

ONE MILLION CRUISE PASSENGERS FOR 2024

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The parliamentary debate on the 2024 National Budget for Antigua and Barbuda started in the House of Representatives Tuesday morning...but with one notable feature, the absence of members on the opposition side of the chambers. *Story on page 5.*

1 million cruise passengers forecasted for 2024

Cruise passenger arrivals into Antigua and Barbuda are expected to top the one-million mark during 2024, a first in the history of the country's cruise tourism industry.

The forecast came from Tourism Minister, Charles Max Fernandez, during his presentation on the 2024 Budget Debate in the House of Representatives on Tuesday.

“Between January 1 and December 31, 2022, the destination welcomed 380,172 cruise passengers. Cruise passengers

for 2023 have almost doubled the amount of arrivals for 2022 with a total of 687,260 passengers. For 2024, to date we have 967,979 committed to visiting the country,” Fernandez reported. He pointed out that these figures do not include the passengers that are expected to arrive aboard the OASIS Class vessels which are expected to sail into the St. John's port during 2024.

Fernandez also reported that the Antigua Cruise Port, which operates both the Heritage and Redcliffe



Tourism Minister, Charles Max Fernandez, standing.

Quays, has confirmed that there are 415 cruise calls booked for Antigua and Barbuda for next year. This figure surpasses the total for 2023 by 39 calls.

The tourism minister revealed that the performance of the homeporting sub-sector of cruise tourism continues to grow exponentially, much to the joy of the ministry as well as industry stakeholders.

For example, homeporting for the 2022-23 season totaled 6,707 passengers. But for the 2023-24 season, passengers participating in the homeporting initiative will total 23,366.

According to Fernandez, the growth in cruise tourism, while spectacular,

is not the whole story of what is happening on the high seas. He reported that the yachting sector is also enjoying robust growth.

“The annual Boat Charter Show which signals the start of the yachting season has just concluded and it was one of the best ever. This year saw a doubling of super yachts registered at 66 compared with 33 last year, with 235 brokers, and 170 marine vendors compared with 107 last year. There were 16 international press agencies compared with six that covered the event last year,” he indicated.

Arrivals in the yachting sector in 2019 stood at 19,000, for 2022, 12,111 and for 2023, 35,381.

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Housing revolution to get a major boost through new partnership

The housing ‘revolution’ that is taking place on Antigua will expand further in the new year through a partnership that the government is entering that will speed-up the completion of individual homes.

Housing Minister, Maria Bird-Browne, made the disclosure on Tuesday during debate on the 2024 National Budget for Antigua and Barbuda.

Minister Bird-Browne reported that the housing revolution is well on the way with 400 homes earmarked for Oliver’s that will feature a combination of homes constructed by the National



Housing Minister, Maria Bird-Browne

Housing Development and Urban Renewal Company (NHDURC) and by private individuals through the sale of lands for housing construction.

The minister said already more than one hundred of these homes are under construction or have been completed. She said some home owners have

started to occupy the homes. There are two categories of homes; the starter homes that are being built at a cost of \$125-thousand and the regular 2 or 3-bedroom homes that are valued at over \$200-thousand.

She explained that many of the persons who have successfully purchased these homes would not ordinarily secure financing for similar homes built privately.

The housing minister noted that along with Oliver’s, homes are also being built at both Bolans and Jennings. However, she announced that a major development
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CMC to re-embrace original purpose

Agriculture Minister, E.P Chet Greene wants the Central Marketing Corporation (CMC) to re-embrace its original purpose of being the marketing agency for the output from local vegetable and meat farmers.

Speaking in parliament on Tuesday, Greene complimented the management and staff of CMC for the successes they have achieved as the supermarket it operates is one of the leading such enterprises in the country.

“I want to go on record as complimenting the staff of CMC for their model which has become a financial success and which is good for the sustainability of the company.

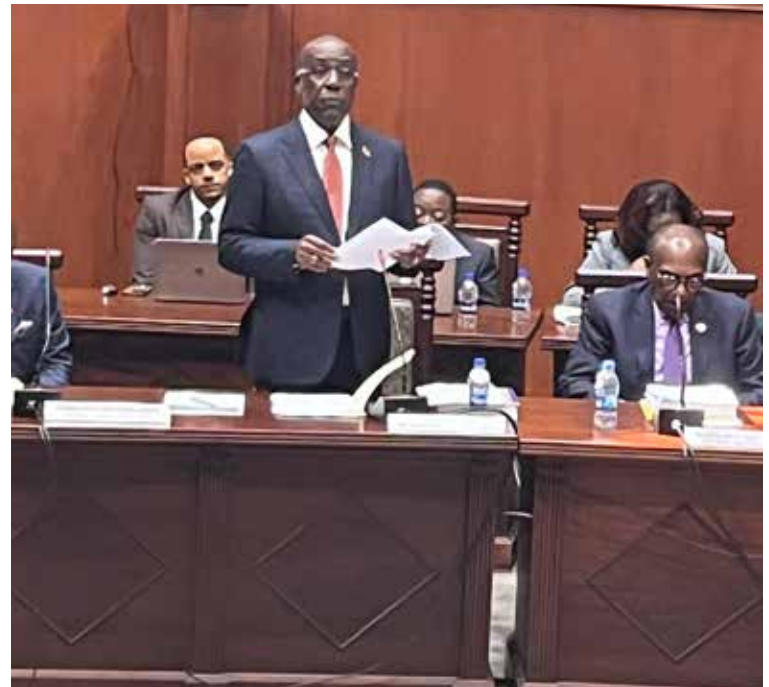
However, we have to move into the direction of ensuring that local farmers are given that level of support where their produce is concerned. Therefore, in the area of pork and meats, we want to ensure that at least 33 per cent of the

produce sold at CMC are sourced from local farmers,” he stated.

The agriculture minister said the country is ‘not doing too badly’ in terms of the production of spices, root crops, vegetables and melons but there are some areas where he wants to see further impacts.

