

FRIDAY 27TH JANUARY 2023 | VOLUME 4 ISSUE 19 | WWW.POINTVILLE.AG



GOV'T DETERMINED TO PROTECT CIP'S INTEGRITY

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Antigua Barbuda's 69F sailors continue their quest today in the Bacardi Cup being held in Miami, Florida. *Story on page 6.*

Local News



Government is considering options to protect the country's CIP

The government is exploring several options to protect the Citizenship by Investment Programme (CIP) following the United Kingdom's signalled intent to conduct a review of the programmes that operate in the English-speaking Caribbean.

On Wednesday, the Cabinet invited the Chief Executive Officer of the CIP, Charmaine Donovan, to provide an update on the measures the agency has taken to strengthen the programme's security protocols.

On Thursday, Cabinet spokesman, Melford Nicholas, said during the last quarter of 2022, both the government and the management of the CIP indicated to the UK government Antigua and Barbuda's willingness to discuss the country's CIP programme to assure them of the robust security measures that are in place to protect both nation's borders from infiltration by undesirable individuals.

"When the head of the CIP visited Cabinet, she was

able to indicate that a number of OECS countries with similar CIP programmes have made certain changes and are looking towards adopting some of the measures that Antigua and Barbuda has in place," he stated.

Nicholas has on several occasions in the past indicated the government's willingness to cooperate with other countries that offer a CIP to arrive at solutions to ensure the survival of the industry and stave off the impact of debilitating changes that may occur in the UK or European Union (EU).

"We don't have full control. What we have is influence and we plan to use that influence to our benefit.

"We were also cautioned that the UK is no longer part of the EU because of Brexit, so they in turn have sent out feelers to look at some of the security issues that they have detected at their border," said Nicholas as he placed the reason for the UK's interest in the country's CIP in context.

According to Nicho-



Cabinet spokesman, Melford Nicholas

las, Donovan assured the Cabinet that the UK's concerns about its border security have not been triggered by breaches in Antigua and Barbuda's due diligence systems or because of any individual granted citizenship under the country's programme.

"We are engaging in a positive manner to share the information.

"We feel that our security measures are as such that we go through detailed levels of approval, and even through Caribbean IMPACS, we ensure

that before we approve any such citizen, we allow these governments to be able to have a preview as well of these individuals before we assign them. They must go through that process.

"We remain hopeful, but if the worse come to that, then it is something that we will have to deal with," he declared.

Antigua and Barbuda has an extremely strong due diligence and investigative machinery in place which ensures that only applicants who are above reproach are approved for citizenship.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet also decided to bring all quarry and road unit workers up to date with overtime payments owed to them.

The money to meet the outstanding obligations to these workers will be paid from the resources of the Citizenship by Investment Programme.

Fri 27 Day		Fri 27 Night	
79°		72°	
Sunshine along with some cloudy intervals. High 79F. Winds NE at 10 to 15 mph.		Clear to partly cloudy. Low 72F. Winds NE at 10 to 15 mph.	
Humidity 65%	UV Index 9 of 10	Humidity 72%	UV Index 0 of 10
Sunrise 6:39 am	Sunset 6:00 pm	Moonrise 11:06 am	Moonset 11:54 pm
Waxing Crescent			

Cabinet suspends Antigua Airways flights

In its first meeting of the new year, the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda has swiftly moved to take action on several issues.

Among them was the decision to suspend flights from West Africa into Antigua and Barbuda.

The move to suspend the charter flights was initiated by the new minister of immigration, Steadroy Benjamin.

Cabinet spokesman, Melford Nicholas said that in part, the decision was made in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority and national visa and other requirements.

Minister Nicholas also acknowledged that some of the African visitors who arrived on the flights from West Africa, which began last year on Independence Day, remain in the country.

Their presence in the country, and



challenges with leaving, created significant debate in the lead up to the elections of 18th January, including accusations of human trafficking.

While the allegation of human trafficking has been dismissed, another issue was identified.

Minister Nicholas said intelligence available to the government suggests that there may have been plans by some of the people arriving to use An-

tigua and Barbuda as a hub through which they would make connections to South America and then onward to countries in North America and Europe.

Nicholas said the government moved to suspend the service to ensure there is no abuse of the government's desire to open up direct travel between the African continent and the Caribbean.

Infrastructure: Job number one

The newly expanded Ministry of Housing, Works, Lands and Urban Renewal has identified infrastructural development as one of its top priorities during the new term of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party administration.

Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry, Senator Clement Antonio made the announcement at Government House following his swearing in earlier this week.

"I know a main focus will be infrastructural development in terms of our



Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Housing, Works, Lands and Urban Renewal, Senator Clement Antonio, with Governor General Sir Rodney Williams and Lady Williams

roads and drains and we will continue on to the

housing revolution that the government started in pre-

vious terms," he revealed.

Antonio said he is anxious to begin the work of fulfilling the ABLP's manifesto promises to the people of Antigua and Barbuda.

"The work is there to be done and all one has to do is to 'watch the ball unto the bat'," he said.

Already, Works Minister, Maria Browne, has instructed that work begin on Loblolly Street in Greenbay Hill.

Work, which began on the road several months ago, was never completed.

Local News



Cruise sector's robust performance to continue in February

The cruise sector will continue to experience a robust season as details of the scheduled calls for February have come to light.

According to the Operations Manager of Antigua Cruise Port, Rawle Reynolds, there are fifty-three cruise ship calls slated for the month. These include two vessels that will be making inaugural calls at the St. John's Harbour.

The vessels are the AIDAbella, which is owned by Royal Caribbean, and Ambassador Ambience, of Ambassador Cruise Lines.

Although down from January's seventy-six, February's very respectable fifty-three calls still represent a substantial number of stops on these vessels' routes and confirms Antigua and Barbuda's status as a sought-after cruise



destination.

On Saturday, the cruise sector will celebrate a historic milestone when the country welcomes the largest vessel to have ever visited the country – the Carnival Arvia – on its inaugural call.

The Arvia will be homeporting in Antigua and Barbuda for the remainder of the 2022/23 cruise season.

This is expected to stimulate significant economic activity within the tourism sector and in the country on the whole.

More than one thousand passengers will begin their cruise on the Arvia from Antigua and Barbuda each time a trip departs.

The national economic benefits will be reaped as these passengers will

be flown into the country on chartered aircraft, after which they will need to be transported by local taxi operators to the St. John's Harbour where they will board the vessel.

A major celebration has been planned by tourism and cruise industry officials to welcome the Arvia to Antigua and Barbuda on Saturday.

Drowning victim identified as Canadian national

The man who drowned at Ffryes beach on Monday has been identified as Canadian national Ian Wolford.

Wolford was on a diving expedition about three miles off the shoreline of Ffryes beach when he allegedly encountered difficulties and drowned.

According to reports, the man and his wife Julie were with three other people aboard a vessel sometime around 9A.M when they were briefed by the captain before they went into

the sea.

As they began diving, the deceased reportedly expressed he was experiencing ear aches. Wolford was left at a shallow depth while his companions dived deeper into the water. When they surfaced some time after, they did not see Wolford.

A search was undertaken but proved unsuccessful.

The Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force Coast Guard and two French helicopters then joined the

search, but they too were unable to locate the Canadian national.

Urlings resident Shane Tonge, a diver, later joined the search and discovered the man's body at a depth of 55 feet.

Wolford's body was then retrieved from the sea by the coast guard and taken to shore where a medical doctor pronounced Ian Wolford dead.

The body was ordered removed to a funeral home, pending an autopsy.

Chamber of Commerce seeks ways to reduce cost of doing business

The Executive Director of the Antigua and Barbuda Chamber of Commerce (ABCC), Martin Cave, has said the organisation is continuing to pursue ways of reducing the cost of doing business in the twin-island state.

To this end, Cave said ABCC made some progress by mid 2022, however, these gains were lost as the year ended due to the rise in the cost of fuel and petroleum products which has resulted in a significant inflation in Antigua and Barbuda.

“We were able to really start in earnest to pursue some of our main goals. Our ultimate goal, the thing that takes me to work every day, is bringing down the cost of doing business,” Cave stated during an interview on Pointe FM’s Pointe On De Streetz.

“It sounds almost impossible because all around us we look, we see prices rising, whether it be fuel and everything that stems from fuel, which is primarily everything.

“We are talking about salaries, the cost of imported goods and transportation cost. All of these things continue to rise.

“So, we have taken on the Herculean task of trying to strangle that thing called cost and inflation and to wrestle it to the ground and subdue it, but we are really trying to focus right now on

bringing the cost of doing business down.”

According to figures released by the Antigua and Barbuda Statistics Division on 24th January, 2023, the nation’s Consumer Price Index for December 2022 rose by 9.2 percent.

The All Items Index increased 9.2 percent for the twelve months ending December 2022. The Food Index rose 12.1 percent over the last twelve months.

The index for Oils and Fats rose 27.5 percent with average price increases of Fresh Butter and Soya Oil contributing to these large increases.

The index for Sugars, Jams, Honey, Chocolate, and Confectionery rose 21.2 percent over the year.

