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JULY 4 DECLARED A PUBLIC HOLIDAY

Story on Page 2



The Ministry of Agriculture officially launched the 2023 installment of the annual PiAngo Fest, formerly known as Mango Fest, slated to take place at Cades Bay in the south of Antigua, in August. *Story on page 6.*

July 4 declared a public holiday

The government has declared July 4, 2023, as a public holiday in Antigua and Barbuda, as part of the observance of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Chaguaramas that created the Caribbean Community, CARICOM.

The decision was made at Wednesday's meeting of the Cabinet and according to sources, the decision is intended to allow for reflection and examination for assessment and for future guidance.

It marked a reversal of a position stated publicly by Prime Minister Gaston Browne that there were too many public holidays already on the books in the country and that he was concerned about the issue of productivity. At the time, he did indicate that he may look favourably at a one-off observance.

The Cabinet has determined that the holiday will be observed this year



only and is being granted because of the significant 50-year milestone in the attainment of regional unity and cooperation.

"The holiday is solely in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of CARICOM and not an annual holiday," according to Cabinet sources.

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Government continues to pursue establishing an 'air bridge' with Africa

The Antigua and Barbuda government continues to pursue every effort to establish an air bridge with Africa.

"The Gaston Browne administration has pursued relations with Air Peace, the largest Nigerian Air Carrier to invest in LIAT 2020 Ltd.

"The Cabinet is of the view that the capital required to make the new LIAT worthy is not forthcoming from the former shareholders of LIAT 1974 Ltd. Hence, another investor is required, and Air Peace has indicated its capabilities," this week's Cabinet Notes have declared.

According to the Notes, the carrier will also seek to establish regular flights between West Africa and Antigua, utilizing LIAT for dispersing its transit passengers to other Caribbean Countries and building up the

capabilities of LIAT to fly outside of the region.

For Carnival 2023, arrangements are being made to share Nigeria's rich cultural tapestry with a group of cultural artists from Nigeria for a period of four days.

They will all stay at one of Antigua's luxury hotels and return to their homeland by Air Peace at the end of the Carnival Festivities.

Sir Ronald uses humour to make a serious point

In a bold statement during the 53rd General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), Sir Ronald Sanders, Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda, revealed an amusing yet compelling truth: the only practical use of Venezuela's seat at the OAS is as a convenient resting place for his briefcase.

The alphabetical seating arrangement at the OAS starts with Antigua and Barbuda and ends with Venezuela.

The Venezuela seat has been empty, since January when the purported presidency of Juan Guaidó collapsed, having not paid any money to the Organization.

By his playful observation, Ambassador Sanders raised a serious matter that has adversely affected the OAS since 2019 when the government of Venezuela withdrew from membership in the Organization, hav-



Sir Ronald Sanders

ing given 2 years' notice in accordance with the OAS Charter.

From the outset of the appointment of Juan Guaidó as the President of Venezuela by a few countries, many of which have since reversed their position, Antigua and Barbuda has argued that the recognition of Guaidó by the OAS was contrary to the rules of the Organization and is ille-

gal.

Speaking at the OAS General Assembly on June 23, Ambassador Sanders expressed his deep reservations regarding the continued inclusion of "mythical" contributions from Cuba and Venezuela, both of which have severed their connections with the OAS. Sir Ronald stressed that by continuing to book membership subscriptions

from these two countries, a misleading representation of the Organization's actual financial situation is being perpetuated.

He also emphasized that Venezuela and Cuba are exercising an "unwanted veto" on decision-making at the OAS since a two-thirds voting majority is being calculated on 35 member states or 24 votes, whereas there are now only 33 members and two-thirds should be 22." He said, "Membership of the OAS by Cuba and Venezuela is first a decision of their governments; it is impractical and unrealistic for any other government to claim otherwise."

Ambassador Sanders has repeatedly urged the OAS member states to address this issue earnestly, recognizing the necessity to rectify both the misleading accounts of the Organization and the distorting effect on its decision-making.

Local News



Drug seizures at Deep Water Harbour and Post Office

Cannabis, weighing a total of 130 pounds, along with a quantity of ecstasy tablets were seized at Deep Water Harbour on Tuesday, 27 June.

The Police Narcotics Department and Customs Department conducted a joint drug operation at the main seaport and discovered 128 sealed packages of cannabis and 53 ecstasy tablets hidden inside several barrels.

The cannabis is said to carry a value of \$780,000 and the ecstasy is valued at \$1,855.

Additionally, a similar operation was conducted at the General Post office, also on Tuesday. During the search, 8 pounds of cannabis were discovered. That seizure is estimated at \$48,000. The controlled substances were taken to the police station, pending further investigations.

NOTICE TO THE LICENSING MAGISTRATE

AND

THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

To: Her Worship
The Licensing Magistrate
Magistrate's Court
St. John's
Antigua

To: The Commissioner of Police
Police Headquarters
American Road
St. John's
Antigua

We, A & B Farms Ltd., of registered offices Stapleton Chambers, Stapleton Lane in the Parish of Saint John in Antigua and Barbuda **DO HEREBY GIVE YOU NOTICE** that it is our intention to apply at the next special sitting of the Liquor Licencing Court to be held at the Magistrate's Court, St. John's, Antigua on 6th July 2023 for a Tavern Licence pursuant to Sections 11 (5) of the Licensing (Intoxicating Liquor) Act, Cap 249, Laws of Antigua and Barbuda in respect of the premises known as "A & B Farms Ltd." situate at Pares in the Parish of Saint Peters in the island of Antigua.

Dated the 1st day of June 2023

Signed Kemar A. Roberts
RICHARDS & COMPANY
Attorneys-at-Law for the Applicant

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ABAA reviews response mechanisms after successful emergency exercise

The Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority is reporting that it is now better positioned to respond to any emergency or crisis at the VC Bird International Airport, following the conduct of a full-scale exercise to test its internal mechanisms and those of its support agencies.

An ABAA release stated that such exercises are done at the behest of the United Nations-established International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) which mandates that they be done regularly and that two years should not pass and one not be held. ICAO also recommends that these exercises should be multi-agency activities, incorporating those agencies that are critical during an emergency.



