

# IMF GIVES A&B ECONOMY 'THUMBS UP!'

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Prime Minister Gaston Browne, right, and other members of the Antigua and Barbuda delegation participate in the opening ceremony of the Embassy of Antigua and Barbuda on Tuesday. *Story on page 3.*

## IMF gives local economy ‘thumbs up!’

The government’s handling of the Antigua and Barbuda economy over the past year has received the stamp of approval from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the world’s foremost authority on these matters.

Following its latest Article 4 assessment of the economy, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) commended Antigua and Barbuda’s robust economic performance, forecasting a solid growth rate of 5.7 percent for the year 2023.

The twin-island nation’s economy has demonstrated resilience, primarily fueled by the strength in tourism and construction sectors.

Tourism, a cornerstone of Antigua and Barbuda’s economy, played a pivotal role in driving growth, with both sectors experiencing notable strength. The report indicates that real economic activity is on track to return to pre-pandemic levels during 2023, signaling a significant milestone in the nation’s recovery

from the economic challenges posed by the global health crisis.

After a notable peak of 9.2 percent at the end of 2022, inflation exhibited a positive trend, falling to 6.6 percent by August of the following year. Core inflation has shown a steady decline, reflecting a favorable economic environment and effective policy measures.

The current account deficit, which widened to an estimated 16.2 percent of GDP in

2022, is expected to contract to around 12 percent of GDP in 2023. While higher tourism receipts partially offset by increased goods imports and a decline in the terms of trade contributed to the deficit, the projected reduction signals positive adjustments in the external balance.

Antigua and Barbuda experienced a rebound in nominal GDP, leading to a decrease in public debt from 95 percent of GDP at the end

*cont’d on pg 3*

## Antigua and Barbuda and China sign several bilateral agreements

The Antigua and Barbuda delegation which is on an official visit to the People’s Republic of China with meetings between the Chinese leader, President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Gaston Browne and party as well as the signing of several agreements.

At Wednesday’s meeting between the two leaders and their delegations held in Beijing, PM Browne told President Xi that his global leadership has been an inspiration to all.

“These include the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative as well as the Civilization and Security Initiative.

“Your philosophy to ensure that there is shared global prosperity and peace is one that resonates globally and I believe that you have demonstrated unparalleled leadership and we are hoping that others, especially those in the developed nations, will follow your lead and that of the People’s Republic of China in ensuring that we can have a more



Prime Minister Gaston Browne and delegation with Antigua and Barbuda students in China.

harmonious planet, ensuring that there is global equity in development,” he remarked.

Agreements were signed with several senior Chinese officials, one dealing with matters of health, with Health and Environment Minister, Sir Molwyn Joseph and another dealing with the strengthening of relations signed by

Foreign Minister E.P Chet Greene.

Both Antigua and Barbuda and the PRC have recommitted themselves to continue the excellent relationship well into the future.

During the trip, PM Browne inspected a Chinese Guard of Honour and he has also held meetings with Antigua and Barbuda students studying in China.

## The new embassy to strengthen Antigua and Barbuda/China relations

The opening of an embassy for Antigua and Barbuda in the Chinese capital, Beijing, will serve to further strengthen the already close relationship between the two countries.

Those were the sentiments expressed by Foreign Affairs Minister E.P. Chet Greene in remarks he gave at the opening of the embassy on Tuesday.

“The opening of this Embassy will enable my government to further enhance our diplomatic engagements, promote more effective economic and investment cooperation initiatives, provide consular services to our stu-

dents and citizens, and promote more people to people exchanges.

“Antigua and Barbuda welcomes the People’s Republic of China’s approach to diplomacy and its all-embracing way of engaging us as equal partners with a shared vision for the world. This approach to diplomacy is also very evident in the many global initiatives put forward by China to promote goodwill and cooperation among nations,” Greene stated.

The foreign minister used the occasion to show raise of the Father of the Nation, National Hero, Sir Vere Cornwall Bird, for his vision in being one of the first leaders to see China’s real potential and for moving swiftly to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC.

“I have directed my staff to create a V.C. Bird wall right here in our Embassy as a mark of respect and reverence for his vision, commitment, and desire to build a long-lasting relationship with the government and people of this great nation, the People’s Republic of China. A wall



will also be erected for the Honourable Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, in recognition of his embrace of the V.C. Bird vision 41 years later,” he revealed. Noting that there is much conflict and strife taking place around the world, the foreign minister also expressed strong support of China’s Global Security Initiative as articulated by President Xi Jinping.

“It is crystal clear that the security and governance are under threat. It is for this reason that Antigua and Barbuda support the Global Security Initiative (GSI), proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping, designed to provide a safe and stable environment for international relations,

economic development, and global peace.

Additionally, my government remains committed to the ‘One China Policy’, that there is only one sovereign state, the People’s Republic of China serving as the sole legitimate government of that China, and Taiwan is a part of China,” Greene declared.

He added that as members of multilateral institutions like the United Nations, Antigua and Barbuda will continue to collaborate with China on critical issues of mutual interest within the bilateral relations and to ensure that the principles enshrined within the charter of this body are kept, ensuring peace and goodwill among the many nations of the globe.



*cont’d from pg 2*

of 2021 to 87 percent at the end of 2022. Despite this improvement, the nation faces challenges with high gross financing needs, and there has been limited progress in addressing arrears to both creditors and domestic suppliers.

