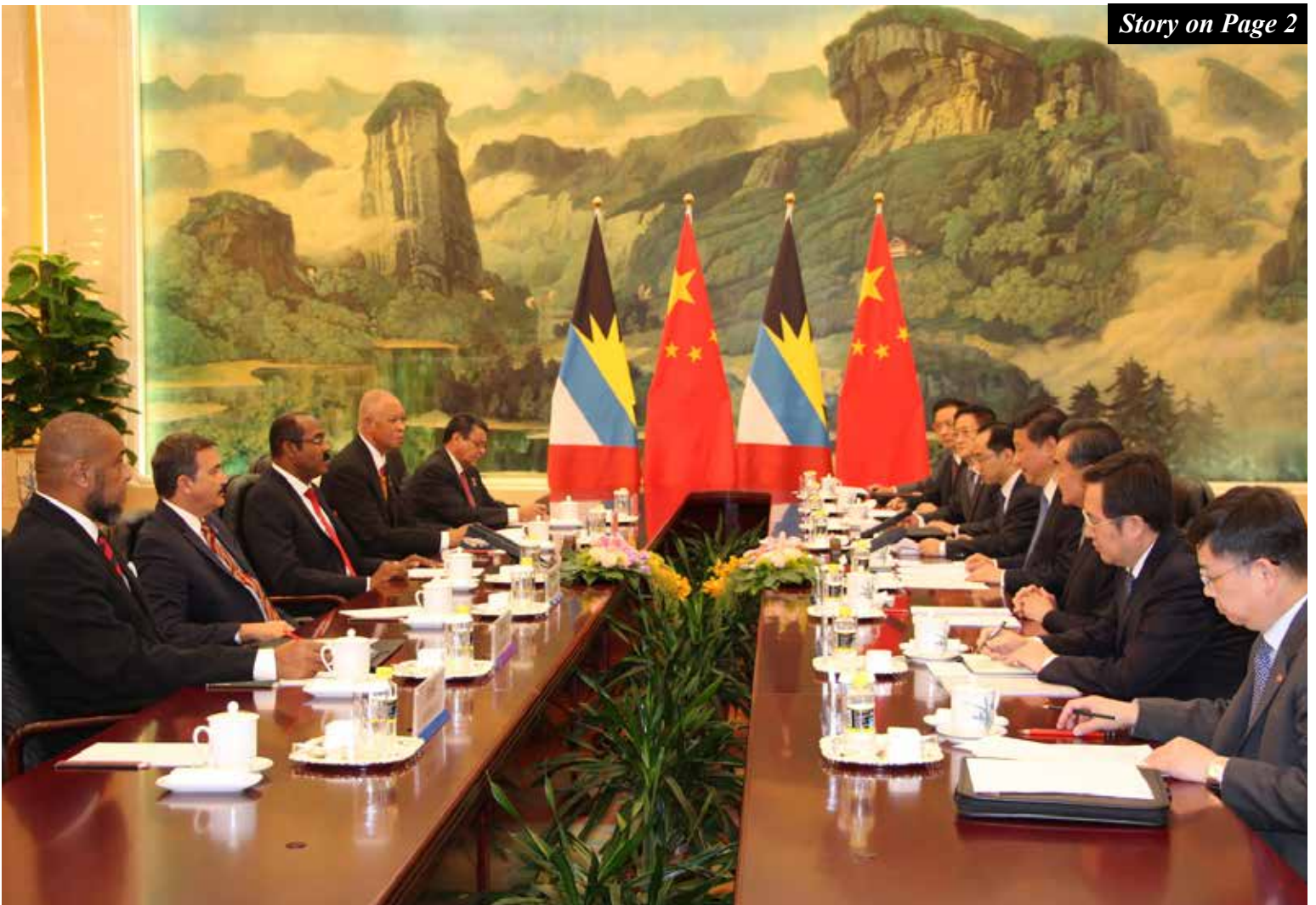


PM BROWNE LEADS DELEGATION ON OFFICIAL PRC VISIT



Prime Minister Browne leads delegation on official visit to PRC

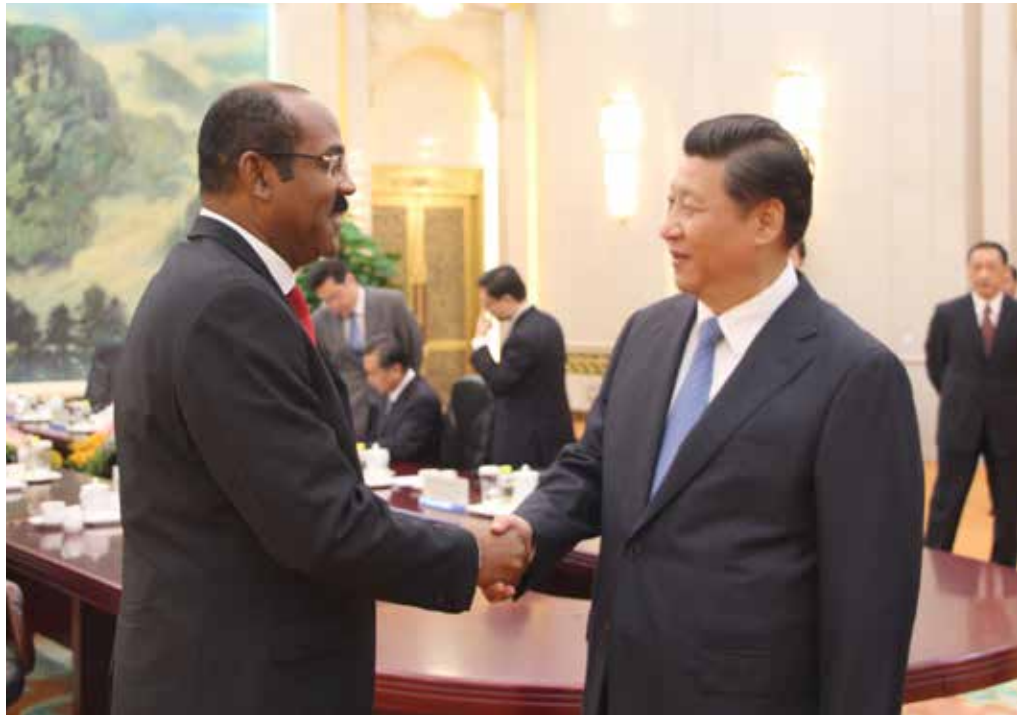
Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne is today in Beijing where he is leading an Antigua and Barbuda delegation on a week-long visit to the People's Republic of China.

Prime Minister Browne is accompanied by Minister of Health, Sir Molwyn Joseph, Minister for Foreign Affairs, E. P. Chet Greene, Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, Brian Stuart-Young, Chairman of the National Solid Waste Management Authority, Michael Joseph and Chief of Staff in the Office of the Prime Minister, Ambassador Lionel Hurst.

During the visit, the Antigua and Barbuda delegation and their Chinese counterparts will sign ten Memoranda of Understanding to include an agreement to address Climate Change under the framework of South-South Cooperation, an agreement to accelerate the formulation of the Cooperation Plan on the Belt and Road initiative and an agreement on Mutual Visa Exemption.

