

RE-PIPING EXERCISE GETTING A 'SHOT- IN-THE-ARM' WITH HELP FROM CHINA



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Prime Minister Gaston Browne, third from left, with the rest of his delegation at the VC Bird International Airport, after returning from their official visit to the People's Republic of China.

The re-piping exercise is getting a ‘shot-in-the-arm’ with help from China



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

Antigua and Barbuda is in line to get another significant form of assistance from the People’s Republic of China, which is acknowledged as the country’s most important developmental partner.

Reporting on his recent trip to the PRC, Prime Minister Gaston Browne hailed the trip as being very fruitful with both countries signing a number of Memoranda of Understanding through which Antigua and Barbuda will get additional developmental assistance from China.

This time, the assistance is coming in the form

of Chinese help with the re-piping that is now taking place here on Antigua.

“We were able to sign infrastructural development assistance agreements; in fact, one of the most exciting is the re-piping of St. John’s, to start, then eventually the whole of Antigua and Barbuda. As you know we have an aging piping infrastructure and we were able to exchange Letters of Commitment with the Chinese government. Normally, this would take up to two years, but we were able to get this matter accelerated to the

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Sir Molwyn: China trip opened doorway to innovative ways to treatment of NCD's

Health Minister, Sir Molwyn Joseph, says he is excited about the opportunities that the visit to the People's Republic of China offered to learn about new and innovative approaches to treat many of the Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD's) and cancers that affect segments of the Antigua and Barbuda society.

Sir Molwyn was a member of the official delegation of Antigua and Barbuda, led by Prime Minister Gaston Browne, which returned Monday from a 10-day tour of China.

"What excited me in China was the opportunity to learn more of what is already there in terms of science and technology in dealing with so many of the diseases that are taking the lives of Antiguan and Barbudans, such as diabetes. I was blown away when we visited a hospital and we were able to see a piece of

equipment that not only diagnosed the patient at the end stage of the disease, but it is an equipment that can forecast the disease," he noted

The health minister says the Chinese approach to health care was very revealing, as unlike here in Antigua and Barbuda where there is what he termed 'sick and care' where a person is treated only after they become sick, the Chinese approach is to develop ways to prevent sickness by early detection.

"They have the equipment that gives them that capacity, not only for diabetes but for cancer screening. There is a new technology which we were fully exposed to, where dealing with cancer would be like dealing with a vaccine. They are saying that they are working on a vaccine that can prevent cancer. Not only that, they are giving the body the ability to fight cancer," he



Health Minister, Sir Molwyn Joseph exclaimed.

According to Sir Molwyn he was informed by the Chinese officials that this technology is about two years away from being ready for human trials and Antigua and Barbuda would be first in line to get access to this new technology for the Caribbean region, once it is ready for general use.

The environment minister also reported that in the area of climate resilience, Antigua and Barbuda will see an acceleration in moving towards renewable energy with the assistance of the Chinese who are developing the technologies to harness solar power for everyday use in a manner that is both affordable and accessible.

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point where within the next twenty-four months we should see some commitment regarding the funding," PM Browne reported.

The move to request Chinese funding for the re-piping exercise is an essential part of the government's move to improve the production and distribution of water throughout both Antigua and sister isle Barbuda.

During the trip, other MOU were signed including one dealing with the whole issue of climate change. Antigua and Barbuda has been a vo-

cal advocate for global action on this critical issue noting that as a small island state it faces an existential threat from the impact of climate change, although its contributions to the phenomenon is negligible at best.

There was also an agreement signed between the Antigua and Barbuda delegation and a university in China for collaboration with the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus to conduct joint research.

"We are confident that due to this trip, the relationship between the PRC and Antigua and Barbuda will

be enhanced, not only at the macro leadership level, based on the strong relations we currently enjoy with the Chinese leadership, but also at the micro-business level in which we have also visited a number of businesses in bio medics, in climate change, including electric vehicles, and we are hoping that we can encourage two of those EV firms to do business here in Antigua and Barbuda," the prime minister revealed.

The prime minister and delegation returned from the trip to the PRC on Monday.

Opening of embassy in Beijing: A plus for Antigua and Barbuda

Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene, who was a member of the official delegation that visited China last week, has highlighted the importance of the opening of an embassy for Antigua and Barbuda in Beijing, the Chinese capital.

Speaking at the VC Bird International Airport after returning to St. John's on Monday, FA Minister Greene says the opening of the embassy has huge significance for the government and citizens of the country.

“Having a physical presence in China means that Antigua and Barbuda traders as well as business between Antigua and Barbuda and China should see a difference in terms of positive growth. Opening the embassy means that nationals who are doing business



Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene, centre.

in China through middlemen, now that we have this physical presence of an embassy in China, they will now be able to do much of their negotiations and sourcing of materials through the embassy,” he remarked.

The foreign minister is also of the view that the embassy will also serve the interests of students now studying in China and who from time to time are in need of consular and other such services, something they didn't have previously.