The country’s financial sector remains stable, as highlighted by the report. However, there are concerns raised about the rapid growth in credit union

lending, albeit from a low base. Analysts have expressed apprehensions about potential impacts on future credit quality, calling for careful monitoring and management of this aspect of the financial sector. In summary, the IMF’s assessment paints a positive picture of Antigua and Barbuda’s economic trajectory, with strong growth, a decline in inflation, and improving external balances. However, it underscores the importance of

addressing lingering challenges, particularly in managing public debt and ensuring the sustainability of credit union lending. As the nation looks towards a post-pandemic future, these insights provide valuable guidance for policymakers and stakeholders alike. The full report is available for free download, allowing a more in-depth exploration of the nuances of Antigua and Barbuda’s economic landscape.

## Preparations pick up pace for SIDS4 conference in May

A broad-based group of stakeholders is fully engaged in preparing Antigua and Barbuda for hosting the 4th United Nations Conference on Small Island States, known as SIDS4, which will take place on island from May 27 – 30 at the American University of Antigua.

The conference will bring thousands of delegates from those nations which are considered islands from across the globe to Antigua and Barbuda. They will have an opportunity to discuss among themselves and with their international partners the variety of issues that threaten their survival by virtue of their exposure to the harmful impacts of climate change, external economic shocks and burdensome debt among others.

The Antigua and Barbuda Mission in New York is the national lead in the overall organization of the

event, which is held once every decade to focus on the plight of these countries. The resources of several key ministries and agencies in Antigua and Barbuda have been activated to meticulously plan and coordinate the event, increase awareness activities, and ensure that a successful outcome of the conference is achieved.

On his most recent visit, Antigua and Barbuda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Dr. Walton Aubrey Webson held meetings with Governor General Sir Rodney Williams, Prime Minister Gaston Browne, Minister of Health and the Environment Sir Molwyn Joseph, Minister of Foreign Affairs E.P Chet Greene and members of the team at his Ministry, Minister of Education Daryl Matthew, the National Coordinating Committee chaired by Sheila Roseau, and other key stakeholders



Antigua and Barbuda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Dr. Walton Aubrey Webson, right, meets with Minister of Education Daryl Matthew

and private sector partners.

These latest rounds of discussions proved a valuable information sharing exercise in the exchange of thoughts and ideas as well as reviewing and providing updates on progress and challenges.

"I am pleased with the progress in the construction of the conference centre at the American University of Antigua and it is truly heartening to see the immense collaboration taking place across government agen-

cies to ensure Antigua and Barbuda hosts a major conference of this nature. On every front, from security, transportation to accommodation, we are making steady progress," Ambassador Webson remarked.

Ambassador Webson began his visit with a round of media engagements that kicked off a campaign to sensitise members of the public about the conference and educate them on the crucial matters that will arise from the discussions.



## Additional security measures at HMP set to be implemented

Heightened security measures are on the cards for His Majesty's Prison.

The addition of CCTV cameras, bag scanners and other electronic devices form part of measures that Superintendent of Prisons Lieutenant Colonel Trevor Pennyfeather revealed will soon come on stream.

The cameras were secured through the assistance of telecommunications company, Digicel and have already been installed around the premises.

"We have some phone jammers and we are currently testing them to augment what we already have in place. We also have metal detectors that are on order. We are in discussions with the Airport Authority as well to assist us with a baggage scanner because as you are aware many family members and friends bring a lot of things into the prison and we have to ensure that those things that are coming are sterile and that no contraband is brought in. That still remains a challenge for us," Pennyfeather explained.

During an operation conducted earlier this month, police and prison officers confiscated a number of items to include PlayStation consoles, speaker boxes, and high-end cellphones.

Among the list of contraband found by the lawmen were 24 cellular phones, one PS3, 66 lighters, two electric kettles, 14 speaker boxes, 15

metal forks, 14 metal spoons, a quantity of nails, 70 grams of cannabis, eight grams of crack/cocaine, a quantity of hashish, a quantity of tobacco, five nail clippers, 10 pairs of scissors, a quantity of electrical components, phone

chargers and mirrors.

In terms of physical security, the completion of the watch towers, additional lighting and additional officers have also been looked at.

The conditions at the prison have long been called into

question as over the years there has been a number of break-outs.

The most recent taking place late last year where a Villa man Josh Joyce reportedly scaled the prison walls

*cont'd on pg 6*

  
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## Antigua and Barbuda students performed well at the 2024 Caribbean STEM Olympiads

Antigua and Barbuda students performed well at this year's Caribbean STEM Olympiads (CSO) held on 17 – 21 January, 2024, in a virtual format. It was the second staging of the event that was organized by the Caribbean Science Foundation (CSF).

A CSO release said that in these Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Olympiads, individuals and teams representing educational institutions, clubs or themselves competed in the (a) Math Olympiad, (b) Computer Coding Olympiad and (c) Robotics Olympiad at three different age levels (12 – 15, 16 – 18 and 19 – 21). The Math Olympiad was held in a Jeopardy-style format and covered topics ranging from consumer arithmetic to vector calculus. The Computer Coding Olympiad tasked applicants to create apps, games, and websites aimed at solving a challenge faced by Caribbean communities.

