

TEACHERS END INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Story on Page 2



Regis Burton, left, and Elizabeth 'Lisa' Makhoul are young people who have recently been elevated to important positions. Burton has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of the Medicinal Cannabis Authority, while Makhoul has been appointed Ambassador-at-Large. *Stories on pages 3 and 4.*

Teachers end industrial action

The industrial action the normal operations at by teachers has affected public schools in Antigua

and Barbuda has now ended and school activities are to return to normal today, Thursday.

The announcement was made overnight by Education Minister Daryll Matthew, who reported of a series of marathon sessions which officials of the Ministry of Education held with the executive of the Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers in order to reach a settlement.

Matthew revealed that the teams met up to 10 p.m. on Tuesday and then resumed at 5:30 a.m. Wednesday morning in an effort to hammer out an agreement that would see

the teachers resume normal classroom activities.

According to the Minister, some twenty-five teachers whose upgrades were outstanding due to a number of administrative issues were invited to meet with the teams on an individual basis to get a clear understanding on an 'appropriate timeline' to have their matters fully resolved.

The minister indicated that the entire teaching fraternity had decided to stand with the twenty-five teachers until their matters were resolved.

"Some of these issues could not have been re-
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Medicinal Cannabis Authority names a Chief Executive Officer

The Antigua and Barbuda Medicinal Cannabis Authority (MCA) has announced the appointment of Regis Burton as its Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Burton has been working with MCA for over 15 months and has proven to be a highly qualified and experienced individual within the Medicinal Cannabis industry and is well-suited for this important role.

This position has been vacant since October 2021, and Burton's appointment is a significant step toward advancing the responsible management of cannabis in the country.

Burton has expressed his passion for public health and wellness, and a commitment to the economic empowerment of the locals, as well as the unification of the Caribbean region within the cannabis industry.

He emphasized the importance of systematically addressing the abuse and misuse of cannabis by youths while harnessing the economic value of responsible cannabis use to improve the life and livelihood of the country.

"As the Chief Executive Officer



of Antigua and Barbuda Medicinal Cannabis Authority, my top priorities will be to actively involve and engage local stakeholders in our decision-making processes and urgently implement a youth educational program," said Burton.

"Local input and involvement are crucial to ensure that the ownership and benefits of the cannabis industry are shared by our communities and that we address any concerns or issues effectively.

"We also need to work together to promote and educate the public on responsible cannabis use by adults, public health and wellness, and the economic empowerment opportunities available."

Burton and the MCA team will be launching a local stakeholders conference for Antiguans and Barbudans in May 2023, titled "Wadadli Cannabis Summit 2023." The public will be invited to register for this inaugural summit at the Office of MCA located on Friars Hill Road in the Jasmine Court Complex, Suite 21, or at (268) 562 – 9729.

The MCA is confident that Burton's leadership will prioritize stakeholder engagement and ensure that their voices are heard. We encourage all stakeholders to join us at the Waladli Cannabis Summit 2023 to share their perspectives, ideas, and concerns, as we work towards building a responsible and sustainable cannabis industry in Antigua and Barbuda.

With Burton's appointment and the upcoming Waladli Cannabis Summit 2023, Antigua and Barbuda Medicinal Cannabis Authority is taking significant steps towards promoting responsible cannabis management, public health, wellness, economic empowerment, and meaningful stakeholder involvement.

cont'd from pg 2

solved at the time; they involved documentation, as well as issues such as the spelling of names," Matthew added.

"I am happy to say that having gone through that matter, the members of the union took the decision to bring the industrial action to an end," he declared.

The education minister noted that communication between himself, the ministry and the union have al-

ways been good.

However, the ABUT was of the view that the upgrades were taking too long to be fully implement-

ed.

"There was a belief by the union that it had to take a particular course of action to press their issue.

Whilst I did not agree with the course of action, we are at a place where schools will reopen on Thursday," he stated.

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Lisa Makhoul is now Ambassador at Large

The head of the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission – Elizabeth ‘Lisa’ Makhoul – has been appointed Ambassador-at-Large by the government.

The appointment was made on February 8, 2023, but the Instrument of Appointment was presented to her by the Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams, on Tuesday of this week.

“I think this speaks to the confidence which the prime minister has in you, as it is the prime minister who designates people to become our ambassadors. The thing is that we are a small-island developing state, and it is hoped that when you rise to the position of becoming an ambassador, you will go out and seek to procure investments for Antigua and Barbuda, because our country can only grow with foreign direct investment and I know that you have been in this field for a long time and bring a wealth of experience to the position,” Sir Rodney observed.



Elizabeth ‘Lisa’ Makhoul

He added that becoming an Ambassador-at-Large is a very important position. It means that she can be assigned duties by the prime minister to carry out functions on his behalf, or on behalf of a minister and that she will carry out her duties without fear, favour, or malice towards anyone.

“I am honoured and I feel quite privileged to have been asked by the government of Prime Minister Gaston

Browne to continue to serve the government in the areas that have been identified. These are foreign direct investment, international migration (CIP), climate change initiatives, and culture,” she told Pointe Xpress newspaper.

Makhoul said this appointment will also serve as motivation for her to do even more for the government and people of Antigua and Barbuda.

“I have worked well with PM Browne on many initiatives in the past, and this award tells me that my work is appreciated at the senior levels of the government,” she stated.

Makhoul is one of the top personalities in the promotion and entertainment business, as she has produced many shows featuring some of the top artists from across the region and internationally. She has a well-developed network of business and other contacts that the government hopes she will be able to leverage for the benefit of the country.

OECS Education Ministers meet in St. John’s

Education Minister Daryll Matthew has made a strong case for the sub-region to work together to overcome the many challenges that are faced by the education sector.

Speaking at the opening of the 8th meeting of the OECS Council of Ministers that is being held under the theme, Touching Lives through Data-Driven Development, Matthew raised the question, “How do the education ministers as the individuals who have the privilege and responsibility of steering the direction education takes during these unprecedented times, ensure that they impact

lives through steady, gradual advancements that are stimulated by sound empirical evidence?” The answer, he posits, is profoundly simple. The region must adopt a bold, multi-faceted approach.

