

TUESDAY 7TH FEBRUARY 2023 | VOLUME 4 ISSUE 26 | WWW.POINTVILLE.AG

TEENS REMANDED ON WEAPONS CHARGES

Story on Page 2



Antigua and Barbuda paid final respects to Sir Reginald Alford Walwyn KCN, OBE, MB.BS, DO who passed away last month at age 97. He was a well-respected and deeply beloved son of the soil whose contribution to the medical field as the country's premier ophthalmologist for several decades left an indelible mark on those whose lives he touched and sight he saved.

Local News



Duo sent to prison after being found with weapons near YMCA area

Two teens, Jaheim Christopher of Golden Grove and Keniza Cochrane of Grays Farm, have been ordered to spend a week at His Majesty's Prison.

The duo was remanded by Chief Magistrate Joanne Walsh on Monday after appearing in her courtroom.

The teens were caught with weapons near the YMCA Complex where children congregate in large numbers after school.

Neither Christopher, nor Cochrane, however,

could offer Chief Magistrate Walsh a reasonable explanation about why they had the weapons in their possession. As a result, she ordered that both teenagers spend some time behind bars to get their "stories straight" before reappearing before her.

In his explanation, Cochrane, 19, told the court that he was going to cut his hair on Friday when he saw his 14-year-old cousin with a knife in his bag and took it from him.

Christopher, 19, said the cutlass taken from him by police was a tool used in his part time job in landscaping. He said he was waiting for Cochrane when they were spotted by the police.

They both denied having been at the YMCA.

Chief Magistrate Walsh was unconvinced by their stories and ordered that they be remanded to the prison until 15th February. She said it was her hope that in the time they have to reflect before returning to court, they would both have more plausible stories to present to her.

Both Christopher and Cochrane were arrested last Friday after being searched and found with the weapons.

They were accused of loitering around YMCA Sports Complex where an incident occurred that same afternoon.

A now viral video showed several youngsters in the YMCA brandishing various weapons.

Police have not indicated whether Christopher and Cochrane were part of that group of weapon touting teens.

What has been confirmed is that on the day in question, at about 2:45pm, police officers attached to the Special Service Unit responded to an anonymous call about a group of

boys walking into YMCA dressed in hoodies and brandishing sharp weapons.

When police responded to the call, Christopher, who was spotted wearing a white hoodie and blue jeans, roused the officers' suspicion.

An officer then approached Christopher who started to walk away.

Christopher was ordered to stop, but instead of complying with the order, he began to run away.

The officer rushed back to the response vehicle and gave chase to the teen who was apprehended near Antigua Public Utilities Authority on Independence Drive.

Christopher was then searched by the police who found a machete in his waist.

He was then placed under arrest.

The police then returned to YMCA where they saw Cochrane acting suspiciously.

He was detained near the Deluxe Cinema on High Street.

Following a search of his person which revealed the knife, he too was placed under arrest.

Both teens were then transported to the St. John's Police Station where they were charged with carrying offensive weapons with the intention to commit a felonious act.

PROBATE FORM P7
Rule 15

THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
(Probate)

In the Matter of the Estate of EVERARD LLEWELLYN a.k.a. EVERADE EDMUND LLEWELLYN a.k.a. EVERADE E. LLEWELLYN a.k.a. EVERARD LLEWELLYN late of All Saints Road, St. John's, Antigua, Deceased

ADVERTISEMENT OF APPLICATION FOR GRANT **2nd PUBLICATION**

TAKE NOTICE that an application has been filed by **RON CLIFTON LLEWELLYN** of 218-14 Sawyer Avenue, Queens Village, NY 11427 for a Grant of Letters of Administration to the Applicant who is the son of the deceased, the deceased having died intestate on the 23rd day of November, 2020.

Any person having an objection to the application for the grant of Letters of Administration shall file an objection within 14 days of the publication of this Notice.

Dated this 28th day of December, 2022


Lenworth Johnson
Attorney-at-Law for the Applicant

Filed by **JOHNSONGARDINER**, Attorneys-at-Law for the Applicant whose address for service is **51A St. Mary's Street, St. John's, Antigua**

Three schools earmarked for increased police presence

The police have agreed to increase patrols at a number of “trouble spots” - including three secondary schools where young people gather after school hours - in an effort to curb escalating youth violence.

National security minister, Steadroy Benjamin, announced the measures following meetings with senior police officers in which solutions to the national crisis were tabled.

“We have decided that there will be increased police presence at these three schools: the Ottos Comprehensive, the Clare Hall Secondary and the Princess Margaret School, as well as at the YMCA and both the East and West Bus Stations,” Benjamin said.

Additionally, the Public Safety Minister also announced a new policy aimed at reining in “the lawless behaviour” of groups of mainly young men who have been recorded on video wielding machetes and other weapons.

“We are taking a no-nonsense approach to this threat to public safety and breaches of the laws. Anyone found with machetes and other weapons in public places, and who engage in fights, will be dealt with like any other person who breaks the laws of Antigua and Bar-

buda,” he declared.

He said the recent spate of youth-on-youth violence was “a troubling development” that must be curtailed immediately.

“We are not going to sit idly by and allow this [lawlessness] to go unchecked,” he said.

Benjamin said he has been meeting around-the-clock with law enforcement officials trying to find solutions to the problem.

The minister added that it was noteworthy that all the incidents of youth violence are centred in and around the city.

“None of the schools in the countryside such as Jennings or All saints Secondary have reported any such incidents. That fact has not been lost on us,” he said.

While no one has yet



National Security Minister, Steadroy Benjamin

been charged with a crime min said investigations are stemming from any of the ongoing and hinted that reported incidents, Benjamin said charges may soon be filed.

PUBLIC NOTICE: Office Closure

The Development Control Authority wishes to advise the public that its offices will be closed effective **Tuesday 7th February 2023** until **Thursday 9th February 2023** to facilitate building maintenance.

Our offices will reopen to continue serving the public on **Friday 10th February 2023** during regular working hours.

We do apologize for any inconvenience caused.

Parents and teachers protest lack of security at CHSS

Dozens of parents descended upon the entrance of Clare Hall Secondary School (CHSS) on Monday to protest the lack of security at the school.

The move follows the daytime intrusion of masked, weapon-wielding attackers at the school last Tuesday.

Bearing a cutlass and golf club, their aim was to attack a male CHSS student. Their attempt was thwarted, however, when teachers intervened and chased them off the compound which they accessed by climbing a wall at the rear of the campus.

Wearing white shirts, the parents and guardians demanded that the authorities do more to protect students and teachers at the public school.

“Me hab one pickney,” said a mother who spoke with Pointe Xpress on the condition her name would not be disclosed.

“Me work hard fa send she ah school fu learn. Not for no mask man run een pan them like ah some Western movie ah gwan up dey.

“Is like they telling people their children don’t matter. Ah since last year this nonsense ah carry on and all you ah hear is meeting, meeting but nothing ah happen fa protect the children an dem.

“Police dey, nobody



know wa the soldier them does do.

“Put them in the schools and them and keep the children and them safe.”

While concerned parents voiced their displeasure outside the school’s compound, on the inside, teachers staged a sit-in over what they claimed was the Ministry of Education’s inability to ensure that two police officers are stationed on the school’s premises.

The CHSS educators argued that assurances were given by education officials during a meeting last week that adequate security would have been provided to ensure their safety and that of their pupils.

Almost a week following the incident on Tuesday, however, only one police officer was deployed to the school on Monday morning.

Principal Ashworth Azille’s guarantee that an-

other officer was expected to arrive did little to change the teachers’ minds.

No classes were held yesterday at CHSS and students were dismissed by noon.

The concerns over security were compounded after it was discovered that vandals targeted the school over the weekend.

Last week, Minister of Information and Information Technology, Melford Nicholas, confirmed that steps are being taken to improve security in public schools.

These measures include the installation of closed-circuit television cameras, however, this will not be completed until March this year.

This was reinforced by Prime Minister Gaston Browne over the weekend.

“To reiterate, the work is in progress to equip our

schools with IT surveillance to complement the physical presence of security.

“These measures... will be complemented with regular spot checks by law enforcement,” Prime Minister Browne said.

While security personnel have been placed in schools, loopholes remain which allow criminals to continue to commit various crimes which expose both faculty and students to harm.

Following the incident last week, Minister of Education, Daryll Matthew, and Director of Education, Clare Browne, met with those affected by the CHSS invasion.

Principal Azille met Director Browne yesterday afternoon following the latest chapter in the ongoing school security saga, however, the outcome of that meeting is not yet known.

MoW to prioritise vulnerable areas for road rehabilitation

The Ministry of Housing, Works, Lands and Urban Renewal will prioritise the most vulnerable areas for road improvement under the soon to be implemented road programme.

Parliamentary Secretary, Senator Clement Antonio, said both he and senior minister, Maria Browne, have wasted no time in bringing relief to the residents and road users in several areas, including Loblolly Road in Greenbay Hill.

“We heard the cries of the people for urgent repair work to be done on Loblolly Road and we responded, even though the area is not represented in Parliament by someone sitting on the government side,” he noted.

Antonio explained that the ministry’s strategic road improvement plan will focus attention on the areas most in need of work, irrespective of who the area’s parliamentary representative is.

