

# SUSPECT IN CUSTODY

*Story on Page 2*



H.E. Ahmed Al Khateeb of the Saudi Fund for Development exchanges a gift with Prime Minister Gaston Browne, right. (Official photos courtesy Wayne Mariette) *Story on page 3.*

# Suspect in Custody

A suspect is in custody assisting the police with their investigations into the shooting death of 25-year old businessman, Roudi Shamarli.

On Monday afternoon Roudi Shamarli, was reportedly shot and killed during a brazen daylight armed robbery on DeSouza Road.

According to reports, a lone gunman entered the Pick n Mix Mart and held up the female attendant at gunpoint, and robbed the establishment of an undisclosed sum of money. The victim, who op-

erates the adjacent establishment, Chicken Hub, apparently heard the commotion and went into the superette to investigate, when upon entry he was allegedly shot in the head at close range. The injured man was transported to the Sir Lester Bird Medical Center by the Emergency Medical Services. He was pronounced dead around 1:35 pm by a medical doctor.

The assailant fled the scene on foot.

Pointe Xpress newspaper has been reliably informed



Roudi Shamarli was killed yesterday.

that the police have a suspect in custody. The man was

picked up by the police hours after the incident. No further information was readily available.

The police have issued a statement saying that they are continuing to probe the deadly shooting incident that resulted in the death of Shamarli.

The police also wish to reassure the public that they will continue intensifying their crime-fighting measures to ensure the safety and security of all.

Shamarli has been described as a well-liked individual, known for his simplicity. He is said to have dedicated himself to work diligently and steered clear of trouble. His sole focus was said to be earning and sending money back to his fiancé and the anticipation of their impending marriage consumed him, as he worked tirelessly towards that goal.

Shamarli's killing is the first recorded homicide for 2023.

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## Antigua and Barbuda supports Saudi Arabia

Antigua and Barbuda has been suggested to a team from Saudi Arabia as an 'excellent' place to invest, as that Kingdom seeks to expand its footprint globally.

The offer was made on Monday by Prime Minister Gaston Browne during a brief meeting with the Chairman of the Saudi Fund for Development and Minister of Tourism of Saudi Arabia, Ahmed Al Khateeb, who led a delegation on an official visit to Antigua and Barbuda for high-level discussions with the government.

"We seek to attract investment from Saudi Arabia knowing that we offer your businessmen and women the opportunity to invest in a stable country. A country whose economy has been growing in a very robust way over the last decade and which would provide stable returns for people," he highlighted.

Additionally, PM Browne spoke of the possibilities for joint investments



Prime Minister Gaston Browne (lower right) welcomes the Saudi delegation (seated opposite)

with the Saudis on a governmental basis. He said there are many areas for possible cooperation between the two countries and these are some of the areas that he would wish the two delegations to discuss further.

"We hope that from our discussions we would be able to take our relation-

ship to the next level of cooperation," he urged.

The Prime Minister also indicated that he held discussions previously with a delegation from Saudi Arabia, during which he invited the Kingdom to establish an embassy here, adding that the government would be willing to offer the land upon which that embassy would be built. "This is to enable Saudi Arabia to have a physical presence here in the Caribbean and we hope that you would give serious consideration to the offer," he added.

He said Antigua and Barbuda is not only committed to strengthening ties with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, but it wants to serve as a conduit for deeper ties between the Kingdom and the rest of the Caribbean.

On the question of Saudi Arabia's bid to host Expo 2030, the prime minister assured the delegation that the Kingdom has Antigua and Barbuda's full support. "Other friends have approached us, but we indicated to all that our support for Saudi Arabia is unshakeable," PM Brown declared. Beyond Expo 2030, the prime minister told the Saudi delegation that they can count on Antigua and Barbuda's support on other international issues such as climate change and other environmental issues.



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## Saudi Arabia committed to closer ties with Antigua and Barbuda

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wants to deepen its relationship with Antigua and Barbuda.

To this end, a high-level team representing the Saudi Development Fund paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Gaston Browne and a delegation comprising several members of the Cabinet.

The delegation is led by the Chairman of the Saudi Fund for Development and the Minister of Tourism of Saudi Arabia (Head of the Delegation) Ahmed Al-Khateeb. Other officials including Deputy Minister of Tourism for International Affairs Sultan Almusallam, Deputy CEO of the Saudi Fund for Development, Faisal Alkahtani, Portfolio Manager/Expo 2030 Team, Mohammadi Shenqiti along with representatives from the Saudi Embassy in Caracas, Venezuela, accompanied the Chairman.



*The Saudi delegation led by H.E. Ahmed Al Khateeb thanks the Antigua and Barbuda government for its support for their Expo 2030 bid.*

The leader of the Saudi delegation noted that since meeting with Prime Minister Browne last year, the Saudi Fund has signed an agreement for a US\$80 million loan for the expansion of the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus and added that they are willing to explore other opportunities to expand the relationship between the Kingdom of Saudi

Arabia and Antigua and Barbuda.

“Saudi Arabia is one of the G20 countries, it has the largest economy in the Middle East and when we establish relations with friends such as Antigua and Barbuda we bring our allies.

