

SUPERYACHT ON SALE FROM APRIL 1

Story on Page 2



Dr. Claudine Richardson (SLBMC Pediatric Consultant), Tavia Hunte (Shiva's School of Dance Artistic Director), Rayanna John (Co-Fitness Jam Instructor and Student at Shiva's School of Dance) and Alexa McDonald (front - Fitness Jam attendee).

Local News



The super yacht Alfa Nero goes up for sale effective April 1

The Antigua and Barbuda government continues to hold important discussions on the proposed auctioning of the super yacht, Alfa Nero, which has been moored in the Falmouth Harbour for over a year.

Following the passage of the amendment to the Antigua Port Authority Act by both houses of parliament, the way is now clear for the government to proceed with putting the vessel up for auction.

The amendment places the onus on the government to advertise to all

concerned, the steps it wishes to take, and provide a ten-day period of notice. Under the new law the vessel will become the property of the state at the expiration of the 10-day period.

“It will then cease being the property of a sanctioned person, nor will the vessel be sanctioned.

“Under those conditions, a sale of the Alfa Nero will cause the resources realized to become the property of the state. The law directs that the money realized be placed in the Consolidated Fund,” a government spokesman ex-

plained.

He revealed that Antigua and Barbuda has already given the several creditors of the Alfa Nero its commitment, to reimburse them from the proceeds of the sale.

The new purchaser would justifiably desire to own the vessel, free of liabilities, and the Government wishes to ensure that its ownership under the law will be free of any liabilities also.

According to the source, in just over a week, by 31 March 2023, the ten-day period would have expired.

PM Browne commends Ambassador Calvin Ayre and urges business community to contribute to developmental projects

Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne has praised local businessman and philanthropist, Ambassador Calvin Ayre for making a significant contribution towards the socio economic development of Antigua and Barbuda.

Prime Minister Browne made the comment while delivering the feature address to launch the University of the West Indies, Five Islands Campus and the Calvin Ayre Foundation 75 Financial Care project which offers over 200 scholarships to students of the campus over a two year period. The project is valued at EC \$540,000.

“For his contributions to the development of Antigua and Barbuda we say thank you and we are eternally pleased. I say to Amba-



sador Calvin Ayre, sincere thank you. An unapologetic thank you, for your commitment to this country and certainly to the region. Your contributions have made a difference, especially your economic contributions. Today, Ambassador Calvin Ayre is easily the single largest private sector developer

on the island, “ said Prime Minister Browne referring to the businessman’s development of a business complex, Canada Place at over \$40 million dollars, the ongoing construction of a retreat centre at a cost of \$40 million US dollars and his plan to construct, later this year a luxury resort and residences

– a Nikki Beach project.

“Ambassador Ayre, evidently has shown a significant amount of commitment to the people of this country and he should be celebrated. I want to encourage all Antiguan and Barbudans to embrace him. He is a citizen and I want to emphasize the point that he has been a good citizen and a most productive citizen in terms of his investments,” said PM Browne.

Prime Minister Browne also encouraged other members of the business community to contribute to community development and worthwhile projects; making reference to the Apostle Paul’s three Christian principles of faith, hope and charity.

“We all know that the
cont’d on pg 3

cont'd from pg 2

best of them is charity. And they say that charity is the best form of love. So Ambassador Ayre is showing his love for the people of Antigua and Barbuda in a very tangible way by making these significant contributions, these significant gifts. In fact, I would say that he is also the single largest philanthropist. We are eternally grateful. And by giving, that is the way in which you demonstrate love for people.

“I am encouraging other businessmen and other professionals in this country to follow the lead of Ambassador Ayre by giving not only to the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus, but generally to the society. For us to become more giving and more empathetic people.

“There are many things that we can volunteer to do, but unfortunately, we do not have a strong culture of volunteering, and I'm hoping that this will change as we look at the contributions of people like Ambassador Calvin Ayre,” said Prime Minister Browne.

Prime Minister Browne also stated that as a small nation with less than 100,000 people, we must make the best of our human resources and continue to invest in people so that they can compete with the best in the world. He noted that his government is determined to continue to invest in the development of its people, not only in academic education, but also in vocational and

technical education.

“My government agrees with Principal Williams of the Five Islands Campus that there is a need for us to assist individuals in the workforce to increase or improve their job proficiency. And that is certainly an area that we welcome as we continue to expand the university's lifelong learning programmes. I am especially concerned about proficiency within the public sector, and we have held private discussions with Professor Williams to help us to provide training for public servants, perhaps on the university's programme so that we could increase job proficiency. This contribution by Ambassador Ayre will assist in this regard,” he said.

He pointed out that his government is hoping that the programme can commence soon and fully institutionalized in an effort to increase productivity within the public sector. He said that this is his government's response to calls for retrenchment in the public service.

“We do not believe that retrenchment is a solution. I believe increasing productivity is a solution. That is why we have asked the university to partner with our adminis-

tration, to continue to develop our public servants and to provide training for the public and private sectors as we seek to increase national productivity.”

The country's leader concluded his remarks by calling on the nation's people to come together in support of the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus, which he said has emerged as the most significant insti-

tution that has been established by any administration in Antigua and Barbuda.

“UWI at the end of the day will be the fulcrum of our development, the fulcrum of our advancement. It is important for all Antiguan and Barbudans to buy into the vision of UWI Five Islands and continue to support its development by making significant contributions or even modest ones,” he said.

Clouds of Glory Ministries
Presents
A night of Praise and Worship

Under the Theme
“Every Praise Belongs to the Lord”
Sunday 9th April 2023
6:30 p.m.
Special Guest Artist: La Twain



Location: Clouds of Glory Church, Golden Grove

Proceeds in aid of Musical Equipment
Tickets: \$15.00 Adults
Children: \$10.00
Refreshments will be on Sale.

God is looking for true worshippers, those who will worship him in spirit and truth, John:4:23mm

<p>Thu 23 Day</p> <p>82° </p> <p>A few passing clouds, otherwise generally sunny. High 82F. Winds NE at 10 to 20 mph.</p> <p>Humidity 67% UV Index Extreme</p> <p>Sunrise 6:09 am Sunset 6:18 pm</p>	<p>Thu 23 Night</p> <p>73° </p> <p>A mostly clear sky. Low 73F. Winds NE at 10 to 15 mph.</p> <p>Humidity 80% UV Index 0 of 10</p> <p>Moonrise 7:30 am Moonset 8:21 pm</p> <p>● Waxing Crescent</p>
---	--

Senator Shoul dismantles UPP's cost-of-living arguments

Government Senator Philip Shoul has exposed the claims made by the UPP's senators in the Upper House about the cost-of-living in the country as being unrealistic and which amount to nothing more than 'empty promises'.

Speaking in the Senate on the 2023 National Budget debate, Sen. Shoul noted that there seemed to have been a theme running through the presentation by the opposition senators, related to the cost-of-living and suggesting that this was the government's fault.

However, in a deliberate and painstaking presentation, Shoul produced data which showed clearly, that the rise in the cost of living had nothing to do with the government of Antigua and Barbuda and in fact, it was the result of inflation internationally, that is currently affecting major economies such as the United States and Europe.

To support his presentation, he produced the figures comparing the cost of fuel (gasoline and diesel) in Antigua and Barbuda compared with the other neighbouring islands.

"I heard Sen. Nicholas talking about lowering fuel prices because they thrive on the suffering of the peo-



Senator Philip Shoul ple of Antigua and Barbuda.

"All their presentations so far, focused on the 'suffering' of the people of the country.

"I just want people to understand two things; one is that the price of oil on the world market (Tuesday's price: US\$75.00 per barrel) is not cheap as has been claimed and secondly, it has been at that price for a long time.

"Additionally, if the government was to purchase this 'cheap' oil, as was suggested by an opposition senator, where will we store it?" he asked.

He went on to present the price of fuel across the OECS as produced by the Eastern Caribbean Curren-

cont'd on pg 5

ECCU FUEL PRICES

IN FEBRUARY 2023, CONSUMERS IN THE ECCU PAID AN AVERAGE OF EC\$15.51 PER GALLON OF GASOLINE

Average Gasoline Prices by Country in February 2023

Anguilla	15.79
Antigua and Barbuda	13.99
Commonwealth of Dominica	14.96
Grenada	15.31
Montserrat	17.66
Saint Christopher (St Kitts) and Nevis	14.29
Saint Lucia	17.00
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	15.06

IN FEBRUARY 2023, CONSUMERS IN THE ECCU PAID AN AVERAGE OF EC\$16.27 PER GALLON OF DIESEL

Average Diesel Prices by Country in February 2023

Anguilla	16.73
Antigua and Barbuda	14.25
Commonwealth of Dominica	13.84
Grenada	16.27
Montserrat	15.79
Saint Christopher (St Kitts) and Nevis	19.89
Saint Lucia	17.00
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	16.37

THE PRICE OF GASOLINE IN THE ECCU PEAKED AT EC\$15.51 PER GALLON IN FEBRUARY 2023

Average Gasoline Prices in the ECCU in 2022 and 2023

Month	2022	2023
Jan.	14.51	15.48
Feb.	15.39	15.51

THE PRICE OF DIESEL IN THE ECCU PEAKED AT EC\$16.59 PER GALLON IN JANUARY 2023

Average Diesel Prices in the ECCU in 2022 and 2023

Month	2022	2023
Jan.	13.27	16.59
Feb.	14.20	16.27

cont'd from pg 4
cy Union.