Minister for Health, Wellness, Social Transformation and the Environment, Sir Molwyn Joseph will sign an agreement with Alibaba Damo Academy and Hospitals for the provision of equipment for early cancer screening and digital health and to provide doctors with AI-powered tools. The agreement will also provide a framework for the identification of chronic diseases.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, E. P. Chet Greene will sign an agreement on a Water Rehabilitation Project along with an agreement for the provision of equipment for the Port of St. John's for aiding in the Anti-Narcotics Laboratory Project funded by China. Minister Greene will also sign an agreement between the China Media Group (CMG) and the Antigua and



Prime Minister Gaston Browne, left, with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Barbuda Broadcasting Services (ABS) for strengthening development and cooperation.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Gaston Browne will join with other members of the Antigua and Barbuda delegation in the official opening of the Antigua and Barbuda Embassy in the People's Republic of China.

On Wednesday, the country's leader will have his first official meeting with President Xi Jinping and members of his Cabinet where discussions will centre around a community of shared future for mankind and the Global Development Initiative.

During the meeting, Prime Minister Browne is expected to highlight China's commitment to create a better future for developing countries whose majority populations are challenged because of debt, denial to established capital markets, and natural disasters.

In the past, Prime Minister Browne has stated that the Chinese vision of a global community of shared future has been deepened and its scope widened

to bring prosperity, stability and substantive benefits to millions of people worldwide, in need of relief.

Antigua and Barbuda has been a beneficiary. Within the past ten years, China has contributed two health clinics that serve a significant fraction of the population of Antigua. China has also built the classrooms and administrative blocs that now form the core of the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus, at no cost.

In addition, the China Export/Import Bank has financed the complete rehabilitation of the St. John's Cargo Seaport, and the modernization of the International Airport terminal.

Scholarships at several Universities for students have been a plank of the development drive; as well as cultural exchanges.

This year, China has offered five scholarships through the Chinese Scholarship Council and a choice of 200 post-graduate scholarships through the Youth of Excellence Scheme of China Programme.

PM Browne draws the line: No involvement with GBC/Stroll dispute

Prime Minister Gaston Browne is publicly distancing himself and the government from what appears to be a private dispute between a depositor, Jack Stroll and the Global Bank of Commerce (GBC).

“He (The PM) knew I couldn’t get my money out of the bank; it didn’t have to go to the courts,” Stroll said in a public statement.

In a quick response, the prime minister informed Stroll that under no circumstances would he agree to use the tax-payers of Antigua and Barbuda’s money to settle the matter between him (Stroll) and GBC. “I asked you previously, on several occasions to cease and desist from seeking to engage me in your customer/bank dispute with GBC. I have no regulatory authority, directorship or shareholding in GBC and the GOAB has no outstanding liability or ownership interest in GBC.

“Your expectation that our government should have stepped in and pay you US\$13M with tax-payers money is unconscionable and wicked. The GOAB has no such fiduciary respon-



Prime Minister Gaston Browne
sibility to you,” PM Browne declared in a social media posting.

According to the prime minister his administration would never agree to undertake any such liabilities.

“My administration, unlike the UPP’s desperate MP’s, will never give any such reckless undertaking, to use tax-payers money to settle the amounts due to you from GBC. Your outlandish expectation for our government to assume the liability, is a corrupt expectation.

“While the UPP’s mendicant MP’s

may be awed by you, with their begging bowl in hand; and would have given you an undertaking to pay if they assumed power; my administration will never become reckless with tax-payers money,” he noted.

Stroll has been appearing on local media outlets trying to make a case for him to be paid by the government, something that is a source of some frustration from the prime minister.

“For the umpteenth time, let me remind you that the GOAB has no contractual relationship with you. Our government does not owe you. We will not be bullied into submission and let me publicly advise you, that you will never receive a penny of tax-payers money to retire the GBC debt, provided my administration continues to govern this country. NOT ONE RED CENT.

“Once again, I am requesting that you cease and desist from bringing myself and the government into public odium, involving your private dispute with GBC.

Please be guided accordingly,” he demanded.

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Birchfield Osborne, Indies Greene and Paynters Court are top winners in annual CGBF competition

The annual Community Gardens and Beautification Festival Competition returned last year after a break imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic with Birchfield Osborne, Indies Greene and Paynters Court being named the overall winners at a prize-giving ceremony held Saturday night.

Osborne, a former winner in the individual category, won first prizes in several of the judged categories; Best Flower Garden, Best Fruits and Vegetables, and Best Herbs and Spices. Indies Greene won for Best Flower Garden and Best Water Garden in the Business Section of the competition, while Paynters Court won for the Best Kept Community Beautification project.

The ceremony was held at Avec Amor in Buckley's and saw a large turnout of gardens and backyard farming enthusiasts. Among those presenting prizes were the Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams, the Permanent Secretary of Agriculture, Sandra Joseph, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health and Social Transformation, Colin O'Keiffe, Director of Community Development, Dale O'Brien and Ministry of Tourism Representative, St. Clair Soleyn.

"This annual compe-



CGBF overall winners, (from left) Marjorie Francis (Indies Green), Birchfield Osborne (Individual), Ilene Edwards (Paynters Court).

tion has four (4) components, the Garden aspect which consists of categories such as Herb and Spice Garden, Fruits and/or Vegetable Garden, Flower Garden, Water Garden which includes (Pools, Ponds, Aquaponics and Hydronics).

"A new aspect of the competition this year is the Best Kept Community which allows for residents to come together and beautify their communities thus encouraging camaraderie and civic pride," Assistant coordinator of the programme, Tanya Williams stated in her overview.

She added that the objectives of the competition are to enhance the cleanli-

ness of the physical environment, improve wellness, attract and encourage community tourism, research of the histories of communities, showcase their uniqueness while building resilient communities.

"We had 32 individual/residential participants, one school and three businesses competing from across both islands in categories of Flower Gardens, Fruits and Vegetable Gardens, Herbs and Spice Gardens and Water Gardens.

"These participants were judged based on layout and permanency of the gardens, health and vigor of the plants and management of the garden (whether any

conservation methods were employed).

"This year, we introduced the Best Kept Community category and had three communities participating being judged on the cleanliness of the community, efforts to preserve the environment and the condition of public spaces in the area," according to Chairperson of the Judges, Vashti Ramsey Casimir.

All the winners received cash prizes donated by several local businesses.

There were also participants from Barbuda, Anthony Mapp won for Best Flower Garden while Jacklyn Beazer won for Best Fruit and Vegetables.



HC Karen-Mae Hill receives Honorary Doctorate degree from UL

Antigua and Barbuda's High Commissioner to the UK, Karen-Mae Hill, a diplomat who used her degree as a springboard to a successful career has returned to the University of Leicester to receive an Honorary Doctorate degree.

Karen-Mae Hill OBE was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Laws during a graduation ceremony, held at De Montfort Hall, in Leicester, last Thursday.

A barrister by profession, HC Hill worked for over 15 years in the banking and financial services sector before taking up her appointment as High Commissioner of Antigua and Barbuda in 2017. She also serves as the country's non-resident ambassador to Ireland, Germany, Estonia and Lithuania.

