

# END OF AN ERA!

*Last LIAT (1974) flight lands at VC Bird International*

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## Last LIAT (1974) flight lands at VC Bird International

The last flight to be operated by the soon to be defunct, LIAT (1974) Ltd. arrived at the VC Bird International Airport on Monday night with airline and senior government officials on hand to mark the occasion.

The flight – LI 335 – landed at the airport just after 7:00 pm from Tortola to a water cannon salute.

Acting Prime Minister, Sir Steadroy Benjamin, who was on hand to mark the historic moment, described the occasion as ‘a bitter-sweet occasion’ as the arrival of the final LIAT (1974) flight marks the end of an era and the beginning of another.

“It’s the end of an era; the end of an airline, LIAT (1974), the Caribbean airline that we have all come to love for more than fifty years and which over that time had become a household name as well as having earned the reputation as one of the safest airlines anywhere, will be no more.

“But whilst we say goodbye to LIAT (1974) Ltd., we at the same time welcome the ‘dawn of a new day’; the birth of LIAT 2020,” he remarked.

He said the new airline will be ex-



panded to provide travel throughout the region with bigger and better planes while at the same time maintain the professionalism and safety standards that Caribbean people have come to expect and which they demand.

Acting Prime Minister Sir Steadroy also took time out to express heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Capt. Arthur Senhouse and the other ‘dedicated staff’ at LIAT (1974) Ltd. who demonstrated a high level of commitment and dedication to the airline and the region to ensure that the airline was able to

take to the skies ‘during these turbulent times’. In doing so, Sir Steadroy said he was sharing the views of Prime Minister Gaston Browne as well.

“Even though PM Browne is on an official visit to the People’s Republic of China, both he, and his government are committed to ensuring that LIAT 2020 will always remain in the skies. This is a promise that we make to the people of Antigua and Barbuda and the region, and it is a promise that we intend to fulfill,” he declared.

Meanwhile, Capt. Senhouse, the airline’s Director of Flight Operations, said the way is now clear for the Antigua and Barbuda government to proceed with purchasing an aircraft from the Caribbean Development Bank, which is necessary for LIAT 2020 to attain an Airline Operating Certificate.

He said all the shareholder governments of LIAT (1974) Ltd. have sent ‘no objections’ letters to the CDB, which holds a lien on the LIAT (1974) aircraft, thus removing all hurdles from the eventual sale.

He disclosed that the CDB and the A&B government are meeting on Wednesday to discuss the purchase arrangements.



## IRD collects over \$550 million in 2023

More than half a billion dollars in revenue were collected by the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) for 2023 reflecting both increased economic activity and better surveillance by the department.

IRD Commissioner Ralph Warner said the total collections for 2023 topped \$559.5 million, an increase of \$66.6 million from the previous year, 2022 when \$497.8 million were collected.

Warner reported that the increased amounts may be attributed to improved collections in four of the main tax streams; corporate income tax, ABST, property tax and travel tax.

Looking closer at the figures, Warner said ABST, the country's main revenue source, was responsible for \$330.3 million of the amount,

representing an increase of \$27.4 million from the \$302.8 collected in 2022.

Corporate income tax rose from \$62.1 million in 2022, to \$101.4 million in 2023, an increase of \$39.2 million.

According to the IRD boss the increases from the corporate income tax came as a result of the collection of some outstanding arrears, more audit activities by his department as well as from increased economic activities in the country.

Much as the collections have reached record amounts, Warner said it could have been better had it not been for certain exemptions and an amnesty for certain taxes.

"We had an amnesty for property tax where the government forego as much as \$8 million dollars in taxes.

In addition, there was a waiver on stamp duty on the sale of property and lands that saw the loss of a further \$20 million. We did not meet the budgeted amount for collections in 2023 which was \$580 million. However, when added together with the exemption and the waiver amounts, we would have surpassed the targeted figure," he outlined.

Warner noted that in both cases, property owners benefitted from government's deliberate actions designed to help stimulate the economy.

The IRD commissioner is predicting that the department will surpass the collections for 2023 this year as there are no waivers nor exemptions planned. In addition, the ABST has been increased by two percent from January 1, 2024.



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# Local News



## PM Browne: Current trip will take A&B/PRC relationship to the 'next level'

Prime Minister Gaston Browne is brimming with optimism about the prospects that his current trip to the People's Republic of China will take the relationship between the two countries to 'the next level'.

Speaking with Chinese media on his arrival in Beijing, PM Browne told reporters that already Antigua and Barbuda and the PRC enjoy one of the best relationships between a small state and a much larger country that can be found anywhere.

