

# ADDITIONAL SECURITY, COUNSELLORS FOR OTTOS COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

*Story on Page 2*



Newly-appointed Chairman of the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission, Arthur Thomas, third from right, with Governor General Sir Rodney Williams, second from right, and others at Government House. *Story on page 4.*

# Local News



# Additional security, counsellors for Ottos Comprehensive School

The Ottos Comprehensive School whose students largely remain traumatized following last week's shooting incident, is getting help to deal with the several issues that have resulted from the traumatic event.

Director of Education, Clare Browne, is reporting that effective today (Tuesday) additional security personnel will be assigned to the school. In addition, the ministry of education is pulling its counsellors from other schools to go to OCS for special counseling sessions with both staff and students.

"Many students remain traumatized from the incident that occurred

at the YMCA complex on Wednesday afternoon when shots were discharged from a firearm in close proximity to where the students had congregated. Since then, there have been interventions from both the ministries of social transformation and education in an attempt to help the students and faculty through these difficult times," he explained.

Browne said events over the days following the shooting have prevented the ministry from fully mobilizing its full team to visit the school. Last Thursday, was the second day of the sports that was canceled due to the



Director of Education, Clare Browne

*cont'd on pg 3*

## TUESDAYS & WEDNESDAYS

# 2 DAYS WAYS SAVE

**\$16.99**

- 2 pcs
- Biscuit
- Drink



**\$19.99**

- Zinger / CCB
- Drink



\*limitations apply\*




## Legislation making parents culpable for their children's crimes may come soon

The government is contemplating several suggestions to effectively combat the issue of youth-on-youth violence in the society.

And according to Prime Minister Gaston Browne, one of the suggestions gaining traction is one where the parents of children who are found to have broken the law be penalized as well.

The decision is influenced by a recent court case in the United States where Jennifer Crumbley was held accountable for her son Ethan Crumbley's action. Ethan has been sentenced to life in prison for the killing

of four of his classmates in 2021.

It also came against the backdrop where teenage boys allegedly fired off shots into the air at an event where students of the Ottos Comprehensive School were in attendance. The shots caused the students to stampede away from the gunfire during which one female student wounded her ankle.

"We are of the view that parents have to take greater responsibility for their children, and we even contemplated whether or not we should place legislation on

the books to hold parents responsible for the actions of their children. I am told, for example, that there are parents who encourage their children to take knives and other implements to school and telling them 'if anybody hit you, stab them'," he remarked.

PM Browne said this is not something that parents should be encouraging their children to do. "If this is true, this is not appropriate behaviour for parents," he

declared.

The prime minister also updated the nation on the issue of the ongoing repairs to the Boys Training School. He said substantial repairs have been completed but that there was a request to undertake additional work on the facility. He announced that the government will approve additional funds to undertake the repairs. He added that completion is now set for approximately 60 days.

*cont'd from pg 2*

shooting incident. Less than 100 students and most of the staff did not attend school on that day. Friday was mid-term holidays. Monday, was report card day with many parents visiting the school to collect their children's report cards.

The Director of Education visited the school on Monday where he addressed both students and faculty. He reported that there is a strong sense of unease among the students and the faculty and the ministry is aware that this environment hampers learning.

"We are anxious to have normality return to the school as we recognize that

both teachers and students must feel safe and comfortable in order for learning to take place. We at the ministry are doing our level best to ensure that this sense of security returns to OCS," he stated.

During his interactions with the students and teachers at the school, Director Browne said he recognized that there was a need for psycho-social counselling and that he is mobilizing the ministry's resources to ensure that this happens.

The director was accompanied by the Education Officer responsible for secondary school, Denise Mills on the visit to OCS on Monday.



Antigua and Barbuda Scout Association  
[secretary@antiguaandbarbudascouts.org](mailto:secretary@antiguaandbarbudascouts.org)  
 Motto: *Be Prepared*

### NOTICE

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE  
 ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA SCOUT ASSOCIATION

RE: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024

Notice is hereby given, in accordance with Section 32 of the Constitution, that the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Antigua and Barbuda Scout Association will be held in the conference room at Government House on **Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 5:00 p.m.**

All Members are invited to attend and to be punctual.

Members are reminded that subscriptions for 2024 are now due and payable.



Janil Gore-Francis  
 National Secretary

## New ABEC chairman, Arthur Thomas: An excellent choice

The appointment of attorney Arthur Thomas as the new chairman of the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission is an ‘excellent’ choice.

That’s the view expressed by Prime Minister Gaston Browne, who nominated Thomas to succeed the late John Jarvis who died on January 15 following a brief illness.

“The selection of attorney Arthur Thomas was an excellent choice and whilst our political opponents will always say otherwise, when you consider his experience serving as an attorney for more than 30-years as well as serving as a director for many organisations not just local-

ly but regionally as well. He is the right man for the job,” he stated.

PM Browne noted that Thomas once served as chairman of the Caribbean Union Bank and that his resignation from the post over issues relating to the Samuel Bankman-Fried FTX matter seems to be an issue for members of the UPP.

“I know they are using this Sam Bankman-Fried FTX issue where the investor’s Antigua and Barbuda company was registered by Thomas’ law firm.

