

# TOP STUDENTS IN GRADE SIX ASSESSMENT SHARE \$8,000 IN PRIZES

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*Minister of Health Sir Molwyn Joseph, centre, is flanked by the top two public school students in the Grade Six National Assessment who received more than \$8,000.00 in cash and prizes for their achievement.*



## Top two public school students in Grade Six Assessment share \$8,000.00 in prizes

The top two students from the public school system in the 2023 Grade Six National Assessment are sharing more than \$8,000.00 in cash and prizes for their achievements.

The students were presented with the prizes at a ceremony held at the Office of the Prime Minister on Thursday. They are Cahira Gerald from Golden Grove Primary School, who ranked 7th overall, and Phoebe Lucien from Old Road Primary School, whose ranking was 14th overall. Both young ladies will attend the Antigua Girls High School, starting in September.

The prizes were solicited on their behalf by the group, Next Gen (Next Generation of Men), which is a group of men who have come together to make a difference in society.

It is the fifth consecutive year that the organization,



spearheaded by Inspector Veldon Raggette is making donations to the top students in the Grade Six Assessment from the public schools.

Spokesman for the Group, Troy Mussington said the performance of the students who are com-

ing from the public schools need to be highlighted, as these students often face challenges that their peers in the private schools do not face. He explained that this has served as motivation for members of the group, to reach out to the corporate

community seeking assistance for the top students.

At Thursday's presentation, Health Minister Sir Molwyn Joseph was among those persons who made cash donations to the students. He encouraged them

*cont'd on pg 3*

## Ministry of Education wants no discrimination based on students' hair

The Ministry of Education has issued a circular cautioning schools not to discriminate against students on the issue of their hair.

Director of Education Clare Browne says it is important to reaffirm the ministry's position on the matter as schools prepare to reopen on Monday, for the start of the 2023-2024 Academic Year.

He explains that the schools are responsible for setting guidelines regarding cleanliness and tidiness of the person, general deportment, and attire. However, he said schools should be mindful that as they establish these rules they should ensure that they are

not discriminating based on the natural texture of hair.

He recalled that in the past some principals had established what was said to be 'the pencil rule' where if a pencil doesn't fall when placed into the hair this often led to disciplinary action for the student.

According to the Director, the hair should be clean, it should not be a health risk for the student or others and it should not have any colouring. "The hair should not be a distraction in the classroom," he declared.

Additionally, Browne wants schools to refrain from developing rules that mention an exact hair length.



Clare Browne



*cont'd from pg 2*

to continue on the path of excellence, adding that this would lead to much more success in the future.

"We're incredibly grateful for the overwhelming contributions we received. A heartfelt thanks to individuals and businesses for their generous cash donations, totaling over \$8,000.00, namely, Sir Molwyn Joseph, Rendezvous Tour, AUA, Kings Casino, Next Generation, Digicom, Quikserve,

Kyle Nicholas, 2M Enterprise, Town-House Megastore, Steven Ragguette, Savannah Ragguette, and Ann Makhoul."

"A special shout-out to Next-Gen for their invaluable support in providing school supplies and a year's worth of exercise books from Sunny Limited. This contribution will significantly impact our students' education," chair of the proceedings, Angelica O'Donoghue stated.

Meanwhile, TDM Laundry Services located on Whenner Road has offered to provide a year of free laundry and ironing services for the students' uniforms. This will ease the families' burdens and help the young ladies to look their best.

In a special moment, Cahira Gerald considered an exceptional student, received a brand-new laptop from Elizabeth Makhoul. The gift will empower Cahira's educational journey.

Also, a visit to a sitting of the Cabinet has been granted to Cahira and other top-performing students.

"From Troy Mellanson, Joel Darroux, and myself, as well as our host today, Ms. Angelica O'Donoghue, we say a heartfelt thanks for the incredible support and generosity. Together, we're making a profound impact in our community. Let's keep spreading kindness and making a lasting difference!" Raggette stated.



## Agricultural Science teachers attend workshop

Agricultural Science teachers participated in a two-day workshop this week, as part of the Ministry of Education's professional development activities with help for all subject areas.

The newly appointed Agricultural Science Education Officer, Nicolette Francis, hosted an Educators Empowerment Workshop for secondary and primary school Agricultural Science teachers, under the theme "Growing Greatness." This was held at the John E. St.



Luce Finance and Conference Center.

During the workshop, the agricultural science

teachers were able to table their past challenges faced within their respective schools, managing the school farms. Teachers were allowed to share ideas that could not only support the students but also the overall development of the Agricultural Science Department.

On the first day of the workshop, the proprietor of Anointed Farms, Neil Gomes, was featured. He addressed the teachers on the characteristics of upcoming farmers and how as

teachers, they can help mold the perspective of farming through the implementation of more practical learning. He also expressed, that as teachers they should educate the students on all aspects of farming, outside of just production.

Farming can be a very lucrative business, as was highlighted by another farmer, Adolph Audain, who explained to the teachers the economic viability of agriculture and how to run a

*cont'd on pg 5*



## Cyberattack on APUA thwarted

An attack on the billing system of the Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) has been thwarted, thanks to the intervention of the government's Information Technology Services.

A report was made to the Cabinet on Wednesday, stating that a malware attack on APUA was defeated by the experts in the Antigua and Barbuda In-

formation Technology Service, and a crisis was averted.

Cabinet sources say the quick actions and the skills of the technicians in the Information Technology Services prevented APUA from having to pay huge amounts of money in ransom, to restore its system had the attack been successful.

The sources explain that malware attacks are now common threats to companies across the globe as cyber-criminals use these computer viruses to disable a company's computer network. Under these circumstances, the affected company is then forced to pay large sums of money to have their systems restored.

## Negotiations are underway for the purchase of LIAT (1974) assets

Negotiations are taking place aimed at purchasing the remaining assets of LIAT (1974) Ltd. by the representatives of the new airline, LIAT (2020) Ltd., which is expected to replace the former regional airline.

News of this is contained in the Cabinet Notes emerging from this week's meeting of the Cabinet.

According to the Notes, the Cabinet invited to its meeting, the Development Commissioner, Ambassador Daven Joseph, who has



been assigned the responsibility of negotiating the terms of the final agreement between LIAT (2020) Ltd. and the principals of Air Peace, to establish a governing agreement between

both carriers.

