

BY-ELECTION ISSUES DISCUSSED BY CABINET

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After a three-year hiatus mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact, the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission is joining hands with the Antigua and Barbuda Steelband Association to stage the return of Panorama for Carnival 2023. *Story on page 5.*

Issues related to the St. Mary's South by-election discussed by Cabinet

The Chairman of the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission (ABEC) John Jarvis, and the Supervisor of Elections (Ag.) Ian Hughes were invited to Cabinet on Wednesday.

According to the Cabinet Notes, two issues occupied the Cabinet's attention: i) the precise deadline for the date of the by-election, given the date of the receipt of the resignation of a member, from the St. Mary's South constituency; and, ii) the final day for the registration of new voters who intend to participate in the St. Mary's

South by-election.

It was agreed that the latest date for holding the by-elections would be October 26, 2023. It was also agreed that the final day for registration of new voters would be July 31, 2023. The date for the by-election in the St. Mary's South Constituency was not fixed.

The second matter raised had to do with the position of Supervisor of Elections. "The Chairman of the ABEC sought and received confirmation that the position of Supervisor of Elections

will be tabled at the next sitting of Parliament. Dame Lorna Simon has submitted her resignation on the basis of age, as dictated by the law. The Cabinet took the opportunity to thank the outgoing Supervisor of Elections for her tremendous work and outstanding competence," the Notes stated.

It was also agreed that the ABEC is in a near state of readiness to conduct by-elections. The Cabinet approved several sums of money to meet the obligations of ABEC in the conduct of the pending by-elections.

MoE holds reading summer camp

The Ministry of Education (MOE), is this week concluding the second instalment of the Reading Summer camp, geared towards creating a love for and excitement about reading among younger students.

Director of Education, Clare Browne, said the

summer camp forms part of the Summer Intervention for the early learners' population. "The primary goal of the Summer Reading Program is to get students excited about reading and writing. Approximately 527 kindergarten to grade 3 students are registered for this camp from 26th

June to July 14th," he explained.

He said instructions will focus on key areas that support the reading process. These are:

- Phonological awareness
- Phonics
- Sight word knowledge
- Comprehension strategies
- Vocabulary
- Written expression

He further explained that a Literacy Station Model is utilized as the foundation for the operation of the camp.

Literacy centers offer meaningful learning experiences where students work independently or collaboratively to meet literacy goals. There are six stations: Sound and Word Works, Sight Words, Reading, Writing, Media/Technology and a Library Nook.



Director of Education, Clare Browne

Practically all public primary schools are participating in the programme. These schools are grouped into four Zones with one school in each of the Zones designated as the centre.

On Friday, there will be an 'Open Day' from 9:30 am to 11:30 am, when members of the public are invited to visit the schools to see what the children have learned over the course of the summer camp.



Secondary Schools students attend Summer Camp too

The Summer School Programme is an initiative that has been offered since 2017 to all Public Secondary Schools that are in the position to offer the programme based on the availability of teachers to engage the students. The emphasis has always been on promotion.

However, in 2021, the emphasis was on Curriculum Recovery for the 4th Form students, in preparation for CXC and/or Levels 3 and 4 students. This initiative for Curriculum Recovery assisted in bridging the gap that existed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The teaching/learning engagements for most of these students were negatively impacted from March 2020 to present. In 2022, the programme reverted to its initial objective.

This year's Summer School Programme, June 26 – July 17, will be undertaken by seven (7) schools. They will capitalize on the opportunity to offer students who missed the Promotion Criteria up to three subjects, to be promoted. Students, who have been promoted can also attend for further reinforcement of concepts. Provision has been made for students from schools that are not offering the programme, to be attached to a school that is offering Summer School for reinforcement purposes. The schools that are offering Summer School are the Antigua Grammar School, Clare Hall Secondary School, Sir Novelle Richards Academy, Pares Secondary School, Glanvilles Secondary School, Ottos Comprehensive School and St. Mary's Secondary School.

This year, special provision is made for the Level 4 students of the Ottos Comprehensive School, Sir Novelle Richards Academy and All Saints Secondary School, where they have been placed in the Learners Support Programme (LSP). These students meet at All Saints Secondary School daily, from

8:00 am to 1:30 pm.

The LSP Summer School Programme seeks to take the students on a three-week journey of exploration and discovery. The students will explore Antigua's rainforest, and beaches and will also take a virtual trip to outer space with the hope that doors will be opened for them to discover various avenues of grasping topics in numeracy and literacy. Students will engage in numeracy and literacy activities, Science experiments, Social Studies field trips, Art and Craft, Computer Basics, and Culinary Arts. As the central focus of the Summer School Programme, each activity is geared toward improving students' numeracy and literacy skills.

The Education Officers - Curriculum are very much involved in the programme. They support the programme by visiting the schools and offering curriculum guidance.

Three hundred and seventy-seven (377) students have capitalized on the opportunity. From all indications, Summer School is running smoothly and the students have expressed appreciation for the opportunity afforded. A student, however, is only offered Summer School two (2) times during secondary school.

The Ministry of Education expresses its profound gratitude to the Board of Education, the National School Meals and the Transport Board for partnering with them to make the camp a reality.



Cabinet bids farewell to Professor Densil Williams

The Principal of the University of the West Indies (UWI) at Five Islands Campus, Professor Densil Williams, paid a farewell visit to Cabinet as he prepares to return to the UWI Campus at Mona, Jamaica to take up a new appointment.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne thanked the principal for his outstanding service to the UWI Five Islands Campus; taking the UWI through a period of transition is highly regarded, the Prime Minister shared and applauded the outgoing principal for his outstanding leadership.

The outgoing principal, the Prime Minister noted, is a great Caribbean talent. He thanked the principal for the outstanding work and achievements on behalf of UWI FIC, and for placing the institution in a tremendously competitive space.

