

# FERNANDEZ: TRAVEL ADVISORS IMPORTANT TO TOURISM INDUSTRY



*Story on Page 2*

Tourism Minister Charles Fernandez, second left, and other local tourism officials flank senior ASTA officials Zane Kerby and Jackie Friedman (centre).

## Fernandez says travel advisors are very important to the tourism industry

Senior travel advisors who met in Antigua and Barbuda over the past two days have been singled out for the critical role the sector plays in ensuring the continued growth of Antigua and Barbuda's tourism industry.

Speaking at a meeting of Chapter Presidents of the American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA), Tourism Minister Charles Fernandez said the meeting is testimony to the strong support which the travel advisors give to the country's tourism industry.

"This visit allows us to thank you personally for being our partners and, as importantly, among the top producers of visitors to Antigua and Barbuda where tourism significantly impacts our economy, contributing over 50 percent to our GDP and constituting more than 46 percent of national employment, both directly



and indirectly," he stated in an address Tuesday at the Sandals Antigua Grande Resort.

Noting that tourism brings economic benefits, Minister Fernandez said the government is committed to managing it sustainably to preserve the environment, culture, and local communi-

ties. "Antigua and Barbuda takes the lead in promoting and practicing sustainable tourism," he added.

The tourism minister noted that Antigua and Barbuda experienced a record-breaking year in tourism in 2023, and he thanked the travel advisors for the role they played in making

this happen.

"With increased airlift, visitor arrivals and an array of new offerings, there truly is something for everyone at every price point, providing an unforgettable travel experience. Equally strong, is the support of ASTA from my ministry and from the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority. My government is committed to working with those who work with us," he declared.

Fernandez referenced the Tourism Authority's launch of a global specialist training and rewards initiative programme for travel advisors. "This initiative underscores our commitment to supporting travel professionals globally, equipping them with the tools, knowledge and resources needed to thrive in a competitive market," he stated.



## ASTA meeting likely to result in increased number of visitors

This week’s meeting of the Chapter Presidents of the American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA) in Antigua and Barbuda has the potential of increasing the knowledge of the twin-island state among a very influential group of people, travel advisors in the United States.

And according to ASTA board chairman, Jackie Friedman, having the leaders of the various chapters of the organization meeting here in St. John’s gives them a first-hand knowledge of the country, its attractions and people thus better equipping them to ‘sell’ it to their membership as well as members of the traveling public.

“They are able to get their word out because a picture or video speaks a thousand words so there will be some organic promotion of the destination. I know a lot of them will also have representatives from tourist boards at the local level so I think you will see a nice bump in visitors to the destination,” she predicted.

Her sentiments were echoed by the President and Chief Executive Officer of ASTA, Zane Kerby, who noted that the representatives at the meeting were the local leaders who manage the day-to-day affairs of the society across the en-

tire United States. He noted that there are more than two hundred meetings each year at the local level of ASTA

“These chapter presidents are going to go back to their home bases in the US and talk about Antigua and Barbuda to all the local constituencies of ASTA members throughout the US to tell them of Antigua and Barbuda’s riches, its features, its beauty and everything else about the country,” he added.

He said as an organization, ASTA supports and defends its members at all levels of government, within the industry itself and to the traveling public.

It has membership in all 50 US states and in over



ASTA representatives. one hundred and twenty countries internationally. Sandals Antigua Grande Resort and Spa hosted the ASTA meeting on Monday and Tuesday.



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The fan who submits the winning name and logo will be awarded with USD1000.00 and two (2) season tickets to the home matches of the upcoming CPLT20 2024.

## Early childhood education is in for major developments in 2024

The Ministry of Education says it has forged several partnerships with a number of educational institutions as a demonstration of its commitment to the delivery of a sound education to students in the nation’s early childhood education system.

According to the Director of Education, Clare Browne, one such partnership has been established with the Oceanview Pre-school in Bethesda.

“We are assisting with providing both staff and facilities to this institution. Together with the operators of the school, the Ministry of Education will assist with providing 13 new spaces at the school that will allow it to attract more students from Bethesda and surrounding communities,” Director Browne explained.

In addition, the ministry has also

linked the school with the School Meals Programme so that its students and staff can attain lunch ‘at a nominal’ cost.

Similar support has been offered to other pre-schools in the country. For example, the Sir Luther Wynter Pre-School on Queen Elizabeth Highway, the St. Peter’s Pre-school on All Saints Road, the Pre-School t the Simon Bolivar Park and the Maria Holder Early Childhood Education Centre located in Buckley’s where 50 new spaces are being added.

“These partnerships and assistance to these institutions speak to the commitment which the government demonstrated by ensuring that human and other resources are being made available to the early education sector so that they can provide the quality ed-

ucation that the young minds need at this point,” he remarked.

Further, Director Browne said the new primary school at Five Islands that will be constructed as part of the expansion of the University of the West Indies FIC, will also have a pre-school department.

“Such is our commitment to this sector, that we have initiated discussions with the UWI FIC to offer a degree programme in Early Childhood Education. We are also prepared to offer scholarships for this programme of study through the Board of Education,” Browne revealed.