“We have the GCC countries as well as the Arab countries behind us, as well as the Muslim countries, as Saudi

Arabia is the home for more than one billion Muslims in the world, and therefore you can count on us. We give full commitment to this relationship,” His Excellency Al Khateeb stated.

The visit is part of a drive to lobby support for Saudi Arabia’s bid to host Expo 2030. “I want to assure you that we are open to any other construction projects as part of our commitment to the relationship. We value your commitment and support for Saudi Arabia hosting Expo 2030 and we promise you we can meet at the Antigua and Barbuda Pavilion at the Expo,” he remarked.

Already, one hundred and thirty-nine countries out of the 170 have pledged support for the Saudi bid, including most of Africa and the Caribbean, along with Central America and countries such as the United States and Canada.



*High-level talks between the Antigua and Barbuda Government and a delegation from the Saudi Fund for Development.*



## Caribbean health disaster coordinators meet in Antigua

Health disaster coordinators from across the Caribbean are meeting in St. John's this week to sharpen their ability to respond to a future health disaster such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic.


The Ministry of Health, Wellness, Social Transformation and the Environment will be hosting the Caribbean Health Disaster Coordinators Meeting from May 22nd to May 24th, 2023, at the Sandals Grande Resort.

Coming out of the experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the health disaster coordinators want to ensure that any future health disaster would generate a

different response based on the lessons learned from the pandemic.

“The meeting is being sponsored by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) with assistance from USAID. This meeting will bring together health disaster coordinators from Antigua and Barbuda and the rest of the region to discuss issues related to disaster management.

“The participants will review past experiences with health emergencies and will create strategies to respond should another occur, particularly in the post-COVID era,” a spokesperson for the Ministry of Health stated.



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## Local fishermen's group receives donation from PRC

One of the local organisations serving the interest of fishermen in Antigua and Barbuda has received a financial grant from the People's Republic of China (PRC) to boost its administrative capabilities.

A statement from the Antigua and Barbuda Fishermen's Co-operative Society noted that it received assistance from the PRC.

"The grant was a testament to the strong friendship between the two nations and was a much-needed boost to the Co-operative's efforts to improve its members' social and economic welfare," according to the statement.

The Antigua and Barbuda Fishermen's Co-operative Society, with a membership of over 270 people, is dedicated to promoting and improving the social and economic welfare of its members by utilizing their collective financial resources to better harvest and processing of seafood in an environmentally sustainable way.

The grant will be used to purchase equipment to improve the administration of the cooperative's secretariat in order to serve its members better.

"The grant was presented to the Co-operative by the Chinese Ambassador to Antigua and Barbuda, Ambassador Zhang Yanling, who spoke of the importance of the relationship between the two countries and the desire of China to support the development of Antigua and Barbuda," the statement added.

President of the Fishermen's Co-operative Society, Sir Anderson M.E. Roberts, expressed his grati-

tude and thanks for the financial support provided by the Chinese government. He indicated that the grant will be used to purchase equipment to improve the administrative capabilities of the secretariat to better serve the membership of the cooperative.

In thanking the PRC, the Antigua and Barbuda Fishermen's Co-operative Society said the grant will have a lasting impact on the cooperative and the local fishing communities it serves, allowing them to continue to organize, thrive, and grow in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way.



PRC donates to ABFCSL President, Sir Andy Roberts.



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## Heart and Stroke Foundation continues education programme

The Heart and Stroke Foundation is continuing its education programme as part of the observance of Stroke Awareness Month.

One such activity was the blood pressure screening clinic held recently at one of the country's supermarkets.

“The event aimed to raise awareness about stroke prevention and promote heart-healthy lifestyles across Antigua and Barbuda. A dedicated team of medical practitioners, students from the American University of Antigua (AUA) and St. An-

thony's Secondary School, enthusiastic volunteers, and our mascot Arter, joined forces to provide essential education on recognizing the signs of a stroke and maintaining healthy blood pressure levels,” the association said in a media release.

The event was part of the Heart & Stroke Foundation's ongoing outreach programme, which focuses on inspiring and empowering individuals to lead heart-healthy lives.

By offering free blood pressure screenings, the Foundation sought to detect potential health concerns early and provide participants with valuable information on managing their blood pressure effectively.

“Over a hundred residents stopped by - the two stations - contributing to its resounding success. Participants learned about the warning signs of a stroke and received valuable insights into maintaining healthy blood pressure, crucial for preventing cardiovascular diseases. One such

resident is Lennie Josiah,” the release noted.

“This event is very timely. For young doctors and volunteers to be here in the public assisting with free medical checks is admirable.

“I will defend your efforts continually. My experience today is beyond measure. This team will go places; you have the know-how and a good caliber of people,” Josiah said.

Dr. Georgette Meade, cardiologist, and spokesperson for the Heart & Stroke Foundation, expressed her satisfaction with the event's outcome.

“We are thrilled with the overwhelming response we received for this initiative. By increasing awareness and offering vital information on stroke prevention and blood pressure management, we hope to inspire positive lifestyle changes that will have a lasting impact on the health and well-being of individuals across Antigua and Barbuda,” said Dr. Meade.





