

PM PLEASSED WITH RESPONSES TO MVI AT RECENT MEETINGS

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WIOC Chief Executive Officer, Gregory Georges (right) with Larry Gonsalves. After more than forty-four years operating the WIOC Friar's Hill Road service station, the company has bid a 'fond farewell' to Larry Gonsalves, described as 'an institution among service station operators in Antigua and Barbuda. *Story on page 4.*

PM pleased with responses to MVI at recent meetings

Prime Minister Gaston Browne says he is pleased with the responses to the case made, to include the Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) when assessing assistance from the international community or financing through institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Speaking with Point Express newspaper, follow-

ing his return to the country on Thursday, PM Browne said he feels positive that the case was made at the margins of the World Bank and IMF meetings in Morocco by the team that has been working and crafting the MVI over the past eighteen months. Prime Minister Browne serves as co-chair of the panel along with the former Prime Minister of Norway, Erna Solberg,

“I think we were able to make the case and to allay their fears over its use and to justify the methodologies that were utilized. Even the indicators that were used, we had to exclude, because we didn’t have good quality data,” the prime minister explained.

When fully adopted, the Antigua and Barbuda leader said he is confident that it will be a good tool to use

to assess a country’s true standings; its vulnerabilities, etc. which are supported by data that is reliable, transparent, and available.

“The MVI is going to be a good tool. I have said to them that it’s a ‘living document’ subject to future iterations. There will be a secretariat that will work with a panel to review the MVI, perhaps every two years so whatever gaps may exist in the current MVI we can always fill those gaps as new and more reliable data becomes available,” he stated.

In terms of a first draft, a first submission of the document, the prime minister described it as ‘an excellent’ document. “It’s a great planning tool, to make the case for Official Development Assistance (ODA) and also a great tool, to manage the risks that are associated with the vulnerabilities of these states,” he noted.

According to the prime minister, the financial institutions are now more open to utilizing the MVI, which he explained must be seen as a companion tool to Gross National Income.

The overall aim of the MVI is to create a space where countries like Antigua and Barbuda can access development aid and better terms when borrowing although they have high GNIs.



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SUMMARY:

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- Notifies builders and architects of variances and instances where plans or constructions are out of compliance with codes or regulations; provides general guidance and information on resolution.
- Follows up to ensure that violations are corrected in accordance with codes and regulations.
- Drafts and distributes reports of inspection findings; maintains records of reports and findings.
- Confirms that land usage and construction projects comply with zoning, health, and safety regulations.
- Maintains knowledge of zoning, health, safety, and building codes and regulations.
- Performs other duties as required.

Required Skills/Abilities:

- Extensive knowledge of construction, engineering, and building codes and regulations.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Excellent organizational skills and attention to detail.
- Ability to write clear inspection reports on the condition of properties.
- Proficient with Microsoft Office Suite or related software.

Education and Experience:

- Bachelors degree in Architecture, Construction, or related field
- Five years of related experience required.

Physical Requirements:

- Must be physically able to inspect construction sites including walking properties, climbing ladders & kneeling.
- Must be able to lift up to 25 pounds at a time.



SMS Register for Elections published

The Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission (ABEC) has announced that the Register for Elections for the St. Mary's South constituency has been published.

In a release overnight, ABEC said the List is now available at the respective locations designated within the constituency. ABEC advises that the List will be uploaded

online on Friday and the link will be made available.

Just over 2700 persons are eligible to cast ballots in the October 24 contest, where the competing candidates are

Andrew Antonio of the Democratic National Alliance, Dwayne George of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party, and Kelvin Simon of the United Progressive Party.

Ribbon cutting ceremony highlights lack of commitment to SMS

Thursday's actions by Kelvin Simon, of a ribbon cutting ceremony to open a constituency office, demonstrates another failure in his and the United Progressive Party's capacity and willingness to take St. Mary's South (SMS) and Antigua and Barbuda to the next level of progress and prosperity.

As a candidate in the January 2023 elections, it is concerning that Mr. Simon chose to open a branch office in the constituency just one week before the by-election.

This move raises doubts about his readiness and commitment to the people of the constituency. The timing of this event is perceived by many as an insult and a disregard for the concerns and priorities of the electorate.

These actions by Mr. Simon are made even more disturbing when you examine his slogan of "Leadership you can trust".

From February 2023 to his resignation in June 2023, Mr. Simon would have received a stipend from the treasury of Antigua and Barbuda of \$2,000.00 per month, in part, to run a constituency office which he never had during the time.

In contrast, Dwayne George demonstrated true leadership and respect for the people of SMS by opening his office within a month of being recruited as the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party (ABLP) candidate.

This decisive action exemplifies

his dedication to serving the community and his unwavering commitment to addressing their needs and aspirations.