“Almost invariably, whenever a lawyer incorporates a company on behalf of his client, until such time as the company starts to trade, the lawyer will



Newly-appointed Chairman of the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission, Arthur Thomas, left, with Governor General Sir Rodney Williams.

serve as a director. Thomas was a nominal director and he was not involved in any actual decision-making of FTX, contrary to what those in the UPP were stating. He was just a nominal director for one of the companies within the group,” he explained.

PM Browne further explained that the Financial Services Regulatory Commission had some concerns about the FTX company and had declined to issue it a licence.

According to the prime minister the new ABEC Chair, Thomas, ‘did not-

ing wrong’ but he decided to resign from the chairmanship of CUB as well as from the Eastern Caribbean Regulatory Commission.

“What he did was in keeping with our good governance framework and this was the right thing to do pending any investigations. You would also recognise that he has not been implicated in anything,” he added.

The prime minister expressed his full confidence in Thomas as a man of integrity and experience who will serve well in the post as ABEC chairman.





## SIDS4 website up and running

Information about the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) is now available on a website that features details about the historic gathering and information about the host country as it intensifies preparations for the May 27 – 30 global event.

The website, which can be found at <https://sids4.gov.ag/> is the culmination

of several months of work by the Ministry of Information's ICT Division within the Government of Antigua and Barbuda working in collaboration with a number of UN agencies to ensure information about the conference is readily accessible to everyone.

The home page features images of both Antigua as well as Barbuda that were captured by photographer Wayne

Mariette as well as a stunning image provided by the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) of the area known as the Sleeping Indian.

For delegates making use of the portal to secure information about the conference and the twin island country, they will be welcomed by Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne and taken through the range of matters the conference will address in a message by Minister of Foreign Affairs E.P Chet Greene.

As interest continues to build around the conference, Antiguan and Barbudans who are keen in participating at various levels, including volunteering, will be able to register by making use of the appropriate sections on the site.

The SIDS4 website also provides links to a number of UN agencies, including the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), where historic and background details about the conference are provided.

Also available are information about Antigua and Barbuda for visiting delegates who would like to make use of the time to enjoy a beautiful tourist destination as well as a News and Updates section which features developments about the conference as they happen.



**4th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON Small Island Developing States 27-30 MAY, 2024 ST. JOHN'S, ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**

### Stay Connected with SIDS4 on Social Media

In addition to the official conference website, the SIDS4 Conference is pleased to announce the launch of its social media channels on Facebook and Instagram. You can find us at @sids4ab, where we will provide weekly up-to-the-minute information on the conference, frequently asked questions, and other valuable insights.

These social media channels serve as the primary hubs for staying informed about all aspects of the SIDS4 Conference. From keynote speaker announcements to schedule updates, attendees and stakeholders can expect timely updates and engaging content leading up to and during the event.

The SIDS4 Facebook and Instagram pages will be the go-to sources for the latest news, resources, and interactive discussions surrounding the conference.

Follow @sids4ab on Facebook and Instagram today to join the conversation, stay informed, and engage with fellow participants. Don't miss out on the opportunity to be part of this important event shaping the future of Small Island Developing States.

For more information about the SIDS4 Conference, visit our official website at [sids4.gov.ag](https://sids4.gov.ag/).

**#SIDS4**

🌐 [sids4.gov.ag](https://sids4.gov.ag)  
 📱 @SIDS4AB



Carnival Venezia's inaugural visit on February 15, 2024.

## ACP predicts February cruise passengers to near 150,000

The Antigua Cruise Port has announced that it has already welcomed over 80-thousand cruise passengers for the month of February.

In a statement, ACP said the overall number by the middle of the month totaled 83,389 passengers from 48 calls.

“The team expects to end the month by receiving 78 calls and having served 141,000 passengers,” the statement added.

The ACP statement comes as it announced the inaugural visit last week of Carnival Venezia which it said brought “Fun Italian Style” cruising into St. John’s for the first time.

Over four thousand passengers sailed into the port aboard the vessel along with 1,401 crew members. St. John’s is the first port of call on the current 12-day roundtrip South-

ern Caribbean itinerary for this ship. The recently rebranded Vista-class cruise liner is expected to call on St. John’s again in November.

Virgin Valiant Lady, Royal Caribbean Explorer of the Seas, and Celebrity Beyond also visited Antigua Cruise Port alongside Carnival Venezia, bringing the total passenger count for the day to 13,350 passengers

Officer In Charge at Antigua Cruise Port, Cynthia Jacobs Browne, accepted a gift from Captain Massimo Pennisi during a traditional plaque exchange ceremony.

“We are delighted to have Carnival Venezia alongside today. This visit is one of several that we anticipate from Carnival Cruise Line this year, which reflects the growing demand for our destination and for cruise vacations.”

