

RE-REGISTRATION OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS COMING THIS YEAR

Story on Page 2



The top two students in the June, 2023 sitting of the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) Examinations are D'Aundre Samuel, left, and Adrian Judnarine, both of St. Joseph's Academy. *Story on page 5.*

Local News



A re-registration of all eligible voters will take place this year

The Cabinet has decided that it will undertake a complete re-registration of all eligible voters in Antigua and Barbuda and that this exercise will take place sometime this calendar year.

That was one of the outcomes of discussions that took place between the Cabinet and a delegation from the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission at Wednesday's Cabinet meeting.

Cabinet spokesman, Ambassador Lionel Max Hurst said the Cabinet decided that it will go the

route of a complete re-registration of all voters rather than just replacing the Voter ID Cards all of which will expire this year.

"The re-registration is superior to merely renewing the cards since renewal is done much like you do a passport renewal; you present your documents and the card is subsequently renewed and issued to the voter.

"Whereas, re-registration requires that the voter begins the process all over again," Hurst explained.

He further explained

that the intention is to go to parliament to pass the requisite legislation that will give the re-registration the full backing of the parliament of Antigua and Barbuda.

Hurst did not give a date when this exercise will commence, but noted that replacement of the cards and re-registration was the option favoured by the opposition United Progressive Party during its term in office, 2004-14.

"We think that ten years have passed and now that the cards are about to expire, that re-registration would be

the just, more equitable way to go; so, we are going the route of re-registration," he remarked.

Five officials from ABEC including the Supervisor of Elections, Ian Hughes, attended the meeting on Wednesday and according to the Cabinet Notes, following intense discussions, it was agreed that re-registration will be preferable since it will preserve the integrity of the voters' list.

A precise date for the start of the process has not yet been decided.

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PM Browne welcomes new US Ambassador

The United States has named a new Ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, His Excellency Roger Nyhus, who was formally welcomed to Antigua and Barbuda on Thursday by senior government officials including Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

Ambassador Nyhus paid courtesy calls on Governor General Sir Rodney Williams, Prime Minister Browne and Foreign Minister E.P Chet Greene on Thursday.

During brief discussions, PM Browne underscored the importance of the United States to Antigua and Barbuda. He noted that the US is the country's

largest trading partner and that the US enjoys a heavily imbalanced trading arrangement with Antigua and Barbuda.

“Eighty percent of our trade is with the United States and as small as our economy is, we have a trade deficit of a half billion (US) dollars. So, the US is very important from the standpoint of trade; even in terms of our food security, as a ‘food insecure’ country if the ships stop sailing for a few weeks from the US to A&B we will all starve. I am here underscoring your country’s importance to us, and our relationship with the US overall,” he remarked.

PM Browne noted that



Prime Minister Gaston Browne presents a gift to His Excellency Roger Nyhus.

whilst there have been disagreements in the past, disagreements are normal in any relationship.

“We are family, and there will be familial disagreements from time to time; we however respect the US as a very significant partner and where there are differences, we will always remain respectful.

“We stand on certain principles and from time to time there may be situations where we are not fully aligned. Our focus is not to get involved in the geo-political wars of the world; we are just too small,” he emphasized.

According to the prime minister Antigua and Barbuda has been supportive of the US in many international fora and whenever its candidates are presented for positions in international bodies, without even US

lobbying efforts, Antigua and Barbuda invariably supports these candidates.

PM Browne drew attention to the outstanding WTO issue noting that Antigua and Barbuda had hoped that this would have been resolved, and he asked the new ambassador to give this some attention so as to arrive at an amicable solution.

In his comments, Foreign Minister Greene also hailed the longstanding friendly relations with the United States which remain strong even after occasions when both sides disagree on a particular matter.

He added that these disagreements have never been fatal as the relationship has survived as well as thrived. “I therefore anticipate that there will be some robust exchanges during your tenure here in the Eastern Caribbean,” Greene remarked.

AUCTION NOTICE

<u>REGISTRATION SECTION</u>	<u>BLOCK</u>	<u>PARCEL</u>
SOUTH CENTRAL	15 1987B	227

Instructed by **ACB MORTGAGE AND TRUST COMPANY LIMITED**, I shall sell by **PUBLIC AUCTION** on Tuesday the 13th day of February 2024 at 11:00am the above residential property at Buckley’s Heights.

The property is under the ownership of **LOREAN DENISE ROBERTS (aka DENISE LOREAN ROBERTS)**. The land is a 10,890 sq. ft. (0.25 acre) plot with an approximate 3,841 sq. ft., 2-storey with a partial basement reinforced concrete building with 4 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms.

The property is in a quiet residential area with a commanding view of the surrounding area.

The Auction shall be held on site.

Details of the Auction may be obtained from **Mr. Trevor Santos, Public Auctioneer** at telephone numbers: 464-7653 and 562-7653.

Dated this the 29th day of January 2024

Trevor Santos
Licensed Auctioneer

Outgoing UK diplomat is proud of her achievements over past four years

Outgoing Resident British Commissioner, Lindsay Thompson, has described her more than four years assignment in Antigua and Barbuda as one filled with much joy and accomplishment.

Speaking at a farewell social in her honour at Nelson's Dockyard, English Harbour on Wednesday night, Thompson noted that her first task was to re-establish a RBC office in Antigua which she achieved with the help of a capable support staff who helped to navigate the processes of getting things done here in Antigua and Barbuda.

