

THURSDAY 16TH FEBRUARY 2023 | VOLUME 4 ISSUE 33 | WWW.POINTVILLE.AG

CARICOM CALLS FOR AID CRITERIA REVIEW



CARICOM Foreign Ministers and members of the US delegation pose for a photo.

CARICOM wants a change in the criteria used to qualify countries for assistance

CARICOM Foreign Affairs ministers meeting in The Bahamas have appealed to representatives of the United States government to use their nation's influence to change the eligibility criteria for special international assistance to developing nations.

The call was made on behalf of CARICOM by Antigua and Barbuda's Foreign Affairs Minister, E. P. Chet Greene, as he addressed a meeting be-

tween his regional counterparts and a US delegation on the sidelines of the 17th Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) meeting in Nassau.

Greene noted that the Caribbean continues to grapple with the overwhelmingly negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic which derailed the progress made by developing countries in pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Noting that economic recovery is critical for the regional grouping, Greene stated that CARICOM states vulnerability must be a primary factor when determining access to concessional financing.

"Our small size, small markets, the frequency and intensity of natural disasters to which we are prone, are inherent characteristics of the unique development challenges that continue to assail us.

"Our small, vulnerable economies require a more relevant criterion for assessing our eligibility for development assistance.

"The United States' influential voice in the international donor community in support of the devel-

opment of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) would be a tremendous boon for CARICOM Member States," Antigua and Barbuda's foreign affairs minister added.

Greene also took the position that the bilateral relationship between CARICOM and the United States remains solid.

"Our countries have shared values and principles in respect of multilateralism, good governance, respect for the rule of law and peace and security. CARICOM looks forward to continued collaboration in these areas of shared interests," he said.

Greene also expressed the group's appreciation to the United States for its continued generosity towards the region.

"CARICOM is highly appreciative of the initiatives of the Biden administration aimed at driving growth in the hemisphere, including in the small and vulnerable CARICOM Member States.

"We will continue to need the US' support in climbing out of the disastrous effects of the pandemic and as we seek to achieve the SDGs by 2030," he said.



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OAS Scholarship Application Announcement

The Organization of American States announces its 2023 call for scholarship applications for undergraduate and graduate academic studies and graduate research.

More information can be obtained through the links listed below.

- Call for applications for Graduate Studies: https://www.oas.org/en/scholarships/Academic_Program_OAS_2023.asp
- Call for applications for Undergraduate Studies: https://www.oas.org/en/scholarships/specaf_2023.asp
· Scholarship application form for Undergraduate Studies (last two years of a Bachelor's degree): <https://www.oas.org/fms/Announcement.aspx?id=1137&Type=1&Lang=Eng>
- Scholarship application form for Graduate Studies: <https://www.oas.org/fms/Announcement.aspx?id=1136&Type=1&Lang=Eng>

Deadline for submission of applications and accompanying documents to the Director of Education, Ministry of Education, Sports and Creative Industries is Friday 31st March, 2023.

A&B, PRC hold bilateral talks in The Bahamas

Prime Minister Gaston Browne participated in several engagements on the margins of the 44th CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting in The Bahamas.

Late on Wednesday, PM Browne held bilateral discussions with a delegation from the People's Republic of China (PRC) on a range of issues of mutual interest.

During the discussions, the PM underscored the tremendous assistance Antigua and Barbuda has received from the PRC.

Director General Cai Wei, led the delegation from the PRC's Department of Latin America and Caribbean Affairs of the Foreign Ministry in the

talks with Antigua and Barbuda's leader.

Director General Wei welcomed Antigua and Barbuda's unwavering support and the prime minister's offer for Antigua and Barbuda to become a constructive interlocutor in helping to resolve challenging issues whether regionally or globally.

Browne indicated that the country is ready to move its partnership with the PRC to the next level in order to advance Antigua and Barbuda's development agenda.

He also informed the Chinese delegation that he intended to accept an earlier invitation to visit the People's Republic of China later this year.



PM Browne with Chinese official Cai Wei in The Bahamas.

Missing New Winthropes resident found

The family of George "Murphy" James is relieved after they were reunited with him yesterday, a week after he was reported missing.

James who went missing last Tuesday after accompanying his friend to a coal kiln in a bushy area off Old Parham Road in the vicinity of Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium, was found in the same area dehydrated, with bruises, but otherwise in good health.

He was transported to Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre for treatment and observation.

As recent as Saturday, several searches were undertaken in New Winthropes, Pares Village and Osbourn with assistance

from the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda to find the 71-year-old man, who reportedly suffers from dementia and had reportedly told his friend he was leaving him at the kiln to visit the beach. But members of the search teams were unsuccessful in their efforts.

On Tuesday, the family of George James announced a \$5,000 reward funded by Saint Peter M.P Asot Michael, for "tangible information" on the elderly man's whereabouts.

It is unclear whether George James, for the last week, was exposed to the elements, or if, at any time, he was in the company of people known or unknown to him.

Police investigations remain ongoing.



George "Murphy" James

Fernandez pushes OECS campaign for Caribbean Tourism Organization to lower membership fees

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) is seeking a reduction in the membership fees to the Barbados-based Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), Antigua and Barbuda's Tourism Minister, Charles Fernandez, has said.

He said the issue was raised at the first business meeting of the CTO held in Curaçao last week.

"Although the bigger islands pay more than the smaller islands, if you prorate it per visitor, you will find out that we pay more per visitor received than the bigger islands. I find that it needs to be re-calibrated.



Tourism Minister, Charles Fernandez

This has gone on for years and no one has ever raised it," said Fernandez.

The OECS groups the islands of Antigua and Bar-

buda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Montserrat, Anguilla and the British Virgin Is-

lands.

The CTO is the Caribbean's tourism development agency comprising membership of Dutch, English, French and Spanish countries and territories, as well as a myriad of private sector allied members.

Its primary objective is to provide to and through its members, the services and information necessary for the development of sustainable tourism for the economic and social benefit of the Caribbean people by among other things developing and promoting regional travel and tourism programs to and within the Caribbean

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Law enforcement intercepts large ammunition shipment at DWH

Police and Customs agents intercepted a large shipment of ammunition at the Deep Water Harbour on Valentine's Day.

