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# MAN SHOT, CRITICALLY WOUNDED IN WILLIKIES

*Story on Page 2*



An 18-year-old student of the Ottos Comprehensive School won the school's well-produced and highly entertaining 2023 Teen Pageant held at the Dean William Lake Cultural Centre, on Saturday night. *Story on page 7.*



# Local News

## Man shot, critically wounded in Willikies

The police have confirmed that a man, said to be in his 20's, has been shot in the head and critically wounded in an incident that happened in Willikies on Sunday at about 8:30 p.m.

The police say the investigation into the incident is ongoing and so far there is no one in custody in relations to the crime. There were no reports of the circumstances surrounding the shooting.

The man is said to have been rushed to the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre where he is said to be in critical condition.

No further information was available.

In another incident, the secretary of Saint Joseph's Academy was transported to

the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre on Sunday afternoon after suffering an injury to his face after he was robbed by two young men who were armed with what appeared to be flare guns.

The incident took place on the school's compound located on Stapleton Lane.

Surveillance footage of the disturbing incident showed the secretary, Shane Anthony, being escorted to a corridor away from the front of the school by two young men who were shirtless, wearing toques, with their faces covered and flare guns trained on the employee.

The footage shows Shane Anthony emptying his wallet and handing over what appeared to be money



to the robbers. With the bandits seemingly demanding more, he then lifted his shirt supposedly to prove that he had no more valuables on his person.

Anthony then attacked one of the bandits who discharged the flare gun. The flare is said to have hit him

in the face.

The robbers then fled the area.

The severity of the SJA employee's injury is unknown at this time.

Efforts to contact the school's principal, Rudolph Davis for comment were unsuccessful.

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## COP Atlee Rodney elected to Presidency of ACCP

Antigua and Barbuda's Commissioner of Police Atlee Rodney was elected to the presidency of the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police at its just concluded 37th annual general meeting and conference, in Trinidad and Tobago.

Commissioner Rodney said his election was unanimous and that he is proud to have been selected by his peers to head the regional body, grouping together 25 police commissioners across the Caribbean, from Haiti in the north to Suriname in the south.

"The theme of the conference was 'Transnational organized crime; a growing threat to regional security. This was our theme and all the discussions and presentations focused on how we can address transnational organized crime because



*Commissioner of Police Atlee Rodney*

that is what we recognize that is what we recognize that is a threat to regional security. Criminals do not respect borders, so they would obviously work from one jurisdiction to the next, affecting individual states and collectively as a region. There were a number of presentations along that line. We had presentations from amongst ourselves as well as from organisations and institutions such as the University of the West Indies," he reported.

He added that there was also a presentation from INTERPOL and how that international crime agency can assist Caribbean states tackle the issue of transnational organized crime; another notable presentation came from the US Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), among others.

Rodney said the com-

missions agreed that the organisation's executive will utilize technology to have monthly meetings to discuss matters of concern.

"In my inaugural address, I called on all of us to work closer together. Basically, what has happened is that some commissioners remain in isolation and the appeal I made is that we have to speak more frequently, we need to work closer together, and we need to exchange best practices," he added.

He announced the formation of an entity that will serve as a storehouse of information from which all police commissioners can share.

Commissioner Rodney said along with crime fighting he also wants to focus on training for police officers locally and throughout the region.

## Staff and members of the public prevent major fire damage at Cool and Smooth

A major catastrophe was averted at one of the most popular stores in St. John's on Saturday mid-morning when the staff of Cool and Smooth, with assistance from members of the public, kept in check, a fire that started in one of their storerooms.

Located immediately east of the Vegetable Market on the highly congested Lower All Saints Road at that time of day, the fire, believed to have been the result of an electrical issue,

started in a storeroom on the northern side of the building.

Immediately, the staff sprang into action utilizing a combination of fire extinguishers and water, with assistance from members of the public who helped keep the fire from spreading to the main store.

The fire department reported that the call came in at 10:31 on Saturday morning and the department responded with three fire tenders: two from

the St. John's Station and one from All Saints.

The department was responding to its 207th fire call for the year; a figure reflecting fire calls from all stations.

The department could not give an estimate of the cost of the damage to the goods in the storeroom. It indicated that much of the damage would have been caused by the smoke that filled the room and not necessarily by the fire itself.



# Local News



## Young Antigua and Barbuda diplomat elected Vice-President of major United Nations body

One of the younger members of the Antigua and Barbuda mission to the United Nations - Asha Challenger – has been elected to one of the important United Nations committees working towards ending plastic pollution worldwide.

A press release from the mission stated, First Secretary Challenger has been elected by acclamation to the position of Vice President of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution, which is seeking to develop a binding legal agreement that will see to the end of plastic pollution across the globe.

According to the release, she serves in this role on behalf of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and has also been tasked with the responsibilities of Rapporteur for the Committee.

“Challenger won unanimous approval for the post during the second session of

the INC which concluded in Paris, France on Friday with a clear mandate for it to begin work on preparing a draft treaty ahead of its next session set to take place in Nairobi, Kenya, this November.

“Antigua and Barbuda has been at the vanguard of the effort to make the oceans free of plastic pollution and the dreaded consequences it is bringing to the health and economic welfare of island nations in the Caribbean and around the world. In 2016, Antigua and Barbuda imposed a ban on the use of single-use plastics giving it an influential voice on the issue internationally, the media release stated.

It noted that in June 2020, on the occasion of World Ocean Day, it joined with Norway and the Maldives to launch the Group of Friends to Combat Plastic Pollution, seeking to accelerate the push for action on



*Asha Challenger*

bringing an end to the crisis.

“Our marine ecosystems which are so vital for our survival will literally suffocate if we fail to act now,” Ms. Challenger acknowledged.

“There’s a growing sense of optimism that we are moving in the right direction in relieving our planet from an impending crisis,” she further said in reflecting on the outcome of last week’s meeting while expressing

gratitude to her colleagues and peers for reposing their confidence in her to serve as Vice President of INC.

Challenger joined the Antigua and Barbuda Mission to the United Nations in New York in 2016 and also covers the high seas treaty and international security and disarmament matters. She has also served as Lead Oceans Negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island Developing States (AOSIS).

The Antigua and Barbuda delegation to the Paris meeting also included Dr. Linroy Christian, Director of the Analytical Services Division, and Indira James-Henry, Environmental Implementation Coordinator. Minister of Health and the Environment Sir Molwyn Joseph represented the country at the high-level meetings earlier.



## A&B to launch soil-testing survey starting today

A multi-agency soil testing and survey project which has as its long-term goal better management and use of the natural resources of the country to enhance food production, is being launched in Antigua and Barbuda.

The 3-week exercise commences with an official launch at the Ministry of Agriculture's Headquarters today, following which, technicians will then begin surveys in Barbuda from June 6th to 10th and in Antigua from June 12th to 21st which will cover the five agricultural districts.

A statement from the Ministry of Agriculture said, given the vast number of samples, it is highly likely that some sites may fall on private properties and the sampling team would require access, to successfully undertake the activity. "In this regard, the Minis-

try of Agriculture kindly requests the cooperation of the public and private property owners in facilitating the technical project team access to designated sites. Team members will be identifiable with their respective uniforms, IDs, and government-issued/branded vehicles," the release indicated.

The Ministry of Agriculture is collaborating with the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management (PISLM), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the University of the West Indies (UWI) - St. Augustine and national stakeholders in executing this national soil survey in Antigua and Barbuda, as part of the regional project 'Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Multi-Coun-

try Soil Management Initiative for Integrated Landscape Restoration and Sustainable Food Systems: Phase 1 (CSIDS\_SOILCARE Phase 1)'.