Several Ministers took the opportunity to express their thanks to the outgoing Principal. He responded by assuring the Cabinet that the UWI Campus at Five Islands is an outstanding achievement and thanked the Government. The outgoing Principal remarked that the build-out of the UWI Five Islands Campus would inure to the benefit of Antigua and Barbuda and other Eastern

Caribbean countries which UWI serves.

The campus, in the post-Covid era, exceeds 1,000 students though it was first constructed to fit 800 students.

The human capital development which has characterized UWI will be re-

flected in the achievements of the growing student population. Professor Williams praised the Government of Antigua and Barbuda for its valiant efforts and the support to UWI which can only empower the people whom the campus will serve.



Professor Densil Williams

Panorama returns with a bang!

After a three-year hiatus mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact, the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission is joining hands with the Antigua and Barbuda Steelband Association to stage the return of Panorama for Carnival 2023.

The steel bands have already put in thousands of hours of practice and with the show slated for August 5 at Carnival City, the pan men, and pan women are expected to put in many more hours of preparation, in anticipation of what is expected to be one of the biggest shows in the 2023 carnival programme.

Eight steel bands will take part in the competition. The steel bands and their renditions on the night of the competition are as follows:

- Halcyon Steel Orchestra – Up and Jumping - Redding
- Original Steel Orchestra – Not U – Claudette Peters
- Harmonites Steel Orchestra – Tanya – Menace XL
- WIOC Gemonites Steel Orchestra – Festival Day – Carl ‘Pan Man’ Richards
- CUB Hell’s Gate Steel Orchestra – No Weapon – Tian Winter
- Westside Symphony Steel Orchestra – Stressless – Claudette Peters
- Panache Steel Orchestra – Benna Benna – Burning Flames
- Cool and Smooth Eb- onites Steel Orchestra –

Roaming – Tian Winter

Panorama was last held in 2019. Carnival 2020 and 2021 were cancelled because of the pandemic and last year, the pan fraternity

staged a ‘pan show’ stating that they did not have ample time to properly prepare for a competition. They gave assurances to the Commission and to the public that for

Carnival 2023, they will all fully participate in Panora- ma.

State Insurance Corpo- ration is the title sponsor of the competition.

STEELPAN MELEE

WHAT ARE BANDS PLAYING?

Antigua Panorama '23

HALCYON STEEL ORCHESTRA
Up and Jumping by Redding

ORIGINAL STEEL ORCHESTRA
Not U by Claudette Peters

HARMONITES INTERNATIONAL
T.A.N.Y.A. by Menace XL

W.I.O.C. GEMONITES STEEL ORCHESTRA
Festival day by Carl "Panman" Richards

C.U.B. HELLSGATE STEEL ORCHESTRA
No Weapon by Tian Winter

WEST SIDE SYMPHONY STEEL ORCHESTRA
Stressless by Claudette Peters

PANACHE STEEL ORCHESTRA
Benna Benna by Burning Flames

COOL AND SMOOTH EBONITES STEEL ORCHESTRA
Roaming by Tian Winter

Antigua Panorama '23
August 5th

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PAHO leads discussion on strategies to prevent future pandemics

A preliminary draft for a new convention, agreement, or other international health instrument to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response was the focus of a regional meeting facilitated by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) this week in Washington, DC.

During the meeting, representatives from health ministries and foreign affairs in the Americas were briefed on the latest deliberations of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) – a process initiated to draft and negotiate a new instrument to be submitted for approval by World Health Organization (WHO) Member States in



Antigua and Barbuda was represented at the meeting by Senior Foreign Service Officer, Chantal Phillip and acting Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Teri-Ann Joseph.

2024.

In his opening remarks at the meeting, PAHO Director and WHO Regional Director for the Americas Jarbas Barbosa said the new agreement presents “an opportunity to leave the world and next generations

better prepared” to face future pandemics.

“COVID-19 showed us that no one was well prepared to respond to a public health emergency such as this pandemic,” the PAHO Director said, stressing that “the lessons from the pan-

demical should be reflected in the new instrument.”

Among these, he cited the importance of transparent, objective, real-time, and evidence-based communication, and equity in access to health technologies, such as personal protective equipment, medicines, and vaccines. “Equitable access to the means of controlling transmission and saving lives is an ethical, moral, and health imperative,” he said.

At an extraordinary meeting of the World Health Assembly in December 2021, WHO Member States agreed to launch this process to create a new instrument, underlining a

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Assemble 3:30 @ King George V Grounds

Artwork © Takumi Media 2023



ABTA promotes the country through a major golf tournament in Toronto

Antiguan-born Canadian professional golfer Amaya Athill is set to join travel industry professionals for a day of fun on the links at this year's Association of Canadian Travel Agencies (ACTA) Ontario Golf Tournament. Scheduled for Thursday, July 13th at Royal Ontario Golf Club in Milton, the 2023 return of this tradition will see Athill play through the course and share a few pointers with attendees.

As the major destination sponsor, the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority will be bringing a taste of the islands to the tournament. Multi-genre Antiguan entertainer Drastic, known for hits such as "Sugary Waistline" and collaborations with Patrice Roberts and Jah Cure, will help welcome guests to the tournament. He'll be accompanied by prominent Antiguan DJ, DJ Gravity, who will be en-

tertaining with local tunes. Serving up authentic Antigua and Barbuda fare for the golfers will be Giovanni Meyer, a Toronto-based Antiguan private chef, who formerly served as sous chef at trendy restaurants Byblos and Constantine.

With a 10-year background in law, Ms. Athill is one of the few black women to become a PGA professional in Canada.