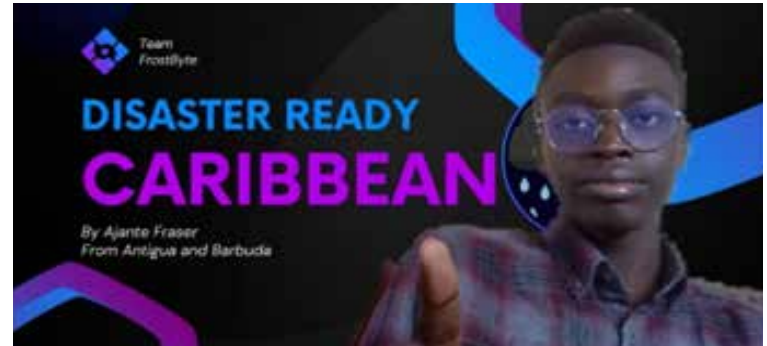
The challenges tackled by teams in the 2024 Olympiads included geohazards and climate change, inter and intra country transportation,

public health, non-communicable diseases, crime, and money movement and financial education. The Robotics Olympiad tasked applicants with building innovative robots from kits at Level I, and complex robots starting from scratch with a set of random parts at Level III.

A total of 131 students from 11 Caribbean countries registered for the 2024 Olympiads. After the preliminary rounds, 39 teams (83 students) made it to the finals. Jamaica emerged with the most medals, eight, followed by Antigua and Barbuda which earned six medals.

In the category Computer Coding Level 2; Ajanté Fraser, a student at the University of the West Indies at Five Islands, but who represented himself in the tournament as FrostByte, won gold for his project Disaster Ready Caribbean. Adrian Judnarine of Patrick Lake Learning Institution with the name, Bread Man, won bronze for his project, Get There.

In the category Computer Coding Level 3; Antigua and Barbuda won two golds and



Ajanté Fraser from Antigua and Barbuda won the gold medal for his Level 2 Computer Coding project "Disaster Ready Caribbean".

a silver. Bread Man (Adrian Judnarine) won gold for his project, Mindful Mate with the second gold going to Saiyan Jacobs of the Antigua State College registered as Weather Machine, won for his project, Weather Monitor.

The team of Ajanté Fraser, Emmanuel Chiddick, D'Chaiya Emmanuel of the UWI FIC, but who registered as The Pennies, won silver for their project, PennyWise.

In the Robotics Olympiad Level 2; Bread Man (Adrian Judnarine) won his third medal when he picked up his second bronze for his project, Solar Tracker.

Professor Cardinal Warde, the Interim Executive Director of the CSF reported that "the STEM outlook for



the Region is very positive. This year we raised the bar a little higher than it was in the inaugural year (2023) for the Math Olympiad, and I was again impressed by the performance of the medalists. To further raise the bar for our robotics and coding efforts, starting in April of 2024 the CSF will offer coaching sessions for interested robotics and coding teams to help them prepare for our 2025 Robotics and Computer Coding Olympiads."

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after having been on remand. The CCTV cameras captured him making his escape on December 8. He was later recaptured.

According to Lieutenant Pennyfeather refresher training and the addition of 30 new officers were matters discussed with government and a commitment has been made for these measures to get underway in the first quarter of this year.

"I would expect they would be made

available to me for final interview within the next four to six weeks," Pennyfeather said.

The overcrowding at the country's lone correctional institution is a matter that has been at the forefront of discussions for years. Government had made declarations about the establishment of a new prison but recent conversations with the National Security Minister Sir Steadroy "Cutie" Benjamin has divulged that the focus will be on retrofitting HMP.



## Local farmers undergo training in broccoli and cauliflower production

Some 25 local farmers attended a training workshop on Wednesday that exposed them to the do's and don'ts of both broccoli and cauliflower production.

Organised by the Extension Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and held at the PDO building on Joseph's Road, the training was conducted by technicians of the Long Ping Agricultural project underway here in Antigua and Barbuda.

"We are trying to increase the production of these crops, especially broccoli as we noticed that because it is largely

imported, the price on the local market is 'quite high'. We feel that if we are able to beef up production, that would in time bring down the cost of the item on the supermarket shelves," Chief Extension Officer, Owolabi Elabanjo stated.

He added that this concern rises to the level of the prime minister who has indicated that he would wish to see farmers shift or expand their production to include broccoli.

"The Chinese company – Long Ping – has demonstrated that broccoli can be suc-

cessfully grown here and the workshop was the division's way to transfer the knowledge and know-how from the Chinese to local farmers," he added.

The workshop covered all aspects of the production,

management and the selection of all varieties of the crop. Seedlings were handed out to the attendees and as part of the training they were given a tour of the Chinese-run farm at Greencastle where broccoli is already in production.



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Dated the 19<sup>th</sup> day of January 2024

... Natalee K Clark and Young Francis

## Google Street-view is coming to Antigua and Barbuda

‘World Travel in 360’, an international company, specializing in creating Google Street View coverage and immersive virtual experiences, will spearhead a transformative project aimed at globally showcasing the picturesque landscapes of Antigua and Barbuda.

The collaboration with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, and ‘World Travel in 360’ signifies a strategic digital renaissance for Antigua and Barbuda. The digital mapping of the entire road network promises enhanced accessibility for citizens and an immer-



Aerial view of downtown St. John's

sive digital encounter for tourists. This initiative transcends technology, serving as an economic stimulant by attracting tourists and contributing to overall community prosperity. The project

is scheduled to commence in February 2024, with the initial Street View coverage becoming operational within a few months.