“We are an inclusive government, and our decisions are not going to be influenced by such concerns.

“As a government, we intend to function in the interest of all citizens and residents of Antigua and Barbuda,” he stated.

Senator Antonio revealed that the ministry’s



Parliamentary Secretary, Senator Clement Antonio

plan of action involves meeting with staff at all levels to discuss their concerns and challenges with a view to resolving them.

“It’s important that we meet with the staff and listen to their needs because this will determine how we can get the best out of them as we move forward to address the government’s priority; to address the infrastructural challenges in the country, mainly the roads and drains,” he said.

Already, meetings have been held with the Permanent Secretary Ambassador Clarence Pilgrim and Director of Works, Alvin Crump.

Meetings with technicians and staff will begin this week.

These meetings will include staff employed at the quarries and other departments under the aegis of the ministry.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Parts Warehouse Officer

An automotive dealership seeking hardworking individuals who can work to efficient process methods and adapt to various tasks, must be a dedicated, hard-working and energized individual who pride themselves on their commitment and work ethic.

Warehouse officer role daily duties include:

- ☐ Assisting with the unloading of vehicles and the checking in of stock
- ☐ Sorting and placing materials or items on to racks, and shelves.
- ☐ Collecting items from throughout the warehouse, preparing and completing warehouse orders for pickup according to a schedule.
- ☐ Performing warehouse inventory controls through a computer.
- ☐ Stock counting and location checks.

As a warehouse operative you will be working both alone and as part of a team with efficiency and commitment to

complete your work and strive to maintain the business performance targets.

This role best suits upbeat and self-motivated individuals who enjoy working systematically and productively. The environment relies on organization and efficiency and with so much ground to cover in the line of duty it is important to ensure that you have a moderate level of fitness to enable you to comfortably carry out your tasks.

Picking and packing products can involve a substantial amount of manual handling including bending, stretching, stooping, stepping, reaching and lifting. Having a good range of mobility is important to ensure you can work safely within health and safety regulations without placing undue strain on your body.

Education

Minimum High School Education

Skills Required:

- ☐ Reliability and dependability
- ☐ Literacy & numeracy
- ☐ Ability to meet the physical demands of the job
- ☐ Self-motivated
- ☐ Upbeat and energized
- ☐ Flexible and willing to take on a variety of tasks
- ☐ Team player
- ☐ A level of computer literacy

Deadline for submission of application is **February 28, 2023.**

Please send applications to **warehouseofficer6@gmail.com**.

Local News



Cruise passenger dies during zip lining excursion

A 79-year-old Spanish national died on Saturday during a zip lining trip at Antigua Rainforest with his girlfriend.

David Sanderson and his partner, Jean Gillot, arrived in Antigua and Barbuda on the Celebrity Silhouette that morning.

As part of their island tour, the couple visited the popular attraction in Fig Tree Drive and decided to spend time zip lining above the rainforest canopy.

Their planned day of fun and sightseeing took a ter-



rible turn, however, when Sanderson collapsed and became unresponsive.

CPR was performed on

the elderly man while Emergency Medical Services was summoned.

According to reports,

efforts to resuscitate Sanderson en route to the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLB-MC) were unsuccessful.

He is believed to have died before arriving at the hospital, sometime around 11:25am.

Unconfirmed reports indicate that Sanderson had a history of hypertension and had a pacemaker implanted in his chest.

After pronouncing Sanderson dead, a doctor at SLBMC ordered his body removed to a funeral home pending an autopsy.

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The United Kingdom's (UK) Resident High Commissioner to Antigua and Barbuda, Lindsay Thompson

“Potential for misuse” behind UK scrutiny of regional CBIs

The United Kingdom's (UK) Resident High Commissioner to Antigua and Barbuda, Lindsay Thompson has said an abundance of caution over the potential for Citizenship By Investment (CBI) and Residency By Investment (RBI) programmes to be abused is the primary reason for the coming review of these initiatives in the English-speaking Caribbean.

Speaking specifically of the RBI offered by some countries in the region, Thompson explained that the UK recently shut down their version of that programme after several security issues were identified which had the potential to threaten the country's immigration system.

“We constantly review our immigration system, and we were not satisfied that that route to residency was secure enough. There was a potential for misuse.

“Now, when you have gone through that experience, it naturally makes you look at all the other routes that people can enter the UK...” she explained.

As restrictions associated with the pandemic relaxed, the Antigua and Barbuda government sought to capitalise on the remote workplace culture that was embraced by companies around the world. The virtual commute meant that businesses who were able to capitalise

cont'd on pg 8



Antigua Cruise Port

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Accounts Officer

The Accounts Officer will report to the Financial Controller in supporting the company's Finance programs.

CORE DUTIES

1. Reconcile bank accounts daily and prepare cash reports.
2. Post vendor invoices to accounting software daily, initiate and post payments.
3. Send out invoices to cruise lines daily and tenants monthly.
4. Follow up on receivables for Cruise Lines and tenants and compile monthly reports.
5. Manage purchasing (placing orders, clearing overseas shipments, liaising with Broker/Driver).
6. Receiving purchases, tracking inventory (cleaning and office supplies), compile monthly inventory reports.
7. Update the fixed asset register weekly (new purchases and disposals).
8. Assist in the preparation for and during Audits.
9. Assist in the preparation of management and financial reports.
10. Fill in for Admin as Financial Assistant when position is vacant.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Associate Degree or equivalent in Accounting or a Finance related field. In the absence of the respective qualifications, a minimum of 3-years relevant work experience.
- Good organizational skills.
- Excellent communication and coordination skills.
- Excellent understanding of dealing with people.
- Leadership skills.
- Use of written and spoken English and report writing skills.
- Confident and self-motivated.
- Ability to work flexible hours.

Antigua Cruise Port (ACP) is seeking to recruit a highly motivated and experienced Accounts Officer.

Learn more at
www.antiguacruiseport.com/careers

All applications are to be submitted
 by February 10, 2023
 to veryssam@antiguacruiseport.com

Local News



cont'd from pg 7

on technology could resume business, while employees had the ability to work from anywhere in the world.

Under the RBI programme, for an economic contribution, applicants who successfully cleared the due

diligence process would have the ability to live and work in Antigua and Barbuda.

It was viewed as an alternative that would attract high net worth individuals to the country who could then live, work and contribute to the local economy without the

commitment, cost and permanency of citizenship.

Thompson, however, said the UK had concerns about the system, and its impact on the CBI, as people unqualified to enter the UK otherwise may seek out "high value passports" like Antigua and Barbuda's to gain VISA free access to the country.

The European Union (EU) and Canada have both also expressed concerns over CBI programmes in the region.

In the case of Canada, VISA free access was revoked for several countries, while others must apply for pre-approval to enter.

The EU has threatened to take similar action.

This would be devastating to the nations in the region which offer CBIs, as the strength of a passport is determined by how many nations it has VISA free access to.

Despite their small size, many English-speaking Caribbean nations have incredibly powerful passports with many offering VISA free travel to at least 150 of the more than 190 nations which are ranked by the Henley Index annually.

In Antigua and Barbuda, the CBI is a significant revenue generator which has powered successive governments' ability to undertake major developments across a plethora of industries. This in turn has had far-reaching socioeconomic benefits for the country and its people.

Thomson said the UK's intention is not to cripple the island nations it will conduct reviews on, but to ensure the safety of their programmes.

She made it clear, however, that the possibility of future VISA restrictions could not be excluded.

"What we are looking to see is where are the risks," Thompson said.

"The UK is looking at these schemes on a whole, on a global basis. I can't promise that we won't apply VISA regimes to countries where there are concerns.

"We have, just like any other nation, like Antigua and Barbuda, to protect our borders, and where we see there are risks and a sufficient threat, then obviously, we are obliged to our citizens to take those measures."

Toward the end of January, it was disclosed that the high commissioner had held meetings with Prime Minister Gaston Browne and the head of the Citizenship by Investment Unit (CIU), Charmaine Quinland-Donovan.

Since that meeting, it was disclosed that Quinland-Donovan has also met with the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda to further discuss this burgeoning issue and others related to the CBI.



Government of Antigua & Barbuda

Ministry of Education, Sports & Creative Industries
Government Complex, Queen Elizabeth Highway
St. John's, Antigua

Tel: 462-0192/462-0193/462-0198/462-0199

Overseas: 268-462-4959/1051

Fax: 268-462-4970

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.

Tue 07 | Day

80°



23%
E 14 mph

Partly cloudy skies. High near 80F. Winds E at 10 to 20 mph.

Humidity
73%

UV Index
9 of 10

Sunrise
6:36 am

Sunset
6:05 pm

Tue 07 | Night

74°



23%
ENE 13 mph

Partly cloudy skies. Low 74F. Winds ENE at 10 to 20 mph.

Humidity
79%

UV Index
0 of 10

Moonrise
7:48 pm

Moonset
7:56 am

○ Waning Gibbous

Cubans respond with zeal to new US migration policy

By Andrea Rodríguez

AP - In barely a week, 25-year-old engineer Marcos Marzo went from riding his small electric motorcycle past the low buildings of Havana's Vedado district to travelling the mega-highways of Florida, amazed by the towering high-rises and giant supermarkets.