"As a mission and in partnership with the Government of A&B, NGOs, and other stakeholders; new roads on Antigua, new power infrastructure being built on Barbuda. Through UK funding A&B was the first country in the region to have a Maritime Economy Plan, which officials know will be the source of inspiration and growth for this fair nation. We have supported Lady Williams and her colleagues to create the country's first Royal Commonwealth Society," she detailed.

The UK diplomat also made reference to the ongoing close collaboration with the Antigua and Barbuda Defense Force and similar agencies in the UK.

"On defence engagement, Antigua and Barbuda is held in such high esteem it has received more RN Ships' visits than any other country in the Caribbean during my tenure. HMS Medway was a frequent caller, particularly in 2022. Her sister ship, HMS Trent, was delighted to visit last weekend. Antigua and Barbuda will always be seen as a welcomed stop for our ship's crew both personally and professionally. During each visit there have been many engagements between our forces, including training at sea," she explained.



Outgoing Resident British Commissioner, Lindsay Thompson, left, and Governor General Sir Rodney Williams.

Thompson said she is particularly pleased with what she has achieved to help young people in Antigua and Barbuda. "I am particularly proud of the support we have given to the development of young people in Antigua and Barbuda, whether its via our world-class Chevening Masters Scholarships programme, supporting events and initiatives run by Gender Affairs, engagement with the National Youth Parliament (who got to meet the UK Speaker of the House of Commons last year), or facilitating exchanges and training between UK and ABDF cadets - which will have its third iteration this year," she stated.

Meanwhile, Antigua and Barbuda Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams, praised Thompson for rekindling the close ties between the UK and Antigua and Barbuda. "Her tenure brought a refreshing breeze, rekindling the ties that had been dormant for over a decade since the last British Mission on our beloved islands.

"Commissioner Lindsay's impact

spanned across diverse sectors. From health to the environment, energy and road works, education, culture, and the promotion of the Commonwealth through various initiatives, she played a pivotal role. Notably, her efforts in national security, youth development, the blue economy, and her involvement in negotiating for support for the upcoming SIDS Conference underscore her comprehensive and dedicated approach to her responsibilities," he noted.

Harold Lovell, who represented the UPP at the function, also spoke glowingly about RBC Thompson and her efforts at securing the many programmes and initiatives that have benefited Antigua and Barbuda.

Members of the Cabinet were unavoidably absent as the meeting of the Cabinet went into the night. Representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Barbuda Council, the EAG as well as members of the diplomatic corps all attended the farewell social.

Four students named in top three positions for CSEC 2023

Director of Education, Clare Browne, has announced the names of the students who secured the top three positions in the June, 2023 sitting of the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate Examinations (CSEC) that were administered by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC).

They are:

D'Aundre Samuel - Saint Joseph's Academy - 23 subjects - 21 I's and 2 II's

Adrian Judnarine - Saint Joseph's Academy - 26 subjects - 19 I's and 7 II's

Stephanie Archibald and Tiana Bretney - Baptist Academy of Antigua - 20 subjects each - 18 I's and 2 II's each

Director Browne has offered con-



Top student in CSEC, D'Aundre Samuel of the St. Joseph's Academy

gratulations to the students, their parents and their schools, adding, "We beseech that these students continue to be ambassadors of excellence".

Due to the close results from the



Second place student in CSEC, Adrian Judnarine of the SJA

2023 examinations, several candidates queried their grades with the Caribbean Examinations Council, which caused a delay in the announcement of the top students.



SAVE THE DATE NOTICE- 67th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TO: SHAREHOLDERS OF ANTIGUA COMMERCIAL BANK LTD.
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We are pleased to advise that the SIXTY - SEVENTH (67th) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) of the Company will be held via hybrid format (both online and in-person) on **Thursday March 21, 2024 at 2:00 pm** at the Sir John E. St. Luce Finance and Convention Centre on Factory Road, St. John's, Antigua and on the Zoom Webinar Platform.

Formal Notice of the Annual General Meeting, together with Shareholders Packages (to include the Annual Report 2022; Proxy Form; Circular to Shareholders) and Pre- registration and Zoom sign – in details, will be distributed no later than thirty (30) days prior to the AGM date, in accordance with Articles 12.3 and 12.4 of the Company's Bylaws.

We look forward to engaging with our Shareholders at our upcoming 67th AGM.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

RHODETTE PAIGE
LEGAL COUNSEL/CORPORATE SECRETARY

MOH launches Cervical Cancer Awareness Poster Competition

In an effort to empower the youth and raise awareness about cervical cancer prevention, the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Cervical Cancer Elimination Team, has launched an exciting initiative - a Cervical Cancer Awareness Poster Competition.

Themed “Her Health, Our Mission, and Cervical Cancer,” the competition invites young artists aged 8-18 from schools across Antigua and Barbuda to showcase their creativity and contribute to the fight against cervical cancer.

Scheduled to run until 16th February 2024, the competition requires participants to design posters highlighting the importance of ending cervical cancer in the region. The

submissions will be judged based on creativity, relevance to the theme, and visual impact.

Winners will be announced on February 23, 2024, with prizes awarded to the top posters in two age categories: 8-12 and 13-18. The winning posters will be featured on the Ministry of Health’s Facebook page and displayed at various locations, amplifying the message of cervical cancer awareness.

Participants are encouraged to submit their handcrafted posters, ensuring they adhere to the size requirements of 18 inches in width and 24 inches in length. Additionally, the artwork must prominently feature the color teal, symbolizing support for cervical cancer awareness.