He further revealed that the research has concluded that students’ performance increases by 75 percent when they are exposed to ‘proper pre-school education’.

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## German students undergo internship training in Antigua and Barbuda

Eight German tourism and hospitality students are currently in the country taking part in a two-month 'Practice in Paradise' internship programme.

The group of students from the private vocational school for hotel and tourism management Dr. Kalscheuer in Traunstein, Germany and their lecturer Nadine Farghaly, arrived in Antigua on January 7, 2024.

The group was greeted at the V.C. Bird International Airport by German Consul for Antigua and Barbuda, Torsten Stenzel, Antigua and Barbuda's Special Economic Envoy in Bavaria/Germany, Ralf G. Hansen, Operations Manager from the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA), Javier Jacobs, and Tourism Officer from the ABTA, Francine Joseph.

Special Economic En-



German Consul for Antigua and Barbuda - Torsten Stenzel, Operations Manager from the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority- Javier Jacobs, Antigua and Barbuda Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Transportation, and Investment - the Honourable H. Charles Fernandez, Antigua and Barbuda's Special Economic Envoy in Bavaria/Germany- Ralf G. Hansen, alongside German tourism and hospitality students. (Photos courtesy The Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority)

voy Hansen said the idea for the programme for German students of tourism and hospitality came from the desire to further the awareness of Antigua and Barbuda within German-speaking countries.

The group will spend seven weeks in Antigua; six weeks for the internship and one week on vacation. They will intern at Hodges Bay Resort and Spa, Tamarind Hills and Jolly Beach Resort

and Spa.

Follow the students on their internship program on their Instagram page: @germanstudentsinparadise or on Facebook at German Students in Paradise.

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## Family and friends celebrate milestone with 'Teacher Gen' Smith

By J'noure Smith-Kellman

Genevieve Smith, affectionately known as 'Teacher Gen' was honored on the 7th of January at Potters Zion Moravian Church as she celebrated her remarkable 90th birthday. Her life's journey, rich with wisdom, love, and unwavering dedication, was joyfully commemorated in a heartfelt service that illuminated her enduring spirit and lifelong commitment to service.

The celebration continued on the 8th of January with a jubilant banquet hosted at Avec Amour. Attendees shared stories and cherished moments that exemplified Genevieve's impactful life, highlighting her steadfast dedication to education and community service.

In a testament to her unwavering commitment to education, the family extended her legacy beyond words. On the 9th of January, a generous donation of school supplies—ranging from books, pens, crayons, markers,



Teacher Gen Smith with family members made a donation to the Potters Primary School where she taught for decades

binder sheets, folders, bags, pens, pencils, to book bags—was made to Potters Primary School. This heartfelt contribution honors her dedicated service of over 40 years, nurturing young minds and fostering academic excellence.

"Granny's impact on education and our community are immeasurable," expressed J'noure Smith-Kellman, one of her many grandchildren. "She

believed in the potential of every child, tirelessly working to ensure their success, especially those with special needs."

Emphasizing her grandmother's legacy of compassion and dedication, Smith-Kellman noted that Genevieve officially fostered 63 children, but her nurturing extended far beyond, impacting countless lives throughout her lifetime.

Donald Smith, Genevieve's firstborn son, highlighted, "This scholarship is a fitting tribute to her unwavering commitment to students' success."

The family announced the establishment of an annual scholarship at Potters Primary School. This scholarship will honor exceptional students - the top male and female students, the most in need student, and the most improved student during the school's upcoming graduation ceremony.

As Genevieve Smith's life was celebrated, the community joined together to honor a woman whose impact will resonate for years to come. Her unwavering spirit, boundless love, and dedication to education and community service will remain a guiding inspiration for future generations.



Matriach Genevieve Smith surrounded by her extended family members.

## Former Barbuda Council Secretary Paul Nedd has died

Paul Nedd, who served for four years as secretary of the Barbuda Council has died after a period of illness.

Reports say Nedd died Tuesday at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre. He was 59 years old.

Like many Barbudans, Nedd lived in the United Kingdom for many years where he worked as a chef. On his return to Barbuda, he became involved in the politics of the island and becoming a member of the Antigua

and Barbuda Labour Party. He contested a council election on the ABLP ticket and was not successful. He would later leave the ABLP and contested another council elections as an independent candidate, and again he was unsuccessful.

He then joined the Barbuda's People's Movement and made a third attempt to win a council seat, but that continued to elude him. He was however appointed secretary of the council from 2018 to



Paul Nedd 2022.

His departure from the post as secretary came over differences with the members of the council over policy. Nedd apparently favoured an approach that involved establishing a working relationship with the main investors on the island, the PLH project.

The other council members disagreed with that position and Nedd was eventually ousted.

He would later rejoin the ABLP and he was active on the campaign trail in last January 18 general elections.

Nedd was married and had two sons.

## Foreign Affairs ministry issues call for volunteers for SIDS conference

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued a nation-wide appeal for volunteers to assist with the many aspects of the upcoming Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) 4th conference slated to take place in Antigua and Barbuda at the end of May.