A close relative told Marzo on Jan. 21 that he had applied online to sponsor the young engineer's trip to Florida as required by the new parole program for Cuban migrants set up by the Biden administration. The next day the sponsorship had been confirmed and the day after that it was approved.

With his printed authorization in hand and a small blue suitcase, Marzo climbed aboard a plane to Hialeah last Friday, shaken by the speed of it all.

"It has been very hard, that in seven days your life changes so drastically, it fills you with hope, but at the same time it fills you with dread," Marzo told The Associated Press before leaving for what he knew would be a personal watershed.

Overwhelmed by thousands of Cubans crowding its southern border after making the dangerous trip through Central America and an increase in makeshift boats crossing the Florida Straits, the United States in early January approved a policy



Marcos Marzo, second left, poses for a photo with his friends who came to say goodbye upon receiving the news that he obtained a permit to travel to the United States, in Havana, Cuba, Wednesday, Jan 25, 2023. Marzo acknowledged that he had considered migrating by the route of "the volcanoes," as Cubans popularly call the Central American journey, but his parents talked him out of it. (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

change that makes migrants request a permit, or parole, online before arriving with the sponsorship of a relative or acquaintance in the U.S.

Cubans, who qualify for the program along with Nicaraguans, Haitians and Venezuelans, have responded with zeal, launching a search for sponsors and long lines to obtain documents. The program's backers hope it will help would-be migrants avoid the risks of the route through Mexico -- plagued by traffickers -- and bring order to the migrant flow.

"This option has come like a light," said Marzo, who had been living with his parents in Havana. Now in the U.S., his dream is to do a master's degree at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and work as an engineer, which he says is his passion.

According to figures from U.S. border authorities, in the 2021-2022 fiscal year -- which began in October last year and ended in September -- officials had a record 224,000 encounters with Cuban migrants on the Mexico border. In October 2022 there were 29,878 Cuban migrants stopped, in November 35,881 and in December 44,064.

Meanwhile, the Coast Guard intercepted 6,182 Cubans trying to arrive by sea in fiscal year 2021-2022. Add to that 4,795 in the past three months.

All the figures are records and come amid a serious economic crisis on the island caused by the coronavirus pandemic, inefficiencies in economic reforms and a radical tightening of U.S. sanctions, which seek to pressure its government to change its

model. Blackouts, shortages, inflation, long fuel lines and dollarization marked parts of 2021 and 2022 in Cuba, while the country saw its first street demonstrations in decades with thousands of people demanding an end to the power outages.

Until Jan. 5, Cubans who arrived at the northern border of Mexico obtained permits that granted them entry into U.S. territory, assuming there was a credible fear that prevented them from returning to the island. Later they usually ended up with refugee benefits and a year after that the protection of the Cuban Adjustment Act.

Then the Biden administration unveiled its new policy: 30,000 migrants will be accepted each month from Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Haiti. The migrants can stay for up to two years but must have a sponsor already in place in the United States. Those who risk reaching the borders without permission would be deported and not be able to enter U.S. territory for five years.

There are still questions about the program, including how many people from each of the four countries will be accepted.

And the program is not without controversy in Cuba amid the migrant boom in recent months, since many people had already begun their journeys toward the United

cont'd on pg 10

Grammys 2023: Kim Petras and Sam Smith break record and other takeaways

By Mark Savage

The 65th Grammy Awards took place in Los Angeles overnight, with awards going to everyone from Ozzy Osbourne and Adele to Willie Nelson and Beyoncé.

Harry Styles' picked up the coveted best album prize, Viola Davis completed an EGOT, and Beyoncé became the most decorated artist in Grammy history.

Here are five of the high and low points of a ceremony that had more twists and turns than a helter skelter in a hall of mirrors.

Every time Beyoncé releases a new album, she rewrites the rule book for everybody else.

From her self-titled vi-



Award-winners Lizzo and Adele were having a blast

sual album in 2013, and the confessional masterpiece that was 2016's *Lemonade*, to last year's disco fantasia *Renaissance*, she has changed the way that pop music is written, produced, released, presented and promoted.

She does so with awe-struck admiration from her peers. "You clearly are the

artist of our lives!" declared Lizzo at tonight's ceremony, echoing words Adele said in 2017.

During the ceremony, Beyoncé picked up a record-breaking 32nd trophy. She was already tied with her husband Jay-Z as the most-nominated artist of all time (they have 88 each).

But for all that love, the

big prizes have eluded her. Of the 16 times she's been nominated in the major, all-genre categories, she has won just once: Song of the year in 2010, for *Single Ladies* (Put A Ring On It).

This year, *Renaissance* was the presumed front-runner for album of the year. A deep and affectionate dive into black and gay dance culture, it was the most critically-acclaimed release of 2022.

But, for the fourth time in her career, Beyoncé was beaten to the top honour. This time Harry Styles took the crown. Previously, it was Beck, Adele and Taylor Swift.

What's the message the *cont'd on pg 11*

cont'd from pg 9

States on the previous route. Some had even sold houses and cars to make the journey through Central America, which begins with a flight to Nicaragua and continues up through Mexico to the U.S. border. It is a route plagued by dangers and human traffickers.

Yudith Cardozo, a 46-year-old homemaker, said the new parole program is "a unique opportunity" that could save lives.

"Nicaragua is a total risk, Mexico, all that journey is a total risk," she said.

Marzo acknowledged that he had considered migrating by the route of "the volcanoes," as Cubans popularly call the Central American journey, but his parents talked him out of it. The number of people who have died on the journey is unknown.

Cardozo, speaking while waiting in front of a government office to obtain

birth certificates and a criminal record certificate, said a relative in the U.S. had initiated the process to sponsor her, her 16-year-old son and her husband, but in three weeks they had gotten no response.

Many Cubans wanting to migrate cannot apply for the program because they lack a sponsor in the U.S.

On social media, memes have spread rapidly about Cubans rediscovering distant cousins or previously unknown uncles in the United States, and the U.S. The Embassy warned Cubans to be careful to avoid fraud and even human trafficking.

Meanwhile, Cubans are crowding public offices to request passports and other documents, in some cases forming lines before dawn. The AP found that the postage stamps needed for the process have become scarce.

Some experts defend the program but acknowledge that without an upturn

in the Cuban economy it is unlikely to reduce the record number of departures.

Biden's widespread use of humanitarian parole has been criticised forcefully by advocates for more restrictive immigration policies, including Stephen Miller, a former senior adviser to President Donald Trump. Texas and 19 other Republican-led states have sued to halt the policy, arguing it is effectively an amnesty for 360,000 people a year. Many on the left welcome the policy but caution that it cannot be used as a substitute for asylum.

The parole program "will help to a certain extent to make Cuban migration safer, more orderly and legal," said William LeoGrande, a political scientist at the American University in Washington. "But the number of Cubans trying to come to the United States right now is so huge that the parole program is not big enough to meet the demand."

cont'd from pg 10

Grammys are trying to deliver here? Because it seems to be: "Stop being so impressive and write music we feel comfortable with".

It's a sentiment that's not entirely out of character. The industry created the awards in 1958 to promote "good" music amid the terrifying onslaught of rock and roll and, ever since, the Grammys have lagged behind every major movement in music.

Famously, The Beatles won more awards after they split up than they did together; and there were no rap categories until 1989.

So maybe, one day, when she's in her 60s, Beyoncé will get her dues.

It wasn't a great night for speech-making.

Ozzy Osbourne made me laugh with a brusque, "Thank you and [expletive] off", but otherwise, there was a lot of thanking your mum and being "so inspired" by all the other nominees.

Luckily, Lizzo was on hand to give everyone a big old pep talk.

"Let me tell you something," she began, as she picked up Record Of The Year.

"Me and Adele are just having a good time, enjoying ourselves and rooting for our friends.

"But now that I'm up here... I want to dedicate this award to Prince.

"When we lost Prince I decided to dedicate my life to making positive music. This was at a time when positive music and feel-good music wasn't mainstream and I felt very misunderstood. I felt on the outside looking in. But I stayed true to myself because I wanted to make the world a better place.

"And now I look around and there's all these songs that are about loving our bodies and feeling comfortable in our skin and I'm just so proud to be a part of it.

"Because in a world that is a lot of darkness and a lot of scary [stuff], I'd

like to believe that not only can people do good, but we just are good, we are good inherently."

Special mention to Wet Leg's drummer Henry Holmes, who gave the night's most honest speech.

"This is just a magical evening. My mind has gone blank, and I feel like I might wet myself."

Don't be confused by the look that he's got / He's just Benny from the block.

The newly-married Mr J. Lo attended the Grammys to support his wife and looked thoroughly, unequivocally bored with the whole thing.

Shots of him staring, unmoved at Stevie Wonder (Stevie Wonder!) while Jennifer Lopez danced in her seat quickly trended on social media.

"However bad of a day you're having, I promise you're not as miserable as Ben Affleck at the Grammys right now," wrote one observer.

"You can see his batteries draining in real time," added another.

This August marks 50 years since DJ Kool Herc and his sister Cindy threw a party in the Bronx that's considered the birthing ground of hip-hop.

To mark the occasion, the Grammys threw a special performance that crammed the stage with legend after legend after legend.