"Arrangements are also being negotiated between LIAT (2020) Ltd. and the Administrator of LIAT (1974) Ltd., Cleveland Seaforth, concerning the pur-

chase of the assets of the latter. The press throughout the English-speaking Caribbean has carried stories indicating that LIAT is a necessary development partner throughout the Caribbean and must be resuscitated," the Notes stated.

It noted that other states have been pursuing establishing another line that would not compete on LIAT's Routes; however, LIAT (2020) is more than a year ahead in its planning to replace LIAT (1974) Ltd. and is likely to outperform the competitors.

LIAT (2020) will have a total of six planes and will have already secured the Air Operating Certificate (AOC).

### *cont'd from pg 4*

farm as a business, as this will assist them in how the school farms are being operated despite limited resources.

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) National Specialist, Craig Thomas spoke on the implementation of internships for students on agriculture-focused businesses within the secondary schools, to encourage the students. He encouraged the teachers to utilize the expertise of local entrepreneurs and technicians within the agriculture sector who could encourage students to see agriculture as a viable area of interest. He also highlighted the many training and ex-

ternal funding opportunities available to Antigua and Barbuda that can also be beneficial to the schools.

The Agricultural Science Department continues to motivate teachers to impart quality curriculum content to students by developing knowledge and understanding of the importance of agriculture in Antigua and Barbuda.

Francis hopes to grow the program and the sector through collaboration with the agricultural science teachers, as they are responsible for molding the next generation of farmers who will contribute to food security and food safety in Antigua and Barbuda.

## Group of artists to participate in cultural activities in NYC

Several performers who scored big, in the just-concluded Carnival festivities will be in New York City this weekend, to take part in the Antigua and Barbuda Day activities.

A flyer promoting the main event, a star-studded show, lists several artists carded to perform at the Gil-Scott Heron Amphitheatre in the Bronx, New York. Among the artists are Claudette Peters, the reigning Party Monarch (Groovy) winner, Ricardo Drue, and Empress. All three tied for the Road March Champion title, this year. The 2023 Panorama Champions, Hell’s Gate Steel Orchestra will also perform.

The artists’ participation is being facilitated by the Antigua and Barbuda Festival Office.

Other performers include Supa Mario, Vicious and Laurena Davis. Radio/television personality - Ibis, Lawrence M and Lertah Kool will jointly host the programme.

Three nationals – Dr. Oswald Thomas, Pamchetta Francis and Tiria Mason – are the organisers of the event. Mason said the event is free to patrons and the artists’ performances are also free. “We provide an opportunity for these artists to perform, and anyone wishing to perform is invited to do so,” she explained.



September 4 is Labour Day in the United States and the island associations representing the Caribbean diaspora in the Tristate area, use the weekend to hold activities to highlight the culture of their respective countries.

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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.

## GEORGE WINS; YOU WIN

*Best wishes,  
Dwayne George*

### **BOLANS**

- Erect a spectator stand, bathrooms & changing rooms on the field in Bolans.
- Refurbishing & secure sporting complexes around the community.

### **WEST PALM BEACH**

- Trim over grown vegetation.
- 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.

### **NEW VILLAGE**

- Repair and erect walk-ways to homes.
- Clean drains of debris and flush clean.

*“It is my solemn commitment, when elected, to donate half of my salary for 6 months to the development of our community’s upliftment”*

*Dwayne George*



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# Local News



## New Swedish Ambassador to present credentials today

Sweden has named a new Ambassador-designate to Antigua and Barbuda, Anders Bengtcén, who will

present his credentials to the Head of State today.

His first engagement is at Government House where he will formally make his presentation to Governor General. Sir Rodney Williams. From Government House, his next stop is at the Office of the Prime Minister for a courtesy call on Prime Minister Gaston Browne. Shortly after he will pay a courtesy call on Opposition Leader, Jamale Pringle accompanied by Minority Leader in the Senate, Senator Shawn Nicholas at the Parliament Building.

Following these engagements, Ambassador-designate

Bengtcén will meet with Health Minister, Sir Molwyn Joseph at the Ministry of Health on Lower High Street.

Saturday has been set aside for the official to visit several places of interest in the country.

Two engagements are planned for Monday. The first is a meeting with the Resident British Commissioner Lindsay Thompson, at the British High Commission in Cedar Valley. The second is a courtesy call on Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene.

The ambassador-designate departs on Monday afternoon.

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## SLBMC temporarily restricts operational hours for outpatient clinics

Starting next week, the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre outpatient clinic will temporarily restrict operational hours. This is to carry out necessary upgrades to the facilities. The temporary hours of operation will be from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., from September 4th to 8th.

“Patients who are affected by this temporary restriction will be contacted by our care team.

“We do recognize the inconvenience that these changes may cause, however, we are appreciative of the public’s understanding, as we continue to make investments in our facilities and services to better serve you,” a communique from the health institution noted.

Hospital sources said there is ongoing work to upgrade/replace the air condition units at the institution, and the temporary restriction is designed to allow the work to proceed, without completely restricting patients’ access to medical care.



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## Letter to Honorable Ralph Gonsalves

Honorable Sir,

I seek your support in my bid for the LIAT Headquarters to be located in Antigua for the following reasons, and, not apologizing for my self-interest in inviting LIAT to utilize lands we hope to invest through our company Antigua Hangars Inc.

I am sure you know that the cohesion which LIAT exuded during its lifetime, was not a mistake; recent fury and disappointment in the aviation industry in the Caribbean has enlightened many, of the importance of LIAT to the entire Caribbean. My company wishes to supply the missing component for continued LIAT success - Private Investment.

Sir, as you see I am not even assuming that you would plan for any other regional airline when the LIAT brand is not dead and buried. It is my honest opinion that LIAT will be restored to its former glory and beyond with a Private Sector shareholding. All in aviation know of the many mishaps LIAT was forced to endure, which cramped

its ability to show a profitable bottom line. We all also know that LIAT was run by Ministers of our Shareholder Governments and Chaired by you, Hon. Prime Minister, respectfully Sir.

I have chosen to address your bid for the airline headquarters in the form of a Press Release by a public letter. Additionally, I have enquired to whom I should address my bid, but no one seemed in charge yet. However, not wishing to lose the momentum, we want to be upfront with an offer of 6.83 acres of land and assistance in sourcing finance for the LIAT Headquarters, as portrayed in the attached plan on Runway 10, V.C. Bird International Airport.