In a media release, the ministry said it is thrilled to extend an invitation for persons to be part of the United Nations 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held under the theme "Charting the Course Toward Resilient Prosperity", scheduled to take place from 27-30 May 2024 in Antigua and Barbuda.

"The Ministry welcomes individuals aged 18

and over from diverse backgrounds and experiences and with a range of skills. Volunteers will not only contribute to the seamless execution of the conference but will also benefit from a life-transformative experience, opening doors to numerous opportunities and connections.

"As we aim to create an impactful and successful event, the Ministry recognizes the invaluable contribution of dedicated volunteers," the media release stated.

Persons wishing to apply are invited to scan a QR Code for details of the programme and the critical roles of the volunteer in the making of a successful conference.







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# Technology



## New material found by AI could reduce lithium use in batteries

By Shiona McCallum

A brand new substance, which could reduce lithium use in batteries, has been discovered using artificial intelligence (AI) and supercomputing.

The findings were made by Microsoft and the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL), which is part of the US Department of Energy.

Scientists say the material could potentially reduce lithium use by up to 70%.

Since its discovery the new material has been used to power a lightbulb.

Microsoft researchers used AI and supercomputers to narrow down 32 million potential inorganic materials to 18 promising candidates in less than a week - a screening process that could have taken more than two decades to carry out using traditional lab research methods.

The process from inception to the development of a working battery prototype took less than nine months.

The two organisations achieved this by using advanced AI and high-performance computing which combines large numbers of computers to solve complex scientific and mathematical tasks.

Executive vice president of Microsoft, Jason Zander, told the BBC one of the tech giant's missions was to "compress 250 years of



Samples of the new solid electrolyte discovered by Microsoft AI and HPC tools. scientific discovery into the next 25".

"And we think technology like this will help us do that. This is the way that this type of science I think is going to get done in the future," he said.

Lithium is often referred to as "white gold" because of its market value and silvery colour. It is one of the key components in rechargeable batteries (lithium-ion batteries) that power everything from electric vehicles (EVs) to smartphones.

As the need for the metal ramps up and the demand for EVs rises, the world could face a shortage of the material as soon as 2025, according to the International Energy Agency.

It is also expected that demand for lithium-ion batteries will increase up to tenfold by 2030, according to the US Department for

Energy, so manufacturers are constantly building battery plants to keep up.

Lithium mining can be controversial as it can take several years to develop and has a considerable impact on the environment. Extracting the metal requires large amounts of water and energy, and the process can leave huge scars in the landscape, as well as toxic waste.

Dr Nuria Tapia-Ruiz, who leads a team of battery researchers at the chemistry department at Imperial College London, said any material with reduced amounts of lithium and good energy storage capabilities are "the holy grail" in the lithium-ion battery industry.

"AI and supercomputing will become crucial tools for battery researchers in the upcoming years to help predict new high-performing

materials," she said.

But Dr Edward Brightman, lecturer in chemical engineering at the University of Strathclyde, said the tech would need to be "treated with a bit of caution".

"It could throw up spurious results, or results that look good at first, and then turn out to either be a material that is known or that can't be synthesised in the lab," he said.

This AI-derived material, which at the moment is simply called N2116, is a solid-state electrolyte that has been tested by scientists who took it from a raw material to a working prototype.

It has the potential to be a sustainable energy storage solution because solid-state batteries are safer than traditional liquid or gel-like lithium.

*cont'd on pg 11*

## Samsung warns of worse than expected profits fall

Technology giant Samsung Electronics says it is likely to see its profits for the last three months of 2023 fall by more than a third.

The decline is much worse than analysts expected and comes as global demand for consumer electronics remains weak.

South Korea-based Samsung is the world's largest maker of memory chips, smartphones and televisions.

The company is scheduled to release a detailed financial earnings report on 31 January.

Samsung estimated that its operating profit fell to 2.8 trillion won (\$2.13bn; £1.76bn) in the October-December quarter, 35% lower compared to the same period in 2022.

It is much less than the roughly 3.7 trillion won expected by technology industry analysts.



Samsung executive Jonathan Gabrio at the CES 2024 technology event in Las Vegas.

Demand for electronic gadgets and the memory chips that go in them ramped up during Covid lockdowns as consumers bought new devices to use at home.

However, memory chip prices dropped sharply last year. This was because of a build up of large stocks of the key electronic components in the wake of the

pandemic, and slower sales for devices such as laptops and mobile phones.

That had a major impact on Samsung's earnings as it saw its operating profit for the third quarter of 2023 fall by more than 77% compared to the same period a year earlier.

In the previous quarter, the same measure of profitability plunged by 95%,

which triggered Samsung to cut the number of memory chips it planned to make.

"We are lowering the production of memory chips by a meaningful level, especially that of products with supply secured," the company said at the time.

Samsung's warning on Tuesday comes as CES, the world's biggest consumer technology trade show, gets underway in Las Vegas.

As well as being a shop window for the latest innovations, it also marks an annual gathering of the biggest players in the technology industry.

Around 130,000 visitors and 4,000 exhibitors are expected at this year's event.

### cont'd from pg 10

In the near future, faster charging solid-state lithium batteries promise to be even more energy-dense, with thousands of charge cycles.