"I am a proud product of the golfing community in Antigua and pleased to represent my island in the golfing space in Canada. It's an honour to have been invited by the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority to support them in their mission to showcase all that Antigua and Barbuda has to offer to the traveling community," said Athill.

Since moving to Canada a year ago, Athill has worked on several initiatives to make golf more in-



Amaya Athill

clusive. In her role as Manager, First Tee - Ontario with Golf Canada she works on creating opportunities for access to golf for children from historically underrepresented and marginalized communities. She is a contributor for ScoreGolf Magazine where she highlights DEI initiatives in golf Canada-wide. Athill is also the founder of Black Women Golfers, whose mission is to ensure black women - from

beginners to more advanced golfers - have a space and community in the sport.

"We are extremely excited and proud to be joined at the ACTA Travel Industry Golf Tournament this year by Ms. Athill, who is remarkable both for what she has achieved within the game of golf and outside it," said Tameka Wharton, Ag. Director of Tourism at the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority. "We are also excited to share the talent of all the other young Antiguan and Barbudans who will be bringing a bit of our culture to the ACTA Golf Tournament."

A yearly tradition since 1988, the ACTA Travel Industry Golf Tournament unites Canadian travel industry representatives, suppliers, and agents drawn from ACTA'S 10,000+ members for a day of live music, carnival games, and - of course - golf.

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common collaborative commitment to prevent outbreaks that could have an impact such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Crises are a good time to make changes," the PAHO Director said. "Reviewing our current mechanisms is everyone's responsibility, and the new instrument can serve to advance the capacities of countries to respond to a health emergency," he added.

Dr. Ciro Ugarte, PAHO's Director for Health Emergencies, said the meeting initiated by PAHO is "extremely important" to promote understanding about the fu-

ture instrument, enabling Member States to "actively participate in the negotiations and dialogue, and on decisions that will be important for all countries and every person on the planet."

The new accord could complement other initiatives, actions, and measures aimed at making the world safer from pandemics, particularly the 2005 International Health Regulations (IHR).

Dr. Barbosa invited country representatives to seek regional consensus on the new instrument ahead of the fifth round of INB deliberations, set to take place on 3-6 April in Geneva.



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US inflation rises at slowest pace in two years

The rate of price growth in the US dropped to its slowest pace in more than two years last month, helped by cheaper used cars.

Inflation rose 3% in the year to June, according to data, from 4% in May.

Inflation has fallen sharply from a peak of more than 9% in June 2022 and the latest reading marks the slowest pace since March 2021.

The figures suggest a succession of interest rate rises have punctured soaring prices.

However, analysts still expected the US Federal Reserve to raise rates again this month.

Brian Coulton, chief economist at Fitch Ratings, said June's slowdown in US inflation was "really only a small step in the right direction."

"In the context of a still tight labour market and sticky wage growth, the Fed's recent concerns about inflation persistence are not going away," he said.

The rise in US inflation in June was driven by higher housing costs, the Labor Department said.

In contrast, prices for used cars and trucks dropped while the cost of food stuffs such as pork, milk and eggs declined. Many households had been struggling with higher grocery bills after the war in Ukraine disrupted global food supplies.

The figures underscore the relatively rapid progress the US has made in curbing price increases, especially compared to the UK, where inflation hit 8.7% in the year to May despite a number of interest rate rises.

Danny Blanchflower, a former member of the Bank of England's rate-setting committee who is now professor of economics at Dartmouth,



said that the US economy was more nimble than the UK.

He said the UK economy had been hit by Brexit, which has made it more difficult for firms to do things like switch supply chains to lower cost alternatives.

"There's been a Covid shock for everybody and there's been a war shock for everybody," he said. "The question is what distinguishes the UK from everywhere else and I would say the answer is Brexit."

In the US, the central bank has raised interest rates from near zero to 5% since March last year in a bid to cool the economy and ease the pressures that had been pushing up prices.

Policymakers at the Federal Reserve have signalled that they are likely to raise rates again this month and many expect further increases later in the year.

Officials have pointed to concerns about so-called core inflation. This measure strips out food and energy costs, which can vary month-to-month. Core inflation has shown signs of stalling at a pace that would keep inflation higher than the bank's 2% target.

But the latest data from the US Labor Department showed core inflation that was lower than expected. It rose by just 0.2% between May and June, the smallest increase since August 2021.

Core inflation slowed to 4.8% in the year to June, from 5.3% in the 12 months to May.

Stocks opened higher and the dollar fell following the report as investors bet it signalled that the Fed would be able to stop raising rates soon.

But business owner Paul Shmotolokha said his firm, Arizona-based New Use Energy Solutions, was still grappling with the effect of earlier cost rises.

Paul said that those increases had put pressure on his firm - which designs and manufactures solar and battery systems - to raise prices. It comes just as rising living costs mean potential customers are watching their spending more carefully.

"It's good news looking forward but it doesn't rectify all of the inflation that we've experienced for the last several years," he added. "I think it needs another month or two... to have businesses breathe a sigh of relief."

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Taylor Swift fan says her Speak Now vinyl contains 'cursed' electronic music

By Mark Savage

A Taylor Swift fan in Staffordshire got a creepy surprise when she tried to play her brand new, orchid-coloured vinyl copy of Taylor Swift's *Speak Now*.

Instead of hearing Swift's re-recorded versions of *Back To December* and *Sparks Fly*, Rachel Hunter was confronted with a collection of dark and disturbing British electronica.

The opening song contained messages about "flakes of flesh" and "endless rows of sardines", while another sampled cult the 1960s horror series *The Outer Limits*.

"There are 70 billion people on Earth, where are they hiding? Where are they hiding?" intoned a husky male voice over a sinister, droning synth.

"At first, I thought maybe the vinyl had a secret message from Taylor," Hunter tells the BBC.

