



ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

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# BELOVED SOCA STAR RICARDO DRUE DIES SUDDENLY

*Story on Page 2*

# Ricardo Drue's death shocks colleagues and fans



The soca fraternity in Antigua and Barbuda, across the region and further afield have been plunged into mourning following the death of one of its shining stars, Ricardo Drue.

Drue was pronounced dead at Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre early Tuesday afternoon after he was discovered unresponsive in his room.

The circumstances surrounding his passing is now being investigated by the police and an autopsy is likely to be conducted to determine the cause of death.

The 38-year-old entertainer's last performance was reportedly at a fete, Sea Grapes, The Breakfast Edition, held on Sunday.

Minister of Education,

Sports and the Creative Industries, Daryll Matthew, was part of a large crowd of people that gathered outside the emergency department of Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre, all in a state of shock at the unexpected development. Members of the artiste's management team, some of his dancers and fans also journeyed to the hospital, where they gathered together outside, all appearing dazed.

Speaking to reporters shortly after offering condolences to Ricardo Drue's mother, Nicola Barriteau, Minister Daryll Matthew said he was lost for words over the shocking news. He described the late entertainer as someone who never left Antigua and Barbuda behind, no matter where his talents lead him.

"He has always been one of those persons who has flown the flag of Antigua and Barbuda very high, anywhere in the world he performs. I was with him a couple of weeks ago in Miami...I'm in shock, I'm really at a lost," Minister Matthew said.

The minister, who holds portfolio responsibilities for carnival and other festivals, highlighted Ricardo Drue's genuine nature that will be greatly missed and added that his mother is devastated by her son's sudden death.

*cont'd on pg 3*





*cont'd from pg 2*

“It is not in the natural scheme of things for a parent to bury a child. Life usually works the other way around [and] children usually bury their parents. And so, when a parent has to face the prospect of burying their child, it is definitely not something that would be easy on any parent. She is holding up and we have offered her any support that she needs and so we will continue to be in contact with her,” Mr. Matthew assured.

Relatives of the entertainer, including his children are expected to arrive in Antigua and Barbuda by Thursday.

Ricardo Drue was born 31st July, 1985 in Antigua and Barbuda to Trinidadian journalist, Nicola Barriteau,

but was raised in the twin-island republic. He began performing at an early age and was part of the popular band Imij & Co.

The father of five worked hard for the respect and recognition he gained in Antigua and Barbuda, remaining respectful and humble throughout the challenges he encountered on the way to becoming a leading soca star. Drue won four soca titles and many of his songs were major hits among soca-loving fans across the globe. He was a cultural and brand ambassador, content creator and promoter for one of the most-anticipated pre-carnival shows, Druesday. It was during that show in 2022 that proposed to Trinidad soca artiste Patrice Roberts and she accepted.



Tributes are continuing to pour in from members of the soca fraternity who are extending condolences to Ricardo Drue’s family.

Late yesterday afternoon, a statement was issued on the late artiste’s Facebook Page that read, “On behalf of Ricardo Drue’s family and team, thank you for the massive outpouring

of love and condolences on the passing of our brother and friend Ricardo Drue. It is evident that Ricardo was truly loved and we are consoled knowing that his impact extended worldwide. His sudden passing has left us all shattered and as such we are asking for privacy as we make sense of this devastating loss”



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## Festivals Commission mourns Ricardo Drue

The Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission along with the Carnival Community both locally and on a regional and international scale, is deeply saddened by the shocking and untimely passing of Soca Icon Ricardo Drue.

Ricardo Drue launched his illustrious Soca career in Antigua in 2010, making his mark with hit songs “No Boring Gyal” and “Get Wild” when he first competed in the Party Monarch Competition.

Even though he did not place, Ricardo’s passion and dedication to his musical journey remained unwavering. Over the years, he achieved significant milestones, capturing a total of four crowns in the groovy and jumpy competitions: In 2014, he won with “Hide and Seek,” in 2015 with “W.A.R.,” and in 2017 with “Another Level.” In 2016,

he triumphed in the Groovy Monarch Competition with “Stamp Yoh Name,” and his latest major achievement was winning the Road March in 2023 with “Last One Standing”.

With hit after hit each year, Ricardo Drue perfected his musical craft, positioning himself as a rising star in the Soca genre. His dedication and talent led to the creation of “Druesday,” making Ricardo the first Soca artist to have an official day in our Carnival celebration. The annual Druesday concert became one of the most highly anticipated events during Antigua’s Carnival, showcasing Ricardo’s immense impact and influence in the music industry.

The loss of Ricardo Drue is deeply felt in Antigua and Barbuda, across the entire Caribbean region, and beyond. His contributions to Soca music and his unwav-



ering passion for the artform have left an indelible mark on our cultural landscape.

Minister with responsibilities for Carnival, Daryll Matthew, shared his reflections on Ricardo’s passing, stating, “I find myself reflecting on my last encounter with Ricardo back in October at Miami Carnival. Just before he went on stage, he said to me with such determination, ‘I am going to show you the power of my flag.’ And that he did, Ricardo tore that stage apart, representing Antigua with unparalleled passion and conviction. As the Minister responsible for Carnival, I felt an immense

sense of pride witnessing his performance, which sadly was the last for me to witness. His passion, conviction and purpose were palpable, leaving an indelible mark on all who witnessed that performance.”

Minister Matthew continued, “I remember when the document came to me for Druesday, I felt a sense of pride because I recognized Ricardo shared the vision of Antigua’s Carnival, and I was proud to champion this at Cabinet.”

“To his fans, family, his mom, Patrice, his daughter, and the boys, my heart

*cont’d on pg 5*



**ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA CIVIL REGISTRY**  
(Births, Deaths, Marriages, Adoptions, Deeds, Bills of Sale, etc.)

