

NEW CANCER CENTRE TO OFFER MANY BENEFITS

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Prime Minister Gaston Browne, right, shakes hands with Reggae artist Tarrus Riley. PM Browne has requested the assistance of Tarrus Riley in the mentorship of upcoming local talent. *Story on page 5.*

New Cancer Centre to offer many benefits; medical and financial

The there is much optimism over the proposed purchase of the Cancer Centre by a group of investors and the potential for cutting edge treatment that it will offer to visitors as well as to locals.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne said the group, which was introduced to the government by local surgeon, Sir Joseph 'Joey' John, has indicated that the re-vitalisation of the centre will lead to many overseas patients traveling to Antigua and Barbuda for this new treatment.

“Over the past weeks we have been engaged in negotiations with a group out of the United States which has developed this new treatment that has proven to be effective in

fighting certain cancers. I believe that have already treatment some people here and are hoping to expand their services through the acquisition of the Cancer Centre. This has the potential of jumpstarting our medical tourism product as people will arrive here to get this treatment,” the prime minister disclosed.

One of the benefits that will accrue is an increase in government taxes as the overseas patients will have to pay the ABST on their treatment while the tax will be waived on locals accessing the cancer care. Overall, the government views the operationalization of the cancer centre as a significant earner of foreign exchange for the country.



Prime Minister Gaston Browne, left, sits beside local surgeon, Sir Joseph 'Joey' John.

The group seeking to acquire the cancer centre is led by wealthy American businessman, Allan Quasha, whose many business interests include health care services as well as other capital investments.

Under the terms of the agreement, the investor

group will purchase the real estate of the cancer centre, but the sale of the equipment will be done with the consent of the majority owner of the now defunct, Eastern Caribbean Cancer Centre, Dr. Lascelles Browne.

PM Browne assured all creditors that all outstanding debts will be paid from the proceeds of the sale, including the charge to the Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank, APUA, staff and any other creditors.

According to the prime minister the sale of the property should be completed during this week. He noted that the services offered under the new centre will be superior to what was offered previously as the new owners have the resources to ensure that it is fully equipped with the latest equipment and other systems.



Government sounds the alarm over ‘price gouging’ by some retailers

The government is voicing concerns over what has been described as ‘price gouging’ by some retailers following the implementation of the two percent increase in the ABST.

Information Minister Melford Nicholas said the government has received numerous complaints from members of the public of price increases in the cost of goods that are much higher than what the additional ABST rate would suggest.

“It has been a matter of much consideration by the Cabinet that while we took some proactive steps to notify the public of the changes in the tax code and the increase in the ABST by two percent, there has been much concerns about some unfortunate actions by some retailers who have used the opportunity to do some price gouging on the public,” he revealed.

He said the appropriate government agency – the Prices and Consumers Affairs Division – has been notified of these matters and it has been asked to take appropriate steps where necessary. Minister Nicholas noted that the head of the P&CAD, Orrin Steele has already made media appearances to address the issue.

The information minister is reminding the public that even prior to COVID 19, the government has created a basket of items that

were exempted from ABST. Those items have since been increased as the government announced the increase in the ABST rate.

According to Nicholas it was never the intention of the government that the additional rate of tax would negatively impact those most vulnerable in the society and that was the reason for a further review of the basket of items that were zero-rated.

“When we engaged with personnel from the ministry

of finance, those were some of the concerns that were expressed as we did not want there to be any inflationary impact on those at the lower rung of the economic ladder,” he explained.

As it moved to lessen the impact on the vulnerable, the government broadened the ABST net by moving the rate paid by visitors in line with what is paid by others in the society. Previously, the tourists paid a lower rate of ABST.



Information Minister Melford Nicholas





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No movement on the sale of the Alfa Nero until conclusion of legal action

The government said that it has been advised not to proceed further with any attempts to sell the super yacht, Alfa Nero, until the conclusion of the several legal battles winding their way through the court system.

That's the word from Information Minister Melford Nicholas who disclosed that the government received legal advice that it should halt any further attempts to sell the vessel pending the outcome of the legal challenges.

The Alfa Nero was acquired by the Antigua and Barbuda government in a public auction last year, but a series of legal actions by the daughter of the Russian oligarch, Andrey Guryev, the man said to have been the beneficial owner of the



vessel prior to its takeover by the government.

The vessel was abandoned in the Falmouth Harbour at the Antigua Yacht Club by its owner for over a year after it was sanctioned by the US Government fol-

lowing the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The Antigua and Barbuda government successfully negotiated with the US government to lift the sanction allowing for the sale to proceed. However, since

that action, the Guryev's daughter has come forward claiming the vessel as hers and she has asked the courts to make that declaration.

There's been no final resolution by the courts on this matter.

Statement on Antigua and Barbuda Support for the 'One China' Policy

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda, from the time of independence in 1981 has always supported the 'One China policy' and has never shifted allegiance from the Peoples Republic of China.

