

MoE: WE ARE READY FOR NATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Story on Page 2



The national soil-testing project that will seek to identify soil types across both islands – Antigua and Barbuda – is now underway with a team of technicians, in Barbuda, carrying out the exercise. A team of fifteen persons consisting of Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) and Ministry of Agriculture technicians, will be there for the next four days as part of the samplings of the various soil types, on the sister island. *Story on page 10.*

Ministry of Education: We are ready for National Assessment

The annual Grade 6 National Assessment examinations begin today in primary schools across Antigua and Barbuda.

Education Officer - Measurement and Evaluation, Ineta Francis said, all systems are a go for the examinations. "We are one hundred percent ready to administer the exams starting today," she declared.

Francis explained that the process is quite lengthy and starts very early in the

year. "The process starts in January and concludes at the end of June or early July when the results are made public. It's a very long process as much has to be put in place in order for this two-day exam period to come off well; the way it ought to," she explained.

This year, thirteen hundred and thirty (1,330) students will write the exams. They are drawn from government primary schools

- 744, and private primary schools - 585, with one child who has been home-schooled. The number is 36 less than those who wrote the exams last year.

"These students have been preparing themselves from the time they hit Grade 6. The first part of the process is for them to complete their School-Based Assessment projects.

"Those would have already been handed in, to

the teachers in the schools.

Today, Wednesday, June 7, marks the start of the written exams which continue into Thursday. The papers for Language Arts 1 & 2 followed by Science are the subjects listed for today. The Mathematics papers are scheduled for Thursday.

The Ministry of Education is extending best wishes to all students writing the Grade 6 National Assessment.



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Foreign Minister, E. Paul Chet Greene



Canada's Minister of Immigration Sean Fraser making the announcement

Government welcomes the return of visa-free travel to Canada

Foreign Minister, E. Paul Chet Greene, has welcomed the news that many hundreds of Antigua and Barbuda nationals can more easily travel to Canada, with immediate effect.

The minister said that his government “was very pleased by the announcement of Canada’s minister of immigration, refugees, and citizenship of Canada, who named Antigua and Barbuda among thirteen (13) countries whose

nationals can travel to Canada on its electronic travel authorization (eTA) program.”

Under the eTA program, nationals of Antigua and Barbuda who have either been issued a Canadian visa in the last 10 years or who currently are in possession of a valid United States, non-immigrant visa, can now apply for an eTA instead of a visa when traveling to Canada by air.

Applying for an eTA is done on the Internet, requiring no travel expenses.

Minister Greene said that this decision by Canada is one for which the Antigua and Barbuda government has been working “assiduously,” given the burden that had been placed by the requirement to travel to Barbados or Trinidad, to secure a visa.

“We are very glad that our efforts have borne fruit

and that this burden has been lifted for many hundreds of Antiguan and Barbudans,” the minister said.

Introducing visa-free air travel will make it faster, easier, and more affordable for Antigua and Barbuda nationals to visit Canada for up to six months, for either business or leisure.

Applications for an eTA have to be made at the following Internet website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada/eta/apply.html?>

Minister Greene pointed out that while persons who have not traveled to Canada in the last 10 years or who do not have a US visa, will still have to apply for a Canadian visa, the majority of the Antigua and Barbuda traveling public qualify for the eTA.

NOTICE

TO: Her Worship
The Licensing Magistrate
St. Johns Magistrate Court
Gray's Farm
Antigua.

TO: The commissioner of Police
Police Headquarters
American Road
St. Johns
Antigua.

Dear Madame,

Re: Notice-Application for Liquor Licence

I, Rayfus Emanuel Prince of Paynters Development, with registered business situated at Redcliff Street in St. John's Antigua and Barbuda **DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE** that it is my intention to apply at the next sitting of the Liquor Licensing Court to be held at the Magistrate's Court, Gray's Farm, St. John's, Antigua on Thursday 6th day of July, 2023 next ensuring for a Liquor License Pursuant to section (11) (5) of the Licensing (Intoxication Liquor) Act Cap. 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda 1992 Revised Edition, in respect of premises known as “**Yardline Bar Enterpize**” situated at Redcliff Street in the parish of St. John Antigua and Barbuda.

Dated the 6th day of June, 2023

Rayfus Prince

729-5413

National Agriculture Health and Food Safety Policy coming

Antigua and Barbuda is moving towards establishing an Agriculture Health and Food Safety Policy for the country, designed to improve the national agriculture and food safety systems.

The announcement is contained in remarks delivered by Agriculture Minister, E.P Chet Greene to commemorate the observance of World Food Safety Day (WFSD), today June 7.

“This policy will include measures for establishing participation in the work of Codex as part of the agriculture, health, and trade mandates. The development of stronger synergies between these sectors through the use and application of standards will be key for advancing the achievement of key Sustainable Development Goals to include but not limited to Goal 2 – Zero hunger, and Goal 12 – responsible production

and consumption,” he remarked.

He added that as the Ministry of Health does its part to bring recognition to the WFSD activities to highlight and recognize the benefits of safe food, the Ministry of Agriculture and the government are encouraging all residents to increase their interactions with Agriculture, Health and the Bureau of Standards to avail themselves of the information and resources that are accessible to all.

“The information, resources, and awareness activities can ultimately assist each individual to realise an improvement in food safety and the general quality of life,” he stated.

He recalled that the road to the inaugural World Food Safety Day started with the Codex Alimentarius Commission at its 39th session in 2016, unanimously agreeing to promote a proposal

to proclaim WFSD on a permanent basis within the framework of the United Nations.

Minister Greene is also congratulating the Codex Alimentarius Commission on its 60th anniversary and for spearheading efforts to establish WFSD as a permanent observance. Since then, he revealed that the Commission has been exercising its mandate to develop standards, guidelines, and codes of practice that contribute to the safety and quality of food, and fairness of international food trade.