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**Friday December 23 2022**  
**Friday December 30 2022**

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*cont'd from pg 4*

weeps for your loss. No words can adequately express my condolences for the untimely departure of such an immaculate soul.

“Hold on to the memories, as Ricardo’s legacy will forever live on through his music. Rest in peace, Ricardo Drue.”

Senator Shenella Govia, Junior Minister with responsibility for Carnival, expressed her deep sorrow, saying, “I am extremely saddened by the loss of Ricardo Drue. So young and yet full of life, Ricardo, in my eyes, holds Antigua and Barbuda close to his heart and is always ready to give back selflessly.

“This past year was his best year personally and professionally and sadly his last. One of his favorite things he would often say to me is, ‘I am not just your Cultural Envoy on paper, I am always a phone call away.’ Gone too soon, one of the humblest to ever grace

the international stage representing Antigua and Barbuda. Rest in peace, Ricardo.”

“The news is still surreal to me. Drue refers to me as Auntie Lisa; I knew him from the time he was born. I watched him grow up; it was a profound joy watching his growth and transition into this musical giant. Being reminded of Drue’s love for me and how he often said he felt so safe around me warmed my heart. Last night, we finalized the artwork for Ricardo for One Nation to release on Friday. It was always a joy to work with him. With his professionalism and his work ethic in his craft, I can’t recall ever getting a no from him. This is a huge loss for Antigua and Barbuda, the cultural landscape, and the entertainment fraternity. Ricardo was respected locally, regionally, and internationally, and he will go down in history as one of our legends,” said Elizabeth Makhoul, Chairman

of the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission.

Director of National Festivals, Petley O’Keiffe, fondly reminisced on her experiences with Ricardo Drue noting, “I have so many cherished memories of him; he was not just a colleague or an artist, but a dear friend.

“His heart was as grand as his talent and his unwavering commitment to his craft shone through in every breathtaking performance. Whether on the global stage or here in Antigua, he always answered the call with unwavering dedication. I weep, for Antigua has lost a Cultural Icon”.

The Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission extends its heartfelt condolences to Ricardo Drue’s family, friends, and fans during this difficult time. His legacy will forever live on in his music, and his influence will continue to inspire future generations to come.

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## Gov't housing revolution continues

Multiple housing projects are being developed simultaneously and Minister of Housing Maria Browne has said there will be further expansion in 2024 as government work towards meeting the demand of citizens.

Minister Browne expressed satisfaction at construction work being carried out at Oliver's Estate and in the Bolans-Jennings areas, with several homes completed and handed over to new owners, while other houses remain under construction.

The Oliver's project falls under the National Housing and Urban Renewal Development Company, where 400 homes and plots of land are being prepared.

In Bolans-Jennings, 72 homes will be constructed and work is expected to continue next year as contractors press ahead to meet their target.

The government is also making



Minister of Housing Maria Browne

provisions for low-income earners to own their own homes. Minister Maria Browne announced a new project, spearheaded by the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHAPA), has been earmarked for Syngyn, an area close to Glanvilles.

While the date was not announced for the commencement of the project, the housing minister said preparation of the area has begun and several lots are already sold under the Land Empowerment Programme.

“That’s the cheapest land that we offer for sale and this is for individuals who haven’t owned land before, individuals who make less than \$3,000 a month. We’ve saved these parcels for individuals who need that extra leg-up, Minister Browne revealed.

The lands at Syngyn are being sold for three dollars a square foot and the area will be developed in two projects, one by CHAPA and the other through a public-private partnership. They are being described as “starter homes” and will cost approximately \$150,000, excluding land.

More information on future housing projects is expected to be outlined during the budget presentation and subsequent debate.



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## Antigua and Barbuda assumes vice-chairmanship of CICAD

Antigua and Barbuda has become the first country in the Organization Of Eastern Caribbean States to assume the post of vice-chair of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS).

The decision was taken on Sunday during CICAD's 74th Regular Session being held in Washington D.C.

Antigua and Barbuda will serve in the position for the period 2023-2024.

Lt. Col Edward Croft, Director of the ONDCP, in his role as Antigua and Barbuda's CICAD Commissioner, delivered remarks on behalf of the country.

CICAD is comprised of most member states in the Western Hemisphere, from Canada in the North to Argentina in the South and is the consultative and advisory body of the OAS on the global drug problem. It serves as the forum for OAS member states to discuss and find solutions to the drug problem and provides them with technical assistance to increase their capacity to counter the growing issue.



Outside of the OECS, four Caribbean states have served in leadership positions on CICAD between 1987 and 2016.

Antigua and Barbuda's representation at the Washington meeting also

includes Counsellor Gillian Joseph of the Embassy of Antigua and Barbuda (Washington D.C) and Dr. John Swift of the ONDCP.

Uruguay has assumed chairmanship of CICAD.

## Suspect in murder of Greenbay man released from custody

The man who surrendered to police in the ongoing murder investigation of Clifford Micah Watt was released from custody on Saturday.

The suspect, whose identity was not revealed, turned himself in at Saint John's Police Station last Thursday accompanied by an attorney, who facilitated his handover.

According to reports, the man, with the attorney pres-

ent, was subjected to several hours of questioning from investigators probing the murder of Greenbay Hill resident Clifford Watt.

At the end of the interrogation on Saturday, the man was released from custody, without charge. Tuesday marked one week since the 32-year-old man was gunned down in a hail of bullets.

Allegations are Watt was

involved in an altercation with a man outside of his home. The unidentified man who Clifford Watt was feuding with left and returned sometime around 9AM with a suspected accomplice, who entered Watt's premises and opened fire on the house. In the process, the gunman encountered the Greenbay Hill resident and shot him multiple times before fleeing the

scene.

