

MORE THAN \$200M SPENT ON WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

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APUA is working towards having uninterrupted water service available to all consumers. Utilities Minister Melford Nicholas, centre, along with senior officials of APUA took part in a tour of the new reverse osmosis plant at Fort James.

APUA is promising 24/7 water service to all consumers within a year

APUA is working towards achieving its long-term strategic goal for Antigua and Barbuda, which is having water service available to all consumers on a 24 hours per day, 7 days a week (24/7) basis.

Speaking at a press briefing on Monday, following a tour of the new reverse osmosis plant at Fort James, Utilities Minister Melford Nicholas, along with senior officials of APUA, indicated that this goal is achievable perhaps within a year.

Nicholas explained that while this is the goal, there are several hurdles before the authority chief, among which is the need for an additional US\$50 million to increase production capacity as well as replace aging pipes and overhaul the switching system.

“So far, the investments into water production infrastructure have topped the EC\$200 million mark and we are not finished. It is more than likely that over the next eighteen months, we are going to have to spend US\$50 million more to get us into the position that we want to get,” he stated.

The utilities minister said this money for additional investments may come from one of two sources; through a grant or via a loan. “We are already having discussions with one



of our friendly countries to look at the issue of either a grant or a loan on concessionary terms, to fix the distribution system. It is a significant undertaking; we are not alone. I recently attended a water conference and I heard my colleague minister for utilities in Barbados raise some of the same issues we have raised. In Barbados, their pipes are over 150 years old in some cases,” he noted.

According to Nicholas, the problem is now being faced by territories throughout CARICOM, but it is a problem that must be addressed.

Minister Nicholas gave a commit-

ment that over the next 18 months, the level of investment into water production and distribution will be quite significant. He cautioned that even with adequate production of water, there are certain ‘efficiencies’ that the authority must invest in to bring water availability to a state where all consumers are happy.

Also speaking at the press conference were the General Manager of APUA - Esworth Martin, Water Business Manager - Ian Lewis, Mechanical and Project Engineer - Brian Nicholas, and Transmission and Distribution Superintendent - Wayne Martin.



Dredging to begin at Crabbes Facility

An agreement has been signed between the Antigua and Barbuda Port Authority (ABPA) and the dredging company, Blue Ocean Marine, to undertake the dredging of the channel at the Crabbes facility to allow bigger vessels to operate there.

The agreement was signed by General Manager at ABPA, Darwin Telemaque, and Conliffe Browne of Blue Ocean Marine. "The contract calls for dredging the channel at Crabbes down to a depth of 8 metres from the 5-6 metres that it is currently. This way, bigger vessels will then be able to use the channels including those vessels that will carry Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) to the new plant being constructed at Crabbes. The LNG vessels will be able to sail right up to the berthing point when the dredging is completed," Telemaque explained.

He added that the project costs an estimated US\$4.2 million that is being made available by the Antigua Power Company Ltd. and its partner in the LNG generation, Eagle LNG out of the United States.

The Blue Ocean Marine official said the company needs only a week to mobilize its resources and that the actual dredging can begin within a week. "We will be widening and deepening the channel from Maiden Island to the docks, as well as

widening the turning basin. We will be dredging over 400 thousand cubic feet of materials which will be used for land reclamation in Shell Beach and other areas," he explained.

The nearby cement silo operation will also benefit from the deepening of the channel, as this means that larger vessels carrying ce-

ment into the country will be better able to maneuver in the channel and berth directly at the shared facility.

Earlier, APUA Minister, Melford Nicholas said the delays in signing the contract may cause the postponement of the end of October completion date. He, however, has expressed the view that if there is any

way that the timeline can be shortened, he is prepared to take those steps.

APC is undertaking the construction of a 40-megawatt LNG power generation plant at Crabbes, and there is a need for the vessels transporting the LNG to Antigua to be able to berth at the Crabbes facility, to discharge its cargo.



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PM Browne unwavering in establishing 'air bridge' with Africa

Prime Minister Gaston Browne remains unwavering in his commitment to build an 'air bridge' between the African continent and the Caribbean with Antigua and Barbuda as its first hub.

PM Browne said his administration remains un-

deterred in its policy objective despite the fallout from the earlier attempt with the establishment of Antigua Airways and the problems that ensued from that arrangement.

According to the prime minister the government

has put in place several measures to ensure that there will not be a repeat of the problem, where hundreds of African migrants ended up being stranded in Antigua. Following an IOM report, it appears as though the Africans, mainly Cameroonians who were

fleeing conflict in their homeland sought to use the direct flights to travel to Antigua, from where they hoped to travel the long treacherous journey to the southern US border.

PM Browne said the steps being implemented will prevent this from happening.

"This time around, having had the experience of a few months ago, we have put certain systems in place so we will not be granting visas to Cameroonians or other countries with instability in Africa," he revealed.

Individuals described by the prime minister as 'opportunistic migrants' will not be allowed to board the flight heading for Antigua. Also, there will be no waivers of visa requirements.

The privately owned Nigerian airline, Air Peace, is currently in negotiations with the government to own a majority of the shares in the newly formed LIAT 2020 which according to PM Browne, should be able to take to the skies by October of this year.

Meanwhile, he said the new airline will soon get the necessary licensing regime that will allow it to operate commercially in Antigua and Barbuda and other territories.



Farmers encouraged to take advantage of the upcoming rainy season to plant

Farmers in Antigua and Barbuda should maximize the anticipated rainfall expected over the next few months of the traditional rainy season to plant crops and store water.

The advice comes from Agriculture Minister, E.P Chet Greene, who recognized that whilst there is an ongoing, prolonged drought, the months of mid-August to the end of November normally usher in most of the rainfall the country experiences in a year.