“Firstly, we must weld our ideas, our knowledge, our experiences, our values, and our resources to transform the future of this region. Welding results in oneness, it makes for stronger structures and, if done properly, the result is permanent. After seven meetings of the OECS Council of Ministers, we have made significant strides, but we have



cont’d on pg 5 Education Minister Daryll Matthew

cont'd from pg 4

an ongoing opportunity to effectively weld our resources to make a greater impact on the lives of our people,” he told his ministerial colleagues.

Secondly, the education minister said it is imperative that the region open avenues for its most valuable resource—its people, to transcend the apparent restrictions imposed by our common history and geography. “Education is the surest means of opening avenues that defeat our historical legacy and geographical constraints. It is the single most effective way to ensure that the people of our region can capitalize on the opportunities presented by the changing global trends, particularly, in the area of technology,” he stated.

While he acknowledged that much ‘ground has been cleared’ regarding education, Minister Matthew feels that there is still much work to be done. He referenced that data from the OECS Education Sector Strategy’s account of education in the OECS, which revealed that less than 15 percent of secondary school graduates go on to pursue post-secondary education and fewer than 10 % of adults in the OECS have completed tertiary level education ... learners complete secondary schooling with insufficient formal qualifications to proceed to the next level of education. “We have to fix this!” he declared.

He added that the opening of the fifth landed campus of the University of the West

Indies is a golden opportunity for OECS to improve the percentage of adults in the OECS who have completed tertiary education. “The Five Islands campus is located in Antigua and Barbuda. We have to embrace it as our very own OECS campus. The

programmes of the university are aligned with the needs of the region and with global directions. The university is preparing young people to be creative, innovative, critical thinkers who can successfully navigate life as global citizens in this millennium,” he

emphasized.

The opening exercises were also addressed by the Director General of the OECS Secretariat, Dr. Didacus Jules, and the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Rosa Greenaway.

The meeting ends today.



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Social Security marks 50th anniversary with important seminar

The Antigua and Barbuda Social Security Board turns 50 this year and among the activities planned to mark the occasion was the staging this week of a seminar that examined the question of whether or not it should expand into offering unemployment insurance.

Executive Director David Matthias said the April 17-19 seminar brought together representatives from the International Social Security Association along with representatives from social security systems from across the region to examine the issue of unemployment insurance policies.

“We are asking the question as to whether the time is not right, especially in light of our experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, to implement unemployment coverage for our contributors,” Matthias stated.

He noted that the International Labour Organisation (ILO) had recommended that such schemes should be



Executive Director David Matthias

in place to cover those who lost their jobs because of the pandemic related issues or as a result of government policies to safeguard public health.

According to Matthias there is now a growing acceptance that the schemes across the region should extend coverage for unemployment for all workers as part of the Social Security Solidarity mandate. This also means looking at the transfer of benefits from one group to another; person to person, sectorial and intergenerational transfers.

“We are our brother’s keeper and we must implement policies to protect our brother in times of need. The question then arises; how do we put such systems in place and what policies do you implement to ensure the sustainability of the schemes,” Matthias revealed as some of the questions that have to be answered by the policies makers across the region.

He noted that while the Bahamas paid out over US\$100 million in unemployment relief to workers, not many countries in the region were in a position to implement such a policy.

For example, the Executive Director advised that the scheme here in Antigua and Barbuda pays out over 90 percent of its earnings in pension payments and with the remaining 10 percent to pay salaries and cover other benefits, paying out unemployment insurance under those circumstances would therefore not be possible without adjustments to the contributions.

Caribbean Union Bank makes positive strides

The Caribbean Union Bank (CUB) where the government holds the majority of the shares is reporting improvements in its financial position.

Officials of the bank were invited to Wednesday’s meeting of the cabinet ‘to speak about the successes of the bank in the post-Covid-19 period.’

According to cabinet sources, the evidence indicates that the bank has begun to generate a profit and that its balance sheet is healthy.

“The bank has applied new technologies to serve its



customers. It has made improvements in Human Resources and it has strengthened its relationship with its correspondent bank,” the

sources indicated.

The cabinet expressed commendations to the CUB and was heartened to learn of its growth. It also concluded

that the CUB is on the right path, as there is liquidity in its capital base, its processes are streamlined, and it has attracted new customers.

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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Shiva's School of Dance welcomes International dance instructor

Students at Shiva's School of Dance are benefitting from the one-week residency of choreographer, dance professor, and researcher Kieron Sargeant, who is also a Grant Fellow in Interdisciplinary Performance and Dance at the University of Iowa.

The overarching aim of the residency, Shiva's principal Tavia Hunte said, is to expose students to other teaching styles and techniques by a world-renowned choreographer. The sessions also aim to challenge the up-and-coming dancers to reach beyond their comfort zone, to unearth new possibilities for increasing their dance vocabulary. They will also learn new dance cultures and enrich themselves culturally. The students will cover traditional folk dances, specifically Bele and Jig from Trinidad and Tobago, African contemporary fusions, and more.

The classes with Sargeant are designed to accommodate students at various dance levels. Sessions begin at 3:30 pm daily and end at 9:30 pm. Shiva's School of Dance holds classes at UWI Open Campus on Factory Road.

"We are pleased to have this opportunity to expand our student's knowledge and capabilities from a myriad

of perspectives, including dance and culture. Kieron is a highly trained and equally talented artist with two decades of experience. He has worked extensively across the diaspora, and we are grateful to have him here with us. When that type of talent and commitment to the arts meets the enthusiasm of our students, we are certain to create something magical, not just for our students but dance in the country," Hunte said.

She added that the choreographies from the workshop would be showcased at Shiva's School of Dance recital on July 1 and 2, 2023.

Sargeant, a native of Trinidad and Tobago, is an interdisciplinary artist, choreographer, drummer, and dance researcher emerging out of the African-Caribbean Diaspora tradition. He is currently a Grant Fellow in Interdisciplinary Performance and Dance at the University of Iowa. Sargeant holds a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Dance Performance and Choreography from Florida State University, a Master of Arts (MA) in Community Dance Practice from Ohio University, and a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Dance from the University of the West Indies.