During an operation carried out with the cooperation of both agencies, approximately 250 rounds of 9mm Luger rounds were discovered in a cardboard box.

The box was removed from the country's main shipping port to Police Headquarters.

An investigation has been launched.

While no arrests have been made, police indicated late Wednesday that their investigation is being assisted by an unnamed person.



New doctor wants to help fight against sickle cell disease

Dr. Prince Henry Lee, who recently graduated with a medical degree from one of Cuba's most prestigious medical universities, now has his sights set on specialising in cardiology and one day helping in the fight against sickle cell disease.

Dr. Lee is the son of Luther and Cicely Lee of Villa Area.

He is one of eight Antigua and Barbuda nationals who were among the successful Class of 2022.

Unfortunately, Dr. Lee experienced his own medical challenges which delayed his graduation by two months.

His graduation took place on 9th February, 2023.

In an interview with Pointe Xpress, he described the journey to obtaining his medical degree.

"I studied at the Latin America School of Med-

icine, or Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina in Spanish, located in Baracoa, Artemisa, Cuba from September 6th 2015 until July 20th 2018 where I learned Spanish and did my first two years of medicine.

"Then I was transferred to Facultad 1 de Ciencias Médicas de Santiago de Cuba of Medical Sciences 1 of Santiago de Cuba from Sept 3rd 2018 until December 23rd 2022," he explained.

Dr. Lee explained that in January last year, he had a cholecystectomy - a surgery to remove his gallbladder - which caused him to miss three months of classes.

Upon his return home, Dr. Lee will work at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre.

He also provided insight into his long-term career goals.

"I do have plans to specialise in cardiology - more



Dr. Prince Lee celebrates with examiners at his university in Cuba.

specifically cardiothoracic surgery - although I've always had aspirations in helping out with the sickle cell organisation in Antigua and Barbuda as I am a sickle cell warrior myself," he added.

Both Luther and Cicely Lee are today proud parents now that their last child has graduated with a medical degree. Both parents and his siblings join in wishing Dr. Prince Lee many years of success as a medical doctor.

cont'd from pg 4

as well as assisting member countries, particularly the smaller member countries with minimal promotional budgets, to maximise their marketing impact through the collective CTO forum.

Fernandez, said another major outcome of last week's meeting was a decision by the CTO to write off thousands of dollars owed by Antigua and Barbuda in 2017, taking into consider-

ation the damage caused by Hurricane Irma in Barbuda.

"Although the hurricane did not hit Antigua, Barbu-

da is a part of us and they had not given us the credit for that; however, we were able to get that done," Fer-

nandez said, noting that several other islands have already benefited from the initiative.

<p>Thu 16 Day</p> <p>80° ☀️</p> <p>22% ☁️ ENE 18 mph</p> <p>Sunshine along with some cloudy intervals. High near 80F. Winds ENE at 15 to 25 mph.</p> <p>Humidity 73% UV Index 10 of 10</p> <p>Sunrise 6:33 am Sunset 6:09 pm</p>	<p>Thu 16 Night</p> <p>73° ☁️</p> <p>24% ☁️ ENE 17 mph</p> <p>Partly cloudy. Low 73F. Winds ENE at 15 to 25 mph.</p> <p>Humidity 78% UV Index 0 of 10</p> <p>Moonrise 3:06 am Moonset 2:20 pm</p> <p>● Waning Crescent</p>
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British High Commission launches Commonwealth Day Pan Playoff

The British High Commission St. John's has announced the launch of its Commonwealth Day Pan Playoff competition, open to all secondary school students within Antigua and Barbuda.

Groups composed of five to ten students are asked to submit a four to five minute video recording of an original arrangement using a Commonwealth Chorale as their motif and the pan as the lead instrument.

Video submissions must also include an explanation of how their arrangement aligns with the core values and principles outlined in the Commonwealth Charter.

The top three groups will be recognised on Commonwealth Day, 13th March 2023, during a ceremony

at Government House. At this time, a donation of equipment will be made to their school through the British High Commission St. John's.

Entries will be judged based on arrangement, relevance to the Commonwealth Charter, the inclusion of a Commonwealth Chorale and general performance.

A detailed breakdown will be posted on the Commissioner's Facebook page and circulated among the nation's secondary schools.

In this competition, which is supported by the Royal Commonwealth Society of Antigua and Barbuda and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Creative Industries, students must be enrolled in a secondary institution. More than one group can

enter per school.

No student will be allowed to play within multiple groups unless they are playing an accompanying instrument (drums, guitar, piano, etc.).

Entries should be submitted to rbc.antiguaandbarbuda@gmail.com along with the names of group members, the instrument each member played and their school of origin by 7th March, 2023.

All entries will be posted on the Resident British Commissioner to Antigua and Barbuda's Facebook page.

The entry with the most reactions by 12am Thursday 9th March, 2023 will automatically advance to the final round of judging.

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Trinidad makes pitch to help Caribbean countries monetise energy sector

Trinidad and Tobago Tuesday said it is prepared to assist Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries further develop their oil and gas industries and has taken a deliberate policy to engage its regional neighbours in the development of economic co-operation in the energy sector.

Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley, addressing the opening of the Guyana's International Energy Conference and Expo, told more than 1,200 delegates that crude oil which was once seen as being at the margins of the region has become a focal point with major dis-

coveries in Guyana, Suriname, French Guyana, Belize and Trinidad and Tobago.

He said beyond this, there is a huge interest by major oil and gas companies prospecting off the coasts of Barbados, Grenada, The Bahamas, Cuba, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic.

Rowley said exploration success by new Caribbean entrants in the petroleum industry can be a game changer for the Caribbean region.

He told the conference that "Regional availability and infrastructure will determine how various countries expand their domestic energy supplies. Industry



innovation for both fossil fuels and renewable sources will continue to increase energy supply and energy efficiency, thereby improving energy security and reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

Rowley said glob-

al trends such as climate change are forcing a rethinking of investment, especially in the light of a reshuffling of global economic activity and significant demand growth in the developing world.