Please allow me to give my opinion on why LIAT, to be successful and lift off quickly with a rapidly increasing fleet, MUST be located in Antigua. Mobilization in a new airline establishment is an expensive and lengthy process, and it is clear that we do not have that luxury of time. Currently, only Antigua can pull together expe-

rienced human resources in all departments (including its pilots, who love LIAT).

In the area of logistics, Antigua is considered the northern gateway of the OECS, with LIAT routes being the most important links to the USVI, BVI, and Puerto Rico. Antigua offers a larger and more efficient base for the Headquarters of LIAT, whose engineers and mechanics surpass many in the region, and are responsible for LIAT's safety record.

I rest my case Sir, and again request your help in having my investment proposal considered; we also request your conjoining private investment from St. Vincent and the Grenadines & the OECS to comprise a LIAT Private Sector Shareholding.

Respectfully, Sir,  
Makeda Mikael  
Chairman

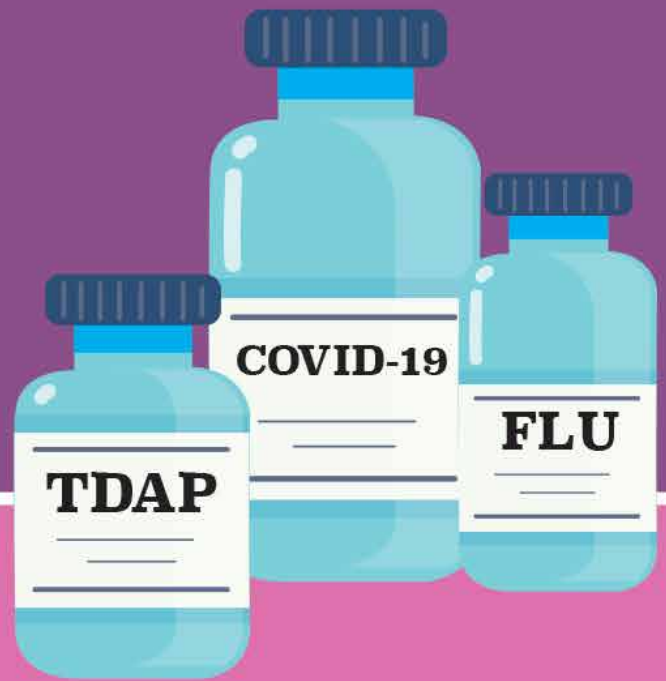
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**The COVID-19** vaccine protects against the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. Your baby cannot get this vaccine until they're 6 months old.

With cold and flu season coming, there's no better time to protect yourself and your baby. You can even get your flu, COVID-19, and Tdap vaccines at the same time!

**Make the right choice for your baby.** As your trusted partner, support, and ally, ask your midwife or provider about vaccination at your next appointment.



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## Grenada: Government and developers reach agreement

CMC - The Grenada government says it has reached an agreement with the True Blue Development Limited, the developers of the 147-room Kimpton Kawana Bay hotel project.

The resort was due to open in late 2021 and be operated by one of the world's leading boutique hotel operators, Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants, part of the Intercontinental Hotels Group (IHG).

But the developers last year filed a complaint with the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment (ICSID). The Washington-based ICSID is an arm of the World Bank devoted to resolving international investment disputes against sovereign states.

"On assuming office, we felt it best to engage in negotiations with the owners of the Kawana Bay project and we are happy to report to this Honourable House that we have essentially reached an agreement, we have reached a settlement with Kawana Bay principals," Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Claudette Joseph, told Parliament.

"The arbitration will be settled, and the property will be transferred back to the people of Grenada," said Joseph, adding that the agreement "will be consummated during the course of



*Kimpton Kawana Bay hotel project (File photo from October 2020).*

this week.

"Before the week is up the agreement will be consummated and that agreement will again see the Kawana Bay properties which is just over five acres of land on the far end of Grand Anse beach again coming back to the people of Grenada, we will once more own that property," she said.

Owned and developed by True Blue Development, whose major shareholder is a former ambassador at large to Grenada, Warren Newfield, the now incomplete tourism project on Grand Anse beach is a Citizenship by Investment (CBI) approved project.

Under the CBI programme, Grenada provides citizenship to a foreign investor in return for making a substantial investment in the socio-economic development of the island.

Joseph told legislators that in 2016 the then

New National Party (NNP) government of then prime minister Dr Keith Mitchell transferred the freehold of the land to True Blue Development.

"And in transferring again nothing went into our Treasury at the time the freehold was transferred in real terms because what happened there was a conveyance and a mortgage.

"Essentially government loaned the True Blue company money and to buy the property from us. Government advance on the money and they take the same money and they brought the property from us. It was a really good deal, it was only 3.5 million dollars," she said without disclosing the currency for the transaction.

According to legal documents for the arbitration matter on March 23, 2016, True Blue Development agreed to purchase the Flamboyant Hotel and Vil-

las after the former owners had defaulted on their mortgage and the property was in receivership.

On May 23, 2016, the Grenada government granted Approved Project status under Section 11 of the CBI Act, giving True Blue Development the right to raise capital and solicit investors for the development of the project.

The Approved Project status also meant that citizenship would be granted to all CBI applicants investing in the project who successfully apply for and qualify to become citizens of Grenada under the CBI programme.

However, the project came to a halt in mid-2021 due to what the then government described as "discrepancies" in the companies' records as it pertains to the CBI regulations. The developers then filed for an arbitration hearing with the Center in July 2021.

## Brain fog after Covid linked to blood clots - study

Blood clots in the brain or the lungs might explain some common symptoms of “long Covid”, including brain fog and fatigue, a UK study suggests.

In the study, of 1,837 people admitted to hospital because of Covid, researchers say two blood proteins point to clots being one cause.

It is thought 16% of such patients have trouble thinking, concentrating or remembering for at least six months.

Long Covid can also develop after milder infections.

But the research team, from the universities of Oxford and Leicester, stress:

Their findings are relevant only to patients admitted to hospital

They are “the first piece of the jigsaw” but further research is needed before they can propose or test any potential treatments

They tracked cognitive problems at six and 12 months only and through tests and questionnaires, which may “lack sensitivity”

Identifying predictors and possible mechanisms was “a key step” in understanding post-Covid brain fog, study author Prof Paul Harrison, from the University of Oxford, said.

