

MINISTRY OF HEALTH GIVES INSIGHTS

Story on Page 2



The owners of the CPL's newest team, the Antigua and Barbuda Falcons, paid a visit to the Cabinet on Wednesday.

Local News



Health ministry gives insights into operations at SLBMC

Perhaps for the first time ever, the Ministry of Health is providing the nation with insights into the number of patients who receive treatment at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre and for what purpose.

The Minister of Health gave a report to Cabinet on Wednesday on the frequency of which the SLBMC was utilized by those who became ill. 12,749 patients were processed through radiology during 2023. 15,908 patients were referred to the hospital by private doctors. 3,136 occupied rooms on the wards. 120,000 sessions of dialysis were performed on more than 1,000 patients whose kidneys had failed them.

The minister contends that the SLBMC serves many patients satisfactorily during each calendar year.



Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre

“The attempt to paint the institution as somehow failing the unwell men, women and children, who enter through its doors, is highly inaccurate,” according to the Health Minister Sir Molwyn Joseph.

Concurrently, he reported, the Emergency Room (E.R.) is being ex-

panded to care for many who need urgent care but not necessarily emergency care.

Nurses and doctors are being trained to engage patients as though they were customers who expected warm, gentle and professional services.

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Ministry of Works officials shared upcoming plans with the Cabinet.

Relief is coming for road users in the country

The government will soon roll out a major road improvement programme that will bring much relief to vehicle drivers and other road users in the country.

On Wednesday, a team from the Ministry of Works was invited to share with members the plans and programmes they have in store to improve the several major and secondary roads in the country.

“The team provided Cabinet with a 10-minute video displaying the strength of the concrete it wishes to utilize when constructing roads in Antigua and Barbuda. The new methodology is expected to last for 30 years as the strength of the concrete measures more than 400 psi after 7 days,” the Cabinet Notes have reported.

It said the Public Works team has identified roads

in each of the 6 parishes and intends, in the first phase, to lay down 2,700 feet of road in each Parish.

The requirement for each community road would be identified in order to determine the method to be used in its repair.

According to the Notes...major roadways would utilize “the roller-compacted concrete” system, and community roads will be paved using the double chip seal system.

Work in each community will begin immediately after April 30th, when all preparation for roadways required for the SIDS conference (May 27– 30) are complete.

The Ministry of Works team had previously visited the Cabinet to explain the new methodology it hopes to employ in road

construction and repairs system goes into effect in the future. That new roughly 60-plus days.

NOTICE

TO: Your Worship
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TO: The COMMISSIONER OF POLICE
Police Headquarters
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Antigua

Dear Sir/Madame,

Re: -Application for Bottle Licence

I, Greg Williamson and Joylan Sinclair both of Bolans Village, with registered business situated at Bolans Village St. Mary’s Antigua and Barbuda **DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE** that it is our intention to apply at the next sitting of the Liquor Licensing Court to be held at the Magistrate’s Court, Gray’s Farm, St. John’s, Antigua on Thursday 4th April, 2024 next ensuring for a Bottle License Pursuant to section (11) (5) of the Licensing (intoxication Liquor) Act Cap. 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda 1992 Revised Edition, in respect of premises known as “ **South Side Auto Repair & Car Wash**” situated at Bolans Village in the parish of St. Mary’s Antigua and Barbuda.

Dated the 29th day of January, 2024
Tel# 720-3386

Group eyes major development for Yeptons Beach Club

A major tourism development is in the works for the area formerly the Yeptons Beach Club, at Yeptons, near Deep Bay.

The Qatari-based Leisure World Properties is proposing to build a 114-room upscale resort development in the property, including 20 villas that will be built over the water using stilts.

The group made a presentation to the Cabinet on Wednesday outlining the proposal to undertake the development that will likely cost in the region of US\$300 million.

The group is led by Ramez Al-Khayyat, a Syrian businessman based in Doha. He is the President and GCEO of Power International Holding (PIH), a Qatari-based conglomerate which operates across general contracting, real estate, food and agriculture, hospitality, and services. PIH is the parent company of Leisure World Properties.

The property at Yeptons was earmarked for a luxury resort development that would have carried the Marriot brand. That project never materialized and the Leisure World Properties group is reported to have since purchased the property.

Last week, Power International



The members of Leisure World Properties with Prime Minister Gaston Browne and other members of the government following discussions at Wednesday's Cabinet meeting.

Holding held the groundbreaking ceremony of Georgetown Seafront Resort and Convention Center, a premium development by its subsidiary Assets Group, the hospitality development and management arm.

The event was held under the patronage of the President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, in the presence of dignitaries from various sectors, including tourism, hospitality, and investment, in parallel with the Guyana Energy Conference & Supply Chain Expo 2024.

From Power International Holding PIH, the ceremony was attended by Mr.

Moutaz Al-Khayyat, Chairman, Mr. Ramez Al-Khayyat, Vice Chairman, President & Group CEO, and Mr. Abid Butt, Group CEO of PIH subsidiary Assets Group.

This ceremony was graced by the attendance of prominent figures, including the Minister of Tourism, Industry, and Commerce, Oneidge Waldron.

The Georgetown Resort and Convention Center is expected to open to the public in 2026. It is poised to transform Guyana's tourism and hospitality landscape, featuring state-of-the-art premium facilities and luxury standards.