"However, fossil fuels are still the main energy source for the world's economic engine and are cost effective. It is resilient and affordable energy that creates economic growth. Therefore, the concept of climate change should not prevent developing countries from using fossil fuels as sources of energy in pursuit of economic growth."

The Trinidad and Tobago prime minister said it is interesting to note that during the rethink, in so far as circumstances demand, some developed countries have fired up their old coal burning plants and have declared hitherto despised nuclear power as "clean energy."

"The Caribbean response is to designate nat-

cont'd on pg 8

BARBUDA EXPRESS
ST. JOHN'S DEPARTURE

SUNDAY

AB 12:00 PM
BA 3:45 PM

MONDAY

AB 6:00 AM
BA 8:00 AM

TUESDAY TO FRIDAY

AB 7:00 AM
BA 3:45 PM

SATURDAY

AB 8:00 AM
BA 3:45 PM

TYPHOON EXPRESS

MONDAY
ST. JOHN'S DEPARTURE

AB 3:45 PM
(OVERNIGHT IN BARBUDA)

TUESDAY

BA 6:00 AM TO ST. JOHN'S

WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY
(CRABBS DEPARTURE)

AB 10:00AM
BA 3:00PM

UPDATED SCHEDULE



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COVID-19



St. Lucia closely monitoring emergence of new COVID-19 sub-variants

Health authorities in St. Lucia are closely monitoring the emergence of new coronavirus (COVID-19) variants and sub-variants as the country recorded one death and 178 new infections over a 30-day period.

“At present, we have sequenced about 12 sub-variants of omicron circulating in country,” Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr. Sharon Belmar-George said, as the Ministry of Health, Wellness and Elderly Affairs said it had noted increases in respiratory illnesses over a wide range of age groups, impacting the education sector significantly.

The Ministry said that, globally, nearly 10.5 million new cases and over 90 000 deaths linked to the COVID-19 pandemic were reported in the last 28 days, ending February 5, a

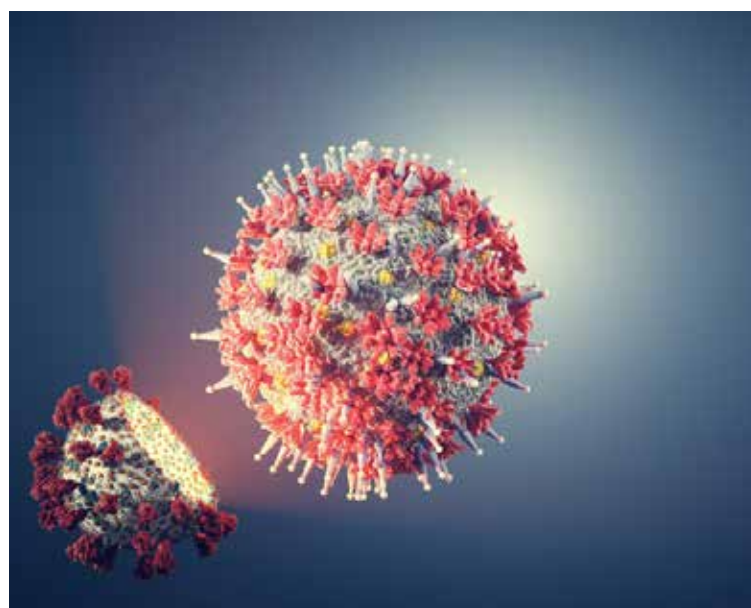
decrease of 89 percent and eight percent, respectively, compared to the previous 28 days.

It said current trends in reported COVID-19 cases are underestimates of the true number of global infections and reinfections. This is partly due to the reduction in testing and delays in reporting in many countries.

The number of newly reported 28-day cases decreased or remained stable across all World Health Organization (WHO) regions.

It said at the regional level, in the last four weeks leading up to February 6, 2023, the number of laboratory confirmed cases has remained relatively low in Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) member states.

The CMO said locally, over the last 30 days end-



ing February 6, “we have recorded a total of 178 cases of COVID-19 and one death.

She said the Ministry of Health is closely monitoring the emergence of new variants and sub variants of COVID-19.

“At present we have sequenced about 12 sub-variants of omicron circulating

in the country. In addition to COVID-19 there are other respiratory viruses in circulation which may possess similar clinical presentation to COVID-19.

“In several countries, there has been a steep increase in cases of influenza and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).”

The authorities said over the last few weeks, parents note that children seem to be developing recurrent respiratory infections.

“Most of the cases are mild in nature. This trend is anticipated as the measures that were placed during the management of COVID-19 also reduced the regular influenza cases over the last three years. Our population is now exposed to many different strains of influenza virus at this point.”

cont'd from pg 7

ural gas as the clean energy, reserve our right and willingness to continue to explore for and market oil resources and invest in green energy and technologies as far as we are able to.

“We will continue to make the case to the major global polluters to encourage investment in green initiatives identified within the region.

“We in the Caribbean are not alone in defending our energy interests,” Rowley said, noting the statement by the Pulitzer prize winner Daniel Yergin who had point-

ed out that in the 1990’s, before shale, gas never accounted for more than 17 percent of electricity generation by 2019 gas had risen to 38 percent and continues to rise.

Rowley said the regional energy landscape does not equip any single country to meet the energy security requirements of the region.

He said a cooperative approach allows for shared risks and diversified perspectives, and will facilitate the development and execution of innovative solutions to the challenges associated with the energy demand for the region.

US partnering with Caribbean in defence of 'shared values'

CMC - The United States says it is partnering with Caribbean Community (CARICOM) governments in defence of their "shared values", and to improve the region's resilience in all aspects including the economy, security and democracy "so that the people of the Caribbean and the United States enjoy prosperity, health and freedom".

The statement by the US Department of State comes as the country's Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, John Kerry is leading a four-member delegation to the Bahamas to meet with CARICOM leaders who are opening their three day-summit later on Wednesday.

The State Department said that Kerry "will continue efforts to advance international cooperation among nations particularly vulnerable to the climate crisis" and that Washington is providing the Caribbean with US\$28 million in assistance to address urgent food security needs.