But there may still be many different causes of



*Long Covid can take different forms but why it develops remains unclear.*

long Covid.

Leicester’s professor of respiratory medicine, Chris Brightling, said: “It’s a combination of someone’s health before, the acute event itself and what happens afterwards that lead on to physical and mental health consequences.”

University lecturer Dr Simon Retford, from Lancashire, spent two weeks in a coma after catching Covid in October 2020, with his family told to expect the worst.

Now, he is 60-70% back to where he was before but still has problems concentrating and with short-term

memory loss and losing his train of thought.

“I took on a course-leader role last May and I was like a really slow computer which struggled to get going,” he says.

Dr Retford used to work for the police but would be unable to do so now.

“If I overdo it now, I feel so fatigued,” he says.

But although he may never completely recover, Dr Retford is determined to remain positive.

“I’m still here and thousands aren’t,” he says.

The Post-hospitalisation Covid-19 study (PHosp-Covid),

in Nature Medicine, blames higher levels of the protein fibrinogen and protein fragment D-dimer for brain fog.

Study author Dr Max Taquet, from Oxford, said: “Both fibrinogen and D-dimer are involved in blood clotting and so the results support the hypothesis that blood clots are a cause of post-Covid cognitive problems.

“Fibrinogen may be directly acting on the brain and its blood vessels, whereas D-dimer often reflects blood clots in the lungs and the problems in the brain might be due to lack of oxygen.”

## CARICOM leaders to discuss situation in Haiti next week

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Leaders will meet on next Wednesday to discuss the ongoing social and political situation in Haiti, CARICOM chairman, Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit has announced.

“We will meet virtually as CARICOM heads, the main item on the agenda will be Haiti and the situation in Haiti,” the Dominican Prime Minister told a news conference on Wednesday, adding that the issue of climate change will also be a matter on the agenda.

He said that the United Nations Security Council had mandated the Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, “to make certain proposals to the Security Council on what actions needed to be taken, what support Haiti needs to restore the security in Haiti and to ensure that the Haitian people can go about their daily lives like everyone of us in the region”.

Skerrit reminded reporters that CARICOM had some months appointed an Eminent Persons Group (EPG) led by the former prime minister of St Lucia, Dr Kenny Anthony and includes the former prime minister of Jamaica Bruce Golding and his former Bahamian counterpart Perry Christie.

“They have been engaging a wide cross section of



*CARICOM Chairman and Dominican Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit.*

the population, representative groups, they have also been having discussions with the UN as well as other stakeholders in the United States and Canada and so we are further looking to coordinate our efforts.

“We are of the view and we accept that on that mandate that CARICOM will have to play a very crucial role in coordinating global efforts towards providing Haiti with the support that it needs.”

Skerrit told reporters that the regional leaders “will be meeting to take stock on what that has transpired thus far and to receive a report from the group led by Dr Anthony and to further determine what other actions that CARICOM would need to take to provide support to Haiti.

“As you know Kenya has communicated its commitment to providing troops, police officers and there are other African countries that have communicated that as well. There are some countries in CARICOM that has indicated they will provide police personnel,” he added.

Earlier this month, in a report that was circulated to the 15-member Security Council, the UN Secretary General outlined two potential UN options, namely providing logistical support to a multinational force and Haiti’s police and to strengthen a UN political mission already in Haiti.

“Haiti’s current context is not conducive to peace-keeping,” Guterres wrote, adding “nothing short of the robust use of force, complemented by a suite of non-ki-

netic measures, by a capable specialized multinational police force enabled by military assets, coordinated with the national police, would be able to achieve these objectives”.

Kenya’s Foreign Minister, Alfred Mutua, has said that his country’s commitment is to deploy a contingent of 1,000 police officers to help train and assist Haitian police restore normalcy in the country and protect strategic installations.

Two CARICOM countries – the Bahamas and Jamaica- have already said they are willing to provide personnel and the United States has also indicated a willingness to put forward a Security Council resolution to back a deployment.

Prime Minister Skerrit said that Dominica is willing to provide support as it relates to translators “as we did before when the earthquake hit Haiti and police officers were sent and others were sent for translation purposes”.

Skerrit said personally for him as chairman of the 15-member regional integration grouping, “I have indicated very sincerely that the Haitian situation is my number one priority.

“We owe it to the Haitian people and it is important that the entire Caribbean Community, not only the  
*cont’d on pg 15*

## Police seize “ghost guns” being manufactured in Trinidad

CMC - Trinidad and Tobago police Wednesday said they had seized a quantity of “ghost guns” being manufactured utilising 3D printing technology.

Police Commissioner Erla Christopher described as “highly commendable” the early morning raid at a house in the Caparo district, in Central Trinidad, conducted by a specialist unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS).

She said that the TTPS remains relentless in its fight against rapidly evolving criminal elements and that the specialist unit acted with great urgency to put an end to the illicit activities of one male suspect.

Police said that they had also arrested a female relative of the suspect.

“Acting on information received, officers of the Specialist Unit quick-



ly verified that a man was allegedly performing the duties of an armourer for criminal groups in the country. A house at ...Caparo, was soon targeted and enquiries revealed that the individual had advanced his criminal activities to include the manufacturing of ‘ghost guns’ using 3D printing technology”.

The police said that following the raid at the sus-

pect’s home “a quantity of firearms, ammunition, projectiles, a 3D printer and a computer system were seized from the location.

The police described ‘Ghost guns’ as “firearms that can be produced using readily available 3D printing technology, making it challenging for traditional firearm control measures to detect and prevent their production. They can be

manufactured without serial numbers or other identifying marks, making them difficult to trace and regulate”.

The Police Commissioner has warned that if such manufacturing operations become established here, it could lead to an increase in untraceable and illegal firearms circulating within the country.

“She notes that the proliferation of illegal firearms poses significant risks to public safety and law enforcement and the lack of control over the production and distribution of these weapons could result in an increase in violent crime and contribute to the empowerment of criminal organisations,” the police statement added.

Last year, Trinidad and Tobago recorded 599 murders and so far this year, the total has registered more than 400.

### *cont’d from pg 14*

heads of governments but the entire Caribbean Community, is engaged and is seized of the issues confronting Haiti and for us to collectively provide that moral or collective commitment and support to Haiti.