For a comprehensive exploration of this ground-

breaking initiative, tourism-oriented business owners, and stakeholders interested in the promotion of Antigua and Barbuda through Google Maps and Google Earth are invited to a complimentary webinar, hosted by ‘World Travel in 360’, scheduled for January 26th, at 11am.

Learn about the Google Street View project, its impact on Antigua and Barbuda, and the business opportunities it presents.

Register for the webinar to connect with industry leaders and explore the digital future of Antigua and Barbuda.

## STUDENT SAFETY POLICY





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## Twitch announces new deal to pay streamers more

By Tom Gerken

Streaming site Twitch has announced plans to share more of its revenue with creators as part of a shake-up.

Streamers make money through fans subscribing to their channel, which starts at £3.99 per month in the UK.

This is then split 50/50 between Twitch and the creator, after fees are paid.

Sweetheart deals have previously been given to the most famous streamers, but the new system means anyone with more than 100 paid subscribers will now receive 60% of the money fans pledge.

The news comes two weeks after parent firm Amazon announced it would axe more than 500 Twitch employees - accounting for a third of the people who work there.

Twitch chief executive Dan Clancy said at the time that the site had paid out \$1bn (£780m) to streamers in 2023, but the site was struggling with making money.

"We've implied this before... but I'll be blunt, we aren't profitable at this point," he said in a stream on the platform.

Meanwhile, parent firm Amazon made \$9.9bn profit in July to September, according to its most recent earnings report - up from \$2.9bn in the same period in 2022.



French Twitch streamer Horty has taken part in marathon gaming events.

Twitch is a livestreaming platform, where people typically play video games while chatting to viewers.

The revamped system, called the Twitch Plus programme, will come into effect in May.

Twitch estimates this will mean "three times as many streamers" will benefit from better revenue shares than the default 50/50 split.

"Streamers and the communities you build are the foundation of Twitch," Mr Clancy said in a blog post.

"We understand the important role the revenue you earn from streaming plays in each of your lives.

"These changes aim to create a long term, transparent framework for streamer compensation that rewards and encourages creators who are committed to live

streaming."

The new deal will keep in place the 70/30 revenue split offered to the site's even more popular users, who have more than 350 paid subscribers each month.

That part of the new system was previously announced in June 2023, as part of what was then called the "Partner Plus" programme, which was met with a degree of criticism at the time.

Some felt that it was very difficult to reach the milestone, meaning the deal only benefitted those who were already popular.

Others called for the 70/30 split to be available to all creators, not just those making the most money.

Under the new rules, streamers will now need to achieve 300 paid subscribers to receive a higher payout.

As part of its new rules, Twitch is also abolishing a long-standing system which meant once its top earners brought in \$100,000, their revenue split would drop back down from 70/30 to 50/50 - which could be seen as an effort to draw back some of those who left.

The firm may be concerned with the growth of rival platforms, such as Kick, which offer streamers a significant 95% share of the revenue they generate through subscribers.

Kick has poached several of its rival's biggest names as it continues to grow, including Amouranth and xQc in 2023.

Meanwhile, YouTubers receive 70% of the revenue from their subscriptions, known as memberships. But

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## Bob Marley fans Harry and Meghan attend film premiere

By Sean Coughlan

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have long been fans of Bob Marley's "music and message", says a source, as the couple attended a premiere in Jamaica of a film about the reggae singer.

Prince Harry and Meghan were photographed with the Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness, at the screening of Bob Marley: One Love.

Mr Holness has spoken of Jamaica "moving on" to become a republic.

Bob Marley's relations were also among the guests at the event in Kingston.

The red carpet screening saw Prince Harry and Meghan joining actors and musicians to watch the film remembering the life of the Jamaican music star.

The couple's surprise attendance at the premiere was as guests of the family of Brian Robbins, chief executive of Paramount Pictures, with sources saying Prince Harry and Meghan were "delighted" to be there.

The film, due to be released in the UK next month,



Meghan and Harry with the Jamaican prime minister Andrew Holness at the film premiere.

stars Kingsley Ben-Adir as Bob Marley, who died in 1981, and Lashana Lynch as his wife, Rita.

Mr Holness, posting on social media, hailed the "enduring impact of Bob Marley's work, recognising the importance of his contribution to global conversations on peace, love, and social change".

Prince Harry had been to Jamaica in 2012 on a successful royal trip, remembered for his jokey meetings with Usain Bolt, where the Olympic athlete had called him "cool, very down to

earth".

During that visit more than a decade ago, Prince Harry had been asked about Jamaica's drain of talent to the United States and had told reporters: "It doesn't matter how big you are, if you've got talent use it. Don't go running off to America if you've got a clear talent your country needs."

On this week's visit, Prince Harry was pictured with Mr Holness, who has been seen as wanting to push for the country to become a republic, rather than

having Britain's monarch as head of state.

When Prince William and Catherine visited the country in 2022, on what became a controversial Caribbean tour, the issue of becoming a republic was raised, along with questions about reparations or an apology over slavery.

Mr Holness had said during that visit, that Jamaica was "moving on".

"We intend to attain in short order our development goals and fulfil our true ambitions and destiny as an independent, developed, prosperous country," he said at the time.

During that visit, Prince William had spoken of his "profound sorrow" over slavery, saying it "forever stains our history". On Jamaica's constitutional future, he said that was "for the people to decide upon".

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YouTube also takes a 30% cut of donations from fans - whereas Twitch gives all donations to streamers.