Following the recent elections held in Taiwan, Antigua and Barbuda reaffirms its long-standing support for and commitment to the "One China Policy" which is a universal consensus of the international community, that there is but one China in the world and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China, and the Government of the People's

Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China.

The outcome of the elections held in the Province of Taiwan should not alter the dynamic process and future direction of cross-strait relations.

Antigua and Barbuda reaffirm its commitment to the non-interference in internal affairs of sovereign states as an important principle enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and a basic norm governing international relations. We further adhere to the General Assembly Resolution 2758 of

1971 that recognizes the People's Republic of China as the only legitimate representative of China to the United Nations.

As a true friend and development partner Antigua and Barbuda supports the efforts of the People's Republic of China toward 'national reunification based on the 'One-China Policy' and remains steadfast to maintaining good relations and positive engagement for the mutual benefits of our two countries.

Issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

PM reaches out to Tarrus Riley to mentor local talent

One of the main attractions at Saturday's 'One Nation' Concert, Tarrus Riley of Jamaica has received a special request from Prime Minister Gaston Browne; to help to mentor upcoming talents from Antigua and Barbuda who may be seeking a career as international performers.

The prime minister made the request when the Jamaican artist 'dropped in' on the *Browne and Browne* show on Pointe FM on Saturday afternoon.

Speaking of the benefits of hosting the annual show, PM Browne said the event has much promise for the opportunities it presents for

a cross fertilization of talent as the show featured many young local artists who he wanted to emulate an international star such as Tarrus Riley.

"It is important for us to development the orange economy so that we can export it to the world. Just like how Jamaica has done it, and they are the best in the Caribbean.

"In fact, I am hoping that we can recommend a few of our artists to you and you help us to hone their skills, even if the government has to assist with accommodation and airfare as well as a small stipend, we need to develop the talent," he declared



Tarrus Riley, left, has been asked by PM Browne to mentor upcoming local talents.

Noting that reggae has a wider international appeal than soca/calypso, PM Browne is suggesting that there ought to be a closer alignment with Jamaican artists to help develop local talent that can be exported.

He added that there is

already a closeness between Jamaicans and Antiguans and that this provides some commonality in the style and culture.

Riley gave the prime minister the assurance that this was something he would give serious consideration.

Sir Ron Sanders attends installation of new Guatemalan president

Antigua and Barbuda Ambassador to the Organisation of American States, Sir Ron Sanders was among a

team from the OAS who traveled to Guatemala City to witness the installation of the new president, Bernardo

Arévalo.

The installation took place on Sunday with representative from a number of countries in attendance to show their support for the democratic process in that Central American state.

There have been attempts to circumvent the will of the Guatemalan electorate and the OAS has worked assiduously to ensure that the country's democratic traditions are upheld.

Sir Ron has been one of those individuals who has been at the forefront of these efforts and his presence in Guatemala City for the inauguration behalf of the OAS is seen as recognition of the work he has put in to help preserve those principles.



Sir Ron Sanders (extreme left) is in Guatemala along with other officials to attend the inauguration of the new president.



St. Paul MP, E.P Chet Greene celebrates 60th birthday

Member of Parliament for St. Paul, E.P Chet Greene, celebrates his 60th birthday today, January 15, 2024.

On Sunday, MP Greene, his son, Chet Greene, Jr., along with members of staff drawn from the various departments of his portfolio and members of the constituency, jour-

neyed to the Our Lady of Perpetual Health, Catholic Church at Tyrells, to join in the morning worship service.

During the service, special blessings were offered for Greene’s continued service on behalf of the people of the constituency and for his services to the nation of Antigua and Barbuda.



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Villa resident celebrates 94th birthday

Family and friends of Lucy Brathwaite as well as members of her church, SDA, came together over the weekend to celebrate her 94th Birthday.

“We praise God for the many years that he has given to Sis Lucy and for her years of service especially in the area of In-gathering not just at Villa but throughout the region. May God continue to bless and keep!

“Birthday blessings are coming from her Adventist family her daughter Verlyn Wright and family, Richie Francis and family and all her nieces and nephew,” the family said in a statement.



Lucy Brathwaite and family

Lucy Brathwaite resides at Bay Street Villa and among those offering

her congratulations on her making this milestone is parliamentary representa-

tive, Prime Minister Gaston Browne, who she often refers to as her son.

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Tribute



Tribute to Dr. Patrick Lewis at his Memorial Service on Sunday, 14th January 2024 in the Chapel at Hampton University

By Sir Ronald Sanders, Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda to the United States of America and the Organisation of American States

In the international community, Dr. Patrick Lewis was an advocate of the causes that concerned his native country, Antigua and Barbuda.

He spoke in measured tones, making his arguments firmly while causing no offence to those with whom he engaged.

His purpose was to bring to the fore of global attention, the disadvantageous circumstances that his small country confronted.

Among them were economic inequities, unfair terms of trade, and marginalization from international decision-making.