The way in which this technology works is by using a new type of AI that Microsoft has created, trained on molecular data that can actually figure out chemistry.

"This AI is all based on scientific materials, database and properties," explained Mr Zander.

"The data is very trustworthy for using it for scientific discovery."

After the software narrowed down the 18 candidates, battery experts at PNNL then looked at them and picked the final substance to work on in the lab.

Karl Mueller from PNNL said the AI insights from Microsoft pointed them "to potentially fruitful territory so much faster" than under normal working conditions.

"[We could] modify, test and tune the chemical composition of this new material and quickly evaluate its technical viability for a working battery, showing the promise of advanced AI to accelerate the innovation cycle," he said.

## Former Miss Bahamas Universe queens call for formal investigation

Less than a week after Melissa Ingraham resigned as Miss Universe Bahamas 2023, another former beauty queen, Miss Bahamas Universe 2021, Chantel O'Brian has come forward to publicly stand with Ingraham. They are calling for a formal investigation into the ethics and financial management of the Miss Bahamas Universe pageant organisation.

The beauty queens released a joint statement to shed light on what they consider to be significant issues.

Chantel O'Brian made history for The Bahamas when she placed in the Top 10 at the 2021 Miss Universe pageant.

O'Brian says following Melissa Ingraham's resignation and entrusted disclosure of her hardships, she publicly stands by her, affirming that Ingraham's struggles resonate with her own during her 9-month tenure as Miss Bahamas Universe 2021.

She said behind the scenes, her international competition readiness required a dedicated team, yet essential components such as wardrobe, make-up, and hair were regrettably self-solicited. She said while some provisions were made, sustainability for the global stage was lacking.

O'Brian said despite a historic Top 10 finish and the Spirit of Carnival Award at Miss Universe, she claimed the organisation offered no further support, leaving her accomplishments fuelled solely by personal dedication, teamwork, and passion.

The statement said: "Days before the 2022 crowning, I briefly shared my experience, choosing then to spare the next reigning queen the stain of my dissatisfaction with the organisation. However, the Miss Universe Organization, to whom I filed a complaint, has yet to take any action. I urge them,



Miss Bahamas Chantel O'Brian. Photo: Miss Bahamas Universe.

along with all affiliated individuals, corporations, and ministries, to seriously consider our grievances."

O'Brian said it is crucial that the organisation fulfills its commitments for the advancement of the pageantry community and its dedication to empowering women.

Upon posting the joint statement on IG, Melissa Ingraham thanked O'Brian for her support. She wrote:

"I am deeply honored to have your support, Chantel! In the face of adversity you completely soared and made history for our beautiful country. Cheers to you and all of your accomplishments!! I am so sorry that you faced similar issues to my experience, it is unfortunate to say the least. But I trust that with us standing together we can be a Voice for Change that encour-

*cont'd on pg 13*

## Fuel in Cuba to become five times more expensive

By Emily Atkinson

The Cuban government has announced a five-fold increase in fuel prices as it struggles with shortages and a deepening economic crisis.

It said that from February the price of a litre of petrol would rise from 25 pesos (\$0.20; £0.16) to 132 pesos.

The government, which subsidises many goods, hopes this will help to reduce its deficit.

It is the latest measure making life more difficult for cash-strapped Cubans.

Finance minister Vladimir Regueiro said the cost of diesel and other types of fuel would face similar mark-ups.

He also announced a 25% increase in electricity prices for major consumers in residential areas, as well as hikes in costs for natural gas.

Mr Regueiro said the government would also open 29 new petrol stations which will solely accept payment in US dollars in order to raise foreign currency to purchase fuel on the international markets.

“These measures are aimed at reviving our econ-



The cost of premium gasoline will rise from 30 to 156 pesos per litre from 1 February.

omy,” Mr Regueiro told state television on Monday.

Cuba has been hit hard by economic turmoil, blamed on the coronavirus pandemic, the tightening of US sanctions in recent years, and structural weaknesses.

Last month, economy minister Alejandro Gil said that Cuba’s communist government could no longer sell fuel at subsidised prices, emphasising it was the “cheapest in the world”.

But economics profes-

sor Omar Everleny Pérez told AFP news agency that while petrol in Cuba may be cheap by global standards, when compared with salaries in the country it was “very expensive”.

He added that the new price structure would affect “the whole of society”.

In a nation where few people own vehicles, the rise in the cost of petrol pushes hopes of car ownership even further away.

Cuba, which depends heavily on imports, has suffered growing shortag-

es of food, medicine, and consumer goods for the last four years.

The price hike comes on top of rampant inflation driving up prices for basic items and stagnant salaries for state workers, upping the pressure on Cubans already struggling to make ends meet.

The fuel crisis has led to long queues forming at forecourts, which sometimes stretch for miles and mean that filling a vehicle with petrol can become a days-long ordeal. Public transportation has also been sorely affected.

Last year, the shortages forced the government to cancel Cuba’s 2023 traditional May Day parade.

*cont’d from pg 12*

ages a better future ahead for those who serve after us. Much love, Queen”

Ingraham resigned as Miss Bahamas Universe 2023 citing a lack of support.