Kicking off with Grandmaster Flash's Flash to the Beat and The Message, the 12-minute medley made room for Run-DMC, Salt-N-Pepa, Public Enemy, De La Soul, DJ Jazzy Jeff (scratching his way through Rock The Bells) Rakim, Ice-T, Method Man, an exquisitely-choreographed Missy Elliott, Queen Latifah and The Lox.

Busta Rhymes stole the show with a rapid-fire, syllable-spewing verse of Look At Me Now, while Nelly upped the fun factor with the goofy Hot In Herre.

Everything was brought up to date with Lil Baby's Freestyle and GloRilla's F.N.F. (Let's Go) before Lil Uzi

Vert closed the set with a snippet of Just Wanna Rock.

"We started in the Bronx," declared LL Cool J over the closing bars. "And ever since, we've gone everywhere,"

It was the undoubted highlight of the night... but there was a glaring absence from Drake and Eminem, both of whom are boycotting the Grammys, saying it sidelines hip-hop from the major categories.

To date, Childish Gambino's This Is America is the only hip-hop song to win song of the year; while Outkast's Speakerboxxx / The Love Below was the last rap album to scoop album of the year, back in 2004.

A tribute is one thing, but the Grammys still have a long road to travel.

Sam Smith and Kim Petras won best pop duo/group collaboration for their campy sex melodrama Unholy - which they also performed, with Smith dressed as the devil for good measure.

But the British singer ceded the microphone to Petras at the winner's podium, watching with pride as she delivered her speech,

"Sam graciously wanted me to accept this award because I'm the first transgender woman to win this award," Petras said, her face covered in a red satin veil.

She went on to thank the pioneers and activists who "kicked the doors open" - a list that would include Wendy Carlos, the first transgender woman to win a competitive Grammy back in 1970, for her pioneering synth album Switched-On Bach).

Backstage, she still couldn't get over the sense of occasion.

"All these years are going through my head of people saying I'd be a niche artist because I'm transgender, and my music would only ever play in gay clubs - and what's wrong with that, because I love gay clubs - but now I got a Grammy for making gay club music with my friend," she said.

"It's the best feeling in the world."

Lifestyle



Can Gen Z make friends in the pandemic era?

By Jessica Klein and Casey Noenickx

For older generations, work was the sole place of connection. Without offices, young people have to get clever about making friends.

Nayomi Mbunga always wanted to live in a big city, so she was thrilled when she landed a tech job in Toronto. The 24-year-old grew up in Ireland, and was eager to “meet people of all walks of life”, she says. But that was a challenge when she started her job in January 2022, as she spent the first few months working remotely and isolating because of Covid-19 cases.

Mbunga liked her colleagues, but didn’t have much of a chance to get to know them without meeting in person, which they weren’t able to do for months into her starting the job. She got along well with her roommates, one of whom she knew from back home, but she wanted to expand her social circle.

How, she wondered, was she possibly going to make friends? Mbunga didn’t play sports, and she felt “creepy” reaching out to strangers who looked cool on Instagram. Her opportunities to meet potential friends were therefore limited to remote work and home.

She also felt out of practice at cultivating relationships, despite being very sociable. “During the pandemic, I was shocked with

how anti-social I’d gotten, how nervous I was to talk to new people and put myself out there,” she says.

Making friends as an early career worker is critical, especially for people in a new city without existing ties. These friends nourish people through job crises and personal moments; in some cases, they end up being friends for life. But while making friends as an adult can be hard in and of itself, barriers have never been higher – especially for Gen Z. While work has traditionally been a place to make connections, many of these young people have lacked opportunities as firms shift to hybrid-, distributed- or remote-working models.

Experts say that, overall, social circles have shrunk after a lonely couple years during the pandemic – and in some cases, were never established at all. This means some young people are seeking new ways of making friends. Particularly, social-media reared Gen Z are now using new platforms to build sustainable close connections in a way that generations before them didn’t. Simply, young workers are getting more creative about the ways in which they meet people.

For Mbunga, in April 2022, she came across a TikTok video posted by Chloe Bow, a government-worker-turned-content-creator, who spoke candidly about friendships. Bow was plan-



ning events for a group she was starting called Toronto Girl Social; Mbunga followed her and signed up for an upcoming movie night, despite her nerves. “When I went to the event, it was so much fun, and everybody was in the exact same boat, everybody was nervous, everybody came on their own, and it kind of broke the ice in a way,” says Mbunga. “It was probably the best thing that I’ve done, because I’ve just met so many people now from it.”

We see ourselves through our friends’

Across Gen Z, Covid-19 created an unprecedented situation for forming friendships. For younger Gen Zers still in school, the pandemic lockdowns imposed a period of isolation and disruption. And older Gen Zers just entering the workforce also found themselves cut off from the new colleagues they would have met under normal circumstances.

“During the pandemic, there was a lack of consistency,” says Joyce Chuinkam, senior research manager at

Los Angeles-based market-research agency Talk Shoppe, which interviewed millennials and Gen Z about their friendships during the pandemic (proprietary data was discussed with BBC Worklife). School and work, which were traditionally a “consistent shared experiences” for young adults in past generations, adds Chuinkam, no longer served that purpose.

“Many people, Gen Z specifically, who are entering the workforce, haven’t necessarily had the experience of being able to make friends in the typical way, and are starting a new job for the first time where they don’t know anyone,” explains Miriam Kirmayer, a clinical psychologist and friendship expert practising in Montréal, Canada.

Research shows just how hard the pandemic has been on Gen Z’s sense of connection. Janice McCabe, an associate sociology professor at Dartmouth University, US, studies how friendship networks boost success. In 2016,

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she began conducting interviews with students at three universities in New Hampshire, US, to see how these early friendships played out through their lives. After completing her second wave of interviews in 2021, when her participants were entering the workforce, she saw how the pandemic had negatively affected both their abilities to sustain friendships and make new ones. "Making new friends was really tough [during the pandemic], so networks across the board were shrinking," she says.

This dearth of relationships can hurt anyone's wellbeing, but the timing for Gen Z couldn't be worse. They are currently facing periods of overwhelming change in their lives: graduating from school, moving to new cities, starting new jobs, entering the workforce – in many cases, all of the above. "With all of that change, they need community in their new spaces," says Chuinkam. And they need to be learning through new experiences, she adds: "Making new friends helps with that – to be exposed to something completely new and different."

But now, that's missing. And finding these meaningful friendships that challenge and expand a young adult's horizons is a crucial experience that affects the rest of one's life, according to McCabe. In young adulthood, people are seeking a sense of self, and friends can help someone become a better or different person, explains McCabe. "We see ourselves through our friends, so we see and figure out the 'kind of person' we are through thinking about and talking about our friends."

Getting creative with friend-finding

This situation is certainly not lost on Gen Zers. For many, limited social networks have been top of mind, and they're working on innovative ways to build the kinds of friendships older generations found more readily at places like offices.

From Talk Shoppe's research, Chuinkam found that Gen Z was more

open than millennials to making new friends online, through means such as friendship-app Bumble BFF and Facebook groups. But apps can be daunting, since they often facilitate one-on-one meetings, which puts pressure on a first meeting akin to that of a first date, study participants said. Gen Z felt like their friend-making "odds were higher" if they met through Facebook groups, says Chuinkam, which often tend to revolve around shared hobbies and also presenting a "more comfortable way to meet people" than the one-on-one experience of an app.

While many young people are open to these approaches, existing means of forging connections don't do the trick for all Gen Zers. Some have come up with their own apps or online-based hubs to make new friends in a challenging social environment.

During the 2020 school year, for instance, Jamie Lee, then a student at Columbia University in New York City, who'd been studying remotely, was looking for ways to authentically connect with her peers online. That summer, she launched the beta version of what would become her app, Flox, where groups of friends could sign up together to meet other groups of friends. To Lee, this felt like a more authentic way for Gen Z to approach friend-making, as she told technology-news website TechCrunch, since people tend to be more authentic around the friends they already have. Meeting new people as a group would let them be themselves, and remove some of the nerves from the friend-making process.

A more unique scenario led to New York City-based Marissa Meizz creating her own online friend-finding hub. Called No More Lonely Friends, this now-national meetup group came about in summer 2021, when the then-23-year-old came across a TikTok video in which a stranger alerted her to the fact that her friends were planning to deliberately host a party without her behind her back. To find new – and better –

friends as a member of Gen Z, Meizz turned right back to the internet to invite strangers to her meetups. She's looking now to expand the service, an online form through which people can sign up to attend her meetup events, abroad.

As critical as the internet has been, the allure of meeting someone in person has not waned for all young people. After Pranav Iyer, 23, graduated from college in Philadelphia, US, in 2020, he moved to a city in Western Maryland to work in a lab, but the job was entirely remote. "I don't think I felt really close with anyone ... we would have maybe once a week, a meeting with myself and a couple other people from the lab, but that was about it," he says. "So, most of the week, it was just me sitting at my computer."

Instead of focusing on making all new friends where he lived, Iyer chose another approach – he made regular trips back to Philadelphia to reinforce the social circles he'd already established in college. Though remote work isolated him from making new friends in his lab, it allowed him to work wherever he pleased, so he could stay in Philadelphia for long stretches.