“We are all thankful for the recent showers; we all pray for additional showers. We of course don’t really wish for hurricanes, but we know that it is during the hurricane season that the showers are likely to come, so I want to encourage farmers to prepare for the showers,” he suggested.

Greene said the ministry has already embarked on a programme of preparation for the expected rains.



These include cleaning the waterways as well as constructing new water catchment facilities. “We understand the importance of food security and food sovereignty issues,” the agriculture minister remarked.

Greene’s comments came at the opening of one of the containers of fertilizers donated to the government and people of Antigua and Barbuda from the Kingdom of Morocco, in Africa.

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ABYSO and The Commonwealth Resounds collaborate to create, perform and inspire!

A 23-strong delegation of musicians from one of the partner organizations of the Antigua and Barbuda Youth Symphony Orchestra (ABYSO), the Commonwealth Resounds (TCR), has arrived in the country for its second visit to Antigua and Barbuda.

The TCR will facilitate a series of workshops and performances from the 8th to the 19th of July 2023. With a special focus on music education and composition, the TCR is an officially accredited Commonwealth musical organization with a mission to connect musical cultures and promote initiatives and partnerships in Commonwealth countries.



The TCR first visited Antigua and Barbuda in 2019. Future trips were delayed until this year because of the pandemic. On their first visit, the TCR made a special visit to Barbuda and donated recorders to support music education

in Barbuda. The group has confirmed that the TCR delegation and 45 musicians from the ABYSO will again visit Barbuda on Sunday 16th July for the first-ever ABYSO concert on the sister island. The visit will also mark the official launch

of the ABYSO's expansion of its music programme to Barbuda.

The workshops will include a special focus on composition. These daily composition sessions will equip students and music educators with new skills on how to write music. The ABYSO is delighted to share this unique opportunity, not only with all its members but also with music teachers and 5th form music students from across Antigua and Barbuda in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Sports and the Creative Industries. Composition is a key part of the CSEC syllabus for music students. The workshops will cover composing for solo instruments, ensemble composition, film music and jazz composition.

Friends of the ABYSO can look forward to four
cont'd on pg 7

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Press statement from NSWMA

The Authority wishes to inform the general public that the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA) is the agency mandated by law to collect, transport, and dispose of solid waste in Antigua and Barbuda.

In an effort to improve our services and reliability, we are updating the residents in the community be-

low of the delayed service and we are working to resolve the issue promptly.

- Cooks Extension (Denfields Development)

In today's schedule, an unavoidably late start will be in the following communities.

- Paradise View
- Trade Winds
- Marble Hill

- All Saint's East (Mock Pond)

We thank the residents in those communities for their patience.

The National Solid Waste Management Authority wishes to advise private citizens that if there is a delay or missed collection of their residential waste services, to contact the Authority via the hotline number 562-1347.

cont'd from pg 6

amazing performances as part of this visit. The first concert will showcase the talent of the ABYSO Juniors and students from the ABYSO Potters Primary School programme on Tuesday 11th July at the Dean William Lake Cultural Centre at 6:30 pm. The next two performances, called Summertime, will be on Saturday 15th July on the lawns of the Weatherills Estate at 6:30 pm and then on Sunday 16th July for a historic first performance in Barbuda at the Fisheries Complex at 1:00 pm. The final performance will be Go Compose Antigua! an evening featuring the compositions of local musicians at the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium on Monday 17th July from 7:00 pm.

Alison Cox OBE, Founder and Musical Director of the TCR stated, "Our musicians warmly welcome opportunities to collaborate with musical partners in the 56 member countries of The Commonwealth. We are especially excited to be returning after 3 years to Anti-

gua and Barbuda, where we shall continue our ongoing mentoring partnership with ABYSO and run an innovative composition teaching programme for young people. Musical initiatives and developments in Antigua and Barbuda are unique in

the Caribbean, and we are proud to be associated with them."

The ABYSO-TCR partnership will continue to engage in music practice and theory knowledge transfer to local tutors and musicians and support the devel-

opment of young composers in Antigua and Barbuda. The TCR delegation will also have the opportunity to visit historical sites, will be guests of the Hellsgate Steel Orchestra and will also participate in a steelpan workshop during their visit.

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Local News



No response from booth owners



More than 24 hours have passed since the Festivals Commission issued an appeal for derelict booth owners to remove whatever valuables these booths may still contain before the demolitions begin.

However, according to sources at the Commission, no one has yet come forward indicating a willingness to heed the call. The booths are those to the right of the entrance gate, closest to the

Government Printery.

The booths are an eye sore, and they harbour rats, which pose a risk for other vendors who will be plying their trade at Carnival City, during the Carnival festivities.

The Festival Commission is warning that if the owners fail to comply within a reasonable time there will be no other choice than to forcibly have the booths demolished.