Overall, Greene sees the trip as a fillip to strengthening the relations between Antigua and Barbuda and the People's Republic of China.

“I'm very pleased as Foreign Minister that at this stage of our relationship, 41 years after, where the relationship has reached a point where both sides are totally comfortable, totally satisfied and from this trip I see a lot happening for Antigua and Barbuda. The signing of agreements, all of which have much benefits for the economy and people of Antigua and Barbuda, adds to my optimism,” he emphasized.

He noted that the onus is on the Antigua and Barbuda officials to do the follow up to ensure that the promised benefits do materialize.

Greene pointed to the area of scholarships for Antigua and Barbuda students to pursue various study programmes as part of the benefits the team was able to secure during the trip.



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New principal of the UWI FIC voicing serious concerns about crime in the region

The newly-installed Principal of the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus, Professor C. Justin Robinson is voicing serious concerns about the high crime rates across the Caribbean calling the murder rates 'shocking'.

Speaking during his installation address at the SJCP House of Restoration on Saturday, Professor Robinson described Caribbean people as some of the friendliest people in the world, but with a dark side, the ease at which many Caribbean citizens tend to murder one another.

"The murder rates across the Caribbean are shocking!



Principal of the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus, Professor C. Justin Robinson

If one was to do an analysis of the top ten places for violent crimes in the world, for the past fifteen years, in that top ten are at least four Caribbean countries," he revealed.

He said the region has

to come up with solutions to end, what he termed, this 'crisis of crime'.

The issue of crime was one of three *Triple 'C' Crises* that currently confront the region. The other two are Climate Change and

Chronic Non-Communicable diseases.

According to Professor Robinson, anyone who doubted that climate change was an urgent issue would have had those doubts erased following the heat waves that the world experienced during the summer of 2023. "The world is heating up and we have to change the way we live, fundamentally," he warned.

On the issue of the Chronic Non-Communicable diseases, the new principal noted that diseases such as diabetes and hypertension often led to early deaths and therefore are matters the region needs to confront.

Antigua and Barbuda official chairs regional meeting

Regional officials are meeting in Georgetown, Guyana, this week looking at ways to establish a regional regime for the registration of professionals and to standardize a Professionals Act for the entire region.

The occasion is the Eleventh Meeting of the Regional Services Project Steering Committee taking place from 29-31 January 2024, at the CARICOM Secretariat's Headquarters.

Deputy head of the Office of National Authorising Officer (ONAO), Barbara Williams, is chairing the meeting which will among other things carry out an analysis of the performance of the regional services sector from 2012 to 2021 as well as an estimated performance for 2022-23 and an outlook for 2024-25.



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Deputy Head of the ONAO, Barbara Williams, chairs regional meeting in Guyana

One of two Jamaican fugitives turns herself in

One of two Jamaican women who have been on the run from law enforcement for over a week is now back in custody.

Immigration sources have confirmed that, Tiffanie Stephanie Howell, 30, turned herself in over the weekend. It was not immediately known whether or not she was accompanied by an attorney when she surrendered.

Howell was denied entry when she presented herself to border security officials on January 18, 2024, and was being held at the Detention Centre at the Immigration Department headquarters when she escaped with compatriot, Donnalee Samantha Salmon, on January 20,



Tiffanie Stephanie Howell

while they were being held for deportation.

Both have been able to elude law enforcement for more than a week until Howell decided to end her

life on the run and presented herself to the authorities.

The Immigration Department says it continues to be on the lookout for

Salmon, who remains on the run.

She has been living in Antigua and Barbud prior to her encounter with the law.

Salmon was among three persons arrested and charged for the illegal possession of a firearm and ammunition.

She was handed over to the Immigration Department for deportation when she along with Howell escaped through a window at the department.

Last week, a Wanted Bulletin was issued for both women. Immigration officials want the public to remain vigilant and to report any sightings as the second woman continues to elude recapture.

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The meeting will consider the draft regional regime for the single registration of professionals. Additionally, the other subject heads listed on the agenda include;

Review and Update of the Regional Policy for the Provision of Professional Services in the CSME

Consideration of the Draft Caribbean Community (Single Registration of Professionals) Act Rev April 2019

Consideration of Common Regional Qualification Standards for Regional Registration:

The meeting is already looking at a list of services that will be considered for registration and for a regime that will facilitate these professionals

working across borders within CARICOM.

The services under consideration include the following;

Legal Services – Attorneys at law
Accounting, auditing and bookkeeping services – Accountants, Auditors and Book Keepers

Taxation services – Tax Advisers

Architectural services – Architects

Engineering services – Engineers

Integrated engineering services – Engineers

Urban planning and landscape architectural services – Urban Planners and Landscape Architects

Medical and dental services – Doctors and Dentists

Veterinary services – Veterinarians

Services provided by midwives, nurses, and para-medical personnel – Midwives, Nurses, Allied Health Professionals

Services provided by pharmacists – Pharmacists

Other

The agenda also calls for consideration of Common Forms for Registration; consideration of Common Procedures for Regional Registration, as well as consideration of Specimen Single Registration Card.