The 4-year project, which was launched in August 2022 in Antigua & Barbuda involves seven other participating countries namely: Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, and Saint Lucia.

These partnerships in collaboration with country governments allow cooperation between developed and developing countries, particularly around knowledge and technology transfer for sustainable land management to meet SDGs. This will assist Antigua and Barbuda to increase its capacity to prioritize measures that will advance integrated landscape management and rehabilitate degraded areas.



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## FAO fulfills promise to farmers

The Antigua and Barbuda office of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has announced the fulfillment of a commitment to assist local farmers address the country's chronic water shortage problem.

National Project Coordinator, Mali Barnes, announced that the FAO successfully provided twelve (12) 1000-gallon tanks to farmers in Antigua and Barbuda through the Water-Energy-Food Nexus project. He said these water storage solutions, offer crucial relief to farmers facing water scarcity challenges, assisting them in improving agricultural production and ensuring food security despite climate change impacts.

"Antigua and Barbuda, like many countries, has been grappling with water availability issues, which significantly affect agricultural productivity. The provision of 12 tanks addresses this pressing concern, empowering farmers to effectively manage water resources and overcome the limitations imposed by limited water availability.

"The Water-Energy-Food Nexus



*Tanks being delivered to protected agriculture farmer based on Antigua*

project focuses on assisting farmers in Antigua and Barbuda in attaining sustainable water access through various interventions. These 1000-gallon tanks provide an immediate solution to the water storage needs of 12 farmers, with 7 located in Antigua and 5 in Barbuda. By storing water in these tanks, farmers can optimize irrigation practices and ensure a consistent water supply for their crops, mitigating the impact of climate change on agricul-

tural yields," Barnes explained.

He added that the FAO acknowledges the importance of these water storage solutions, in enhancing the resilience of farmers and improving food security. Through the generous funding provided by the Mexican Government, through its Cooperation Agency, AMEXCID, this initiative has been made possible. This partnership highlights the shared commitment to sustainable agriculture and the collective efforts in addressing water scarcity challenges.

Commenting on the significance of this contribution, Barnes said, "The provision of these 1000-gallon tanks is a critical step towards supporting our farmers in Antigua and Barbuda. By empowering them with improved water storage capacity, we are enabling them to optimize their irrigation practices and enhance their agricultural output, ultimately contributing to the nation's food security goals."

The FAO, he continued, remains committed to promoting sustainable agricultural practices and supporting farmers in mitigating the challenges posed by climate change by fostering resilience, resource efficiency, and food security in Antigua and Barbuda.



*Backyard farmer and teacher Peter Cuffy in Barbuda*



*Ilesha Punther, teacher and backyard farmer in Barbuda*



## Tajahna St. Jean wins OCS teen pageant

An 18-year-old student of the Ottos Comprehensive School won the school's well-produced and highly entertaining 2023 Teen Pageant held at the Dean William Lake Cultural Centre, on Saturday night.

Six young ladies took part in the pageant which had as its theme – *Oh Mama Africa* – this was evidenced in all aspects of the show, as each contestant represented one of the more than 50 countries, researched, on the African continent. The research segment was judged, whilst the creative wear segment replaced, what traditionally was, the evening wear segment.

From the opening prayer, performed in song by a student who sang in both Spanish and English, to the skit involving three young men who introduced the show, to the announcement of the winners at the end; the show delivered high marks for its producers and participants. The choice of the masters of ceremony – Menace XL and Kariann Challenger, a teacher (not at OCS) – was an excellent one as they provided that critical link between the segments with a mixture of comedy, charm, and naturalness, to keep the audience engaged and entertained throughout.

The six contestants and the African countries they represented are; Ms. Ghana - Teshanya Francis; Ms. South Africa - Melina Abreu Reyes; Ms. Zambia - Trinity John; Ms. Kenya - Shi-Anna



Payne; Ms. Egypt - Tajahna St. Jean and Ms. Nigeria - Lillian Panthier.

Judging was done in five categories: Interview, Personality and Aspiration, African Research, Performing Talent, and Creative Wear. At the end of the competition, the following winners in each category were announced.

Interview: **Lillian Panthier**

Personality and Aspiration: **Shi-Anna Payne**

African Research: **Tajahna St. Jean**

Performing Talent: **Shi-Anna Payne**

Creative Wear: **Teshanya Francis**

The top three finalists were; Teshanya Francis, Lillian Panthier, and Tajahna St. Jean. The second runner-up prize went to Teshanya Francis, the first runner-up went to Lillian Panthier, and the



winner was Tajahna St. Jean.

"I am very excited that I won; I didn't think that I would have won, but I did!" St. Jean told Point Express moments after fighting back tears during the crowning ceremony. "I am very grateful, I want to thank Nigel James for putting all the time and effort he put in, to help me win this crown," she continued.

The first runner-up Lillian Panthier was a study in courage, as she overcame six surgeries to correct the bow-leggedness she had since birth, which allowed her to be able to participate in a pageant.

Overall, much praise goes to Victor Babu Samuel Jnr. the driving force and creative genius behind the very successful pageant.





# Local News



## June 5 is World Environment Day

Antigua and Barbuda joins the rest of the world in observing World Environment Day today, June 5, 2023.

This year, the theme for World Environment Day will focus on solutions to plastic pollution under the campaign #BeatPlasticPollution.

The world is being inundated by plastic. More than 400 million tonnes of plastic is produced every year, half of which is designed to be used only once.

Of that, less than 10 percent is recycled. An estimated 19-23 million tonnes end up in lakes, rivers, and seas.

Today, plastic clogs our landfills, leaches into the ocean, and is combusted into toxic smoke, making it one of the gravest threats to the plan-

et.

Also, what is less known is that microplastics find their way into the food we eat, the water we drink, and even the air we breathe. Many plastic products contain hazardous additives, which may pose a threat to our health.

Meanwhile, at least one civil society group, the Environmental Awareness Group (EAG) will engage many of the nation's youth in an activity designed to deepen their understanding of environmental issues, as well as help them to be better students overall.

The EAG announced that in celebration of World Environment Day today, it will be having an Exam Energizer in preparation for the Grade 6 National Assessment.

"The goal of this session is to ensure that students are exam ready, by reinforcing key topics covered during the science component of their school curricula over the past year, with a special focus on the Environmental Science component.

"We strongly believe that science should not just be interesting but also fun, and the Energizer will be a very interactive session, strengthening environmental concepts and encouraging and rewarding students when they participate and apply their knowledge," said a spokesman for the group.

Four primary schools – Christian Union Primary, St. Nicholas Primary, Newfield Primary, and Grace Christian Academy – will be hosted concurrently throughout the day.



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# Local News

## Rotary Club of Antigua introduces aviation career expo

The Rotary Club of Antigua recently hosted an Aviation Career Expo at the New Winthorpes Primary School.

President Ilean Ramsey and aviation stakeholders informed, educated, and sensitized Grade 5 students about the aviation industry's myriad career options.

The expo focused on three main objectives, namely:

- \* To create awareness and stimulate interest in careers in aviation

- \* To propel students to desire and ultimately pursue careers in aviation

- \* To contribute to efforts aimed at creating a future cadre of aviation professionals in Antigua and Barbuda

New Winthorpes Primary School was selected for the project due to its histo-

ry and proximity to the V.C. Bird International Airport.

Prior to 1942, Winthorpes Village was located in the vicinity of the V.C. Bird International Airport. During WWII, the village was relocated to accommodate the establishment of an American base. The village was renamed New Winthorpes at its new location, and the school was built to serve the community.