# The PISLM and UWI launch Regional Scholarship Programme

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Trade and Barbuda Affairs (FAATBA), in collaboration with the Department of Environment (DOE), has

received approval through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to participate in a regional project entitled, "Caribbean Small Island Developing States

(SIDS) Multicountry Soil Management Initiative for Integrated Landscape Restoration and Sustainable Food Systems: Phase 1 (CSIDS\_SOILCARE

Phase 1)."

Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) for Caribbean small island developing states (CSIDS) has partnered with the University of the West Indies (UWI) to offer five regional scholarships to academics in the Masters and Doctoral spheres within the eight participating countries of the regional project.

The project is being funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and is executed in collaboration with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the University of the West Indies (UWI St. Augustine).

This scholarship is geared towards encouraging practical research in the areas of focus under the project including, soil science, agronomy, nutrition, integrated land management, and other related fields within the realms of agriculture, food security, and land management.

All academics are encouraged to visit the website at <https://pislmsids.org/> to access the application form. The deadline for application has been extended to July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, at 11:59 pm AST.



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## Meta: Facebook owner fined €1.2bn for mishandling data

By Shiona McCallum

Facebook's owner, Meta, has been fined €1.2bn (£1bn) for mishandling people's data when transferring it between Europe and the United States.

Issued by Ireland's Data Protection Commission (DPC), it is the largest fine imposed under the EU's General Data Protection Regulation privacy law.

GDPR sets out rules companies must follow to transfer user data outside of the EU.

Meta says it will appeal against the "unjustified and unnecessary" ruling.

At the crux of this decision is the use of standard contractual clauses (SCCs) to move European Union data to the US.

These legal contracts, prepared by the European Commission, contain safeguards to ensure personal data continues to be protected when transferred outside Europe.

But there are concerns these data flows still expose Europeans to the US's weaker privacy laws - and US intelligence could access the data.

This decision does not affect Facebook in the UK. The Information Commissioner's Office told the BBC that the decision "does not apply in the UK"



but said it had "noted the decision and will review the details in due course".

'Dangerous precedent'

Most large companies have complex webs of data transfers - which can include email addresses, phone numbers and financial information - to overseas recipients, many of which depend on SCCs.

And Meta says their broad use makes the fine unfair.

Facebook president Nick Clegg said: "We are therefore disappointed to have been singled out when using the same legal mechanism as thousands of other companies looking to provide services in Europe.

"This decision is flawed, unjustified and sets a dangerous precedent for the countless other compa-

nies transferring data between the EU and US."

But privacy groups have welcomed that precedent.

Caitlin Fennessy, of the International Association of Privacy Professionals, said: "The size of this record-breaking fine is matched by the significance of the signal it sends.

"Today's decision signals that companies have a whole lot of risk on the table."

It could make EU companies demand US partners stored data within Europe - or switch to domestic alternatives, she added.

In 2013, former US National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden disclosed American authorities had repeatedly accessed people's information via technology

companies such as Facebook and Google.

And Austrian privacy campaigner Max Schrems filed a legal challenge against Facebook for failing to protect his privacy rights, setting off a decade-long battle over the legality of moving EU data to the US.

Europe's highest court, the European Court of Justice (ECJ), has repeatedly said Washington has insufficient checks in place to protect Europeans' information.

And in 2020, the ECJ, ruled an EU-to-US data transfer agreement invalid.

But the ECJ left the door open for companies to use SCCs, saying the transfer of data to any other third country was valid as long as it ensured an "adequate level of data

*cont'd on pg 11*



## Ireland to introduce alcohol label health warning

The Republic of Ireland is set to introduce health warning labels on alcohol products.

Stephen Donnelly, the Irish minister for health, signed new regulations into law on Monday but they will not come into force until 2026.

Labelling will warn consumers about the risks of drinking alcohol as well as providing a product's calorie content and the number of grams of alcohol.

The Irish government said the regulations would bring alcohol products into line with requirements for food packaging.

Mr Donnelly said: "I welcome that we are the first country in the world to take this step and introduce comprehensive health labelling of alcohol products.

"I look forward to other



*New health labelling requirements will come into force in 2026.*

countries following our example."

Consumers will be warned about the dangers of drinking while pregnant as well as the risks of liver

disease and fatal cancers.

In January, Italy's ambassador to Ireland told Irish broadcaster RTÉ that the plans were "totally disproportionate".

Wine production remains a major export industry in Italy.

Ruggero Corrias said: "There is nothing wrong with the warnings, the point is the warnings should be proportionate and, in this case, since you're talking about wine, saying that drinking alcohol on a bottle of wine causes liver disease is totally disproportionate."

Dr Sheila Gilheany, the chief executive of Alcohol Action Ireland, welcomed the regulation.

She said: "This measure goes some way to ensuring consumers are informed about some of the risks from alcohol."

*cont'd from pg 10*  
protection".

It is that test Meta has been found to have failed.

Asked about the €1.2bn fine, Mr Schrems said he was "happy to see this decision after 10 years of litigation" but it could have been much higher.

"Unless US surveillance laws get fixed, Meta will have to fundamentally restructure its systems," he added.

