

# PM PLEDGES ONE MONTH'S SALARY TOWARDS SIDS4 CONFERENCE

*Story on Page 2*



New United States Ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Roger Nyhus, second left, in conversation with government and APC officials following a tour of the LNG power plant at Crabbes Peninsula. *(Story on page 4)*

## PM pledges one month's salary towards SIDS4 conference

It's a classic case of leading from the front. On Friday, Prime Minister Gaston Browne made a pledge of one month's salary (estimated at US\$5,000.00) towards funding for the Small Islands Developing States Fourth (SIDS4) conference that takes place here in late May this year.

PM Browne made the pledge at a Partnership Roundtable on Friday where he provided an update on the status of the planning for the conference as well as an update on the overall cost of the undertaking as well as the funding that has been pledged so far.

He told the conference that SIDS4 will cost approximately US\$7 million to host and that so far approximately US\$4 million has been pledged. There therefore is a funding gap of US\$3 million.

The purpose of the roundtable which attracted participation from several governments and funding agencies, was to encourage them to pledge to the hosting of the conference if they had not done so before as well as to encourage those who pledged before to follow through with their commitments.

PM Browne also used his position as a co-chair of the event to urge some participants, especially those representing friendly governments or financial institutions to make a pledge as the government was fully committed to doing everything possible to ensure the success of the conference.

It was against this background, and as a demonstration of his personal commitment to the success of the conference as well as to serve as an example to those in attendance or those in the general community to



follow his lead and to make whatever commitments they can to the conference.

He explained that one reason why hosting the conference was expensive had to do with the fact that the country did not have the facilities to host such an event.

Therefore, at the urging of the government, the American University of Antigua, has decided to build a new conference facility that will be completed in time for the conference.

The government is providing the infrastructural works necessary for the project. These include roads, parking, internet services and other such facilities.

The prime minister pointed out that the conference will add to the capacity of the nation to host similar events in the future thus enabling it to compete for this very lucrative segment of the tourism market.

Countries contributed to date:

United Kingdom  
New Zealand  
Italy  
Republic of Korea  
The People's Republic of China  
Canada  
Qatar  
Kuwait  
Dominican Republic  
Firm pledges: Germany, Norway, Denmark, Ireland.

Other project support for activities connected to the forum provided by the UN system:

UNICEF will provide support to the youth project.

UN Women will provide support to the Gender Equality Forum

OHRLLS will provide support to the Business forum

UNOPS has provided support to the mission in New York to facilitate the management of the project from the mission.



## PM Browne pushes back on anti-China claims

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has staunchly defended Antigua and Barbuda's relationship with the People's Republic of China and he has rubbished suggestions that the country will soon be 'colonised' by China.

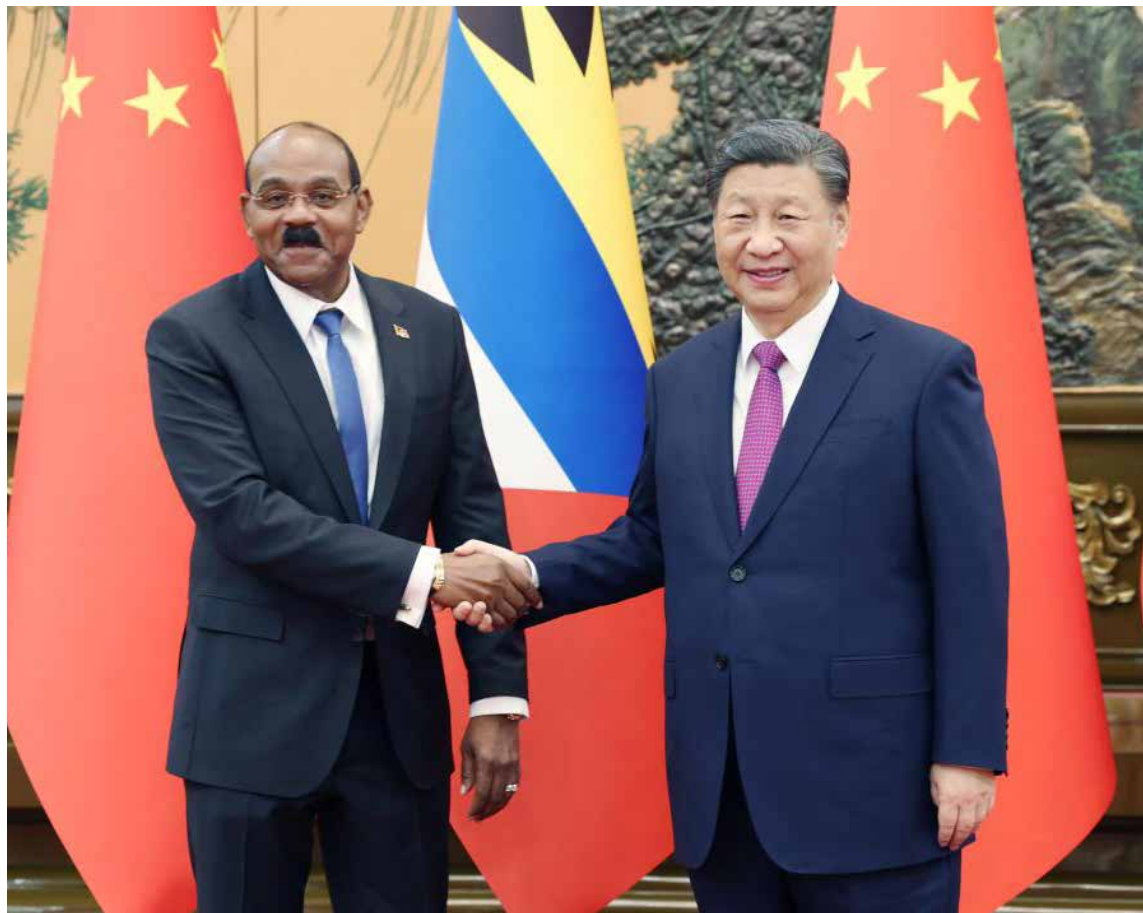
Speaking on the *Browne and Browne* show on Pointe FM on Saturday, PM Browne dismissed the suggestion as nonsensical as China does not have a history of colonizing any country.