ABAA in conjunction with the National Office of Disaster Services (NODS) were the main coordinating agencies in the exercise held last week, to test the national emergency response mecha-

nisms in handling a scenario that created a hostage crisis situation on the compound of the airport.

The overall objective sought to assess the procedures and response mechanisms of the Airport Operation Centre, and the country's Emergency Operation Centre in not only minimizing the effects of any emergency but protecting and saving lives.

"We live in an age where we can't leave anything to chance and we are obliged to take all possible and potential

threats to the safe aerodrome environment in which we operate with absolute seriousness," noted Director of Safety and Security Avery Henry.

At various stages of the exercise, there was involvement from several key agencies whose resources would be called on should a real-life emergency ever take place at the airport. These included the Police and Defence Forces, the Fire Service, the Emergency Medical Services, the Red Cross, Sir Lester Bird Mount St. Johns Medical Centre and the National Office of Disaster Services.

Among the observers were the Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority (ECCAA), which is the regulating agency for all Civil Aviation safety and security matters based on International Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs).



Local News



Ministry of Agriculture officially launches Piango Fest 2023

The Ministry of Agriculture officially launched the 2023 installment of the annual Piango Fest, formerly known as Mango Fest, slated to take place at Cades Bay in the south of Antigua, in August.

According to a spokesman, “PiAngo Fest is organized by the Ministry of Agriculture each year to display mangoes, and now pineapples in not just their natural state but with all the by-products that come from them. This has always been a great opportunity for agro-processors and entrepreneurs to promote their businesses, and network with others to add value to our local fruits, here in An-



tigua and Barbuda.”

PiAngo Fest 2023 was officially launched on Wednesday, by Agriculture Minister, E.P Chet Greene who commended the Ministry for an event that pro-

motes small businesses. Additionally, he has arranged for a \$50,000 grant to be made available to the agro-processors who register for PiAngo Fest to ensure that businesses get the recognition they deserve. He also tasked the PiAngo Fest committee with increasing the number of vendors to a minimum of 60, adding that he is looking forward to PiAngo Fest this year, as the newly appointed Minister of Agriculture.

The ceremony was held at the Ministry of Agriculture’s Headquarters. Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry, Senator Knacyn-tar Nedd delivered the welcome remarks.

Agro-processor Nakima Williams of Kima’s gave brief remarks extending gratitude to the Ministry for hosting such an event as PiAngo Fest which allows processors like herself to create new products and

promote their businesses with assistance from supporting agencies to expand the product lines.

The Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture’s (IICA) National Specialist, Craig Thomas pledged that IICA will continue to support PiAngo Fest, as it has been doing from its inception when it was just called Mango Fest. IICA has been working closely with agro-processors each year to not only expand their product line but better their businesses through several workshops.

At the launch, many local items were displayed and available for sale such as fruit wines, soaps, jams, jellies, cakes, dried fruits, sweets and treats, and cosmetic products.

PiAngo Fest 2023 will be held on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th of August at the Cades Bay Agricultural Station.

NOTICE TO THE LICENSING MAGISTRATE

AND

THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

To: Her Worship
The Licensing Magistrate
Magistrate’s Court
St. John’s
Antigua

To: The Commissioner of Police
Police Headquarters
American Road
St. John’s
Antigua

We, Soursop Holdings Ltd., of registered offices Lighthouse Global Executive Services Inc., Scotts Hill in the Parish of Saint John in Antigua and Barbuda **DO HEREBY GIVE YOU NOTICE** that it is our intention to apply at the next special sitting of the Liquor Licensing Court to be held at the Magistrate’s Court, St. John’s, Antigua on Thursday 6th July 2023 for a Tavern Licence pursuant to Sections 11 (5) of the Licensing (Intoxicating Liquor) Act, Cap 249, Laws of Antigua and Barbuda in respect of the premises known as “Soursop Holdings Ltd.” situate at Friars Hill in the Parish of Saint John in the island of Antigua.

Dated the 1st day of June 2023

Signed Kemar A. Roberts
RICHARDS & COMPANY
Attorneys-at-Law for the Applicant

The Antigua and Barbuda Evangelical Alliance responds to 'social ills'

The Antigua Barbuda Evangelical Alliance (ABEA) has planned a series of events beginning this weekend, aimed at addressing what it describes as social ills to include, crime and youth violence.

In a media release, the ABEA said this is 'in an effort to fulfill our Christian duty to be vanguards of the morals of our nation.' "We strongly believe that it is our duty and mandate as the people of God, to humble ourselves, to pray and to seek the face of our God for the healing of this nation," the release stated.

Details of the week of events are as follows:

Saturday 1st July - the Young-Adult arm of the Organisation will host a Glow Walk through the streets of St. Johns to help to raise awareness to the vast section of society who are very concerned with the status quo. The message through the March of Witness is that these unwanted activities must end now! The walk will begin at 6:00 pm from the old Cultural Building on Parliament Drive. The public is invited to join.

Sunday 2nd to Friday 7th of July - the clergy will be leading in sessions of prayer in several churches and on various radio stations. Further details about the specific stations and times will be given subsequently.

Sunday 9th July - select congregations representing every parish across the islands of Antigua and Barbuda shall engage in times of prayer on behalf of the nation. These prayer sessions will run simultaneously at

selected locations starting at 6:00 am.

"The entire Board of Directors of the ABEA join in expressing their sincere thanks to the people and government of Antigua and Barbuda for the steadfast

support over many years.

"We covet your support of these events and ask that you listen out for other activities which the ABEA will host throughout the remainder of this year," the release concluded.



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Local News



Nerissa Martin celebrated by the Sandals Group

The Sandals Group is celebrating the achievements of Nerissa Martin, who started as a server in the company, and today has been promoted to restaurant manager, within the company.

Nerissa joined the Sandals family in 2007 as a restaurant server and has shown dedication and commitment to meeting and exceeding customer service expectations. "Growing up, it was always a part of me

to care for people. Joining the Sandals family not only allowed me to do that, but it has proven to be a satisfying and rewarding experience," she shared.

Reflecting on her journey in the tourism and hospitality industry, her passion for guest services and a constant desire to achieve excellence are always at the forefront of Nerissa Martin's endeavors.

