

# WANTED JAMAICAN WOMEN ARE STILL ON THE RUN

*Story on Page 2*



Students attending three government primary schools were the beneficiaries of a donation of school supplies made possible through Antigua Agronomics and Senator Dwayne George. *Story on page 6.* (Photos courtesy Wayne Mariette)

## Two wanted Jamaican women are still on the run

One week after being on the run from law enforcement officials, two Jamaican women remain at large and the authorities are making another appeal for help with their recapture.

Both officials at the Immigration Department and the police CID have said they are intensifying the search for the women but so far they have come up emptyhanded. "We are following up on a number of leads that we have received from members of the public regarding the two fugitives, but they remain at large up to this time," a senior official of the Immigra-



Donnalee Samantha Salmon Immigration Department tells Pointe Xpress newspaper.

The women – Donnalee Samantha Salmon and Tiffanie Stephanie Howell – were being held at the Detention Centre of the Immigration Department awaiting deportation when they es-



Tiffanie Stephanie Howell escaped through a window on Saturday night and have not been seen since. A Wanted Bulletin was issued by the department earlier in the week asking members of the public to assist with the recapture of the two.

Salmon was among three

persons intercepted in a motor vehicle with a firearm and ammunition. She was handed over to Immigration for deportation to her native Jamaica. Howell arrived last Thursday on a flight from Jamaica and was denied entry. She was being housed at the Detention Centre awaiting the next flight to Jamaica (on Sunday) to be returned.

Attorney General Sir Steadroy Benjamin has issued a warning to members of the public to desist from providing material or other assistance to the fugitives as they continue to elude recapture.



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## High winds force cruise ship to cancel call at Antigua

The high winds which Antigua and Barbuda have been experiencing over the past week forced a cruise ship to cancel its call at Antigua on Thursday.

Antigua Cruise Port spokesperson, Jessica Russell said the vessel, Beyond of the Celebrity Cruise Lines, declined to sail into the St. John's Harbour because of the strong prevailing winds. Safety of the vessel and its passengers is a top priority for cruise operators.

She said the vessel has a capacity to carry 3,260 passengers but she had no information about how many passengers were aboard as it did not dock in the port and declare its manifest.

The vessel is scheduled to visit on February 15. There was only one vessel in port on Thursday, the



Windstar.

The Antigua and Barbuda Met Office confirmed that the high winds are usual for this time of year when low pressure systems in the Atlantic give rise to winds between 20-30 knots with occasional higher gusts. Normal wind speed for this time of year aver-

age between 8 and 15 knots.

The forecast calls for these winds to continue into Friday evening but are generally expected to return to normality overnight into Saturday.

The winds also caused the Montserrat ferry to suspend services during the week. The service is ex-

pected to resume on Saturday.

Meanwhile, three vessels are due in port on Friday. They are Marella Voyager, Mein Schiff 3 and Seabourne Ovation. A military vessel is also expected in port on Friday for what is expected to be a "R&R" visit for its crew.



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## Statistics Division to conduct census mapping exercise

The Statistics Division, under the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Governance, is readying itself to conduct the Mapping and Listing Exercise which forms part of the pre-enumeration activities for the 2024 Census.

According to the Division, plans are progressing for the conducting of the 2024 Population and Housing Census.

There are three stages to executing a census first, the pre-enumeration stage which is what the Census Office is currently em-

barking on and is key. Second, is the enumeration which is the data collection stage and is the critical component of the Census.

Third, is the post-enumeration stage, where the data collected is verified, analysed, and statistics, reports, and other outputs are produced and disseminated.

This pre-enumeration exercise helps census workers locate dwellings, businesses, and other buildings quickly and efficiently. Additionally, it

determines the extent to which the maps correctly reflect the geographic and housing characteristics of the enumeration districts. These maps will be used for the actual census enumeration later this year.

The Census Office, which is responsible for implementing the Census, will be engaging at least ten (10) persons to assist with this exercise.

These field officers received theoretical and practical training on January 9, in preparation for the actual exercise com-

mencing on January 26, 2024.

Field Officers will be issued official picture IDs, and while in the field, all officers will be appropriately attired in T-shirts bearing the Division's logo on the front and "Census Mapping Exercise" on the back. The exercise is expected to end on March 31, 2024.

The Statistics Division encourages the public to cooperate fully with the field officers when they visit their homes or business places.

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Repairs are being made to fix the part of the basketball court that was vandalized at the JSC Sports Complex.



The vandalized area of the basketball court at the JSC Sports Complex. (Photos courtesy ABBA)

## ABBA condemns vandalism at JSC Sports Complex

The Executive of the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association (ABBA) is condemning a recent attempt of vandalism at the JSC Sports Complex. In the wee hours on Thursday 25 January, an attempt was made to light a fire in the middle of the court by an unknown assailant.