“In egg production, we are doing exceptionally well. Of our market volume of \$19.2 million, local production accounts for over \$18 million or 97 per cent of the eggs consumed in the country. In the area of spice crops, of a market volume of \$7 million, we are currently supplying \$1.9 million of that which means roughly \$5 million is imported. We intend to up this percentage from the current 27 percent to a minimum of 30 percent by the end of 2024,” he outlined.

Other areas of focus include roots and tubers. He said that market volume for these items stands



Agriculture Minister, E.P Chet Greene (standing) during his presentation

at \$11.6 million of which \$2.7 million of that is from local production. This means the country is importing almost \$9 million worth of these produce. The intention, according to Greene is to up that percentage from 23 percent to 30 percent.

For pork and chicken production, the minister disclosed that the pork sector accounts for \$15 mil-

lion annually but with only \$1 million coming from local production.

“As minister of agriculture, I am saying that this is not good enough. I am therefore making a call to current and would be farmers that the ministry of agriculture is prepared to invest to make sure that we can move the production from 6 percent to not less than 15 percent by the end of 2024,” he declared.

Similarly for poultry; that market in 2022 had a volume of \$53 million with only \$1 million from local production resulting in the importation of \$52 million worth of poultry meats.

“We do not feel comfortable with that,” he stated as he outlined steps that government is taking, including upgrading the abattoir, to deal with the problem.

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opment is in the works for an expansion of the housing programme in the new year.

“What is going to be happening in 2024 is that we have entered into an exciting partnership with a group called Enova, which has both local and international interests.

“They will partner with CHAPA to construct homes at about \$190.00 per square foot. These homes will be located at Jennings and Bolans. They have started the foundations for four model homes already and these will be completed early

in the new year,” Minister Bird-Browne stated.

According to the minister the building materials that will be used will be similar to those used in the Antec homes that are climate resilient. This will make construction time shorter than the traditional concrete block homes.

“We are looking at alternative materials to both reduce the time of construction and secondly to make delivery to home owners much faster to meet the growing demands for homes by the people of Antigua and Barbuda,” she declared.

Opposition chided for ‘no-show’ at Budget Debate

The parliamentary debate on the 2024 National Budget for Antigua and Barbuda started in the House of Representatives Tuesday morning...but with one notable feature, the absence of members on the opposition side of the chambers.

The action by the six members of the UPP along with Barbuda’s Trevor Walker who votes with them, is believed to have been influenced by the decision to start the Budget debate on Tuesday rather

than on Thursday as they wanted.

Opposition Leader Jemale Pringle had threatened a boycott last week when the House voted in favour of starting the debate on Tuesday.

When both sides could not arrive at a mutually acceptable time to start the debate, Speaker Sir Gerald Watt polled by division so that each member’s position could be recorded.

The house voted 9 in favour and 7 against and was

carried.

Speaking in parliament on Tuesday, Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene said the ‘no-show’ was a disingenuous act by the opposition members as the decision to start the debate on Tuesday came out of a process in which they participated.

Additionally, he said the opposition members had been promising a robust debate prior to the budget presentation but since then they have fallen flat.

“Their call for protest action largely failed; all their pronouncements about the project prior to its delivery fell flat and they participated in the decision-making about the start of the exercise.

“People are watching them; nobody would be satisfied with their action today,” he observed.

Meanwhile, the government team, with all members in place, stated that they intend to wrap up the debate by Wednesday.

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Local News



CIBC/FCIB donates over \$30,000 to bring joy to families, institutions

One of the commercial banks operating in the country is making donations to families and institutions

as part of its annual programme to bring the joys of Christmas to those less fortunate in society. It has do-

nated more than \$30,000 in cash and household items.

Included in the donations were: the Antigua and Barbuda Association of Persons with Disability, the Pediatric Ward at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre, the Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development (GARD) Centre, Friends of Care Project, The Soup Kitchen and Good Human 268 who all received \$5,000 each.

Additionally, three families were presented with household supplies so that they may have an enjoyable Christmas holiday season.

Led by the Country Manager, Ladesa James-Williams, staff members climbed aboard a specially decorated bus dubbed 'the Christmas Caravan' on Tuesday as they drove from institution to institution spreading joy and making their presentations.

A bank spokesman said this annual Christmas drive of making donations to charitable institutions and families in need forms an essential part of the bank's policy of giving back to the community which it serves.

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Artistes gather to salute Ricardo Drue

One week after his sudden passing, members of the soca fraternity in Antigua and Barbuda gathered on Tuesday night to celebrate the life of one of the country's brightest stars, Ricardo Drue who died last Tuesday at age, 38.

Dubbed, 'a candlelight vigil for Ricardo Drue', the event took place at the Antigua Recreation Ground, which is transformed annually into Carnival City where Ricardo Drue per-

formed countless times and won many trophies.

Festivals Minister, Daryl Matthew led members of the National Festivals Commission and the soca fraternity in paying tribute to the artist they called the Soca Ambassador.

Hosted by entertainers, Ibis and Supa Dymond, the show featured performances from Drastic, Menace, Ezzy Ratigan, Claudette Peters, Tian Winter, Young Lyrics among others as well

as featuring video clips of Ricardo Drue in several of his notable performances, and video tributes from various members of the international soca fraternity.

The organisers would like to say thank you to our generous sponsors:

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Tribute to an outstanding diplomat, honourable statesman, and a great human being

By Ambassador Walton Aubrey Webson,
Antigua and Barbuda's
Permanent Representative
to the United Nations

As we celebrate this holy and festive season, I take a moment to reflect on the life of our veteran diplomat who recently left us for a heavenly place. Ambassador Sir Ramez Fares Hadeed, KGCN passed away on the 7th of December 2023. He and his dear wife Lady Afaf are now

at the Lord's altar with the angels.