Over the past 20 years, he has been



Kieron Sargeant

involved in documenting, assessing, and analyzing dance traditions of the Caribbean and establishing a canon of dance teachings and workshops, informed by his research, to popularize the ancestral survival of movement traditions between the Circum-Caribbean and Western Africa.

Sargeant has conducted African Diaspora and Caribbean dance Masterclasses at Queensborough Community College, the University of Iowa, Hofstra University, NYU Steinhardt, New York University, and Simon Fraser University of Contemporary Arts. Before this, he taught Masterclasses and Workshops in African-Caribbean, African-Diasporic, and African-contemporary at Ecole Des Sables (Senegal), the Majuba Black Dance Festival, the University of Florida, the National Dance Education Colorado Conference, Sacramento State University, Columbus State University, Florida State University, the Edna Manley School of the Performing Arts (Jamaica), The Dance Guild (Nigeria), The International Association of Blacks in Dance Conference (IABD) and the Collegium for African Diaspora Dance (CADD).





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SKN Foreign Minister calls for overhaul of international lending market

Loop - St Kitts and Nevis Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Denzil Douglas has called for an overhaul of the lending policies of international financial organisations as he lamented that they are biased towards small islands and developing nations.

Douglas made the call as he joined the Governor of Guam, the Deputy Premier of Bermuda, and the Foreign Minister from Tuvalu virtually to open Island Innovation’s 2023 Island Finance Forum yesterday.

The three-day forum, which ends tomorrow, is being held under the theme “Investments for Sustain-

able Development”.

He said an overhaul will start the process to bridge “the gap between the G7 and the G77”.

He reiterated St Kitts and Nevis Prime Minister Terrance Drew’s call for the international financial institutions to implement a Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) that privileges the Caribbean’s unique vulnerability to natural disasters like hurricanes.

Douglas echoed the call of his small island counterparts for climate, environmental and reparatory justice since they are the ones significantly affect-



Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Denzil Douglas.

ed by climate change even though they are not major polluters.

Douglas, who is the former prime minister of St Kitts and Nevis, also used his speech to invite poten-

tial investors to visit and work with the country for win-win partnerships on strategic projects in green technology, sustainable agriculture, and light manufacturing.

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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Crime in the Caribbean: Jamaican PM calls for reformation of laws

By Laura Dowrich-Phillips

Andrew Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica, is calling for reform of the justice system to fight crime.

Speaking at Regional Symposium: Violence as a Public Health Issue – The CARICOM Challenge, Holness said the Caribbean’s laws and jurisprudence were not designed to treat criminal threats facing the region.

“We must reform our legislation to match the growing sophistication,

scale, and nature of the threat. Our jurisprudence must incorporate measures which will support enhanced security operations, which will support the use of emergency powers, and which will support preventative action to disrupt and control the space in which criminals operate before they commit the act of violence,” he said.

Speaking about the illegal flow of guns into the region, Holness said in Jamaica they seized 8,036 il-



Andrew Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica.

legal firearms over the last decade.

He said criminal organi-

sations and gangs have been able to acquire these illegal guns with ease even though they were not manufactured in the region.

“As a matter of regional security and foreign policy we must coordinate and strengthen our efforts bilaterally with the United States and multilaterally with the UN system to control over the illegal export of small arms and light weapons to our region,” he said.

Holness said in the same way the Caribbean supported the US’ war on drugs, they, too, must support the Caribbean’s war on guns which are killing our children.

“Our children are just as valuable as the children in North America. There has to be equal energy, effort and attention paid to preventing illegal guns coming into our country as we paid effort, energy and attention to illegal drugs going to

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India to have more people than China by mid-2023, UN says

BBC - India is set to overtake China to become the most populous country in the world by the middle of this year, data released by the United Nations shows.

India's population is expected to reach 1.4286 billion - 2.9 million more than its neighbour on 1.4257 billion.

The Asian nations have accounted for more than a third of the global population for over 70 years.

China's birth rate has plunged recently with its population shrinking last year for the first time since 1961.

India's population forecast provided in the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) State of World Population report is an estimate since there has been no census in the country since 2011.

After 140 years of uninterrupted census every 10 years, the 2021 census was cancelled because of Covid and postponed to 2022. Now it has been pushed back again to 2024.

In an interview with the BBC, the UN's Chief of Population Estimates and



Projection, Patrick Gerland, says that any numbers about India's real population size are "naïve assumptions based on fragmental information".

"We don't have real official data coming out from India," he says.

Also, the UN says their estimate does not include the population of China's two Special Administrative Regions - Hong Kong and Macau, which together have more than 8 million people - or the island of Taiwan, which Beijing sees as a breakaway province to be unified with the mainland one day. Taiwan sees itself as distinct from the Chinese mainland, with its own con-

stitution and democratically-elected leaders.

In November, the global population crossed 8 billion. But experts say growth is not as rapid as it used to be and is now at its slowest rate since 1950.

Both India and China have seen declines in their fertility rates.

This means in China, the population will start declining next year, despite the country abandoning its one-child policy in 2016 and introducing incentives for couples to have two or more children.

Soaring living costs and the growing number of women joining the workforce are among other fac-

tors being blamed for the slowdown in China.

In India, too, fertility rates have fallen substantially in recent decades from 5.7 births per woman in 1950 to 2.2 births per woman today.

A survey commissioned by the UNFPA had a majority of Indians saying their population was too large and fertility rates too high. Almost two in three respondents identified economic issues as top concerns when thinking about population growth.

Demographers, however, say India's population overtaking China's shouldn't be seen as a matter of concern and caution against giving into anxieties over the rising numbers.

"Instead, they should be seen as a symbol of progress, development, and aspirations if individual rights and choices are being upheld," the UN report says.

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their country. In fact, the war on drugs will continue to be infected unless there is an equivalent and consummate war on guns," he declared.

Holness urged regional leaders to put their money where their threats lie and

increase capabilities and capacity to scan goods coming into the ports, buy offshore patrol vessels, and have offshore patrol surveillance.

