

# FULL ABST WAIVER ON SCHOOL SUPPLIES THIS WEEKEND

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# Local News

## Full ABST waiver on school supplies this weekend

The government is making a move to ease the financial burden on parents who are preparing their children for the start of the 2023-2024 academic year. It has advised of a waiver of the ABST on all school-related supplies for this Friday and Saturday.

“Cabinet at its meeting on Wednesday, August 23, 2023, agreed to grant a waiver on the payment of the Antigua and Barbuda Sales Tax (ABST) on back-to-school items during the period Friday, September 1 and Saturday, September 2, 2023,” the government release stated.

A government spokesman said the move follows the traditional ABST relief offered during the Christmas

season with the government deciding to extend the relief to parents, many of whom face challenges with back-to-school expenses, particularly those households with multiple students. The Cabinet also published a list of more than twenty items that will qualify

for the waiver.

The full list is as follows;  
 School uniforms ( pants, shirts, skirts, blouses, jumpers, ties and crests)  
 Textbooks as provided on the ministry/school-generated book lists  
 School bags – with or without



wheels  
 Binders/folder leaves  
 Plastic book covers  
 Erasers  
 Crayons, Highlighters  
 Whiteout/correction fluid  
 Pencil cases/pouches  
 Calculators  
 School shoes, socks, belts  
 School Physical Education uniforms – shirts, skirts, and pants  
 Dictionaries  
 Lunch boxes/kits  
 Graph paper/books  
 Pens/Pencils/Pencil sharpeners  
 Water paints  
 Markers  
 Glue sticks  
 Rulers/T-squares/ geometry sets  
 Tights, vests

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## Children with disabilities to receive school supplies

Several children living with disabilities are to receive school supplies as they prepare for the start of the 2023-2024 Academic Year.

The Antigua and Barbuda Association of Persons Living With Disabilities (ABAPD) will distribute the school supplies to more than twenty special needs children. The distribution point is the association's headquarters located in Belmont.

ABAPD Treasurer, Wendy Valentine said the packages include school bags, books, pencils, folders, and binder sheets. In addition to the students who will receive the supplies directly from its headquarters, the association will also present school supplies to the Adele School for students of that insti-

tution.

Valentine reported that her association has solicited assistance from individuals and organizations to help with the donations. At least two organizations gave generously; they were the Fire and Phoenix Foundation located here in Antigua and Barbuda, and Kathy Wint of AnB Safe of South Florida.

Valentine explained that her association recognizes that many persons living with disabilities face challenges at the start of the school year and her organization has sought assistance to help relieve them of their anxiety.

She added that the gifts are for students living with disabilities or children of persons who are living with disabilities.



*ABAPD Treasurer Wendy Valentine*



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## ABEC in preparation mode for by-election

More than \$100,000.00 has been approved by the government, in preparation for the upcoming by-election in St. Mary's South.

Incoming Supervisor of Elections, Ian Hughes, has confirmed that the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission (ABEC), is in receipt

of the funds and is moving ahead with plans.

No date has been revealed when eligible voters of the constituency will be allowed to select their members of parliament. However, ABEC's preparations continue. A by-election was triggered following the resignation

of the United Progressive Party's MP Kelvin Simon in June.

Simon is returning to contest the seat on his party's behalf, while Senator Dwayne George is the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party's candidate.

As the nation awaits the

date, Ian Hughes reiterates that all rules relating to a general election will apply in the upcoming by-election, except that only eligible voters in St. Mary's South, will participate in the process. Hughes is expected to receive his instruments of appointment sometime next week.

## Antigua and Barbuda to host a major UN conference on population issues next week

The event, the Caribbean Forum on Population and Development is being held under the theme: "Accelerating implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development in the Caribbean."

In a statement, the Ministry of Social Transformation said the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Sub-Regional Office for the Caribbean, in collaboration with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda and ECLAC, will host the Caribbean Forum on Population Development on September 4 and 5 at the Royalton Resort in St John's, Antigua and Barbuda.

It said the Forum will analyze and promote action to address key population issues affecting the sub-region, through a review of progress in the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus, the regional agenda for population, ten years on from its adoption. The Forum will discuss emerging issues, and challenges, share lessons learned and best practices, and agree on actions to accelerate the implementation of the Consensus.

Participants at the forum will review the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development in the Caribbean's development. There will be engagement of Governments, legislators, academia, youth leaders, and civil



Minister of State Senator Samantha Marshall, along with Permanent Secretaries Colin O'Keiff and Sarah Stuart and UNFPA representatives.

society organizations in a discussion about the status of implementation, opportunities, challenges, lessons learned, and best practices to hasten the realization of the Nairobi Commitments from the ICPD25 Summit, as well as the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development. Particularly, the discussions will also focus on important issues like adolescent pregnancy, Gender Based Violence (GBV), migration, and demographic resilience.

The goal is to build consensus on a Caribbean vision, develop an action plan to accelerate the Montevideo Consensus implementation and endorse

commitments for the realization of the same.

Speakers at the conference will be:

Dr. Natalia Kanem - UNFPA Executive Director

Hon. Sir Molwyn Joseph - Minister of Health, Wellness, Social Transformation and the Environment, Antigua and Barbuda

Senator Samantha Marshall - Jr. Minister Ministry of Health, Wellness, Social Transformation and the Environment

Diane Quarless - Director, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean



## Port Authority explores setting up an LNG Bunkering operation

The establishment of a Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) power plant at Crabbes Peninsula is already bringing other benefits to Antigua and Barbuda.

As word spread about the facility which is likely to become operational within the next few months, one of the benefits of having the LNG plant here is that cruise and cargo ship operators are actively making inquiries about the possibility of bunkering their vessels with LNG here in Antigua.