My presence at the table in this noble and honorable profession was late in coming, as I joined the diplomatic corps a mere ten years ago when Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne asked me to serve my country at the level of the United Nations. This offer I could not refuse as there is no greater earthly honor than to serve one's country and fellow nationals.

On taking up my assignment, I had the distinguished honour of meeting Sir Ramez whose dedication to service immediately earned my respect and admiration as an outstanding national of the highest possible esteem.

His passing is a significant loss not only to our country, but also to the international community. Sir Ramez attended United Nations Gener-

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Local News



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al Assembly meetings for decades and provided support to the Permanent Mission of Antigua and Barbuda in New York as our small country endeavored to establish and deepen our diplomatic relationships with many global powers.

For over sixty years this exceptional individual dedicated his life to his adopted home of Antigua and Barbuda. At home he was an outstanding visionary in the area of business and his spirit of altruism and philanthropy touched many lives and households across the length and breadth of our country. He provided leadership, intelligence, and integrity to the private sector and an unwavering commitment to diplomacy which he passed on to young and fledgling diplomats.

As a senior statesman, Ambassador Hadeed had a deep understanding of political, social, and economic challenges faced by Antigua and Barbuda and its people.

He provided sound advice and genuine support to any government who served this nation in addressing a variety of social and economic challenges. As a businessman, his vision and strategic thinking has left a lasting impression on the economic landscape of our twin island nation. He contributed widely towards the economic growth of the country over the forty two years



of Independence and in the emergence of the new Antigua and Barbuda.

Beyond the diplomatic and business acumen that Sir Ramez brought to the national table, he was known for his compassion and profound empathy. He genuinely cared for the welfare of people and the wellbeing of all humanity. Ambassador Hadeed's humanitarian efforts touched many lives within our nation, bringing hope and countless positive change to many in need.

The passing of this extraordinary individual will leave a void to fill, not only in the diplomatic space, but in nation building. His legacy will serve to remind future diplomats and businesspeople who are focused on nation building that service to nation is honourable and rewarding as we focus on the importance of leadership,

compassion, and diplomacy regardless of the levels we are asked to serve in that humble task.

In his memory, let us carry forward those values and principles he held dear. Let us work to bridge divides and promote understanding between all of our citizens and between all nations.

Although his loss will be deeply felt, let us find solace in the fact that the contribution of Sir Ramez will be remembered and celebrated for generations to come. His impact on this nation and I suggest this corner of the world will not be forgotten.

And as we anticipate the joys of this season and reflect on the passing of our great patriots, I must also pause to remember the contribution of Mr. James 'Tanny' Rose and more recently Mr. Ricardo Drue, all of whom shared

exceptional lives and gave much towards the development of this nation. Let us honour their achievement and express our gratitude for their contribution in different spaces in nation building and in a dedicated commitment to our beautiful shores.

The spirit of generosity of these three gentlemen was a telling feature of their character and will be long remembered in the rich and enduring legacy they have all now left behind.

My thoughts and prayers are with the families, colleagues, and friends at this time. Our nation has lost true patriots, many have lost trusted friends, and we are all poorer for the departure of these wonderful human beings from our national landscape.

May they continue to rest in peace.

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Insomniac is behind successful PlayStation exclusives including Spider-Man 2.

Insomniac: Spider-Man 2 PlayStation studio victim of huge hack

By Tom Richardson

The videogame studio behind Spider-Man 2 has been the victim of a huge hack in a ransomware attack.

Last week, hackers demanded \$2m from Sony-owned Insomniac, which developed the PlayStation 5 superhero hit, to keep stolen information private.

Since then, details of future releases and work-in-progress footage showing the company's upcoming Wolverine game have appeared online.

BBC Newsbeat has approached Sony for comment.

A listing for the leak, seen by the BBC, suggests it includes private employee data and internal company emails.

Fellow games developers, journalists and fans were quick to condemn the attack, urging others not to share or republish any of the content.

Alan Wake 2 developer Remedy Games wrote on X to offer its sympathies to «all the affected team members».

They wrote: “After all the effort and dedication they have poured into their games, they didn’t deserve this.

“No-one does. The hackers also leaked employee’s personal information, which is truly disgraceful and shameful.”

Insomniac has released few official details of the Wolverine game beyond a teaser trailer in 2021 and confirmation it would have a «mature» tone compared with the Spider-Man

games.

Ransomware group Rhysida has claimed responsibility, and it also said it was behind a similar attack on the British Library last month.

The method uses malicious software to infect a company’s computer network and lock its files, demanding payment for them to be restored.

It’s the latest leak from a high-profile games studio, after details of Rockstar Games’ upcoming Grand Theft Auto 6 appeared online last year.

That attack was committed by a different group, which also hacked Uber and graphics card maker Nvidia.

When the case appeared in a UK court, it emerged that an 18-year-old member had released the clips while he was on bail in a Travelodge hotel.

Fears of higher oil prices after Red Sea attacks

By Nick Edser

Attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea risk pushing up the price of oil and other goods, analysts have warned.

Several firms have paused shipments through the route after vessels were attacked by Houthi rebels in Yemen.

The world's second largest shipping line, Maersk, said on Tuesday that it would reroute some of its vessels around Africa's Cape of Good Hope.

The disruption has led the US to launch an international naval operation to protect ships on the Red Sea route.

Countries joining the security action - named Operation Prosperity Guardian - include the UK, Canada, France, Bahrain, Norway and Spain.

The US has also said it would welcome China playing a constructive role in trying to prevent further attacks.

The analysts' warnings came as the rebels vowed to continue their attacks in the Bab al-Mandeb strait, a vital shipping lane between Asia and Europe.

"Even if America succeeds in mobilising the entire world, our military operations will not stop... no matter the sacrifices it costs us," said senior Houthi official Mohammed al-Bukhaiti on X, formerly Twitter.

US defence secretary Lloyd Austin held a virtual meeting with ministers from more than 40 countries on Tuesday, and called on more nations to contribute to the security efforts.

