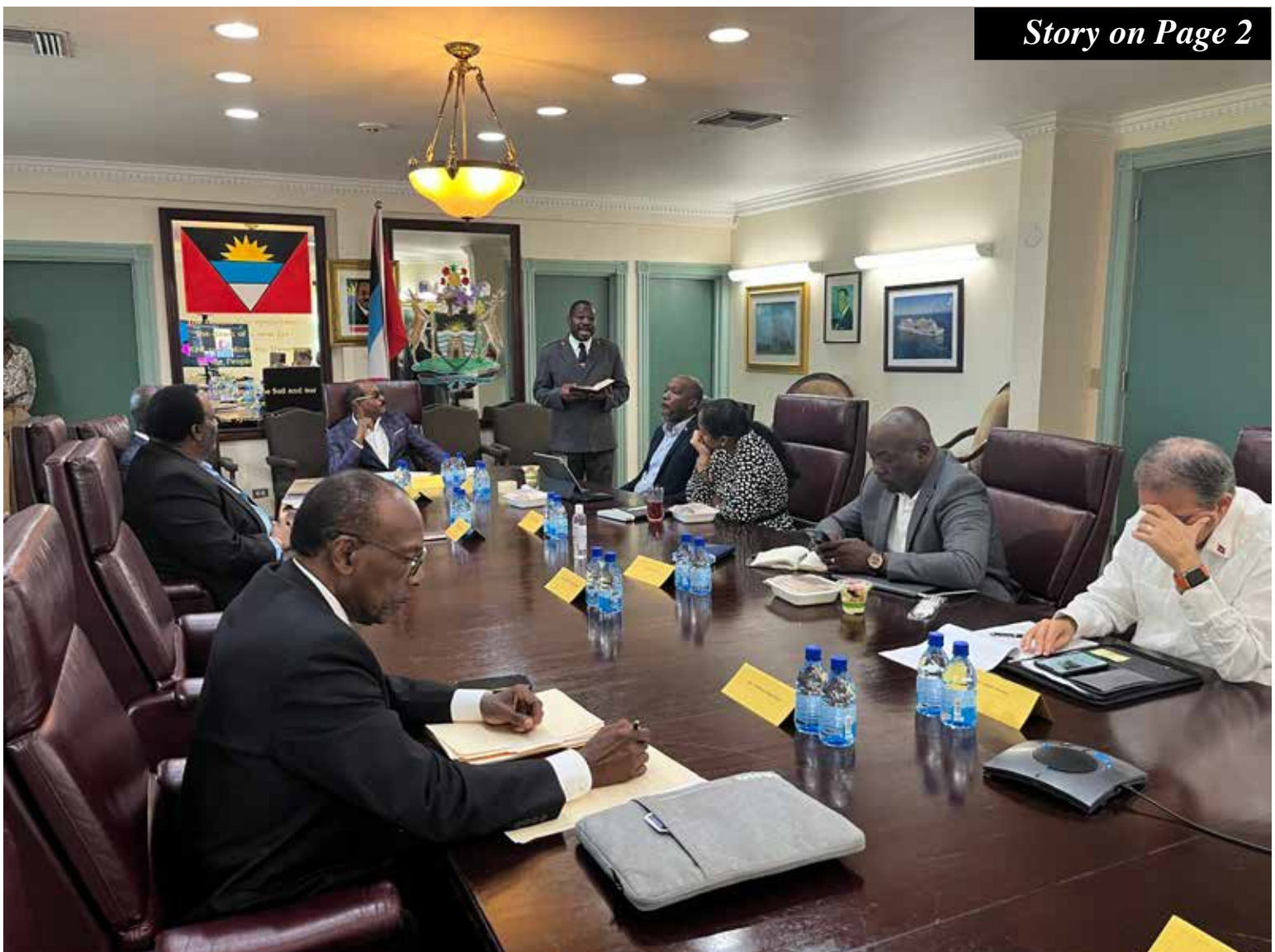


THURSDAY 26TH JANUARY 2023 | VOLUME 4 ISSUE 18 | WWW.POINTVILLE.AG

NEW CABINET CONVENES



New Cabinet starts first meeting with a message, prayer

The new Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda, with chairman, Prime Minister Gaston Browne presiding, began its first post-Election meeting on Wednesday with a message and prayer.

Led by the Salvation Army's Major Raymond Cill Pierre, the prayer requested God's favour on the cabinet collectively, and for each member individually, as they manage the affairs of the nation for another five years.

Each month, a member of the clergy from one of the denominations in Antigua and Barbuda prays with the cabinet at the start of its weekly Wednesday meeting.

The cabinet is composed of the cabinet secretary, the prime minister

and the seven ministers who have been appointed and given portfolios.

The other elected member of the ABLP has been appointed Deputy Speaker and cannot, under the constitution, be a member of the cabinet.

All members of the cabinet were present at Wednesday's meeting, including Foreign Minister E. P. Chet Greene who joined via ZOOM from Argentina where he represented the country at the CELAC summit on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the cabinet invited the Director, Permanent Secretary and Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Works to reset the ministry now that a new minister has been appointed.

It was decided that all contracts emanating from the Ministry of Works will come before cabinet for approval in order to maintain the transparency that the ABLP administration has pursued since taking power in 2014.

Similar contract reviews will also now occur for those entered into by the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA) and Central Board of Health (CBH).

The Cabinet applauded the new Minister of Works, Maria Browne, and the technical team for acting to resurface Loblolly Street with concrete.

Already the cement, steel, aggregates and machines necessary to complete the project are being moved into

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Tourism recovery continues, but figures lag behind 2019

There are signs that the hotel sector continues to improve following the two years of stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, however, recent figures indicate that the industry still lags behind the record breaking 2019 performance.

The latest statistics released by the Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourist Association (ABHTA) show that hotel occupancy in 2022 was 74.6 percent.

While this is better than 2021's 70.4 percent, 2020's 44.8 percent and 2019 at 69.4 percent, the ABHTA noted that the 15,000 room nights that were available in 2019 were closed in 2022.

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place to complete the road which is just over 100 yards long.

Minister Browne also reported that the resurfacing work on Anchorage Road has been halted until new water pipes have been installed in the area as the existing network of pipes is more than 60 years old.

The cabinet also agreed on Wednesday to settle overtime payments due to quarry workers. The money to meet the outstanding obligation to the workers will be transferred from the Citizenship by Investment Programme.

When 2022's occupancy rate is adjusted with this fact in mind, the average falls to 62.2 percent.

Arrivals in December 2022, were down across the board from those recorded in 2019. A look at arrivals from the four top source markets reflected that trend.

The overall arrivals

in December 2022, were 30,656. In 2019, the figure recorded was 37,818.

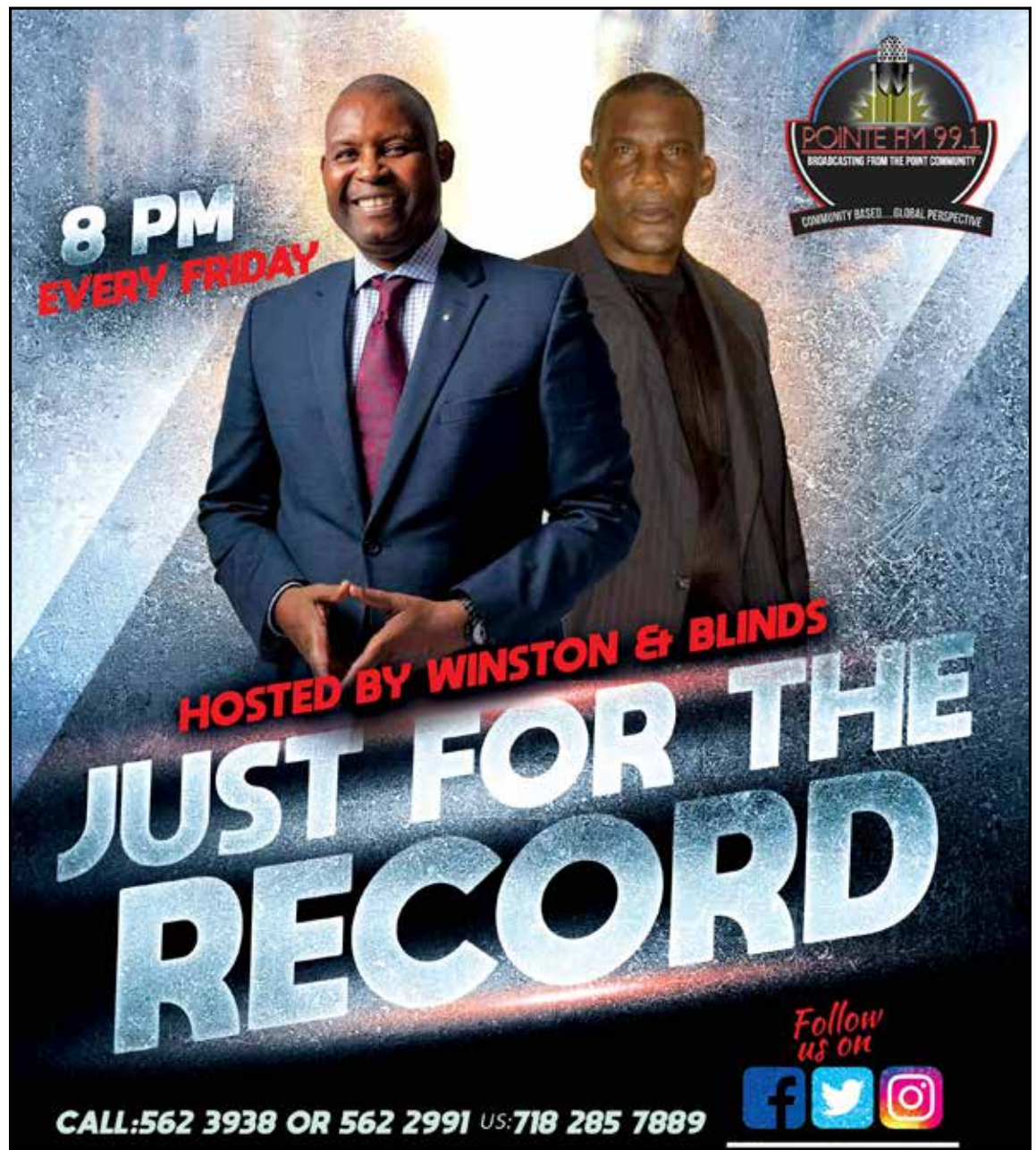
December arrivals from the country's main source market, the United States, stood at 14,715 compared with 15,662 for the same month in 2019.