Although a number of persons from the village are employed in the aviation sector, the majority are in entry-level positions. Therefore, the event sought to address this shortcoming related to marketable skills in the sector and ultimately, the employment disparity.

President Ilean expressed her conviction about the im-



portance of targeting young and impressionable minds. She also thanked the Principal of New Winthorpes Primary School and the aviation stakeholders for their timely

and impactful presentations.

The Aviation Career Expo falls under one of Rotary's 7 areas of focus, Community and Economic Development.



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# Feature



## Rastafari gain sacramental rights for marijuana in Antigua and Barbuda, celebrate freedom to worship

By Luis Andres Henao

On the same ground where their enslaved ancestors were forced to plant sugar cane, Rastafari on this small island nation are now legally growing and ritualistically smoking marijuana.

For Rastafari, the practice brings them closer to the divine. But for decades, many have been jailed and endured racial and religious profiling by law enforcement because of their marijuana use.

The government of Antigua and Barbuda has sought to right that wrong. The twin islands recently became one of the first Caribbean nations to grant Rastafari authorization to grow and smoke their sacramental herb.

"We're freer now," said Ras Tashi, a member of the Ras Freeman Foundation for the Unification of Rastafari, who was arrested several times for growing cannabis but refused to plead guilty because to him, "it's a God-given plant."

On a recent Sunday, he led chants and praise in the tabernacle on the foundation's farm located in Liberta's lush agricultural district. Tashi puffed on a corn husk-wrapped joint while others passed chalice pipes and waved Rastafari flags in the green, gold and red colors of the faith.

"The government gives



*Ras Richie, a member of the Ras Freeman Foundation for the Unification of Rastafari, smokes cannabis from a chalice pipe in Liberta, Antigua. (AP Photo/Jessie Wardarski)*

us our religious rights ... we can come and plant any amount of marijuana ... and no police can come and take up any plant. We fight for that right — and we get that right," he said.

Rastafari elsewhere are pushing for similar religious protections. Experts and stakeholders think the Antigua and Barbuda law could give a boost to these efforts worldwide, at a time when public opinion and policy are continuing to shift in favor of medical and recreational marijuana use.

Under the same law change, the island government also decriminalized the use of marijuana for the general public. In addition to the expansive religious use granted Rastafari, people outside the faith can grow four cannabis plants each and possess up to 15 grams.

"We believe that we have to provide a space for everyone at the table, irrespective of their religion," Prime Minister Gaston Browne told The Associated Press at an interview in his office in the capital city of St. John's.

"Just as we've recognized other faiths, it's absolutely important for us to also ensure that the Rastafari faith is also acknowledged ... to acknowledge their constitutional right to worship and to utilize cannabis as a sacrament."

"Ganja," as marijuana is also known, has a long history in the Caribbean region, and its arrival predates the Rastafari faith. Indentured servants from India brought the cannabis plant to Jamaica in the 19th century, and it gained popularity as a medicinal herb.

It began to gain wider ac-

ceptance in the 1970s when Rastafari and reggae culture were popularized through music icons Bob Marley and Peter Tosh, two of the faith's most famous exponents.

Rastafari rejects materialist values and often practice a strict oneness with nature, eating only unprocessed foods as part of "Ital" their faith's vegetarian diet. They also let their hair grow, uncombed, into dreadlocks.

But many of them were long treated as second-class citizens across the Caribbean islands, looked down on for their dreads and sacramental marijuana use.

The prime minister said that growing up poor in Antigua, he witnessed how adult Rastafari were chased by police and locked up, while children were not allowed in schools because of their hair. Browne also recalled how members of the Rastafari generously fed him "Ital" meals when his single mother, who had a mental illness, struggled to raise him and his siblings.

"They embraced me," he said in his office overlooking palm trees, green hills, and the turquoise Caribbean waters. "It speaks to that positive value of brotherly love ... I was always socialized to embrace Rastafari."

After Browne took office in 2014, he appointed

*cont'd on pg 13*



*cont'd from pg 12*

Ras Frank-I, the late respected Rastafari leader, ambassador to Ethiopia. In 2018, Browne apologized publicly to the Rastafari community for the oppression and religious persecution they suffered. He also said that Rastafari should be given a stake in the production and economic benefits derived from medicinal marijuana as reparations “for the wrongs inflicted on this significant minority group in our countries.”

His government also helped build a Rastafari-run public school and led efforts to decriminalize marijuana use.

Earlier this year, he met with Rastafari groups and granted them licenses from the country’s medical cannabis authority to grow the plant for religious purposes.

“We have adopted many European and non-European religions and we have a Pan-African religion ... and instead of embracing it, we have sought to destroy it,” Browne told Rastafari members in March. “I want to encourage you to stand your ground (and) continue to exercise that resilience.”

The changes have faced some opposition from some politicians and Christian leaders in the socially conservative Caribbean region. But Rastafari academics praised Browne’s apology and his government’s actions, saying this tiny nation of about 100,000 people has gone further than regional efforts by larger countries and could set a global example.

Jamaica and most recently, the U.S. Virgin Islands granted sacramental rights to cannabis. But Charles Price, a professor at Philadelphia’s Temple University who focuses on Rastafari identity, said that it is Antigua and Barbuda’s comprehensive initiative that could spur more organizing for the sacramental recognition of cannabis in other islands.

They have become “test cases for the rest of the Caribbean,” he said. “They’ll suggest the viability of this ... so other nations can now look to these

two nations and say, ‘Ah, they’ve done it.’”

Through a lease from the government, a former sugar cane plantation — a symbol of slavery and British colonial oppression — in Antigua has been transformed into worship grounds, sustainable farmland, and the headquarters for Ras Freeman, one of the island’s main Rastafari groups.

“This might be a small win, but it’s something we can definitely celebrate and feel proud of — that lands that were once used to enslave our people, we’re using it to liberate our community,” said Ras Richie, a member of the group. He’s also a co-founder of Humble and Free Wadadli.

During that recent Sunday worship service, the breeze fluttered verdant leaves on the marijuana fields surrounding the grey stone remnants of a sugar mill.

Inside the nearby tabernacle, it moved clouds of fragrant marijuana smoke that hung in the air while Ras Freeman members chanted psalms, ululated, and banged on Nyabingi drums.

“The attitude towards it has dramatically changed and it’s more in a positive light,” Ras Kiyode Erasto, Ras Freeman’s chairman said outside the tabernacle, while he grasped branches of dry cannabis.

“We give thanks for the prime minister ... his government bravely stand up with courage to decriminalize, and to even give sacramental rights to the Rastafari community.”

Erasto said he suffered bullying and discrimination growing up. At one point, he said, his mother had to cut his dreadlocks so he could be allowed in school.

“It was sad,” he recalled. “I loved my locks as a child.”

Rastafari dreadlocks are an “antenna towards the cosmos” to connect with “the planets, the sun, the moon ... it’s the transmission receiver towards messages out there that come to us in a spir-

itual sense,” said Erasto, who now has long, white-gray, flowing locks.

Throughout his adulthood, he joined marches demanding fair treatment for his community and traveled to other islands for conferences led by the Caribbean Rastafari Organization to advocate for the sacramental right to cannabis.

“We see it as medicine, a food source. We see it as a sacrament. ... It aids us into meditation and (to) tap into consciousness,” he said. “To deprive us of our food, of our medicine, we saw that as being unjust. ... We had to stand up and fight over the years.”

Erasto was part of an effort by Rastafari from across the Caribbean to help repeal the so-called “Rasta Law” in the British Virgin Islands. The 1980 law ordered immigration authorities to refuse entry to nonresident Rastafari and “hippies” to the territory. It remained on the books for more than 20 years.