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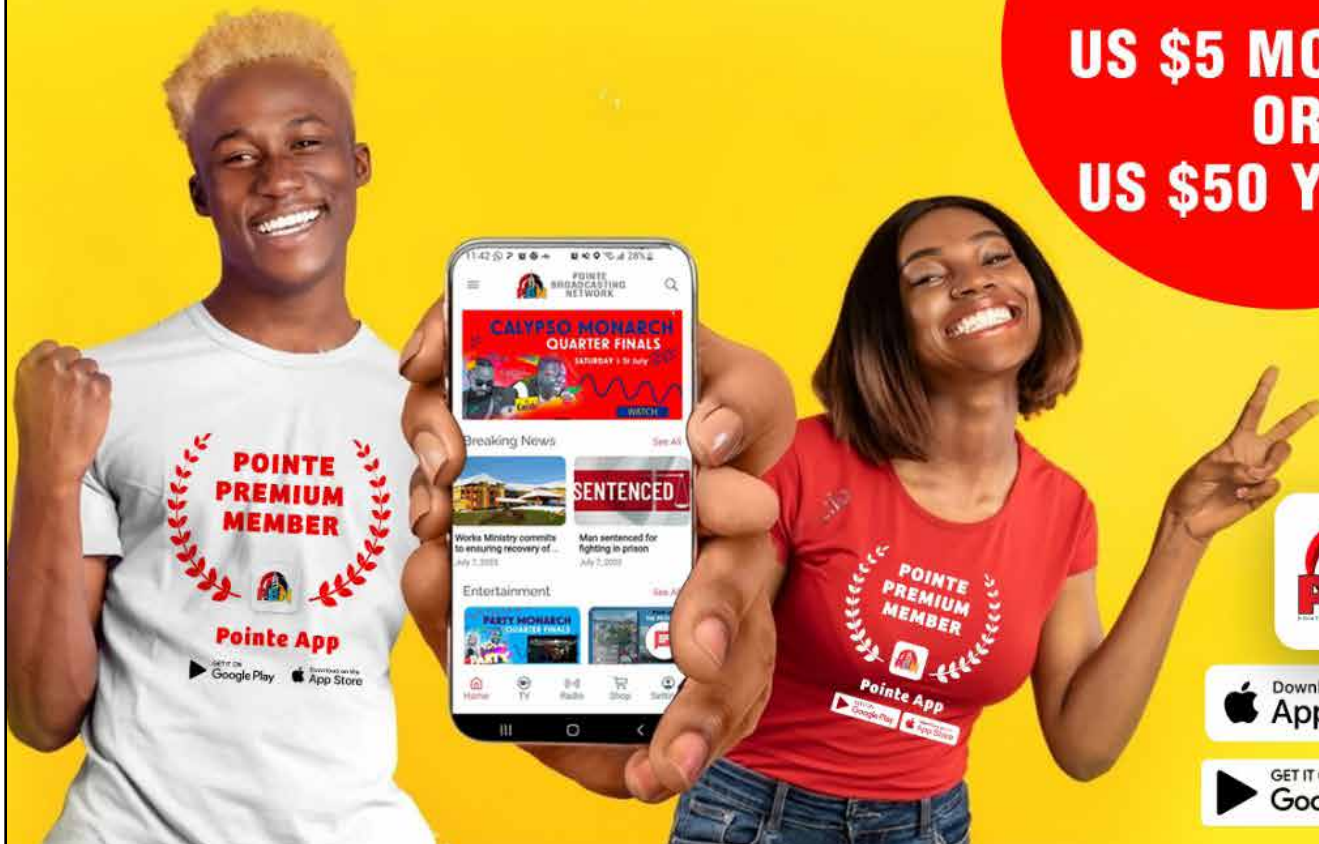
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Headquarters of the Ministry of Creative Industries relocated

Please be advised that the Department of Creative Industries has relocated some of its offices.

Please note the forgoing with the Department of Creative Industries locations.

The Department of Creative Industries Headquarters is now located on Old Parham Road upstairs of the INET and KFC Building, this department was formerly housed at the Roberts Industrial Park,

Cassada Gardens (behind the APUA building).

Marketing & Communications relocated from Old Parham Road upstairs of the INET and KFC Building, to the Festivals Unit, 1st Floor Ce-

cil George-John Building located on the corner of Corn Alley & Redcliffe Street.

The Department of Creative Industries would like the public to be guided accordingly.

Carnival vendors notice for meeting and payments

The Ministry of Education, Sports and Creative Industries schedules a meeting for all vendors for Carnival 2023.

The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 12th July at the Multipurpose Cultural Centre, Perry Bay, at 5 pm. This meeting is to discuss the new layout and the way forward for Vendors for Carnival 2023.

Meanwhile, vendor's fees/payments are currently accepted at the Cultural Unit located on Lower Nevis Street, Mondays – Thursdays, 9 am - 3 pm, and Fridays, 9 am – 2 pm.

Vendor's fees are as follows: -

For Booth Spots Outside (Shanty Town/Las Vegas) - \$900.00 (550 + 250*+100)

For Built-in Booths (Andy Roberts Stand) - \$850.00 (500+250*+100)

For Tray Spots Outside - \$300.00

For Tent Spots Outside - \$600.00 (350 + 250*)

For Mobile Vans - \$700.00

For Game Spots - \$950.00 (700 + 250*)

For Dance Hall - \$1,600.00 (1250 + 250*+100)

For Bounce Castles - \$650.00

For Kids Zone - \$850.00

For Built-in-Booths (ACB

Stand) - \$750.00

Tray Spots Inside - \$400.00

Tent Spots Inside - \$650.00 (400 + 250*)

Mobile Vendors - \$250.00 (without drinks)

Photography Booth - \$400.00

Gambling Booth - \$1,500.00

(1250 + 250 + 250*)

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Magnitude 6.6 earthquake strikes near Caribbean in Atlantic Ocean

A 6.6 magnitude earthquake which occurred in the Atlantic Ocean this afternoon was reported as being felt in several Caribbean islands.

The Puerto Rico Seismic Network said the earthquake occurred at approximately 4:28 pm.

The epicentre of this earthquake was at Latitude: 20.1 North and Longitude: 61.1 West at a depth of 10 kilometres.

In its report, the Network said there was No Warning, Warning or Watch of Tsunami for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

The US Geological Survey (USGS) also stated the 6.6 magnitude earthquake occurred 227 kilometres NNE of Codrington, Antigua and Barbuda around 4:28 pm at a depth of 10 km.

It was not long after the tremor occurred that people took to social media to find out if anyone felt an earthquake.

The British Virgin Islands Department of Disaster Management (BVI DDM) said the earthquake was felt in the Virgin Islands.