It said that the United States Agency for International Aid (USAID) has deployed five technical experts to the Caribbean region, "who advise on efficient use of fertiliser, biofertiliser production, nutrient management and crop insurance feasibility, and are working to develop an operational



logistics and supply chain model to streamline intra-regional trade".

The State Department said the US Environmental Protection Agency has conducted three capacity-building training sessions in the region to promote pesticide management and strengthen food security.

The USAID, in coordination with CARICOM, is designing an integrated food security activity that will increase farmer adoption of climate-smart technologies, improve smallholder fruit and vegetable production, build capacity of small-medium enterprises (SMEs) in agro-processing, increase technical knowledge among extensionists, and address sanitary and phytosanitary measures limiting open trade.

"The United States, CARICOM and the Dominican Republic developed medium- and long-term action plans that will guide ongoing efforts to enhance food security in the region," the statement said.

Under the US-Caribbean Partnership to Address the Climate Crisis 2030 (PACC 2030), Washington said it is working with the Caribbean to develop "wide-ranging, long-term energy security and climate resilience solutions."

It said understanding the need for reliable, cost-effective energy solutions, the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) last month issued Trinidad and Tobago a specific licence "to allow them to develop the Dragon gas field, located in Venezuela maritime territory, paving the way for LNG from this eventual project to benefit the entire Caribbean."

The Biden administration congratulated CARICOM member-countries that have joined 150 countries in endorsing the Global Methane Pledge, adding that it is "committed to working together to meet our collective goal to reduce global methane emissions 30 per cent by 2030 – the

single most effective strategy to limit warming in the near term.

"We look forward to supporting national country planning and related methane reduction policy and project efforts, particularly in the waste sector," the statement said, noting that last month, USAID announced its intention to partner with the Barbados government with funding to support the establishment of the Blue Green Investment Corporation, a regional financing vehicle to finance projects that will help with climate change mitigation and adaptation, including resilient housing, renewable energy, green transportation, and water conservation.

In addition, the department said the United States "supported flexibility" in the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) allocation of the Resilience Sustainability Trust, under which the IMF approved significant financing for Barbados' future investments in climate resilience.

US arrests four tied to assassination of Haitian president

AP - U.S. authorities have arrested four more people in the slaying of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse, including the owner of a Miami-area security company that hired ex-Colombian soldiers for the mission, prosecutors announced Tuesday.

The squad of former Colombian soldiers are among dozens of suspects who carried out the July 2021 attack that authorities say originally was envisioned to be a coup rather than an assassination. The plotters had hoped to reap lucrative contracts under a new administration once Moïse was out of the way, investigators allege.

“This was both a human tragedy and an assault on core democratic principles,” said Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew G. Olsen.

Antonio “Tony” Intriago, 59, a Venezuelan-American who owned CTU Security that hired the Colombians, is charged with conspiracy to kill or kidnap a person outside the U.S. among other charges. CTU company representative Arcangel Pretel Ortiz, 50, a Colombian-born resident of the U.S., faces the same charges.

Florida-based U.S. financier Walter Veintemilla, 54, of Weston, Fla., is accused of funding the operation. A fourth suspect, Frederick Joseph Bergmann Jr., 64, of Tampa, is accused of smuggling goods including 20 CTU-branded ballistic vests disguised as medical X-ray

vests and school supplies.

Intriago was known among plotters as “The General” and Pretel as “Colonel Gabriel,” according to authorities.

Tama Kudman, Veintemillas' attorney, told The Associated Press that he would plead not guilty to both charges.

Claude Joseph, who was serving as prime minister when Moïse was killed, cheered the announcement. “Justice must prevail,” he tweeted.

A total of 11 suspects are now in U.S. custody, including key players like James Solages and Joseph Vincent, two Haitian-Americans who were among the first arrested after Moïse was shot 12 times at his private home in July 2021. Other suspects include Christian Emmanuel Sanon, a pastor and failed businessman whose associates have suggested was duped by the plotters.

A power vacuum following the assassination has allowed gangs in Haiti to gain more power and control more territory, with experts estimating that they control 60% of Port-au-Prince. A spike in kidnappings, rapes and killings have prompted Prime Minister Ariel Henry to demand the immediate deployment of foreign troops. But the request in October has gone unheeded by the U.N. Security Council, which has opted to implement sanctions so far.



Matthew Olsen, Assistant Attorney General for National Security, speaks during a news conference, Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023, in Miami. At right is an image of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse, (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)

Federal authorities said that in April 2021, Veintemillas company, Worldwide Capital Lending Group, provided CTU with a \$175,000 line of credit.

“By that time, the men planned to foment a public uprising aimed at ousting President Moïse and installing Sanon as president,” charging documents say.

Authorities said that Intriago, Ortiz and Veintemilla expected to “reap significant financial benefits” if Sanon became president via anticipated contracts for infrastructure, military equipment and the provision of security forces.

Also in April, Ortiz and others met with the FBI and unsuccessfully tried to draw them into “a discussion about regime change in Haiti.”

Around that time, Ortiz told Solages that “the current president is the thief...delete the messages that could com-

promise you in case of being captured.” Ortiz also sent a text message to another suspect, Colombian citizen Germán Rivera García, with a photo of a whiteboard sketch of an assault plan including “snipers” and “10 warrior-neutralizers,” according to court documents.

The suspects had used coded language like “screws” and “nails” for ammunition and “tools” or “instruments” for firearms, with Veintemilla providing \$15,000 to Solages to buy ammunition and \$250,000 for armoured vests, authorities said.

Authorities have said that the original plan was to detain Moïse, force him onto a plane and whisk him to an unidentified location, but that plot crumbled when suspects couldn’t find a plane or sufficient weapons, according to court documents.

Sanon, who envisioned
cont'd on pg 11

US envoy says he wants to listen to Caribbean leaders on climate change

CMC - The United States Special Presidential Climate envoy, John Kerry, says he intends to listen to Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries regarding their concerns about the impact of climate change.