In 2001, she won a scholarship to

study for an LLB in French Law and Language at the University of Leicester. After graduation, she became the first Antiguan to win a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford, where she read Development Studies.

HC Hill said: "Leicester is home to a large and dynamic Antiguan and Barbudan diaspora who contribute to the rich cultural, social and economic tapestry of the county. My time at the University were among my happiest days with lifelong friendships and academic rigour which have helped to shape my life. I am honoured to be recognised for this honour."

Alongside her diplomatic work, the HC plays a key role on the international steering committee for the development of the Centre for Oceanography and the Blue Economy at the Universi-

ty of the West Indies Five Islands campus on Antigua and Barbuda. An accomplished pianist, she is the founder and chair of the Antigua and Barbuda Youth Symphony Orchestra. The diplomat has also developed a successful exchange programme for young cricketers between clubs in the UK and Antigua and Barbuda.

HC Hill is a fellow of Goodenough College and a non-executive director of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. She was awarded Diplomat of the Year for North America and the Caribbean in the 2023 Diplomatic Awards. She is also currently president of the Bureau International Des Expositions (BIE) Administration and Budget Committee.

She serves as a director of the Her-

cont'd on pg 6

Local News



cont'd from pg 5

itage Trust (Antigua and Barbuda) which is focused on the restoration of the historic Government House in Antigua. She was instrumental in securing a multi-million pound grant to build the Harrison Centre Institute for Continuing Studies in Antigua.

She is also a disability rights advocate and worked with the Commonwealth Secretariat to host two IamAble conferences in Antigua and Barbuda. The conferences focused on access to employment, education, healthcare and political participation for persons with disabilities in the Caribbean.

HC Hill's areas of professional interest are financial services regulation, the blue economy, trade, and advocacy around the recognition of the inherent vulnerabilities of small states, and she is a widely sought-after speaker in these areas.

She has adopted the empowerment of youth, persons with disabilities, and



music as a force for social mobility and harmony as her areas of social focus

She was awarded the OBE in the 2023 New Year's Honours List for services to youth and the arts.

President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester, Professor Nishan Canagarajah, said: "I am delighted that we have honoured one of

our own graduates, Dr Karen-Mae Hill, as an exemplar for our community.

"Through her achievements, Dr Hill practically demonstrates what it is to be a Citizen of Change. Her accomplishments provide a measure of the impact that an individual can have upon society and serve as an inspiration for us all."

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Winners of Christmas Lighting Competition announced

The Ministry Creative Industries has announced the winners of the Christmas Home and Business Lighting Competition for the period December 18- 29, 2023.

The competition featured a Home and a Business category. The Home category was divided into four zones (East, West, North, and South), while the Business category was one zone island-wide.

The competition evoked the spirit of the season, capturing and showcasing an exceptional array of creative and festive lighting displays. Winners for both categories of the competition will be awarded a cash prize as follows:

- First Place: \$3,000.00 ECD
- Second Place: \$2,000.00 ECD

• Third Place: \$1,000.00 ECD
Participants for the Home category will receive a 100% waiver, while Businesses will receive a 50% waiver of their Electricity account for the month of December 2023.

The Ministry Creative Industries takes this opportunity to congratulate all the winners and thank all the participants for their contributions and innovative presentations for the Christmas Home and Business Lighting Competition 2023.

The winners in each zone are as follows:

- EAST ZONE:** - Winner: Chatura Philip –
1st Runner Up: Marilyn Jones-Marsh –
2nd Runner Up: Chandy Lewis

WEST ZONE: - Winner: Gisel Isaac-Rayne

- 1st Runner Up: Alix-Xerone John
- 2nd Runner Up: Rawlins Andrew

NORTH ZONE: - Winner: Jean-Pierre Shoul

- 1st Runner Up: Inez Doreen White

- 2nd Runner Up: Verena Charles-Williams

SOUTH ZONE: - Winner: Vernelle Weste

- 1st Runner Up: Roland Joseph

- 2nd Runner Up: Philmore Braithwaite

BUSINESS CATEGORY: - Winner: Shoul’s Toys, Gifts & Housewares

- 1st Runner Up: Pigotts Mall
- 2nd Runner Up: Falmouth Harbour Marina

Innovative water technology project gains momentum in Antigua and Barbuda

The Water Optimization Technologies & Applications (WOTA) initiative in Antigua and Barbuda is making significant strides towards sustainable water solutions.

In a recent meeting, WOTA representatives provided Minister of Health and the Environment, Sir Molwyn Joseph, with updates on the ongoing pilot activities.

Key highlights of the progress include the successful completion of demonstrations for the WOTA Box, conducted between December 7th and 10th, 2023, at prominent locations such as the De-



WOTA Representative along with Health and Environment Minister, Sir Molwyn Joseph

partment of Environment, YASCO, Pigeon Point, and Fort James. The initiative has engaged in productive discussions with CHAPA, National Housing, and

APUA, demonstrating a commitment to collaboration.

Additionally, the Minister urged the retrieval of data on the daily energy

consumption of the Sir Lester Bird Medical Center to evaluate the feasibility of integrating a Renewable Energy system.

Looking ahead, the next steps in this groundbreaking project involve the completion of the Project Proposal, financing by the Government of Japan, approval in Q1 2024, and potential participation in a technology expo at the SIDS 2024 Conference.

WOTA remains committed to driving innovation in water technology, fostering partnerships, and contributing to sustainable development in Antigua and Barbuda.

The Bright Hack Plastic Challenge - Let's innovate together



How Can We Improve Waste Infrastructure?

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In partnership with: BCRC

How can we improve waste infrastructure?

The Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN – www.cyen.org) is inviting students (8 – 19 years old) from across Antigua and Barbuda to form teams (minimum of 3 – maximum of 5) and register at www.brighthack.org by January 31, 2024 to represent their schools in a category for the upcoming BRIGHT Hack Plastic Challenge; with a chance to win cash, gift cards, electronics and a chance to compete in the FIRST Global 2024 Robotics Challenge.

This hybrid edition of the BRIGHT: (B)oostring (R)enewables and (I)nfrastructure (G)lobally by (H)arnessing (T)echnology hackathon event is being done with support from The Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for the Caribbean (“the BCRC-Caribbean”) www.bcrc-caribbean.org which is executing the Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded project, entitled “Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in Small Island Developing States (ISLANDS)” which seeks to address the sound management of chemicals and

waste in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

National Coordinator for CYEN in Antigua and Barbuda – Mr. Elijah James explains: the intent of this Hackathon is to inform the general public; while inspiring entrepreneurship amongst youth in Antigua and Barbuda through STEM education using robotics; on the sound management of chemicals, harmful waste by raising awareness on plastic pollution through the global Tide Turners movement – www.tide-turners.org

Student teams will be required to download the Tide Turners App from the mobile stores to learn how the problem of plastic pollution is negatively affecting our environment.

Android - <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.tide-turners.app>

iOS - <https://apps.apple.com/it/app/tide-turners/id6449464570>

They will utilize the information learnt to participate in virtual weekly brainstorm challenges which begins - February 1, 2024 to help inspire

robotic ideas on waste management. The best teams will move on to showcase their innovative ideas in the Challenge Finals which ends - February 29, 2024 to present their robotic solutions to be judged and awarded prizes.

