

DUTY-FREE ON MOTOR VEHICLES COMES TO AN END

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The port complex at Deep Water Harbour

Duty-free on motor vehicles comes to an end

The practice of waiving the duty and other applicable taxes on the importation into the country of both new and used vehicles has come to an end.

At its meeting on Wednesday, the Cabinet arrived at a decision on a new policy that effectively ends the practice that has been ongoing for many years.

“Cabinet affirmed its decision to discontinue discretionary waivers on the forgiveness of Duty,

ABST, Revenue Recovery Charge (RRC), and Environmental Levy on the importation of used vehicles and the sale of new vehicles,” Cabinet sources indicated.

According to the sources, the decision was influenced by a report prepared by the Customs and Excise Department on Revenue Collection in 2023, which showed that discretionary waivers exceeded the deficit amount which the government was financing by

borrowing.

“The discontinuation of the waivers is premised on filling the gap between revenues and expenditure, which must be undertaken to reduce the borrowings by the government,” the sources emphasized.

Each year, several hundred used motor vehicles are imported from Japan and other places on the expectation that the owners will not pay the full duty, ABST, RRC and other taxes that are payable on these

imports.

The move reflects a concerted effort by the government to bring expenditures in line with government’s revenues thus reducing the need to borrow by the government to meet its financial obligations.

One man dead and another hospitalised from accident at Fitches Creek

Reports reaching Point Express indicate that a man died in a what has been described as a ‘freak accident’ at Fitches Creek on Wednesday.

Details of the incident remain sketchy but initial reports suggest that a second man has been hospitalized because of the incident.

The reports indicate that two men were pumping water from a cistern when the accident occurred. The exact cause of death has not been officially determined.

The police have not yet issued an official report on the incident. One expects that the police will issue a report on the incident sometime today.

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The Cancer Centre is to reopen soon



The Cabinet has made a decision that the Cancer Centre on the Queen Elizabeth Highway will reopen shortly to provide critical care to many cancer patients in the country.

The first step in this direction came in December when the parliament of Antigua and Barbuda acquired the property under the terms of 'eminent domain'.

This comes as the government and the majority shareholder in the company – Bahamian, Dr. Conville Browne, have been unable to reach a compromise on the value of the prop-

erty.

Evaluators engaged by the government came to the conclusion that the centre was worth approximately EC\$6-9 million dollars; the majority shareholder demanded EC\$40 million dollars. Despite several entreaties, he had refused to budge from his demands.

“By way of eminent domain, the parliament of Antigua and Barbuda acquired and took control of it in early December 2023. A refurbished Cancer Centre provided with new and improved machines will be op-

erational within the first quarter of 2024; such that, those cancer patients who now travel abroad for radiation and other therapies will not be so inconvenienced,” government sources have indicated.

Since the closure of the centre in the first half of 2023, the government has been saddled with a huge bill of flying cancer patients overseas in order for them to receive chemotherapy and other cancer treatments.

Over time, these payments for overseas travel and care have mounted to significant proportions.

HAPI housing programme to get a major boost

The government will be pumping money into the Home Assistance Project for the Indigent (HAPI) Programme which targets people in the most vulnerable groups in society.

The programme comes under the stewardship of Inspector Veldon Raggette who said since its inception, the programme has helped 56 families with either new homes or repairs to existing homes.

The Cabinet was persuaded that the HAPI initiative has been a shining example of rescuing those indigent families who have suffered fires that have destroyed all of their be-



Inspector Veldon Raggette

longings. The Cabinet has ordered EC\$500,000 to be transferred to the National Housing Development and Urban Renewal Company for their continued management of the HAPI programme.

The objective is to en-

sure that the time between the tragedy of the indigent home owner and the provision of the new home is greatly shortened. Many of the supplies are freely given by hardware stores, lumberyards, and cement providers to construct these

homes. The suppliers are usually moved by the situation of the indigent families and give generously.

Raggette stated that the new funding now being made available will go towards constructing six new houses in the first instance; two of which will be specially reserved to families who experience losses from fires or other disasters.

Construction of these houses may start as early as next week now that the funds are being made available. The areas where homes will be built include the Point, Bendals, Jennings and St. Johnson's Village.

Government agency is assisting traders, public navigate ABST increase

The Prices and Consumers Affairs Division (P&CAD) has been providing assistance to traders and members of the public to navigate the changes in prices and related issues following the coming into effect of the increase in the Antigua and Barbuda Sales Tax (ABST).

Director of P&CAD, Orrin Steele said since the new increases in the tax took effect on Monday January 1, the department has been inundated with calls from business people and consumers seeking clarity on a number of issues.