Now, 15 years later, with a world of experience under

her belt, the proud Sandals Grande Antigua team member still has her eyes set on the prize.

Excelling as a server, Nerissa challenged herself to be more involved in guest services, zealously jumping at the opportunities for training and development offered by the company, one of which was with the Club Sandals department.

Shortly after her training, she was transferred to the department where she



Nerissa Martin

worked as a Club Sandals concierge from 2013 until her promotion to Club Sandals supervisor, in 2017.

As destiny would have it, Nerissa was successful at securing a promotion to restaurant manager and is assigned to the OK Corral restaurant which is a Tex-Mex dining experience for guests.

Since her promotion Nerissa has been a trailblazer, exemplifying her natural skills in leadership, human resources, and customer service by facilitating team member training, implementing recognition programmes, and always encouraging growth and development among the team members she leads.

With her outstanding track record thus far, Nerissa has her eyes set on continuing her self-improvement and development journey as she aspires to one day become a food and beverage director within the company.

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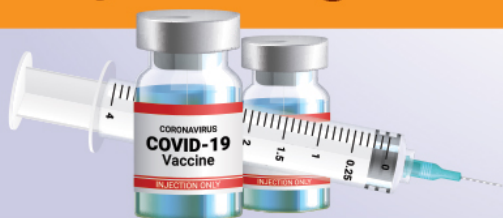
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Bird flu defence discovered in our bodies

By James Gallagher

A key defence that blocks nearly all bird flu when it attempts to invade our body has been discovered by scientists.

Bird flus have been involved in four pandemics since 1918 - killing millions of people.

The research, led by the University of Glasgow, showed those pandemics and normal winter flus had evolved ways of getting round this “powerful barrier”.

The team think we will soon be able to predict which of the flus currently in birds pose the biggest risk.

The scientists were investigating spillover events. These are the moments a person catches an infection from an animal. This jump across species is a critical step in the start of a new pandemic.

In laboratory experiments, researchers uncovered a section of our genetic code - our DNA - that becomes activated in response to an infection. It

is called BTN3A3 (although even the researchers admit “we’re stuck” with a clunky name).

The data, published in the journal *Nature*, showed BTN3A3 became active in our nose, throat and lungs and that it reduced the ability of bird flus to replicate.

Researcher Dr Rute Maria Pinto said “nearly all” bird flus are unable to bypass this protection so “these are normally blocked by it, so they don’t jump”.

She added: “The big majority of human viruses and in fact all pandemic viruses so far, have [resistance to BTN3A3] so they overcome this block and therefore infect.”

There is a constant chance of bird flus making the jump into people. There is a variety of flu viruses in wild birds, and poultry poses a high risk because of the sheer number of farmed animals and their close proximity to people.

The 1918 flu pandemic is thought to have started in birds and is esti-

mated to have killed 50 million people. The researchers showed a form of bird flu called H7N9 developed higher levels of resistance to BTN3A3 in 2011 and 2012 before the first human cases emerged in 2013.

Evolving ways of bypassing BTN3A3 is one of the steps a bird flu can take to successfully infect us.

The researchers’ vision is to routinely analyse - or sequence - the genetic code of flus that are currently circulating in birds, identify the dangerous ones and tackle them.

Prof Massimo Palmarini, director of the Centre for Virus Research in Glasgow, told me: “In the not so distant future we’ll be able to put together all the pieces of the puzzle.

“From a sequence of a virus, we’ll be able to say this has a 90% chance to cross over to humans, this virus has only a 10% chance.”

Then targeted measures could be introduced to help control viruses that do have a high risk of making the jump.

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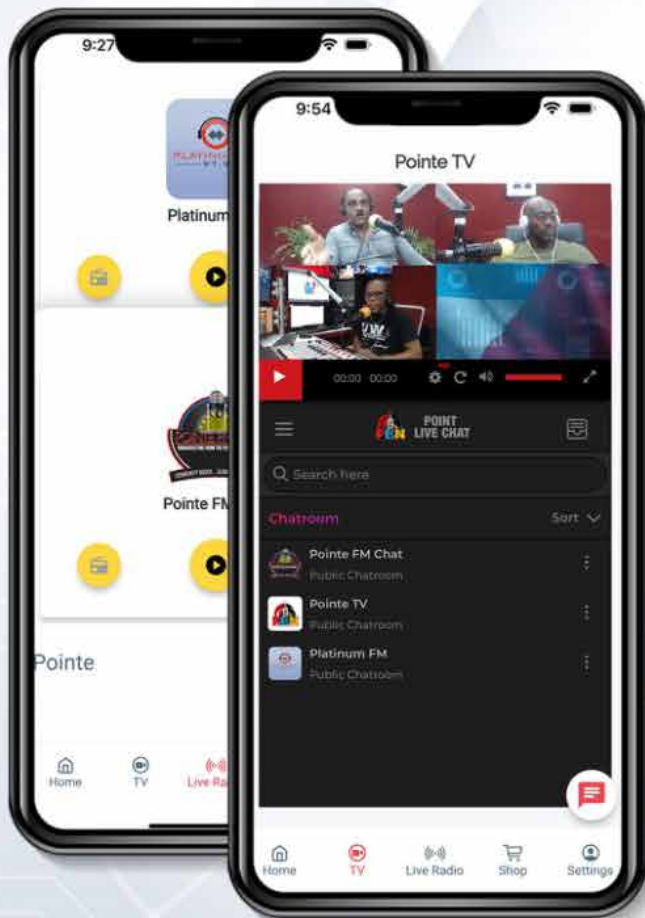


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Technology

ChatGPT owner OpenAI to open first foreign office in UK

The US company behind ChatGPT has said its first international office will be based in London.

OpenAI chief executive Sam Altman said the move was an “opportunity to attract world-class talent”.

It comes after he criticised the EU’s proposed legislation regulating artificial intelligence (AI), which would require companies to reveal the content used to train their systems.

The UK meanwhile is planning what it calls “pro-innovation” regulation.

“We are thrilled to extend our research and development footprint into London, a city globally renowned for its rich culture and exceptional talent pool,” said Diane



OpenAI chief executive Sam Altman said the move would ‘attract world-class talent’.

Yoon, OpenAI VP of People.