A draft Professionals Bill, 2024, is also down for consideration by the officials.

Antigua and Barbuda's CARICOM Ambassador, Dr. Clarence Henry is also attending the meeting.



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CROSQ Launches eLearning Courses

BRIDGETOWN, January 18, 2024 - The CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) has launched five e-learning courses, with a view to engaging more with academia to bring quality infrastructure education to youth and young professionals.

Speaking at the recent online launch of the **Quality for Organisational Effectiveness and Sustainability (QOES) eLearning Programme**, CROSQ CEO, Mr. Deryck Omar, said: *“If quality infrastructure is to attract the kind of skilled and dedicated professionals that are necessary for the future success of our small island developing states, then it must include partnerships with academia. It must start with an understanding of how the pure and applied sciences, and even the social sciences, taught in our secondary and tertiary institutions can also direct graduates into the specialized field of Quality Infrastructure.”*

Noting that CROSQ was on a path to developing active and fruitful partnerships with academia in coming years, Mr. Omar noted that the institution was also marketing quality infrastructure as a career development path for youth.

CROSQ’s QOES Programme Leader and Technical Officer, Quality Promotions, Ms. Latoya Burnham noted that under the 11th European Development Fund Technical Barriers to Trade Project, the five, free courses were geared mainly toward entry level professionals in quality-related institutions.

She said the courses developed by technical officers of the CROSQ Secretariat and from across the region include: Introduction to Quality Infrastructure, Standards Development – Essentials, Fundamentals of Metrology, Auditing for Quality Effectiveness, and, Quality Infrastructure: Marketing Communications.

Programme Manager with the European Union Delegation to Barbados, Eastern Caribbean States, the OECS and CARICOM/CARIFORUM, Mr. Sheldon Jackman praised CROSQ and its partners on the EU-funded initiative.

“The development of these training courses come in response to recognised growth in demand by firms and other stakeholders in their use of quality systems to meet local, regional and international market requirements,” Mr. Jackman said.

He added: *“Professionals in firms and staff of standard bodies who complete this course of study, will benefit from enhanced tools and best practices, in the respective areas of QI and close any knowledge gaps that may exist. This training, supports the overall objective of the TBT programme by increasing the use of internationally-recognised Quality Infrastructure by the regional and national quality institutions and by the private sector.”*

Committing support to combatting technical barriers to trade in the region, the EU Delegation representative praised the 11th EDF-TBT Project managers, the German National Metrology Institute (PTB), as well as implementers CROSQ and the Dominican Republic’s Institute for Quality (INDOCAL), on the launch of the training programme.

PTB Project Coordinator, Dr. Sabine Greiner said the courses would assist in building knowledge of quality infrastructure amongst individuals who are interested in entering the quality infrastructure field, as well as continuing education for existing professionals in the region.

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X blocks searches for Taylor Swift after explicit AI images of her go viral

By Nadine Yousif

Social media platform X has blocked searches for Taylor Swift after explicit AI-generated images of the singer began circulating on the site.

In a statement to the BBC, X's head of business operations Joe Benarroch said it was a "temporary action" to prioritise safety.

When searching for Swift on the site, a message appears that says: "Something went wrong. Try reloading."

Fake graphic images of the singer appeared on the site earlier this week.

Some went viral and were viewed millions of times, prompting alarm from US officials and fans of the singer. Posts and accounts sharing the fake images were flagged by her fans, who populated the platform with real images and videos of her, using the words "protect Taylor Swift".

The photos prompted X, formerly Twitter, to release a statement on Friday, saying that posting non-consensual nudity on the platform is "strictly

prohibited".

"We have a zero-tolerance policy towards such content," the statement said. "Our teams are actively removing all identified images and taking appropriate actions against the accounts responsible for posting them."

It is unclear when X began blocking searches for Swift on the site, or whether the site has blocked searches for other public figures or terms in the past.

In his email to the BBC, Mr Benarroch said the action is done "with an abundance of caution as we prioritise safety on this issue".

The issue caught the attention of the White House, who on Friday called the spread of the AI-generated photos "alarming".

"We know that lax enforcement disproportionately impacts women and they also impact girls, sadly, who are the overwhelming targets," said White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre during a briefing.

She added that there should be

legislation to tackle the misuse of AI technology on social media, and that platforms should also take their own steps to ban such content on their sites.

"We believe they have an important role to play in enforcing their own rules to prevent the spread of misinformation and non-consensual, intimate imagery of real people," Ms Jean-Pierre said.

US politicians have also called for new laws to criminalise the creation of deepfake images.

Deepfakes use artificial intelligence to make a video of someone by manipulating their face or body. A study in 2023 found that there has been a 550% rise in the creation of doctored images since 2019, fuelled by the emergence of AI.

There are currently no federal laws against the sharing or creation of deepfake images, though there have been moves at state level to tackle the issue.