"As you know, China has been very respectful of all countries irrespective of

size and China has been a great example for all countries globally in terms of its benevolence and the role it has played to ensure peaceful co-existence and at the same time to ensure global prosperity for all," he remarked.

PM Browne was given a red-carpet welcome on his arrival at the airport with his delegation to China. He said both countries will sign a cooperation agreement among other things while in China.

During the visit, Antigua and Barbuda will officially open an embassy



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

in Beijing to further boost cooperation and to serve its interests in this the world's most populous country and the second leading economy on the globe.

## Immigration Department issues wanted bulletin for two females

Two Jamaican nationals who were detained by the Immigration Department prior to being deported have escaped from the Detention Centre and are now wanted by Immigration and other law enforcement authorities.

Wanted bulletins have been issued for the recapture of Donnalee Samantha Salmon and Tiffanie Stephanie Howell both of whom on Saturday absconded from the Detention Centre, located at the Immigration Department headquarters on Sir George Walter Highway.

Salmon was among a trio of individuals who were arrested and charged last



Donnalee Samantha Salmon week on firearm and ammunition charges. She was traveling with two male companions in a motor vehicle which was pulled over in a stop-and-search operation conducted by the police. The police apparently handed her over to the immigration department for



Tiffanie Stephanie Howell deportation prior to her escape.

According to the bulletin...Salmon, a Jamaican National, is 23 years old, dark in complexion, approximately 5 ft.6 inches in height, slimly built, and weighing approximately 125 lbs. Anyone with infor-

mation on the whereabouts of Salmon is asked to contact the Immigration Enforcement Unit at 764-3240 or 562-5394. The public can also contact the nearest Police Station.

Her compatriot, Howell, was denied entry when she presented herself to the Immigration Department on Friday. She has been described as 30 years old, fair in complexion, approximately 5 ft. 6 inches in height, slimly built, and weighing approximately 135 lbs.

The department is advising the public not to offer any assistance to the wanted individuals.

## Commissioner Constance Blackman's tenure ends

Another vacancy has opened up on the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission; this time the vacancy arose following the end of the tenure of the representative from the church, Commissioner Constance Blackman.

In a statement issued Monday, ABEC noted that the tenure of the Antigua Christian Council's and the United Evangelical Association of Antigua and Barbuda's representative on the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission's (ABEC's) has ended.

"Constance Blackman bade farewell to the Commission on January 11, 2024 after serving the electoral management body for three years, following her appointment in September 2020.

"During her time as a



member of the Commission, Blackman executed her duties in a fair and transparent manner and was also afforded the opportunity to represent the body in many occasions both regionally and internationally," the ABEC statement noted.

Blackman expressed thanks to her immediate

colleagues and the entire staff at the Commission, who contributed to a meaningful learning experience that has certainly enhanced her overall knowledge of the country's democratic and electoral processes.

She is a former public servant who dedicated over forty years to the de-

velopment of Antigua and Barbuda. She also served as Director at the country's tourism office in Toronto, Canada and Head of the Consulate General in Toronto, Ontario.

It's the second vacancy to arise on ABEC in a week following last week's death of chairman, John Jarvis.



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## CAF makes sizeable donation to educational institution

The Calvin Ayre Foundation (CAF) is fulfilling its commitment to contribute towards the educational development of the youth of Antigua and Barbuda with a sizeable donation to the Island Academy International.

At a recent ceremony held at Island Academy International, the Foundation once again donated US\$200,000 (EC\$540,00) in scholarships, to assist local Antiguan and Barbudan students to access education at the accredited international baccalaureate school.

The cheque was handed over by CAF Manager, Jamilla Kirwan, at the function attended by various representatives, including the school's Founder, Bernadette Sherman; Director, Portia Moursy; Principal, Sophie Bown and students from various



grades.

CAF Manager, Jamilla Kirwan, announced that the significant financial contribution was aimed at increasing educational opportunities for local students and posited that the partnership is a

shared goal between the two organizations, to empower students to unlock their fullest potential.

"Today, I am honored to stand here to announce the Calvin Ayre Foundation's continued commitment to

the Island Academy as they continue to provide a world-class education here in Antigua, our island home. Since 2015, the Calvin Ayre Foundation has been supporting the Island Academy and this

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financial donation has provided approximately 30 local Antiguan students with scholarships to attend the Island Academy,” Kirwan stated.

Principal, Sophie Bown, spoke on the impact that CAF’s involvement has had on the school’s success over the years. “Our students here (at the Island Academy) are given the resources, opportunities, and supportive environment to grow into holistic global citizens and that wouldn’t be possible without the support of the Calvin Ayre Foundation,” she stated.

