

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MEETS TODAY

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A Week of Activities that featured a series of events designed to foster community spirit, advocate for important causes, has just been concluded by The University of the West Indies Global Campus Antigua Guild of Students. *Story on page 6.*

Local News



The House of Representatives meets today

A meeting of the House of Representatives is slated for today in the Parliament Chambers in St. John's.

In what is expected to be a relatively short meeting, there are only three bills listed for hearing during the ses-

sion. These are the Fire and Rescue Services Bill, 2023, the Consumer Protection Bill, 2023 and the Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (Amendment) Bill, 2023. These measures are listed to have their second and third readings.

Parliamentary sources indicate that there is likely to be agenda item, Questions to the Prime Minister, as is now the norm for meetings of the Lower House. Additionally, the newly elected member for St. Mary's South, Kelvin Simon will take his Oath of Allegiance during the sitting. The Senate meets on Thursday when Senator Dwayne

George will take his Oath of Allegiance.

This is likely to be the final meeting of the House of Representatives before the end of the current session and the start of the new session slated for December 7, 2023, with the delivery of the Throne Speech to a joint sitting of both houses of parliament outlining government's legislative and social agenda for the upcoming year.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne, who is also Minister of Finance, Corporate Governance and Public/Private Partnerships, will deliver the National Budget estimates on December 14.

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New completion date for dredging

The completion date for the ongoing dredging and expansion of the St. John's Harbour has been pushed back to at least the end of the year.

Tourism Minister Charles Max Fernandez acknowledged that the delays have been a concern of many in the community, noting that he too is concerned about the moving completion date.

However, Fernandez said there are several reasons why the deepening exercise at the port has had to be postponed, again.

One reason, he noted, was the government's decision to engage Blue Horizon as the company that would undertake the dredging.

He said going with this company has saved the country significant sums of money.

Additionally, Blue Horizon is partially owned by the Antigua and Barbuda government which benefits from any profits made by the company.

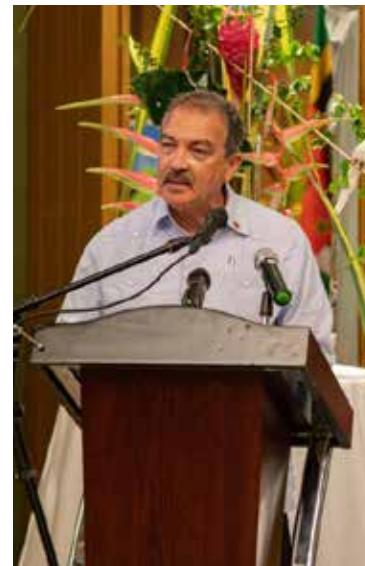
"What I have been told is that when the contract was signed initially, they

were told that they would have to dredge to a depth of 11.8 metres. They have since adjusted it to a depth of 12.3 metres.

"This request for additional depth for the entrance and turning basin for the port is another reason for the delay," Fernandez reported.

Once the dredging is complete, representatives from the cruise line, Royal Caribbean, will visit Antigua to carry out their own inspections.

It is only after these inspectors give the green-



Tourism Minister Charles Max Fernandez

light that the vessels of the Oasis class will be permitted to call at the St. John's Harbour.

According to the minister there is even a bigger class of cruise ships that are now being built – the Iconic Class. He said these would require even further depth in the harbour.

However, the minister is suggesting that there be need for a frank discussion on whether investing in the millions it would require to undertake this additional dredging would be beneficial to the country.

He noted that this may also raise questions about the number of cruise visitors that the country can carry on a given day without the numbers causing so much disruption go normal operations that it sparks a pushback from residents. These are questions, he said, that have to be answered when the time arises.



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Female Senators participate in regional meeting dealing with gender equality

Three female members of the Upper House, the Senate, represented Antigua and Barbuda at a regional meeting of parliamentarians which focused on issues including gender equality.

The delegation comprised President of the Senate, Alincia Williams Grant, Senate Minority Leader, Shawn Nicholas and Independent Senator, Kiz Johnson participated in an exchange among Caribbean women parliamentarians and civil society held in St Lucia. The multi-stakeholder dialogue was hosted by ParlAmericas, the United Nations (UN) Women Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean and the Parliament of Saint Lucia.

More than 20 Caribbean countries were represented in exploring issues surrounding gender equality.

“Despite progress towards achieving gender parity, violence

against women and girls (VAWG) continues to surge across our Caribbean.

“It was noted that 46% of women across the Caribbean have experienced at least one form of violence in their lifetime. This has triggered long term psycho-social, economic and health consequences with some cases ending in loss of life.

“The alarming statistic and plethora of VAWG issues tabled and revealed during this multistakeholder dialogue has encouraged and, in many instances, renewed the energy of our Caribbean parliamentarians to continue fighting for gender equality,” a media release from the parliamentarians noted.

Antigua and Barbuda’s three parliamentarians lent their voices and contributions to the robust discourse. President of the Sen-

cont’d on pg 5



NHURDC spearheads National Highway Beautification Project

A national highway beautification project has just been launched by the Ministry of Works, Housing and Urban Development with the planting of palm trees along one of the nation’s highways.