He undertook his task in the studied manner of his academic training, marshalling the facts of his contention and presenting them with conviction.

He started his work in diplomacy as Adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1984 to 1987, replacing me in that role when I accepted other priorities.

Subsequently, while I served as Ambassador in several European Capitals, between 1995 and 2004, Dr.

Lewis represented Antigua and Barbuda as Ambassador to the United States and the Organisation of American States and then as Ambassador to the United Nations.

We worked in separate theatres to advance Antigua and Barbuda's interests in the global community for over a decade.

They were tough times. Small states did not have the prominence they now experience. We had to fight for a seat at the table of decision-making.

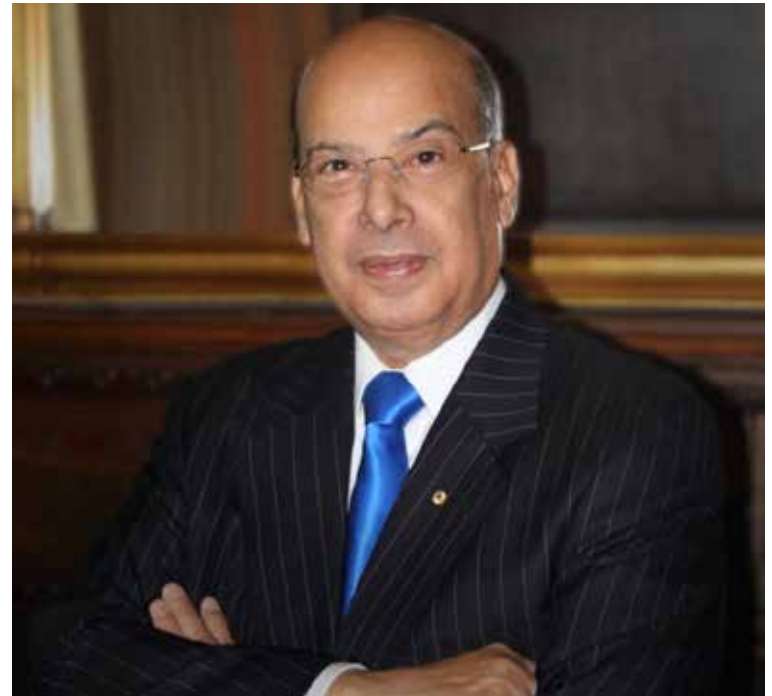
We had to fight even harder to ensure that, once that seat was secured, our small country would not lose it.

Today, Antigua and Barbuda leads in many hemispheric and international fora, on issues such as curbing Climate Change, ending racial injustice and upholding human equality.

Dr. Lewis in his sedate and precise manner, contributed to that work, and to progressing Antigua and Barbuda's interests.

I need not recount his academic journey, which started and ended at this historic Hampton University, whose spirit helped to fashion his outlook.

This was just the beginning of a lifelong commit-



Sir Ronald Sanders

ment to knowledge and intellectual discourse.

Many of you know that journey well. There can be no doubt that Dr. Lewis' humble beginnings in Antigua resonated with the history of Hampton University.

The aspirations of Hampton's leadership - from its origins as a school for former slaves, through its founding as the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in 1870, and its elevation as a university in 1982 - would have chimed with the goals of human improvement that were ingrained in Patrick Lewis.

He was proud of the path that he chose from a small country village on a

small Caribbean Island, to becoming an ambassador in the councils of the world's highest decision-making body, the United Nations.

He served his native country well.

And Antigua and Barbuda thanks him and honours him for his service. Today, as we bid farewell to a man who conducted himself with quiet grace, let us remember Dr. Patrick Albert Lewis for the indelible mark he left on the hearts and minds of his family and friends.

May his love for knowledge, his diplomatic service, and his commitment to his homeland, serve as an enduring inspiration for us all.

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Trump and follow suit

By Tony Deyal

Jamaicans say, “Sometimes yuh affi tek bad things mek joke.” This translates into “We are always joking and having a good laugh over any bad situation.” Political jokes are like that, and the reason I stay far from them is that they all get elected. When that happens, you find yourself on spit street. In other words, it is better to be discreet than talk sheet.

Staying with Jamaica, one of the Jamaica Gleaner readers was astonished by the present prime minister, Andrew Holness, saying that crime is beyond what the country can handle. However, he showed what he could handle with his supporters. After a country trip, he was quoted as saying, “Mi go a one place call Mosquito Hole; and when mi leave deh suh, mi go a Big Wood, and den Long Wood, and more places with all kind a wood ...” This is why so many Jamaicans remember the past leaders, especially Alexander Bustamante and the joke about the Montego Bay riot. The story is that, when this was happening, ‘Busta’ tried to summon his police chief to bring him some help and a weapon. The phone connection was bad and ‘Busta’ had to speak slowly and spell out what he wanted. “Bring a gun! You hear me, a gun. You still can’t hear me? GUN. G as

in Jesus, U as in Europe, and N as in pneumonia.”