The index for Sugar increased 27.8 percent over the same period while the index for Edible Ice Cream and Sorbet rose 16.3 percent.

The index for Food Products N.E.C rose by 19.8 percent and the index for Meat and Meat Products increased by 15.2 percent.

The remaining food groups posted changes ranging from -3.4 percent (Fruit) to 12.9 percent (Bread and Cereals).

The Index for All Items Less Food and Energy rose 8.5 percent, a slightly larger increase than the 8.1 percent increase in November 2022.



Executive Director of the Antigua and Barbuda Chamber of Commerce, Martin Cave

The index was similarly affected as the November index. It was impacted by a larger increase in the index for Transport Services which rose from 34.6 percent to 41.7 percent.

Cave said the ABCC has found that, in addition to the escalation in the price of fuel and petroleum products, telecommunication services have the next biggest influence on inflation.

“The way that we did it last year as a continuation of previous efforts, was to look at what are some of the main drivers of cost in Antigua and Barbuda, in any country really,” Cave stated.

“But we have to look at our own peculiar circumstances, the make-up of our economy, the structure in terms of businesses and the government’s policies such as taxes, et cetera.

“The first thing that we tackled is the cost of telecommunications. Telecommunication, next to fuel, is the most influential factor on cost.

“We have approximately four major telecommunications companies here in Antigua and Barbuda, so if we are going to look at bringing cost down, we have to look how can these companies get to a point where they charge less because we think they can offer some savings and offer more at the same time.”

Cave said the unlevel playing field influencing the nation’s four major telecommunications providers has resulted in Antigua and Barbuda having the highest costs for telecommunication services within the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

Local News



Dr. Sir Alford Walwyn to receive official funeral

The Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda has agreed to honour the late Dr. Sir Alford Walwyn with an official funeral.

Dr. Walwyn, the country's leading vision specialist for many decades, recently passed away at the age of 97.

"The Cabinet has learned of the death of Dr. Sir Alford Walwyn, a National Honouree who provided decades of service to helping those whose eyesight had to be corrected.

"He was a great eye surgeon removing thousands of cataracts thereby causing improvement in patients' ability to see. The Cabinet decided to offer an official funeral for this Knight Grand Cross recipient who will be buried next



Dr. Sir Alford Walwyn

month," the cabinet notes stated.

The loss created by his passing and his legacy of service were also

recognised by the Medical Association of Antigua and Barbuda (MAAB), of which Dr. Walwyn was a founding member in the 1950s and served as its president for many years.

"We are grateful for his efforts and dedication to healthcare in Antigua and Barbuda serving the general public and the medical fraternity. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family during this difficult time. He touched so many lives throughout his career and lifetime," said a statement penned by current president of the MAAB, Dr. Alafea Stevens.

The official funeral will be held on 6th February, 2023 at Ebenezer Methodist Church commencing at 10am.

Team Antigua Barbuda maintain stellar performances in 69F tournaments

The Rum Runners spent last week in Miami racing in Act 1 of the Youth Foiling Gold Cup (YFGC).

The YFGC qualifying series, which lasted from Tuesday to Thursday, saw Antigua and Barbuda finishing in 1st place leading into the finals.

After abandoning the race on Friday due to low wind conditions, the 69F fleet sailed into the first and only day of finals on Saturday.

Conditions were less than ideal with an average of 3 - 4 knots gusting 5 - 6 knots throughout the day.

The conditions allowed for three races in the final series in which Team Antigua and Barbuda finished in 2nd,

5th, and 2nd place (the last race being double points), wrapping up the week in 3rd place overall.

Team Antigua Barbuda continue their quest today in Miami in the Bacardi Cup onboard the 69F. After the Bacardi Cup, the team will fly to Cagliari, Sardinia to train with their newly commissioned Persico 69F.

Regrettably, the team is now without their lone female teammate, Junella King, who suffered a recent leg injury which, for now has ended her part in the campaign.

Teresa Mairone has taken over as Flight Controller under Skipper, Rocco Falcone with support from Mainsail Trimmer, Filippo Amonti.





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**.

Opinion

Being homosexual is not a crime – Pope Francis

By Sir Ronald Sanders

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

“Being homosexual is not a crime. We are all children of God, and God loves us as we are and for the strength that each of us fights for our dignity.” Those words were spoken by Pope Francis, easily the most radical pontiff that the Roman Catholic Church has ever had.

The Pope was speaking in an interview with the Associated Press that was published on January 25, ahead of a planned tour of two African countries, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The African continent ranks among the most homophobic regions of the world. Apart from South Africa, Mozambique and Angola, which are countries whose governments and peoples are most tolerant of homosexual rights, the majority of African nations rate equally with the intolerant governments of Russia, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq.

Throughout his papacy, Pope Francis has advocated

a less doctrinal policy approach for modern Catholicism. Francis is a man of his time, determined not to harden the Church's anachronistic positions in times, which have changed, with a greater emphasis on human rights, including gay rights. In the interview with the Associated Press, he emphasised the Holy See's position that laws that criminalize homosexuality outright are “unjust” and that the Church must work to put an end to them.

He did not spare Bishops of the Church who support laws that criminalize homosexuality. He said that they need to “have a process of conversion” and should apply “tenderness, please, as God has for each one of us.” Whether he has opened the eyes, ears and hearts of the controlling hierarchy of the Church is left to be seen.

What is certain is that Francis has succeeded in humanising the face of the Church which, for centuries, imposed repressive rules on its followers that, politically, supported colonialism, imperialism and racism. In a socio-economic context, its rules on abortion, caused suffering and hardship for poor communities around the world, particularly in Ireland and Latin America where Catholicism dominated.

The impact that his ap-



Sir Ronald Sanders

proach has achieved is evident in the leadership of Ireland and in parts of Africa. The current Taoiseach, or the head of government, of Ireland is Leo Eric Varadka who is the child of an Indian father and an Irish mother and is a declared homosexual. Many prejudices – both racial and religious – were overcome with his election, in a remarkable tribute to the openness of the Irish people to change. But, the influence of Pope Francis, now completing a decade as a change-agent of the Church, contributed immensely to the freedom of thinking and attitudes in Ireland.

Similarly, his papacy has had a beneficial effect in Africa where recent statistics show 2.1 per cent growth in Catholic followers between 2019 and 2020. Out of a global population of 1.36 billion Catholics, 236 million are African or 20% of

the total. Reports indicate that Catholicism is witnessing a “youth bulge” in Africa. This follows the effective transmission of Pope Francis' message that churches, religious groups and governments show solidarity with young people. He calls them “the church of now.”

In November 2022, during a synodal consultation with African youth, he denounced the exploitation of Africa by external forces and its destruction by wars, ideologies of violence and policies that rob young people of their future. That message by the Head of a Church, which conspired with many authoritarian regimes in Latin America, Europe and in parts of Africa and Asia, to exploit and repress their people, has a powerful appeal.

Nonetheless, his visit to South Sudan and the DRC will not be without its prob-

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lems. In the interview with the Associated Press, Pope Francis acknowledged that in Africa and other parts of the world, there needs to be change in relation to anti-homosexual laws. Responding to the question, "Can the Church contribute to repealing these laws?", he was unequivocal, saying: "They have to do it. What happens is that they are cultures in a state and the bishops of that place, although they are good bishops, [they] are part of the culture and some still have their minds in that culture. The bishops also have [to undergo] a process of conversion."

Some of these reluctant Bishops exist in South Sudan and DRC as they do in other parts of Africa and the Caribbean. Having been nurtured in a culture of intolerance, they find adjustment to a new dispensation difficult. Although, as Pope Francis pointed out, "In the catechism of the Catholic Church it says that people of homosexual tendency

have to be welcomed, they do not have to be marginalized". He makes it clear that "Every man and woman has to have a window into his life where he can pour his hope and where he can see the dignity of God. And being gay is not a crime. It's a human condition."

Throughout most of the world, societies and governments have accepted that "being gay is a human condition." The result is that members of the LGBTQIA community have attained high positions in all sectors of society. While there may be little hope in authoritarian countries, such as Russia, Afghanistan and Iran, it is past time for more progressive societies to heed the counsel and wisdom of Pope Francis, who has emerged as an enlightened, caring example of the best of humanity.

I had the privilege of working with a former Justice of the High Court of Australia, Michael Kirby, when we were members of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group, which was

commissioned by Heads of Government to propose ways of reforming the Commonwealth in 2010. Justice Kirby urged all members of the Group to recommend abolition of the homosexual laws, which were imposed on its colonies by the colonial British government – laws which Britain itself repealed but are retained to this day by some Commonwealth countries in Africa and the Caribbean.

He made this telling point to the group – if governments and civil societies had not taken a strong and determined stand against Apartheid in South Africa, and before that in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), institutional racism would still exist in Africa, robbing the majority black populations of their right to equality, fairness and justice.

Kirby's irresistible argument resonates in the words of Pope Francis.