Rather, according to the prime minister, China under President Xi Jinping has developed a philosophy of 'shared future development for all peoples'.

Through that philosophy, PM Browne noted that China has made available US\$1 trillion annually in soft loans to help developing countries, which doubles what both the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank give when their budgets are combined.

"For those who are saying that we may be colonized by China, I ask them, what country has China ever colonized. The irony is, those countries that did in fact colonise us, if they lend us money, its fine, if China lends us money, it's a debt-trap. That's illogical," he exclaimed.

The prime minister



President Xi Jinping meets with Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda Gaston Browne at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, Jan 24, 2024. [Photo/Xinhua]

gave as an example negotiation with the World Bank in the wake of Hurricane Irma where the government was seeking a loan of EC\$100 million for restoration efforts on the sister island.

He said the World Bank offered the loan at 4 percent over ten years with stipulations on how the money could be used.

Conversely, the loans for the airport and the seaport were valued at over EC\$500 million.

Yet, each loan was for over 20 years repayment

at 2 percent interest with five-year moratoria each. "Who is colonizing who?" PM Browne asked rhetorically.

The prime minister also addressed the issue of the opening of the Antigua and Barbuda embassy in China, in response to a UPP operative who claimed that the government 'rushed' to open the embassy.

In dismissing that claim, PM Browne described China as Antigua and Barbuda's most important developmental partner at this time.

"We have embassies in countries where we don't get the type of assistance that we get from China, what is wrong about opening an embassy in a capital from which we get this level of developmental assistance," he queried.

He also disclosed that the PRC is making available the embassy office space to the government free of cost 'for a few years' so that for now, it does not cost the government anything. An ambassador who will be resident in China will soon be named.



## US Ambassador: LNG power-plant is a ‘game-changer’

The new United States Ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Roger Nyhus, is highly complimentary in his praise for the move by Antigua and Barbuda to acquire a new Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) power plant, now under construction at Crabbes Peninsula.

Ambassador Nyhus

was given a tour of the facility Friday afternoon together with senior government representatives and the owners of Antigua Power Company Ltd, which along with Eagle LNG out of the United States are jointly building and will also operate the new power plant in association with APUA.

At the end of the tour, Ambassador Nyhus could not contain his excitement for the project calling it ‘a game-changer’ not just for Antigua and Barbuda, but for the entire Caribbean as well.

“This project is a game-changer for Antigua and Barbuda, the region and a positive message

to the world. If we can make progress the world, these are difficult issues and you are making those critical decisions that are so important,” he said in response to comments by both Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene and Utilities Minister, Melford Nicholas.

The ambassador queried what was the government’s message to the citizenry and why they should be excited about the transition to LNG and other energy sources.

Minister Greene noted that the transition is being done in recognition of a global reality.

“Leveraging our environment when we go full wind and solar and the transition now to LNG is a wonderful move which has attracted the attention of the people.

“We therefore continue to do this and to ‘sell’

*cont’d on pg 5*





*cont'd from pg 4*

the message and this calls for education as well as we must bring the people along in this vision in our transition to 'green' energy; appreciating what energy means in the transition process and period.

"Like you, we are excited, and we wish to pass that excitement on to the people so it's a shared position of excitement across the country," he remarked.

For his part, Utilities Minister Nicholas focused on the economics of renewable energy, especially against the backdrop of the several major conflicts taking place in the world which have the potential

of having an inflationary impact on prices of several commodities here in Antigua and Barbuda.

"Many see the move to renewable energy as helping the environment, but we have to remember that the Caribbean produces less than one percent of global greenhouse gases, so the real motive for us has to be economics. Against the backdrop of what's taking place in the world, if more and more of our energy comes from renewable sources, that would be a plus for us. There has to be a mix of wind, solar and turning to less harmful sources such as LNG," he stated.



The US ambassador also fully supported the public/private partnership in undertaking the LNG Power-plant and as Minister Nicholas stated, there are times when to undertake certain projects the government will have to

turn to the private sector to become its partner as is the case with the current project.

The tour party included APCL's Francis Hadeed, Aziz Hadeed, Calid Hassad and attorney, Dr. Errol Cort.

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## FM Greene proposes a consultative approach with EU on 'blacklisting'

Antigua and Barbuda's Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene, is proposing a consultative approach with the European Union on the question of blacklisting over matters dealing with financial services.

Speaking with the new German Ambassador to Antigua and Barbuda, Dr. Christoph Eick, last Friday, Greene noted that Antigua and Barbuda has always favoured consultation on these matters rather than to have the EU unilaterally impose sanctions.