"These reckless Houthi attacks are a serious international problem and they demand a firm international response," he said.

The UK's Ministry of Defence said the Royal Navy destroyer HMS Diamond would join the new task force, with the security situation "deteriorating".

The Red Sea is one of the world's most important routes for oil and liquefied natural gas shipments, as well as



for consumer goods. It is bookended by the Bab al-Mandab Strait - also known as the Gate of Tears - in the south near the coast of Yemen and the Suez Canal in the north.

Houthis have declared their backing for Hamas in its war with the Israelis and the rebels based in Yemen said they were targeting vessels which they believe are heading for Israel.

However, some firms, such as Investor Chemical Tankers, whose Swan Atlantic vessel was attacked on Monday, said that its ship had no links to Israel.

Shipping firms have reported vessels coming under attack from drones and missiles.

"The ballistic missiles are really the tough one. This is the first time we've ever seen ships hit by this type of weapon," Sal Mercogliano, a naval historian at Campbell University, told the BBC.

"It's a very difficult type of missile to shoot down."

Despite the launch of the international operation to ensure safe passage through the Red Sea, Maersk said it was not clear when it would resume journeys along the route, and would assess things on a case-by-case basis.

It said while it was pleased to hear of efforts to improve security in the area, "at this time it remains difficult to

determine" when it would return to the Red Sea route.

Meanwhile, Hapag-Lloyd, a German firm whose Al Jasrah vessel was attacked last Friday, said that while it welcomed the new task force, the company needed 100% assurance the Red Sea was safe for ships to return.

The alternative route, around the Cape of Good Hope, adds about 3,500 nautical miles to the journey.

Hapag-Lloyd's head of corporate communications Nils Haupt told the BBC: "We go from the eastern Med to Singapore. Normally it takes 13 days through the [Suez] Canal - without using the canal that will be 31 days."

Attacks on ships have intensified in recent days. Investor Chemical Tankers said its Swan Atlantic tanker was hit by an "unidentified object" on Monday, while Maersk described the situation as "alarming" on Friday after a "near-miss" incident involving Maersk Gibraltar and another attack on a container ship.

Oil giant BP said on Monday that it would temporarily pause all shipments of crude through the route. Rival energy giant Shell has yet to comment.

At the moment, changes to the oil price have been minimal. Prices rose 1% on Monday, but on Tuesday they

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Bahamas PM responds to UN human rights report

CMC - Prime Minister Phillip Davis says while he is concerned at the report of the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WAGD) at the same time, "I don't need a UN report to tell me some issues we have and we are addressing these issues as best as we can."

In its preliminary report released here earlier this month, the WAGD called on the authorities to do more to ensure people under arrest are given access to legal representation.

"The Working Group interviewed numerous detainees who were deprived of any legal representation at the initial stages of the proceedings because they did not have the financial means," the WAGD said in its preliminary report.

The WGAD visited the country from November 27 to December 9 and visited 10 facilities and interviewed over 130 people in detention.

In its report, the WGAD said also that people are too often arrested without a warrant, and arrests are sometimes based on outdated or expired warrants. It also found that detainees are often detained for significantly longer than 48 hours without court-granted extensions.

"The Working Group



Bahamas Prime Minister Phillip Davis.

received information that some detainees suffered vision loss due to their detention in darkness," the report said, noting also recurrent complaints about detainees' inability to access medical care and the absence of treatment for drug-dependent people."

Speaking with reporters, Davis said his administration has been working towards rectifying some issues contained in the report.

"Well, I am always concerned about these issues, particularly as it relates to human rights, because we have for quite a long time, this is a legacy issue that has been plaguing our administration of justice, to the criminal side of it, for quite a long time and we need to address it.

"I'm concerned about it

and I don't need a UN report to tell me some issues we have and we are addressing these issues as best as we can," he told reporters, adding "The UN has to appreciate that we are a country of limited resources and we have a lot of competing interest to attract our attention for resources.

"So, we are doing what we can within the limits of our resources and so we hear them and we understand what they're saying, but we also have other responsibilities to discharge and that requires resources and we have to be able to share those resources effortlessly across the spectrum where the needs are most crucial and urgent."

Soon after the release of the report, National Security Minister, Wayne Munroe,

in criticising the document WGAD report, said the experts did not provide proof of many of their accusations about the country's criminal justice system.

Munroe said he found the report alarming, adding that it had inconsistencies.

"This report says that the evidential threshold to prove that a confession was a result of ill-treatment is high. The group reports that an accused has to prove that he was beaten.

"That is not the law in this country as you all know. The law in this country is that we must prove beyond reasonable doubt that the confession was taken without oppression,"

Munroe said, urging citizens to trust law enforcement and not the "adverse" report findings.

ICJ to be follow court ruling on Bouterse

CWC - The Geneva-based International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) says it will be present when the Hof van Justitie, the highest court in Suriname, is expected to issue its final decision on Wednesday in the appeal by former president Desi Bouterse against his conviction for the 1982 murders of 15 political prisoners.

The ICJ said that it has been monitoring the trial since 2012 and will be its Commissioner, Reed Brody from the United States, a veteran war crimes prosecutor who has participated in cases involving Augusto Pinochet, and Jean Claude Duvalier among others.

"This is the most important criminal trial in Suriname's history," said Brody, adding "that a final decision will be delivered, after so many delays and detours, is a tribute to the courage and independence of Surinamese



judges, the perseverance of the victims' families and the resilience of the rule of law".

Last Saturday night, the main opposition National Democratic Party (NDP) staged a mass meeting ahead of the court's ruling.

Bouterse urged supporters not to be provoked on Wednesday, saying "we shouldn't make a mess".

In August 2021, the Court Martial of Suriname upheld the 2019 military court ruling of a 20-year-jail term on Bouterse following a trial that had been going on for several years.

In 2017, Bouterse along with 23 co-defendants appeared in the military court after the Court of Justice had earlier rejected a motion to stop the trial. The former military officers and civilians had been charged with the December 8, 1982 murders of the 15 men that included journalists, military officers, union leaders, lawyers, businessmen and university lecturers.