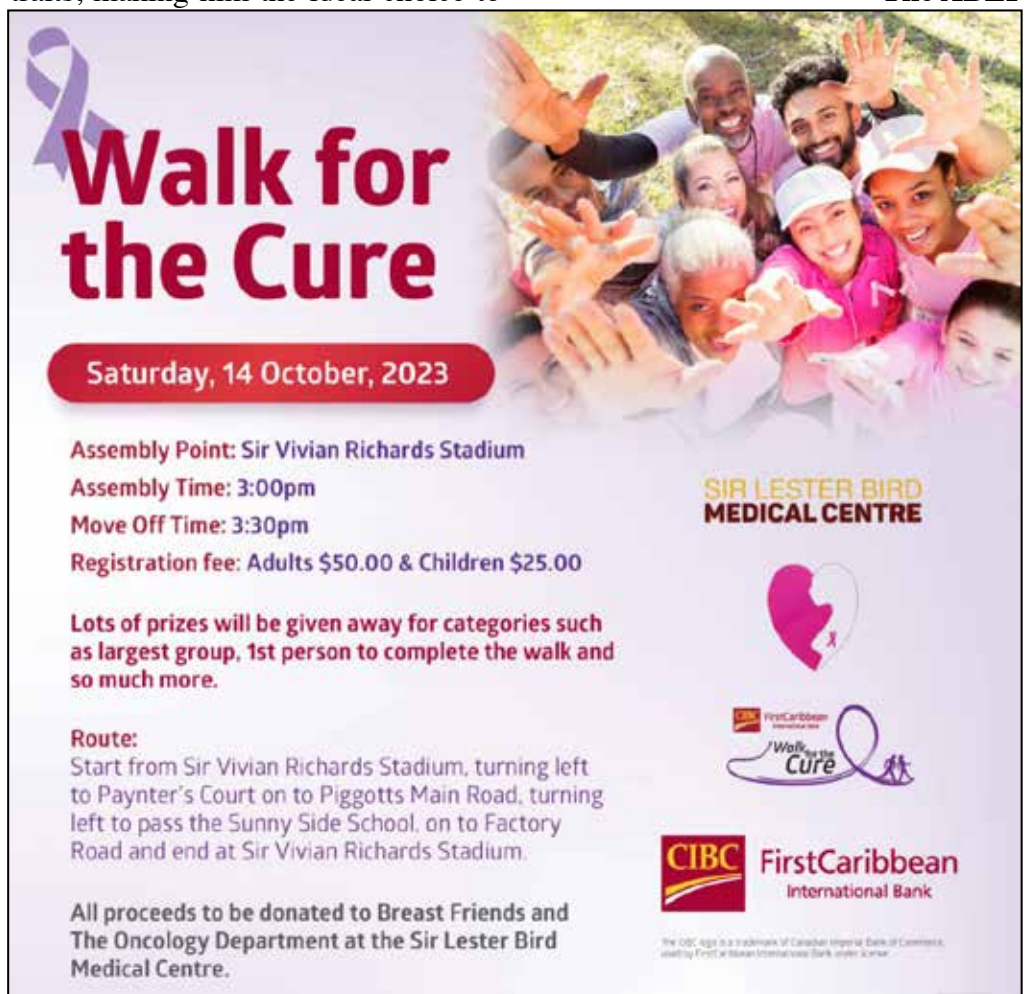
The upcoming bi-election on the 24th of October presents an opportunity for the people of SMS to choose a candidate who embodies the qualities of leadership, respect, and a clear community focus. Dwayne George has consistently demonstrated these traits, making him the ideal choice to

represent the needs and aspirations of the people of SMS.

On by-election day, we urge the people of SMS to support Dwayne George by casting their vote for a candidate who will prioritize their pressing concerns and usher in positive change for the constituency.

Vote Dwayne and call it George because when George wins; You win.

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Larry Gonsalves gets a fond farewell from WIOC

After more than forty-four years operating the WIOC Friar's Hill Road service station, the company has bid a 'fond farewell' to Larry Gonsalves, described as 'an institution among service station operators in Antigua and Barbuda.

West Indies Oil Company held a social event on Thursday after as a show of appreciation to Gonsalves, his staff, and his family for their outstanding work over the past 44-plus years.

WIOC Chief Executive Officer, Gregory Georges, said the event is a token of the high regard with which



WIOC holds Gonsalves and all that he has done for his customers and the industry

for almost five decades.

"I am here to say thank you to Larry Gonsalves,

a stalwart in this industry, someone who has provided

cont'd on pg 5

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KEEP AWAY FROM CHILDREN

cont'd from pg 4

exemplary customer service to many for many, many years. As an example, people would come from all over the island to the Friar's Hill station to purchase their fuel.

"Now fuel is a commodity that you can purchase anywhere, but they chose to come to Larry, because of the customer service.

"We want to say thank you to him; he's been a good operator over the years; always paid his bills on time and we just want to say 'thank you' to him." Georges explained.

He also expressed appreciation to Gonsalves for the staff members that he developed and trained, as well as the administrative



staff for the role they played over the years.

The WIOOC CEO also singled out Gonsalves' wife, Jonette, noting that she has been like a backbone, supporting him in this endeavor.

Asked about the recent

legal issues between the company and Gonsalves, Georges indicated that all is well between the two.

"The relationship has always been excellent. However, towards the end, there was some friction, but I am happy to report that all that

is behind us, and as Shakespeare said, 'all's well that ends well.'

The Friar's Hill service station officially returns to WIOOC on October 16. Georges was tight-lipped when asked about the company's plans for the station.

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Local News



FA Minister Greene wants a deepening of relations with Italy

Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P. Chet Greene, is among senior government representatives from Latin America and the Caribbean attending the XI Italy Latin America and the Caribbean Conference in Rome.

The meeting is being held under the theme. "Growing Together." In his opening remarks to the conference, Foreign Minister Greene made a strong case for the deepening of the relations between Italy, Antigua and Barbuda, and the rest of the region.

Greene noted that this is imperative for the survival of the economies and overall society in an ever-changing and dynamic world, affected by the effects of climate change, the rising cost of living, and the threat to global security.

Greene believes that Italy, along with the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean should work hand in hand, through sustained economic part-

nerships to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

He pointed to the issue of climate change, noting that as a country with a substantial coastline, Italy shares some of the same concerns as Small Island Developing States such as Antigua and Barbuda.

"Colleagues, the time has come for us to speak from a united position when it comes to the issue of climate change, as the very planet that we all occupy will cease to exist as we know it, if we allow the status quo to continue.