In a statement, the Ministry said the initiative is in keeping with the government’s mandate to plant more trees in an effort to help combat climate

change.

National Housing and Urban Renewal Development Company (NHURDC) is the lead agency spearheading the project with the planting of palms along Friars Hill Road.

NHURDC said it has incorporated several other agencies to ensure the success of the project. These include the Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA).

“APUA has indicated that they will commence the burial of the electric wires along that highway in 2024 and already it is working with NHURDC to allocate the proper placement of the palm trees,” a spokesman for the ministry said.

This beautification project will continue along the other major highways, not only adding to the overall aesthetics of the coun-

try but also aligns with its commitment to Sustainable Development Goals #13 and #15 (to take steps to combat climate and promote responsible use of the environment).

The Ministry of Housing, Lands & Urban Renewal encourages citizens to do their part in helping to combat climate change by also planting trees themselves.

CBH announces fogging schedule

The Central Board of Health is stepping up its campaign to control the spread of the disease-causing aedes aegypti mosquitoes with planned fogging

in selected communities during this week.

In a media release the department said the fogging exercise forms part of its Mosquito Control Pro-

gramme and will this week concentrate on communities across Antigua.

The fogging starts as early as 4:30 in the mornings and conclude at 4:30

in the afternoon. Monday, fogging took place in Blue Waters area, Flagstaff, Lower Ottos, Nut Grove, Bathlodge and Bendals.

Today Tuesday, the CBH officers will conduct the fogging in Hodges Bay, Jabberwock area, Royal Gardens, Sea View Farm, Freeman's Village, Lightfoot and Gunthropes.

Paynters, Weir's Estate, Fitches Creek, Pigotts as well as Longfords, Mount Pleasant and Cedar Grove are all scheduled to have their fogging done on Wednesday.

A full schedule of communities are also listed for Thursday and Friday's scheduling of fogging.

cont'd from pg 4

ate Williams Grant was a part of a panel which explored avenues to promote gender equality and ending VAWG within and through parliament. President Williams Grant advocated for more women entering the political space to leverage this platform as one of way of having VAWG issues addressed.

She added that within the Antiguan and Barbudan Legislative structure, the Youth Parliament, the Young Women in Leadership and the President's 10 programmes have provided avenues for increased participation and voicing of gender issues within a structured space.

The multi-stakeholder dialogue ended

with a special session where parliamentarians reviewed and made contributions to the joint statement, 'Stronger Together: Propelling Sustainable Development, Gender Equality and an end to Violence against Women and Girls in the Caribbean.'

An exchange among representatives of Caribbean women's parliamentary caucuses was held. This gave participants the opportunity to report on the status of the gender caucus committee in the respective parliaments and to identify areas for strengthening.

The Network Antigua of Women's Parliamentarians of Antigua and Barbuda (gender caucus) was chartered in 2019.

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KEEP A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

UWI Global Campus Guild members conclude week of activities

A Week of Activities that featured a series of events designed to foster community spirit, advocate for important causes, has just been concluded by The University of the West Indies Global Campus Antigua Guild of Students.

The activities were also to celebrate the achievements of its student body and by extension the 75th anniversary of the university.

The activities included a church service, media day, a day set aside for environmental advocacy, a blood drive and a day where members assisted with preparing and sharing food for the less fortunate at the Soup Kitchen located near the public market in St. John's.

The week's activities came to an end last Saturday night with an Honour Roll Ceremony. A total of 28 students were recognized and celebrated for their outstanding academic achievements, reinforcing the guild's commitment to academic excellence. Also in attendance was the Foreign Affairs Minister E.P. Chet Greene who also



shared remarks with the awardees. Minister Greene congratulated the students and shared his excitement for being a part of the inaugural ceremony hosted by the Global Campus Antigua Site.

The University of the West Indies Global Campus Guild of Students

Week of Activities not only showcased the diversity of talents and interests within the student body but also demonstrated the guild's dedication to fostering a supportive and vibrant community. The week served as a reminder of the impact that students can make when they come together with a shared vision for positive change.

The UWI Global Campus is formally the UWI Open Campus located on the Queen Elizabeth Highway.



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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER



Students had their turn to assist with the tree planting

Community activist launches tree-planting initiative at Glanville Polyclinic

Community activist in the St. Phillip area, Randy Baltimore, has launched an initiative aimed at beautifying the Glanville Polyclinic that serves the area.

Baltimore who has been active donating electric fans as well as a host of educational materials to schools in the area, has now turned his attention to the polyclinic which also serves as a community centre.

With the help of well-known individuals from the area, he undertook a tree planting exercise at the polyclinic. Among those planting trees at the event were Parliamentary Representative, Sir Robin Yearwood, former Ombudsman, Sir Hayden Thomas, and former top netball scorer and coach, Karen Joseph as well as students from the Nelvie N Gore Primary School, Newfield Primary School, Glanville Secondary School, and nurses from Glanville Polyclinic.