The Miss Bahamas Universe Pageant Organisation in a statement announced that Miss Taja Hudson (1st runner up in the 2023 Miss Bahamas Universe Pageant) will be serving as Miss Bahamas Universe.

## Ecuador prisoners take guards hostage after drug lord's escape

By Vanessa Buschschlüter

Ecuador's security forces are trying to re-establish order in at least six jails where riots broke out on Monday.

Inmates have reportedly taken a number of prison guards hostage and have threatened to kill them if soldiers are deployed to regain control of the penitentiaries.

Four police officers were also kidnapped after President Daniel Noboa declared a state of emergency.

The unrest was sparked by the escape of the notorious gang boss known as Fito.

Officials said Fito, whose real name is Adolfo Macías Villamar, was not in his cell on Sunday morning when police arrived to move him to a different jail within the same compound.

A search of the maximum-security wing where he was being held has so far not yielded any trace of him.

Government spokesman Roberto Izurieta said that Fito, who leads the powerful Los Choneros gang, had been tipped off that he was about to be moved from La Regional jail, where he lived in a spacious cell painted in jaunty colours and decorated with murals.

He is thought to have absconded just hours before his planned transfer. Two prison guards have been detained on suspicion of help-



Soldiers have been deployed to the prison from which the gang leader known as Fito escaped. Fito was killed in 2020.

The 44-year-old leads Los Choneros, a powerful prison gang which is thought to be behind many of the deadly riots and prison fights which have erupted in Ecuador's jails over recent years.

Even though its top boss has been operating from behind bars, Los Choneros' power is not limited to Ecuadorean prisons. Gang members also engage in contract killings, extortion and drug dealing across the country.

The group has also forged an alliance with Mexico's powerful Sinaloa drugs cartel, which smuggles cocaine from neighbouring Colombia through Ecuador's port cities to the US and Europe.

Fito took over leadership of the gang after its previous boss, Jorge Luis

Zambrano, was killed in 2020.

While he had originally kept a relatively low profile, he appeared to taunt the authorities in a "narcocorrido", a ballad praising his criminal exploits, released in September.

In the video, two singers and Fito's daughter croon about the boss's dedication to his family and those who are loyal to him, insisting that he gets "a bad press".

The slick recording, taken in defiance of a ban on electronic devices in jail, also shows Fito in the prison courtyard relaxing with fellow inmates and petting a fighting cockerel.

His escape is a blow to the government of President Noboa, who was sworn in in November after winning an election tarnished by the assassination of presidential candidate Fernando Villavi-

cencio.

Villavicencio had reported receiving death threats from Fito just days before he was shot dead while leaving a campaign rally in the capital Quito.

Mr Noboa declared a two-month-long nationwide state of emergency on Monday as well as a nightly curfew in an attempt to curb the violence which has erupted in the aftermath of Fito's escape.

A search is under way for three police officers who were seized while on duty in the city of Machala by men driving an unmarked car. Another officer was abducted in the capital, Quito.

There have also been reports of a number of explosions in the city of Cuenca, with pamphlets dropped near the scene demanding "an end to [prison] transfers".

## Bail for Tupac Shakur murder suspect set at \$750,000

By Madeline Halpert  
A former gang leader suspected of killing rapper Tupac Shakur can be released on house arrest before his June trial, a judge has said.

Clark County District Court Judge Carli Kierny on Tuesday set the bail for Duane “Keffe D” Davis at \$750,000 (£590,000).

Mr Davis, 60, was charged in September in the murder of Shakur, who was 25 when he was shot in a drive-by in Las Vegas in 1996.

He has pleaded not guilty.

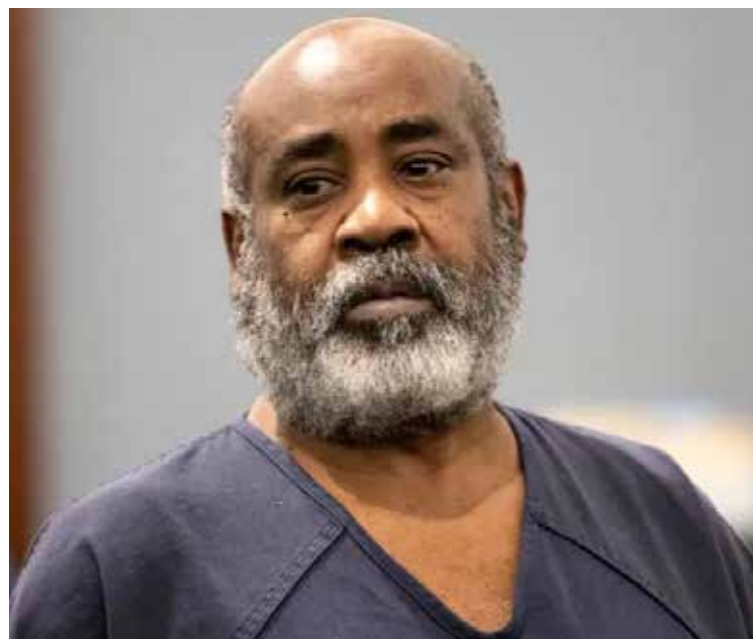
During the Tuesday hearing, which Mr Davis attended, his court-appointed attorneys argued he should be released because he is a grandfather and that no evidence suggests he would flee before trial, news outlet KLEW reported.

