

OPPOSITION BOYCOTT; A COP-OUT!

Story on Page 2



Sir Clare Roberts joins the family to celebrate Gladys Hodge's great milestone of reaching 106 years of age. *Story on page 7.*

Opposition boycott of Budget 2024 debate is a cop-out says Prime Minister Browne

Prime Minister Gaston Browne on Tuesday evening levelled criticisms on the Opposition members of the House of Representatives for their absence from the budget debate, a move he called a ‘cop-out’.

The opposition members of the House argued on Friday that they needed more time to prepare for the debate which was scheduled to commence on Monday of this week. The government moved the debate start to Tuesday, however the opposition mem-

bers refused, standing their ground to start the debate on Thursday. The debates commenced on Tuesday as planned with all members of the government’s bench making presentations.

“During the budget statement, we would have nailed the lies and exposed the lies, and I believe they were too embarrassed to come here and repeat those lies, after we would have had up to 300 people in the parliament and those listening via social media, radio and television. These



Prime Minister Gaston Browne people would have recognized that they would have been feeding the public with an avalanche of lies, so we nailed their lies and they were too embarrassed to come back here to repeat them” Prime Minister Browne stated.

Prime Minister Browne said he believed that the Opposition’s behaviour should be a testament to their lack of capacity. “If they had capacity, even if we had decided to start the debate the following day, they would have been in a position, if they were following the debates for the last several years, to do so. I suspect that they do not have the capacity, because every time they speak, they undermine themselves. It is a form of self-preservation,” noted the Prime Minister.

“They dodged the debates so that they would not make a fool of themselves and to undermine themselves within the public. They have a leadership contest, so they would not want to stand in this honourable house to have the entire nation laughing at them once more,” Prime Minister Browne said.

The Opposition’s absence from the lower house debate did not prevent the House from passing the Appropriation Bill, 2023, and the Revenue Miscellaneous Provisions Bill, 2023, which made adjustments to a number of revenue measures designed to strengthen revenue collection, reduce distortions in the tax system and improve taxpayer compliance.

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House of Representatives passes Budget 2024 without participation from Opposition

The House of Representatives on Tuesday evening passed the 2024 National Budget (Appropriation Bill 2023) without the participation of the Opposition in the House in what appeared to have been a boycott.

The \$1.9 billion budget was passed by the House

following presentations from the members on the government bench.

Each member during their presentation said that the actions of the Opposition to not appear for the debate, on the grounds that they wanted the debate to commence on Thursday this

week on the Budget presented Friday last by Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Gaston Browne, was irresponsible. Government made a compromise by moving the original debate period from Monday to Tuesday, however the Opposition were unwilling to

move from their requested day of Thursday.

The Ministry of Education, Creative Industries and Innovations received the lion share of the budget, with its recurrent expenditure tagged at \$198.6 million. The Prime Minister's Ministry and the Ministry of Finance and Public Private Partnerships received \$177.7 million, while the Ministry of Health, Wellness, Social Transformation and the Environment was allocated \$160.5 million.

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The new revenue measures will see the implementation of a 10% excise tax on alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis products; increasing the ABST rate from 15% to 17% and applying this rate to the tourism

sector, which currently attracts a rate of 14%.; amendments to the Airport Administration charge and the introduction of an environmental charge.

The Senate will debate both bills on Friday.

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Local News



Utilities Minister Nicholas: “The (water problem) fix is in!”

Minister responsible for Utilities (APUA), Melford Nicholas, is assuring the residents of Antigua and that the ‘fix is in’ to bring an end to the longstanding problem of inadequate supply of water.

Speaking at the budget debate on Tuesday, Minister Nicholas revealed that the government and APUA are implementing several initiatives to finally solve the water problem.

In doing so, the minister has asked the public to be patient as the problems are varied and will take time to overcome. These range



Minister responsible for Utilities (APUA), Melford Nicholas from the need to replace aging distribution pipes, meeting the need for increased water production by adding additional capacity and up- grading the valve system through the use of technology, adding greater storage capacity, and replacing the metering system that is the

source of much revenue loss for the authority.

On the question of increased production, which he outlined is the plan for 2024, the minister said this would require heavy capital investment which APUA does not have at the moment. “The most logical alternative is to invite partners who have the capital to invest and we have just executed an MOU with Seven Seas Water Group to assist us with expanding the plants at Ffryes and the Ivan Rodrigues Plant at Barnacle Point,” he revealed.

cont'd on pg 5

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CBH issues food safety tips for the holiday season

The Central Board of Health has issued a series of health and food safety tips for home owners for the holiday season when food preparation and consumption are at a premium.

Principal Public Health Inspector (Ag) Julienne Mannix said the department issued the safety tips in an effort to educate members of the public on the safe ways of handling food and its preparation during this busy holiday season.

“We want to provide the necessary information for all home owners so that they can act accordingly. This is a time of year when much cooking is done in the home and it is important that individuals handle the preparation aspect of this ritual in a manner that would avoid food-borne illnesses from mishandled food,” she stat-

ed. She added that the holiday period is a time for enjoyment among families and the department wants to ensure that there are no incidents that may turn the festive occasion to one of family anguish.

The tips include washing of hands before handling food, to thaw meats properly before cooking, and not to over-crowd the refrigerators thereby limiting their ability to properly store food items.