Jeana Browne, Madison Smith, Danica Tarter, and Vernon Henry, all members of Island Academy’s Student Ambassadors Committee, all gave glowing reports about the school, the student body, the curriculum as well as the CAF scholarship donation, and what it meant for students and the institution on a whole.

The donation by CAF will continue to provide financial assistance to young and deserving Antiguan and Barbudan students, ensuring that they can pursue their academic goals without the burden of excessive financial constraints. This contribution is a testament to a belief that CAF’s Founder, Ambassador Calvin Ayre holds true – that education has the power to transform lives and communities.

The event started with the Antigua and Barbuda National Anthem played on vi-

olin by senior student, Asafa Donovan. The entertainment continued with a beautiful rendition of Katy Perry’s “Firework”, played by the Grade 7 students, led by their music and drama teacher, Jocelyn Beldman. The musical piece featured various percussion instruments, including the Steel Pan.







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## UNAIDS welcome new domestic violence legislation in Jamaica

CMC - UNAIDS has welcomed Jamaica's expansion of protections against gender-based violence as the country's Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act came into effect on Monday.

"UNAIDS welcomes the commitments made by Jamaica to expand protections to tackle gender-based violence. Determined action is essential across the Caribbean and Latin America, and across the world, to break the vicious cycle of violence, abuse and inequality. Survivors must be heard, and justice must be done," said UNAIDS Executive Director, Winnie Byanyima.

"To protect women and girls' health, it is essential to protect women and girls' human rights," Byanyima added.

The government said the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act, 2023 will provide greater protection to victims of domestic violence.

"This government, and indeed the whole House, has demonstrated its commitment to preventing and punishing acts of domestic violence through the passage of these important amendments which will, among other things, allow the Court to issue Protection Orders and impose a



UNAIDS Executive Director, Winnie Byanyima. Photo: UNAIDS

penalty of up to one million dollars for a breach of a Protection Order, up from a maximum of J\$10,000," said Gender Affairs Minister Olivia Grange.

She said that the amendment also allows for a sentence of up to one year in prison and that the Protection Orders are intended to guard against an array of potential harm, from harassment to property damage, and "it is right with the passage of time that we now apply a more appropriate penalty that will serve as a deterrent to this very serious crime".

"Alongside the new legal changes, the Government of Jamaica has also

committed to continuing to implement other policies to support survivors including a gender-based violence helpline, legal support, shelters, intervention centres at police stations, and special training for members of the police force and other service provider".

UNAIDS Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, Luisa Cabal, applauded the political commitment of the Jamaica government and parliament, highlighting the importance of addressing the challenges in enforcement as well as policies.

Cabal noted the critical role of the courts, po-

lice, other law enforcement personnel and civil society partners in tackling gender-based violence in all its forms for all women and girls in all their diversity.

The government said the new law will also increase the categories of persons who can make an application for a Protection Order, including the spouse or parent of an individual in respect of whom the conduct has been made or is likely to be made.

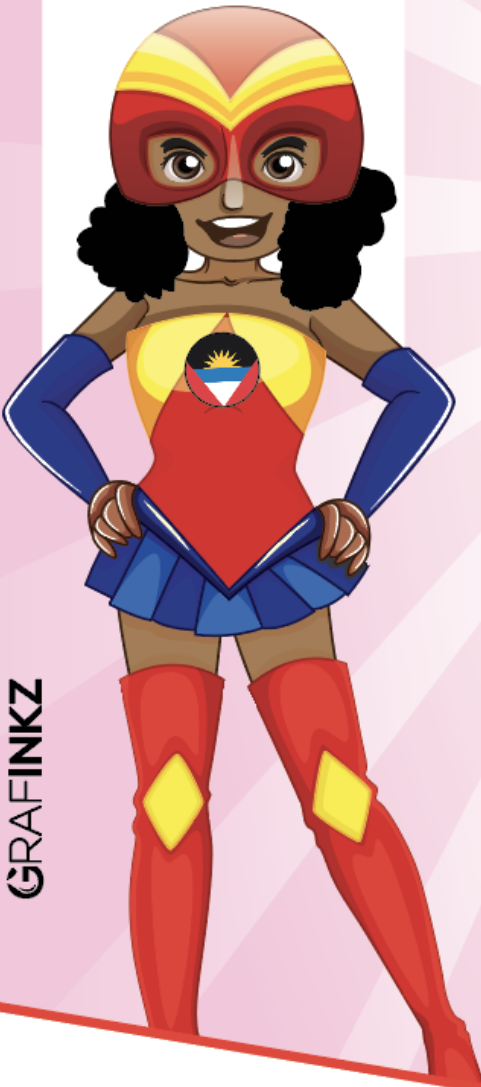
The Children's Advocate will also now be able to apply for a Protection Order where the alleged conduct is threatened against a child.