Responses and previous commentaries: www.sirronaldsanders.com



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Technology

Meta to reinstate Donald Trump's Facebook and Instagram accounts

By Katie Paul and Sheila Dang

Reuters - Meta Platforms Inc (META.O) said Wednesday it will reinstate former U.S. President Donald Trump's Facebook and Instagram accounts in the coming weeks, following a two-year suspension after the deadly Capitol Hill riot on January 6, 2021.

The restoration of his accounts could provide a boost to Trump, who announced in November he will make another run for the White House in 2024. He has 34 million followers on Facebook and 23 million on Instagram, platforms that are key vehicles for political outreach and fundraising.

His Twitter account was restored in November by new owner Elon Musk, though Trump has yet to post there.

Free speech advocates say it is appropriate for the public to have access to messaging from political candidates, but critics of Meta have accused the company of lax moderating policies.

Meta said in a blog post Wednesday it has "put new guardrails in place to deter repeat offences."

"In the event that Mr. Trump posts further violating content, the content will be removed and he will be suspended for between one month and two



Former U.S. President Donald Trump announced that he will once again run for U.S. president in the 2024 U.S. presidential election during an event at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, U.S. November 15, 2022. REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst

years, depending on the severity of the violation," wrote Nick Clegg, Meta's president of global affairs, in the blog post.

The decision, while widely expected, drew sharp rebukes from civil rights advocates. "Facebook has policies but they under-enforce them," said Laura Murphy, an attorney who led a two-year long audit of Facebook concluding in 2020. "I worry about Facebook's capacity to understand the real world harm that Trump poses: Facebook has been too slow to act."

The Anti-Defamation League, the NAACP, Free Press and other groups also expressed concern Wednesday over Facebook's ability to prevent any future attacks on the democratic process, with Trump still repeating his false claim that he won the 2020 presidential election.

Others said it was the right decision.

Jameel Jaffer, executive director at the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University and a former ACLU official, defended the reinstatement. He had pre-

viously endorsed the company's decision to suspend Trump's account.

"The public has an interest in hearing directly from candidates for political office," said Jaffer. "It's better if the major social media platforms err on the side of leaving speech up, even if the speech is offensive or false, so that it can be addressed by other users and other institutions."

OTHER REACTIONS?

The decision to ban Trump was a polarising one for Meta, the world's

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Global group warns dementia in the Caribbean is increasing significantly

The New Zealand-based Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI), is warning that dementia in the Caribbean is set to rise by 155 percent to nearly 750,000 cases by 2050.

In a statement, it said only 16 percent of Caribbean countries and territories have made any progress to develop a national dementia plan, most of which have inadequate funding

"Following stalled progress conversations with governments across the region, ADI is calling for the public across the Caribbean to urge their governments to take urgent action on dementia," said ADI, adding that it is teaming up with Alzheimer's associations in Barbados, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Jamaica, Grenada, Puerto Rico, St. Kitts-Nevis, St Maarten, St Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago to launch a regional campaign #WhatsYourPlan.

ADI, the global federation for 105 Alzheimer's and dementia associations across the world, said the



campaign focuses on encouraging Caribbean governments to urgently develop a national dementia plan which would help countries manage the oncoming influx of dementia cases.

ADI's chief executive officer, Paola Barbarino, says developing, funding, and implementing national dementia plans is essential to improving health outcomes for people living in the Caribbean with dementia.

"A national dementia plan is a vital step in helping those living with dementia to have access to the support and services they need to live well, for longer," says Barbarino.

"Access to support and a care plan, including care at home and in community settings, at-home adaptations, and respite for carers, alongside medical treatments, are vital for people living with dementia, as well as their careers and family."

She said by denying Caribbean people this support, governments are doing a disservice to their communities, adding "all people living with dementia in the Caribbean deserve access to the kinds of support and services a national dementia plan makes available. It's their human right."

In 2019, dementia was ranked the third leading cause of death in the Americas, accounting for over 390,000 deaths.

Dementia is not a specific disease but is a general term for the impaired ability to remember, think, or make decisions that interfere with doing everyday activities. Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia.

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biggest social media company, which prior to the Trump suspension had never blocked the account of a sitting head of state for violating its content rules.

The company indefinitely revoked Trump's access to his Facebook and Instagram accounts after removing two of his posts during the Capitol Hill violence, including a video in which he reiterated his false claim of widespread voter fraud during the 2020 presidential election.

It then referred the case to its independent over-

sight board, which ruled that the suspension was justified but its indeterminate nature was not. In response, Meta said it would revisit the suspension two years after it began.

Meta's blog post Wednesday suggested it may reactivate other suspended accounts, including those penalised for their involvement in civil unrest. The company said those reinstated accounts would be subject to more stringent review and penalties for violations.

Whether, and how, Trump will seize upon the

opportunity to return to Facebook and Instagram is unclear.

Trump has not sent any new tweets since regaining his account on Twitter, saying he would prefer to stick with his own app Truth Social. But his campaign spokesman told Fox News Digital last week that being back on Facebook "will be an important tool for the 2024 campaign to reach voters."

In a post on Truth Social, Trump responded to his reinstatement on Meta apps, saying: "Such a thing should never again hap-

pen to a sitting President, or anybody else who is not deserving of retribution!" He did not indicate if or when he would begin posting on Meta platforms again.

Representative Adam Schiff, a Democrat who previously chaired the House Intelligence Committee, criticised the decision to reinstate him.

"Trump incited an insurrection," Schiff wrote on Twitter. "Giving him back access to a social media platform to spread his lies and demagoguery is dangerous."

Official: Australia could deny Ye entry over antisemitism

By Rod McGuirk

A senior Australian government minister said Wednesday that rapper Ye, formerly known as Kanye West, could be refused a visa due to antisemitic comments if he attempts to visit Australia.

Education Minister Jason Clare was responding to media reports that the U.S. celebrity intends to visit the family of new Australian partner Bianca Censori in Melbourne next week.

Clare said he did not know if Ye had applied for a visa but that Australia has previously refused them to people with antisemitic views.

"I expect that if he does apply, he would have to go through the same process and answer the same questions" as others who've aired such views, Clare told Nine Network television.

Last month, Ye praised Hitler in an interview with conspiracy theorist Alex Jones. Twitter later suspended Ye after he tweeted a picture of a swastika merged with the Star of David.

Australia's Migration Act sets security and character requirements for non-citizens to enter the country. Any decision on whether Ye gets an Australia



Kanye West, known as Ye, watches the first half of an NBA basketball game between the Washington Wizards and the Los Angeles Lakers in Los Angeles, on March 11, 2022. A senior Australian government minister said Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2023, that Ye could be refused a visa due to antisemitic comments if he attempts to visit Australia. (AP Photo/Ashley Landis, File)

lian visa would be made by Immigration Minister Andrew Giles, whose office said he could not comment on individual cases due to privacy reasons.

Peter Wertheim, co-chief executive officer of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, met government officials on Tuesday to argue for an entry ban.

"We had a sympathetic hearing," Wertheim said on Sky News. "We've made the case that this particular individual does not meet the character test and that

it would be in the national interest not to grant him a visa and we set out our reasons in some detail."

Opposition leader Peter Dutton said if he were in government, he would be inclined to bar Ye on character grounds.

"My inclination would be not to allow him in," Dutton told Melbourne's Radio 3AW on Tuesday.

"His antisemitic comments are disgraceful, his conduct and his behaviour is appalling, and he's not a person of good character," Dutton added.

Ye and Censori intend to visit her family who live in the northeast Melbourne suburb of Ivanhoe next week, Seven Network News reported.

Ye and Censori recently married less than two months after he finalised his divorce from Kim Kardashian, entertainment news website TMZ reported two weeks ago.

The AP asked Ye's representative whether he had married Censori and planned to visit Melbourne, but did not get an immediate response.

Lloyd Morrisett, who helped launch 'Sesame Street,' dies

By Mark Kennedy

AP — Lloyd Morrisett, the co-creator of the beloved children's education TV series "Sesame Street," which uses empathy and fuzzy monsters like Abby Cadabby, Elmo and Cookie Monster to charm and teach generations around the world, has died. He was 93.

Morrisett's death was announced Monday by Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit he helped establish under the name the Children's Television Workshop. No cause of death was given.

In a statement, Sesame Workshop hailed Morrisett as a "wise, thoughtful, and above all kind leader" who was "constantly thinking about new ways" to educate.

Morrisett and Joan Ganz Cooney worked with Harvard University developmental psychologist Gerald Lesser to build the show's unique approach to teaching that now reaches 120 million children. Legendary puppeteer Jim Henson supplied the critters.

"Without Lloyd Morrisett, there would be no 'Sesame Street.' It was he who first came up with the notion of using television to teach preschoolers basic skills, such as letters and numbers," Cooney said in a statement. "He was a trusted partner and loyal friend to me for over 50 years, and he will be sorely missed."

"Sesame Street" is shown in more than 150 countries, has won 216 Emmys, 11 Grammys and in 2019 received the Kennedy Center Honor for lifetime artistic achievement, the first time a television program got the award (Big Bird strolled down the aisle and basically sat in Tom Hanks' lap).