“We have to guard against any semblance of or attitude of Haiti fatigue from various quarters...and we are in touch with members of the Security Council because I know at the end of the day, it is the Security Council that will make a determination as to the support to be provided.

“Countries that will want to provide support, but would want to have a UN Security decision...to provide them with the

necessary legal cover of being present in Haiti,” Skerrit said, assuring the Caribbean public that they will be provided with the outcomes of the deliberations on Wednesday.

Last year, Haiti’s Prime Minister Dr Ariel Henry, sent an urgent appeal to the UN asking for “the immediate deployment of a specialized armed force, in sufficient quantity” to stop gang warfare in his country.

On the issue of climate change, Skerrit said it is an item that will remain “fixed” on CARICOM’s agenda “and so we look forward to the engagement of heads on this issue.

# Regional News



## US concerned about China's expansion in Caribbean

CMC - Outgoing United States Ambassador to Guyana, Sarah-Ann Lynch says the Biden administration is concerned about what she says is China's expanding financial footprint in Guyana and the wider Caribbean.

"We've tripled the bilateral trade over the last few years so I think we are here we are strong, and we will remain here," she told reporters at a news briefing as her tour of duty here winds down.

According to Lynch, China's financial presence in Guyana and the rest of the Caribbean is expanding but the US Embassy is aggressively pushing guarantees of value for money from American companies.

"Clearly, the China footprint is growing in Guyana, as well as the broader Caribbean," she said.

She stated that in addition to the

United States, other countries have been exploring investment opportunities in agriculture, Information Technology, tourism, and manufacturing. However she advised Guyanese companies to take advantage of business opportunities with American companies because of inherent advantages.

"US companies bring some unique things to any country in which they invest, and that's quality, excellence on time on budget projects and high standards of safety so I think all those things are important for Guyanese local companies to think about when they're considering which US companies they want to partner with and it's important for the Guyanese people to know that US companies what they bring to the table," she said.

Over the years, Chinese companies have been contracted to build the



*Sarah-Ann Lynch.*

new Demerara Harbour Bridge, roads, the building that houses the Marriott Hotel, electricity sub-stations, the Arthur Chung Conference Centre and the upgrade of the Cheddi Jagan International Airport, Timehri.

During last month's visit to China, President Irfaan Ali committed to concluding the Joint Action Plan on Promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative with Beijing.

Latin Research Professor at the US Army War College, R. Evan Ellis earlier this month said the US should not be worried about Guyana's close relations with China. "The US has a strategic interest in working respectfully, yet attentively, with Guyana as its newfound oil wealth continues to transform it, to preserve the vitality of Guyana's friendship with the US, even as it engages with the PRC and others as well," he said.

Lynch, who would be taking up an assignment at the United States' Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) in Florida, would be succeeded by Nicole Theriot.

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## Whale hunting resumes in Iceland under strict rules

By Paul Kirby

Iceland's government has lifted a summer suspension on whaling, allowing hunting to resume under a series of tight new regulations.

Only one company, Hvalur, still hunts whales off Iceland and the whaling season has only weeks to run.

But opponents are furious about the change of heart.

Fisheries and Foods Minister Svandis Svavarsdottir said she understood the views of most Icelanders who wanted an end to whaling.

But she said she had to follow a legal framework based on the licence granted earlier this year by her predecessor.

"We are the last nation in the world that is fishing for large whales in this way, and there is only one party doing this whaling," she told reporters.

The values of Icelanders were now different from those of decades ago, she said, but added that it was up to parliament and society to discuss the next step.

Although Norway and Japan also allow commercial whaling, only Iceland permits the killing of longer fin whales.

The summer whaling season in Iceland is traditionally over by the end of



*Hvalur is the only company still whaling off Iceland but it will have to follow strict new rules.*

September, before it becomes too windy and dark.

Sigursteinn Masson of the International Fund for Animal Welfare in Iceland says the foods minister had taken a significant step.

"I truly believe this year will be the final year of whaling in Iceland," he told the BBC. "There is solidarity in the government and that is important for the next steps to be taken to end whaling permanently."

The foods minister suspended the summer season in June after a report by Iceland's Food and Veterinary Authority found that killing whales took longer than welfare laws permitted.

Under the new regulations, fin whales can only be hunted off Iceland within a distance of 25m (80ft) from the boat and no calf must be involved.

Hunting should take place in daylight, and no electricity will be allowed. Anyone involved should be properly trained and using the right equipment and methods.

Profits from whaling have declined and the increasingly stringent regulations will make hunting far more costly and difficult to do.

Although a recent survey by the Maskina institute in Iceland suggested 51% of people opposed whaling, it is thought many MPs are in favour.

The food minister's Left-Greens party supports a ban, but many Icelanders see continuing the tradition as a question of sovereignty and independence.

Lawyer Katrin Oddsdottir of the Icelandic Nature Conservation Association said there were no good

arguments for whaling and it was to the shame of Iceland that one company, run by Kristjan Loftsson, was still aiming to continue.

"He could whale until the end of the year because the permit is valid and this new decision allows him to go out in the morning and start whaling," she told the BBC.

She said an injunction had been filed in a bid to prevent hunting from resuming.

A growing number of film-makers have signed a petition against whaling and Katrin Oddsdottir said there was a genuine risk of a Hollywood boycott of Iceland now that the practice was being allowed to resume.

Under annual quotas, 209 fin whales are allowed to be killed along with 217 smaller minke whales.

## Johannesburg fire 'wake-up call', President Ramaphosa says

A deadly fire in Johannesburg's inner city was "a wake-up call" for South Africa, says President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Seventy-four people were killed - including 12 children - after a blaze in a five-storey building, which was being occupied by homeless people.

More than 50 others were injured.

Earlier, the city of Johannesburg confirmed it owned the building, but said cartels had taken it over. Officials say the cause of the deadly fire is unclear.

In a news conference at the site of the fire, Mr Ramaphosa said the incident needed to be investigated and lessons learnt to prevent future tragedies.

"It's a wake-up call for us to begin to address the situation of housing in the inner city," the South African leader said.

The building used to be a home for abused women and children, but once the lease expired, it was "hijacked", President Ramaphosa explained to reporters.

Many properties around the area where the blaze happened have been deemed unfit to live in.