"We received a lot of calls on Tuesday from various stakeholders indicating that they are facing challenges in reflecting the increases on the items

already on the shelves.

"They indicated that they were able to change the prices in their systems, however, they do not have the manpower to change all the items already on the shelves. I believe this is going to be an issue for consumers at least until the end of this week.," he revealed.

According to Steele one particular businessman stated that he intends to wait until he has sufficient manpower to change the prices on the shelves as he wants to avoid getting into any dispute with consumers who may suggest that he was selling the items at an incorrect price.

"There are challenges for both the consumer as well as the business person in this regard," he stated.

Steele said the basket of items that do not attract ABST is quite extensive and along with basic food items, some baby products and adult diapers, the zero-rated items now cover medicines, other medical products and even coffins.

He went on to explain that whilst he anticipates that there will be a slight increase in the prices of goods not included in the controlled items, there will be increases in some items that are on the zero-rated list.

"For example, water does not attract ABST but the bottles and the caps do so the prices for the water overall will likely see an increase," he noted.

Additionally, the director is advis-
cont'd on pg 6



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Influential group of travel advisors to meet in Antigua and Barbuda

Antigua and Barbuda will host a meeting of the highly influential American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA) Chapter Presidents with the opening set for Sunday and the business sessions starting a day later.

The meeting will take place at the Sandals Grande Antigua Resort and Spa.

The four-day event will focus on travel in 2024 and beyond, and will see the convergence of travel agent presidents from across North America attending this historic gathering.

Details of the agenda for the meeting or the number of delegates that is expected have not been made



Tourism Minister, Charles Fernandez public yet.

Among the local representatives

from Antigua and Barbuda invited to attend are Prime Minister Gaston Browne and Tourism Minister, Charles Fernandez, as the travel agent sector continues to have a major impact on the tourism sector in Antigua and Barbuda.

ASTA, is the world's leading association of travel professionals, and is the global advocate for travel agencies, the travel industry and the traveling public.

They champion ethical and traveler-friendly practices and policies at every level of government and throughout the travel and hospitality industry.

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ing that traders should note that any item sold after January 1, 2024, will attract the

ABST, regardless of when the specific item was imported.

“What this means is that

it does not matter when the goods were purchased by the business whether it was a month ago or even six

months ago. Once it is being sold after January 1, 2024, it will attract ABST,” he further explained.

The Following goods do not attract the Antigua and Barbuda Sales Tax (ABST)

Chicken – fresh, chilled or frozen
 Fish – fresh, dried, salted, whether or not (in brine or smoked). Red herring and mackerel are smoked.
 Milk – cream and condensed, including powdered milk
 Butter – fresh and salted
 Eggs – fresh
 Vegetables – fresh or chilled
 Fruit – fresh
 Rice
 Flour – wheat or meslin, durum or other
 Maize (corn) meal
 Cereal grains – rolled etc., including but not limited to oats, barley and wheat

Refined edible oil (including but not limited to olive oil, palm oil, corn oil, sunflower seed oil, canola oil and soya-bean oil)
 Margarine
 Imitation lard (shortening)
 Preparation for infant use for retail sale
 Sardines (canned)
 Cane and beet sugar
 Bread (not including other baked products such as bun)
 Active yeast
 Ordinary water (not containing added sweetening or flavouring)
 Table salt for retail sale

Medicines in retail quantities including but not limited to Penicillin, Insulin, Aspirins, Paracetamol, cough preparations but not including vitamins)
 Pharmaceutical goods (including but not limited to sterile catgut, blood grouping reagents, first aid kits and dental cements)
 Sanitary towels and tampons
 Napkins and napkin liners (diapers) for babies and adults
 Books or printed matter (including but not limited to encyclopaedias, dictionaries, text books, novels, bibles but excluding periodicals, magazines, drawing and colouring books, exercise books)
 Bed pads (for adults)
 Insecticides

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end at the basketball court

Crispin Thomas wins DOE EV raffle

The Department of Environment announced the winner of the “Let’s Get Ready” Campaign on Wednesday, marking an innovative initiative aimed at raising public awareness and reducing carbon emissions across the nation.

Crispin Thomas emerged winner of the grand prize of an electric vehicle that was raffled to raise both funds and awareness.

The primary objective of this exciting campaign was to engage citizens in Antigua and Barbuda by gathering essential data through various surveys.

As an incentive to encourage participation and bolster our 2030 environmental goals, respondents were given the opportunity to enter a raffle for a chance to win various prizes, including an Electric Vehicle (EV), landscaping equipment, mosquito traps, and more.

“This campaign is an important step towards our commitment to sustainability and reducing carbon footprints.