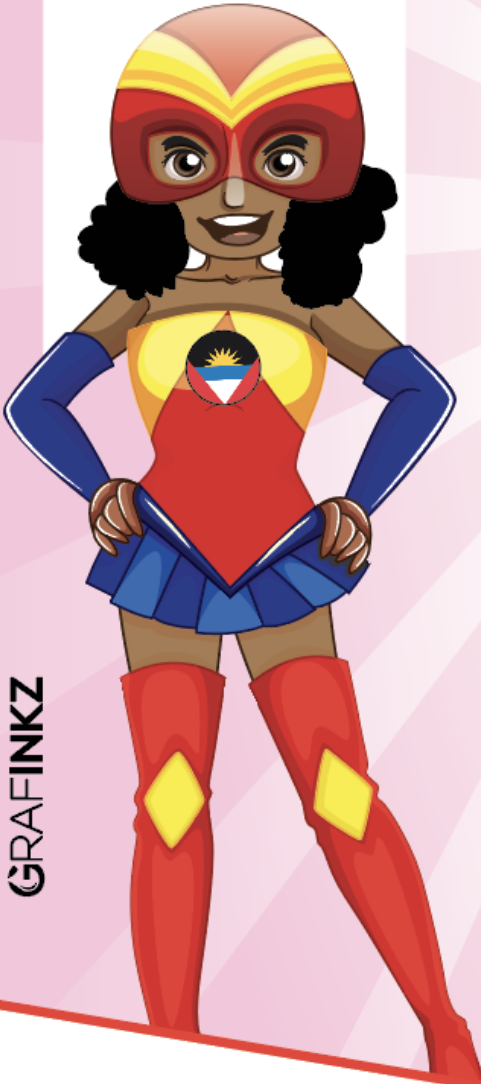


Cynthia Jacobs Browne and Captain Massimo Pennisi during Carnival Venezia's inaugural visit.

5 WAYS YOU CAN BE A

# GERM BUSTER

STOP BAD GERMS FROM SPREADING BY TAKING CARE OF YOUR BODY.



GRAFINKZ



Eat healthy foods, fruits and drink lots of fluids.



Get plenty of sleep and exercise often.



Wash your hands frequently with soap or hand sanitizer.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.



Avoid contact with people who are sick. Stay up-to-date with your vaccines.



For more information or assistance:  
Call (268) 462-5522  
or visit us on Lower High Street,  
St. Johns, Antigua.





## Sandals donates fans to Villa Primary School

**DEWS**

FOLLOW US ON  
INSTAGRAM!

@dewspro

DEWS
 dewspro
 info@dewspro.com
 729-3397/ 729-1210

Sandals Grande Antigua Resort and Spa has donated a number fans to the Villa Primary School.

The donation of ten standing fans came as a welcome relief to the school, which often struggles with keeping its classrooms cool and comfortable in the hot Caribbean climate.

Principal Sandra Felix expressed her sincere appreciation for the donation and thanked the Sandals team for their continued support over the years. “This gesture of kindness from the resort has not only made a

significant impact on the students and teachers but also on the community as a whole.

“The resort’s efforts to improve the school and its facilities are a testament to their commitment to the education and well-being of the students.

“The students and teachers of Villa Primary School are truly grateful for the generosity and support of Sandals Grande Antigua Resort and Spa.”

During a tour of the school, Sandals General *cont'd on pg 10*



**TUES - FRIDAY  
11AM - 2PM**



**HOSTED BY  
SENATOR COLIN O'NEAL BROWNE**

# **TALKING POINT**

**CALL: 562-3989 OR 562-2991 | US: 718 285 7889**

**FACEBOOK LIVE @ POINTE FM99.1**

**WE ARE GETTING STRONGER**

# Young musician set to attend jazz festival in Cuba

Khadijah Simon, a 19-year-old musician and entrepreneur hailing from Antigua and Barbuda is thrilled to announce her acceptance to the highly anticipated 'Jazz Emprende 2024' event, set to take place in Havana, Cuba, from February 27th-29th, 2024. This extraordinary opportunity is made possible through the generous sponsorship of the UNESCO Transcultural Programme, with the support of the European Union.

This unique event, at the convergence of jazz music and entrepreneurial activity, is poised to be a groundbreaking initiative fostering creativity, innovation, and cultural expression within the Caribbean region. The 'Jazz Emprende 2024' event offers a dynamic platform for young entrepreneurs like Khadijah to enrich their professional competence, enhance entrepreneurial skills, and partake in knowledge transferred through masterclasses, workshops, and live concerts.

The UNESCO Transcultural Programme, through its sponsorship, is covering the international mobility expenses for Khadijah, ensuring her participation in this transformative experience. This includes round-trip flights, transfers, accommodation, meals, and daily transportation in Havana.

"I am truly grateful to have been selected for this incredible opportunity. The support from the UNESCO Transcultural Programme will undoubtedly amplify my entrepreneurial journey in the jazz music sector. I look



Khadijah Simon

forward to immersing myself in the rich cultural and musical heritage of the Caribbean, connecting with industry professionals, and gaining valuable insights to further develop my creative project," expressed Khadijah.

The purpose of the sponsorship is to facilitate Khadijah's growth by providing access to entrepreneurship workshops, conferences, and networking activities with key stakeholders from the international jazz market. The UNESCO Transcultural Programme aims to not only empower

young Caribbean entrepreneurs in the jazz music sector but also to increase the visibility and recognition of Caribbean jazz, enhancing the region's cultural identity and heritage.

The impact of this sponsorship extends beyond participants' personal growth, with the potential to contribute to the development of the Cultural and Creative Industries in the Caribbean. The 'Jazz Emprende 2024' event is expected to stimulate collaborations, create job opportunities, and spur economic growth within the jazz sector.

*cont'd from pg 8*

Manager David Latchimy also noticed areas that could use refurbishment and immediately offered to pro-

vide assistance in the upcoming term.

The partnership between the resort and the school has been a strong and beneficial

one through many initiatives including the Sandals Foundation Reading Road Trip, the Sandals Foundation annual Christmas toy

drive and party and the donation of a playground to the school's pre-school that is set to see refurbishment upgrades later this year.