Born in 1929 in Oklahoma City, Morrisett initially trained to be a



Honoree Lloyd Morrisett appears with muppet characters at the 42nd Annual Kennedy Center Honors at The Kennedy Center, Sunday, Dec. 8, 2019, in Washington. Morrisett, the co-creator of the beloved children's education TV series "Sesame Street," which uses empathy and fuzzy monsters like Abby Cadabby, Elmo and Cookie Monster to charm and teach generations around the world, has died. He was 93. Morrisett's death was announced Tuesday by Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit he helped establish under the name the Children's Television Workshop. (Photo by Greg Allen/Invision/AP, File)

teacher with a background in psychology. He became an experimental educator, looking for new ways to educate children from less advantaged backgrounds. Morrisett received his bachelor's at Oberlin College, did graduate work in psychology at UCLA, and earned his doctorate in experimental psychology at Yale University. He was an Oberlin trustee for many years and was chair of the board from 1975 to 1981.

The germ of "Sesame Street" was

shown over a dinner party in 1966, where he met Cooney.

"I said, 'Joan, do you think television could be used to teach young children?' Her answer was, 'I don't know, but I'd like to talk about it,'" he recalled to The Guardian in 2004.

The first episode of "Sesame Street" — sponsored by the letters W, S and E and the numbers 2 and 3 — aired in the fall of 1969. It was a turbulent time in America, rocked by

cont'd on pg 14

'Rick and Morty' creator dropped by Hulu after abuse charges

AP - Hulu on Wednesday became the second television company to cut ties with "Rick and Morty" creator Justin Roiland after felony domestic abuse charges against him were revealed.

"We have ended our association with Justin Roiland," 20th TV Animation and Hulu Originals said in a statement.

Roiland co-created and provided voices for the streaming outlet's animated show "Solar Opposites," and is also a producer and actor on its animated "Kōala Man." Both shows will continue without him.

On Tuesday, Cartoon Network's Adult Swim division, home to the animated sci-fi sitcom "Rick and Morty," made the same move, saying in a brief statement that they have



Justin Roiland poses for a portrait to promote the television series "Rick and Morty" on day two of Comic-Con International, July 21, 2017, in San Diego. Roiland, who created the animated series "Rick and Morty" and provides the voices of the two title characters, is awaiting trial on charges of felony domestic violence against a former girlfriend. A criminal complaint obtained Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023, by The Associated Press from prosecutors in Orange County, Calif., detailed the charges against him. (Photo by Chris Pizzello/Invision/AP, File)

ended their association with Roiland.

Squanch Games, a video game developer Roiland co-founded, said on Twitter

later Tuesday that he had resigned from the company.

Roiland, 42, was charged in Orange County, California in January of

2020 with two counts of felony domestic violence against a former girlfriend that he was living with. He has pleaded not guilty and is awaiting trial.

The charges went unreported until NBC News ran a story on them earlier this month.

Roiland's attorney and publicist did not immediately reply to emails seeking comment.

Roiland provided the voices of the two title characters, a mad scientist and his grandson, in "Rick and Morty." He and Dan Harmon created the show that has run for six seasons and has been renewed for a seventh. Adult Swim has said the series will continue without him, but have not announced who the new vocal performers will be.

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the Vietnam War and raw from the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. the year before.

Children's programming at the time was made up of shows like "Captain Kangaroo," "Romper Room" and the often violent cartoon skirmishes between "Tom & Jerry." "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood" was mostly teaching social skills.

"Sesame Street" was designed by education professionals and child psychologists with one goal: to help low-income and minority students aged 2-5 overcome some of the deficiencies they had when entering school.

"Social scientists had long noted

kids who were white and from higher-income families were often better prepared.

The show was set on an urban street with a multicultural cast. Diversity and inclusion were baked into the show. Monsters, humans and animals all lived together peacefully.

It became the first children's program to feature someone with Down syndrome. It had puppets with HIV and in foster care, invited children in wheelchairs, dealt with topics like jailed parents, homelessness, women's rights, military families and even girls singing about loving their hair.

It introduced the bilingual Rosita — the first Latina Muppet — in 1991. Julia, a 4-year-old Muppet with

autism, came in 2017 and the show has since offered help for kids whose parents are dealing with addiction and recovery, and children suffering as a result of the Syrian civil war. To help kids after 9/11, Elmo was left traumatised by a fire at Hooper's store but was soothingly told that firefighters were there to help.

The company said upon the news of his death that Lloyd left "an outsized and indelible legacy among generations of children the world over, with 'Sesame Street' only the most visible tribute to a lifetime of good work and lasting impact."

He is survived by his wife, Mary; daughters Julie and Sarah; and granddaughters Frances and Clara.

Film starring Bermudian actress, Lana Young, nominated for NAACP Award

LOOP — Bermudian actress Lana Young has a chance to create history as she's been nominated along with the cast of "A Jazzman's Blues" for a National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) Award in the United States.

A Jazz Man's Blues, which is a Netflix film directed by Tyler Perry, was nominated for the Outstanding Ensemble in a Motion Picture and Outstanding Motion Picture categories.

Netflix says the film tells a "tale of forbidden



Actress Lana Young. Photo via @actorlanayoung on Instagram.

love and family drama unravels 40 years of secrets and lies against a soundtrack of juke-joint

"SWEET MILE-STONES - let's celebrate each and everyone, big and small. I'm very excited to share this nomination with my Uber talented AJB family who worked from the heart on this one," she wrote on Instagram.

The 52-year-old actress has had a number of roles in big films and television series such as "Law and Order", "Greenleaf", "Wanda Vision" and "The Blacklist" over the years.

The 54th NAACP Awards is set to take place on February 25, 2023 at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, in California.



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Regional News



U.S. arrests of Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan and Venezuelan migrants plummet

Reuters - The number of migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela caught crossing the U.S.-Mexico border dropped off dramatically from December to January following new rules that expel them back to Mexico, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said.

U.S. authorities encountered a daily average of just 115 migrants from those countries over a week-long period ending on Jan. 24, down from an average 3,367 in the week to Dec. 11, a 97% drop, DHS said on Wednesday.

The department attributed the decrease to the expansion of a public health order known as Title 42, which was first implemented by Republican former President Donald Trump to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as expanded legal pathways to enter the United States.

On Jan. 5, the administration of Democratic President Joe Biden announced that migrants from Cuba, Haiti and Nicaragua would be expelled to Mexico without the chance to seek U.S. asylum under Title 42. Mexico had previously accepted mostly Mexicans, some Central Americans and, more recently, Venezuelans.

Reuters reported last week that overall border arrests dropped in January following the new policies.

Biden, who intends to seek reelection in 2024, has struggled both operationally and politically with record numbers of migrants attempting to cross the U.S.-Mexico border illegally.

His move to expand the Trump-era program has angered some immigration advocates and Democratic lawmakers who point to his pledge to reverse the Republican's hardline border policies.



Asylum-seeking migrants cross the Rio Bravo river, the border between the United States and Mexico, to request asylum in El Paso, Texas, U.S., as seen from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico January 2, 2023. REUTERS/Jose Luis Gonzalez/File Photo

Biden's administration has coupled the expulsions with new legal pathways for migrants who enter by air and who have U.S. sponsors. Under the new program, up to 30,000 migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela may enter the United States per month with a two-year temporary humanitarian "parole."

About 1,700 people from Cuba, Haiti and Nicaragua have arrived in the United States through the program in recent weeks, with thousands more approved for travel, a senior administra-

tion official said on Wednesday during a call with reporters. Venezuelans have been eligible for such entry since October.

A coalition of 20 U.S. states with Republican attorneys general filed a lawsuit on Tuesday seeking to halt Biden's humanitarian entry program, saying it violates federal immigration law.

The Biden official, who requested anonymity as a condition of the call, criticised the lawsuit as a "stunt" that "will lead to more illegal immigration."

CCJ says former Guyana AG can be sued in defamation case

Loop - The Trinidad-based Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) has dismissed an application by former Guyana attorney general, Senior Counsel Basil Williams, who sought special leave to appeal a lower court ruling refusing to grant him leave to appeal a decision of the Full Court of the Supreme Court of Guyana.