He said the region cannot depend on outside forces to do the work for us as they will only report what is in their interests.

Caribbean leaders agree to ban assault weapons for civilian use

Loop - Caribbean heads have decided to ban the use of assault weapons in the civilian populations of their respective nations.

Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley made the announcement on Tuesday while delivering closing remarks at the Regional Symposium: Violence as a Public Health Issue - The Crime Challenge.

Dr Rowley said CARICOM leaders also intend to write to the United States President and his administration for a "greater effort in preventing the manufacturers of these killing machines and projectiles from having the profit-making outcome that is killing our people and destroying our society. We want the guns and ammunition stopped."

"Today we are saying to the United States the same way we fought with you to prevent the powder (cocaine)



Dr Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

from going up North to poison your community we want you to fight with us to prevent the guns and ammunition from coming into our territories," he said, echoing sentiments of other leaders over the two days.

Prime Minister Rowley stated that these little islands in the Caribbean cannot sustain for much longer the death rate and the economic destruction that this wanton use of arms and ammunition is wreaking on us.

Guyana: Bar owners to be charged for selling alcohol to drunk drivers

Loop - Liquor License holders have been warned that they will soon face the brunt of Guyana's law enforcement if they continue to flout provisions of the Intoxicating Liquor Licensing (Amendment) Act 2022.

The warning comes from Attorney General Anil Nandlall as he expressed the government's outrage about the carnage that has taken place on Guyana's roadways recently as a result of drunk drivers.

"The Government of Guyana continues to be concerned with the sense-



less deaths on our roadways which, many times, are attributable to drunken driving.

"Unfortunately, based upon reports and complaints received, it appears that license holders, particularly

bar owners, have not been in compliance with their obligations imposed under the Intoxicating Liquor Licensing (Amendment) Act.

"An appeal is hereby made to such bar owners to play their part in the promo-

tion of the public good and the preservation of a safe society, free from drunken driving," the AG's said in a statement from his chambers.

License owners are obliged to prevent any person who is drunk, violent, quarrelsome or disorderly from entering their premises.

Any license owner, who fails to adhere to their obligations, face a fine of GYD\$100,000 for the first offence, and GYD\$200,000 for a second offence.

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Barbados government makes maximum cash offer to former LIAT workers

CMC - The Barbados government says it will make a maximum cash offer of BDS\$75,000 to former Barbadian workers of the cash-strapped regional airline, LIAT, even as it acknowledged that “it has no legal obligation to settle any indebtedness” to them.

Director of Finance and Economic Affairs, Ian Carrington, in a statement said that to date, some workers have received two monetary gifts and a loan from the government.

“In addition, some workers who contributed to the Barbados National Insurance and Social Security Scheme have received what they are entitled to from the Scheme,” he said, adding that the Barbados government will offer an ex-gratia payment to former Barbadian workers of LIAT.

“The ex gratia sum offered to each former employee will be no greater than the



sum due to them from LIAT (1974) Ltd as a consequence of the termination of their employment following the administration of the airline,” Carrington said.

He noted that in calculating the government’s ex gratia offer, the loan and other payments already received, not including gifts, will be deducted from the offer.

“A maximum cash offer of BDS\$75,000 will be made,” he said, adding that where after deductions,

the balance is greater than BDS\$75,000, a portion will be paid in bonds.

Carrington said he would be reaching out to the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport to have the meeting with the former airline workers with the aim of having the payments done by the end of this month.

“I would like to have this situation behind us once and for all...it would be safer to say they would be paid early next month,” he added.

During her budget presentation in March, Prime Minister Mia Mottley had announced a BDS\$10 million ex-gratia payment to the former airline employees.

In May 2021, as a compassionate gesture, the government agreed to give the Barbadians who did not receive severance, BDS\$2,000 as a one-off cash gift and a BDS\$2,000 per month advance for one year which was to be repaid at a future date from any severance payment settlement.

The Antigua-based LIAT (1974) Limited, entered into administration in July 2020 following increased debt and the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The airline is owned by the governments of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica and St Vincent and the Grenadines. A downsized version of the carrier has been operating a reduced schedule with a limited workforce since November 2020.

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Some other obligations imposed on the license holder include:

- (a) Not permitting drunkenness or any violent, quarrelsome, or riotous conduct to take place on his premises;
- (b) Not to sell, give or barter intoxicating liquor to a drunken person;
- (c) Not to allow another person [for example an employee or servant] to sell, give or barter intoxicating liquor to a drunken person;
- (d) Not to sell, give or barter intoxicating liquor to a person he knows is likely to leave the premises by driving unless that person has identified another person to be

the designated driver of the motor vehicle;

(e) Not to sell, give or barter intoxicating liquor to any person identified as a designated driver;

(f) To inform the nearest police station and request their immediate assistance in cases where he knows that a drunken person is attempting to drive or is in charge of a motor vehicle on the road or other public place;

(g) Post signs that discourage drinking and driving at conspicuous places on the licensed premises;

(h) Ensure that announcements are made at regular intervals on the premises that persons should not drink and drive.

Sudan conflict: Residents flee capital Khartoum as fighting continues

BBC - Thousands of civilians have fled Sudan's capital and foreign nations are trying to evacuate their citizens, amid a fifth day of fierce fighting.

Witnesses reported people leaving Khartoum in cars and on foot on Wednesday morning, as gunfire and deafening explosions rocked the city.

Meanwhile, officials in Japan and Tanzania say they are considering missions to evacuate their citizens.

The exodus follows Tuesday's collapsed ceasefire between the warring factions.

The Sudanese military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) had agreed a 24-hour humanitarian ceasefire on Tuesday, but the truce collapsed within minutes of its proposed launch at 18:00 local time (16:00 GMT).

A new ceasefire with the same timing was put forward by the RSF on Wednesday. The army said it would abide by the truce - but gunfire can still be heard across the capital.

Smoke can be seen over the area of the army headquarters in the centre of the city, where much of the fighting between rival military factions is centred.