Yet these old blocks, abandoned by their owners or the city authorities, are full of families, often paying rent to criminal gangs who run them.

Some of those who use the buildings include undocumented migrants, mostly from other African countries.

The buildings, which lack running water, toilets or a legal electricity connection, are then said to have been "hijacked".

South Africa faces a chronic housing shortage, with an estimated 15,000 people estimated to be homeless in Johannesburg.



"We need to get on top of this and find effective ways of dealing with problems of accommodation, of housing, and services in the inner city," Mr Ramaphosa added.

He also commended emergency services, who arrived at the scene 10 minutes after the fire was reported.

Johannesburg city manager Floyd Brink said 200 families were affected by the fire and "all efforts" were taken to provide accommodation.

A spokesman for the emergency services, Robert Mulaudzi, told the BBC that the fire had gutted the building but firefighters had been able to bring out some of the occupants.

He explained that because the building was not properly looked after, makeshift structures and debris had made it hard to search for and rescue people.

A video posted by Mr Mulaudzi to the platform X, formerly known as Twitter, showed fire trucks and ambulances outside the building with burnt-out windows.

Photos from the scene showed covered bodies lined up near the burned building.

One woman told journalists she

was outside the building searching for her 24-year-old daughter.

"As soon as I heard the building was burning down, I knew I had to run here to come and look for her," she said.

"Now that I'm here, I'm kept in suspense because I really don't know what is happening. I don't get any direction - so I'm actually very anxious, I don't know if my daughter is alive."

In a visit to the scene, Johannesburg mayor Kabelo Gwamanda said Johannesburg officials would relocate people living in similar "hijacked" buildings in the city, and turn those buildings into social housing. "We are not going there with brute force," he told reporters, "we are trying to apply a sensitive strategy."

Asked whether his administration would take responsibility for the tragedy, Mr Gwamanda said the government was dealing with the issue of cartels hijacking buildings, which was taking place across the city.

In the wake of the fire, many South Africans on social media condemned the online xenophobic attacks that some have made against the victims and survivors of the fire.

## Proud Boys leader Joe Biggs sentenced to 17 years for Capitol riot

By Bernd Debusmann Jr

A leader of the far-right Proud Boys has been sentenced to 17 years in prison, one of the longest sentences yet handed out over the US Capitol riot.

Prosecutors said US Army veteran Joe Biggs, 38, was an “instigator” of the storming of Congress on 6 January 2021.

The former Infowars correspondent was convicted of seditious conspiracy and other charges in May.

In court, Biggs pleaded for leniency and expressed remorse for his actions.

The sentence, handed down by US District Judge Timothy Kelly, is below both federal sentencing guidelines and the 33 years sought by prosecutors.

Another Proud Boys member, Zachary Rehl, was sentenced on Thursday to 15 years, also on a charge of seditious conspiracy.

Rehl, a former US Marine and leader of the Philadelphia branch of the Proud Boys, was seen on video spraying a chemical irritant at officers outside the Capitol during the riot.

Biggs was convicted of a slew of charges in May, including seditious conspiracy, conspiracy to use, intimidation or threats to prevent officials from discharging their duties and interference with law enforcement during civil disorder.

In a sentencing memo,



Joe Biggs (right) with Enrique Tarrío at a rally in 2019.

prosecutors said that Biggs - a veteran of the war in Iraq and former correspondent for conspiracy website Infowars - “employed his military experience to direct and control large groups of men under his command” to lead a “revolt against the government”.

“Biggs viewed himself and his movement as a second American revolution where he and the other ‘patriots’ would retake the government by force,” the memo said.

In court, a tearful Biggs apologised for his actions and said he was “seduced” by the crowd on the day of the riot.

“I just moved forward. My curiosity got the better of me,” he added. “I’m not a terrorist. I don’t have hate in my heart.”

“I know that I have to be punished, and I understand,”

Biggs said.

As he sentenced Biggs, Judge Kelly said he was “not trying to minimise the violence” but that the 6 January riot paled in comparison to other mass casualty events. He also said that a stricter sentence may have created sentencing disparities with other convicted rioters.

Biggs went to trial alongside four other Proud Boys members including former chair Enrique Tarrío, whose sentencing was abruptly postponed on Wednesday. His sentencing is now scheduled to take place next week. Prosecutors are seeking a 33-year sentence.

The Proud Boys involved in the case have said they plan to appeal against the conviction.

In court, federal prosecutor Jason McCullough said the crimes are “very serious” and that a stiff sen-

tence would send a message ahead of next year’s presidential election.

“There is a reason why we will hold our collective breaths as we approach future elections. ... They pushed this to the edge of a constitutional crisis,” he said.

Prosecutors used text messages, social media posts and videos to show that the Proud Boys were involved in a co-ordinated effort to stop the certification of the 2020 election at the Capitol.

As of 6 August, over 1,100 people had been arrested on charges related to the riot, resulting in over 630 guilty pleas and 110 convictions.

Another prominent participant in the riot, Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes, was sentenced to 18 years in prison in May.

## John Isner's US Open and tennis career ends in loss

NEW YORK (AP) - John Isner's career fittingly ended with a final-set tie-breaker at Flushing Meadows on Thursday.

Isner put a volley into the net to end the match and what he had announced would be his final singles tournament, falling in the U.S. Open second round to fellow American Michael Mmoh 3-6, 4-6, 7-6(3), 6-4, 7-6(7).

"It's tough. I like to think I work as hard as I can," Isner told a Grandstand crowd that erupted in cheers as he trailed off into tears.

The 38-year-old Isner, who needed a wild card to get into the main draw at Flushing Meadows, blasted 48 aces and won 86 percent of his first-serve points in a match that also included 63 unforced errors.



John Isner, of the United States, reacts after losing to Michael Mmoh, of the United States, during the second round of the U.S. Open tennis championships, Thursday, Aug. 31, 2023, in New York. (AP)

Isner reached a career-best ranking of No. 8 in 2018, shortly after reaching the semifinals at Wim-

bledon, won 16 singles titles and has hit more than 14,000 aces, an ATP Tour record.

That includes 113 in the longest match in tennis history, a first-round Wimbledon win against Nicolas Mahut in 2010 that lasted 11 hours, five minutes and ended at 70-68 in the fifth set.