"But when I flipped to the b-side it started saying 'There's 70 billion people on earth, where are they hiding?' I started to get a little scared.

"I was alone and it was late and my vinyl was playing creepy messages."

Initially, Hunter had planned to film an "unboxing" video for her new purchase. But once she realised the manufacturing error, she shared her discovery on social media.



Taylor Swift is not, to the best of our knowledge, a proponent of sinister British electronica.

"Who is this?" she asked her followers, her voice shaking. "Please help me!"

By Wednesday, the video had 3.6 million views on TikTok and had been watched more than 1.5 million times on Twitter.

Internet sleuths started to piece together what was going on, identifying that both the songs Hunter had heard were taken from a UK compilation called *Happy Land (A Compendium Of Electronic Music From The British Isles 1992-1996)*.

Side One is a trippy, 11-minute freakout called *True Romance* by the short-lived dance act *Thunderhead*. Side two is the deep house track *Soul Vine (70 Billion People)* by reformed punks *Cabaret Voltaire*.

"As far as record company mistakes go, this has to be one of the finest," noted DJ *Damian Lazarus*, re-posting Hunter's original video.

"Basically, if you bought the vinyl and was excited to listen to *Speak*

Now, you will now be confronted by some of the most bizarre and brilliant music ever made... Good luck!!!!"

Happy Land was compiled by Ed Cartright and Leon Oakey and issued earlier this year by the small British label *Above Board Distribution*.

It sold out its first print run but the label's founder, Dan Hill, says he's been taken aback by the sudden surge of attention.

"I haven't done anything, I've just been caught in this crossfire," he tells the BBC, "but it's a funny story and I'm glad that I haven't messed anything up."

He thinks the story has caught people's attention because the two styles of music are "poles apart".

"If they were more similar, it wouldn't be a story," he says. "But I think the star of the show, really, is Rachel: The way she's handled it and the way it blew up from there."

Since her first video went viral, Hunter has

posted several follow-ups, including one where she changes the speed of her record player to prove the original audio hadn't been faked.

So far, she hasn't heard from other fans who've encountered the same error. "As far as I know it's the only one found!"

"It's going to be a collector's item," agrees Hill. "I've tried to buy two! I just want a copy of it."

Mistakes like this are well-known in the record collecting community, and occur when a manufacturer accidentally uses the wrong metal master to press a new batch of vinyl.

These errors are generally caught by quality control before making it out of the plant. In some cases though, the error is not noticed until the records are in the hands of collectors.

In 2017, Columbia Records notified fans that a vinyl release of *Beyoncé's Lemonade* had been mispressed with music from Canadian punk rock band *ZEX*.

Going further back, some copies of *Start by The Jam* were mispressed with the *Village People's Just Can't Stop The Music*; and one US pressing of the *Rolling Stones' hits compilation Hot Rocks* contained a version of *Brown Sugar* that was missing the saxophone

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Elon Musk accused of owing \$500m in Twitter severance

BBC - A former human resources boss at Twitter has accused the company of failing to pay roughly \$500m (£385m) in severance pay owed to former staff of the company.

Courtney McMillian, who was the social media site's former "head of total rewards", made the claim in a class-action lawsuit.

The complaint says Twitter owner Elon Musk knew about the severance plan before he sacked thousands of staff.

But it says he balked at the "expense".

It is the latest of multiple lawsuits filed against the company over the mass firings that followed Mr Musk's purchase of Twitter for \$44bn (£34bn) last year.

The layoffs ultimately affected roughly 6,000 people, according to the lawsuit.

Under Twitter's severance plan, staff were due to receive a minimum of two

months base salary in severance and a cash contribution toward health insurance, among other benefits, according to the complaint filed in federal court in San Francisco.

Those with more senior roles, including Ms McMillian, were due six months base salary in severance pay, plus one week for each full year of experience, it says.

But staff received "at most" three months of pay after they were sacked. That included one month of severance, as well as two months worth of pay to comply with a US law aimed at providing workers with notice of firings, according to the complaint.

That was a "fraction" of the \$500m to which employees were entitled, it says.

Twitter, which no longer has a public relations department, did not comment.

Mr Musk said in November following a round of mass layoffs that staff



Elon Musk

would receive three months worth of pay, "50% more than legally required".

The complaint accused Mr Musk of misleading employees about whether the company would honour the plan, leading some to remain at the firm for longer than they would have otherwise.

"Musk initially represented to employees that under his leadership Twitter would continue to abide by

the severance plan," said Kate Mueting, the lawyer from Sanford Heisler Sharp who is representing Ms McMillian.

"He apparently made these promises knowing that they were necessary to prevent mass resignations that would have threatened the viability of the merger and the vitality of Twitter itself," she added.

The BBC has contacted Twitter for comment.

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solo.

These one-off discs often sell for hundreds of pounds on sites like Discogs and eBay.

It's not yet clear how the error on Speak Now (Taylor's Version) occurred.

Swift's album was released by Universal Music, which has no ties to Happy Lands' distributor, Above Board.

However, both companies used the

French pressing plant MPO to manufacture their discs.

In a statement to the BBC, Universal said: "We are aware that there are an extremely limited number of incorrectly pressed vinyl copies in circulation and have addressed the issue".

The company said that fans who had been affected should contact their retailer for a replacement or refund.

For Hunter, the reaction to her discovery has all been positive.

"It's been really funny," she says.

"Taylor's been playing surprise songs on tour and people are hoping for a cover of 70 Billion People now!"

"Other people have told me to stop playing the record because they said it's cursed - which is funny because Speak Now has a song on it called Haunted."

For now, she's holding on to the disc, "because it's the rarest Taylor merch I have".

"But I have joked that I'd swap it for VIP tour tickets."