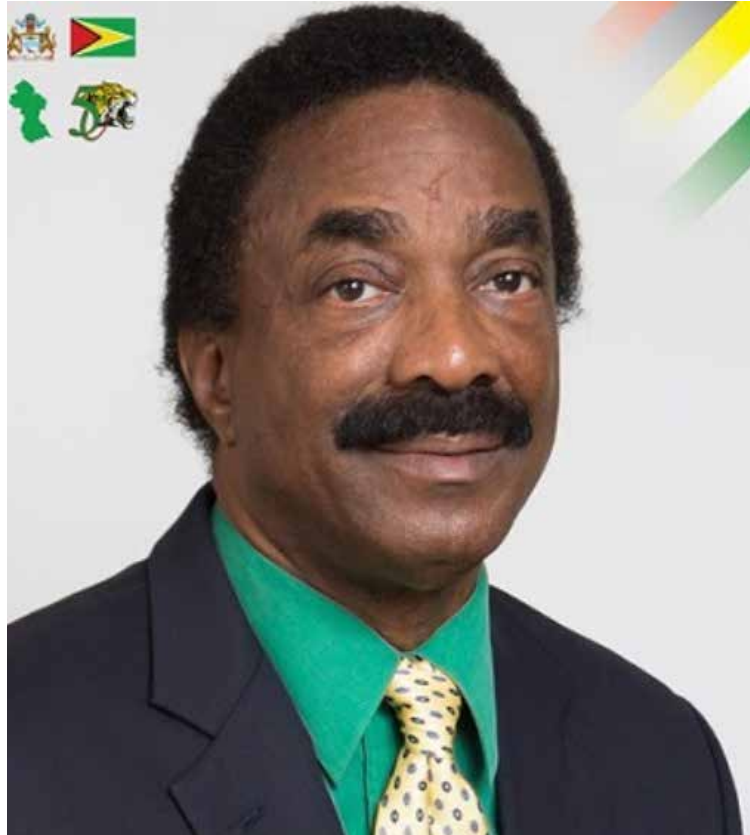
In its ruling, the CCJ, which is Guyana's highest court, also upheld the lower court's ruling not to grant Williams an extension of time to lodge the appeal.

Former deputy solicitor general in the Attorney General's office, Prithima Kissoon, had sued Williams and the Guyana National Newspaper Ltd for defamation.

The dispute arose because Williams, while holding the office of Attorney General, was dissatisfied with the manner in which Ms Kissoon handled certain political cases involving the then opposition People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C).

Williams ordered her off all political cases after the appeal in a matter between the Attorney General v Bharrat Jagdeo, which was under Ms Kissoon's care and control, was dismissed.

The former solicitor general argued that Williams abused and vilified her



Senior Counsel Basil Williams. (File Photo)

in the press and as a result she sued him in his personal capacity for defamation.

But Williams applied to strike his name from the claim arguing that the Attorney General of Guyana ought to be sued instead. The High Court of Guyana dismissed Williams' application but gave leave to Ms Kissoon to join the Attorney General to the claim, which she did. Upon an application by the Attorney General, the High Court subsequently struck Williams from the claim.

The former solicitor general applied to the Full Court to review the decision to strike Williams from the claim. The application was

heard by a judicial panel of the Full Court, of which Ms Kissoon's brother-in-law was a member.

The Full Court restored Williams as a party to the claim. The decision was delivered via email on 31 March 2021, but Williams said that he only learnt of the decision on April 13, 2021, because an incorrect email address was used while attempting to dispatch it to him.

On April 28, 2021, Williams filed an application for leave to appeal the decision of the Full Court to a judge in chambers in the Court of Appeal. This application was outside of the required 14 day time period, and as a

result, he also filed an application to extend the time to lodge that appeal.

But the judge in chambers dismissed Williams' application on the ground of lack of jurisdiction. The former attorney general then applied to a full Panel of the Court of Appeal to review the decision of the Full Court.

However, on July 14 last year, the full Panel of the Court of Appeal dismissed Williams' application for leave to appeal the decision of the Full Court, and for an extension of time to lodge that appeal, as the intended appeal had no merit.

On August 23, last year, Williams applied to the CCJ for special leave to appeal the decision of the Court of Appeal. This application was opposed by Kissoon.

Williams argued that the order of the High Court striking him from the claim in his personal capacity should be restored. He submitted that the Full Court's decision was tainted with bias. He also argued that joining him to the claim breached sections 3, 9, and 10 of the State Liability and Proceedings Act Cap 6:05 (the State Liability Act).

The CCJ considered the authorities relating to bias and the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct and found that the judge of the

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Regional News



Jamaica's PM says no bailout for failed financial institutions amid multi-billion-dollar fraud

CMC - Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness has declared that the government will not compensate for losses of failed financial institutions as a result of the inability to secure their clients' funds.

He made the disclosure at Tuesday night's annual Jamaica Stock Exchange capital markets conference.

"The government will not socialise any debt, and we will not socialise the failure of our banks to be prudent and to protect your customers," Holness said.

"Were we to do that, it would send a very bad signal to the banks and investment houses that they can be negligent and expect the Bank (of Jamaica) to cover their negligence. That will not happen," he further said.

Prime minister Andrew Holness said the socialisation of debt landed the country in a catastrophe that took decades to resolve and "made the entire country poor," and said the country should use the opportunity to fortify the regulations governing the sector.

Holness also said there would be "no political interference or political



Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness.

cover" into investigations of the fraud.

The Jamaican government recently announced that the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) will assist local authorities in the investigation of the multi-million-dollar fraud at the investment firm, Stocks and Securities Limited (SSL).

Holness also noted the penalties for financial and white-collar crimes.

On Monday, Finance Minister, Dr.

Nigel Clarke said the government is moving to review the financial sector legislation to apply harsher penalties for breaches.

Clarke said the review will improve the country's ability to detect, investigate, and prosecute financial crimes in the banking, securities, insurance, and pensions sectors, with amendments to the Securities Act, Banking Act, Insurance Act, and Pensions Act.

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Full Court ought to have recused himself given his close relationship with Ms Kissoon, the appellant before him.

Nevertheless, the CCJ found that this issue was not determinative of the application for special leave because the CCJ still had to assess whether Williams satisfied the test for obtaining special leave, that is,

whether the intending appellant demonstrated a realistic prospect of the appeal being successful.

The CCJ noted that to determine the prospect of success of the appeal, it considered and interpreted the State Liability Act.

The Court noted that the State Liability Act was modelled after the United Kingdom's Crown Proceedings Act 1947, 'the UK Act'.

Section 2 of the UK Act and section 3 of the State Liability Act both impose liability on the Crown in cases where torts are committed by the agents or servants of the Crown, or State as the case may be, in the course of the execution of their duties.

The CCJ found that there was nothing in the Act or any authority that removed the right of an injured party to sue the person

who committed the tort for acts or omissions in the performance of their duties as an agent or servant of the State.

The CCJ, therefore, found that the Full Court was entitled and right to restore Williams to the suit as a defendant in his personal capacity. It dismissed the application for special leave and ordered Williams to pay Ms Kissoon's costs.

Germany apologises for leopard jibe that upset some Africans

AP - Germany apologised on Thursday for using a leopard emoji in a jibe at Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Twitter that ended up offending some Africans.

The German foreign ministry poked fun at Russia's top diplomat during his tour of Africa when it tweeted that he wasn't there looking for leopards, but using the trip to try and justify Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The tweet, and the leopard emoji the foreign ministry used on its official account, played off Germany's decision to send some of its advanced Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine to help its military fight off Russian forces.

But an African Union official took offence at what



In this photo released by the Russian Foreign Ministry Press Service, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, left, and Eswatini's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Thuli Dladla walk together during their meeting in Mbabane, Eswatini, Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2023. (Russian Foreign Ministry Press Service via AP)

she said was the continent being portrayed as only about wild animals. Ebba Kalondo, the spokeswoman for AU Chairman Moussa Faki Mahamat, tweeted back to the German government account questioning if Africa, its people and

its wildlife was "just a joke to you?"

"Foreign policy is not a joke nor should it be used to score cheap geopolitical points by illustrating an entire Continent with colonial tropes," Kalondo wrote in a follow-up tweet.

The German foreign ministry apologised and said that the tweet wasn't meant to offend, but rather "to call out the lies that Russia uses to justify its imperialist war of aggression against Ukraine."

Lavrov has visited South Africa, Eswatini, Angola and Eritrea this week, where he has repeated his claims that the United States and its Western allies are using Ukraine as a tool in a "hybrid war" against Russia.

Many African nations still hold historical ties with Moscow. South Africa was one of several to abstain from a U.N. vote last year condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Eritrea voted against the resolution alongside Russia, Belarus, North Korea and Syria.

Kenyan court convicts Venezuelan diplomat for envoy's murder

Reuters - A Kenyan court on Wednesday found a Venezuelan diplomat guilty of murdering the Latin American nation's acting ambassador a decade ago at her home in an upmarket Nairobi neighbourhood.

Dwight Sagaray, who was the first secretary at the embassy, was found guilty of the July 2012 killing of Olga Fonseca, Judge Roselyn Korir said in her ruling.

The court also convicted

three Kenyan nationals who had been charged alongside Sagaray, saying they were involved in a common plan to carry out the murder.

Another suspect who fled after the murder is still at large and the court said his arrest warrant should remain in force.

Sagaray, who wore a suit and tie in the dock, clasped his hands and held them against his face when

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A Kenyan police officer arrives at the residence of the Venezuelan embassy's slain charge d'affaires, Olga Fonseca, at the Runda neighbourhood in Kenya's capital Nairobi July 27, 2012. REUTERS/Thomas Mukoya/File Photo

Suspect in Half Moon Bay farm killings faces 7 murder counts

AP - A farmworker accused of killing seven people in back-to-back shootings at two Northern California mushroom farms was charged Wednesday with seven counts of murder and one of attempted murder.

Chunli Zhao, 66, was set to make his first court appearance Wednesday but it was postponed until Feb. 16, San Mateo County District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe said. His two attorneys did not immediately respond to calls and emails seeking comment.