The prosecution had alleged that the men were arrested on the nights of December 7 and 8 and transferred to Fort Zeelandia,

the then headquarters of the Surinamese National Army. They said the men were tortured and summarily executed.

Bouterse told the meeting that he hopes that the judges will use their common sense on Wednesday, maintaining that his case is a political one, and pointing an accusing finger at the Netherlands.

"Free Bouta! Free Bouta!" supporters shouted with Bouterse insisting that he is at peace with himself and declaring his innocence in the case

"I hope the judge uses his common sense," Bouterse told the crowd, adding that the NDP would also be blamed for the present socio-economic state of the Dutch-speaking Caribbean Community (CARICOM) country, it is very important that the elections go ahead on May 25, 2025.

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were little changed with benchmark Brent crude trading at around \$78 a barrel.

As petrol is derived from oil, increases in the price of crude usually feed through to higher costs at the pump.

But Simon Williams, the RAC motoring group's fuel spokesman, said while tankers avoiding the Red Sea had the "potential to push up the oil price, the barrel is still below \$80, \$15 lower than it was at the end of September".

"Talk of this immediately affecting fuel prices is unhelpful as we are still waiting for retailers to fully pass on the savings from much lower wholesale costs. We don't want to give them a reason not to continue cutting their prices, especially at the most expensive time of the year," he added.

Mr Williams argued current petrol prices at £1.42 should be around 10p cheaper on average. "This means even if the Red Sea situation worsens, there is no reason for the biggest retailers to push up prices as fuel is still over-

priced," he added.

Richard Meade, editor-in-chief of shipping newspaper Lloyd's List, told BBC Radio 4's Today programme: "What is going to be very interesting is if the tankers continue to reroute.

"That's a much more finely balanced market that could have serious implications for the global supply chain."

But rerouting will affect more than just oil. Mr Meade said 12% of global trade was taken through the Red Sea,

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Fire kills five children while father shopping for Christmas gifts

By Max Matza

A father was Christmas shopping when his four children and a young relative died in an Arizona house fire, police said.

The fire tore through the two-story home on Saturday evening, authorities said on Monday, leaving no survivors.

Four children, ages 2, 4, 5 and 13 were siblings, while an 11-year-old was a visiting relative.

Officials are investigating the fire and have not released the names of the children or father.

The fire broke out in Bullhead City, 100 miles (160km) south of Las Vegas, just before 17:00 local time (1:00 GMT) on Saturday.

“The children’s father reported to investigators that he was gone for approx-



Five children died in the Arizona house fire - the oldest was only 13.

imately 2.5 hours to buy groceries and Christmas gifts,” Bullhead City police said in a statement.

The preliminary investigation found that the fire originated in the downstairs entranceway, “most likely making it impossible for the children in the upstairs bed-

room to get out of the residence safely”, authorities said.

All five victims were found in the same upstairs bedroom. It appeared that the fire had made its way up the home’s only staircase, blocking their escape.

Witnesses described

frantic neighbours gathering hoses and ladders in an attempt to fight the fire.

“We pulled the garage door open, there was guys pulling stuff out,” one witness, Patrick O’Neal, told local CBS News affiliate KTVK. “The closer we

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which is about \$1 trillion worth of goods a year.

“We’ve seen most of the main container carriers - these are the ones that carry finished goods, TVs, electronics, trainers - they have almost exclusively started rerouting,” he said.

Hapag-Lloyd told the BBC that it will have rerouted 25 ships by the end of the year, costing it tens of millions of dollars as the ships were booked before the attacks. However, it said new orders would “probably” see a rise in costs.

“This industry is keeping world trade alive and attacks on merchant shipping are unacceptable,” said Mr Haupt.

Marco Forgiona, from the Institute of Export and International Trade, told the BBC that rerouting would increase fuel and insurance costs for shipping, “and then you’ve got the issue that the ships are in the wrong place, the containers are in the wrong place and you get the potential for congestion at the ports and further delays”.

However, Mr Haupt said that while he expected to see congestion at some ports in a few weeks, “I don’t think it will be as tough as we have seen it during Covid.

“Yes we will see some disruption and we might see delays, but I would not expect this to be a total disruption of the supply chain.”

S&P Global Market Intelligence said that nearly 15% of goods imported into Europe, the Middle East and North Africa were shipped from Asia and the Gulf by sea.

That includes 21.5% of refined oil and more than 13% of crude oil.

A rise in oil prices can lead to higher inflation, which measures the pace of price rises. Inflation has been falling in the UK and is currently 4.6%.

New figures out on Wednesday will show whether it has continued to drop but, at the current level, it is still more than twice the Bank of England’s 2% target. The Bank has, until recent months, been raising interest rates to cool inflation.

Colorado Supreme Court kicks Trump off ballot

By Madeline Halpert

Colorado's Supreme Court has removed Donald Trump from the 2024 presidential ballot, citing an insurrection clause in the US Constitution.

In a landmark decision that upends the White House race, the court ruled 4-3 that Mr Trump is not an eligible candidate because of section 3 of the 14th Amendment.

But the decision has been placed on hold pending appeal next month.

Several attempts to kick Mr Trump off the ballot in other states have failed.

Tuesday's decision does not apply to states outside of Colorado.

"We conclude that because President Trump is disqualified from holding the office of President under Section Three, it would be a wrongful act under the Election Code for the Secretary to list President Trump as a candidate on the presidential primary ballot," the Colorado Supreme Court wrote in its ruling.

The decision reverses an earlier one from a Colorado judge, who ruled that



the 14th Amendment's insurrection ban did not apply to presidents because the section does not explicitly name them.

That same lower court judge also found that Mr Trump had participated in an insurrection on the day of the US Capitol riot in 2021 when supporters of his stormed Congress as lawmakers were certifying President Joe Biden's election victory.