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## Cryptocurrency firm Terraform Labs files for bankruptcy in US

The cryptocurrency company behind the crashed TerraUSD and Luna tokens has filed for bankruptcy in the US.

Terraform Labs' tokens collapsed in May, losing \$40bn of their value and contributing to the so-called "cryptocrash" of 2022.

Co-founder Do Kwon is currently in jail in Montenegro after having been found guilty of forging documents.

He has been charged with defrauding investors by US regulators and is awaiting extradition.

He also faces fraud charges in South Korea, his native country, so could be extradited there.

A third legal case is ongoing in Singapore, where the company is registered.

Terraform Labs' Luna token came to prominence in December 2021, when its value began to rise from \$5 to a high of \$116 in April 2022.

Fans of Luna became known as "Lunatics", with Mr Kwon referred to as their «king».

Then suddenly, on 9 May 2022, it collapsed, losing 99% of its value in just 48 hours.

It was algorithmically linked to its sister coin, TerraUSD, which was a stablecoin, meaning it was meant to stay at a value of \$1.

But the value of Ter-



Do Kwon being taken to court in Montenegro in March 2023.

raUSD plummeted to about \$0.02 - which then caused the Luna coin to nosedive.

The crash led to shockwaves around the crypto market, with investors pulling billions of dollars from other cryptocurrencies in fear of a similar crash.

It is estimated that about \$400bn was wiped from the value of other cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin.

Announcing the bankruptcy filing, Terraform Labs chief executive Chris Amani said: "This action is necessary to allow us to continue working toward our collective goals while resolving the legal challenges that remain outstanding."

Terraform "intends to meet all financial obligations to em-

ployees and vendors during the Chapter 11 case and does not require additional financing to do so," the company said in a statement.

A Chapter 11 bankruptcy means that Terraform Labs can continue to do business.

The firm offers blockchain and other Web3-related services.

The bankruptcy documents, filed in Baltimore, list Terraform as having between \$100m and \$500m in assets.

They also say Do Kwon owns 92% of the shares of the company, with his co-founder Daniel Hyun-sung Shin owning the other 8%.

Mr Kwon was arrested

in Montenegro in March 2023 as he tried to board a plane to Dubai.

Three months later, he was found guilty of forging documents - which he denied - and sentenced to jail.

The former finance officer of Terraform Labs, Han Chang-joon, was also sentenced to prison after being found guilty of the same charges.

According to Reuters, police had found doctored Costa Rican passports and a separate set of Belgian passports among their luggage.

In November 2023 a court in Montenegro approved his extradition, but was yet to decide whether it would be to South Korea or the US.



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# Regional News



## Curaçao seeking closer trade ties with Suriname

CMC - Suriname's Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation, Albert Ramdin, arrived in Curaçao on Monday for talks with Economic Development Minister Ruisandro Cijntje on improving trade relations between the two Dutch-speaking countries.

The Ministry of Economic Development said Ramdin will sign a Letter of Intent (LOI) together with Cijntje to initiate a negotiation process for a package of agreements in the areas of industry, commerce, and investment between Curaçao and Suriname, as well as increased technical cooperation in other relevant areas for both countries.

It said the LOI include intentions to establish a bilateral commercial



agreement in the form of a Partial Scope trade agreement between the two countries and a bilateral fiscal treaty between Curaçao and Suriname.

The authorities here said that despite the historical relations and ties between Curaçao and Suriname, the Letter of Intent marks the first time that the two countries will formally establish commercial relations since 2010.

In November 2022, Curaçao hosted a trade mission from Suriname, in collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Development (MEO) as part of the efforts to develop the so-called Suriname – Curaçao financial corridor.

In addition to the November 2022 visit, the MEO has organized various commercial visits to Suriname over the past years with the goal of working together on concrete actions to stimulate commerce between Curaçao and Suriname, as well as commerce via Curaçao to extend beyond the region, both in the business and governmental sectors.

The LOI and other agreements are expected to be signed on Tuesday with officials here acknowledging that Suriname, which belongs to the 15-member regional integration movement,

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## Guyana: Position of fire chief could depend on review of COI report

CMC - Home Affairs Minister Robeson Benn said Monday that the fate of Fire Chief, Gregory Wickham, who has been cited for dereliction of duty by a Commission of Inquiry into the Mahdia Secondary School dormitory that killed 20 children last year, now depends on an examination of the report.

The report, which was recently handed over to President Ifraan 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 Commission of Inquiry 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.

Benn said Wickham did not fully express himself properly in his testimony before the three-member COI under the chairmanship of Retired Major General Joseph Singh.

“We have to read the report in some detail. I think he was a bit inarticulate in making responses but we’ll review things,” Benn said, adding that the COI review would start in another month.