UK firms to mount trade exhibition in Antigua and Barbuda

Several companies from the UK and Northern Ireland will mount the United Kingdom Investment and Trade Mission to Antigua and Barbuda from 11th - 14th March, 2024.

The three-day high-level trade mission follows the third annual UK-Antigua and Barbuda Investment

Summit in London and Dublin. It will provide the platform to facilitate bilateral trade and investment opportunities between Britain and the public and private sectors in the country.

Making the announcement, Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister E.P. Greene expressed his enthusiasm

for the trade mission, "I am delighted to welcome several British businesses to continue dialogue on potential trade and investment opportunities between the twin island state and the United Kingdom.

A sizeable portion of the country's economic activity is strongly linked to global

markets. The UK market represents significant potential for growth in agriculture, renewable energy, fast moving consumer goods and the blue and green economy."

British High Commissioner to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Scott

cont'd on pg 5

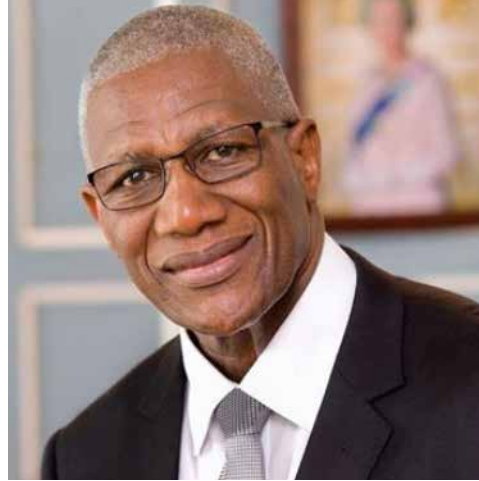
The Chief Scout wants a national effort to solve youth violence

Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams, who is also the titular head of the Scouting Movement, wants greater collaboration among youth groups and service clubs to help bring an end to the youth-on-youth violence that is plaguing the country.

In a message to mark Founder's Day for the Scouting Movement (February 22), Sir Rodney is reaching out for a national effort to tackle the problem.

"I am, therefore, reaching out to our esteemed citizens and residents, urging you to join hands with the Scouts Association and other service clubs in our efforts to engage the youth in positive and uplifting endeavors. We need volunteers to extend the Scouting Movement to more churches and schools in other parishes, contributing to the spiritual, academic, social, and life skill development of our youth," he urged.

The Chief Scout sees the organisation as one of those institutions that help to mold character of the nation's



Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams youth. "The Association is not only a beacon of character development but also a platform where our youth can learn valuable life skills, leadership, and the importance of community service. However, like many other service organizations, we face the serious challenge of declining membership due to competing interests for the hearts and minds of our young people," he noted.

The Governor General said he is proud to serve as the Chief Scout.

"I am honoured to serve as the Chief Scout of the Antigua and Barbuda Scouts Association, collaborating with the Executive, The Chief Commissioner, 16 dedicated leaders, and 66 enthusiastic scouts across six units. These units, primarily located in the Parish of St. John's, include St. John's Cathedral, Spring Gardens Moravian, Ebenezer Methodist, Holy Family Catholic Cathedral, Judges Hill Moravian, and Simon Bolivar Park," he explained.

Sir Rodney emphasized that this year's Founders' Day theme, 'Our World, Our Thriving Future,' is a timely one and resonates deeply with the mission to guide and empower the nation's youth.

"The Antigua and Barbuda Scouts Association plays a vital role in shaping the character and future of our young people. Your support and commitment can make a significant difference. Together, let us ensure a thriving future for our world by guiding the leaders of tomorrow," he added.

cont'd from pg 4

Furssedonn-Wood echoed the importance of the trade mission, and welcomed the visiting British businesses.

"I am delighted to be partnering with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda to host this inaugural trade mission of UK firms. Increasing opportunities for trade and investment between the UK and Antigua and Barbuda, along with the wider Eastern Caribbean, is a top priority for the UK.

"This mission will provide a unique opportunity to explore how British Busi-

nesses and UK expertise can support the ambitions of Antigua and Barbuda, and deliver benefits for us all. I look forward to welcoming you."

The Mission will provide a unique platform for networking, knowledge sharing, and exploring potential business partnerships with a number of companies including REIDsteel, Lagan, GreenCrowd, EcoStim, Aquama Renewables and Beko.

"EcoStim is excited about the prospects and opportunities that this trade

mission presents. We believe that Antigua and Barbuda offers significant market potential with our Agricultural Range of Bio-Stimulants and we are eager to explore and deepen our collaboration and growth with the country.

"By participating in this trade mission, we aim to establish strategic relationships, increase our market presence, and identify new business opportunities and partners," commented Phil Gaffney, Director.

Interested companies are encouraged to join the

trade mission and seize the significant opportunities Antigua and Barbuda has to offer.

The Trade Mission will be delivered in partnership with organizations to include, the Antigua and Barbuda High Commission to the UK, DMA Invest, the British High Commission, Commonwealth Secretariat, Sustainable Markets Initiative, Antigua and Barbuda Investment Authority, Antigua and Barbuda Chamber of Commerce and the Antigua and Barbuda Citizenship by Investment Unit.

Wedding/events planner, Taneisha Richardson, makes history

Taneisha S. Richardson, the Owner/Lead Planner & Designer of Unique Events by TSR, has achieved the distinguished honor of being named a top 3 finalist in the “Best Wedding Under \$50,000” category by The Wedding Planners Institute of Canada Inc. Wedding Awards. She becomes the first wedding planner from Antigua and Barbuda to receive such recognition for her remarkable accomplishment.