And the announcement comes just two days after top YouTuber MrBeast announced how much money he was able to make from videos on X, formerly known as Twitter.

The social media platform is aiming to court content creators who use rival platforms by offering a large share of its advertising revenue.

While MrBeast seemingly earned a lot from the single video he posted - more than \$250,000 (£197,000) - it pales in comparison to the millions of dollars he makes from YouTube.

## Bahamian government to amend bail legislation

CMC - Bahamian Prime Minister Phillip Davis said that his government would be tabling amendments to the Bail Act to ensure that bail is automatically revoked for suspects who violate the conditions of their release.

“Bail is a constitutional right, but not a right to be abused. There is a fundamental right to be presumed innocent, but the liberty that accompanies that presumption is not absolute, especially when someone poses a danger to society and themselves.”

Speaking in the Parliament, Davis said that the move is part of his government’s strategy to combat crime, telling legislators “for far too long the persistent cycle of violence and crime has been a dark cloud over our nation.

“Each act of violence is a stark reminder of the urgent work that lies ahead. The stories of families shattered, dreams unfulfilled, and communities living in fear are not just news items; they are heartbreaking realities that I, as your prime minister, carry with me every day. These are not just statistics; they are our children, our friends, our future,” he said.

He said the government’s strategy titled “Crackdown 2024: Build-



Bahamian Prime Minister Phillip Davis.

ing Safer Communities” addresses the harsh realities facing The Bahamas.

“It is bold and unflinching. It is grounded in the certain knowledge that the security of our citizens is our number one responsibility. We recognise that the roots of criminality are deep and tangled. They stem from social, economic, and cultural factors. Our response, therefore, is likewise multifaceted and robust, addressing each of these aspects with the seriousness they deserve.”

He said in line with the government’s commitment to strengthen the rule of law and to ensure justice, “I am also announcing a significant amendment to the Bail Act.

“Our amendment will ensure that bail is automatically revoked for those accused persons who commit offence while on bail. This

includes those found to be in violation of the terms of their bail, which is an offense under the amendment.

“This measure sends a clear message: our legal system will no longer tolerate those who flout its rules and endanger our communities,” Davis said, adding “overall, our comprehensive plan is at the heart of a bold determination by my government to combat the scourge of crime, which has long plagued our society.

“We are expanding school policing, placing more trained officers in schools to foster positive relationships with students. This initiative aims not only to ensure safety but also to engage in early prevention, detection, and intervention of criminal activities among the youth.”

He said to deter crime in high-risk areas, the authorities are significantly

increasing police presence through expanded saturation patrols, adding “this heightened visibility of law enforcement is a direct response to the community’s call for increased security.

“In our technological front, we are introducing advanced facial recognition CCTV systems. These state-of-the-art surveillance tools will greatly enhance our crime detection and prevention capabilities.”

Davis told legislators that recognising that crime is not just a local issue, “we are also strengthening regional cooperation in our fight against drug trafficking and illegal arms trade.

“By working closely with our neighbouring countries, we aim to tackle these cross-border issues more effectively,” he said.

So far this year, 17 people have been murdered and last week, the government released a five pillar plan to fight crime, which includes measures like tougher legislation for gang activity and a focus on school policing.

Davis said that while the government would be making every effort to unite Bahamians in “a ‘Whole-of-Government’ and ‘Whole-of-Society’ assault on crime, I feel obliged to bring to the attention of the House, a recent incident,

*cont’d on pg 12*

## Venezuelan opposition denounces 'intimidation' attempts

By Vanessa Buschschlüter

Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado has denounced what she says are attempts by the government to intimidate her and her supporters.

She said two campaign co-ordinators had been “abducted” and party offices had been vandalised.

The incidents come just months after the government agreed to a deal laying the groundwork for free and fair elections to be held in 2024.

Ms Machado said Tuesday’s incidents violated that deal.

Under the agreement, which was reached in Barbados in October last year, the government of President



María Corina Machado urged her followers to unite in the face of intimidation.

Nicolás Maduro committed to allowing international observers to monitor the presidential poll, which is scheduled for a yet-to-be-determined date in the sec-

ond half of 2024.

The 2018 election, which saw President Maduro win a second term in office, was widely dismissed as neither free nor fair.

As part of the Barbados deal, his government also promised to guarantee that all candidates would be able to freely and safely move

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which reflected extremely poorly on the judgement one of our Honourable Members”.

He criticised Opposition Leader Michael Pintard following his recent attack on the Commissioner of the Police, Clayton Fernander’s integrity.

“I am sure that I am not alone when I describe to the House the shock and embarrassment I felt, to hear an Honourable Member attack the Commissioner of Police in such terms.”

Davis said that what made the attack even more egregious, was the fact that “it stemmed from the fact that the Honourable Gentleman was merely ignorant of the details concerning a police investigation, an investigation in which the Honourable Member may likely be a person of interest, given the public utterances of the complainant”.

Davis said that calling someone a liar is not language permitted in parliament, because it is an affront to the implied integrity of everyone here.

“The same is true of other constitutionally recognised positions. Such an attack ought to be beneath the dignity of Honourable Members. One would also think that the Honourable Gentleman would show more prudence, as, in making such an accusation in the media, he also exposes himself to a prosecution for criminal libel.

“At a time when we are urging Bahamians to join together in the fight against crime, and to support the police on the frontline of the battle, the Honourable Gentleman chooses to undermine the integrity of the person at the front of the battle.”