“When these standards, guidelines, and codes of practice are applied, consumers can trust the safety and quality of the food products they buy, and importers can trust that the food they ordered will be in accordance with suitable quality and safety specifications,” he concluded.

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Multiple government agencies mark World Food Safety Day

Several government agencies are combining efforts to organize events marking World Food Safety Day, today, June 7.

The Antigua and Barbuda Bureau of Standards, in its capacity as the National Codex Contact Point (NCCP), said it is celebrating World Food Safety Day (WFSO) with its stakeholder counterparts in the Ministries of Agriculture and Health, under the theme

‘Food Standards save lives.’

WFSO 2023 also marks the 60th Anniversary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, which is the body responsible for setting international standards for food safety, food and guidelines for food trade.

The Bureau of Standards said WFSO 2023 activities will consist of media appearances spanning Tuesday 6th

cont'd on pg 8

TO: Her Worship The Licensing Magistrate
District "A" Magistrate Court
High Street
St. John's, Antigua

TO: Commissioner of Police
Police Headquarters
American Road
St. John's, Antigua

I, Simone Gayle of Swetes Village, DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that it is my intention to apply at the next sitting of the Liquor Licensing Court to be held on Thursday, 6th July 2023 at the Magistrate's Court Grace Farm, St. John's, Antigua next ensuring a type of Licensing in respect premises known as Countryside Jerk Centre, Mathews Road, All Saints Village St. Paul Parish, Antigua pursuant to Section (11) (5) of the Licensing (intoxication Liquor) Act Cap 249 of the Law of Antigua and Barbuda Revised Edition 1992.

Dated the 15th day of May 2023

.....
Simone Gayle
268 789-3343



Food Standards Saves Lives

Department of Analytical Services

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Trade & Barbuda Affairs



How Food Becomes Contaminated

Foodborne disease is a universal problem caused by consumption of contaminated food and drink.



- Pathogens can be introduced into food from infected humans who handle food without thoroughly washing their hands. This is especially relevant to persons whose job is to prepare food.



- Pathogens thrive in warm & moist conditions. Generally, refrigeration prevents virtually all microbes from growing while heating food sufficiently kills most microbes.



- Cooked foods can be re-contaminated by transferring pathogenic microbes through raw foods, contaminated utensils and surfaces.



- Fresh fruits & vegetables can be contaminated if they are washed with water that is contaminated by animal manure or human sewage.



- Pathogenic microbes in animal's intestines can cause contamination during slaughter.

Common Culprits

More than 200 pathogens are associated with foodborne disease & they include bacteria, viruses & parasites. Harmful bacteria are the most common cause. Below are a few examples.



E. coli

- 1-3 days after ingestion
- Found in animals & human's intestinal tract
- Watery diarrhea, abdominal cramps, some vomiting



Salmonella

- 6-48hrs after ingestion
- Diarrhea, fever, abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting
- Found in animals, raw poultry & birds
- Eggs, poultry, meat, unpasteurized milk, cheese, contaminated raw fruits & vegetables



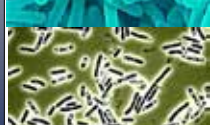
Staphylococcus aureus

- 1-6hrs after ingestion
- Severe nausea & vomiting, Abdominal cramps, diarrhoea & fever
- Found in human nose, throat & skin
- Improperly refrigerated meats, potato & egg salads, cream pastries



Listeria monocytogenes

- 3 days - 10 weeks after ingestion
- Meningitis, sepsis, muscle aches, nausea, diarrhoea, Stillbirths
- Found in soil, water & some animals
- raw milk, & dairy products, soft cheeses made with raw milk, ready-to-eat deli meats & hot dogs

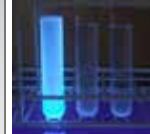


Bacillus cereus

- 10-16 hrs after ingestion
- Abdominal cramps, watery diarrhoea, nausea
- Found in soil, vegetation, cereals & spices
- Improperly refrigerated cooked rice & pasta, Meats, stews, gravies

Lab Diagnosis

The detection of microbes in food are an essential part of any quality control or food safety plan. The contaminated food is homogenized and placed on specialized growth medium.



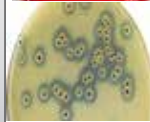
EC Broth

- E.coli under long-wave UV light glows bright green/blue.



XLD Agar

- Salmonella appears red with black centers.



Baird Parker Agar

- S.aureus appears black with clear zones.



Oxford Agar

- L.monocytogenes appears brown/black.



MYP AGAR

- B.cereus appears pink/red.

References: <http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/foodborne-germs.html>
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodbornenessContaminants/>

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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Health Ministry widens mask mandate

The Ministry of Health is extending the mask mandate it reintroduced over a week ago, in response to reports that the cases of the COVID-19 virus are on the rise. The ministry said in a press release, that in May the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the end of the public health emergency for the COVID-19 virus. However, it noted, the threat of COVID-19 and its associated risks remain, and is very evident, as the virus has not been eliminated.

“The Ministry remains steadfast in its commitment to providing the best

possible healthcare to citizens and residents of Antigua and Barbuda, in a safe environment.

“Therefore, effective immediately, persons visiting or working on the premises of public Healthcare Institutions, will be required to wear a clean, properly fitted mask covering the nose and mouth,” it added.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Ministry of Health Headquarters
- Health Centers / Clinics / Polyclinics
- Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre
- Medical Benefits Scheme

- Clarevue Psychiatric Hospital
- Fiennes Institute
- Antigua Barbuda Emergency Medical Services
- Central Board of Health
- AIDS Secretariat
- CARE Project
- Hannah Thomas Hospital

The ministry is also reminding residents to continue to practice appropriate infection control measures, good hand washing and workplace hygiene, and cough and sneeze etiquette as in the protocols already established.

cont'd from pg 6

to Thursday 8th June 2023, to include personnel from the Bureau of Standards, Department of Analytical Services, and the Ministry of Health - Central Board of Health. Feature activities will be:

CBH Mock supermarket appearances outside Chase, Epicurean, and at Woods Centre near Cost Pro on World Food Safety Day – Wednesday 7th June 2023, to raise consumer awareness on making safe food purchases.