Mohammed Alamin, a journalist based in Khartoum, told BBC Focus on Africa radio that the gunfire hadn't stopped, despite the supposed ceasefire.



Smoke billows over the Sudanese capital Khartoum.

"It's really horrible - these warring parties are firing randomly everywhere," he said. "I saw, myself, hundreds of people going outside Khartoum, rushing to travel to the neighbouring states."

Some civilians did not know what was happening - while others directed their anger at both sides.

"Basically the people think that this war is against them," Mr Alamin said. "This is what the people told me in the streets."

He also said that one problem with implementing the ceasefire might be the fragmented forces in the city.

"There is a kind of a disconnection between these troops - they are fighting in different areas, in different places with less communication....," he said.

The fighting at the moment mostly involves shelling, not heavy air bombard-

ments.

Civilians began to flee the capital early on Wednesday morning after fighting resumed and Khartoum was enveloped in thick black smoke following explosions near the army headquarters.

Witnesses reported heavily armed RSF fighters patrolling the city on pick-up trucks, while fighter jets loyal to the military conducted strikes on targets believed to be held by the paramilitary forces.

A shortage of fuel and a lack of public transport has seen many of those fleeing forced to do so on foot, with some seeking to get passage to central and western Sudan - where their families live - on flatbed trucks.

One local fleeing the capital told the BBC that the RSF had set up checkpoints on roads around the city and some of its fighters

had robbed him, stealing his phone and some money.

Robberies have also been reported in areas of the capital itself. On Tuesday, residents of the Khartoum 2 area told the BBC that the RSF militia had been going house-to-house in the neighbourhood demanding water and food.

As the fighting intensifies, a number of nations say they have started preparations to evacuate their citizens from the country.

Japan said its Self Defence Forces were considering how to evacuate some 60 Japanese citizens from Sudan, with a military plane placed on standby.

Tanzania's Foreign Affairs Minister Stergomena Tax told parliament that his government was also evaluating whether it was possible to evacuate 210 of its citizens.

However, the US ambas-

cont'd on pg 17

Heathrow security staff and passport workers announce May strikes

By James Gregory

Further strikes by airport and passport workers have been announced for next month as part of their escalating disputes over pay.

Security staff at Heathrow Airport will take a further eight days of industrial action in May, the Unite union said.

The Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) has confirmed more than 1,000 Passport Office workers will also walkout at the start of May.

The FDA union will also ballot senior civil servants for strike action.

The latest announcements from the three unions come amid a wave of industrial action by hundreds of thousands of workers across different sectors over the past year.

Disputes are mostly over pay, with unions calling for wage rises to keep up with rising prices.

Almost 2,000 PCS members working as passport examiners in offices in Bel-



PCS members on the picket line outside the Glasgow Passport Office earlier this month.

fast, Durham, Glasgow, Liverpool, London, Newport, Peterborough and Southport have been on strike since 3 April.

They will now be joined from 2 to 6 May by 1,000 workers in non-examination roles in the same offices, and interview officers in Birmingham, Corby, Hemel Hempstead, Leeds, Portsmouth, Sheffield and Plymouth from 3 to 6 May.

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka said the government had “insulted” his staff last week by announcing they will receive a pay rise for 2023-2024 of between 4.5% and 5%.

The 1,400 security officers at Heathrow who took part in 10 days of industrial action over the Easter period will now walk out on eight further days - 4-6 May, 9-10 May and 25-27 May.

Unite said the strikes will cause “inevitable disruption and delays” to passengers arriving for the King’s coronation because of “Heathrow’s stubborn refusal” to make an offer that meets members’ expectations.

Heathrow offered striking workers a 10% pay increase in January, but in talks last week it said it had improved the offer with a further £1,150 lump sum this

year.

The airport said Unite was refusing to put the revised offer to its members.

“We kept Heathrow running smoothly during the first 10 days of Unite’s failed industrial action, and passengers can have confidence that we will do so again this time,” a Heathrow spokesperson said.

British Airways cancelled around 300 flights in advance due to the previous strike.

The FDA’s membership spans the civil service right up to permanent secretaries - the most senior rank of civil servant. It includes policy advisers, diplomats, lawyers, tax professionals, economists, statisticians and museum curators.

It is the first time the union has approved a national strike ballot over pay in more than 40 years.

It comes after the government’s decision last week to give civil servants a pay rise of between 4.5% and 5%.

cont’d from pg 16

sy in Khartoum said “the uncertain security situation” in the capital meant there were no plans for a “US government-coordinated evacuation”.

And the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies told the BBC that it was advising locals calling it for help to stay put and avoid putting themselves in the line of fire.

“Whoever calls, we tell them the truth: ‘Look, right now it’s a challenge to get you out, and it’s better and safer to

stay where you are,’” Farid Abdulkadir, the organisation’s chief in Sudan, told Focus on Africa.

The death toll caused by the fighting is unclear, but the Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors (CCSD) said on Tuesday that at least 174 civilians had been killed in the violence.

In a joint statement issued on Wednesday, the US, EU, UK and 12 other nations said the death toll had reached 270.

However, experts say the real figure

could be far higher, with many wounded unable to reach hospitals which have reportedly been shelled.

Tanzeel Khan - an Indian national working in Khartoum - told the BBC that airstrikes in the city were putting civilian lives at risk.

“Since this morning, the airstrikes in this area have intensified and we do not know when they’re going to hit our building,” he said. “There are around 15 other people living in the same building who are facing similar difficulties.”

Teenagers charged with murder over shooting in Dadeville, Alabama

By **Brandon Drenon**

Two teenage boys have been charged with murder after the shooting at a 16th birthday party in Alabama that killed four and injured 32 over the weekend.

Brothers Ty Reik McCullough, 17, and Travis McCullough, 16, were arrested on Tuesday night, police said.

Authorities said the suspects are each being charged with four counts of reckless murder and that more charges are expected.

Hours later, police announced the arrest of a third suspect.

Wilson LaMar Hill, 20, is facing the same charges as the two boys, who prosecutors say will be charged as adults.

At a press conference on Wednesday, officials told reporters that these were the early stages of the investigation into the shooting on Saturday in Dadeville and offered very few details.