The Montserrat Volcano Observatory (MVO) in a report said a moderate to large earthquake measuring M6.6 occurred approximately 350 km to the



NE of Montserrat at 16:29 local time (20:29 UTC).

It notes there is no tsunami threat from the tectonic earthquake, nor is it related to the Soufriere Hills volcano.

The MVO adds that it is aware of felt reports on island and in neighbouring St Kitts and Guadeloupe.

Meanwhile, the Meteorological Department of St Maarten reported that the earthquake occurred 190 miles northeast of St Maarten.

And, the UWI Seismic Research Center (UWI SRC) in Trinidad and Tobago said the event occurred outside its monitoring area but was felt in some islands.

It reported the event as a 6.2 magnitude earthquake which occurred around 4:28 pm at a depth of -25km.



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PAHO holding meetings on future pandemic agreement

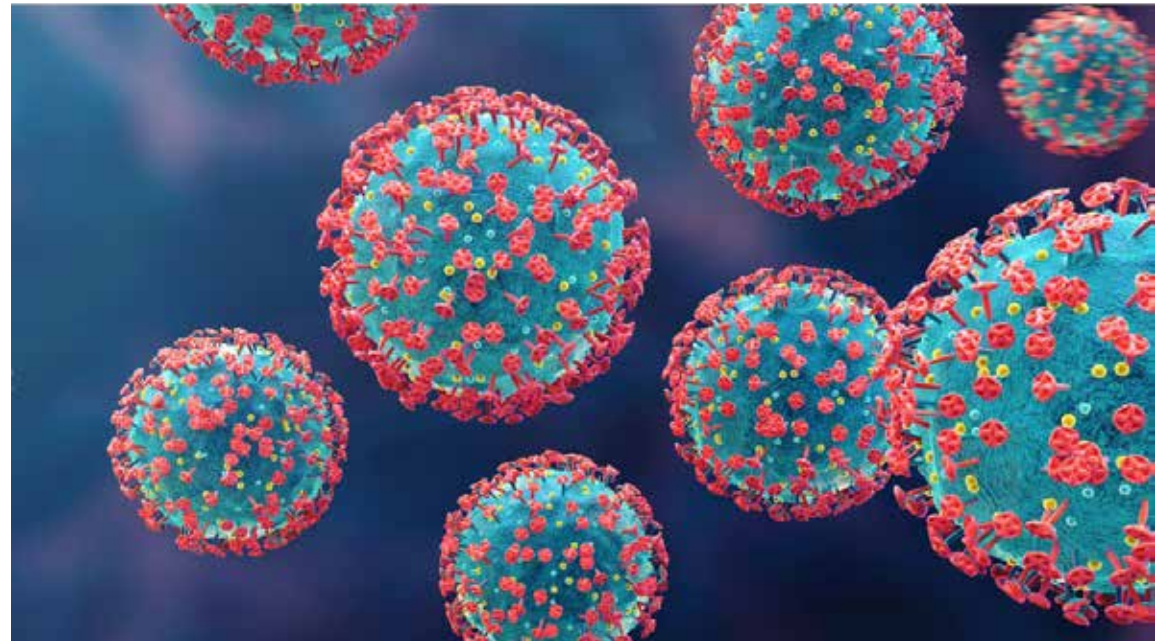
CMC - The Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) Monday began meetings in Washington to discuss the key components and implications for the region of the future pandemic instrument, as well as the proposed amendments to the International Health Regulations (IHR-2005).

PAHO said that the meetings this week, which are being attended by officials from its 35 member states, including those in the Caribbean, is aimed at sharing information, promote better understanding and facilitate consensus.

It said both processes are driven and led by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and seek to ensure that the health, social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is not repeated, and that the world is better prepared to prevent or respond to future pandemics through increased collaboration, exchange, and high-level political commitment.

“Member states have a once in a generation opportunity to approve a new instrument and amendments to the IHR-2005 to set the basis of a safer world for all humanity,” said Dr. Jarbas Barbosa, PAHO Director, in a video message at the opening of the meeting.

“It is essential that member states continue to engage



actively in the deliberations in Geneva, ensuring proper interaction and alignment between their respective capitals and permanent missions,” he said.

Until Wednesday, representatives of the Ministries of Health and Foreign Affairs of the countries of the Americas will participate in the second meeting convened by the PAHO Director to “facilitate their meaningful participation” in the deliberations.

The meeting also includes members of countries’ permanent missions to the United Nations in Geneva and to the Organisation of American States (OAS) in Washington.

In December 2021, the World Health Assembly established the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) to draft and negotiate a convention, agreement, or

other international instrument within the framework of the WHO Constitution to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. This will be submitted for approval in 2024.

Last year, the World Health Assembly created a working group of member states to examine the proposed amendments to the IHR, a legally binding agreement to prevent the international spread of disease.

The IHR was previously amended in 2014, to extend for life the validity of the yellow fever vaccination certificate, and in 2022, to reduce the duration of entry into force of future amendments from 24 to 12 months.

The meeting here is being held in preparation for the sixth meeting of the INB (July 17-21) and the Fourth meeting of the IHR

Working Group (July 24-28), when delegates from all WHO member countries will continue in-depth discussions on the preliminary draft pandemic instrument, chapter by chapter, as well as proposed amendments to the IHR (2005).

PAHO said an effective pandemic agreement – based on solidarity among countries – is expected to help ensure that health personnel worldwide are better equipped for the next pandemic, and that the production and distribution of vaccines and other medical products is more equitable.

“It also aims to ensure effective early detection and response measures against potential pandemic pathogens, and to improve the response capabilities of health, laboratory and research services, among other objectives,” PAHO added.

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Kevin Spacey 'attacked man while he slept', London sex assault trial told



BBC - An aspiring actor who sought career advice from Kevin Spacey claims he woke up with the star performing a sex act on him after being invited to his flat.