Hackathons are unique competition events that bring individuals or teams together in rapid innovation and collaborative engineering to brainstorm business solutions to problems being faced by communities. They are also a great way to network, learn new skills or even just make new friends with similar interests.

The initial BRIGHT Hack Fin-Tech Challenge was held in September 2023 under the theme – How Can We Improve Financial Infrastructure? with support from the US Embassy Bridgetown, UWI Five Islands, ECCB and the Bankers Association which saw over \$10,000 in prizes being awarded to student teams from - the Seventh Day Adventist School, UWI, Antigua State College and ABITT.

To learn more contact the organizers at - registration@brighthack.org

Vision for Everyone – Antigua Program

By Arvel Grant

1. What are Antigua-Barbuda's International Obligations to Vision for Everyone:

1.1 In 2021, the General Assembly, passed UN Resolution A/75/L.108 "Vision for Everyone accelerating action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals". This resolution was drafted by: Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh and Ireland and adopted unanimously by all 193 members.

1.2 In 2020, The World Health Assembly adopted WHA resolution A73.4 Integrated people-centred eye care including preventable vision, impairment and blindness.

1.3 In 2021, The WHA enhanced the eye health metric by adopting resolution A74/9Add.3 Integrated people centred eyecare including preventable vision impairment and blindness.

1.4 WHA A74/9Add.3 mandated the following targets, for effective coverage of refractive errors and cataract surgery, to be achieved by 2030:

1.4.1 Provision of Prescription Eye Glasses:

A 40-percentage point increase in effective coverage of refractive error by 2030:

Countries with a baseline effective coverage rate

of 60% or higher should strive for universal coverage.

Countries should aim to achieve an equal increase in effective coverage of near and distance refractive error in all relevant population subgroups, independent of baseline estimates.

1.4.2 Cataract Surgery

The recommended global target for effective coverage of cataract surgery is:

A 30-percentage point increase in effective coverage of cataract surgery by 2030:

Countries with a baseline effective coverage rate of 70% or higher should strive for universal coverage

Countries should aim to achieve an equal increase in effective coverage of cataract surgery in all relevant population subgroups, independent of baseline estimates.

1.4.3 Achievement of the objectives require a strong primary eyecare program in Antigua-Barbuda.

15 In September 2023, CCB's AGM adopted Caribbean Vision for Everyone as the brand to be used in advancing the objectives set out in WHA A74/9Add.3.

2. Why Antigua-Barbuda Needs primary Eye Care Services at District and Community Levels?



2.1 The 2011 Census found 7,262 persons, (almost 10% of adults) blind in 1 or both eyes.

2.2 Eight of 10 people needing eye care, are older; Requiring treatment closer to where they live.

2.3 The finding let to:

2.3.1 Establishment of eye clinics at: Claire Hall, Greys Farm and Johnsons Point.

2.3.2 Implementation of the Public Sector Eye Care Program and

2.3.3 Implementation of the Barbuda Eye Service, as an itinerant program.

3. With the closure of

eye clinics at: Claire Hall, Gray's Farm and Johnsons Point, more than 15,000 eye patients must seek eye health services elsewhere.

Operating the largest eye clinic in the Eastern Caribbean, located on the Holberton Campus, CCB will use its National Vision Centre to help alleviate the problem. The clinic includes: airconditioned waiting for up to 45; 6 examination lanes and a 2-lane eyeglass laboratory.

**Arvel Grant C-Sw,
BSc-SW, DPA, MPH
Public Health and
International Development
Specialist**

Woman on the blaze

By Tony Deyal

After my column last week on ‘Trump and follow suit’, one of my female Facebook friends was upset, and rightly so. She wrote, “Tony, you bigging up men but we women not easy either, you know. And it is not just the obscene language, or where we put what, but we say it as well as, or better than, men. You make a big deal about Churchill and women but there are some who are just as good, or even better.”

This is true. The expert on dropping it on men in combat, and come-back, was Nancy Astor who, despite being a viscountess, was the first woman to take a seat in the British House of Commons. She devoted herself to the welfare and rights of women. The male members, especially Winston Churchill, were very discourteous to her. When she challenged him about his behaviour, he told her that it was because he found her intrusion into the all-male preserve embarrassing – especially as if she had burst into the bathroom when he had nothing to defend himself. She retorted, “Winston, you are not handsome enough to have worries of that kind.” When, before the war, Churchill’s critics were so upset with him that one told Lady Astor, “We just don’t know what to make of him.” She replied, “How about a nice rug?”

She found it unnecessary to have to prove herself the equal of her male colleagues, especially as she knew that women are the superior sex. She insisted, “I married beneath me – all women do.” To prove her point, Lady Astor remarked to her neighbour that she considered men to be more conceited than women. Noticing that her comment had been heard around the table, she continued in a loud voice, “It’s a pity that the most intelligent and learned men attach less importance to the way they dress. Why, right at this table the most cultivated man is wearing the most clumsily knotted tie!” The words had no sooner left her lips than every man in the room surreptitiously reached up to adjust his tie.

Then there was the US newspaper columnist, Ann Landers, with 70 million readers in over 1,000 newspapers. A pompous US senator once asked, “So you’re Ann Landers? Say something funny!” She did not hesitate, “Well, you’re a politician, tell me a lie.” Ira Clare, a US actress and former stage comedienne, was married to John Gilbert, a romantic hero of the silent screen. A reporter asked her how she felt being married to a celebrity. She replied, “Why don’t you ask my husband?” Interestingly, women never go easy on women either. Lady Margot



Tony Deyal

Asquith, wife of a British prime minister, was a British socialite and author. When the famous actress Jean Harlow met Lady Asquith, she pronounced Margot as “mar-got” instead of “margot”. In reply, Lady Asquith corrected Ms Harlow by pointing out, “My dear, the ‘t’ in my name is silent, as in ‘Harlow’.” When hearing about a famous British horse and hunting sportsman Lord Lonsdale, especially his prowess as a rider over fences, Lady Asquith replied, “Jump? Anyone can jump. Look at fleas!”

This is why Dorothy Parker, an American poet known for her caustic wit, once said that the affair between Margot Asquith and Margot Asquith was one of the prettiest love stories in all literature. This is perhaps the reason that Mark Twain, the writer and humorist, when asked, “In a world without women, what would men become?” re-

plied, “Scarce, sir. Mighty scarce.” This is also why the talented 44-year-old writer from Jamaica, Queens, Eric S. Gray, remarked, “Whatever you give a woman, she will make greater. If you give her sperm, she’ll give you a baby. If you give her a house, she’ll give you a home. If you give her groceries, she’ll give you a meal. If you give her a smile, she’ll give you her heart. She multiplies and enlarges what is given to her. So, if you give her any crap, be ready to receive a ton of s..t!”

This is along the lines of the ‘10 signs you are an assertive, badass woman who doesn’t take s..t from anyone’. First, you’ve been called a “B” word many times. Next is that you’re never afraid to speak your mind, and that’s because you are fearless and not caring what others think of you. Third is that “You take no
cont’d on pg 11



Opinion

cont'd from pg 10

crap from anyone”, and fourth, “You terrify some men.” However, you are insanely confident and, despite being told to be nice and sweet and talk gently, you don’t sugarcoat what you have to say.