Regional News



37 Haitians who landed in Jamaica illegally in 'good health'

Loop - The 37 Haitians who landed in Portland on Monday are in good health following medical checks completed by local health officials.

"The Ministry of Health and Wellness, I understand, has completed their health checks and examinations, and everyone there is in good health," disclosed Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Minister, Senator Kamina Johnson Smith, at a post-Cabinet press briefing on Wednesday.

The Haitians, including eight children, were picked up by the authorities after coming ashore at the Boston Beach in Portland.

The Haitians are being housed at an undisclosed facility in St Mary at this time, the parish's police



The Haitians who landed in Jamaica on Monday are seen on Boston Beach in Portland. *loop*

have confirmed. Johnson Smith confirmed that the immediate needs of the Haitians are being met by the relevant arms of the Jamaican Government.

She noted, too, that the Ministry of National Security leads on these matters relative to the foreigners, and will provide details of their exact location in Ja-

maica if they deem it necessary.

"They (the Haitians) are acknowledged at this point as illegal entrants, and therefore, they are housed in comfortable circumstances," Johnson Smith said.

"They are being fed and taken good care of, and further decisions and announcements will be made in terms of their ultimate

treatment of this body of persons in due course," she stated.

Meanwhile, Johnson Smith said no policy decision has been taken by the Government in relation to arrival of Haitians in Jamaica "at this point in time".

"We are creatures of international law, and we're always guided by that in terms of rules of asylum and refugee status.

"There has been no claim made in either of those categories by the persons who have arrived, and therefore, they are being treated as illegal entrants because that's the capacity in which they have arrived," the minister said.

Johnson Smith said the matter will be discussed further.

Cuba slams presence of US nuclear sub at Guantanamo Bay

Loop - Cuba's government on Tuesday called the presence of a U.S. nuclear-powered submarine at the Guantanamo Bay naval base for several days last week a "provocative escalation," while a US official said it was a logistics stop by the vessel at a U.S. base on its way to maritime exercises.

A statement from Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the submarine was at the U.S. naval base on the island from July 5 to July 8. It gave no more details.

"This constitutes a provocative escalation by the United States, whose political or strategic motives are unknown," the foreign ministry statement said.

The US State Department said it does not discuss the movements of US military assets.

A US Defence official, speaking on condition of anonymity to provide details of a military operation, said the Navy submarine made a scheduled logistics stop at Guantanamo Bay. It then continued south to participate in UNITAS, the world's longest-running multinational maritime exercise.

"Today is the two-year anniversary of the July 11 protests by the Cuban people demanding their legitimate human rights, and of the Cuban government's repressive response," said State Department spokesman Matthew Miller. "Attempts by the Cuban gov-



ernment to distract the world from the significance of this day are transparent and risible."

The July 11 street protests were the biggest in Cuba at least since those a quarter century ago, when then-President Fidel Castro personally went into the streets to calm crowds of thousands

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SVG to provide security for Cuban health workers after second attack

CMC - Prime Minister Dr Ralph Gonsalves says his government will provide additional security for Cuban medical professionals in St Vincent and the Grenadines after two of them were attacked on Tuesday night, the second such incident in less than two weeks.

“When you have two incidents, you begin to ask yourself the question and, of course, this has to be explored, ‘Are these random incidents or is there more?’” said Gonsalves, who is also Minister of National Security.

Speaking on the state-owned NBC Radio on Wednesday, Prime Minister Gonsalves said, “from all reports, we have had a very successful creative outpouring in Carnival and people have enjoyed themselves.

“The Carnival has been marred really by a few instances of violence and criminal conduct, including a couple of homicides ... and that’s a matter which



St Vincent and the Grenadines pinned on map.

we have to continue to work on, the whole of the society.

“I got the news this morning when I got up at 3:30 but the information has been sent just around midnight to me...that two Cubans up in the Georgetown area, two Cuban professionals, doctors, one who has come to work on the MRI machine, MRI facility, he was assaulted and injured, he had to do surgery last night,” Prime Minister Gonsalves told his

radio audience.

He said he was told that the injured man was “recovering pretty ok.

“And another Cuban who was with him, a lady, another professional at Modern Medical, was struck with a stone. The police are investigating and I understand that somebody is in custody who may be of interest.

“I spoke to the Commissioner this morning and asked him to get in touch with the Cuban Am-

bassador for us to provide additional security for our Cuban brothers and sisters who are here working as professionals in medicine, in the health services.”

Gonsalves said he had also spoken with the Cuban diplomat as well as deputy hospital administrator, Idinga Miller, who is the administrator at Modern Medical and Diagnostic Centre, in Georgetown.

“All that was done this morning before a lot of people wake up because it is vital to our well-being,” the prime minister said.

The incidents on Tuesday night follow the July 1 attack on Cuban physician Dr Alfredo Batista Salgado, who was slashed in the abdomen as he made his way back home after attending a calypso show.

The doctor is recovering at hospital.

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furious over dire shortages that gripped the island following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Many protesters expressed anger over long lines and shortages of food and medicines, as well as repeated electricity outages. Cuba’s government called the protests a U.S.-backed attempt subvert peace and order, and hundreds were detained.

Cuba’s Foreign Ministry said on Tues-

day that 33 Latin American nations signed an agreement committing themselves to be a “Zone of Peace” and warned about “the danger posed by the presence and circulation of nuclear submarines of the United States armed forces in the nearby Caribbean region.”

Cuba considers the US presence at the Guantanamo Bay naval base an occupation and has unsuccessfully demanded its return.

Hot weather sweeps across southern Europe

By James Gregory

A heatwave is sweeping across parts of southern Europe and north-west Africa, with potential record-breaking temperatures in the coming days.

Temperatures are expected to surpass 40C (104F) in parts of Spain, France, Greece, Croatia and Turkey.