The department has also issued an advisory on the safe handling of eggs as well.

It is advising members of the public to refrain from consuming raw eggs that are not pasteurized.

Noting that eggs that are consumed raw should be pasteurized to kill bacteria,

it stated that consuming raw eggs poses the risk of salmonella poisoning. It listed the symptoms of salmonella

poisoning as diarrhea, fever, chills, headaches, stomach cramps and blood in the stool.

Holiday Season Food Safety Tips

- 01 Wash your hands under running water with liquid soap before & after touching raw meat & eggs.
- 02 Use a Calibrated Thermometer to ensure that food have been cooked to their safe minimum internal temperature.
- 03 Make sure your refrigerator is set at or below 41°F & the freezer at or below 0°F.
- 04 Dough & batter made with flour & eggs can contain harmful bacteria such as Salmonella and Ecoli. DO NOT let children taste raw batter & dough.
- 05 Thaw your Ham, Turkey & chicken at safe temperature to prevent harmful bacteria from growing rapidly.
- 06 Avoid overcrowding your fridge & freezer. This can cause rapid food spoilage. A free flow of cold air is required to keep food stored at their correct temperature.

For more information, call the Chief Health Inspector's Office at 462 2936.

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He said the plant at Barnacle Point currently has a capacity of 1.6 million gallons daily but that this this has proven inadequate, so an additional 2 million gallons will be added over time. At Fryes, APUA will upgrade the plant by an additional 1 million gallons to serve the communities and hotels in the southern corridor. The aim is to have this completed by the end of the first quarter of 2024.

A second company, North-Sound Water Management Company will also add another 1 million gallons by the end of April next year.

According to Nicholas if APUA

is able to meet the water production needs, then it can turn its attention to other issues such as water storage to bring this from the current 12 million gallons capacity (though all is not readily available) to an expected 30 million gallons 'in short order'. Having adequate water storage will ensure a ready supply of water if and when any of the plants go offline for whatever reason.

The other areas of concern include the aging pipes that are decades old and which often break due to the pressure in the lines leading to much water loss. The government is currently negotiating with the Peoples Republic

of China to finance the replacement of these pipes. The cost: US\$60-million.

Nicholas also pointed to the valve system that is operated manually and disclosed that a study is being done by a company out of Trinidad and Tobago to automate the valve system at APUA.

The metering system is also in line for a major overhaul as many are old and 'decrepit'. He disclosed that roughly half of the revenues due to APUA for water is lost because of this faulty system. This is another issue that is receiving priority attention by the management team at APUA, the minister and the government.

Government agencies provide care packages to the vulnerable

Several government agencies have collaborated to provide care packages to persons from vulnerable communities who have been impacted by the recent natural hazards that have plagued the country.

The agencies involved were the Ministry of Health, Wellness, Social Transformation and the Environment through the Directorate of Gender Affairs and the National Office of Disaster Services.

The activity, conceptualised by the Directorate of Gender Affairs with additional technical support from NODS, aims to provide additional support to persons who were impacted by severe widespread flooding and property damage because of storms Philippe and Tammy in October. The initiative is being implemented in partnership with the UNDP through funding support from Global Affairs Canada and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth &



Development Office (UK FCDO).

The activity falls under the Enabling Gender-Responsive Disaster Recovery, Climate and Environmental Resilience in the Caribbean (EnGender) Project which was initiated to further integrate gender equality and

human rights-based approaches into climate change, disaster risk reduction and environmental management intervention.

Funds were allocated to support food response for 100 persons living in Antigua and Barbuda from communities and segments of society who are particularly vulnerable with respect to climate change adaptation and mitigation and to facilitate post-disaster recovery.

Packages will be distributed to survivors of gender-based violence through the Support and Referral Centre (SARC), persons living with disabilities, vulnerable persons from flood-prone communities identified through the NODS Shelter Management system, and to vulnerable individuals living on Barbuda.



No reports of injuries from car fire

There were no reports of injuries when a motor vehicle burst into flames after it ran off the road on the Valley Church Road near Big Creek on Tuesday night.

Spokesman for the St John's Fire

Department, Insp Lester Bagot said the Fire Department received a call at 10:13 pm stating that a car was on fire in the Big Creek Area.

An immediate response was made in the No.15 fire tender. On arrival at

the scene, crew met a silver Toyota Vitz fully engulfed in flames. Water was used from the Fire tender to control and extinguish the fire.

The fire brigade is investigating the origin of the fire.

Gladys Hodge: 106 not out!

Antigua and Barbuda's oldest living citizen, Gladys Hodge, marked her 106th birthday on Wednesday.

Activities marking this momentous milestone were spearheaded by the Community Development and Citizens' Engagement Division as officials, family friends and well-wishers joined to celebrate alongside Hodge.

'Nenen', as she is affectionately known, is a mother of five; four sons and one daughter. However, her daughter passed away at the age of sixteen.

Hodge is always willing to share with anyone the 'secret' to her longevity as she is always open for a good



The nation's oldest citizen turned 106 on Wednesday chat.

According to her youngest son, Fitzroy Lake, her favourite foods are rice and chicken, and soup.

In her earlier years she worked in her garden and also as a cleaner.

At the ceremony held at Fort Road, she expressed gratitude to all who took the time to be with her on this her special day. She made mention of her children and grandchildren who have been there for her throughout

the years.