Wagstaffe, speaking outside the courthouse, declined to share any additional details on a motive in the killing of Zhao's current and former coworkers, saying he wanted to keep the details out of the public eye to ensure a fair trial. Sheriff's officials have said it was workplace violence.

It was California's third mass shooting in eight days, and the largest in San Mateo County's history,



Chunli Zhao appears for his arraignment at San Mateo Superior Court in Redwood City, Calif., on Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2023. Zhao, a farmworker accused of killing seven people in back-to-back shootings at two Northern California mushroom farms was charged Wednesday with seven counts of murder and one of attempted murder. Zhao, 66, made his first court appearance. (Shae Hammond/Bay Area News Group via AP, Pool)

Wagstaffe said. It followed the killing of 11 people in the Los Angeles area amid Lunar New Year celebrations Saturday.

Authorities believe Zhao acted alone Monday

when he entered a mushroom farm where he worked in Half Moon Bay, shot and killed four people and seriously wounded a fifth. He then drove to a nearby farm where he worked previous-

ly and killed three more people, said Eamonn Allen, a sheriff's spokesperson.

Erlin Ortiz and her sister, Miriam Ortiz, pack mushrooms at the farm where Zhao is accused of killing four people.

They were sitting in their car after their shift when they saw Zhao, who was about 40 feet (12 metres) away, pull a gun from a backpack, shout something in Mandarin to a fellow Chinese farmworker and then shoot the man, they told the Bay Area News Group.

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the verdict was read.

Sagaray could be tried for the murder because he did not enjoy diplomatic immunity after Venezuela waived it following the crime, the court ruled.

Fonseca was found strangled in her bedroom less than two weeks into her posting to Nairobi, which followed the abrupt departure of the previous ambassador after he was accused by his domestic staff of sexual harassment.

Sagaray, who had been heading the mission before the arrival of Fonseca, was angered by her presence since he wanted to continue overseeing the embassy, the court found.

He intended to be the main beneficiary of the crime, Korir said, adding there was evidence he had tried to interfere with Fonseca's ability to take over as the head of the embassy, before she was killed.

Sagaray and his co-accused will be sentenced at a later date, the judge said.

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Zhao then shot a second worker, and gunned down the first worker who had gotten to his feet and tried to run away, Erlin Ortiz said.

"He was super red and very angry," she said of Zhao.

Shocked and horrified, Miriam Ortiz's husband, who was behind the wheel, started the car and prepared to drive away.

Zhao turned to look at them, then hopped onto a forklift and headed toward an encampment on the farm where he and the sisters lived. His demeanour had changed, they said.

"He was laughing, he was smiling," Erlin Ortiz said. "We saw him get on the forklift, and when he turned to see us, he was making fun of the situation."

Erlin Ortiz said Zhao, who grew onions for himself and his wife in a little garden plot, would wave and greet them but always seemed serious.

The charges against Zhao include additional allegations that could result in the death penalty or life in prison without parole, though Gov. Gavin Newsom has issued a moratorium on executions. Among those allegations are that Zhao used a gun, caused great bodily injury and killed multiple people.

The coroner's office named six of the victims: Zhishen Liu, 73, of San Francisco; Marciano Martinez Jimenez, 50, of Moss Beach, California; Aixiang Zhang, 74, of San Francisco; Qizhong Cheng, 66, of Half Moon Bay; Jingzhi Lu, 64, of Half Moon Bay; and Yetao Bing, 43, whose hometown was unknown. The charging documents identify Jose Romero Perez as the other person killed and Pedro Romero Perez as the eighth victim, who survived the shooting.

Officials have said some of the people killed were migrant workers.

Some people were shot in trailers on the property, Wagstaffe said.

Servando Martinez Jimenez said his brother Marciano Martinez Jimenez, one of the victims, was a delivery person and manager at one of the farms. He never mentioned Zhao or said anything about problems with other workers.

"He was a good person. He was polite and friendly with everyone. He never had any problems with anyone. I don't understand why all this happened," Martinez Jimenez said in Spanish.

Marciano Martinez Jimenez had lived in the United States for 28 years after arriving from the Mexican state of Oaxaca. Servando Martinez Jimenez said he is working with the Mexican consulate to get his brother's body home.

It would not have been Zhao's first fit of workplace rage, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. In 2013, Zhao was accused of threatening to split a coworker's head open with a knife and separately tried to suffocate the man with a pillow, the Chronicle reported, based on court documents.

The two were roommates and worked at a restaurant, and the man, identified as Jingjiu Wang, filed a temporary restraining order against Zhao that was granted but is no longer in effect. Wang could not be immediately reached, the Chronicle reported.

Zhao is from China and has lived in the United States for at least a dozen years, Wagstaffe said. He had legal paperwork to live in the country at one time and investigators were determining whether it was still valid, Wagstaffe said. They were also looking into his prior contact with law enforcement.

The shootings broke out at California Terra Garden, previously known as Mountain Mushroom Farm, and nearby Concord Farms.

The majority of farmworkers in the area are Latinos but the Mountain Mushroom Farm was one of the few that employed Asian workers, said Belinda Hernandez, executive director of ALAS, a farmworker advocacy group based in Half Moon Bay. She said that mushroom farms offer the benefit of year-round work.

David Oates, a California Terra Garden spokesperson, said that he did not know how long Zhao worked there and that he was one of 35 employees who had stayed when ownership changed. He declined to comment further Wednesday, saying he would defer to law enforcement. And Aaron Tung, part owner of Concord Farms, did not respond Wednesday to a request for additional comment.

Half Moon Bay is a small, laid-back, coastal and agricultural city about 30 miles (50 kilometres) south of San Francisco. Its sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean make it a popular spot for hikers and tourists, who flock there to surf and for an annual giant pumpkin festival.

The new year has brought six mass killings in the U.S. in fewer than three weeks, accounting for 39 deaths. Three have struck California since Jan. 16, according to a database compiled by The Associated Press, USA Today and Northeastern University. The database tracks every mass killing - defined as four dead, not including the offender - in the U.S. since 2006.

The shootings in Half Moon Bay and Monterey Park followed the killing of a teenage mother, her baby and four others at a home in California's Central Valley on Jan. 16. Officials discussing the investigation mentioned a possible gang link to the killings. ____

This story has been corrected to say six people, not eight people, were killed in California's Central Valley on Jan. 16.

Australian Open 2023 results: Elena Rybakina and Aryna Sabalenka reach Melbourne final

BBC - Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina has another shot at a major title after reaching the Australian Open final where she will meet Belarusian fifth seed Aryna Sabalenka.

Rybakina, 23, won 7-6 (7-4) 6-3 against Victoria Azarenka, ending the two-time champion's hopes of winning the title 10 years after her last triumph.

Sabalenka beat Poland's Magda Linette to reach her first major final.

The powerful 24-year-old won 7-6 (7-1) 6-2 against her unseeded opponent.

Sabalenka was the heavy favourite to beat 30-year-old Linette, who had never been past the third round of a Grand Slam event before, and grew in confidence as the match wore on.

After losing three times in major semi-finals, Sabalenka's relief was evident after securing her place in Saturday's showpiece against another big-hitter.

"I wouldn't say I started really well but in the tie-break I found my rhythm and trusted myself and started going for my shots," said Sabalenka, who is on a 10-match winning streak after lifting the Adelaide title.

Rybakina, seeded 22nd, will contest her second major final after her triumph at the All England Club last year.

"I'm super happy to be in the final and play one more time here," she said.

"It was different conditions, I couldn't play aggressive tennis and couldn't go so much for my shots but I was happy to win.

"I got a lot of experience from



Elena Rybakina has beaten three major champions in a row on her way to a second Grand Slam final

Wimbledon and I want to come on court [for the final] and enjoy the moment."

Low-key Rybakina making sure she is noticed

Rybakina has been one of the most unheralded Wimbledon champions in recent history as a result of her low profile and a ranking that is artificially low because points were not awarded at the All England Club last year.

At Melbourne Park, the tall Kazakh - who was born in Moscow and represented Russia until she was 19 - has been reminding people once again of her outstanding talent.

At the US Open last year, Rybakina said she did not "feel like" a major winner because she was ranked outside of the world's top 20 after points were stripped because of Wimbledon banning Russian and Belarusian players.

Rybakina was also stuck on a small outside court for her Australian Open first-round match - although

she insisted she "did not care" - but since then there has been no escaping the threat she posed in the draw.

She was responsible for knocking out world number Iga Swiatek in the last 16, either side of other notable wins against 2022 runner-up Danielle Collins and 2017 French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko.

Big serving has been one of the keys to her success and it teed up what many expected to be a fascinating contest against 33-year-old Azarenka, who has been one of the best returners in the game over the years.

Rybakina laid down a marker in the first game of the match with three aces and produced another comfortable hold before 24th seed Azarenka - absorbing her opponent's power which helped her switch defence into attack - broke for 3-2.