The disclosure comes from the General Manager of the Antigua Port Authority, Darwin Telemaque, who explained that adding this service to the port's operation adds much to its overall marketability.

"What makes a port attractive is its marketability. So the spinoff effect of having an LNG-powered plant, is that several of the cruise lines such as AIDSA, P&O, Carnival, and MSC as well as shipping lines such as Tropical and Crowley are all asking about being able to refuel with LNG in the near future," Telemaque disclosed.

He further explained that many of the cruise lines and the cargo ship operators are moving away from heavy fuel-powered plants to a mix of renewable energy and LNG, which is a much cleaner fuel. In fact,

according to the port general manager, one shipping line, Crowley, is moving away completely from heavy fuel to LNG to power its ships.

Additionally, Antigua and Barbuda will be the only country in the Eastern Caribbean where this fuel will be available.

"Only Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago currently have LNG terminals. This means that Antigua and Barbuda, with its location in the 'heart of the Caribbean,'

is strategically located to serve the needs of shipping traversing the Caribbean," he noted.

The availability of LNG fuel in Antigua and Barbuda is also coming at a time when concerns over the environmental impact of heavy fossil fuel, have reached the point where some ports are asking ships to use shore power in their harbours rather than their power so as to reduce carbon emissions.



*Darwin Telemaque*



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## Local hotel launches educational fund for its staff

Blue Waters Resort has announced the launch of an educational fund that will assist all its employees in pursuing further development.

In a media release, Blue Waters said presentations have been made to six (6) members of the Blue Waters Resort staff. The initiative, the Blue Waters Employee Education Fund, is designed to financially support the educational and/or athletic endeavors of staff and their direct relations.

The release said the Blue Waters Employee Education Fund was formed this year and reflects the deep respect the ownership



Blue Water Education Fund recipients with Buzzy Randall

and the Resort have for its valued employees. It was inspired by a desire and the hope to be able to contribute

to the future success of the employees and their loved ones.

The Fund proudly names the recipients of this first disbursement: Kiron O'Garro, son of Monique Franklyn, Housekeeping Attendant to attend Monroe College, USA; Kurtoya Williams, daughter of Shanekina Black, Food and Beverage Supervisor to attend Augusta University, USA; Orville Facey, son of Roggette Morrison, Housekeeping Attendant to attend University of Northampton, UK; Khiari Anthony, son of Celia Morgan, Executive Assistant Manager to attend Brooke House College, UK; Rukiya Thomas and Romario Thomas, daughter and son of Renardo Thomas, Laundry Supervisor to attend Christ the King High School and St John's Lu-

theran School respectively; and Omarion Proctor son of Ron Proctor, Laundry Attendant to attend Sunny Dale Primary School.

This fund is available to all full-time Blue Waters Resort & Spa employees and can be accessed on behalf of themselves or a direct descendant.

The first distribution of funds, totaling over \$40,000, was planned for September 2023 and now the aspiration is to be able to disseminate funds at least three times a year, starting in 2024 with support from both the company and generous benefactors.

With the launch of this initiative, it is hoped that through the owner's contributions, and the benevolence of other supporters of the resort, this fund will continue to grow.

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### AUCTION SALE NOTICE

Instructed by the **ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA DEVELOPMENT BANK** of 27 St. Mary's Street, in the City of Saint John, in the State of Antigua and Barbuda, I will sell by public auction on Tuesday 31 August 2023 at 11:00 a.m. on site, the under mentioned property.

The property is located at Dyett Street in Villa, St. John's, Antigua and consists of a parcel of land of an area of approximately 2,178 sq. ft./ 0.05 acre, with a 514 sq. ft. single storey, two (2) bedroom, one (1) bathroom wooden dwelling thereon.

The service lines for potable water, electricity and telephone which are provided by A.P.U.A are accessible to the property.

The land is registered under the Registered Land Act, 1975 as follows:-

**REGISTRATION SECTION:** Villa  
**BLOCK:** 62 1693F  
**PARCEL:** 37

Parcel No. 37 of Block No. 62 1693F is bounded by the following:

- On the North by: Parcel 35;
- On the South by: Parcel 39;
- On the East by: Public Road;
- On the West by: Parcel 36

Particulars of the sale can be obtained from:

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Licensed Auctioneer  
Office: (268) 562-7653  
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Email: [info@go-going-gone.com](mailto:info@go-going-gone.com)  
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# DWAYNE GEORGE

ST. MARY'S SOUTH



**Hello,**

Below are a few immediate plans I have for St. Mary's South. I would like to invite you to take a read and let's discuss a brighter future for us all in St. Mary's South.

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*Best wishes,  
Dwayne George*

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### **WEST PALM BEACH**

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- Road Work & Drainage infrastructure.

### **URLINGS**

- Erection of basketball court and subsequent fencing of the complex on lands at the back of the Urlings Primary School.
- Renovate and Revitalize the Technical Institute at the Urlings Primary School.

### **JOHNSONS POINT**

- Remedy the infrastructure to get operational the Health Centre/ (Clinic) & MBS Pharmacy at Johnsons Point.
- Maintenance and upgrade to road infrastructure, chiefly around the Darkwood Beach & Ffryers Beach area.

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- Repair and erect walk-ways to homes.
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*Dwayne George*



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# Commentary

## Social Security reform in the Eastern Caribbean

**By Prof. C. Justin Robinson**  
**Professor of Finance & Principal,**  
**UWI Five Islands Campus**

National Insurance Scheme (NIS) reform is currently a hot topic in the Caribbean as many nations confront the viability of their schemes and propose reforms.

Social Security is essentially about income replacement during events and periods when individuals face loss of income.