In a statement, Steven Cheung, a spokesman for the Trump campaign, called the ruling "completely flawed".

"Democrat Party lead-

ers are in a state of paranoia over the growing, dominant lead President Trump has amassed in the polls," Mr Cheung said.

"They have lost faith in the failed Biden presidency and are now doing everything they can to stop the American voters from throwing them out of office next November."

Mr Cheung added that Mr Trump's legal team would "swiftly file an appeal" to the US Supreme Court.

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), a watchdog

group that brought the case, lauded the ruling.

"It is not only historic and justified, but is necessary to protect the future of democracy in our country," the group's president, Noah Bookbinder, said in a statement.

Similar lawsuits in New Hampshire, Minnesota and Michigan have failed.

The 14th Amendment was ratified after the American Civil War. Its Section 3 was deployed to block secessionists from returning to previous government roles once southern states re-joined the Union.

It has been used against the likes of Confederate president Jefferson Davis and his vice-president Alexander Stephens, both of whom had served in Congress, but has seldom been invoked since.

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got to the door there was smoke starting to come into the garage and choking people out."

The neighbours were unaware that anyone was inside the home, he added. If they had known, he said they would have

attempted a rescue. Police say there were no adults home when the fire started.

A vigil is planned in a local park for Wednesday night, and a GoFundMe drive has raised over \$14,000 (£11,000) as of Tuesday to help the families cover funeral expenses.

RCB shell out US\$1.4 million for Joseph at IPL Auction

In a groundbreaking move during the auction for the 2024 edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL), Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) secured the services of Antigua and West Indies pacer Alzarri Joseph for an impressive sum of INR (Indian Rupees) 11.50 crore (US\$1.4 million) in Dubai on Tuesday.

The acquisition marked a significant milestone as Joseph emerged as the franchise's first pick in the auction, underlining the team's strategic approach to bolstering its bowling prowess. The speedster's addition to the RCB roster is expected to bring a dynamic and potent dimension to their bowling attack.

Joseph holds the record for the best bowling figures in the IPL. Back in 2019, he finished with figures of six wickets for 12 runs in 3.4 overs while playing for Mumbai Indians (MI) in their match against the Sunrisers at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad.

In 19 matches in the IPL, Joseph picked up 20 wickets at an economy rate of 9.19. He was with the Gujarat Titans (GT) before making a move to RCB.

Joseph's previous stint with the Gujarat Titans, from whom he was released ahead of the auction, did little to diminish his appeal,

and his skill set in the fast bowling department made him a prime target for the Bangalore-based side.

As RCB looks to make a strong impact in the upcoming IPL season, the inclusion of Joseph is expected to play a pivotal role in their quest for success.

Joseph's performance for the Titans in the IPL 2023 season was below expectations. In the seven games he featured in, he managed to secure only seven wickets, falling short of the kind of prolific performance one would expect from a player of his caliber.

Adding to the concerns was Joseph's relatively high economy rate, standing at 9.38, which suggested that he conceded runs at a pace that could be deemed expensive in the T20 format.

Joseph recently played three T20Is against England after which he has been rested for the last two matches of the series. The pacer will now be getting ready for the Test series against Australia early next year.

Meanwhile, Australia's fast bowlers Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins have become the most expensive players ever sold at the Indian Premier League auction, smashing the record held by England all-rounder Sam Curran.

Starc has not played in the IPL since 2015 and the



Fast bowler Alzarri Joseph left-arm quick's return to the fray drew a bidding war that ended in an unprecedented bid of £2.34million (24.75 crore rupees) from Kolkata Knight Riders.

Cummins had earlier been picked up by Sunrisers Hyderabad for just under £2million (20.5 crore), with both fees eclipsing the £1.77m Punjab Kings paid for Curran last year. Starc and Cummins had both signed up with a base price of less than £200,000.

Cummins is making

his comeback to the tournament after a one-year absence to focus on his international commitments, during which he has captained Australia to glory in the World Test Championship and 50-over World Cup on Indian soil.

While those successes placed a premium on the available Australian talent, England's terrible World Cup campaign saw their stock fall on the trading floor in Dubai.

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All Saints United and English Harbour get wins in ABFA's leagues

All Saints United and English Harbour recorded wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) domestic league competitions on Monday.

All Saints won for the second time in as many games in the Premier Division. They cruised to a 3-1 victory against Parham in the last match of the third round of the Premier League at the ABFA Technical Center.

Zafique Drew scored in the 22nd minute, Malcolm Stewart had a 34th-minute conversion, and Blake Thompson scored in the 65th minute for All Saints United.

Dennie Henry scored in the 40th minute for Parham, who remain winless and without a point after losing for the third time in as many outings.

English Harbour moved to the top of the ABFA's Second Division by recording a 3-0 victory against ABAYA at the English Harbour playing field.

Shea Walsh scored twice



Players of the English Harbour football team. (File photo)

with conversions in the 4th and 30th minutes, and Jaquon Watts scored in the 12th minute to propel English Harbour to their third win in four matches.

The result ensured English Harbour remained unbeaten and advanced to the top of the standings with 10 points, one more than Freemans Village in second place.

ABAYA remains on three points after suffering

their second loss in three matches.

The Second Division will continue with four matches across the island today at 4:30 pm.

Celtics will host Bethesda/Christian Hill at Radio Range in Ottos; Earthquakes will meet Real Blizzard at New Winthorpes; Freemans Village will host CPTSA Wings at Freemans Village; and FC Master Ballers will meet TAMO FC at Golden

Grove.

Four Second Division matches are also scheduled for Thursday at 4:30 pm.

Young Warrior will entertain Glanvilles at Buckleys, Sea View Farm will host Golden Grove at Sea View Farm, Urlings will meet Blackburn Palace at the Princess Margaret School playing field, and JSC Progressors will tackle Belmont FC at the ABFA Technical Center.