“This tree planting event at the Glanville Polyclinic/community cen-



Working together are Sir Robin Yearwood assisted by Randy Baltimore in planting a tree

ter is an initiative I have launched as part of my efforts to assist the area in whatever way that I can. It is also an

effort to contribute to the national effort to help combat climate change,” Baltimore he told Pointe Xpress.

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New board of directors for Kiwanis Club

The Kiwanis Club of Antigua AR Fusion has a new Board of Directors. The nine-member team will lead the service club for a two (2) year period. The term will end in September 2025.

The incoming Board comprises of the following:

- Rebekah Warner – President
- Monique Francis - Secretary
- La Verne Francis Browne - Treasurer
- Oslyn Francis - President Elect for 2025
- Sharon Francis- Immediate Past President

The other Board members are Marva Isaac, Icilma Joseph, Dawn-Marie Hughes and Sir Dr. Richie Richardson.

In keeping with the 2023 theme for Kiwanis International - “Revitalize, Inspire, Serve, Empower- RISE Kids Matter” - Kiwanis Club AR Fusion will focus on engaging more with each other to



From left: Back row – Dawn-Marie Hughes, Board member, Icilma Joseph Board member and Sharon Francis- Immediate Past President; Front row - Monique Francis – Secretary, La Verne Francis Browne – Treasurer, Rebekah Warner – President, Marva Isaac Board member, Oslyn Francis - President Elect for 2025.

bring out the best in each other, and on providing more service to our children and communities.

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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Shakira: Singer settles Spanish tax fraud case with €7.5m fine

By Helen Bushby

Colombian pop star Shakira has reached a deal with Spanish prosecutors to settle a tax fraud case, just as her trial was about to begin.

The singer has paid a €7.5m (£6.5m) fine - prosecutors had wanted to jail her for eight years and fine her €23.8m (£20.8m) if found guilty.

She had faced tax fraud allegations for €14.5m (£12.7m) in a Barcelona court.

Shakira, who has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing, said she settled “with the best interest of my kids at heart”.

In a lengthy statement, she said her children “do not want to see their mom sacrifice her personal well-being in this fight”.

The performer had previously rejected a deal offered by prosecutors, instead opting to go to trial.

“Throughout my career, I have always strived to do what’s right and set a positive example for others,” she said.

“Unfortunately, and despite these efforts, tax authorities in Spain pursued a case against me as they have against many professional athletes and other high-profile individuals, draining those people’s energy, time, and tranquillity for years at a time.



Shakira arriving at court: “I need to move past the stress and emotional toll of the last several years”.

“While I was determined to defend my innocence in a trial that my lawyers were confident would have ruled in my favour, I have made the decision to finally resolve this matter with the best interest of my kids at heart who do not want to see their mom sacrifice her personal well-being in this fight.”

She added she needed to “move past the stress and emotional toll of the last several years and focus on the things I love - my kids and all the opportunities to come in my career”.

At the centre of this row is Shakira’s residency status between 2012 and 2014, when prosecutors alleged that she was living in Spain

but listing her official residence elsewhere.

Under Spanish law, people who spend more than six months in the country are considered residents for tax purposes. But Shakira says Spain was not where she was mainly living at the time.

In July, prosecutors issued a document which claimed that she bought a house in Barcelona in 2012, which became a family home for her and her then-partner, Barcelona footballer Gerard Piqué.

Her lawyers have said that up until 2014 most of her income came from international tours and she spent long chunks of time outside of Spain.

“The Spanish tax authorities saw that I was dating a Spanish citizen and started to salivate. It’s clear they wanted to go after that money no matter what”, she told Elle magazine.

Shakira declared Spain to be her place of residence for tax purposes in 2015. She said she has paid €17.2m (£15m) in tax and has no outstanding debts.

In a separate case in 2019, Mr Piqué was fined €2.1m (£1.8m) by the Spanish national court for evading tax between 2008 and 2010.

The couple announced in early June that they had split up after 11 years. They have two sons together, aged seven and nine.

OpenAI boss Sam Altman ousted after board loses confidence

By Zoe Kleinman

Sam Altman has been ousted as the head of artificial intelligence firm OpenAI by the company's board, which said it had lost confidence in his ability to lead the company.

The board said Mr Altman had not been "consistently candid with his communications", hindering its ability to exercise its responsibilities.

The 38-year-old helped launch OpenAI, which is behind the ChatGPT bot.

Mr Altman had become one of the most high-profile figures in the industry.

In a statement the board said it was grateful for Mr Altman's contributions but that members believed new leadership was necessary.

"The board no longer has confidence in his ability to continue leading OpenAI," the company said, citing "a deliberative review process by the board, which concluded that he was not consistently candid in his communications with the board, hindering its ability to exercise its responsibilities".

It is not clear what he is alleged to not have been candid about.

On social media, Mr Altman wrote that he had loved his time at the company.

"It was transformative for me personally, and hopefully the world a little bit. Most of all I loved working with such talented people," he wrote.

According to OpenAI co-founder Greg Brockman, it all took place over hastily-organised Google Meet video conference calls.