The typical events and periods covered by schemes include sickness, maternity leave, employment injury, unemployment, and of course retirement. In light of the inevitability of these events and periods of time for most of us, NIS is everybody's business, especially the most vulnerable

among us.

All Caribbean countries have a comprehensive NIS providing coverage against all or some of these events and periods of time.

NIS offers old-age pensions, invalidity, and survivor's pensions, as well as benefits for sickness, maternity, and employment injury. In addition, a few countries have added unemployment benefits (Barbados and The Bahamas), and partial health benefits (Belize, Jamaica, and The Bahamas).

In this, the first article of a three-part series I present data on the design features of the NIS old age pension schemes, the major component of NIS, across the Caribbean.

The key design features presented in Table 1 are, the rates contributors are

required to pay (contribution rate), the maximum level of income on which contributions are paid (wage ceiling), the ages at which eligible contributors qualify for a full or normal pension and an early pension, the number of weeks persons are required to contribute before they are eligible for a pension from the scheme, the minimum pension for any eligible contributor and the rate used to calculate normal pensions (accrual rate).

As can be seen in Table 1, there is some degree of consistency in the design features of NIS across the region with noticeable differences in the contribution rates, minimum pensions, and to some extent in the wage ceilings.

*cont'd on pg 9*

**Table 1: Key Design Features of NIS Schemes Across Caricom**

Country	Cont Rate (Private)	Wage Ceiling (pm)		Normal Pension Age	Early Pension Age	# Weeks for Age Pension	Minimum Pension (pm)	
		Local Currency	US \$'s				Local Currency	US \$'s
Anguilla	10.0%	\$7,500	\$2,809	65	-	500	\$715	\$268
Antigua-Barbuda	14.5% to 16.0%	\$6,500	\$2,434	63 to 65	60	500	\$350	\$131
Bahamas	9.8%	\$3,207	\$3,207	65	60	500	\$346	\$346
Barbados	18.3%	\$4,880	\$2,440	67	60	500	\$1,052	\$526
Belize	10.0%	\$2,253	\$1,127	65	60	500	\$204	\$102
BVI	8.5%	\$3,750	\$3,750	65	-	500	\$260	\$260
Dominica	13.5% to 15.5%	\$7,000	\$2,622	65	60	500	\$325	\$122
Grenada	11.0%	\$5,000	\$1,873	60	-	500	\$201	\$75
Guyana	14.0%	\$280,000	\$1,344	60	-	750	\$35,000	\$168
Montserrat	11% to 15%	\$4,000	\$1,498	65	-	500	\$333	\$125
St. Kitts-Nevis	11.0%	\$6,500	\$2,434	62	-	500	\$430	\$161
St. Lucia	10.0%	\$5,000	\$1,873	65	60	750	\$300	\$112
St. Vincent & Gre.	10.0%	\$4,333	\$1,623	63 to 65	60	500 to 750	\$303	\$114
Turks & Caicos	10% to 12%	\$4,000	\$4,000	65	60	500	\$405	\$152
Trinidad & Tobago	13.2%	\$13,600	\$2,040	60	-	750	\$3,000	\$450

**Source: Mr. Derek Osbourne (Consultant Actuary to several Caribbean Social Security Schemes)**



# Commentary

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Key Design Features  
of NIS Schemes Across Caricom**

Country	Cont Rate (Private)	Wage Ceiling (pm)		Normal Pension Age	Early Pension Age	# Weeks for Age Pension	Minimum Pension (pm)	
		Local Currency	US \$'s				Local Currency	US \$'s
Average	11.4%	\$ 23,385	\$ 2,338	63.8	60.0	553.6	\$ 2,882	\$ 207
Median	10.0%	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,434	65.0	60.0	500.0	\$ 346	\$ 152
Minimum	8.5%	\$ 2,253	\$ 1,127	60.0	60.0	500.0	\$ 201	\$ 75
Maximum	18.3%	\$280000	\$ 4,000	67.0	60.0	750.0	\$ 35,000	\$ 526

*cont'd from pg 8*

Table 2 presents basic descriptive statistics on the key design features. The average contribution rate is 11.44% and ranges from a low of 8.5% in the BVI to a high of 18.3% in Barbados.

The average minimum pension is US \$207 per month but ranges from a minimum of US \$75 in Grenada to a high of \$526 per month in Barbados. The average wage ceiling is US

\$ 2,338 per month and ranges from a low of \$1,127 in Belize to a high of US \$4,000 per month in Turks and Caicos.

There is much greater consistency across the normal pension ages, early pension ages, and the minimum number of contributions required to be eligible for a pension from the scheme.

The differences across the schemes point to the need for a carefully designed and constantly adjusted framework for persons who move between

countries for work.

Any NIS reform program will likely involve tweaking one or more of these design features and an appreciation of these features is critical for a meaningful discussion of NIS viability and reform. I

In the next article, I will assess the viability of NIS Schemes across the Caribbean, based on some widely used actuarial metrics, and the final article will lay out some reform options.



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# Burger King faces legal claim over size of Whopper

By Annabelle Liang

Burger King must face a lawsuit that alleges it makes its Whopper burger appear larger on its menus than it is in reality, a US judge has ruled.

The lawsuit accuses the fast food giant of misleading customers by showing the burger with a meatier patty and ingredients that “overflow over the bun”.

“The plaintiffs’ claims are false,” Burger King told the BBC.

Rivals McDonald’s and Wendy’s are facing a similar lawsuit in the US.

The class action lawsuit against Burger King alleged that the Whopper was made to look 35% larger, with more than double the amount of meat compared to what was actually served to customers.

Burger King had earlier argued that it was not required to deliver burgers that look “exactly like the picture”.