Anguilla:	Gasoline	\$15.79	Diesel	\$16.73
Antigua and Barbuda:	Gasoline	\$13.99	Diesel	\$14.25
Dominica:	Gasoline	\$14.96	Diesel	\$13.84
Grenada:	Gasoline	\$15.31	Diesel	\$16.27
Montserrat:	Gasoline	\$17.66	Diesel	\$15.79
St Kitts-Nevis:	Gasoline	\$14.29	Diesel	\$19.89
St. Lucia	Gasoline	\$17.00	Diesel	\$17.00
St Vincent and the Grenadines	Gasoline	\$15.06	Diesel	\$16.37

Senator Shoul also noted that not only are fuel prices in Antigua and Barbuda cheaper than the neighbouring islands, but the government also subsidises the prices for bus drivers, fishermen and taxis.

Speaking about other prices, he explained that chicken, for example, has been higher in both the US and Brazil where most of the supplies originate. He noted that the prices for all the factors of production have increased, and where there may be a price drop, the suppliers have deliberately reduced production.

He further explained that the majority of these items are already zero-rated, meaning that they attract no taxes, so removing the taxes would not help. He also revealed that the Antigua and Barbuda 'basket of items' that are zero-rated or where the taxes are reduced amount to a whopping 189 items.

ECCU FUEL PRICES

NOTES TO CHARTS

Please note the following caveats to the ECCU fuel data:

- Anguilla** - The retail price for regular 87 octane gasoline and the retail price for ultra-low sulphur diesel are utilised.
- Antigua and Barbuda** - The retail price for US Waterborne unleaded 87 gasoline and the retail price for ultra-low sulphur diesel are utilised.
- Commonwealth of Dominica** - The retail price for unleaded gasoline and the retail price for high-sulphur diesel are utilised.
- Grenada** - The retail price for regular gasoline is utilised; information on the type of diesel sold is not available.
- Montserrat** - The retail price for regular gasoline and the retail price for diesel are utilised.
- Saint Christopher (St Kitts) and Nevis** - The retail price for unleaded gasoline and the retail price for diesel are utilised. There are two (2) data sources for diesel – Delta Petroleum St Kitts Ltd and Sol St Kitts & Nevis Ltd. Delta Petroleum St Kitts Ltd provides prices on ultra-low sulphur diesel from which an average is calculated. Sol St Kitts & Nevis Ltd. provides the price of ultra-low sulphur diesel as at the end of the month.
- Saint Lucia** - The retail price for regular unleaded gasoline and the retail price for low-sulphur diesel are utilised.
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines** - The retail price for gasoline and the average retail price for high- and low-sulphur diesel are utilised.

General: When there is more than one price change provided for a specific month, the average of the said prices is utilised.

ECCU FUEL PRICES

Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) is better known as cooking gas.

IN FEBRUARY 2023, THE AVERAGE PRICE OF A 20- POUND CYLINDER OF LPG IN THE ECCU WAS EC\$39.35

Average Prices of 20-pound LPG Cylinder by Country in February 2023

Anguilla	58.00
Antigua and Barbuda	32.00
Commonwealth of Dominica	34.06
Grenada	40.00
Montserrat	38.56
Saint Christopher (St Kitts) and Nevis	30.00
Saint Lucia	43.27
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	38.88

IN FEBRUARY 2023, THE AVERAGE PRICE OF A 100-POUND CYLINDER OF LPG IN THE ECCU WAS EC\$213.35

Average Prices of 100-pound LPG Cylinder by Country in February 2023

Anguilla	242.27
Antigua and Barbuda	155.00
Commonwealth of Dominica	160.31
Grenada	291.20
Montserrat	192.50
Saint Christopher (St Kitts) and Nevis	140.00
Saint Lucia	336.13
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	189.42

THE PRICE OF THE 20-POUND CYLINDER OF LPG IN THE ECCU PEAKED AT EC\$39.35 IN FEBRUARY 2023

Average Prices of the 20-pound Cylinder of LPG in the ECCU in 2022 and 2023

Month	2022	2023
Jan.	35.87	39.01
Feb.	36.96	39.35

THE PRICE OF THE 100-POUND CYLINDER OF LPG IN THE ECCU PEAKED AT EC\$213.35 IN FEBRUARY 2023

Average Prices of the 100-pound Cylinder of LPG in the ECCU in 2022 and 2023

Month	2022	2023
Jan.	187.99	204.47
Feb.	194.53	213.35

Compiled by the Research, Statistics and Data Analytics Department of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank

BAICO/CLICO matter is now before the CCJ

The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) is hearing the case brought against the government and Trinidad and Tobago for its failure to properly compensate policy holders of BAICO/CLICO from the Eastern Caribbean, including Antigua and Barbuda.

The case management aspect opened on Wednesday, as the CCJ seeks to determine whether T&T failed to promote the interests of consumers in the Caribbean community, by not providing adequate and effective redress following the collapse of CL Financial. President of the British American Insurance Co. Ltd and Colonial Life Insurance Co. Ltd Policyholders Group (Bacol), Dr Patrick Antoine says the wait for the start of the case is finally over.

The legal action filed by Bacol represents policyholders of British American Insurance from Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

“We have a right as consumers, to be treated equitably and to be given the same access as T&T customers. The avenues must in fact be adequate and they must be effective, and we argued that we were not given the avenues of access



when there was the meltdown that were adequate or effective,” Antoine said.

Bacol represents 2,000 policyholders with investments worth nearly EC\$800 million (US\$296 million).

“We have the opportunity to air the first case before the court, and that has not been done in any case of this nature in the Caribbean at all. We are happy that the whole case is going to have a chance to be heard by the court, and so we are equally confident as we were before. This is because the grounds are all tied one to the other: removal of restrictions, imposition of the restrictions and of course the grounds that are different in all of this, is the one which talks about protecting consumer

rights. The consumer rights we are talking about are the rights for us to essentially have adequate and effective redress in instances such as the ones that we are discussing,” Antoine said.

Antoine said the matter was filed a little shy of two years ago and has the possibility of being determined by the first quarter of next year.

“There are several things that we are looking at. History must never record that we did not try to fight for our rights as we view them in the Treaty of Chaguaramas. History must never record the people of the Eastern Caribbean in that way, and indeed it shall not,” he said.

On March 2, the CCJ dismissed the majority of

the claims brought by Bacol who alleged that T&T had breached various articles of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas in the aftermath of the collapse of CL Financial.

Bacol argued that the measures taken by the Government of T&T in its intervention in and assistance to CL Financial and its subsidiaries, were discriminatory and breached Articles 7, 36, 37 and 38 of the Revised Treaty.

The claimants alleged that the bailout measures were taken to rescue CL Financial and all subsidiaries registered in T&T. But this same protection was not offered to them as policyholders of British American Insurance Company Limited.

Senator Nathaniel-Johnson wants more men pursuing higher education

Independent Senator Kiz Nathaniel-Johnson used her maiden presentation in the Upper House of Parliament yesterday, to appeal to men to balance the men to women ratio in the area of higher education.

Nathaniel-Johnson, who was appointed by Governor General Sir Rodney Williams in January, to serve in the Senate of Antigua and Barbuda, was debating the Appropriations Bill, 2023.

Describing herself as a proponent of education, Senator Nathaniel-Johnson applauded the government for the priority it places on education and for its efforts that resulted in the establishment of the 4th landed campus of the University of the West Indies at Five Islands.

She stated that while educational opportunities are greater for Antiguan and Barbudans, along gender

lines, statistics from The University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus have revealed that men continue to lag behind women in pursuing higher learning.

Senator Kiz Nathaniel-Johnson has appealed for men to focus on closing the gap.

“In October 2021, 81% of the females that graduated were from The UWI Five islands Campus, while it was a mere 19% [of men]. If we fast forward to October 2022, the numbers are showing a similar trend. It was 80% of females who graduated, while a mere 20% of males graduated,” the independent senator revealed.

She added that the similarity is also evident with the current enrollment at UWI FIC, where 75% of females make up the student population, while 25% are males.

“I implore the males within our

society to continue to pursue higher-quality education,” Senator Kiz Nathaniel-Johnson added.

The independent senator also credited the government for working to develop technical/vocational education in Antigua and Barbuda.

“I also welcome the construction of the Harrison Centre, where people will have an opportunity to develop their technical skills.

“If you’re not so much on the academic side of life and that is okay and you’ve been blessed with the gift of your hands, you will now have an opportunity to further yourself in the technical area.

“I am happy for the people of Antigua and Barbuda in this regard. Education has no colour, no race, no creed or political persuasion. Education is the great equalizer!” Senator Kiz Nathaniel-Johnson concluded.

NODS to host tsunami disaster drill today

The National Office of Disaster Preparedness will stage a tsunami disaster exercise today to test the residents’ state of preparedness and evacuation plans, should such an event affect the country.

NODS Public Relations Officer, Midcie Francis, said the exercise is a regional drill that is held annually and coordinated by the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA).

She stated that more than thirty private businesses, government departments and schools have agreed to participate in the evacuation exercise. The exercise will



start at approximately 10:30 a.m., with participants receiving an alert from the CAP system downloaded on their phones, or mobile de-

vices.