In attendance at Wednesday's ceremony were Governor General's Deputy, Sir Clare Roberts, Permanent Secretary within the Ministry of Health, Colin O'Keiffe, Senior Community Development Officer, Devorah Simmons, other Community Development Field Officers within the Community Development and Citizens' Engagement Division, family, friends and members of the Beacon Light Nazarene Church in Villa.

There are currently 18 living Centenarians in Antigua and Barbuda and abroad – two male and sixteen females.

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Hospice receives large donation from Halo

Two local charities received a large donation of funds raised from a gala held in London, UK, earlier this year.

The donation was made by the Halo Foundation, which has raised thousands of dollars to help charitable organization as well as social and cultural organisations and events.

This Christmas, the St. John Hospice and the St. John Ambulance Brigade are sharing \$160,000.

Director of Golden Halo Foundation and President of the Halo Foundation, Lady Sandra Williams, recently presented both organisations with the funds which were raised at this year's Wings of Charity gala, held annually in London.

Lady Williams said, "It is important that we continue to contribute to wor-



Lady Williams presents a cheque to representative of the St. John Hospice, Charlene Selkridge, at Government House.

thy causes. It is much more practical for us to highlight existing charities that are doing great work, as opposed to reinventing the wheel. 2024 will see height-

ened efforts by Halo to address the requests of those in need."

The St. John Hospice states as its ultimate goal "to make the final days of

a terminally ill patient as comfortable as possible, together with helping their family members cope with the stress of caring and the inevitable loss".

Recall of Antigua and Barbuda Machine Readable Passport extends indefinitely

The Passport and Citizenship Division of Antigua and Barbuda has announced that through a decision of the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda, it has extended the deadline for the mandatory recall period for all Antigua and Barbuda Machine Readable Passports indefinitely.

The decision was taken in light of the continuing impact of global events on the ability of citizens here and abroad to meet the previous deadline

of 31 December 2023.

All citizens of Antigua and Barbuda with a Machine-Readable passport are advised that the document remains valid until its expiration. The passport office will continue to issue ePassports to new applicants and persons with expired passports. The new Antigua and Barbuda ePassport was introduced in April 2017.

Application forms for the ePassport are available at the Passport Of-

fice, Queen Elizabeth Highway, the Antigua and Barbuda Missions in the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom or from the government's website at www.ab.gov.ag. Further information is available from the Passport Office in Antigua and Barbuda at telephone 462-0092.

The Passport and Citizenship Division of Antigua and Barbuda extends its thanks to the public for its cooperation and understanding.

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AI cannot patent inventions, UK Supreme Court confirms

The UK Supreme Court has upheld earlier decisions in rejecting a bid to allow an artificial intelligence to be named as an inventor in a patent application.

Technologist Dr Stephen Thaler had sought to have his AI, called Dabus, recognised as the inventor of a food container and a flashing light beacon.

But in 2019, the intellectual property office (IPO) rejected this, saying only a person could be named as an inventor.

The decision was then backed by both the High Court and Court of Appeal.

The IPO has argued, and courts have supported the view, that only “persons” can have patent rights, not AIs.

Now five Supreme Court judges have dismissed a bid to reverse those decisions, concluding that “an inventor must be a person”, and that an AI cannot be named as an inventor to secure patent rights.

The judgement does not deal with the issue of whether Dabus did in fact invent the food container and light.

Dr Thaler, who believes that Dabus is a “conscious and sentient form of machine intelligence”, told the BBC “Naturally, I feel disappointed by this decision, highlighting the ongoing clash between human and

machine intelligence.”

The IPO told the BBC it welcomed the judgement and the clarification it provided.

But it added that “the government will nevertheless keep this area of law under review to ensure that the UK patent system supports AI innovation and the use of AI in the UK”.

Rajvinder Jagdev, of specialist intellectual property litigation firm Powell Gilbert, said: “The judgement does not preclude a person using an AI to devise an invention - in such a scenario, it would be possible to apply for a patent, provided that person is identified as the inventor. The judgement alludes that had this been the scenario it had been asked to consider, the outcome may have been different.”

Dr Thaler also argued that he was entitled to patents for Dabus inventions as the AI’s owner, but this was rejected.

A different decision could have caused “headaches for companies using [AI] software to innovate as they may not be the owner of the patent”, Diego Black, from European intellectual property firm Withers and Rogers, told the BBC.

Simon Barker, of law firm Freeths, said the judgement raised “interesting policy questions” about



how governments might look to change laws in the future as AI advances.

“There are similar debates in other areas of intellectual property rights too. Copyright in AI-generated works, for example. Is the programmer of the AI the creator, or the user who is responsible for prompting the machine? And what if it really is just the machine itself, like Dr Thaler claimed of Dabus?”

But Professor Ryan Abbott of the University of Surrey who represented Dr Thaler in the case said the decision implied that “AI, at best, can be a ‘highly sophisticated tool’ that can be used by people who invent.

“This affects the meaning of an “inventor” under UK patent law, and to be an inventor, one need not make the creative leap behind the invention, as had been previously assumed. Accordingly, companies who use AI to develop products will have to say they or their employees are

the inventors, even when the humans involved do little else but switch on the computer.”

Some legal experts expect pressure for changes to existing laws to grow, as AIs become increasingly capable of autonomously generating novel ideas.