The father of three was rushed to Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre, where police said he was pronounced dead, becoming the country's 10th homicide victim for 2023.

Anyone with knowledge of the incident is asked to contact the Criminal Investigations Department at 462-3913, or the Crimestoppers Hotline at 800-TIPS (8477).

# Commentary

## A look at Antigua's 2024 budget

By Prof. C. Justin Robinson  
Professor of Corporate Finance &  
Principal UWI Five Islands

### Introduction

As a relatively new resident in Antigua & Barbuda in my position as Principal of The UWI Five Islands campus Antigua & Barbuda I take this opportunity to express a few thoughts on the upcoming December 15, 2023, budget. In assessing national budgets my academic training in Finance and my 16 years as a Director of the Central Bank of Barbados lead me to focus on the current economic context, historical tendencies in terms of the performance of the economy, long term policy targets and the primary balance.

The current economic context is one of an economy recovering rapidly from the economic ravages of the Covid 19 pandemic. In 2020, Real Gross Domestic Product (Real Gross Domestic Product is the total value of all the goods and services a country produces adjusted to remove the effects of inflation), fell by 17.5%, rebounding by 6.6% and 8.5% in 2021 and 2022 respectively. It will take Real GDP growth of at least 2.4% in 2023 just to recover the losses from the Covid 19 pandemic. The economic losses from Covid 19 which wiped out

the combined economic growth of the previous four years also had a devastating impact on the public finances since the economic decline reduced government revenues, while the nature of the pandemic required increased government expenditures. The budgetary proposals can be assessed on whether they bolster the current economic recovery while taking steps to fix the hole Covid 19 blew in the public finances.

The historical tendencies in terms of the performance of the economy provide hope in this challenging context. As shown in table 1 Antigua & Barbuda has an impressive record of economic growth over the last forty-five years achieving positive growth for 37 of the forty-five years being reviewed here (8 years of negative growth).

In terms of comparisons over the same time period, Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago recorded 16, 13 and 16 years of negative growth, while OCES neighbors, St. Kitts & Nevis and St. Lucia recorded 7 and 9 years of negative growth respectively.

The economic growth record in the five years prior to the pandemic was most impressive and the longer-term economic history outlined in table 1 provides cause for optimism that the econo-



Prof. C. Justin Robinson

my can return to a sustained growth path in the wake of the Covid 19 pandemic. I am heartened by the fact that since 1978 Antigua and Barbuda is yet to record a year of negative economic growth not preceded by either an external shock or a natural disaster. The budgetary measures can be assessed in terms of whether they bolster or impact negatively on the long-term growth path of the economy.

In terms of long-term policy targets, as a member of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union, a major long term policy target for Antigua & Barbuda is achieving a Debt to GDP ratio of 60%. Over the last 20 years as seen in table 2

*cont'd on pg 9*

**Table 1: Antigua & Barbuda's Growth Rate in Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**

Year	Real GDP Growth (%)	Year	Real GDP Growth (%)	Year	Real GDP Growth (%)	Year	Real GDP Growth (%)	Year	Real GDP Growth (%)
1978	4.4	1988	5.2	1998	4.7	2008	0.0	2018	6.8
1979	8.1	1989	5.3	1999	3.7	2009	-12.0	2019	4.3
1980	8.2	1990	3.0	2000	6.2	2010	-7.8	2020	-17.5
1981	3.8	1991	2.2	2001	-4.5	2011	-2.0	2021	6.6
1982	-0.1	1992	1.2	2002	1.0	2012	3.4	2022	8.5
1983	5.4	1993	5.3	2003	6.1	2013	-0.6		
1984	10.2	1994	6.7	2004	5.8	2014	3.8		
1985	7.6	1995	-4.4	2005	6.5	2015	3.8		
1986	11.5	1996	6.6	2006	12.7	2016	5.5		
1987	6.6	1997	5.5	2007	9.3	2017	3.1		

Source: International Monetary Fund



*cont'd from pg 8*

Antigua & Barbuda's Debt to GDP ratio fell from a high of 128.13% in 2003 to a low of 76.8% in 2019, which was an impressive performance before the economic ravages of the Covid 19 pandemic.

The challenge for the Finance Minister is to get the public finances back on a path to a Debt to GDP ratio of 60% over some defined time horizon and the budgetary measures and address can be assessed on whether they provide clear direction on the path and timelines towards a Debt to GDP ratio of 60%.

Alongside the tendency for the economy to grow there is a tendency for Antigua & Barbuda's public finances to show primary deficits as seen in table 3. The Primary Balance is the difference between Government's revenue (what it is earning) and its non-interest expenditure (what it is spending, not including debt payments). To put that in a household context, your "primary balance" would be the difference between your monthly salary and your monthly expenses,

not including the money you spend repaying your debts, e.g. your mortgage or car loan. When the primary balance is positive (negative), that is, when revenue is more (less) than non-interest expenditure, that can also be referred to as a primary surplus (deficit).

A primary deficit implies that the government has to raise additional financing to cover debt service costs which almost inevitably means a further buildup of debt and/or arrears. A primary surplus on the other hand means that after other expenditures there is extra money available to go towards debt service, which includes interest on debt and the repayment of the principal on debt (amortization). Primary surpluses are seen as being extremely important if a country is to be able to reduce its debt burden and avoid getting into a situation where debt service takes up a large and growing share of government revenues which can then knock the economy off the growth path it has enjoyed for much of its modern history (see table 3 for some

**Table 2: Antigua & Barbuda's Debt to GDP Ratio**

Year	Debt to GDP %	Year	Debt to GDP %
2003	128.13	2013	101.06
2004	131.40	2014	100.17
2005	101.82	2015	86.92
2006	90.85	2016	82.61
2007	80.65	2017	83.86
2008	79.71	2018	78.95
2009	89.17	2019	76.8
2010	84.26	2020	96.51
2011	92.59	2021	92.49
2012	87.68	2022	84.54

Source: Eastern Caribbean Central Bank

data on the debt burden).