From the United Kingdom, 7,852 arrivals were recorded in December 2022

compared with 9,278 for the same month in 2019.

Arrivals from Canada were 3,576 for the period under review compared with 5,077 in December 2019.

Arrivals from the Caribbean were also down last month when compared with the same month in 2019, 2,429 versus 3,874.






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More drugs trafficked through GPO

Police are investigating yet another incident of drug smuggling through the General Post Office.

On Monday, the Customs Task Force and Police K-9 Unit conducted a joint operation which resulted in the discovery of four vacuum-sealed packages that were concealed in a cardboard box.

Upon opening the parcel which was mailed to Antigua and Barbuda from the United States of America, a substance believed to be marijuana was discovered.



The value of the cannabis found is estimated at EC\$20,000.00.

Police have not indicated whether they have identified anyone involved in

the importation of the controlled substance.

This is the third major drug discovery since the start of 2023.

On 9th January,

EC\$24,000.00 worth of marijuana was discovered at the FedEx office located at the V. C. Bird International Airport cargo bay in an operation conducted by the police Narcotics Unit and Customs Enforcement Department.

Days earlier on 6th January, fifty-two vacuum-sealed packages of cannabis, weighing 52 pounds, were discovered at the Deep Water Harbour.

The value of that seizure was estimated at EC\$312,000.00.

Mixed reviews for ECAB's integration of former Scotiabank clients

The integration of former Scotiabank customers into the Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank is receiving mixed reviews.

As the process picked up pace, the signature red Scotiabank debit cards were deactivated last weekend and the new ECAB debit cards activated. But the integration has not been smooth for everyone and this has resulted in long lines at the bank's branches.

From re-pinning of cards, to collection of new cards and requests for access to accounts online have resulted in long queues and dissatisfaction expressed by some former Scotiabank customers. Additionally, the bank has indicated that not all the services they of-

fer will be available at every branch. Customers will now have to familiarise themselves with locations that will handle specific transactions.

Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank has utilized mainly the internet and newspapers to publish its notices on the integration. However, it appears the information did not reach all of its clients, especially the elderly.

Not all of the experiences have been unpleasant. Some customers have spoken of the pleasant encounters they have had with the bank's staff both in-person and via the hotline service.

In October, 2020, ECAB confirmed the purchase of Scotiabank Antigua's Branch, following



approval of the sale by the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB).

ECAB completed the acquisition of Scotiabank in 2021, ending more than 50 years of the Canadian financial institution's presence in Antigua and Barbuda.

The Government of Prime Minister Gaston Browne had rejected the sale of Scotiabank that sold its operations in nine Ca-

ribbean countries, including Antigua and Barbuda to Republic Financial Holdings Ltd.

Mr. Browne was determined that a local banking consortium be given the first right of refusal in the sale and declined the issuance of a vesting order unless that was done.

In the end, Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank acquired Scotiabank's Antigua and Barbuda branch.

CARPHA urges vigilance as mosquito-borne diseases surge

The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) has issued an advisory for the public to remain vigilant as arboviral diseases such as dengue, chikungunya and Zika are still circulating in the Caribbean.

Nine years ago, outbreaks of chikungunya and Zika in the region triggered panicked responses as both can cause moderate to severe health consequences, with young children and older people at higher risk.

Dengue poses a similar level of threat with the highest risk existing among the same groups.

Symptoms of Zika include rash, fever, muscle and joint pain, and conjunctivitis.

Zika has been confirmed as a cause of congenital abnormalities in neonates of women infected with Zika virus during pregnancy and is also a trigger of Guillain-Barré Syndrome.

Symptoms of dengue include rash, fever, muscle and joint pain, and nausea, while chikungunya may cause similar symptoms with muscle and joint pain persisting for an extended period.

As a result of the serious health consequences of these diseases, all of which are spread by mosquitoes, CARPHA is stressing the importance of prevention and control measures to re-

duce the transmission of these viruses.

CARPHA said it is critical that Ministries of Health continue public education campaigns to remind people of the importance of keeping their surroundings free of mosquito breeding sites and avoiding mosquito bites.

Measures that can be taken include keeping water storage containers tightly covered, discarding stagnant water from vases, old tyres, and other items in which water can collect and become breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

As travel to the Caribbean returns to prepandemic levels and with the presence of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito which transmits dengue, chikungunya and Zika, CARPHA is urging its member states to remain vigilant for signs that these diseases may be present in their populations.

CARPHA's Executive Director, Dr. Joy St. John gave the assurance that the organisation is committed to



Dr. Joy St. John

strengthening public health systems for early detection and response to the emergence, re-emergence, and spread of arboviral infections.

“The CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory (CMML) has the capacity and remains ready to test

and provide diagnostic confirmation of suspected cases in the Region,” she said.

“Member States must maintain a strategic approach to surveillance and sample collection and submission to increase our chances of early identification of infections.”

Thu 26 Day 80° Intervals of clouds and sunshine. High around 80F. Winds ENE at 10 to 20 mph.		Thu 26 Night 72° Mainly clear skies. Low 72F. Winds NE at 5 to 10 mph.	
5% ENE 14 mph	22% NE 10 mph	Humidity 66%	UV Index 9 of 10
Sunrise 6:39 am	Sunset 5:59 pm	Humidity 76%	UV Index 0 of 10
Moonrise 10:27 am	Moonset 11:00 pm	Waxing Crescent	

IICA to facilitate rural tourism course

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) is offering a rural tourism online course that explores rural tourism options and opportunities.

The programme aims to take the learner through the stages of planning and execution of a rural tourism enterprise. It is adapted to the Caribbean context and takes advantage of IICA's many years of experience advocating for closer linkages between agriculture and tourism and promoting tourism enterprises in rural communities.

Rural tourism is an alternative to the traditional sun, sand and sea tourism for which the Caribbean is tradi-

tionally known.

The course introduces the learner to rural tourism as a subset of the global tourism industry and outlines a range of opportunities in the sub-sector and aims to provide knowledge of the approaches and steps required to undertake the analysis and preparatory activities to implement and manage a rural tourism enterprise.

Those being targeted by organizers are entrepreneurs who wish to start a rural tourism business or improve on an existing venture. Also, employees of entities involved in tourism, agriculture and rural development, such as ministries of tourism, agriculture and

community development.

Individuals involved in or are interested in farming, food and hospitality, nature and cultural and heritage enterprises can also apply.

The online course will open for registered students in March 2023 and the start date will be made available during that month. Students must complete the course in a 10-week period. Approximately three hours of course involvement are estimated weekly.

Registration for the course will remain open until 28th February, 2022.

Interested persons can visit the Ministry of Tourism's Facebook page for more information.



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JOIN OUR TEAM

CAREER OPPORTUNITY: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

The Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) is seeking a highly motivated and experienced **Human Resources Manager** to join our team. The successful candidate will play a key role in developing and implementing HR strategies and programs that support the overall mission and objectives of the organization.

Key Responsibilities:

1. *Identifying ABTA's immediate, mid-term and long-term staffing needs and guiding an organizational culture that aligns with the business and employer brands*

2. *Recruiting, selecting, and hiring talent*

Completing cost effective recruitment and selection activities and ensuring compliance with applicable labour law in Antigua and Barbuda and across the overseas offices

3. *Managing a comprehensive compensation program*

Maintaining a cost-effective and competitive compensation and benefits program in alignment with the ABTA's Compensation Philosophy

4. *Designing and executing employee engagement activities*

Maximizing individual and collective employee performance by designing and implementing engagement plans and activities that recognize and reward performance, build talent, capacity performance... Designing and delivering or coordinating learning opportunities Working collaboratively within the Employee Engagement Advisory Committee

5. *Counselling and coaching at all levels*

Guiding and advising members of the leadership team and individual employees on relevant matters, maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality. Employing progressive discipline

6. *Performing relevant and related duties, as necessary, to maintain the smooth business operations of the ABTA*

Qualifications:

- *Master's Degree in Human Resource Management or related field and 2 years experience as a Human Resource Manager*

- *Bachelor's Degree in Human Resource Management or Business Administration or related field and 4 years experience as a Human Resource Manager*

- *Sound communication skills*

- *Sound knowledge of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Code*

If you are a strategic thinker with a passion for HR and a desire to make a positive impact on our organization, we encourage you to apply for this exciting opportunity. The ABTA is committed to diversity and inclusion and encourages applications from candidates from all backgrounds.