Francis explained that CAP – Common Alert Protocol – will alert the participants by a sound, indicat-

ing that there is an extreme situation on hand. “There are several sounds from the CAP system, but the one for

cont’d on pg 8

Judge begins hearing in case where prisoner on remand sues Police Commissioner

The case where an inmate on remand in His Majesty's Prison (HMP) is suing the Commissioner of Police and others, opened before Justice Ann-Marie Smith in the High Court on Wednesday.

The Acting Director of Public Prosecution, Shannon Jones-Gittens, represented the parties – the Attorney General, the Commissioner of Police and the Prisons Superintendent - in the matter. Early in the hearing, the Acting DPP filed two affidavits in reply to the submission from attorney, Wendell Alexander (formerly Wendell Robinson). The case was adjourned until the afternoon session, to allow the defense attorney time to consider the affidavits.

The Acting DPP argued that certain aspects and



framework of the Criminal Prosecution Services Act are unconstitutional, and the affidavits of Inspector Dane Bontiff and Curtis Cornelius both admitted that there was no written authorization from the DPP, before the criminal charges were instituted against the prisoner.

Alexander argued, that given the admissions from

the two affidavits, the charge filed is a nullity, and his client is unlawfully remanded. He supported his argument with case law.

Jones-Gittens also argued with case law, seeking to show that portions of the Act are unconstitutional.

The court ordered the filing of submissions by both sides and will rule by April

17th or earlier.

Meanwhile, the prisoner who has been on remand since October last year, was ordered back to HMP. His attorney said he plans to file another affidavit seeking his release on bail, as soon as possible. The prisoner cannot be named based on the nature of the crime with which he is charged.

cont'd from pg 7

tsunami is an extreme sound notifying the participants of what is expected under the circumstances, and what they should do," she further explained.

A number of evacuation centres have been identified, where people are expected to gather for the duration of the exercise. These include the St. John's Cathedral, the Antigua Recreation Grounds, YASCO, the Botanical Gardens, Scotts Hill, and the grounds of the Parliament Building.

At least one of the major commercial banks in the country – ACB Caribbean – is among participating entities listed to take part. After the alert has

been sent out, all entities, government, private sector, and schools are expected to stop what they are doing and to immediately evacuate to the designated centres.

Francis disclosed that both the police and the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will assist organisers by sounding their sirens, to make it easier for evacuees to congregate at the centres.

She further explained that while the CAP alert has a system to interrupt radio and television broadcasts, this aspect of the alert will not be activated today.

The NODS PRO added that fol-

lowing the exercise there will be an 'after-action' review of the event to determine areas of weaknesses and strengths.

This will include reports from the district disaster committee lead persons who will interact directly with participants.

Representatives from the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda, The Fire Department, the Antigua and Barbuda Defense Force and the Red Cross will also participate, as they too will assist with the exercise. Additionally, there will be a more in-depth review of the exercise involving all stakeholders next week.

Italy to help NPA with technical advice and training

The management of the heritage and environmental assets within Antigua and Barbuda’s national parks, continue to win the admiration of friendly governments and strategic partners.

The Italian government is showing keen interest in connecting the National Parks Authority with heritage professionals in Italy for technical advice and capacity building.

In this connection, Italy’s Special Envoy for the Caribbean, Ambassador Gianni Piccato, recently returned to the National Parks after his initial visit in November 2022 in an effort to connect the NPA with heritage professionals in Italy, for technical advice and capacity building.

During his visit he met with Parks Commissioner Ann Marie Martin along with the Manager of the Heritage Department, Dr. Christopher Waters



From left: Manager of the NPA’s Heritage Department Dr. Christopher Waters, Personal Assistant to Honorary Italian Consul, Ms. Camilla Holme, Parks Commissioner Ann Marie Martin, Italy’s Special Envoy for the Caribbean Ambassador Gianni Piccato and Heritage Resources Officer with the National Park, Ms. Desley Gardner.

es Officer, Desley Gardner.

One of the major opportunities being pursued is developing relationships with experts at the UNESCO World Heritage sites in Venice and Pompeii, in areas like sensitive Climate Change mitigation and creative application of renewable energy.

“Threats from Climate

Change, like rising sea levels, are of a major concern, and learning from other heritage sites in how they are preparing for the same issues while maintaining their UNESCO inscription will go a long way to securing ours for the future,” noted Dr. Waters.

Park officials also got the opportunity to meet with Dr. Anna Paolini, the newly appointed Director of the UNESCO Office of the Caribbean

in Kingston, Jamaica.

She visited the NPA as part of her tour of Antigua and Barbuda, to help identify the potential benefits her new position would be able to bring the National Parks in the future.

During her first visit, she experienced Antigua and Barbuda’s UNESCO World Heritage Site and was shown the stewardship of the site, and the wider Nelson’s Dockyard National Park (NDNP), under the management of the NPA.

She was impressed by the ability of the NPA to manage the Park’s diverse stakeholders to create a functioning, living and economically sustainable space while preserving the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site.

One of the key take-aways was that the NPA and our World Heritage Site have a lot to offer the region in terms of heritage management practices, and opportunities.



Director of the UNESCO Office of the Caribbean Dr. Anna Paolini (second from left) is seen here with (from l-r) Manager of the NPA’s Heritage Department Dr. Christopher Waters, Heritage Resources Officer Ms. Desley Gardner and Antigua and Barbuda’s UNESCO Representative Dr. Reginald Murphy.

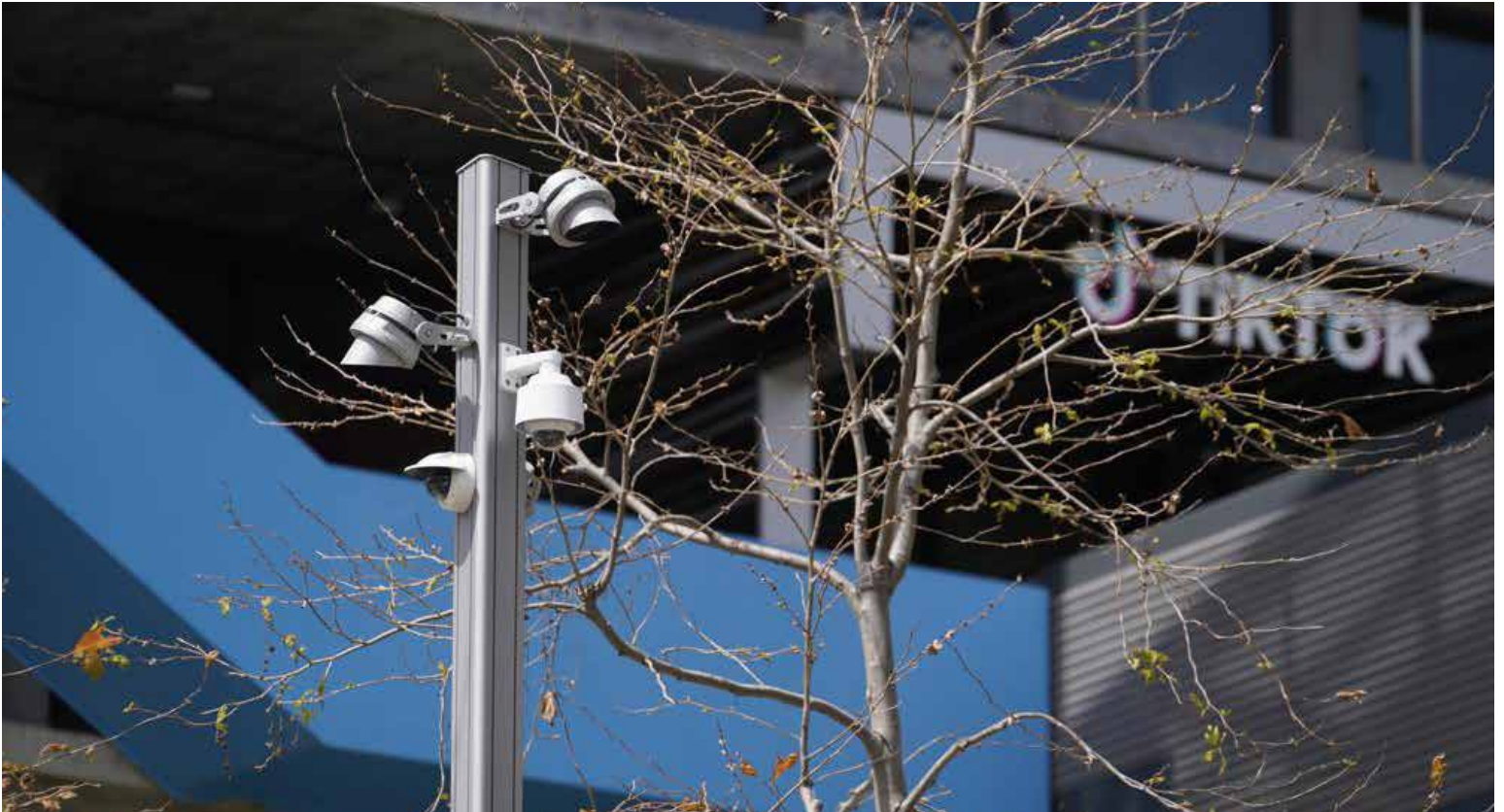


Members of the National Parks’ Heritage team in discussion with UNESCO officials. (Photos courtesy National Parks Authority)

Technology



Why TikTok's security risks keep raising fears



Security cameras are seen at the TikTok Inc. building in Culver City, Calif., Friday, March 17, 2023. The battle between the U.S. and China over TikTok comes to a head on Thursday when the social media platform's CEO testifies before Congressional lawmakers. (AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes, File)

By Kelvin Chan and Haleluya Hadero

The battle between the U.S. and China over TikTok comes into full view on Thursday when the social media platform's CEO testifies before Congressional lawmakers.