Mr Brockman - who was himself dismissed from the board a few minutes later and then resigned from the company - said both men were



Sam Altman

"shocked and saddened" by the news.

He said they were "still trying to figure out exactly what happened" but claimed in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, that the whole drama unfolded in a matter of hours.

They sat on the company's relatively small board of just six executives. It is unusual for such a tight team to take such a dramatic decision so quickly, which begs the question: was it personal?

OpenAI is widely seen to be a company at its peak, with lucrative investment pouring in, and ChatGPT - which was launched almost exactly one year ago - is used by millions.

Mr Altman has been the face of the firm's rise. More than that, he is seen by many as the face of the industry more widely.

He testified before a US Congress hearing to discuss the opportunities and risks created by the new technology, and also at the world's first AI Safety Summit, held in the UK at the beginning of November.

The outpouring of support from Silicon Valley bosses shows that he

enjoyed the support of the tech industry.

On social media, former Google boss Eric Schmidt called Mr Altman "a hero of mine" and said that he had "changed our collective world forever".

"I can't wait to see what he does next. I, and billions of people, will benefit from his future work- it's going to be simply incredible," he wrote.

There will be a lot of interest in whatever that next move is - and many will be waiting to see if Mr Altman is angry enough to talk about being dumped by the company he helped create.

He has promised he will have "more to say about what's next later".

But it doesn't appear he's poised to lift the lid on his departure just yet, even writing on X to advise OpenAI's remaining board members to "go after me for the full value of my shares" if he gets into a public row with them.

ChatGPT can now access up to date information

Mr Brockman announced he had

cont'd on pg 14

Sint Maarten: Pension increase, retroactive payments in December

Pensioners in Sint Maarten can look forward to a merry December as Minister of Public Health, Social Development and Labor, Omar Ottley has officially signed the National ordinance containing a general measure increasing the Old Age, Widow(er)'s and Orphan (AOV/AWW) pension.

The ordinance, which had previously received approval on November 15 will now be enacted to benefit pensioners.

Under the new measure, pensioners can expect an increase in their pension payments, offering them greater financial security and stability.

During his announcement, Minister Ottley clarified an essential aspect of



pension payments. He highlighted that the pension is, in fact, a prepaid payment system, with the November payment considered as the advance for December. This arrangement accounts for the double payment (13th

month) that seniors receive in November each year.

To ensure that pensioners are not subjected to an increased tax burden, the organisation responsible for pension administration has devised a plan for retroac-

tive payments.

In December 2023, pensioners will receive retroactive payments from January 2023. This approach helps safeguard pensioners' financial well-being while adhering to fiscal regulations.

cont'd from pg 13

quit his role at the company following Mr Altman's ousting.

In a statement posted X, Mr Brockman said: "I'm super proud of what we've all built together since starting in my apartment eight years ago.

"We've been through tough and great times together, accomplishing so much despite all the reasons it should have been impossible. But based on today's news, I quit."

He said he would continue to "believe in the mission of creating safe AGI that benefits all of humanity".

OpenAI started in 2015 as a non-profit. It restructured in 2019 and is now backed by Microsoft, which has invested billions.

Just weeks ago, OpenAI was reportedly in talks to sell shares in the company to investors at a price that would value it at more than \$80bn (£64bn).

The company said its board members -who include an OpenAI chief scientist, the head of popular question and answer app Quora, and an AI researcher affiliated with Georgetown University - did not have shares in the firm and that their fundamental governance responsibility was to "advance OpenAI's mission and preserve the principles of its Charter".

The company said chief technology officer, Mira Murati, would take over as interim chief, effective immediately, while the board searches for a permanent replacement.

ChatGPT is known for its ability to respond to prompts from users with human-like text.

Hundreds of millions of people have tried it out, and many are now regularly using it to help them do their jobs and study - to consternation in some cases, like teachers facing essays written by the bot and people worried for their jobs.

The company has also faced legal action from writers who say the bot developed its abilities by harvesting their work, in violation of copyright law.

Billionaire Elon Musk, who with Mr Altman was one of the founding co-chairs of OpenAI, has also criticised it for straying from its non-profit roots.

Experts say wall that killed nine in Dominican Republic was poorly built

AP - A concrete wall along an avenue in the Dominican Republic's capital that collapsed over the weekend and killed nine people during heavy rains was poorly designed, experts said Monday.

The government of the Caribbean country has come under scrutiny, with experts saying they had warned more than 20 years ago about the wall's failures and lack of effort to fix them.

"It has weaknesses in the design," civil engineer Cristian Rojas told The Associated Press. "No anchors were placed, and that is why the wall collapsed."

Rojas, former president of the Dominican College of Engineers, Architects and Surveyors, said the force of the water in a flooded adjacent avenue, combined with the type of wall that was built, led to the collapse.

Dominican geologist Osiris de León recalled that the first warnings about the wall were made more than two decades ago. He posted a story from December 1999 on X, formerly known as Twitter, in which El Siglo newspaper quoted the college recommending that the wall be rebuilt because it was cracked and "it can fall and cause a tragic accident."