In its statement, the IPO said it recognised “that there are legitimate questions as to how the patent system and indeed intellectual property more broadly should handle [AI] creations”.

In June 2022, the UK government published a response to its consultation on AI and intellectual property.

“The response concluded that there should be no legal change to UK patent law now, and noted that many share the view that any future change would need to be at an international level. The decision of the Supreme Court does not alter that conclusion,” the IPO wrote.

Hitmaker Celine Dion ‘no longer has control over muscles’

Celine Dion “no longer has control over her muscles”, according to her sister Claudette Dion.

Claudette, 75, has shared a health update for her sister, who is currently battling a rare neurological disorder called Stiff-Person Syndrome.

“She’s working hard, but she doesn’t have control over her muscles. What breaks my heart is that she’s always been disciplined,” Claudette told Canadian outlet 7 Jours.

“She’s always worked hard. Our mother always told her, ‘You’re going to do it well, you’re going to do it properly’,” she continued, adding, “it’s true that in both our dreams and hers, the goal is to return to the stage. In what capacity? I don’t know.”

Stiff-Person Syndrome is a pro-



gressive and incurable condition which severely impacts mobility.

“The vocal cords are muscles, and the heart is also a muscle. This is what comes to get me. Because it’s (a) one out of a million case; the scientists haven’t done that much research because it didn’t affect that many people.”

Claudette, also a singer, noted that her sibling, 55, has received a huge amount of support since announcing her diagnosis in December 2022.

“Some people have lost hope, because it’s an illness that isn’t well known.

If only you knew the number of phone calls the Foundation (Fondation Maman Dion) gets about Celine!

“People tell us they love her, and they’re praying for her. She gets so many messages, presents and blessed crucifixes.”

The ‘My Heart Will Go On’ hitmaker had to cancel her world tour as a result of her diagnosis. She made her first public appearance in three and half years when she attended a hockey game in Las Vegas in November.



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Regional News



Venezuela: Americans freed in swap deal - and fraudster Fat Leonard returned

An infamous fugitive billionaire - known as Fat Leonard - has been released as part of a prisoner swap with Venezuela, the White House has confirmed.

The fugitive, whose real name is Leonard Glenn Francis, masterminded a \$35m (£30m) fraud against the US Navy. He escaped from US custody in 2022.

Ten US citizens held in Venezuela were released as part of the deal.

In exchange, the US released Alex Saab, an aide to Venezuela's president.

Francis, the most high-profile prisoner involved in the deal, was detained in September 2022 trying to board a flight from Venezuela to Russia while on the run from US authorities.

The Malaysian businessman had escaped house arrest in California two weeks earlier, where he was being held after admitting to his role in a sprawling scam that cost the US tens of millions of dollars and implicated dozens of navy officers.

Prosecutors say he used his Singapore-based business - which had contracts to service US naval vessels - to defraud the US Navy, while also plying American officers with cash and gifts as bribes.

Court documents filed as part of his plea agreement accused Francis of giving US officials millions of dol-



Francis was behind what has been described as one of the most embarrassing incidents in the US Navy's history.

lars worth of gifts, which included lavish trips, "top-shelf alcohol and wine", Spanish suckling pigs, Cuban cigars and access to prostitution services.

Francis was first arrested in 2013, and pleaded guilty to offering \$500,000 (£444,000) in bribes in 2015.

In a statement, President Joe Biden said he will now be "sentenced for his lead role in a brazen bribery and corruption case".

He said: "I am grateful that their ordeal is finally over, and that these families are being made whole once more."

The swap deal will also see Mr Saab, a close aide of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, returned.

He faced allegations of laundering money on behalf of the Maduro government, which he denied.

Mr Saab was extradited to the US in 2021 after being arrested during a stop-over in Cape Verde.

The Maduro government has long demanded the

release of Mr Saab, whom it describes as a "diplomat".

The Colombian-born businessman was on his way to Iran when he was detained on an Interpol "red notice" while his plane refuelled in Cape Verde in 2020.

The Venezuelan government described him as an "envoy" and argued that he had been travelling to Iran to buy medical supplies during the Covid-19 pandemic.

But Cape Verde ruled that he did not have diplomatic status and extradited him to the US, where he was charged with money laundering and bribery.

According to US prosecutors, Mr Saab siphoned off \$350m (£276m) from Venezuelan government contracts by fraudulently using favourable exchange rates.

He then allegedly laundered the money in the US before finally transferring it to accounts controlled by him and his alleged associate.

The US treasury department has described Mr Saab

as a "profiteer orchestrating a vast corruption network" that it says enabled "President Nicolás Maduro and his regime to significantly profit from food imports and distribution in Venezuela".

Mr Saab has denied the charges and the Maduro government has stood by him, even walking out of US-backed talks with the Venezuelan opposition in protest at Mr Saab's extradition in 2021.

The White House also said Joseph Cristella, Eyvin Hernandez, Jerrel Kenemore, and Savoï Wright were among those released.

It classes six of the 10 Americans released by Venezuela as having been "wrongfully detained".

The White House also said Venezuela had agreed to release 20 Venezuelan political prisoners, as well as opposition figure Roberto Abdul, and had committed to suspending the arrest warrants of three other Venezuelans.

This is not the first prisoner swap the US and Venezuela have agreed.

In October 2022, Venezuela freed seven jailed US citizens in exchange for the release of two nephews of Mr Maduro's wife.