“By collecting vital data, we can better understand and address climate change challenges while involving our community,” stated the Director of the Department of Environment, Ambassador Diann Black-Layne.

The initiative extended its reach beyond citizen



involvement. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were invited to join efforts by collecting information, selling raffle tickets, and retaining proceeds to fund Climate Change interventions within their organizations and communities. This collaborative approach enabled data collection, community fundraising, and promoted awareness of innovative climate change technologies.

Minister of Health, and the Environment, Sir Molwyn Joseph indicated this is the first time the Department is being funded by various projects focused on gathering data related to emissions and energy usage in the Transport Sector of Antigua and Barbuda, guiding interventions, and

raising awareness about climate change resilience and adaptation strategies.

He further stated that “despite not meeting our initial targets, the initiative generated over 2,974 raffle tickets and 732 completed surveys, raising just over \$40,000 XCD for ten stakeholders.”

The DOE awarded an Electric Vehicle (EV) as the grand prize to the lucky winner, Crispin Thomas. Moreover, various landscaping tools were presented to other winners:

- Anna-Maria won a G.W. Lawnmower valued at \$715.

- Cortez Osbourne won a STIHL Lawnmower valued at \$500.

- Quincey Stone won an EGO Leafblower valued at \$280.

- Brandon Browne won a STIHL Hedge-trimmer valued at \$250.

The proceeds from the raffle were allocated to partners actively involved in survey administration:

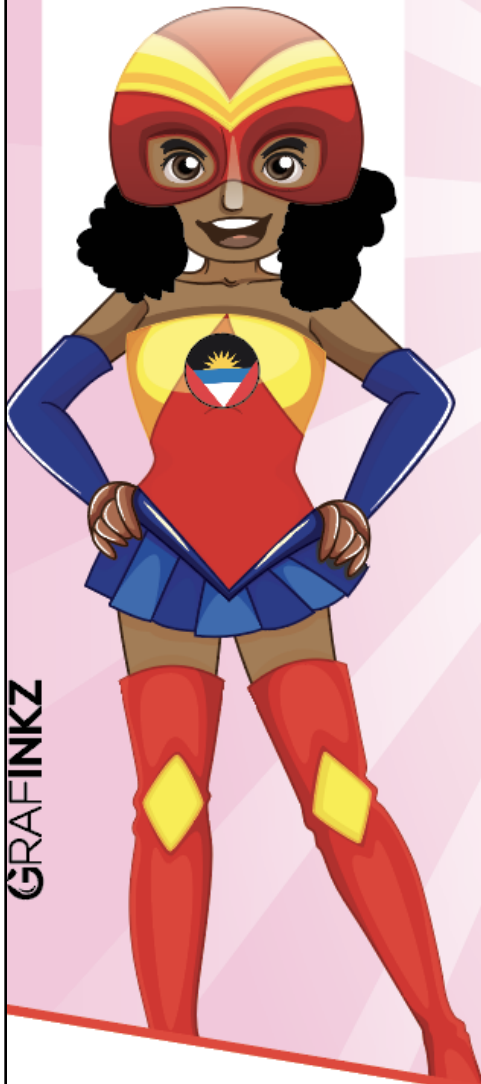
1. Antigua and Barbuda Bus Association
2. Antigua Football Association
3. Victory Centre
4. Rotary Club
5. Rotaract Club
6. Vipers Cycling Club
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8. JCI Antigua
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The DOE extends its appreciation to all participants, partners, and citizens involved in making this initiative a success.

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Guyana moving to quickly monetise natural gas resources

CMC - The Guyana government has announced plans to quickly monetise the country's natural gas resources and would soon be requesting proposals in that regard.

"In another week we expect to go out to 'Request for Proposals' to move towards implementing, or requesting models through which we can move as quickly as possible to monetise the total gas asset we have in our country," President Mohamed Irfaan Ali said in a live broadcast on his Facebook page.

Guyana started producing oil in 2019 as a result of the lucrative Stabroek Block offshore and the government says it wants to harness the natural gas resources also found in that offshore block to produce cheaper energy and other products.

The government has already re-

leased the "Guyana Gas Monetisation Strategy" for public consultation that includes monetisation options, including using the natural gas for power generation and to create other products such as methanol, liquified natural gas (LNG), ammonia/ urea and blue ammonia/ hydrogen.

"We received all the comments [and] we are integrating the comments with the initial document," Ali said, adding that his administration would be seeking proposals that will allow the natural gas resources to be used quickly.

According to the draft gas monetisation plan, it is estimated that approximately 17 trillion cubic feet of recoverable gas resources, mainly associated gas and condensates, exist in the Stabroek Block.