At number seven, if you don’t know or don’t understand something, “you ask a lot of questions”. One of your biggest strengths is that “you are successful in your career”. In other words, not only that you take risks and chances but you carry yourself in a very confident, bold manner.

At nine is “you are opinionated and passionate but you know you can’t always be right”. While you know you are wrong sometimes, you accept yourself as you are. And, at 10, “you know that if a man behaved in the same way as you, he’d be applauded and respected”. As Mandy Hale,

the author of *A Single Woman*, wrote, “Strong women don’t play victim, don’t make themselves look pitiful, and don’t point finger. They stand and they deal.” This is why I recommend to all my female children and all the others in the world, “Choose to believe that you are truly worthy. Worthy of love, worthy of affection, worthy of attention, worthy of acceptance, worthy of a second chance, worthy of being chosen, worthy of succeeding and of reaching for your dreams.”

However, just in case, remember that men are like bananas. The older they get, the less firm they are. More important, women don’t work as hard as men. That is because you get it right the first time. I’ve had my share, and sheer hard-talk from women, including, “What does it mean when a man is in your bed gasping for breath and calling your name?” “You didn’t hold

the pillow long enough.” I’ve been told that the only kind of man women can actually change are the ones in diapers, and that love is really blind because marrying a man is a real eye-opener. What I found tough is that, when a woman takes on a 20-year-old man, she wants him to be handsome, charming, rich, witty, in good shape and romantic. But when he reaches 60 and beyond, she just hopes he will keep the hair in his nose and ears trimmed, doesn’t belch or scratch in public, tell the same joke all the time, and remembers her name sometimes. The real problem when, like me, you’re 78, is that you can’t remember your own name.

Tony Deyal, when asked, “What do you call a truly assertive woman who takes no crap from anybody?” he replied that he (or his children) calls her “Mom”.

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Baldwin faces fresh manslaughter charge over 'Rust' shooting

By Sam Cabral

A grand jury in New Mexico has charged Alec Baldwin with a fresh count of involuntary manslaughter over a fatal movie set shooting in October 2021.

Previous charges against the Emmy award-winning actor were dropped last April, just two weeks before a criminal trial against him was due to begin.

Local prosecutors have since shared "additional facts" from forensic tests on the weapon used in the shooting.

Attorneys for Mr Baldwin told the BBC: "We look forward to our day in court."

Mr Baldwin, 65, was practicing firing a Colt .45 pistol before filming a scene for *Rust*, an upcoming Western film shot near Santa Fe, in October 2021.

But the gun went off, fatally striking 42-year-old cinematographer Halyna Hutchins and wounding director Joel Souza.

The actor has maintained he did not pull the trigger and only drew back the hammer of the pistol.

He has also argued he is not at fault for Ms Hutchins' death because he did not know the weapon contained live rounds and because no live ammunition was supposed to be on set.

But special prosecutors in New Mexico said in October that they had commissioned forensic experts to reconstruct the weapon, after it had been broken during FBI testing.

They said doing so revealed that the incident could only have taken place if the trigger had been pulled.

"Although Alec Baldwin repeatedly denies pulling the trigger, given the tests, findings and observations reported here, the trigger had to be pulled or



'We look forward to our day in court,' lawyers for Alec Baldwin replied on Friday.

depressed sufficiently to release the fully cocked or retracted hammer of the evidence revolver," their report concluded.

The new evidence was brought to a grand jury of 12 beginning on Thursday, with a requirement for at least eight to agree on probable cause for new charges.

Their one-count indictment was issued on Friday under two alternative legal theories - that Mr Baldwin was either negligent in his use of a firearm or that he acted with "total disregard or indifference for the safety of others".

Prosecutors have indicated that he can only be convicted on one of these theories, not both. If convicted, he faces up to 18 months in prison.

An attorney representing Ms Hutchins' family said it was "looking forward to the criminal trial".

"Our clients have always sought the truth about what happened on the day that Halyna Hutchins was tragically shot and killed," Gloria Allred said in a statement.

"They continue to seek the truth in our civil lawsuit for them and they also would like there [sic] to be accountability in the criminal justice system."

Mr Baldwin - who has expressed "shock and sadness" at Ms Hutchins' death - said in recent court filings that he has struggled to find acting work since the incident.

Friday's indictment comes exactly one year after the first manslaughter charge against him was announced. But the original case fell apart amid challenges from the Hollywood star's lawyers and the initial team of prosecutors stepped down.

The new prosecution team dismissed the charge in April 2023 over evidence that the gun may have been modified, causing it to malfunction and discharge without the trigger being pulled.

But, as prosecutors weighed whether to refile charges in light of their new forensic results, judges had put several civil lawsuits against Mr Baldwin and other *Rust* producers on hold.

A low-budget independent flick, *Rust* was said to be a passion project for Mr Baldwin. He stars in the film as outlaw Harland Rust, in addition to co-writing it with Mr Souza, the director, and receiving a producer credit.

cont'd on pg 14

VACANCY

MOBILE SUPPORT TECHNICIAN

The Antigua Public Utilities Authority is now seeking applications from suitably qualified persons for the position of Mobile Support Technician:

The Mobile Support Technician will provide support to maintaining and improving roaming services on the inet Mobile network and ensuring continuous connectivity with all Roaming Partners. This role will be responsible for configuring the necessary mobile network elements to allow voice, data and SMS roaming to take place for both inbound and outbound directions including the monitoring, reporting and troubleshooting of network elements that may point to issues that negatively affect roaming services. Reporting and resolving those issues also form key functions of the role along with providing support to internal customers in the use and management of the inet Mobile eTopUp systems.

Key tasks include but are not limited to the following:

- Designing and maintaining scripts/code and templates;
- Collaborating with internal and external suppliers of goods and services in the troubleshooting process;
- Managing tests with internal and external suppliers;
- Investigating and fixing issues;
- Ensuring that network elements are correctly configured;
- Ensuring that network elements are kept up to date;
- Documenting procedures and ensuring that that these procedures are kept up to date;
- Working closely with internal and external customers to ensure accurate billing;
- Managing system configurations including user accounts as required;
- Troubleshooting and managing system problems

The ideal candidates should possess the following:

- A Bachelor's Degree in Information Communications Technology (ICT) or related field.
- Proven experience and knowledge in communication protocols (TCP/IP, SS7, SIP etc.);
- Excellent communication and organizational skills;
- Proficiency in the use and configuration of mobile devices;
- Proficiency in the use of computers (both hardware and software);
- Knowledge of UNIX/LINUX and Windows for managing and researching files and data produced by the switch and/or billing system.
- Proficiency in using Microsoft Office Products;
- A solid understanding of telephony operations;

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANT

The Antigua Public Utilities Authority is now seeking applications from suitably qualified persons for the position of Management Accountant:

The Management Accountant is responsible for establishing and enforcing policies, procedures, and operating margins for each Business Unit. The Management Accountant is also responsible for assisting the Senior Accountant with the production of the Annual Audit schedules during the first quarter of each year and for revision of annual budgets with Business Unit Managers where required. The Management Accountant will further monitor expenditure to ensure it is within approved budgetary allocations and, provide various periodic financial reports and analysis to the Financial Controller and Management team.