World Food Safety Day on the WTP Radio (93.5 FM) “Wellness Corner” feature on Thursday 8th June 2023 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., with Solange Baptiste from the Bureau of Standards, Kelvene Spencer from the Department

of Analytical Services and a medical practitioner (to be named), to discuss the nuances and medical impact of Foodborne pathogens; and

The sharing of a special poster on food pathogens by Ms. Kelvene Spencer, for WFSD 2023.

Regionally and internationally, numerous webinars and awareness activities are being held all this week, to strengthen the message of the importance of food standards for health and wellbeing.

PAHO through its WFSD 2023 webpage shares that “...600 million people get sick due to the 200 different types of illnesses that can be transmitted by food; and that “Foodborne illnesses cause 420,000 preventable deaths every year.” The National Codex Contact Point (NCCP) in the Bureau of Standards highlights two (2) calls to action to encourage consumers to:

- Know what foods are safe; and,
- Team up (or collaborate) for food safety.

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Soil-testing project launched with a bang!

The national soil-testing project that will seek to identify soil types across both islands – Antigua and Barbuda – is now underway with a team of technicians, in Barbuda, carrying out the exercise.

A team of fifteen persons consisting of Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) and Ministry of Agriculture technicians, will be there for the next four days as part of the samplings of the various soil types, on the sister island.

The project was launched on Monday by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in collaboration with PISLM under the theme ‘Caribbean Small Island Development States (CSIDS) Multi-country Soil Management Initiative for Integrated Landscape Restoration and Sustainable Food Systems: (CSIDS_SOILCARE Phase1)’. The project has several phases that are expected to span over the next



four years.

In her opening remarks, Parliamentary Secretary Senator Knacyntar Nedd-Charles, who joined via ZOOM, expressed gratitude for this and such projects that would foster sustainability, offer more yield, and healthier foods for everyone to benefit from. Further, she explained her profound approval of Barbuda’s inclu-

sion in the CSID project.

The project implementation, executing agency support, and overview were delivered by Simone Dias, the PISLM project assistant. During her statement, Dias identified several other stakeholders including GEF, FAO, the Department of Environment (DoE), and Farmers.

To conclude her remarks

on behalf of the project coordinating office, she extended heartfelt gratitude to the DoE, MoA, and the government for the support given to the CSID project thus far.

The technicians will be on the ground here in Antigua, from Monday 12th to Wednesday 21st of June. It is intended that a total of a hundred and twenty (120) samples will be collected.

High Court re-opens today for limited hours

The High Court Building in St. John’s is re-opening today (Wednesday, June 7) after being closed to have the building fully cleaned for allergens.

High Court Registrar, Cecile Hill, said following extensive cleaning of the interior and continued work being done on the air conditioning units,

the Public Servants Association President, Joan Peters, met with the staff on Tuesday and informed them that she is pleased with the work that was done and that they could now return to work.

The staff at the High Court had been complaining that allergens in the building had been making them sick,

and it was because of their intervention that the Court was closed for deep cleaning.

However, Hill said over the next three days the court will operate from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. This changes next Monday when the office hours return to normal.

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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Guyanese government worried at the low intake of HPV vaccines

CMC - Health Minister Dr Frank Anthony says the low adoption rate of HPC vaccines in Guyana has become a cause for concern even as cervical cancer is the second most common cancer affecting women in the country.

Health authorities here said that the vaccines serve as a vital safeguard against HPV infections and cervical pre-cancers.

Speaking at the launch of the national expansion of the HEARTS Initiative

for the management of cardiovascular diseases, Anthony noted that since the introduction of the programme in Guyana, the number of persons who are vaccinated remains at a minimum.

“It’s not a lack of resources ...we have to start by getting more people to take HPV vaccines,” he said, noting “how are we going to prevent cervical cancer from happening if we don’t have a broad base programme?”



“This is something, I recall HPV vaccination was started...a long time

ago. Up to now, we have not been able to scale it up to where it ought to be,” Anthony said, emphasising the critical need for medical professionals to re-evaluate the implementation of the programme, recognising the pivotal role they play in bringing real change in the country.

“It’s not that we don’t have the tools to prevent, it’s that we’re not implementing the tools to the scale that we need to implement it, to make that impact and to bring that change,” the health minister said.

According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, all HPV vaccines protect against at least HPV types 16 and 18, which places individuals at the greatest risk of developing cervical cancer.

HPV is a sexually transmitted virus that can cause a range of health issues, including genital warts and cancer.

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'Ducking hell' to disappear from Apple autocorrect

By Shiona McCallum

Apple has said it will no longer automatically change one of the most common swear words to 'ducking'.

The autocorrect feature, which has long frustrated users, will soon be able to use AI to detect when you really mean to use that expletive.

"In those moments where you just want to type a ducking word, well, the keyboard will learn it, too," said software boss Craig Federighi.

He announced the development at Apple's developers' conference in California.

iPhone users have often complained about how autocorrect forces them to



rewrite their own messages - with the term "damn you autocorrect" becoming an acronym, a meme, an Instagram account and even a song.

The changes to the function will happen thanks to the use of a transformer model, which learns context by tracking relationships in data, like the words in this sentence, using mathemati-

cal techniques.

Initially flagged in a 2017 paper from Google, transformers are some of the most powerful classes of AI models, and autosuggest - or predictive text - systems are beginning to become more mainstream.

The autocorrect change will be part of the iOS 17 operating system upgrades

which are expected to be available as a public beta in July, with the general release in September.

It should mean that iPadOS 17 also carries the new function.

Elsewhere at the developers' conference, Apple unveiled an augmented reality headset, Apple Vision Pro which will retail at \$3,499 (£2,849).

Apple chief executive Tim Cook said the new headset "seamlessly blends the real world and the virtual world".