In the UK, the sharing of deepfake pornography became illegal as part of its Online Safety Act in 2023.

Britney Spears appears to apologise to Justin Timberlake over book allegations

By Yasmin Rufo

Britney Spears has appeared to apologise to her ex Justin Timberlake for comments in her autobiography.

He had told her to have an abortion as he “didn’t want to be a father”, she alleged in *The Woman in Me*, and cheated on her with “another celebrity”.

But on Monday, she posted a clip of him singing his songs with Jimmy Fallon on NBC’s Saturday Night Live programme.

And alongside the Instagram post, she wrote: “I wanna apologise for some of the things I wrote about in my book.”

Spears wrote: “If I offended any of the people I genuinely care about, I am deeply sorry.

“I also wanted to say I am in love with Justin Timberlake’s new song, *Selfish*.”

“It is so good - and how come every time I see Justin and Jimmy together, I laugh so hard?”

Spears released a song in 2011 with the same title, with some Britney fans campaigning to get her *Selfish* track into the charts higher than Timberlake’s new single, according to US media.

Spears dated the NSync singer from 1999,



Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake dated in their late teens.

when she was aged 17, to 2002.

And after becoming pregnant, she had been unsure whether having an abortion was the right decision, the *Baby One More Time* singer wrote in her autobiography, released in October 2023.

“If it had been left up to me alone, I never would have done it,” she wrote.

“And yet Justin was so sure that he didn’t want to be a father.”

The allegations sparked a social-media backlash - and Timberlake appeared to turn off com-

ments on his Instagram for a while.

He has not publicly responded - but in 2021, wrote on Instagram: “I understand that I fell short in these moments and in many others and benefited from a system that condones misogyny and racism.

“I specifically want to apologise to Britney Spears and Janet Jackson both individually, because I care for and respect these women and I know I failed.”

Spears has been married three times and has

two children with her second husband, dancer Kevin Federline.

Also in her book, the Toxic singer documented her controversial conservatorship.

Calling herself a “child robot”, she claimed her father told her he had assumed legal control of her personal and professional affairs, by saying: “I am Britney Spears now.”

And last week, following rumours she was planning a return to the studio, Spears said she would “never return to the music industry”.

IDB Lab invests in Jamaican hub to drive health innovation

IDB Lab, the innovation laboratory of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Group, will invest US\$750,000 to support the Jamaican company Novamed to build Catalyst, the first health innovation accelerator and incubator in the Caribbean region.

Health innovation is crucial to overcoming healthcare challenges in the Caribbean and improving access to quality care, creating opportunities to accelerate positive impact.

Novamed's focus on private sector-led healthcare innovation aims to improve the quality and affordability of care, which can benefit on a greater scale vulnerable populations and public agencies delivering care through public-private partnerships.

Through the grant, IDB Lab and Novamed will support, catalyse, and accelerate innovation in health and the development of an ecosystem to support and grow new or improved health solutions in the Caribbean region by building out and delivering specialized knowledge, connections, organizational capacity, and partnerships needed to support innovators in this area.

The funds will be used to pilot several projects, devel-



David Walcott, founder and managing partner of Novamed, the company behind Catalyst, the first health innovation accelerator and incubator in the Caribbean region.

op regional integration and cooperation to strengthen a regional health innovation ecosystem, knowledge exchange missions with other innovation labs, pitch competitions offering micro-grants, capacity building for start-ups, and the building of a health innovation community.

“IDB Lab is catalysing more investments in the Caribbean region addressing needing sectors, such as health, and supporting nascent ecosystems that foster not only interactions between internal and external actors but promote growth and innovation”, said Irene Arias, CEO of IDB Lab.

The solutions incubat-

ed through Catalyst will tackle four challenges that were identified as the most important and persistent in Jamaica and the Caribbean region: Non Communicable Diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity; process innovation, which is vital to address resource constraints, improve access to care, and enhance healthcare delivery efficiency; mental health given high rates, stigma, and limited access to these services; and communicable diseases such as dengue fever and Zika virus, which intersect with climate changes and for which, the region has particular vulnerability.

“This collaboration with

IDB Lab marks a significant milestone in our mission to revolutionize healthcare innovation in the Caribbean. IDB Lab's investment in Catalyst, our pioneering health innovation accelerator, will foster a dynamic ecosystem of innovation that enhances healthcare delivery, affordability, and accessibility, ultimately improving the lives of people in Jamaica and across the Caribbean”, said David Walcott, founder and managing partner of Novamed.

This project will benefit from financial counterpart support and technical training offered by other partners such as the Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ).

Daniel Pruce sworn in as British Virgin Islands' new governor

By Dillon De Shang

Daniel Pruce has been sworn in as the British Virgin Islands' new governor.

Justice Angelica Teelucksingh administered the oath of office at a ceremony this afternoon.

Pruce, who is a career public servant and diplomat, is the territory's 15th governor.

In his first address as governor, Pruce said he was honoured to be given the responsibility and pledged to work with everyone interested in improving the lives of Virgin Islanders.