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Veteran Chris Woakes landed a deal worth a fraction under £400,000 as he joined team-mates Curran and Liam Livingstone at Punjab Kings, while Harry Brook was snapped up for around £380,000 by Delhi Capitals.

Brook had been released after one season of a £1.3m deal with Sunrisers and the Yorkshireman settled for a healthy but much-reduced payday.

He hit one superb century in his first IPL campaign, but was otherwise badly short of runs with just 190 in 11 matches.

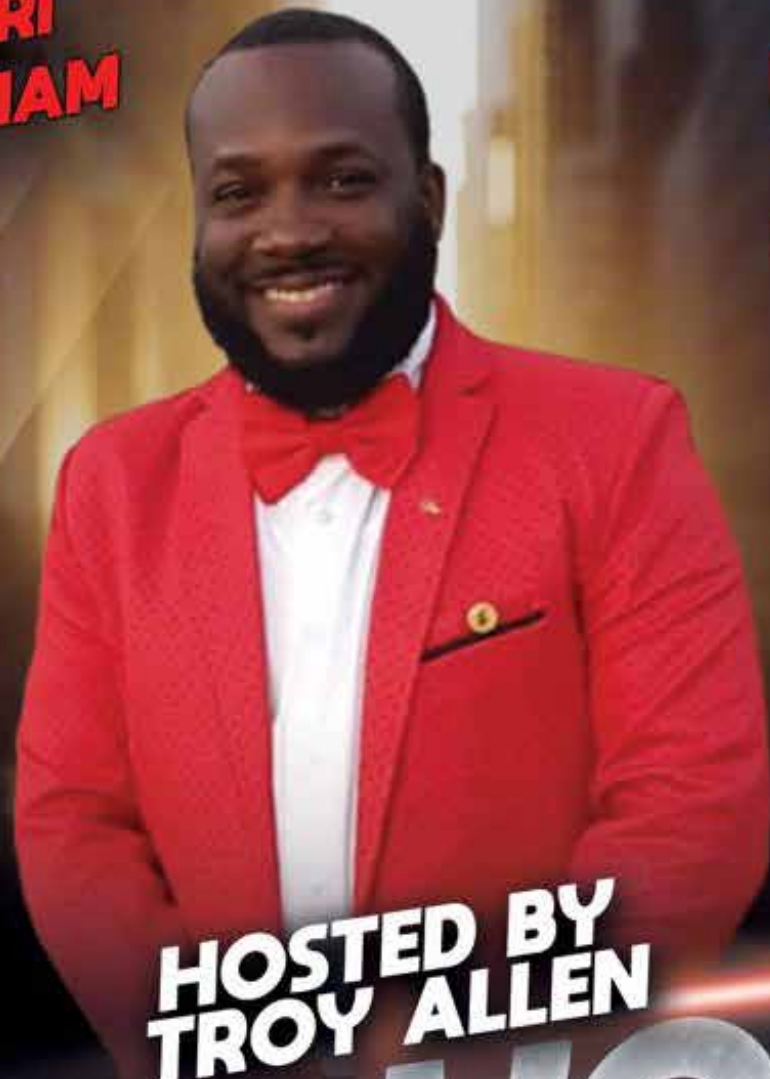
Sunrisers also splurged on another Australian, Travis Head, who capped a stellar year with a match-winning 137 in the World Cup final in Ahmedabad. He cost around £645,000 (6.8 crore) as he returned to the tournament for the first time since 2017.

West Indies T20 captain Rovman

Powell was the first player to go under the hammer at the event in Dubai and fetched a surprisingly lavish £700,000 bid from Rajasthan Royals, while New Zealand all-rounder Daryl Mitchell scooped the biggest cheque of his career when he went to Chennai Super Kings for £1.3million.

CSK also signed Mitchell's fellow Kiwi Rachin Ravindra, the breakout star of the World Cup, for a modest £170,000.

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Man City outclass Urawa Red Diamonds to reach Club World Cup final

JEDDAH (Reuters) - Manchester City outclassed Urawa Red Diamonds in a 3-0 victory in the King Abdullah Sports City stadium on Tuesday to set up a Club World Cup final showdown against Brazilian side Fluminense.

European champions City were frustrated by a well-organised Japanese side during the opening half but took the lead with an own goal by Marius Hoibraten in stoppage time.

Mateo Kovacic made it 2-0 in the 52nd minute with his first goal since joining City from Chelsea and Bernardo Silva's deflected shot a few minutes later meant City could play the rest of the game in cruise control.

Pep Guardiola's City, who had won only three of their previous eight games in all competitions, are looking to become the fourth English club to win the title after Manchester United, Liverpool and Chelsea.

They will start as heavy favourites in Friday's final against Copa Libertadores champions Fluminense who on Monday beat Egypt's Al-Ahly 2-0.

City have suffered some domestic wobbles



Manchester City players celebrate after Mateo Kovacic scored their second goal during the Soccer Club World Cup semifinal soccer match between Urawa Reds and Manchester City FC at King Abdullah Sports City Stadium in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Tuesday, Dec. 19, 2023. (AP)

of late and have slipped off the pace in the Premier League in their quest for a fourth successive title.

But even with Erling Haaland still missing and Guardiola shuffling his pack after Saturday's 2-2 draw with Crystal Palace, they had far too much for the J1 League side.

The Diamonds' game-plan was obvious as they packed their defence and midfield to create a red wall in front of their goal and it worked well as City struggled to find openings.

Despite barely getting out of their own half they almost made it to halftime on level terms but were undone as Matheus Nunes finally found some space and his low cross was intercepted by Hoibraten, who steered the ball into his own goal.

The game opened up in the second half with Diamonds showing a little more adventure but it made it easy for City. Kovacic, twice a winner of the competition with Real Madrid and once with Chelsea, was

sent clear and he surged away before smashing a shot high past Shusaku Nishikawa.

City wrapped it up when Nishikawa made a fine save but the ball fell to Bernardo Silva whose shot took a nick off Hoibraten and went just inside the post.