Please submit your resume and a cover letter outlining your qualifications and experience to HR@visitaandb.com by **Wednesday February 1 2023**.



JOIN OUR TEAM

CAREER OPPORTUNITY: CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

The Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) is seeking a highly motivated, highly qualified, and experienced **Chief Marketing Officer (Consultant)** - to join our team. The successful candidate will play a key role in the support and management of the Marketing Change process.

The position of Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) is a two (2) year consultancy reporting to the CEO. The successful applicant will be required to create a supportive environment and implement sound and reasoned systems that coordinate the strategic marketing plan. This is to be done simultaneously while promoting growth and exploiting new marketing opportunities for the destination.

Key Responsibilities:

1. *Evaluating and strengthening, as necessary, the marketing service relationships (PR, Advertising, etc.) across the ABTA to maximize results with minimal waste (human, financial, etc.)*

2. *Guiding the Marketing Pillars Teams in a coordinated development and execution of the strategic marketing plan, e.g.*

- a. *prioritizing and scheduling high return activities across the Pillars*
- b. *translating KPIs to tangible actions*
- c. *evaluating ROI and other KPIs, Etc.*

3. *Collaborating with the HR Manager (HRM) to review the alignment of the matrix structure to the ABTA purpose by:*

- a. *Defining marketing service gaps*
- b. *Identifying growth areas of individual team members*
- c. *Delivering tailored hands-on learning opportunities, etc.*
- d. *Conducting objective assessment of team members to identify an empowered successor while boosting team morale and engagement, etc.*
- e. *Strengthening market research and analysis methods*

Qualifications:

- *Master's Degree in Business Management, Tourism, Marketing or related field and 5 years' experience in the capacity of Destination Marketing Management*

- *Bachelor's Degree in Marketing, Tourism or Business Administration or related field and 8 years' experience as a Destination Marketing Manager*

- *Sound communication skills*

- *Strong organisation and planning skills*

- *Sound knowledge of Destination Marketing with experience in the digital arena*

If you are a strategic, analytical thinker with a passion for Destination Marketing who is results oriented with a desire to make a positive impact on our organization, we encourage you to apply for this exciting opportunity. The ABTA is committed to diversity and inclusion and encourages suitably qualified applications from candidates from all backgrounds.

Please submit your resume and a cover letter outlining your qualifications and experience to HR@visitaandb.com by **Wednesday February 1st 2023**.

Desperation is bankruptcy – Collateral consequences of Bowen

By *Francesca Sterling*

The 2023 elections of Antigua and Barbuda was unlike any other in its history. The underlying gangsterism motif during this election only served to diminish the attempt at curating positive campaign messaging and increased doubts among many in the electorate. Bullying tactics play no constructive role in our society and it should not be supported by anyone.

The most abhorrent result stemming from the 2023 election was the notorious election of a formerly convicted felon who appealed his case, and won it, not on the basis of the facts of the killing of the lady victim, but rather on judicial procedure. The appeal allowed for a retrial at the discretion of the Director of Public Prosecutions. This retrial never occurred. Now, Sherfield Bowen, the formerly convicted felon who served part of his sentence in prison will have the privilege of holding a seat in the sacred House of Assembly as a lawmaker.

Why in the World is it much harder to be selected as a beauty pageant contestant than a person seeking to contest elections in Antigua and Barbuda?

This option, of Sherfield Bowen, should have never been imposed by the United Progressive Party (UPP) leadership on the people of Antigua and Barbuda. It is an injustice and a reckless act. While the Constitution of Antigua and Barbuda is quite clear on what merits the disqualification of those seeking to be elected into our National Assembly, the leadership of the UPP should have been guided by a moral compass instead of misjudg-

ment clouded by the desire for power.

Section 39 (1) (e) of the Constitution of Antigua and Barbuda states that “No person shall be qualified to be elected as a member of the House who - ...has been sentenced to imprisonment (by whatever name called) for a term of or exceeding twelve months...”. Sherfield Bowen served approximately two and half years in prison out of his 5-year sentence for manslaughter. As mentioned before, he appealed his case, and in 2007, the Appeal ruled that his criminal case for the fatal shooting of his lady victim, who carried no weapon on her person, be placed on retrial at the discretion of the Director of Public Prosecutions. The retrial never occurred.

The Antigua and Barbuda public, under the Gaston Browne administration, saw two resignations on account of criminal indictments levied against two elected Ministers of Government. As highlighted before, one needs to be sentenced to imprisonment for a “term of or exceeding twelve months” in order to be disqualified from serving as a member in our sacred Parliament, but Prime Minister Gaston Browne knew that harboring any possible criminal element in his government until a verdict was rendered would only denigrate the public trust and compromise the principles of good governance – transparency and accountability.

As a result of these two resignations, and a subsequent suspension of a Minister for not acting as a team player within his Ministerial role, the Gaston Browne administration suffered the collateral consequences of

these irresponsible figures.

I for one, can only surmise that it was by divine intervention that the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party won by one seat. That was not luck. That was fate.

If the United Progressive Party was capable of bending the rules in desperation and lowering its standard for presenting sub-par candidates to the electorate, then I certainly could not have rested well at night had they won this 2023 election. And so long as Bowen is on the slate, the United Progressive Party will not win any other.

Let’s imagine the unthinkable for a moment. Could you really imagine Sherfield Bowen as Minister with responsibility for Gender Affairs – meeting survivors of gender-based violence and advocates against violence against women and girls at local, regional and international conferences? Could you really envisage Sherfield Bowen as Minister of Foreign Affairs meeting with other foreign dignitaries and foreign leaders? Trust that they would not meet him, and no one would wish to work with him. Bowen would not have commanded the respect required to fulfill any Ministerial role. It is unthinkable.

Desperation is bankruptcy. That entire UPP slate is bankrupt from it all, including moral competence.

While he may have willingly accepted the call by the opposition to contest these recent elections as a choice for St. Phillip South, Sherfield Bowen should never have been imposed as the opposition choice for the electorate.

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Five ways to be calm – and why it matters

By **Lindsay Baker**

Is being calm about passivity and numbness, or is it a superpower that makes us strong? Lindsay Baker explores the ideas behind serenity, and ways that we can achieve it.

Is calmness a passive state of being, involving numbing oneself to what's really going on? Is it in some cases unnatural – sociopathic even? Or is a sense of tranquillity one of the greatest qualities we can have? Here are five ideas about calmness, from the philosophy of serenity, to the music, art and poetry that can make us feel peaceful – and how to find our "flow".

More like this:

- Eight nature books to change your life
- The sci-fi genre offering hope
- Inside Japan's most minimalist homes

Stoic serenity

"Stay calm and serene regardless of what life throws at you," advised the Roman philosopher Marcus Aurelius. Sounds easier said than done, you would think. But in fact, the Stoic Aurelius had a knack for making calmness seem easy to achieve.

Aurelius's famous work *Meditations* is, according to John Sellars – author and Reader at Royal Holloway,

University of London – all about "putting our everyday cares and concerns into wider perspective". As emperor of Rome, Aurelius faced huge pressures but, Sellars tells BBC Culture: "He often reminds himself how brief his life is compared to the vastness of time, and how small it is compared to the whole of the cosmos."

In line with his Stoic life view, Aurelius also reminds himself constantly that "whatever frustration or negative emotions he might be feeling are ultimately the product of his own judgments or interpretations about situations, and so, as a consequence, things within

his power to control," says Sellars.

In order to make good decisions we need a calm frame of mind so that we can pause and reflect, rather than behaving merely reactively – John Sellars

But why the emphasis on being calm? Is it really that important to find peace? In the Stoic mindset, it seems, calmness is everything – it is strength. As Aurelius writes in *Meditations*: "The nearer a man comes to a calm mind, the closer he is to strength."

Sellars explains: "Calmness is essential to living a good, happy life, Marcus and his fellow Stoics would insist. This is because a disturbed or troubled mind isn't going to be able to make sensible, rational decisions. The person in the grip of violent emotions, for instance, literally isn't thinking straight. They have been overcome and may act impulsively or violently. In order to make good decisions we need a calm frame of mind so that we can pause and reflect, rather than behaving merely reactively."

According to the Stoics, we just need to see that calmness is within our control. Whatever is going on in the world, "it all depends on our judgments and inter-

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Never in my life would I have expected to learn that anyone would be so desperate to elect an individual who irresponsibly used his gun to kill someone. Why was the gun even taken out? During the trial, Bowen said it was instinct. How nice. Instinct is me breathing air.

Even if a grossly fecal job was done in St. Phillip South by the incumbent Labour candidate that caused voters to suffocate in that constituency to the point of desperation to vote for a man convicted of manslaughter, the vote in favor of Bowen cannot be forgiven. I do not know Antigua and Barbuda people to be submissive and uncreative.