This initiative not only aims to engage young minds in creative expression but also to foster a deeper understanding of the importance of cervical cancer prevention and early detection. By involving the youth, the Ministry hopes to instill a sense of responsibility and empower them to become advocates for positive health practices within their communities.

As the deadline for submissions approaches on February 16, 2024, the Ministry urges all eligible students to participate actively in this meaningful campaign. Through their artwork, young artists have the opportunity to make a tangible impact in raising awareness and contributing to the elimination of cervical cancer in Antigua and Barbuda.



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Heart and Stroke Foundation: 'Arter' marks a year of getting kids pumped about health

'Arter' knows a thing or two about the impact of too much sugar and not enough exercise on one's health. High blood pressure, diabetes and stroke are just some of the ailments he's witnessed among loved ones, inspiring his crusade to help reverse the trend.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation's eye-catching mascot may be a fictional character but his story is a reality for thousands of people across Antigua and Barbuda where non-communicable diseases are the leading cause of death.

This week marks a year since the organisation launched Arter and since then he's made his sky-high scarlet presence felt across nine primary schools, delighting hundreds of children and encouraging them to make pos-



itive lifestyle changes.

Arter is accompanied on his school trips by a team comprising paediatricians from the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre, physicians, nurses and friends of the Founda-

tion.

"We speak about the importance of healthy habits, like eating fruits and vegetables, having less screen time and instead getting out and exercising, walking and playing games with friends, along with staying hydrated through drinking water rather than fruit juice," a spokeswoman explained.

"We also do breathing exercises with the children, taking a few minutes to have them focus on their breathing and being present. They really love that."

Interactive activities such as holding up placards that display choices between water and soda, playing football or a video game, have proved a hit with the youngsters. The Foundation also created an upbeat jingle teaching kids to eat their greens in order to

grow strong and healthy.

It's not just children that Arter has in his sights. More than 200 teachers and auxiliary staff have been screened for body mass index (BMI), blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar.

February is National Heart Month during which Foundation members will step up activities to raise awareness about heart disease, the world's number one killer. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, inadequate exercise and being overweight are all major risk factors.

This month is also the fourth anniversary of the Foundation which was set up to act as a voice and support system for patients and their families, raise funds, stage events, and carry out medical research.



Local News



ABTA announces date for 'Google Street' launch

'World Travel in 360', an international company, specializing in creating Google Street View coverage and immersive virtual experiences, will spearhead a transformative project aimed at globally showcasing the picturesque landscapes of Antigua and Barbuda.

Learn more about the project and how to get the most from the google

products by attending the Google Street View project presentation scheduled for February 6th 2024.

The presentation will be held at 3:30 p.m. at the John E. St. Luce Conference Centre with the CEO and COO of World Travel in 360.

Learn about the Google Street View project, its impact on Antigua and Bar-

buda, and the business opportunities it presents. Register for the in-person meeting and reserve your spot: <https://forms.gle/xtEjTY6L3dxcYLBfA>

For more information contact:
CEO Federico Debetto - kiko@worldtravelin360.com

COO Dimitar Kunev - dimitar@worldtravelin360.com

Congratulations: 39 years of loyal service

Assistant Superintendent of Police, Cecil Daley, on Thursday celebrated 39 years of dedicated service in the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda.

ASP Daley currently serves as the head of the

security unit assigned to Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

A brief get-together was held in the Prime Minister's Secretariat on Thursday to mark the occasion. PM Browne de-

scribed ASP Daley as 'an example' for the other officers noting that 39 years in the service is quite a remarkable achievement.

"I recognize this as a significant achievement and today we celebrate



Cecil Daley

continued longevity not only in terms of service, but also in terms of your health and your time here on earth. It is also my desire that our friendship continues to grow.

"I appreciate you as a brother and as a friend and you can always count on my support," he stated.

Other members joined in wishing ASP Daley continued health and happiness as he continues to provide yeoman's service to the RPFAB, the prime minister and the people of Antigua and Barbuda.

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CIBC FirstCaribbean unveils rebrand to CIBC Caribbean honouring heritage while looking to new era of growth, innovation and service excellence

Bridgetown, Barbados – CIBC FirstCaribbean has unveiled its rebranded regional bank, CIBC Caribbean, promising it is not just a “cosmetic change but a strategic move to position ourselves as a modern, forward-thinking institution.”

Speaking during the evening ceremony at the bank’s Barbados-based head office, Chief Executive Officer Mark St. Hill said the decision to rebrand “reflects our dedication to adapt and evolve with the needs of our clients and the dynamic landscape of the financial industry. In an era of rapid technological advancements and changing customer expectations, rebranding is not just a cosmetic change but



Prime Minister of Barbados Mia Amor Mottley joined Chair of CIBC Caribbean’s Board Brian McDonough (left), President and CEO of CIBC Canada, Victor Dodig (second left), CEO of CIBC Caribbean Mark St. Hill (second right) and Harry Culham, Senior Executive VP and Group Head, Capital Markets for the unveiling of the new logo.

a strategic move to position ourselves as a modern, forward-thinking institution”.

St. Hill told the audience, which included Barbados Prime Minister and

Minister of Finance Mia Amor Mottley, CIBC President and Chief Executive Officer, Victor Dodig, members of the diplomatic corps and scores of excited bank staff, that the bank is on the cusp of “a new era of growth, innovation, and service excellence through our rebranding initiative”.