Asked whether he was satisfied with Wickham’s

overall performance, he said “I’ll speak to this matter when I am on the floor giving my presentation” a reference to the debate on the GUY\$1.146 trillion national budget that began in the National Assembly on Monday.

The COI 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 fulfillment 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 hailed Scott’s performance and recommended that he be promoted, but Benn declined to comment, saying “I’m not discussing this matter at the moment.

“When we review, we will talk.”

The Inquiry found that the fire was intentionally set hours after a female student had threatened to burn down the dormitory because her cellular phone had been taken away from her in keeping with the rules of the facility.

A 15-year-old girl has been charged with 20 counts of murder and she has been remanded to a juvenile holding facility pending trial.

### *cont'd from pg 12*

CARICOM, is an extremely important commercial, social, and cultural ally for Curaçao.

In addition to the signing of the LOI,

Ramdin will pay courtesy calls on the Governor, Prime Minister, President of Parliament, and various other ministers and dignitaries. He will also engage members of the private sector.

# Canada sets two-year cap on foreign students

Canada has said it will cap the number of foreign students admitted to the country for two years in an attempt to address pressure on housing and healthcare in the country.

The cap will result in a decrease of 35% in approved study permits.

Over 800,000 foreign students were in Canada in 2022, up from 214,000 a decade earlier.

The new measures are also meant to ensure the “integrity” of the system, officials said.

Immigration Minister Marc Miller announced the cap on Monday, saying that Canada aims to approve around 360,000 undergraduate study permits this year.

Each province and territory will be allotted a portion of that total, determined by population and current student intake. Provinces will then decide how to distribute these permits across their universities and colleges.

The cap will only apply to students at a diploma or undergraduate programme, and will not affect students applying for study permit renewals.

As part of the change, the government will also no longer - as of September - grant work permits for students graduating from colleges that operate under



Immigration Minister Marc Miller says the measures are meant to protect students from “bad actors” and ensure sustainable immigration.

a public-private partnership model, which is most commonly found in the province of Ontario.

“It’s unacceptable that some private institutions have taken advantage of international students by operating under-resourced campuses, lacking supports for students and charging high tuition fees, all while significantly increasing their intake of international students,” Mr Miller said.

He said the the new measures are “not against individual international students” but are meant to ensure future students receive a “quality of education that they signed up for”.

The announcement also comes as the Trudeau government faces growing pressure to address an

increasingly unaffordable housing market.

Home prices in Canada now average C\$750,000 (\$550,000;£435,000) and rent for Canadians has risen 22% in the last two years.

Some economists have linked housing unaffordability to a spike in immigration, as home construction has not kept up with Canada’s unprecedented population growth.

In 2022, the country grew by over a million people in the span of one year for the first time ever - a growth largely driven by newcomers. Last year Canada’s population hit a record of 40 million people.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation - a national housing agency - estimates that the coun-

try needs 3.5 million more housing units by 2030 to restore affordability.

While population growth is part of the problem, experts have pointed to other pressures driving down the number of housing starts, including high interest rates that make homes less affordable.

The cost of building materials also remains elevated due to inflation and supply chain disruptions from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The cap represents a significant shift in policy for Canada, which has historically relied on open immigration to fill job vacancies and address its rapidly-aging workforce.

Mr Miller had previously hinted at reducing the

*cont’d on pg 15*

## Dozens reported killed as battle rages in Gaza's Khan Younis

By David Gritten

Dozens of people are reported to have been killed in intense Israeli strikes on Khan Younis in the south Gaza Strip, as battles between soldiers and Hamas fighters rage on the ground.

Residents said tanks had surrounded a hospital and university where thousands of displaced people were sheltering.

Ambulances were also trapped and unable to reach the wounded.

Khan Younis has been a recent focus of Israeli forces, who are convinced top Hamas commanders are holed up there.

On Sunday, the Israeli military said it had found an underground compound in the city where it believed about 20 Israeli hostages had been held.

Meanwhile in Israel, a number of hostages' families on Monday interrupted



Khan Younis residents are reporting the heaviest fighting of the war so far.

a finance committee meeting at the Israeli parliament in Jerusalem, to call for the government to do more to secure their release.

One relative shouted: "We won't let you breathe until our kids come back."

As the US, Qatar and Egypt try to mediate, Hamas has demanded that Israel ends the war and

withdraws its forces before the hostages are released.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected such a deal, saying it would amount to a capitulation to "monsters" and mean soldiers had "fallen in vain".

But on Monday evening the US news website Axios quoted two US officials as saying Israel had

given Hamas a proposal that included a two-month pause in fighting in return for the phased release of all remaining hostages in Gaza.