I implore that the people of St. Phillip South and Antigua and Barbuda pressure the leadership of the United Progressive Party to remedy their mistake by petition-

ing Sherfield Bowen to vacate his seat and call a by-election in St. Phillip South where a quality candidate who has never been convicted of a felony can be put in place there. We have upstanding and worthy members in our society who are qualified to represent our country and the people of St. Phillip South.

Even though Sherfield Bowen won his appeal, a life was lost in the end. We must vote with a conscience and not out of desperation.

(Franchesca Sterling is an advisor to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, with previous experience as a litigation specialist at Whiteford Taylor and Preston, LLP. She holds a BA in Political Science and Spanish Studies, and a Masters in International Business. The views expressed in this article are solely her own.)

Lifestyle

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pretations of situations, not the situations themselves," explains Sellars. The philosopher Epictetus, he adds, who was Aurelius's primary influence, wrote: "When we are frustrated, angry or unhappy, never hold anyone except ourselves – that is, our judgements – accountable."

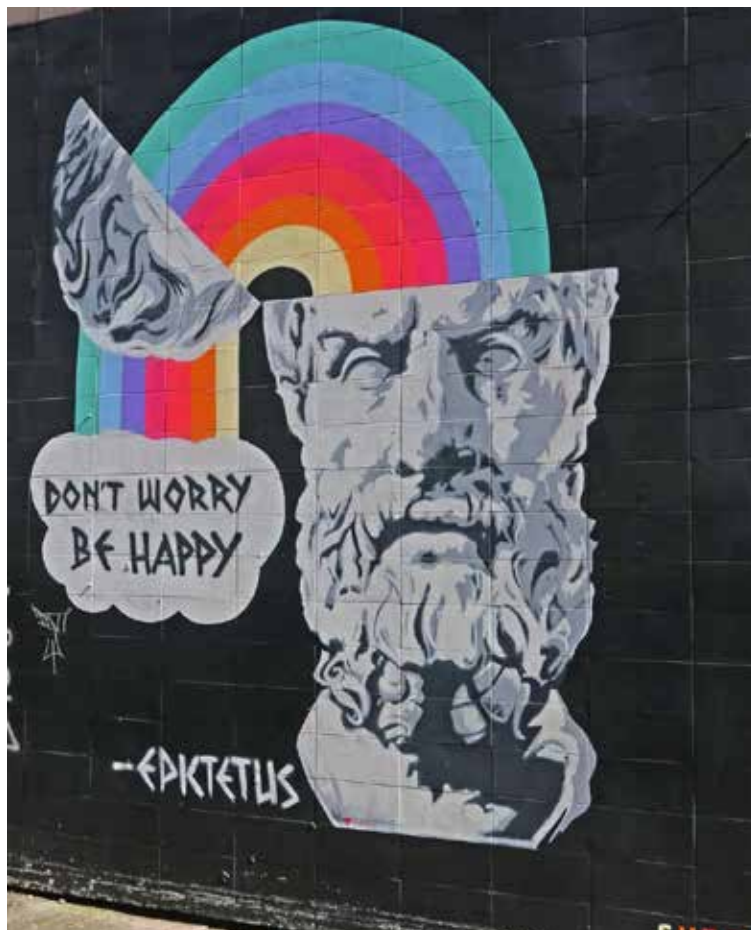
This core Stoic idea was, says Sellars, "a huge influence on the founders of modern cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and its effectiveness has been proven by the many studies of CBT that have been made".

Electronic escape

From supposedly soothing pan pipes to ambient rainforest sounds, we are all accustomed to the stock idea of soundscapes as a calming backdrop. But of course the sounds that each of us find restful are by definition a personal thing, and there is no one-size-fits-all soundtrack that will promote peacefulness for all.

Just as the Stoics emphasised perspective and how small each of us is compared to the whole of the cosmos, electronic music artist George FitzGerald looked to the universe and the stars for inspiration for his 2022 album *Stellar Drifting*.

The musician told *MusicTech*: "To me, [space] represented the furthest point away; the grandest vision of humanity." FitzGerald spent time in New Mexico driving in the desert and



The philosopher Epictetus and other Stoics believed that finding calm was essential – and within our control (Credit: Alamy)

stargazing. "Space gets you out of yourself. It reminds you that we're tiny and insignificant."

He took images of the universe collected by Nasa and, by feeding them into new software programmes, converted them into sounds, which he then developed into the 10 tracks on the album. He also used audio recordings from probes that were floating around the solar system.

Electronic, garage and house music have for decades been a form of escapism, first evolving in the interesting margins of society, and uniting disparate groups. And according to FitzGerald, the stars in the sky are an escapism, one that connects all of us. Prob-

ably the most calming track on the album is *Setting Sun*, to be enjoyed not necessarily on a busy dancefloor, but rather lying on a sofa or standing on a hillside, contemplating the vastness of the universe – and our own insignificance.

Art of tranquillity

Likewise in visual art, one viewer's tranquil, meditative experience is another's intense psychodrama. The *New Yorker* describes the work of Swedish artist Hilma af Kilmnt as "fearfully esoteric" and resonating with a "restlessly searching mood in present culture". For other spectators, masterpieces such as *The Ten Largest, Group IV, No. 3 Youth 1907* are quintessentially peaceful in their enig-

matic otherworldliness.

A Swedish mystic and painter, Af Klint developed her own lexicon of pastel-hued shapes several years ahead of other more feted abstract artists. An exhibition this April at London's Tate Modern will explore her work alongside that of Piet Mondrian. "At the heart of both of their artistic journeys was a shared desire to understand the forces behind life on Earth," says Tate.

Like others before her, Af Klint viewed our existence as only a small element in the larger scheme of things

Af Klint began her career as a landscape painter, inspired by nature, and then her work began to represent natural forms that veered towards abstraction. Spirituality, theosophy and philosophy were central to her out-there vision, and her work reflects that sense of something bigger than us at play – in fact she actually believed her works were painted under the direction of higher spirits. Like others before her, she viewed our existence as only a small element in the larger scheme of things.

Undeniably woo-woo though her vision was, her interest in metaphysics and theosophy was intricate, even semi-scientific, and with its own internal logic – she was drawn to both the spiritualist writings of the founder of the Theosophical Society, Madam Blavatsky,

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and the philosophical ideas of the Medieval mystic Christian Rosenkreuz. She wanted her work to facilitate spiritual mediation that would transcend physical reality, and to visualise a kind of astral world.

Who knows the precise motivation or meaning behind these extraordinary, liminal, enigmatic artworks? And perhaps that mystery and other-worldliness is what makes the act of looking at them, to some of us at least, such a profoundly peaceful experience.

Harmony of haiku

The traditional form of Japanese poetry, haiku, which consists of 17 syllables in three lines, is widely considered to have a calming effect on the reader. The structure of haiku follows a strict syllable count, and it encourages the poet to focus on a single image or moment, which in itself has a meditative effect.

The use of nature imagery in haiku also evokes feelings of serenity and peace. The brevity and simplicity of haiku allows the reader to contemplate and consider the meaning and the imagery without feeling overwhelmed by excessive ideas and language.

Matsuo Bashō of the Edo period, the best known haiku poet – his complete poetry is translated in the book *On Love and Barley: Haiku of Bashō* – was born in Iga-ueno near Kyoto in 1644, and he began writing verse while acting as a companion to a local aristocrat. Bashō was not only a master of haiku, but also a Buddhist monk and a great traveller – when he travelled he relied entirely on the hospitality of temples and fellow poets.

His gnomic poems combine the Zen idea of a oneness with creation with *kurami*, or lightness of touch. Each of his poems evokes a scene from the natural world – a leaping frog, a summer moon, cherry blossom, winter snow – which suggest the smallness of human life in the context of the vast-

ness of nature. Pithy and spare, his most famous haiku is *The Old Pond*: "Old pond/ A frog jumps in –/ The sound of water". Another is *A Leafless Branch*: "On a leafless branch/ A crow comes to rest –/ Autumn nightfall".

Bashō led a solitary life completely free from possessions. Arguably, his haiku are the result of a keen eye and a meditative mind that have been left clear from the distraction of "stuff", and so he is more alive to the beauty of the world around him – and closer to his own intuition.

As Daisetz T Suzuki writes in *Zen in the Japanese Culture*: "A haiku does not express ideas but... puts forward images reflecting intuitions. These images are not figurative representations made use of by the poetic mind, but they directly point to original intuitions, indeed they are intuitions themselves." The suggestion is that the composition of haiku is so intuitive, it is almost unconscious.

Haiku and their close attention to the details of nature are part of the wider Japanese concepts of *nagomi* and *ikigai*, which roughly translated equate to a sense of meaning and harmony. "[Haiku] gives us an insight into why the word *ikigai* exists in Japanese," writes Yukari Mitsuhashi in *Ikigai: Giving Every Day Meaning and Joy*.

"In our everyday lives, whether we are immersing ourselves in nature or devouring traditional Japanese food, paying attention to detail grabs our focus on to what is right in front of us, instead of wondering about our to-do lists in our head... permitting us to find joy and *ikigai* in simple, everyday things."

And the principles of haiku can be calming when applied to other areas of life, too. In his book *Goodbye Things*, Funio Sasaki writes: "Traditional paintings have few figures in them and value negative space. Japanese calligraphy and brush paintings are in black

and white. Haiku is the shortest poem form in the world. These are a few examples of a minimalistic aesthetic in Japanese art and culture."