The presence of chronic primary deficits in an economy with consistent growth suggests large and growing government expenditures relative to the tax base and structure, challenges with revenue collection and possibly large tax expenditures (tax waivers).

Again, the budget can be assessed on the extent to which the measures address these issues in the structure of the public finances and move the public finances towards a primary surplus and an indication of what levels of surpluses are required to achieve a debt to GDP of 60% by a

given date given growth expectations and a path to achieving such primary surpluses.

### Conclusion

The Finance Minister faces a delicate and difficult balancing act to repair the public finances from the damage done by the Covid 19 pandemic and the history of primary deficits while not damaging the economic growth prospects of the economy. I wish the Finance Minister and his team the best as they engage this herculean task and I look forward to my first budget debate in Antigua & Barbuda which promises to be a robust one.

**Table 3. Antigua & Barbuda Primary Balance & Debt Service (EC \$)**

Year	Primary Balance	Interest	Amortization	Debt Service	Debt Service to Revenues
2013	\$ (78.3)	\$ 66.3	\$ 56.0	\$ 122.3	20.5%
2014	\$ (5.0)	\$ 88.9	\$ 97.5	\$ 186.4	28.1%
2015	\$ 167.3	\$87.4	\$ 81.7	\$ 169.2	21.6%
2016	\$ 88.9	\$103.7	\$ 137.2	\$ 240.9	31.0%
2017	\$ 4.4	\$101.2	\$ 215.3	\$ 316.5	40.0%
2018	\$ (31.6)	\$107.0	\$ 187.7	\$ 294.7	36.1%
2019	\$ (56.0)	\$115.5	\$ 238.6	\$ 354.2	41.7%
2020	\$ (110.5)	\$ 94.5	\$ 339.0	\$ 433.5	55.2%
2021	\$ (85.1)	\$ 98.5	\$ 320.9	\$ 419.5	51.4%
2022	\$ (48.8)	\$122.2	\$ 281.1	\$ 403.3	44.2%

Source: Eastern Caribbean Central Bank

## Sports Illustrated boss Ross Levinsohn fired weeks after AI scandal

By Madeline Halpert

The CEO of The Arena Group, owner of Sports Illustrated, has been fired just weeks after the magazine was accused of publishing articles generated by artificial intelligence.

Ross Levinsohn was terminated “to improve the operational efficiency and revenue” of the company, Arena Group said in a statement.

It comes amid a wider purge of a number of senior executives at the company since the scandal broke.

Manoj Bhargava will take over as CEO.

But a spokesperson for Mr Bhargava - founder of the 5-Hour Energy drink - told the BBC that Mr Levinsohn’s removal “had absolutely nothing to do with the AI issue at all”.

He insisted that the move was about ongoing efforts to improve the company. But it comes after the Arena Group fired three of its major executives last week, including chief operating officer Andrew Kraft, media president Rob Barrett and corporate counsel Julie Fenster.

The announcement comes a month after tech news outlet Futurism revealed Sports Illustrated had published several articles with fake author names and headshots from an AI-generated image website.



*Sports Illustrated CEO Ross Levinsohn has been fired, following backlash against the magazine for allegedly publishing AI-generated articles.*

The magazine removed the content but disputed the report’s accuracy, while launching an internal investigation.

Arena Group licensed the content from a third-party company, Advon Commerce, a company spokesperson said in a statement.

Advon Commerce is an e-commerce company that works with retailers and publishers.

In its statement last month, Arena Group claimed that Advon Commerce had assured them “that all of the articles in question were written and edited by humans” and that the e-commerce firm regularly uses “counter-plagiarism and counter-AI software”.

As for the fake names, the group said writers were allowed to use pseudonyms “in certain articles” to protect their privacy.

The brief statement from Arena Group announcing Mr Levinsohn’s firing did not mention the scandal.

This incident at Sports Illustrated comes as concern grows in the media world that generative artificial intelligence could cheaply replace journalists and potentially spread misinformation.

Various newsrooms have experimented with AI or released guidelines for employees and audiences to explain their approach towards it.

Some newsrooms have made headlines, however,

after publishing AI articles that included errors or falsehoods. Others gained attention for not marking stories as AI generated.

Numerous Sports Illustrated staff said on social media that they were appalled by the findings in Futurist’s report, particularly as Arena Group has made large cuts to staff in recent years.

In a statement at the time, the Sports Illustrated Union said “these practices violate everything we believe in about journalism”.

“We demand the company commit to adhering to basic journalistic standards, including not publishing computer-written stories by fake people,” the union said on X.



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Indonesia was TikTok's biggest online retail market before the ban came into force in October.

## TikTok Shop Indonesia to reopen after \$1.5bn deal

**By Peter Hoskins**

Social media app TikTok has struck a joint venture deal with Indonesian tech giant GoTo to restart its online shopping business in the country.

The firm, owned by China's Bytedance, plans to invest over \$1.5bn (£1.2bn) in the long-term in Indonesia's biggest e-commerce platform Tokopedia.

In October, TikTok Shop shut down in Indonesia to comply with new rules in South East Asia's largest economy.

TikTok has around 125 million users in Indonesia.

Under the deal, TikTok will buy just over 75% of Tokopedia and integrate TikTok Shop's Indonesia business with it.

"The strategic partnership will commence with a pilot period car-

ried out in close consultation with and supervision by the relevant regulators," the two companies said in a joint statement.

GoTo and TikTok also said they will promote Indonesian goods on their platforms and help the country's small and medium-sized businesses develop their production and sales strategies.

The deal comes after the Indonesian government banned online shopping on social media platforms to protect smaller merchants and users' data.