Key tasks include but are not limited to the following:

- Establishing and enforcing policies and procedures, standard costs and collects operational data.
- Collecting and interpreting data and making comparative analyses.
- Discussing reports and analyses with Management Team.
- Ensuring accurate production of management accounts reports.
- Assisting with production of Annual Audit schedules within specified timelines.
- Completing special projects and producing specific reports.

The ideal candidates should possess the following:

- A minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting or Finance from a recognized tertiary institution.
- Certification as a Chartered Accountant would be ideal.
- Three (3) to five (5) years' work experience in managerial cost accounting role.
- Demonstrated ability to meet deadlines and be able to take initiative.
- A keen eye for detail.
- Excellent oral and written communication and report production skills.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office Products. Working knowledge of Microsoft Great Plains would be an asset.
- The ability to work long and flexible hours as the need arises.

Interested persons are asked to apply in writing to:

The Human Resources Manager
 Antigua Public Utilities Authority
 P.O. Box 416
 Cnr. High Street & Independence Avenue
 St. Johns, Antigua
OR Email: hr@apua.ag

Deadline for application is Wednesday 31st January, 2024

** Only suitable applicants will be acknowledged **
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SVG: Man ordered to pay for unlawfully accessing ex-girlfriend's phone

CMC - Attorney Adrian Odle has told Vincenians to take heed of the message sent by the courts after a man was ordered to pay EC\$6,000 to his former girlfriend for unlawfully accessing her phone.

In addition, Rayshawne James, has been further ordered to pay a fine of EC\$100 for trespassing on the property of the claimant, Sophie Lawrence, who filed a lawsuit under the Cyber Crime Act.

"I hope that this send a message to those who attempt to illegally access account of others, those who attempt to send around explicit material, that they are not supposed to have in the first place that you are mindful of how you treat others in this new and technological era," Odle told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC).

"In this case, we have illegal access to a device that does not belong to that particular person as well as remaining in that particular



system of the device as well as concerning some form of identity theft, impersonation of someone," Odle said.

Magistrate Bertie Pompey handed down ruling last Thursday at the Colonaire Magistrate's Court. The matter was heard in James' absence.

The women told the court that she and James were in a relationship that was not intimate and on September 25, 2022, James, uninvited, visited her around midnight and that she asked him to leave.

But as she was calling for a taxi so that James could leave, he pushed his hand through the open window and took the telephone from her and ran.

Lawrence said that after several calls to the telephone that went unanswered, she telephoned the Colonaire Police Station, which responded. She made a formal report later that day.

She said she received her telephone from the Colonaire Police Station some days later but she could not access her business and per-

sonal accounts on social media as she had done before the phone was stolen.

Lawrence told the court that the phone had been wiped — all the data had been deleted from it and that after she received the phone, James contacted her and she told him to stop what he was doing.

Lawrence told the court that James removed explicit photos of her from her phone and sent them to her.

Odle said that while a person who is found guilty of an offence under the Cybercrime Act can be fined in excess of EC\$100,000, in the magistrate's court, the maximum fine for a convicted person is EC\$14,000.

The attorney said there is "the prevalence of young men who illegally access cell phones of females and doing illegal activities" reminding the court that the matter "is a great breach of privacy".

cont'd from pg 12

Hannah Gutierrez-Reed, who was responsible for weapons and ammunitions on set as the film's armourer, faces her own manslaughter charge, as well as a charge of evidence tampering. She has pleaded not guilty and will stand trial next month.

Dave Halls, who was in charge of safety on set as the first assistant director, pleaded no contest last March to a misdemeanour charge of negligent use of a deadly weapon.

His plea agreement entailed six months of unsupervised probation in lieu of prison time.

Rust was completed in May, after producers decided to finish the movie as a tribute to Ms Hutchins, and is currently awaiting distribution.

Ms Hutchins' widower, Matthew, and her son, who was nine at the time, will receive a portion of the film's profits in line with a wrongful death settlement approved in June by a judge.

COI accuses Guyana Fire Service Chief of dereliction of duty

CMC - The report of the Commission of Inquiry (COI) launched into the deadly fire at Mahdia Secondary School dorm early last year, which killed 19 girls and the young son of the housemother, has cited Chief Fire Officer of the Guyana Fire Service, Gregory Wickham's dereliction of duty.

The report which was recently handed over to President Dr Mohamed Ibraan Ali, said Wickham failed to give priority to a report about poor fire safety at the Mahdia Secondary School's dormitory, which he received from the Sub-Officer in Charge of the Mahdia Fire Station, Ryan Scott, less than three months before the inferno.

According to the report of the COI into the dorm fire, Scott had inspected the dormitory on February 7, 2023, compiled and dispatched a report to Wickham in which he identified several fire safety weaknesses at that state-owned facility, including a complete absence of any fire prevention systems such as – fire detection and alarm systems, exit signs and smoke detectors.

The report also noted that there were only three fire extinguishers provided in the buildings and grills were seen on all the windows.

Regarding the response of the region's fire depart-



Gregory Wickham, Chief Fire Officer of Guyana. Photo: CMC

ment on the night of the fire, the COI reported that the guard on duty did not know Sub-Officer's Scott's number and so could not call him; and Sub-Officer Scott told the inquiry that members of the town had to reach him through his personal mobile phone.

Scott told the COI that following his assumption of duty at the Mahdia Fire Station in July 2022, he dispatched an email to Chief Fire Officer Wickham on August 4, 2022 asking that "urgent attention" be paid to the poor condition of the fire tender there and another on August 9, 2022 list of items that were "urgently needed" at the Mahdia Fire Station "to safely, effectively and efficiently carry out the function of the Guyana Fire Service".

On the recommended

list of 12 actions to be taken to make the Mahdia Secondary School safe were the prominent display on all walls instructions on actions to be taken in the event of a fire, construction of suitable storage facilities such as racks, shelves, cupboards, for all items, no fuel must be stored on the premises without permission from the fire department, removal of grills from all windows and the installation of hydrants near the school.

The report said that Scott testified that he never received a response to the email, and the fire station there was not equipped with many of the items which he requested, adding that they had a light pump, and a power saw.

"It is expected that the head of the fire service of any country, being in pos-

session of reports such as these, would go beyond the bounds of duty and service to ensure compliance therewith. This we feel, in all circumstances, was lacking from the Chief Fire Officer," the COI stated.

The COI report, while praising Scott and recommending him for promotion and a national award, accused Wickham of giving "scant regard" to the report of Sub-Officer Scott, that contained critical information in the interest of life and fire safety.

It stated that Wickham admitted that of the 12 recommendations, his action was only taken in relation to that concerning fire hydrants, in that he informed Guyana Water Incorporated of the requirement to have water mains upgraded and nothing else.

"This we consider to be bare minimum action and certainly not a fulfilment of the duties bestowed on the most senior fire officer of this country," the report stated, stopping short of recommending disciplinary action on Wickham.

The COI also frowned on the Chief Fire Officer's explanation that the standard operating procedure only required him to ensure the Regional Education Officer (REdO) was furnished with the report.