Known as the "narco-nephews", the two men had been serving 18-year sentences in the US for attempting to smuggle cocaine into the US.

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Dominica: Special prosecutor for murder case involving hoteliers

CMC - Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit on Tuesday said that a special prosecutor will be appointed to deal with the murders of Canadian-born hoteliers, Daniel Langlois and Dominique Marchand, as he urged the public to avoid “wild speculations” regarding their deaths.

Two American nationals have been remanded into custody until March 24 next year, after they appeared in a magistrate’s court on December 6 in connection with the murders of the two hoteliers, whose charred remains were found in a burnt-out vehicle on December 1, 2023.

American businessman, Jonathan Lehrer, 57, and his co-accused Robert (Rob) Thomas Snider Jr “have been charged with two counts of murder.

The prosecution alleges that between November 29 and December 2, 2023, the two Americans murdered Langlois and his partner Marchand, whose killings shocked the southwest community of Soufriere, where the two Canadian nationals, owned and operated the Coulibri Ridge



Canadian-born hoteliers, Daniel Langlois and Dominique Marchand. Resort.

The Americans were not required to enter a plea since murder is an indictable offence and can only be tried before a judge and jury at the High Court.

Skerrit told a news conference that he wanted to “commend the Dominica police for their professional approach to the investigations thus far,” adding “I have every confidence in the justice system to administer this matter fairly and above board.

“I have seen no evidence so far to the contrary and I believe all involved have acted within the con-

finances of the law and with the highest degree of integrity. I urge us all to be level-headed in our discussions of this matter.

“Let us avoid wild speculation and the spreading of false information which can do more harm than good,” Skerrit told reporters, adding “I have also directed that a special prosecutor be brought in to help prosecute this case to ensure greater possibility of success in the prosecution”.

Earlier Skerrit said he was “shocked and sad” at the killings of the two hoteliers, whom he described as “true friends of Dominica,

who contributed much to our country’s development, particularly in the Soufriere, Scottshead area.

“Through their efforts many were provided with jobs and their example of sustainable development served as an inspiration for us all in our pursuit of energy independence and a climate resilience agenda”.

Skerrit said he was thankful that the government had been able to honour Langlois with a national award during last month’s independence celebrations, adding that “their generosity to Dominica and its people knew no bounds”.

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Relations between the two countries eased further in October this year when the US agreed to loosen its sanctions on Venezuela in exchange for President Maduro agreeing to al-

low international observers to monitor next year’s presidential election.

But the US has since reiterated its demand that US citizens “wrongfully detained” in Venezuela be freed and threatened to reimpose sanctions if

progress was not made on the issue.

Human rights groups in Venezuela have reacted to the news by demanding that the close to 300 people they list as political prisoners in Venezuelan jails also be freed.

Narendra Modi breaks silence on US murder plot allegation

By Cherylann Mollan

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that India will “definitely look into” any evidence provided on its alleged links to an assassination plot in the US.

In November, the US charged an Indian man of conspiring to murder a Sikh separatist leader in New York.

Mr Modi told the Financial Times that the allegations will not affect ties between India and the US.

This is the first time he has spoken publicly about the issue.

“If a citizen of ours has done anything good or bad, we are ready to look into it. Our commitment is to the rule of law,” the prime minister told the newspaper.

The target of the attempted assassination, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, is a dual US-Canadian citizen who is a vocal supporter of the Khalistan movement which advocates for a separate Sikh state.

US prosecutors claimed that a man named Nikhil Gupta had paid \$100,000 (£79,000) in cash to a hitman to assassinate Mr Pannun and that he was allegedly directed by an Indian government official.

India has designated Mr Pannun a terrorist, but he denies the allegation and says he’s an activist.

The allegations came about two months after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau accused India of having links to the murder of another Sikh separatist leader named Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

Nijjar was shot dead outside a Sikh temple on 18 June in Canada.

India has strongly denied the allegations and accused Canada of providing shelter to “Khalistani terrorists and extremists” who threaten India’s



Mr Modi said the allegations won’t affect India’s ties with the US.

security.

Delhi has also repeatedly claimed that Ottawa has not yet shared concrete evidence to back the allegation.

The diplomatic row has damaged India-Canada ties.

In an interview with Canada’s public broadcaster CBC, Mr Trudeau said he went public with the allegations against India after weeks of quiet diplomacy.

He said his aim was to “put a chill on India” and deter any alleged agents who were thinking of carrying out further attacks in Canada.

Mr Trudeau added that he had noticed a shift in tone from India after the US came forward with their own allegations.

“There’s an understanding that maybe, maybe just churning out attacks against Canada isn’t going to make this problem go away,” he said.

The Indian government has often reacted sharply to demands by Sikh separatists in Western countries for Khalistan.

The Khalistan movement peaked

in India in the 1980s with a violent insurgency centred in Sikh-majority Punjab state. It was quelled by force and has little resonance in India now, but is still popular among some in the Sikh diaspora in countries such as Canada, Australia and the UK.

Experts say that the recent accusations of extra-judicial killings of Sikh separatists threaten to dent India’s ties with the US, which have been steadily growing.

However, Mr Modi told the Financial Times that he feels confident about the upward trajectory of the relationship.

“There is strong bipartisan support for the strengthening of this relationship, which is a clear indicator of a mature and stable partnership,” he said.