“One go through a lot of struggle, especially with the cannabis,” said Shokie Straker, Erasto’s mother, and the group’s matriarch, after she sang and praised for hours during Sunday worship. “One pay a lot of money, fines to the court. Man go to jail. Man even lose their life. And this is the struggle, but (now), it’s 100% better.”

To purify the land, the group keeps the red embers of a Nyabingi fire always burning near their house of worship. They cook together and share meals of coconuts, cassava, carrots, and onions produced on their land without pesticides. They keep a strong presence on social media with photos and videos that introduce visitors to their culture and faith. And they have plans to expand, hoping eventually to build a museum, a store to sell their Ital food, and a sacramental cannabis dispensary.

“What gives me hope is now that we are reaching out to different parts of the world and realizing the respect that Rastafari has,” Ras Richie said. “That’s the power we have now.”



# Opinion

## A grouse for Mr Vishwas

By Tony Deyal

Last Tuesday was Indian Arrival Day in Trinidad. Although I believe that while the politicians, contractors, doctors, lawyers and “business” people have all arrived, but the rest of us have not reached, I found one Indian who without ever reaching Trinidad did not give a damn. Worse, he was the real thing and not, like many of the Trinidad politicians, just a phoney. I know we have all heard about brain drains, but what about drain brains?

Most of us have read, or heard of A House For Mr Biswas by Vidia Naipaul. Now India has its own nobel prize, “A Grouse For Mr. Vishwas.” Picture this. Rajesh Vishwas, a food inspector, last week dropped his phone in the Paralkot reservoir in central India. He tried to take a selfie with his \$1,200 Samsung phone. He first sent divers into the reservoir and then ordered the entire reservoir drained. It took more than three days to drain the roughly 530,000 gallons of water from the reservoir. When his phone was found at the bottom, to the disappointment of Mr. Vishwas, and to nobody else’s surprise, the smartphone was neither smart nor religious enough to keep on working or walking in water. So, what did both Vishwas and the fish say when they saw the phone being dragged out of the water? Dam!

Although there are peo-

ple who feel that the spelling of the name “Vishwas” would be better by replacing the “w” with another “s” at the end, he is not the only Indian arrival in the brew. While Indira Gandhi said, “Corruption is in the blood of Indians”, stupidity is supposedly second in the stream. There are indeed many contenders for “the stupidest politician in India”. One writer chose as “the most-hated poster boy of the Congress Government, S. Digvijay Singh, who runs his mouth almost always, putting himself and his party in an awkward situation”. After the Mumbai blasts, Singh said, “India is better than Pakistan where blasts take place every day, every week.”

The same writer added as his second in common a member of the famous Gandhi family, political rulers of the country for many years. He commented, “The scion of the Congress government, Rahul Gandhi, is all talk, no brains ... To say “poverty is a state of mind” is not being philosophical ...” Gandhi is also quoted as saying, “Indian women enjoy it. I want to provide them more of such enjoyment”, “10 out of seven youths in Punjab are hooked on to drugs”, and “politics is in your shirt and pants”. Thinking about this I realised it could not be a “Lazy Boy Ash Black” or “Herbivorous Pea Dragon Jeans”. My choice would be a “Drop Crotch Harem Pants” for all the Jeans and Dinahs in town.



Tony Deyal

However, as Indian female politician, Mamata Banerjee, of West Bengal said, “Rape cases are on a rise in the country because men and women interact with each other more freely now,” She also said, when the leader of the Student Federation of India was killed by the police, “It is a small and petty matter.”

### NOT ALONE

However, India is not alone in the stakes for the world’s worst politicians. One who is among the leaders in the field is Tony Abbott, the British-born politician who was Australia’s prime minister from 2013 to 2015, a period of one year and 25 weeks. When commenting on a soldier’s death overseas to one of the soldier’s friends, he said, “Shit Happens.” Abbott also winked at a phone sex worker during a radio talk-show. Worst, he claimed, “It is a man’s right to demand sex, and a woman’s right to withhold it, but both must be used in moderation.” He

was the minister for women at the time. A former Mexican senator, Gutiérrez de la Torre, chairman of the Institutional Revolutionary Party in Mexico City, ran a prostitution business on behalf of the ruling party at its offices in the nation’s capital. It was financed by public money.

Some people argue that as a politician Vishwas should have known better. However, he is definitely not alone in this field or lake. There are other politicians who themselves, and not their phones, reach rock bottom. I must apologise to my friend from Siparia, Trinidad, whose nickname was ‘Rock’ because of his football skills and would have ‘cuffed’ me down for any such comment on his rear or rare end. One of my favourite stories is proof that while some people, like the Indians who have suspended Vishwas because he is not worth a dam, give a dam about the dams, there are others who stand in the

*cont’d on pg 15*



*cont'd from pg 14*

middle and end up with mud on their faces. In Michigan, the politicians ruled that there would be no building without a permit. On that basis they sent a letter to Mr. Stephen Tvedten demanding that he “cease and desist” the construction of two dams on his property. The problem was that it wasn’t Tvedten building the dams, it was a family of beavers.

## STUPIDEST POLITICIANS

As a believer and not a beaver, I tried to find out who are “The Top Ten Stupidest Politicians” in the world. One list included Donald Trump (of course) and Sarah Palin. Then I thought of the Caribbean politicians in the mix with some leading the charge of the shite brigade. Before any of you are angry because I used this term, Wiktionary said, it is “A foolish or deceitful person who is useless.” In terms of Jamaica, The Gleaner, wrote, “Politicians in Jamaica are among the worst paid in the region, but that could be a reflection of the performance.” The Gleaner makes the point that almost a J\$100 billion is being suck annually from the national economy by crime and corruption.

Former Trinidad prime minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, immediately after Tropical Storm Tomas hit Barbados, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines made it clear, “We will have to look at ways in which we would be able to assist. But you would recall my comments earlier this year, when

I said there must some way in which Trinidad and Tobago would also benefit.” The Barbados government was taken to task by the Barbados Today (BT) newspaper which quoted talk show host and attorney-at-law, Sade Jemmott, “I honestly hate how this government insists on making unforced errors. Like why in this climate would you just

up and rename Independence Day of all things?” BT added, “This reflects the sentiment of many people who are still baffled by the decision. It is what the Americans might term being ‘tone deaf’. The one good thing that came out of it all is that whether our prime ministers preached, or Samsung, we still have a way to go to catch up with the US

and India.

Tony Deyal was last seen asking the Prime Minister of Trinidad who shut the floodgates to stop the free money coming to his country from the Gates Foundation? This leads to the global question, “What do they call any Prime Minister when the person enters Parliament?” An inside joke.

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## With oil prices slumping, OPEC+ producers weigh more production cuts

AP — The major oil-producing countries led by Saudi Arabia and Russia are wrestling with whether to make another cut in supply to the global economy as the OPEC+ alliance struggles to prop up sagging oil prices that have been a boon to US drivers and helped ease inflation worldwide.

The 23-member group is meeting Sunday at OPEC headquarters in Vienna after sending mixed signals about possible moves. Saudi Arabia, dominant among the oil cartel's members, has warned speculators that they might get burned by betting on lower prices. Russia, the leader of the non-OPEC allies, has indicated no change to output is expected.

The decision comes amid uncertainty about when the slow-growing global economy will regain its thirst for fuel for travel and industry and with producers counting on oil profits to bolster their coffers.

Oil prices have fallen even after OPEC+ slashed two million barrels per day in October, angering US President Joe Biden by threatening higher gasoline prices a month before the midterm elections. Then, several OPEC members led by the Saudis made a surprise cut of 1.16 million barrels a day in April.