Many of Indonesia's population of more than 270 million people are active social media users, and they made up TikTok's biggest online retail market before the ban came into force in October.

The announcement of the ban came after Indonesia's President Joko Widodo said in September: "We need

to be careful with e-commerce. It can be very good if there are regulations but can turn bad if there aren't any regulations."

Online retailing in Indonesia has soared in recent years. The value of e-commerce sales will have increased more than six-fold between 2018 and next year to hit 689 trillion Indonesian rupiah (\$44bn; £35bn), according to the country's central bank.

TikTok Shop had been growing its market share since its launch two years ago into Indonesia's online shopping market, which is dominated by platforms such as Tokopedia, Shopee and Lazada.

The regulations in Indonesia were another setback for TikTok, which has come under scrutiny in the US, European Union and the UK, where Parliament has banned the app from its network over security concerns.



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## Guatemala seeks consent to intervene in Belize-Honduras territory case

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has indicated that the Republic of Guatemala filed an application on December 1 for permission to intervene in the proceedings concerning Sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes (Belize vs Honduras).

In its Application for permission to intervene, Guatemala recalls that on November 16, 2022, Belize instituted proceedings against the Republic of Honduras concerning “sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes or Cayes, a cluster of islands in the Gulf of Honduras, which Guatemala also claims”. In these proceedings, Belize requests the Court to “adjudge and declare that, as between Belize and Honduras, Belize is sovereign over the Sapodilla Cayes”.

According to Guatemala, Belize’s submission in the Belize v. Honduras case overlaps with its submissions in the case concerning Guatemala’s Territorial, Insular and Maritime Claim (Guatemala/Belize). In the latter case, both Belize and Guatemala claim sovereignty over the Sapodillas.

In its Application for permission to intervene, Guatemala contends that it has “a clear interest of a legal nature [in the Belize v. Honduras case] since . . . it has a longstanding claim of sovereignty over the

Sapodillas, which is part of the subject-matter of the pending Guatemala/Belize case before the Court”, and which may be affected by a decision of the Court in the present case.

Guatemala further indicates that the object of its intervention is twofold:

(a) to protect the rights and interests of Guatemala over the Sapodilla Cayes by all the legal means available, including that established by Article 62 of the Statute of the Court;

(b) to inform the Court of the nature and extent of Guatemala’s rights, which may be affected by the Court’s decision on the issue of sovereignty over the Sapodillas.

Guatemala’s Application also seeks to ensure that the Court’s determinations do not touch upon or prejudice the legal rights and interests of the Republic of Guatemala.”

As regards the existence of a basis of jurisdiction between Guatemala and the Parties to the present proceedings, Guatemala notes that while Guatemala and Belize have concluded a special agreement in the Guatemala/Belize case, there is no basis of jurisdiction between Guatemala and Honduras.

However, it contends that “the absence of such a link with Honduras is not a bar to Guatemala’s interven-



Belize-Guatemala-Honduras (Photo Credit: iStock)

tion, since the . . . application for permission to intervene is based on Article 62 of the Court’s Statute”.

The ICJ notes that pursuant to Article 62 of the Statute, whenever a State not party to a case considers that it has an interest of a legal nature which may be affected by the decision in the case, it may submit a request to the Court to be permitted to intervene.

As such, in accordance with Article 83 of the Rules of Court, Belize and Honduras have been invited to furnish written observations on Guatemala’s Application for permission to intervene.

According to the history of these proceedings, on November 16, 2022, Belize instituted proceedings against Honduras with regard to a

dispute concerning sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes, which it describes as a group of cayes lying in the Gulf of Honduras at the southern tip of the Belize Barrier Reef.

In its Application instituting proceedings, Belize stated that, since the early nineteenth century, the Sapodilla Cayes have formed part of the territory of Belize, initially as part of the settlement of Belize and later the colony of British Honduras, and since 1981 as part of the independent State of Belize.

The Applicant argued that, “under international law, Belize is sovereign over the Sapodilla Cayes” and that “the Honduran claim to the Sapodilla Cayes, ar-

*cont’d on pg 15*



## Brazilian president will not attend talks in St Vincent

President Luis Inacio 'Lula' Da Silva will not attend Thursday's meeting in St Vincent and the Grenadines between President Irfaan Ali of Guyana and his Venezuelan counterpart, Nicolas Maduro, on the contentious border dispute between the two countries, according to Brazilian media reports.

Da Silva, who had been invited to attend the talks brokered by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the Caribbean Community CARICOM, will be represented by his foreign relations advisor, Celso Amorim.

The Brazilian media reported that Amorim had travelled to Caracas earlier this month and has been the main coordinator in the resumption of diplomatic relations between Brazil and Venezuela, since Da Silva won a third term in October last year.

One media outlet reported that Amorim, in Lula's



Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

absence, would be responsible for transmitting different messages to the two countries involved in the territorial dispute and that he would indicate that Brazil will not support unilateral measures that lead to an escalation of the situation, adopting a firm stance against the conflict.

Following the December 3 referendum in which the Venezuelan government said at least 95 per cent of voters in his South American country voted in support

of Caracas annexing the Essequibo in Guyana, President Maduro announced that the Essequibo would be Venezuela's new military zone.

He also urged foreign investors who have concessions granted by Guyana have three months to leave, and that a census would be conducted to grant residents of Essequibo, citizenship and Venezuelan identification cards.

On Monday, former Commonwealth secretary

general, Sir Shridath Ramphal, said "false expectations should not be encouraged" in the talks between the two leaders.

In a statement, Sir Shridath, the co-Agent of Guyana before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) said that it is important that the limits of the talks in Kingstown are understood

He said for decades, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has been "the most vocal and consistent supporter of Guyana with regard to the Guyana-Venezuela border controversy. "Never was that support more evident than when its Heads of Government held an emergency meeting in that context on 8 December 2023. They did not falter. CARICOM Heads repeated where they stood on the most critical aspects of the current situation," he said.