The last of four men in the trial who claim they were sexually assaulted by the US actor gave evidence at London's Southwark Crown Court on Monday.

He said he was afraid to go to the police because he was in a "David and Goliath" situation.

The US actor denies 12 sex offences between 2001 and 2013.

His trial heard how the complainant was invited to Spacey's flat in the Waterloo area of London - where he was staying during his stint as the director of the Old Vic theatre - after seeking him out for career mentorship.

Jurors were played a recording of the complainant's police interview, in which he said he was initially "really

excited" the Hollywood star was taking an interest in his career.

The man - who was 23 at the time of the alleged offence - drank beer, smoked cannabis and ate pizza with Mr Spacey.

He said: "I thought 'what a good person taking time to help me out'. That quickly went.

"He was slightly despondent in conversation and didn't really want to talk about acting. Everything was very quick.

"Nothing was a developing conversation. In hindsight, he just had one thing he wanted to do. He obviously had one thing on this mind."

The court heard the man claim that Spacey gave him a "low-waisted hug" and put his head in his crotch while they were sitting on a couch.

He told police during the recorded interview that he was "a bit tipsy", adding: "It's unusual in my behaviour

to just conk out and that's what I did."

Recounting the alleged assault, he said his "very first image" after waking up was the actor performing a sex act on him.

The complainant told police: "I said no, he kind of carried on and I pushed him, and he stopped.

"He stood up. My belt was still together but my buttons were undone. I was zipping up and massively in shock.

"He said I think it was best you go. He said I should leave, and I shouldn't tell anyone about this.

"Because I was in such shock, I don't know what I thought."

The man said he had heard Spacey liked "young, straight boys" but "didn't know at that point he was a predator".

He said he cried while waiting for a bus home and had been afraid to go

cont'd on pg 16

US Congressman lauds ‘productive, informational’ visit to Trinidad

CMC - United States Democratic Leader in the House of Representatives Hakeem Jeffries has described as “productive and informational” his visit last week for talks with Caribbean Community (CARICOM) leaders.

Jeffries led a bipartisan Congressional delegation to Port of Spain and in a statement on Sunday said the delegation discussed “pressing economic and geopolitical issues in the Caribbean and reaffirmed the strong partnership between the United States and our neighbours”.

Jeffries, who represents the largely Caribbean 8th Congressional District in New York, said the delegation also joined US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to “build on the historic partnership reignited by the Biden-Harris administration”.

He said the delegation participated in the CARICOM conference that coincided with the 50th anniversary of the regional integration movement.

He said during a meeting with the regional leaders chaired by Dominica’s Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit, they discussed “several issues of mutual concern, including the rise of



Congressman Hakeem Jeffries and Trinidad and Tobago’s Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley. Photo: Office of the Prime Minister.

gun trafficking, the climate crisis, access to banking institutions and economic development.

“Our delegation also had productive bilateral meetings with the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago Dr Keith Rowley and the Prime Minister of Barbados Mia Mottley,” Jeffries said.

He said during a meeting with Trinidad and Tobago’s American Chamber of Commerce, the delegation “echoed our commitment to

strengthening our bilateral ties and supporting economic growth.

“The United States and the Caribbean are deeply intertwined, anchored in our geographic proximity, security concerns and economic interests. The Western Hemisphere is stronger because of the relationships that bind it together.

“We will continue building and strengthening the bond between the US and our Caribbean neighbours,” he added.

cont’d from pg 15

to police over the incident.

Asked why he had not initially reported it, he said: “It’s David and Goliath isn’t it, and speaking to police, and being the only one.

“I did not have the confidence...it was so deeply buried. I didn’t even tell friends.”

During in-person cross-examination in court, the complainant said he believed he was drugged by

Spacey and described him as a “vile, sexual predator” who “raped” him. The complainant was quizzed by Patrick Gibbs KC on behalf of Spacey, who questioned his motives for coming forward.

Mr Gibbs suggested that money worries might have been behind him going to police and approaching media outlets, and asked questions about his spending and gambling habits.

The defence said the complainant had discussions with lawyers about seeking millions in compensation from Spacey. Mr Gibbs also put questions to the complainant about his sexuality, and suggested that he knew Spacey wanted to “hook up” with the complainant when he agreed to go to his flat.

In January, Mr Spacey pleaded not guilty to three counts of indecent assault,

three counts of sexual assault and one count of causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent.

He also previously denied four further charges of sexual assault and one count of causing a person to engage in penetrative sexual activity without consent.

All four accusers are entitled to lifelong anonymity under the law.

The trial continues.

Guyana: Fire destroys millions of dollars in goods in Georgetown

A fire has gutted a supermarket and warehouse in the Guyanese capital, Georgetown.

According to the Guyana Fire Service (GFS), the blaze, which began early on Saturday morning, started in the warehouse that housed a large quantity of cloth and other combustible materials.

The blaze quickly spread to the Hong Wei Supermarket.

Firefighters rescued five Chinese nationals who were trapped in the building. Three of them were sent to the hospital for smoke inhalation, along



Fire officers attempting to quell a fire at the Hong Wei Supermarket. Photo: Guyana Fire Service.

with a firefighter. The diligent work of firefighters over the weekend prevented the blaze from spreading to La Penitence market. GFS investigators are still trying to determine what caused the fire.

Regional governments agree to pay arrears to CDEMA

CMC - Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries with outstanding arrears to the Barbados-based Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency have agreed to meet their financial obligation, Dominican National Security Minister, Rayburn Blackmoore has disclosed.

Blackmoore said that the undertaking to meet the outstanding arrears was taken during a meeting of Council of Ministers meeting held in St. Lucia last week.