“Our new brand identity is a testament to our heritage, symbolizing the values that have been the cornerstone of our success for the past 100 years. At the same time, it embraces a fresh, contemporary look that signifies our readiness to embrace the future. We want our clients



Country Head and staff, ready to present CIBC cupcakes to customers.

cont'd on pg 11

cont'd from pg 10

to feel a renewed sense of confidence in our ability to meet their financial needs, coupled with the assurance that we remain rooted in the principles that have guided us since our inception,” St. Hill said.

Barbados’ Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley, the featured speaker at the event, thanked CIBC’s President and Chief Executive Officer Victor Dodig for “having the confidence in this country to recommit in this way [for us] to be a serious part of the global brand of CIBC. It was so easy for you



Staff in Antigua following the unveiling of the CIBC sign outside the branch on Old Parham Road. to choose anywhere else, but you chose Barbados, and you chose to recommit after



Cadets from the Barbados Cadet Corps during the flag raising ceremony at the bank’s Head Office in Barbados, featuring all the CIBC territories in the Caribbean.

some difficult years and that has not escaped us as government or a country. I’m sure it has not escaped your employees as well.”

“I believe that your commitment to the country was reflected not just this year with the rebranding but when your bank took the decision to come back into the domestic market and to purchase \$100 million in BOSS bonds...that was a huge step of confidence,” Prime Minister Mottley said. She also praised the bank for thinking “outside the box” and being “innovative” as lead arranger and lender for the Barbados Blue Bond.

She thanked the bank’s employees as well noting that it was clear “there is an abundance of talent and genius and that this bank has tapped into it”.

The Prime Minister along with executives and staff members also placed items representing the bank’s milestones over the years as well as a letter from the youngest member of

staff, into a time capsule to be opened in 50 years.

In Antigua rebranding was also undertaken at the Head Office on Old Parham Road on 31st January, 2024 and customers were greeted with CIBC branded cupcakes.

Country Head Ladesa James-Williams stressed that the bank was here to stay.

“We are delighted and excited to announce that we have rebranded to CIBC. The decision to change brands is the signal to our clients, employees and the wider market that we are here and here to stay. We are thrilled to usher in a new era of growth, innovation and service excellence through adopting the CIBC brand.”

She continued, “We have lots in store for our clients, employees and the community and look forward to serving you. You will start to see signs change then our new ABMs will be deployed and there will be other goodies.”

Technology



Zuckerberg wins on Wall Street after Washington hit

By Natalie Sherman

Mark Zuckerberg's Meta had a bad day in Washington this week. But on Wall Street, it took a victory lap.

The social media firm updated investors with a slew of good news: quarterly profits that tripled year-on-year to more than \$14bn (£11bn), a surge in users, lower costs and higher ad sales.

Even its much ridiculed, money-losing virtual reality unit hit a milestone, generating \$1bn in revenue.

Lest anyone doubt its confidence, the company declared a first-ever dividend.

That is a payout to shareholders - in this case of 50 cents per share.

The company, owner of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, also pledged to keep the money flowing, saying it was in a strong financial position, and could invest in the business while still making plans for such payments on a quarterly basis "going forward".

Shares in the company, already at record highs, surged more than 12% in after-hours trade.

Analysts said the decision to offer a dividend was a sign of maturity, as Facebook approaches its 20th birthday.



Mark Zuckerberg.

It confirmed the shift in investor sentiment from 2022, when shares in the company had swooned and a high-profile investor wrote a public letter to Mr Zuckerberg that the company had "drifted into the land of excess — too many people, too many ideas, too little urgency" and "needed to get its "mojo back"

Elsewhere in big tech, business was also good.

Amazon sales leaped 14% year-on-year during the September-December period. At Apple, revenue returned to growth for the first time in a year.

But Meta's performance was the most head-spinning, coming just a day after it faced blister-

ing critique in Washington, where senators told Mr Zuckerberg that his product was "killing people" and he was pushed to apologise to families of victims of child sexual exploitation.

Speaking to analysts on Thursday, Meta acknowledged that it was facing regulatory challenges that could "significantly" affect its business.

But it spent little time on the topic.

And for now, whatever the product may be doing, there is little doubt that people, and advertisers, are sticking with it.

Meta said nearly 3.2 billion people were active on one of its platforms daily in December, up 8%

year-on-year.

Revenue in the September-December period grew 25% year-on-year to more than \$40bn.

Meanwhile the cost cutting drive that Mr Zuckerberg launched last year, which included thousands of job reductions, helped push expenses down 8%. Head count was 22% lower.

Jasmine Engberg, principal analyst at Insider Intelligence, said the company had exceeded expectations, as its investment in using AI to enhance advertising paid off.

"It was a stellar Q4," she said. "Meta's 2023 earnings are cause for more celebration as Facebook's 20th anniversary nears."

Angiodema: Gene therapy blocks painful hereditary disorder

By Richard Warry

Gene therapy has transformed the lives of people with a genetic disorder that causes painful and unpredictable swelling attacks.

Angiodema, thought to affect 50,000 people worldwide, can be seriously debilitating, affect airways, and occasionally prove fatal.

Patients treated with a single dose of gene therapy Crispr-Cas9 showed little sign of further symptoms.