“We are eager to build dynamic teams in research [and] engineering... to reinforce our efforts in cre-

ating and promoting safe AI.”

When ChatGPT burst onto the scene last November, the chatbot’s ability to give human-sounding answers to questions kickstarted intense global interest in the latest AI-powered products.

It also sparked a debate about what threats AI potentially poses - and what regulation is needed to mitigate those risks.

At an event at University College London in May, Mr Altman said he believed AI could create jobs and reduce inequality.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said at the event that AI could “positively transform humanity” and “deliver better outcomes for the British public, with emerging opportunities in a range of areas to improve public services”.

ChatGPT has proven controversial, being briefly banned in Italy before it was restored in April 2023.

The UK government said it has invested £2.5bn in AI since 2014.

The BBC has approached the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology for comment.



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Madonna postpones tour after intensive care stay

BBC - Madonna has postponed her world tour after being taken to a hospital's intensive care unit (ICU) with a serious bacterial infection.

According to her manager, the global popstar's infection was "serious" and led to "a several day stay in the ICU". He added a full recovery is expected.

In a statement, Guy Oseary said Madonna's health is improving, but she is still under medical care.

Madonna, 64, was expected to launch her 84-date tour next month.

She is believed to be receiving treatment at a hospital in New York City, US media reports.

The pop icon aimed to celebrate the 40th anniversary of her breakout single, *Holiday*, by embarking on her first ever greatest hits tour.

Dubbed the Celebration Tour, this would be the singer's return to arenas and stadiums after her experimental, theatre-based *Madame X* shows in 2019 and 2020.

Some of those performances were called off due to the star's knee and hip injuries.

"Sorry I had to cancel tonight," the star wrote on Instagram after cancelling a 2020 performance in Lisbon, "but I must listen to my body and rest!"



Madonna celebrated the 2022 release of her compilation album at a roller disco in New York.

Madonna's latest tour was due to start in Vancouver, Canada, on 15 July and end on 30 January in Mexico City.

But the singer-songwriter's manager said Madonna developed a "serious bacterial infection" on Saturday 24 June and all commitments would need to be paused as a result.

She was due to begin the UK and Europe portion of her tour on 14 October, scheduled to begin and end at London's O2 Arena.

In announcing the tour back in January, she told fans: "I am excited to explore as many songs as possible in hopes to give my fans the show they have

been waiting for."

Madonna's greatest hits span several decades - including *Into The Groove* (1985), *Like A Prayer* (1989), to *Vogue* (1990) and *Hung Up* (2005) to name a few.

It is likely that Madonna - who is intensely private about health matters - was in the final stages of a rehearsal regime in preparation for the tour.

In 2009, she was awarded a Guinness World Record for the highest-grossing music tour by a female artist after completing her *Sticky & Sweet Tour*.

American magazine *Forbes* lists her as the 45th richest self-made

woman in the US with an estimated wealth of \$580m (£460m) and says she has earned an estimated \$1.2bn from tours.

She has six children. Last week, she posted to her 18.9m Instagram followers to congratulate her twin 10-year-old daughters for completing elementary school.

Madonna Louise Ciccone grew up in the city of Detroit, Michigan. In 1978, she moved to New York to pursue a career in dance and music.

Earlier this year, her older brother Anthony Ciccone died aged 66 after struggling with alcoholism and homelessness.

Regional News



NYC Mayor announces new initiative for Caribbean immigrants

CMC - New York City Mayor Eric Adams says the city will open a 12th Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centre as thousands of Caribbean and other asylum seekers continue to arrive weekly in the city.

Adams said that, soon, 1760 Third Avenue in Manhattan will open as a humanitarian relief centre to serve more than 500 families with children seeking asylum, providing a range of services, in addition to ensuring they can reach their desired destination, if not New York City.

Many of the asylum seekers arriving in New York City from the southern border of the United States are Venezuelans, Cubans and Haitians.

"With over 50,000 asylum seekers currently in

our care and a total of over 81,200 asking us for care since last spring, New York City continues to do more than any other city or level of government to address this national crisis," said Mayor Adams.

"We continue to meet the needs of people arriving in New York, but as the number of asylum seekers continues to grow, we are in serious need of support from the federal government.

"This 12th Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Center will provide over 500 households with a place to stay, access support, and get to their final destination," he added.

He said the centre demonstrates the city's commitment to meeting its obligations and doing so with care, compassion, and dignity for every person.



"However, our city cannot continue to shoulder a disproportionate responsibility for what we know is a national issue.

"The federal government needs to provide additional assistance and a coordinated decompression strategy to relieve the pressure being felt by many major cities across the country, particularly New York City," said Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom.

Adams said since the humanitarian crisis began, the city has taken "fast and ur-

gent action" opening, among others, about 175 emergency shelters, enrolling thousands of children in public schools through Project Open Arms, launching the Asylum Application Help Center to help migrants with their asylum applications; and more.

Earlier this year, the city released "the Road Forward: A Blueprint to Address New York City's Response to the Asylum Seeker Crisis," detailing how the city will continue to manage the influx of asylum seekers and advocate for support from federal and state partners.

Stolen sweet peppers and bacon? Two charged separately in St. Vincent

Two men in St Vincent and the Grenadines have been charged for separate incidents in relation to the alleged theft of sweet peppers and bacon.

In the first incident on June 23, police arrested and charged Arnold Dasent, 47, a labourer of La Croix/Ginger Village for the alleged theft of 23 pounds of mature Sweet Peppers valued at EC \$149.50 from the property of a Richland Park farmer.

Dasent appeared at the Serious Offences Court to answer the charge on Monday where he pleaded not guilty. He was granted \$1,000 bail with one



surety. He was ordered not to contact the virtual complainant and the matter was adjourned and transferred to the Calliaqua Magistrate Court for trial on July 4, 2023.

Meanwhile, in a separate incident, a man was charged for stealing three packs of bacon.

Desmond George, 64, a labourer of Stubbs was arrested and charged on June 23 with the offence of Theft.

George allegedly stole three packs of Oscar Bacon valued at EC\$105.10 from a supermarket in Kingstown.

The accused appeared at the Serious Offences Court on Monday, where he pled guilty to the charge.

He was bonded for six months in the sum of \$800 or six months imprisonment.