In the book, Sasaki, like Bashō all those centuries before, decides to give away most of his possessions, and explores the feeling of calm and tranquillity that results: "There are more things to gain from eliminating excess than you might imagine: time, space, freedom, and energy, for example."

Find your flow

Calmness is regarded by some with suspicion – is a state of calmness really just a state of passivity? A surrender of engagement, giving up, or, worse, a sociopathic disconnection?

But being calm need not equate with being passive or numb. When we're absorbed in something we love – music, gardening, drawing, knitting, writing, whatever it is – we can enter an almost trance-like state of calm, mesmerised by what we are doing. As Mitsuhashi argues in her book about *ikigai*, immersing ourselves in nature or a particular activity makes us focus on what is in front of us, freeing up our minds from other things, and enabling us to find peace.

In her classic work *The Artist's Way*, Julia Cameron encourages the reader to "make a commitment to quiet time". She writes: "Creativity occurs in the moment, and in the moment we are timeless".

And author Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi argues that what really makes us feel not only calm and peaceful, but also glad to be alive, is unlocking a more fulfilling state of being. He calls this state of mind "flow".

In his book *Flow: The Psychology of Happiness*, he throws light on the idea that many philosophers before him have posited – that the way to peace doesn't lie in mindless detachment, but in mindful challenge. Each of us finds our flow in different ways, and our sense of calm.

The mindset to rekindle lost passion

By David Robson

It's easy to lose the spark for work you once loved. Five strategies can help reignite your fire.

I have wanted to be a writer since I first borrowed my parents' old typewriter, aged six. (To my frustration, I wasn't yet allowed on the family PC.) As I saw my thoughts take shape on the blank page, I was instantly hooked.

As an author and journalist, I recognise how lucky I am to be following these childhood ambitions, but I would be lying if I said there aren't regular periods when that passion ebbs. This is particularly so in the dank and dull of London in January, when my mood is already low, and the repetition of the weekly deadlines can start to feel exhausting. I feel like I'm on a never-ending treadmill – and I want to jump off.

I'm hardly alone: as the recent trend in 'quiet quitting' has revealed, many people are losing their enthusiasm for the careers they once loved. You may have done everything within your power to attain the perfect job, and yet the daily grind sometimes saps you of your enthusiasm.

"In my experience with my coaching clients, I would say that is a big issue, and that this problem is growing," says Anna K Schaffner, a life



Taking up a hobby can give you a sense of purpose and achievement, so that your job is not the only place to find satisfaction in your life (Credit: Getty Images)

coach in the UK, who specialises in exhaustion, burnout and resilience, and the author of *The Art of Self-Improvement*.

For some, a loss of passion may be a sign that you need to change careers – but such a drastic move is not always possible. Fortunately, recent studies show that some people naturally apply "cultivation strategies" to reignite their passion and motivation – and there are many ways we can all apply these techniques.

A matter of mindset

The first study comes from Patricia Chen, a professor of psychology at the University of Texas at Austin, US.

Chen's previous research examined the influence of

two different mindsets about passion. So-called "fit theorists" are more likely to endorse statements such as:

I believe that there is a perfect job fit for every individual, and finding the right line of work will determine one's happiness and success at work.

The "develop theorists", in contrast, are more likely to agree with statements such as:

I believe that passion is developed through a learning process within any chosen line of work. The better one gets at one's type of work, the more one will start to love the profession.

Using detailed questionnaires that measure people's mindsets and various workplace outcomes, Chen found

that these beliefs become self-fulfilling prophecies. The fit theorists will struggle to find happiness in a job that doesn't meet their specific criteria. The develop theorists, in contrast, can learn to find enjoyment and interest in the different tasks, so that their satisfaction grows over time, even if the job didn't initially tick all the desired boxes.

Chen's new paper aims to explore how the develop theorists manage their passion in this way. What strategies do they use to fan the flames of their zeal for work?

To find out, she first surveyed 316 undergraduates of various academic disciplines about the ways their passion for their subject had changed throughout time. Crucially,

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this included an open-ended question on what had caused this change in passion.

From the hundreds of responses, the researchers identified five common strategies that the students claimed had raised their motivation. They were:

Recognising personal relevance: A student studying business, for instance, could try to think of the ways that theoretical knowledge would help them to found a start-up.

Recognising societal relevance: A student might ask themselves how the subject could help them to understand the world, and how that knowledge could ultimately benefit others.

Building familiarity: Acquiring new knowledge can itself prime someone's curiosity to know more, as they identify further points of interest, and the very fact of having made progress and mastered difficult tasks can be a reward in itself. So, someone who is feeling demotivated might look for new ways to grow their skill set.

Gaining practical experience: Many of the students found that work placements and internships increased their enthusiasm for their academic studies.

Finding mentors and changing the environment: Students could actively seek teachers that inspired them, or friends who could help to make the work more fun.

Overall, Chen confirmed that the students with the develop mindset were more likely to see positive increases in their passion for their subject over time, and that change was correlated with the number of the passion cultivation strategies that they had used. The students with the fit mindset, in contrast, did not seem to be employing those strategies so effectively.

Making motivation

Chen's findings chime with broader psychological research looking at the ways that people regulate their interest and motivation in their work. Besides confirming the use of the strategies that

Chen had identified – such as identifying the personal or societal relevance of the work – these studies suggest a few other ways of reviving your mojo.

Two of the most useful techniques are “proximal goal setting” and “self-consequating”. These are particularly useful when you feel overwhelmed with a new project, in which the challenge is so great, and the reward so distant, that you struggle to summon up the enthusiasm to get started.

Two of the most useful techniques are ‘proximal goal setting’ and ‘self-consequating’

To apply proximal goal setting, you would split the project into bite-size tasks that are much quicker to complete – allowing you to enjoy the warm feeling of satisfaction when you tick them off your plan. “This can be especially effective if you use little rewards for achieving those goals such as watching Netflix, after you've completed an assignment,” says Maike Trautner, a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Münster, Germany. That's the self-consequating part.

Once again, mindset matters. In a recent study with Malte Schwinger, a professor at Philipps University of Marburg in Germany, Trautner surveyed more than 700 students on the ways they handle their motivation. Just as Chen observed with her work on passion, they found that some students believe that motivation for a task is fixed and unchangeable, while others believe that it can be cultivated. And it is those with the latter mindset who will then look for ways to build their motivation using practical strategies, while those who believed their motivation was beyond their control were less proactive.

Taking action

For people who already have the develop mindset, these strategies may seem obvious. But Chen's work suggests they are in the minority: in her samples, most people had the fit mindset, and could therefore benefit from be-

ing reminded of their potential to build their motivation and passion.

Taking some time to think about our overall goals, looking for the benefits our work is providing to others, reaching out to inspirational colleagues and setting out a plan with small rewards – these are simple strategies that we could all take to boost our enthusiasm.

You don't have to assume all the responsibility, however. Schaffner suggests talking to your boss about the ways you can change your job so that it is more closely aligned with your values and interests – a process she describes as “job crafting”. “Good employers should be interested in that and supportive of the idea: it makes perfect sense for their employees to be given tasks that they are most suited to perform well,” she says.

If you still feel like you are in a rut, you might simply be asking too much from your career. In much the same way that we might expect our romantic partners to generate all the excitement in our life – which puts unnecessary pressure on the relationship – we can sometimes have unrealistic expectations of our jobs to provide meaning in our lives.

For this reason, Schaffner suggests taking up a hobby that could also give you a sense of purpose and achievement, so that your job is not the only place to find satisfaction in your life. “Ironically, with a little bit of detachment and perspective, we tend to work better, and with more levity,” she says.

It's a philosophy I've tried to apply myself. On these bleak January days, I've tried to bolster my energy by reminding myself of all the reasons I was first drawn to a career in journalism and by taking more time to read people's responses to my writing – an activity that is often overlooked in the face of pressing deadlines. But on Schaffner's advice, I'm also making sure that I spend more time on all the other activities I love.

In her words: “It can be incredibly healing and curative when work is just work.”

Trinidadian Woman steals police car to kidnap baby

CMC — Police have detained a 24-year-old woman, after she reportedly stole a police vehicle from a police station in Cunupia in Central Trinidad to kidnap a toddler in Arima, on Monday.

The police said the woman, who remains in custody, is known to the parents of the child. They said she had been left briefly with the child when the parents left the house, but on their return their daughter was missing.



Neighbours informed the parents that the woman had taken the child and the police were notified.

Police said officers from the North Central Division Task Force West were on patrol on Monday night and saw a police car being driven along the Eastern Main

Road, Tacarigua.

They attempted to stop the car, but it sped off and was later intercepted and the child rescued. The child was taken to the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex Pediatric Department for medical examination.

Investigators said the police car was stolen from the Cunupia police station and the woman remains in custody. She is likely to be charged with kidnapping and theft.

IMF approves US\$105 million for Haiti

CMC — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has approved US\$105 million for Haiti under the Food Shock Window of the Rapid Credit Facility to help the country address urgent balance of payment needs related to the global food crisis.

The Washington-based financial institution said Haiti has been hit hard by the global food price shock. Record price inflation has worsened Haiti's fragility given the high pass through from global to domestic food prices and shortages in food supplies.

It said with more than half the population already below the poverty line, Haiti faces a dire humanitarian crisis, with an expected financing gap in this financial year of at least US\$105 million or 0.5 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP), assuming import compression and pending additional external financing from development partners.