Despite the record-breaking size of the fine, experts have said they think Meta's privacy practices will not change.

"A billion-euro parking ticket is of no consequence to a company that earns

many more billions by parking illegally," Johnny Ryan, a senior fellow at the Irish Council for Civil Liberties.

The US recently updated its internal legal protections to give the EU greater assurances American intelligence agencies would follow new rules governing such data access.

In 2021, Amazon was fined for similarly flouting the EU's privacy standard.

Ireland's DPC has also fined WhatsApp, another Meta-owned business, for breaching stringent regulations relating to the transparency of data shared with its other subsidiaries.

## ‘Fast X’ speeds to No. 1; knocks ‘Guardians 3’ to second

The 10th installment of the “Fast and Furious” franchise was off to the races this weekend, knocking “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3” out of first place and easily claiming the No. 1 spot at the box office. “Fast X” earned \$67.5 million in ticket sales from 4,046 North American theatres, according to estimates from Universal Pictures on Sunday.

It’s on the lower end of openings for the series which peaked with “Furious 7’s” \$142.2 million launch, the sole movie in the series to surpass \$100 million out of the gates. “Fast X’s” domestic debut only ranks above the first three. The last movie, “F9,” opened to \$70 million in 2021.

But this is also a series that has usually made the bulk of its money internationally, often over 70 per cent. True to form, overseas it’s on turbo drive. “Fast X” opened in 84 markets internationally, playing in over 24,000 theaters, where it earned an estimated \$251.4 million. The top market was China with \$78.3 million, followed by Mexico with \$16.7 million. And it adds up to a \$319 million global debut — the third biggest of the franchise.

“It’s a global franchise with a very broad audience,” said Jim Orr, Universal’s head of domestic distribu-



*This image released by Universal Pictures shows Vin Diesel, left, and Daniela Melchior in a scene from “Fast X.” (Peter Mountain/Universal Pictures via AP).*

tion. “The themes resonate across the world.”

Directed by Louis Leterrier (who took over from Justin Lin during production), “Fast X” brings back the familiar crew including Vin Diesel, Michelle Rodriguez, Tyrese Gibson and Jordana Brewster and adds several newcomers, like Brie Larson, Rita Moreno and a villain played by Jason Momoa. The ever-expanding cast also includes Jason Statham, Charlize Theron, Scott Eastwood and Helen Mirren.

Reports say the movie cost \$340 million to produce, not including marketing.

Reviews were mixed for “Fast X,” the begin-

ning of the end for the \$6 billion franchise, which currently has a 54 per cent on Rotten Tomatoes. AP’s Mark Kennedy wrote in his review that, “It has become almost camp, as if it breathed in too much of its own fumes” and that it’s also “monstrously silly and stupidly entertaining.”

According to exit polls audiences were 29 per cent Caucasian, 29 per cent Hispanic and 21 per cent Black, and 58 per cent were between the ages of 18 and 34. They gave the film a B+ CinemaScore.

In its third weekend, Disney and Marvel’s “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3” made an estimated \$32 million in North Amer-

ica to take second place. It’s now made \$266.5 million domestically and \$659.1 million globally.

Third place went to another Universal juggernaut, “The Super Mario Bros. Movie,” which is now in its seventh weekend and available to rent on VOD. Nevertheless, it earned an additional \$9.8 million in North America, bringing its domestic total to \$549.3 million.

“Book Club: The Next Chapter” added \$3 million in its second weekend to take fourth place, while “Evil Dead Rise” rounded out the top five in its fifth weekend with \$2.4 million.

“Mario” and “Fast X” are just the latest success

*cont’d on pg 13*



## Guyana: Deadly Mahdia school dormitory fire maliciously set

By Melissa Wong

The Guyana Fire Service has confirmed that the fire which claimed 19 lives at the Mahdia Secondary School female dormitory and left others injured, was maliciously set.

At a media conference, it was revealed that the point of origin was identified to the southwestern end of the building. The scene was handed over to the police.

The building in which the children stayed was described as a concrete and wooden structure with five doors and grilled windows. At the time of the fire, it was reported 56 children were at the dorm.

President of Guyana Dr Irfaan Ali at the news briefing announced three days of official national mourning and as of 4 pm for all flags to be flown at half-mast in honour of these children.

He described today as one of the saddest days in his life as president. He said Guyana is in pain.

The president gave an



update on the victims and stated that three of the girls went home for the weekend from the dorms.

Thirteen girls died at the dorm, a little boy (5 years) also died at the dorm, and five girls died at the Mahdia Hospital.

Six girls were medevacked to Georgetown and 17 are at the Mahdia Hospital with preparations being made to have three more medevacked to Georgetown.

Of the 13 lives lost, external assistance is required in DNA analysis to support the identification of the vic-



Deadly blaze at Mahdia Secondary School (Photo: CMC).

tims. The president said this support has already been sought from regional and international partners.

The government has

mobilised full counselling for all affected and pledged its full support to all the families and their children.

“I’m committing, as I have done to the family members already, our full unconditional, unhindered support for the families and these children; whether it be medical, social, counselling, financial, transportation, accommodation- whatever the form of support required, the state will provide that support to the families, to the children.”