"My priority as Governor will be to deliver positive change for all the people of the Virgin Islands. So I look forward to working in close cooperation and partnership with all branches of the Government of the Virgin Islands –the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. I look forward to building close relations with all communities in the Territory and drawing from their insights as I set about my work," he said.

"I will be a Governor who is accessible to everyone, including all branches of civil society, public servants and the private sector. And of course I will engage with the Government of the United Kingdom, representing the interests of these islands to the best of my ability. As Governor



Governor Daniel Pruce.

I look forward to collaborating with all those who have the best interests of the people of this Territory at heart, in positive and productive partnership."

Pruce pledged to do his best to keep islanders safe in the face of rising crime, champion excellence in governance and support efforts to protect the BVI's delicate environment.

Premier Dr Natalio Wheatley welcomed Pruce to the island and expressed his willingness to work with the new governor in developing the British Virgin Islands.

Wheatley said Pruce's appointment comes at

a time when the United Kingdom and its overseas territories are working on a pathway to greater self-determination.

"A lot hinges on the relationship between the governor and premier in our political system. I will be a good partner as we carry out our constitutional role," he said.

"We are hoping that by the end of your tenure, there will be a stronger public service and improved security across the territory. We are committed to working with you in these areas to help support their strengthening. We also look forward to work-

ing with you and your team on governance reforms. We share the sense of urgency in completing the remaining governance reforms."

Wheatley made a plea to Pruce to hold off on his predecessor's plan to increase the officeholders' powers as it would affect how the territory's elected officials work.

As the country looks to celebrate 74 years of democracy, Wheatley said: "The people of these Virgin Islands wish for the democratic governance of the territory to continue and their constitutional and democratic rights to be respected."

Iranian and two Canadians charged with plotting murder of defector

By Mike Wendling

US authorities have charged three men with plotting to murder an Iranian defector living in Maryland.

Naji Sharifi Zindashti, 49, who lives in Iran, allegedly asked Canadian Damiion Ryan to help with an assassination.

Mr Ryan, a member of the Hells Angels motorcycle club, then enlisted associate Adam Pearson, who is currently in prison.

They are also accused of targeting the defector's female companion.

Mr Zindashti - who US and UK officials say operates a criminal network targeting Iranian dissidents around the world on behalf of the Iranian government - agreed to pay Mr Ryan, 43, and Pearson, 29, a total of \$350,000 (£275,000) plus \$20,000 (£15,750) in travel expenses for the murder-for-hire, according to an indictment released Monday.

The group communicated on an encrypted chat app, SkyECC, which has been implicated in a number of organised crime cases. The company that produced the app, Sky Global, was seized by US authorities in 2021. It is not related to media conglomerate Sky Group Limited.

Mr Zindashti, who lives in Iran, messaged Mr Ryan about "jobs" and starting in January 2021 they began talking about a specific plot



Naji Sharifi Zindashti is accused of running international assassination and drug smuggling operations.

in the US, according to the indictment.

Mr Ryan talked about shooting the victim in the head and wrote that he would ensure his operatives would know that "we gotta erase his head from his torso".

He said he had assembled a team of four people including Pearson, a Canadian who was living illegally in Minnesota at the time.

The plot was apparently never carried out and alleged targets in Maryland were not named in the indictment.

The three men were charged with conspiracy to commit murder-for-hire, which carries a maximum prison sentence of 10 years if no death or injuries occur. In addition, Pearson faces firearms charges.

Also on Monday, the US and UK governments announced sanctions on Mr Zindashti and his associates.

Reports say Mr Zindashti has been arrested several times in Iran and Turkey on drug charges. In 2014, his daughter was killed by rivals in a gang dispute.

He is believed to now live in Iran and US officials say he organizes assassinations of dissidents and drug-smuggling operations on behalf of the Iranian government. Turkish officials believe his network was behind the abduction of Habib Chaab, a Swedish-Iranian activist who was kidnapped during a visit to Turkey in 2020 and was later executed in Iran.

"The Iranian regime's continued efforts to target dissidents and activists

demonstrate the regime's deep insecurity and attempt to expand Iran's domestic repression internationally," said Brian Nelson, US Treasury undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence.

The BBC contacted Iran's ministry of foreign affairs for comment.

Mr Ryan and Pearson are currently in prison in Canada on charges unrelated to the alleged murder-for-hire.

Mr Ryan is awaiting trial on drugs and weapons charges. Canadian authorities allege he was involved in an international drug-smuggling operation.

Pearson pleaded guilty to the manslaughter of a man in Alberta and was sentenced last year to eight years in prison.

Carlos Bolsonaro: Brazil ex-leader's son caught up in spying probe

By Vanessa Buschschlüter

Police in Brazil have raided a number of properties linked to Carlos Bolsonaro, one of the sons of former President Jair Bolsonaro.

The search is part of an investigation into allegations that political enemies of President Bolsonaro were spied on illegally by the Brazilian intelligence service during his time in office.