The IMF said this shock compounds the hardships of an already highly fragile country, also suffering a

public health emergency (cholera) and serious security risks.

"Haiti is facing a dire humanitarian crisis and was hit hard by the economic spillovers from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. These spillovers included record price inflation that worsened Haiti's fragility and compounded the suffering of Haiti's population already affected by severe malnutrition," said IMF Deputy Managing Director, Antoinette Sayeh.

She said measures are being taken by the government to cushion the impact of the food price shocks on the population and to expand the social safety nets.

She said IMF emergency support under the food shock window of the Rapid Credit Facility will help fill the balance of payment gap and support those most affected by food price rises through feeding programs and cash and in-kind transfers to vulnerable households, waives school fees and other measures.

"To address the crisis, budgetary



resources will need to be allocated toward priority spending on food programs and to increase social assistance toward the most vulnerable. To ensure the appropriate use of emergency financing, which will be vital for catalysing further donor support and mitigate risks to debt sustainability, the authorities should carefully control, track, record, and publish all spending related to the emergency response.

Supported by close Fund engagement, they should undertake internal expenditure audits by all the line ministries involved in the use of emergency resources provided under the food shock window through the General Inspectorate of Finance and communi-

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St. Vincent elected to the presidency of CELAC

LOOP - St Vincent and the Grenadines has been elected to the presidency of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), which ended its seventh summit here on Tuesday.

St Vincent and the Grenadines succeeds Argentina.

Prime Minister Dr Ralph Gonsalves, addressing the 33-member hemispheric grouping, called for a fresh guard in these difficult times to reflect on the purpose of the integration movement.

“We are forming a meaningful link between Latin America and Caribbean civilizations,” Gonsalves said, as Kingstown was elected unanimously to the helm of the body that welcomed back Brazil’s President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, whose country re-joined CELAC after a two-year absence.

Brasilia withdrew from the bloc during the presidency of Jair Bolsonaro, who was recently voted out

of office, after serving from 2019 to 2022.

CELAC was founded in 2011 to avert United States influence in the hemisphere and excludes Canada and the United States.

However, Washington will be represented at this year’s meeting, with US Special Presidential Advisor for the Americas, Chris Dodd in attendance.

Apart from Gonsalves, other Caribbean Community (CARICOM) leaders attending the CELAC seventh summit are Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley and Bahamas Prime Minister Phillip Davis, who is also chairman of the 15-member regional integration grouping, CARICOM.

Several Caribbean countries are also being represented at the summit by their foreign ministers.

Gonsalves said the CELAC presidency would put Kingstown “in a critical leadership position to help to define the dialogue which will take place be-



tween CELAC, consisting of 600 million people in 33 states, define the relationship between CELAC and the European Union over the next two to three years”.

He said that this year, CELAC will hold summits with the European Union, the African Union, India and China.

Meanwhile, CELAC in a communique has called for more international funding in the region following economic and climate crises.

“We stressed the need for international regional financial institutions, such as the Multilateral Development Banks, to improve credit facilities through clean, fair, transparent and accessible mechanisms.”

The 111-point “Declaration of Buenos Aires” described how effects of COVID-19, climate change and the war in Ukraine had rippled across the region, stating “we express our concern that several countries emerged from the pandemic with higher levels of public debt”.

The statement also stressed the importance of democracy across the region, expressed support for negotiations between the Venezuelan government and its opposition, and demanded the United States lift its blockade on Cuba.

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cate these internal audits to the Supreme Audit Court in a timely way.”

Sayeh said the combination of appropriate macroeconomic and structural policies under the Staff-Monitored Program (SMP) provides additional safeguards for the Fund’s outstanding obligations. While providing adequate liquidity support to the financial sector, the central bank should

reduce monetary financing of the deficit and limit foreign exchange interventions to smoothing volatility.

“The SMP is also catalytic to donor support. A successful implementation of Haiti’s SMP would be key in the process of restoring macroeconomic stability and sustainability, strengthening the social safety net, and tackling governance weaknesses and corruption,” she added.

Ship sinks between S. Korea and Japan; two dead, eight missing

AP — Ships searching in wind-whipped waters between South Korea and Japan have picked up at least 14 of the 22 crew members from a cargo vessel that sank early Wednesday, killing at least two, officials said.

South Korean officials said nine of those rescued remain unconscious, but they did not immediately confirm any deaths. Ten crew members were later airlifted to Nagasaki in southern Japan for treatment, but two of them were confirmed dead on arrival, Japanese officials said.

South Korean and Japanese coast guard vessels and aircraft as well as two commercial cargo ships were continuing to search for the eight missing crew members but the efforts were being slowed by strong winds and waves, South Korean officials said.

The Japanese coast guard confirmed the rescue of at least 13 crew members and said five of them — all Chinese nationals — were still alive.

The 6,551-ton Jin Tian sank about 3 1/2 hours after it sent a distress call at around 11:15 p.m. Tuesday in Japan's exclusive economic zone, Japanese coast guard spokesperson Shinya Kitahara said.

The vessel, which was Hong Kong registered and carrying lumber, sank about 160 kilometres (100 miles) southwest of Nagasaki, Japan, and about 150 kilometres (93 miles) south of South Korea's Jeju island.

The captain last communicated with the coast guard through a satellite phone around 2:41 a.m., saying the crew would abandon the ship, minutes before it sank, Jeju island coast guard officials said.

Six crew members were picked up by South Korean coast guard vessels, while a cargo ship picked up five and



In this photo provided by the Korea Coast Guard, a South Korea coast guard vessel conducts a search operation in waters between South Korea and Japan, Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2023. South Korean and Japanese coast guards were searching for crew members of a cargo ship that sank early Wednesday in waters between South Korea and Japan, South Korean officials said Wednesday. (The Korea Coast Guard via AP)

Japanese aircraft picked up three, according to Jeju's coast guard.

Officials said 14 crew members are Chinese and eight are from Myanmar. According to maritime transport websites, the vessel left Malaysia's Port Klang on Dec. 3 and was headed for South Korea's Incheon port.

The ship is owned by Long Bright Shipping Limited, a Hong Kong-registered company that is a subsidiary of Shenzhen Shekou Shipping Transportation Co., Ltd., according to a July 2022 filing made by the parent company to China's National Equities Exchange and Quotations. The filing says the Jin Tian was used as collateral for a loan that was later repaid.

Calls to a number listed for Shenzhen Shekou Shipping Transportation in mainland China went unanswered on Wednesday during the weeklong Lunar New Year holiday.

South Korean officials didn't im-

mediately say whether the nine who were unconscious were likely to survive. They said the five other crew members who were rescued were either conscious when found or regained consciousness.

Kitahara said the cause of the ship's sinking was not immediately known and there were no signs that it collided with another vessel. He said the arrivals of Japanese patrol boats and aircraft were delayed by difficult weather.

Officials at Jeju's coast guard said a strong wind warning was issued for the area earlier on Wednesday but was later lifted. Winds were blowing at around 56 kilometres (35 miles) per hour, creating waves 3-4 metres (9-13 feet) high.

The Japanese coast guard said the water in the area remained rough with a temperature of 14 degrees Celsius (57 degrees Fahrenheit).

Classified documents found at former U.S. Vice President Pence's home

Reuters — Documents marked as classified were discovered at former U.S. Vice President Mike Pence's Indiana home last week, and he has turned those classified records over to the FBI, his attorney said in letters seen by Reuters on Tuesday.

The attorney, Greg Jacob, sent a letter to the National Archives on Jan. 18 notifying them of the documents and in a separate letter on Jan. 22 notified the Archives that the FBI came to the former vice president's home to collect them.

The discovery puts Pence in the company of his former boss, former President Donald Trump, and President Joe Biden after documents with classified markings were found at their residences.

Jacob said in the letter dated Jan. 18 to the National Archives that "out of an abundance of caution" Pence had engaged outside counsel to review records stored in his home after reports about the materials found at Biden's residence.

"Counsel identified a small number of documents that could potentially contain sensitive or classified information interspersed throughout the records," Jacob wrote in the letter.

"Vice President Pence immediately secured those documents in a locked safe



Former U.S. Vice President Mike Pence is interviewed by Kevin Roberts, president of the Heritage Foundation, in front of an audience at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, U.S., October 19, 2022. REUTERS/Leah Millis

pending further direction on proper handling from the National Archives," he said. Pence's counsel did not review the contents of the documents once they were determined to be marked classified, the letter said.

In a separate letter dated Jan. 22, Jacob said the Justice Department "bypassed the standard procedures and requested direct possession" of the documents at Pence's residence.

With agreement by the former vice president, FBI agents came to his Indiana home at 9:30 p.m. on Jan. 19 to collect the documents stored in the safe, Jacob said.

Biden, whose documents dated from his time as vice president, and Trump, who resisted turn-

ing over the items, leading to an FBI raid, are both facing special counsel investigations by the Justice Department over improper handling of classified materials.

During a presidential transition period, the records from each administration are supposed to be turned over to the legal custody of the U.S. National Archives. It is unlawful to knowingly or willfully remove or retain classified material. Failure to properly store and secure classified material poses risks to national security if it should fall into the wrong hands.