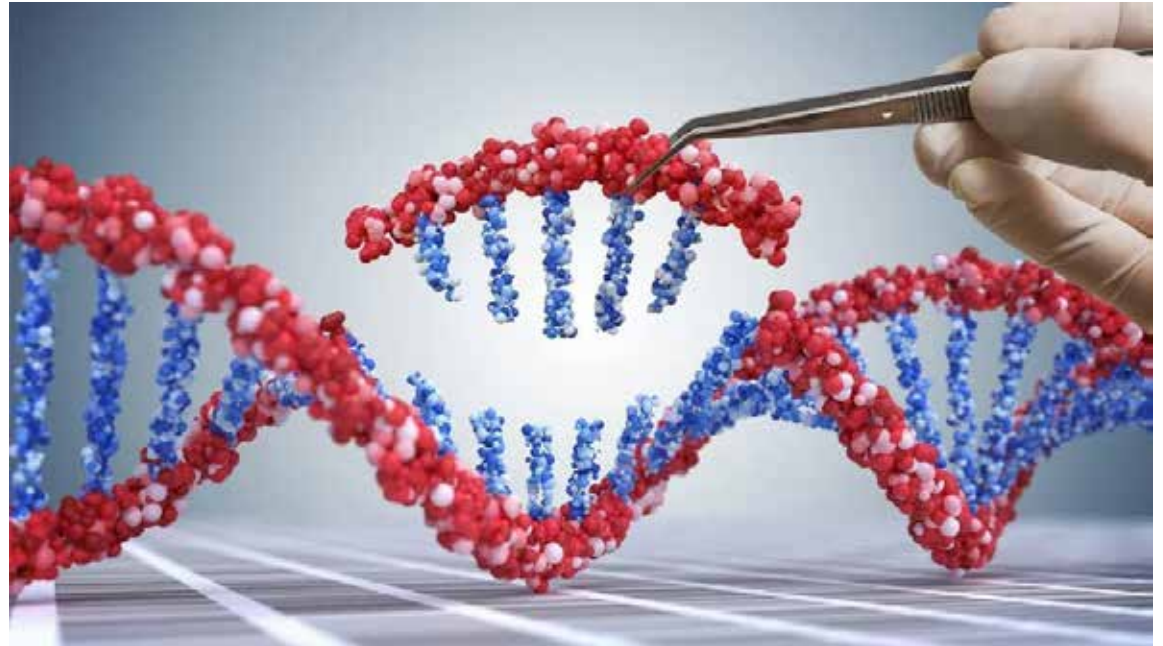
The therapy also has big potential as a treatment for other genetic conditions.

“It looks as if the single-dose treatment will provide a permanent cure for my hereditary angioedema patients’ very disabling symptoms,” principal investigator Dr Hilary Longhurst, a clinical immunologist at Auckland hospital, said.

Angiodema causes swelling in the soft tissues and can affect many parts of the body.

Cleveland Firman, from Suffolk, who received the treatment in the UK said: “The randomness, unpredictability and potential severity of the attacks has made trying to live my life almost impossible. I spent my life constantly wondering if my next attack would be severe.

“The swellings are painful and disfiguring. I



Crispr therapy allows single genes to be targeted.

was embarrassed to go out in case of an attack. I’ve been hospitalised with swellings on my neck and throat that have affected my ability to breathe.

“Since the treatment, I’ve not had a single attack. I’ve had a radical improvement in my physical and mental wellbeing.

“I am very positive about the future. I am now volunteering where I can meet like-minded people. The freedom has opened up my world and improved my self-confidence.”

Crispr-Cas9 is a DNA cutting and pasting system that scientists have borrowed from nature. Bacteria use it to protect themselves against foreign DNA from viruses. Scientists have been using it in the lab to target and cut out faulty DNA in human cells that

cause illnesses.

However, the edits are not always perfect and the cuts can end up in the wrong place.

In the trial, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, angiodema symptoms were reduced by 95% among a small group of patients from the UK, New Zealand, and the Netherlands given a single infusion - targeted at cells in the liver - to reduce the *KLKB1* gene’s ability to produce plasma prekallikrein.

Just one of the patients continued to show symptoms, which were only minor.

Dr Padmalal Gurugama, who led the UK branch of the research, at Cambridge University Hospital, said the therapy could significantly improve lives.

“Hereditary angioedema can cause patients severe swellings and intense pain, which can be life-threatening as well as restricting normal activities, such as going to work or school,” he said.

“Because it is often misdiagnosed, many patients undergo unnecessary treatments and invasive procedures.

“This is not the only condition in which Crispr-based gene editing is being tried.

“There are a lot of clinical trials targeting various other conditions that are producing similar results.”

The patients will be followed up for 15 years - to monitor the treatment’s long-term safety and efficacy.

Larger trials are also scheduled.

Kenyan President Ruto says Haiti mission to go ahead soon despite court ruling

By Wycliffe Muia

A Kenyan opposition leader has accused President William Ruto of planning to defy a court ruling against the deployment of police to Haiti.

Ekuru Aukot, who last week successfully challenged the planned deployment in court, says the president can only deploy the army and not the police.

The court said the mission was illegal.

Mr Ruto said on Tuesday the mission could go ahead “as soon as next week” if all the paperwork was done to satisfy the demands of the court.

Last November, the Kenyan parliament ratified the deployment of 1,000 officers to lead a multinational force in Haiti, where gangs are attempting to expand their territorial control.

But last week, a judge said Kenya’s National Security Council, which is led by the president, does not have the authority to deploy regular police outside the country.

It added that the council can only deploy military, not police, for peacekeeping missions such as Haiti.

The court also said there must be a reciprocal agreement between the two countries before the deployment.



President Ruto says Kenya’s Haiti mission is a “bigger calling to humanity”.