I thought of this as I followed the funeral of former Prime Minister Basdeo Panday and this week’s “courting” of Donald Trump. I link these two together for my own convenience and yours. It is based on what Mr Panday replied when asked if his link with other parties for an election wasn’t “a marriage of convenience” In his usual insouciant smile, Panday replied, “Aren’t all marriages?” Donald Trump had three marriages and the joke about the present wife, Melania, is the question, “What does she see in her husband?” A truckload of money, high cholesterol and COVID-19.

There are a lot more like, “What do you call a Trump supporter who doesn’t believe in democracy?” A patriot. “If minorities have the race card and women have the gender card, what do rednecks have?” The Trump Card. Among the others are, “What does Donald Trump say when he can’t find his Viagra?” The erection is rigged! Why did Trump cross the road? To get to the Russian side. Then, my favourite two: When as his car passed on the streets and people applauded and shouted, “Well done!”, Trump asked his driver, “God, what did you tell them?” The driver replied, “I’m President Donald Trump’s driver and I just



killed the pig.” The one I like best is, “A Russian spy, a sexual predator and a billionaire walk into a bar. The bartender asked, “What can I get you, Mr President?”

One of the recent stories about another president, Bill Clinton, was that he, Prince Andrew and Sir Richard Branson were in the ‘sex tapes’ of billionaire Jeffrey Epstein. It reminded me of when Clinton, George Bush and George Washington were on a sinking ship. As the boat started to go under, Washington heroically shouted, “Save the women!” George Bush was historical and scared. He made it clear what he felt was the right thing to do and shouted, “Screw the women.” And Clinton asked excitedly, “Do we have time?” When Clinton was asked what he thought about foreign affairs, he replied, “I don’t know. I never had one”. Most of my American friends believe that both Clinton and Trump should have learnt an important lesson from one of

the earlier presidents, Calvin Coolidge, who was famous for being so taciturn that they called him ‘Silent Cal’. One time at a party, a woman approached him and said, “I have a bet with one of the other guests that I could get three words out of you.” Coolidge replied, “You lose.”

This is very much like the story about tough, old Generalissimo Franco who lingered on, clinging to life and power. Rumours of his death were rife but wrong. He hung on, testing the patience of the nation and his successor, Prince Juan Carlos. Finally, one evening after attending to Franco as usual, the doctor came out and said to the prince, “Your Majesty, I have good news and bad news, which one do you want first?” “I can do with some good news,” the prince responded. The doctor said, “Congratulations, you are now in charge. General Franco is dead.” “And what is the bad news,” asked Juan Carlos. “The

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bad news,” said the doctor, “is that you will have to tell him yourself.”

In my case, having worked for three Trinidad and Tobago prime ministers and helping others in the region, I stick with the American humorist and social commentator Will Rogers, who claimed, “I don’t make jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts.” Another, journalist Doug Larson, insisted, “Instead of giving a politician the keys to the city, it might be better to change the locks.”

When I was based in the office of our first prime minister, Dr Eric Williams, my office was just below ground level. One day, a youngster came and rested his bicycle on the huge tree in the yard and was about to leave it there when a police guard stopped him, “Listen. Today is Cabinet day and just now the ministers will be here right where

you put your bike. The Honourable Mr George Chambers will come early. The Honourable Mr A.N.R. Robinson will be here very soon. The Honourable Mr Mahabir, too ...” The boy stopped the policeman from continuing by saying, “In that case, and those people, I better move my bike, yes!”

This also made me remember Dr Williams and his determination that he didn’t want anything in his name after his death. Of course, that did not happen and even now there are suggestions about using his name in a similar vein. The one question few people ask is how Dr. Williams feels about this. One of his closest friends was John O’Halloran, who was able to get away with crimes that many other people have done major jail time for. When John O’Halloran finally reached the Pearly Gates, he asked St Peter if he could talk to his old friend, boss and

ally, Eric Williams. St Peter was not very helpful, “Listen, there are a lot of Eric Williams up here and some due over the next few years. I need more information than that.” Johnny O thought a bit and then said, “We used to call him Bill.”

St Peter was impatient, “Look man, we have thousands of people named Bill Williams up here, is there anything else you can tell me about him?” Johnny O had a flash of inspiration, “Well, he once told me, if they ignored his wish and named anything after him, he would turn over in his grave.” “Oh,” St Peter said triumphantly, “you mean ‘Revolving Bill’?”

Tony Deyal was seen reading about the lawsuit against Trump by film actress Stormy Daniels. She claims he called her a liar. She said, “He can’t screw with me like this, at least not again.”

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Oil prices rise on US-UK strikes over Red Sea attacks

Oil prices jumped by 4% after the US and UK launched strikes in Yemen over recent attacks by Houthi rebels on ships in the Red Sea.

Brent crude hit \$80 per barrel for the first time this year as the Iran-backed rebels vowed to retaliate against military action by Western powers.