In the ruling, US District Judge Roy Altman said it should be left to jurors to “tell us what reasonable people think”.

However, he dismissed claims that Burger King misled customers with its television and online advertisements.

“The flame-grilled beef patties portrayed in our advertising are the same pat-



*The Whopper on Burger King's online menu.*

ties used in the millions of Whopper sandwiches we serve to guests nationwide,” a Burger King spokesperson said in a statement after the ruling.

Lawyer Anthony Russo, who represents the plaintiffs, did not immediately respond to a BBC request for comment.

The Burger King website describes the Whopper as “the burger to rule them all”, that contains a “real meaty” beef patty, and other ingredients.

Other fast food chains have recently faced legal challenges over claims of

false advertising.

Earlier this year, Taco Bell was sued in the US for selling pizzas and wraps that allegedly contained half the filling that was advertised.

Last year, a man in New York proposed a class-action lawsuit against McDonald’s and Wendy’s, in which he accused the two companies of unfair and deceptive trade practices. The lawsuit alleged that McDonald’s and Wendy’s burgers in marketing materials were at least 15% larger than they were in real life.

In the UK, the Adver-

tising Standards Authority (ASA) looked into a complaint regarding an advert for one of Burger King’s chicken burgers in 2010, which was upheld.

“In that case, the burger was not as plump and did not have as much filling as in the ad and so we banned it,” Donna Castle from the ASA told the BBC.

“Consumers should be able to trust the ads they see and hear. Ads should not be materially misleading, should not be ambiguous and should not exaggerate or leave out any important information,” she added.



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# Technology



## Pass AI law soon or risk falling behind, MPs warn

By Chris Vallance

The prime minister's plan for the UK to take the lead in AI regulation is at risk unless a new law is introduced in November, MPs have warned.

The EU could overtake the UK in efforts to make AI safe unless action is taken, ministers on the Commons Technology Committee said.

The UK will host an international AI summit at the start of November.

The government told the BBC it is willing to consider further steps if needed.

But it did not reveal if it agreed that a new law should be put forward so rapidly. Instead, a spokesperson highlighted the summit and a £100m initial investment in a task-force to encourage the safe development of AI models.

That is "more funding dedicated to AI safety than any other government in the world", the UK government said.

If legislation isn't introduced in the King's Speech on 7 November, the earliest legislation could become law in 2025, the committee says in a report published Thursday.

The report argues not bringing in legislation for two years risks the UK "being left behind by other legislation—like the EU



Writers are among those concerned about the impact of AI

Act—that could become the de facto standard and be hard to displace".

The situation could mirror data protection rules, where UK laws followed the EU lead, the report argues.

But although the government's white paper on AI regulation has recognised a new law may be needed at some point, Rishi Sunak has previously argued that, initially, "we can probably do lots of this without legislation".

A key part of his plan is the November summit which the government says will be the "world's first major global summit on AI safety".

The committee argued as wide a range of countries as possible should be invited, which would include

China.

The use of copyrighted material to train AI systems is also one of the challenges.

So-called generative AI systems can now create new works in the style of famous artists, actors and musicians.

But to pull off this feat AI is trained on huge amounts of copyrighted material. Many authors, actors, artists and musicians argue that AI should not be trained on their works without permission and compensation.

There are already steps to develop a voluntary agreement that would allow AI firms access to copyrighted works, while at the same time supporting artists, the report notes.

A planned exemption to copyright for AI firms was abandoned by the government in February.

AI's power to imitate people could also be used to spread misinformation, or to commit fraud, or to fool bank voice-recognition security systems, MPs said.

The report follows a warning on Wednesday from the National Cyber Security Centre, which said that large language models - a type of AI that powers popular chatbots - could not be protected from certain types of attacks designed to persuade them to do malicious things. There were at present "no failsafe measures" that would remove the risk, the centre wrote.

MPs broadly supported the government's approach to keeping AI safe which does not require the creation of a new AI regulator, but instead passes oversight

*cont'd on pg 13*



## Mark Thompson: CNN appoints former BBC director general as chief executive

By Ian Youngs

Ex-BBC and New York Times boss Sir Mark Thompson has been appointed to lead CNN following a series of crises and falling ratings at the US news network.

Sir Mark replaces Chris Licht, who struggled to stabilise CNN in his 13 months as chairman and CEO.

The network has also been through the firings of star anchors Chris Cuomo and Don Lemon, and the closure of streaming service CNN+ after just one month.

Sir Mark must also guide CNN during the 2024 US presidential election.

That challenge will coincide with coverage of criminal charges against Donald Trump.

The network has had a famously tempestuous relationship with the former US president, who unsuccessfully tried to sue CNN for defamation, claiming it had created a “false and incendiary association” between him and Adolf Hitler fol-



Mark Thompson received a knighthood in the King's birthday honours in June.

lowing the last election.

A CNN interview with Mr Trump in May was widely criticised, including by the network's own Christiane Amanpour. Mr Licht stepped down weeks later. CNN's previous boss Jeff Zucker had been forced to resign in February 2022 after failing to disclose a romantic relationship with a senior executive.

David Zaslav, chief executive of parent company Warner Bros Discovery, de-

scribed Sir Mark as “a formidable force for CNN and journalism at this pivotal time”.

He added: “Mark is a true innovator who has transformed for the digital age two of the world's most respected news organizations.”

The British executive was director general of the BBC from 2004 to 2012, and is credited with reviving the fortunes of the New York Times by boost-

ing digital subscriptions as president and CEO from 2012 to 2020.

“I can't wait to roll up my sleeves and get down to work with my new colleagues to build a successful future for CNN,” Sir Mark said.