“I don’t think it is appropriate to link a few incidents with diplomatic relations between the two countries,” he added.

He also said that India was concerned about the “activities of certain extremist groups based overseas”.

French court jails former Rwanda doctor for 24 years for role in 1994 genocide

By **Oliver Slow**

A former doctor in Rwanda has been jailed for 24 years by a French court for his involvement in the 1994 genocide in the east African country.

Sosthene Munyemana was found guilty of crimes including genocide and crimes against humanity.

He was accused of organising torture and killings in the genocide, in which 800,000 people were killed between April and June 1994.

It took French prosecutors 28 years to bring the case to trial.

In 1994, Munyemana was a gynaecologist in Butare, southern Rwanda, and was accused of helping set up roadblocks to round people up, and keeping them in inhumane conditions in local government offices before they were killed.

He was also accused of drafting a widely-distributed letter encouraging the massacre of Tutsis, which prosecutors said was used as justification for future attacks.

Most of those killed in the genocide were from the minority Tutsi ethnic group, and opponents of the extremist Hutu government.



Sosthene Munyemana pictured arriving at court with his lawyer in November.

During the trial, Munyemana, who moved to France in 1994, repeatedly disputed the accusations against him, claiming he had been a moderate Hutu trying to save Tutsis by offering them refuge in local government offices.

The prosecutor had sought a 30-year jail sentence during the six-week trial in Paris.

Reading the verdict, the judge said Munyemana was part of a group that “prepared, organised and steered the genocide of the Tutsis... on a daily basis”.

After arriving in France in September 1994 - where his wife was already living

- Munyemana lived in the country’s southwest, and worked as a doctor. He recently retired.

A complaint was filed against him in Bordeaux in 1995.

Munyemana was a close associate of Jean Kambanda, who was interim prime minister at the height of the 1994 killings.

Kambanda is currently serving a life sentence in Mali, imposed by a United Nations war crimes tribunal for his role in the genocide.

The genocide was sparked by the death of Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana when his

plane was shot down above the airport in Kigali, Rwanda’s capital, on 6 April.

Mr Habyarimana was from Rwanda’s Hutu ethnic majority, and while exactly who killed the president has not been established, the presidential guard in Kigali immediately initiated a campaign of retribution. Leaders of the political opposition were murdered, and almost immediately, the slaughter of Tutsis and moderate Hutus began.

Within hours, recruits were dispatched all over the country to carry out a wave of slaughter that saw 800,000 people killed in 100 days.



Players of the Full Clip A team celebrate after winning the Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Association's final three-hand competition of the year at the ABNDA headquarters in Ottos. (ABNDA)

Full Clip A win three-hand domino contest

The Full Clip A team has won the Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Association's (ABNDA) final three-hand competition of the year.

The A team of Full Clip clinched the title by winning their last encounter during the seventh and final round of matches in the Accumulated Points Three-Hand Competition at the ABNDA headquarters in Ottos.

The Full Clip A team won the contest by accumulating an overall total of 475 points by winning the second match in the final round. Full Clip A scored 87 points to beat Dominatrixx with 61 points and the A team of Willikies Super Stars with 56 points.

The result was sufficient for the A

team of Willikies Super Stars, which entered the final round in third place, to capture second place with an overall total of 459 points. Dominatrixx finished in fourth place with an overall total of 454 points.

The B team of Bolans Revellers won the third match of the final round to claim third place with an overall total of 457 points.

The Bolans Revellers B team scored 76 points to prevail against Double Six Ice with 70 points and the Ramplers with 69 points.

Triple Dynamite won the opening match of the final round to finish in seventh place with an overall total of 433 points. Triple Dynamite recorded

78 points to beat the A team of Bolans Revellers with 74 points and the B team of Full Clip with 60 points.

Double Six Diamonds won the last match of the final round by scoring 79 points to prevail against Unstoppables with 76 points and Moise Eagles with 71 points.

Ramplers finished in sixth place with 444 points, Double Six Ice in eighth place with 427 points, Unstoppables in ninth place with 425 points, and Moise Eagles in 10th place with 423 points.

The Willikies Super Stars B team and Parham Strikers received byes and did not compete in the final rounds

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Browne joins FIFA International Refereeing List

Assistant Referee Patrick Browne makes his debut on the 2024 FIFA International Refereeing List, bringing to six the total number of Antigua and Barbuda match officials on the list.

According to a media release from the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association (ABFA), while Browne makes the list for the first time, fellow assistant referees Iroots Appleton, Wasnah Barnarde, Nikesha Gage, and Kevin Peters were re-appointed.

Referee and sibling of Appleton, Ken Pennyfeather, was also re-appointed. For keen observers wondering about 2023 debutant Assistant Referee Abigail Brathwaite nee McKenzie, she too was re-appointed.

However, McKenzie migrated to Barbados and now falls on the list of Barbadian match officials.

Head of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Referees Department, Kelesha Antoine, congratulated the match officials and encouraged them to maintain their discipline and focus.

"We are proud of our cadre of FIFA referees. They continue to put in the work, and they serve as examples for others to follow. I am confident that each of them has the ability to make their mark, to have longevity, and to go far as long as they maintain their commitment to excellence," Antoine said.

She noted the work of the Referees Department, from recruitment to ongoing training, and she encouraged match officials with the requisite skills to stay on course.