An instant reply swung the momentum back to Rybakina but, as she tried to serve out the set at 5-3, her first-serve percentage suddenly

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Record number of teams to contest Three-Hand Domino League



Parham Strikers, seen here during the march past to mark the opening of the 2023 ABNDA season on Saturday, 21st January, 2023, is among teams that will contest the Three-Hand Domino League. (Photo: ABNDA)

A record number of teams have registered to contest this weekend's start of the Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Association's (ABNDA) 2023 Three-Hand League at the association's headquarters in Ottos.

Eighteen teams are registered to compete in the season opener, surpassing the previous association record of fifteen teams.

Among the registered teams are Bryden's Stingray City, Bolans Revellers A, Bolans Revellers B, Bolans Revellers C, Bravo and Dominatrixx.

Also participating are Everyday Double 6 A, Everyday Double 6 B, Legacy, Future, Moise Eagle Warriors and Asot's Parham Strikers, Anjo's Ramplers,

Rising Stars, Medicare Pharmacy Triple Dynamite, Unstoppables, Willikies Superstars A and Willikies Superstars B.

The Three-Hand League will be conducted using the format of three points for match winners, two points for the runners-up and one point to the third place finishers.

The Three-Hand League will be held over ten weeks and is expected to conclude in July, just before team Antigua and Barbuda departs for Guyana in August to contest the 2023 World Domino Tournament.

The 2023 domestic season of the ABNDA officially got underway with a March Past and Opening Ceremony on Saturday, 21st January.

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plummeted.

That enabled Azarenka to fight back to 5-5 and earn three break points in the 11th game, only for Rybakina to regain her composure to hold and provide confidence to take control of the tie-break.

Azarenka was not helped by several costly errors and they continued in the second set as Rybakina imposed herself with two breaks for a 5-2 lead.

While she could not serve out the match, Rybakina sealed victory with another break and - rather fittingly - produced a low-key celebration.

Sabalenka ensures Belarusian presence in Melbourne final

Rybakina's win ended the pros-

pect of an-all Belarusian final in Melbourne before Sabalenka ensured the eastern European nation - whose flag she cannot play under because of its support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine - would be represented.

Sabalenka has previously said "no-one supports war", adding she was "really disappointed" politics had interfered with sport after Russian and Belarusian players were banned from Wimbledon last year.

While Sabalenka says having "zero" control over the war helps her "stay strong", her success will lead to more discussion about a divisive political issue in sport.

Amid the ongoing controversy, her focus has been on finally reaching the major final which her talent

has long promised.

A edgy start saw Sabalenka lose serve in the first game and, although she broke back for 2-2, did not find her best form until the pivotal first-set tie-break where her explosive hitting came to the fore.

With confidence now flowing, she raced ahead in the second set. Nerves crept in again as she could not convert any of three match points on Linette's serve at 5-1, but took her fourth opportunity in the next game with a typically thunderous forehand winner.

"It's good that I have made a breakthrough in the semi-finals, but there is one more match to go. I just want to stay focused," Sabalenka said.

Sports News



Chase for Champions League spots intensifying in Serie A

AP - While it seems only a total collapse could keep Napoli from winning its first Serie A title in 33 years, the chase for the three remaining Champions League spots is intensifying.

Napoli's victory over Salernitana on Saturday combined with losses for AC Milan and Inter Milan has given the southern team a 12-point lead at the top of the standings. Only three points separate the five teams immediately below it - with second-place Milan having 38 points; Lazio, Inter and Roma with 37; and Atalanta with 35.

Milan will be hoping to end a terrible run when the defending champions host Sassuolo on Sunday, less than a week after Tuesday's 4-0 loss at Lazio left the team without a win in its past five matches.

That streak has seen Milan eliminated from the Italian Cup by Torino before drawing 2-2 at Lecce. Perhaps the most painful loss came last week when Milan was beaten by city rival Inter 3-0 in the Italian Super Cup.

"We lost in the Super Cup, we've



AC Milan's manager Stefano Pioli reacts after the fourth goal against his team during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Lazio and AC Milan at the Olympic Stadium in Rome, Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2023. (AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia)

conceded 11 goals in three matches. This is a delicate moment," Milan director Paolo Maldini said. "At the same time we're alone in second place, so I don't think it's a massive disaster.

"It's clear that this is a rough moment. In terms of technique, tactics, but above all state of mind, this isn't

our best moment. That's really clear."

The last time Milan was in a similarly negative period it almost fired coach Stefano Pioli at the start of 2020 - just a few months into his tenure - to replace him with Ralf Rangnick. Milan was in advanced negotiations with

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School netball shoots off next Monday



Princess Margaret School won the Under-16 division title in the 2022 Schools' Netball League. (File photo)

The 2023 Cool & Smooth Inter-schools' Netball League will shoot off on Monday, 30th January.

Twenty-four teams from eighteen schools, along with the Antigua State College, will participate in the league whose matches will all be contested at the YMCA Sports Complex.

Ten secondary schools will vie for supremacy in the Under-13, Under-16

and 18 and Over divisions, while teams from eight learning institutions will seek top honours in the primary school category.

The Princess Margaret School (PMS) is the defending champion of the Under-16 division.

The Antigua Girls High School (AGHS) will defend their Under-13 division title while J. T. Ambrose are cup-holders in the Primary Schools' Division.

Olympics 2024: IOC plan for Russian & Belarusian athletes criticised by UK Government

BBC - The International Olympic Committee's plan to allow Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete at Paris 2024 has been condemned by Culture Secretary Michelle Donelan.

She said the move was a "world away from the reality of war".

On Wednesday, the IOC said it would "explore a pathway" for Russian and Belarusian athletes' participation.

"We condemn any action that allows President Putin to legitimise his illegal war in Ukraine," Donelan said.

"This position from the IOC is a world away from the reality of war being felt by the Ukrainian people - and IOC president [Thomas] Bach's own words less than a year ago where he strongly condemned Russia for breaking the Olympic Truce and urged it to 'give peace a chance,'" she added.

"We, and many other countries, have been unequivocal on this throughout, and we will now work urgently



The IOC is working in plans to allow Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete at the 2024 Games under a neutral flag

across like-minded countries to ensure that solidarity continues on this issue."

The IOC previously asked sporting federations to exclude athletes from the countries following Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year. However, Wednesday's statement said "no athlete should be prevented from competing just because of their passport".

Last month, Bach spoke of not wishing to punish individual athletes for the actions of their governments.

However, in response to the IOC statement, World Athletics stressed that ath-

letes from those countries remained excluded from its events.

The athletics governing body outlined that Russian athletes were suspended over the country's doping scandal and also - alongside Belarusian athletes - for the invasion of Ukraine.

It added that a taskforce will report in March on whether "the intensive work we have conducted in cleaning up athletics in Russia has now been sufficiently embraced for the doping-related suspension to be lifted."

If that suspension is lifted, World Athletics said its

council meeting would then consider the ongoing suspension of Russian and Belarusian athletes and officials in relation to the invasion of Ukraine.

Russian and Belarusian athletes will, though, be able to take part in this year's Asian Games, the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) has said, its statement adding: "All athletes, regardless of their nationality or the passport they hold, should be able to compete in sports competitions."

Meanwhile the International Paralympic Committee said it would "follow with interest" the IOC's decision.

"We wish to reiterate that we hope and pray that the conflict comes to an end, that no more lives are taken, and that we can run sports and politics separately," IPC president Andrew Parsons added.

Russia and Belarus were suspended by the IPC with immediate effect last year for their "inability to comply with membership obligations".

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the German coach before changing its mind.

Maldini laughed off suggestions the title-winning coach's job was again at risk.

"That is a question I hoped I wouldn't get. But I'd have to answer yes (we have faith in him) ... we're second in the standings, and I'll remind you that two years ago, after a seven-year absence, we qualified for the Champions League, then we de-

servedly won the Serie A title last season, and we're second in the league," Maldini said.

"With all due respect for the criticism, which is deserved, I'd look at the facts. We'll beat this slump in the usual way, with hard work and all pulling in the same direction ... At the moment the team isn't playing well, it's not in great shape physically or mentally, but it's still there."

Milan will have to get out of its slump fast, especially with the Serie A

derby against Inter coming up on Feb. 5.

Inter also has been in mixed form and its Super Cup celebrations were hampered by a home loss to Empoli on Monday. The Nerazzurri next face last-place Cremonese on Saturday before taking on Atalanta in the Italian Cup quarterfinals.

Atalanta hosts relegation-threatened Sampdoria, also on Saturday, while Lazio plays Fiorentina and Roma visits Napoli on Sunday.

Sports News



Spanish Heat blow out Ottos Clippers in Division II basketball

Spanish Heat blew out Daryll Matthew's Ottos Clippers by 31 points in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division on Wednesday night.

Spanish Heat romped to a 88 - 57 victory over Clippers in their Zone 2 affair at the JSC Sports Complex.

Steven Matthew shot a game high of 21 points,

Carlos Saurez scored 13 points and Rohland Hamilton converted 12 points for Spanish Heat.

Clippers had a topscore of 13 points and grabbed nine rebounds while Etian

Davis chipped in with 10 points for Ottos Clippers.