Blackmoore did not indicate how much is owed to CDEMA, established in 1991, as a regional inter-governmental agency for disaster management in CARICOM, but said the meeting acknowledged that the



financing of CDEMA is key going forward.

“Over the years, CDEMA has done a fantastic job in managing and coordinating our response so far as disaster is concerned,” he said, noting one of the highlights of the meeting was the approval of the recommendations for the sustainable financing of CDEMA.

“Firstly, to ensure that member states pay their contributions to ensure that CDEMA from an ad-

ministrative standpoint continues to operate with efficiency and effectiveness,” he said noting that it was important to give the executive director the ability to seek funding from potential donor agencies to finance the operation of CDEMA.

“That I believe was significant and we have to have to ensure that the financing aspect of CDEMA is sustainable.

“And we were able to get all member states to commit to meet the contribution,” Blackmoore said, noting that Dominica has been up to date in its payments to CDEMA even “when we weren’t affected by COVID-19 and Hurricane. Maria, we have always been current insofar as our contribution is concerned”.

Turkey backs Sweden's Nato membership - Stoltenberg

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has agreed to support Sweden's bid to join Nato, the military alliance's chief Jens Stoltenberg says.

He said the Turkish leader would forward Sweden's bid to the parliament in Ankara and "ensure ratification".

Meanwhile, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said: "I am very happy, it is a good day for Sweden."

Turkey had previously spent months blocking Sweden's application, accusing it of hosting Kurdish militants.

As one of Nato's 31 members, Turkey has a veto over any new country joining the group.

Reacting to the news, US President Joe Biden said he welcomed the commitment by President Erdogan to proceed with "swift ratification".

"I stand ready to work with President Erdogan and Turkey on enhancing defence and deterrence in the Euro-Atlantic area. I look forward to welcoming Prime Minister Kristersson and Sweden as our 32nd Nato ally," a White House statement said.

German Foreign Minister Annalen Baerbock tweeted: "At 32, we're all safer together." British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said Sweden joining would "make us all safer".

Mr Stoltenberg announced the agreement late on Monday following talks between the Turkish and Swedish leaders in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius.

The Nato chief described it as a "historic step", but stressed that a "clear date" could not be given for when Sweden would join the military alliance - as this relied on the Turkish parliament.

Sweden and its eastern neighbour



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson shake hands with Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg looking on.

Finland - both nations with a long history of wartime neutrality - announced their intention to join Nato in May last year, several months after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Finland formally joined in April.

Mr Stoltenberg said Turkey and Sweden had addressed "Turkey's legitimate security concerns" and as a result Sweden had amended its constitution, changed its laws, expanded its counter-terrorism operation against the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party - which is banned in Turkey) and resumed arms exports to Turkey.

Turkey and Hungary are currently the only two Nato members yet to ratify Sweden's membership application.

Asked about opposition from Budapest, Mr Stoltenberg said that "Hungary has made it clear that they will not be the last to ratify".

"I think that problem will be solved," he added.

Earlier on Monday, President Erdogan had also appeared to link Turkish support for Sweden's Nato bid to the EU re-opening frozen membership

talks with Ankara.

EU officials were quick to reject the demand, saying those were two separate issues.

But in a statement after the deal was announced, Nato said Sweden would actively support efforts to "re-invigorate Turkey's EU accession process" and this would include "modernisation of the EU-Türkiye customs union and visa liberalisation".

Turkey first applied to join the EU way back in 1987, but its drift towards authoritarianism under President Erdogan brought the accession process to a halt.

However since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Mr Erdogan has also played a unique role as a Nato leader with influence in Moscow.

He helped broker last year's Black Sea Grain Initiative, which enables Ukraine to export agricultural products from its ports.

Turkey has helped the keep the deal alive, despite frequent Russian threats to withdraw.

But Turkey has also angered the

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Japan: Toshodaiji Kondo temple in Nara defaced by Canadian teen

By Nadine Yousif

A Canadian teenager has been questioned by police in Japan after carving letters on a wooden pillar of an 8th Century temple.

Police said the 17-year-old boy carved "Julian" on a pillar at the Toshodaiji Kondo temple complex in Nara, Japan.

The boy was caught carving the pillar with his fingernail by a Japanese tourist, who alerted temple staff.

The temple is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site.

After the incident, which occurred on 7 July, the boy was questioned on suspicion of violating the cultural properties protection law.

The carving was made on the pillar of the temple's "Golden Hall", which is a designated national treasure, police told Japanese newspaper The Mainichi.

Police also told CNN that the boy said his actions



Toshodaiji Temple in Nara is identified as a national treasure of Japan.

did not intend to harm Japanese culture. They added he is now with his parents, who were with him when the vandalism occurred.

A monk at the temple told The Mainichi that "even though it may have been done without malice, it is still regrettable and sad".

The temple is one of eight sites that make up the Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara.

According to UNESCO's website, the monuments,

which include Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, "provide a vivid picture of life in the Japanese capital in the eighth century, a period of profound political and cultural change".

Nara is around 45km (28 miles) south of Kyoto, and was once the capital of Japan. It remains popular with tourists.

Under Japanese law, any person who has damaged an object of "important cultural property" could face up

to five years in prison, or a fine of ¥300,000 (\$2,120; £1,650).

The incident in Nara follows a video which showed a UK-based man carving a message into a wall at Rome's ancient Colosseum.

The man, Ivan Dimitrov, faces legal proceedings after cutting "Ivan+Haley 23" into stone at the 2,000-year-old monument. He has apologised and said that was not aware how old the monument was when he acted.

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Kremlin by supplying armed drones to Ukraine.

Russian officials were also furious at the weekend when Turkey, in a surprise move, allowed five former commanders of the Ukrainian garrison at Mariupol to fly back to Kyiv at the end of a visit by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Under the terms of a prisoner exchange last year, Russia expected the men to remain in Turkey until the end of the war.