Next up for the 89th-ranked Mmoh will be Jack Draper, who upset an apparently ailing Hubert Hurkacz 6-2, 6-4, 7-5, extending his return to the tour after being out more than two months with a shoulder injury.

Elsewhere, sixth-seeded Jannik Sinner advanced to the third round with a 6-4, 6-2, 6-4 victory over fellow

Italian Lorenzo Sonego.

The sixth-seeded Sinner improved to 10-0 lifetime against his countrymen. He's seeking a deep run at Flushing Meadows after reaching the semifinals at Wimbledon this year and the quarterfinals at last year's US Open, losing to Carlos Alcaraz in a five-set marathon after holding a match point.

"I felt now my game has improved a little bit and developed," said the 22-year-old Sinner, who won 89 percent of his first-serve points and was successful in 22 of 25 trips to the net. "Physically, I'm good and let's see what's coming."

*cont'd on pg 21*



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## Guptill hits century as TKR makes light work of Royals

A dominant display with both bat and ball saw Trinbago Knight Riders register a record 133-run win over Barbados Royals in the 2023 Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) at Kensington Oval on Wednesday night.

Barbados Royals, captained by Rovman Powell, won the toss and opted to field first, and it seemed a good decision, as they initially had Trinbago Knight Riders at 69 for two inside 10 overs, before a fantastic 108-run third wicket stand between Martin Guptill and captain Kieron Pollard fired the Knight Riders to their daunting total of 194 for five.

Guptill, whose last half-century in the CPL was back in 2018 against the Tallawahs, came good on the night with a 58-ball unbeaten century, while Pollard contributed 46 off 32 balls. Jason Holder was the pick of the Royals bowling with two for 39 from his four overs.

The Royals' reply was derailed by Andre Russell, who grabbed three quick wickets in the power-play -



*Martin Guptill of Trinbago Knight Riders hits a four during match 13 of the Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League against Barbados Royals at the Kensington Oval in Barbados on Wednesday, August 30, 2023. (CPL T20 via Getty Images)*

Rahkeem Cornwall (zero), Kyle Mayers (zero) and Alick Athanaze (two) - while Sunil Narine accounted for Laurie Evans (five) and the host were unable to recover from the early demolition.

They were eventually bowled out for 61 in 12.1 overs, succumbing to the largest defeat in CPL history.

Afghan left-arm wrist spinner Waqar Salamkheil introduced himself to the tournament in grand fashion, picking up four for 14 in 3.1 overs.

Russell finished three for 13 from two overs, and left-arm spinner Akeil Hosein captured two for 16 from his four overs.

Earlier, Trinbago Knight Riders had a cautious start to their innings, with Guptill progressing steadily at one point on 20 runs from 20 balls.

They lost the wickets of Mark Deyal (27) and Nicholas Pooran (six), but the complexion of the innings changed once Pollard joined Guptill in the middle.

The two swung the mo-

mentum of the game, with Guptill, opening up and paraded his six hitting skills, as he hammered nine maximums and a solitary four on his way to an even 100 which came up in the final over.

It was the first century of the 2023 edition and it was firmly backed by Pollard's well-paced knock, which included four sixes and a solitary four.

Despite losing Pollard, Russell (five) and Dwayne Bravo (zero) at the backend, the damage was already done, and it was left for the Knight Riders bowlers to mop up what was left of the Royals hopes on the night.

Barbados Royals will be back in action tomorrow night against reigning champions Jamaica Tallawahs at the same venue.

### **cont'd from pg 20**

Alexander Zverev, the No. 12 seed, downed fellow German Daniel Altmaier 7-6(1), 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 on his return to outer Court 17. Zverev was among several players who noticed a scent of marijuana on the court in the first round.

For Zverev, a US Open finalist in 2020,

it marked his fifth straight advance to the tournament's third round.

He will face No. 19 seed Grigor Dimitrov, who downed Andy Murray in a convincing 6-3, 6-4, 6-1 victory in Arthur Ashe Stadium that included 45 unforced errors from the British two-time Grand Slam champion.

## Spanish women team's coach Vilda to be sacked - federation source

MADRID (Reuters) - Spanish women team's coach Jorge Vilda, who faced down a player mutiny to steer his team to World Cup glory, is to be sacked in the increasingly acrimonious fallout from a kiss scandal involving his boss, according to a football federation source.

The 42-year-old Vilda cut a sometimes isolated figure in Australia as his squad largely celebrated without him, and has now become caught in the backlash against football federation (RFEF) president Luis Rubiales for kissing a player on the lips.

Rubiales' kiss of Jeni Hermoso, who has denounced it as unwanted and sexist, came as he handed medals to the World Cup-winning squad in front of millions of viewers worldwide at the closing ceremony in Australia earlier this month.

Vilda backed the now-suspended Rubiales and the RFEF's new board is planning to terminate his contract after the coach refused a request to resign, the source told Reuters.

The board is also negotiating with women players to end their strike over the Rubiales case, the source said, in a furore that has overshadowed the team's remarkable run at the World Cup culminating in a 1-0 victory over England.



Spain's head coach Jorge Vilda celebrates with the gold medal after the final of Women's World Cup soccer between Spain and England at Stadium Australia in Sydney, Australia, Sunday, Aug. 20, 2023. (AP)

Rubiales has refused to resign and blamed "false feminists" for demonizing him, but when world governing body FIFA suspended him, regional RFEF chiefs urged him to step down. Both FIFA and Spanish authorities are investigating him.

Vilda's tenure as coach since 2015 was called into question last year when 15 players sent letters to the RFEF saying they would no longer play for Spain with him in charge.

The RFEF made some adjustments to working conditions following their complaints but backed Vilda, who took his squad to the World Cup without most of the mutineers.

The board was now

working on the legalities of Vilda's termination and determining a severance package equal to his 160,000 euro (US\$173,552) annual salary, the source said.

The RFEF, which speaks for Vilda while he remains coach, did not respond to a Reuters request for comment. At the World Cup, he said the team's success would not have been possible without RFEF backing for him.

On Thursday, Pedro Rocha, the RFEF's interim president, said Vilda remained coach for now. "Once we meet with him, we will give you the pertinent information," he told reporters. "We haven't decided. We have to listen and talk."

Rubiales had praised Vilda for the World Cup win and offered him a fresh, four-year contract with an annual salary of 500,000 euros. Vilda was among those who most enthusiastically applauded Rubiales' refusal to resign at an RFEF meeting.