Initiated in 2016, The WPIC Wedding Awards serve as a distinguished program designed to honor exceptional achievements within the industry.

This platform, boasting over 10,000 esteemed Alumni from The Wedding Planners Institute of Canada Inc. and The Wedding Planners Institute of Coordination Inc., provides an opportunity for professionals to showcase their outstanding work and compete for top accolades within their field.

The Wedding Planners Institute of Canada Inc. has been an invaluable collaborator, offering certified training in Antigua and Barbuda as part of ABHTA's Professional Learning Series.

Taneisha Richardson, a Certified



Taneisha S. Richardson

Wedding/Event Planner & Designer who successfully completed WPIC Training in 2019 has been chosen as a finalist for the prestigious “Best Wedding Under \$50,000” award. With each category garnering 8-10 nominations, Taneisha's selection among the top 3 finalists underscores her exceptional talent and dedication. WPIC received submissions from across the globe, including as far as Dubai, reflecting its international reach and acclaim.

Taneisha's exceptional work has earned her a well-deserved place among the top finalists, adhering to the criteria of planning a wedding within a budget of under CAD \$50,000.

Her criteria submission included 5-7 event photos, client testimonial, descriptions of challenges faced and overcome, thematic and design elements, compelling justifications for why her submission merits recognition and relevant supporting documents such as Timelines, Budget, and breakdown of costs, etc.

Expressing her excitement, Taneisha stated, “I am truly excited! I feel honored and am truly honored and grateful to be selected in the Top 3 for this Award. I am even more delighted to know that this is the first time an alumni from Antigua & Barbuda has been nominated.

“This is great news for our beautiful island paradise. I want to say thank you to my amazing couple, Donely and Raymond Smith, for trusting me to plan and design their dream wedding. I am looking forward to the final results when the winner in this category is announced on Saturday!”

The WPIC Wedding Awards ceremony is scheduled to take place on Saturday, February 24, 2024, in Canada. The ABHTA wishes Taneisha Richardson the best of luck in the final results.

Kenyan ambassador makes courtesy call on Foreign Minister



The Kenyan Ambassador to Cuba, Chege R. Gathoga Wanyoike, who is visiting Antigua and Barbuda with his family, paid a courtesy call on Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P. Chet Greene

NODS finalizing plans for Caribe Wave Tsunami Exercise next month

The National Office of Disaster Services (NODS) is finalizing plans to stage the annual Caribe Wave Tsunami exercise slated for March 21.

The activity is an initiative of an inter-governmental coordination group for tsunamis and other coastal hazards of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It targets countries throughout the Caribbean to help them prepare for tsunamis which are regarded as rare hazards usually causing severe devastation.

Schools, workplaces and residents in general are encouraged to use the opportunity to boost their knowledge of tsunamis, their impacts and how to prepare for such hazards. Groups participating in the drill are asked to register with NODS before March 7 by calling 462-4206 or email nods.anu@ab.gov.ag.

Tsunamis have impacted Antigua and Barbuda and other regional territories in the past.

Records show that on April 6, 1690 an earthquake near Antigua and Nevis believed to have been triggered by landslides into the sea generated tsunami waves that were observed in Antigua, Nevis and St. Thomas.

Also, on November 1, 1755, the Great Lisbon earthquake in Portugal, which had a magnitude of between 8.5 and 9.0, caused tsunamis throughout the Caribbean with wave heights of 3.5 feet reported in Antigua.

In more recent times, the 8.1 magnitude earthquake in Haiti in 2010 generated a tsunami that caused 75 deaths. Over the past ten years or so, several schools and workplaces have participated in the annual Caribe Wave exercise which UNESCO started in 2011.

Falcons owners visit Cabinet



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What influence does CARICOM's foreign policy strategies have in aiding to strengthen the Community's foreign policy coordination?

Thus was the title of the thesis presented by Alyssa Weste, a technical officer within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that awarded her a distinction for her research paper towards the overall attainment of a Master of Arts Degree in International Relations and World Order from the University of Leicester. Her research paper has since been published by the University of Leicester and is available for viewing in the University's library.

In her thesis, Ms. Weste notes that the rationale for coordinating foreign policy is central to the Caribbean Community's core. It is regarded as a necessary objective to boost CARICOM's visibility, international status, and influence to better address the vulnerabilities faced resulting from their size and the inability to respond to the rapidly changing economic and geopolitical system. Scholars have been critical of the language utilised in the Treaty of Chaguaramas relating to foreign policy coordination, noting that CARICOM's approach was "minimalistic" as they applied a "fairly loose" methodology to the outline of this objective as opposed to other comprehensive sections of the Treaty such as its Trade or Agricultural Policy.

There have been numerous regional integration theories that have been constructed that speak to the challenges and opportunities of regional integration. Yet, none has truly considered the political environment of the Caribbean. As a result, CARICOM's analysis has been chiefly constructed under the scope of EU ideology, which does not accurately reflect its complex landscape despite being one of the oldest integration movements.



Alyssa Weste

It should be noted that the challenges of foreign policy coordination are not unique to CARICOM. Its recurring obstacles, namely dependency crises, sovereignty positions and exploitation by Third States, have made foreign policy coordination difficult to achieve compared to other institutions. Although the Community has implemented foreign policy strategies in the past, none have fully addressed or overcome these obstacles.