Shou Zi Chew's hearing is happening at what he's called a "pivotal moment" for the hugely popular short video sharing app. TikTok is owned by parent company ByteDance, which has offices in Beijing. The platform has 150 million American users but it's been dogged by persistent claims

that it threatens national security and user privacy, or could be used to promote pro-Beijing propaganda and misinformation.

Chew will attempt to persuade lawmakers not to pursue a ban on the app or force its sale to new owners.

So are the data security risks real? And should users be worried that the TikTok app will be wiped off their phones?

Here's what to know:

WHAT ARE THE CONCERNS ABOUT TIKTOK?

Both the FBI and officials at the Federal Communications Commission have

warned that ByteDance could share TikTok user data — such as browsing history, location and biometric identifiers — with China's authoritarian government.

Officials fear that TikTok, which like many other social media platforms collects vast amounts of data on its users, would be forced to give it to Beijing under a 2017 law that compels companies to turn over any personal data relevant to China's national security.

Concerns around TikTok were heightened in December when ByteDance

said it fired four employees who accessed data on journalists from BuzzFeed News and The Financial Times while attempting to track down the source of a leaked report about the company.

HOW IS THE U.S. RESPONDING?

The Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S. — known as CFIUS and part of the Treasury Department — is carrying out a review, and has reportedly threatened a U.S. ban on the app unless its Chinese owners divest their stake. China's Foreign Ministry in

cont'd on pg 11

cont'd from pg 10

turn accused the United States itself of spreading disinformation about TikTok's potential security risks.

White House officials have said there are "legitimate national security concerns with respect to data integrity."

Some U.S. senators urged CFIUS last year to quickly wrap up its investigation and "impose strict structural restrictions" between TikTok's American operations and ByteDance, including potentially separating the companies.

At the same time, lawmakers have introduced measures that would expand the Biden administration's authority to enact a national ban on TikTok. The White House has already backed a Senate proposal that has bipartisan support.

HOW HAS TIKTOK ALREADY BEEN RESTRICTED?

Authorities in North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific have banned the TikTok app, mostly on government-issued phones or devices used for official business, citing cybersecurity concerns. Last week Britain imposed a government phone ban while New Zealand restricted lawmakers and other workers in its Parliament from having it on their phones.

The European Union's three main institutions, the executive Commission, Parliament and Council, have ordered staffers to remove it from their work phones. So has Denmark's defense ministry.

The Canadian government said its ban includes blocking civil servants from downloading the app in the future. Norway and Netherlands warned this week against installing TikTok on government devices.

The White House ordered U.S. federal agencies to delete TikTok from all government-issued mobile devices. Congress, the U.S. armed forces and more than half of U.S. states had

already banned the app.

WHAT DOES TIKTOK SAY?

In a TikTok video this week, Chew appealed against a ban, saying it could take the app away from 150 million American users.

In his testimony, he plans to outline how the company's data protection and security efforts go "above and beyond" anything that its social media and online entertainment rivals do.

Under a \$1.5 billion project dubbed Project Texas that's underway, data from U.S. users is being routed through servers controlled by Oracle, the Silicon Valley company it partnered with in an effort to avoid a nationwide ban.

Older U.S. user data stored on non-Oracle servers will be deleted this year. Under this arrangement, there's no way for Beijing to access the data, Chew said in prepared remarks released ahead of the hearing.

TikTok has also sought to portray ByteDance as a global company, not a Chinese one. Executives have been pointing out that ByteDance's ownership consists of 60% big global investors, 20% employees and 20% Chinese entrepreneurs who founded the company. TikTok itself is headquartered in Singapore.

ARE THE SECURITY RISKS LEGITIMATE?

It depends on who you ask.

Some tech privacy advocates say while the potential abuse of privacy by the Chinese government is concerning, other tech companies have data-harvesting business practices that also exploit user information.

"If policy makers want to protect Americans from surveillance, they should advocate for a basic privacy law that bans all companies from collecting so much sensitive data about us in the first place, rather than engaging in what amounts to xenophobic showboating that does exactly nothing to protect anyone," said Evan Greer, di-

rector of the nonprofit advocacy group Fight for the Future.

Karim Farhat, a researcher with the Internet Governance Project at Georgia Tech, said a TikTok sale would be "completely irrelevant to any of the alleged 'national security' threats" and go against "every free market principle and norm" of the state department's internet freedom principles.

Others say there is legitimate reason for concern.

People who use TikTok might think they're not doing anything that would be of interest to a foreign government, but that's not always the case, said Anton Dahbura, executive director of the Johns Hopkins University Information Security Institute. Important information about the United States is not strictly limited to nuclear power plants or military facilities; it extends to other sectors, such as food processing, the finance industry and universities, Dahbura said.

IS THERE PRECEDENCE FOR BANNING TECH COMPANIES?

The U.S. has banned the communications equipment sold by Chinese companies Huawei and ZTE, citing national security risks. But banning the sale of items is easier than banning a free app.

Such a move might also wind up in courts on grounds that it could violate the First Amendment, as some civil liberties groups have argued.

Another possibility, albeit remote, is forcing a sale. That's what happened in 2020 when Beijing Kunlun, a Chinese mobile video game company, agreed to sell gay dating app Grindr after an order from CFIUS.

Beijing Kunlun said it signed a "national security agreement" with CFIUS to sell Grindr to San Vicente Acquisition for \$608.5 million, promising not to send sensitive user data to China, cease its operations there and maintain its headquarters in the U.S.

Holy month of Ramadan begins for Muslims across the world

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The Muslim holy month of Ramadan began at sundown on Wednesday, as the faithful prepared for a month of dawn-to-dusk fasting intended to bring them closer to God and to remind them of the suffering of those less fortunate.

For the next 30 days, Muslims will refrain from eating or drinking anything — even the tiniest sip of water — from sunrise to sunset. Many will strictly observe prayers, read the Quran and donate to charity as they seek to draw closer to God. Family and friends will gather for joyful nightly feasts.

This year many will struggle to afford holiday treats amid soaring prices fueled in part by the war in Ukraine. Iran, Egypt and Lebanon are grappling with economic crises that have weakened their local currencies, making things even more expensive.

The holy month will also be shadowed by the suffering in Turkey and Syria, where an earthquake last month killed more than 52,000 people, and in conflict zones across the Muslim world, though there have been some encouraging signs of possible reconciliation.

“We used to look forward to Ramadan as the most beautiful month of every year,” said 19-year-old Rama Jamal, recalling how her family would decorate the house and sit together reading the Quran.

Now she lives alone in the war-ravaged northern Idlib province of Syria. After surviving more than a decade of war, her parents and brother were killed in the earthquake.

“Now I’m by myself, and there’s no mood of Ramadan, there’s no joy,” Jamal said. “I’m missing my family all



A worker cleans an area in the historical Sunehri mosque, ahead of the upcoming Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, in Peshawar, Pakistan, Wednesday, March 22, 2023. Muslims across the world will be observing the Ramadan, when they refrain from eating, drinking and smoking from dawn to dusk. Ramadan is expected to officially begin Thursday or Friday in Pakistan, though the timing depends on the alignment of the moon. (AP Photo/Muhammad Sajjad)

the time, every hour.”

In the impoverished Gaza Strip, which has been under an Israeli blockade since the militant group Hamas seized power there in 2007, residents struggling to cope with higher prices also fear another war amid months of soaring Israeli-Palestinian violence.

“The prices of many staples have increased crazily,” said Mohammed Forra, a grocery store owner in the Gaza City. He said the price of cooking spices has doubled since last year.

More than 1.8 billion Muslims, who account for around a quarter of the world’s population, are expected to observe Ramadan. Islam follows a lunar calendar, so the month begins a week and a half earlier each year, cycling through the seasons, including the long days of hot summers.

The start of the month depends on the sighting of the crescent moon by local religious authorities and astron-

omers, and can sometimes vary from country to country. But this year there was broad agreement that it began Wednesday evening, with Thursday declared as the first day of fasting.

In Indonesia, home to the world’s largest Muslim population, worshippers flooded mosques for evening prayers after authorities declared that several Islamic astronomy observer teams had sighted the crescent moon in different regions. Muslim authorities in Saudi Arabia and several other Middle Eastern countries have also announced that Ramadan will begin Wednesday night.

Muslims believe God began revealing the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad during Ramadan more than 1,400 years ago.

The fast is one of the five pillars of Islam and is required for all Muslims, though exceptions are made for

cont’d on pg 13

Rapper Tekashi 6ix9ine injured in assault at Florida gym

LAKE WORTH, Fla. (AP) — Rapper Tekashi 6ix9ine, whose testimony against his own gang helped convict two high-ranking members, was assaulted by several people at a gym in Florida, officials said Wednesday.

An “altercation between several individuals” brought Palm Beach County sheriff’s deputies to an LA Fitness outlet in Lake Worth on Tuesday night, the sheriff’s office said in a social media post.