All that was left then for City was to make sure of a first clean sheet since Nov. 7. Urawa Red Diamonds will face Al-Ahly in the third-placed playoff on Friday.



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De Zorzi ton guides South Africa to win over India

PORT ELIZABETH (Reuters) - Left-handed opener Tony de Zorzi scored a career-best unbeaten 119 from 122 balls to lead South Africa to an emphatic eight-wicket win over India in the second One-Day International at St. George's Park on Tuesday and level the three-match series at 1-1.

South Africa won the toss and sent India into bat, restricting the visitors to 211 all out in 46.2 overs on a wicket that was not easy to score on.

They chased down their target with 45 deliveries remaining to set up a series decider in Paarl on Thursday.

De Zorzi, 26, playing in his fourth ODI and a replacement for Quinton de Kock at the top of the order, started cautiously before taking the attack to the tourists as he put on 130 for the first wicket with Reeza Hendricks, who scored a more sedate 52 from 81 balls.

The rate accelerated in a second wicket stand of 76 with Rassie van der Dussen (36) as India's bowling attack failed to apply the same pressure

with the ball as their hosts.

India had skittled South Africa for 116 in the first game of the series in Johannesburg on Sunday, the latter's lowest ever score on home soil, as the visitors won comfortably by eight wickets.

They looked set for a competitive total in Gqeberha when they reached 114 for two, but lost their last eight wickets for the addition of 97 runs as South Africa put the squeeze on the scoring rate.

Seamer Nandre Burger took three for 30 in 10 overs, with Beuran Hendricks (2-34), in the side for the injured all-rounder Andile Phehlukwayo, also among the wickets in his first ODI since April 2021.

India opening batter Sai Sudharsan followed up his unbeaten half-century on debut with a fluent 62 from 83 balls, while captain KL Rahul scored 56 from 64 balls. They were the only two innings of any substance.

Both sides have rested key players with a two-match Test series to follow, starting in Pretoria on Dec. 26.



South Africa's Tony de Zorzi celebrates after scoring a 100 runs during the second One Day International cricket match between South Africa and India at the St George's Park in Gqeberha, South Africa, Tuesday, Dec. 19, 2023. (AP)

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pare a study for me, showing what the economic benefit of a CPL team in the OECS is likely to be," Minister Matthew said.

"I will share with you the number, and I want people to recognize that you cannot measure the economic benefits of Carnival based on how many people buy a ticket to attend a show, and you cannot base the economic benefits of cricket on how many people come through the gates.

"The study was done based on what has happened with the franchise in St. Lucia and the franchise in St. Kitts, simply because they are part of the OECS like Antigua and Barbuda and they are of similar size, so it's likely the effect will be around the same.

"The study came to the conclusion that the impact of hosting 10 CLP matches in St. Kitts and Nevis was somewhere in the region of about US\$11.6 million per year.

"In St. Lucia, to host four games, the impact is somewhere in the region of US\$6 million. I have been told by the organizers that the CPL schedule has already been prepared. The first set of games will be in Antigua and Barbuda in September of next year, and we expect to host about seven or so games.

"This date from St. Lucia and St. Kitts is from 2015, and so it is likely to be higher now. So by simple mathematics, we can expect very

easily and conservatively to generate approximately US\$6 million per year by simply having a CPL franchise based in Antigua and Barbuda."

The Minister announced a competition will be launched to determine the name and logo for the franchise.

The CPL was founded by Cricket West Indies (CWI) in 2013 to replace the Caribbean Twenty20 as the premier T20 competition in the Caribbean.

CPL franchise to return to Antigua and Barbuda

The Minister of Sports, Daryll Matthew, has disclosed that Antigua and Barbuda will return as a home base of a Caribbean Premier League (CPL) franchise in 2024.

Matthew, who is also the Minister of Education and Creative Industries, made the disclosure during his contribution to the 2024 Budget Debate in the Lower House of Parliament on Tuesday.

“This Cabinet, Mr. Speaker, recognized that the current opposition (United Progressive Party) in government made what we believe to be a disastrous and, there I say, a stupid decision to not allow CPL cricket to continue in Antigua and Barbuda.

“Over the last year, we have been having discussions with the CPL, and we are now at a stage where I can announce that come 2024, a CPL franchise will be based right here in Antigua and Barbuda once again,” Matthew stated.

The Antigua Hawksbill franchise, based in Antigua and Barbuda, was one of six teams that were established for the inaugural CPL season in 2013. It was also the only one based in the Leeward Islands. It also played in the 2014 CPL before it was dissolved in 2015 and replaced by the St. Kitts and Nevis Patriots.

Matthew accused the UPP government of lacking the vision to see the potential revenue that could be generated from hosting a CLP franchise.

“At the time, the decision and debate were that it was costing too much



President of Cricket West Indies (CWI) Dr. Kishore Shallow (left) presents a brand new West Indies One-Day International jersey to Hon. Daryll Matthew, the Minister of Sports in Antigua & Barbuda. Minister Matthew was at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium on Sunday, December 3, 2023, to support the West Indies in the opening match of the CG United ODI Series against England. (CWI Media)

money. At the time, they were paying US\$250,000 a year to host the team,” he said.

“They decided and could not recognize that by having CPL, which was at the time a new enterprise taking place in West Indies cricket, they could not see what it could become, and so fast forward 11 years, and now CLP is now the biggest thing in regional cricket.”

Minister Matthew expects the Antigua-based CPL franchise to generate significant revenues for the country from the hosting of matches.

He said this was based on a study that was conducted by economist Peter Abraham Jr., who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Leeward Islands Cricket Board and is also currently employed as a technician in Antigua and Barbuda’s Ministry of Finance.

“CPL is an exciting, fast-paced, and high-revenue generator for all the countries where it is placed. Before taking that decision to have the CPL team based in Antigua and Barbuda, I asked the Ministry of Finance to pre-

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