POLITICAL FALL-OUT

The Pence discovery may help ease the political fallout for Biden, who had criticised Trump last fall

for his handling of classified materials, leading to charges of hypocrisy when documents at his former office and his garage were found. The issue has become a political liability for both men, who may face each other in a 2024 presidential race.

Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, a critic of Biden and an ally of Trump, said he did not think any of the three men were intentionally trying to compromise national security.

"But clearly we have a problem here. So hopefully when this is all said and done, maybe we're over-classifying things, that may be part of the problem," he said. "What became a political problem for Republicans is now a national security problem for the country."

CNN first reported the story of the documents being found at Pence's home.

A spokesman for former President Barack Obama told Reuters when asked about possible classified documents or searches that his office had been given a "clean bill of health" by the National Archives.

The administration of George W. Bush "turned all Presidential records over — both classified and unclassified — upon leaving the White House," Bush spokesman Freddy Ford told Reuters.

Hipkins sworn in as New Zealand PM, pledges focus on economy

AP — Chris Hipkins was sworn in Wednesday as New Zealand's 41st prime minister, following the unexpected resignation last week of Jacinda Ardern.

Hipkins, 44, has promised a back-to-basics approach focusing on the economy and what he described as the “pandemic of inflation.”

He will have less than nine months before contesting a tough general election, with opinion polls indicating his Labour Party is trailing its conservative opposition.

New Zealand Governor-General Cindy Kiro officiated the brief swearing in ceremony in front of his friends and colleagues after she earlier accepted Ardern's resignation.

“This is the biggest privilege and responsibility of my life,” Hipkins said at the ceremony. “I'm energised and excited by the challenges that lie ahead.”

Carmel Sepuloni was also sworn in as deputy prime minister, the first time a person with Pacific Island heritage has taken on the role. She congratulated Hipkins and thanked him for the trust he'd placed in her.

After the ceremony, Hipkins said as an aside to reporters: “It feels pretty real now.”

Hipkins is known to many by the nickname



Chris Hipkins, centre, is sworn in as New Zealand's next prime minister and Carmel Sepuloni, left, as deputy prime minister by Governor-General Dame Cindy Kiro, right, at Government House in Wellington, Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2023. Hipkins, 44, has promised a back-to-basics approach focusing on the economy and what he described as the "pandemic of inflation." (Mark Mitchell/New Zealand Herald via AP)

“Chippy,” which fits with his upbeat demeanour and skills as an amateur handyman.

He served as education and police minister under Ardern. He rose to public prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic, when he took on a kind of crisis management role. But he and other liberals have long been in the shadow of Ardern, who became a global icon of the left and exemplified a new style of leadership.

Ardern last week said she was resigning after more than five years in the role because she no longer

had “enough in the tank” to do the job justice. “It's that simple,” she said.

On Tuesday she made her final official appearance as prime minister, saying the thing she would miss most was the people because they had been the “joy of the job.” On Wednesday morning, she was greeted with hugs and farewells by dozens of former staff and admirers on Parliament's forecourt as she left the building.

Ardern plans to stay on as a backbench lawmaker until April to avoid triggering a special election ahead of the nation's general elec-

tion in October.

New Zealand's head-of-state is Britain's King Charles III, and Kiro is his representative in New Zealand, although these days the nation's relationship with the monarchy is largely symbolic.

Britain's Prince William and wife, Kate, thanked Ardern on Twitter “for your friendship, leadership and support over the years, not least at the time of my grandmother's death. Sending you, Clarke and Neve our best wishes. W & C”

Clarke Gayford is Ardern's fiance and Neve is their 4-year-old daughter.

Women's Indian Premier League: T20 franchises sell for £465m

BBC — The five franchises for the inaugural Women's Premier League in India have been sold for £465m.

The WPL, which takes place in March, is a women's version of the Indian Premier League (IPL), the world's biggest Twenty20 franchise competition.

Owners of three existing IPL teams - Royal Challengers Bangalore, Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals - secured the rights for women's franchises.

The other two teams were awarded to Adani Group and Capri Global.

Those sides will be based in Ahmedabad and Lucknow respectively.

The owners of four other IPL franchises, Kolkata Knight Riders, Punjab Kings, Rajasthan Royals and Sunrisers Hyderabad, were unsuccessful with their bids.

Former England cricketer and BBC Test Match Special commentator Isa Guha described the deal as "a landmark day for the women's game."

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) previously sold the media rights for the WPL to Viacom 18 for approximately £96m.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah described the deal as "transformative" for women's cricket.



Players including England's Sophie Ecclestone previously played in the Women's T20 Challenge in India

"A record-breaking start for the inaugural Women's Premier League and expected nothing less!" former India captain Mithali Raj said on social media. "It will truly revolutionise women's cricket as we know it."

Current India player Smriti Mandhana added that it was a "pioneering move" and a "brilliant step forward for Indian women's cricket".

A player auction will now be held before the tournament, which is expected to take place at the beginning of February.

Each team can sign up to seven overseas players, with England stars such as spinner Sophie Ecclestone and all-rounder Nat Sciver expected to be among the most expensive.

The player registration process has already started, with ex-England spinner

and BBC Test Match Special summariser Alex Hartley confirming her application on social media.

Previously, India hosted the Women's T20 Challenge, an invitational event which started as one exhibition match in 2018 before expanding to three teams in 2019.

'The most significant development in women's cricket history' - analysis

Stephan Shemilt, BBC chief cricket writer

After years of rumours and false dawns, the women's version of the IPL is finally here. The advent of the Women's Premier League may be the most significant development in the history of women's cricket.

The purchases of the teams means the league is starting to take shape, but there are bigger days ahead.

How much money will the top players in the women's game be worth? More than the deals in some men's franchise leagues? What high-profile coaches might be attracted to the WPL?

For all the excitement, there is a note of trepidation for the knock-on the WPL might have to the international game.

Already the likes of Deandra Dottin and Lizelle Lee have stopped playing for West Indies and South Africa respectively, partly because they can make a living in franchise leagues. How many more will follow suit, especially from nations where contracts to female cricketers are not lucrative?

What about space in the calendar? There is already The Hundred in the UK, Women's Big Bash in

cont'd on pg 20

NBA All-Star rosters won't be picked until game night

By Tim Reynolds

AP — The NBA All-Star Game is Feb. 19. And nobody will know the All-Star rosters until that night.

Not even the players themselves.

The team captains — probably LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers and either Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo or Brooklyn's Kevin Durant — will make their picks in a live, televised pregame segment shortly before the game begins in Salt Lake City.

The NBA and the National Basketball Players Association announced the format change on Tuesday night.

This will be the sixth time that the league has used the format where captains choose their teams, but in each of the first five instances the rosters were selected several days before the game.

The captains and starters will be announced on Thursday.

James has been a captain in each of the first five years and, based on the re-



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James, right, and forward Troy Brown Jr. celebrate after defeating the Portland Trail Blazers in an NBA basketball game in Portland, Ore., Sunday, Jan. 22, 2023. (AP Photo/Craig Mitchell/lyer)

sults of voting released by the league late last week, is virtually certain to be one again this year. The leading vote-getter from both the Eastern and Western Conference earns the right to be a captain.

Durant was the early leader among East players, then fell slightly behind Antetokounmpo in the most recent balloting. He's still expected to be selected as

a starter, and it won't be known until Thursday if he reclaimed the East voting lead in the final days.

Ballots to decide the starters were due Saturday.

"I want to play," Durant told reporters in New York on Tuesday. "I want to be a part of all these events."

James' teams are 5-0 in All-Star games when he is a captain.

Durant has been a cap-

tain as the East's voting leader in each of the past two years. Antetokounmpo was in the previous two years, 2019 and 2020.

The top three frontcourt players and top two guards in each conference will be chosen as starters, with the leading overall vote-getters from each conference serving as captains and choosing their teams.

Fan voting counts for 50% of the starters balloting, a media ballot counts for 25% and the ballots turned in by NBA players count for the other 25%.

Reserves — chosen by NBA coaches, seven players from each conference — will be revealed Feb. 2.

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Australia and a short Caribbean Premier League. There is a Pakistan Super League on the horizon, too.

Are there enough women cricketers to service the growing amount of international and domestic cricket? Rest and rotation has crept into the women's international game, which really needs the best play-

ers on show all the time to stay attractive to fans, broadcasters and sponsors. Can women's cricket avoid the mistakes made in the men's game?

If this sounds a gloomy outlook, it is anything but. This is a thrilling moment for women's cricket, providing endless opportunities for players. Still, the game must tread carefully.

Conor McGregor investigated for physical assault in Ibiza

AP — Conor McGregor is under investigation in Spain after being accused of physical assault in Ibiza, court officials said Wednesday.

The case had been closed but a judge ordered it to be reopened after receiving more details about the alleged incident.

The court did not give any more detail about the case involving the Irish mixed martial arts superstar.

Spanish media said the investigation is related to an altercation with a woman on a yacht after a party in Ibiza.



MMA fighter Conor McGregor throws out a ceremonial first pitch before a baseball game on Sept. 21, 2021, in Chicago. Conor McGregor is under investigation in Spain after being accused of physical assault in Ibiza, court officials said Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2023. The case had been closed but a judge ordered it to be reopened after receiving more details about what allegedly happened. (AP Photo/Charles Rex Arbogast)

CWI congratulates players named in ICC Team of the Year

Cricket West Indies (CWI) has congratulated the players named in the International Cricket Council's (ICC) Teams of the Year for 2022. Three West Indies players were announced by the ICC on Tuesday in the annual awards.