Carlos Bolsonaro often attacked his father's critics on social media.

He has in the past been accused of spreading fake news, which he denies.

Neither Carlos Bolsonaro nor his father have so far commented on this latest raid.

The scandal first broke on Thursday when Brazil's Supreme Court unsealed documents in which the country's intelligence agency Abin was accused of carrying out surveillance on key political and judicial figures critical of the former president.

Among the alleged targets of the illegal eavesdropping were three Supreme Court justices and a speaker of Brazil's lower house of Congress.

Police searched the



Carlos Bolsonaro, seen here behind his father, was Jair Bolsonaro's confidante.

home and offices of Alexandre Ramagem - the former head of Abin and a close ally of Jair Bolsonaro - on Thursday.

But the investigation moved much closer to the former president on Monday when officers arrived at a beach house where Jair Bolsonaro was staying with his sons.

The former leader was reportedly on a fishing trip with his sons when police arrived at the property in Angra dos Reis.

This latest probe adds to the legal problems of Jair Bolsonaro, who has been banned from running for office for eight years after casting unfounded doubts on Brazil's electronic voting

system.

Now police are investigating whether Abin may have been illegally used during Mr Bolsonaro's presidency to collect information on people who were perceived to be critical of the president.

During his father's presidency, Carlos Bolsonaro often acted as an unofficial spokesman for the elder Bolsonaro, attacking foes of the president on social media.

A police source told Reuters news agency they suspected that Carlos Bolsonaro had illegally used information gathered by Abin.

Police said last week that their investigations indicated that a "criminal

group" had created "a parallel structure within the Brazilian Intelligence Agency (Abin) and used its tools and services for illicit acts, producing information for political and media purposes, for personal gain and to interfere in federal police investigations".

Under Jair Bolsonaro's presidency Brazil became increasingly polarised with followers and opponents of the president accusing each other of dirty tactics.

Since he narrowly lost to Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in the 2022 election, the former president has come under investigation for a number of alleged wrongdoings, including corruption and abuse of power.

Sports News



Empire Nation win third straight in ABCA Two-day contest

Empire Nation trounced the Bolans Blast-ers by an innings and 149 runs at the Rising Sun playing field to win their third consecutive match and maintain their 100 per cent winning run in the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association (ABCA) two-day competition over the weekend.

Opener Tanez Francis and all-rounder Kershaski Jno Lewis missed out on centuries as Empire Nation declared their only innings at 320 for eight off 58 overs after winning the toss and opting to bat.

The 14-year-old Francis cracked 94, and Lewis slammed 90 off 80 balls as the pair shared a 165-run fourth-wicket partnership. Opener Zianni Da Silva struck 54 off 41 balls,

while Bolans skipper and fast bowler Taiem Tonge captured three for 86.

In reply, the Bolans Blast-ers crashed to 54 all out in 21.3 overs, with Lewis grabbing three wickets for nine runs and Javaughn James claiming three for 18.

Asked to follow on 266 runs behind, the Bolans Blast-ers were dismissed in their second innings for 117 in 37.5 overs, with leg-spinner Micah McKenzie snapping up four for 17.

But the WES Rising Sun Spartans claimed their first win with a six-wicket victory against host Pigotts Crushers, who lost for the first time after winning their first two matches.

The Crushers won the toss and batted, scoring



Tanez Francis

160 off 34.2 overs in their first innings. Deran Benta got 59 off 57 balls, and his brother Demari Benta made 43. Medium pacer Shane Burton captured five for 57.

In reply, the Rising Sun Spartans were all out in their first innings for 191 off 43 overs, with opener Junior Henry and middle-order batsman Melvin Charles each getting 44.

Captain and spinner Kadeem Henry claimed three for 27, and off-spinner James Cornelius captured three for 31.

Pigotts Crushers were then dismissed in their second innings for 115 in 42.2 overs. Michael Harilall took four for 13, and skipper Kerry Mentore claimed three for 14.

Burton struck an unbeaten 47 off 28 balls as the Rising Sun Spartans secured victory by achieving the required victory target of 85 runs for the loss of four wickets in 17.1 overs.

Defending champions PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks claimed their second victory, while the Jennings Tigers and Caribbean Union Bank (CUB) Bethesda Golden Eagles recorded their first win in the two-day competition.

The Liberta Black Hawks prevailed by eight wickets against the All Saints Pythons at the Mack Pond playing field in All Saints.

Scores in the match: All Saints made 119 off 46.2 overs in their first in-

cont'd on pg 17



Micah McKenzie

Hurt drove Brisbane miracle but West Indies want more Tests

SYDNEY (Reuters) - Skipper Kraigg Brathwaite credited injured pride for West Indies' extraordinary upset of Australia in Brisbane on Sunday and said the Caribbean islanders needed more Test cricket if they were to continue their revival.

West Indies were once the most feared team in world cricket, but expectations have lowered over years of decline, and Brathwaite's touring squad were given little chance of success when they arrived in Australia to play the World Test Championship winners.