Nonetheless, there are established strategies and frameworks that CARICOM can adopt, such as internal cohesion, harmonisation strategies and gradualist strategies that can address these issues to increase their collective advancement and overall external effectiveness.

For instance, dependency crises are a conundrum faced by small states whereby it is idealistic for them to establish partnerships of dependence. Still, they must also diversify their relationships so that they are not reliant on one partner 'who could use such a relationship as a means of exerting influence'. Consequently, small states must be observant, analytical, and interpretive to avoid potentially adverse

developments in their relationships with these partners. Failure to do so will allow small states to embark on a dependency crisis that could compromise their autonomy.

In response to a dependency crisis, countries may employ preventive strategies or "preventative diplomacy", that will aim to 1) "prevent the creation of new, damaging ties of dependence" or 2) "...prevent the escalation of ongoing developments in that trajectory.

During such a pivotal time for the region, preventative diplomacy requires implementation to secure CARICOM's and its Member States' priorities. Consensus should not be mandatory but rather internal cohesion to suppress any escalation of ongoing developments considering the broader implications for the region. By emphasizing internal cohesion, CARICOM can optimise their strengths while mitigating potential drawbacks that will allow them to mobilise more in the future. This is also a gradualist strategy, which involves incremental changes to build experience and trust, which are crucial for deepening and strengthening integration over time and the overall efficacy of CARICOM's foreign policy and its coordination.

This is a small excerpt of her research which further explores how CARICOM's foreign policy strategies with additional implemented strategies have and can strengthen(ed) its foreign policy coordination. By analysing CARICOM's foreign policy approach and its bilateral partnerships with countries like China and Venezuela, a comprehensive view of the situation is explored.

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1

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- After handling rubbish

2

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3

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The missing panel on the Boeing plane.

Boeing 737 Max boss out after blowout

By Natalie Sherman

The leader of Boeing's troubled 737 Max programme is to leave the company, which has been under pressure since a piece of one of its jets blew off during a passenger flight in January.

The departure of Ed Clark after nearly 18 years is part of a wider shake-up of the commercial airplane division that Boeing announced on Wednesday.

Boeing said the changes were aimed at improving its quality and safety.

It comes as the firm prepares to meet with regulators.

The company has been facing scrutiny since the incident on the Alaska Airline flight, which did not lead to serious injuries but forced an emergency landing.

The incident revived wider questions about manufacturing process-

es for Boeing's popular 737 Max planes, years after crashes involving a different version of the jets in 2018 and 2019 killed 346 people and led to a global grounding for 20 months.

Boeing was barred last month from expanding its 737 Max output by the Federal Aviation Administration, while the authority reviewed its production line for the planes. Other less serious flaws have troubled production in recent years as Boeing ramped up manufacturing following the grounding.

A preliminary investigation of what went wrong on the 737 Max 9 jet flown by Alaska Airlines found that bolts meant to fasten the door panel were missing, after being removed inside Boeing's factory in Renton Washington.

Ed Clark was vice president and general manager of the 737 programme, overseeing the Renton,

Washington factory that produced the plane involved in the blowout. Calls followed from safety campaigners for new leadership at the firm.

He will be replaced by Katie Ringgold, currently vice president of 737 delivery operations. The company also announced it was creating a position of senior vice president for quality.

In a message to staff on Wednesday, Stan Deal, the head of Boeing commercial airplanes division said the changes were aimed at "ensuring that every airplane we deliver meets or exceeds all quality and safety requirements. Our customers demand, and deserve, nothing less".

He said Mr Clark was leaving with the company's "deepest gratitude for his many significant contributions over nearly 18 years of dedicated service to Boeing".

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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER



Don't try this at home, Apple says.

Don't dry your iPhone in a bag of rice, says Apple

If your iPhone gets wet don't dry it in a bag of rice, Apple has advised.

Despite the technique's popularity, experts have long warned against it, with tests suggesting it doesn't work.

And now the tech giant itself has published guidance telling users it could result in small particles of the grain damaging their devices.

The firm said people should instead gently tap out any liquid, with the phone connector facing down, then leave it to dry out.

Despite the increasing sophistication of smartphones, popular approaches for fixing them if they have been dropped in water remain

rather unsophisticated.

Apple has taken the opportunity to steer users away from several of them.

As well as avoiding bags of rice, it also advises against drying a wet phone using an "external heat source or compressed air", meaning radiators and hairdryers should be avoided.

Nor, it suggests, should users try inserting "a foreign object, such as a cotton swab or a paper towel" into their phone.

Instead, it guides people to leave their phone in a "dry area with some airflow" before reconnecting it to a charger.