They also said their client is in declining health following a battle with cancer.

His lawyers asked for bail to be set at around \$100,000.

Prosecutors claimed Mr Davis posed a danger to the public as a former gang leader.

Judge Kierny said that,



Duane “Keffe D” Davis has pleaded not guilty in the murder of Tupac Shakur.

while Mr Davis has not tried to flee, his time in a gang played a role in the bail decision.

“There are lots of people who are still scared of him,” Judge Kierny said.

Mr Davis is accused of planning the 7 September 1996 shooting with his nephew, Orlando Anderson, following a fight with Shakur in a casino.

Officials have shared security footage in which several men are seen kicking and punching Anderson. They allege the altercation ultimately led to the retaliatory shooting of Shakur as he was waiting in his car at a red light.

The hip-hop legend died in hospital a few days later.

Police also said that Mr Davis got the gun from an unnamed associate, and

mentioned Mr Davis’s “own admissions” to media outlets that he was in the vehicle where the shots were fired from.

The three men who were in the car with Mr Davis at the time of the shooting, which included his nephew, have all since died.

Shakur, whose stage name was stylised as 2pac, was one of the most acclaimed names in hip-hop and sold more than 75 million records worldwide.

Mr Davis’ arrest 27 years after the murder came after authorities searched his home and said they found materials connected to the shooting.

Though Mr Davis is charged with planning the shooting, authorities have not said who actually fired the gun.

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# Sports News



## Newland pitch gets away with 'unsatisfactory' rating by ICC

DUBAI (Reuters) - The pitch at Newland in Cape Town, where India beat South Africa inside five sessions of a Test match last week, has incurred one demerit point after being rated "unsatisfactory", the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Tuesday.

The Newlands contest lasted 642 balls with India registering a series-levelling victory in the shortest ever Test in which there has been a winner, beating Australia's 656-ball victory over South Africa in 1932.

South Africa captain Dean Elgar, playing his farewell match, and India counterpart Rohit Sharma both felt the pitch was below-standard and many would feel the venue got away with a rather light punishment.

"The pitch in Newlands was very difficult to bat on," match referee Chris Broad



The Newland Cricket Ground in Cape Town, South Africa. (Getty Images) said in an ICC statement.

"The ball bounced quickly and sometimes alarmingly throughout the match, making it difficult to play shots.

"Several batters were hit on the gloves and many wickets also fell due to the awkward bounce."

South Africa, electing

to bat, were bundled out for 55 in their first innings and spinners were not used at all by either of the sides. Hosts Cricket South Africa have 14 days to appeal against the sanction.

Under the ICC rules, "unsatisfactory" rating incur one demerit point, three points are slapped if a ven-

ue is found 'unfit' under the governing body's pitch and outfield monitoring process.

These points will remain active for a rolling five-year period.

If a venue accumulates six demerit points in that period, it is suspended from hosting any international cricket for 12 months.

## Willikies and Parham draw Premier League encounter

Willikies Warriors and Parham battled to a 4-4 draw in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division on Monday night.

Kenja Benjamin struck twice as Parham made a great start to the game to take a two-nil halftime lead in the encounter at the ABFA Technical Centre at Paynters.

Parham were reduced to 10 men in the 40th minute when they lost the services of Dennie Henry, who received a red card for using offensive, insulting, and abusive language to the referee.

Willikies capitalized on their one-man advantage to draw level by scoring two goals early in the second half..

It was a see-saw game with three goals each until Willikies led in the

match for the first time when Novelle Francis Jr. scored in the 83rd minute to give his team a 4-3 lead.

However, Parham found an equalizer via Jamol Yorke, who scored in the 88th minute, which ensured both teams finished the match with a share of the points.