Greene said this is particularly frustrating since St. John's has been making earnest efforts to come to terms with the requirements as stated by the EU.

"The issue of blacklisting is a troubling one for us and our economy as our position has been to always seek a level of dialogue as opposed to unilateral sanctions, which is the way it has been done. We want to enlist your support for discussions at the EU level; the notion of a consultative approach versus unilateral approach on these matters. If we have consultation on these matters, we might know what are the gaps, real or perceived, and I would be able to address them," he ex-



Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene, left, with German Ambassador to Antigua and Barbuda, Dr. Christoph Eick.

plained.

According to the foreign minister, Antigua and Barbuda has spent many hours working and fashioning its legislations to deal with these issues as well as being 'very strident' in its comments at every level in terms of its support for the international framework of anti-terrorism, anti-money laundering etc, yet after doing all this work to meet the demands by the EU and others, it still faces the possibility of being 'blacklisted'.

"To have ourselves placed on a sanctioned list after all that does not give a good feeling that the work

we are doing is even appreciated, so we are asking for a level of cooperation which allows for dialogue. Even as we speak, we are offering a team of experts from St. John's to travel to meet with the EU to discuss these issues so that we can be very clear as to why, as well as to have an opportunity to explain directly what is our own situation," he remarked.

In response, Ambassador Eick stated that from his Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago base, he has had to deal with the matter of blacklisting and therefore he is quite familiar with the subject.

"In my reporting with

my capital (Berlin) I will point to the need for engagement and consultation because I believe that this is something that has to happen and which probably has not happened enough on the issue of delisting," he revealed.

Ambassador Eick also took note of the complaints from many Caribbean capitals on what is termed 'moving of the goal-posts'. He noted that reports from Brussels, headquarters of the EU, were that offers for consultations have been made but he is of the view that there cannot be too much consultation on issues such as these.

## Caribbean pharmacists conclude symposium in Antigua

Sunday 4th February 2024 marked the conclusion of the three-day Caribbean Association of Pharmacists (CAP) Symposium, hosted by the Antigua and Barbuda Pharmaceutical Society.

The Symposium, which commenced on Friday, February 2nd, focused on the theme “Pharmacists making a difference in patients’ lives”. It was held in a hybrid format, in person and online via social media plat-

*cont’d on pg 8*



Headtable at Caribbean Pharmaceutical Society symposium held in Antigua and Barbuda February 2-4.

## Antigua and Barbuda joins in observing World Cancer Day today

The Ministry of Health and Wellness joins the global community in observing World Cancer Day on February 4th, 2024. This day serves as a vital platform to raise awareness, encourage prevention, and foster support for those affected by cancer.

Cancer remains a significant public health challenge, impacting millions of lives worldwide. In recognition of World Cancer Day, the Ministry reaffirms its commitment to combating this disease through various initiatives aimed at prevention, early detection, and comprehensive care.

Minister of Health, Sir Molwyn Joseph, emphasized the importance of unified efforts in the fight against cancer, stating,



“World Cancer Day serves as a poignant reminder of the urgent need to address this global health crisis. Through collaboration and proactive measures, we can make strides towards reducing the burden of cancer

and improving the quality of life for all affected individuals.”

Public Relations Officer for the Ministry of Health, J’noire Smith-Kellman, highlighted the significance of awareness campaigns in

empowering communities to take proactive steps towards cancer prevention. Smith-Kellman stated, “As we observe World Cancer Day, it is crucial to emphasize the importance of education and early detection. By raising awareness and promoting regular screenings, we can empower individuals to take control of their health and reduce their risk of cancer.”

The Ministry urges all citizens to take proactive steps towards cancer prevention by adopting healthy lifestyle choices, participating in regular screenings, and supporting individuals affected by cancer. Together, we can work towards a future where cancer is no longer a life-threatening disease.



# Local News



## More arrests for unlawful possession of firearm, ammunition

The police continue their sting operations with the aim of ridding the nation of the scourge of illegal firearms and ammunition.

The latest report in that ongoing initiative, saw the

police arresting two individuals on Saturday and charging them with the unlawful possession of firearms and ammunition.

Police arrested and jointly charged 38-year-old

Vashell James and 26-year-old Vashawn James, both of Swetes Village for Unlawful Possession of one .380 Pistol. The offense occurred on 3rd February, 2024 at Swetes Village.

Both were further charged with Unlawful Possession of Ammunition to wit six (6) .380mm rounds of ammunition. This happened on 3rd February, 2024 at Swetes as well.

*cont'd from pg 7*  
forms.

Pharmacists, renowned as the most accessible community healthcare professionals, have convened to address pressing healthcare challenges amidst evolving landscapes.

Celebrating its forty-eighth year of professional excellence, CAP underscores the importance of continuous learning and improvement among its members, highlighting the Symposium as a platform for pharmacists to stay updated on dynamic pharmaceutical and healthcare environments.

Presentations include research papers from students of the Antigua and Barbuda School of Pharmacy, exploring topics such as patient medication counseling and drug storage practices, aiming to emphasize patient compliance, safety, and cost implications.

The Symposium, welcomed participants from across the Caribbean, fostered professional comradery and regional integration within the pharmaceutical community. With plans to elevate pharmacy programs and increase the number of skilled professionals, the Symposium signals a commitment

to advancing the pharmaceutical sector in Antigua and Barbuda.