*cont'd from pg 12*

stories for Universal, following hits like “Cocaine Bear” and “M3GAN.” And later this summer, on July 21, they’ll release Christopher Nolan’s “Oppenheimer.”

“Universal as a studio is just on a roll like no other by having this incredible slate of films from all different types of genres,” said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. “They’ve created a release strategy that’s really picture perfect

so far.”

“Fast X” doesn’t have an entirely open runway though. Next weekend there will be sizable competition in Disney’s live-action “The Little Mermaid,” in addition to a slew of crowd-pleasers hoping to catch a Memorial Day weekend audience, including Julia Louis-Dreyfus in “You Hurt My Feelings” and the broad comedy “About My Father,” with Sebastian Maniscalco and Robert De Niro.



## Carriacou: Lauriston Airport wants to accommodate night landings

The Government of Grenada is examining the idea of installing night-landing facilities as part of a plan for improving the overall operations and structure of the Lauriston Airport.

A team from the Grenada Airports Authority, led by Project Manager of the Caribbean Air Transport Regional Connectivity Project (CATCOP), Don'el Mitchell, were recently on island reviewing the structures that are in place at Lauriston.

He explained that the aim of the project is to enhance regional connectivity by improving the safety of air transport and the resili-



Lauriston airport, Carriacou.

ience of airport infrastructure to natural disasters.

Mitchell said that specifically for Carriacou, his

team is looking at ways to improve air traffic to the

13 square-mile-island, with discussions on the imple-

mentation of facilities for night landing.

Consultant Heinz Wipf, a Air Navigation Consultant from Switzerland, is also in Carriacou as part of Caribbean Air Transport Regional Connectivity Project.

Wipf, who has more than 30 years of experience in the field, is helping to gather data to guide the project's implementation.

For Minister for Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs and Local Government, Tevin Andrews, the visit of the Grenada Airports Authority team and the consultant inches the island closer to the implementation of the night-landing facilities, which he listed as one of the major projects for 2023.

He said this should encourage an increase in the tourism market and the attraction of a major hotel brand here for the first time.



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## Former NNP opposition member crosses the floor in Grenada

**By Melissa Wong**

Two weeks after resigning from the Dr Keith Mitchell opposition-led New National Party (NNP), Member of Parliament for St Andrew North West, Delma Thomas officially announced her decision to join the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC).

She made the announcement during a media engagement on Sunday where Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell was present.

The prime minister who is the political leader of the NDC said it is his honour to ‘welcome our courageous sister as we embark on this journey towards a stronger and more united Grenada.’

He added: “To the residents of St Andrew North-West, you are blessed with two powerful examples of female leadership. May we all be guided by their example, finding ways to work together to build our country.”

Thomas resigned from the NNP on May 7, 2023, stating that her continuation as a member of the party had become untenable following my many attempts to promote the democratisation of the organisation, and the consequent orchestrated backlash from an extremely small section of the party’s leadership.

At Sunday’s meeting, Thomas who was thinking



*Member of Parliament for St Andrew North West, Delma Thomas and Prime Minister of Grenada Dickon Mitchell.*

of representing her constituents, as an Independent, instead said a resounding yes to join the government’s side.

“I say to the prime minister, I say yes. I say yes to work for the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. I am committed to the people of St Andrew North West. It has always been about you.” She has pledged to work with the NDC.

Noting that her political career began in 2008, Thomas said from young, she was raised with integrity and good spiritual values, traits that stayed throughout her life.

Revealing that she has been going through stress since September 2022 to April 13, 2023, Thomas said she will not allow her character to be tainted or her family’s.

“There’s no one at present in the NNP that can say I have accepted anything from anyone, no one, no one can call my name in on, they could dig as deep as they want. There is nothing.”

She said they used to call her the conscience of the party and the government, ‘but a difference of opinion will cause you to be on the other side... will cause you to be viciously attacked.’

Thomas said: “There is a faceless monster, a giant, that came into the office of government and was promised to be one of the most powerful women in Grenada.

And she was indeed powerful for a period. She was making decisions behind the scenes. That faceless monster is still behind the scenes.

This powerful woman has group chats telling them how to attack and when to come after me.”

Thomas said despite the character assassinations and online attacks made against her, her character remains untainted.

## G20: India hosts tourism meet in Kashmir amid tight security

BBC - India is holding a key G20 tourism meeting in Kashmir amid heightened security and opposition from China.

The working group meeting is being held in Srinagar, the summer capital of the federally administered territory, from Monday to Wednesday.

This is the biggest international event organised in the region since India scrapped its special status in 2019.

Over 60 delegates from G20 member countries are expected to attend the event.

China, however, has said it will not attend, citing its firm opposition “to holding any kind of G20 meetings in disputed territory”. The BBC has emailed India’s foreign ministry for its response to China’s statement.

Both India and Pakistan claim Kashmir in full, but control only parts of it. The nuclear-armed neighbours have already fought two wars and a limited conflict over the region.

In April, Pakistan, which is not a G20 member, had criticised India’s decision to hold the meetings in Kashmir, calling it an “irresponsible” move.

