blasters remained firmly rooted at the bottom of the Zone A standings without a point.

New Winthropes Lions, meanwhile, claimed their second win in five matches to advance to 10 points by pulling off a 20-run victory over Police in the second match on Sunday.

Chasing 104 to win their second match in the competition, Police were restricted to 83 for 6 off 10 overs as New Winthropes' skipper, Nino Henry, snapped up 3



PIC Insurance's Joshua Thomas (left) accepts the Man of the Match award from First Vice-President of the Antigua Cricket Association, Kenny Lewis, after his team's ABCA 10 Splash victory over the Rising Sun Spartans at the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium on Sunday, 15th January 2023. (Photo: ABCA)

wickets for 11 runs.

Jeron Jones was not out on 17, Vincent Shadrach Jr. got 15 and Tarick Prince made 11 for Police as they slipped to their second loss in five outings to remain on 8 points.

Opener, Jermain Otto, slammed an unbeaten half century to lift New Winthropes Lions to 103 for 3 after winning the toss and opting to bat.

Otto hammered 52, not

out, off 34 balls with 4 sixes and 2 fours while Henry hit a quick-fire 21 off 9 balls with 2 sixes and a four.

The competition continues with a Zone A double header at the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium today.

Pigotts Crushers will take on the Liberta Black Hawks in a top of the table clash at 2:30pm, while All Saints Pythons will meet Freetown at 5:30pm.



Coach Rohan "Porridge" Benjamin (right, standing) and ABICE celebrate with the Under-20 Boys' Division trophy after defeating All Saints Secondary in the final at the ABFA's Technical Center at Paynters on Friday, 13th January, 2023. (Photo: Elwin Francis)

ABICE capture Senior Boys' Division

The Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education (ABICE) has won the Under-20 or Senior Boys' Division of the 2022/23 Ministry of Sports Secondary Schools' Football League.

ABICE secured the championship by overcoming All Saints Secondary 5 - 4 on penalties in a keenly contested final at the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Technical Center last Friday.

The game was decided by penalties after both teams played to a 0 - 0 draw at the end of regulation time.

ABICE and their supporters burst into jubilation after Roshane Brookes scored the fifth and winning penalty to secure the title.

Coach Rohan "Porridge" Benjamin, who is also the coordinator of the schools' football programme, expressed his happiness with ABICE's success.

"I am feeling very happy with these boys here.

"When I arrived there, I told them that we have a goal and the goal is to win this championship. We can do it!" Benjamin said.

"We have good talent, they always have good talent, but you see that the discipline wasn't there. So, I tried to instill that as early as possible and these guys are wonderful guys.

"I am actually in their chat group, learning some of these language that they are speaking."

Coach Curtis Charles also expressed his satisfaction with the way All Saints Secondary played during the season in which their loss to AC-BICE was their only defeat in the Under-20 Boys campaign.

"I think that the boys played very, very well. The only thing is that we didn't score during regular time.

"This game is the only game that

we would have lost out of fifteen games for the season," Charles said.

"I think the guys have done very, very well, and so, I must congratulate them.

"I must also congratulate the winners, ABICE. They played well.

"It was a good experience. We started training since March (2022) and I was really expecting these guys to take the trophy this time around, but it didn't happen. However, I think that they played very, very well."

Ottos Comprehensive School captured the bronze medal by prevailing 1 - 0 over the Antigua State College in the third-place playoff at the same venue last Friday.

Joshua Arias scored the lone goal of the match.

These encounters brought the curtains down on the 2022/23 Secondary Schools' Football League which kicked off in October last year.

Villa Lions beat Five Islands to move to third in Premier League

Villa Lions romped to a 5-0 victory over Five Islands to move into third place in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Sunday, 15th January.

Villa scored four goals late in the second half after Jaheim Ferron's 18th minute conversion gave the Lions a 1-0 halftime lead in the first game of a triple header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Forward, Joshua Ferdinand, scored twice in four minutes with goals in the 81st and 84th minutes.

One minute later, Sean Tomlinson's conversion propelled Villa Lions to a 4-0 advantage.

Striker Tejhano Jarvis completed Villa's onslaught against Five Islands when he found the back of the net with a strike in the 90th minute.

Their fifth win in seven matches has lifted Villa Lions to join Jennings Grenades on 15 points, 3 points adrift of leaders, All Saints United.

Jennings Grenades, however, occupy second place ahead of Villa Lions



Villa Lions beat Five Islands to move into third place of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's Premier Division League at the ABFA Technical Center on Sunday. (File photo)

by virtue of a superior goal difference.

Their sixth loss in seven appearances ensured Five Islands remained second from bottom of the standings on one point.

Shalon Knight scored a brace to give Swetes a 2-1 victory over Empire in Sunday's feature match.

Knight scored on either side of halftime with goals in the 44th and 54th minute to give Swetes a 2-0 lead.

Jevaughn Jarvis scored a late consolation goal for Empire with an 88th minute conversion.

The result carried Swetes into fifth place on 14 points from seven outings while Empire's fourth loss in six encounters left them in 12th position on six points.

Old Road and Pigotts Bullets fought to a goalless draw in the second match on Sunday.

The result lifted Old Road to fourth place, with 14 points from their seven matches, ahead of Swetes by virtue of a superior goal difference.

The result also allowed Pigotts Bullets to leapfrog Empire into 11th place by

advancing to 7 points from six appearances.

Meanwhile, matches in the ABFA Second Division resume today.

Golden Grove will take on English Harbour at the Golden Grove playing field at 5pm.

Freemans Village will face Bethesda at Freemans Village at 4:30pm.

Belmont will oppose Sea View Farm at Belmont at 4:30pm while CPTSA Wings will clash against Attacking Saints at the Clare Hall Secondary School playing field at 4:30pm.