The result meant that Parham

*cont'd on pg 17*



## New ABNDA domestic season to begin in March

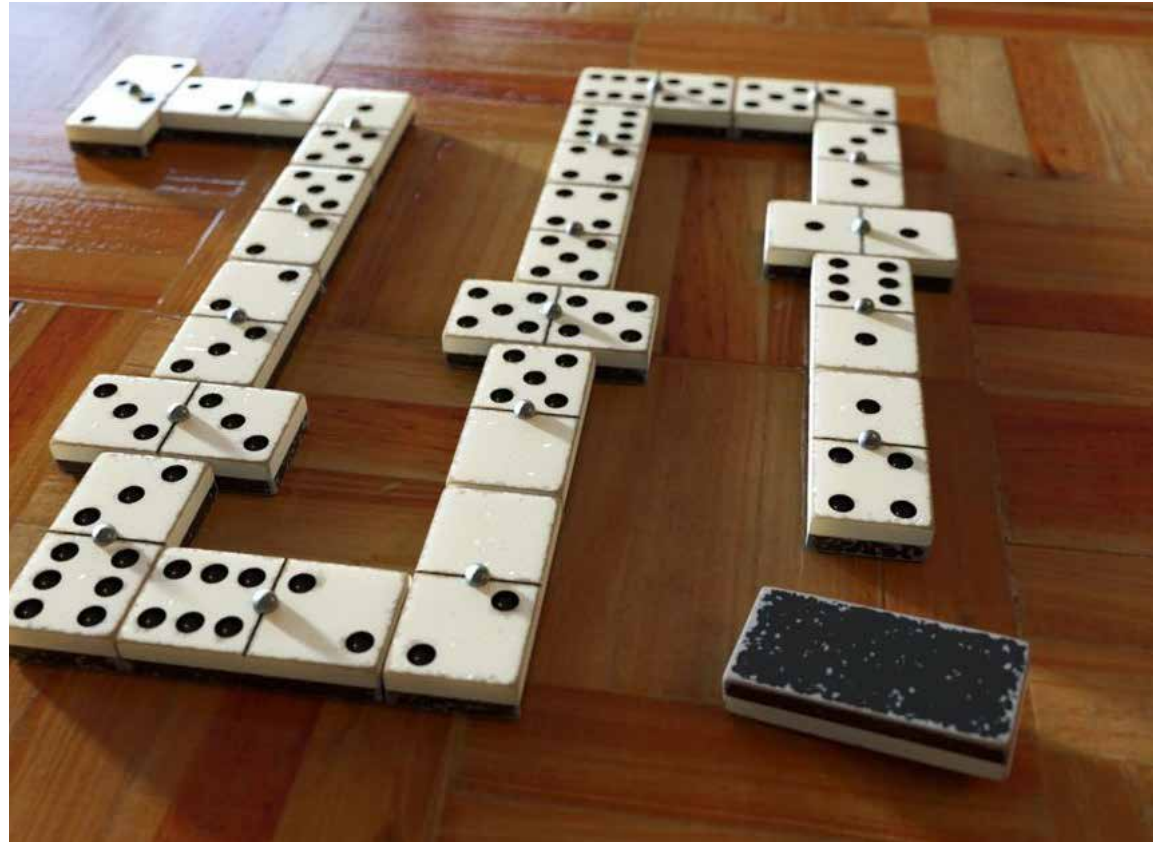
The 2024 season of the Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Association (ABNDA) is expected to commence in March.

According to the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the ABNDA, Carol-Faye Bynoe, the start of the new domestic season will commence in early March after the Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held on Wednesday, February 14, and the presentation of awards ceremony takes place on Saturday, February 17.

Looking back at the just-ended 2023 season, which concluded in late December, Bynoe said it was a very busy year for the ABNDA.

Bynoe said the year marked the return of clubs being able to assemble for domestic competitions following an absence of almost two-years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

She said it was also a hectic year in which the ABNDA had to prepare, participate, and capture their third successive title during



the 19th World Council of Domino Championship, which was held in Guyana in August 2023.

However, Bynoe said during the pandemic, many players were able to learn new techniques from online domino games, which were downloaded on cellphones and other mobile devices.

“2023 was a very interesting and action-packed

year for the Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Association. Coming out of a global pandemic, it was not an easy transition for the domino players,” Bynoe said.

Bynoe said the ABNDA was able to host as many domestic competitions as possible, and the Willikies Super Stars were eventually crowned as the champion

team for the season.

Bynoe expressed a heartfelt thank you to all its supporters, media partners, and sponsors, especially the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, the Ministry of Sports, Daryll Matthew, and the Minister of Agriculture and Foreign Affairs, E.P Chet Greene, for their support and assistance given to the domino association.

*cont'd from pg 16*

picked up their first point of the competition after losing all four of their previous matches.

Willikies advance to five points after drawing for the second time in five matches.

Soccer Academy claimed their second win in four matches in the Second Division by recording a three-nil

victory against ABAYA at the Parham playing field on Monday.

Keyondre Hewlett struck a brace with conversions in the 33rd and 74th minutes, and Michael Peters scored the other goal in the 58th minute.

Soccer Academy advanced to eight points, while ABAYA remains on three points after suffering their fourth loss in five matches.

The ABFA's Second Division will continue with four matches today at 4:30 pm.

Real Blizzard will face West Ham at New Winthropes, Bethesda will tackle Freemans Village at Bethesda, CPTSA Wings will clash with TAMO FC at the ABFA Technical Center, and Earthquakes will host Young Warriors at Fort Road.



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## Beckenbauer revolutionised game and became icon of German sporting success

GERMANY (Reuters) - Franz Beckenbauer, who has died at the age of 78, helped modernise soccer and came to personify Germany's post-war sporting success, captaining his country to the 1974 World Cup title on home soil to anchor his legacy.

'Der Kaiser', as he was nicknamed for his imperious playing style and command of the game, was for decades synonymous with Germany's success on the pitch, as player and then coach.

He amassed every major honour in his glittering playing career and continued his extraordinary record of success after switching to the manager's bench.

Beckenbauer won 103 caps and captained West Germany to World Cup success in 1974, two years after lifting the European title.