**MON - FRI  
9AM TO 11AM**



**HOSTED BY  
TROY ALLEN**

# TALK YOUR MIND

**CALL: 562-3989 OR 562-2991 | US: 718 285 7889  
FACEBOOK LIVE @ POINTE FM99.1**

**WE ARE GETTING STRONGER**



Twitter, now X, staff in Ghana at the time of the takeover, many of whom subsequently lost their jobs.

## Sacked Twitter staff in Ghana finally get pay-off

By **Nkechi Ogbonna**

X, formerly known as Twitter, has finally paid off the staff it sacked in its African headquarters more than a year after they were laid off, the agency which represents them has said.

Most had only been in the job, based in Ghana's capital, Accra, for a few months when the social media platform fired them in November 2022.

They had threatened to take X to court for failing to pay the redundancy money they said they were promised.

The company has not commented.

X has previously said that it had paid ex-employees in full.

Elon Musk, who took over the company in 2022, embarked on a massive global cull of employees, sacking more than 6,000 people. He had said he was losing more than \$4m (£3.5m) a day.

The African contingent, who number fewer than 20, had only just moved into X's new office in Accra, following about eight months

of working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Agency Seven Seven, the company providing legal representation to the staff, said it had been successful in its quest to get a redundancy settlement and repatriation expenses for foreign staff, although it did not specify the amount of the pay-out.

"They are very pleased to finally be able to get their due, put this behind them and look to the future," Carla Olympio from Agency Seven Seven told the BBC.

Last year, sacked staffers told the BBC their treatment by X had harmed their mental health and their finances.

"It's difficult when it's the world's richest man owing you money and closure," one said.

They said they were initially told that, although their contracts were being terminated, they would be paid to work for one more month. But they were immediately locked out of their emails and no further salary payments were made.

Since then, the staff said they had

been involved in a frustrating battle for compensation.

Some of them had moved from neighbouring countries, such as Nigeria. Their contract termination meant they were left stranded in Ghana, along with their families.

In a rare interview last April, Mr Musk told the BBC that the social media giant had 1,500 employees, down from the just under 8,000 who were employed at the time he bought the company.

When the news of Mr Musk's radical staff cull became public, he tweeted that laid-off employees were given three months' severance pay.

But the staff based in the Africa office say they did not receive this.

According to Agency Seven Seven, X only began negotiations with the sacked Africa staff after the BBC covered the story.

Last year, X was hit by a lawsuit, filed by ex-employees in a California court, for allegedly refusing to pay at least \$500m in promised severance packages.

## Jeremy Renner gets standing ovation at People's Choice Awards

By Steven McIntosh

Actor Jeremy Renner received a rapturous reception at the People's Choice Awards, more than a year after a horrific snow plough accident.

The Hawkeye star broke more than 30 bones after being accidentally run over by his own snow plough last January.

Arriving on stage at Sunday's ceremony, Renner told the audience: «I've got to say, it feels good to be back.»

Renner's fellow Marvel star Tom Hiddleston was among the audience members to give him a standing ovation.

"The fans rock, I'll tell you what," Renner said, appearing visibly moved by the crowd's reaction.

"This year's been a



Renner said the past year had been "a heck of a journey" as he presented the first award of the ceremony.

heck of a journey, and I'm happy to be here with you, the fans. You guys are the best."

The actor presented Billie Eilish with the TV performance of the year award for her work in

the comedy horror show *Swarm*.

The People's Choice Awards were hosted by another Marvel star, Shang-Chi's Simu Liu, who introduced Renner by saying: "I could not be more excited

to bring out our first presenter.

"My fellow Marvel man, we are so, so happy to have him back, here with us tonight... Please make as much noise as humanly possible for Jeremy Renner."

Earlier this month, Renner spoke to *Entertainment Tonight* about his recovery, explaining he was "probably doing 90 percent of all the things I needed to be doing".

He added: "It's a one-way street, this recovery. The rest of my life is about health and wellness. Recovery will be part of the rest of my life, so I look forward to it, man."

"There's always something to do to get better, be stronger, be happier, be healthier, and that's what I look forward to."



Renner's fellow Marvel star Tom Hiddleston greeted him after Renner had presented the award.

# Regional News



## The Bahamas: Off duty cop, his mother and others arrested

Police in The Bahamas are investigating a shooting incident which resulted in the confiscation of a loaded firearm, ammunition and the arrest of six people.

According to reports around 8 pm on Sunday, police were alerted to gunshots being discharged in the vicinity of Exuma Street and Cordeaux Avenue. Further details indicated that the occupants of a vehicle were responsible.

A speed chase ensued between the occupants of the car and officers attached to Operation Ceasefire who were on routine patrol, in the area of Bahamas Games



Boulevard.

It is reported while in the area, three male occupants

opened fire on the officers resulting in an exchange of gunshots, causing the sus-

pects' vehicle to crash near the baseball stadium.

*cont'd on pg 15*

### STUDENT SAFETY POLICY

STATE INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED

Live in a better State of mind

www.sicantigua.com  
info@sicantigua.com  
1 (268) 481-7800/04

## Guyana President Ali: Regional cargo ferry is key to integration and trade

By Melissa Wong

President of Guyana Dr Irfaan Ali says the regional cargo ferry which will be launched soon involving Guyana, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago will be a test to prove that investment in regional transportation can be profitable.