The assault left the rapper, whose real name is Daniel Hernandez, with several injuries. He was taken to a hospital but his injuries were not considered life-threatening, officials



Rapper Daniel Hernandez, known as Tekashi 6ix9ine, performs during the Philipp Plein Women’s 2019 Spring-Summer Collection, unveiled during Fashion Week in Milan, Italy, Sept. 21, 2018. Palm Beach County, Fla., Sheriff’s investigators said an altercation occurred Tuesday night, March 21, 2023, between Hernandez and several people. Hernandez’s injuries were not considered life-threatening. (AP Photo/Luca Bruno, File)

said.

A motive for the assault, including whether it was connected to his coopera-

tion with prosecutors, was unclear. No arrests have been made, and investigators have asked anyone with

information to contact them.

The rapper’s attorney, Lance Lazzaro, did not respond to an email from The Associated Press. But he told other news outlets that Hernandez was attacked by three or four people in the gym’s sauna.

Tekashi 6ix9ine, known for his rainbow-colored hair and “69” tattoo on his forehead, previously faced decades in prison as part of a racketeering case in which he was accused of using a violent gang as a “personal hit squad.”

Instead, his sentence was reduced to about two years after his testimony against the Nine Trey Gangsta Bloods, earning him a label as a “snitch.”

cont’d from pg 12

young children and the sick, as well as women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or menstruating. Travelers are also exempt, including athletes attending tournaments away from home.

Those observing the fast must refrain from eating, drinking, smoking and sexual intercourse from sunrise to sunset. They are also encouraged to refrain from cursing, fighting, gossip or road rage throughout the holy month.

Many Muslims, particularly those who live in the U.S. and Europe, are accepting and welcoming of others around them who are not observing Ramadan. They also are not expecting shorter work hours, as is the case in the public sector across much of the Arab world during Ramadan.

Eating or drinking in public during the day is generally frowned upon in

Muslim-majority countries. In some, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — home to a large expatriate population in Dubai and Abu Dhabi — it can be punished by fines or imprisonment.

The normal bustle of cities dies down by late afternoon, with streets emptying and shops closing early. Muslims traditionally break the fast at sunset as the Prophet Muhammad was said to have done, with a sip of water and a few dates. Some can be seen happily indulging in a long-awaited cigarette.

After sunset prayers, family and friends gather for “iftars” — feasts with local holiday treats like candies and nuts. Mosques and charities set up outdoor banquets where the poor can eat for free each night of Ramadan. Muslims then wake up early for

“suhoor,” a small meal eaten just before dawn.

Five-star hotels, particularly in wealthy Arab Gulf countries, host lavish iftars, and cable networks unveil big-budget soap operas, raking in millions in advertising. Both practices have been criticized by conservatives who fear Ramadan is becoming too commercial.

Ramadan culminates in Laylat al-Qadr, or the Night of Destiny, during the last 10 nights of the month, when Muslims engage in intense late night worship. Muslims believe this was the night God sent the Angel Gabriel to the prophet to reveal the first verses of the Quran.

After the last day of fasting, Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr, a festive three-day holiday in which children are often given new clothes and gifts.

Regional News



Three CARICOM states join Mexico in lawsuit against US gun manufacturer

CMC - The Bahamas government says it has joined a brief filed by Mexico in the United States Court of Appeal in the First Circuit, in support of a US\$10 billion suit to hold US gun manufacturers liable for the harm caused by their products.

The Bahamas has been joined by Antigua and Barbuda, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the Latin American and Caribbean Network for Human Security (SEHLAC), a net-

work of non-government organisations and affiliated professionals specialising in international humanitarian law and seeking disarmament in the Latin American and the Caribbean region.

The named defendants in the US\$10 billion suit include seven major gun manufacturers and one gun wholesaler and distributor.

“The guns used in the commission of violent crimes in The Bahamas are not manufactured here, but instead, are manufactured

abroad and illegally trafficked across our borders,” according to a statement issued by the Office of the Prime Minister announcing Nassau’s decision to join the legal battle.

“A critical element of the government’s effort to reduce violent crime in our country is cracking down on the proliferation of firearms, with particular focus on strengthening borders and entry points and on interrupting networks of illegal smugglers.

“Today, as part of this

broader effort to reduce the impact of gun violence in The Bahamas, our country joined an amicus curiae (friend of the court) brief in the United States Court of Appeal in the First Circuit, in support of Mexico, who is appealing their case to hold US gun manufacturers liable for the harm caused by their products,” the statement added.

Earlier this month, Trinidad and Tobago’s Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley, addressing a political meeting of his ruling People’s National Movement (PNM), said that Mexico despite having lost an initial approach to US authorities “intends to continue fighting.

“Mexico has approached CARICOM asking us as independent sovereign states with the same problem to join the fight to test it in the courts of America to hold the manufacturers and distributors of handguns and assault weapons into our country, to hold them responsible for the mayhem that they have unleashed on our societies,” Rowley said, adding “we have to join that fight”.

Rowley said America had passed laws to prevent gun owners from being sued, adding those who are making those guns knowing where they are going and what they could do, *cont’d on pg 15*

DEWS

STEEL & PLYWOOD

SALE

SPECIAL OFFER!

\$3350.00

1/2 STEEL

3/8 STEEL

5/8 STEEL

20% OFF

3/4 FORM PLY

T1-11 5/8

T1-11 3/8

BEADED 3/8

DEWS
 dewspro

info@dewspro.com
 729-3397/ 729-1210

Guyana: 10 member team appointed to investigate BOSAI Mine accident

Loop – A formal investigation into the BOSAI Mine accident that claimed the life of employee Neprid Hercules will begin next Monday.

Guyana's Minister of Labour Joseph Hamilton appointed the 10-member investigative team on Monday.

The investigation is expected to last six weeks.

The Ministry of Labour notes that the investigation is in keeping with Section 72 (1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, Chapter 99:06 Laws of Guyana.

"The persons appointed are referred to as 'The court' and "shall hold the investigation in open court



Chairman of the accident investigation team, Charles Ceres.

in such a manner and under such conditions as the court may think most effectual for ascertaining the causes and circumstances of the accident", the ministry said.

Geotechnical engineer Charles Ceres is chairing the investigative team.

The remaining members of the committee are Emilia Maslen, Victor Fernandes, Jimmy Reece, Michael A Howard, Krishna Ramdas, Neza King, Darwin Bourne, Alyea Williams and Colis Primo.

Hercules and the CAT

D9T bulldozer he was operating were covered by a mound of earth on March 11 when a section of the East Montgomery Mine collapsed.

Hercules' body was found several days later by rescuers.

cont'd from pg 14

have been insulated from lawsuits.

"But recently a couple of people had sued the gun manufacturers in America and won. So the dam has cracked," he said, even as he acknowledged this was a difficult fight because one could buy guns all over America in most states.

"In other words, you could just go and buy a firearm like how you buy bread. And once that becomes so, we Trinidadians are all over the place, they (the gun will) come to us from Connecticut, Alabama, Miami, Texas, and Georgia and they end up in Trinidad and Tobago," Rowley said.

In the court brief, the countries claim that "unlawful trafficking of American firearms must be curtailed at its source: the US gun industry.

"The gun manufacturers and dis-

tributors from a single nation must not be permitted to hold hostage the law-abiding citizens of an entire region of the world', and notes that the governments of the participating countries 'have a solemn duty to protect the lives, health, and security of their citizens'.

The statement notes that the "brief argues that US gun industry practices, including the bulk sales of guns to dealers who are known to engage in practices correlated with illegal weapons smuggling, have caused significant harm to the countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

"The brief points to the increase in gun violence in The Bahamas, including collateral damage to unintended victims, including Bahamian children caught in the crossfire in re-

cent years."

Another example of harm cited in the brief includes the use of firearms by Haitian gangs in violent crimes and kidnapping, which has led many Haitian migrants to flee their country.

The brief argues that the US district court could order the defendants, the US gun manufacturers, "to reduce the violence committed abroad involving their products by adopting 'reasonable retail and manufacturing practices", including refraining from supplying the small number of dealers 'whose misconduct precipitates the vast majority of illegal firearms trafficking', committing to only work with dealers who take measures to ensure the guns are not sold to criminals, and making manufacturing changes that would reduce the harm caused by the guns.



Corruption contributing to illegal gun problem in Caribbean

By Melissa Wong

The issue of illegal guns entering borders of Caribbean countries and its related violence were among the topics discussed at the Regional Security System (RSS) Council of Ministers Meeting on Wednesday, where Member States were told that the issue of corruption must also be treated to deal with the problem of illegal firearms.

The high-level meeting took place in Grenada.

Executive Director –RSS, Commodore Errington Shurland, says while over the past year, the Region has been relatively quiet in terms of

Member States not being impacted by climatic events or severe weather systems, he says there has been a noticeable increase in gun violence which has had a deleterious effect on some Member States.

Commodore Shurland says this violence is taking a heavy toll on societies not only in respect of loss of life but also with injuries and psychological trauma.

In replying to this challenge, he posits that hard and soft responses must be applied through a whole-of-society approach.

Soft through constant positive messaging to

young people with the aid of social development programmes, that constantly target troubled youth and programmes that address issues related to recidivism.

He says the hard responses require the commitment to put in place the necessary infrastructure to secure borders and prevent guns from entering the space as well as treat the issues of corruption.

“I say corruption because I believe the only way these guns can get into our countries is through our borders and through individuals who facilitate such actions.”