At club level he steered Bayern Munich to three successive European Cup victories from 1974 to 1976 and won the World Club Cup, the European Cup

Winners' Cup and eight domestic trophies -- four league titles and four cup triumphs.

He was West Germany's footballer of the year a record four times and twice European footballer of the year. Widely regarded as one of the greatest soccer players of all time, and by many as the best European, as a player he invented and defined the modern libero role.

Always calm under pressure and a skillful marshal of his defense, Beckenbauer could read the game so astutely he knew exactly the right moment to surge upfield.

The unhurried sweeper never seemed to break sweat as he sprayed perfect long raking passes to his strikers.

He enjoyed success as a coach while leading the Germans to the 1990 World Cup title in Italy, one of only three men to have won world titles as both player and coach.

But despite heading the 2006 World Cup on home soil as organising chief, his



Franz Beckenbauer reputation was tarnished in recent years following an investigation into a potential slush fund for that tournament and a 6.7 million euros (US\$7.34 million) payment to world soccer's governing body FIFA in 2005.

Beckenbauer, who had been battling several health issues in recent years, denied any wrongdoing and largely withdrew from the public eye.

Born in Munich on Sept. 11 1945, Beckenbauer, a postal official's son

who once trained to be an insurance salesman, joined Bayern's youth teams in 1959.

He progressed to the first team and, with Beckenbauer orchestrating from midfield, Bayern rocketed to international prominence from the obscurity of West German regional league soccer to establish the most powerful brand in German football.

Shortly after his 20th birthday Beckenbauer was capped for the first time in a World Cup qualifier against Sweden and became a fixture in the national team for more than a decade.

Beckenbauer produced notable performances in three World Cups before moving across the Atlantic to New York Cosmos in a multi-million-dollar deal in 1977.

### cont'd from pg 20

saw the massive crowds that showed up each night to watch those games. It is because of the success of the Stanford 2020 that we now have an IPL today," Springer stated.

"With this transition going forward, it is now incumbent on all stakeholders to come together and come to an understanding to make this a successful venture.

"The Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association will have to lead the charge, but we need to also have the Ministry of Sports on board, the Ministry of Tourism, the Parish League cricket organizers, and ensure all of the other stakeholders are on board."

The 2024 CPL season is expected to start in mid-August and run into September.

## Springer: Joseph should lead new franchise in 2024 CPL

Cricket administrator, analyst, and commentator Vernon Springer said the recent decision by the Caribbean Premier League (CPL) to replace the Jamaica Tallawahs with a new franchise based in Antigua and Barbuda will have a positive impact on cricket in the small twin-island state, but it will need to acquire the services of national fast bowler Alzarri Joseph.

Late last year, it was revealed that the Jamaica Tallawahs, the 2022 CPL champions, will not feature in the tournament's 2024 season and will be replaced by a new franchise based in Antigua and Barbuda.

Kris Persaud, a Guyanese businessman based in Florida, owned the Tallawahs franchise but has sold it back to the CPL. They will be replaced by an Antigua-based franchise in 2024, which does not yet have a name.

The island hosted a franchise named the Antigua Hawksbills in the first two CPL seasons (2013 and 2014), but they won only three matches and were replaced by the St. Kitts and Nevis Patriots in 2015.

Springer, who was a guest with President of

the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association Leon "Kuma" Rodney on a recent Television Jamaica (TVJ) Sports programme, said the return of a CPL franchise to Antigua will require a new mindset to be successful.

Springer believes that the services of Joseph, who is the twin-island nation's only Indian Premier League (IPL) player and represented the St. Lucia Kings in this year's CPL, must be secured to lead the new Antigua-based franchise in the 2024 season.

"I think this franchise coming back to Antigua and Barbuda sets up what is to happen in the next 10 to 15 years of cricket in the Leeward Islands and Antigua and Barbuda," Springer said.

"When you look at the Hawksbill moving to become the St. Kitts Nevis Patriots, they are different administrators with different mindsets, and I am hoping that the mindsets will completely change.

"In this year's competition, the top players in the Leeward Islands were not playing for the St. Kitts Patriots. Rahkeem Cornwall represented the Barbados Royals, and Alzarri Joseph



Antiguan and West Indies fast bowler Alzarri Joseph. (File photo)

played for the St. Lucia Kings.

"This will have to change in 2024. Alzarri Joseph, who is a household name, must be acquired to lead this new CPL franchise based in Antigua and Barbuda.

"You cannot have Antigua and Barbuda's only IPL player playing for another franchise, and I think it is only common sense that you have somebody like Joseph leading this new franchise."

Joseph, who is currently the top fast bowler for the West Indies in all formats of international cricket, was purchased for approximate-

ly US\$1.4 million by the Royal Challengers Bangalore for the upcoming 2024 IPL season.

Springer is also confident that Antigua and Barbuda will show great support for the new CPL franchise in similar fashion to the way the nation embraced the now-defunct Stanford 2020, which burst on the scene at the re-named Coolidge Cricket Grounds in 2006.

"Antiguans and Barbudans have always turned out to good sporting events. The Stanford 2020 was launched in Antigua in 2006, and we

*cont'd on pg 19*