It will be available early next year in the US and in other countries later in 2024. On Monday, Apple's market valuation reached just under \$3 trillion - a new company record.



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268-782-6020

Cuba Gooding Jr settles rape lawsuit ahead of civil trial



Cuba Gooding Jr, pictured at an earlier court case in 2022. The terms of the settlement have not been disclosed.

By Sam Cabral

Actor Cuba Gooding Jr has settled a lawsuit with an unnamed woman who accused him of raping her in a New York City hotel room in 2013.

It came as jury selection was about to begin in a federal civil trial that was expected to include damaging testimony against him.

The Oscar winner, 55, has denied the allegation and insists his interactions with the woman were consensual.

He has been accused of groping and unwanted touching by dozens of women.

The terms of the settlement have not been disclosed.

Last year, Mr Gooding pleaded guilty to kissing a woman without her consent.

That case saw him spared from jail or a criminal history, with charges relating to three other accusers dis-

missed as part of a plea agreement with prosecutors.

He was ordered to complete six months of alcohol and behavioural counselling.

But the testimony of those three women, who say the actor abused them between 2009 and 2019, was due to be heard at this civil case in Manhattan.

The now-settled lawsuit was filed in 2020 on behalf of a woman identified only as Jane Doe. The plaintiff sought \$6m (£4.8m) in damages.

She alleged that, in the summer of 2013, Mr Gooding had introduced himself to her at a local restaurant and invited her to drinks at The Mercer Hotel in Soho, where he was staying.

At the hotel, she claimed, the actor told her he needed to change clothes, invited her up to his fifth-floor room and began to undress.

The woman said she had tried to leave but that Mr Gooding blocked

her path, pushed her onto the bed, “wouldn’t stop” touching her, “aggressively removed” her underwear and penetrated her twice.

A lawyer representing the defendant at the time called the allegations “completely false and defamatory”.

The presiding judge ruled last week that he would allow testimony from three of Mr Gooding’s other accusers because they were “sufficiently similar” to the plaintiff’s allegation.

One woman, Kelsey Harbert, said last year that Mr Gooding’s previous plea deal had been “more disappointing than words can say”.

Jury selection in the trial was set to begin at 10:00 EDT on Tuesday, but neither Mr Gooding nor attorneys for either side showed up.

An entry on the court’s electronic docket for the case reads: “TRIAL OFF. Reason for cancellation: The parties have resolved the matter.”



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9AM TO 11AM**



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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

St Kitts PM: Security forces to ramp up fight against gun violence

By *Melissa Wong*

The number of crimes being committed with illegal firearms in St Kitts and Nevis has become worrisome, with Prime Minister Dr Terrance Drew announcing that the island's security forces will be taking further steps to tackle the upsurge in gun violence.

In a national address this afternoon, the prime minister said the security forces will implement the following:

- * Increased security presence in communities through various methods
- * Further engagement of regional and international security experts to work along with St Kitts and Nevis' forces
- * Strengthening of the intelligence capabilities of the security forces



Screengrab of Prime Minister of St Kitts and Nevis Dr Terrance Drew during a national address on June 6, 2023.

- * Expansion of the CCTV infrastructure island-wide

- * Enhancement of evidence-gathering capabilities to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.

He also announced that the Cabinet has agreed to table legislation in the National Assembly to increase the penalty for illegal firearms offences from 15 years to 25 years in prison.

In addition, the National Security Task Force has been commissioned to take the lead on a behaviour-changing initiative, "Crime and Violence as a Public Health Issue".

The prime minister lamented that the country has been shaken by the recent upsurge in gun violence, and from reports, a majority of which are linked to gang-related violent crimes, highly

concentrated in the Central Basseterre community.

PM Drew told citizens the present upsurge in criminal activity is a natural and direct result of the monetisation of crime management.

He said similar methods were tried and failed in Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, Mexico, Haiti and El Salvador, for example, and in every occasion, it resulted in what is being seen right now in the Federation of St Kitts and Nevis.

The prime minister made an appeal to all young men and women to move forward as law-abiding citizens with respect for the rights of livelihoods of others.

He also extended condolences to the families of those who have succumbed to violent crimes.

Dengue worries: Grenada secures mosquito nets for pregnant women



Mosquito nets (Photo via GIS Grenada)

Loop - The transmission of dengue fever through the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito continues to pose a problem in Grenada with steps being taken to protect pregnant women.

The Community Nursing Division of the Ministry of Health, Wellness, and Religious Affairs distributed approximately 1,000 mosquito nets at health centres across Grenada, Carriacou, and Petite Martinique

in the six health districts, as part of its strategic response and ongoing efforts to prevent the spread of dengue among pregnant women and the public.

The ministry says the nets are highly recommended for use by pregnant women who are in their 3rd trimester (last three months of the pregnancy).

Acting Chief Community Health Nurse, Carol *cont'd on pg 17*

Death toll climbs as rains continue to affect Haiti

CMC - The death toll from the heavy rains, which have been pounding the French Caribbean Community (CARICOM) island of Haiti since the last weekend, climbed to 42 with 11 others missing, Haitian authorities have confirmed.

Head of the Civil Protection Office (DPC), Jerry Chandler, in a provisional report said that at least 12,779 families have been affected with an estimated 13,633 houses flooded in several departments.

“The biggest impact was the West region (metropolitan area). The other ecologically vulnerable regions of the country that have suffered heavy damage are: the North West; Nippes and the South-East.”

The provisional report showed that 85 people have been injured following the rains, which have been pounding the country since June 1 and expected to continue during this week.

Prime Minister Dr Ariel Henry has already indicated that his government is seeking international assistance to respond to the



A woman uses a bucket to remove water from inside her flooded house, after a heavy rain in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Saturday, June 3, 2023. (AP Photo/Odelyn Joseph)

needs of the population affected by the rains that have caused several rivers to overflow their banks resulting in floods, and landslides in many areas.

“My government, in concert with national and international institutions, is taking urgent measures in order to meet the demands of the hour,” he said in a Twitter posting.