Minister of Health, Sir Molwyn Joseph, expressed his support, stating, "The Symposium serves as a crucial platform for advancing healthcare standards and ensuring that pharmacists are equipped to meet the evolving needs of our communities."

As the Symposium concluded, organizers and participants aim to translate gathered insights into tangible improvements in patient care, not only in Antigua and Barbuda but across the wider Caribbean region.

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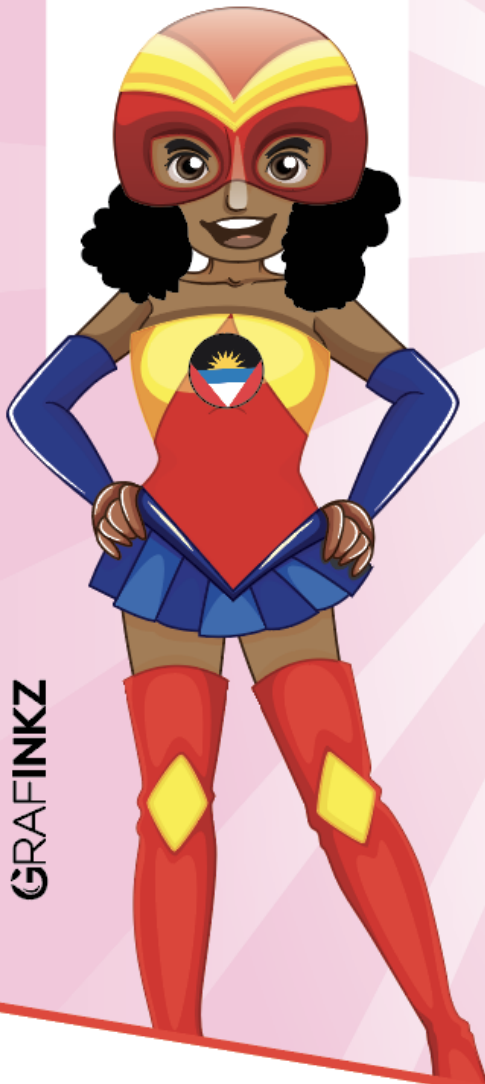
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# Business



## Big US jobs increase in January surprises again

Job creation in the US surged in January, as the economy continued to defy predictions of a slowdown.

Employers added 353,000 jobs and average hourly pay jumped, while the unemployment rate held steady at 3.7%, the Labor Department said.

The report extended a streak of job gains that has surprised economists, who have expected a jump in interest rates since 2022 to slow the economy.

Analysts said the job market strength made an early rate cut less likely.

“The US employment data provided a shock, beating expectations by miles, with earnings much higher than expected as well,” said Neil Birrell from Premier Miton Investors.

“These numbers show the US economy to be strong and will sway anyone thinking a March rate cut was on the way to look further out. Any thoughts of recession are off the mark as well for now.”

The US central bank started raising rates two years ago, responding to price inflation that was rising at the fastest pace in decades.

Higher borrowing costs aimed to cool economic activity and ease pressures pushing up prices.

Price inflation has come



down from the high rates seen in 2022, and stood at 3.4% in December.

But strong household spending, initially buoyed by pandemic-era savings, has kept businesses humming, generating a kind of virtuous cycle, as the healthy jobs market in turn sustains consumer spending.

Friday's report showed hiring in December and November were stronger than had been previously estimated. Health care and retail firms, as well as business and professional services, helped drive the job gains in January.

Overall, the US economy grew at an annual rate of 3.3% in the September to December period.

The head of the US central bank, Jerome Powell, this week said officials were

hopeful that inflation would continue to fall without a more serious downturn.

But he warned the bank wanted “greater confidence” before it declared victory and started to lower borrowing costs again. He said a rate reduction in March, as some investors had been betting, was unlikely.

Some analysts said the strong pay gains reported on Friday - with average hourly earnings up 4.5% compared with January 2023 - should worry those hoping to see inflation continue to fall quickly.

“Wages growing at this rate, in a labour market this tight, is a problem for the Fed,” said Brian Coulton, chief economist at Fitch Ratings.

Others warned that a fall in overall hours worked

each week would undercut pay gains and complicate the picture.

With the US presidential election due in November, the monthly report has become a political flashpoint.

While surveys show consumer sentiment has improved in recent months, the mood remains significantly more downbeat than before the pandemic.

Analysts said that while wage gains have largely caught up recent price rises, people are still coming to terms with higher costs.

“You remember when you were paying \$1 for something and now you're paying \$1.17,” said professor Charles Franklin, director of the Marquette Law School poll. “Adjusting to the new normal for prices - that takes a long time.”





## TikTok pulls Taylor Swift and The Weeknd's music

TikTok has removed music by stars including Taylor Swift, The Weeknd and Olivia Rodrigo from videos after a row with their record label, Universal Music Group (UMG).

A licensing agreement between TikTok and the label expired on Wednesday, and a new deal could not be reached.

UMG said TikTok wanted to pay a "fraction" of the rate other social media sites do for access to its songs.

TikTok accused UMG of presenting a "false narrative and rhetoric".

All videos which have UMG music on them will be muted and new videos will not be able to be made with those tracks.

Some artists such as Ariana Grande and Katy Perry have had most of their music disappear from their official pages, except a few songs which

are on other labels.