"With an increase in global temperatures, we have coincidentally seen an increase in natural disasters. We have all experienced unusual and yet unbearable record temperatures during the summer of 2023.

"These phenomena have had a profound effect across the globe, which will affect every aspect of life from food se-

curity to economic prosperity," the minister observed.

He is asking Italy, as a partner in development, to utilize its position within the EU and on the global stage to advocate on the issue of climate change and its effects on SIDS and low-lying coastal areas.

"The time has come for us to work assiduously towards SDG Goal No. 13 – Climate Action, which left unchecked, will hinder our overall development. To grow together effectively, we need to care for our environment and partner towards its survival," he emphasized.

Turning to the issue of education, Greene is suggesting that this is an area where both the Italian people and those from the region may benefit from collaboration in this important area of human development.

The Italy Latin America and the Caribbean Conference ends today.

Dr. Rhonda Sealey-Thomas officially takes up new post

The woman who has held the position of Chief Medical Officer for Antigua and Barbuda for almost two decades has been formally sworn in as the new Assistant Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization (WHO).

In her new post, Dr. Rhonda Sealey-Thomas is part of PAHO's Exec-



utive Management team, along with PAHO Director, Dr. Jarbas Barbosa, Deputy Director, Mary-Lou Valdez, and Director of Administration, Kristan Beck.

“Dr. Sealey-Thomas knows, understands, and shares the values and the mission of this great organization. Indeed, the work of her whole life reflects these values of equity, excellence, solidarity, respect and integrity,” PAHO Director, Dr. Jarbas Barbosa, said. “The Organization is quite fortunate to have her at this crucial time.”

During the ceremony, the new assistant director highlighted the primary health challenges the Americas must face over the next few years, including non-communicable diseases, climate change, the ability to have



Dr. Rhonda Sealey-Thomas, right, with Health Minister Sir Molwyn Joseph.

resilient systems, and the urgent need to strengthen pandemic preparedness and response. Dr. Sealey-Thomas expressed her commitment to working with Dr. Barbosa, to support his vision for the future of PAHO and the Americas.

Also speaking at the ceremony, *cont'd on pg 8*



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Local News



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Minister of Health, Sir Molwyn Joseph, underscored the “pivotal role” PAHO has played and “must continue to play” in the region, and welcomed Dr. Sealey-Thomas’ appointment “because of our deep knowledge of her capacity to perform successfully and with every confidence in her ability to strengthen the PAHO team.”

Dr. Sealey-Thomas oversees the departments of Communicable Diseases, Prevention, Control, and Elimination; Social and Environmental Determinants for Health Equity; Evidence and Intelligence for Action in Health; Health Systems and Services; Innovation, Access to Medicines and



Health Technologies; and Non-communicable Diseases Prevention and Mental Health; as well as the Special Programs on Comprehensive Immunization and the Regional Revolving Funds.

In addition, three PAHO/WHO technical centers are under Dr. Sealey-Thomas’ responsibility:

the Pan American Center for Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Veterinary Public Health (PANAFTOSA); the Latin American Center for Perinatology, Women and Reproductive Health (CLAP); and the Latin American and Caribbean Center on Health Sciences Information (BIREME).

”Please be assured that

I embark on this journey with humility, determination, and compassion,” Dr. Sealey-Thomas concluded. “Let us all remember that our collective efforts are the driving force behind building healthier, more resilient, and more equitable societies throughout the Americas.

Dr. Sealey-Thomas holds a Bachelor of Medicine, and Bachelor of Surgery degree, as well as a Master of Public Health and a Doctorate in Public Health from the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica. She has worked for the Ministry of Health in Antigua and Barbuda for over 25 years, most recently serving as Chief Medical Officer from 2005-2023.

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CWA ministers group photo

Eight-member team represents Antigua and Barbuda at CWA

The annual Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) enters its final day in the Bahamas today with an eight-member team from Antigua and Barbuda in attendance.

Caribbean Week of Agriculture 2023 is being held under the theme ‘Accelerating Vision 25 by 2025.’. The Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA) was conceptualized by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) as a facility to place agriculture and rural life on the “front burner” of regional integration activities and in doing so enable: the key decision-makers in the public and private sectors to better acknowledge the importance of agriculture and rural life to the economic, social and environmental stability of the region; and for the major stakeholders in agriculture and related sectors to have an opportunity to dialogue and forge a common vision for the repositioning of agriculture and the enhancement of rural life.

The Antigua and Barbuda delegation to CWA comprises Permanent Secretary, Sandra Joseph, Director of Agriculture, Gregory Bailey, Senior Plant Forestry Officer Adriel Thibou, Liaison Officer,



At the Antigua and Barbuda booth at CWA. Marcelle Freeland is second from left

Events, Marcelle Freeland, Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr. Tubal Edwards, Plant Protection Officer, Dr Janil Gore-Francis, Veterinary Officer, Dr. Chere Kellman, and Director of the GARD Centre, June Jackson. The CWA is the premier event on the Agriculture calendar in the Caribbean Region. It is convened under the aegis of the Alliance for Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Rural Milieu (‘The Alliance’). From the inaugural meeting in 1998, the two main collaborating agencies were IICA and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat.

In 2002, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) joined IICA and CARICOM to establish a core group that functions, as the Secretariat of The Alliance. Since then, the four agencies have collaborated on the management and logistics necessary for the convening and servicing of meetings of The Alliance, as well as the myriad of activities during the CWA.

Antigua and Barbuda has mounted a booth at CWA where on display are several agro-processing products.

Training in hydroponics offered to Pares Village residents

Residents and community-based organizations of Pares Village are being encouraged to register for a 2-Day Backyard Hydroponics Operations training programme, hosted by the National Hydro Growers, in collaboration with the Department of Environment.