While the price rose, it is below highs reached when Russia invaded Ukraine.

But the UK government has drawn up scenarios suggesting further disruption could hit the economy.

The BBC understands the Treasury has modelled outcomes including crude oil prices rising by more than \$10 a barrel and a 25% increase in natural gas.

On Friday, Brent Crude - the international benchmark for oil prices for much of the world - hit \$80.71 per barrel before easing, while US West Texas crude increased by 2.79% to \$74.03.

The UK government is concerned that ongoing attacks on shipping in the Red Sea could weigh on the UK economy, where growth remains fragile.

Higher energy prices risk stoking inflation just as it has begun to slow. Meanwhile, the cost of shipping containers on vessels has jumped, meaning that companies could choose to pass



on this expense to consumers.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said that the attacks had caused “major disruption to a vital trade route and [higher] commodity prices”.

But Simon French, chief economist of Panmure Gordon, pointed out that energy prices are still considerably lower than they were four months ago.

“At these levels, it is actually quite disinflationary for the UK economy,” he said.

He added that when the Bank of England comes to make its next interest rate decision in February, oil prices are still likely to be some 20% lower than they were in the autumn.

Houthi rebels in Yemen have stepped up attacks on commercial vessels since the start of the Isra-

el-Hamas war in October. The US said there had been 27 attacks in the Red Sea since mid-November.

The group has been using drones and rockets against foreign-owned vessels transporting goods through the strait of Bab al-Mandab - a 20-mile wide channel that splits Eritrea and Djibouti on the African side and Yemen on the Arabian Peninsula.

Ships usually take this key trade route from the south to reach Egypt’s Suez Canal further north. Many companies are now sending vessels around the Cape of Good Hope instead, a route that adds at least 10 days of travel.

On Friday, shipping data showed that at least four oil tankers changed course since the overnight strikes by the US and the UK.

Danish fuel tanker giant Torm also said that it had stopped allowing its fleet to sail through the southern Red Sea, while Intertanko, which represents nearly 70% of all internationally traded oil, gas and chemical tankers, is currently urging its members to avoid the Bal al-Mandab straight for several days and turn off their transmitters.

Currently, about a quarter of the world’s shipping containers are being diverted.

According to the White House, about 15% of global seaborne trade passes through the Red Sea. This includes 8% of global grain, 12% of seaborne oil and 8% of the world’s liquified natural gas.

Vincent Clerc, chief executive of Maersk, the shipping giant, told the BBC

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Authorities initiate search and arrest of former Suriname president

CMC - The police in Suriname have launched a search for former President Desi Bouterse who has been sentenced to serve 20 years in prison for his role in the murder of 15 political opponents on December 8, 1982, when a military junta led by him was in power in Suriname.

The Public Prosecution Service of Suriname said the police started the search and arrest for the former president, 78, as he did not show up at the prison on Friday morning as scheduled, to start serving his prison sentence.

On December 20 last year, the ex-army commander was sentenced by the Court of Justice to a prison term of 20 years along with three co-convicted retired soldiers, Ernst Gefferie, 81, Stephanus Dendoe 68 and Benny Brondenstein 68, who all reported to prison.

The fifth convict, Iwan Dijksteel, did not show up and, like Bouterse, is on the run and is now being tracked down by the police.

Bouterse and his political party, have always stated that the criminal trial was politically motivated and directed by former colonizer the Netherlands.

This was also emphasized on Friday at his residence by his wife Ingrid Bouterse-Waldring and board members of his party, where supporters had gathered to express moral support for their leader in case he went to prison.

His wife told supporters and the press that her husband was not at home, that she did not know his whereabouts and had not spoken to him for several days.

She further said that Bouterse would not go to prison.

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Former Suriname President, Desi Bouterse.

cont'd from pg 12

that “significant disruption” to global trade was already being felt “down to the end consumer”.

The Houthi group has declared its support for Hamas and has said it is targeting ships travelling to Israel, although it is not clear if all the ships that have been attacked were actually heading to Israel.

As a result of the attacks, Maersk and several of the world’s other major shipping lines have been avoiding a key route for global trade as they prioritise the safety of their crews.

“We have ships that are being shot

at. We have colleagues whose lives are at risk when this happens and we can simply not justify sailing through these danger zones the way the situation is right now,” Mr Clerc said.

He said the longer route around Africa was sucking capacity out of the global shipping system in the short term, adding anything from seven days to two weeks to a ship’s journey, as well as costing \$1m (£783,000) more in fuel alone.

Rates for moving cargo by sea reached record highs during the pandemic. Since the attacks on vessels started in the region, prices for both

container transport and that of goods have again surged.

According to the Drewry World Container Index, pricing for a 40ft container hit \$3,072 on 11 January, prior to the US and UK strikes carried out on Houthi targets in Yemen.

In Bahrain on a tour of the Middle East this week, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said extra costs get “translated into higher prices for people, for everything from fuel to medicine to food”.