The Executive was alerted about the minor damages to the playing surface by the custodian later that day. Upon assessing the damages, the burnt pieces were removed and replaced. While the damage to the playing surface was not significant,

President of ABBA Michael Freeland shared his frustrations over the non-sensical matter.

“To even think that someone would try to light a fire in the complex is just ridiculous and alarming as well and we condemn this act and all acts of vandalism.

“We will be filing a police report. We are calling on patrons to cease and desist from vandalizing the complex.

“This will only cause harm to the sport and our youth, especially, as many use the facility on a daily basis

whether it be for practice sessions, school games or just to stay in shape. We have our league coming up as well.

“For those persons in the surrounding communities, we are asking for you to keep an eye out and let’s all work together to keep the facility in proper condition,” Freeland said.

Efforts will be made to increase security measures at the facility. Over the years, there have been several cases of vandalism and attempted break-ins at the complex but nothing to this degree.





## Antigua Agronomics teams up with Sen. Dwayne George to donate school supplies

Students attending three government primary schools were the beneficiaries of a donation of school supplies made possible through Antigua Agronomics and Senator Dwayne George.

The first presentation was made Thursday morning to the Bendals Primary School where its principal, Jose Joseph, accepted the donation of folders, books, pens, pencils and pencil cases on behalf of the 110 students attending the institution.

She thanked the company for deciding to make the presentation to the school recognising that for some students the donation came at a critical time in the learning process.

Antigua Agronomics has a facility located in Bendals where it plans to cultivate cannabis for med-

ical purposes. According to Company Director, Dwight Ateba Henry, the company has decided to adopt the school and it will be making donations of similar types to the institution over the coming weeks and years.

Currently, the company is nearing completion of its facility and it hopes to begin cultivation and production in the second half of the year.

Antigua Agronomics also teamed up with the ABLP Caretaker in the St. Mary's South constituency, Sen. Dwayne George to make similar donations to the Bolans Primary School and the Urlings Primary School. At Bolans, the students were engaged in sports day activities but the presentation went ahead nonetheless with the principal, Claudina Charles ac-



cepting on behalf of the 135 students there.

At Urlings, the presentation was made to the principal, Denese Parker. There are 100 students attending that school.

Following the presentation, Senator George said he was happy to be a part of the presentation as he sees this as an investment into the future.

“Our youth represent the future of our country

and anything that will help in their growth and development, especially in the area of education, I plan to give my strongest support. I would like to thank Antigua Agronomics for making this donation on my behalf,” he stated.

Antigua Agronomics Director Henry, who currently resides in the UK, was born in Bolans. He said that explains his affinity for the schools in the area.





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# Local News



## Independent senator, Kiz Johnson, wants more clarity about her role



Senator Kiz Johnson

Independent senator, in the Upper Chamber of Parliament, Sen. Kiz Johnson, will observe the first anniversary since her appointment this weekend with much satisfaction with her achievements in the first year in office.

She told Pointe Xpress that her first year was phenomenal. “I have to say that it has been a pleasure serving in the Senate as an Independent Lawmaker. I enjoy it immensely. You must observe how my eyes lit up just knowing that I am a part of shaping the laws of this country which will impact not only our current generation but that of our future generation brings me joy.”

Much as she has enjoyed her experiences over the past year, one of which was representing Antigua and Barbuda as the country’s standard bearer at King Charles the Third’s Coronation, Sen. Johnson believes that there is some misunderstanding among the public about her role as an inde-

pendent senator.

For her, this is a major challenge. “The only challenge with this role is that there is still a perception that the Independent Senator is not really “independent” by virtue of the fact that I am the Governor General’s appointee and the Governor General is himself appointed by the Prime Minister,” she bemoaned.

According to Sen. Johnson, the confusion in the minds of many people is manifested by the comments they make in their social media postings.

“I have been looking at the comments online following my debate presentations and some people still do not understand who is an Independent Senator, some have said that I am opposition senator while some have asked if I am a Government Senator.

“An Independent Senator is not affiliated with any political party nor represents the interest of any  
*cont’d on pg 10*

## More arrests made on gun and ammunition charges

The police are continuing their drive to rid the nation of illegal firearms and ammunition.

Over the past two weeks a number of arrests have been made involving persons found in possession of illegal firearms and ammunition.

In the latest case, the police arrested and jointly charged Zamir O’Garro of Bethesda, Nquanze Armstrong of John Hughes, Tristan Armstrong of Tyrells and Zykia George of Falmouth for unlawfully having in their possession of one 30-30 Winchester

Rifle and possession of five matching rounds of ammunition.

The accused were taken into custody by the police on Tuesday, 23 January, after finding the illegal items at home in John Hughes. They are due to appear before the court on Thursday.