Chandler said that security remains a concern as the authorities attempt to respond to the disaster while trying to manoeuvre through gang-controlled territory to bring aid to the population.

He said damage assessment is ongoing and emergency response teams are being mobilized and trying to support affected communities. Alongside UN aid groups, civil protection volunteers are slowly deploying shelter, food and sanitation facilities, as well as drinking water for those affected.

The Acting Humanitarian Coordinator for Haiti, Jean-Martin Bauer, said although it is not a hurricane or a tropical storm but a strong depression, considerable damage has been reported in the affected areas.

“The humanitarian

community is working alongside national institutions to come to the aid of those affected,” he said, adding “I’m particularly concerned about this situation when the Haitian population is already facing great vulnerabilities

“The humanitarian response plan is still too weak financed with only 20 per cent of the necessary budget received. I call for solidarity with the Haitian people from all donors to ensure the financing of this plan which will be critical in the response to these floods and the preparation for the next bad weather,” Bauer added.

The World Food Programme (WFP) said it would “start providing hot meals to displaced people in the coming hours and are mobilising ready-to-eat rations and dry food”.

cont’d from pg 16

Telesford-Charles says based on scientific studies, a pregnant woman infected with dengue can pass the virus on to her fetus during pregnancy or around the time of birth.

She added that dengue can have harm-

ful effects, including death of the fetus, low birth weight, and premature birth.

The Ministry of Health is encouraging the public to “Fight the Bite” by taking all necessary measures to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes in and around their homes.

Ukraine dam: Thousands flee floods after dam collapse near Nova Kakhovka

BBC - Thousands of people are being evacuated downstream of a major dam which has collapsed in Russian-held Ukraine.

President Zelensky said 80 towns and villages were at risk of flooding after the destruction of the dam at Nova Kakhovka, which he blamed on Russia.

Water is surging down the Dnipro river and is said to pose a catastrophic flooding risk to the city of Kherson.

Russia has denied destroying the dam - which it controls - instead blaming Ukrainian shelling.

Neither Ukraine nor Russia's claim has been verified by the BBC.

The Kakhovka dam is crucial in the region. It contains a reservoir, which provides water to farmers and residents, as well as to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. It is also a vital channel carrying water south to Russian-occupied Crimea.

Video footage shows a torrent of floodwater gushing through a breach in the dam. Several towns are already flooded, while people in areas further downstream were forced to flee by bus and train.

Around 40,000 people need to be evacuated, Deputy Prosecutor-General Viktoriya Lytvynova said on Ukrainian television - 17,000 people in Ukraine-controlled territory west of the Dnipro River and 25,000 on the Russian-controlled east.

Also speaking on Ukrainian television, Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said about 1,000 people had been evacuated so far and "24 settlements" had been flooded.

He accused Russia of shelling the southern region of Kherson, where people were being evacuated from, and issued a warning about the dangers posed by mines being exposed by



An aerial image shows water pouring through what appears to be a breach in the dam.

the rising water levels.

One local resident Andriy, who lives close to the dam - which has been under Russian control throughout the invasion - said he believed Russia wanted to "drown" his city.

In Kherson, a woman called Lyudmyla - who was loading her belongings including a washing machine onto a trailer that was attached to an old car - said: "We're afraid of flooding. We're taking our things a little higher up."

She called for Russian forces to be "kicked out of here... they're shooting at us. They're flooding us or doing something else".

Another resident of the city, Serhiy, said he feared "everything is going to die here".

"All the living creatures, and people will be flooded out," he said, gesturing at nearby houses and gardens.

On the Russian-controlled riverbank, Vladimir Leontyev, the Moscow-installed mayor of Nova Kakhovka where the dam is located, said the city was underwater and 900 people had been evacuated.

He said 53 evacuation buses were being sent by the authorities to take people from the city and two other set-

tlements nearby to safety.

Nova Kakhovka's Russian-installed mayor said water levels had risen to over 11m (36ft) and that some residents had been taken to hospital, but gave no further details.

The Kazkova Dibrova zoo on the Russian-held riverbank has been completely flooded and all 300 animals are dead, it said in a post on its Facebook page.

There are concerns about the impact on the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, which uses water from a reservoir behind the dam for cooling.

The situation there is said to be under control and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has said it is monitoring the situation closely.

The UN agency said it saw "no immediate nuclear safety risk" at Europe's biggest atomic plant.

It is not yet clear what caused the breach in the dam, but Ukraine's military intelligence has accused Russia of deliberately blowing it up early this morning.

This seems plausible, as Moscow may have feared that Ukrainian forces would use the road over the dam to ad-

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vance into Russian-held territory, as part of their counter-offensive.

For Russia, anxious to defend conquered territory in southern Ukraine, the dam represented an obvious problem.

Just as Ukrainian forces attacked road and rail bridges further downstream last autumn in a successful effort to isolate Russian forces in and around Kherson, Russia may have decided to destroy the dam to hold up Ukraine's counter-offensive, which it fears could come from multiple directions.

However, a Russian official claims Ukraine carried out the attack on the dam to detract from what they said were the failures of its counter-offensive and to deprive Crimea of fresh water.

A major Ukrainian push has long been expected. Kyiv has said it would not give advance warning of its start but a recent increase in military activity is being seen as a fresh sign that the counter-offensive may have begun.

Senior Ukrainian military commander Serhiy Naev said the dam blast would not stop Ukraine from advancing.

On Monday, Ukraine's deputy defence minister Hanna Maliar said Ukrainian forces had advanced around the "epicentre of hostilities" in Bakhmut, but did not say whether the counter-offensive had begun.

Bakhmut has for months been at the heart of fierce fighting. It has little strategic value - but is important symbolically both for Kyiv and Moscow.

In the aftermath of the attack on the dam, Mr Zelensky said he had called a meeting of the country's security and defence council.