In a media release, the National Hydro Growers said it will host the November 6 and 7 training in collaboration with the Antigua and Barbuda Department of Environment (DOE).

It describes the event as a practical training on Backyard Hydroponics Operations through the project titled "Building Resilience through Climate Smart Agriculture Systems." The training will be followed by a community meeting in Pares Village on 9th November 2023.

This training will be the first of several participatory and people-centered training events under the National Hydro Growers project. It aims to promote



capacity building in the farming community, especially among women and youth, to utilize climate-resilient farming technology, while also improving land use and natural resources management in rural areas.

All participation expenses for up to 25 residents, including participation fees

and meals, will be covered by the National Hydro Growers' project through funding by the OECS Commission's BioSPACE Project, an EU-funded initiative. Spaces are limited and interested residents, including students, are encouraged to register by Wednesday, 25th October 2023 to secure a spot.



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Michael Joseph joins forces with mental health advocate Chaneil Imhoff for World Mental Health Day

Co-founder of the Fire Phoenix Foundation, Michael Joseph is joining forces with mental health advocate, Chaneil Imhoff, in commemorating World Mental Health Day, this week.

As part of this partnership, Joseph is providing students in grades 4, 5 & 6 at the Five Islands Primary School with a copy of the empowering mental health activity and coloring book,

“Be Kind to Your Mind.” World Mental Health Day, observed on October 10 every year, aims to raise awareness about mental health issues and encourage individuals to take action to support mental well-being.

Recognizing the importance of mental health education and early intervention, Joseph and Imhoff have come together to address the needs of young

minds. “Be Kind to Your Mind” is a unique activity and coloring book specially designed to engage and educate children about mental health.

“This captivating book combines fun activities, interactive exercises, and beautiful illustrations that encourage self-reflection, emotional expression, and self-care.

“By providing students

with this resource, Michael Joseph and Chaneil Imhoff hope to foster a positive mindset and equip young individuals with the tools they need to navigate their mental well-being.

The collaboration between Michael Joseph and Chaneil Imhoff represents their shared commitment to promoting mental health awareness and providing resources to support young minds.



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FTX thief cashes out millions during Bankman-Fried trial

By Joe Tidy

A thief who stole more than \$470m (£383m) in cryptocurrency when FTX crashed is trying to cash it out while the exchange's founder is on trial.

Sam Bankman-Fried's high-profile court case began last week. The former crypto mogul denies fraud.

After lying dormant for nine months, experts say \$20m of the stolen stash is being laundered into traditional money every day.

New analysis shows how the mystery thief is trying to hide their tracks.

FTX was once one of the biggest exchange platforms in the world allowing crypto investors to buy, trade and store digital currencies. It went bankrupt on 11 November 2022, with billions of dollars of customer funds missing.

Mr Bankman-Fried is pleading not guilty to misusing customer funds and money laundering while bankruptcy lawyers are trying to locate the missing billions.

On the day FTX collapsed, hundreds of millions of dollars of cryptocurrency controlled by the exchange were stolen by an unidentified thief that is believed to still have control of the funds.

No one knows how the thief - or thieves - was



Sam Bankman-Fried is accused of fraud and money laundering.

able to get digital keys to FTX crypto wallets, but it is thought it was either an insider or a hacker who was able to steal the information.

The criminal moved 9,500 Ethereum coins, then worth \$15.5m, from a wallet belonging to FTX, to a new wallet.

Over the next few hours, hundreds of other cryptoassets were taken from the company's wallets, in transactions eventually totalling \$477m.

According to researchers from Elliptic, a cryptocurrency investigation firm, the thief lost more than \$100m in the weeks following the hack as some was frozen or lost in processing fees as they frantically moved the funds around to

evade capture.

But by December around \$70m was successfully sent to a cryptocurrency mixer - a criminal service used to launder Bitcoin, making it difficult to trace.

Without using a mixing service to hide the illicit origins of their Bitcoin, criminals risk being caught or having their funds seized by cryptocurrency exchanges.

Such exchanges allow people to exchange coins like Bitcoin and Ethereum for traditional cash.

Although mixers make it difficult to trace Bitcoin, Elliptic was able to follow a small amount of the funds - \$4m - that was sent to an exchange.

The rest of the stolen FTX stash - around \$230m

- remained untouched until 30 September - the weekend before Mr Bankman-Fried's trial began.

Nearly every day since then chunks worth millions have been sent to a mixer for laundering and then presumably cashing out.

Elliptic has been able to trace \$54m of Bitcoin being sent to the Sinbad mixer after which the trail has gone cold for now.

Experts say the activity is strange and goes against the norm for cryptocurrency hackers and thieves.

"Crypto launderers have been known to wait for years to move and cash out assets once public attention has dissipated, but in this case they have begun to

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Nigeria diphtheria outbreak kills 600 people

By Gloria Aradi

More than 600 people, mostly children, have died of diphtheria in Nigeria since the current outbreak began in December 2022, officials say.

With 14,000 suspected cases, this outbreak is far worse than the last one in 2011 when 98 cases were reported.

Kano state, in northern Nigeria, is the epicentre, recording more than 500 deaths, but there has been a recent decline in active cases.

Diphtheria is highly contagious and affects the nose and throat.

It can also cause ulcers on the skin.

It is spread by coughs and sneezes or through close contact with someone who is infected, and in serious cases can be fatal.

It is preventable through vaccines, but many of the children who have died in Nigeria were unvaccinated, said Dr Faisal Shuaib, the head of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency.

During a visit to a diph-



Health authorities are encouraging parents to get their children immunised.

theria isolation centre in Kano city on Wednesday, he added: "Witnessing the young children suffering from this entirely preventable disease at the centre today was profoundly heart-wrenching."