India, however said, that it was “natural” to hold G20 events and meetings in “Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, which are an inte-



*Some opposition leaders have criticised the elaborate security arrangements ahead of the G20 meet.*

gral and inalienable part” of the country.

In 2019, the Bharatiya Janata Party-led federal government had divided the Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir to create two federally administered territories - Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. Ladakh is a disputed frontier region along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China, and both countries claim parts of it.

The Indian government and several sections of the media have calling the G20 event in Kashmir “historic”, billing it as an opportunity to showcase the region’s culture.

In the days leading up to the event, India had conducted several security

drills in Kashmir. The region has seen an armed insurgency against India since 1989 - India accuses Pakistan of fomenting the unrest by backing separatist militants, a charge denied by Islamabad.

Over the decades, opposition politicians, activists and locals have also accused successive Indian governments of human rights violations and stifling of freedoms in the restive region - which Delhi has denied.

This year, the region has witnessed increased attacks by suspected militants and security officers have told the media that they are taking steps to prevent any threats designed to derail the G20 meet.

Elite security forces - including marine commandos,

National Security Guards, Border Security Force and police forces - have been deployed in Kashmir to provide ground-to-air security cover, according to reports.

Security has also been boosted around the Dal Lake and the Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) in Srinagar, which is the venue for the meeting.

Schools around the routes that G20 delegates will use have been closed. Military bunkers, a common sight in Kashmir, have been covered with G20 banners to hide them from view.

Local opposition leaders, including former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, have criticised the elaborate se-

*cont'd on pg 17*



## Granddad's grenade kills US man and injures teens

**By Bernd Debusmann Jr**

An Indiana man was killed and his two children injured after a hand grenade found in a grandfather's belongings exploded, say police.

The blast happened on Saturday evening in Lake of the Four Seasons, a community about 140 miles (225km) north-west of Indianapolis.

Police believe someone pulled the pin on the device.

The father died and his 14-year-old son and 18-year-old daughter suffered shrapnel wounds.

Both teenagers were taken to hospital. Their condition was unclear.

In a statement posted to Facebook, the Lake County Sheriff's Department said that responding offi-



cers found the 47-year-old victim fatally wounded at his home. He was later declared dead and identified as Bryan Niedert.

A bomb squad was called to the scene to check if any other explosives were at the house.

Authorities have not released any more information on the grenade or why

it was in the grandfather's belongings.

While deaths from unexploded ordnance are extremely rare in the US, they are not unheard of.

In 2020, a 12-year-old boy in Virginia was killed when a Second World War hand grenade bought at a local flea market exploded.

According to experts,

the vast majority of grenades and other ordnance found in private homes are inert and safe to handle.

Last year the FBI warned: "Some families of aging US war veterans are finding unexpected, and highly dangerous, souvenirs among their loved ones' belongings - ticking time bombs."

*cont'd from pg 16*

curity arrangements and accused the federal government of making life even more difficult for ordinary people. In a press conference, Ms Mufti compared the restrictions in Kashmir ahead of G20 to that of the notorious US military prison, Guantanamo Bay. The Jammu and Kashmir administration has not responded to this yet.

A 53-year-old businessman, who did not want to be named, told the BBC that locals had to "face a lot of difficulties" over the past 10 days due to the security arrangements.

"There was a lot of frisking, checking and search operations in residential areas. Many schools and colleges

are shut," he said.

He also questioned the federal government's claim that the meeting would boost the local economy, saying that only "permanent peace" could achieve that.

Others have also criticised the decision to hold the meeting in Kashmir.

Last week, Fernand de Varennes, the UN's special rapporteur on minority issues, had issued a statement saying that the G20 was "unwittingly providing a veneer of support to a facade of normalcy" when human rights violations, political persecution and illegal arrests were escalating in Kashmir. The statement was criticised by India's permanent mission at the UN

on Twitter.

India has said it will showcase the cultural heritage of Kashmir and promote its tourism potential during the meeting. Delegates will be taken on sightseeing tours and there will be discussions on strategies to promote «film tourism», according to an official statement.

The G20, which includes the world's 19 wealthiest nations plus the European Union, accounts for 85% of global economic output and two-thirds of its population.

India currently holds the presidency - which rotates annually between members - and is set to host the G20 summit in Delhi in September.

## Palestinian gunmen among three killed in Israeli Nablus raid

By Yolande Knell

Three Palestinians have been shot dead and several wounded by Israeli forces in Nablus, in the occupied West Bank.

Witnesses described hearing gunfire and explosions as Israeli troops raided several houses in the crowded Balata refugee camp, in what they said was the biggest operation there in years.

The Israeli military says gunmen shot at its soldiers, who returned fire.

It says the soldiers found three M16 rifles, ammunition and an explosives workshop. Three arrests were made.

Israeli-Palestinian violence has been intensifying for months with near-nightly Israeli military raids in the West Bank and rising settler violence as well as a series of deadly attacks by Palestinians on Israelis.

Funerals have taken place for the three men who were killed during the latest raid in Nablus. Two have been identified as fighters from the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, the armed wing of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah faction.