# VACANCY

## MOBILE SUPPORT TECHNICIAN

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

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

**Key tasks include but are not limited to the following:**

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

**The ideal candidates should possess the following:**

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

## MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANT

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

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

**Key tasks include but are not limited to the following:**

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

**The ideal candidates should possess the following:**

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

**Interested persons are asked to apply in writing to:**

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

**Deadline for application is Wednesday 31st January, 2024**

\*\* Only suitable applicants will be acknowledged \*\*  
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# Opinion

## Senator Clement Antonio shares his thoughts on youth in politics

Senator Clement Antonio, has taken a firm stance in support of increased youth participation in politics and leadership roles. Recognizing the immense potential and unique perspectives that young individuals bring, Senator Antonio believes that their active involvement is crucial for the advancement and prosperity of Antigua and Barbuda.

With a passion for empowering the next generation, Senator Antonio highlights the need to create platforms and opportunities that allow young people to engage in political processes and decision-making. He firmly believes that their voices deserve to be heard and their ideas considered in shaping the future of the nation.

“As a nation, we must embrace the value that our youth possess and provide them with the necessary support and encouragement to contribute effec-

tively,” stated Senator Antonio. “Their energy, creativity, and fresh perspectives can bring about positive change and drive innovation in our society.”

Senator Antonio’s advocacy for increased youth involvement aligns with his broader goals of promoting education, fostering entrepreneurship, and ensuring a prosperous future for Antigua and Barbuda. By actively encouraging young individuals to participate in politics and leadership, he aims to create a more inclusive and representative society that addresses the diverse needs and aspirations of its citizens.

Furthermore, Senator Antonio believes that nurturing the leadership skills of young individuals will cultivate a new generation of visionary leaders who will shape the country’s future with integrity and dedication.

The senator’s call for increased youth participation in politics and leader-



Senator Clement Antonio

ship serves as an invitation to fellow politicians, community leaders, and citizens of Antigua and Barbuda to recognize and invest

in the potential of young people for the betterment of the nation.

Antigua and Barbuda’s progress and development depend on harnessing the energy and ideas of its youth. Senator Clement Antonio’s unwavering support for increased youth involvement in politics and leadership paves the way for a brighter future, where the voices of the young are valued and their contributions shape the destiny of the nation.

### *cont’d from pg 8*

political party; that in my capacity as an Independent Senator, I represent the interests of the people, the ones who are underserved or do not wish to channel their views through a political party.

“The views of the average man must be represented and I take pleasure in speaking on behalf of these groups in our society,” she stated.

Despite this however, Sen. Johnson believes that generally there is what she

termed ‘a good view’ of her within the body of politics.

“The only comment that is not very appealing is that the independent senator is not a necessarily a popular position within the parliamentary structure, so it takes some work to stamp your name in this capacity and to be embraced by society. Overall, I think people are beginning to warm up to the idea of the Independent Senator based on my contributions so far in the Senate,” she added.



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# Opinion



## Red Sea Crisis: Houthi attacks raising prices worldwide

By Sir Ronald Sanders

Up until a few weeks ago, the Red Sea and Yemen held little significance for the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. However, an unexpected turn of events thrust these regions into the spotlight—the relentless attacks on commercial shipping by a group known as the “Houthis.” Emerging from global obscurity, the Houthis have become central to headline news worldwide.

### Houthi attacks driving up prices for goods

The Houthi assaults severed vital shipping routes by blocking access to the Suez Canal, a critical link connecting the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, representing a staggering 15 percent of global trade. These attacks have propelled shipping costs to unprecedented levels—data from the London-based Drewry Shipping Consultants reveals that the average global price for a 40-foot container has more than doubled in the past month.

Furthermore, the World Trade Organization reported a staggering 40 percent decline in wheat shipments through the Suez Canal in the first half of January. Faced with this disruption,

companies are re-routing fleets away from the Red Sea, opting for the Cape of Good Hope route around South Africa. However, the journey takes 10 days longer, further increasing costs.

### No region of the world is immune

While Europe, Africa, and the Middle East directly bear the brunt of trade disruptions from the conflict, the global turmoil poses risks for all, including the Caribbean. Intertwined global transportation, with rising shipping costs, idle warehouses, and disrupted container schedules, initiates a ripple effect, impacting prices universally.

Additionally, the global stock market’s speculative nature further contributes to rising prices. Notably, in mid-January, heightened risks in the Red Sea led to a surge in oil prices to \$80 per barrel.

The Caribbean, already grappling with elevated costs from the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, is not immune to the recent price hikes. Prolonged disruption by the Houthis, far from a distant concern, directly affects the Caribbean, impacting the pockets of people across the region.



Sir Ronald Sanders

### Who are the Houthis and why are they attacking shipping

The problem is the Houthis have no self-serving interest to stop. The Houthis are a political and military organization in Yemen, a country located in the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula. It is bordered by Saudi Arabia to the north and Oman to the northeast. Significantly, it overlooks the Red Sea at its narrowest point - a 20-mile strait of water - before it plunges into the Arabian sea. It is from this vantage point that the Houthis have been attacking ships since the conflict between Hamas

and Israel in Gaza began in November 2023.