### cont'd from pg 14

articulated in its 1982 Constitution, which remains in force as a matter of the internal law of Honduras, has no basis in international law".

Belize requested the Court "to adjudge and declare that, as between Belize and Honduras, Belize is sovereign over the Sapodilla Cayes".

As basis for the jurisdiction of the Court, Belize invoked Article XXXI of

the American Treaty on Pacific Settlement (Pact of Bogotá) of April 30, 1948, and Article 36, paragraph 1, of the Statute of the Court.

By an Order dated February 2, 2023, the Court fixed May 2 and December 4, 2023, as the respective time-limits for the filing of the Memorial of Belize and the Counter-Memorial of Honduras. Both written pleadings were filed within the time-limits thus fixed.

## Canadian 'poison seller' Kenneth Law faces multiple murder charges

A Canadian man accused of supplying a poisonous chemical to people who died by suicide is facing multiple murder charges.

Police in Canada have charged Kenneth Law, a 57-year-old former chef, with 14 counts of second-degree murder.

Mr Law was previously charged with aiding suicide in relation to deaths of people who had allegedly purchased the lethal chemical from him online.

British detectives have also linked Mr Law to 90 deaths in the UK.

In an emailed statement to the BBC, Mr Law's lawyer, Matthew Gourlay, said his client intended to plead not guilty to the charges.

The murder charges announced by police on Tuesday mark an escalation in the prosecution of Mr Law in Canada, who has been the subject of a "very active and very complex" investigation involving 11 police agencies in the country's largest province, Ontario.

Speaking on behalf of the multijurisdictional investigation, Simon James, an inspector with York Regional Police, said the new murder charges were related to a total of 14 victims in Ontario.

Mr James said that "evidence has come in that supports the charge of second-degree murder", but declined to add further de-

tails as the investigation was ongoing.

Along with the murder charges, Mr Law faces 14 counts of aiding and counselling suicide in connection to the same Ontario deaths, for a total of 28 charges. He faces imprisonment for life if he is found guilty of second-degree murder under Canadian law.

Mr Law, who remains in police custody, is also the subject of probes by police agencies in other parts of Canada and countries, including the UK.

Mr James said police in Ontario are cooperating with those international investigations.

Canadian detectives said Mr Law had run a number of websites offering equipment and substances to help people end their lives. Police believe he may have sent more than 1,200 parcels containing lethal substances to around 40 countries.

He was first arrested and charged in May with counselling or aiding suicide. In August, police brought additional counts against him, all linked to deaths that occurred in Ontario.

The ages of the people who died ranged from 16 to 36. Mr James said more than one victim was under the age of 18.

Many of Mr Law's alleged victims were also based in the UK. There,



*Kenneth Law faces charges relating to 14 deaths in Canada but police believe there may be many more victims.*

the National Crime Agency (NCA) in London said Mr Law was known to have sent packages to 272 people.

The NCA, which is now investigating if any criminal offences were committed in the UK, said 90 of those recipients later died, though they could not confirm that a toxic substance was the direct cause of each death.

One individual died after police had carried out welfare checks on all the addresses which received a parcel, the agency added.

A spokesman for the NCA said: "This investigation will explore viable leads that help us identify evidence of crimes committed in the UK or against its citizens."

The news of the charges were welcomed by David Parfett, whose 22-year-old son Tom bought the chemical from Mr Law and ended

his life in October 2021.

"It sends a signal to other people who encourage vulnerable people to self harm and provide suicide kits that they're not beyond the law," Mr Parfett told the BBC.

And he said there are wider lessons for the authorities on what more needs to be done to protect people online.

"Actions like encouraging others to kill themselves that would be prosecuted in real life are tolerated online. That has to stop," he said.

While this is a significant moment for many of the victims' families, some said they still have outstanding concerns.

They worry there are other sellers out there who have taken Mr Law's place and are still selling the poisonous chemical he allegedly supplied. Many also feel

*cont'd on pg 17*



## Reichsbürger: German far-right extremists charged with planning violent coup

By Ido Vock

German prosecutors have charged 27 suspected far-right extremists with planning a violent coup.

The suspects are accused of membership of the fringe Reichsbürger - or Citizens of the Reich - movement.

“The members of the group strongly rejected state institutions and the free democratic constitutional order,” according to the indictment.

They are mostly associates of Heinrich XIII Prince Reuss, a Reichsbürger figurehead from an aristocratic family.

Prosecutors have charged the 27 people with planning to overthrow Germany’s democratic political system.

Concrete preparations were made for a coup beginning in summer 2021.

The plan was to seize power by invading the Bundestag, Germany’s par-



Some of those charged were arrested in raids last year.

liament, with a small group of armed personnel. The assault would be launched after receiving a signal, such as the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

The alleged plotters had already determined how their new state would function after the coup.

Prince Reuss was planned to be head of state. On taking office, he would negotiate a peace treaty with the Allied powers which won World War II. Prince Reuss tried to meet

representatives of the Russian government to gain support for the coup, according to prosecutors.

Birgit Malsack-Winckelmann, then a member of the Bundestag for the far-right Alternative for Germany party, would have been made justice minister. Prosecutors said she granted access to parliamentary buildings to other co-conspirators.

The would-be rebels are alleged to have attempted to recruit soldiers and

police officers.

The group had drawn up lists of enemies. Members were aware that their plans would result in people being killed, according to the indictment.

Members were made to sign a declaration of secrecy. Violators would have been executed for high treason.

The suspected plotters had access to about 380 firearms and 148,000 rounds of ammunition.

Some of the accused were arrested in federal police raids last December.