Hamas gunmen took about 250 people hostage and killed 1,300 others when they carried out an unprecedented cross-border attack on southern Israel on 7 October, Israeli authorities say.

At least 25,295 people have been killed in Gaza since the Israeli military launched a large-scale air and ground campaign in response, according to the Hamas-run health ministry. More are believed dead under rubble.

On Monday Israeli tanks were reported to have advanced into western areas of Khan Younis and closed in on the city's two

*cont'd from pg 14*

number of international students admitted to Canada, drawing concern from some Canadian universities.

In response to Monday's announcement, Universities Canada, which represents post-secondary institutions across the country, said it welcomed that the cap is not affecting post-graduate students, but is concerned that it will "add stress on an already-stressed system".

The organisation also said it worries that some of the measures will deter students from coming to Canada, driving them to study elsewhere instead.

Last week, president of McMaster

University in Hamilton, just outside of Toronto, said a cap would mean "a loss" for his institution.

"If we lost our international students, we would not be as rich from a learning-environment perspective," David Farrar told public broadcaster CBC in an interview.

He added that tuition paid by international students helps offset costs for some domestic students, as universities struggle with limited government funding and budgets.

A cap on international students, he said, would mean the university will have to cut the number of domestic students it admits.

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# Sports News



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main hospitals following a night of heavy bombardment.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) said Israeli forces were besieging the area around al-Amal Hospital, which it runs, as well as its headquarters and nearby ambulance centre, and that it was deeply concerned about the safety of staff, patients and displaced civilians inside them.

“The area now is extremely dangerous. They are hearing strong bombing in the area,” spokeswoman Nebal Farsakh told Al Jazeera TV. “Everyone who tries to move out or who goes out in the street is being targeted.”

She added that PRCS ambulances were trapped and unable to respond to reach wounded people in the area, and that a telecommunications blackout meant staff were only able to contact each other via VHF radios.

Smoke was also seen rising and gunfire heard in the vicinity of Nasser Hospital, the largest medical facility still functioning in Gaza.

Palestinian media cited the hospital’s surgical director as reporting that it had received 50 dead and more than 100 wounded since the night.

Gaza’s health ministry said dozens had been killed or wounded west of Khan Younis on Monday, and that people had been forced to bury 40 bodies inside the grounds of Nasser Hospital because it was not safe outside.

A doctor in the emergency department told Reuters that the hospital was overwhelmed by casualties and “on the brink of collapse”.

“With the siege on the neighbourhoods close to Nasser [hospital], it is very difficult to deliver medical aid to the hospital, and it is very difficult to continue treating the patients,” Ahmed Abu Mustafa said, adding that

there were “no pain killers, no anaesthesia, or any medical resources”.

A health ministry spokesman also told Reuters that Israeli troops had stormed the al-Khair Hospital in the al-Mawasi area, west of Khan Younis.

On Monday White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said Israel was obliged under international law to protect innocent people in Gaza hospitals as much as possible.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military on the reports from the three hospitals. However, it has previously accused Hamas of operating inside and around medical facilities - a claim the group has denied.

Shelling was also reported around the Al-Aqsa University, in al-Mawasi, where thousands of displaced people are staying.

“We can’t leave... it’s dangerous and I fear for the little ones,” Younis Abdel Razek, who was sheltering there with his family, told AFP news agency. “They said the al-Mawasi area was safe, but they lied.”

The Israeli military has told civilians to move for their own safety to what it calls a “humanitarian zone” in al-Mawasi. The thin strip of mainly agricultural land runs along the Mediterranean coast, south-west of Khan Younis.

The UN estimates that 1.7 million people have been displaced by the past 15 weeks of fighting, many of them multiple times.

UN Secretary General António Guterres warned on Saturday that disease and hunger were “deepening” among them.

“People are dying not only from bombs and bullets, but from lack of food and clean water, hospitals without power and medicine, and grueling journeys to ever-smaller slivers of land to escape the fighting,” he said. “This must stop.”

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## Empire Nation and Crushers claim wins in ABCA Two-Day contest

Empire Nation and Pigotts Crushers recorded emphatic wins in the second round of matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) Two-Day Championship over the weekend.

After beating the Jennings Tigers by 110 runs in the opening round, Empire Nation made it two wins in a row by romping to an innings and 200-run victory against the Caribbean Union Bank (CUB) Bethesda Golden Eagles in Bethesda.

Opener Tyrone Williams Jr. struck his second successive century, and captain Kenrick Scott also hit a century to propel Empire Nation to 398 for nine declared in 67.2 overs after being asked to bat first.