The two-day Nato summit kicks off

in Vilnius on Tuesday and Ukraine's membership bid will be high on the agenda.

All alliance members agree that Ukraine cannot join the bloc during the war - amid fears this would lead to a direct conflict with a nuclear-armed Russia.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has himself said he does not expect membership until after the war - but he wants the summit to give a "clear signal" on Ukraine's bid.

Several Nato members in Eastern Europe are pressing for a fast-track

membership for their neighbour but others, including the US and Germany, are seen as more hesitant.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Monday warned that Ukraine's membership of Nato would have "negative consequences for the entire security architecture, which is half destroyed as it is in Europe".

Ukrainian membership would "represent an absolute danger, threat to our country, which will require of us a quite firm and clear reaction", Mr Peskov said.

Sex offender Larry Nassar stabbed multiple times in prison

By Madeline Halpert

Former US national gymnastics team doctor Larry Nassar has been stabbed several times at a Florida prison.

Nassar, serving up to 175 years for molesting gymnasts, received multiple injuries during a fight with another inmate on Sunday, CBS News reported.

He is reportedly in hospital in stable condition and is said to have suffered a collapsed lung.

The 59-year-old was jailed for sexually assaulting athletes he worked with, and possession of child pornography.

During the assault, Nassar was stabbed twice in the neck, twice in the back and six times in the chest, a prison union leader told NBC News.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons confirmed an inmate was assaulted at 14:35 EST (18:35 GMT) at United States Penitentiary Coleman in Florida, where the disgraced former doctor is serving time.

“Responding staff immediately initiated life-saving measures”, the agency told BBC News. The inmate was taken to a local hospital “for further treatment and



Larry Nassar is believed to have been stabbed several times in a prison fight.

evaluation”.

An internal investigation has been launched, and no staff or other inmates were injured in the incident, the statement said.

Nassar admitted to sexually assaulting athletes while he worked with the USA Gymnastics programme and Michigan State University, where he maintained a clinic.

More than 330 women and girls at USA Gymnastics and Michigan State University have accused Nassar of sexual abuse.

Olympic gold medallists

Simone Biles, Aly Raisman and McKayla Maroney have all testified about surviving Nassar’s abuse.

Some of the young athletes said they had come forward about the abuse to adults, including coaches and doctors, but were dismissed.

An investigation into the FBI’s handling of the scandal, published in 2021, found the agency made a series of missteps, including delays and cover-ups, which allowed Nassar’s abuse to continue for several more months after the case was

first opened.

The agency’s own watchdog found the FBI disregarded allegations about Nassar and made early errors in its investigation.

Several women who were sexually assaulted by Nassar - including Raisman, Biles and Maroney - have sued the FBI for \$1bn (£783m) for mishandling credible complaints of sexual assault.

USA Gymnastics has agreed to pay \$380m to Nassar’s victims, while Michigan State reached a \$500m settlement with survivors.



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CWI appoints Shane Deitz as new Head Coach of the West Indies Women

Cricket West Indies (CWI) has announced the appointment of Shane Deitz as the new Head Coach of the West Indies Women's team.

The appointment was confirmed at the CWI Board of Directors meeting on Friday, June 30th at the Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua.

Deitz, 48, is a former first-class player who represented South Australia as a wicket-keeper/batsman in 66 first-class matches between 1998 and 2008.

He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position, having been coaching at the professional and international levels for over a decade. He was the Head Coach of Bangladesh Women team and is currently the Head Coach of the Netherlands Women side.

Johnny Grave, CWI's



Shane Deitz has been appointed as the new Head Coach of the West Indies Women's team. (CWI Media)

Chief Executive Officer said, "We are pleased to announce Shane as our new West Indies Women's Head Coach following a robust global recruitment process.

"Shane is well equipped for the role having coached extensively in both the Men's and Women's game, in his native Australia, as well as

other parts of the world.

"He is dynamic, energetic, and is very familiar with the requirements of the women's game. He brings the right skills and experience to drive the team and the women's game in the West Indies forward."

Shane Deitz said, "I am very honoured to have the

opportunity to coach the West Indies Women's team. West Indies cricket both men and women have a great history of success whilst playing entertaining cricket and my aim is to continue with that formula.

"The team has a great blend of world class senior players and some talented younger players which is a good starting point to build from. We have a lot of work to do though as reality is we are behind the top few sides in the world and we need to bridge that gap and become competitive again to challenge for World Cups in the future."

Deitz will start the role in late August ahead of the Women's CPL and the West Indies Women's next international assignment, the away tour of Australia in October.

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The Cuties Ovals OJays Basketball team. (File photo)

Wins for Ovals and Flyers in division one basketball league

The Cuties Ovals OJays and the Flyers notched up important wins against their closest rivals in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Division One League on Sunday night.

The Ovals Ojays ascended to the best record in the league by overpowering the Northside Stingerz 80-68 in the opening game of a double-header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Joshua Minner shot a game-high 25 points and snatched nine rebounds to lead the Ovals Ojays to their 10th win in 12 games.

Minner was well supported by his team-mates. Kareem Edwards scored 15 points; Alexis Jackson had 14 points and nine rebounds; and Mario Davis chipped in with 13 points, 10 rebounds, and seven assists.

It was another disappointing result for the Stingerz, who were beaten for the third time in as many games over the weekend to slip to an overall record of 10 wins and four losses in 14 encounters.

Donte Trimmingham scored 15 points and grabbed six rebounds; Kenroy Telemaque had 12 points and 11 rebounds; Jevonte Valerie produced 12 points and nine rebounds; and Devorn Benjamin chipped in with 12 points and five rebounds for the Stingerz.