As the website MacWorld -

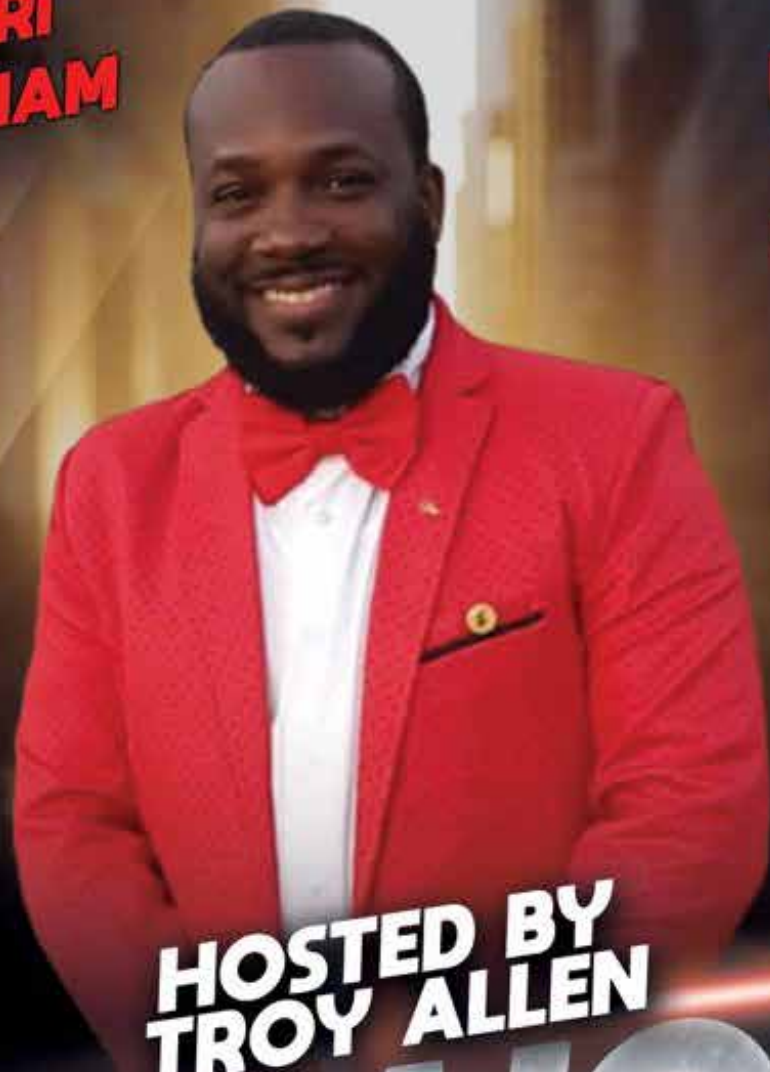
which first spotted the new support document - notes, the changing design of smartphones may mean all such advice will be unnecessary in the future.

That is because devices are increasingly able to withstand getting wet.

All Apple devices from the iPhone 12 onwards are able to withstand immersion up to a depth of six metres, for up to half an hour.

But with cost-of-living pressures driving growth in the global second-hand mobile market, it is likely that many people will need advice on what to do - and what not to - with a soggy smartphone for some time yet.

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Major project to improve Grenada's southern water supply

To improve access to water in areas of southern Grenada the water system serving the south of the Caribbean Island will be significantly upgraded under a US \$20.7 million grant from the Government of the United Kingdom, through the United Kingdom Caribbean Infrastructure Fund (UKCIF), administered by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).

The upgrade project, unveiled by officials from the Government of Grenada, the United Kingdom, and the CDB, in St George's, will be executed by Grenada's National Water and Sewerage Authority.

A statement from the CDB says the intervention will increase the

availability of safe drinking water and improve water resources management in the country's southern region.

Work is slated to begin later this year and run until early 2026.

Although the entire island of Grenada is affected by limited water supply in the driest months, the urban areas of southern St George, where most of the residential, tourism, and commercial activity occur, are particularly affected. Approximately 15,000 people, just over 14 per cent of Grenada's population, will benefit from the intervention.

CDB's Director of Projects, Therese Turner-Jones, said the collaboration with the Government of

the United Kingdom, and the Government of Grenada will also help alleviate some of the lingering economic impacts of COVID-19 by creating short-term job opportunities.

"This project will mean increased water production capacity, additional treated water storage, and upgraded transmission capacity, and essentially, that means an improved quality of life for the residents of the communities the project will benefit," said Turner-Jones.

Resident British Commissioner to Grenada, Victor Clark said, "The UK understands how pivotal the Water Supply Expansion Project is for expanding and upgrading Grenada's

cont'd on pg 15

Bermuda: Police investigating discovery of laced heroin

CMC - Police have launched an investigation into the discovery of heroin suspected of being laced with the synthetic opioid fentanyl on the island after three people were treated at hospital for a possible overdose of the substance.

Fentanyl is a potent synthetic opioid drug approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use as an analgesic (pain relief) and anesthetic. It is approximately 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin as an analgesic.

“The public is advised that fentanyl use, even in small doses, can result in serious adverse effects, which are compounded when combined with other drugs, particularly other opioids such as heroin,” the Bermuda Police Ser-



vice (BPS) said in a statement.

“Individuals who use this drug put themselves in very real danger, which can potentially occur very soon after only one instance of fentanyl use,” it warned.

The BPS said signs of

overdose included small, constricted “pinpoint pupils”, falling asleep or losing consciousness, slow, weak or no breathing, and choking or gurgling sounds. Other indicators were a limp body, cold or clammy skin, or discoloured skin, especially in

lips and nails.

The police said that the side effects of fentanyl and dangers of its misuse can include hallucinations and visual disturbances, drowsiness and nausea, confusion, respiratory distress, and rigid muscles. Other consequences can be unconsciousness or sedation, seizures and overdose.

In the statement, the BPS outlined steps to take if it is thought someone has used fentanyl or substances laced with the opioid, starting with an immediate call to 911.

“Try to keep the person awake and breathing. Lay the person on their side to prevent choking.