Antoine also issued a call for individuals interested in refereeing to stay tuned for the next round of recruitment that is often undertaken in collaboration with world-governing FI-

FA's continental governing body for the region, CONCACAF (Confederation of North, Central America, and Caribbean Association of Football), and the Caribbean Football Union (CFU). Meanwhile, three promising referees, Shemroy Al-



Antigua and Barbuda's Assistant Referee Patrick Browne has earned his FIFA badge. (ABFA)

lie, Cariessa Corbett, and Portia Davis, are invited to the third edition of the CFU Next Generation Referee Course. The 2024 edition will take place in Trinidad and Tobago from January 11 to 15.

Introduced in 2022, Next Gen, as it is called, provides concentrated training for Caribbean referees who are yet to earn their FIFA badge but have the requisite abilities to matriculate to the international list in a year or two.

After one year in the Next Gen Course, Antigua and Barbuda's Giovannie James is heading to the Concacaf Referee Academy to continue his development.

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since they had completed their quota of matches in the penultimate round of the competition.

The B team of Willikies Super Stars, which occupied second place at the end of the penultimate round, finished in fifth place with an overall total of 445 points.

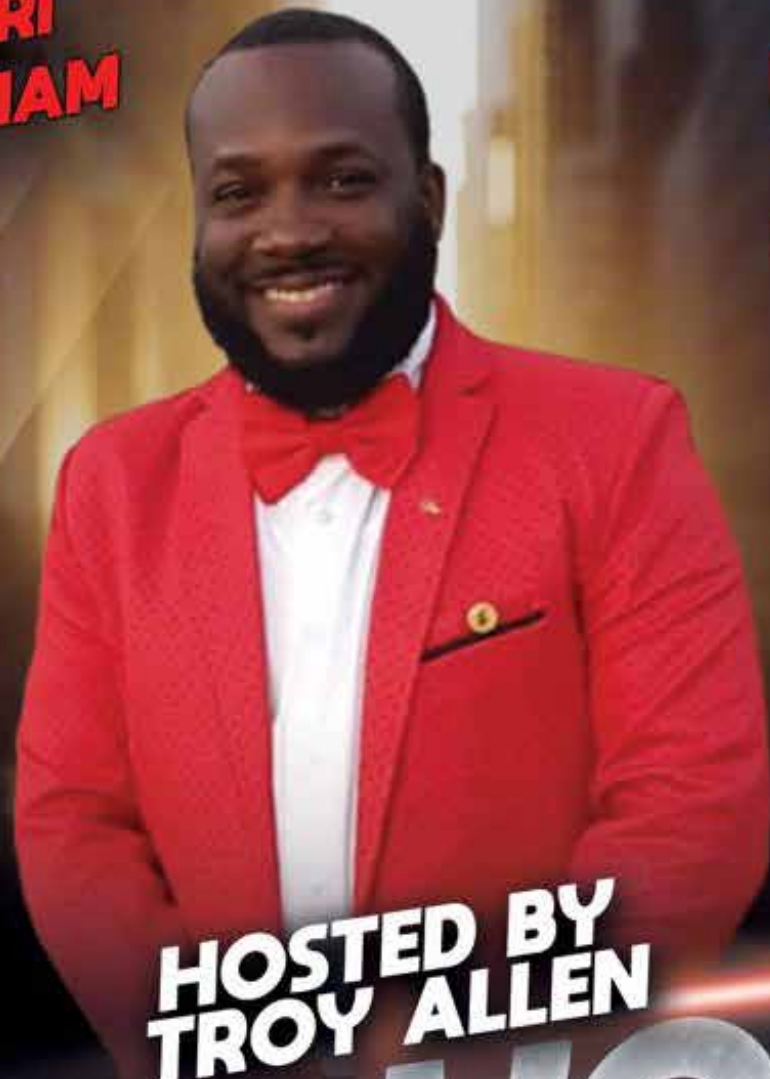
Parham Strikers finished in 11th place with an overall total of 422 points. They were followed by Double Six Diamonds with 420 points, the A team of Bolans Revellers second from bottom with 402 points,

and the B team of Full Clip in the cellar of the 14-team contest with 396 points.

Meanwhile, the Willikies Super Stars have won the 125 Four-Hand competition, which also concludes with its final round of matches.

The Super Stars won the four-team contest with 10 wins, and Everyday Service Station Double Six finished second with eight wins. The A.S. Bryden and the Stingray City Bolans Revellers came in third place with six wins, and the Ramplers finished in the cellar without a point.

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Players of the Attacking Saints football team. (File photo)

Five Islands, Attacking Saints and Lion Hill win in First Division

Five Islands, Attacking Saints, and Lion Hill all recorded wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division League on Tuesday.

Jamal Joseph and Elijah Whyte both scored twice as Five Islands kept their unbeaten run intact by surging to a 6-0 drubbing of Old Road's Young Lions at the ABFA Technical Center.

Joseph had conversions in the 8th and 33rd minutes, while Whyte scored in the 17th and 60th minutes. Alex Burton scored an own goal in the 2nd minute, and Jaheim Jeremy had an 11th-minute conversion.

Hamilton Joseph also failed to convert a penalty kick for Five Islands in the 56th minute. Five Islands

moved to the top of the First Division after recording their third win in four matches to advance to 10 points.