Rescue teams carry a deceased person from the place where a wall collapsed at the entrance of a tunnel in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, Saturday, November 18, 2023. According to Civil Defense at least 9 people were killed when the wall fell down due to heavy rains. (AP Photo/Eddy Vittini)

The collapse occurred Saturday in Santo Domingo when a portion of the wall that runs along the heavily transited 27 of February Avenue fell in one piece, crushing cars and their occupants, authorities said.

Among the victims was Puerto Rico prosecutor Michael Orozco, his wife, María Nereida Martínez, and his in-laws, according to Javier Rivera, president of the island's Association of Prosecutors. Martínez was pregnant.

"Comrade Orozco was living a wonderful personal moment with his family, and as a young, committed lawyer, a promising future

awaited him," Rivera said.

Also killed was Dominican Police Gen. Eduardo Cabrera Castillo, authorities said.

Andrés Matos, spokesman for the Ministry of Public Works, rejected accusations that the government did not properly maintain the wall and nearby infrastructure.

"These tunnels and overpasses are given permanent maintenance," Matos told the AP.

He attributed the collapse to other causes but declined to provide details.

"The ministry is ordering a deep, structuralist investigation, which implies

that we should not get ahead of the causes," he said.

The collapse occurred as a tropical disturbance moved through the western Caribbean, battering the Dominican Republic with heavy rains over the weekend. Authorities said at least 24 people died, including those crushed by the wall.

The storm tore tin roofs off hundreds of homes and cut off access to nearly a dozen communities, authorities said.

Officials in neighbouring Haiti, which shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic, said two people died after being swept away by floodwaters.

Radical political change in Argentina and an uncertain future

By Katy Watson

Javier Milei's victory sends a clear message - Argentines wanted change and he was the candidate most likely to deliver it.

His rise to the top was swift. A former economist and pundit, Mr Milei was relatively unknown before winning the primaries back in August.

But his brash manner, radical campaign proposals, as well as his unruly hair-style, got him noticed.

In a country mired in economic crisis, where annual inflation is now over 140% and two in five Argentines now live in poverty, a drastic new approach to fixing the problems was a clever move.

Many presidents before him have tried, and failed, to improve the situation so there was nothing to lose by promising something very different.

The challenge will be how he navigates a country in crisis away from campaign promises and deals with reality - trying to improve the situation for millions of Argentines, not make it worse.

So will Argentina see the Mr Milei who has promised to destroy the central bank, slash government spending and introduce the US dollar as Argentina's official currency?

Or will there be a toned-down version of Mr Milei waiting in the wings?

"Perhaps he'll moderate



Right-winger Milei won Argentina's presidential poll.

his agenda to build public support and win over lawmakers from other parties. Otherwise, expect political gridlock, social uproar, and revolts by unions," says Benjamin Gedan, who heads the Argentina Project at the Wilson Center global affairs think tank.

"Many of Milei's supporters voted against their economic interests. Should he dismiss a significant number of government workers, slash social welfare programs, and dramatically increase the price of water, electricity, natural gas, and public transportation, there will be a serious case of buyer's remorse with very real implications for governability."

Mr Milei's victory is being seen as a victory for the far-right beyond Argentina.

Former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's team travelled to Buenos Aires to support him and Spain's Vox party has also backed him. But, say experts, his win is more than just about politics.

"Javier Milei's voters are more connected to the economic and the political discontent rather than to purely an ideological 'anarcho-capitalist' or 'anarcho-libertarian' far-right base," says Juan Cruz Díaz, managing director at the Cefeidas Group in Buenos Aires.

"I think what explains Milei's victory is mostly connected with the economy and the economic challenges Argentina is facing right now."

And it is not just the economy that Mr Milei wants to shake up.

He has also pledged to loosen gun laws and ban abortion - this in a country which in 2020 legalised abortion and helped improve sexual and reproductive health rights for women across what has traditionally been a very conservative region.

Mr Milei has also criticised China and Brazil, saying he does not do business with "communists". The two countries are Argentina's biggest trading partners.

In the wake of his victory, Brazil's President Lula da Silva stopped short of congratulating Mr Milei personally, instead offering his congratulations to the institutions which carried out the electoral process.

"Democracy is the voice of the people and that must always be respected," Lula said on X.

That sentence is likely both a diplomatic nod to the election results and a subtle dig at Mr Milei.

He and his vice-president, Victoria Villarruel, have repeatedly been accused of lacking respect for democracy and calling into question the official number of victims during Argentina's military dictatorship between 1976 and 1983.

All told, Mr Milei's victory is a departure for a country with a traditional scene - a scene so often dominated by the Peronist political movement.

Instead, there is a new kind of politics forming - one led by a politician often compared to former US President Donald Trump and Brazil's ex-leader Jair Bolsonaro.

So yes, Argentines wanted change and Javier Milei said he would deliver it - but what that change will look like is anyone's guess for now.

The only thing that is clear is that it will be unlike anything that has come before.

Italy mafia trial: 200 sentenced to 2,200 years for mob links

By Davide Ghiglione

More than 200 defendants in one of Italy's biggest mafia trials for generations have been sentenced to a total of more than 2,200 years in jail.