Ultimately, because Gen Z has not had the "experience of making new friends at work that they really can draw on and leverage to keep them feeling socially connected", says Kirmayer, young people are fundamentally changing their approaches to how they connect, and what those connections look like. These shifts also have changed the entire traditional idea that work functions as a "hub of friendship and social connection".

Gen Z, notes Chuinkam, is also uniquely poised to decentralise that "hub", thanks to their comfort with online methods of meeting new people, and their ability to work remotely and move to their friends, instead of their friends having to come to them. Yes, they may be having a tough time in the wake of the pandemic – but if anyone is uniquely poised to cultivate them in a changed world, it is them.

Regional News



Seven Haitians die in highlands of Peru, Bolivia, hoping to reach United States

CMC - The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) says seven Haitian migrants have died in the Andean highlands of Peru since the start of this year, as their efforts to cross into Bolivia have been stymied by protests against the Peruvian government.

In a report on Saturday, the UNHCR said six of the deaths, including that of a minor, occurred in the small town of Desaguadero, where a bridge over a river of the same name links Peru and Bolivia.

According to a UNHCR spokeswoman in Peru, Iris Bano Romero, the other death, occurred in the town

of Juli, also near the Bolivian border.

The Haitians fell victim to a combination of factors: difficult access to food, shelter and supplies, and temperatures - at an altitude of 12,500 feet, sometimes near freezing.

In addition to the deaths, two other people have been hospitalised with pneumonia since last Thursday, one of them in critical condition.

Bano Romero said the deaths and illnesses occurred despite the "very generous" efforts of locals to help.

The Haitians, some of whom had spent years in Chile or Brazil, were hoping to eventually reach the United States.

Bano Romero added that blockades erected amid the political crisis in Peru have made life difficult for both locals and migrants, making it hard to obtain basics like food and fuel, or to pay for rent and other services.

The blockades on Desaguadero's international bridge are among several around the country erected to protest against the government of President Dina Boluarte.

She succeeded Pedro Castillo as president after he was ousted from office and arrested on December 7 after attempting to dissolve Congress and govern by decree.

Guyana to establish new scientific council to boost healthcare

CMC - A new medical scientific council could soon be established in Guyana, and that body will be tasked with determining what international development can boost local healthcare.

This was announced on Saturday by President Dr. Irfaan Ali as he addressed the launch of a new stem cell and immunotherapy facility at the privately-owned Woodlands Hospital.

According to Ali, with this development, Guyana will be a regional healthcare powerhouse, however he acknowledged that initiatives must be pursued to

facilitate the development of the local healthcare system.

"That is why we now must move to this new level... to the establishment of a National Medical Scientific Council that brings our best talent to investigate not old technology but the best-in-class medical science development that can be applied in Guyana to help us here."

He added that medical professionals must be able to understand the government's efforts and support policy making.

It was contended that the new stem cell services at the Woodlands Hospital



President Dr. Irfaan Ali

is an example of how the government and the private sector can work together to develop the sector.

Last year, a new organ transplant law was passed by the National Assembly,

cont'd on pg 15

Jamaican transport operators withdraw service amid slew of complaints

CMC - Several Jamaican transport operators have withdrawn their services in response to sections of the Road Traffic Act, as well as issues with the Government's move to clamp down on outstanding traffic tickets, among other concerns.

The One Voice Transportation Group announced it will cease operations to send a message to the government amid their complaints.

The group's President and Director of Communication, Lorraine Finnikin, advised commuters of the protest during a meeting on Sunday.

"We want to say to the public that we cannot guarantee normality come Monday, and we are sorry for the inconvenience that you will face, but not until we take industrial action, not just in the public trans-



portation sector, but in every sector, only when we take industrial action we are heard," Finnikin said.

Among the concerns raised by the transport operators are exorbitant ticket fines, the suspension of licence after paying fines, the lack of designated taxi parking spots and stops, and the compulsory use of

wreckers only for towing vehicles.

Meanwhile, some commuters from sections of St Catherine were left stranded waiting for taxis on Monday morning.

President of the Spanish Town Taxi Association Aaron Mattis said the members of his group support the strike due to con-

cerns surrounding the requirement of child seats in the new Road Traffic Act.

"There needs to be a definitive ruling on this critical issue and to leave it to the police discretion is not enough," Mattis said.

While some taxis have withdrawn their service, bus drivers were operating normally in some areas.

cont'd from pg 14

paving the way for, inter alia, these stem cell services.

The president also backed the hospital's initiative, stating that "Stem cells (services) are highly effective where there is early diagnosis."

He also described the new venture as "bold and innovative."

Meanwhile, Health Minister Dr. Frank Anthony highlighted that

Guyana is embracing more modern healthcare services.

According to him, specialised care for individuals, as opposed to broad solutions, is being sought after.

"...we are going to understand more about the person, their genomics and based on their genomics, manufacture medicine specific to that person," he explained.

He also said the introduction of

stem cell services is just one aspect of Guyana's development as a major healthcare hub.

"We recognize that this is going to be a potential area for growth and we want to be one of the places in the Caribbean and for that matter, where we can be pioneering this type of technology.

"People are recognizing that Guyana is ready for this type of medicine," the health minister said.

Powerful quake rocks Turkey and Syria, kills more than 2,500

AP - A powerful 7.8 magnitude earthquake rocked wide swaths of Turkey and neighbouring Syria on Monday, killing more than 2,500 people and injuring thousands more as it toppled thousands of buildings and trapped residents under mounds of rubble.

Authorities feared the death toll would keep climbing as rescuers searched through tangles of metal and concrete for survivors in a region beset by more than a decade of Syria's civil war and a refugee crisis.

Residents jolted out of sleep by the pre-dawn quake rushed outside in the rain and snow to escape falling debris, while those who were trapped cried for help. Throughout the day, major aftershocks rattled the region, including a jolt nearly as strong as the initial quake. After night fell, workers were still sawing away slabs and still pulling out bodies as desperate families waited for news on trapped loved ones.

"My grandson is 1 1/2 years old. Please help them, please. We can't hear them or get any news from them since morning. Please, they were on the 12th floor," Imran Bahur wept by her destroyed apartment building in the Turkish city of Adana. Her daughter and family were still not found.

Tens of thousands who were left homeless in Turkey



Civil defence workers and residents search through the rubble of collapsed buildings in the town of Harem near the Turkish border, Idlib province, Syria, Monday, Feb. 6, 2023. A powerful earthquake has caused significant damage in southeast Turkey and Syria and many casualties are feared. Damage was reported across several Turkish provinces, and rescue teams were being sent from around the country. (AP Photo/Ghaith Alsayed)

and Syria faced a night in the cold. In Turkey's Gaziantep, a provincial capital about 33 kilometres (20 miles) from the epicentre, people took refuge in shopping malls, stadiums and community centres. Mosques around the region were opened to provide shelter.

The quake, which was centred on Turkey's southeastern province of Kahramanmaraş, sent residents of Damascus and Beirut rushing into the street and was felt as far away as Cairo.

Turkish Vice President Fuat Oktay said such a disaster could hit "once in a hundred years." Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said officials do not know how high the number of dead and injured will rise.

The quake piled more misery on a region that has seen tremendous suffering

over the past decade. On the Syrian side, the area affected is divided between government-held territory and the country's last opposition-held enclave, which is surrounded by Russian-backed government forces. Turkey, meanwhile, is home to millions of refugees from the civil war.

In the rebel-held enclave, hundreds of families remained trapped in rubble, the opposition emergency organisation, called the White Helmets, said in a statement. The area is packed with some 4 million people displaced from other parts of the country by the war. Many of them live in buildings that are already wrecked from past bombardments.

Strained health facilities quickly filled with injured, rescue workers said. Others

had to be emptied, including a maternity hospital, according to the SAMS medical organisation.

The region sits on top of major fault lines and is frequently shaken by earthquakes. Some 18,000 were killed in similarly powerful earthquakes that hit north-west Turkey in 1999.

The U.S. Geological Survey measured Monday's quake at 7.8, with a depth of 18 kilometres (11 miles). Hours later, a 7.5 magnitude one struck more than 100 kilometres (60 miles) away.

The second jolt in the afternoon caused a multistory apartment building to topple face-forward onto the street in the Turkish city of Sanliurfa. The structure disintegrated into rubble and raised a cloud of dust as bystanders screamed, according to video of the scene.

Thousands of buildings were reported collapsed in a wide area extending from Syria's cities of Aleppo and Hama to Turkey's Diyarbakir, more than 330 kilometres (200 miles) to the north-east.

In Turkey alone, more than 3,700 buildings were destroyed, authorities said. Hospitals were damaged, and one collapsed in the Turkish city of Iskenderun.

Bitterly cold temperatures could reduce the time frame that rescuers have to save trapped survivors, said Dr. Steven Godby, an expert

‘Loophole’ excuses WHO officials accused of misconduct

AP - A confidential U.N. report into alleged missteps by senior World Health Organization staffers in the way they handled a sexual misconduct case during an Ebola outbreak in Congo found their response didn't violate the agency's policies because of what some officials described as a "loophole" in how the WHO defines victims of such behaviour.

The report, which was submitted to WHO Direc-

tor-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus last month and wasn't released publicly, was obtained by The Associated Press. The WHO hasn't publicly described the report's contents and did not respond to requests for comment.