“You can’t say this is an existential issue in one breath and then walk around and slow walk our approach to the technologies, to the challenges we face particularly in island states. The island states of the world and the sub-Saharan African states. I mean 48 sub-Saharan African countries equal 0.555 percent of all the emissions in the world,” Kerry told a function hosted by the US embassy in The Bahamas on Tuesday night.

“I just want to say to all of you, it takes everybody. Every country has got to be a part of this journey and you know The Bahamas and other countries in the region don’t contribute a lot to it, but we



John Kerry enjoying the Junkanoo welcome at the US embassy on Tuesday night. (Photo courtesy Nassau Guardian)

all have a vested interest in making certain that we’re on a track to do what our citizens want us to do and citizens around the world want us to do, which is to respond to this crisis,” he added.

Kerry is leading a 30-member delegation that includes former US Senator Chris Dodd and Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Brian Nichols, to the 44th CARICOM summit that gets underway later this evening

with the ceremonial opening that will also be attended by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

John Kerry said the reason for his visit is simply to listen to the concerns of the regional leaders and hear the challenges faced by Caribbean countries regarding the impact of climate change.

“So, we’ll talk...and I came here along with Chris and Brian and the rest of our delegation, we came here to listen.

“We want to listen to you. How do you deal with the resilience issue? What are the choices in terms of adaptation? What are options in terms of our ability to deal with food production and quick response to increasingly intense storms which take their wrath on the islands again and again and again, most recently, with Dorian?”

“So, my friends, we’re all in this together. Different layers of contribution, different levels of responsibility, but every one of us has to take measure of our responsibility to live up to the hopes and aspirations of our kids and grandkids,” the US envoy added.

Prime Minister Davis said he was looking forward to the continued close collaboration between the United States and CARICOM, specifically in the areas of climate resilience, economic diversification and clean energy transition.

cont’d from pg 10

himself as Haiti’s new leader, was supposed to seize power, but some suspects soon favoured a former Haitian Supreme Court judge to take over instead. Ortiz, Intriago, Veintemilla and others realised that “Sanon had neither the constitutional qualifications nor the popular support of the Haitian people to become president,” according to court documents.

Police say the judge remains a fugitive.

A day before the killing, Solages falsely told other suspects that it was a CIA operation and that the real mission was to kill the president. Shortly before

Moïse was killed, Solages yelled that it was supposedly a DEA operation so that the president’s security detail would comply.

Also detained are former Haitian Sen. John Joël Joseph, who had fled to Jamaica, and former U.S. government informant and Haitian businessman Rodolphe Jaar, who was extradited from the Dominican Republic.

As the U.S. investigation pushes forward, the probe in Haiti is nearly idle. Three judges have stepped down from the case amid fears of reprisals and a fourth one was dismissed.

Meanwhile, no court hearings have

been held yet for the more than 40 suspects arrested in Haiti, with many of them including 18 Colombian soldiers languishing in a severely overcrowded jail in Port-au-Prince that often lacks food and water.

The situation has angered and frustrated the president’s widow, Martine Moïse, who lashed out in a 13-minute video she posted earlier this month, noting that things have worsened in Haiti since the assassination.

“It’s a huge crime that happened against the nation,” she said. “Where is the mother law of the country, where are the people, where is the democracy?”

UN says 73 migrants presumed dead in vessel mishap off Libya

AP - An inflatable rubber boat carrying migrants wrecked off the coast of Libya and 73 people were missing and presumed dead, the U.N. migration agency said Wednesday. It was the latest tragedy involving migrants seeking better lives in Europe.

The U.N. International Organization for Migration said in a statement that the disaster took place Tuesday and that Libya authorities had retrieved 11 bodies.

It said the boat, packed with around 80 migrants, reportedly departed from the village of Qasr al-Akhyar, 80 kilometres (50 miles) east of the capital, Tripoli. The migrants were heading to European shores, it said.

The dead included one woman and 10 men, said Safa Msehli, IOM's spokesperson.

It was not immediately clear what happened to the vessel but images showed the deflated broken-up rubber boat on shore.

Seven migrants, all men, survived the mishap and made it to Libyan shores, the U.N. said, and were in "extremely dire conditions." They were taken to a hospital.

Qasr al-Akhyar officials shared footage online showing Libya's Red Crescent workers handling dead bodies that washed ashore. The footage also showed the



This is a locator map for Libya with its capital, Tripoli. (AP Photo)

broken-up inflatable rubber boat.

A survivor said in a different video shared by the municipality that scores of migrants were killed in the shipwreck. He said they paid between \$3,000 to \$5,000 each to smugglers to make the ill-fated trip.

In video comments, Salem Awag, the top Qasr al-Akhyar official, called on authorities in Tripoli to step up support to the village to help guard the shore and prevent further crossings.

Tuesday's shipwreck was the latest tragedy in the central Mediterranean Sea, a key route for migrants. The death toll on that route has reached at least 130 migrants this year, IOM said.

In 2022, more than 1,450 migrants died, according to the IOM's missing migrants project.

"This situation is intolerable," said Safa Msehli, the organisation's spokesperson. She called on governments to increase search and rescue efforts and to "establish clear and safe disembarkation mechanisms as well as safe and regular pathways to migration.

Off Libya's shores alone, at least 529 migrants were reported dead and 848 others missing last year, while over 24,680 were intercepted and returned to the country, according to the IOM.

Libya has in recent years emerged as the dominant transit point for migrants from Africa and the Middle East trying to make it to Europe.

The oil-rich country plunged into chaos following a NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed

longtime autocrat Moammar Gadhafi in 2011.

Human traffickers in recent years have benefited from the chaos in war-torn Libya, smuggling in migrants across the desert country's lengthy borders with six nations. The migrants are then typically packed into ill-equipped rubber boats and set off on risky sea voyages.

European countries have in recent years pushed Libyan authorities and the coast guard to detain and intercept migrants attempting to cross to European shores.

Many of those who have been intercepted and returned to Libya - including women and children - are held in government-run detention centers where they suffer from abuse, including torture, rape and extortion, according to rights groups.

China threatens US entities over downing of balloon

AP - China said Wednesday it will take measures against U.S. entities related to the downing of a suspected Chinese spy balloon off the American East Coast.

At a daily briefing, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin gave no details and did not identify the targets of the measures.