Blaming "Russian terrorists" for the partial destruction of the dam, Mr Zelensky said "it's only Ukraine's victory that will return security".

Yuri Sak, an adviser to Ukraine's ministry of defence, told the BBC Radio 4's Today programme that phone intercepts suggest

Russia wants to target more dams.

"They're actually calling to blow up more dams on the Dnipro river," he said.

Ukraine has branded the attack on the dam "ecocide" and said that 150 tonnes of engine oil has spilled into the Dnipro river.

Ukraine's hydroelectricity operator has said that a power station linked to the dam had been "completely destroyed... the hydraulic structure is being washed away".

World leaders have laid the blame for the blast at Russia's door, with some calling it a war crime.

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said that if Russia was found to be responsible for the collapse of the dam it would "demonstrate the new lows that we will have seen from Russian aggression".

The head of Nato, Jens Stoltenberg, said the destruction of the dam demonstrated once again the brutality of Russia's war in Ukraine, while Charles Michel, the president of the European Council, said he was "shocked by the unprecedented attack".

The Geneva Conventions explicitly ban targeting dams in war due to the danger it poses to civilians.



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Prince Harry: Hearings begin over US visa records

By Bernd Debusmann Jr

A federal judge has begun hearing arguments in a case that hopes to make public the Duke of Sussex's US immigration records.

The lawsuit, from the conservative Heritage Foundation, seeks to compel the government to release the records to show whether drug use was disclosed.

Prince Harry, 38, has publicly admitted to using cocaine, marijuana and psychedelic mushrooms.

A decision in the case, being heard in Washington DC, may take weeks.

Application forms for US visas specifically ask about current and past drug use.

Drug use can lead to non-immigrant and immigrant visa applications being rejected, although immigration officers have discretion to make a final decision based on a number of factors.

It is not clear what visa Prince Harry used to enter the US. His wife, Meghan Markle, is a US citizen. The couple have lived in California since 2020.

At the heart of the Heritage Foundation's lawsuit is an admission by Prince Harry, in his memoir *Spare*, that he repeatedly used drugs as a teenager in the UK and as an adult.

In the lawsuit, the Heritage Foundation argues that "widespread" coverage of the duke's admitted drug use calls into question whether the government properly followed immigration law when it admitted him into the US, and whether he was given preferential treatment.

Current or past drug use could, in theory, make one inadmissible to the US.

During an hour-long court hearing on Tuesday, Heritage Foundation law-



Prince Harry and Meghan Markle have lived in the US since early 2020.

yer Samuel Dewey said the case was about the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)'s "compliance with the law".

The judge in the case, Carl Nichols, will first have to determine whether DHS' headquarters must expedite the process of finding relevant documents. Several components of DHS, including Customs and Border Patrol, have already denied the foundation's request to reveal the documents, citing privacy concerns.

Judge Nichols told DHS to decide by 13 June whether it will release the documents or expedite a Freedom of Information Act request.

If they reject the request, he will hear arguments in court to determine whether it is in the public interest to make the immigration documents - or parts of them - available.

"We're not at that stage yet," Judge Nichols said.

DHS, for its part, has argued that there is no need for the rapid release of Prince Harry's documents.

It has also argued that that there was nothing to suggest "widespread" public interest in seeing the immigra-

tion documents.

A lawyer representing DHS in the case, John Bardo, said that the Heritage case was based on a "bunch of articles" in the British press that "simply speculate" about Prince Harry's visa status and do not call into question the government's integrity. He added that a person's visa status is confidential.

He argued that the issue of the duke's visa is only of interest to "certain social circles" in the US and has been largely ignored by mainstream US media outlets.

Nile Gardiner, a former aide to Margaret Thatcher who works as a foreign policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation, told BBC News last week that the foundation believes the case is "symbolically important".

"If Prince Harry was treated differently than anyone else applying, I think it would undermine confidence in the US immigration system and how it is enforced," he said.

"It's important that US officials are seen to be applying the law robustly, effectively and fairly," Mr Gardiner added. "Otherwise the system doesn't work at all."

cont'd on pg 21

Canada wildfire smoke threatens health of millions

By Nadine Yousif

High-risk air quality warnings have been issued for millions of people across North America due to ongoing wildfires in Canada.

Wildfire smoke has blanketed major cities in Ontario and Quebec, including Toronto and its surrounding areas.

The smoke has reached as far as New York City and Connecticut, where air quality has been classified as “unhealthy”.

Much of the smoke is coming from Quebec, where 160 fires are burning.

Environment Canada issued its strongest warning on Tuesday for Ottawa, deeming the air quality in the Canadian capital a “very high risk” to people’s health.

In Toronto and its surrounding areas, the air quality has been classified as “high risk”.

Meanwhile, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has classi-



Air quality advisories have been issued in New York City and surrounding areas, where a smoky haze could be seen blanketing the area on Tuesday.

fied the air quality in much of the north-eastern US as “unhealthy”, especially for people who already had respiratory issues.

Air quality advisories include much of New York City and Connecticut. They also stretch as far north as Boston and as far south as Pittsburgh and Washington DC.

In New York, photos taken on Tuesday morning showed an orange haze blanketing the city’s

skyline due to the wildfire smoke from Canada that has travelled south.

Public health officials have cautioned people not to exercise outside and to minimise their exposure to the smoke as much as possible, as the air poses immediate and long-term health risks.

Deteriorating air quality has also forced at least one region in Quebec - the Atikamekw community of Opitciwan, 350km (217

miles) north of Montreal - to transfer people with asthma and other respiratory issues away from the smoke.

Canada continues to see a more active wildfire season than normal. Federal officials cautioned on Monday that this summer may bring Canada’s largest fires yet because of dry and hot conditions that are forecast for much of the season.

Fires across the country have *cont’d on pg 22*

cont’d from pg 20

Court documents filed by the Heritage Foundation cite a number of examples of British celebrities being refused entry or returned to the UK.