His appointment comes days after Warner Bros Discovery announced a new attempt at launching a CNN streaming service, CNN Max, which will combine existing shows with on-line-only programming.

CNN's cable TV ratings have been dropping faster than those of its competitors, according to official figures quoted by the Associated Press earlier this year.

*cont'd from pg 12*

onto existing regulators depending on what the AI does.

Some who spoke to the committee, including Hugh Milward of Microsoft UK, preferred this approach to that of the EU which he told the committee was “a model of how not to do it”.

But he has also previously told the BBC that care needs to be taken with any UK legislation too. There was a danger that a single piece of legislation tried to do everything “and then it becomes a bit like a Christmas tree and everybody tries to hang their own personal issues on it”, he said.

# Regional News



## OECS countries could be initial owners of new regional airline

CMC - St Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister Dr Ralph Gonsalves Tuesday said he had received a document from the Barbados-based Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) outlining a proposal for the financing and operating a regional airline.

"I have studied very carefully the up to date document which I received from the President of the Caribbean Development Bank (Dr Hyginus Leon) concerning the re-establishment of a regional airline and the process by which we will do this," Gonsalves told a news conference, saying that he would not talk about all the details contained in the document.

However, he told reporters that the initial owners of the airline could be the governments of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) "but we would have to engage the Caribbean Development Bank on this exercise too."

The OECS groups the islands of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, St Kitts and Nevis, Montserrat, Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands.

Gonsalves said that while the location for a headquarters for the airline hasn't been discussed, he was "offering" St Vincent and the Grenadines as one of the options.



But he acknowledged that "there's some work still to be done...and we have to meet" telling reporters that following the news conference he would be holding discussions with the St Lucian-born head of the CDB "on some clarifications and some next steps".

He said that there would be a meeting with the OECS leaders and the CDB, "but we are moving seriously and actively in pursuance of an additional option in the air."

"What we have, we have to thank CAL (Caribbean Airlines) for the number of planes they are putting on, more and more they are increasing the number of seats, they are having some challenges as you noticed recently, I am sure they will sort out those internal challenges between management and labour."

"I know one or two private airlines are trying to do that but we need something which is a core and to have it evolved in a manner to suit our circumstances and all our requirements," Gonsalves said recalling

the financial and other challenges faced with the regional airline LIAT (1974) that entered into administration in July 2020 following increased debt and the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The airline is owned by the governments of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica and St Vincent and the Grenadines, and while the Barbados and St. Lucia governments have made available funds to cover the three-year outstanding debt to the workers in their countries, that has not been the case with employees in the other islands.

Gonsalves said if a poll is taken across the Caribbean region today, "there would be a poll against putting money into LIAT, you know".

He said he had been making the point repeatedly like a mantra "I said to the region, a regional carrier of LIAT type is a marginal financial proposition, but it is absolutely necessary and desirable as a social and economic vehicle for islands, and particularly for

islands engaged in the business of tourism.

"We are moving people and we are a mobile people. It was so pellucid to me, so clear that I did not think it broke any serious opposition. Certainly to make LIAT more efficient...there were big lies being told about it and every time I went to the Parliament for money it was a big song and dance."

"The opposition at every turn attacked it mercilessly even up to the last time in 2020," he said noting that the EC\$2.7 million approved then did not go to the airline as planned.

"Because Barbados had shortly thereafter signalled that they can't carry this thing anymore."

"They are out of it for the reasons, which they gave, and I told Gaston (Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda) that St Vincent and Grenadines and Antigua and Barbuda can't carry it by ourselves."

Gonsalves told reporters that there are "many, many lessons" learnt from the demise of LIAT including that "countries served by this airline should be equity partners or we should require market support."

"We have to try to make the airline fairly lean in its functioning so as to avoid some of the old legacy issues ...and we need also to strengthen the Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority," he added.



## Dominica to get first female and indigenous President

**By Dillon De Shong**

Dominican Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit announced that Sylvanie Burton is the government's nominee to become Dominica's next President.

At a media conference today, Skerrit said he spoke with Opposition Leader Jesma Paul regarding Burton's nomination so that a joint nominee can be sent to parliament for approval.

The constitution requires the prime minister and opposition leader to agree on a nominee and submit their selection to the Speaker of Parliament. However, if a consensus is not reached, any member of parliament

can submit a nominee.

The government has the majority needed to approve her nomination.

Once her appointment is approved by the National Assembly, Burton will be Dominica's first woman and indigenous head of state.

Burton is the current Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Environmental, Rural Modernisation and Kallinago Upliftment.

She replaces Charles Savarin, who is demitting office after serving two five year terms. Savarin's term expires on October 1. The 58-year-old will be Dominica's ninth president.



*Presidential nominee Sylvanie Burton.*

## Belize: Taiwanese business community donates hurricane relief items

Belize received a significant donation of supplies this week pledged by the Taiwanese business community to support Hurricane Lisa relief efforts.

Following the devastating impact of Hurricane Lisa in November 2022, the Embassy of Belize in the Republic of China (Taiwan) initiated the "We are Family: Help for Belize" fundraiser.

The campaign mobilised support from 32 donors among Taiwan's business community and private sector.

The donation includes US\$10,000 from St Dominic Catholic High School and a container of essential supplies, including clothing, medical supplies, food, laptops and tablets. These con-



*Hurricane relief items for Belize.*

tributions complement the prompt assistance rendered by the Government of Taiwan in the wake of Hurricane Lisa's aftermath.

Reflecting on the initiative, Candice Pitts, Ambassador of Belize in Taiwan, underlined the immediate activation of the fundraiser

following Hurricane Lisa. She emphasized the strong response from Taiwan's business community, reflecting the enduring 34-year friendship between Belize and Taiwan.