According to the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, Germany’s domestic intelligence agency, there are about 23,000 followers of the Reichsbürger movement in the country.

*cont’d from pg 16*

the UK government has not done enough to stop this type of crime.

Mr James of York Regional Police said one major challenge is that some of the websites used by Mr Law are based in countries outside of Canada, where Canadian law does not apply.

Families of victims said they also want action taken against those who set up and

run a pro-suicide forum which encourages and instruct the vulnerable how to die. The BBC reported on the forum in October and even confronted one of its founders, who claimed he is no longer involved.

Many of the dead found out about Mr Law and other sellers through the forum, which the BBC is not going to name.

They followed detailed instructions posted there on how to end their lives.

## APUA Telecoms to face Sandals in final of business football league

Defending champions APUA Telecoms remain on course to make a successful defense of their title in the Cool and Smooth JOMA Caribbean Ministry of Sports Business Football League.

APUA Telecoms will clash with Sandals for the championship in the final at Antigua Recreation Grounds (ARG) today.

Both teams booked their spots in the final by recording victories in the semi-finals at the same venue on Sunday night. APUA prevailed 5-4 in a penalty shootout to oust DEWS Pro Builders after both teams fought to a 1-1 draw at the end of regulation in the second semi-final.

Nazir McBurnette scored for APUA Telecoms and Andre Nicholas scored for DEWS Pro Builders in regulation to send the match into a penalty shootout to decide the winner.

Daniel Francis scored the lone goal as Sandals prevailed 1-0 against St. John's Development Corporation (SJDC) in the first semi-final.

The four teams had advanced to the semi-finals after recording victories in their respective matches in the quarterfinals.

APUA Telecoms prevailed 5-4 against Cocos/Keyonna in a penalty shootout after both teams played to a 1-1 draw at the end of regulation. Jamil Williams scored for APUA Tele-

coms and Denie Henry scored for Cocos/Keyonna in regulation.

DEWS Pro Builders also prevailed 5-4 against Royalton Hotel in a penalty shootout after both teams battled to a 1-1 draw at the end of regulation.

Goals by Peter Byers and Keon Greene lifted Sandals to a 2-0 victory against the Curtain Bluff Hotel, while Kendall Pennyfeather's conversion gave SJDC a 1-0 victory against the Ministry of Agriculture in the other two quarterfinal encounters.

Wednesday's final, which will commence at 7:15 pm, will be preceded by a playoff for third place between SJDC and DEWS Pro Builders at 6:15 pm.

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# TG Welding extend unbeaten run in MPL

TG Welding extended their unbeaten run during the latest round of matches in the Cool and Smooth Mandy Premier League (MPL) Sherma Jackson Business Softball Cricket Competition on Sunday.

They maintained their lead in the eight-team round-robin competition by recording their fifth win in as many matches with a seven-wicket victory against PEL Boys at the Powells Playing Field.

The PEL Boys were restricted to 44 for six off their allotted 10 overs, with Samuel Joshua getting 19. Essan Warner claimed two wickets for eight runs and Richie Thomas took one wicket for two runs.

TG Welding cruised to victory at 45 for three in 4.3 overs. Player of the

Match Deran Benta made 18, which included two sixes. Iverson Joseph captured three wickets for 23 runs.

The Board of Education remained in second place by snatching a four-run victory against the Antigua and Barbuda Defense Force (ABDF) to secure their fourth win in five outings.

Chasing 74 to win in 10 overs, the ABDF was restricted to 69 for three off their allotted overs. Malik Marcellin top-scored with 31.

Male player of the match Tanez Francis grabbed two wickets for six runs and female player of the game Delise Glynn picked up one wicket for eight runs.

Board of Education batted first and made 73 for seven off their 10 overs. Rayn John hit 24 and Kadeem Henry



The Board of Education's Tanez Francis, right, and teammate Delise Glynn. Francis was the BOE's male player of the game, while Glynn was the female player of the game against ABDF. (Photo courtesy of MPL)

scored 18. Mary Browne captured two wickets for 17 runs.

Polished Concrete Floors and Countertops (PCF&C) recorded their third win in five matches by grabbing a three-run victory against Hanse On Security.

PCF&C made 86 for four off their 10 overs. Sharmar Perriera hammered 40, which included three sixes and player of the match Malinga Bruney struck 27, which also included three sixes. Melvin Charles claimed two wickets for 12 runs.

In reply, Hanse On Security was restricted to 83 for five off their 10 overs. Andra Samuel slammed 28, which included four sixes, and Kerry Mentore made 30. Bruney bagged two wickets for 18 runs.

Grill Box won by default against Time of Victory, which failed to show up for their encounter.



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## Williams claims golden boot in U-16 Boys Division

Forward Greg Williams of the national Under-15 team has been crowned the chief marksman or the top goal scorer in the Under-16 Boys Division of the Ministry of Sports Secondary Schools' Football League.

Williams finished as the Golden Boot winner by scoring a total of 13 goals to lead Princess Margaret School (PMS) to the Under-16 Boys Division title.

Nashawn Gunthorpes of All Saints Secondary School (ASSS) and Samuel Brazier of Antigua Grammar School (AGS) finished as joint second-highest goal scorers with seven goals apiece.

Joshua James of St. Joseph's Academy (SJA) finished as the top goal scorer in the Under-14 Boys Division, which has been retained by Princess Margaret School.

James scored 10 goals and Tafari Parker of Antigua Grammar School came in second with a total of eight goals. Four players, Robert Jeffery of Clare Hall Secondary School (CHSS), Iczjaire Sebastian of SJA, Kimani Francis of ASSS and Kevonte Lewis of AGS finished as the joint third highest goal scorers with seven goals each.

Eroy Gonsalves of St. Joseph's Academy is currently the leading goal scorer in the Under-20 Boys Division, which has reached the semi-final stage.