Delivering the ruling, Justice Chacha Mwita praised Kenya’s offer to deploy police to Haiti, but said it needed to be carried out within the law.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Italy-Africa summit in Rome, Mr Ruto on Tuesday told Reuters news agency that he expected a request would come soon that would satisfy the demands of the Kenyan court.

“The mission is on course. The mission is a bigger calling to humanity,” he added.

Asked if there were efforts for Haiti to get the necessary request, Mr Ruto said: “Absolutely.”

“Haiti have actually written formally, not today, several months ago,” he added.

Korir Sing’oei, a senior official in Kenya’s foreign ministry, in a series of posts

on X, said that the deployment of the police abroad would not be unconstitutional if conducted under a bilateral reciprocal arrangement.

But Mr Aukot says the deployment requires more than just the bilateral agreement between the two countries.

“Appreciate the wisdom of Justice Mwita on a ‘service’ and a ‘force’. As per *cont’d on pg 15*



US Air Force Commander in Guyana to enhance bilateral cooperation

CMC - The United States Southern Command's Air Force Commander, Major General, Evan Pettus, is on a three-day visit to Guyana to further discuss US defence partnership with Guyana.

In a statement on Thursday, the US Embassy explained that as the Air Force component to US Southern Command, the unit conducts security co-

operation and provides air, space, and cyberspace capabilities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

It also supports the US Southern Command to deter aggression, defeat threats, rapidly respond to crises, and work with allies and partner nations to build regional capacity to ensure a secure, free, and prosperous Western Hemi-

sphere.

The US embassy said that during the visit, Pettus is scheduled to meet with senior leaders in the Government of Guyana, Guyana Defence Force (GDF), and US Embassy.

He will also discuss plans on air domain awareness and collaborate on advancing Guyana's airspace awareness capacity to protect its national security

and sovereignty, the US Embassy said.

The embassy noted that Pettus' visit to Guyana is his first trip overseas in 2024 and signifies the importance of the bilateral security partnership as the GDF continues to expand its aviation capabilities.

"Major General Pettus' visit to Guyana underscores the continued importance and strong commitment the United States places on the US-Guyana bilateral security partnership in support of regional stability," the US embassy stated.

The embassy said the United States will continue to work closely with its allies around the world to strengthen alliances and partnerships by improving interoperability, deepening information-sharing and planning, and conducting complex joint and combined exercises.

cont'd from pg 14

law and the constitution, you can not deploy a police service outside Kenya," Mr Aukot posted on X, accusing the foreign affairs official of misleading the president.

During the Tuesday interview, Mr Ruto stressed that it was a police rather than a military operation.

The Kenyan government said it would appeal against the court ruling.

The US said last week that it supports the Kenyan government's intention to challenge the ruling.

But the Kenyan opposition on Tuesday warned the US against meddling in Ken-

ya's internal affairs.

It is unclear when the Kenyan government would launch the appeal in court and whether other countries who pledged to send smaller forces to boost the multinational mission would consider going it alone.

Among those who planned to send forces were the Bahamas, Antigua and Barbuda, with the US pledging \$200m (£158m) to support the deployment.

A UN envoy said last week that the Haiti gang violence had reached "a critical point", with nearly 5,000 deaths reported last year.

Ukraine support package worth €50bn agreed by EU leaders

All 27 EU leaders have agreed a €50bn (£42bn; \$54bn) aid package for Ukraine, after Hungary stopped blocking the deal.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky welcomed the new funding, saying it would strengthen the country's economic and financial stability.

Ukraine's economic ministry said it expects the first tranche in March.

There had been fears Hungary's PM would again block the package as he did at a European summit in December.

Viktor Orban, Russian President Vladimir Putin's closest ally in the EU, had said he wanted to force a rethink of the bloc's policy towards Ukraine and questioned the idea of committing funds for Kyiv for the next four years.

The new funding promise comes as aid from the US - the largest provider of military support for Kyiv - is being held up by Congress.

"I think it will be an encouragement for the United States also to do their fair share," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said.

The agreement was announced less than two hours after the summit started, surprising many observers who had expected talks to go on much longer due to



EU leaders at a pre-summit meeting on Thursday morning.

the depth of disagreement between Mr Orban and the other EU leaders.

On the streets of Kyiv, people welcomed the news. "It's great. All this support, money, ammunition, humanitarian help are all important for our country, and we thank all the world for supporting us," one man told the BBC.

However, this EU funding package is not for the frontline - it's for life in the rear. War is an expensive endeavour, and budget revenue in Ukraine is being swallowed up funding the fighting.

But the Ukrainian government still needs to pay for pensions, state salaries - down to keeping the lights on.

There were warnings such payments could be delayed, had the EU not

approved the aid.

Keeping life for its citizens running as smoothly as possible is vital for the government to maintain domestic support for the war effort, even as Ukraine pushes for continuing backing from its allies abroad.

The new deal includes a yearly discussion of the funding package and the option to review it in two years, "if needed" - and only at the Council's discretion.

Mr Orban had been pushing for a yearly vote on the package, which could have left the deal exposed to an annual veto threat from Hungary.

Under the agreement, one precondition for the support for Ukraine is that it upholds the "rights of persons belonging to minorities" - a possible refer-

ence to Mr Orban's longstanding concern about the ethnic Hungarian minority in Ukraine.