Officials previously said they had recovered numerous shell casings used in handguns at the crime scene, noting that there was no evidence a high-powered rifle was used.

Police said that among the 32 people injured, four remain in hospital in a critical condition.

“We are going to make sure every one of those



Mourners attend a vigil at the First Baptist Church of Dadeville following the mass shooting at the Mahogany Masterpiece dance studio on 16 April in Dadeville, Alabama.

victims has justice and not just the deceased,” Sgt Jeremy Burkett of the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) said.

The agency added: “These individuals have been charged after a complex and thorough investigation was conducted with assistance from a multitude of law enforcement agencies.”

Until Wednesday, police had offered few details since the shooting on any suspects in the case.

District Attorney Mike Segrest said: “I know that there has been some frustration among our community and among media about a lack of information that has been provided up to this point.”

The deceased vic-

tims have been identified as Marsiah Collins, 19; Phil Dowdell, 18; Corbin Holston, 23; and Shaunkivia Smith, 17.

Mr Dowdell died trying to save his sister Alexis, his family has said.

He was a star athlete on his high school’s American football team and had been due to graduate to go to Jacksonville State University on a sports scholarship.

One of his friends and school football teammate told the BBC: “Phil to me was an amazing friend. God’s got an angel.”

There were about 50 people at the party, which was held at a local dance studio.

Dadeville, a town of roughly 3,000 residents,

is about 60 miles (100km) north east of the state capital of Montgomery.

Officials said the two teenage brothers who have been arrested are from Tuskegee, Alabama, which is about a 40-minute drive from Dadeville.

Sgt Burkett urged those who were at the party at the dance studio to contact authorities if they have not already done so.

“We need you to come forward for these families, for these victims,” he said.

The weekend attack took the US to a grim milestone of more than 160 mass shootings this year, according to the Gun Violence Archive, which defines such events as ones in which four or more people are shot.



The Northern Vybz Community Group in conjunction with the Hon. Charles 'Max' Fernandez, MP for St. John's Rural North along with the Principles of the Mitch League and Provizion Athletics Prime invites children in the constituency between the ages 7-18 ages to the Northern Vybz Basketball Camp in the Cedar Grove and Yorks Communities.

**CEDAR GROVE
SPORTS COMPELX** **6pm-
8pm**

**YORKS BASKETBALL
COURT** **4pm-
8pm**

Friday April 21st

Saturday April 22nd

**CEDAR GROVE
SPORTS COMPELX** **4pm-
8pm**
Sunday April 23rd

For more information & application forms: <https://forms.gle/kbCL7bx9aotfgqeD8>
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The players of the Liberta Black Hawks leave the field following their victory over Pigotts Crushers in the Cool and Smooth T20 Explosion Tournament at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium on Tuesday, 18th April, 2023. (CST20)

Liberta Black Hawks extend winning form in T20 Explosion

Reigning champions PIC Insurance Liberta Black Hawks have continued their strong defense of the Cool and Smooth T20 Explosion title.

The Black Hawks kept their unbeaten record intact by notching up their fourth win in as many outings by soaring to an eight-wicket victory against Pigotts Crushers at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium on Tuesday night.

Set 123 to win, the Liberta Black Hawks achieved their victory target for the loss of two wickets with 4.3 overs to spare.

Karima Gore struck 34 not out off 25 balls with four boundaries, Kofi James cracked 32 off 30 balls with three fours and two sixes and opener Leroy Lugg made 30 off 18 balls with two fours and three sixes. Chris Greves captured two wickets for 30 runs.

Pigotts Crushers could only muster 122 for nine off their allotted 20 overs after winning the toss and opting to bat.

Opener Essan Warner struck 21 off 25 ball and his fellow opening partner Kristan Kallicharan also made 21 off 14 balls, while Gershum Phillip hit 16 not out off 17 balls.

Leg-spinner Hayden Walsh Jr snapped up five wickets for 21 runs and off-spinner Kofi James picked up two wickets for 16 runs.

Empire Nation recorded their second win in three outings by trouncing Jennings Tigers by 78 runs in the opening match on Tuesday.

Overseas players, opener Mikyle Louis and Matthew Cross, both hit half centuries to propel Empire Nation to 191 for six off their allotted 20 overs after winning the toss and electing to

bat.

The pair also shared a 124-run second wicket partnership as Louis slammed 77 off 40 balls with nine fours and four sixes, while Cross hammered 53 off 37 balls with six fours and a six.

Kershaski Jno Lewis chipped in with 21 off 18 balls. Left-arm spinner Glenton Williams took two for 24 and Ben Sexton claimed two for 31.

In reply, Jennings Tigers were restricted to 113 for eight off their 20 overs. Lachian Bangs made a run-a-ball 27 and Jedidiah Martin scored 23.

Darren Need had two for 20 while left-arm pacer Nathan Edwards and leg-spinner Micah McKenzie each picked up two for 21.

Louis, who was later named man of the match, said he is disappointed
cont'd on pg 23



MATCH SCHEDULE

APRIL 13TH - APRIL 29TH

THURSDAY APR 13TH

4:30PM	Liberta Blackhawks	VS	Empire Nation
8:30PM	Bethesda Golden Eagles	VS	Bolans Blasters

FRIDAY APR 14TH

4:30PM	Jennings Tigers	VS	New Winthorpes Lions
8:30PM	Pigotts Crushers	VS	All Saints Pythons

SATURDAY APR 15TH

12:30PM	Liberta Blackhawks	VS	Bolans Blasters
4:30PM	New Winthorpes Lions	VS	Pigotts Crushers
8:30PM	Empire Nation	VS	Bethesda Golden Eagles

SUNDAY APR 16TH

12:30PM	All Saints Pythons	VS	Jennings Tigers
4:30PM	Bolans Blasters	VS	Pigotts Crushers
8:30PM	New Winthorpes Lions	VS	Liberta Blackhawks

MONDAY APR 17TH

4:30PM	Bolans Blasters	VS	Jennings Tigers
8:30PM	All Saints Pythons	VS	Bethesda Golden Eagles