“Stay with the person until emergency assistance arrives,” it added.

cont'd from pg 14

water distribution network and increasing climate resilience of the water sector. We are proud to be providing £17 million (XCD 57.8 million) in grant funding for this project, which will deliver real and tangible benefits for the people of Grenada.”

Grenada’s Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell said the project underscored the essence of investing in Grenada’s resilience, progress, and sustainability, particularly in the face of climate uncertainties.

“This project stands as a beacon of hope and resilience for Grenada, arriv-

ing at a critical juncture when the spectre of climate change looms over our beautiful nation. Grenada like many nations, is grappling with the noticeable impacts of climate change. Rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and shifting environmental dynamics threaten the very fabric of our tri-island.”

The project is expected to result in an improved ability to withstand the effects of climate change on water resources, fewer service interruptions, improved customer relations capacity of NAWA-SA, less stress on economic resources, enhanced livelihoods, and improved public health in Grenada.

Russia 'struggling with supply of weapons and ammunition' for Ukraine war - Western officials

By Gordon Corera

Russia is struggling to provide ammunition and weapons for its war in Ukraine, according to Western officials.

It is facing "extreme challenges" in obtaining sufficient equipment and materiel, an official said.

It comes as concerns over the provision of Western weapons to Ukraine are mounting.

As the war enters its third year, the supply of ammunition, arms and manpower looks set to be a critical factor.

"Russia's domestic ammunition production capabilities are currently insufficient for meeting the needs of the Ukraine conflict," a Western official claimed, saying Moscow has been able to increase its supply only by seeking out alternative sources of ammunition and weapons, which does not offer a long-term solution.

They pointed to the impact of sanctions as one cause.

"Sanctions are hitting the Russian military industrial complex hard, causing severe delays and increasing costs. An inability to access Western components is severely undermining Russia's production of new systems and repairs



Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu visiting a Russian missile factory last month.

of old systems, with long-term consequences for the quality of weapons produced," they said.

Russia has made advances recently, such as taking the town of Avdiivka, and appears to have the upper hand on the battlefield.

But officials believe Moscow's ability to deliver these successes has come at a high cost in terms of casualties. Russia is firing artillery shells at a far higher rate than Ukraine - five times more by some estimates - but fewer than it was in 2022 and is believed to still not be producing enough to replenish what it is using.

The claims about Russian supply come amid growing pessimism

in some quarters about Ukraine's prospects after the relative failure of last year's counter-offensive. The comments by officials appear to be an attempt to focus on the fact Moscow may have its own problems. Previous predictions that Russia was about to run out of missiles or other weapons have not always proved correct.

The official said Russia has been having to turn to foreign sources for arms. These include drones and missiles from Iran and ammunition stocks from North Korea. Some of this is also believed to be poor quality as well as having taken extensive negotiations, including a visit from Russia's Defence Minister Sergei

Shoigu to North Korea, to secure.

The official also said Russia is requisitioning equipment due to be delivered by its defence industry to other countries. This includes India, which has long been reliant on Russian weaponry for its armed forces, and whose air force a year ago said it was not receiving what it expected.

The claims about Russian weapons supply come ahead of the second anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February. The assessment from Western officials is that Russia has not given up on its original goals of "subjugating" Ukraine.

But they said Russia
cont'd on pg 17

Japanese mafia boss conspired to traffic nuclear materials, says US

By Bernd Debusmann Jr

US prosecutors have charged an alleged member of the Japanese mafia with conspiring to traffic nuclear materials.

Takeshi Ebisawa, 60, tried to sell uranium and plutonium that he believed would be transferred to Iran to build a nuclear bomb, it is alleged.

Mr Ebisawa and a Thai co-defendant were previously hit with weapons and drug charges in April 2022.

He faces life imprisonment if convicted of the latest charges.

US authorities say Mr Ebisawa - who is being held in a Brooklyn jail - is a senior figure in the Japanese organised crime syndicate, known as the Yakuza, with operations in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand and the US.

The US Department of Justice said Mr Ebisawa and his “confederates showed samples of nuclear materials in Thailand” to an undercover agent from the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).

The agent was posing as a drugs and weapons trafficker with links to an Iranian general.

The nuclear samples - which came from Myanmar - were seized by Thai authorities and transferred to US investigators. A US laboratory confirmed the material contained uranium and weapons-grade plutonium.

Prosecutors also allege that Mr Ebisawa sought to acquire large quantities of military-grade weapons on be-



US authorities claim that Takeshi Ebisawa is a senior figure in a sprawling Japanese organised crime group.

half of an unspecified rebel group in Myanmar.

The weapons included surface-to-air missiles, assault and sniper rifles, machine guns, rockets of various calibres and a variety of tactical gear.

“It is chilling to imagine the consequences had these efforts succeeded, and the justice department will hold accountable those who traffic in these materials and threaten US national security and international stability,” assistant attorney general Matthew G Olden said in a statement on Wednesday.

In February 2020, Mr Ebisawa allegedly contacted the DEA agent about selling nuclear materials. According to US prosecutors, he explained via encrypted communications that uranium is “not good for your health”.

In September that year, Mr Ebisawa allegedly emailed the undercover

DEA agent a letter bearing the name of a mining company. He offered to sell 50 tonnes of uranium and thorium for \$6.85m (£5.4m).

Prosecutors also say he sent photographs showing “a dark rocky material” with a Geiger counter, which is used to measure levels of radiation.