The Flyers continued their resurgence as they flew past the Potters Steelers 73-69 in the second game on Sunday night.

Adonis Humphreys converted 15 points and snapped up 12 rebounds to lead the Flyers to back-to-back wins following their 77-57 drubbing of the

Stingerz the previous night.

Jevonte Daley had 13 points and five steals; David Hernandez sank 11 points and distributed five assists; Jabari Williams grabbed 12 rebounds and converted 10 points; and T-Shawn Lewis chipped in with 10 points and five rebounds to propel the Flyers to their eighth win in 12 encounters.

Jacob Lloyd had 14 points and five assists to lead the Potters Steelers, which suffered back-to-back losses for the first time this season.

Humroy Wright scored 13 points and snatched five rebounds; Cohen Desouza produced 12 points and 16 rebounds; and Marlon "Buju" Charles also contributed 12 points, 13 rebounds, five assists, and five steals for the Potters Steelers, who lost for the third time in 13 encounters.



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Strictly Business trounce Dredgers in softball cricket contest

Rackaman Construction Strictly Business was among the winners in the Antigua and Barbuda Softball Cricket Association's (ABSCA) Men's T20 Competition on Sunday.

The Strictly Business team crushed the Dredgers by 68 runs. The Strictly Business won the toss and opted to bat, scoring 185 for six off their allotted 20 overs.

Charles James cracked 33, Raymond Leadette hit 32, and Kim George struck 31. Melvin Charles captured three for 35.

In reply, the Dredgers were restricted to 117 for nine off their 20 overs,

in which Mervin Higgins slammed 53. Egbert Francis snapped up four wickets for 17 runs, and Kim George picked up two wickets without conceding a run.

The Lil Lincs Supermarket ABDF Warriors defeated 300 by five wickets. The 300 made 149 for six off their 20 overs, with Veston Lewis hitting 43 and Kennedy Tonge getting 33. Tyron Payne and Malique Gerald each claimed two wickets for 24 runs.

The Defense Force Warriors then achieved victory by scoring 151 for six with 16 balls to spare. Almojie Webster slammed 50, Jeff Lawrence cracked 35, and



Melvin Charles

Malique Gerald was not out on 26. Kennedy Tonge captured two for 37.

Flyers and Sagicor Life Enforcers also recorded wins in the ABSCA's Female T20 competition on Sunday.

The Flyers secured a nine-wicket win against Foster Jonas and Harley's Maintenance Potters Uprising.

Potters Uprising were dismissed for 36 in 8.5 overs. Diane Anthony snatched three wickets for 10 runs, Makeda Samuel picked up two wickets for six runs, and Valencia Thomas had two wickets for seven runs.

Makada Samuel struck 32 as the Flyers romped to victory at 37 for one in just

2.5 overs.

The Enforcers crushed the Jennings Rockets by 42 runs. Enforcers made 139 for seven off 20 overs. Enrika Matthew smashed 39 not out, Sacha Michael hit 31, and Grace Persaud scored 23.

Valarie Isaac captured three for 38 runs, and Kushana David picked up two for 25.

In reply, the Jennings Rockets were dismissed for 97 runs in 18.1 overs. Kushana David got 28, and Ann-Marie Parker scored 24. Gaynell O'Garro grabbed three wickets for 20 runs, Sherilyn Watkins snatched three wickets for 27 runs, and Camille Thorpe took two wickets for 16 runs.



Malique Gerald

Empire maintain winning run in ABCA's Super40 Cup

The Empire Nation extended their unbeaten run in the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) Super40 Cup limited overs competition on Sunday.

The Empire Nation secured their third win in as many matches by snatching a two-wicket victory against the Wes Rising Sun Spartans at the Rising Sun playing field.

The Spartans crashed to 69 all-out in 25 overs after winning the toss and opting to bat. Tyrone Williams Jr. grabbed five wickets for 17 runs, and off-spinner Justin Athanaze snapped up four wickets for nine runs.

The Empire Nation secured victory by scoring 73 for eight in 20.2 overs. Tassilo Allen snapped up three wickets for three runs, and Martin Singh took three wickets for 27 runs.

The Pigotts Crushers and the Caribbean Union Bank (CUB) Bethesda Golden Eagles notched up their third wins in four outings.

The Crushers beat the New Winthorpes Lions by

26 runs at the New Winthorpes playing field.

The Crushers, who were sent in to bat first after losing the toss, made 138 for nine off their allotted 40 overs, with Orandel Boston taking three wickets for 26 runs in eight overs and captain Nino Henry picking up two wickets for 17 in seven overs.

In reply, the New Winthorpes Lions tumbled to 112 all-out in 30.4 overs, with Hilroy Andrew getting a top score of 41 off 31 balls.

Vishal Gobin claimed two wickets for five runs, Vincent Shadrach Jr. had two for 14, and Trevorson Atley captured two for 22.

The Bethesda Golden Eagles beat the All Saints Pythons by seven wickets at the Bethesda playing field.

The Pythons were dismissed for 89 in 26.3 overs after being sent in to bat. Captain Deran Benta claimed three wickets for nine runs, leg-spinner Anthony "I Roots" Martin took three wickets for 10 runs, and fast bowler Kelvin Pitman captured two



Tyrone Williams Jr. claimed a five-wicket haul to help Empire Nation beat the Rising Sun Spartans in the ABCA Super40 Cup on Sunday, July 9th. (File photo)

for 25.

Bethesda then coasted to victory at 90 for three in 17.2 overs. Stevel Rodney hit an unbeaten 26 and Deago Joseph was not out on 21.

However, the other scheduled encounter between the Bolans Blasters and the Jennings Tigers was abandoned. The pitch at the Bolans playing field was deemed unfit for play.