Those expectations were lowered still after a 10-wicket mauling in the first Test in Adelaide but, spearheaded by young quick Shamar Joseph, they staged a remarkable turnaround to beat their hosts by eight runs in a Gabba thriller on Sunday.

Brathwaite said comments by former Australian pace bowler Rodney Hogg had cut particularly deep.

"Rodney Hogg said we were pathetic and hopeless, so that was our motivation.



West Indies' Shamar Joseph, center, celebrates with teammates after taking the wicket of Australia's Mitchell Starc, bottom left, on the fourth day of their cricket test match in Brisbane, Sunday, Jan. 28, 2024. (AP)

I want to ask him: 'Are these muscles big enough for you?'" he retorted in the post-match ceremony on Sunday.

"We wanted to let him know that we heard him," Brathwaite added in his news conference.

"We planned well as a group, but we saw his words and that was extra motivation for us as well.

"Test match cricket is

never easy ... when you have a guy disrespecting the West Indies, and us players that are playing, it is hurtful."

It was a first Test win for West Indies over the men in the baggy green caps since 2003, and the first in Australia since 1997.

Brathwaite said it was essential that West Indies had more opportunities to play the longest format of the game if they were to

build on the Brisbane triumph.

Perhaps the best news for Brathwaite was that young quick Joseph, who played through the pain to take a match-winning seven for 68 at the Gabba and was named Man of the Series after his first two Tests, was committed to the format.

"It's my dream to play Test cricket for the West Indies," he told reporters.

"There will be times when T20s might come around (but) I will always be available to play Test cricket for the West Indies, no matter how much money comes towards me.

"I will always be here to play Test cricket."

cont'd from pg 16

nings (Elroy Francis Jr. had three for 25), and 145 in their second innings off 39.4 overs (Michael Haynes Dover 56; Ian Gore took three for 30); Liberta made 221 in their first innings off 58 overs (Elroy Francis Jr. 93, Tarek Charles 45; Akeem Blackman took five for 24); and

46 for two in their second innings off 8.5 overs.

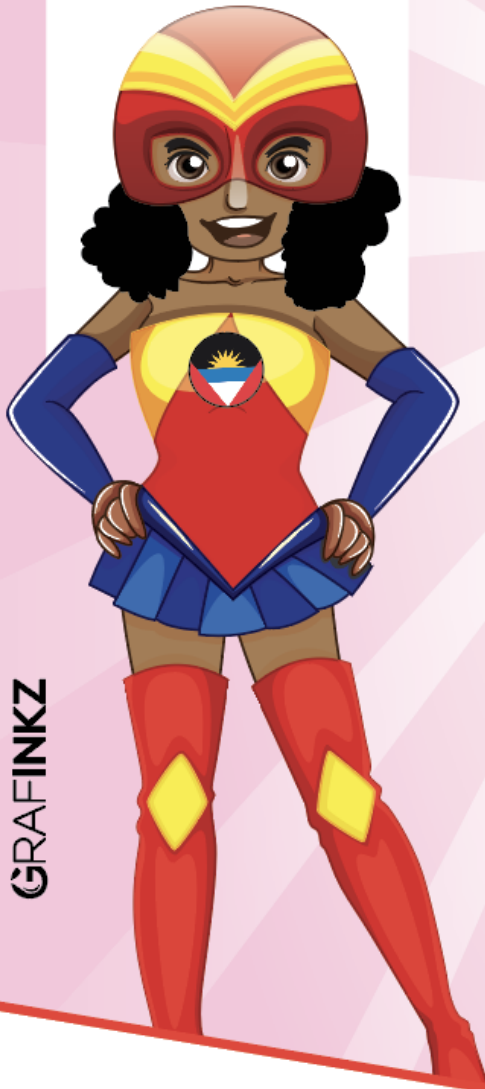
The Jennings Tigers snatched a 24-run victory against the New Winthropes Lions in New Winthropes.

The Bethesda Golden Eagles beat Combined Schools by seven wickets in Bethesda.

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Wins for John Hughes, Hoppers and Empire in Premier League

John Hughes, Greenbay Hoppers, and Empire all recorded wins by 2-1 score lines in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Sunday.

Deno Bryan scored twice on either side of halftime to lead John Hughes to victory against Parham in the first game of a triple header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Bryan's 42nd-minute conversion gave John Hughes a one-nil halftime lead, and he slammed home a penalty kick in the 77th minute to double his team's advantage.

Parham reduced the deficit via Rashid Burton's own goal in the 83rd minute, but were unable to avoid slumping to their fifth loss of the season.

The result ensured Parham remained second from bottom of the 15-team round-robin league on three points from eight matches, while John Hughes advanced to 13 points after claiming their fourth win in nine games.

Kareem Martin struck a late winner to allow the Greenbay Hoppers to snatch victory against the Willikies Warriors in Sunday's second encounter.

Martin converted Hoppers' winner in the third minute of added time (90+3 minutes) after Novelle Francis scored an equalizer for Willikies in the third minute of first half added time (45+3 minutes) as both teams reached halftime deadlocked at 1-1.