The authorities said that all the

gas produced is being used for re-injection to maintain reservoir pressure except approximately 50 million standard cubic feet per day of gas produced from the Liza field, which will be transported to shore and used to generate 300 megawatts of electrical power as part of the Gas to Energy project and other possible downstream initiatives.

The Gas to Energy project will feature an integrated natural gas liquid plant and a 300-megawatt power plant. It is expected to come onstream in 2024. US-based integrated energy solutions group, LINDSAYCA, in partnership with a local firm – CH4 Group- is executing the engineering, procurement and construction of the project.

President Ali said that Guyana will achieve net zero by 2050.

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US lifts ban on imports of latest Apple watch

By Monica Miller

Apple's latest smart watches can resume being sold in the US after the tech company filed an emergency appeal with authorities.

Sales of the Series 9 and Ultra 2 watches had been halted in the US over a patent row.

The US's trade body had barred imports and sales of Apple watches with technology for reading blood-oxygen levels.

Device maker Masimo had accused Apple of poaching its staff and technology.

It comes after the White House declined to overturn a ban on sales and imports of the Series 9 and Ultra 2 watches which came into effect this week.

Apple had said it "strongly disagrees" with the ruling.

The iPhone maker made an emergency request to the US Court of Appeals, which proved successful in getting the ban lifted.

Earlier this month, Apple had "pre-emptively" removed the devices from its US site and from stores in the country. Sales elsewhere have not been affected.

The US International Trade Commission (USITC) order, issued in



Apple won its appeal against a US import ban on its latest smart watch models.

October, was subject to a 60-day review by the president, who has the power to veto the decision. That review period ended on Christmas Day, when the White House decided to keep the ban in place.

The office of the United States Trade Representative Ambassador, Katherine Tai, said on Tuesday that it had decided not to reverse the USITC's decision after "careful consultations".

Apple had asked for a stay on the ban until Customs and Border Protection (CBP) could consider

whether the redesigned versions of its watches, which do not include the disputed technology, violated Masimo's patents.

CBP was due to make its decision on 12 January, according to an Apple spokesperson.

The USITC found in October that Apple infringed two patents owned by medical device maker Masimo Corporation.

The California-based company had accused Apple of poaching key staff and taking other steps to steal technology it developed to measure oxygen

levels in the blood.

Most versions of Apple's smart watches have included the disputed blood oxygen feature since 2020.

Its lower cost SE models do not. Previously sold watches will also not be affected by the ban.

In a statement given on Tuesday, Apple said: "We strongly disagree with the USITC decision and resulting exclusion order, and are taking all measures to return Apple Watch Series 9 and Apple Watch Ultra 2 to customers in the US as soon as possible".



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Regional News



CARICOM pays tribute to former T&T Prime Minister Basdeo Panday

CMC - The 15-member regional integration movement, CARICOM, Wednesday paid tribute to former Trinidad and Tobago prime minister Basdeo Panday, who died in a United States hospital on Monday at the age of 90.

In a statement, the Guyana-based CARICOM Secretariat said Panday, the country's fifth prime minister and first person of Indian descent to lead a government in T&T, "held a multi-faceted career in service of his country, as a politician, trade unionist and civil servant.

"He used his exceptional skill as a barrister to advocate passionately for workers' rights. His belief in the value of education, and his ideologies and initiatives, have made a lasting impact on the twin-island Republic".



It recalled that as the CARICOM chairman, at the close of the last century, he hosted a two-day Summit of CARICOM leaders with deliberations that focussed on "Concluding the 20th Century and Commencing the

21st", with outcomes aimed at preparing the Community to face the first decade of the new century".

The CARICOM Secretariat said that he was also active in media and

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Guyana takes up seat on United Nations Security Council

CMC - Guyana has joined five other countries in officially taking up their two-year term on the United Nations Security Council on Tuesday.

Guyana, Algeria, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone and Slovenia, were elected to serve in June last year, and they are replacing Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana and the United Arab Emirates who ended their terms on December 31 last year.

Five permanent members sit around the iconic horseshoe table in New York, China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The ten non-permanent members, selected to provide regional balance, are elected by the General Assembly which is made up of all 193 UN Member States.

France serves as president of the Security Council for the month of January, and it is expected that the Israel-Palestine crisis and war in Gaza will continue to be a prime focus for ambassadors.

Guyana's Permanent



Permanent Representative of Guyana to the United Nations, Ambassador Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, installed the Guyana flag alongside those of other Security Council members outside the Council chambers.