In Italy, temperatures could reach as high as 48.8C (119.8F). A red alert warning has been issued for 10 cities, including Florence and Rome.

On Tuesday, a man in his forties died after collapsing in northern Italy.

Italian media reported that the 44-year-old worker was painting zebra crossing



lines in the town of Lodi, near Milan, before he collapsed from the heat. He was taken to hospital where he later died.

“We are facing an unbearable heatwave,” Italian

politician Nicola Fratoianni tweeted.

“Maybe it’s the case that in the hottest hours all the useful precautions are taken to avoid tragedies like the one that happened

today in Lodi.”

Several tourists in the country have already collapsed due to heat stroke, including a British man outside the Colosseum in *cont’d on pg 17*



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One dead as driver flees police traffic stop near White House

BBC - A person has died after a driver fleeing a US Secret Service traffic stop ploughed into pedestrians near the White House.

The fatal collision in the heart of Washington DC unfolded as uniformed officers pulled the car over for an expired registration plate.

The motorist drove off through a red light and “struck multiple individuals in the crosswalk” before fleeing, said the Secret Service.

The suspect is still at large.

The incident happened just before 13:30 local time (17:30 GMT) on Wednesday as uniformed Secret Service officers pulled over the driver.

The suspect “indicated that they would stop the vehicle, but then quickly fled”, the agency said in a



The incident happened at the crosswalk of 17th Avenue and Constitution in Washington, DC.

statement.

Secret Service Spokesman Anthony Guglielmi said police were “working to locate the suspect”.

“Our deepest condolences go out to the victim’s family,” he said.

Officers at the scene -

an area typically crowded with tourists and other visitors to the nation’s capital - provided first aid to those injured.

“One person was transported from the scene in critical condition and later succumbed to injuries at an

area hospital,” officials said in a statement.

The victim was a 75-year-old man, according to CBS Washington. A 13-year-old girl was also treated for injuries at the scene, according to local reports. The Secret Service has asked local law enforcement to be on the lookout for the suspect in the crash.

The crash is strikingly similar to another fatal hit-and-run near the White House in December 2022.

While fleeing a Secret Service traffic stop, the suspect’s car ploughed into a crowd of pedestrians, killing one and injuring others.

Police arrested 35-year-old Spiro Stafilatou and he is awaiting trial on charges of murder and aggravated assault.

cont’d from pg 16

Rome.

The Cerberus heatwave - named by the Italian Meteorological Society after the three-headed monster that features in Dante’s inferno - is expected to bring extreme conditions in the next few days.

The Met Office says temperatures will peak on Friday, and BBC Weather says large swathes of southern Europe could see temperatures in the low to mid 40s - and possibly higher.

Europe’s hottest ever temperature of 48.8C (119.8F) was recorded near Syracuse on the Italian island of Sicily in August 2021.

More than 60,000 people died in Europe as a result of the heat last year. The fear is that this heatwave could cause many more deaths this summer.

A heatwave is a period of hot weather where temperatures are higher than is expected for the time of year.

Experts say periods of exceptionally hot weather are becoming more frequent and climate change means it is now normal to experience record-breaking temperatures.

The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather forecasts said that globally, this June was the hottest on record.

Pita Limjaroenrat: Thailand's reformist leader faces uncertain PM vote

The reformist winner of Thailand's elections in May faces an uncertain vote as he runs for prime minister at the opening of parliament.

Pita Limjaroenrat swept to victory as voters' rejected conservative military rule that had been in place since a coup in 2014.

But he needs the support of lawmakers appointed by the same military leaders to secure a majority.

Mr Pita also faces last-minute legal challenges which could disqualify him.

His alliance has 312 votes, which is 64 short of the 376 votes required to be elected prime minister.

Apart from the votes he would need, Mr Pita appeared to face another blow to his ambitions on Wednesday when Thailand's notoriously conservative Constitutional Court accepted a recommendation from the Election Commission that he be disqualified.

The court says it is now assessing two complaints against the Move Forward leader; one that he holds shares in a media company - although that company has not functioned for 15 years.

The other that Move Forward's proposal to amend the draconian royal defamation law, which has jailed hundreds of critics of the monarchy, amounts to an attempt to overthrow Thailand's entire political



Mr Pita has ridden a voters' rebuff of nearly a decade of conservative rule.

order.

It is unclear when the Constitutional Court will deliberate on the case, but technically, under Thailand's laws, Mr Pita can still become prime minister even if he is removed from parliament.

The 42-year-old Harvard graduate and former tech executive has led throngs of orange-clad supporters in big rallies across the country ahead of Thursday's parliamentary vote.

"I don't know how long we will have to wait before the golden chance of 13 July will come again," Mr Pita said at a Sunday rally outside one of the biggest shopping malls in the capital, Bangkok.

Ahead of Thursday's parliament session, outgo-

ing Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha announced his retirement from politics after leading the South East Asian nation for nine years.

Mr Prayuth was the army chief who carried out the 2014 coup to oust the country's civilian leaders who were accused of massive corruption. It was Thailand's second military uprising since 2006 and in both instances, a member of the powerful Shinawatra political dynasty was removed from power.

In fact, one of the largest blocs in Mr Pita's coalition is led by Paetongtarn Shinawatra, daughter of exiled former prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra.

The decades-old lese majeste laws, which can land people in jail for speak-

ing against the monarchy, were strictly enforced under Mr Prayuth's leadership and critics said this was used to crush free speech.

During his term, people have been jailed for selling calendars with satirical images of ducks and dressing up like the country's queen.

Mr Pita described Mr Prayuth's term as Thailand's "lost decade" and has promised to end the country's cycle of corruption and military uprisings. He pledged reforms that would "demilitarise, demonopolise and decentralise" the country.