Guyana AG: Minister innocent of rape allegations until proven guilty

CMC - Attorney General, Anil Nandlall, says embattled Local Government Minister, Nigel Dharamlall, is innocent until proven guilty as the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) called on the police to continue their investigations into the rape allegations against him by a 16-year old girl.

“Mr Dharamlall as a citizen is accorded certain constitutional and legal safeguards by the highest of our laws – the Constitution. He is accorded certain facilities, he is presumed innocent like every other citizen of this country, and the investigative arm of the State must be allowed, free from any form of pressure to conduct its investigatory role and functions,” Nandlall said on his televised programme ‘Issues in the News’ on Tuesday night.

Dharamlall, an executive member of the ruling People’s Progressive Party (PPP), who is on one million dollars (one Guyana dollar=US\$0.004 cents) bail, has publicly denied all accusations.

Police had arrested the minister, who has since gone on leave to facilitate the probe, when he presented himself at the Brickdam Police Station in the company of his attorney, Nigel Hughes, last week Monday night.

There have been calls from the opposition, as well as several civil society organisations including the Amerindian Peoples Association and Red Thread, for Dharamlall to be removed from public office.

They have also called for a fair and transparent investigation into the allegations made by the 16-year-old schoolgirl against the embattled minister.

Nandlall in his broadcast assured that the process outlined in the country’s Criminal Justice System is being



Nigel Dharamlall (Photo: CMC)

“scrupulously” followed.

“Mr Nigel Dharamlall is a colleague of ours in the Government, and he is also a citizen of Guyana. In both capacities, he is entitled to certain due processes. Those due processes as enshrined in our administrative protocols, in our legal statutes, in our criminal processes, are being pursued and are being carried out.

“They will not be influenced one way or another by virtue of the fact that Mr Dharamlall is a minister or it will be compromised in any form or fashion because politicians would like a particular outcome,” Nandlall said.

Head of the Criminal Investigations Department, Assistant Commissioner Wendell Blahum, has confirmed that the DPP had asked the police to further investigate allegations after reviewing a file that had been sent to the DPP office.

The Office of the DPP, in a statement, said that it will not be intimidated by individuals who profess to want justice in a criminal matter even while

a police file is being given due legal attention.

It urged the public to desist from politicising an alleged criminal offence, adding “all statements or evidence must be considered before legal advice is given to the Guyana Police Force.”

The teenager remains in the protective care of the Ministry of Human Services’ Child Care and Protection Agency and is said to be receiving all necessary support including counselling.

Nandlall said as the Attorney General, he is not involved in the matter and that the government is following protocols as it treats with this very sensitive issue.

“I want to assure that the government is complying with all the standard operating procedures and the state apparatus is complying with all the standard operating procedures in this matter, and the Government is not intervening. The government has no role to play,” he added.

Daniel Penny pleads not guilty in NY subway chokehold death of Jordan Neely

BBC - A former US Marine who placed a homeless man in a fatal chokehold on a New York City subway train has pleaded not guilty to criminal charges.

Daniel Penny, 24, was indicted in court on Wednesday on counts of second-degree manslaughter and negligent homicide.

Witnesses said Jordan Neely, 30, was shouting at other subway passengers and asking for money when Mr Penny pinned him down for several minutes on 1 May.

Video of the confrontation sparked protests and counter-demonstrations.

Mr Penny faces up to 15 years in prison if convicted of the manslaughter charge. He was arrested on 12 May and released on \$100,000 (£80,000) in bail.

He has said he was acting in self-defence in the incident on a northbound F train subway car in Manhattan.

Witnesses said Mr Neely was shouting about how he was hungry and willing to return to jail or die. There is no indication he physically attacked anyone.

The incident was filmed by bystanders, and a video captured by a freelance journalist on the train shows Mr Penny holding Mr Neely around the neck for two minutes and 55 seconds.

He continued to restrain Mr Neely, including after he stopped moving, say prosecutors.

Emergency responders tried to resuscitate him, and he was taken to hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

The city medical examiner said his death resulted from compression of the neck and ruled it a homicide.

In a statement on Wednesday,



Jordan Neely's death sparked protests in New York City.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg said he hopes the Neely family is "on the path towards healing as they continue to mourn this tragic loss".

Mr Penny did not address reporters as he entered the Manhattan court for Wednesday's brief hearing.

Earlier this month, Mr Penny addressed the incident on social media and said he did not intend to kill Mr Neely.

"I was scared for myself but I looked around there were women and children, he was yelling in their faces saying these threats. I just couldn't sit still," he said.

Outside court, attorneys for Mr Penny expressed confidence he will ultimately be found not guilty.

"There is not a living, breathing soul in Manhattan that has not experienced a variation of what not only Mr Penny but other individuals experienced on that subway car," lawyer Thomas Keniff said.

The defendant was ordered to return to court on 25 October for a pre-trial hearing.

A self-defence argument was the most logical way for Mr Penny to proceed, attorneys told the BBC.

The case is "dependent on whether or not there was an imminent harm posed to himself or others, and whether or not his conduct was excessive", said Dmitriy Shakhnevich, a criminal defence attorney and professor at John Jay Law School.

"That's really it," he said. "There's nothing else in this case."

That standard would be quite high, said Lance Fletcher, a former prosecutor who now works as a New York defence attorney.

"They have to say, he killed this guy and it wasn't justified, and no reasonable person would think it was justified," Mr Fletcher said. "And that's going to be tough."

Perception "has a huge impact on the case", said Mr Fletcher, "since this case is all about justification".

Mr Neely was a Michael Jackson impersonator who frequently performed in Times Square.

He had 42 arrests on charges such as evading fares, theft and assaults on three women, according to US media reports.

Mr Neely began experiencing mental health issues after his moth-

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French HR murders: Gabriel Fortin sentenced to life in prison

By Kathryn Armstrong

A man who fatally shot three women he accused of ruining his career has been sentenced to life imprisonment in France.

Gabriel Fortin, 48, was given the maximum sentence for murder and attempted murder by a court in the city of Valence on Wednesday.

This means he will spend up to 22 years behind bars.

Fortin, who was dubbed the “HR killer”, was arrested in 2021 - days after the women were shot dead.