Williams slammed 113 off 114



Tyrone Williams Jr.

balls, and Scott hammered 119 off 122 balls, as both shared a 154-run third-wicket partnership. Kershaski Jno Lewis chipped in with a quickfire 81 off 66 balls. Shacoy Floyd captured four for 100.

In reply, the Bethesda Golden Eagles were dismissed for 157 in 51.3 overs. Mekali Tonge hit 58, and Teron Payne got 43. Veteran off-spinner Justin Athanaze claimed four for 28.

Asked to follow on 241 behind, the Golden Eagles crashed to 41 all out in 26.4 overs to suffer their second heavy loss in as many games. Athanaze snapped up seven for 22 to finish with a match haul of 11 for 50.

The Pigotts Crushers, who beat Combined Schools by 232 runs in the opening round, also won for the second time in two matches by trouncing the Bolans Blasters by an innings and 286 runs at Pigotts.

The Bolans Blasters, who were sent in to bat, were bundled out for 77 in 35.3 overs. Derek Mourillon made 35, while fast bowler Jawaki Joseph captured four for 26.

In reply, Essan Warner and Demari Benta both struck unbeaten centuries to guide Pigotts Crushers to 390 for two declared in 61 overs. Warner cracked 133 not out off 112 balls, and Benta was not out on 100 off 78 balls as both shared an unbroken third-wicket partnership of 194 runs.

Openers Kadeem Henry and Uri Smith both struck half centuries during a 133-run first-wicket stand. Henry made 78, and Smith scored 60.

Trailing by 313 runs, the Bolans Blasters were dismissed in their second innings for just 27 runs in 15.5 overs. Pacer Trevorson "Jango" Atley snapped up four wickets for eight runs, and Joseph took three for 14.

All three other games were severe-



Demari Benta

ly affected by rain and wet conditions. Cup-holders PIC Insurance Liberta Black Hawks were held to a draw by Jennings Tigers at Jennings.

Combined Schools and WES Rising Sun Spartans played to a draw at Rising Sun.

The match between the New Winthorpes Lions and All Saints Pythons was abandoned at New Winthorpes. Scores in the match: Lions 158 all out in 49 overs (Nino Henry 38; Kadeem Josiah had three for 35; and Andra Samuel took three for 55); Pythons were 34 for three off 12 overs when the game ended.

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## Sports ministry ratifies nominees for 2023 National Sports Awards

The Ministry of Sports, through its rigorous ratification process, has confirmed the list of nominees for various 2023 National Sports Awards categories.

The grand ceremony scheduled for March 2, 2024, will see the nation's sporting ambassadors and officials recognized for their major accomplishments and contributions.

Nominees will compete in eight categories. While all those nominated will be recognized for their prowess, an august panel of judges will determine the winners in various categories.

Winners will be determined based on their resume of success in regional and international competitions, as submitted by the



Quinton Griffith

athletes' various nominating sporting associations. The accuracy of submissions will be triangulated by independent research.

The Senior Sportsman 2023 nominees are: Maurice James of drag racing, Cejhae Greene of athletics, Emmanuel Gayral of cycling, Zuber Patel of rifle, Adnonis Humphreys of basketball, Kenroy Christian of bodybuilding, Mervin Higgins of softball cricket, Tiger Tyson of sailing, Jordon Wuilliez of swimming, Adrian Constant of volleyball, Dante Browne of fencing, Alzarri Joseph of cricket, and Quniton Griffith of football.

The Senior Sportswoman 2023 nominees are: Joella Lloyd of athletics; Kimberly Percival of bodybuilding; Bianca Mitchell of swimming; Tanya Greene of netball; Junella King of sailing; Josanne Lewis of volleyball; Anik Jarvis of football; Cheryl Williams of softball cricket; and Amanda Edwards of hardball cricket.

The Junior Sportsman of 2023 nominees are: Daryl Massicot of football, Craig Massiah of basketball, Khaliq Joseph of volleyball, Patrick Green Smith of sailing, Ethan Stubbs-Green of swimming, Tahje Browne of cycling, Kasiya Daley of athletics, Jewel Andrew of



Alzarri Joseph

cricket, and Elite Thomas of triathlon.

The Junior Sportswoman of 2023 nominees are: La'Nika Locker of athletics; Kinisha James of basketball; Ellie Shaw of swimming; Jewel Crump of fencing; Emily Gaillard of sailing; Gabrielle De Souza of football; Jassania Joseph of volleyball; Kimberly Anthony of cricket; and Maleah Butler of triathlon.

The Coach of the Year 2023 nominees are: Orland Weeks of drag racing, Ted Daley of athletics, Ollyn Martin of bodybuilding, Vaughn Charles of fencing, Nelson Fojo of swimming, Astell Joseph of football, Olsen Joseph of volleyball, George Hughes of basketball, St. Clair Williams of cycling, and Ian Tittle of cricket.