The prime minister said that while the police commissioner “has rightly

maintained a dignified silence on the matter, it is therefore left to us to cry “shame” on his behalf.

“The commissioner has dedicated a lifetime of service to this country. He has achieved high office through dedicated excellence. He has sacrificed much and has himself been the victim of crime when he was shot and injured by an intruder.”

Davis called on everyone to play a role in curbing the crime situation here saying “this is not a time for political gamesmanship.

“Our nation is at a critical juncture. This moment demands of us a unity of purpose and action. I will not rest, nor will my government, until we have turned the tide on crime and violence. This is our pledge to every citizen who looks to us for protection and peace,” Davis said.



Nicolás Maduro told backers that he would “continue governing this country with the support of the Venezuelan people”

*cont’d from pg 12*

throughout the country.

In return, the United States, which backed the Barbados talks, eased some of the sanctions it had imposed on Venezuela’s oil sector.

However, just three months after the agreement was struck, tension between the opposition and the government is again on the rise.

On Monday, Venezuela’s Attorney-General Tarek William Saab, a close ally of President Maduro, announced that 32 people had been arrested for allegedly plotting to assassinate the president and Venezuela’s defence minister, Vladimir Padrino.

Mr Saab also said that arrest warrants had been issued for another 14 suspects, among them human rights activist Tamara Sujú and journalist Sebastiana Barráez, who both live outside of Venezuela and have been highly critical of the government.

Tension also seems to be on the rise

again with the United States, with Mr Padrino claiming that the alleged plot to kill him and the president had the backing of the CIA and the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

The US state department said on Tuesday it was “deeply concerned” by Monday’s arrests.

“Actions that run counter to the spirit and the letter of the Barbados Agreement will have consequences,” state department spokesman Matthew Miller warned.

Meanwhile, rival groups of supporters took to the streets of the capital Caracas on Tuesday.

President Maduro appeared to goad his followers when he told them, invoking independence hero Simon Bolívar: “If the fascists ever hurt me (...), I leave it to you to do what you have to do to restore justice and peace in Venezuela. Activate the Bolivarian fury!”

Graffiti appeared later on the pave-

ment in front of María Corina Machado’s campaign headquarters reading “Bolivarian fury”.

The whereabouts of two of her campaign co-ordinators are unknown after video showed men seizing them and taking them away in unmarked cars.

Ms Machado asked for help from the international community, telling them that “we must put a stop to this madness because this is what the Bolivarian fury means: aggression, disappearances, persecution”.

The 56-year-old politician overwhelmingly won an opposition primary held in October despite being banned from running for office.

She has appealed against the ban, which she has always maintained was unfair and designed to keep the opposition down. Mr Maduro has not yet announced whether he will stand for re-election or if his party will put forward a different candidate.

## Top US court refuses to block nitrogen gas execution in Alabama

By Brandon Drenon

The US Supreme Court will not block Alabama from executing Kenneth Eugene Smith with nitrogen gas, a method never used before for capital punishment.

Death row inmate Smith had asked the court to intervene saying the execution was a cruel and unusual punishment.

The execution, in which toxic nitrogen would be pumped into his body through a mask, is planned for Thursday.

But it could still be delayed as judges in a lower court consider a separate case from him.

Alabama already tried to execute Smith, 58, by lethal injection two years ago, for his 1989 murder conviction.

But the attempt failed because executioners were unable to raise a vein before the state's death warrant expired at midnight.

Alabama is now trying again, this time by using nitrogen gas - which would make Smith the first person in the US to be executed by this method.

Smith was one of two men convicted in 1989 of murdering a preacher's wife, 45-year-old Elizabeth Sennett, who was stabbed and beaten to death in a \$1,000 (£786) killing-for-hire.

At his trial he admitted to being present when the victim was killed, but says



Eugene Kenneth Smith has spent decades on death row at Holman Correctional Facility

he did not take part in the attack.

Smith's partner-in-crime, John Forrest Parker, was executed in 2010.

The UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights has said gassing Smith could amount to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and called for a halt.

Smith's lawyers lodged a legal challenge with the Supreme Court, arguing that the US Constitution forbids putting convicts through multiple execution attempts under the Eighth Amendment, which protects against "cruel and unusual" punishment.

His lawyers also said the nitrogen gas method was "recently released and untested" and "a novel method of execution that has never been attempted by any state or the federal government".

But on Wednesday, the Supreme Court declined to hear his legal challenge - and also denied Smith's request to stay his execution.

No justice publicly dissented from the decision.

Smith could still win a last-minute reprieve from a lower court.

He is contesting the legality of Alabama's nitrogen gas protocol in another case before the 11th US Circuit Court of Appeals.

The three-judge panel heard arguments last Friday, but is yet to rule on the appeal. It did not indicate when it would issue a decision.

That case could still come to the Supreme Court, potentially asking the justices to consider the case again.

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crime, John Forrest Parker, was executed in 2010.

Alabama is one of three US states that have approved the use of nitrogen hypoxia as a method of execution.

Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall previously called the method "perhaps the most humane method of execution ever devised".

The state has one of the highest per capita execution rates in the US and has 165 people currently on death row.

Since 2018, the state has been responsible for three botched attempts at lethal injection in which the condemned inmates survived. The failures led to an internal review that largely placed blame on the prisoners themselves.