China says the balloon was an unmanned weather airship that was accidentally blown off course and accuses the U.S. of overreacting in bringing it down with a missile fired from an F-22 fighter jet.

Since the Feb. 4 downing of the balloon, the United States has sanctioned six Chinese entities it said are linked to Beijing's aerospace programs.

The U.S. House of Representatives subsequently voted unanimously to condemn China for a "brazen violation" of U.S. sovereignty and efforts to "deceive the international community through false claims about its intelligence collection campaigns." Secretary of State Antony Blinken also cancelled a visit to Beijing that many hoped would stabilise ties that have cratered amid disputes over trade, human rights, Taiwan and China's claim to the South China Sea.

While China denies the balloon was a military as-



In this photo provided by Chad Fish, the remnants of a large balloon drift above the Atlantic Ocean, just off the coast of South Carolina, with a fighter jet and its contrail seen below it, Feb. 4, 2023. A missile fired on Feb. 5 by a U.S. F-22 off the Carolina coast ended the days-long flight of what the Biden administration says was a surveillance operation that took the Chinese balloon near U.S. military sites. It was an unprecedented incursion across U.S. territory for recent decades, and raised concerns among Americans about a possible escalation in spying and other challenges from rival China. (Chad Fish via AP, File)

set, it has yet to say what government department or company was responsible.

After initially expressing regret over the balloon's entry into U.S. airspace, China has returned spying accusations against Washington, alongside its threats of retaliation.

"China firmly opposes this and will take counter-

measures in accordance with the law against the relevant U.S. entities that undermine China's sovereignty and security," Wang said at Wednesday's briefing.

China will "resolutely safeguard national sovereignty and its legitimate rights and interests," Wang said.

Also Wednesday, U.S.

Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel said the Chinese balloon's intrusion was part of a pattern of aggressive behaviour by Beijing.

Emanuel noted China's recent beaming of military-grade lasers on a Philippine coast guard patrol vessel, the harassment of U.S. planes by Chinese jets and China's opening of ille-

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The crash pulverised the bus and it is not clear why the driver lost control

Panama migrant bus plunges off road killing 39

BBC - At least 39 people died in Panama when a bus carrying migrants hoping to reach the US plunged into a ravine.

The bus was heading north and was near the Costa Rica border when the driver reportedly tried to turn around, having mistakenly passed a migrant hostel.

There were 66 passengers on the bus and about 20 injured are now in hospital, officials said. Officials did not disclose the victims' nationalities.

Thousands of migrants risk their lives crossing Panama's swampy Darién Gap.

Last year, those numbers surged to a record 248,000 migrants, most

of them Venezuelans. Migrants from Haiti and Cuba also take the long overland route.

The crash in Gualaca district is reported to be the worst accident involving migrants in Panama's history. It is not clear why the driver lost control on the twisting road; some reports speak of a collision with a

minibus.

Panama's President Laurentino Cortizo said: "The government extends its condolences to the families of those killed in this accident, and reiterates its commitment to continue providing humanitarian aid and decent conditions to deal with irregular migration."

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gal police stations in the U.S., Ireland and other countries.

"The balloon to me is not an isolated incident," Emanuel said.

If China wants to be a respected member of the international community, "then you act appropriately to certain basic premises; that is you don't open police stations in other countries

ignorant of their laws as if your laws don't have any boundaries," he said.

"These are not exactly the qualities and characteristics of the good neighbour policy," the ambassador said, referring to China's outreach to countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

On Tuesday, Japan's Defense Ministry said at least three flying objects spotted in Japanese airspace since

2019 were strongly believed to have been Chinese spy balloons. It said it has protested and requested explanations from Beijing.

Senior lawmakers in Japan's governing party on Wednesday said they were considering expanding the Self Defense Force law to also include violations of Japanese airspace by foreign balloons.

Hamilton on FIA rule: 'Nothing will stop me from speaking'

By Jenna Fryer

AP - Seven-time Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton insisted he will not be silenced by offseason rules that prohibit drivers from speaking out on political issues.

Hamilton said Wednesday he will continue to use his global platform to promote his wide-ranging interests, which include social justice and race, human rights and protection of the LBGQT community.

The FIA in December updated its International Sporting Code to require prior written permission for drivers to make or display "political, religious and personal statements or comments" during race weekends. The FIA is the governing body for Formula One.

The crackdown on free speech has been condemned by most drivers but Hamilton only weighed in for the first time Wednesday, when Mercedes revealed its 2023 car.

Hamilton said the FIA crackdown "doesn't surprise me" but he quickly dismissed it when he learned about it over the offseason.

"Nothing will stop me from speaking on the things that I feel that I'm passionate about and issues there are," Hamilton said. "I feel the sport does have a responsibility, still, always, to speak out as a means to create awareness on important topics, particularly as we are travelling to all these different places, so nothing changes."

Asked if he was prepared to be penalised by the FIA for violating the new rule, Hamilton said "it would be silly to say I would want to take extra penalty points" but remained steadfast in that he won't be silenced.

"I'm still going to be speaking on my end," Hamilton said. "We still have this platform. There's a lot of



Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton of Britain listens to a question during a press conference in Sao Paulo, Brasil, on Nov. 9, 2022. Seven-time Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton insisted he will not be silenced by offseason rules that prohibit drivers from speaking out on political issues. Hamilton said Wednesday Feb. 15, 2023 he will continue to use his global platform to promote his wide-ranging interests, which include social justice and race, human rights and protection of the LBGQT community. (AP Photo/Andre Penner, File)

things we need to tackle."

Most of the drivers have spoken out against the new rule and most recently by F1 boss Stefano Domenicali, who recently told The Guardian newspaper the series would not be imposing any sort of gag. Domenicali said he expected the FIA to soon clarify its position.

Hamilton is the most vocal driver in F1 and remains the same change agent 17 years into his career as when he became the first Black winner in F1 in 2008. The British racer is now 38 years old, the winningest driver in series history and is tied with Michael Schumacher with a record seven titles.

Hamilton remains the only Black driver at the most elite level of motor-

sports.