Ali spoke on the topic at the opening of the 2024 Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo, which is being held under the theme, "Fuelling Transformation and Modernisation".

He says the shipping asset will allow the movement of containers and the movement of passengers (a ferry service) as a test to prove the model, that investment in the regional transport infrastructure is not only key and critical but is profitable.

The President of Guy-



President of Guyana Dr Irfaan Ali speaking at the opening of the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo on February 19, 2024.

ana says this service can help the region to achieve the goals of integration, a greater level of trade and food security.

Ali says development partners in the region al-

low for the opportunity of having off-takers for the commodities and additions that will be produced.

Just last week it was announced T&T, Guyana and Barbados were on the

cus of the formation of a company to drive the process for the introduction of a regional ferry service.

Discussions were hosted by T&T's Works and Transport Minister Rohan Sinanan on the operationalisation of the service where regional officials reiterated the objective verbalised by leaders of the three CARICOM States to promote regional food security.

The meeting also focused on the issues surrounding possible pre-clearance in the three areas of customs, immigration and plant quarantine.

*cont'd from pg 14*

Two of the males were able to evade officers initially, however, one of the suspects was arrested after he attempted to scale the wall of a nearby school. He was identified as an off-duty officer.

A search of the suspects' vehicle revealed a loaded firearm along with a quantity of ammunition.

Police say a check of the area where gunshots were initially heard on Exuma Street and Cordeaux Avenue revealed a 23-year-old man was shot and injured

while walking. He was taken to hospital and treated.

Subsequently, police arrested three males aged 22, two 26-year-olds along with a 22-year-old woman.

In addition, police executed a search warrant at a residence in Imperial Park where a quantity of ammunition was discovered and confiscated. This led to the arrest of the off-duty officer's 41-year-old mother.

Investigations are ongoing into this matter.



Some homes were buried by a landslide in Achocalla, while others had their roofs swept away.

## Bolivia floods: Alert as torrential rains kill dozens

By Vanessa Buschschlüter

Hundreds of towns and villages in Bolivia have been put under alert as torrential rains continue to wreak havoc in the South American country.

Officials say 33 people have died since November due to the rains, which have triggered landslides and caused rivers to burst their banks.

The death toll is eight times higher than in the same period last year.

Officials are carefully monitoring a number of dams which they fear could overflow.

Deputy Minister for Civil Defence, Juan Carlos Calvimontes, said out of Bolivia's 340 municipalities, 10 had been put on the highest alert, and another 279 were on orange alert - the second highest.

Officials also said that humanitarian aid had been sent to Achocalla, in

La Paz province, where a 35-year-old woman and her two children were buried in a mudslide that engulfed their home.

A neighbour told local newspaper *Correo del Sur* that she had shouted at the woman to get out of the house, but that the mother had probably not managed to grab her children in time.

More than 20 people were also injured.

Also in La Paz province, the authorities are keeping a close eye on the water levels in the Incachaca dam.

Government experts together with the mayor of the city of La Paz, which is located downstream from the dam, inspected it on Sunday.

Mayor Iván Arias said that while the water level in the reservoir had "reached 100%", the water was currently draining well and he did not

foresee "any major consequences downstream".

Three more reservoirs - Hampaturi Alto, Pampalarama and Alpaquita - are also at their maximum level.

The heavy rains have hit Bolivia after a prolonged drought and one of the hottest winters the country has experienced.

Back in October, hundreds of people had gathered at the Incachaca reservoir - which is now close to overflowing - to pray for rain.

Extreme weather events are not uncommon in Bolivia, but a warming atmosphere caused by climate change has made extreme rainfall more likely.

The world has already warmed by about 1.1C since the industrial era began and temperatures will keep rising unless governments around the world make steep cuts to emissions.





The Houthis said they had targeted the the Belize-flagged, British-registered cargo ship Rubymar (file photo)

## Crew abandon British-registered cargo ship off Yemen after Houthi attack

The crew of a Belize-flagged, British-registered cargo vessel have abandoned ship off Yemen after it was hit by missiles fired by the Houthi movement.

The Rubymar was in the Gulf of Aden and nearing the Bab al-Mandab Strait when it was struck, security firms said.

The vessel, which is carrying “very dangerous” fertiliser, has been taking on water.

Condemning the “reckless attack” on the ship, the UK said that allied naval

vessels were “already on the scene”.

It is one of the most damaging attacks yet carried out by the Iran-backed Houthis, and is the latest evidence that Western efforts to deter them are yet to succeed.

The Houthis have launched dozens of missiles and drones at merchant vessels and Western warships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden since mid-November, in what they say is a show of support for the Palestinians in the war between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza

Strip.

The attacks have prompted many shipping companies to stop using the critical waterway, which accounts for about 12% of global seaborne trade.

US and British forces began carrying out air strikes on military targets across Houthi-controlled western Yemen in response last month.

On Sunday night, the UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) agency said it had received a report of an incident from an unnamed ship about 35 nau-

tical miles (65km) south of the Yemeni Red Sea port of Mocha.

The master had reported “an explosion in close proximity to the vessel resulting in damage” at about 23:00 local time (20:00 GMT), it added.

Early on Monday, the agency cited military authorities as reporting that the crew abandoned the vessel following an attack.

“Vessel at anchor and all crew are safe,” it said. “Military authorities remain on scene to provide  
*cont'd on pg 18*

*cont'd from pg 17*  
assistance.”