Gonsalves, who is also a national youth team player, has scored a total of 11 goals. He is closely followed by Joylan Sinclair of Ottos Comprehensive School (OCS), which is one of the four teams in the semi-finals. Sinclair has a total of 10 goals.

Karique Knight of Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education (ABICE) is currently the third-leading goal scorer with seven



*Greg Williams, right, and coach of Princess Margaret School Rolston 'Lexi' Phoenix hold the Under-16 Boys Division trophy at the PMS playing field on Friday, December 8, 2023. (Photo courtesy of Ministry of Sports)*

goals.

National Under-15 Girls Forward, Nafisa Quashie, finished as the top goal scorer in the Under-20 Girls Division, which has been won by Princess Margaret School.

Quashie scored a total of 10 goals to allow Antigua Girls' High School (AGHS) to finish as runners-up in the competition. National senior team and PMS player Irresia Allen scored a total of five goals to finish as the second

highest goal scorer.

Allen is currently the leading goal scorer in the Under-16 Girls Division. She has scored a total of 15 goals to lead PMS into the final against AGHS.

Quashie is the second leading goal scorer, with a total of 13 goals for AGHS. Quashie and Allen will both fancy their chances of increasing their tally when AGHS and PMS clash in the Under-16 Girls final in the New Year.



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## South Africa reach rain-reduced target to beat India

South Africa opener Reeza Hendricks laid the foundation as they beat India by five wickets after reaching a rain-reduced target to win their second Twenty20 International at St. George's Park on Tuesday.

South Africa were set 152 off 15 overs because rain delayed play for almost an hour after India had been sent in to bat and made 180 for seven off 19.3 overs.

Hendricks fell short of a half century but his 49 runs off 27 balls proved the basis for success to allow South Africa to go ahead in the three-match series after Sunday's opening clash in Durban was washed out.

South Africa did not press home their advantage as wayward bowling allowed India to score briskly, with skipper Suryakumar Yadav hitting 56 off 36 balls, while Rinku Singh was 68 not out off 39 balls.

Singh's innings was brought to a premature end three balls short of the 20 overs when the umpires



South Africa's opener Reeza Hendricks bats during the second Twenty20 international against India at St. George's Park in South Africa on Tuesday, December 12, 2023. (AP)

took the teams off for rain and the 55-minute delay meant South Africa were set a reduced target.

South Africa lost their first wicket with 42 runs on the board when Matthew Breetzke was run out for 16, but Hendricks kept calm to

strike eight boundaries and keep the hosts ahead of the required run rate.

India, however, put the brakes on as they took three wickets in 10 balls to reduce South Africa to 108 for four, but David Millar and Tristan Stubbs put on 31 runs for

the next wicket to make all but sure they would take a 1-0 lead in the series.

The last T20 clash is on Thursday at the Wanderers in Johannesburg, after which the two teams play three One-Day Internationals and then two Tests.

### cont'd from pg 24

best young cricketers on the planet to five notable international venues.

"This event has a long-standing tradition of unveiling the newest stars onto the international stage, and with fans given the opportunity to witness these players in action for free, we firmly believe the stage is set for another thrilling edition."

Tournament Director Wanele

Mngomezulu added, "As Cricket South Africa, we are humbled by the ICC's show of confidence in our abilities to stage international cricket events. While the task of hosting the U19 Men's Cricket World Cup 2024 has been conferred upon us with very tight timelines, we are happy to take on the challenge."

"Hosting this event allows us an opportunity to further sharpen our

skills and capabilities in the run-up to the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2027, which will be held in South Africa.

"Hosting the tournament on home soil is opportune for us to promote cricket to sport-loving South Africans and attract new fans and young talent to the game, thereby driving our strategic pillars of excellence, access, and inclusion."

## ICC unveils revised schedule for U19 World Cup

A revised schedule for the ICC Under-19 Men's Cricket World Cup in South Africa in 2024 has been revealed by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

It confirms five venues in South Africa that will host the 15th edition of the celebrated event between January 19 and February 11, following the decision taken by the ICC Board in November to relocate the event from Sri Lanka.

The new schedule sees the hosts kick off their campaign against the West Indies in Potchefstroom on the opening day, while defending champions India start the defense of their crown a day later against former champions Bangladesh, who claimed the silverware when the tournament was last hosted in South Africa back in 2020.

The West Indies will face Scotland at JB Marks Oval in Potchefstroom on January 24 and will clash with England at the same venue on January 26 in their other two first-round matches.

The most exciting young talent in world crick-



Players of the West Indies Under-19 team. (CWI Media)

et will compete for the silverware across 41 matches held at established international venues: Mangaung Oval in Bloemfontein, Buffalo Park in East London, Kimberley Oval in Kimberley, JB Marks Oval in Potchefstroom, and finally Willowmoore Park in Benoni, the venue selected to host the semi-finals on February 6 and 8, and the final on February 11.

The event will welcome a new format for this edition, where teams progressing from the group stages will enter a new

Super Six stage, starting on January 30, where two groups of six teams will clash to determine the semi-finalists and the subsequent finalists.

In the group listings, holders India are joined by Bangladesh, Ireland, and the USA in Group A. Group B consists of England, South Africa, the West Indies, and Scotland.

Group C features Australia, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, and Namibia, while Group D is made up of Afghanistan, Pakistan, New Zealand, and Nepal.

ICC Head of Events, Chris Tetley, stated, "In the past 12 months, we have seen South Africa successfully deliver two milestone events for the sport: the inaugural ICC Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup last year and the groundbreaking ICC Women's T20 World Cup that immediately followed.

"The relocation of the Under-19 Men's Cricket World Cup 2024 to South Africa allows us the opportunity to build on this momentum and welcome the

*cont'd on pg 23*