The Houthi Organization controls most parts of Yemen, including the capital. They have been at war with a military coalition, organised and supported by Saudi Arabia for 10 years. The Organization is supported by the Government of Iran for two reasons. The first is that Iran rivals Saudi Arabia for regional dominance; Yemen is a proxy for the wider competition. The rivalry is exacerbated by religious differences - Iran is largely Shia Muslim, while Saudi Arabia is Sunni Muslim.

*cont'd on pg 13*



## cont'd from pg 12

The second reason for Iran support of the Houthis is the conflict between Israel and Hamas over Gaza. Israel and Iran are sworn enemies, and Iran is believed to be financing the Houthis to attack ships serving ports in Israel. But what started out as an attempt to inflict damage on Israel in support of the Palestinian cause, has spread into attacking ships belonging to the US, the UK and other Western nations regarded as allies of Israel.

### The UN response

On January 10, 2024, the United Nations Security Council attempted to address the issue by passing a resolution, condemning the Houthi attacks on shipping. But the resolution, while adopted, exposed serious divisions among the 5 veto-nations on the Council. The US, UK and France voted in favour, Russia and China abstained. Both Russia and China linked their abstention to the consequences of Israel's military operations in Gaza that have now lasted for more than 3 months, resulting in more than 25,000 people being killed.

### Situation about to worsen

Recent US and UK airstrikes across Yemen, directed at Houthi operations, prompted a Houthi demand for the expulsion of all US and UK UN and humanitarian staff within a month. Whether this demand hints at further retaliatory actions against the US and UK re-

mains uncertain.

Meanwhile, the Houthis lack an incentive to cease attacks on Western-owned ships, as their actions in Yemen, purportedly in support of Palestine, have bolstered their popularity, diverting attention from the Organization's failure to provide basic services to the Yemeni people.

Both the US and UK governments are facing general elections this year. Wars – even small ones – have the tendency to rally national support behind governments, particularly if they claim that the involvement in conflict is to

provide economic benefits or enhance national power. Thus, the US and UK governments also have domestic political reasons to intensify their military response to the Houthis, in the hope that it will build their political capital.

### No prospects for an early end

The ongoing disruptions underscore the urgency for nations to unite in diplomatic efforts, prioritizing humanitarian concerns, and seeking enduring solutions to restore stability. However, given all the vested interests at play, no such thing will happen.

Therefore, the prospect is real of a prolonged disruption of shipping. Countries around the world need to prepare for higher prices. And, once again, small states, through no fault of their own, will be the victims of events in which they play no part.

*(The writer is Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the US and the OAS. He is also the current President of the OAS Permanent Council. The views expressed are entirely his own. For comments and previous commentaries, see: [www.sirronaldsanders.com](http://www.sirronaldsanders.com))*





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# Amazon's record drought driven by climate change

By Mark Poynting

One of our planet's most vital defences against global warming is itself being ravaged by climate change.

It was the main driver of the Amazon rainforest's worst drought in at least half a century, according to a new study.

Often described as the "lungs of the planet", the Amazon plays a key role in removing warming carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

But rapid deforestation has left it more vulnerable to weather extremes.

While droughts in the Amazon are not uncommon, last year's event was "exceptional", the researchers say.

In October, the Rio Negro - one of the world's largest rivers - reached its lowest recorded level near Manaus in Brazil, surpassing marks going back over 100 years.

As well as being a buffer against climate change, the Amazon is a rich source of biodiversity, containing around 10% of the world's species - with many more yet to be discovered.

The drought has disrupted ecosystems and has directly impacted millions of people who rely on rivers for transport, food and income, with the most vulnerable hit hardest.

One trigger for these dry conditions is El Niño - a natural weather system where sea surface temperatures increase in the East Pacific Ocean. This affects global rainfall patterns, particularly in South America.

But human-caused climate change was the main driver of the extreme drought, according to the World Weather Attribution group, reducing the amount of water in the soil in two main ways.

Firstly, the Amazon is typically re-



ceiving less rainfall than it used to between June and November - the drier part of the year - as the climate warms.

Secondly, hotter temperatures mean there's more evaporation from the plants and soils, so they lose more water.

The researchers used weather data and computer simulations to compare drought conditions in two scenarios: one with human-caused warming, and one without.

In a world where humans hadn't heated up the planet by around 1.2C, such an intense 'agricultural drought' - where a lack of rainfall and high evaporation dry out the soils - may only have happened around once every 1,500 years, the study suggests.

Climate change has made a drought of this severity around 30 times more likely, according to the researchers, and one is now expected to happen every 50 years under current conditions.

"This really is something quite exceptional," says Dr Ben Clarke, a researcher with the World Weather Attribution group.

As the map below shows, drought hit almost all of the Amazon basin. This scale - and intensity - makes it

different to previous droughts, Dr Clarke told BBC News.

And if warming continues, such extreme droughts could become even more common.