The death toll has risen since 24 September, when the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) reported 453 fatalities, and 11,587 suspected cases.

The World Health Organization (WHO) said

the fatality and infection rate may be higher due to low testing and the failure by some patients to report their symptoms.

But Dr Shuaib said that measures, including contact tracing, have contributed to a decline in the number of cases.

The outbreak has hit 19 of Nigeria's 36 states as well as the federal capital, Abuja.

The worst-affected states are all in the north - Kano, Yobe, Katsina, Bor-

no, Jigawa and Kaduna.

Health authorities are rallying parents with unvaccinated or partly vaccinated children to get them immunised, insisting that it is the most powerful way of controlling the outbreak.

The WHO said that only 57% of Nigerians are immunised with the pentavalent vaccine, which protects against five life-threatening diseases, including diphtheria.

Nigeria must increase vaccinations to cover at least 80% of the population to prevent future diphtheria outbreaks, it added.

The last major outbreak in the country was in 2011, when 21 people died and 98 were infected in Borno state, the WHO said.

cont'd from pg 12

move just as the world's attention is once again directed towards FTX and the events of November 2022," said Tom Robinson, Elliptic's co-founder.

Another finding from tracing the funds points to a potential link to Russian cy-

ber-crime.

Some of the stolen Bitcoin successfully laundered last year has been traced to a wallet known to be used by Russian-linked criminal groups. Elliptic says this could point to the involvement of a broker or other intermediary with a link to Russia.

St Vincent and the Grenadines to strengthen legislation regarding sex and firearm crimes

CMC - Prime Minister Dr Ralph Gonsalves says his administration will soon bring legislation to Parliament providing for stiffer penalties for persons convicted of sex and firearm crimes.

Gonsalves said there would be an increase in penalties for some sexual offences as well as possession of unlicensed firearms and that the government will also be introducing legislation to regulate the tinting of vehicles.

“Because criminals or persons suspected of criminal activities have been using tinted vehicles to make detection more difficult,” said Gonsalves, who is also Minister of National Security, adding “I know some persons are going to object, but the point is this, we have to be reasonable. And we have to think of the entire country.

“I know some persons like to have the tint and be inside there and nobody can see them, and so on, privacy and all the rest of it, but the not only the evidence here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines but comparative evidence across the region and from various advisors that this is an area which we need to address.”

Gonsalves said the law to regulate tinting will be introduced soon.

“Well, I want it to be done quite quickly. But there’s a draft on it already. I’ve given my okay as Minister of Legal Affairs, chair of the Cabinet Subcommittee on Legislation,” he said, adding that the increase in the penalties for firearm possession will bring them in line with the regional averages.

“It’s fairly stiff at the moment. But it looks as though when you examine comparatively other areas we might be in terms of penalties a little below the median line, though it used to be abnormally low and we increased it. Remember it was one year, we increased it to seven years, but lots of places is 10 in the region, in some cases, 15.”

Gonsalves said the seven year penalty does not apply to prohibited firearms, noting “I’m talking for, quote unquote, normal firearms.”

Prime Minister Gonsalves said that there will be “some review of the penalties for some particular sexual offences where some of the penalties are not in sync with some of our own neighbours or where we consider they ought to be.”

There is often outrage here over the sentencing for indecent assault with



Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr Ralph Gonsalves.

the maximum penalty being five years imprisonment if the victim is less than 15 years old and two years imprisonment in any other case.

Gonsalves said that the government is also looking at strengthening the prisons, including the physical facilities.

“We are improving up in Belle Isle with the wom-

en’s prison, but we also have some work, a lot of work to do on the prison down in Kingstown, the old prison.

“And then there are some other organisational issues. I had a discussion with the acting Superintendent of Prisons Dwayne Bailey, who is a splendid leader, is doing a good job,” Gonsalves said.

UK to deploy more police officers to Anguilla

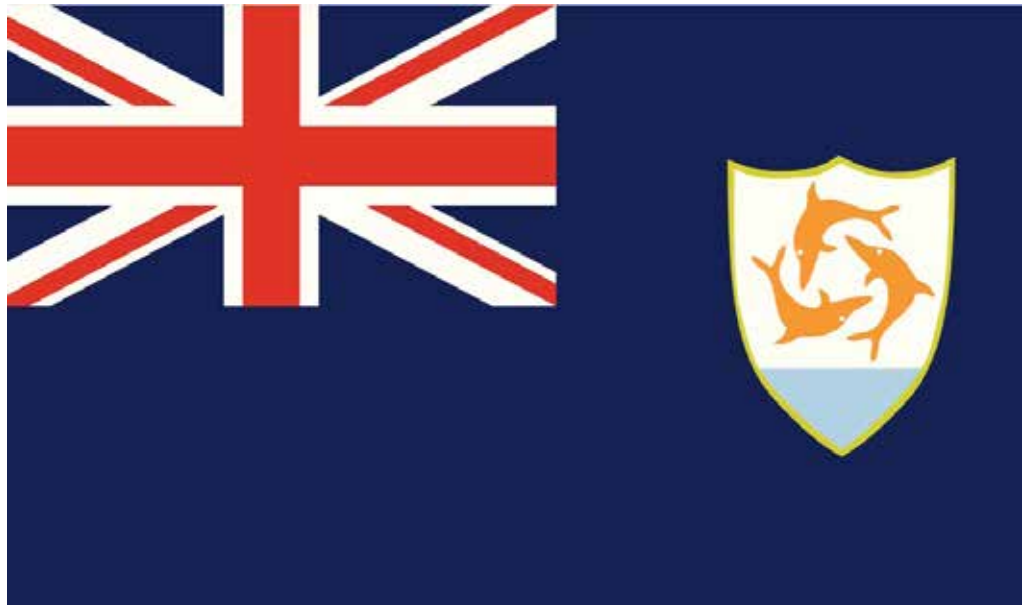
The United Kingdom will be sending four police officers to Anguilla to boost manpower and “provide specific technical expertise” in the island’s crime fight.