Artillery for Ukraine was also discussed at the summit. Earlier this week, the EU acknowledged that it would only be able to deliver 52% of the one million ammunition rounds it had promised to send by March. Today, European Council President Charles Michel said the EU is determined to make sure Ukraine gets the equipment it needs to defend "their country and their future".

In a video address to European leaders, President Zelensky said the EU had "proven that its word matters, and its promises work for the interests of entire Europe".

He referred to the fact *cont'd on pg 17*

Hostages freed after being held for nine hours at P&G plant in Turkey

By Aoife Walsh

Seven workers seized at a Proctor & Gamble (P&G) plant outside the Turkish city of Istanbul were rescued after a nine-hour ordeal, officials say.

Police in Gebza moved in after the suspect, who was apparently protesting at the war in Gaza, went to the toilet.

Local governor Seddar Yavuz said the hostages had suffered no injuries.

Images online showed the suspect, his face hidden by a Palestinian scarf, wearing what appeared to be an explosives vest and carrying a gun.

He was detained unharmed after the “meticulous” rescue operation, Mr Yavuz added.

The hostage-taker entered the plant at about 15:00 local time (12:00 GMT), DHA news agency reports. The hostages were released shortly before midnight.

Officials say the suspect wanted to draw attention to the ongoing situation in



Gaza.

A Palestinian flag was reportedly painted at the entrance of the building with a sign saying “doors will be open for Gaza”.

Police officers cordoned off access to the factory and medical staff were dispatched to the scene.

Officials say a large-scale investigation into the

incident is under way.

Footage from the scene during the standoff showed relatives of some hostages clustered together at a police cordon some distance from the plant.

İsmet Zihni, whose wife works at the plant, told DHA she had sent him a message saying she had been taken hostage.

However, he added he did not know “if it was her or someone else”.

Relatives of the hostages had expressed frustration at the lack of information from Turkish officials or the police.

“We have been waiting for six hours without any official making a statement,” the father of one hostage told AFP earlier.

In a statement, P&G said it was relieved no-one was harmed during the incident.

“We are grateful to the authorities and first responders who managed the situation with courage and professionalism,” the company added.

It also said the suspect was not an employee.

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that US aid is being blocked up by Congress, saying that today’s announcement would send a “signal across the Atlantic... that the international rules-based world order will withstand all challenges.”

“Europe sets the tone for global affairs - with its unity,” Mr Zelensky added.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, who had been highly critical of what he called Mr Orbán’s “strange and egotistic

game,” posted on X: “Viktor Orbán could be ‘persuaded’... Let’s move on.”

The EU had been withholding €20bn of funds for Hungary because of concerns about human rights and corruption in the country.

Today’s announcement of a new aid package comes after European leaders agreed to open EU membership talks with Ukraine in December - a decision hailed at the time as «a victory» for his country.

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State College and OCS to clash in Under-20 Boys Division final

The Antigua State College and Ottos Comprehensive School will battle for the Under-20 Boys Division league title in the Ministry of Sports Secondary Schools Football Championships at the Antigua Recreation Grounds (ARG) today.

Both teams booked their place in the final by recording wins in the semi-final at the same venue on Wednesday.

Nadre Thomas scored twice as Antigua State College defeated All Saints Secondary School 3-1 in the second semi-final.

Silence Manyaka struck a 64th-minute winner as Ottos Comprehensive School came from behind to snatch a 2-1 victory against Irene B. Williams Secondary in the first semi-final.

Antoniell Campbell scored in the 25th minute to give Irene B. Williams Secondary a one-nil lead, and Aquan Singh scored the equalizer for Ottos Comprehensive School with a 30th-minute conversion.

Antigua State College and Ottos Comprehensive School will clash in today's final at 4:15 pm.

The Under-20 Boys Division final will be preceded by a playoff for third place between All Saints Secondary and Irene B. Williams Secondary at 1 pm.

Princess Margaret School (PMS) and Antigua Girls High School (AGHS) will clash in the final of the Under-16 Girls Division today at 3 pm.

Princess Margaret School will be seeking their fourth title this season after winning the under-14 and 16 boys division league competitions as well as the under-20 girls championship.



Players of the Sea View Farm football team. (File photo)

Sea View Farm go third in Second Division League

Sea View Farm advanced into third place after the latest round of matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's

(ABFA) Second Division on Wednesday.

Sea View Farm recorded their sixth win in eight matches by beating ABAYA

3-1 at the ABFA Technical Center to move to third place in the standings by advancing to 18 points.

The result carries Sea

View Farm to 18 points, one adrift of Bethesda, who are currently in second place. ABAYA remains third from

cont'd on pg 21

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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Clare Hall make winnings start in defense of junior boys title

Reigning champions Clare Hall Secondary School (CHSS) made a successful start in defense of their Junior Boys Division title in the 2024 Cool and Smooth Inter-School Basketball Championship on Wednesday.

Clare Hall Secondary launched their campaign with a 49-33 victory against St. Mary's Secondary in the second game of a Junior Boys Division double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Tajahron Davis shot a game-high 20 points, and Aiden Tonge converted 19 points for Clare Hall Secondary, while Yohan Nicholas scored 17 points for St. Mary's Secondary.

Tonge said his team played well, especially in defense.

"I did my best; I missed some layups that I should have made, but it's part of the game. My team did well; we played some nice defense. My teammate Tajahron did not play his best, but we got the win, and that is all for today," Tonge stated.

Although he led the team in scoring, Davis admitted he could have played a lot better.

"I didn't play 100 percent as I wanted to, but my teammates helped me," he said.