Integral to the fundraiser's success were Taiwanese businesses, Happy Home

World Alliance International Taiwan and the Industry Development Association, which leveraged their connections to facilitate donations.

During the handing over ceremony, Ambassador Amalia Mai, Chief Executive Officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Foreign Trade, and Lily Li-Wen Hsu, Ambassador of the Republic of China (Taiwan) to Belize, formally handed over the items to Daniel Mendez, National Emergency Coordinator for the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO).

NEMO will oversee the distribution of these items to the communities still rebuilding after the impact of Hurricane Lisa.

# Gabon coup leaders name General Brice Oligui Nguema as new leader

By George Wright

Army officers who seized power in a coup in Gabon on Wednesday have named General Brice Oligui Nguema as the West African state's transitional leader.

Gen Nguema was earlier carried triumphally through the streets of the capital Libreville by his troops.

The deposed President, Ali Bongo, has appeared in a video at his home, calling on his "friends all over the world" to "make noise" on his behalf.

The former French colony is one of Africa's major oil producers.

Mr Bongo's overthrow ended his family's 55-year hold on power.

Army officers appeared on TV in the early hours of Wednesday to say they had taken power.

They said they had annulled the results of Saturday's election in which Mr Bongo was declared the winner but which the opposition said was fraudulent.

The officers also said they had arrested one of Mr Bongo's sons for treason.

Within hours, generals met to discuss who would lead the transition and agreed by a unanimous vote to appoint Gen Nguema, former head of the presidential guard.

Crowds in Libreville and elsewhere celebrated the army's declaration.



People have been celebrating on the streets.

But the coup was condemned by the UN, the African Union and France, which had close ties to the Bongo family.

There has long been simmering resentment of the Bongo family - it ruled Gabon for 55 years - and there has been public discontent over broader issues such as the cost of living.

"At first I was scared, but then I felt joy," a resident of Libreville, who requested anonymity, told the BBC. "I was scared because of the realisation that I am living through a coup, but the joy is because we've been waiting for so long for this regime to be overthrown."

Gen Nguema, 48, was absent from the first three statements read out by senior army officers on national television to announce the coup.

But he was named tran-

sitional leader soon after, and was carried through the streets in jubilant scenes.

He was aide-de-camp to the ousted leader's father, Omar Bongo, who ruled for almost 42 years until his death in 2009.

A former close colleague told AFP news agency that Gen Nguema had been extremely close to Omar Bongo, serving him from 2005 until his death in a Spanish hospital.

Under Ali Bongo he first worked as a military attaché at Gabon's embassies in Morocco and Senegal.

But in 2018 he was made intelligence chief under the elite republican guard - Gabon's most powerful army unit - replacing Ali Bongo's half-brother Frederic Bongo, before getting promoted to general.

As in previous general elections in Gabon, there

were serious concerns about the process in Saturday's vote.

Main opposition candidate Albert Ondo Ossa complained that many polling stations had lacked ballot papers bearing his name, while the coalition he represented said the names of some of those who had withdrawn from the presidential race had still been on the ballot sheet.

Both of Mr Bongo's previous wins were disputed as fraudulent by opponents. This time, controversial changes were made to voting papers just weeks before election day.

In 2018, he suffered a stroke which sidelined him for almost a year and led to calls for him to step aside.

The following year, a failed coup attempt saw mutinying soldiers sent to prison.



## North Korea says it simulated nuclear strike on South

By George Wright

North Korea says it has fired two short-range tactical ballistic missiles to simulate nuclear strikes on military targets in South Korea.

State media said the tests had been conducted as a warning against the US deployment of strategic bombers to the region.

South Korea reported two missiles landing in the sea.

The launches coincide with annual joint military drills held by South Korea and the US.

Pyongyang has long de-



North Korean state media released photos of the missile tests.

nounced the drills as a war rehearsal.

The North's army said the missiles had been fired

late on Wednesday in a "tactical nuclear strike drill simulating scorched earth strikes at major command centres and operational air-fields" in South Korea.

"The drill is aimed to send a clear message to the enemies," the army added.

The launches come a day before South Korea and the US end 11 days of combined military drills.

The drills involved at least one US B-1B strategic bomber flying above the Korean Peninsula, according to South Korean media.

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un observed a drill on Tuesday preparing his top commanders for all-out war with the South, according to state media.

The drill simulated repelling a sudden invasion, then launching a counter-attack to occupy "the whole territory of the southern half", the report said.



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# Beekeepers to the rescue after 5 million bees fall off truck in Canada

By Nadine Yousif

Beekeeper Michael Barber woke up on Wednesday morning to several calls from police looking for help after five million bees fell off a truck in Canada.

The hives were being transported when the straps holding them in place came loose, allowing them to slip free.

Mr Barber said he arrived to “a pretty crazy cloud of bees” who were “very angry, confused and homeless”.

Drivers were told to keep their windows up and pedestrians to stay away.

The scene in Burlington, Ontario was unlike anything Mr Barber has experienced in his 11-year career.

“It was something else,” he told the BBC. “I hope to never experience it again.”

Mr Barber, who owns Tri-City Bee Rescue in nearby Guelph, said he first received the calls from local police at around 07:00 local time (12:00 GMT), informing him that there was an accident that resulted in bee hives being spread all over the road.

At the same time police put out a public call on social media urging people to stay away from the area, which is about an hour



*Most of the bees were safely corralled back to their hives thanks to a dozen beekeepers who answered calls for help from local police in Burlington, Ontario.*

south of Toronto.

The bees were in their hives packed up on the back of a truck and being transported to their wintering location when the accident happened.

As soon as Mr Barber heard from police, he put out a call to other beekeepers for additional help. About a dozen beekeepers eventually helped corral the insects.