Speaking to reporters following the verdict, the lawyer for the family of Géraldine Caclin, one of the victims, told the AFP news agency that Fortin’s “only response to life’s failures, and we’ve all experienced them, was to organise this crime.”

Bertrand Meichel, the sole survivor of the attacks, was also present at

the court and questioned the length of time Fortin would spend behind bars.

“When the death penalty was abolished in 1981, we were promised life imprisonment,” he said.

“Today, the law limits life imprisonment to 22 years, and the court will have no choice but to comply.”

The first killing happened on 26 January 2021 in the Alsace region of eastern France. Human resources manager Estelle Luce was shot in the head in her company car park after work.

Later that evening, about 50km (30 miles) away, another HR manager was shot at his home by a man posing as a pizza deliverer. The victim, Mr Meichel, survived.

Two days afterwards, 500km to the south, a man wearing a facemask and carrying a white plastic bag entered the Valence



Gabriel Fortin's trial in the southwestern city of Valence lasted for two weeks.

local job centre, pulled a gun from a plastic bag and killed the benefits director, Patricia Pasquion.

Minutes later another HR manager, Géraldine Caclin, was killed at an environmental services company near Valence.

The number plate of the car used by the gunman as he left the job centre later led police to Fortin and linked him to the final murder that followed.

It was later revealed that Ms Luce and Mr Me-

ichel had been involved in Fortin’s dismissal from a company in 2006. Three years later, Ms Caclin led dismissal proceedings against the engineer after an unsuccessful trial period.

Ms Pasquion never dealt with Fortin, but police believe he held a grudge against staff at the Valence job centre, where he was registered until 2013.

During his two-week trial, Fortin remained mostly tight-lipped but claimed he was the victim of conspiracies that had led him to be dismissed from roles between 2006 and 2009, as well as spying.

Fortin’s lawyers suggested he was mentally unfit to stand trial, claiming he was isolated and suffering from personality disorders.

But prosecutors showed how he had thoroughly researched and plotted the attacks.

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er’s murder by her boyfriend in 2007, his aunt, Carolyn Neely, told the New York Post last month.

New York Mayor Eric Adams has said Mr Neely’s previous offences highlight the need to improve the city’s mental health system.

The case has become politically charged with conservatives - including Florida Governor and presidential hopeful Ron DeSantis - praising Mr Penny as a hero.

His detractors, such as US civil rights

leader Reverend Al Sharpton, have characterised Mr Penny as a vigilante in the mould of Bernard Goetz, a white man who shot and injured four black men on a New York subway in 1984.

Mr Penny’s supporters have raised nearly \$3m (£2.37m) for his legal defence.

But Neely family attorney Donte Mills said on Wednesday: “For everyone who thought donating \$3 million would somehow make this go away or buy his pass: It’s not going to happen. You can ask for a refund.”

Human remains thought to be found in Titan sub debris

BBC - Human remains are believed to have been found in wreckage of the Titan submersible, the US Coast Guard says.

Pieces from the sub, which imploded on a deep dive to the Titanic, were unloaded in St John's, Canada, on Wednesday.

Officials say the sub's landing frame and a rear cover were found among the debris.

US medical professionals will conduct a formal analysis of presumed remains, the coast guard said in a statement.

The agency is in the early stages of an investigation into the causes of the disaster. The Coast Guard's Marine Board of Investigation (MBI) will transport the evidence to a US port for further analysis and testing.

MBI Chair Captain Jason Neubauer said in a statement that there is "still a substantial amount of work to be done to understand the factors that led to the catastrophic loss of the Titan and help ensure a similar tragedy does not occur again".

"I am grateful for the coordinated international and interagency support to recover and preserve this vital evidence at extreme offshore distances and depths," Cpt Neubauer said.

All five people on board



A US Coast Guard ship brought pieces of the sub ashore.

the vessel died on 18 June after it imploded about 90 minutes into a dive to view the famous 1912 shipwreck, which sits at a depth of 3,800m (12,500ft) in the north Atlantic.

The passengers were the head of OceanGate, which organised the dive, 61-year-old Stockton Rush; British explorer Hamish Harding, 58; Shahzada Dawood, 48, and his son, Suleman Dawood, 19; and French diver Paul-Henry Nargeolet, 77.

Officials were initially sceptical about the prospect of recovering any of the bodies.

"This is an incredibly unforgiving environment down there on the seafloor," Coast Guard Adm John Mauger said, shortly after the loss of the vessel was confirmed.

Cpt Neubauer said at the time that investigators

would take "all precautions" if they discovered human remains and that the probe would likely include a formal hearing with witness testimony.

So far, the coast guard says, five major pieces of the sub have been found in a large debris field near the bow of the Titanic.

The debris brought ashore on Wednesday appeared to include at least one titanium end cap, the sub's porthole with its window missing, as well as a titanium ring, landing frame and the end equipment bay, according to BBC science correspondent Jonathan Amos.

The recovery mission was led by Canadian ship Horizon Arctic, which carried a remotely operated vehicle operated by Pelagic Research Services. The company said in a statement earlier Wednesday

that its team had completed off-shore operations and was returning to base.

OceanGate has been criticised for its safety practices, and former employees have raised concerns about the Titan sub, which was not subject to regulation.

In email messages seen by the BBC, Mr Rush had previously dismissed safety worries from one expert, saying he was "tired of industry players who try to use a safety argument to stop innovation".

Another former OceanGate employee also wrote an inspection report which identified "numerous issues that posed serious safety concerns", including how the hull had been tested.

In a statement last week, OceanGate said it was "an extremely sad time for our employees who are exhausted and grieving deeply over this loss".

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Sports News



Teams battle for last two semi-final spots in Thursday League contest

The teams and the way they are seeded if they qualify for the semi-finals of the Antigua Commercial Bank (ACB) Caribbean Parish League Sir Vivian Richards Thursday League competition will be decided in the final round of preliminary phase matches today.

PIC Insurance Liberta Black Hawks and Mahico will enter their last preliminary round matches as joint leaders with 12 points apiece and have

already qualified for the semi-finals.

However, the outcome of each team's respective encounters in the final round of preliminary matches will determine the other two qualifiers and the seedings of the teams that advance to the semi-finals.