In 2010, for example, the documents said musician Pete Doherty was refused entry at an airport in New York and sent back to the UK, despite having a visa. Mr Doherty has several pri-

or drug convictions.

In 2014, celebrity chef Nigella Lawson was prevented from boarding a flight from the UK to Los Angeles after admitting to taking cocaine “two times in my life” in evidence during an unrelated court case.

A spokeswoman for the US embassy in London said at the time: “There are several ways of legally travelling

into the United States and Ms Lawson has been invited to come to the embassy and apply for a visa for travel to the US.” Ms Lawson was eventually granted a visa.

The US case is separate from an ongoing civil case in the UK in which Harry has sued Mirror Group Newspapers over allegations of phone hacking.

International

AROUND THE WORLD



cont'd from pg 21

already burned more than 3.3m hectares of land - an area 12 times the 10-year average for this time of year.

Thousands of people have been evacuated across the country, including in Quebec, where fires have burned around 200,000 hectares to date.

Major fires have also been burning in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Nova Scotia and the Northwest Territories.

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West Indies Academy players at High-Performance Camp

The members of the West Indies Academy returned to action for a three-match series as part of their High-Performance Camp.

They started training on 3rd June and the camp will run until 14th June. All training sessions and the three two-day matches will be at the Coolidge Cricket Ground (CCG).

The players in the camp are all the West Indies Academy team members who recently won the Headley Weekes Tri Series first-class competition.

They will be joined by other aspiring players, some of whom have played at the first-class level and others who featured in the West Indies Rising Stars age group programmes.

For the upcoming matches, Team "A" will be led by Nyeem Young, the all-rounder who was at the helm during the Headley Weekes Tri Series and the CG United Super50 last November. Team "B" will be led by Kimani Melius, the former West Indies Rising Stars Under-19 captain and Windward Islands Volcanoes batter.

Graeme West, Cricket West Indies (CWI) High Performance Manager, outlined that the camp is a continuation of the work which has been ongoing for the last 10 months.

"The main objective of the camp is to assess the squad's holistic progress as we approach the 12-month mark of the programme.

"Not only have the players developed technically and tactically, they have received full-time physical support, dedicated mental skills programs and all 15 players have had personal development programs which included the completion of the Level One Coaching Qualification," West said.

"The performances in the Headley-Weekes Series were hugely en-



West Indies Academy players in training at a High-Performance Camp at the Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua. (CWI Media)

couraging and a credit to all the players and to the staff members who have worked with the squad throughout the year.

"Despite their limited first-class experience the players prepared well and were able to express themselves in all disciplines for sustained periods, one of the key objectives introduced by Head Coach Andre Coley."

West added, "Kirk McKenzie's promotion to the 'A' Team demonstrated to all the Academy players that hard work and a desire to improve all aspects of your game will be rewarded.

"We have high expectations for our young cricketers and the Academy programme will continue to challenge the players in Year Two.

"By bringing in additional talent to the camp and putting them alongside the current squad we will be able to assess the depth we have in the system and start to identify those players that will be pushing for places on the Academy programme as they become available."

The West Indies Academy was

launched last year. It functions as a nexus between regional junior and senior teams while supporting the development of talented players between the ages of 19 and 25.

The Academy's objectives include the management of talent; personal development – develop person first and then the player; accelerating player development and increasing readiness of players for international cricket; as well as building capacity of players, support staff and high-performance resources.

SQUADS: Team A - Nyeem Young (Captain), Kevlon Anderson, Aceem Auguste, Teddy Bishop, Carleon Bowen-Tuckett, Jaden Carmichael, McKenny Clarke, Amari Goodridge, Leonardo Julien, Chamiqueki Landerfort, Matthew Nandu, Ashmead Nedd and Ramon Simmonds.

Team B - Kimani Melius (Captain), Onaje Amory, Joshua Bishop, Rivaldo Clarke, Nathan Edward, Matthew Forde, Joshua James, Johann Layne, Kirk McKenzie, Kelvin Pitman, Keagan Simmons, Kevin Wickham and Rashawn Worrell.

Sports News



GNFCRebels' Alyssa Laviscount, left, accepts the Best Goalkeeper Award in the Under-13 Boys Division from Operations Manager of Kenneth A Gomez Insurance Agency Limited Marissa Hallpike at the Awards Ceremony of the 2023 Gomez/Netherlands Insurance Youth Football League at the Fort Road basketball court on 27th May, 2023.

Coaches laud youth football tournaments for developing players

National Technical Director of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association (ABFA) Sowerby Gomes and coach of Cutting Edge Football Club Vincent "Nabbu" Samuel said youth tournaments are playing a vital role in the development of the sport in the twin-island nation.

Gomes - a coach at the Aston Villa FC (Villa Lions) - and Samuel, who also performs coaching duties at the Generation Next FC (GNFC), had teams participating in the 2023 Gomez/Netherlands Insurance Youth Football League, which concluded with an



Villa Lions' Kahrique Joseph, left, accepts the Best Defender Award in the Under-13 Boys Division from Marissa Hallpike at the Awards Ceremony of the 2023 Gomez/Netherlands Insurance Youth Football League at the Fort Road basketball court on 27th May, 2023. (Photos by Elwin Francis)

Awards Ceremony at the last month. tions such as the annual Fort Road basketball court Gomes said competi- cont'd on pg 25

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youth league, which is organized by the Generation Next FC, is appreciated by the ABFA and the competitions contribute to the overall development of the young football players in Antigua and Barbuda.

“Well certainly it builds so much for the full development of the game. These small pockets of small clubs putting on tournaments like these help the overall development of the game,” Gomes stated.

“The ABFA welcomes these situations because of what they give to the players. The players are engaged and it gives everyone a chance to play, and at the same time, we are able now to see the full talent being blossomed.

“So these tournaments create the opportunity for these young ones and the ABFA welcomes these small tournaments such as these.”

The annual youth league, which is jointly sponsored by Kenneth A Gomez Insurance Agency Limited and A.S Bryden & Sons, local agents for Milo, kicked off in February and concluded last month.