TUESDAY APR 18TH

4:30PM	Jennings Tigers	VS	Empire Nation
8:30PM	Liberta Blackhawks	VS	Pigotts Crushers

WEDNESDAY APR 19TH

12:30PM	New Winthorpes Lions	VS	Bethesda Golden Eagles
4:30PM	All Saints Pythons	VS	Bolans Blasters
8:30PM	Liberta Blackhawks	VS	Jennings Tigers

THURSDAY APR 20TH

12:30PM	Pigotts Crushers	VS	Empire Nation
4:30PM	Liberta Blackhawks	VS	Bethesda Golden Eagles
8:30PM	All Saints Pythons	VS	New Winthorpes Lions

FRIDAY APR 21ST

4:30PM	Bethesda Golden Eagles	VS	Pigotts Crushers
8:30PM	New Winthorpes Lions	VS	Empire Nation

SATURDAY APR 22ND

4:30PM	All Saints Pythons	VS	Liberta Blackhawks
8:30PM	Empire Nation	VS	Bolans Blasters

MONDAY APR 24TH

2:30PM	All Saints Pythons	VS	Empire Nation
6:30PM	Jennings Tigers	VS	Pigotts Crushers

TUESDAY APR 25TH

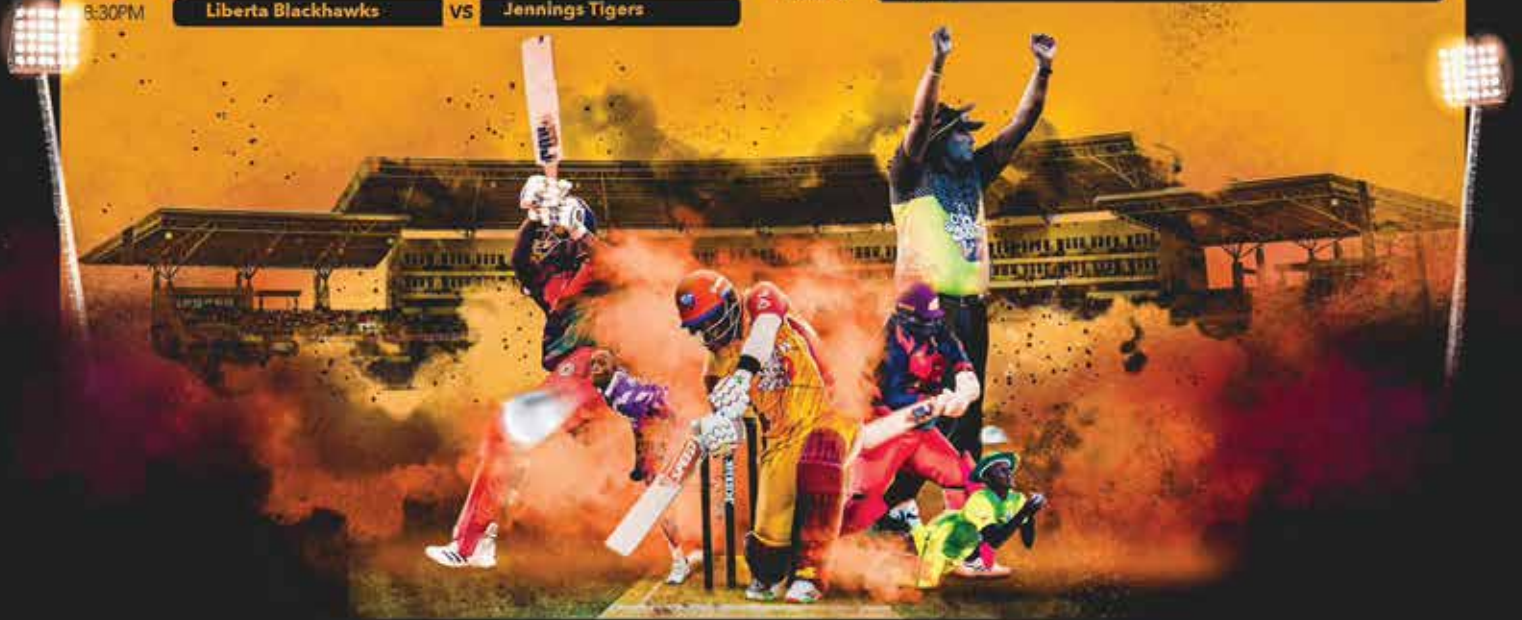
4:30PM	New Winthorpes Lions	VS	Bolans Blasters
8:30PM	Bethesda Golden Eagles	VS	Jennings Tigers

THURSDAY APR 27TH

4:30PM	Semi-Final 1
8:30PM	Semi-Final 2

SATURDAY APR 29TH

4:30PM	Third Place Match
8:30PM	Finals



SIR VIVIAN RICHARDS CRICKET STADIUM



Enforcers trounce Clippers in female softball cricket contest

Sagicor Enforcers recorded one of the biggest margins of victories in the second round of matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Softball Cricket Association (ABSCA) St John's Co-Operative Credit Union Women's 15 overs competition. Sagicor Enforcers crushed Daryll Matthew Clippers by 112 runs in one of three second round matches.

Enforcers made 174 for two off their allotted 15 overs after winning the toss and opting to bat. Grace Persaud hammered 64 and Sacha Michael struck 55 not out.

In reply, Clippers were restricted to 62 for seven off their 15 overs with Karen Cort getting 18. Lokuehl Pelle claimed two wickets for nine runs and Sacha Michael

picked up two wickets for 14 runs.

There were wins as well for Foster Jonas, Harley's Maintenance Potters Uprising and Bryson's Shipping & Insurance Bullets.

Potters Uprising romped to a 78-run victory over Jennings Rockets. Potters Uprising made 133 for two off their 15 overs after Jennings Rockets won the toss and decided

to field. Nolia Elvin-Hodge struck 35 not out and Tawana John scored 24.