International bench-



*The logo of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is seen outside of OPEC's headquarters in Vienna, Austria, on March 3, 2022. (AP Photo/Lisa Leutner, File)*

mark Brent crude climbed as high as \$87 per barrel but has given up its post-cut gains and has been loitering below \$75 per barrel in recent days. US crude has dipped below \$70.

Those lower prices have helped US drivers as the summer travel season kicks off, with prices at the pump averaging \$3.55, down \$1.02 from a year ago, according to auto club AAA. Falling energy prices also helped inflation in the 20 European countries that use the euro drop to the lowest level since before Russia invaded Ukraine.

The US recently replenished its Strategic Petroleum Reserve — after Biden announced the largest release from the national reserve in American history last year — in an indicator that US officials

may be less worried about OPEC cuts than in months past.

The Saudis, on the other hand, need sustained high oil revenue to fund ambitious development projects aimed at diversifying the country's economy. The International Monetary Fund estimates the kingdom needs \$80.90 per barrel to meet its envisioned spending commitments, which include a planned \$500 billion futuristic desert city project called Neom.

That may have been one motivation behind Energy Minister Abdulaziz bin Salman's warning to speculators that they will be "ouching" if they keep betting on lower oil prices.

Bin Salman's pointed comment isn't necessarily a prelude to a cut at Sunday's meeting, said James

Swanston, Middle East and North Africa economist at Capital Economics.

"Our expectation is that OPEC+ will stick with current output quotas," he said, adding that "there have been signs that the government may be readying to live with lower oil prices and running budget deficits."

On top of that, Russia may find current prices to its liking because its oil is finding eager new customers in India, China and Turkey. Western sanctions over the war in Ukraine have forced Russian oil to sell at discounts of around \$53 to \$57 per barrel.

At those prices, Moscow's shipments avoid triggering the \$60 price cap imposed by the Group of Seven major democra-

*cont'd on pg 18*



# Former BVI Premier likely to face trial alone

CMC - Former British Virgin Islands (BVI) premier Andrew Fahie, is likely to face trial on drugs and money laundering-related charges alone after Oleanvine Maynard, the former managing director of the BVI Ports Authority joined her son, Kadeem, in signalling their intention to plead guilty.

Fahie and Maynard were arrested in Miami in April 2022 following a sting operation led by the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), while her son, accused of arranging meetings between the pair and a US informant, was arrested in the United States Virgin Islands (USVI).

The trio were scheduled



Former Premier Andrew Fahie.

to go on trial on July 17, but the Maynards, according to a recent Miami District Court filing, will appear in court on June 12 to change their plea of not guilty.

They are accused of conspiring to smuggle co-

caine into the United States, through the waters of the Virgin Islands. They also face charges of conspiracy to import a controlled substance, conspiracy to engage in money laundering, and attempted money laun-

dering.

Fahie and Maynard also pleaded not guilty to one count each of “interstate and foreign travel in aid of racketeering” — a charge that was not brought against Kadeem Maynard.

The recent court filings did not state to which of the charges the Maynards plan to plead guilty, but a deal with prosecutors could include the condition that they cooperate in the case against Fahie.

Since their arrests, Fahie has been out on one million US dollars bail, wears an ankle monitor and is under house arrest at an apartment in Florida, while the Maynards remained in custody.

*cont'd from pg 17*

cies to try to limit oil profits flowing into Russia's war chest. The price ceiling allows the world's number three oil producer to keep supplying non-Western customers to avoid a global shortage that would drive up prices for everyone.

Insurers and shipping companies largely based in Western countries are barred from handling Russian oil if it is priced above the cap. Russia has found ways to evade the limits through “dark fleet” tankers, which tamper with transponders showing their locations or transfer oil from ship to ship to disguise its origin.

An OPEC+ “production cut could push the price of Russian oil above the G7 price cap of \$60 per bar-

rel, which would make it difficult to transport and thus to sell the oil,” commodity analyst Carsten Fritsch at Commerzbank wrote in a research note. “Russia appears to be doing good business at the current price level.”

The International Energy Agency said in its April oil market report that Russia has not completely followed through on its announcement to extend a voluntary cut of 500,000 barrels per day through the end of the year.

In fact, Russia's total exports of oil and refined products such as diesel fuel rose in April to a post-invasion high of 8.3 million barrels per day. That is in spite of a near-total boycott from the European Union, formerly

Russia's biggest customer.

Analysts say OPEC+ faces conflicting pressures. A cut could support prices or send them higher, with demand expected to pick up later this year.

“The impact of higher oil prices on the global economy will weigh heavily on the ministers' minds,” said Jorge Leon, senior vice president of oil market research at Rystad Energy. “High oil prices would fuel inflation in the West right when central banks are starting to see inflation gradually recede.”

“This could prompt central banks to continue increasing interest rates, a detrimental move for the global economy and oil demand,” Leon wrote in a research note.

## US sanctions former Haitian PM

CMC - The United States on Friday sanctioned former Haitian Prime Minister Laurent Salvador Lamothe for his alleged involvement in "significant corruption."

"This action renders Lamothe generally ineligible for entry into the United States," said US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken. "Specifically, Lamothe misappropriated at least US\$60 million from the Haitian government's PetroCaribe infrastructure investment and social welfare fund for private gain."

"Through this corrupt act and his direct involvement in the management of the fund, he exploited his role as a public official and contributed to the current instability in Haiti," added Blinken, stating that the Biden administration continues to support "the citizens, organisations, and public servants of Haiti who are committed to generating hope and opportunity for a better future in their nation."

"The United States will continue to promote accountability for those who abuse public power for personal gain," he continued.

"Today's designation is part of a series of actions that promote accountability for those who foment violence, block life-saving humanitarian support, and enrich themselves at the expense of the Haitian people," Blinken noted.

On April 5, the US Department of the Treasury's

Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned the former President of the Haitian Chamber of Deputies Gary Bodeau, pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13818, for his extensive involvement in corruption in Haiti.

The US Treasury Department said E.O. 13818 "builds upon and implements the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act and targets perpetrators of serious human rights abuse and corruption around the world."

"Corrupt officials like Bodeau have created an en-



*Former Haitian Prime Minister Laurent Salvador Lamothe.*

vironment that empowers illegal armed gangs and their supporters to inflict violence on the Haitian people," said Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian E.

Nelson.

"Along with our partners, including Canada, we are committed to holding accountable those undermining the integrity of Hai-

*cont'd on pg 20*



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# Regional News



## Barbados looking to establish air bridge with Ghana

CMC - Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley says she does not anticipate any problems getting 600 to 800 people every month to make the journey between her island and Ghana.

“On our side, I know that we have been able to awaken the interest of Barbadians with respect to wanting to find out more about Africa,” Mottley said, as she held discussions with Ghana’s Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Ibrahim Awal, and his delegation.

A government statement said that there is a firm commitment from the two countries to work on making the much-talked-about air bridge a reality.



Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley and Ghana's Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Ibrahim Awal. (BGIS Photo).

The statement said Awal has pledged to see how best he could fast-track the talks with his Barbadian counterpart, Minister of Tourism and International Trans-

port, Ian Gooding-Edghill.

It said that during the discussions, Prime Minister Mottley expressed her deep appreciation for the provision of pharmaceuti-

cals on the African Medical Supplies Platform to assist CARICOM countries with accessing therapeutics, equipment and vaccines at low cost during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“And that is the benefit of what we bring together and there are so many functional opportunities that only require us sitting down together.”