Matches were held on Saturdays in the Boys Under-7, 9, 11, 13, 15, Under 17 categories as well as a Girls division. It culminated with a prize giving ceremony in which trophies and medals were presented to the top three teams in each divisions.

Individuals awards were also presented to the most outstanding goalkeepers,

midfielders, defenders and strikers in each category.

Operations Manager of Kenneth A Gomez Insurance Agency Limited Marissa Hallpike and Nestle Business Manager of A.S Bryden & Sons Trevor Singh assisted in presenting the awards to the recipients.

Coach Samuel also expressed his happiness with the staging of these youth tournaments which he said

heightens their awareness of football and allow the players to compete with their peers in various categories.

“It is critically important and you see the love of the game by the children and fact that they are coming out every Saturday to match their skills against each other.

“The more of these tournaments, it heightens the awareness of football and it

also brings a competitiveness among all of the players,” Samuel stated.

“If you look at the situation now as far as the presentations are concerned, you can see the smile on the kids’ faces and, at least, they are getting something as they are rewarded.

“I am happy that we can have these sort of things and continue in this way, so it is definitely a good stuff.”

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Teams seek success in Thursday League contest

Three teams will hope to continue their winning form while the other three sides will go in search of their first victory in the Antigua Commercial Bank (ACB) Caribbean Parish League Sir Vivian Richards Thursday League this week.

All six teams will resume their quest for supremacy in three second round matches in the T20 competition, which will bowl off at 3 pm tomorrow (Thursday).

Wes Rising Spartans, who lost to Mahico in the opening round, will seek their first win when they face PIC Insurance Liberta Black Hawks at Rising Sun.

After losing their opener against All Saints Pythons, Pigotts Crushers will be aiming to rebound with a second round victory over Police at Pigotts.



Police, who won last year's competition, will also be seeking to get title defense back on track with a win at Pigotts after losing their opening encounter against Liberta Black Hawks.

All Saints Pythons and Mahico will be trying to maintain their winning start to the competition when

both sides clash in the other second round match at Clare Hall.

Nigel Browne and Michael Lawrie will umpire the game at Rising Sun. Melissa Lawrie and Oliver Benjamin will officiate at Pigotts, while Calvin Thomas and Bertel Baltimore will umpire the match at Clare Hall.

cont'd from pg 28

medal in the men's completion during the tournament which was held on the sand courts on Los Corales beach in Punta Cana.

Cuban pair Jorge Alayo and Noslen Díaz defeated the Costa Rican duo of Julián Araya and Jhostin Varela in the gold medal match with a score of 2-0 (21-15, 21-12) in 34 minutes.

Canadian duo of Cameron Chadwick and Tynan Gannett easily won the bronze medal after defeating Nicaraguans Jefferson Cascante and Josue Menezes 2-0 (21-16, 21-15).

The fifth place went to

the twin brothers Yoel and Christopher Guardado of El Salvador as they prevailed against Guatemala's Rodolfo Ventura and José Izaguirre in three exciting sets, 2-1 (21-14, 17-21, 15-9).

The match for seventh place was won 2-0 (21-13, 21-17) by Canadians Martin Licht and Steven Abrams against Elkreen Morton and Zendai Richards of Saint Kitts & Nevis.

The Antigua and Barbuda female team of Joseph and Benjamin failed to advance out of the preliminaries after losing both group stage matches.

Joseph and Benja-

min lost 2-0 (21-9, 21-12) against Ruth Martínez and Crismil Paniagua of the Dominican Republic and were beaten 2-0 (21-6, 21-10) by Naomi Monney and Andrea Godoy of Guatemala.

Puerto Ricans Allan Nava and María González captured the female title by winning the gold medal match 2-0 (21-9, 21-10) over Jeneiry Rosario and Yari Cleto of the Dominican Republic.

Canadian duo of Sophia Hladnyiuk and Emma Braticevic defeated Dominican Republic's Ruth Martínez and Crismil Paniagua 2-0 (21-14, 21-15) to

win the bronze medal.

In the match for fifth place of the event, Ximena Nuñez and Kianny Quesada of Costa Rica prevailed 2-0 (21-15, 21-14) against Naomi Monney and Andrea Godoy of Guatemala.

Maryn McCoombs and Lucia Finlason of Cayman Islands finished seventh after Sofia Vega and Laura Molina of Costa Rica forfeited.

The team comprising Nahima Silva and Ella Resau of Nicaragua took ninth place over Daniela Vigil and Karla Tovar of El Salvador in three sets, prevailing 2-1 (21-16, 18-21, 15-5).

Disappointing results for Antiguans at NORCECA Beach Tournament

The Antigua and Barbuda men's and women's teams were among the lowest finishers at the Under-23 North, Central America and Caribbean Volleyball Confederation (NORCECA) Beach Tournament in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, from 1st to 5th June.

The Antigua and Barbuda duo of Kalique Joseph and Rashawn Martin finished in 10th place in the men's competition, which featured 13 teams.

Antigua and Barbuda's team of Jassania Joseph and Nia Benjamin finished in the cellar position in the female competition that was contested by 11 teams.

The team comprising Joseph and Martin lost 21-8, 21-11 against Rolvin Maldonado and Ricardo Paredes of the Dominican Republic in the playoffs for ninth place.

The Antiguans also lost their two preliminary round matches in Pool B of the men's competition of the Under 23 event, which is the new beach volleyball circuit that the NORCECA



JASSANIA JOSEPH



KALIQUE JOSEPH



NIA BENJAMIN



RASHAWN MARTIN

Confederation has created for athletes to earn ranking points for this age-group.

Joseph and Martin were

beaten 2-0 (21-7, 21-6) by Rodolfo Ventura and José Izaguirre of Guatemala and

also lost 2-0 (21-9, 21-6) to

Jefferson Cascante and Josue Meneses of Nicaragua.

Cuba won the gold

cont'd on pg 27