Commodore Shurland

says the RSS looks forward to assisting Member States with diagnosing crime and security problems through the Regional Crime Observatory.

The RSS will continue to implement and assist with anti-corruption programmes and will continue to assist and enhance the border security framework through robust assessments and adjustments to the coordinated response model.

RSS Member States include Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Boy shoots two administrators at Denver high school

DENVER (AP) — A student shot and wounded two administrators at a Denver high school Wednesday morning, after a handgun was found during a daily search of the boy that was being conducted because of behavioral issues, authorities said.

The 17-year-old suspect remained at large. Denver school officials, facing criticism over lax security, said they were putting armed officers into every high school.

The shooting occurred at a school shaken by frequent lockdowns and violence, including the killing of a classmate that prompted East High School students to march on the Colorado Capitol earlier this month. Parents who converged on the 2,500-student campus on Wednesday faulted officials for not doing enough to protect their children.

“I am sick of it,” said Jesse Haase, who planned to talk with her daughter about taking her out of classes for the rest of the school year.

Police were searching for Austin Lyle for attempted homicide. The gun used in the shooting was not immediately recovered, Denver Police Chief Ron Thomas said.

Police issued an alert linking Lyle to a red 2005 Volvo X90 with Colorado plates and offered a reward



Denver Mayor Michael Hancock, center, walks across 17th Avenue to talk to parents as they wait for their children to be walked out of East High School after a school shooting Wednesday, March 22, 2023, in Denver. (AP Photo/David Zalubowski)

up to \$2,000 for information on the case.

The shooting happened just before 10 a.m. in an office area as the student was undergoing a search as part of a “safety plan” that required him to be patted down daily, officials said.

One of the wounded administrators remained in serious condition and the other was in good condition, said Heather Burke, a spokesperson for Denver Health hospital. Both victims are male.

Thomas said police know where Lyle lives and believed they would apprehend him.

“He obviously is armed and dangerous and willing to use the weapon, as we’ve

learned this morning,” Denver Mayor Michael Hancock warned as law enforcement searched.

Hundreds of students on March 3 skipped class and marched in support of stricter gun laws following the death of Luis Garcia, 16, who was shot while sitting in a car near the school.

There were no school resource officers on campus at the time of Wednesday’s shooting, Thomas said. But following the shooting, Denver Public Schools Superintendent Alex Marre-ro said two armed officers will be posted at East High School through the end of the school year.

In June 2020, amid a

summer of protests over racial injustice following the murder of George Floyd, Denver Public Schools became one of the districts around the US that decided to phase out its use of police officers in school buildings. That push was fueled by criticism that school resource officers disproportionately arrested Black students, sweeping them into the criminal justice system.

Gun violence at schools has become increasingly common in the U.S. with more than 1,300 shootings recorded between 2000 and June 2022, according to researchers from the Naval Postgraduate School and

cont’d on pg 18

International

AROUND THE WORLD



cont'd from pg 17

Center for Homeland Defense and Security. Those shootings killed 377 people and wounded 1,025, according to a database maintained by the researchers.

Students from East High School had been scheduled to testify Wednesday afternoon before the Colorado Legislature on gun safety bills.

“This is the reality of being young in America: sitting through a shooting and waiting for information just hours before you’re scheduled to testify in support of gun safety bills,” said Gracie Taub, a 16-year-old East High School sophomore and volunteer with Students Demand Action in Colorado.

“Our school experience

should not be completely shaped by gun violence,” she added.

Lyle had transferred to East High School after being disciplined and removed from a high school in nearby Aurora during last school year because of violations of school policies, Cherry Creek School District spokesperson Lauren Snell. She declined to specify the violations, citing student privacy.

Officials did not reveal why he was being searched daily.

Marrero said safety plans for students are enacted in response to “past educational and also behavioral experiences,” adding that it’s a common practice throughout Colorado’s pub-

lic schools.

But daily pat downs are rare, said Matthew McClain with the Colorado School Counselor Association, and Franci Crepeau-Hobson, a University of Colorado Denver professor specializing in school violence prevention.

“Clearly they were concerned,” said Crepeau-Hobson. “I can’t imagine they’d do that if there wasn’t a history of the kid carrying a weapon for whatever reason.”

School safety plans are often imposed after students exhibit threatening or suicidal behavior, said Christine Harms, director of the Colorado School Safety Resource Center. A team that can include counselors, administrators and police officers assesses the possible threat and develops a safety plan, which can include mental health support, more supervision and searches, she said.

East High School, not far from downtown near a busy street that cuts through the city, was placed on lockdown as police investigated the shooting.

Hundreds of parents lined up along a road near the school, with the scene sealed off by police.

Some parents and students vented frustration over violence at the school as they surrounded the police chief. Others argued about the causes of the violence.

Thomas listened quietly, nodding and promising

to engage with the school board.

At the edge of the crowd, a man said the city’s school board members should be recalled for getting rid of police in school, telling a police officer nearby “I just want you to be able to do your job.”

Another man shouted that it was a problem of “evil in the world” while a girl responded that the violence wouldn’t happen if guns weren’t so easily available.

Parent Haase said her daughter, a senior, texted while hiding in a classroom with the lights off during the lockdown. Haase said lockdowns have happened too frequently at the school this year and she was frustrated.

Denver Public School confirmed the victims were administrators.

Wednesday was also the second anniversary of 10 people being shot and killed at a supermarket in Boulder, Colorado.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said she wasn’t sure whether President Joe Biden had been briefed on the school shooting, but said, “Our hearts go out to the families of the two school administrators in Denver today, and to the entire school community.”

She repeated Biden’s called for stricter gun laws, including bans on assault-style weapons and high-capacity magazines, and for Congress to “do something” on gun control.

KINGDOM ALLIANCE

Crusade

UNDER THE THEME:
Kingdom People Stand Your Ground

Date: MARCH 26-31, 2023

6:30pm NIGHTLY

Location: Union Estate, Hatton
(West of Torturer's Gym)

THE CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY (COOKS HILL) IN CONJUNCTION WITH IRON SHARPENS IRON, KENTISH PENTECOSTAL CHURCH, FIRST CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE, WESLEYAN HOLINESS, GREENBAY MORAVIAN CHURCH WITH SEVERAL OF OUR INDEPENDENT CHURCHES WILL BE COMING TOGETHER FOR SIX NIGHTS OF REVIVAL.

North Korea fires cruise missiles as allies stage drills

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea launched cruise missiles toward the sea on Wednesday, South Korea's military said, three days after the North carried out what it called a simulated nuclear attack on South Korea to protest its military drills with the United States.

North Korea has stepped up its weapons testing activities, saying they are in response to the ongoing South Korean-U.S. military training that it sees as an invasion rehearsal. Analysts say North Korean leader Kim Jong Un likely intends to enlarge his arsenal to win greater outside concessions, while trying to boost an image of a strong leader amid domestic economic hardships.

The 11-day South Korean-U.S. drills are to end on Thursday. But North Korea is expected to continue its weapons tests as the United States reportedly plans to send an aircraft carrier in coming days for another round of joint drills with South Korea.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said it detected "several" cruise missile launches from the North's eastern coastal town of Hamhung. It said the missiles flew into the waters off the North's east coast and that South Korean and U.S. intelligence authorities were analyzing further details.

The launches are the North's sixth round of missile tests this month and the fourth since the U.S. and South Korean militaries early last week began large-scale military drills, which include field exercises and computer simulations. The field training is the largest of its kind since 2018.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff said the South Korean military will maintain a firm readiness and successfully complete the rest of the drills with the



U.S. and South Korean, top, army soldiers gather before a combined live fire exercise between South Korea and the United States at Rodriguez Live Fire Complex in Pocheon, South Korea, Wednesday, March 22, 2023. North Korea launched multiple cruise missiles toward the sea on Wednesday, South Korea's military said, three days after the North carried out what it called a simulated nuclear attack on South Korea. (AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon)

United States.

North Korea keeps a huge stockpile of ballistic missile systems whose tests are banned by multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions. Eleven rounds of U.N. sanctions imposed on North Korea since 2006 were approved because of North Korea's previous ballistic missile and nuclear test explosions.

Cruise missile tests by North Korea aren't prohibited by the U.N. council. But experts say they still pose a serious threat to its neighbors because they are designed to fly at a lower altitude to avoid radar detection. Experts say the main mission of North Korean cruise missiles include striking U.S. aircraft carriers or other big enemy ships in the event of conflict.

North Korea has called some of its cruise and ballistic missiles "strategic" weapons, a suggestion that it wants to arm them with nuclear warheads. Foreign experts debate whether the North has overcome the remaining techno-

logical hurdles to possess functioning nuclear missiles.

North Korea's state media didn't immediately confirm Wednesday's launches. But it carried a statement by senior Foreign Ministry official Jo Chol Su, which protested what it called recent U.S. diplomatic attempts at the U.N. Security Council to push with the North's denuclearization.

Cho said North Korea will view any outside bid to force it to surrender its nuclear weapons as "a declaration of war." He said North Korea will sternly deal with such an attempt in line with its escalatory nuclear doctrine.

After more than 70 missile tests last year — the largest number for a year — North Korea has extended its provocative run in weapons demonstrations in 2023, launching around 20 missiles in 10 separate events. The weapons that were tested this year included short-range nuclear-capable

cont'd on pg 20

Russia hits apartments and dorm, killing civilians in Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia stepped up its missile and drone attacks against Ukraine on Wednesday, killing students and other civilians, in a violent follow-up to dueling high-level diplomatic missions aimed at bringing peace after 13 months of war.