Smith - who has been on death row for more than three decades - spoke to the BBC via written answers earlier this week, where he said the wait felt like "torture".



The Diavik Diamond Mine in the North Slave Region of the Northwest Territories, Canada.

## Six dead after plane carrying Rio Tinto workers to diamond mine crashes in Canada

By Nadine Yousif

Six people have died after a plane carrying workers to a Rio Tinto diamond mine in Canada's Northwest Territories crashed, officials said.

The small Jetstream aircraft was on its way to the company's Diavik mine and crashed shortly after take-off.

One survivor was airlifted to a hospital in Yellowknife, the Northwest Territories coroner's office said.

Rio Tinto said it is working closely with authorities as they investigate the crash.

"We are absolutely devastated by this news," Rio Tinto's CEO Jakob Stausholm said in a statement.

Four of the fatalities were passengers, and two others were crew members with Northwestern Air, the

Northwest Territories coroner's office said in a statement on Wednesday.

The plane crashed near Fort Smith, a small town about 740 kilometres south of Yellowknife, north of the Alberta border.

Canada's public broadcaster CBC reported that the plane crashed about 500 metres from the end of the Fort Smith Regional Airport's runway. Joint Rescue Coordination Center Trenton said it lost contact with the plane shortly after take-off.

Rio Tinto's Diavik Diamond Mine is about 300 kilometres north-east of Yellowknife. According to the company's website, it has been in operation since 2003.

The incident has been "very devastating" for the close-knit community, said Fort Smith's deputy mayor

Dianna Korol.

"Everybody has a little piece — or somebody that they know," Ms Korol told the CBC.

RJ Simpson, the premier of the Northwest Territories, offered his condolences to the victims' families and friends.

"The impact of this incident is felt across the territory," Mr Simpson said.

"The people we lost were not just passengers on a flight; they were neighbours, colleagues, friends and loved ones. Their stories and contributions to our communities will not be forgotten."

Both the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Transportation Safety Board of Canada are investigating the crash.

## Adams seeks new talent at CAF GNFC player combine

Micky Adams is one of several overseas football coaches who will be representing colleges, universities, and professional clubs in exploring for new talent at the annual Calvin Ayre Foundation (CAF) Player Identification Combine (PIC), which is hosted by the Generation Next Football Club (GNFC).

The 2024 CAF Player Identification Combine for male and female players, ages 15 to 23, will be held at St. Anthony's Secondary School from today (Thursday), January 25, to Sunday, January 28.

Adams is a former manager for three English football clubs: Leicester City, Sheffield United, and Southampton.

Adams said this weekend's player identification combine is an opportunity to explore new horizons outside of the United Kingdom in search of new talent.

"It's very kind to say that we have lots of football talents here in the United Kingdom, but football is a global sport now. There are emerging nations and players from everywhere. I don't think we as a nation in England should think that all the best players are based in England," Adams stated.

"I think you have got to explore new horizons in search of a new pool of

talent and identify it wherever it is. I think coming to Antigua would be a fantastic opportunity to have a look at the standard and, hopefully, there are players on the island that can go on and become professional footballers."

The CAF Player Identification Combine is being held for players to showcase their talents in their bids to secure athletic scholarships at colleges and universities or trials at professional football clubs.



Micky Adams (Getty Images)

Adams said the scouts will not only be looking for talented players but also for those who have a genuine love and passion for football.

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Players of the Potters Tigers football team. (File photo)

## Tigers narrow gap on First Division leaders Five Islands

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

Keon Greene struck a hat trick to lead the Potters Tigers to a four-nil victory over Bolans in the second game of a First Division double header at the ABFA Technical Center on Tuesday.

Greene had conversions in the 5th, 11th, and 24th minutes, and Jay-Zeba James scored the other goal for the Potters Tigers in the 87th minute.

Potters Tigers remain in second place after claiming their fifth win in eight matches to advance to 18 points, one adrift of leaders Five Islands.

Bolans remain on seven points

after suffering their fifth loss in eight matches.

Police romped to a 6-1 victory against the Young Lions of Old Road in the first encounter at the ABFA Technical Center.

Dimitri Scotland scored in the 5th minute, Javere Joseph had a 41st-minute conversion, Glenroy Prince fired home in the 56th minute, Stephen Hughes converted a penalty kick in the 64th minute, Alexander Burton scored an own goal in the 78th minute, and Joumol Semper scored the last goal for Police in the 83rd minute.

Zavier Joseph scored the lone goal for the Young Lions when he converted a penalty kick in the 36th minute.

The result allows the Police to move into third place by advancing

to 15 points from eight matches, while the Young Lions remain winless and in the cellar without a point after losing for the seventh time in as many games.

Jennings United and Bendals played to a goalless draw in another First Division encounter at the Jennings playing field.

The result allows Jennings United to move on to 11 points from eight games, while Bendals remain second from the bottom of the standings even though they advanced to six points after the same number of matches.

However, the Second Division game at the Radio Range playing field in Ottos was not played after the Celtics failed to show up for their encounter against the Freemans Village Scorpions.