In a brief statement, Ambassador Rodrigues-Birkett said her country recognises that the task of maintaining international peace and security is growing increasingly complex with multidimensional challenges and, that the Council is, therefore, compelled to be proactive in addressing po-

tential sources of conflict, and comprehensive in its response to existing conflict situations.

She said that Guyana will seek a people-centred approach, including the involvement of women and youth in the search for solutions, ever mindful that conflict is a driver of poverty and underdevelopment and therefore inimical to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The theme of Guyana's participation in the Security Council is "Partnering

for Peace and Prosperity".

Guyana said its tenure on the Security Council will be rooted in a firm commitment to multilateralism and guided by the priorities of climate change, food insecurity and conflict; peacebuilding and conflict prevention; women, peace and security; protection of children in armed conflict; and youth, peace and security.

Georgetown said in keeping with these priorities, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) country has endorsed the "Joint Pledge on Climate, Peace, and Security" and joined the "Statement of Shared Commitments on Women, Peace, and Security".

This will be Guyana's third time serving on the Council following terms in 1975 – 1976 and 1982-1983.

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culture, as an actor, multi-linguist and proponent of religious pluralism.

"The Community extends heartfelt condolences to his family members and friends, and the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago.

"We join with all who mourn the passing of this son of our soil, who served with

determination and passion, and made an enduring contribution to our progress and development," the CARICOM Secretariat added.

Panday served as prime minister between 1995-2001. The cause of his death has not been disclosed and the Trinidad and Tobago government said he would be given a State funeral under Hindu rites.

Japan Airlines: Coastguard plane not cleared for take-off, transcripts show

By Kathryn Armstrong

A coastguard aircraft involved in a fatal collision at Tokyo's Haneda airport was not cleared for take-off, Japanese authorities have said.

The smaller aeroplane collided with a Japan Airlines (JAL) passenger jet on the runway on Tuesday.

Newly released transcripts of air traffic control instructions just before the crash confirmed the JAL Airbus A350 was cleared to land.

Permission for take-off was not given to the coastguard Bombardier Dash-8.

According to officials, the JAL flight was cleared to land on runway 34R at Haneda while the coastguard aircraft was told to "taxi to holding point C5" - a place on the airfield's taxiway system where aircraft await permission to enter the active runway for take-off.

The transcript shows the coastguard aircraft acknowledged the call from air traffic to taxi to the holding point - its last transmission before the collision.

The transcripts appear to contradict the coastguard plane's captain - the only one of the six crew to survive - who told investigators he had been given permission to enter the runway which the JAL airliner was approaching.

The BBC has also found information that suggests the series of lights at the rel-



evant holding point may not have been working.

But experts point out there are other visual cues like painted markings which would show where aircraft needed to stop short of the runway.

All 379 passengers and crew on board the state of the art JAL Airbus were safely evacuated after the collision, police said.

Japan Airlines Flight 516 had departed from Sapporo's New Chitose airport at 16:00 local time (07:00 GMT) and landed at Haneda shortly before 18:00.

Flames engulfed the airliner shortly after it landed.

"I felt a boom like we had hit something and jerked upward the moment we landed," one passenger told Kyodo news agency. "I saw sparks outside the window

and the cabin filled with gas and smoke."

Passengers escaped via evacuation slides and ran to safety, footage and photos showed.

TV footage showed several fire engines at the scene as smoke and flames billowed from the Airbus. Footage from inside the aircraft showed passengers surrounded by thick smoke.

One woman posted a picture of a huge crowd watching the scene unfold. "I was on board. I'm safe. Thank goodness," she wrote on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter.

Officials said the flight crew had reported no problems before landing.

A statement from JAL said flight JL516 had been "involved in a collision with a Japan coastguard aircraft

during its landing at Haneda Airport, resulting in a fire on the runway".

The coastguard aircraft was heading to help with rescue and relief efforts following Monday's earthquake in Ishikawa. It was one of four aircraft on a mission to the quake site.

Within hours of the blaze, Tokyo police confirmed reports that five coastguard crew members had died and the pilot was severely injured.

Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said the authorities were trying to make sure the accident did not impede deliveries of earthquake relief supplies.

"This is a great regret as the crew members performed their duties with a strong sense of mission and responsibility for the victims of the disaster area," he said.

At least 14 of the passengers and crew who were taken off the JAL flight suffered minor injuries, according to Japanese public broadcaster NHK, citing fire officials.

It is the first major accident involving an Airbus A350, one of a new breed of aircraft built largely of advanced materials such as carbon fibre-reinforced plastic.

The aircraft manufacturer is sending a team of specialists to assist in the investigation in Japan.

Saleh al-Arouri: Hamas leader's death 'won't go unpunished', says Hezbollah chief

By Kathryn Armstrong

Hasan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, says the killing of Hamas's powerful deputy leader will "not go unpunished".