The junior boys of

St. Anthony's Secondary School, who lost to Antigua Grammar School's first team in their opening encounter, rebounded to claim their first win in their second outing on Wednesday.

St. Anthony's Secondary School prevailed 31-22 against Otto Comprehensive School in the second game of Wednesday's double header.

Justyn Raeburn produced nine points, and Aiden Carbon and Ean Southwell each scored eight points for St. Anthony's Secondary.

Carbon said his team did okay, but he got off to a slow start in the game.

Jalen Isaac sank nine points, Ajani Adams scored seven points, and Tristan Browne had six points for Ottos Comprehensive School, which lost for the second time in as many games.

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the bottom of the standings on three points after suffering their seventh loss in eight matches.

Sanje Carr scored five times, and Diondre Harrigan struck a hat trick as Blackburn Palace romped to a 10-nil drubbing of the bottom team, the Young Warriors, at the Buckleys Primary School playing field.

It was the second win in eight matches for Blackburn Palace, who advanced to nine points, while the Young Warriors remain winless and in the cellar without a point after crashing to their eighth loss in as many games.



Tajahron Davis, left, and Aiden Tonge were the leading scorers for Clare Hall Secondary against St. Mary's Secondary in their junior boys division encounter at the JSC Sports Complex on Wednesday, January 31, 2024. (Photo courtesy the School Basketball Unit)

But Wednesday's other scheduled Second Division encounter was not played. The JSC Progressors defaulted to leaders Freemans Village. They were unable to field a team for the encounter at the Freemans Village playing field.

The result ensured Freemans Village extended their lead at the top of the Second Division.

Their eighth win in nine games allows Freemans Village to advance to 24 points, five points ahead of Bethesda.

The JSC Progressors remain winless, without a point, and second from the bottom of the standings after suffering their seventh loss in as many games.



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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

OCS and PMS launch inter-school netball campaigns with multiple wins

Ottos Comprehensive School (OCS) and Princess Margaret School (PMS) both claimed multiple wins in the opening round of 16 and Under and 18 and Under matches in the Cool and Smooth Inter-School Netball League at the YMCA Sports Complex on Wednesday.

The Ottos Comprehensive School claimed a 20-6 victory against Clare Hall Secondary School in the 18 and Under Division.

Goal shoot Jessica Massicott sank 12 of her 19 attempts, and goal attack Ophelia Browne scored eight of her 13 shots for Ottos Comprehensive School. Goal shoot Delicia Graham

converted all of her six shots for Clare Hall Secondary.

Princess Margaret School beat Christ the King High School 26-6. Goal shooter Kenilee Deschamps scored 11 of her 18 attempts, and Kadeja Alexander converted 10 of her 22 shots for Princess Margaret School.

Antigua State College romped to a 31-2 victory against Jennings Secondary School in the 18 and Under category.

Goal shoot Zhanire Pereira converted 24 of her 32 attempts, and goal attack Cedrica Joseph scored seven of her 13 shots for Antigua State College.

Ottos Comprehensive School

snatched a narrow 16-15 victory against Glanvilles Secondary School in the 16 and Under Division.

Goal shoot Jessica Massicott sank 10 of her 20 attempts for Ottos Comprehensive School, while goal attack Deano Romeo converted 13 of her 27 tries for Glanvilles Secondary.

Princess Margaret School also recorded a 15-6 victory against Antigua Girls High School's first team.

Goal attack Khaiva Knowles scored 13 of her 24 attempts for Princess Margaret School, while goal shoot Kellisha Gordon converted five of her nine shots for the first team of Antigua Girls High School.



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Joseph gets CWI retainer contract

Cricket West Indies (CWI) has announced the upgrade of Shamar Joseph from his current Franchise contract to a CWI International retainer contract.

This decision comes in recognition of Joseph's outstanding performance and invaluable contribution to the recent historic victory against Australia on their home soil in Brisbane, marking Australia's first defeat to the West Indies since 1997.

Antiguan Enoch Lewis, CWI Director and Chair of the Cricket Development and Performance Committee, expressed, "As exhilarated as we are, it is also dutiful to elevate Shamar Joseph to a CWI International retainer contract.

"His extraordinary talent and steadfast dedication serve as the cornerstone of our team's recent triumph at the Gabba, and such promise merits its due recognition. Shamar has not just been rewarded with a retained contract, he has earned it."

Shamar Joseph's remarkable debut series showcased his prowess with



West Indies' Shamar Joseph raises the ball after taking seven wickets in his team's defeat of Australia on the fourth day of the second cricket Test match in Brisbane, Sunday, Jan. 28, 2024. (AP)

13 wickets in two matches, including a match-winning spell of seven for 68 in the decisive second Test. His performance, coupled with his dedication, exemplifies the spirit of West Indies cricket.

Director of Cricket, Miles Bascombe, remarked, "Shamar's elevation to a CWI International retainer

contract reflects his potential and the bright future ahead for West Indies cricket.

"Meanwhile, we will continue to support Chemar Holder, who returned from injury rehabilitation, and has shown signs of eagerness to be reintegrated at the highest level."

The full list of Men's In-

ternational retainers for West Indies Men for 2023/24 are: Alick Athanaze, Kraigg Brathwaite, Keacy Carty, Tagenarine Chanderpaul, Joshua Da Silva, Shai Hope, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Shamar Joseph, Brandon King, Gudakesh Motie, Rovman Powell, Kemar Roach, Jayden Seales, and Romario Shepherd.