Mr Barber said the bees and their hives were scattered over a 400-meter (1,300-foot) radius. On nearby cars and mail posts some of the younger bees

were clustering, which he said they do when they are seeking safety.

“There were probably a thousand bees on the front of my truck,” he said.

Other bees, ones that were angrier and older, were buzzing around.

After a few hours, most of the bees were able to find their hives, Mr Barber said, but a few hundred bees did not survive the accident.

Some beekeepers were also stung.

The driver of the truck was stung more than 100 times, Mr Barber said, as he wasn’t wearing a full

beekeeper suit. Paramedics were nearby and he was not seriously injured.

“There were a lot of flying bees that made even beekeepers in full suits nervous,” he said.

He said he was grateful for the many local beekeepers that worked to keep the insects and the public safe, and added that the incident is a good reminder to always securely strap your bees.

“Lesson learned. Everybody survived and a few bees were hurt,” he said. “Hopefully the hives will survive the winter.”





*The West Indies Under-19 team players. (CWI Media)*

## Emerging players get chance to show skills in Women's CPL

Some of the best young players in the West Indies will be on show when they take part on the Women's Caribbean Premier League (WCPL).

This is due to the emerging players programme which will see players under the age of 23 given opportunities in the three franchise teams – Barbados Royals, Guyana Amazon Warriors and Trinbago Knight Riders.

Graeme West, High-Performance Manager of Cricket West Indies (CWI), lauded the joint initiative between CWI and CPL and noted some of the players are poised to deliver excellent performances in the two-week tournament.

The opening contest is on Thursday at Kensington Oval when home team Barbados Royals led by Hayley Matthews face Guyana Amazon Warriors, with Stafanie Taylor at the helm. First ball is at 3pm (2pm Jamaica).

West passionately emphasized, "CPL gives players another opportunity to play competitively and to play good quality cricket. We've got some really outstanding overseas players in that tournament, so to rub shoulders with some of those players is a great opportunity for our young players."

"The expectations are that they've already been performing, so added pressure but good pressure to perform and contribute to their teams, will be exciting to watch."

Some of the young players selected for the WCPL are Trishan Holder, Djenaba Joseph, Janneilia Glasgow, Ashmini Munisar, and Zaida James – who have recently represented the West Indies Rising Stars Under 19s and also the Senior West Indies Women's team.

At the heart of this initiative lies the West Indies Women's Academy,

the foundation for nurturing emerging cricketing talent in the region.

As the CPL unfolds, the focus will be on observing how these promising players implement the skills and knowledge they acquired through rigorous training at the Coolidge Cricket Ground.

West added, "The CPL provides the great opportunity to see how the players implement all they've learnt at the West Indies Women's Academy and how they handle the pressure. We are looking at the players and their maturity and growth."

"We have seen some positive signs in the last camp in Antigua. We can see the improvements in their game sense and awareness. Their participation is a crucial part of the players' development. I'm hopeful we see some of that in this tournament and in the coming months."



# Sports News



## Six team to battle as women's league kicks off this weekend

Six teams will be battling for supremacy in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Women's Invitational League, which will kick off this weekend.

Among them will be Cutting Edge, winners of the knockout contest that took place in June and July as a precursor to the league competition.

The Losing finalists in the knockout competition, Wadadli United, will also be in contention for the league title.

The other four teams that contested the female knockout contest will also participate in the league competition.

They are third-place finishers, Fort Road Players; the fourth-place finishers All Saints United; Ottos Tigress; and the Empire Trendsetters.

The league competition will com-



*The Cutting Edge football team that won the ABFA Women's Knockout Competition at the Technical Center in July 2023. (File photo)*

mence with a triple-header at the ABFA's Technical Center at Paynters on

Sunday.

Trendsetters will face Wadadli United in the opening encounter at 4 pm. Fort Road Players will tackle All Saints United at 6 pm, and Ottos Tigress will clash with Cutting Edge at 8 pm.

There is a tangible amount of prize money at stake for the top three finishers in the league competition.

The champion team will take home EC\$9,000, the runners-up will get EC\$6,000, and the third-place finishers will receive EC\$4,500.

The ABFA has also provided a number of incentives to the participating teams in the Women's Invitational League.

According to a media release from the ABFA, each team has been provided with an initial start-up funding of EC\$1,500. They have also been given 10 match balls and a set of uniforms.

Each team that wins a league match will receive a financial reward of EC\$500, and if the game ends in a draw, the two teams will each get EC\$250.



## Coco Gauff cruises into US Open third round

NEW YORK (AP) - Coco Gauff cruised into the third round of the US Open with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva on Wednesday.

The sixth-seeded American approached the net 18 times, winning 15 of those points, in her second straight match in Arthur Ashe Stadium, and she credited that newfound net game after struggling to beat German Laura Siegemund in three sets in the first round.

"I learned to be aggressive," the 19-year-old Gauff said in her on-court interview. "I did well making her play off her back foot."

Andreeva, at 16 the youngest woman in the tournament, previously reached the fourth round at Wimbledon and the third round at the French, also losing to Gauff.

Gauff next faces 32nd-seeded Elise Mertens of Belgium, who came back to beat American Danielle Collins 3-6, 7-6 (9), 6-1.

Elsewhere in early action on Wednesday, 15th-seeded Belinda Bencic of Switzerland downed British qualifier Yuriko Lily Miyazaki 6-3, 6-3.

But two-time US Open champion Venus Williams suffered her most lopsided loss in 24 appearances at



*Coco Gauff, of the United States, returns a shot to Mirra Andreeva, of Russia, during the second round of the US Open tennis championships in New York on Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2023. (AP)*

the Grand Slam tournament with a 6-1, 6-1 defeat at the hands of qualifier Greet Minnen in the first round on Tuesday night.