Saleh al-Arouri died in a drone attack in Beirut on Tuesday. Israel has not confirmed it was responsible.

Mr Nasrallah described Arouri's death as a "major, dangerous crime about which we cannot be silent".

He added that if Israel wages war on Lebanon "there will be no ceilings, no rules" to Hezbollah's response.

"We are not afraid of war," said Mr Nasrallah in a televised address.

"Those who think of going to war with us will regret it. War with us will come at a very high cost."

He previously said that any killings in Lebanon would be a red line.

Hezbollah - like its ally, Hamas - is considered a terrorist organisation by Israel, the UK and others. It is the largest political and military force in Lebanon and has ministers in the country's government.

The attack that killed Arouri was the first in Beirut following months of exchanges of fire between Iranian-backed Hezbollah and Israel, in response to the war in Gaza. These had largely been confined to Lebanon's southern border.

The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) said on



Hasan Nasrallah had previously said that any killings in Lebanon would be a red line.

Wednesday it was "defending its borders" from a number of missiles launched from Lebanon.

That was after its military was reported to have increased the number of its air defence batteries near the border.

Arouri was a key figure in the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas's armed wing, and a close ally of Ismail Haniyeh, the Hamas leader. He had been in Lebanon acting as a connection between his group and Hezbollah.

He was known to be on Israel's hit list and the country's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu had previously vowed to eliminate Hamas's leaders - wherever they are.

Arouri was on a US blacklist too, with a bounty of \$5m (\$3.9m) on his head since 2018.

Miri Eisin, a retired col-

onel from the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) told the BBC that the Hamas deputy was "living in the heart of the Dahiya, in the heart of the Hezbollah area of Beirut" and that he was the "direct connection between Hamas and Hezbollah".

She added that while she felt bad for the Lebanese people about the risk of a full-blown conflict with Israel, it was important to deal with "terror operatives".

The US said it remained incredibly concerned about the risk of the conflict in Gaza spreading to the wider region after Arouri's death - a fear shared by Lebanese Foreign Minister, who said his government had appealed to Hezbollah not to retaliate.

"We are very concerned, [the] Lebanese don't want to be dragged, even Hezbollah does not want to be dragged into a regional war," Ab-

dallah Bou Habib told the BBC.

US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said on Wednesday that Washington was not given advance notice of the strike in Beirut that killed Arouri.

The United Nations (UN) peacekeeping force in Lebanon says it is also deeply worried about a potential escalation of violence.

A spokesperson for the UN's Interim Force in Lebanon (Unifil) has urged all parties to show restraint, saying that a wider conflict would have devastating consequences for both Israel and Lebanon.

Iran has condemned the killing of Arouri, with the country's foreign minister criticising Israel for its "cowardly terrorist operations" in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

Hamas has reportedly *cont'd on pg 18*

Cricket West Indies confirms organizational changes

Cricket West Indies (CWI) has confirmed several organisational changes at the start of a significant year, that will see the launch of a new four-year strategic plan (2024-27) and the hosting of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in June.

Johnny Grave, Chief Executive Officer of CWI, stated, "As an organization, we are dedicated to nurturing a culture of continuous evolution and improvement.

"We are steadfast in our pursuit to maximize our human capital, engage the best talent, and foster an environment where excellence thrives throughout the entire system."

Grave also revealed that "we have concluded a thorough appraisal process, resulting in the realignment of responsibilities of some of our team members.

"As part of this process, while some contracts have reached a natural conclusion, including those of Dominic Warne, Commer-



CEO of CWI Johnny Grave

cial, Marketing and Communications Director, and Philip Spooner, Media and Public Relations Manager; both individuals will continue supporting us in the extremely important year ahead, in new roles working directly on the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup in June.

One of the components being assessed as part of the new cricket strategy is the selection system. CWI will further explore the strengthening of this area, building on the established policy

from the 2019 selection review.

Miles Bascombe, Director of Cricket at CWI, emphasized the importance of this review, stating, "We are dedicated to refining our selection processes to better serve the needs of West Indies cricket. The ongoing evaluation and restructuring efforts are integral steps toward achieving this goal."

Bascombe elaborated that the review has resulted in some immediate changes in structure and personnel.

CWI has taken the de-

cision not to immediately replace these selectors until the completion of the review process. The remaining lead selectors shall continue to serve under their existing contracts with CWI.

Bascombe further added, "Coach Development Manager, Chris Brabazon, has also left the organisation to take up a new role back home in Australia.