The three-year trial saw individuals allegedly linked to the 'Ndrangheta sentenced for crimes ranging from extortion to drug trafficking.

Those sentenced included a former Italian senator, though the verdicts can still be appealed.

The 'Ndrangheta is one of Europe's most influential criminal organisations.

The case illustrated the mob's broad influence over the politics and society of southern Italy. Experts said the convictions of white collar workers, including local officials, businessmen and politicians, showed the far-reaching impact of organised crime on Italian institutions.

Among the most notable people to be sentenced was Giancarlo Pittelli, a lawyer and former senator for ex-premier Silvio Berlusconi's party Forza Italia. Pittelli received an 11-year sentence for collusion with a mafia-type organisation.

Others convicted included civil servants, professionals across various industries and high-ranking officials, who were critical to the 'Ndrangheta's success in infiltrating the legitimate economy and state institutions.

More than 100 defendants were acquitted.

The judges presiding over the case were put under police protection over fears for their safety.

Originating in the impoverished region of Calabria, the 'Ndrangheta is considered one of the world's most dangerous criminal organisations. It is estimated to control as much as 80% of Europe's cocaine market.

The gang boasts an estimated annual turnover of around \$60bn (£49bn).

The trial was held in a call centre on the outskirts of the town of Lamezia Terme, converted into a high-security courtroom equipped with cages to hold the defendants and large enough to hold some 600 lawyers and 900 witnesses. Charges included murder, extortion, drug-trafficking, loan sharking, abuse of office and money laundering.

Over three years, proceedings demonstrated how the Calabrian syndicate extended its reach across continents, eventually operating as far afield as South America and Australia.

Its members infiltrated the local economy, public institutions, and even the health system, rigging public tenders and bribing local officials.

The trial, the largest of its kind since the 1980s, saw judges examine thousands of hours of testimony. Former



The judges in the case were placed under police protection.

mobsters turned collaborators with the justice system testified about the activities of the Mancuso family and their associates, who wield extensive control over the province of Vibo Valentia.

The Mancuso family, from the town of Limbadi, are one of the most powerful of the 150 clans which make up the 'Ndrangheta.

Anna Sergi, a professor of criminology at the University of Exeter, said: "This trial confirms convictions of classic mafiosi, sentenced for offences traditionally more associate with criminal activities, such as extortion or drug trafficking."

She added: "However, it is important to note how the different types of people involved, including white collar workers, provide a more comprehensive view of the entire province and the connections between various mafia clans."

Most of the defendants were arrested in December 2019, following an extensive investigation spanning at least 11 Italian regions, which began in 2016. Approximate-

ly 2,500 officers took part in raids targeting suspects in Vibo Valentia, an area primarily controlled by the 'Ndrangheta's Mancuso clan.

More than 50 former mafia members agreed to cooperate with the trial, among them Luigi Mancuso's nephew, Emanuele.

Their testimony shed light on the inner workings of one of Italy's most powerful mobs. The trial revealed that 'Ndrangheta members allegedly concealed weapons in cemetery chapels, used ambulances for drug transportation and diverted public water supplies to grow marijuana.

Those who opposed the organised crime group faced grim consequences, including finding dead puppies and goat heads left in front of their houses, torched cars and vandalised shop windows.

"This first round of sentences demonstrates how challenging it is to combat the 'Ndrangheta due to its political, economic, and financial connections," Antonio Nicaso, a writer and organised crime expert, said.

CWI President Dr. Shallow holds fruitful meetings in Florida

Broward County Stadium in Florida is ready to host matches in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in June 2024, marking a historic moment as West Indies and the USA present the largest cricket World Cup ever.

Cricket West Indies (CWI) President Dr. Kishore Shallow held meetings in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on November 6 and 7, 2023, to discuss the progress and opportunities surrounding this global calendar event.

While the primary focus of the discussions centered on the forthcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup, parallel considerations of future plans were also tabled.

This encompasses collaborative efforts to enhance cricket in both the West Indies and the USA. In addition, the prospect of sustaining a partnership with Worldwide Sports Enterprise (WSE) garnered a favourable reception from officials.

President Shallow expressed, "I am heartened by the enthusiasm displayed by key stakeholders in the USA. Broward County and the City of Lauderhill are fully committed, and collective endeavors are underway to ensure the resounding success of this monumental event."

He also acknowledged the pivotal role played by



CWI President Dr. Kishore Shallow, left, with Broward County Commissioner Hazelle Roger, centre, and Jeff Miller of Worldwide Sports Enterprise. (CWI Media)

WSE in realizing this opportunity, commending their critical partnership in fostering cricket's growth in Broward County.

Broward County Commissioner Hazelle Roger eagerly anticipates hosting the World Cup, stating, "I am excited at the opportunity to showcase Broward excellence and hospitality to the world, as we work towards being World Cup ready."

"We are eagerly awaiting the announcements of the scheduled games to be played at Broward Central Regional Park."

Mayor Ken Thurston of the City of Lauderhill echoed similar sentiments, expressing, "The City of Lauderhill has been envisioning this day for well over two decades. We are honoured the ICC Men's T20 World Cup is coming to the United States and especially to Central Broward Park and Stadium in Lauderhill."