Billie Eilish, another UMG artist, has had all but one of her songs taken down.

Her song What Was I Made For? was featured in the Barbie movie - whose soundtrack was published by Warner Music Group.

Sophie Ellis-Bextor's Murder on the Dancefloor, which became a viral hit after appearing in the film Saltburn, is also unavailable.

Unofficial, sped-up and slowed-down versions of tracks are still available to use.

Noah Kahan, whose number one song Stick Season started as a viral TikTok clip, posted a video on his account saying he was unable to promote his new song on the platform.

"I can't stick it down your throats any more on this app," he said.

"I'll probably be OK, right? I'll land on my feet, right?"

Meanwhile Cody Fry, an artist signed to a record label owned by UMG, said in a TikTok video he felt «like a person standing between two colliding planets» - having seen reports about the licensing agreement expiring as one of his tracks was going viral in China.

The 33-year-old musician told the BBC he did not even have a TikTok account when his song, I Hear A Symphony, went viral on the platform in 2021, several years after it was first released.

He added that he thought TikTok should "value music more than it does currently" and he wished the two giants could have resolved differences without "leaving it to the expense of

*cont'd on pg 12*

## US, Suriname hold Third Strategic Dialogue to strengthening relations

CMC - The United States Department of State announced on Friday that Washington and Paramaribo held their Third Strategic Dialogue here “in the spirit of strengthening bilateral relations.”

The Office of the Spokesperson in the Department of State said in a statement that senior officials from the Governments of the United States and Suriname, earlier this week, explored ways to promote inclusive growth, foster innovation, combat climate change, and collaborate on capacity building and training.

“The dialogue underscored the urgent need to address the climate crisis,



accelerate the clean energy transition, promote sustainable development, foster economic resilience, and strengthen democracy,” the statement said.

In the area of securi-

ty cooperation, the United States and Suriname said they support completing negotiations on the Air Intercept Assistance Agreement.

The statement said that

both sides discussed other options to enhance information sharing, including through a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty and a Customs Mutual Assistance

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artists on the ground”.

“I don’t know much about the mechanics of these massive corporate negotiations,” he said, “but I’d be remiss if I didn’t express the frustration about how this was handled on behalf of myself, and I think Universal’s artists, because to find out something like this on the news, it’s pretty tough.”

Music companies and artists earn royalty payments when their songs are played on streaming and social media platforms.

On TikTok, they are used as backing music to the videos uploaded to the site.

But there has long been unease about how little the platforms pay, which in this case developed into a major and very public disagreement.

UMG and TikTok were in talks over a new deal, but were unable to

agree one before the 31 January deadline.

In an open letter, published on 30 January, Universal claimed that «ultimately TikTok is trying to build a music-based business, without paying fair value for the music».

Universal said it was also concerned about getting artists fair compensation for AI-generated songs made to sound like real artists - such as one made to sound like Drake and The Weeknd which went viral.

“Content creators already compete on social media platforms with diluted or non-existing royalty pools,” said Franklin Graves, an attorney and author of a newsletter focused on legal developments in the creator economy.

“By throwing an additional licensing payment for AI-generated music into the mix, it could potentially decrease any ad revenue share left after

TikTok’s cut and rights holders are paid,” he added.

Universal also had issues with TikTok’s content moderation, saying it failed to adequately deal with “the tidal wave of hate speech, bigotry, bullying and harassment on the platform”.

TikTok responded: «It is sad and disappointing that Universal Music Group has put their own greed above the interests of their artists and songwriters.

“Despite Universal’s false narrative and rhetoric, the fact is they have chosen to walk away from the powerful support of a platform with well over a billion users that serves as a free promotional and discovery vehicle for their talent,” it added.

Universal’s rival Warner Music agreed a licensing deal with TikTok in July 2023.



## Guyana pledges to support Palestinian refugees amid Gaza conflict

Guyana pledged to donate USD\$150,000 towards the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), in support of Palestinians displaced and affected by the ongoing conflict in Gaza.

“Guyana’s contribution to UNRWA aligns with our appeals for a more robust international response to the ongoing situation in the Gaza Strip and the protection of civilians impacted by the ongoing conflict. To this end, as an elected member of the United Nations Security Council, Guyana supports a cease-fire to facilitate humanitarian aid into Gaza,” the Guyanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Thursday.

Guyana said it has



Palestinians line up for free food distribution during the ongoing Israeli air and ground offensive in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, Friday, February 2, 2024. (AP Photo/Hatem Ali)

made several financial donations to UNRWA, which is the primary humanitarian agency that provides support for over 2 million

Palestinians, over the years and supports the Palestinian people in their quest for freedom and a secure homeland.

“The Government of Guyana looks forward to a new day for Palestinians and Israelis beyond the constant shadows of war. Guyana is prepared to work as a member of the UN Security Council and with the entire UN membership to accelerate the vision of two independent states living side by side in peace and security, and of a peaceful Middle East,” Guyana added.

Fighting between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip, which began on October 7, 2023, has claimed over 25,000 lives.

*cont'd from pg 12*

Agreement.

The United States said it supports Suriname’s efforts to address shared security challenges, including transnational organised crime, narcotics and human trafficking, money laundering, and corruption by enhancing the capacity of police and security services, including through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI).

“The United States commends Suriname for its endorsement of the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection; both sides reaffirmed their commitment to

promote safe, orderly, and humane migration in the Americas,” the statement said.