“Russia is shelling the city with bestial savagery,” President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote in a Telegram post accompanying video showing what he said was a Russian missile striking a nine-story apartment building on a busy road in the southeastern city of Zaporizhzhia. “Residential areas where ordinary people and children live are being fired at.”



A residential multi-story building is seen damaged after a Russian missile hit it in southeastern city of Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine, Wednesday, March 22, 2023. (AP Photo/Kateryna Klochko)

At least one person was killed in the attack shown in the Zaporizhzhia video, apparently recorded by closed circuit TV cameras. Elsewhere, Moscow’s forces launched exploding drones before dawn, killing at least

cont’d on pg 21

cont’d from pg 19

ballistic missiles capable of striking South Korea and intercontinental ballistic missiles designed to attack the mainland U.S.

On March 12, the day before the South Korea-U.S. drills began, North Korea test-fired two cruise missiles from a submarine. Last month, North Korea launched what it called four long-range cruise missiles that demonstrated potential to strike targets 2,000 kilometers (1,240 miles) away.

On Sunday, Kim supervised a test-firing of a short-range ballistic missile launched from what was possibly a silo dug into the ground. State media called it a simulated nuclear attack on unspecified South Korean targets that was meant to send a “stronger warning” to the United States and South Korea over their drills.

The North’s media said a mock nuclear warhead placed on the missile detonated 800 meters (2,600 feet) above water, an altitude that some experts say was aimed at maximizing damage.

It was the first time for North Korea to publicize such an altitude for detonating a nuclear weapon though it has previously claimed to have conducted simulated nuclear strikes on its rivals.

By disclosing such information, North Korea likely wanted to intimidate South Korea and the United States. After a test last week of the country’s longest-range Hwasong-17 ICBM, Kim told state media that the launch was meant to “strike fear into the enemies.”

The North’s testing spree indicates Kim is emboldened by his advancing

nuclear arsenal. Last year, North Korea legislated a law that authorizes the preemptive use of nuclear weapons.

South Korea and the United States have been responding by expanding their joint military exercises.

Seoul’s Defense Ministry said earlier Wednesday that South Korea and the U.S. are planning to conduct a live-fire exercise that would be “unprecedented” in scale in June.

As part of the ongoing joint drills, South Korean and U.S. troops on Wednesday staged live-fire training at a site near the land border with North Korea. Col. Brandon Anderson, deputy commanding officer of the 2nd Infantry Division, stressed that the drills were defensive in nature.

“We are (going to) continue to do it,” he said. “It is what we expect to do in conflict and to be good at it.”

cont'd from pg 20

eight people in or near a student dormitory near Kyiv.

Ukrainian media showed several angles of the missile raining down on an apartment building across the street from a shopping mall in Zaporizhzhia, producing a huge plume of gray and black smoke, with bits of concrete flying into the air as cars whizzed by. Videos showed the violent outcome of the attack: charred apartments, flames and smoke billowing out of several floors of the buildings, and piles of broken concrete and shards of glass on the ground. Two children were among the wounded, said Zaporizhzhia City Council Secretary Anatolii Kurtiev, adding that 25 people needed hospital treatment, with three in critical condition.

Zaporizhzhia city is about 100 kilometers (60 miles) from the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, Europe's largest which has come under threat during the war and has been shut down for months. The U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency reported the plant had suffered another loss of a backup external power source. Its six reactors still need power to cool nuclear fuel, and were relying on only a primary source Wednesday, the IAEA said.

Russia has denied targeting residential areas even though artillery and rocket strikes hit apartment buildings and civilian infrastructure daily. Russian officials have blamed Ukrainian air defenses for some of the deadliest strikes on apartments, saying the deployment of air defense systems in residential areas puts civilians at risk. Russia sometimes also claims Ukraine is hiding military equipment and personnel in civilian buildings.

The war, which Russia started Feb. 24, 2022, has evolved in two main directions: a front line mainly in eastern Ukraine, centered around the city of Bakhmut, and periodic Russian mis-

sile and drone strikes nationwide. In addition, periodic — although unconfirmed — Ukrainian sabotage attacks have been launched across the border into Russia. The front-line fighting largely stalemated over the winter, with expectations of major offensives by both sides expected in more favorable spring weather.

Earlier Wednesday, a drone attack damaged a high school and two dormitories in the city of Rzhyshev, south of the Ukrainian capital, officials said. It wasn't clear how many people were in the dormitories at the time. The body of a 40-year-old man was among those pulled from the rubble on one floor, according to regional police chief Andrii Nebytov, adding that more than 20 people were hospitalized. Video showed what appeared to be a bloodied sneaker and a green ball on the ground near a damaged building, whose top floor was ripped off at a corner.

The attacks occurred as dueling diplomatic missions were winding down. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida left Kyiv after meeting Zelenskyy to support Ukraine. Chinese leader Xi Jinping left Moscow after meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin about Beijing's peace proposal, which the West has rejected as a non-starter. No progress toward peace was reported.

U.S. National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson noted the violent turn of events.

"Just one day after Russia called for peace, Russia is attacking Ukrainian homes as part of its brutal war," she said in Washington. "What Russia is doing is horrific — and we are committed to continuing to help Ukraine defend itself against this Russian aggression."

The drone barrage and other Russian attacks on civilian infrastructure also drew a scathing response from Zelenskyy.

"Over 20 Iranian murderous

drones, plus missiles, numerous shelling occasions, and that's just in one last night of Russian terror," he tweeted in English. "Every time someone tries to hear the word 'peace' in Moscow, another order is given there for such criminal strikes."

Zaporizhzhia's regional administration said two missiles struck the apartment block, saying Russia's goal is "to scare the civilian population of the city of thousands."

"It's hell in Zaporizhzhia," Ukrainian lawmaker Oleksiy Goncharenko wrote on Telegram, adding: "There aren't any military facilities nearby."

Vladimir Rogov, an official with the Moscow-appointed regional administration for the Russian-occupied part of the Zaporizhzhia region, claimed, without offering evidence, that a Ukrainian air defense missile launched to intercept a Russian missile had hit the apartment complex.

In other attacks, Ukrainian air defenses downed 16 of the 21 drones that Russia launched, the Ukraine General Staff said. Eight were shot down near the capital, according to the city's military administration. Other drones struck west-central Khmelnytskyi province.

Also Wednesday, Zelenskyy made another in a series of battlefield visits, meeting with soldiers and officers in the eastern Donetsk region, stopping by a hospital to see wounded troops and giving state awards to the defenders of Bakhmut, a devastated city that has become a symbol of Ukraine's dogged resistance under a threat of Russian encirclement and for months has been the scene of the war's bloodiest fighting and longest battle. Zelenskyy's last known visit to the Bakhmut area was in December. On Wednesday, the Ukrainian president also visited Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, which his forces recaptured from the Russians last September.

Lewis expresses happiness with improve transportation for schools' volleyball championship

Coordinator Rosely Lewis said there was a major improvement in the transportation of teams in the recently concluded Inter-Schools' Volleyball Championship.

Lewis said the improved transportation, which is coordinated by Stanfield "Shipwreck" Joseph, resulted in games starting on time.

She also said while most of the girls who participated in the competition are relatively new players, the standard of play displayed in the competition among the boys, was of a high caliber.

"I must say for one of the first time, the transportation was awesome because we always had transportation issues in terms of Shipwreck having to pick up so many different teams and so on. So it was always a problem in terms of having games starting late, but this year, it was not like that at all," Lewis stated.

"In terms of the level of play on the female side, we did a beginners' league for the female teams because most of them are new players. But the guys, they were a little more advanced



The Island Academy 2023 School boys' volleyball champions

so they played like a regular league and the level of play for the boys was very high."

This year's inter-schools' hard court or indoor volleyball competition commenced on 23rd January at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex.

Twelve teams, divided into two zones, competed in the girls or female division, while nine teams contested the boys or male division.

It all climaxed on Monday, 13th March, with Island Academy capturing both girls and boys' titles.

The First Team of Island Academy claimed the girls' division title by beating the Antigua Girls High School 15-13, 15-11, 15-11 in the final, while the First Team of Island Academy also won the boys' division championship with an impressive 25-17, 25-15, 15-13 against Ottos Comprehensive School in the final.

Lewis said quite a bit of the players who participated in this year's schools' competition have been recruited by the clubs who are currently contesting the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association's (ABAVA) National

cont'd on pg 23



The Island Academy 2023 School girls' volleyball champions

ABABWF to host fundraising Fitness Jam and Expose

The Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Bodybuilding & Weightlifting Federation (ABABWF) will be hosting a Fitness Jam and Expose for everyone at the St Anthony's Secondary School on Saturday, 25th March.

According to Public Relations Officer, national Bikini Fitness athlete Melissa Seaforth, the event which will be held from 3 pm to 6 pm is being used as a fundraiser to acquire funds to assist the ABABWF in sending a team to participate in the Central American and Caribbean (CAC) Bodybuilding Championships in Aruba from 21st to 25th September.

However, Seaforth said the ABABWF is yet to determine whether the size of the contingent for Aruba will be larger or smaller than the 10-member national team which represented Antigua and Barbuda at last year's CAC Bodybuilding Championships in Barbados.