In a statement, Governor Julia Crouch said the officers would be deployed for at least four months.

Crouch and Commissioner of Police Robert Clark mentioned the deployment of more UK police officers at a media conference on October 8 following the murder of 14-year-old Shaquan Richardson.

Richardson and another teen boy were shot by a gunman at the James Ronald Webster Park.

Crouch noted three of the officers would be deployed “to enhance capa-



bility and capacity, including on current investigations”.

The fourth officer will support the

Royal Anguilla Police Force with technical analysis. The officers are expected to arrive in Anguilla by October 31.

Guyana: Body of one-year-old retrieved from Kamarang River

CMC – A one-year-old child, who went missing on Wednesday afternoon during a family at Top Side Paruima Falls in Region Seven, was found dead in the Kamarang

River.

Family members of Romeil Delgado launched an all-night search to recover his body.

The child’s mother told

investigators that she took him and other relatives to the river on Wednesday afternoon in the company of her boyfriend.

She explained that she

left her son in her brother’s care at the river’s edge as she checked on her daughter who was asleep. However, on her return, it was then that it was discovered that the toddler had gone missing.

An alarm was raised and they began searching for the child.

Just before midnight, the Romeil’s lifeless body was found in the river.

The police said there were no marks of violence on the child’s body and it is suspected that he wandered off into the river and drowned.

An investigation has been launched.



US \$6bn deal with Iran under scrutiny in wake of Hamas attack on Israel

The US says Iran has not accessed money agreed in a prisoner swap as the White House faces renewed criticism over the deal amid claims Tehran instigated a Hamas attack on Israel last weekend.

Washington has a “quiet understanding” with go-between Qatar not to free up any of \$6bn (£4.9bn) from the pact, the BBC’s US partner CBS reports.

Iran’s mission to the UN said the US cannot renege on the agreement.

The US has said it has no evidence of a direct Iran link to the Hamas assault.

The \$6bn of Iranian oil funds held in South Korea were unfrozen in September as part of a deal that saw five US-Iranian citizens freed from captivity.

US President Joe Biden’s officials have pushed back strongly against Republican criticism that the fund empowered Iran’s support for Hamas.

On Thursday morning, Deputy US Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo told House of Representatives Democrats behind closed doors that the money “isn’t going anywhere anytime soon”.

But later in the day,



An Iranian pro-government protester in Tehran joins a celebration of the Hamas attack on Israel.

White House spokesman John Kirby would not confirm reports that the funds had been frozen.

“What I can tell you,” he said, “is none of it has been accessed and we are watching every dime as you would expect.

“We were watching it very, very closely.”

Neither would US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken confirm the money had been frozen as he visited Tel Aviv on Thursday.

He instead listed the “facts” about the account in a weary voice when asked about the matter by journalists.

America’s top diplomat said it was Iran’s money

from oil sales, that it was held in Qatar and that it was only for food and medicine and that the US has to approve every transaction.

It is a complicated mechanism that has not yet been activated.

Any such freeze would be a provocative one at a time when the US is trying to prevent Iran and the militant groups it backs from joining the Israel-Hamas conflict.

Analysts warn such a move could embolden hardliners in Iran.

US officials would also probably be concerned a freeze of the fund would lead Iran to arrest more US-Iranian citizens.

National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters on Wednesday that Iran had played a role in the attack by funding the military wing of Hamas over the years.

But US officials have also said they cannot corroborate reports of direct involvement in the attack by Iran, which is Israel’s arch-enemy.

President Biden has been under pressure from within his party to stop the funds going to Iran.

Democratic senators who are facing re-election next year have joined Republican calls for the US president to effectively

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Gabon coup: Wife of deposed President Ali Bongo detained

By Thomas Naadi

Sylvia Bongo, wife of ousted Gabonese President Ali Bongo, is being held in pre-trial detention on allegations of the embezzlement of public funds, her lawyer says.

She had been under house arrest since the 30 August coup.

But after a long hearing in front of a judge it was decided that she should be detained in jail.

Her lawyer, Francois Zimeray, criticised the decision and is quoted as calling it arbitrary and illegal.

Mrs Bongo is facing charges of money laundering, forgery and the falsification of documents. She has not made any public comment on the charges.

The BBC understands she will appear in court in 10 days' time for a further hearing, where her lawyer can make a case for her release.

The former head of Gabon's cabinet, Brice Lacruche Alihanga, who was jailed four years ago on charges of embezzlement, misappropriation of public funds and money launder-



Sylvia Bongo has been married to the ousted president since 1989.

ing, gave evidence at Mrs Bongo's hearing.

The allegations against her are closely linked to the former cabinet chief.

In 2019, the former first lady is alleged to have been behind a major anti-corruption campaign, dubbed Operation Scorpion, which saw several government officials arrested and jailed, including Alihanga, and which some Gabonese described as a witch hunt.

Noureddin Bongo, the son of the deposed president, is also in detention awaiting trial on corruption allegations following his arrest after the coup.

The ousted president, aged 64, had led the oil-rich country since 2009 when he succeeded his father who had been in power for more than 40 years. The family had strong links to France, the former colonial power in Gabon.

The August coup, led

by Gen Brice Oligui Nguema, was greeted by celebrations at home but has been condemned by regional and continental bodies, as well as France

It came soon after the announcement that Mr Bongo had won disputed elections.