“We welcome Suriname to the Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation, a White House priority launched in September 2023,” it added, stating that the Partnership is a platform for Atlantic coastal states to work together “to address common challenges to realize interconnected goals of advancing a peaceful, stable, prosperous, open, safe, and cooperative Atlantic region, and promote a healthy, sustainable, and resilient Atlantic for generations to come.”

## Namibia's new President Mbumba sworn-in hours after predecessor dies

Namibia has a new president in the shape of Nangolo Mbumba just hours after, as vice-president, he had announced the death of his predecessor.

Hage Geingob, 82, died early on Sunday while receiving medical treatment at a hospital in the capital, Windhoek.

A veteran of the country's independence struggle, Mr Geingob had been diagnosed with cancer and revealed the details to the public last month.

The nation had lost a "liberation... icon", Mr Mbumba said.

He has since been sworn-in as Mr Geingob's replacement and will serve in the role until elections due later this year.

"I am not going to be around for the elections so don't panic," he said at a swiftly arranged swearing-in ceremony at state house, just 15 hours after the death of the president.

Paying tribute to his predecessor, he said "our nation remains calm and stable owing to the leadership of President Geingob who was the chief architect of the constitution".

"I take on this heavy mantle cognisant of the weight of responsibility."

Mr Geingob was first sworn-in as president in 2015, but had served in top political positions since independence in 1990.



President Nangolo Mbumba took the oath of office hours after announcing the death of his predecessor.

The exact cause of his death was not given but last month he underwent "a two-day novel treatment for cancerous cells" in the US before flying back home on 31 January, his office had said.

On Namibian radio, people have been sharing memories of someone they described as a visionary as well as a jovial man, who was able to share a joke.

Leaders from around the world have been sending condolence messages with many talking about Mr Geingob's efforts to ensure his country's freedom.

Among them has been Cyril Ramaphosa, president of neighbouring South Africa, who described him as "a towering veteran of Namibia's liberation from colonialism and apart-

heid".

Mr Geingob, a tall man with a deep, gravelly voice and a commanding presence was a long-serving member of the Swapo party. It led the movement against apartheid South Africa, which had effectively annexed the country, then known as South West Africa, and introduced its system of legalised racism that excluded black people from political and economic power.

Mr Geingob lived in exile for 27 years, spending time in Botswana, the US and the UK, where he studied for a PhD in politics.

He came back to Namibia in 1989, a year before the country gained independence.

"Looking back, the journey of building a new

Namibia has been worthwhile," he wrote on social media in 2020 while sharing a picture of him kissing the ground on his return.

"Even though we have made a lot of progress in developing our country, more work lies ahead to build an inclusive society."

When Mr Geingob first became president in 2015, he had already been the country's longest-serving prime minister - in the post for 12 years from 1990 and then again for a shorter stint in 2012.

But going by results at the ballot box, his popularity had declined.

In the 2014 election, he won a huge majority, taking 87% of the vote. But five years later that had fallen to 56%.

*cont'd on pg 15*





US President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden attended a repatriation ceremony for three American soldiers killed in a drone attack.

## Iran says US strikes are a 'strategic mistake'

By **George Wright**

Iran has called US air strikes on Iraq and Syria a “strategic mistake” after 85 targets were hit across the region on Friday.

The US launched retaliatory strikes in response

to last week’s drone attack on a US military base that killed three American soldiers.

The White House blamed the drone attack on an Iran-backed militia group.

The US and UK also launched a new round of joint strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen on Saturday.

Iran’s foreign ministry said the strikes on Iraq and Syria “will have no result other than intensifying ten-

sions and instability in the region”.

Earlier, Iraq said the US retaliatory strikes would bring “disastrous consequences” for the region.

At least 16 people, including civilians, were killed as a result of the strikes, Iraqi officials said.

A spokesman for Iraq’s prime minister said the strikes were a “violation” of his country’s sovereignty and that they would impact “the security and stability of Iraq and the region”.

While Syria said the US “occupation” of Syrian territory “cannot continue”.

According to a US mil-  
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Mr Geingob’s first term coincided with a stagnant economy and high levels of unemployment and poverty, according to the World Bank.

His party also faced a number of corruption scandals during his time in office. This included what became known as “fishrot”, where ministers and top officials were accused of taking bribes in exchange for the awarding of lucrative fishing quotas.

By 2021, three-quarters of the population thought that the country was going in the wrong direction, a three-fold in-

crease since 2014, according to independent polling organisation Afrobarometer.

Three decades after independence, the heroic narrative of Swapo having liberated the country was losing its appeal among a generation born after the event, long-time observer of Namibian politics Henning Melber wrote in 2021.

Swapo, in power since independence, had chosen Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah as its presidential candidate for November’s planned elections.

She has now been appointed vice-president and will become the country’s first female president if she wins.

# International

AROUND THE WORLD



*cont'd from pg 15*

ity statement, the US struck Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force and affiliated militias in Iraq and Syria.

Several US aircraft were involved, including long-range bombers that flew over from the US.

Seven locations were hit - four in Syria and three in Iraq - with more than 85 targets being struck, the US military said.

There have been no strikes on Iranian soil.

Since Friday's US strikes in Iraq and Syria, there has been one attack on American forces, a US defence official told the BBC's US partner CBS News.