Palestinian sources say these two men were killed in an exchange of fire with Israeli forces, while it was unclear if the third man had joined in the fighting.



The Palestinian presidency condemned what it called the "continuous aggression" against those living in Nablus.

Security camera footage being shared on social media, which cannot immediately be independently verified by the BBC, appears to show that one man was unarmed when shot while approaching a soldier.

Palestinian reports said that Israeli troops entered Balata camp accompanied by bulldozers and that they blocked ambulances from entering.

"All night we didn't sleep, we stayed awake, we were afraid, in horror," a resident of the camp, Um Abdullah, told al-Quds TV.

"We were sitting inside the house and a friend of my son called to say: 'They're

going to demolish the house next-door, you need to leave.' Within a few seconds they demolished the house and our windows and doors fell down. We stayed inside and then ran away."

In a statement, the spokesman for the Palestinian presidency, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, condemned what he called "a real massacre and a continuation of the all-out war Israel is waging against the Palestinian people".

He called for the US administration to intervene to put a stop "to the Israeli madness that will drag the region towards an explosion".

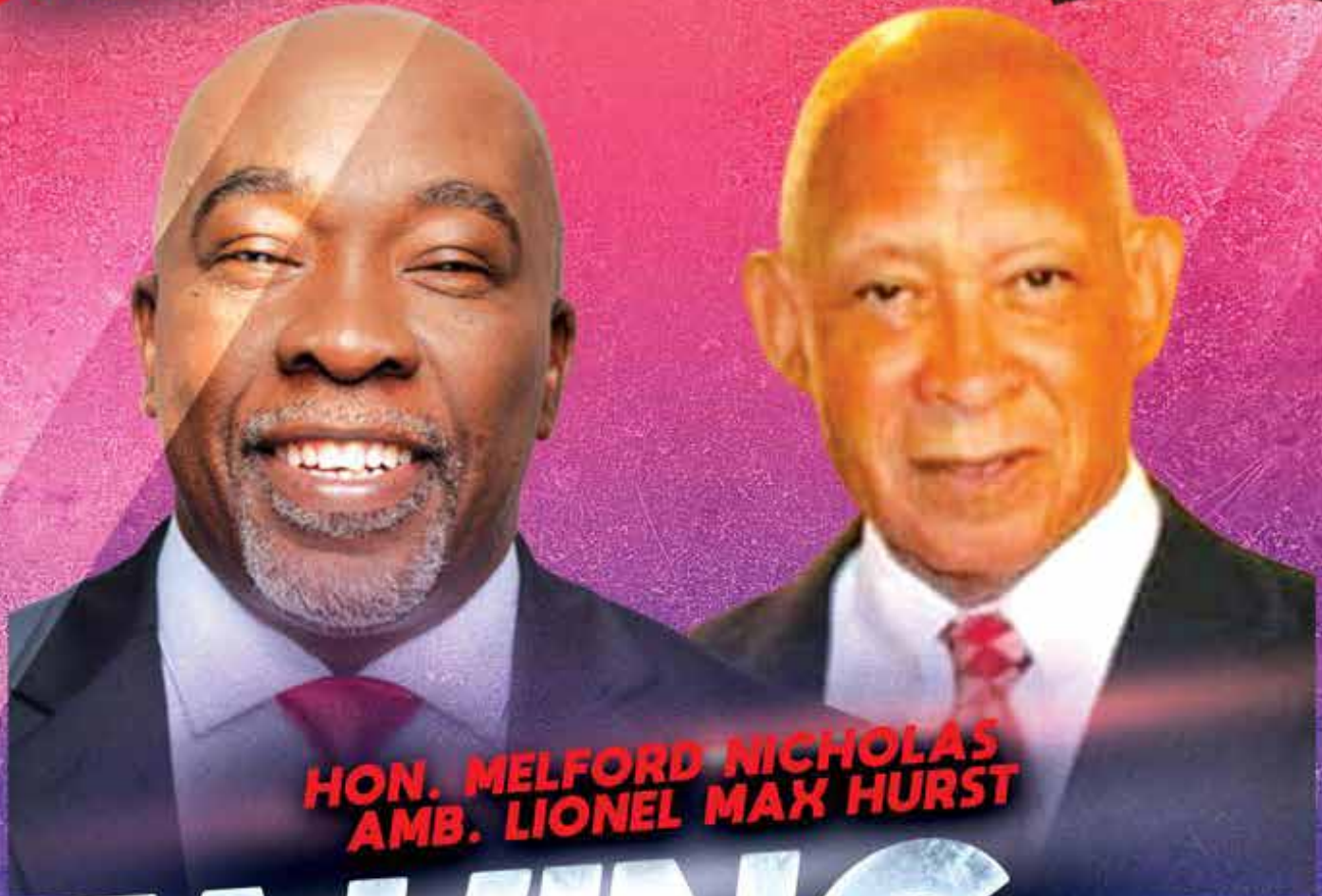
Overnight, the Israeli military says it made more than a dozen arrests across the West Bank, including three in Jenin. Like Nablus, Jenin has recently seen a concentration of Israeli army raids and has been a hotbed for Palestinian militants.