This they regarded as
cont'd on pg 16

Donetsk: Deadly blast hits market in Russia-held Ukraine city, officials say

By Oliver Slow

At least 27 people have been killed in a shelling attack in the Russian-held city of Donetsk, the Moscow-installed leader of the region says.

Denis Pushilin described the strike on a busy market as “horrendous”, and said the number of casualties could rise.

A Ukrainian army group operating in the region said it did not carry out the attack. Mr Pushilin blamed Ukraine.

BBC News was not able to immediately verify the circumstances around the strike.

Photographs published by Reuters news agency appeared to show destroyed shop fronts, as well as bodies lying in the street.

According to AFP, a local resident named Tatiana told local media she heard an incoming projectile overhead, and hid under her market stall.

“I saw smoke, people screamed, a woman was



Russian-installed officials in Donetsk blamed Ukraine for the strike - which the Ukrainian military has rejected.

crying,” she was quoted as saying.

In a statement posted on Facebook, the Tavria unit - part of the Ukrainian army - said its forces “did not engage in combat operations in this case”.

It continued: “Donetsk is Ukraine! Russia will have to be held accountable for the lives of Ukrainians taken.”

The Russian Foreign Ministry called it “a barbar-

ic terrorist act against the peaceful people of Russia” by Ukrainian forces who, it said, had “used weapons supplied by the West”.

Donetsk city and parts of the wider region in eastern Ukraine were first seized by Russian-backed forces in 2014, and the area has been partially controlled by Moscow ever since.

The city is around 20km (12 miles) from the front-

line. Areas near Donetsk city - including Mariinka and Avdiivka - have seen some of the fiercest fighting of late.

It has been almost two years since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, but it has made little progress in recent months.

On Saturday it claimed to have captured the village of Krokhmalne in north-eastern Ukraine’s Kharkiv region. A Ukrainian military spokesman confirmed its forces had withdrawn from the area, but said the territory was of little military importance.

Days earlier Moscow also claimed to have taken control of a settlement named Vesele in Donetsk. Kyiv has not confirmed the claim.

cont’d from pg 15

the fire chief essentially passing off onto the REdO, the responsibility of ensuring that the emergency recommendations in the report were brought to life.

The Commissioners said they also found it regrettable that in all circumstances and even with all his experience as the most senior fire officer in Guyana, the Chief Fire Officer did not see the need, nor did he take the initiative, to communicate to the Permanent Secretary of his Ministry,

the emergency recommendations.

The COI, which was headed by Retired Major General Joseph Singh concluded that the fire was intentionally set, and in the hours before, a female student had threatened to set the dorm on fire if she her mobile phone, which was seized because use of phones is prohibited from 9pm, is not returned to her.

“She say, I would just bun down this dorm; if I didn’t get to do it tonight, I will do it tomorrow,” a student testified.

Bwari kidnapping: Nigeria police secure release of sisters taken from Abuja

By Oliver Slow

Nigerian police say they have successfully rescued five sisters who were held hostage after being kidnapped in the country's capital.

The girls were freed in a joint police-army operation in a forest in northern Nigeria on Saturday night.

They were taken from their home in Abuja earlier this month, along with another sister who was later killed.

The kidnapers had demanded a ransom for their release, but the statement made no mention of one being paid.

Nigerian police said the girls had been reunited with their family following the operation, which took place near the Kajuru forest in Kaduna State at around 23:30 local time (22:30 GMT) on Saturday.

The six sisters, aged from the early teens to 23, were taken hostage alongside their father, Mansoor Al-Kadriyar, on 2 January at the family home in Bwari, a suburb of Abuja.

Witnesses said the girls' uncle ran to find help but was ambushed and killed, as were three police officers.

The kidnapers released Mansoor on the condition he raise a large ransom, but his



Nabeeha, pictured second from left, was killed by the kidnapers.

21-year-old daughter, Nabeeha, a final year university student, was then killed as a warning, according to a family member who spoke to the BBC on condition of anonymity.

Kidnapping has become rife in Nigeria, with hundreds of people abducted in recent years, largely by criminal gangs who see it as an easy way to make money. It has been particularly bad in the north-west of the country.

The case of the Al-Kadriyar sisters prompted widespread anger in the country, with many arguing that the kidnapping emergency has continued despite government promises to bring it to an end.

First Lady Remi Tinu-

bu urged security agencies to «intensify their efforts» to end the kidnapping and security crisis, and demanded a «swift return of the Al-Kadriyar sisters».

The ransom for the girls' return was set at 65m naira (\$68,000; £53,000), leading to many Nigerians donating to a crowdfunding initiative.

However, Defence Minister Mohammed Badaru Abubakar urged people not to contribute towards the ransom, saying it would «only worsen the situation».

“We believe we have to stop - as painful as it is. We have to stop responding to payment on ransom. If we stop, over time the kidnapping will not be profitable and they will stop,” he said.

No matter how des-

perate the circumstances, Nigerian law prohibits the payment of ransom money. However, many victims pay up because they do not trust authorities to secure the release of their loved ones.

There has now been an outcry that the insecurity has reached the capital, prompting Abuja's police force to launch a special squad to tackle the kidnapping gangs.

Mr Abubakar said he believed operations against the gangs elsewhere had forced them to move to areas near the capital.

“The security agencies are working very hard to push them out and block the movements and finish them off once and for all,” he said.

Sports News



Old Road maintain perfect run in the Premier Division

Old Road maintained their perfect run in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Saturday.

Winger Raheem Deterville and forward Rakeem Joseph each scored twice as Old Road recorded their eighth win in as many games by pulling off a 4-2 victory against the Aston Villa Lions in the second

game of a triple header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Deterville struck in the 8th minute, and Joseph scored in the 20th minute to give Old Road a two-nil lead. Orel Edwards scored in the 34th minute to allow the Villa Lions to reduce the deficit at halftime.

The Villa Lions equalized to make it 2-2 in the 80th minute via an own

goal, which was scored by Old Road's Carlos Molina. But Old Road hit back to snatch victory by scoring two late goals.

Old Road regained the lead via Deterville's 88th-minute conversion to make it 3-2, and Joseph ensured victory by scoring his second goal of the match in the fifth minute of added time (90+5 minutes).

The win allows Old Road to jump into first place by advancing to 24 points, while the Villa Lions remain on 17 points after losing for the first time in eight matches.

Willikies overcame a one-nil deficit to secure their second win in seven matches by prevailing 3-1 against the Ottos Rangers in Saturday's opening encounter.

James Simon scored twice by converting two penalties before he was given a red card in the 89th minute for committing serious foul play. Simon converted the penalties in the 13th and 65th minutes.

Keith Connor scored the other goal for Willikies in the 33rd minute, while Elijah McDonald had the lone conversion for the Ottos Rangers when he put his team ahead by scoring in the first minute of the encounter.

The result ensured that Willikies would advance to nine points, while the Ottos Rangers would remain on eight points after suffering their fourth defeat in eight matches.

Two struggling teams who have yet to win a game in the league, Parham and Green City, picked up their first points in the competition as they battled to a goalless draw during a bot-

cont'd on pg 19

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

Attacking Saints and Lion Hill claim wins in First Division

Attacking Saints and Lion Hill have recorded wins during the latest round of matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division League.