"If we continue burning oil, gas and coal, very soon, we'll reach 2C of warming and we'll see similar Amazon droughts about once every 13 years," says Dr Friederike Otto, a senior lecturer in climate science at Imperial College London.

More frequent and intense droughts test the Amazon's resilience. That has already been stretched by deforestation - around one-fifth of the rainforest has been lost over the last 50 years.

Trees help the area retain and release moisture, fuelling their own clouds, and they also help to cool temperatures.

While the effect of deforestation was not directly tested in this latest study, previous research has shown it increases the vulnerability of the rainforest to drought.

The world's largest rainforest is seen as crucial in the battle to limit global warming.

*cont'd on pg 15*



## US warns citizens against crime situation in The Bahamas

CMC - The United States on Wednesday blamed “retaliatory gang violence” as the primary motive for murders in The Bahamas as it warned its nationals to be aware of the situation when visiting the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) country.

In a statement, the US embassy here advised American citizens to be “aware that 18 murders have occurred in Nassau since the beginning of 2024.1.24”

“Murders have occurred at all hours including in broad daylight on the streets. Retaliatory gang violence has been the primary motive in 2024 murders,” it said, urging Americans to “exercise extreme caution in the eastern part of New Providence Island”

and use caution when walking or driving at night.

In addition, Americans have been told to keep a low profile and do not physically resist any robbery attempt.

The announcement by the Embassy follows a statement by Prime Minister Phillip Davis to Parliament on Wednesday, 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 bail.

“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.”

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 heart-breaking 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: Building Safer Communities” addresses the harsh realities facing The Bahamas.

*cont’d from pg 14*

“The Amazon could make or break our fight against climate change,” says Regina Rodrigues, a professor of physical oceanography and climate at the Federal University of Santa Catarina in Brazil.

In a healthy state, it takes up more carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) than it releases.

This limits CO<sub>2</sub> increases in the atmosphere from human activities, keeping a lid on temperatures.

But there is evidence that this may be changing, as trees die back due to drought, wildfires and deliberate clearance to make room for agriculture.

There is concern that if climate change and deforestation continue at their current pace, the Amazon could

soon reach a “tipping point”.

If crossed, this could lead to the rapid and irreversible dieback of the whole rainforest - potentially leading to the region becoming a significant source of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

It’s not known exactly where such a threshold might sit.

“I don’t think that [tipping point] is what we are seeing [yet], at least in all but the driest part of the Amazon forest,” says Yadvinder Malhi, a professor of ecosystem science at the University of Oxford, who was not involved in the latest study.

Despite the latest record drought, there has been some encouraging progress.

The rate of deforestation fell in

2023 compared with the year before, according to the Brazilian space agency, with President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva pledging to halt it completely by 2030.

This - alongside urgent action to slash the greenhouse gas emissions that are fuelling global warming - can still help to protect what’s left of the Amazon, researchers say.

“The loss of the Amazon forest is far from inevitable in the short-term,” as long as fire and deforestation can be controlled, Prof Malhi told BBC News.

“But we do need to get to grips with stabilising global climate, as the risk increases with every fraction of a degree the planet warms.”

## Dominica: Former government minister fined on gun related charges

CMC – A magistrate Wednesday ordered former Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Kenneth Darroux to pay EC\$5,000 immediately after he was convicted on gun-related charges.

“Possession of a firearm is a serious offence, and we see it escalating in Dominica and the Caribbean bringing an outcry to the society. I will not impose a custodial sentence since you are a first-time offender, fully co-operated and we did not have a protracted trial,” Magistrate Michael Laudat said.

Darroux, who is the Special Envoy in the Office of the Prime Minister, had pleaded guilty to two charges that on January 16, this year, he imported one Glock 19 barrel and also one Glock 17 slide without being the holder of a license to so do as is required under the Firearms Act.

Darroux had elected for a summary trial at the Magistrate Court given that the charges could have been summarily or indictable at the High Court.

His attorney, Lennox Lawrence, told the court that his client has been the holder of a firearms license for the past 10 years and he honestly and genuinely thought that his “firearms license was sufficiently enough”.

Darroux is the holder of two firearms licenses for a Glock 19 firearm and both licenses are valid. He imported personal effects along with one Glock 19 barrel that arrived in Dominica on January 22, 2024.

When the package was being examined by the customs officer, he found a Glock 17 slide and one Glock 19 barrel. They were seized and the matter was reported to the police.

The court heard that Darroux admitted to the purchase but stated that since he was the holder of a firearms



license, he thought that was sufficient for him to order the firearm accessories.

As a result, he was arrested and slapped with the two charges.

“He formed a view that is regrettably wrong...this was not a full firearm, it only has components of a firearm,” Lawrence told the court.

“There are no aggravating circumstances in this case, this is somebody who has not concealed anything from the police, he is a first-time offender who is saying to the court I am sorry.”