"We are having this event on the 25th of March and the proceeds are in aid

of team travel to the regional CAC championships this year that is going to be hosted in Aruba," Seaforth said.

"We are not yet sure of how many athletes we are going to be able to take to Aruba, of course all of that depends on successful fundraising and a successful national championship to see how much funds we can accumulate.

"But we are looking to send a large team to Aruba, similar to what we did last year when we were able to send a team of 10 athletes to the CAC in Barbados and we would like to be able to repeat that number again or possibly increase it."

Saturday's event will be showcasing fitness services and products which are available locally and four instructors will be conducting the fitness jam.

The instructors to facilitate the fitness jam will be Anewbian "Mofit" Anthony, Shannon Lawes, Monette Theodore and Tony "The Tiger" Jacobs.

Seaforth said Saturday's



Public Relations Officer of the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Bodybuilding & Weightlifting Federation, national Bikini Fitness athlete Melissa Seaforth. (File photo)

Fitness Jam and Expose is an event for the entire family and fitness enthusiasts.

"This event is actually something for the entire family, fitness enthusiasts and for persons who want to start keeping fit or just basically want to try something new," Seaforth said.

"This will not be focusing specifically on bodybuilding, but on the other part of what we do, which is fitness and overall cardiovascular health.

"We have the four in-

structors and they will each be doing 30 minute sessions. Each instructor will present their own style of workout, starting with the warm-ups, step in motion, the jumpy afro-beat style workout and socarobics.

"So basically we are going to start with the warm-ups and as each 30-minute session comes around, it is going to get more intense and we will have 10 minute breaks in between each session so people will get a chance to catch their breath and cool down, drink some water and go again."

Participants will pay a fee of \$25 and can register at the event. Adult persons who want to attend the event will be required to pay an entrance fee of \$20 dollars while children under 12 years old will have to pay \$10.

cont'd from pg 22

League.

"What I am finding now is that a lot of the clubs are actually asking about individual players to pull them in to play so we always feel like one or two or three persons being asked about, but this year people over there are asking me questions about almost everybody," Lewis stated.

"My programme is to feed the associa-

tion's clubs so you want them out there on display so the clubs can see them and say 'I see this person, they are not all wonderful right now, but training and so on can get them to where they are supposed to be.

"I think absolutely that is my goal at the end of the season to see how many of the young people are being asked about and stuff like that. So yes I think I succeeded in doing that."

Black Hawks duo leads Hurricanes' fightback against Volcanoes

An unbroken seventh wicket century stand between debutante Karima Gore and fellow Liberta Black Hawks team-mate Kofi James has allowed the Leeward Islands Hurricanes to stage an impressive fight-back against the Windward Islands Volcanoes in their fourth round Cricket West Indies (CWI) regional four-day championship match at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy Stadium in Tarouba, Trinidad, Wednesday.

Gore, making his debut in the regional four-day contest, hit an unbeaten 87 off 177 balls with 12 fours and a six while James is not out on 61 off 153 balls with three fours and one six as the Leeward Islands Hurricane reached 271 for six off 90 overs at the close



Leeward Islands Hurricanes' Assistant Coach and Team Manager Wilden 'Polo' Cornwall, center, is flanked by debutante Karima Gore, left, and pacer Javier Spencer at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy Stadium in Tarouba, Trinidad, 22nd March, 2023. (Photos courtesy LICB)

of the opening day.

The pair has so far added 150 runs for the seventh

wicket after coming together with the Hurricanes struggling on 121 for six

in the 41st over after winning the toss and electing
cont'd on pg 25

cont'd from pg 26

Just two of the 12 groups, both in League C, were decided by the end of last June's window. March's games should produce a grandstand finish, with much at stake for nearly all the teams in action.

The 17th edition of the Concacaf Gold Cup is scheduled to take place from 16th June to 16th July, 2023, and will include a 12-team Preliminary Round (Prelims) and a 16-team Group Stage. All followed by a single match direct elimination knockout stage.

The teams that will participate in the Prelims and Group Stage of the 2023 Gold Cup will be confirmed at the conclusion of the 2022/23 CNL Group Stage, as follows:

2023 Gold Cup Prelims: 12 teams
League A third place finishers (four teams)

League B second place finishers (four teams)

League C group winners (four teams)

Thus far, two nations, Saint Lucia and Puerto Rico, have secured a berth into the Prelims.

2023 Gold Cup Group Stage: 16 teams

League A group winners and second place finishers (eight teams)

League B group winners (four teams)

2023 Concacaf Gold Cup Prelims winners (three teams)

Guest nation and Asian Champi-

ons, Qatar

To date, three Concacaf nations, El Salvador, Jamaica, and Panama, have secured a berth in the Gold Cup Group Stage. The Concacaf Nations League (CNL) was introduced by the Confederation in 2018 and provides all member associations with the opportunity to compete consistently in a regular schedule of official matches during the four-year cycle between FIFA World Cups.

It drives development and delivers a compelling tournament for fans across the entire region. The first edition of the CNL was won by the United States after a fantastic final against Mexico, which was played in Denver, Colorado, in June 2021.

cont'd from pg 24
to bat.

Left handed opener Kieran Powell, who struck a century in the Leeward Islands third round match against reigning champions Barbados Pride last Saturday, continued his batting resurgence with a knock of 75 off 105 balls with 12 fours and a six.

Left-arm medium pacer Preston McSween has taken two for 42 and off-spinner Kenneth Dember had captured two for 66.

Black Hawks left arm pacer Javier Spencer is also making his debut for the Hurricanes in the regional four-day contest.

Barbados Pride have taken control of their regional four-day championship match against Trinidad and Tobago Red Force at the Queen's Park Oval in Trinidad.

After dismissing the Red Force for 203 off 75.3 overs, the Pride cruised to 40 without loss in 12 overs at the close of the opening day.

Zachary McCaskie (21 not out) and Sheyne Moseley (19 not out) will resume today's second day with Barbados 163 runs adrift of the Trinidad and Tobago first innings total in which Jason Mohammad top scored with 55, Tion Webster got 46 and Joshua Da Silva made 32.

Off-spinner Chaim Holder captured five for 71 and fast bowler Jair McAllister claimed three



Karima Gore, left, accepts his cap from Leeward Islands Hurricanes captain Jahmar Hamilton prior to the start of their fourth round Cricket West Indies regional four-day championship match against the Windward Islands Volcanoes at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy Stadium in Tarouba, Trinidad, 22nd March, 2023.

for 31.

Captain Leon Johnson struck an unbeaten century to lead the Guyana Harpy Eagles to 268 for nine off 86.3 overs at the close of the opening day of their regional four-day championship match against the Jamaica Scorpions at Providence in Guyana Wednesday.

The left-handed Johnson is unbeaten on 142 off 248 balls in which he struck 16 fours. Tevin Imlach made 46 and Kevlon Anderson got 36.

Medium pacers Marquino Mindley has taken two for 34, Derval Greene has picked up two for 35 and Ojay Shields has captured two for 66.



Benna Boys resume Gold Cup quest in Concacaf Nations League

The Antigua and Barbuda Senior National Men's Football team, the Benna Boys, will continue their quest to gain qualification to the preliminaries of this year's Gold Cup or promotion to League A when the Concacaf Nations League (CNL) group stage matches resume this evening (Thursday).

Antigua and Barbuda will resume their battle for supremacy in League B when they take on Guadeloupe in their penultimate preliminary group match at the Rene Serge Nabajoth Stadium in Les Abymes, Guadeloupe, today at 7 pm.

Antigua and Barbuda will enter today's match against Guadeloupe still with a remote chance of winning the League B Group and a more realistic chance of claiming second place, with a finish in either position earning the Benna Boys automatic qualifications into the Concacaf Gold Cup this summer.

Victory for the Benna Boys against Guadeloupe and a win over bottom team Barbados in their final League B preliminary group match at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua on Sunday, 26th March,



The Antigua and Barbuda Benna Boys team that beat Guadeloupe 1-0 when both sides met in the Concacaf Nations League at Warner Park in Basseterre, Saint Kitts and Nevis, on 5th June, 2022. (Photo courtesy Concacaf)

will guarantee Antigua and Barbuda a top-two finish in the group and a berth into the Gold Cup.

Antigua and Barbuda will enter today's match in third place on six points, three points adrift of group leaders Cuba and second place Guadeloupe who are jointly tied on nine points.

The group winners will also earn qualification into League A of the Nations League for the 2023/24 season, while the second and third place finishers will remain in League B, with the team that ends up in

the cellar being relegated to League C of the Nations League.

The remaining 2022/23 Concacaf Nations League Group Stage matches will take place in the FIFA Match Window of 23rd to 28th March, 2023.

The decisive 34 matches will conclude the Group Stage of the CNL's second edition and will determine the national teams that will participate in this summer's Concacaf Nations League Finals (four teams) and Concacaf Gold Cup (24 teams).

These matches will also

determine the Leagues B and C teams that will be promoted to Leagues A and B, respectively, for the revamped 2023/24 CNL.

The third edition of the CNL commences in September 2023 and will determine the six Concacaf national teams that will qualify for the 2024 CONMEBOL Copa America.

Play in 2022/23 CNL kicked off during the FIFA Match Window of June 2022 in which fans were treated to entertaining matches and more than 190 goals.

cont'd on pg 24