British maritime security firm Ambrey separately reported that a Belize-flagged cargo ship had come under attack in the Bab al-Mandab Strait on Sunday as it sailed northwards.

Rubymar's security firm, LSS Sapu, and data provider Lloyd's List Intelligence later confirmed that it had sustained damage after being hit by two missiles.

“We know she was taking in water,” a spokesperson for LSS-Sapu told Reuters news agency.

“There is nobody on board now,” it added. “The owners and managers are considering options for towage.”

The UK government confirmed the Rubymar was taking on water and had been abandoned, with its crew taken to safety.

According to data from Marine-Traffic, which last received a tracking signal on Sunday, the Rubymar had been travelling from Saudi Arabia to Bulgaria.

Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea announced in a statement on Monday morning that its naval forces had fired a number of missiles at “a British ship” in the Gulf of Aden, which he identified as the Rubymar.

“The ship suffered catastrophic damage and came to a complete halt,” he said, without providing any evidence.

“As a result of the extensive damage the ship suffered, it is now at risk of potential sinking in the Gulf of Aden. During the operation, we made sure that the ship's crew exited safely.”

The Djibouti Port Authority said it had co-ordinated the safe repatriation of the Rubymar's 24 crew members - 11 Syrians, six Egyptians, four Filipinos and three Indians - after they were initially assisted by a passing vessel.

It also warned that the Rubymar had on board almost 22 tonnes of fertiliser - classified as a “very dangerous” material because it is highly explosive - and was now at an unknown location in the Bab al-Mandab Strait, which is only 32km wide.

The 172m-long Rubymar is flagged in Belize, its operators are from Lebanon and its registered owner is Golden Adventure Shipping, with an address in the British port of Southampton.

The UK government said current reports suggested there were no casualties resulting from the attack.

“Nearby coalition vessels are already on the scene and HMS Richmond continues to patrol in the Red Sea to help protect commercial shipping,” a spokesperson added.

“We have been clear that any attacks on commercial shipping are completely unacceptable and that the UK and our allies reserve the right to respond appropriately.”

Ambrey also said it was aware that two projectiles had exploded close to a Greece-flagged, US-owned cargo ship about 100 nautical miles east of the southern Yemeni port of Aden on Monday.

The UKMTO said a ship's master had reported two explosions, and that there was “evidence of shrapnel and damage to paintwork”.

“The vessel and crew are reported to be safe and proceeding to the next port of call,” it added.

Greek shipping ministry sources told Reuters that the vessel was the Sea Champion, whose owner is New York-based MKM Chartering, and that it had been transporting grain from Argentina to Aden when it was attacked.

Later on Monday Mr Sarea claimed the Houthis had targeted two American ships in the Gulf of Aden - the Sea Champion and the Navis Fortuna.

Mr Sarea also said Houthi air defences in the Red Sea province of Hudaydah had shot down a US MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) “while it was carrying out hostile missions against our country on behalf of [Israel]”.

There was no immediate comment from the US military.

US Central Command said its forces had carried out five strikes against three mobile anti-ship cruise missiles, one unmanned underwater vessel (UUV) and one unmanned surface vessel (USV) in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen on Saturday after determining that they presented an imminent threat to US Navy ships and merchant vessels in the region.

It was the first time that US forces had identified a UUV, or submarine drone, being employed by the Houthis since the attacks began.

BBC security correspondent Frank Gardner says the discovery that the Houthis are deploying both USVs and UUVs is a worrying development. The concept of a “swarm attack” - launching a number of relatively cheap missiles and drones simultaneously at an enemy in the hopes of confusing and overwhelming their defences - is straight out of the playbook of the navy of Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

As Houthi attacks on shipping in the lower Red Sea and adjacent Gulf of Aden show no sign of stopping, the prospect of such an attack being directed at a US or British warship is an ever-present threat for those crews now serving there, our correspondent adds.

In another development, EU foreign ministers meeting in Brussels approved a mission to help protect international shipping in the Red Sea. It aims to have the operation which will involve four ships from France, Germany, Italy and Belgium up and running in a few weeks.

## Combined Schools get first win in ABCA two-day contest

Combined Schools trounced the Bolans Blast-ers by an innings and 124 runs to record their first win in the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) two-day championship over the weekend.

Opener David Richardson slammed a century to guide Combined Schools to 335 off 79.2 overs in their first innings after losing the toss and being sent in to bat at the Factory grounds.

Richardson cracked 134 off 239 balls, including 10 fours; Malique Jacobs struck 48; Glen Williams hit 47 off 46 balls; and captain George Elvin scored 42 off 31 balls. The Blast-ers captain and fast bowler Taiem Tonge claimed three for 88.

In reply, the Bolans Blast-ers tumbled to 90 all out in 32 overs in their first innings, with Xanden Hobson grabbing four for 16, and fast bowler Glen Williams capturing three for 42.

Asked to follow on 245 runs behind, the Bolans Blast-ers were dismissed in their second innings for 121 in 29.1 overs. J'Quan Athanaze bagged five for 47, and left-arm pacer Yanique Watley took three for 14.

All four other matches ended in outright wins for one of the teams. The Pigotts Crushers beat the All Saints Pythons by 10 wickets at the Mack Pond playing field in



Matthew Miller

All Saints Village.