The Attacking Saints pulled off their second win in three matches by beating Bolans 3-1 at the Jennings playing field.

Attacking Saints move on to seven points, the same as the Potters Tigers and Lion Hill.

Following a goalless first half, Juan Melenciano converted a penalty kick in the 77th minute to give Lion Hill a 1-0 victory against the Liberta Black Hawks at the Golden Grove playing field.

It was the second win in four matches for Lion Hill, while the second loss in three games left the Liberta Black Hawks in eighth place on

three points.

After drawing their first two matches, Soccer Academy recorded their first win in the lone Second Division game on Tuesday.

Soccer Academy came from behind to snatch a 3-2 victory against West Ham at the Princess Margaret School playing field.

Four Second Division matches are also scheduled for today (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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Pakistan pick fresh faces for New Zealand series

LAHORE (Reuters) - Pakistan have given three players their first call-ups to the T20 squad for next month's five-match series in New Zealand and also included Haris Rauf despite friction over the pace bowler's decision to skip the Test tour of Australia.

The uncapped duo of right-arm pacer Abbas Afridi and wicketkeeper-batter Haseebullah Khan were named in the 17-man squad for the series, which will double as T20 World Cup preparations for both nations.

Leg-spinner Usama Mir, who featured in Pakistan's World Cup squad for the 50-over tournament in India, will also hope to make his T20I debut in a new-look squad to be captained by pace spearhead Shaheen Afridi for the first time.

White-ball specialist Rauf will return to Pakistan colours after incurring the wrath of the nation's cricket board for opting out of the ongoing three-test series against Australia.

The board later gave him permission to play a limited



Pakistan's Fakhar Zaman celebrates his century with captain Babar Azam during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup match between New Zealand and Pakistan in Bengaluru, India, Saturday, Nov. 4, 2023. (AP)

role in Australia's Big Bash League with the Melbourne Stars.

Test captain Shan Masood and batter Mohammad Haris have been rested for the New Zealand T20s, while spin bowling all-rounder Shadab Khan and young quick Naseem Shah will miss out due to injuries.

Chief selector Wahab

Riaz said Pakistan, runners-up to England at last year's T20 World Cup in Australia, would use the New Zealand tour to build depth before the global showpiece in the United States and West Indies in June.

"This is the best pool of players but we also want to build back-ups," he said in a statement.

"We have to explore our new talent and see what kind of performances they are capable of producing."

Batsman Sahibzada Farhan, who played the last of his three T20Is against New Zealand five years ago, has earned a recall after solid form in the National T20 Cup.

Pakistan squad: Shaheen Afridi (capt), Aamir Jamal, Abbas Afridi, Azam Khan, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Haseebullah Khan, Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Wasim Jr., Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub, Usama Mir, and Zaman Khan.

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deliveries and from then on their chances of an unlikely victory faded.

Andre Russell made sure West Indies went down swinging as he clouted 51 in a desperate last stand but was eventually out to a steepling catch by Brook to give Topley a third wicket. Topley claimed three for 37. An incredible match contained 33

sixes and the fireworks could continue in the decider.

"The boys like a final it seems! We will come with brand new ideas and plans and see if we can entertain our fans at home," West Indies skipper Rovman Powell said.

"We have failed to close out the series from a good position, but Thursday is an opportunity to do that."

England level T20 series against Windies

TRINIDAD (Reuters) - Phil Salt smashed a magnificent record-breaking century in England's highest-ever T20 International total as they romped to a 75-run win in the against the West Indies to square the series in a spellbinding fourth CG United match at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba, Trinidad, on Tuesday.

Salt thumped 119 off 57 balls as England tore into the West Indies attack to make 267 for three, surpassing their previous highest T20 total of 241 against New Zealand in 2019.

Ten sixes flew off Salt's bat as well as seven fours, as he hit the highest total by an England men's batsman in T20, eclipsing the 116 by Alex Hales in 2014.

Captain Jos Buttler and Liam Livingstone joined the party with quickfire half centuries.

Buttler's 55 came off 29 balls with his three sixes, making him the English batsman with the most sixes in T20 Internationals, 123 in total.

Salt also struck a belligerent 109 not out in the third



England's Phil Salt celebrates with Liam Livingstone scoring a century against West Indies during the fourth T20 cricket match at Brian Lara Stadium in Tarouba, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuesday, Dec. 19, 2023. (AP)

match of the series to deny West Indies a 3-0 series lead and he proved unstoppable again.

"I am definitely enjoying it. It's a cool place to come and tour and play cricket," Salt said.

"The boys have produced the goods in the last few games and now we have the decider to look forward to."

The series is now locked at 2-2 and both team will

clash in the fifth and deciding match at the same venue in Trinidad on Thursday.

In reply to England's huge total, the West Indies lost opener Brandon King off the opening ball bowled by Moeen Ali, but reacted in dazzling fashion with some sensational hitting to stay above the required run rate although wickets fell at regular intervals.

Nicholas Pooran hit 20 off the first over after King's

dismissal and made 39 off 15 balls before falling to a brilliant running catch by Harry Brook off Sam Curran's bowling.

Sherfane Rutherford also blazed away in spectacular fashion as West Indies brought up the 100 in the seventh over, but their chase was doomed to failure as wickets tumbled.

Rutherford fell lbw to Rehan Ahmed for 36 off 15

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