In addition to President Shallow, Commissioner Rogers, and Mayor Thurston, participants at the meetings included Jeff Miller from WSE, senior

management of Visit Lauderhill, and senior officials from Broward County Parks and Recreation. In August 2023, a multitude of spectators experienced the climax of a thrilling T20I series at Broward County Stadium, where West Indies emerged triumphant over India. The matches were co-hosted by CWI and WSE.

The ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 match schedule is expected to be announced in the coming weeks, following the ICC board meetings in India in November 2023.

Teams record wins in the second round of MPL business softball league

Hanse On Security Tech, TG Welding, and Polished Concrete Floors & Countertops (PCF&C) recorded victories in the second round of matches in the annual Cool and Smooth Mandy Premier League's (MPL) Sherma Jackson Business League softball competition at Powells on Sunday.

Hanse On Security Tech prevailed by 30 runs against Grill Box.



Kerry Mentore

Hanse On Security Tech made 105 for seven off their allotted 10 overs.

Kerry Mentore, who was named man of the match, struck 31, including four sixes. Vernel Isadore also slammed 31, which also included four sixes, and Andra Samuel chipped in with 17.

Zavear Otto snapped up three wickets for three runs, and Elroy Francis Jr. picked up two wickets for 21 runs.

In reply, Grill Box was restricted to 75 for eight off their 10 overs. Randino Turner made 22, and Francis Jr. contributed 16.

Kerry Mentore took two wickets for six runs, and Kerique Mentore claimed two wickets for nine runs.

TG Welding defeated the Board of Education by three wickets. The Board of Education scored 89 for four off their 10 overs. Man of the Match D'Ahri Francis hammered 51, and Rayn John got 16. Essan Warner bagged two wickets for eight runs.

TG Welding achieved victory at 94 for four with 3.1 overs to spare. Deran Benta cracked 28, including three sixes. Warne and Richie Thomas each chipped in with 17. Kadeem Henry captured two wickets for nine runs.

Polished Concrete Floors & Countertops claimed a three-wicket win against the Antigua and Barbuda Defense Force (ABDF).

The Defense Force could only muster 46 for seven off their 10 overs. Shaquille Richards made 11. Steve Martin took two wickets for nine runs, and man of the match Shaquan Reifer captured two for 16.

In reply, PCF&C achieved victory at 47 for seven in 6.2 overs. Shaquan Reifer made 14. T'ron Payne picked up two wickets for



D'Ahri Francis

nine runs, and Michael Marcellin captured two for 14.

The Board of Education won by default against Time of Victory, and the game between ABDF and Time of Victory was not played.

The competition will continue on Sunday at Powells, where spectators can win gifts by taking a catch during any of the matches.

Sports News



Assistant Secretary/Treasurer of ABBA Inga Francis presents the 2023 Business Basketball League Playoff runner-up trophy to the Richie's Shooterz team at the JSC Sports Complex on Saturday, November 18, 2023. (Photo courtesy ABBA)

Business basketball league ends with presentation of awards

The 2023 Cool and Smooth Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association (ABBA) Business Basketball League came to an end with a presen-

ation ceremony on Saturday night.

Awards and prizes were presented to outstanding teams and top individual performers during the competition at the JSC Sports Complex.

The Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board won the round-robin league and the playoff titles.

Sandals finished as runner-up in the league, with Richie's Shooterz claiming third place. Richie's Shooterz captured the runner-up position in the playoff competition.

The ex-national and veteran guard of double champions Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board, Marlon "Buju" Charles, won the most valuable player awards in both the league and playoff phases of the business basketball competition.

His Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board teammate Ishan Peets won the award for scoring the most points



Sandals' Dirkisha Fullington, left, accepts the lone female player award from Inga Francis.



Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board's Marlon 'Buju' Charles, left, accepts one of his MVP awards from Inga Francis.

in a single game, which was 51 against Police on October 18.

Peets also won the award for the

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West Indies Academy level series against Emerging Ireland

Player of the Match Jordan Johnson scored an unbeaten 40 and Joshua Bishop and Ashmead Nedd each took three wickets as the West Indies Academy defeated Emerging Ireland by seven wickets at the Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua on Sunday to level their One-Day series at a game apiece.

Chasing the tourists' modest total of 103 made in 23.3 overs, West Indies Academy raced to victory at 107 for three in just 15.4 overs.

Johnson's knock of 40 came from just 21 balls and included four fours and three towering sixes as he and Teddy Bishop guided the Caribbean men to an easy victory. Bishop was not out on 32 from 25 balls when victory was achieved.

The pair helped the recover from the loss of three early wickets, as openers Kadeem Alleyne and Matthew Nandu fell cheaply for 19 and nine, respectively.



Jordan Johnson, right, receiving his Player of the Match Award from Match Referee Stephen Proverbs following his unbeaten 40 that led the West Indies Academy to a seven-wicket victory over Emerging Ireland at the Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua on Sunday, November 19, 2023. (CWI Media)

Leonardo Julien barely troubled the scorer making only one before Johnson and Bishop repaired the early damage and led the Acad-

emy to victory.