Mr Ebisawa faces charges including conspiracy to commit international trafficking of nuclear materials, narcotics importation conspiracy, conspiracy to acquire, transfer and possess anti-aircraft missiles and money laundering.

His co-conspirator in the case - 61-year-old Thai national Somphop Singhasiri - is facing drugs and weapons charges.

Both are facing life in prison if convicted.

The pair will be arraigned in a New York federal courtroom on Thursday.

cont'd from pg 16

does not have a clear plan to bring that about other than hoping that in the long term its superior manpower and resources will make the difference by grinding its neighbour down.

Russia is currently producing more ammunition than Ukraine is receiving. However, Russia may be close to its limits of supply while there remains the possibility that Ukraine could still get more from

its allies.

That makes clear that Western support and its supply of arms to Ukraine looks set to be a critical factor in the war's outcome. And with a US package, which includes \$60bn

(£48bn) for Ukraine, currently stalled in Congress, the concern is that even with Russia struggling over its supply, it may still be able to outlast Ukraine if Western support does not come through.

Today marks 100 days to the start of 2024 ICC Men's T20 World Cup

The countdown is on. Thursday, February 22, marks 100 days to the start of the historic 2024 ICC Men's T20 World Cup to be held in the West Indies and USA from June 1-29.

To celebrate this milestone, there will be a host of dynamic fan engagement events across all host locations.

From 10 am Antigua Standard Time on Thursday, February 22, fans worldwide will also be able secure their seats to witness the exhilarating clash of cricketing titans as remaining tickets from the tournament's official ticketing website: tickets.t20worldcup.com.

Ticket prices across all matches are the same as they were during the ballot and accessibly priced, starting from US\$6 for select matches. Fans seeking a more immersive World Cup experience can also choose from a limited supply of Caribbean venue packages online or they can purchase travel and hospitality packages from ICC's official travel and tour operators.

As excitement builds and anticipation mounts with only 100 days to go to the pinnacle ICC Men's T20 event, there is going to be a blast off of major proportions across all



nine host locations.

As part of the myriad of activities planned, larger-than-life cricket balls will take over Times Square, New York City; Bayside Marketplace, Miami, Florida; Grand Prairie, Texas, and all six Caribbean host venues.

Fans can also look forward to live musical performances, street parades, and appearances by past and present Men's T20 World Cup winners such as West Indian duo Dwayne Bravo who will be at Times Square, NYC, and the "Universe Boss" himself, Chris Gayle, who will be in Barbados, the venue for the

final.

There will also be cultural performances, interactive fan experiences and free giveaways that will engage fans and create a hyped buzz around this momentous occasion.

In the West Indies, cricket fans, enthusiasts and the public are invited to attend these events at Judgement Square in Antigua and Barbuda; Freedom Park, Barbados; MovieTowne, Guyana; Heritage Square, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and C3 Centre, Trinidad and Tobago.

The event at Derek Walcott Square, Saint Lucia will

be on Saturday, February 24, due to Independence celebrations on Thursday, February 22.

As part of the 100 days to go activities, ICC and Cricket West Indies will also launch the official advertising campaign for the tournament, titled: Out of this World.

As part of the campaign rollout, fans can expect to see a series of captivating advertisements across various media platforms, including television, digital streaming services, social media, and outdoor billboards, and featuring guest cameos by crick-

cont'd on pg 19

Nolan Hue Foundation hosts YAPDW 2024

The Nolan Hue Foundation will be hosting its Young Athletes' Professional Development Workshop (YAPDW) next month.

All young athletes ages 11-19 are being invited to attend the event, which will be held at the Villa Policlinic on Saturday, March 2, from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm.

According to the Nolan Hue Foundation, no matter the sport, this profes-

sional development workshop is designed to help aspiring young athletes advance their careers.

Contents to be covered during the workshop include Vision Board and Goal Accomplishments; Effective Communication; Public Speaking and Interview Skills; Professional Careers and Financial Management; Personal Development and Image Branding; Nutrition and Recovery Technology; and TEA

Work and TEA Pride (NH Concepts), as well as gaining valuable insights and skills from top professionals.

The registration fee is EC\$30, and those interested may contact the Nolan Hue Foundation at 720-7724 or visit www.nolanhue.com to secure their spot.

The Nolan Hue Foundation is a non-profit organization geared towards professional development in Antigua and Barbuda.

cont'd from pg 18

eting superstars Quinton de Kock, Marc Stoinis, Kieron Pollard, and other surprises.

Additionally, immersive experiences and interactive activations will allow fans to be part of the action like never before.

Fawwaz Baksh, ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 said, "With just 100 days to the start of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, we are on the cusp of witnessing the most awaited Men's T20 World Cup.

"Since the public ticket ballot opened, we have seen an unprecedented surge in demand for tickets, and when the first phase of general ticket sales begin on February 22, we anticipate a similar response.

"The overwhelming demand underscores the meteoric rise in the game's popularity worldwide and every fan who wants to see every captivating match should aim to secure their tickets as early as possible."

As the countdown continues and the world eagerly looks forward to a month-long extravaganza of T20

cricket, passion, drama, and unforgettable moments, fans are reminded to only purchase tickets from the official

tournament website.

For further ticketing information, visit tickets.t20worldcup.com.

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

Potters and Five Islands retain top two spots in First Division

The Potters Tigers and Five Island both won their latest matches to remain in the top two positions in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division League.