Jennings Rockets were then restricted to 55 for eight off their 15 overs with Kushana David getting 21. Tawana John grabbed four wickets for eight runs and Debra George captured two wickets for 14 runs. Bryson's Shipping & Insurance Bullets snatched an 11-run victory

over Flyers. Bullets won the toss and batted first, scoring 89 for six from 15 overs. Cheryl Williams got 17 while Akeda Francis picked up two wickets for 13 runs.

Flyers were then restricted to 78 for four off their 15 overs. Sevely Ireland struck 29 not out and Robinette Burton scored 28. Lana Thomas claimed two wickets for 18 runs.

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with not being able to reach a century in his innings against the Tigers.

"It was a wonderful innings and I really enjoyed batting today. It was a little unfortunate that I wasn't able to carry on and score the hundred, but it was a good innings nonetheless," Louis stated.

"That's my role on the Empire team. They gave me the role to go out there and be free, express myself and give them the

power start at the beginning of the game."

Louis, a native of St Kitts and a Leeward Islands Hurricane player, is also grateful for the opportunity to play in the Cool and Smooth T20 Explosion to showcase his talent.

"Coming into the tournament I was really hoping that I would perform and showcase my talent on a big stage because I know there is a lot of people watching and viewing these games," he stated.

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For more information on registration contact **Natasha Charles** at 484-5137 or **Khadijah James** at 484-5064.

All funds raised will be donated to Breast Friends and The Oncology Department at The Sir Lester Bird Mount St. John's Medical Centre.

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Antigua name squad for LI women's cricket tournament

Five Leeward Islands players have been named in a 14-member Antigua and Barbuda squad to contest the Senior Leeward Islands Women's Tournament, which will be hosted in St Kitts next week.

The players, who represented the Leeward Islands in last year's Cricket West Indies (CWI) CG United Women's Super50 Cup and Super T20 Blaze in Guyana and are selected in the Antigua and Barbuda squad, are Amanda Edwards, Jenisen Richards, Terez Parker, Tonya Martin and Sidella Bellot.

Also selected are Cheyanne Moses, Kimberly Anthony, Danesia Wilson, Jessica Hall and Sheanna Wallace.

The rest of the players selected in the Antigua and Barbuda squad are Alliyah Cornelius, Ruchira Daley, Courtney Browne and Keonnah Duggan.

The players were selected following two trial matches last weekend at the Police Recreation Grounds.

Terez Parker, the wicketkeeper/batsman, hit an unbeaten 56 off 47 balls with nine fours, Amanda Edwards struck 52 not out off 50 balls with six fours and Kimberly Anthony also starred with the bat, smashing 77 off 70 balls with 11 fours in the T20 Trial match last Sunday.

It was the second half century



Amanda Edwards

scored by Anthony, who hammered 85 off 90 balls with 12 fours in a 35 overs aside trial match on Saturday.

Antigua and Barbuda will compete against senior national teams from St. Kitts and Nevis in the Leeward Islands Cricket Board (LICB) Women's 50 Overs and T20 Tournament in St. Kitts from 23rd to 29th April.

The Antigua and Barbuda team will be accompanied by coach Leon "Kuma" Rodney, who is also the Leeward Islands women's team coach, and also serves as President of the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association.



Tonya Martin (File photos)

Also part of the Antigua and Barbuda squad are coach Pernell "Shafto" Watley, Manager Kattian Edwards Baltimore and Scorer Dane "Pacco" Gustave.

Full squad:

Amanda Edwards, Jenisen Richards, Cheyanne Moses, Kimberly Anthony, Danesia Wilson, Jessica Hall, Sheanna Wallace, Alliyah Cornelius, Ruchira Daley, Courtney Browne, Terez Parker, Tonya Martin, Sidella Bellot and Keonnah Duggan. Kattian Edwards Baltimore (Manager); Leon Kuma Rodney (Coach), Pernell Watley (Coach); and Dane Gustave (Scorer).

cont'd from pg 26

also helped a long way," Weston stated.

"On the field we are pretty happy because we went unbeaten. After 18 games we scored about 58 goals and we conceded 10 so it's a really good feel-

ing. We won 16 games out of the 18 so that is great."

Jennings United's Team Manger Ian Bailey also expressed his elation, saying the hard work and perseverance during a long journey, which spanned over 10 years, finally paid off.

"Man it's a long, hard road that we have travelled. It has been long. Over 12 years since we are in the cellar position and it was hard work. I'm just elated right now," Bailey stated.

"I am out of words. Words are not enough for

me to explain this immediate feeling. It's just a fantastic journey. I have to say thanks to the youngsters. We persevered and it was a challenge. We tried our best to hold them together for the success and it has paid off."

Jennings United celebrate winning second division title

Jennings United celebrated winning the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division title with a 6-0 drubbing of Young Warriors in their final match at the Jennings playing field on Tuesday.

Watched by scores of spectators, Jennings United produced another brilliant display to demolish the Young Warriors to cap a fine season in which they played unbeaten in winning the Second Division with 43 points from their 18 matches to earn automatic promotion to the first division next season.

Founder of the Jennings United Football Club John Weston said it feels good to finally gain promotion to the first division after competing in the second division for over the past 10 years.

"Yeah it's a good feeling after we have been trying for some years. We have been down in the second division for over 10 years now so it's just feeling very fitting and we feel really good to back up in the first division," Weston stated.

Weston also commend-



The Jennings United football team celebrate with their championship trophy after winning the second division title at the Jennings playing field on Tuesday, 18th April, 2023.

ed the coaching and managerial units for their work and the commitment and praise the effort produced by the players in a commendable display throughout their unbeaten season in which Jennings United soared to the title by winning 16 and drawing two of their 18 matches.

"The organizing committee, the technical team we have, Micah Samuel, Fitzroy and the manager Ian Bailey, Isaac and the whole team, they all made a great difference; and the commitment of the players

cont'd on pg 25



Members of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association present Jennings United player Daryl Massicott with the second division championship trophy at the Jennings playing field on Tuesday, 18th April, 2023. From left: ABFA's Vice President Gwen Salmon, Jennings United player Daryl Massicott, ABFA's Technical Director Sowerby Gomes and ABFA's Vice President Daryl Michael. (Photos by Elwin Francis)