Hamilton often speaks out while racing in countries with questionable human rights records, or when an issue arises in which he feels his voice can lend support, which would be banned under the new FIA rule.

Hamilton last year sparred with the FIA over its crackdown of drivers wearing jewellery in the car and mocked the rule by arriving at a news conference wearing three watches, eight rings and multiple necklaces. Hamilton and the FIA had a protracted back-and-forth over the jewellery ban in which he received an extension on a deadline to remove some piercings; the two sides eventually came to an agreement.

Court overturns ban against former Haitian soccer president

AP - A lifetime ban against former Haitian soccer federation president Yves Jean-Bart over allegations he sexually abused female players was overturned Tuesday by the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

The court upheld Jean-Bart's appeal after noting "inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the statements of the victims and witnesses presented by FIFA."

A FIFA ethics committee in November 2020 had found Jean-Bart guilty of having "abused his position and sexually harassed and abused various female players, including minors" over several years.

The 75-year-old Jean-

Bart had also been fined 1 million Swiss francs (\$1.1 million).

Jean-Bart had denied the allegations, which involved national team players, including minors.

The CAS ruling said information submitted by third parties including Human Rights Watch and world players' union FIFPro was not "sufficiently evidentiary."

"In conclusion, the Panel of Arbitrators considers that the evidence against Yves Jean-Bart regarding the allegations of sexual abuse is inconsistent, unclear and contradictory and that, as a result, it is not sufficient to establish a violation of (FIFA's ethics code)," the CAS ruling said.



In this file photo dated Thursday, May 21, 2020, Yves Jean-Bart, president of the Haitian Football Federation, wearing a protective face mask, arrives for a court hearing regarding allegations that he abused female athletes at the country's national training centre, in Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti. A lifetime ban against former Haitian soccer federation president Yves Jean-Bart over allegations he sexually abused female players was overturned Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023 by the Court of Arbitration for Sport. (AP Photo/Dieu Nalio Chery, File)

Alick Athanaze and Akeem Jordan named in 15-member Test squad to face South Africa

CWI - Cricket West Indies (CWI) Men's Selection Panel named two newcomers, Alick Athanaze and Akeem Jordan, in the 15-member squad for the upcoming two-Test Series against South Africa. Athanaze, the left-handed batter is the captain of Windward Islands Volcanoes while Jordan, the right-arm seam bowler plays for Barbados Pride.

Both have demonstrated good form in the first two rounds of the current four-day West Indies Championship. Athanaze had scores of 41 and 51 against Trinidad & Tobago Red Force in Round 1 and followed up with a

career-best 141 against Guyana Harpy Eagles in Round 2. He is a product of the West Indies Under 19s Rising Stars where he was one of the standout players at the 2018 ICC Men's U19 Cricket World Cup. Jordan had match figures of 5-86 against Guyana and followed up with 7-113 against Jamaica Scorpions to be one of the leading wicket-takers in the West Indies Championship after two rounds of matches.

Athanaze and Jordan replace left-arm spinner Jomel Warrican and batter Nkrumah Bonner who are part of the squad for the just-concluded series in

Zimbabwe. Jayden Seales is unavailable for selection following a knee injury and subsequent surgery, while Anderson Philip has returned to training but is not yet match-fit.

Lead Selector, The Most Hon. Dr Desmond Haynes said:

"Athanaze is one of the young players who we have invested in, and he played well in the 'A Team' and CWI President's XI. He showed great promise in the CG United Super50 last year and then got his first hundred in the West Indies Championship last week. We believe he should be given

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Captain of Thai 'cave boys' soccer team dies in Britain

Reuters - One of 12 boys dramatically rescued after two weeks trapped in a flooded cave in Thailand in 2018 has died in Britain where he was attending a soccer academy, his former teacher said on Wednesday.

Duangpetch Promthep, better known as "Dom", was captain of the "Wild Boars" team whose seemingly impossible extraction by international divers and Thai navy SEALs captured huge global attention.

The circumstances of 17-year-old Duangpetch's death were not immediately clear. The news was shared on social media by a Buddhist monk who taught the boys in Thailand's northern Chiang Rai province.

"Duangpetch Promthep has now gone to another world," Supatpong Methigo posted on Facebook. "I hope he will be reborn and become my student again in the next life."

Reuters could not independently confirm the death, which Supatpong said he learned of from Duangpetch's grandmother, who said he had suffered an unspecified accident in Britain.

Former Thai national team captain and coach, Kiatisuk Senamuang, whose foundation helped Duangpetch secure a scholarship at the Brooke House College Football Academy in



Rescue workers take a rest as they take out machines after 12 soccer players and their coach were rescued in Tham Luang cave complex in the northern province of Chiang Rai, Thailand, July 10, 2018. REUTERS/Soe Zeya Tun/File Photo

Leicestershire, described him as a polite, kind gentleman who dreamt of playing for his country.

"I wanted to see his dream realised ... but rest well now Dom," he posted on Instagram.

In June 2018, the boys, aged 11-16 and their 25-year-old assistant coach set off to explore the Tham Luang cave complex for just an hour, but ended up trapped by flood waters.

They were found nine days later in

a flooded chamber 4 kilometres (2.5 miles) from the entrance of the caves. Their complicated extraction started six days later in an unprecedented operation during which a retired Thai diver died.

Once rescued, the boys were invited to attend a Manchester United match and their story was the subject of books, documentaries and films, and most recently, the Netflix (NFLX-.O) series "Thai Cave Rescue".

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an opportunity at this level. He has also shown leadership, as captain of the Windwards at the start of this season."

Haynes added:

"Jordan has been very impressive from last year, he has continued to bowl well, and has been excellent in the first two matches

so far this year. He is very skillful, can bowl the new ball, and looks to put the ball in the right areas. He is also a sharp fielder and good catcher close to the wicket. This will be a challenging tour. There is no easy way tour in Test cricket. South Africa have a good team, but I am sure we will be up for the task and will do well

in these two Test matches."

The upcoming Series is the final Test fixture for both teams in the ICC World Test Championship. West Indies are currently in sixth place and have the opportunity, with a Series win, to move above South Africa, currently in fourth place, in the final table.