A week after the military takeover, the deposed president was released from house arrest and is free to leave the country, but he has remained in the capital, Libreville.

Gen Nguema has promised that there will be free and fair elections leading to the establishment of a new civilian government, but no timetable has yet been announced.

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break the deal.

But Iran's mission to the United Nations said in a statement reported by the Washington Post: "The senators in question and the US government are all acutely aware that they can not renege on the

agreement.

"The money rightfully belongs to the people of Iran, earmarked for the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to facilitate the acquisition of all essential and non-sanctioned requisites for the Iranians."



Players compete in the Team Three-Hand domino competition at the ABNDA's headquarters in Ottos. (Photo courtesy ABNDA)

Teams confirm for final of ABNDA Team Three-Hand contest

Everyday Service Station Double Six, Ramplers, and Willikies Super Stars will battle for the Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Association's (ABNDA) Team Three-Hand title.

The trio will fight for the championship on November 1

after advancing to the final during the preliminary rounds of the competition at the national association's headquarters in Ottos.

Eleven teams participated in the first round of the competition, from which Parham Strikers, Legacy,

and Moise Eagle Warriors were eliminated.

The three finalists and debutant newcomers Full Clip were among eight teams that advanced to the second round at the completion of the first round matches.

Joining the three finalists

and Full Clip into the second round were AS Bryden & Stingray City Bolans Revellers, Dominatrixx, Rising Stars, and Triple Dynamite.

Ramplers then got a bye into the final, while Full Clip were eliminated in the third-

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Trimingham Trucking get another win in business league

Trimingham Trucking Enterprises claimed their seventh win in 10 games in the Cool and Smooth Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Business League Competition on Wednesday night.

Trimingham Trucking Enterprises beat the Sledge O'Ballers 76-55

in the first game of a double-header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Donte Trimingham shot a game-high 25 points, and T-Shawn Lewis sank 14 points for Trimingham Truck-

ing Enterprises.

Coy Quinland converted 12 points, while Tristan Jacobs and Adrian Constant each scored 11 points for the Sledge O'Ballers, who suffered their seventh loss in eight games.

The Board of Education recorded their fifth win in eight games by cruising to a 76-50 victory against the Police.

Jesus Emmanuel produced 21 points, Bruce Whyte and Leon Lawrence each scored 11 points, and Kel-

vyn Pimental and Errol Henry each contributed 10 points for the Police, who suffered their sixth loss in as many games.

The business basketball league will take a break to stage its All-Star Night at the JSC Sports Complex on Saturday. But the competition will resume with a double header on Sunday.

Anjo Wholesale will take on the Police at 6:45 pm, and the Sir Lester Bird Medical Center will tackle the Callan Shooters at 7:45 pm.



The Antigua and Barbuda Under-23 men's volleyball team. (File photo)

Antigua compete in Pool B at ECVA U-23 Men's Championship

Antigua and Barbuda are competing in Pool B of the Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Association (ECVA) Under-23 Male Volleyball Championship, which commences with two matches in Road Town, Tortola, in the British Virgin Islands on Wednesday night.

Pool B consists of Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis,

and Saba.

Pool A comprises the British Virgin Islands (BVI), St. Maarten, Grenada, Dominica, and Anguilla.

Dominica beat Grenada 3-0 in the opening encounter, and the host British Virgin Islands also defeated Anguilla 3-0 in the first two games of the tournament on Wednesday evening.

Premier of the British Virgin Islands, Honourable

Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley, expressed excitement at his government's partnership with the Virgin Islands Volleyball Association (VIVA) to host the second edition of the ECVA Under-23 Male Championship during a press conference on October 10.

"Volleyball is a sport that requires commitment, dedication, and lots of practice, and it is only fitting

that these are some of the qualities that we look for in our young men. I am also pleased to see that persons associated with volleyball have taken on the opportunity to mentor our youngsters through the sport," the Premier noted.

ECVA Delegate Brenda Allen indicated that her association is pleased with preparations for the tournament and gave the assurance that every effort will be made to use volleyball to positively impact the development of young people.

Wednesday's matches preceded the official opening ceremony, which took place at the Multi-Purpose Sports Complex in Road Town, Tortola, yesterday (Thursday).

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round showdown with Double Six and Wilkies Super Stars, who advanced to the final. The Team Three-Hand Final is the third competition thus far that will be decided on November 1.

Zenus Williams and Rohan Cordice of Dominatrixx, and Mervin LeFleur of Wilkies Super Stars have advanced to the final of the King of Domino competition.

Desiree Parker and Surleen Samuel of AS Bryden & Stingray City Bolans Revelers, and Carolyn Joseph of Unstoppables have advanced to the final of the Queen of Domino competitions.

The ABNDA will continue its 2023 domestic season with the commencement of the President's Pair and 500 four-hand competitions at its headquarters in Ottos this weekend.

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ABTTA announces key leadership appointments

The Antigua and Barbuda Table Tennis Association (ABTTA) has appointed three key persons to its leadership team to strengthen the administrative core and fortify the development and promotion of table tennis within the twin-island nation.

According to a media release from the ABTTA, Ti-Anna Harris has been appointed as Secretary-General, Tritia George as Table Tennis Co-ordinator, and Cynthia Laviscount as Competition Manager and Training Officer.

Harris, who brings a wealth of expertise to the role, will spearhead the ABTTA's administrative functions.

The release states, "Ms. Harris brings a rich blend of youthful enthusiasm, experience, and dedication to the role. A seasoned professional, she serves with distinction at the Antigua and Barbuda Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association.