“And so it’s having a real impact on people around the world in their daily lives.”

Bullet removed from child's throat in Guyana

A five-year-old girl who had a bullet lodged in her throat, underwent surgery in Guyana at the Linden Hospital Complex yesterday afternoon and the operation was successful. A suspect is also assisting police in relation to the incident.

The Guyana Police Force in an update said the warhead was removed from her throat and it was handed over to the Police. The child remains at the hospital in a stable condition.

The warhead was photographed, marked and sealed, and will be escorted to the GPF's Ballistics Section for analysis.

The incident was first brought to light on Thursday when medical personnel from the Linden Hospital complex reported that a child was at the medical institution with a 'warhead lodged in her throat.'

The child's mother told police that she had put her daughter to bed on Wednesday and while she was trying to put her eight-month-old baby to sleep, she heard



the child screaming.

The mother went to the 5 year-old and enquired what was wrong and the child said that she had hit her throat. The woman applied 'Petroleum jelly' to the child's throat and put her back to sleep.

The woman said the next morning, she saw her five-year-old daughter crying, so she examined her throat and saw that it was swollen. She then took her child to the Mackenzie Hospital, where she learnt that a bullet was lodged in the victim's neck. There was a small 'entry' wound on the

neck.

Police say a taxi-driver, 24, of Wismar Linden was held Thursday afternoon and escorted to his apartment, where a search was conducted in his presence, but nothing of evidential value was found.

The suspect was then escorted to Mackenzie Police Station, where his hands were swabbed for gun powder residue.

Last evening, detectives conducted a video and audio interview with the suspect. Prior to the interview the suspect was told of his rights, and of an allegation

that he, on January 10 at Half Mile Wismar Linden, discharged a loaded firearm with intent, and caused injury to the five-year-old child who lives in the apartment next to his.

The suspect was cautioned in accordance with the Judges Rules and in his reply he said, among other things, "Officer, is me friend (name withheld) bring de gun and gee me fu keep last night and I try to teck out de magazine and de weapon go off".

He was asked several questions and he answered accordingly. The entire interview was video and audio recorded.

The suspect was asked about the weapon and he claimed that he went at the Four Corner and gave it back to his friend. Police are currently making efforts to contact the 'friend'.

Investigations continue.

cont'd from pg 14

In a statement to the media on Thursday, Bouterse's lawyer said the former president would bow to justice and the law and, like the other convicts, would surrender to the authorities for the execution of his sentence.

Meanwhile, on Friday, Bouterse's personal security, consisting of soldiers and

police officers, assigned to him from the government as ex-president, was withdrawn with immediate effect.

Government vehicles assigned to him were also seized.

According to local reports, it's believed that the former president may have fled abroad several days ago and could be in Venezuela.

Iceland volcano eruption spills lava into town setting houses on fire

By Ruth Comerford

Houses are on fire in the Icelandic fishing town of Grindavík after two volcanic fissures opened nearby.

A volcano on the Reykjanes peninsula erupted in the early hours of Sunday, spilling lava into the town.

The eruption is proving to be “the worst case scenario” according to one expert, with the entire population of the town being evacuated.

Defences built after an eruption in December have partially contained the lava, but some have been breached.

The main road into the town has been cut off by the flow of lava.

Addressing the nation in a live broadcast on Sunday evening, Iceland’s President Gudni Johannesson urged people to “stand together and have compassion for those who cannot be in their homes”.

He said he hoped the situation would calm down, but that “anything can happen”, the AFP news agency reported.

Strong earthquake tremors preceded the December eruption in the Svartsengi volcanic system. In the weeks since, walls were built around the volcano to direct molten rock away from Grindavík, home to some 4,000 people.

The Icelandic Meteorological Office (IMO)



A volcano spews lava and smoke as it erupts in Reykjanes Peninsula.

said the barriers had been breached in some places, allowing lava to reach the town which then set houses and buildings on fire.

People who had returned to Grindavík, in south-west Iceland, after the previous eruption were forced to leave their homes once again.

Science journalist and volcanologist Robin Andrews said the ongoing eruption is an “extremely perilous and deleterious situation” now that lava has made its way into the town.

Speaking to the BBC, he pointed out that the outpour of lava from the two current fissures show “no sign of slowing down”.

“In terms of duration

and severity of damage its impossible to map at this moment,” he says.

He warned that the aftermath of the eruption could prove “fairly problematic” for people with pre-existing respiratory problems, such as sulphur dioxide, a noxious gas that is an irritant to the skin, eyes, nose and throat, which is released during volcanic activity.

Prime Minister Katrín Jakobsdóttir said the government will be meeting on Monday to discuss housing measures for the evacuated residents.

“Today is a black day for Grindavík and today is a black day for all of Iceland, but the sun will rise again,” she said.

“Together we will deal with this shock and whatever may come. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.”