The attack in question targeted US forces based at the Mission Support Site Euphrates in Syria using rockets, but no injuries were reported.

President Joe Biden said the US attacks "will continue at times and places of our choosing" but added his country "does not seek conflict in the Middle East or anywhere else in the

world".

The strikes come after three US troops were killed and dozens injured in a drone attack on a US base near Jordan's border with Syria.

US officials said the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an Iranian-backed militia group, was responsible for the attack.

The drone was Iranian-made, they said, and similar to the ones being supplied to Russia.

The militant organisation - an umbrella group of multiple militias - is believed to have been armed, funded and trained by the IRGC.

Iran has denied any role in the attack on the US base, saying it was "not involved in the decision making of resistance groups".

A spokesperson for Iran's foreign ministry said US strikes on Iraq, Syria and Yemen "merely provide for the goals of the Zionist regime", referring to US ally Israel.

Russia has called for an "urgent" meeting of the UN Security Council "over the threat to peace and safety

created by US strikes on Syria and Iraq", Moscow's diplomat at the UN, Dmitry Polyansky, said on social media.

Russia - a permanent council member - has become a close ally of Iran.

The US attacks came several hours after Mr Biden attended a repatriation ceremony for William Rivers, 46, Kennedy Sanders, 24, and Breonna Moffett, 23, who died in the attack last weekend.

More than 40 other service members were injured in the same drone attack, which struck the US Tower 22 base.

US Republicans criticised the timing of the retaliatory strikes, saying that the US had waited too long to strike back. American officials said any hold up was due to cloudy weather obstructing targets.

Some foreign policy experts believe the delay allowed Iran to withdraw personnel, potentially avoiding a wider conflict between the US and Iran.



## NOTICE

### **MEETING INVITATION TO THE CALYPSO FRATERNITY:**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Thursday 01<sup>st</sup> February 2023 – St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda.** The Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission is inviting all Calypsonians, Songwriters, Music Producers and Arrangers to a very important meeting on **Wednesday 07<sup>th</sup>, February at 5:30 pm at the John E. St. Luce Finance & Conference Center** on Factory Road.

All Fraternity Members are asked to be on time and in attendance as factors influencing the future of Calypso and Carnival will be discussed.



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



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

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## ASC and PMS claim last two schools football league titles

The Antigua State College (ASC) and Princess Margaret School (PMS) captured the remaining two division titles at the Antigua Recreation Grounds (ARG) on Friday to wrap up the 2023 Ministry of Sports Secondary Schools Football Championships.

After conceding two early goals, State College produced a remarkable effort to come from behind and claim a 4-2 victory over Ottos Comprehensive School in the final to capture the Under-20 Boys Division title.

Ottos Comprehensive School made a fast start by surging to a two-nil lead as  
*cont'd on pg 19*



The Antigua State College team after capturing the Under-20 Boys Division league title at the Antigua Recreation Grounds (ARG) on Friday, February 2, 2024. (Photos courtesy Ministry of Sports)

## Bethesda narrow gap on Second Division leaders

Bethesda narrowed the gap on leaders Freemans Village during the latest round of matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division League.

Following a goalless first half, Chunsae Martin scored in the 82nd minute to snatch a one-nil victory for Bethesda against Lingies CPTSA Wings at the ABFA Technical Center.

Their seventh win in nine matches ensures Bethesda remain in second place by advancing to 22 points, two adrift of leaders Freemans Village.

Soccer Academy, Golden Grove, and West Ham also recorded wins in the Second Division.

Tajjah Christian scored in the last minute (90th) to grab a one-nil victo-

ry for Soccer Academy against Glanvilles at the ABFA Technical Center.

Their fourth win in seven matches carries Soccer Academy to 15 points, while Glanvilles remain on six points after slumping to their seventh loss in nine games.

Golden Grove hammered the Celtics 4-1 at the Golden Grove playing field. Alex Asthon scored in the 13th minute, Attain Fabian had a 47th minute conversion, Te'rique Smith scored in the 85th minute, and Terrence Spencer scored in the second minute of added time (90+2 minutes) for Golden Grove.

The result carries Golden Grove to 12 points from eight matches, while the Celtics remain on six points after eight outings.

Following a goalless first half, West Hams prevailed 2-1 against the Earthquakes at the Princess Margaret School playing field.

The other two Second Division matches ended in draws. English Harbour and FC Master Ballerz fought to a 2-2 draw, with all four goals being scored in the second half of the encounter at English Harbour.

The result ensured both teams advanced to 15 points each, but English Harbour have played eight matches, one more than FC Master Ballerz.

Real Blizzard and Urlings battled to a 1-1 draw at the ABFA Technical Center. The result carries Real Blizzard to 12 points from seven games and lifts Urlings to 10 points from eight matches.



## Police and Jennings claim wins in First Division

Police and Jennings United recorded wins in the latest round of matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division League.

Dimitri Scotland struck a hat trick as the Police won their third consecutive match with a 5-1 drubbing of the Liberta Black Hawks at the ABFA Technical

Center.

The win allows Police to move above Attacking Saints from fourth to third place by advancing to 18 points from nine matches.

Jennings United came from behind to snatch a 2-1 win against the bottom team, the Young Lions of Old Road, at

the Jennings playing field.

Their fourth win in nine matches carries Jennings United to 14 points and moves from sixth to fifth place.