One of his most contentious campaign promises is to amend the lese majeste laws, which will prove difficult as the monarchy is highly regarded by Thais.

Antigua to contest Billie Jean King Cup in Americas Group III

Antigua and Barbuda female tennis players will be among athletes from 10 nations that will be competing in the Billie Jean King Cup in Americas Group III in Panama next week.

Antigua and Barbuda will be represented by a team of four players, along with non-playing captain Cordell Williams, who is also a coach and current president of the National Tennis Association.

The players, who are all attending overseas colleges, are Ariel Naomi Kelsick, Selene Kentish, Janae George-Alexander, and Sammar Davis.

Antigua & Barbuda, Aruba, Barbados, Bermuda, Cuba, El Salvador, Jamaica, Panama, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands will be contesting the event that will feature singles and doubles matches in Panama City from July 17th to 22nd.

However, St. Lucia has withdrawn from the tournament. The 10 participating teams will be divided into two zones, with five teams in each group.

The Top finishers in each group will face off in a cross-over promotion play-off, from which the top two will be promoted to Americas Group II.

Right:

Coach Cordell Williams will be the non-playing captain of the Antigua and Barbuda team at the Billie Jean King Cup in Americas Group III in Panama from July 17th to 22nd. (ABTA)




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Walsh signs to Major League Cricket team

By Carlena Knight

Antiguan cricketer Hayden Walsh Jr will feature in the inaugural Major League Cricket T20 tournament in the United States.

Walsh Jr has been signed to the Seattle Orcas as a bowler. He will team up with fellow West Indian Shimron Hetmyer.

The T20 tournament, which will include six teams – Los Angeles Knight Riders, MI New York, San Francisco Unicorns, Seattle Orcas, Texas Super Kings and Washington Freedom – will see the tournament bowl off on July 13 and run through to July 30.

It will comprise of 19 matches – 12 inclusive of the playoffs and the finals carded for Grand Prairie. The remaining seven will be played at the Church Street Park in Morrisville, North Carolina.

It will be played in a single round-robin format



Hayden Walsh Jr.

with 15 league matches played among the six franchises before a four-match playoff phase begins.

A number of other regional stars will feature in the tournament as well.

Trinidad and Tobago and West Indies off spinner, Akeal Hosein will turn out for the Washington Freedom. His countryman, Sunil Narine will captain the Los Angeles Knight

Riders while Jamaican Andre Russell is set to team up with Narine.

Former West Indies captains Kieron Pollard and Nicholas Pooran will turn
cont'd on pg 21

Parish League season to climax with two finals in three days

The finals of the two remaining competitions for the 2023 Antigua Commercial Bank (ACB) Caribbean Parish League domestic season will be held within three days.

The PIC Insurance Liberta Black Hawks will take on the Wes Rising Sun Spartans in the final of the Sir Vivian Richards Thursday League at Ball Beef in Liberta today at 3 pm.

The Black Hawks are favourites to win the Thursday League title, al-

though Liberta's only loss in the T20 competition came against Rising Sun during the preliminary rounds.

Freetown and Police will clash in the final of the Dave Joseph limited overs competition at Urlings on Saturday.

Both teams will be seeking to capture their second Parish League title of the season in the 30-over Dave Joseph one-day final, which will commence at 1 pm.

Freetown, who have already retained the Sir Curtly Ambrose Limited Overs crown, beat Masters in the first semi-final, while Police, who have also retained the Sir Richie Richardson one-day championship, overcame Mahico in the other semi-final.

Live coverage of today's Thursday League final will be carried on the ACB Parish League Facebook and Youtube channels, as well as ABS Television.

Antigua among 35 nations to contest qualifiers for women's Gold Cup

Antigua and Barbuda's Benna Girls will be among 35 Concacaf women's senior national teams that will participate in a series of qualifiers for the group stage of the inaugural 2024 female Gold Cup competition.

The teams have been divided into three leagues and sub-divided into groups. The Qualifying matches will take place in the FIFA Women's match windows of September, October, and November later this year.

The Women's Gold Cup is the region's premier competition for women's senior national teams and is a key part of the Concacaf women's football strategy, which the Confederation launched in 2019.

The inaugural female Gold Cup competition will be played between February 17th and March 10th, 2024, in the United States.

The 2023 road to the Women's Gold Cup will start after the conclusion of the FIFA Women's World Cup, which takes place this summer in Australia and

New Zealand and includes a record six competing Concacaf women's national teams.

The 35 Concacaf Member Associations participating, excluding the two who will compete in the 2024 Paris Summer Olympic Games Women's Football Tournament (USA and Canada or Jamaica), were split into three leagues according to their Concacaf Women's Ranking as of March 2023 and sub-divided into groups.

The Antigua and Barbuda Benna Girls will be contesting Group A in League B, which comprises the next 12 best-ranked teams after the nine top-ranked teams that have been divided into three groups in League A.

The 12 teams in League B, including Antigua and Barbuda, have been divided into three groups of four.

Antigua and Barbuda will contest League B Group A along with Dominica, Guyana, and Suriname. Contesting League B Group B will be El Salvador, Nicaragua, Hon-



Antigua and Barbuda's Benna Girls will be among 35 Concacaf women's senior national teams that will participate in a series of qualifiers for the group stage of the inaugural 2024 female Gold Cup competition. (ABFA)

duras, and Martinique, while League B Group C will comprise the Dominican Republic, Bermuda, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Barbados.

The Antigua and Barbuda Benna Girls will open their qualifying campaign at home against Guyana on Wednesday, September

20th. The Benna Girls second game will be away to Suriname on Sunday, September 24th.

After 90 group stage qualifying matches, which include home and away play within each League and group, the top finishers in each of the League A groups (three teams) will qualify for the 2024 Women's Gold Cup Group Stage.