The ABBA Second Division will continue with a Zone 2 double header at the JSC Sports Complex on 28th January.

Cutie's Ovals Young Guns will tackle Wadadli Elites2 at 6:45pm while Flyers2 will take on Caribbean Pharmaceuticals Fearless Crew1 at 8:30pm.

Meanwhile, ABBA's General Secretary, Jennell Willette, has said the organisation hopes to complete the preliminary stage of the Second Division by the end of February with the play-offs scheduled for early March 2023.

She continued that the ABBA First Division league is set to shoot off on 19th February.

Registration for Division One is now open to participating teams and will close by mid-February.

Willette said ABBA would not be able to disclose how many teams will participate in the First Division competition until the registration period has ended. The Division One league was suspended for the last three years due to the pandemic.

The last edition was staged in 2019 and was won by Cutie's Ovals Ojays.

Pointe Xpress Weekend Puzzle

ACROSS

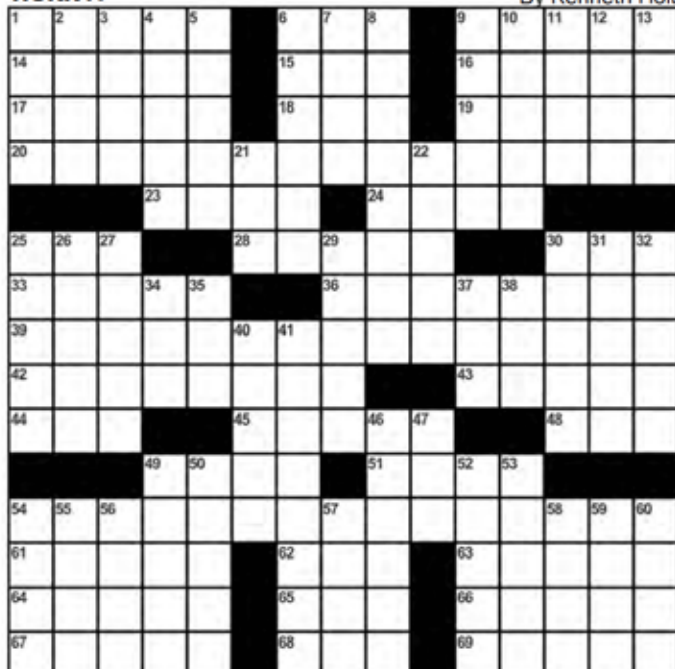
- 1) City in central New York
- 6) No longer is
- 9) Form of sorcery
- 14) Clear plastic wrap
- 15) Gasteyer, formerly of "SNL"
- 16) One kind of wave
- 17) "Give me ____" ("Call me")
- 18) Grassy square
- 19) Fly without an engine
- 20) How speeders like to travel
- 23) Habitual litterbug, e.g.
- 24) Bone in the human arm
- 25) Crucial sleep stage
- 28) "Saturday Night Fever" setting
- 30) Earthbound bird
- 33) Detached
- 36) Classified
- 39) Quaint place to stay
- 42) Certain seedpod bearer
- 43) It's before noon?
- 44) Real attachment
- 45) Adroit
- 48) Stat for a pitcher
- 49) Baglike anatomy structures
- 51) Mobsters speak with one in stereotypes
- 54) McDonald's and Wendy's, for two
- 61) Cool in manner
- 62) Squealer
- 63) Fiber from the East
- 64) Italian resort isle
- 65) 67.5 degrees, in terms of dir.
- 66) Type of angle
- 67) English county
- 68) "Cheers" character Malone
- 69) Change in Chihuahua

DOWN

- 1) Colorado Springs Acad.
- 2) Noted literary plantation
- 3) Blue flag, e.g.
- 4) Pitches to one side
- 5) Heavenly being
- 6) Horseradish condiment
- 7) Bartlett abbr.
- 8) Pharisee's rival
- 9) Keyboard kin
- 10) Very light wood
- 11) Correct a manuscript
- 12) Handy assistant
- 13) A gardener or farmer, sometimes
- 21) "Twilight Zone" writer Serling
- 22) Botanist's concern
- 25) Jewish teacher
- 26) They're crossed in Olympic competition
- 27) "____, I'm Adam" (palindrome)
- 29) Shopping binge
- 30) Related on mom's side
- 31) Microwave frequency device
- 32) Sound leader?
- 34) Did more than walked
- 35) Explosive stuff
- 37) Music from Jamaica
- 38) Not accurate
- 40) "Harry Potter" villain Malfoy
- 41) You get them lying down
- 46) "President" follower
- 47) T-shaped cross
- 49) Accumulate for future use
- 50) Paste on, as a stamp
- 52) Purse attachment
- 53) Park, in Monopoly
- 54) Commonly reflected image
- 55) "Woe is me"
- 56) Soaks (up)
- 57) Another "SNL" alum, ____ Carvey
- 58) Plural of 30-Across
- 59) Michael Jackson's brother
- 60) Meets, as a bet

HURRY!

By Kenneth Holt





Stage set for opening rounds of 2023 West Indies Championship in Antigua and Grenada

Cricket West Indies (CWI) today announced the match schedule and venues for the first two rounds of the West Indies Championship, the region's first-class four-day red ball tournament, which will be played in Antigua and Grenada.

The tournament will open with the Windward Islands Volcanoes hosting the Trinidad & Tobago Red Force at the Grenada National Stadium (GNS). This match will start on 31 January and will continue on 1 to 3 February.

In Antigua, defending champions the Barbados Pride will start their bid for a third straight title when they face Guyana Harpy Eagles in the feature match at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium (SVRS) on 1 to 4 February.

The third contest will see the Leeward Islands Hurricanes hosting the Jamaica Scorpions at the Coolidge Cricket Ground (CCG) from 1 to 4 February.

The second round will be played from 8 to 11 February when the Barbados Pride will meet the Jamaica Scorpions at CCG; Trinidad & Tobago Red Force travel to face the Leeward

Islands Hurricanes at the SVRS, and the Guyana Harpy Eagles take on the Windward Islands Volcanoes at the GNS.

The third round of the West Indies Championship resumes on 15 March with the final round concluding on 1 April when the 2023 Champions will be crowned and presented with the Headley Weekes Trophy. The final three rounds will all be played in Trinidad and the venues will be announced at a later date.

Roland Holder, CWI's Manager of Cricket Operations said:

We are happy to announce the match schedule and venues for the first two rounds of the West Indies Championship, our flagship regional tournament on the annual calendar.

The six teams have been preparing diligently for the upcoming season and we expect to see keen competition this year as they battle for the Headley Weekes trophy.

From the tournament, the best performers also have the reward of playing for Team Weekes and Team Headley in the new tournament announced

by CWI scheduled for April and May.

The new Headley Weekes Series will follow the West Indies Championship and will feature three matches and three teams.

Team Headley and Team Weekes will select from the best performers in the 2023 West Indies Championship and players outside the starting West Indies Test XI. The new West Indies Academy will provide the third team in the new Series.

Team Headley and Team Weekes are named in honour of West Indies pioneers and legendary batting greats George Headley and Sir Everton Weekes, whose names are also honoured on the Trophy for the winners of the West Indies Championship. All three matches will be played from 18 April to 6 May at CCG in Antigua.

Every West Indies Championship match will be streamed live on the Windies Cricket YouTube channel. Fans can follow each and every game from their mobile devices, computers or connected TVs, including access to live ball-by-ball scoring on the Windiescricket.com live match centre.

Jennings United regain top spot in ABFA Second Division



Jennings United have regained the lead in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division. (File photo)

Jennings United have regained the lead in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division League.

Jennings United kept their perfect record intact by overcoming Blackburn Palace 3 - 0 at the ABFA Technical Center on Wednesday, to overtake Attacking Saints at the top of the standings.

Jean Pierre Williams scored twice with goals in the 33rd and 67th minutes while Deionte Harrigan had the other conversion for Jennings United in the 51st minute.

Their seventh win in as many matches lifted Jennings United back to the top of the standings with 21 points, 2 points ahead of Attacking

Saints who are now in second place.

Attacking Saints have also played one game more than Jennings United.

A fifth loss in six matches has left Blackburn Palace second from bottom of the standings on three points.

CPTSA Wings recorded their second win in seven matches by pulling off a 3 - 1 victory over Young Warriors at the St Johnston's Village playing field.

Dorian Meade scored twice for Wings with goals in the 5th and 50th minutes while a Marques Gordon conversion in the 27th minute secured the third goal.

K'Vonte Lewis scored a consolation goal for Young Warriors in the

65th minute.

Their second win in seven matches lifted Wings to six points, a figure shared by Young Warriors who lost for the fifth time in seven outings.

Real Blizzard secured their fourth win in seven matches by snatching a 2 - 1 victory over FC Master Ballerz at the ABFA Technical Center.

Taharie James scored both goals for Real Blizzard with conversions in the 26th and 40th minutes.

Shem Dascent scored for FC Master Ballerz in the 33rd minute.

The result lifted Real Blizzard to 13 points, while their fourth loss in seven matches ensured that FC Master Ballers remained in the lower half of the standings with five points.