The result left the Young Lions winless and without a point, as they remain in the cellar after suffering their eighth loss in as many games.



The Princess Margaret School team celebrate with their trophy after capturing the Under-16 Girls Division league title at the Antigua Recreation Grounds on Friday, February 2, 2024.

*cont'd from pg 18*

Josie "Naymar" Arias and Teandre Elliott scored in the first and second minutes of the match, respectively.

But State College came roaring back and drew level by halftime with goals from Kylano Isaac in the 12th minute and Twon James in the 19th minute.

The State College boys continued their resurgence

in the second half by scoring two more goals while keeping the Ottos Comprehensive from breaching their defense to secure their victory and the title.

Javaughn Parker gave State College a 3-2 lead with a 52nd-minute conversion, and Nadre Thomas ensured victory by scoring his team's fourth and final goal in the 74th minute.

Irresia Allen and Role-

sha Humphreys both scored twice as Princess Margaret School hammered Antigua Girls High School 5-1 in the final to capture the Under-16 Girls Division title.

It was the fourth title captured by Princess Margaret School in the 2023 Secondary Schools Football Championships after winning the Under-14 and Under-16 boys as well as the Under-20 girls division

league crowns.

Both finals were preceded by a playoff for third place between the two losing semi-finalists in the Under-20 Boys Division.

All Saints Secondary School claimed third place by prevailing 4-2 on penalties against Irene B. Williams Secondary after both teams had finished deadlocked at 1-1 at the end of open play.



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



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Players of the Sandals and Inet Jennings Grenades football team. (File photo)

## Grenades open up six-point lead at the top Premier League

Defending champions Sandals and Inet Jennings Grenades have opened up a six-point gap at the top of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League.

Carl Osborne scored a late winner to allow the Grenades to maintain their perfect unbeaten run by snatching a 2-1 victory against second-placed Old Road in a top-of-the-table clash in the feature match of a triple header at the ABFA Technical Center on Saturday night.

Osborne scored in the fifth minute of added time (90+5 minutes) to snatch victory for the Grenades, which allowed the Premier Division leaders to avoid dropping points for the first time in the competition.

Osborne's goal broke the 1-1 deadlock that both teams had battled to

reach well before halftime of the keenly contested encounter.

Sherman Augustin put the Grenades ahead with a 21st-minute conversion, but Stefan Smith scored three minutes later to equalize for Old Road.

Their 10th win in as many games carries Jennings Grenades to 30 points, six more than Old Road, who remain in second place following successive losses after winning all eight previous matches.

Greenbay Hoppers and Pigotts Bullets also recorded wins in the other two matches on Saturday.

Yoandir Puga Estevez scored twice to lead the Hoppers to a 3-2 victory over Empire in a Gray's Green derby in Saturday's opening game.

Hoppers moved into fourth place after recording their sixth win in nine matches to advance to 18 points.

Empire, who won for the first time in their previous outing, will remain in the lower half of the table on four points after losing for the seventh time in nine matches.

Pigotts Bullets scored twice in the first half and held on to clinch a 2-1 victory against John Hughes in Saturday's second game.

Akeem Isaac scored in the 14th minute, and Seigel Rodney scored in the 31st minute to give Bullets a two-nil lead at halftime.

It was only the second win in nine matches for the Pigotts Bullets, who advance to nine points, while John Hughes remains on 13 points after suffering their fifth loss in 10 encounters.

The Premier League will continue at the same venue today when All Saints United clash with the Villa Lions at 6 pm.

## Australia beat Windies to seal ODI series win

SYDNEY (AP) — Sean Abbott exhibited his all-rounder skills and powered Australia to a series deciding 83-run win over the West Indies in the second One-Day International at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) on Sunday.

Abbott made a better than a run-a-ball 69 and lifted Australia to a competitive 258 for nine at his home ground after West Indies won the toss and opted to field.

The tall fast bowler then struck inside the batting powerplay before he picked up key wicket of Keacy Carty, who top-scored with 40, in his return spell to finish with three for 40 as the West Indies tumbled to 175 all out in 43.3 overs.

Earlier, Australian top-order batters couldn't convert good starts before the home side was rescued by Abbott's career-best ODI knock.

Spinners Gudakesh Moti with three for 28 and Roston Chase (0-40) conceded just two boundaries in 20 overs between them before Abbott's countercharge against the fast bowlers.

Jake Fraser-McGurk



Australia's Sean Abbott, right, plays a shot in front of the West Indies' Shai Hope during their One-Day International cricket match in Sydney, Sunday, Feb. 4, 2024. (AP)

had an eventful five deliveries on his ODI debut as he smacked a four and a six before edging Alzarri Joseph, who took two for 74, in the first over, and Josh Inglis (nine) was smartly caught by Roston Chase at point.

Fraser-McGurk made his debut in place of Travis Head, who has been released from the squad for

the remaining limited-overs games to rest ahead of the test series in New Zealand starting in late February.

Sutherland made his debut and replaced fast bowler Xavier Bartlett, while Hazlewood returned in place of Lance Morris.

Cameron Green (33) didn't hold back and smashed Joseph for three consecutive boundaries

ies down the ground before captain Steven Smith dragged Matthew Forde back onto his stumps as the West Indies pacers kept striking at regular intervals inside the powerplay.

The last match of the series will be played at Canberra on Tuesday before both teams compete in a three-match T20 series, starting at Hobart on Friday.