The Mind Sports 2023

nominees are Bernard Willock of draughts, and Zenus Williams, and Lorraine Richardson of domino.

The Sports Official 2023 nominees are: Nerissa Pelle of athletics; Cedric David of basketball; Dwayne Edwards of bodybuilding; Rawle Lee of volleyball; Wasnah Barnarde of football; and Carol-Faye Bynoe of domino.

The Sports Administration Recognition 2023 nominees are: Elvis Cordice of draughts, Shawnor Charles-Joseph of athletics, Paul Ryan of drag racing, Dane Gustave of cricket, Carlena Knight of basketball, Marvette Richards of bodybuilding, Edith Clashing of swimming, Rameez Mascall of fencing, Wilbur Harrigan of volleyball, and Conrad Constant of domino.



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Australia's Usman Khawaja walks off the field after being injured on the third day of the first Test against the West Indies at the Adelaide Oval on Friday, January 19, 2024. (Getty Images)

## Khawaja cleared to play second Test against West Indies

MELBOURNE (Reuters) - Australia opener Usman Khawaja will return to training on Tuesday after being cleared to play the second Test against the West Indies in Brisbane later this week.

The 37-year-old batsman retired hurt last Friday in the final few overs

of Australia's thumping 10-wicket victory in the first Test after being struck on the helmet by a Shamar Joseph delivery.

Australia faced the prospect of searching for a new opener for the second time in the series if Khawaja had been unfit to play in the day-night Test, which begins at

the Gabba on Thursday.

Steve Smith moved up the order to replace David Warner when the veteran opener retired from the format in the wake of the 3-0 series sweep of Pakistan around the New Year.

Meanwhile, India batter Virat Kohli has pulled out of the first two Tests against

England, citing personal reasons, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said on Monday. Kohli, 35, has scored nearly 9,000 runs in 113 Test matches.

India host England in a five-match series starting on Thursday in Hyderabad. The England squad arrived at the venue on Monday.

*cont'd from pg 22*

main in ninth place on nine points after slumping to their third loss in eight matches.

Deno Bryan scored twice as John Hughes prevailed 3-1 against the bottom team, Empire, in the second game on Sunday.

Bryan converted a penalty kick in the 4th minute and scored his second goal of the match in the fourth minute of added time (45+4 minutes) to give John Hughes a two-nil halftime lead.

Empire were reduced to 10 players in the 85th minute when Rashidie Lewis was given a red card for denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity.

Empire was also penalized for Lewis' infraction, which resulted in the referee awarding a penalty kick to John Hughes.

However, John Hughes squandered the chance to capitalize on the goal-scoring opportunity when Hanel Burrell failed to convert the penalty

kick in the 87th minute.

Nyque Watkins reduced the deficit by scoring for Empire in the 89th minute. But John Hughes ensured their victory when Daniel Bryan scored their third and final goal in the fourth minute of added time (90+4 minutes).

Their third win in eight matches propelled John Hughes into seventh place on goal difference, joining fellow promoted team, Garden Stars, on 10 points. However, the Garden Stars have only played six matches.



Players of the Sandals, Inet Jennings Grenades football team. (Photo courtesy Jennings Grenades FC).

## Grenades return to top of Premier League

Unbeaten leaders and defending champions, the Sandals and Inet Jennings Grenades, maintained their perfect run to return to the top of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division on Sunday night.

Grenades won for the eighth time in as many games with a 5-1 drubbing of Swetes in the final game of a triple header at the ABFA Technical Center.

The goals were scored by Barrington Blake in the 8th minute, Vashami Allen in the 14th, Rakeem Henry in the 15th, Keanu Barrette in the 58th, and Tev Lawrence in the 77th minute.

Shackwon Simon scored a consolation goal in the 35th minute for Swetes, who remain winless on two points in the lower half of the standings after suffering their sixth loss in eight matches.

The result allows the Grenades to move back to the top of the division on goal difference by advancing to join fellow unbeaten side, Old Road, on 24 points.

All Saints United and John Hughes also recorded wins in the other two Premier League matches on Sunday.

All Saints United kept their unbeaten run intact and leapfrogged

Aston Villa Lions into third place by securing their sixth win in seven matches with a five-nil victory against SAP in Sunday's opening game.

SAP finished the match with nine players after two players were sent off by the referee in the 78th minute. Rackley "Leach" Thomas and Tajeja Tonge were given red cards for using offensive, insulting, and abusive language toward the referee.

The result allows United to advance to 19 points, two more than Villa Lions, who have also played one game more than All Saints. SAP re-

*cont'd on pg 21*