# GERM BUSTER

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1

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- After using the bathroom
- After touching pets or animals
- After handling rubbish

2

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3

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Players of the Antigua Girls High School (blue and black uniform) and Irene B. Williams Secondary (yellow uniform) prepare to tip off their Senior Girls Division encounter in the Cool and Smooth Inter-School Basketball Championships at the JSC Sports Complex on Tuesday, January 23, 2024. (Photo courtesy School Basketball Unit)

## AGHS and PMS get opening wins in senior girls division

The Antigua Girls High School (AGHS) and Princess Margaret School (PMS) made successful starts to their campaigns in the Senior Girls Division of the Cool and Smooth Inter-School Basketball Championships on Tuesday.

Antigua Girls High School prevailed 17-15 against Irene B. Williams Secondary in the first game of a senior girls' division double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Shakora Prince, Joy Shaw, and Ruchira Daley each scored four points for Antigua Girls High School. G. Abbott sank points, and Serenity Colbourne had four points for Irene

B. Williams Secondary.

Daley said the AGHS girls were able to overcome the pressure and win the closely fought encounter because they played as a team.

Colbourne said Irene B. Williams played well but could have done better.

Princess Margaret School cruised to a comfortable 30-9 victory over Christ the King High School in the second senior girls affair.

Kayla Melvin shot a game-high 18 points, and Sanura Lewis and Teonya Lewis each converted four points for Princess Margaret School. Jodaliah Constant scored six points

for Christ the King High School.

Greenbay and TN Kirnon schools also made a winning start to their campaigns in the Mini-boys Primary category.

Greenbay Primary secured an 18-4 victory against Potters Primary. Kobe Alphonso converted eight points for Greenbay, and Mario Lambert scored three points for Potters.

TN Kirnon Primary prevailed 6-2 against JT Ambrose Primary. Tevon Anderson, Tacquan Brann, and Kaylen Samson each scored two points for TN Kirnon. Rayon Nicholas also scored two points for JT Ambrose Primary.



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## CPTSA Wings Sports Club elects new executive

The Concerned Parents, Teachers, and Students Association (CPTSA) Wings Sports Club has elected a new executive body to administer its affairs for the next two years.

Seven administrators were elected to conduct the affairs of the CPTSA Wings Sports Club until 2026.

Lucaso Brumant and Barbara Coates were unopposed and were returned as president and vice president, respectively.

The other members elected are Karen Lloyd as secretary; Useiga Benjamin as assistant secretary; Valencia Burnette as treasurer; Cavelle Joseph as assistant treasurer; and Melissa Lawrie as a floor member.

The new executive is taking over from an interim executive who has been in operation at the club for the past two years.



The CPTSA Wings Sports Club executives. From left to right: Lucaso Brumant, Barbara Coates, Karen Lloyd, Useiga Benjamin, Valencia Burnette, Cavelle Joseph, and Melissa Lawrie. (Photo courtesy CPTSA Wings Sports Club)

The interim body was implemented after several failed attempts to convene a general meeting, including the election of an executive to run the affairs of the organization.

This was mainly due to a lack of financially registered members in the various sectors to take up a position in the voluntary nonprofit sports organization.

As such, it was decided and agreed, at a meeting of the units on December 8, 2023, to hold an election of officers with financially registered members on January 18, 2024.



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## Andrew leads West Indies to victory over Scotland

Antiguan and Leeward Islands batsman Jewel Andrew continued his rich vein of form at the ICC Under-19 Men's Cricket World Cup, as he posted another unbeaten knock in a five-wicket beating of Scotland, which gifted West Indies their first win of tournament at Senwes Park, in South Africa, on Wednesday.

After blasting a 96-ball 130 in a losing cause against host South Africa in West Indies' opening fixture, Andrew again displayed confidence and poise in his unbeaten 64 off 60 balls, which ensured the West Indies successfully chased down Scotland's 205 for nine off 50 overs.

Andrew's knock includes eight boundaries, as he starred in an unbroken 95-run sixth-wicket stand with Nathan Edward, who capitalized on a promotion up the order, with a patient 27 off 55 as the West Indies achieved victory at 206 for five in 35.1 overs.

The two came together with the regional side in a spot of bother at 111 for five. This, as Adrian Weir (seven), captain Stephan



Nathan Edward, right, and Jewel Andrew, left, leave the playing field following West Indies' win over Scotland in their second match of the ICC Under-19 Men's Cricket World Cup at Senwes Park, in South Africa, on Wednesday, January 24, 2024. (Getty Images)

Pascal (26), Joshua Dorne (11), Jordan Johnson (24) and Mavendra Dindyal (29), all again failed to make a lasting impression.

Fortunately, Edwards patiently occupied one end, and that allowed Andrew to play with some degree of freedom against the Scottish seamers.

Earlier, Pascal's decision to insert Scotland proved right. Apart from Jamie Dunk, who made an 87-ball 57, as well as Adi Hedge (32) and Alec Price

(31), the opponents offered very little resistance with the bat, as they found Isai Thorne, in particular, too hot to handle.

Thorne, a right-arm medium fast, bagged a career-best four for 46 from nine overs, and Nathan Sealy claimed two for 38.

The win, which was also West Indies' fourth over Scotland at this level, saw them to second in Group B on two points, behind England (four points).

Sri Lanka and Paki-

stan also recorded wins on Wednesday. Sri Lanka defeated Namibia by 77 runs in Kimberley.

Sri Lanka made 133 in 37.5 overs, and Namibia crashed to 56 all out, their second-lowest total in the Under-19 World Cup history.

Pakistan defeated Nepal by five wickets in East London. Nepal tumbled to 197 in their 50 overs, and Pakistan achieved victory at 201 for five in 47.4 overs.