West Indies are due to

arrive in South Africa on 17 February. They will face South Africa in two Test matches at SuperSport Park in Centurion (28 February to 4 March) and the Wanderers in Johannesburg (8 to 12 March). Following the Tests, West Indies will then play a white ball series. The squads for these will be named at a later date.

GNFC to host Player Identification Combine next week

The Generation Next FC will be hosting the 2023 Calvin Ayre Foundation (CAF) sponsored Player Identification Combine from 20th to 25th February, 2023.

However, unlike last year, the event will not take place at the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Technical Center in Paynters.

This is due to the busy schedule of matches in the ABFA's national domestic league competitions that are taking place at the Technical Center.

As a result, the CAF Player Identification Combine will now be held at St. Anthony's Secondary School from 20th to 25th February, 2023.

According to chief organizer, President of the Generation Next Football Club (GNFC) Ricky Santos, registration to participate in the event will close today, Thursday.

Players, both males and females, from the ages of 13 to 24 are eligible to participate and persons can register online via the Generation Next FC's Facebook page using a link that is posted there.

All players who are fully registered will receive a pair of sunglasses and a pen, compliments Hartpury College and University, once stocks last.



President of the Generation Next FC Ricky Santos speaking at the official opening of a combined Player's Identification exercise between the Mount Pleasant FC Academy of Jamaica and Generation Next FC in Montego Bay, Jamaica, from 20th to 28th January, 2023. (Photo courtesy GNFC)

Nine coaches from the United States of America, England and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), will be in attendance scouting for players to access possible scholarship opportunities into High Schools, Colleges and Universities, and Semi-Pro and Pro Clubs placements.

Santos said although pro and semi-pro placements are difficult to acquire, English League One Club, Fleetwood Town, will be one of the clubs attending the combine that has the capacity to provide

such offers to players at the upcoming event.

"We have scouts or coaches from the US that will be attending.

"We have scouts or coaches from the UK and we also have one coming in from Dubai.

"So that should be pretty interesting and we hope to get a number of scholarship offers, even a couple of semi-pro or pro contracts," Santos said.

"I know getting a semi-pro or pro contract in the UK is difficult, but for instance, who will be attending here is Fleetwood

Town.

"Fleetwood Town, like a lot of the other clubs in the UK, are now forming clubs in various places, like Fleetwood Town have clubs in Dubai, they have a club in South Africa and they have one in Ireland.

"So, if they see a player here in Antigua that they like, they can take the player and send him to one of their overseas clubs where he could spend a couple of years and then bring him into England.

"So, that is another pathway that gets around the work permit issue."

FC Master Ballers get third win in second division league

FC Master Ballers claimed only their third win of the season in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division League on Tuesday.

A Shareem Richards' 84th minute conversion gave FC Master Ballers a 1-0 victory over Golden Grove at the Golden Grove playing field.

It is the second win in succession for Master Ballers, who trounced Blackburn Palace 6-0 in their previous outing.

Their latest win lifted Master Ballers into 8th place in the standings with 11 points from nine outings, while their fourth loss in eight matches ensured that Golden Grove slipped down to 9th place with 10 points.

Freemans Village recorded their seventh win of the season to join leaders Jennings United and Attacking Saints with 23 points, but only advanced to third place in the standings on goal difference.

Freemans Village came from behind to beat Lingies CPTSA Wings 4-2 in their encounter at the St. Johnston's Village playing field.

Rickoy Johnson, who scored both goals for Wings via penalty kicks,



FC Master Ballers Football Team. (File photo)

converted his first in the 31st minute to give his team a 1-0 halftime lead.

But Freemans Village equalized two minutes after the interval via a Leroy Hunte's 47th minute conversion.

Kallique Kellman, who also recorded a brace, scored his first goal in the 56th minute to give Freemans Village a 2-1 lead. Johnson then converted his second penalty of the match to draw Wings level at 2-2.

However, Kevin Gregory restored Freemans

Village lead with a 69th minute conversion and Kellman scored his second in the 82nd minute to seal their team's victory.

Their seventh win in 10 matches allows Freemans Village to overtake Sea View Farm into third place.

Freemans Village advance to 23 points, one ahead of Sea View Farm, who also have a game in hand.

Wings remain in ninth place after suffering their sixth loss in 10 matches.

English Harbour

claimed their fifth win of the season by pulling off a 2-0 victory over Belmont at the ABFA's Technical Center. Both goals came in the first half and were scored by Jahleel Goodwin in the 19th minute and Oshane Blackwood in the 27th minute.

The result lifted English Harbour into fifth place on goal difference with 16 points from 12 matches. Belmont remain in seventh place on 16 points after succumbing to their fourth loss in 10 matches.

AGS mini boys among winners in schools' basketball league

Antigua Grammar School secured victory in the lone Mini Boys' Secondary Division encounter in the Cool & Smooth Inter-Schools' Basketball League on Tuesday.

Antigua Grammar School prevailed 11-7 against Sir Novelle Richards Academy in one of four matches that were contested at the YMCA Sports Complex.

Joshua Joseph scored six points for Antigua Grammar School, while Lennox Phoenix converted four points for Sir Novelle Richards Academy.

There were wins for Liberta, Villa and Cedar Grove in the Mini Girls' Primary Division in the day's other encounters.

Liberta Primary claimed a 4-2 victory over JT Ambrose Primary, with Joy-Anna Harriette and Caleisha Dale each scoring two points for the winners. Annie-May Arm also scored all two points for JT Ambrose Primary.



The Antigua Grammar School team that won their Mini Boys' Secondary Division encounter in the Cool & Smooth Inter-Schools' Basketball League at the YMCA Sports Complex on Tuesday, 14th February, 2023. (Photo courtesy CPTSA Wings Sports Club)

Villa Primary pulled off a 6-2 win over Sea View Farm Primary. Zoriah Caleb had four points for Villa, while Kameisha Adams

scored all two points for Sea View Farm Primary School. Cedar Grove Primary School overcame Buckley's Primary 8-2, with Jkayla

Bellott scoring six points for the winners. Maryann White scored the only two points for Buckley's Primary School.