The country’s alert level has been raised to “emergency” - the highest of the three-level scale which signals there could be a threat of harm to people, communities, property or the environment.

Sunday’s eruption is the fifth to have taken place along the Reykjanes peninsula since 2021.

Iceland sits over what’s known as the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, the boundary between the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates - two of the largest on the planet. It has 33 active volcano systems.



Colombia landslide toll rises to 33 including children

The death toll from a landslide in north-west Colombia has risen to at least 33 people with children accounting for most of the victims, the vice president says.

Nineteen others were injured and rescue operations are ongoing.

Landslides had already closed the road connecting the cities of Medellín and Quibdó so people left their cars and sheltered in a house, an official said.

Another landslide then happened, burying them and some of the vehicles.

Colombian President Gustavo Petro has pledged “all help available” to the Chocó region.

The landslide took place near the community of Carmen de Atrato, a local official said.

As many as 60 people were seeking shelter near a junction. The house was full of women and young children, one man who survived the ordeal told local media.

Choosing to speak anonymously to El Tiempo newspaper, he said sausage and fried plantain had been offered to those coming into the building from the heavy rain.

But then, in a matter of seconds, the landslide swept over the house and nearby cars.

In a post on X, Vice President Francia Márquez Mina said relief agencies, local authorities, police and the army had all been deployed to support search and rescue efforts in the Chocó province.

The tragedy has rocked the South American country, with blanket media

coverage and many expressing shock and condolences on social media.

The area in Chocó province, bordering the Pacific Ocean, is heavily forested and has been hit by significant rainfall on Friday and Saturday.

The local mayor said on Saturday that some people were still trapped by the debris.

Images on social media and television channels showed cars destroyed and partially buried by mud and fallen rocks.

While Colombia is currently going through a period of drought, the country’s Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies has previously warned over the danger posed by heavy rains in areas bordering the Pacific and the Amazon rainforest.

West Indian umpires Duguid, Gustard appointed for ICC U-19 World Cup



West Indian umpire Nigel Duguid

West Indian umpires Nigel Duguid and Patrick Gustard have been named among match officials appointed for the International Cricket Council (ICC) Under-19 World Cup, scheduled for January 19 to February 11, in South Africa.

Both Duguid and Gustard are among 16 officials that will stand in games during the youth showpiece which will be played across five venues.

Duguid, 54, has already stood in one Test 15 One-Day Internationals and 44 Twenty20 Internationals, while featuring as television umpire in 36 men's senior internationals. He will

be involved in the January 20 contest between reigning champions India and Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, Gustard, 52, has never stood in a Test nor a men's ODI, but has officiated in 29 T20 Internationals and served as TV official in further nine. The Jamaican will join Mick Burns on field for the January 21 encounter between Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe.

The West Indies, winners of the tournament eight years ago, will do battle in Group B alongside South Africa, England, and Scotland, and will open their campaign against the hosts at Senwes Park in Potchefstroom on Friday.

West Indies win first warm-up game ahead of U-19 World Cup

The West Indies Under-19s comfortably defeated New Zealand by six wickets on Sunday at the Braam Fisherville Sports Complex in Johannesburg in their opening warm-up game ahead of the ICC Under-19 World Cup, beginning on January 19.

Vice-Captain Nathan Sealy starred with the ball with four for 21 from nine overs to help the West Indies restrict New Zealand to 131 all out in just 39.2 overs.

They then needed just 24.5 overs to reach 132 for four, thanks to an unbeaten 58-run match-winning partnership between Joshua Dorne and wicketkeeper Jewel Andrew of Antigua



Players of the West Indies Under-19 team and Barbuda.

Dorne ended up 45 not out off 66 balls, including three fours, while Andrew finished unbeaten on 36 off just 24 balls, hitting one

four and three sixes.

Jordan Johnson (14) and Steven Wedderburn (10) also chipped in for the Windies. New Zealand Captain Oscar Jackson took

two for 14 from three overs.

The West Indies will take on Nepal in their next warm-up match on Tuesday.

cont'd on pg 19



The FC Master Ballerz football team

Belmont, Master Ballerz, and Blackburn win in Second Division

Belmont FC and Blackburn Palace recorded wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division League on Thursday.

Belmont FC overtook Freemans Village at the top of the standings by snatching a one-nil win against Golden Grove at the Golden Grove playing field.

N'Jre Carbon-Buckley scored the only goal of the match in the 54th minute as Belmont claimed their fifth win in six matches to move to the top of the Second Di-

vision with 16 points, one more than Freemans Village.

Golden Grove remains on six points after losing for the third time in five games.

FC Master Ballerz prevailed 3-2 against Sea View Farm in their encounter at the Radio Range playing field in Ottos.

Brandon Satchell scored twice with conversions in the 52nd and 80th minutes, after Kenya Hughes had scored an own goal in the 29th minute for Master Ballerz.

J'Coy Lewis had a 6th-minute conversion, and Azari Joseph scored the other goal for Sea View Farm, who lost for the second time in six matches to remain on 10 points.