Captain Kraigg Brathwaite was picked in the Test Team of the Year, while wicketkeeper/batsman Shai Hope and fast bowler Alzarri Joseph earned spots in the One-Day International (ODI) Team of the Year.

Brathwaite averaged 62 in seven Tests during the last calendar year, scoring two hundreds - a monumental 160 against England at Kensington Oval in March and an outstanding 110 against Australia at the Perth Stadium in December, on the eve of his birthday.

Hope maintained his consistency in the ODIs, averaging 35 with three

centuries from 21 ODIs. He was among only seven players to pass 700 runs for the year. The highlight was his knock of 115 in his 100th appearance against India at Queens Park Oval in July.

Joseph was also among the leading wicket-takers in ODIs for the year, with 27 wickets at an average of 25 runs per wicket from 17 matches and featured in all three formats.

CWI's President Ricky Skerritt said, "Captain Kraigg Brathwaite continued to lead from the front with a number of world-class batting displays, which characterise his composed and courageous style of play.

Skerritt said, "The major achievement was leading the team to victory over England to capture the Richards Botham trophy which brought glory to West Indies fans.

"Shai Hope also demonstrated his

immense talent in front the stumps and agility behind the wickets. He too showcased an exceptionally high level of skill, and a great sense of occasion, with a remarkable century to mark his 100th appearance against India in Trinidad."

He added, "Alzarri I Joseph emerged as the leader of the bowling attack in ODIs and was consistent and persistent all year in all three formats.

He said Joseph "has matured from an exciting young speedster to a truly world-class pace bowler and is reaping the rewards for the hard work he has been putting in off the field.

Skerritt said, "CWI applauds all three for their outstanding performances in 2022 and also wishes them continued success and growth in 2023 and beyond."

Wimbledon men's doubles reduced to best-of-3 format

AP — The men's doubles format at Wimbledon has been changed to best-of-three sets to bring it in line with the other three Grand Slam tournaments.

The All England Club announced the switch from best-of-five sets on Wednesday and said the reduction could attract more players to enter the doubles competition at Wimbledon.

It also provides the referee's office "with greater certainty when scheduling matches during the event," the club said in a statement.

Matthew Ebden and Max Purcell won the men's doubles title at Wimbledon last July. The Australian pair beat Nikola Pietrangeli and Mate Pavic of Croatia 7-6 (5), 6-7 (3), 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (10-2) on Centre Court. The match lasted 4 hours, 11 minutes.



Ottos Coolers crush Fearless Crew2 by 50-point margin

Ottos Coolers crushed Jan Serv Fearless Crew2 by 50 points in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division on Tuesday night.

Ottos Coolers romped to their emphatic 106 - 56 victory over Fearless Crew2 in a Zone 2 affair in the opening game of a double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Vladimir Castro produced a triple double by scoring 51 points, 18 rebounds, 10 assist and snatching 9 steals for the winners.

He was supported by Ismael Pale-

mo, who sank 31 points and snapped up 12 rebounds and Malefi Joseph who sank 14 points.

Daysher Samuel converted 35 points and snatched 10 rebounds for Fearless Crew2.

New Generation Slam romped to a 72-58 victory over Raeburn Generators United in their Zone 1 affair in the second game of the double header.

Anjis Anthony sank 30 points, grabbed 23 rebounds and produced six steals.

Leon Lawrence produced a triple double by scoring 16 points, claiming

20 rebounds and snatching 11 steals while Kim Casey scored 12 points and pulled down nine rebounds for New Generation Slam.

Kwame Huntley shot a game-high of 33 points and grabbed 20 rebounds for Raeburn Generators United.

Wadadli Elites1 will take on Old Road Daggers in a Zone 1 affair at the JSC Sports Complex tomorrow, Thursday, 26th January.

Tomorrow's other scheduled Zone 1 encounter between Cuties Ovals Superiors and Jan Serv Fearless Crew2 has been postponed.

Golden Grove pulls off surprise win against Sea View Farm

Golden Grove stunned one of the early front-runners, Sea View Farm, to claim their second win in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division on Tuesday.

Golden Grove snatched a 2 - 1 victory against Sea View Farm at the Golden Grove Playing field to claim their second win in five matches and advance to 7 points.

Their three goals came in the first half as Justin Pereira's 5th minute conversion gave Golden Grove an early 1 - 0 lead. Sea View Farm drew level with a goal by Chevorn Moore in the 10th minute.

But Golden Grove regained the lead when Jermaine Severino scored what turned out to be the winner in the 31st minute to hand Sea View Farm their first loss in eight matches.

The result ensured that Sea View Farm, who won their first five matches but dropped points in their last two encounters, remained in third place on goal difference with 16 points.

Freemans Village snatched a 2 - 0 win to end leaders Attacking Saints' unbeaten run at the Freemans Village playing field.

Ranique James scored both goals for Freemans Village in the 1st and 56th minutes to lead his team to their



Golden Grove defeated Sea View Farm to claim their second win in the ABFA Second Division at the Golden Grove playing field on Tuesday, 24th January, 2023. (File Photo)

fifth win in seven matches. The result lifted Freemans Village to 16 points, the same as Sea View Farm, who boast a superior goal difference.

It was the first loss in eight matches for Attacking Saints who remained at the top of the standings with 19 points.

Jahvier Joseph scored a hatrick as Belmont romped to a 6 - 0 victory over bottom team TAMO FC at the ABFA Technical Center.

Joseph scored in the 35th, 37th and 88th minutes while the other three goals were converted by Iandre Hodge in the 48th minute and N'Jre Carbon-Buckley in the 60th and 76th minutes.

Their fourth win in eight matches lifted Belmont to

13 points while TAMO FC remained winless in the cellar position without a point after losing for the seventh time in as many outings.

Nigel Graham scored a brace as English Harbour claimed their third victory in nine matches by pulling off a 3-1 win against Bethesda at the English Harbour playing field.

Graham put English Harbour ahead with a strike in the 8th minute, but Bethesda equalised in the 12th minute via an O'Shale Simon's conversion.

Shadaeki Fredericks restored English Harbour's lead with a 16th minute conversion to give the home team a 2 - 1 halftime lead.

Graham scored for the second time in the match with an 81st minute con-

version to seal English Harbour's victory.

The result lifted English Harbour to 12 points, while their third loss in seven matches ensured that Bethesda remained on 10 points.

The ABFA programme will continue with matches in the First Division on Thursday, 26th January.

Bolans will face Potters Tigers at the Bolans playing field, Young Lions Will take on Bendals at the Old Road playing field and JSC Progressors will clash with Garden Stars at the St Johnston's playing field at 4:20pm. Green City will oppose Lion Hill at the Bendals playing field and John Hughes will challenge Police at the ABFA's Technical Center at 5pm.

US coach leads sports delegation on interactive visit to Antigua and Barbuda

Executive Director of NewFlex Youth Programs, Inc., Coach Nesta Felix, led a sports delegation from New York, USA, who visited Antigua and Barbuda under the auspices of sports administrator and coach, Colin James, from 12th to 14th January.

The group comprised several basketball and volleyball players and coaches who interacted with and conducted training sessions with several local sports organisations including the Antigua Barbuda Volleyball Association, the Cyclones, the CPTSA Wings Sports clubs and the Wadadli Elites Basketball Academy.

Felix is no stranger to Antigua and Barbuda, having visited last five years ago when she facilitated sports clinics throughout the country and in particular with CPTSA Wings Sports Club.

Coach Felix, coach Imani Davidson and the rest of the delegation also met with local basketball and volleyball officials, including President of the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association (ABVA) Wilbur Harrigan, the ABVA's Franklyn Benjamin and



Coach Imani Davidson, left, and Coach Nesta Felix, third right, conducted a coaching session with players of the CPTSA Wings basketball team at the YMCA Sports Complex on Saturday, 14th January, 2023. (Photo: CPTSA Wings)

CPTSA Wings' volleyball coaches, Farida Carr and Rohan Telemaque.

Coaches Felix, Davidson and their athletes conducted several clinics over their weekend trip and delivered encouraging pep talks to local volleyball and basketball athletes.

During the clinics, participants received gifts of shoes and sportswear for answering trivia questions correctly.

The visitors also engaged in a basketball scrimmage against Wadadli Elites.

Meanwhile, coaches Felix and Davidson explained the US college system to the Wings Youth

Basketball team and the requirements they must meet to acquire scholarships.

The coaches also discussed the many opportunities available in sports beyond being an athlete.

"You can become a media sports broadcaster, reporter, a sports photographer, a coach, a referee, statistician, trainer, commentator; there are so many areas in sports besides being a professional athlete," Davidson said.

NewFlex Youth Programs, Inc. was founded in 2009 by Felix.

As a result of her years of coaching basketball and sports administration, she became motivated to de-

velop leaders among the youth in her community both on and off the basketball court.

In 2009, as part of her MBA thesis, Felix incorporated her vision and NewFlex Youth Programs (at the time NewFlex Hoops, Inc.) was born.

NewFlex Youth provides training in the fundamentals of basketball and other sports, mentoring, workshops, trips and academic management.

Its programmes are geared towards nurturing young girls and developing responsibility among young men while preparing them all for various opportunities.