"We are grateful for the tremendous contribution that Chris has made over the past four years, which has seen the introduction of a comprehensive range of coaching courses and accreditations, resulting in over 1,000 newly certified coaches in the region."

CWI reaffirms its commitment to fostering an environment of continuous improvement and transparency within its operations. The recruitment process for a new Commercial Director and Coach Development Manager will begin imminently.

cont'd from pg 17

told Egyptian and Qatari mediators that it is suspending talks over the possible release of more Israeli hostages in response to Arouri's killing.

There are also reports in Arab media that a scheduled visit by an Israeli delegation to the Egyptian capital has been postponed.

Meanwhile, the fighting in Gaza continues. The UN said five people were killed in an attack on the Palestinian Red Crescent building in the southern city of Khan Younis on Tuesday, as Israel urged people to evacuate.

A five-day old baby was among the dead, according to a spokeswoman for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

"This was a space where babies were living. This is a space where children were living," said Gemma Connell.

"You can see on the floor the blood. The world should be absolutely horrified. The world should be absolutely outraged."

Leaflets have been dropped in Khan Younis, warning residents to

leave specified areas designated a "combat zone" by the IDF.

The message said it was an "urgent warning" to evacuate several blocks in numerous neighbourhoods.

The Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza says more than 22,000 people have been killed in the territory since Israel started its retaliatory campaign.

At least 1,200 people were killed when Hamas attacked Israel on 7 October and about 240 others were taken hostage. Some 105 hostages were later released during a six-day ceasefire at the end of November.

South Africa trail India after record-breaking first day of second Test

CAPE TOWN (Reuters) - South Africa closed an extraordinary see-saw first day of the second and final Test against India at Newlands on 62 for three in their second innings, trailing the tourists by 36 runs after 23 wickets and several records fell on Wednesday.

Aiden Markram (36 not out) and David Bedingham (7 not out) will hope to bat on and set India a challenging target on the second day.

Seamer Mohammed Siraj took a career-best six for 15 as the visitors skittled their hosts for 55 in the first innings after the latter elected to bat on a wicket offering plenty of assistance to the bowlers.

South Africa lost captain Dean Elgar twice in the day before his retirement, which he announced ahead of the



Indian bowler Mohammed Siraj, left, celebrates with teammates after taking a wicket of a South African batsman during the second Test match between South Africa and India in Cape Town, South Africa, Wednesday, Jan. 3, 2024. (AP)

series. He scored four and 12. Mukesh Kumar (2-25) grabbed Elgar's wicket in the second innings, and that of

Tony de Zorzi, while Jasprit

Bumrah removed debutant Tristan Stubbs as the home side were left teetering at the

close.

South Africa were pegged back in their first innings by *cont'd on pg 21*

Old Road beat Rangers to go joint-top of Premier Division

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

Old Road claimed their fifth win in as many matches to join Sandals Inet Jennings Grenades at the top of the standings with 15 points each by snatching a 2-1 victory against Ottos Rangers at the ABFA Technical Center.

Goals by Stefan Smith in the 21st minute and Raheem Deterville in the 70th minute gave Old Road a two-

nil lead before Mark Portsmouth reduced the deficit with a 79th-minute conversion for the Ottos Rangers, who lost for the first time in five outings to remain on eight points.

The Potters Tigers, Jennings United, and Bolans all recorded wins in the First Division competition on Tuesday.

The Potters Tigers prevailed 2-1 against Fort Road at Radio Range to jump into second place by advancing to 12 points, one point adrift of unbeaten leaders Five Islands..

Attacking Saints unbeaten start

to their First Division campaign was ended by a one-nil loss to Jennings United at home at the Mack Pond playing field in All Saints.

Taiem Tonge struck twice as Bolans claimed their first win in five matches by snatching a 4-3 victory against the Young Lions at the Jennings playing field.

Joumol Semper struck a hat-trick and Roan Harris hit twice as the Earthquakes recorded their third win in five matches with a 5-1 drubbing of ABAYA in a Second Division encounter at the Parham playing field.



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Coach Isaac using glow volleyball to attract more participation

Coach and member of the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association (ABAVA), Farida Isaac, is spearheading a new initiative to generate new and continued interest in the sport in Antigua and Barbuda.

Isaac, who is coach of national club team Starz Seniors and business volleyball league team ECAB, will be coordinating the event called 'Glow in the Dark Volleyball' that is being planned to take place at the YMCA Sports Complex on Saturday, January 20, 2024.

Coach Isaac said the new initiative is geared towards generating more participation in the sport of volleyball in Antigua and Barbuda.

"It's a new initiative. I am part of the volleyball association, but it's endorsed by the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association. As a member of the volleyball association, I am just trying something new to create some interest in volleyball and encourage participation," Isaac said.