Joshua Samuel recorded a hat trick to propel the Attacking Saints to a 6-1 drubbing of the bottom

team, Old Road's Young Lions, at the Mack Pond playing field in All Saints.

The Attacking Saints have moved into third place by advancing to 14 points after recording their fourth win in seven matches. The Young Lions would remain in the cellar without a point after tum-

bling to their sixth loss in as many games.

Lion Hill came from behind to pull off a 4-1 victory against host Fort Road at the Fort Road playing field.

Brandon Michael put the home side ahead when he scored what turned out to be Fort Road's only goal of the match in the fourth minute.

Cassiano Samuel scored Lion Hill's equalizer just before the inter-

val with a 44th-minute conversion, which ensured both teams finished the first half deadlocked 1-1 at halftime.

The win allows Lion Hill to move into fourth place ahead of Police on goal difference. Both teams are now tied on 12 points, but Lion Hill has a superior goal difference.

Fort Road would remain on nine points after slumping to their fifth loss in eight matches.

cont'd from pg 18

tom-of-the-table clash in the last game on Saturday.

The Premier League will continue today with the last eight-round fixture between the Pigotts Bullets and Garden Stars at 6 pm.

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The FC Master Ballerz football team. (File photo)

FC Master Ballerz end Belmont's unbeaten run in Second Division League

FC Master Ballerz have ended Belmont FC's unbeaten start in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division League.

Master Ballerz maintained their unbeaten run by recording their third win in five matches by prevailing 2-0 against Belmont FC at the Radio Range playing field in Ottos during the latest round of matches.

Shareem Richards had a 42nd-minute conversion, and Brandon Satchell scored in the 88th minute for the Master Ballerz to advance to 11 points.

It was the first defeat in seven matches for Belmont FC, who would remain in second place on 16 points, two adrift of Second Division leaders Freemans Village.

O'Shale Simon scored five goals, and Chunsae Martin struck a hat trick

as Bethesda hammered the bottom team, Young Warriors, 13-0 at the ABFA Technical Center.

Their fifth win in seven matches allowed Bethesda to remain in third place on goal difference by advancing to 16 points, the same as Belmont FC. The Young Warriors remain in the cellar without a point after crashing to their sixth loss in as many games.

Urlings won their second game in six matches by snatching a one-nil victory against Golden Grove at the Golden Grove playing field. Kestone Daley scored the lone goal of the match in the 20th minute.

The result carries Urlings to nine points, while Golden Grove would remain on six points from six matches.

Glanvilles won by default after JSC Progressors were unable to field a team for their encounter at the Prin-

cess Margaret School playing field.

The result allows Glanvilles to advance to six points from seven matches, while JSC Progressors would remain second from the bottom of the standings on goal difference without a point after six games.

Earthquakes and Blackburn Palace battled to a 2-2 draw at the Fort Road playing field. Gregson Munroe struck in the 2nd minute, and Raheim Andre scored in the 32nd minute for the Earthquakes.

Diondre Harrigan had a 28th-minute conversion, and Tarique Gomes scored in the 68th minute for Blackburn Palace.

The result allows Earthquakes to move on to 13 points from seven games, while Blackburn Palace would advance to seven points after the same number of matches.



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Action resumes in school basketball league today

Several teams will be launching their campaigns in the Cool and Smooth Inter-School Basketball League today.

Following the recent official opening ceremony, competitions will get under way in two divisions when the league resumes at the JSC Sports Complex on Monday.

St. Joseph's Academy will begin the defense of their title against Antigua Grammar School in the Mini Boys Secondary Division at 2:15 pm.

Action will also commence in the Senior Boys Division with a double header. Ottos Comprehensive will tackle Antigua State College at 3:15 pm, and Antigua Grammar School will face Sir Novelle Richards

Academy at 4:15 pm.

Four matches in both the Mini-boys and Mini-girls Primary divisions were postponed at the same venue on Friday.

But Antigua Grammar School (AGS) recorded their first win of the league following the recent official opening of the annual inter-school basketball competitions.

Antigua Grammar romped to an impressive 33-10 triumph over Clare Hall Secondary School in the Mini-boys Secondary Division. Joshua Joseph top scored with 11 points, and Dajon George chipped in with eight points to secure the win for Antigua Grammar School. Clare Hall's Dwayne Emanuel scored five points in a losing effort.



Dajon George (left) and Joshua Joseph (right) were the leading scorers for the Antigua Grammar School against Clare Hall Secondary. (Photo courtesy School Basketball Unit)

cont'd from pg 24

ceive US\$100,000.

Johnny Grave, CWI Chief Executive Officer, said, "We are pleased to announce the schedule for the upcoming West Indies Championship and welcome two new teams and an expansion in the number of matches.

"With significant upgrades taking place at all the host venues for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in June, and additional improvements being made to the National Stadium in Grenada and Windsor Park in Dominica, we are using nine venues across Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, Antigua & Barbuda and Trinidad & Tobago.

"The eight teams will be fighting hard for the Headley Weekes Trophy and the new prize money of US\$250,000 available to the winning team.

"All the games will be shown live on our YouTube channel, with live ball-by-ball scores on our website so

that fans around the region and world can watch and follow the competition unfold over the next three months."

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Two new teams in 2024 CWI four-day Championship

Cricket West Indies (CWI) has announced the 2024 West Indies Championship schedule, confirming the expansion in the number of participating teams and rounds for the premier regional four-day competition.

After a winning performance in the Headley-Weekes tournament in 2023, the West Indies Academy are all set to make their debut in this year's West Indies First-Class season. The West Indies four-day championship will run from February 7 to April 20.

The Combined Campuses and Colleges (CCC) are making a return, re-joining the tournament after a few years' absence.

The 2024 West Indies Championship is set to begin in February, with the opening three rounds spanning from February 7 to 24.

In the first block of games, matches will take place in host countries, St. Kitts and Nevis and Jamaica. Two venues, Warner Park and the Conaree Cricket Centre, will be used in St. Kitts and Nevis.

Matches will be played at three venues in Jamaica. They are Sabina Park,



The Guyana Harpy Eagles who won the title in 2023 will be defending this year's Cricket West Indies regional four-day championship. (CWI Media)

Kensington Cricket Club, and Chedwin Park.

The second block of matches will commence on March 13, with the fourth and fifth rounds scheduled to be held in Trinidad and Tobago and Antigua and Barbuda.

The games in Trinidad and Tobago will take place at the Queen's Park Oval, the Diego Martin Sports Complex and the Sir Frank Worrell Cricket Ground at UWI Spec.

The matches in Antigua and Barbuda will be played at the Coolidge Cricket Ground (CCG). The tournament will re-start after Easter with the final two rounds in Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago from April 10 to 20.

The competing eight regional teams fighting for the Headley Weekes Trophy over seven (7) rounds of matches are defending champions Guyana Harpy Eagles, Barbados Pride,

Combined Campuses and Colleges, Jamaica Scorpions, the Leeward Islands Hurricanes, Trinidad and Tobago Red Force, West Indies Academy and the Windward Islands Volcanoes.

The 2024 West Indies Championship will have a significant increase in prize money with the winning team receiving US\$250,000, while the second-placed team will re-

cont'd on pg 23