The statement said that discussions were also held on the establishment of an Afreximbank headquarters in Barbados, as well as other global issues including the upcoming COP 28 summit in Dubai.

Barbados and Ghana established diplomatic ties in 1994.

*cont'd from pg 19*

ti’s government and destabilizing the country.”

The action followed a December action in which OFAC sanctioned two Haitian politicians, Rony Celestin and Richard Fourcand, for abusing their power to further drug trafficking activities in the region. Bodeau had also been sanctioned by Canada.

The Treasury Department said it sanctioned Bodeau, pursuant to E.O. 13818, for “being a foreign person who is a current or former government official, or a person acting for or on behalf of such an official, who is responsible for or complicit in or has directly or indirectly engaged in, corruption, including the misappropriation of state assets, the expropriation of private assets for personal gain, corruption related to

government contracts or the extraction of natural resources, or bribery.

“Bodeau was involved in several corrupt schemes wherein he engaged in efforts to influence the outcome of Haitian political appointments, including facilitating and soliciting bribes worth millions of dollars,” the department said.

“In 2018, Bodeau paid Haitian officials to secure their votes while seeking ministerial position appointments.”

It also said that Bodeau “solicited a large bribery payment worth hundreds of thousands of dollars from senior government officials in exchange for his political support.”

On February 16, Blinken sanctioned five Haitian individuals and seven family members as subject to visa restrictions under section 212(a)

(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

“This policy impacts Haitian officials and other individuals involved in the operation of street gangs and criminal organizations that have threatened the livelihoods of the Haitian people and are blocking life-saving humanitarian support,” Blinken said.

“This action sends a clear message of our continued commitment to root out corruption and impact the behavior of bad actors whose influence underpins the lawlessness in Haiti.”

In November and December 2022, the United States sanctioned four Haitian individuals—Joseph Lambert, Youri LaTortue, Rony Celestin and Herve Fourcand — under Executive Order 14059, which includes both financial sanctions and visa restrictions.

## Ukraine war: Anti-Kremlin fighters say Russian soldiers 'captured'

By James FitzGerald

Fighters opposed to the government in Moscow say they have captured some Russian soldiers in Belgorod, near the border with Ukraine.

Belgorod's top official replied to say he had agreed to meet the men's captors if the soldiers were still alive.

But later, the fighters said that the governor "had not found the courage" to meet them and they would hand over their captives to Ukraine.

Russia has blamed Ukraine for recent attacks in its border territories.

Kyiv denies being directly involved.

The Russian army said on Sunday its artillery had hit a "terrorist" group near the village of Novaya Tavolzhanka, adding that "the enemy scattered and retreated".

Earlier, a group of paramilitaries issued a message on the Telegram app, saying they had captured two men but would hand them over if Belgorod governor Vyacheslav Gladkov agreed to talks.

The video purported to show both captives, although the BBC has been unable to independently verify their identities.

The message was posted by the Liberty of Russia Legion (FRL) and described as a joint statement with the Russian Volunteer



*The Russian Volunteer Corps (RDK) came to prominence in the Bryansk region in March.*

Corps (RDK).

Mr Gladkov responded with his own Telegram video, saying he had agreed to the talks if the soldiers were shown to be still alive - adding that he thought they had probably been killed.

Later, the RDK posted a further video - this time appearing to show even more captives, in which they said that Mr Gladkov had failed to turn up for the meeting.

"Neither the military nor the civilian leadership is interested" in the fate of the captured men, the RDK said.

Meanwhile, the FRL described the Russian authorities as "rotten and cowardly". They said they would now hand over the captives to Ukraine - to be subject to an exchange with Ukrainian prisoners of war.

Both groups want to

topple President Vladimir Putin, and also oppose the full-scale invasion of Ukraine that he launched in February last year.

Ukrainian officials say the two paramilitary organisations consist of Russian citizens who want to create a "security zone" for Ukrainians.

The RDK came to prominence in March for a cross-border raid in Russia's Bryansk region. Its leader is a Russian nationalist with alleged links to neo-Nazis.

The FRL is considered a different sort of organisation that fights alongside Ukrainian troops against Russian forces.

In his video, Mr Gladkov labelled the fighters in question "scoundrels, murderers, fascists", but promised to "guarantee safety" if the talks took place.

And though they asked him to go to Novaya Tavolzhanka to meet them, he said this was too dangerous and that he would expect them at a checkpoint in the town of Shebekino.

Mr Gladkov has not commented on the events since the video, but posted pictures of a meeting with regional and federal officials.

There has been a spate of attacks in Belgorod recently - notably including a major cross-border incursion late last month which Moscow said ended in the deaths of 70 insurgents.

Kyiv has denied having any direct involvement in such attacks.

But it has painted the growing violence in Russian territory as being the inevitable consequence of Russia's invasion last year.



## India train disaster: Signal fault the likely cause, minister says

BBC - India's railway minister has suggested a signal fault led to the Odisha rail disaster, with a "change in electronic interlocking" the likely cause.

Ashwini Vaishnaw later said the cause and people responsible for the deadly three-train crash in eastern India had been identified but did not elaborate.

India's Railway Board said there had been "some kind of signalling interference" rather than failure.

A report into India's worst rail accident this century is due later.

Meanwhile the death toll has been revised down to 275 after some bodies were counted twice, officials said.

Of the 1,175 injured people taken to hospital, 793 have been discharged. Some families are still searching for their loved ones.

In railway signalling the electronic interlocking system sets routes for each train in a set area, ensuring the safe movement of trains along the track.

The crash saw a passenger train collide with a stationary goods train and derail, after being wrongly directed onto a loop track by the side of the main line. Derailed carriages then struck the rear carriages of a second passenger train passing in the opposite direction.

At a press conference on



Sunday, Jaya Verma Sinha from India's Railway Board said both passenger trains had approached a Balasore district station under a green signal - indicating it was safe - within seconds of each other at the correct speed of under 130kph (81mph).

She said the passenger trains had been supposed to pass each other on the main lines but the Coromandel Express rammed into an iron ore-laden freight train on the loop line, causing the engine and some coaches to lift over the top of the heavy goods carriages.

The passenger train took the entire impact on collision and the freight train was not derailed, or even moved, she told reporters.

The Howrah Superfast Express had nearly crossed in the opposite direction, but two of its rear coaches

were struck by the derailed Coromandel Express.

Ms Verma Sinha said there was "no issue with the electronic interlocking system" and said investigations indicated "some kind of a signalling interference" rather than failure.

"Whether it was manual, whether it was incidental, whether it was weather related, whether it was because of wear and tear related, whether it was a maintenance failure, all that will come out after the inquiry," she added.

Infrastructure expert Partha Mukhopadhyay told the BBC it should not be possible for green signals to display on the main line if the track is set for the loop.

"Signal interlocking is supposed to be failsafe and this level of failure is quite unprecedented," Mr Muk-

hopadhyay, from the Delhi-based think tank Centre for Policy Research, said.

On Saturday Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the crash scene and vowed that anyone found guilty would be "punished stringently".

Around 2,000 people are thought to have been on board the two passenger trains - the Coromandel Express, travelling between Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) and Chennai (formerly Madras) and the Howrah Superfast Express travelling from Yesvantpur to Howrah - when the crash happened at about 19:00 (13:30 GMT) on Friday.

Odisha state official Pradeep Jena told the BBC that at least 187 bodies remained unidentified and officials were uploading

*cont'd on pg 23*

## Li Shangfu: War with US would be unbearable disaster, says China defence minister

BBC - China's defence minister has said war with the US would be an "unbearable disaster" for the world in his first major speech since taking on the role.