National player Javorn Stevens



Deno Bryan

gave Hoppers a one-nil lead with a 35th-minute conversion.

Their fifth win in eight games allows the Greenbay Hoppers to remain in fifth place by advancing to 15 points, and the Willikies remained on nine points after suffering their third loss in eight matches.

Lee Andree Nicholas scored twice as Empire came from behind to beat the Ottos Rangers to record their first win in the competition in the last game on Sunday.

All three goals were scored in the first half, with Jose "Naymar" Arias hitting the back of the net in the 8th minute to put the Ottos Rangers ahead. But Nicholas struck Empire's equalizer in the 21st minute and snatched his team's winner with a 34th-minute conversion.

The result carries Empire to four points from eight matches, and the Ottos Rangers, who secured two wins and two draws in their first four games, remain on eight points after crashing to their fifth consecutive loss.



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Players of the Young West Indies team at the 2024 ICC Under-19 Men's World Cup in South Africa. (CWI Media)

West Indies to play Sri Lanka and Australia in Super Six stage at U-19 World Cup

With the group stage done on Sunday, the West Indies are among the 12 teams that remain in contention for the 2024 ICC Under-19 Men's World Cup as the tournament enters the Super Six phase in South Africa.

The West Indies will open their Super Six campaign against Sri Lanka in Kimberly today, and will face Australia at the same venue on February 2.

Two other matches in the Super Six stage will also take place today. India will take on New Zealand in Bloemfontein, and Pakistan will meet Ireland in Potchefstroom.

The Super Six will involve the top three sides from each of the four round-robin groups, with teams progressing from Groups A and D com-

prising one Group, and those from B and C the other.

Crucially, each team carries forward the points and Net Run Rate (NRR) they earned against fellow Super Six qualifying teams.

The West Indies will begin the Super Six third in group two with two points, thanks to their group stage win over England, trailing Sri Lanka (4) and Australia (4).

The six teams to make it from Groups A and D are India, Bangladesh, Ireland, Pakistan, New Zealand, and Nepal.

South Africa, England, West Indies, Australia, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe progress from Groups B and C.

USA, Afghanistan, Namibia and Scotland – the four teams who didn't

make the second stage of the tournament – will contest in play-offs for the last four places.

The teams will play two matches in the Super Six stage against their opponents from the corresponding group who finished in a different position in their group.

That means India (toppers of Group A) will face off against New Zealand (second position in Group D), and Nepal (third position in Group D).

The top two sides from the two Super Six groups will then progress to the semi-final stage.

The two semi-finals are scheduled to be held on February 6 and 8. The final is set to take place on February 11, with all three knockout games set to take place in Benoni, South Africa.

Joseph expresses joy with progression of Antiguan fast bowler

Coach Sylvester “Bouncing” Joseph is expressing great joy and happiness with the progress of young Antiguan right-arm fast bowler Glen Williams.

The 19-year-old Williams is currently in Jamaica with a 17-member Combined Compasses & College (CCC) training squad, which is preparing to make a return to the Cricket West Indies (CWI) regional four-day championship that is slated to commence in February.

The Antiguan, a former student at the Antigua Grammar School and currently a first-year student at the Antigua State College, is one of the initial 45 players who are chosen from tertiary-level educational institutions across the Caribbean to try to make the final CCC’s 13-man squad for its first three matches in the 2024 regional four-day competition.

Joseph, who is the cricket coach at the Antigua Grammar School and for the Combined Schools, has been working with Williams for several years, and the former West Indies and Leeward Islands player said he is proud of the young Antiguan fast bowl-



Young Antiguan fast bowler Glen Williams

er. “To be honest, I am really extremely proud to see the progression of Glen. Since he was attending Antigua Grammar School, you could see that he is a player who wants to represent the West Indies, and throughout the years, he has shown the attitude, de-

sire, passion, and love for the game,” Joseph stated.

Joseph is optimistic that Williams, who represents the Combined Schools team in Antigua, has all that is required to make the final 13 for the CCC’s opening match against the Barbados Pride at Chedwin Park in Jamaica from Feb-

ruary 7 to 10.

Joseph said the CCC will provide Caribbean cricketers that are enrolled in colleges and universities another avenue to play regional first-class cricket.

“Being among these guys and seeing Glen now getting this opportunity, I think this is a way that is opening up the door for players doing their tertiary level education to get the opportunity to play first-class cricket,” Joseph said.

“It is very difficult to get into the Leeward Islands Hurricane team setup, so this is another avenue, and so when the opportunity came about, I mentioned it to them, and these guys -- not only Glen, but there are a few others -- took it onboard and came and worked hard.

“But Glen was the one that stood out because of his fast bowling aspect that they were looking at.

“I hope this will be an inspiration to the other players, and they will continue to learn and realize that there are opportunities if you work hard because there is nothing that is impossible. They just have to believe and put in the effort by working hard.”