The U.N. investigation comes after a 2021 review by a panel appointed by Tedros found that three WHO managers fumbled a sexual misconduct case first reported by the AP earlier

that year, involving a U.N. health agency doctor signing a contract to buy land for a young woman he reportedly impregnated.

Last week, Tedros said U.N. investigators concluded the "managerial misconduct" charges were unsubstantiated and the three staffers returned to work after being on administrative leave. The WHO chief said the agency would seek advice from experts on how to handle the inconsistencies

between the two reports.

The investigators said Tedros was informed of the sexual misconduct allegations in 2019 and had been warned of worrying gaps in the WHO's misconduct policies the previous year.

"If these issues were brought to Tedros' attention and no action was taken, (WHO) member states must demand accountability," said Dr. Irwin Redlener, a global health expert at Co-

cont'd on pg 18

cont'd from pg 16

in natural hazards at Nottingham Trent University. He added that the difficulty of working in areas beset by civil war would only complicate rescue efforts.

Offers of help - from search-and-rescue teams to medical supplies and money - poured in from dozens of countries, as well as the European Union and NATO. The vast majority were for Turkey, with Russian and even an Israeli promise of help to the Syrian government, but it was not clear if any would go to the devastated rebel-held pocket in the northwest.

The Syrian opposition's Syrian Civil Defense described the situation in the enclave as "disastrous."

The opposition-held area, centred on the province of Idlib, has been under siege for years, with frequent Russian and government airstrikes. The territory depends on a flow of aid from nearby Turkey for everything from food to medical supplies.

At a hospital in Idlib, Osama Abdel Hamid said most of his neighbours died. He said their shared four-story building collapsed just as he, his wife and three children ran toward the exit.

A wooden door fell on them and acted as a shield.

"God gave me a new lease on life," he said.

In the small Syrian rebel-held town of Azmarin in the mountains by the Turkish border, the bodies of several dead children, wrapped in blankets, were brought to a hospital.

Television stations in Turkey aired screens split into four or five, showing live coverage from rescue efforts in the worst-hit provinces. In the city of Kahramanmaraş, rescuers pulled two children alive from the rubble, and one could be seen lying on a stretcher on the snowy ground.

In Adana, 20 or so people, some in emergency rescue jackets, used power saws atop the cement mountain of a collapsed building to clear space for any survivors to climb out or be rescued.

"I don't have the strength anymore," one survivor could be heard calling out from beneath the rubble of another building in Adana earlier in the day, as rescue workers tried to reach him, said a resident, journalism student Muhammet Fatih Yavuz.

In Diyarbakir, hundreds of rescue workers and civilians formed lines across a mountain of wreckage, passing down broken concrete pieces, household belongings and other debris as they searched for trapped survivors while excavators dug through the rubble below.

More than 1,600 people were killed in 10 Turkish provinces, with more than 11,000 injured, according to Turkish authorities. The death toll in government-held areas of Syria climbed to over 539 people, with some 1,300 injured, according to the Health Ministry. In the country's rebel-held northwest, groups that operate there said the death toll was at least 380, with many hundreds injured.

Huseyin Yayman, a legislator from Turkey's Hatay province, said several of his family members were stuck under the rubble of their collapsed homes.

"There are so many other people who are also trapped," he told Haber-Turk television by telephone. "There are so many buildings that have been damaged. People are on the streets. It's raining, it's winter."

cont'd from pg 17

lumbia University.

Tedros has previously said he became aware of sexual misconduct complaints in Congo only after media reports in September 2020 and learned of the specific case reported by the AP when it was published. He said anyone connected to sexual misconduct faced consequences including dismissal. To date, no senior WHO staffers linked to the abuse and exploitation have been fired.

In May 2021, an AP investigation revealed senior WHO management was told of sexual exploitation during the agency's efforts to stop Ebola in eastern Congo from 2018-2020 but did little to stop it.

The AP published a notarized agreement between former WHO doctor Jean-Paul Ngandu and the woman he allegedly impregnated, in which he agreed to cover her health care costs and buy her land.

The deal, also signed by two WHO staffers, was meant to protect the WHO's reputation, Ngandu said. The woman and her aunt went to the WHO office in Beni to complain about Ngandu, according to internal WHO correspondence.

"After the allegations were made to WHO (headquarters), a decision was made not to investigate the complaint on the basis that it did not violate WHO's (sexual exploitation and abuse) policy framework," the U.N. report said.



World Health Organization

The review explained that the decision was made by officials from the U.N. health agency's legal, ethics and other departments and was due to the fact that the woman wasn't a "beneficiary" of WHO assistance, meaning she didn't receive any emergency or humanitarian aid from the agency, and thus, didn't qualify as a victim under WHO policy.

WHO staffers interviewed by U.N. investigators said this might be considered a "loophole which had the potential to cause complaints to fall through the cracks."

"Ngandu's conduct did not violate any WHO (sexual exploitation and abuse) standards of conduct," the report said, describing his agreement to pay off the woman as a "private financial settlement."

U.N. investigators noted there were problems in the WHO's sexual misconduct policies, describing those as "a collective responsibility." In February 2018, several staffers sent a memorandum to Tedros warning of the policies' shortcomings.

Experts slammed WHO's defence, saying the agency should uphold the

highest standards in handling sexual exploitation since it coordinates global responses to acute crises like COVID-19 and monkeypox.

"Escaping accountability based on weasel words and technical language, like not being a 'beneficiary' of WHO assistance is unacceptable," said Larry Gostin, director of the WHO Collaborating Centre on Public Health Law and Human Rights at Georgetown University.

"That the U.N. Office of Internal Oversight Services excused this behaviour based on this legal technicality shows the U.N. and WHO are not taking sexual abuse seriously."

After the reports of sexual misconduct in Congo arose, the WHO created a new office to prevent such behaviour, headed by Dr. Gaya Gamhewage. In her interview with U.N. investigators, Gamhewage said that prior to starting her new job, she had no knowledge of the WHO's sexual misconduct policies and had not even read them.

"Sexual exploitation and abuse were not familiar terms to her," the report

said.

The U.N. investigation comes weeks after the AP published another story detailing sexual misconduct at the WHO, involving a Fijian doctor with a history of sexual assault allegations within the agency, who was preparing to run in an election for the WHO's top director in the Western Pacific.

"These repeated instances of sexual assault, and arguably worse, its cover-up, are grossly intolerable," said Columbia University's Redlener.

"It's possible this Ngandu case didn't technically break WHO's policy, but there is policy and then there is morality and ethics," he said. "There's something deeply uncomfortable about what happened here."

During the Ebola epidemic, Tedros travelled to Congo 14 times to personally oversee the WHO's response.

"At a minimum, Tedros should promise and deliver a major overhaul on policies and accountability," Redlener said. "There might even be an expectation that he failed in his responsibilities and should therefore resign."

China accuses US of indiscriminate use of force over balloon

AP - China on Monday accused the United States of indiscriminate use of force in shooting down a suspected Chinese spy balloon, saying it “seriously impacted and damaged both sides’ efforts and progress in stabilising Sino-U.S. relations.”

The U.S. shot down the balloon off the Carolina coast after it traversed sensitive military sites across North America. China insisted the flyover was an accident involving a civilian aircraft.

Vice Foreign Minister Xie Feng said he lodged a formal complaint with the U.S. Embassy on Sunday over the “U.S. attack on a Chinese civilian unmanned airship by military force.”

“However, the United States turned a deaf ear and insisted on indiscriminate use of force against the civilian airship that was about to leave the United States airspace, obviously overreacted and seriously violated the spirit of international law and international practice,” Xie said.

The presence of the balloon in the skies above the U.S. dealt a severe blow to the already strained



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, Saturday, Feb. 4, 2023. The downing of the suspected Chinese spy balloon by a missile from an F-22 fighter jet created a spectacle over one of the state's tourism hubs and drew crowds reacting with a mixture of bewildered gazing, distress and cheering. (Chad Fish via AP)

U.S.-Chinese relations that have been in a downward spiral for years. It prompted Secretary of State Antony Blinken to abruptly cancel a high-stakes Beijing trip aimed at easing tensions.

Xie repeated China's insistence that the balloon was a Chinese civil unmanned airship that blew into U.S. airspace by mistake, calling it “an accidental incident caused by force majeure.”

China will “resolutely safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies, resolutely safeguard China's interests and dignity and reserve the right to make further necessary responses,” he said.

U.S. President Joe Biden issued the shoot-down order after he was advised that the best time for the operation would be when it was over water, U.S. officials said. Military officials determined that

bringing down the balloon over land from an altitude of 60,000 feet (18,000 metres) would pose an undue risk to people on the ground.

“What the U.S. has done has seriously impacted and damaged both sides’ efforts and progress in stabilising Sino-U.S. relations since the Bali meeting,” Xie said, referring to a recent meeting between Biden and his Chinese

cont'd on pg 20

International

AROUND THE WORLD



cont'd from pg 19

counterpart, Xi Jinping, in Indonesia that many hoped would create positive momentum for improving ties that have plunged to their lowest level in years.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning provided no new details on Monday, repeating China's insistence that the object was a civilian balloon intended for meteorological research, had little ability to steer and entered U.S. airspace by accidentally diverging from its course.