At a security summit, General Li Shangfu said "some countries" were intensifying an arms race in Asia.

But he said the world was big enough for both China and the US, and the two superpowers should seek common ground.

Earlier the US alleged "unsafe" manoeuvres by a Chinese destroyer near a US warship in the Taiwan strait.

On Saturday the US navy said a Chinese destroyer sailed "in an unsafe manner" near an American warship as it transited the Taiwan Strait with Canadian vessels.

China criticised both countries for "deliberately provoking risk". The US and Canada said they were sailing where international law allows.

Gen Li, who became de-



*Li Shangfu became defence minister in March.*

fence minister in March, accused the US of a "Cold War mentality" and said this was "greatly increasing security risks".

In his speech he said China would not allow naval patrols by the US and its allies to be "a pretext to exercise hegemony of navigation".

Asked about the incident in the Taiwan Strait, he said only that countries from outside the region were raising tensions.

He was speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, the Asia-Pacific region's only annual security meeting.

Beijing has rejected a US request for direct military talks in protest at sanctions placed on Gen Li by the US in 2018 over weapons purchases from Russia.

At the Singapore summit, US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin rebuked China for refusing to hold military discussions.

Gen Austin and Gen Li shook hands and briefly spoke at the event's opening dinner on Friday, but there was no substantive exchange, reports say.

One of China's delegates told AFP that the removal of US sanctions on Gen Li was a precondition for talks.

Senior intelligence officials attended a meeting of spy chiefs at the Singapore summit, according to Reuters.

Despite the diplomatic spat, a top US state department official has arrived in Beijing for a week of wide-ranging talks.

Relations between Washington and Beijing have been strained in recent years over several issues, including China's claim over Taiwan, and territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

### *cont'd from pg 22*

pictures of the victims on government websites and would carry out DNA testing if needed.

Rescue work was completed on Saturday and efforts were underway to clear wreckage and restart train traffic, officials said.

India has one of the largest train networks in the world with millions of pas-

sengers using it daily, but a lot of the railway infrastructure needs improving.

Trains in India can get very packed at this time of year, with a growing number of people travelling during school holidays.

The country's worst train disaster was in 1981, when an overcrowded passenger train was blown off the tracks and into a river during a cyclone in Bihar state, killing about 800 people.





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*The Caribbean Alliance Insurance Storming Lions men's volleyball team. (File photo)*

## Storming Lions prevail against Pytonz in volleyball league

Caribbean Alliance Insurance Storming Lions had to dig deep to secure a 3-2 victory over Pytonz in a keenly contested men's division encounter in the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association's (ABAVA) Local Club League at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex on Saturday night.

The Storming Lions eventually prevailed 25-23, 17-25, 21-25, 25-21, 17-15 after battling Pytonz for an hour and a half to record their sixth win in nine games. It was only the second loss in nine encounters for the Pytonz.

Reigning champions Caribbean Alliance Insurance Da Squad kept their unbeaten run intact to remain on course to make a successful defense of their female division title.

Da Squad made light work of Jets in powering their way to a comfortable 25-18, 25-17, 25-21 straight-set victory to grab their 11th win in as

many games. It was the fifth loss in 11 encounters for the Jets.

Former champions Paragons outlasted North Coast Hardware Starz Seniors to win their female division encounter 3-2 in another keenly contested affair.

Paragons rebounded from losing the opening set 22-25 to eventually prevail 26-24, 25-17, 20-25, 15-8 in the tough five-setter that lasted for a duration of two hours and five minutes.

It was the 6th win in 11 games for Paragons while it was just the second loss in 11 encounters for Starz Seniors, who remain in second place behind unbeaten leaders Da Squad.

North Coast Hardware Starz Juniors ended their female division campaign without a win, suffering their 12th loss in as many outings as they went down in straight sets against Stoneville in their last game.

Starz Juniors lost 15-25, 15-25,

16-25 to Stoneville, who won their sixth game in 11 encounters. Stoneville will face Royal Cruisers in their final game in the preliminaries next week Wednesday.

Defending champions Stoneville took sole leadership of the top spot in the men's division by beating Renegades in four sets.

Stoneville, who entered the encounter tied with Pytonz at the top of the standings with identical records of seven wins and one defeat, took sole leadership of the men's division by prevailing 25-22, 24-26, 25-13, 25-15 against Renegades to claim their 8th win in nine games.

It was the seventh loss in nine encounters for the Renegades. High Flyers secured their fifth win in nine outings by soaring to a 25-18, 26-24, 25-20 victory against Sharks who remain rooted in the cellar position of the men's division after losing for the 9th time in as many games.



# Sports News



## Cup-holders Police lose opening match in Thursday League cricket

Liberta Black Hawks defeated defending champions Police by seven wickets in the opening round of matches in the Antigua Commercial Bank (ACB) Caribbean Sir Vivian Richards Thursday League T20 Competition.

Police made 117 for seven off their allotted 20 overs in the encounter at Ball Beef in Liberta. Malique Gerald top scored with 47 and Emanuel Lawrence hit 27. Wilden Cornwall Jr and Avier Christian each captured three wickets for 10 runs.

Ahmal Nathaniel hit an unbeaten 27 and Karima Gore was not out on 23 as Liberta achieved victory at 118 for three with seven overs to spare. Off-spinner James Cornelius picked up two for 17.

There were wins as well for Mahico and All Saints Pythons in the other opening round Thursday League matches.

Mahico trounced Wes Rising Sun by 48 runs at Rising Sun. Brandon Jno Baptiste hammered 65 off 31 balls with six sixes and four fours as Mahi-

co batted first and scored 151 for four off 18 overs.

Kenrick Scott hit 27 not out off 21 balls while Tyrone Williams Jr struck an unbeaten 26. Jewel Andrew claimed two wickets for 12 runs.

In reply, Rising Sun crashed to 103 all out in 16.3 over with Melvin getting 21 and Ozan Williams making 17. Pacer Jedidiah Martin snapped up four for 16, left-arm spinner Glenton Williams took two for 13 and Xaveek Toppin captured two for 31.

All Saints Pythons overcame Pigotts Crushers by five wickets at Pigotts. Crushers tumbled to 69 all out after winning the toss and opting to bat. Bartlette Henry top scored with 16.

Andra Samuel grabbed three for 13, Kenny Sutton picked up two for 10 and Emroy Lee captured two for 11.

All Saints then secured victory at 71 for five with Michael Marcelin scoring 30 and Sutton getting 15. Vishal Gobin took two wickets for five runs and Morton Browne claimed two wickets for eight runs.



Malique Gerald hit 47 but was unable to stop police from losing to Liberta Black Hawks in the Antigua Commercial Bank Caribbean Sir Vivian Richards Thursday League T20 Competition. (File photo)

## Ottos Full Throttle secure fourth consecutive win in basketball league

Ottos Full Throttle notched up their fourth consecutive win in seven games in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) First Division League on Saturday.

Lincoln Weekes produced 22 points, seven steals, six assists and six rebounds to lead Full Throttle their 75-67 victory against Braves at the JSC Sports Complex.

Warren Bogle chipped

in with 29 points and nine rebounds while Shaquille Kelly had 317 rebounds and 13 points for Ottos Full Throttle.

Tristan Jacobs led Braves with 16 points, seven rebounds and six steals. Sergio Symister sank 12 points and Rhonde Davis contributed 10 points for Braves who lost for the seventh time in nine games.

In their previous outing, Braves snatched a one-

point win over Spanish Heat in their bottom of the table clash.

Braves secured their second win of the season by prevailing 73-72 against Spanish Heat.