Scores: All Saints Pythons 86 off 39.1 overs (Demari Benta 4-15, Jared Jno Baptiste 3-26) and 150 off 41.1 overs (Demari Benta 5-29); Pigotts Crushers 232 off 49.5 overs (Deran Benta 63, Demari Benta 59, Kadeem Henry 35; Justin Robinson 5-69, Akeem Blackman 3-12) and eight without loss.

The New Winthropes Lions defeated the Caribbean Union Bank (CUB) Bethesda Golden Eagles at the New Winthropes playing field.

Scores: Bethesda Golden Eagles 149 off 54 overs (Kevin Pitman 44; Ishmael Peters 4-22) and 39 off 28.1 overs (Orandel Boston 6-2); New Winthropes Lions 74 off 22.2 overs (Mekali Tonge 6-28, Tehrique Mason 3-27) and 115 for four

off 24.3 overs (Damon Valentine 35 not out).

Defending champions PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks trounced Empire Nation by 94 runs at the Rising Sun playing field in St. John's.

Scores: Liberta Blackhawks 172 off 43.3 overs (Malique Walsh 52; Justin Athanaze 9-44) and 141 off 32.1 overs (Amahl Nathaniel 74; Justin Athanaze 5-50, Micah McKenzie 3-14); Empire Nation 158 off 34.5 overs (Tyrone Williams Jr. 54; Kadeem Phillip 6-42) and 95 off 26.3 overs (Kershaski Jno Lewis 40; Kadeem Phillip 4-41, Elvis Weaver 3-14).

The Jennings Tigers crushed the WES Rising Sun Spartans by an innings and 11 runs at the Pigotts playing field.

Scores: Jennings Tigers



Justin Athanaze

326 for nine declared off 70 overs (Matthew Miller 116, Jedidiah Martin 92, Nicolas Tappin 34; Michael Harilall 3-79); Rising Sun Spartans 166 off 44.5 overs (Junior Henry 53, Tassilo Allen 37; Jedidiah Martin 5-52); and 149 off 49.3 overs (Junior Henry 30; Glenton Williams 5-36).

# Sports News



## Two days until tickets go on sale for 2024 T20 World Cup

Following the conclusion of the 2024 ICC Men's T20 World Cup public ticket ballot, which closed on February 7, tickets with remaining allocations go on sale in just two days, on February 22, which marks 100 days to the start of the World Cup, from 10 am Antigua Standard Time.

The blockbuster Men's T20 World Cup event will be held in the West Indies and USA from June 1-29. Tickets start at just US\$6 and will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis at [tickets.t20worldcup.com](https://tickets.t20worldcup.com).

A variety of ticket options will be available and accessibly priced. Fans will be able to purchase tickets to single or multiple matches, travel and hospitality



Fans in attendance at a cricket match in the Caribbean. (CWI Media)

packages, and limited venue specific packages for matches at Caribbean venues (subject to availability).

Whether you are looking to attend a single thrilling match or immerse yourself in the excitement of multiple games, there is a ticket option for you.

Four types of ticket categories ensure fans can tailor their World Cup experience.

Cricket fans are being urged to start planning for the 2024 ICC Men's T20 World Cup experience today and get ready to purchase their tickets from February 22.

"The ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for fans to witness the world's greatest cricket superstars in action in some of the world's most inviting Caribbean and US destinations," said Fawwaz Baksh, ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 Tournament Director.

"Tickets are going to go fast when general tickets go on sale, so if you want to be part of the action in person, we encourage all fans to secure their tickets as soon as they go on sale and be part of this historic ICC Men's T20 World Cup celebration. It promises to be out of this world."

For further ticketing information visit [tickets.t20worldcup.com](https://tickets.t20worldcup.com).

## Hoppers win and remain fourth in Premier League standings

Former champions the Greenbay Hoppers claimed their seventh win and remained in fourth place in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Sunday.

Yoandir Puga Estevez scored an 84th-minute winner as the Hoppers came from behind to snatch a 3-2 victory against the Pigotts Bullets in the first game of a Premier League triple header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Estevez fired home the late winner after Javorn Stevens' 23rd-minute conversion, and an own goal, which was scored by Dale Gardener in the

26th minute, allowed the Hoppers to equalize after conceding two early goals against the Pigotts Bullets.

Both teams reached halftime deadlocked at 2-2 after Jamol Stevens scored an own goal in the 3rd minute and Akeem Isaac's 12th-minute conversion gave the Bullets a two-nil lead.

Isaac squandered a good chance to put the Bullets ahead and score his second goal of the match when he failed to convert a penalty kick in the 41st minute.

The Pigotts Bullets also finished the match with 10 men after Niah Browne received a red card in the 78th

minute for committing serious foul play against an opponent.

The result allows the Hoppers to move on to 21 points from 10 matches, while the Pigotts Bullets will move from 10th to 11th place with nine points after suffering their fifth loss in 10 encounters.

The other two matches on Sunday ended in 2-2 draws. Former champions SAP and Empire battled to their draw in Sunday's second game.

The result allows SAP to move up from 11th to 10th place by advancing to 10 points from 10 matches. Empire

*cont'd on pg 21*

## Buckley's 3J's end Bullets unbeaten run in T10 mixed competition

Buckley's 3J's ended the unbeaten run of Bryson's Shipping and Insurance Bullets in the Antigua & Barbuda Softball Cricket Association (ABSCA) T10 Mixed (Male & Female) Competition on Sunday.