She also did not say what additional steps China intended to take in response to Washington's handling of the issue and cancellation of Blinken's trip, which would have made him the highest-ranking U.S. official to visit since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We have stated that this is completely an isolated and accidental incident caused by force majeure, but the U.S. still hyped up the incident on purpose and even used force to attack," Mao said at a daily briefing. "This is an unacceptable and irresponsible action."

Balloons thought or known to be Chinese have been spotted from Latin America to Japan. Japanese Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihiko Isozaki told reporters Monday that a flying object similar to the one shot down by the U.S. had been spotted at least twice over northern Japan since 2020.

"We are continuing to analyse them in connection with the latest case in the United States," he said.

Mao confirmed that a balloon recently spotted over Latin America was Chinese, describing it as a civilian airship used for flight tests.

"Affected by weather and due to its limited self-control ability, the airship severely deviated from its set route and entered the space of Latin America and the Caribbean by acci-

dent," Mao said.

Washington and Beijing are at odds over a range of issues from trade to human rights, but China is most sensitive over alleged violations by the U.S. and others of its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Beijing strongly protests U.S. military sales to Taiwan and visits by foreign politicians to the island, which it claims as Chinese territory, to be recovered by force if necessary.

It reacted to a 2022 visit by then-U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi by firing missiles over the island and staging threatening military drills seen as a rehearsal for an invasion or blockade.

Beijing also cut off discussion with the U.S. on issues including climate change that are unrelated to military tensions.

Last week, Mao warned Pelosi's successor, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, not to travel to Taiwan, implying that China's response would be equally vociferous.

"China will firmly defend its sovereignty, security and development interests," Mao said. McCarthy said China had no right to dictate where and when he could travel.

China also objects when foreign military surveillance planes fly off its coast in international airspace and when U.S. and other foreign warships pass through the Taiwan Strait, accusing them of being actively provocative.

In 2001, a U.S. Navy plane conducting routine surveillance near the Chinese coast collided with a Chinese fighter plane, killing the Chinese fighter pilot and damaging the American plane, which was forced to make an emergency landing at a Chinese naval air base on the southern Chinese island province of Hainan. China detained the 24-member U.S. Navy aircrew for 10 days until the U.S. expressed regret over the

Chinese pilot's death and for landing at the base without permission.

The South China Sea is another major source of tension. China claims the strategically key sea virtually in its entirety and protests when U.S. Navy ships sail past Chinese military features there.

At a news conference Friday with his South Korean counterpart, Blinken said "the presence of this surveillance balloon over the United States in our skies is a clear violation of our sovereignty, a clear violation of international law, and clearly unacceptable. And we've made that clear to China."

"Any country that has its airspace violated in this way I think would respond similarly, and I can only imagine what the reaction would be in China if they were on the other end," Blinken said.

China's weather balloon explanation should be dismissed outright, said Oriana Skylar Mastro, an expert on Chinese military affairs and foreign policy at Stanford University.

"This is like a standard thing that countries often say about surveillance assets," Mastro said.

China may have made a mistake and lost control of the balloon, but it was unlikely to have been a deliberate attempt to disrupt Blinken's visit, Mastro said.

For the U.S. administration, the decision to go public and then shoot down the balloon marks a break from its usual approach of dealing with Beijing on such matters privately, possibly in hopes of changing China's future behaviour.

However, Mastro said, it was unlikely that Beijing would respond positively.

"They're probably going to dismiss that and continue on as things have been. So I don't see a really clear pathway to improved relations in the foreseeable future."

Chiefs, Eagles land in Phoenix, prepare for Super Bowl 57

By David Brandt

AP - A few minutes after the Kansas City Chiefs and quarterback Patrick Mahomes landed in Phoenix, the pilot hung a "Chiefs Kingdom" flag out of the window as players, coaches and staff got off the plane and walked across the runway.

About an hour later, it was the Philadelphia Eagles who arrived in Arizona, with an "It's a Philly Thing" flag fluttering in the runway as quarterback Jalen Hurts, coach Nick Sirianni and others made their way to a fleet of buses.

Super Bowl 57 is just one week away.

The Chiefs will face the Eagles on Feb. 12 in Glendale, Arizona.

Both teams landed at Goldwater Air National Guard Base in ideal Phoenix winter weather - bright sunshine and temperatures in the low 70s. Team personnel occasionally stopped to take pictures and videos on the runway.

Former Chiefs star Christian Okoye was on hand to pass out hats to Kansas City's players as they got off the plane. The former star running back lives in Southern California and made the short trip to Phoenix.

"They called me and wanted me to come over here and welcome the team,"



The Philadelphia Eagles arrive ahead of Super Bowl 57 NFL football game, Sunday, Feb. 5, 2023, in Phoenix. The Kansas City Chiefs will play the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday. (AP Photo/Matt York)

Okoye said. "So I said 'Yes, of course' - my team's over here getting ready to win the Super Bowl."

Odds makers are expecting a good game, though they disagree with Okoye and are giving the Eagles a slight edge. Philadelphia opened as a 1 1/2-point favourite, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

The Chiefs advanced to their third Super Bowl in four seasons when Harrison Butker made a 45-yard field goal with 3 seconds left to push Kansas City past the Cincinnati Bengals 23-20 in the AFC championship game last weekend.

The Eagles routed the San Francisco 49ers 31-7

in the NFC title game. They've looked dominant in the playoffs so far, also beating the New York Giants 38-7 in the divisional round.

Philadelphia is back in the Super Bowl five years after beating the New England Patriots 41-33.

Now a mostly new generation of Eagles - led by Hurts and Sirianni - will come to Arizona to try and win another title.

The teams will both take part in the "Super Bowl LVII Opening Night" on Monday in downtown Phoenix, where all the players and coaches from both teams are available for the annual media extravaganza.

Then it's down to business. The Chiefs will practise throughout the week at Arizona State's football facilities while the Eagles will do their preparation at the Arizona Cardinals' practice facility.

There is no shortage of storylines: Kansas City coach Andy Reid goes against his former team - which he led to Super Bowl 39 - in a game that's also the first matchup of Black starting quarterbacks in the Super Bowl with Mahomes and Hurts.

There's also a brother-against-brother showdown between Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce and Philadelphia centre Jason Kelce.

Sports News



Manchester City charged with breaking financial rules by Premier League

By Katie Falkingham

BBC - The Premier League has charged Manchester City with more than 100 breaches of its financial rules following a four-year investigation.

It has referred the club to an independent commission over alleged rule breaches between 2009 and 2018.

It also accused City of not co-operating since the investigation started in December 2018.

City said they were "surprised" by the charges and are supported by a "body of irrefutable evidence".

The commission can impose punishments ranging from a fine and points deduction to expulsion from the Premier League.

"Manchester City is surprised by the issuing of these alleged breaches of the Premier League Rules, particularly given the extensive engagement and vast amount of detailed materials that the EPL has been provided with," the club said in a statement.

"The club welcomes the review of this matter by an independent commission, to impartially consider the comprehensive body of irrefutable evidence that exists in support of its position.

"As such we look forward to this matter being put to rest once and for all."

Last season City won their sixth Premier League title since the 2008 takeover



Manchester City were taken over by owners from Abu Dhabi in 2008

by the Abu Dhabi United Group.

What has the City been charged with?

In a statement the Premier League said City breached rules requiring them to provide "accurate financial information that gives a true and fair view of the club's financial position".

This information covered club revenue, which includes sponsorship income and operating costs.

Further alleged breaches relate to rules requiring full details of manager remuneration - from the 2009-10 to 2012-13 seasons, when Roberto Mancini was in charge - and player remuneration between 2010-11 and 2015-16.

The Premier League said City breached rules related to Uefa regulations, including Financial Fair Play (FFP), from 2013-14 to 2017-18, as well as Premier League rules on profitability and sustainability from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

In 2020 European football governing body Uefa ruled that City committed "serious breaches" of FFP regulations between 2012 and 2016.

However, a two-year ban from European competitions was overturned by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (Cas) later that year.

Uefa began its investigation into City after German newspaper Der Spiegel published leaked documents in November 2018 alleging the club had inflated the value of a sponsorship deal.

The proceedings of the commission - chaired by Murray Rosen KC - will be confidential and heard in private.

When the Premier League investigation began, City said the allegations were "entirely false" and that allegations in Der Spiegel came from "illegal hacking and out of context publication of City emails".

'It will be expensive and will drag on' - analysis

BBC Sport's Simon

Stone

City were not given advance warning of the Premier League statement. They were called at the same time the statement was published.

They also note the timing of the statement given the white paper on football governance is about to be published. It is felt that bringing this case is likely to be used by the Premier League as evidence of them being able to deal with governance issues itself.

City are confident in their position and that includes the charges that were time-barred in their Uefa case. The club are understood to have provided the relevant evidence around those charges to the Premier League some time ago.

On the basis it has taken the Premier League four years to get to this point, do not expect a resolution to this case any time soon.

Manchester City have always denied financial wrongdoing. They always said the detail published by Der Spiegel when it was passed information by Football Leaks was incomplete.