Furthermore, the second-place finishers in each of the League A groups (three teams) and the first-place finishers in each of the League B groups (three teams) will advance to the 2024 Women's Gold Cup Preliminary rounds.

cont'd from pg 20

out for the MI New York franchise.

The Texas Super Kings will include Trinidadian all-rounder Dwayne Bravo in the squad as well.

The highly anticipated event bowls off tomorrow with Texas Super Kings taking on Los Angeles Knight Riders.

An elaborate opening is set to open the competition.

It will be broadcasted live across major cricketing nations, including Australia (FOX Cricket), the Caribbean (SportsMax), New Zealand (Sky NZ), Pakistan (A Sports), South Africa (SuperSport) and the United Kingdom (BT Sport). MLC has announced coverage from Willow TV in the United States and exclusive coverage in India on Viacom18's sports network.



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First Vice-President of the ABBA Gilbert Findlay, left front row, presents the division one league trophy to sponsor of the Ovals OJays, the Honourable Steadroy 'Cutie' Benjamin, the Member of Parliament of the St. John's City South Constituency. The OJays won the 2023 ABBA Division One League title at the JSC Sports Complex on Tuesday, July 11th, 2023. (Photo courtesy ABBA)

Ovals OJays win ABBA division one league title

The Cuties Ovals OJays have retained the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) First Division League title.

The Ovals OJays, who claimed the title in 2019, the last time the competition was held before the COVID-19 Pandemic, retained the crown after ending their campaign with a record of 12 wins and two losses to finish at the top of the standings in round-robin league competition.

They trounced the Spanish Heat 91-54 in their final league encounter in the second game of a double-header at the JSC Sports Complex on Tuesday night.

Joshua Minner produced a game-high 20 points with six rebounds and five steals, and point guard Tavarus

Benta had 13 points, nine assists, and eight rebounds as the top performers for the Ovals OJays.

Team-mate Sheldon Gomes scored 13 points and distributed eight assists; Darnell Azille sank 11 points and grabbed 17 rebounds; and Alexis Jackson chipped in with 11 points, eight rebounds, and five assists for the Ovals OJays.

Darius Richards converted 16 points and snatched eight rebounds; Kelvin Pimentel scored nine points; and Israel Pulinario sank eight points and secured 12 rebounds for the Spanish Heat, who lost for the 10th time in 12 encounters.

The Flyers recorded their eighth win in 12 encounters when they soared past the Ottos Full Throt-

tle 85-58 in the first game on Tuesday night.

Jabari Williams shot a game-high 23 points and grabbed 15 rebounds, and David Hernandez sank 13 points and gave out six assists to lead the Flyers group of top performers.

Jevonte Daley also contributed 13 points; Selassie Brathwaite had nine points, nine rebounds, and five steals; and Kwame Brathwaite chipped in with nine points and nine rebounds for the Flyers.

Warren Bogle had 21 points, seven rebounds, and seven steals; Lincoln Weekes converted 20 points; and Akeem Davis chipped in with eight points and seven rebounds for the Ottos Full Throttle, who lost for the eighth time in 12 games.

India dominate West Indies

India gained the upper hand on the opening day of the two-match Test series against West Indies as the spin-twins Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja wreaked havoc, sharing eight wickets amongst themselves and restricting the hosts to a modest total of 150.

Captain Rohit Sharma (30 not out) and debutant Yashasvi Jaiswal (40 not out) forged an unbeaten 80-run opening stand in the final session to make sure that India took advantage of the bowlers' superlative performance on the opening day of the first Test of the two-match series at Windsor Park in Dominica.

India closed the day's play at 80 without loss to trail the West Indies by 70 runs after comeback man Ravichandran Ashwin-led bowling attack bundled out the hosts for just 150 runs in their first innings.

Earlier on Wednesday, West Indies openers Kraigg Brathwaite and Tegenarine Chanderpaul provided a solid start after winning the toss and electing to bat, adding 31 runs for the first wicket.

Their partnership, however, was short-lived as seasoned Ravichandran Ashwin struck twice, dismissing both openers in the opening session.



The West Indies players along with India's captain Rohit Sharma and debutant Yashasvi Jaiswal wait on a television umpire's review during the opening day of the first cricket Test at Windsor Park in Dominica on Wednesday, July 12th, 2023. (AFP)

The exit of Brathwaite and Chanderpaul in quick succession provided India with a much-needed reprieve, putting them in command.

The West Indies' struggle continued as the Indian spinners capitalized on the early breakthrough. Raymon Reifer and Jermaine Blackwood failed to make an impact and lost their wickets before lunch.

Ravindra Jadeja, who finished with three for 26, joined the party after the break, dismissing Joshua Da Silva shortly after the match resumed in the second session.

Jason Holder then joined hands with debutant Alick Athanaze and the duo

stitched a 41-run stand for the sixth wicket and managed to take West Indies past the 100-run mark.

Athanaze (47), who was the sole glimmer of hope for the West Indies, unfortunately, fell short of a half-century on his debut, being dismissed by Ashwin just three runs away from the milestone.

The remaining West Indies batsmen struggled to display resilience following captain Kraigg Brathwaite's decision to bat first.

The Indian bowlers maintained a disciplined line and length, making it difficult for the West Indian batsmen to score freely. Eventually, the hosts were bowled out for their modest total in 64.3

overs.

Ashwin returned with figures of five for 60, securing his 33rd five-wicket haul and fourth against the West Indies, resulting in the hosts collapsing in less than half an hour.

In doing so, Ashwin joined the ranks of Anil Kumble (956) and Harbhajan Singh (711) as the third Indian spinner to achieve 700 International wickets across all formats, marking a significant milestone in his career.

Day one of the opening Test match belonged to the Indian bowlers, particularly the spin duo of Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja, who turned the tide in India's favour.