Braves had claimed their first win in this year's competition by beating Spanish Heat 82-74 in their first round meeting on 21st May.

Braves were led by Rhonde Davis with 13 points, while Tristan Jacobs

and Damien Floyde each had nine points in their latest win.

Steven Matthew shot a game high 28 points and six rebounds, Israel Pulinario had 20 points and 16 rebounds and Kelvin Pimentel chipped in with 12 points, 13 rebounds and six assists for Spanish Heat, who remain winless after losing for the sixth time in as many games.

Potters Steelers contin-  
*cont'd on pg 27*

## Vipers and WAR Swimming Teams capture medals at regional meet

Eighteen swimmers from the Vipers and Wadadli Aquatic Racers (WAR) captured over 40 medals at the Aquatic Centre International Invitational meet that was hosted by the Barbados Aquatic Sports Association from 26th to 28th May.

Both teams combined to win a total of 44 medals, which comprised 12 first places, 14 second places and 18 third places.

Based on their performances, a number of the swimmers have qualified to attend several overseas competitions.

Madison MacMilan qualified to participate in the upcoming CCCAN Championship in El Salvador in August.

Zardad Jan acquired two AA times to qualify for the World Aquatic Junior Championship in Israel in September.

Keziah Joseph, Alexandro Bazzoni and Anya DeGannes also obtained quadruple A times which qualifies them for a meet in Atlanta, Georgia, later this year.

Zane Williams set a na-



*The Vipers swim team (Photos courtesy ABSF)*

tional record in 100-meter backstroke in the boys' 8 and under category. He also placed second overall in the boys, 7-8 year old age group.

Anya DeGannes placed 2nd overall in the 11-12 age category. Alexandro Bazzoni placed 2nd overall in the 9-10 age category.

Keziah Joseph achieved two age group records in the 400 and 200-meter freestyle category in the girls' 9-10 age group.

Bianca Mitchell achieved a national record



*The Wadadli Aquatic Racers swimmers*

in the 200-meter Individual Medley and set a record

in 100-meter breaststroke category in the girls 18 and over age group.

The Antigua and Barbuda Swimming Federation (ABSF) extends congratulations to all the participating swimmers, who all achieved personal best times in different stroke categories and distances.

### *cont'd from pg 26*

ued their impressive run as they recorded their 6th win in seven encounters by overpowering All Saints Slam 94-68 in their division one encounter.

Guard Marlon "Buju" Charles produced 16 points, seven rebounds and five steals; Lindsay McDonald scored 14 points while Ammiel Williams sank 11 points for

Potters Steelers.

Keaddy Martin had 15 points and six rebounds; Adissa "Ras I" Harris produced 11 points, seven assists and seven steals; Olivee Morris also scored 11 points while Ezekiel Francois chipped in with 16 rebounds, eight points and six blocked shots for All Saints Slam, who lost for the 6th time in eight encounters.





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**FEATURING COACH SPEEDY FRASIER**

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## CWI names coaching and support staff for West Indies Men's teams

Cricket West Indies (CWI) has announced the members of the coaching and support staff for the West Indies men's red ball and white ball teams.

Former West Indies captains Carl Hooper and Floyd Reifer have been named as assistant coaches in the white ball teams to work alongside new head coach Daren Sammy.

James Franklin, the former New Zealand all-rounder is the third assistant coach. They have joined the team ahead of the start of the upcoming three-match One Day International (ODI) series against United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Speaking on the appointments, Sammy said, "Cricket is a team sport. Therefore, having the right set of people around you, who share your vision, is extremely important. This is a group of hard-working, passionate men, who have no egos. Our collective desire is to have a positive impact on the players and West Indies cricket."

Hooper is one of the most successful allrounders in West Indies history – the only player to score over 5,000 runs and take over 100 wickets in both Tests and ODIs. He worked previously at various levels coaching in the Caribbean and Australia. Reifer also has experience across various levels from regional up



Former West Indies captains Carl Hooper. (CWI Media)

to internationals.

The former allrounder from Guyana expressed his desire to see West Indies cricket move forward. Hooper stated, "When I was initially approached by Daren about the potential opportunity, I immediately confirmed my interest, as I really want to help with the challenge and make a meaningful impact."

"I firmly believe that it is time for West Indies cricket to ascend, and I am confident in my ability, knowledge, and experience to aid in this endeavour."

For the Test team, former West Indies players Kenny Benjamin and Stuart Williams as well as Rayon Griffith will be the assistant

coaches, working alongside head coach, Andre Coley.

Benjamin and Griffith were part of the coaching staff for the tours of Zimbabwe and South Africa earlier this year, while Williams has previously worked as an assistant coach on various tours.

Coley, who took the team to Zimbabwe and South Africa earlier this year as head coach, is confident that some continuity will be beneficial to the players, stating, "We are looking for as much continuity as possible in the preparation for our upcoming assignments."

"Kenny and Rayon will continue in their roles from the previous two tours, and Stuart Williams is currently

with the 'A' team in Bangladesh. It is a hard-working group with some clear tasks outlined and we can effectively serve West Indies cricket as a unit for the upcoming series against India."

The other members of the Team Management Unit who will work with the WI Men's teams across all formats are: Rawl Lewis (Team Manager), Denis Byam (Physiotherapist), Ronald Rogers (Strength & Conditioning Coach), Avenash Seetaram (Analyst) and Dario Barthley (Media & Content Officer).

The West Indies are presently in Sharjah for the series against UAE, which bowled off yesterday (Sunday) at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium. The second match is on Tuesday, 6th June, and the third and final match is on Friday, 9th June.

For the ICC World Cup Qualifiers, West Indies have been drawn in Group A, where they will face hosts Zimbabwe, United States, Netherlands, and Nepal in the preliminary round.

The ten teams will be competing for the two remaining places at the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, to be hosted in India later this year.

All new assistant coaches have been appointed on a short-term basis and will be reviewed after the India Series in August 2023.



## West Indies Women to host Ireland Women in St. Lucia

Cricket West Indies (CWI) has announced the match schedule and venue for the West Indies Women's international home series against Ireland Women.

The highly anticipated series will feature three CG United One Day Internationals (ODIs) and three T20 Internationals (T20Is) at the Daren Sammy Cricket Ground in St. Lucia from 26th June to 8th July.

The first two CG United ODIs will bowl off at 10 am (9 am Jamaica Time) with the third being a day/night game, starting at 3pm (2pm Jamaica). The three T20Is will commence at 5 pm (4 pm Jamaica).

The ODIs hold significant weight in this series as they contribute crucial points to the ICC Women's Championship and the results will therefore directly impact qualification for the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 in India.

CWI's High Performance Manager Graeme West said, "The Ireland Series is the only engagement in the region for the Senior Women in 2023 and its critical we maximize



Players of the West Indies women's team celebrate a wicket during an ODI. (CWI Media)

'home' advantage in the three CG United ODIs as we continue our qualification campaign towards the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup in 2025.

"The three T20Is will kick start the preparation towards the 2024 ICC T20 World Cup which the team has already qualified for."

West added, "Ireland have shown great improvement in recent times and the game between the two

sides in February at the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in South Africa was a thriller.

"We will need to prepare well for both series with very clear game plans, the squad will get time in St Lucia prior to the first ODI to establish the key roles and focus areas that each player will be required to execute in order to play winning cricket.

"It's exciting to be tak-

ing international Women's Cricket back to St Lucia, the island is developing a number of exciting young female players and we hope the Ireland games can inspire more girls to get involved and start their own cricket journeys."

Fans worldwide can join the excitement as all six matches will be streamed live on the Windies Cricket YouTube channel.