Brian Davis struck a hat trick as the Potters Tigers retained their position as First Division leaders with an eight-nil drubbing of the Liberta Blackhawks at the Radio Range playing field in Ottos on Tuesday.

Davis had conversions in the 10th, 25th, and 49th minutes, while Kelvin Carr and Javan Henry both scored twice. Carr scored in the 8th and 27th minutes, while Henry had conversions in the 67th and 75th minutes.

Javorn Benjamin scored the oth-

er goal for the Potters Tigers in the 71st minute. Their eighth win in 10 matches carries the Potters Tigers to 27 points, while the Liberta Blackhawks remained second from the bottom of the standings with six points after suffering their ninth loss in 11 games.

Jamal Joseph and Demario Roberts both scored twice to lead Five Island to a four-nil victory against the bottom team, the Young Lions of Old Road, at the Five Islands playing field.

Joseph had conversions in the 13th and 29th minutes, while Roberts scored in the 68th and the first minute of added time (90+1 minute).

Their eighth win in 10 matches ensured Five Islands stayed in

touch with the Tigers by advancing to 25 points and remaining in second place.

The young Lions stayed firmly rooted in the cellar with three points after crashing to their 10th loss in 11 matches.

Domestic football action will continue with four matches in the Second Division today at 4:15 pm.

English Harbour will host Golden Grove at the English Harbour playing field. West Ham will take on Glanvilles at the Princess Margaret School playing field.

FC Master Ballerz and Bethesda will clash at the Radio Range playing field in Ottos, and Earthquakes will tackle CPTSA Wings at the Fort Road playing field.

AGHS and SASS get wins in Inter-Schools' senior girls division basketball

The Antigua Girls High School and St. Anthony's Secondary School notched up wins in the Senior Girls Division of the Cool and Smooth Inter-Schools' Basketball Championships on Tuesday.

The Antigua Girls High School prevailed 24-15 against Princess Margaret School at the JSC Sports Complex.

Ruchira Daley sank 10 points for Antigua Girls High School, while Kayla Martin also had 10 points for Princess Margaret School.

St. Anthony's Secondary School romped to an emphatic 49-9 victory against Irene B. Williams Secondary School.

Jenah Andrew shot a game-high 21 points, and Alyssa Jardine converted 20 points for St. Anthony's Secondary School.

There were wins as well for J.T. Ambrose and T.N. Kirnon primary schools in the Miniboys Primary Division on Tuesday.

Rayon Nicholas scored six points as J.T. Ambrose Primary prevailed 10-3 against the Potters Primary School. Marcus Thomas produced 20 points and Tavan Henderson sank eight points as T.N. Kirnon Pri-



St. Anthony's Secondary School's Jenah Andrew, right, prepares to take a free throw during her team's senior girls division game against Irene B. Williams at the JSC Sports Complex on Tuesday, February 20, 2024. (Photo courtesy of CPTSA Wings)

mary romped to a 32-3 victory against Combined.

Meanwhile, the Daryll Matthew Ottos Clippers made a winning start to their campaign in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Division II League on Tuesday night.

The Ottos Clippers romped to a 65-42 victory against the Gaston Browne Pointville Ballers in the opening game of the league at the JSC Sports Complex.

Joshua Salmon sank 19 points; Amare Browne had 17 points and five assists; and Antoine Browne pro-

duced 14 points and seven steals for the Ottos Clippers.

Kyle Alexander scored 15 points and grabbed seven rebounds; Cedric Henry had 18 rebounds and eight points; and Nazeem Richards chipped in with 11 rebounds and eight points for the Pointville Ballers.

Antiguans off to contest ECVA Beach tournament in St. Lucia

A group of four players will be representing Antigua and Barbuda at the Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Association's (ECVA) Senior Men and Women Beach Championships in St. Lucia.

The duo of Adrian Constant and Jamarie James will contest the men's tournament, while Sharifa Simmons and Jassania Joseph will be carrying the nation's flag in the women's competition at the event, which will take place at Cul De Sac Bay in St. Lucia from February 23-25.

The Antiguan players departed for St. Lucia on Wednesday and will return home to Antigua next Monday.

St. Lucia will be defending the titles in both competitions, which they won at the same venue in February last year.

Denila Prospere and Chenoa Evans, who won the female title, will once again be representing St. Lucia in this weekend's competition. Constant and James also represented Antigua and Barbuda in the male competition last year.

Seven other countries will join defending champi-



The four players who will be representing Antigua and Barbuda at the Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Association's Senior Men and Women Beach Championships in St. Lucia this weekend at the VC. Bird International Airport on Wednesday, February 21, 2024. From left to right: Jassania Joseph, Jamarie James, Sharifa Simmons, and Adrian Constant. (ABAVA)

ons St. Lucia, and Antigua and Barbuda in the female beach competition this weekend.

The other participating countries are Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, Bermuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and St. Kitts and Nevis.

In other volleyball news, there were wins for

the second team of Christ the King High School (CKHS), Antigua Grammar School (AGS), and Ottos Comprehensive School (OCS) in the Ministry of Sports Secondary Schools' Volleyball Championships on Tuesday.

Christ the King High School II prevailed 25-21, 25-18 against Sir Novelle Richards Academy in the

Girls Division during a triple header at the indoor volleyball stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex.

In the boys' division, Antigua Grammar School secured a 27-25, 25-18 victory against Pares Secondary, while Ottos Comprehensive School cruised to a 25-13, 25-15 win against Clare Hall Secondary School.