Following the two front-runners are the Pigotts Crushers and Rising Sun Spartans, who are jointly tied on eight points.

The Crushers will meet Mahico at Clare Hall, the



Spartans will host defending champions Police at the Rising Sun playing field, and the Liberta Black

Hawks will face the All Saints Pythons at the Mack Pond playing field in All Saints in today's matches.

If the Pythons beat the Black Hawks, the Crushers win against Mahico, and the Spartans defeat Police, the Black Hawks, Mahico, the Crushers, and the Spartans will finish the preliminary rounds tied on 12 points each, thus completing the semi-final line-up.

However, if the Spartans are beaten by the Police, the Pythons overcame the Black Hawks, and Mahico defeated the Crushers, the Police and the Pythons will end the preliminary rounds jointly tied with the Spartans and the Crushers on eight points each.

If all four teams end the preliminary rounds jointly tied on eight points, the Parish League organizers will use the net run rate to decide which two of the four teams will join the Black Hawks and Mahico in the semi-finals.

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Leewards chose three Under-25 players in professional draft

The Leeward Islands Hurricane have selected three Under-25 all-rounders among the five players they selected in the recent West Indies Professional Cricketers Draft to be retained on full-time regional contracts.

They are off-spin bowler Zawandi White of Montserrat, leg-break bowler Mikyle Louis of St. Kitts, and left-arm pacer Nathan Edwards of St. Maarten.

The other two players selected by the Leeward Is-

lands Hurricane in the draft are Barbadian all-rounder Justin Greaves and Jamaican pacer Oshane Thomas.

The Leeward Islands Hurricane were among the other five Territorial Board Franchises that participated in the draft to select the five players for their squads for regional tournaments, which will include the CG United Super50 Cup limited overs tournament and the West Indies Championship four-day first-class compe-



Mikyle Louis
tition.

The five players selected by each franchise are added to their pre-selected squad of 10 protected players to make a full squad of 15 players, two of whom must be under the age of 25 by October 1st, 2023.

The Leeward Islands Hurricane, which had already retained Antiguan Under-25 player and left-arm pacer Javier Spencer of the Liberta Black Hawks, and the Guyana Harpy Eagles are the only two regional franchises to select four Under-25 players in their overall squad of 15 contracted players.

The four Under-25 players selected by the Guyana Harpy Eagles are Matthew Nandu, Kevlon Anderson, Rampertab Ramnath, and Mavendra Dindyal.

Three Antiguan, who all represent the Liberta Black Hawks, have been



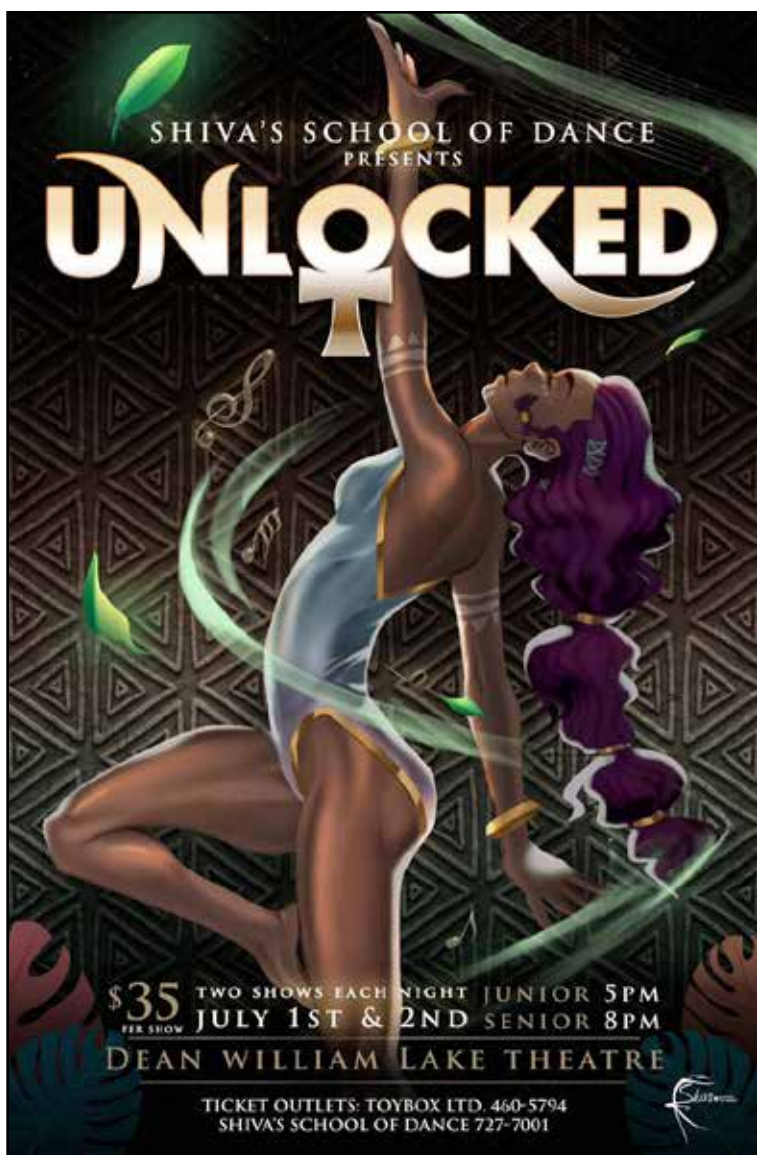
Justin Greaves
selected as part of the overall 15 contracted players chosen by the Leeward Islands Hurricane. They are Rahkeem Cornwall, Karima Gore, and Kofi James.

The rest of the Leeward Islands contracted players are Kieran Powell, Jahmar Hamilton, Colin Archibald, Jeremiah Louis, Daniel Doram, and Keacy Carty.

The CWI West Indies Professional Cricketers Draft was held in Jamaica last Thursday.

The draft was conducted over five rounds, where each franchise picked a player in each round. The franchises selected their picks from a pool of nearly 100 players.

A total of 90 men's cricketers across the six franchises are being retained on full-time regional contracts.



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Sinclair to replace Cariah in West Indies team

Cricket West Indies (CWI) has announced that Kevin Sinclair has been named as the injury replacement for Yannic Cariah in the 15-member squad for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 Qualifier tournament, which is being played in Zimbabwe.