Lawrence said Darroux, 53, a former health minister and a medical practitioner by profession, is a genuine member of society and it would serve no useful purpose if he is given “a custodial sentence.

“This is an outstanding member of the community, we are asking for special considerations but not special favours,” he said.

“We all make mistakes, this matter should not have even reached the court, it should have been dealt with administratively,” Lawrence said, adding that his client should be “reprimanded and discharged.”

But he said if the court is minded to impose a fine it should be “very

small just to make a statement.”

On the issue of the public’s interest in the matter, the defence attorney said that the public’s interest is not served by penalizing his client for crimes done by other individuals.

“He cannot carry the sins of other offenders” and urged the magistrate to “disregard anything said by the prosecution about public’s interest.”

In his ruling, Laudat said that he was not going to adhere to the sentencing guidelines since it was “not in the public’s interest”

But he said that “ignorance of the law is no excuse and the country has seen the prevalence of illegal firearms and the court must send out a clear message.”

For possession of the Glock 19 barrel, Darroux was fined EC\$3,000.00 to be paid forthwith in default six months in jail, and for the importation of the Glock 17 slides he was fined EC\$2,000.00 also to be paid forthwith or in default six months in prison.

The fines were paid forthwith.

Under the Firearm Act of Dominica, Darroux could have been fined EC\$15,000.00 and be sent to prison for seven years.



# Top Arizona Republican quits over leaked tape offer to Kari Lake

By Max Matza

Arizona's Republican party chairman has quit over a leaked tape in which he is heard apparently trying to induce a Senate candidate to quit the race.

On the audio, Jeff DeWit asks Kari Lake if there is "any number" that would make her take a political "pause" as "very powerful people" want her out.

In his resignation letter, he denied any bribery and said Ms Lake had released a "selectively edited" tape.

Ms Lake narrowly lost her 2022 race for Arizona governor.

The right-wing firebrand and ally of Donald Trump is now running for the seat currently occupied by independent Senator Kyrsten Sinema.

Arizona Republicans have long worried that Ms Lake's combative style of politics may turn off moderate voters and lose the race, potentially costing Republicans control of the Senate.

In the tape, recorded during a meeting at her house 10 months ago, Mr DeWit tells Ms Lake there are "very powerful people that want to keep you out".

He does not name them, but says they are "back



Right-wing firebrand Kari Lake is running for a Senate seat. East".

"I'll tell you what I'm offering you," he says, suggesting that she could be put on the payroll of a company in exchange for a two-year "pause".

He repeatedly asks her not to tell anyone about their conversation.

"Is there a number at which...", he says, before Ms Lake interrupts.

"I could be bought? No," she replies.

When Mr DeWit says he has doubts that Mr Trump will win the presidential election because of fundraising issues in the state, she disagrees.

"This is about defeating Trump and I think that's a bad, bad thing for our coun-

try," she argues.

Ms Lake, who had called for Mr DeWit to resign after the tape emerged, welcomed his departure.

"We want ethical leaders," she posted on X on Wednesday. "Time to root-out the corruption at ALL levels - both inside and outside our party."

Mr DeWit, a former state treasurer, worked for Mr Trump's campaigns in 2016 and 2020.

In his resignation letter on Wednesday, he said that Ms Lake's team had delivered him an ultimatum - "resign or face the release of a new, more damaging recording".

He said that since their conversation, Ms Lake

"has been on a mission to destroy me".

"Contrary to accusations of bribery, my discussions were transparent and intended to offer perspective, not coercion," he says.

Mr DeWit is not the only Republican state party leader to leave office this month.

Florida's chairman was voted out by party members after allegations of sexual assault.

Christian Ziegler was cleared by police of rape last week, but could still face a voyeurism charge.

In Michigan, Republicans voted to remove Kristina Karamo as party chair due to infighting and fundraising issues.

## Argentina: Tens of thousands march against Javier Milei's cuts

By Graeme Baker

Tens of thousands of Argentines have joined protests in the first major challenge to President Javier Milei's plans to slash workers' rights.

Large crowds gathered in the heart of Buenos Aires and other cities for demonstrations called by the CGT union.

Mr Milei was sworn in 45 days ago promising deregulation, deep spending cuts and the devaluation of the peso.

Protesters on Wednesday bore placards reading "eating is not a privilege" as they were faced down by riot police.

Others read "The homeland is not for sale" and "Stop robbing retirees".

The main rally in the capital was outside Congress, where politicians discussed Mr Milei's plan to deregulate the economy, slash labour rights and cut large areas of government to revitalise a country suffering 200% inflation and 40% poverty levels.

He has also announced his intention to abolish rent caps and remove government subsidies on everyday items.

The CGT, which has seven million members, has been joined by other smaller unions and civic groups vowing they will "not yield an inch of what



Riot police guard the Argentine congress during protests in Buenos Aires.

has been achieved" for workers' rights.

"People are angry... nobody can deny it," said CGT co-leader Héctor Daer.