The Belgian smacked 24 winners and saved all six break points she faced to dispatch the veteran American, who she reveres.

"In 1997, Venus already played a final here and I was just born, so for me, it was incredible to play a legend like her," the 26-year-old Minnen said in an on-court interview. "I have huge respect for her."

Former world number one Williams' best chance of climbing back into the contest came when she had

a break point opportunity in the opening game of the second set but she failed to convert.

The hard-hitting Minnen would break the next game at love and cruise to victory in the match that lasted just 75 minutes.

"First I have to give credit to my opponent," Williams told reporters.

"There wasn't a shot she couldn't make. Even when I hit really amazing shots, she just hit a winner or a drop shot, so I don't think I played badly. I think it was just one of those days where it's just unlucky."

Seven-time Grand Slam winner Williams, whose

younger sister Serena retired after last year's US Open with 23 major titles to her name, said she was prepared to come to Flushing Meadows without her sibling playing.

"I was very much aware that Serena wouldn't be playing the tournament, so I think I was okay. I've had a chance to get used to that idea even before she retired," she said. "I kind of knew that was coming."

Asked when she might hang up her racket, Williams was non-committal.

"I wouldn't tell you," she said with a smile. "I don't know. I don't know why you're asking."



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## Johnson and Thorne lead West Indies to victory

A brilliant batting display, followed by disciplined bowling led West Indies Rising Stars Men's Under-19s to a superb victory over Sri Lanka Under-19s in the second Youth One-Day International at the International Cricket Stadium in Dambulla on Wednesday.

Jordan Johnson made a match-winning century after West Indies were asked to bat first. The Caribbean side scored 320 for eight off their 50 overs.

Isai Thorne then produced a quick spell of fast bowling, which wrecked the Sri Lanka batting. The home side were bowled out for 125 in the 31st over as West Indies won by a whopping 195 runs.

The series is now levelled 1-1 with the third and final match to be played on Friday.

The left-handed Johnson played with great aplomb as he recorded his maiden century in his seventh Youth ODI. He made 105 off just 79 balls with 12 fours and three sixes.

He brought up his century when he got a single into the

leg side which was met with rapturous applause by teammates and spectators. He celebrated by taking a "bow" and raising his bat aloft.

He shared a crucial third-wicket stand of 160 with Joshua Dorne, who made 56 off 73 balls with six boundaries. When they both fell, Tarrique Edward maintained the momentum with an explosive 53 not out, which came off just 36 balls, as he smashed two boundaries and three towering sixes.

In the second half of the match, Thorne took centre stage as he grabbed three wickets in the space of 12 balls to leave the Sri Lanka innings in tatters at 40 for six in the 14th over.

He ended with impressive figures of three for 18 in seven overs, including three maidens. He was well supported by new ball bowlers Deshawn Edwards with three for 30 and Nathan Edward with two for 17.

It was also a good day in the field as wicketkeeper Divonie Joseph held three catches on debut - including two in one over off the ram-paging Thorne.



West Indies Under-19 batsman Jordan Johnson celebrates after reaching his century in the second Youth One-Day International against Sri Lanka at the International Cricket Stadium in Dambulla on Wednesday, August 30th, 2023. (CWI Media)

*cont'd from pg 24*

Richards Stadium on Saturday, September 9th.

The Bahamas and Puerto Rico will clash at the Thomas A. Robinson Stadium in Nassau, Bahamas, in the other Group B encounter on the same day.

The Benna Boys will be away for

their second encounter on Tuesday, September 12th. They will meet Puerto Rico at the Thomas A. Robinson Stadium in Nassau, Bahamas.

Guyana will host the Bahamas at the National Track and Field Center in Leonora, Georgetown, Guyana in the other Group B encounter on the same

day.

A squad of players, who were selected from the nation's domestic football programmes, are currently in training at the ABFA's Technical Center in preparation for the Benna Boys opening CNL encounter next week-end.

## Benna Boys to contest CNL next weekend

The Benna Boys of Antigua and Barbuda will be among 41 senior men's national men's football teams that will be battling for supremacy in 2023-24 CONCACAF Nations League (CNL), which is due to kick off next week.

The 2023-24 CNL competition's format has been revamped to include more direct elimination matches that qualify teams for continental summer competitions. This includes the qualification route for CONCACAF's six competing teams in the CONMEBOL Copa America USA 2024.

The CNL will continue to be played in the three league format (A, B, and C), with the region's 41 men's senior national teams distributed into the leagues according to the 2022/23 CNL results.

The revamped competition will take place in the FIFA Match Windows of September, October, and November 2023, while the finals will be held in March 2024.

The Benna Boys will be among a number of teams that will be involved in CNL



*The Antigua and Barbuda Benna Boys starting X1 during their Concacaf Nations League Group A of League B match against Guadeloupe at Warner Park in St. Kitts on Sunday, 5th June, 2022. (File photo)*

Group Stage matches that will be taking place during the upcoming September FIFA Match Window.

Antigua and Barbuda's Benna Boys are among 16 national teams that will be contesting CNL's League B. The 16 teams are divided into four groups of four. Each team will play every other team in their group,

home and away, for six matches per team (three at home and three away).

The Benna Boys will contest Group D alongside Guyana, Puerto Rico, and the Bahamas.

Group A will feature Guadeloupe, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Maarten.

Nicaragua, the Domin-

ican Republic, Montserrat, and Barbados will compete in Group B, while French Guiana, Bermuda, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Belize will contest Group C.

Antigua and Barbuda's Benna Boys will open their campaign at home against Guyana at the Sir Vivian

*cont'd on pg 23*