Fionn Hand was the best of the Irish bowlers having claimed the wickets of Nandu and Julien to finish with

two for 29 from four overs.

Sent in to bat, Ireland never really got going as only middle-order batter Scott McBeth, who scored 29 and opener Stephen Doheny, who got 27, made any score of note.

Fellow opener Murray Commins (16) and Gavin Honey (17) were the only batters in double figures against the bowling of Nedd, who returned figures of three for 12 and Bishop, who took three for 19.

Nyeem Young captured two for 23 and McKenny Clarke claimed two for 20.

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most three-pointers in a game. He scored 10 three-pointers, converting 51 points against the Police on October 18.

Keroi "Dragon" Lee of Sandals was named the most outstanding player of the competition. Lee also won the Leading Scorer Award. He scored a total of 238 points.

Dirkisha Fullington of Sandals claimed the award for being the only female player that participated in this year's business basketball league.

Jain Benta of the Police won the People's Choice Award. Kwame Brathwaite of Richie's Shooters captured three individual awards.

Brathwaite claimed the awards for the best dunk, block shot king, and "get that s**t outta here."

Sledge O'Ballers won the award for the most improved team, and Health First Pharmacy Fearless Crew claimed the Most Disciplined Team Award.

Thirteen teams participated in this year's business basketball league.



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camp.

Head Coach Daren Sammy indicated that the camp is a crucial component to the team's preparations to face the visitors. The camp will be held at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium and Coolidge Cricket Ground, with net and planning sessions as well as fitness and strength and conditioning sessions.

"Everyone is fully aware of what is required as we prepare to face England on our home soil. The camp will be detailed and based on specifics, which we have identified will be required if we are to be successful at the international level.

"We will have high-intensity, purposeful training sessions,

and everything that we do will be geared towards improving and winning," Sammy said.

Justin Greaves is unavailable for selection due to an injury he sustained in the recently concluded CG United Super50 Cup.

Nicholas Pooran is unavailable for selection as he prioritizes preparation for T20I format.

Jason Holder is unavailable for selection as he prioritizes preparation for Test and T20I formats.

FULL SQUAD: Shai Hope (captain), Alzarri Joseph (vice-captain), Alick Athanaze, Yannic Carriah, Keacy Carty, Roston Chase, Shane Dowrich, Matthew Forde, Shimron Hetmyer, Brandon King, Gudakesh Motie, Kjorn Ottley, Sherfane Rutherford, Romario Shepherd, and Oshane Thomas.



Bowling all-rounder Matthew Forde. (Getty's Images)

Ticket Outlets Antigua: Landing Strip, Roti King, Eighteen Plus 1 Restaurant, ABCA Office
Ticket Outlets Montserrat: Beni's Jewelry, Summer Breeze Restaurant



GOLD JACKET

Award Ceremony 2023



MR. CHARLES "JIM" ALLEN MBE

Awardees

SIR VIVIAN A RICHARDS KNH OBE OOC

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West Indies name squad for ODI series against England

Cricket West Indies (CWI) Senior Men's Selection Panel on Monday named the 15-member squad for the upcoming CG United One-Day International (ODI) Series against England, starting in Antigua on December 3.

Shai Hope will again lead the team with Antiguan and Leeward Islands Hurricane fast bowler Alzarri Joseph named as the new vice-captain.

There are two uncapped players in the squad: batting all-rounder Sherrifane Rutherford and seam bowling all-rounder Matthew Forde, who has earned his first call-up at the senior international level.

The selection panel also recalled experienced wicketkeeper/batsman Shane Dowrich, who played his only ODI in May, 2019; and opener Kjorn Ottley, who played two ODIs in January, 2021.

Lead Selector, Dr. Desmond Haynes said, "We named Alzarri Joseph as vice-captain as he demonstrated maturity and good leadership qualities for the Leeward Islands Hurricanes during the recent CG United Super50 Cup.

"We believe with exposure and opportunities he could be a future leader in West Indies cricket. Matthew Forde is a whole-hearted cricketer who has been impressive. He is one of the players coming through the West Indies Academy programme, who can form part of the future."

Haynes added, "England on tour of the West Indies is always filled with



Fast bowler Alzarri Joseph. (CWI Media)

excitement and expectation. We expect this to be a hard-fought series, but we also believe this squad will do well in our home conditions.

"We have a clear vision. We are focused on building a solid team. Our main focus is to re-build for success at the ICC Cricket World Cup 2027."

The CG United ODI Series will feature three matches. The tour will start with two matches at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua on Sunday, December 3, and Wednesday, December 6.

The first CG United ODI is a day game, starting at 9:30 am, while the second CG United ODI is a day/night game, starting at 1:30 pm.

The tour then moves to Barbados for the third and final CG United ODI to be played at Kensington Oval, on Saturday, December 9. This will also be a day/night game, starting at 1:30 pm.

Ahead of the first match, the West Indies squad assembled in Antigua yesterday (Monday) for a preparation

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