Buckley's 3J's defeated the Bullets by 43 runs. Buckley's 3J's won the toss and batted, scoring 115 for two from their 10 overs. Denley Thomas hammered 57 not out, including six sixes and two fours, and Randino Turner made 25.

In reply, Bullets were restricted to 62 for eight from 10 overs. Morrison Browne scored 18, and Vaughn Charles got 13. Menover Govia snapped up three wickets for seven runs as the Bullets crashed to their first defeat after winning their previous three matches.

Buckley's 3J's also claimed a seven-wicket win against PMS, who won

the toss and batted, scoring 80 for three from 10 overs. Clarence Francis cracked 24, Walter Carr hit 23 not out, and Kenny Benjamin struck 21.

Buckley's 3J's achieved victory by scoring 86 for three with two balls to spare. Randino Turner slammed 58, including four sixes and three fours, and Stacey Bright chipped in with 13. Kenny Benjamin claimed two for 17.

Before losing to Buckley's 3J's, Deran Benta struck a century as the Bullets recorded their third consecutive win by romping to a 135-run victory against the Dredgers.

Benta slammed 188, including 26 sixes and four fours, to fire Bullets to 218 for two off their allotted 10 overs. In reply, Dredgers were restricted to 83 for four from 10 overs. Gaynell O'Garro cracked 35, including five fours and a six, and Grace Persaud



Deran Benta hit 188 for Bullets against Dredgers chipped in with 20.

Dredgers rebounded to snatch an eight-run victory against Rackaman Construction Strictly Business.

Dredgers made 107 for four from 10 overs. Rae Charles hit 48, including four sixes and four fours; Mervin Higgins scored 24; and Gaynell O'Garro made 11 not out. Adrian Abbott took two for 12.

Strictly Business made

96 for one from their 10 overs. Owen Graham hammered 62 not out, including eight sixes and two fours, and Kim George made 27 not out.

PMS prevailed by 15 runs against Sisserou. PMS made 96 for two from 10 overs. Walter Carr scored 28, Kenny Benjamin made 27, and Kushana David got 26.

In reply, Sisserou could only muster 81 for five from their 10 overs. Karl Simon struck 28, Carla Weatherhead got 15, Saheim Dharijant made 12, and Tawana John chipped in with 11. Patara Francis grabbed three for 15, and Terrence Thompson captured two for 25.

### *cont'd from pg 20*

will advance to five points from 10 matches but will remain second from the bottom of the standings.

National winger Raheem Deterville scored twice to give Old Road a two-nil lead in their drawn encounter with the Wilkies Warriors in the final game on Sunday.

Their first draw in 11 games ended Old Road's two-match losing streak and allowed them to join All Saints United on 25 points. However, Old Road will remain in third place behind All Saints United in second place due to an inferior goal difference.

Wilkies will remain in eighth place, advancing to 13 points from 10 matches.

## Flyers make winning start to ABBA's Division I campaign

Reigning playoff champions, Flyers, made a winning start to their campaign in the 2024 Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Division I domestic league on Sunday.

The Flyers prevailed 73-70 against the Potters Steelers in the second game of a Division I opening-night double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Kwame Brathwaite produced 17 points and 12 rebounds; David Hernandez had 15 points; Adonis Humphreys contributed 14 points, 15 rebounds, and six assists; Xavier Meade scored 11 points; and Kenya Ahcom chipped in with 10 points and eight rebounds for the Flyers.

Cohen Desouza had a game-high 23 points, 10 rebounds, and six assists, and Marlon "Buju" Charles produced 14 points and eight rebounds for the Potters Steelers.

All Saints Slam snatched a 66-62 victory against the Spanish Heat in the opening game of the Division One season.

Kim Casey produced 13 points and seven assists; Anjis Anthony had 13



Players of Flyers Basketball teams sit in the stands during the official opening of the 2024 Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's domestic league at the JSC Sports Complex on Sunday, February 18, 2024. (Photo courtesy of CPTSA Wings)

points and seven rebounds; Judah Ferris grabbed 20 rebounds and scored 10 points; John Rolland Jr. contributed 14 rebounds and nine points; Keaddy Martin had nine points and nine assists; and Ezekiel Francois chipped in with 10 rebounds and eight points for the All Saints Slam.

Steven Matthew shot a game-high 24 points and snatched seven rebounds; Coy Quinland scored 13 points; and Sean Nicholas grabbed 25 rebounds and sank nine points for the

Spanish Heat.

Both games were preceded by a parade of teams and an official opening ceremony to start the new domestic season.

Last year's Division I league champion, Cuties Ovals O'Jays, will not be participating in the 2024 competition. Six teams will be battling for supremacy in Division I.

They are the Flyers, Northside Stingerz, Potters Steelers, Spanish Heat, All Saints Slam, and Ottos Full Throttle.

Ten teams will be tak-

ing part in the Division II competition. They are the Spanish Heat 2, Flyers 2, Fearless Crew, DA Project, Pointville Ballers, Ottos Clippers, Lower Ottos Warriors, Old Road Daggers, Wadadli Elite, and Court Martial.

Action in Division II will commence with a double header at the JSC Sports Complex today. The Fearless Crew will launch their campaign against DA Project at 6:45 pm, and the Pointville Ballers will face the Ottos Clippers at 8:30 pm.