Isaac gave an overview of 'Glow in the Dark Volleyball', which will be held from 6 pm until.

"It's going to be held in the evening. The lighting will be similar to what is used at glow fetes, where they use these neon-coloured lights and



Coach Farida Isaac

have glow sticks and things like that," she said.

"There will be no lights on, so the volleyball net will be lit up with glow lights, and we will be using glow volleyball, which is a specially made vol-

leyball that glows in the dark.

"The participants will be given different glow items on their bodies. There will also be a black light that will enable the players to see each other by highlighting the neon colours. "

The competition is a mixed-team event. Each team will feature six players on the court, but must have two female players on the court for the duration of the matches.

It is a knockout competition, and each match will last for 10 minutes. The first team to score 15 points, or the team closest to the 15-point target at the end of the 10-minute duration, will win the match.

The winners will go on to the next round, while the losers will be eliminated. The last two unbeaten teams will clash in the final for the title.

Isaac said the goal is to have a total of 14 teams participate in the event. Registration is open and will close on January 18. The registration fee is EC\$20 per player.

Interested parties are asked to contact these numbers to register. The numbers are 714-5599 and 725-8038.

There will be live entertainment provided by Ancient King Sounds, and food and drinks will be on sale at the event. The admission fee is EC\$5.

cont'd from pg 19

a superb nine over spell from Siraj, who bowled an impeccable line and length and made full use of the movement off the surface.

The home batters were at times the architects of their own downfall as they made poor decisions around shot selection, especially the lower order, who tried to hit their way out of trouble but only

fell deeper into it.

South Africa's paltry score was their lowest since 1932 at a venue where New Zealand were bowled out for 45 in 2013 and Australia for 47 in 2011.

Their previous lowest innings total against India in Tests was 79 at Nagpur in 2015. At home it was 130 at the same Newlands venue in 2018.

India made a fast start in reply, led by captain Rohit Sharma (39) and Shubman Gill (36), before Virat Kohli struck a fluent 46.

But just as they looked to be taking the game away from their hosts, seamer Lungi Ngidi (3-30) took three wickets in an over as he found extra bounce off the wicket.

Panic set in for the visi-

tors in a dramatic collapse that saw them lose six wickets in the space of 11 deliveries, including the needless run out of Siraj, to be all out for 153 in their first innings.

Kagiso Rabada (3-38) and Nandre Burger (3-42) were also among the wickets for the home side. South Africa won the first Test in Pretoria by an innings and 32 runs.

Clashing claims 2023 as rewarding year for swimmers

President of the Antigua and Barbuda Swimming Federation (ABSF), Edith Clashing, said 2023 has been a very rewarding year for swimmers in the twin-island state and her organization.

“I think it has been a rewarding year despite the challenges. It has been a very active year with a lot of events back-to-back that some swimmers didn’t get the chance to recover properly or had to forego going to certain meets because they were just not able to turn it around fast enough,” Clashing said.

As 2023 was drawing to a close,



Zane Williams

Clashing said seven of the 18 swimmers who represented Antigua and Barbuda at a pool championship in Trinidad in December attained qualification for the 2024 Carifta Aquatic Championships in the Bahamas from March 28 to April 7.

“Three of the swimmers from WAR (Wadadli Aquatic Racers Swim Club) and four swimmers from the Vipers Swim Club qualified for Carifta.

“It’s not just that we are going to have seven; there are going to be other swimmers joining them because we have our own meet coming up in 2024, which will be our last qualifier for them to make the Carifta team.”- Clashing said.

Clashing also showered high praise on Zane Williams, who produced some creditable performances in the boys 8 and under category at a meet in Jamaica just before the recent Christmas holidays.

“He made three meet records over in Jamaica, smashing the records made at that particular meet in the 100-meter backstroke, 100-meter butterfly, and 100-meter freestyle.

“He also made six new national age group records and narrowly missed two others in the 200-meter individual medley and the 200-meter breaststroke.

“He also cleaned up in medals. He had a total of 10 medals, comprising six gold, three bronze, and one silver, and I daresay he was the top performer at that meet.

“He will now be moving into the



Ellie Shaw

9 to 10 age category, which is going to be a slightly different arena for him because he is going to have to settle in. But we have no doubts that once he keeps on the track that he is on, he is also going to do very well,” Clashing said.

The ABSF president said the success gained at the recent meets in Trinidad and Jamaica as well as other regional meets, including winning two gold medals at Carifta and retaining the OECS Swimming Champions in St. Lucia in November, made 2023 a very rewarding year for swimmers in Antigua and Barbuda.