Protesters in the capital told BBC News they were marching to give voice to popular opposition to Mr Milei's plans.

Valentina, a pensioner, said the president had "forgotten about the poor" and was putting her country "up for sale".

Nahuel, from the social movement Movimiento Evita, said the working classes were suffering under Mr Milei's rule.

"None of the laws they are trying to pass in congress are to help the working class, who are the ones taking the hit and the one that is here today," he said.

The strike on Wednesday, lasting 12 hours, affected public transport, flights and other services. Aerolíneas Argentinas cancelled nearly 300 flights, affecting more than 20,000 passengers.

Security Minister Patricia Bullrich insisted the Milei administration would not be defeated, and said on Twitter, also known as X, that far more people went to work than walked out.

She denounced "mafia labour unions, managers of poverty, complicit judges and corrupt politicians... who resist the change democratically decided by society".

Opposition parties and the unions say the proposed deregulation and public spending cuts will

hit the most vulnerable and increase poverty.

Mr Milei blames decades of overspending by left-wing populist governments for Argentina's economic decline.

He has said that "shock treatment" would be needed to drag the country out of its economic crisis, and added that those who opposed him would usher in "a social catastrophe of biblical proportions".

His reforms are being challenged on several fronts, with more than 60 lawsuits already filed, and he has already faced several waves of public demonstrations.

His attempt to increase the job probation period from three to eight months, reduce compensation in

*cont'd on pg 19*



## Mixed fortunes for AGS in junior boys basketball contest

There were mixed fortunes for Antigua Grammar School (AGS) in the Junior Boys Division of the Cool and Smooth Inter-School Basketball Championships on Wednesday.

The Antigua Grammar School's first team prevailed 43-20 against St. Anthony's Secondary School in one of three games at the JSC Sports Complex.

Najee Simons produced 13 points, and Kadeem Simon scored nine points for Antigua Grammar School. Ean Southwell converted 10 points for St. Anthony's Secondary.

But Princess Margaret School romped to an emphatic 64-22 victory against the second team of the Antigua Grammar School.

Craig Massiah shot a game-high 36 points, and Tyrese White sank 16 points for Princess Margaret School. Jordan Andrew scored 10 points for the Antigua Grammar School's second team.



Princess Margaret School's Craig Massiah handles the ball during his team's encounter against the second team of the Antigua Grammar School in the Junior Boys Division of the Cool and Smooth Inter-School Basketball Championships at the JSC Sports Complex on Wednesday, January 24, 2024. (Photo courtesy School Basketball Unit)

The Irene B. Williams Secondary claimed a 47-20 victory against the Ottos Comprehensive School in the other junior boys encounter.

Davinique Osborne converted 18 points, and

Shemaiah Cochrane had 16 points for Irene B. Williams Secondary. Ajani Adams scored nine points, and Keion Knights chipped in with seven points for Ottos Comprehensive School.

The Inter-School Bas-

ketball Championships will continue today with games in the mini girls and mini boys primary divisions.

Post Millennial Academy will face Sea View Farm Primary, and defending champion Cedar Grove Primary will meet J.T. Ambrose Primary in the Mini Girls Primary Division.

The SR Olivia David Primary of Bolans will oppose Sea View Farm Primary, and Golden Grove Primary will challenge Post Millennial Academy in the Miniboys Primary Division.

### cont'd from pg 18

case of dismissal and cut pregnancy leave has already been frozen by a court pending a review by the country's congress.

The government is also leaning on congress to approve the privatisation of state enterprises. However, his party is only the third largest in parliament and faces opposition from the larger parties.

Mr Milei's attempt to boost export competitiveness by devaluing the peso by more than 50 percent last month has also been criticised.

"What was gained in competitiveness is lost with inflation," economist Martin Epstein told AFP.

Mr Milei reversed plans to cut public funding of the film industry after a backlash from film stars.



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## Isaac hails first Glow Volleyball event a success

Coach and member of the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association (ABAVA), Farida Isaac, said the first ever 'Glow in the Dark' Volleyball event was a success and surpassed her expectations.

The Fantastic 6 won the inaugural competition, which was contested by 10 teams under neon-coloured lighting at the indoor volleyball facility at the YMCA Sports Complex recently.

Slaughter House came in second, and Shadow Legions claimed third place in the event that was contested before an audience that filled the volleyball stadium.

Isaac, who introduced and coordinated the new



The Fantastic 6 team which won the first ever 'Glow in the Dark Volleyball' competition at the YMCA Sports Complex on Saturday, January 20, 2024. (Photos by Johnathan Murphy)

initiative to generate new Barbuda, said it was well and continued interest in supported by participating the sport in Antigua and teams and spectators.

"It went very well. We had 10 teams that entered the competition, and we had prizes for the top three teams. It was the first one, and it went well," Isaac said.

Several people played key roles that contributed to the overall success of the event, which also featured live entertainment, including music and a fire display by Tricks Promotion Fire Eater.