On Sunday, the Israeli military said a soldier was lightly wounded in a car ramming attack in the village of Hawara, close to Nablus. A search for the driver is continuing.

Earlier this month, two Palestinians were killed and others wounded by Israeli army gunfire during another arrest raid in Balata camp.



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# Sports News



## Cornelius claims third straight hat-trick for Police in Parish League cricket



James Cornelius

Police off-spinner James Cornelius accomplished an astonishing feat when he grabbed his third consecutive hat-tricks in the Antigua Commercial Bank (ACB) Caribbean Parish League Sir Richie Richardson Limited Overs Championship over the weekend.

In his two previous matches, Cornelius claimed a hat-trick in picking up four wickets for two runs during Police's 64-run victory over Urlings and also took a hat-trick in grabbing six-wickets for just one run to lead his team to a sev-

en-wicket win against Time of Victory Old Road.

Cornelius' latest exploit for defending champions Police was achieved in a nine-wicket win against host Dreams 2 Reality Sea View Farm last weekend.

Cornelius achieved his latest feat to finish with three for 13, Lashorn Barnard snapped up four for 12 and captain Derek Mourillon captured two for 16 as Sea View Farm tumbled to 75 all out in 17.3 overs in which Rolston "Triss" Phillip got a top score of 31.

Malique Gerald then hammered an unbeaten 42 to lead Police to victory at 76 for one in just 8.2 overs.

Freetown pulled off a two-wicket win against Police at Freetown. Vincent Shadrach Jr hit 48 and Damon Valentine scored 47 in Police's total of 182 for seven off 34 overs. Vance Nathaniel captured three for 44.

Kief Baltimore cracked 45 and Pete Lee struck 35 as Freetown snatched victory at 186 for eight with a ball to spare. Leg spinner Lynton Africa claimed three for 38 and Derek Mourillon took two for 25.

Mahico had double success in their encounters last weekend. Mahico secured a 46-run triumph over Time of Victory Old Road at Clare Hall and overcame Urlings by 30 runs at Urlings.

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## Braves get first win in ABBA's division one league

Braves snatched an eight-point victory over Spanish Heat to record their first win in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) First Division League on Sunday night.

Braves won for the first time in six encounters when they overcame Spanish Heat 82-74 in a bottom of the table clash in the second game of a double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Sergio Symister scored 24 points and claimed 10 rebounds; Damien Floyd sank 18 points; Bernard Andrew converted 13 points and snatched 10 rebounds while Lenroy McFarlen chipped in with 10 points and nine rebounds for Braves.

Israel Pulinario shot a game high 30 points and grabbed 16 rebounds; Steven Matthew scored 17 points while Antonio Cruzdehaa chipped in with 12 points, 12 rebounds, seven steals and six assists for Spanish Heat, who lost for the fifth time in as many outings to remain rooted at the bottom of the league.

Ottos Full Throttle claimed their third consecutive win in six encounters by trouncing All



*Braves*

Saints Slam 81-50 in the first game of Sunday's double header.

Kwame Payne produced a game-high 22 points, seven rebounds, six assists and five steals while Warren Bogle had 16 points, 10 rebounds and six assists for Ottos Full Throttle.

They were supported by Lincoln Weekes with 12 points; Shaquille Kelly with 10 points and 10 rebounds and Akeem Davis, who also had 10 points and six rebounds.

Ezekiel Francois grabbed 25 rebounds and converted 14 points while Olivee Morris sank 11 points for All Saints Slam who were beaten for the fourth time in six encounters.



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Abbiel Fleming, centre, won the overall title.

## Fleming wins ABCF's Individual Time Trial

Abbiel Fleming of Team Pillars Cycling has won the overall title in the Antigua and Barbuda Cycling Federation's (ABCF) Individual Time Trial on Sunday.

Fleming clocked the best overall time to win the race from Police Recreation Grounds to Miss Welch's Shop in Pares Village.

He also won the Men's Elite division by completing the distance in a time of 24 minutes and 59.40 seconds. He finished ahead of team-mates Jeffery Kelsick and Delvin Peters as riders from Team Pillars Cycling claimed the top

five positions in the Elite Men's Class.

Teenager Tahje Browne won the Junior Male Class as Wadadli Cycling Academy made a clean sweep of the top three places.

Browne completed the race in 25 minutes and 25.82 seconds to finish ahead of team-mates Jahiem Telemaque, who clocked 28 minutes and 26.98 seconds, and Jayonte Joseph in 37 minutes and 51.96 seconds.

The Masters Class was won by Wayne Henry of Road Runners Cycling Club in a time of 26 minutes and 32.22 seconds. Richard Lam of Little

Rascals came second in 28 minutes and 53.96 seconds while Neil Lloyd of N&R Wheelers finished third in 30 minutes and 21.17 seconds.

Cosmos Richardson of Vipers captured the Sports Class by clocking 28 minutes and 26.14 seconds. Macos Ozu-na of Little Rascals took second place in 29 minutes and 39.36 seconds. Independent cyclist Jason Adams finished in third place.

The Cadets 14 to 17 age group class was won by Aiden Tonge of East Side Raiders in a time of 30 minutes and 44.42 seconds.