Cariah, the leg-spinner and left-handed batsman, had surgery on a nasal fracture last week after getting hit in the nets.

He has unfortunately not recovered sufficiently to resume playing at this stage. Sinclair, the tall off-spinner and right-hand-

ed batsman, is due to arrive in Harare today.

The Event Technical Committee of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2023 has approved the replacement. The replacement of a player requires the approval of the Event Technical Committee before the replacement player can be officially added to the squad.

The Super Six stage will be played from Thursday, 29th June, to Friday, 7th July. West Indies ended third in Group A with two wins and two defeats.

The Caribbean side will



West Indies off-spinner Kevin Sinclair. (File photo)

play three Super Six matches against the teams qualifying in the top three positions from Group B.

Those three matches will be against Sri Lanka, Scotland and Oman.

The final will be played at Harare Sports Club on Sunday, 9th July. The two finalists will progress to the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, which will be

played in India in October and November.

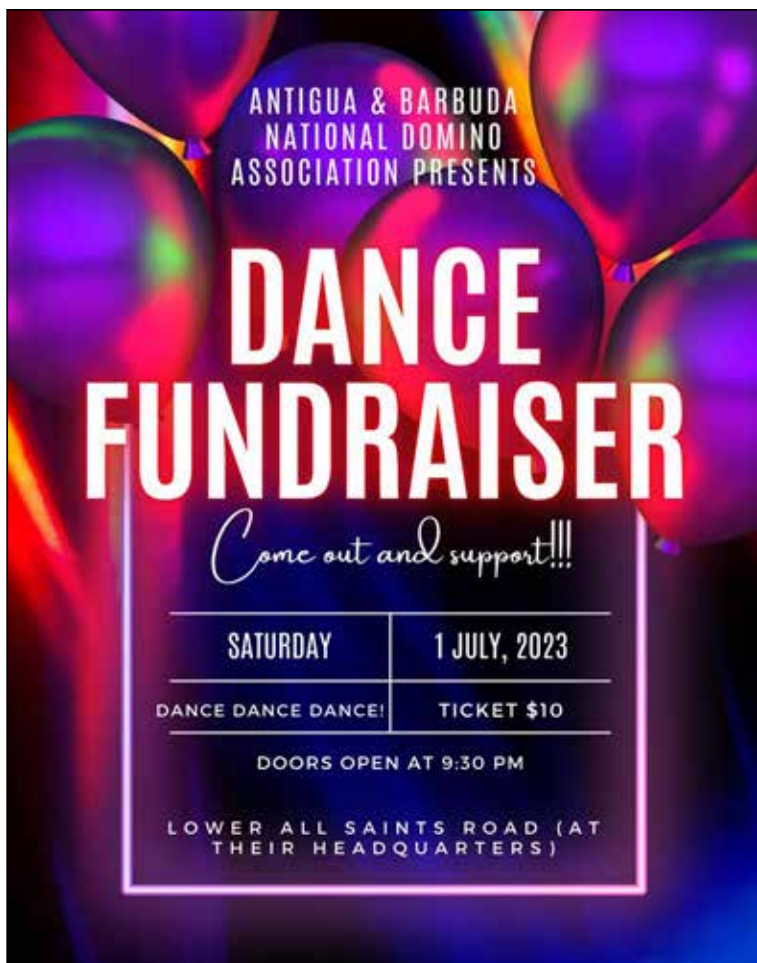
Full Squad: Shai Hope (captain), Rovman Powell (vice-captain), Shamarh Brooks, Keacy Carty, Roston Chase, Johnson Charles, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Brandon King, Kyle Mayers, Keemo Paul, Nicholas Pooran, Romario Shepherd, and Kevin Sinclair.

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said Empire Nation also exposed a few youngsters in the two-day competition. He said the team will be working with their younger players to ensure that Empire Nation will be much harder to beat in the future.

"I have to say kudos to all the players of the Empire Nation team, the support staff, everybody around the team, and all our fans and supporters," Scott said.

"I know we just have to go back to the simple things and work with these youngsters that we exposed in the two-day competition, so going forward, we will have a much harder team to beat in the future. So I just want to say, 'Good luck to everybody.'"



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Cornwall happy with Black Hawks' success

Coach Wilden "Polo" Cornwall said he is elated that the PIC Liberta Black Hawks were able to successfully defend and retain the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) Two-Day Championship.

The Black Hawks claimed back-to-back titles by prevailing on first innings against Empire Nation in the two-day finals, which ended in a draw at the King George V Grounds on Sunday.

Cornwall said retaining the title is special to him since the team had to rely on exposing some of their younger players in the ABCA two-day contest due to the absence of several key players, some of whom were representing the Leeward Islands Hurricane in the Cricket West Indies (CWI) regional four-day championship.

Cornwall, who is also a coach with the Leeward Islands Hurricane, said that due to the absence of several key players, the Black Hawks were able to achieve their goal of finishing in the top four at the end of the preliminary rounds to advance to the semi-finals.

He said those key players were able to return for the semi-finals and the final, which allowed the Black Hawks to successfully defend and retain the title in the two-day competition.

"I think our performance throughout the season really sums up the way we want to showcase our youngsters. Early on in the season, we took some beating, but we had a plan where we were exposing quite a few of our young cricketers in the two-day competition," Cornwall said.

"It goes to show that when you have the likes of Rahkeem Cornwall, Hayden Walsh Jr., Karima Gore, Kofi James, Joshua Thomas, and all these guys chipping in, it helps to make this a big success.

"To defend a title like this in your country is something that I hold dear to my heart. I am really glad for this win, and I am glad that we were able to defend the title."

Losing finalists Empire Nation dominated the early stages of the two-day competition by finishing in first



Liberta Black Hawks Coach Wilden 'Polo' Cornwall is all smiles with the ABCA Two-Day championship trophy following his team's success in the final against Empire Nation at the King George V Grounds on Sunday, June 25th, 2023. (Photo by Elwin Francis)

place with 67 points, just one point ahead of the Liberta Black Hawks at the end of the preliminary rounds that comprised nine matches. Captain Kenrick Scott

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