Among them are K'yla Thomas, Marcus Cornelius, Donita Samuel, Olsen "Karrat" Joseph, Noel Jervier, Shanae Jervier, King Kid, and national youth female player Jaya Isaac-



Teams compete during the inaugural 'Glow in the Dark Volleyball' competition at the YMCA Sports Complex.

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Players of the Lingies CPTSA Wings football team. (File photo)

## Three teams claim wins in Second Division football league

Lingies CPTSA Wings, English Harbour, and Soccer Academy recorded wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division league on Wednesday.

Wings came from behind to snatch a 2-1 victory against Belmont FC in the second game of a double header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Zamaal Greene scored in

the 37th minute to give Belmont FC a one-nil halftime lead. But almost immediately after the interval, Wings snatched an equalizer via Dorien Meade's 46th-minute conversion.

Eric Logan struck the winner for the Wings when he scored in the 73rd minute. The result meant Belmont FC failed to overtake Freemans Village Scorpions at

the top of the standings.

It was the first defeat in seven matches for Belmont FC, who remain in second place on 16 points, two adrift of leaders Freemans Village. Wings advanced to 11 points after recording their third win in seven matches.

Nigel Graham and Os-hane Blackwood both struck hat tricks as English Harbour climbed into fourth place by

inflicting an eight-nil drubbing on the bottom team, the Young Warriors, at the English Harbour playing field.

Their fourth win in seven matches carries English Harbour to 14 points, while the Young Warriors remain winless and in the cellar without a point after crashing to their seventh loss in as many games.

Keyondre Hewlett and Imani Joyce both scored twice to lead Soccer Academy to an 8-1 victory against TAMO FC in Wednesday's second game at the ABFA Technical Center.

It was the third win in six matches for Soccer Academy, which advanced to 12 points, while TAMO FC remained on 10 points after suffering their third loss in seven matches.

*cont'd from pg 21*  
Carr.

The event also received support from several sponsors, such as KN Consultants, Theminator, Biggs Car Rental, and Top Ranking.

Isaac said the successful hosting of the inaugural glow volleyball event has attracted the interest of other countries that are members of the Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Association (ECVA), of which Antigua and Barbuda is a member.

"It went so well that the following day the pictures were posted on the Antigua volleyball association's Facebook page and shared with other members of the ECVA. A lot of the presidents in those other ECVA member countries have reached out to me about how to replicate it in their respective countries," Isaac said.

Isaac said she is currently contemplating whether the competition could be staged twice a year or if it will be an annual event in Antigua and Barbuda.

## Australia stifle West Indies despite fightback

BRISBANE (Reuters) - Australia's fearsome pace trio combined for five wickets in the opening session to leave West Indies reeling on day one of the second Test on Thursday, but a gutsy century partnership between Kavem Hodge and Joshua Da Silva steadied the ship in Brisbane.

West Indies reached 266 for eight at stumps after the pair frustrated the hosts for 52 overs, successfully negotiating the tricky twilight period of the day-night affair and adding 149 runs before Da Silva was out lbw to spinner Nathan Lyon for 79.

Speedster Mitchell Starc was the pick of Australia's bowlers, swinging his way to four for 68 with the pink ball.

Australia lead 1-0 in the two-Test series, having prevailed in the Adelaide opener by 10 wickets.

The day started with touring skipper Kraigg Brathwaite (4) on the right side of two reviews, but no reprieve came when he edged a gentle Josh Hazlewood outswinger to keeper Alex Carey.

The afternoon's first wicket also brought a mo-



The West Indies' Kavem Hodge bats against Australia on first day of the second cricket Test match in Brisbane, Australia, on Thursday, Jan. 25, 2024. (AP)

ment of levity when Hazlewood, who claimed two for 32, gave a send-off not to the batsman but to Australia's all-rounder Cameron Green, who was shooed away from the celebrations having tested positive for COVID-19 along with coach Andrew McDonald.

The slips were soon brought into play by Starc and captain Pat Cummins (1-70), who induced false strokes from Kirk McKenzie and Tagenarine Chanderpaul, both out for 21.

Alick Athanaze was caught behind for eight to become Test wicket number 350 for Starc, who also found the outside edge of Justin Greaves (6) to put West Indies in the perilous position of 64 for five at dinner.

But Hodge and Da Silva recovered impressively to bat into the third session, frustrating the hosts by ducking anything short and countering Lyon's off-spin with ease.

A sharp chance went begging in the 71st over

when Hodge, on 59, flashed Starc past a diving Green at gully, but the breakthrough soon came when Da Silva departed.

After the second new ball was taken, Hodge was caught for 71 at second slip off Starc.

Alzarri Joseph contributed an entertaining 32, but was squared up by Hazlewood in the final over to leave debutant Kevin Sinclair unbeaten on 16 overnight. The West Indies last won a Test Down Under in 1997.