When Uefa launched its case, City said they had no faith in that investigation and, when it went against them, they went straight to the Court of Arbitration for Sport, where they were cleared of what they regarded as the substantive allegation

cont'd on pg 23

Warriors: Curry sidelined with left leg injury

AP - Golden State All-Star guard Stephen Curry will be sidelined due to injuries to his left leg, the team said Sunday, and the Warriors aren't sure how many weeks he'll miss.

Curry was diagnosed after an MRI with partial tears to his superior tibiofibular ligament and interosseous membrane in his left leg and also has a lower-leg contusion. But Warriors coach Steve Kerr stressed Sunday that the news could have been far worse.

"I didn't know those ligaments existed," Kerr said. "I think the main thing is he's going to be out for a little bit. We're going to re-evaluate in a few days. And the good news is, he's going to be back. We don't exactly know when but it's not an injury that's going to keep him out for the season. He's going to come back this season and hopefully sooner rather than later."

Curry left Saturday's game against Dallas with 2:01 left in the third quar-

ter, after his wrapped left leg - which he originally hurt Thursday in a matchup against Denver - appeared to buckle as he played defence.

He immediately began hopping in obvious discomfort, then left the game and didn't return.

Curry, who is averaging 29.4 points per game this season, won't play Monday against Oklahoma City. And with the All-Star Game two weeks away, it now seems very possible that Curry might not be there.

If Curry - or any of the other 24 players selected to the NBA All-Star Game - cannot participate in the Feb. 19 contest, Commissioner Adam Silver will select a replacement. Starters were chosen by a formula that included voting from fans, media and NBA players. Reserves were picked by NBA coaches.

Curry already has had one extended absence of the season, missing 11 games from Dec. 16 through Jan. 7



Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (30) gestures after scoring against the Dallas Mavericks during the second half of an NBA basketball game in San Francisco, Saturday, Feb. 4, 2023. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)

with a shoulder injury. The Warriors went 6-5 in those games, and has five games left before the All-Star break.

"We just got through a stretch without him ... and held our own," Kerr said. "We know we can hold our own now. We went through this last year when he missed I think the final

10 games of the season or so and obviously went on a great run in the playoffs. We have some experience with this and we're confident that we can keep things going and be where we want to be by the end of the year."

The Warriors, like many teams in the Western Conference, have very little room for error in the playoff chase. Golden State is 27-26 and entered Sunday seventh in the West - three games behind third-place Sacramento but only one game ahead of 11th-place Portland.

The top six teams in each conference are assured playoff spots. The teams that finish between seventh and 10th will go to a play-in tournament to decide the No. 7 and No. 8 seeds in each of the conference brackets.

cont'd from pg 22

tions, even though some were timed out.

They will be armed with the very best lawyers, looking line by line at every element of the Premier League's case.

The charge sheet includes five years of allegations that City have not assisted with their inquiry - which is all of it.

The whole thing will be expensive and it will drag on.

City manager Pep Guardiola has always said he was assured by his employers that they have done nothing wrong. Others - La Liga president Javier Tebas is one of

the loudest voices - argue vehemently the other way.

Should City win, legally, they will be clear, even if the sniping will continue.

Should they lose, all manner of punishments can be handed down. The Premier League's scope in that sense is completely open-ended and we are in uncharted territory.

We are now beginning a very long end game. City's reputation - and the reputation of those who own it - is on the line. The outcome, whenever it comes, will be fascinating.

Sports News



Wins for Daggers and Slam in D2 basketball

Old Road Daggers and New Generation Slam both celebrated wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division League on Sunday.

Old Road Daggers prevailed 70 - 67 against Ottos Coolers in the opening game of a Zone 1 double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Ariel Quallis shot a game high 32 points with 13 rebounds and 7 assists while Victor Osbourne scored 25 points for Old Road Daggers.

Lincoln Weekes sank 19 points; Michael Barton converted 15 points

and snapped up 20 rebounds; Javon Simon scored 13 points and had 6 rebounds, 7 assists and 5 steals; and Shaquille Kelly grabbed 17 rebounds and scored 8 points for Ottos Coolers.

New Generation Slam crushed Jan Serv Fearless Crew2 by 25 points in Sunday's second encounter.

Anjis Anthony shot a game high 23 points to lead New Generation Slam to their 71 - 46 victory.

Teammates Shawn Thomas grabbed 17 rebounds and sank 10 points and Keaddy Martin also

scored 10 points and snapped up 10 rebounds for the winners.

Tishawn George converted 13 points and pulled down 8 rebounds and Daysher Samuel sank 12 points and snatched 8 rebounds for Fearless Crew2.

The ABBA Second Division will continue with a Zone 1 double header at the JSC Sports Complex this evening.

Raeburn Generators United will meet Rebels at 6:45pm while Jan Serv Fearless Crew2 will challenge Old Road Daggers at 8:30pm.

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)

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Karima Gore stars in third National Team trial match

All rounder, Karima Gore, shone with both bat and ball during the third Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association (ABCA) Senior National Team Intra-Squad Trial over the weekend.

Gore, who captained his team against the Elroy Francis Jr XI, narrowly missed out on a century, however, he managed to bag a five-wicket haul in the drawn two-day affair at Pigotts.

After winning the toss and opting to bat, the Karima Gore XI were all out for 236 in 58.3 overs.

Gore top scored with 96 off 100 balls, hammering 6 massive sixes and 11 fours in 155 minutes at the crease.

He was involved in two key partnerships which were crucial to his team getting past the 200 run total.

Gore shared an 84 run ninth wicket stand with number 10 batsman Jedediah Martin, who made 36 off 56 balls.

Gore also added 58

runs for the sixth wicket with fellow Liberta Black Hawks colleague, Joshua Thomas, who contributed 10 off 32 balls.

Glenton Williams picked up 3 wickets for 29 runs in 13.3 overs, Shavon Moore took 3 wickets for 39 runs in 14 overs and pacer Kelvin Pitman captured 2 wickets for 40 runs.

In reply, the Elroy Francis Jr. XI were all out for 172 in 55 overs with Gore snapping up 6 wickets for 31 runs in 15 overs.

Middle order batsman, Kenrick Scott, top scored with 57 off 80 balls with 9 fours and a 6.

Michael Greaves chipped in with 41 off 87 balls, including 7 fours. He went on to share a 50 run fifth wicket partnership with Deran Benta, who made 18 off 43 balls.

The Karima Gore XI were struggling on 33 for 6 off 13.5 overs in their second innings when the match ended.

Glenton Williams snapped up 5 wickets for 15 runs.



All rounder, Karima Gore, shines with both bat and ball during the third Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association (ABCA) Senior National Team Intra-Squad Trial over the weekend. (File photo)

The trial matches are being used to help select the Antigua and Barbuda

squad who will participate in this year's senior Leeward Islands Three-Day Tournament.

The Leeward Islands Cricket Board (LICB) is proposing to stage this year's Senior Leeward Islands Three-Day Tournament in St. Kitts and Nevis from 18th February to 4th March.

cont'd from pg 26

matches also ensured that Old Road remained fourth in the standing after advancing to 17 points.

Ottos Rangers prevailed 2 - 1 against SAP in the second encounter on Sunday.

Junior Benjamin scored a penalty in the 2nd minute and Jalmaro Calvin

scored in the 13th minute to give Ottos Rangers a 2 - 0 halftime lead.

Shaquan Telemaque scored for SAP with a 64th minute conversion.

Their fifth win in nine matches has lifted Ottos Rangers to 15 points and into sixth place ahead of Swetes on goal difference.

All Saints United reclaim Premier League lead

All Saints United reclaimed their three-point lead at the top of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division on Sunday night.

All Saints United came from behind to overcome Swetes 3-1 in the first game of a triple header at the ABFA Technical Center at Paynters.

Kevin Francis scored in the 10th minute to give Swetes a 1 - 0 halftime lead. After the interval, All Saints United equalised via a Kenduka Challenger's 59th minute conversion.

Nazir McBurnette squandered a chance to get on the scoresheet and put All Saints ahead when he failed to score a penalty kick in the 61st minute.

Swetes were then reduced to 10-men in the 75th minute, losing the services of Joel Jacobs, who was given a red card after committing his second bookable offence.

All Saints United capitalised on having an extra man and scored two late goals to win the match.

Veteran forward Randolph "Etty" Burton gave



All Saints United reclaimed their three-point lead at the top of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's Premier Division League on Sunday night, 5th February. (File photo)

All Saints the lead with a goal difference with 15 points.

Daryan James sealed All Saints United's victory by scoring his team's final goal in the 86th minute.

Kevin Francis completed a disappointing display by Swetes when he missed a penalty in the fourth minute of added on time (90+4 minutes).

Their third loss in 10 outings has caused Swetes to slip to seventh place on

Their ninth win in 10 matches has lifted All Saints United to 27 points, three ahead of Jennings Grenades who are in second place.

Villa Lions missed a chance to rejoin Jennings Grenades on the same number of points when they were held to a 1 - 1 draw by Old Road in Sunday's feature match.

Maliko Anthony gave Old Road the lead by scoring in the 13th minute, but Villa Lions equalised in the 26th minute with a goal by Kwame "Monty" Kirby.

The result ensured that Villa Lions retained third place position, but they are now on 22 points, two adrift of Jennings Grenades after 10 appearances.

Their fifth draw in 10

cont'd on pg 25