The source said the federation could not be held to Rubiales' verbal salary offer, and felt it had a "strong argument" if Vilda were to take legal action.

At the weekend, Spain's top 58 female players said they would not return to play for the national team under the existing leadership. The RFEF source said players were now being consulted as to whether the removal of Vilda would change that.

## Pathirana leads Sri Lanka to five-wicket win over Bangladesh

PALLEKELE, Sri Lanka (AP) - Young fast bowler Matheesha Pathirana grabbed a career-best 4-32 and led injury-hit Sri Lanka to a comfortable five-wicket win over Bangladesh in the Asia Cup on Thursday.

Pathirana consistently challenged the batters with his deceptive pace while spinners Dhananjaya de Silva and Dunith Wellalage dried up runs in the middle overs as Bangladesh was bowled out for 164 in 42.4 overs.

Charith Asalanka (62 not out) and Sadeera Samarawickrama (54) then hit half centuries and carried Sri Lanka to 168 for five with 11 to overs spare despite the top order hobbling against Bangladesh's pace and the left-arm spin of captain Shakib Al Hasan, who took two for 29.

Sri Lanka stuttered at 43 for three within the first 10 overs when fast bowler Taskin Ahmed had Dimuth Karunaratne clean bowled cheaply and Al Hasan knocked back the stumps of Kusal Mendis with a straight delivery.

But Asalanka and Samarawickrama rebuilt the chase with a 78-run stand before Mahedi Hasan had the latter stumped off a delivery that spun away from the right-hander.

Al Hasan then had Dhananjaya de Silva's stumps rattled with a full pitched delivery before Asalanka ensured Sri Lanka got home with



Sri Lanka's Matheesha Pathirana, centre, celebrates taking the wicket of Bangladeshes' Mushfiqur Rahim with teammate Pathum Nissanka during the One-Day international cricket match between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in the Asia Cup in Pallekele, Sri Lanka, on Thursday, Aug. 31. (AP)

plenty of overs to spare.

It was a remarkable show by Sri Lanka's second string bowlers after injuries to multiple frontline bowlers ahead of the tournament, including ace leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga.

Al Hasan's decision to bat first under overcast conditions didn't go well. Off-spinner Maheesh Theekshana struck off his second ball when he had Tanzid Hasan leg before wicket without scoring that encouraged Sri Lanka skipper Dasun Shanaka to deploy spinners inside the first 10 overs despite overcast conditions.

De Silva had Mohammad Naim (16) caught at point off a leading edge and Pathirana's pace outdone Al Hasan (5) who gloved a low catch

to wicketkeeper Pathum Nissanka as Bangladesh slipped to 36 for three in the 11th over.

Najmul Hossain Shanto top-scored with 89 off 122 balls but never looked to threaten the pace and spin on a tricky wicket.

Shanto shared a 59-run fourth-wicket partnership with Towhid Hridoy, who made 20 before Shanaka went for a successful television referral of lbw against Hridoy and broke the stand in the 24th over.

Bangladesh's most experienced player Mushfiqur Rahim (13) was one of the four batters to reach double-figures before he fell in Pathirana's return spell as he failed to clear the third man fielder with his uppercut.

Pathirana made short work of the tail-enders by claiming two more quick wickets as Bangladesh folded for a well below-par total.

Afghanistan is the other team in Group B, with the top two advancing to the Super 4.

Pakistan inflicted a crushing 238-run defeat on newcomer Nepal in the opening Group A game on Wednesday and will take on archrival India in its next group game on Saturday.

The Asia Cup is being hosted in Pakistan and Sri Lanka after India refused to travel to Pakistan because of political tensions between the two countries. Pakistan will host four games while Sri Lanka will host nine, including the final on Sept. 17.

## Antigua to finalize squad for ECVA U-23 championship next week

Antigua and Barbuda will finalize its squad next week to contest the Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Association (ECVA) Under-23 Tournament in Dominica later this month.

The initial squad of 29 players, which started preparations in June for the September 20-25 ECVA tournament on the Nature Isle of the Caribbean, Dominica, has since been reduced to 16 players.

The 16 players currently in training are; Faith Gibson, Jahzara Donovan, Jasannia Joseph, Jaya Carr, Jerri-Ann Barnes, Michelle Christophe, Nashea Browne, and Philisha Burnette, Rhiana Matthews, Rihanna Brown, Samrah Samuel, Schmidt Carter, Sharifa Peters, Shekira Hope, Nia Benjamin, and Alexia Farrell.

On Monday, September 4th, the squad will be further reduced to the final 10 players who will represent the twin-island nation at the competition.

The national under-23 squad is undergoing training at the indoor volleyball facility at the YMCA Sports Complex under the guidance of head coach Rosemarie Simon and assistant coach Jacqueline Ladoo.

Eight countries will be contesting the ECVA Under-23 Championship. They are Antigua and Barbuda, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands (BVI), Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Coach Simon said the national under-23 team's preparation is going well. She said it has been aided by the assistance of Cuban volleyball coach

Francisco Cruz, who is a Federation of International Volleyball (FIVB) Level I instructor.

"It has been going pretty well. Our national association brought in a coach from Cuba. He came in for a couple of months to help with the development of volleyball for the youths and the females," Simon said.

"He has been working with us and other young groups of players to help us prepare for the tournament in Dominica. We started with 29 females, and presently we are down to 16.

"By Monday, we will know the final 10 players who will be traveling to Dominica. So the training has been going pretty well. The ladies are prepared, and we are just looking forward to what will happen over in Dominica."

Coach Cruz, who is also working with the Trinidad and Tobago national volleyball programme, had to leave Antigua in July to fulfill some international coaching course obligations but he is scheduled to return to Antigua in early September to resume his work in the twin-island nation.

Simon said special attention is being paid to ensure that the young players grasp the fundamentals of volleyball during the overall training of the Under-23 team for the upcoming engagement in Dominica.

"We have some seasoned players who have been playing for a while. They would know the game a bit more than the younger ones who are coming in," Simon stated.

"In regards to the Under-23 tour-



National Under-23 Team Coach Rosemarie Simon. (Photo courtesy JVC)

nament, we have at least four players who have been playing volleyball for a while who will be able to pretty much carry the team. The others are new players, so it is a learning experience for them."