Master Ballerz advanced to eight points after securing their second win in four matches.

Following a goalless first half, Sanje Carr converted a penalty kick in the 50th minute to give Blackburn Palace a one-nil victory against Glanvilles at the Glanvilles playing field.

Xarik Richards had squandered a good chance to give Glanvilles the lead when he failed to convert a penalty kick in the 41st minute.

Blackburn Palace advanced to six points after claiming their first win in six matches, while Glanvilles would remain on three points after suffering their fifth loss in six games.

Urlings won by default against JSC Progressors, who failed to show up for their encounter at the Urlings playing field.

The first win in five matches lifted Urlings to six points, while JSC Progressors remain winless and second from the bottom on goal difference without a point after losing all six matches.

cont'd from pg 18

Afghanistan and Zimbabwe also won warm-up matches on Sunday. Afghanistan beat England by 67 runs.

Zimbabwe beat Ireland by 27 runs via the Duckworth/Lewis Method. Ireland made 217 for nine off their 50 overs. Har-

ry Dyer struck 44, and Kian Hilton made 37. Matthew Schonken took three for 36.

Zimbabwe reached 167 for three in 38 overs when rain brought an early end to the encounter. Ryan Kamwemba cracked 52, and Campbell Macmillan hit an unbeaten 49.



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The Potters Tigers football team

Tigers end Five Islands unbeaten run in First Division

The Potters Tigers have ended the unbeaten run and narrowed the gap on leaders Five Islands in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division League.

Keon Greene's 5th-minute conversion gave the Potters Tigers a one-nil victory over Five Islands when both sides clashed at King George V Recreation Grounds in the latest round of matches.

The Potters Tigers kept their unbeaten run intact by recording their fourth win in seven matches to advance to 15 points, one adrift of Five Islands, who lost for the first time in the same number of games.

After making a dismal start to the competition by losing their first three games, Bolans claimed their second consecutive win by snatching a one-

nil victory against Jennings United at the Jennings playing field.

Taiem Tonge scored the lone goal of the match in the 45th minute for Bolans, who would advance to seven points from six games.

Jennings United would remain in fourth place on 10 points after losing for the second time in six matches.

Meanwhile, Wadadli United ended unbeaten leaders Fort Road's perfect run during the latest round of matches in the ABFA Women's Football League.

Fort Road, who had won all seven previous matches, were held to a goalless draw by Wadadli United in the second game of a double header at the ABFA Technical Center on Friday.

The result meant that Fort Road would continue to lead the five-team

round-robin competition by advancing to 22 points from eight matches, while Wadadli United would remain in third place and move on to 11 points after the same number of games.

Trend Setters prevailed 2-0 against Cutting Edge in the opening game of Friday's double header. Following a goalless first half, Karmel-ai Hughes struck in the 47th minute, and Anik Jarvis scored in the 59th minute.

It was only the second win in eight matches for Trend Setters, who would remain second from the bottom of the standings, advancing to eight points.

Cutting Edge would remain in second place on 13 points after losing for the third time in eight matches.

Grenades and Old Road remain unbeaten in Premier League

Cup-holders Sandals, Inet Jennings Grenades, and Old Road have maintained their perfect run in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League.

Both teams recorded 2-1 victories to secure their seventh win in as many matches during a triple header at the ABFA Technical Center on Saturday.

Barrington Blake had a 27th-minute conversion, and Sherman Augustin scored in the 71st minute for the Grenades to prevail against John Hughes in the second game on Saturday.

Rokeba Cordice scored in the 40th minute for John Hughes, who lost for the fourth time in seven matches to remain on seven points.

The result carries Jennings Grenades to 21 points and ensures the reigning champions remain at the top of the 15-team round-robin competition on goal difference ahead of Old Road in second place.

National winger Raheem Deterville scored



The Jennings Grenades football team

twice as Old Road stayed within touching distance of the Grenades by beating Swetes in the last game on Saturday.

Deterville scored in the 28th and 46th minutes for Old Road after Shalon Knight had given Swetes the lead by converting a penalty kick in the 24th minute.

The result lifted Old Road to 18 points, while Swetes remain on two points after crashing to their fifth defeat in seven matches.

Two former champions,

Empire and Parham, continue to struggle to record their first win in the competition as they played to a 1-1 draw in Saturday's opening encounter.

Both goals came in the second half, following a goalless first half in which Jahzino OGarro missed a good chance to put Parham ahead by failing to convert a penalty kick.

Parham still managed to take the lead via Kenja Benjamin's 64th-minute conversion, but Joel Yhap scored

an equalizer for Empire in the 82nd minute to secure a draw in the encounter.

The result carries Parham to two points from six matches, while Empire picked up their first point from the same number of games to move out of the cellar.

The Premier League will continue today when All Saints United tackle the Ottos Rangers in the last seventh-round fixture at the ABFA Technical Center at 6 pm.