"Ti-Anna's impressive track record in leadership roles, especially with the Rotaract Club Antigua, un-



Ti-Anna Harris

derscores her capabilities. As Secretary-General, she will steer the administrative functions of ABTTA, providing crucial guidance to the association's broader objectives."

The ABTTA stated that George will oversee the development of school and community leagues, grassroots development, and World Table Tennis Day activities.

"Tritia George, who is entrusted with the crucial role of table tennis coordinator, is a physical education teacher of twenty-five (25) years. She is passionate about table tennis and youth empowerment and will oversee the development of school and community leagues, grassroots development, World Table Tennis Day activities, and more.

"Her role is pivotal in ensuring a robust foundation for table tennis enthusiasts and professionals. Coordinating local and international training camps and tournaments will also fall under her purview. A tireless individual, Ms. George's energy and commitment to the task are in-



Tritia George
 spirational."

Laviscount, who is a former national female player, is expected to play a pivotal role in overseeing the successful organization and execution of ABTTA's tournaments.

The ABTTA release states, "As Competition Manager and Training Officer, Ms. Laviscount, who is a former national player, will be pivotal in overseeing the successful organization and execution of ABTTA tournaments.

"Her multifaceted role encompasses ensuring venue readiness, timely results publication, game officials' training, and player registration. A civil engineer by profession, Cynthia's insights and proficiency will undeniably amplify the competitive spirit of table tennis in Antigua and Barbuda."

Speaking about the appointments, President of ABTTA, Charles "Chucky" Bellot, said, "We continue on our journey to position Antigua and Barbuda as a formidable force in

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Cynthia Laviscount



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PMS make fine start in defense of U20 Girls title

Princess Margaret School (PMS) made an impressive start in defense of their Under-20 Girls Division title in the Ministry of Sports Secondary Schools' Football League on Wednesday.

K'Niece Browne scored a hat-trick, and Ajahna Martin had a double conversion to lead Princess Margaret to a 5-1 victory against Jennings Secondary School at the PMS playing field. Abigail Donalds scored a consolation goal for Jennings Secondary.

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table tennis.

The addition of Ti-Anna, Tritia, and Cynthia to our leadership team is a testament to our commitment to this goal. We're confident their collective expertise and dedication will propel ABTTA to unprecedented heights.

"The association expresses its deepest gratitude to its members, stakeholders, and the public for their continued support. With these fresh appointments, ABTTA looks forward to dynamic growth, enhanced community engagement, and a resurgence of table tennis as a premier sport in Antigua and Barbuda."

The ABTTA is the governing body for the sport of table tennis in Antigua and Barbuda. Its mission is to promote, develop, and foster the growth of table tennis at all levels within the nation.

The Antigua Girls High School also made a successful start in the six-team round-robin competition by romping to a 6-0 drubbing of Clare Hall Secondary at King George.

Nafisa Quashie also scored a hat-trick, and Ozaro Roberts had a double conversion for Antigua Girls High School.

But the other encounter between former champions Ottos Comprehensive School and St. Anthony's Secondary School ended in a goalless draw at

the Radio Range playing field in Ottos.

The Secondary Schools Football League will continue with three matches in the West Zone of the Under-20 Boys Division at 3 pm today (Friday).

Princess Margaret School will host Ottos Comprehensive at the PMS playing field; newcomers Trinity Academy will meet Jennings Secondary at Jennings; and Antigua Grammar School will clash with Antigua State College at the Golden Grove playing field.



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Lone Antiguan cyclist to contest CCC

One cyclist and two officials of the Antigua and Barbuda Cycling Federation (ABCF) will be attending the senior Caribbean Cycling Championships (CCC) in Guadeloupe this weekend.

Emmanuel Gayral will be Antigua and Barbuda's sole cyclist at the October 14th and 15th CCC Championships, which comprised an individual time trial on Saturday and a road race on Sunday.

President St. Clair Williams and secretary Cliff Williams will be representing the ABCF at the event, which will include the Congress of the Caribbean Cycling Union (CCU).

This weekend's CCU Congress will include the election of a new executive committee to administer the sport's governing body for the Caribbean region for the next four years.

Cliff Williams, who was elected to serve as treasurer on the regional federation's executive, which was chosen at its last election in Cuba in 2019, will be seeking to attain the presidency of the organization.

Cliff Williams will be vying for the presidency of

the CCU in a bid to replace incumbent president Trevor Bailey of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

St. Clair Williams will be seeking to take over the post of treasurer during the CCU's elections, which will take place on Saturday. A total of 10 positions will be chosen to form the new CCU's executive, which will serve until 2027.

Meanwhile, the ABCF has announced that it has not selected any cyclists to represent Antigua and Barbuda at the 2023 Pan American Games, which will be held in Santiago, Chile, from October 20 to November 5.

According to the media release, the ABCF did not select any cyclists for the games because no one had met the qualifying standards, and no wild card slots were made available to Antigua and Barbuda. The ABCF has also made a decision to postpone this year's Schools' Invitational Race until next year.

The ABCF's release stated, "It has been decided to postpone this race to the second term of our school year to align it with the other sporting activities and championships that would be occurring



Emmanuel Gayral will be Antigua and Barbuda's sole cyclist at the senior Caribbean Cycling Championships (CCC) in Guadeloupe this weekend. (File photo)

at that time. Tentatively, the middle of March 2024 is being discussed."

The ABCF is also taking stock of the equipment that was utilized by its members as part of its lease programme for the duration of this cycling year.

The ABCF is appealing to all members who have benefited from the use of its equipment in the lease pro-

gramme to indicate whether they will continue or stop using the equipment during the new year.

All members who will discontinue their use of the equipment are asked to contact the ABCF so that arrangements can be made to have them returned to the national federation in good working order on or before December 30, 2023.