

PM CAUTIONS BARBUDA COUNCIL OVER THREATS OF CIVIL UNREST

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King Charles has been diagnosed with a form of cancer, says Buckingham Palace. *Story on page 5.*

PM cautions Barbuda Council over threats of civil unrest

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has issued a stern warning to the Barbuda Council that threats of possible civil unrest on the island over the government’s proposals to sell lands in Barbuda, will not be countenanced.

Council member, Devon Warner spoke on a local radio station recently, where he openly issued a threat to the prime minister warning that any attempts to disrupt the practice of communal land ownership on the island would be met with civil unrest.

“I want to put this to the Prime Minister of An-

tigua and Barbuda that the Barbuda Council will be prepared whenever he tries to implement the sale of lands in Barbuda, and the Barbuda people are waiting.

“I however, want to warn the prime minister; I want to put him on call (notice) today, for he seems to want to agitate things that might not be in the best interest of Antigua and Barbuda.

“I want to ask this question as I know he probably has some high-paid adviser on his team, is there anyone willing to tell the prime minister that this

could be rather dangerous,” Warner exclaimed.

According to Warner, the road the prime minister plans to take on this issue is ‘a very dangerous one’.

“This could cause civil unrest within the state of Antigua and Barbuda. He needs to rethink what he is doing and to rethink it seriously,” Warner warned.

He called for the practices that have been in place on Barbuda ‘for hundreds of years’ to continue.

In response, the prime minister again reiterated that the land issue on Barbuda is a ‘settled matter’ and that the lands are vested in the crown (the Cabinet) which has the authority to determine how lands on the island are to be handled.

“Let me speak on the issue of the law and lawlessness; one thing I can assure Devon Warner et



Prime Minister Gaston Browne al, there shall be no lawlessness in Barbuda under the leadership of Gaston Browne and the Labour Party.

“So those of you who want to incite violence and anarchy within Barbuda, be careful what you wish for because there shall be no lawlessness in Barbuda; that much I can assure you. And that’s a promise,” he emphasized.

AUCTION NOTICE

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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.

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Statement of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda on the Russia Ukraine conflict

5th February 2024

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda continues to be sympathetic to the situation of the people of Ukraine and will continue to support their rights and all efforts to achieve a solution to conflict with Russia, through diplomatic and legal means.

Issued by;
The Antigua and Barbuda Embassy
Washington, D.C
USA

A&B student gains acceptance into AOSIS Fellowship

Antigua and Barbuda student Carlon Knight has been accepted into the coveted AOSIS Fellowship programme where he will undergo a nine-month work/study internship.

Knight has been welcomed into the programme by the Chair of AOSIS, H.E. Dr. Fatumanava-o-Upolu III Pa'olelei Luteru of Samoa.

The Fellowship Programme will begin in New York on 4 March 2024 and will end on 31 December 2024. Knight will be attached to the Antigua and Barbuda Mission in New York, similarly, the other 2024 fellowship recipients will be attached to their respective missions.

Knight joined the Foreign Service of Antigua and Barbuda in 2014 before leaving to pursue graduate studies in 2017. He most recently held the position of Political and Economic Attache at the High Commission of Antigua and Barbuda in London.

He has completed undergraduate studies in Political Science and Economics from the University of the West Indies and has a master's in International Public Management and policy from Erasmus University as well as a certificate in Public Policy Economics from the University of Oxford, and a Diploma in Green and Sustainable Finance from

the Chartered Banker Institute in London.

He has also completed a certificate in ESG Investing from the CFA institute and is enrolled in Masters in Finance, Leadership and Management with the University of York via distance study. In September 2023, he was selected by the Global Diplomatic Forum to attend a Young Diplomats Leadership Forum and he has completed several training modules in diplomacy with the same organization.



Carlon Knight



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Local News



One-Nation: A significant boost to the economy

The One-Nation concert held in January generated much benefits for the country with many benefiting, including the government, vendors and the artists who performed.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne calls the concert, held on January 13, a ‘resounding success’ as it was not only a boost to the economy, it also provided quality entertainment to local patrons who turned out in large numbers to experience the event.

“The turn-out was outstanding, and this shows that the One Nation concert is the most significant event in the Calendar of Events in Antigua and Barbuda. My wish is that the opposition would stop carping about

the concert because it is significant from the standpoint of the amount of trade and commerce that are generated from the concert. It’s a good event for our vendors and artists, all of whom got paid handsomely. It is also extremely good because of its entertainment value,” PM Browne observed in his first public assessment of the concert.

He also noted that the One-Nation concert provided an opportunity for all strata of society to mix in an atmosphere of fun and merriment. “You have to understand that recreation and entertainment are part of life so it was good in that aspect as well,” he remarked.

Another benefit highlighted by the prime minister was the opportunity for cross-fertilization of talent where local artists are able to perform on the same stage as several international artists and are able to learn, as well as hone their performing skills.

From a financial point of view, the concert generated much more than was spent on staging it.

“We spent approximately EC\$450-thousand to put on the concert. However, the value in term of the taxes from the spending, I’m absolutely sure, would have exceeded the amount spent,” he revealed.

PM Browne now wants to ex-
cont’d on pg 5

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KEEP ANTIGUA CLEAN

King Charles makes cancer diagnosis public

Buckingham Palace has announced that King Charles has been diagnosed with cancer and that he is receiving treatment for the disease.

King Charles has been diagnosed with a form of cancer, says Buckingham Palace.

It is not prostate cancer, but it was discovered during his recent treatment for an

enlarged prostate.

The type of cancer has not been revealed, but according to a palace statement the King began "regular treatments" on Monday.

Buckingham Palace says the King "remains wholly positive about his treatment and looks forward to returning to full public duty as soon as possible".

He will postpone his

public engagements and it is expected other senior royals will help to stand in for him during his treatment.

No further details are being shared on the stage of cancer or a prognosis.

Although he will pause his public events, the King, 75, will continue with his constitutional role as head of state.

He was seen at a church

service in Sandringham on Sunday, where he waved to crowds.

He had a prostate procedure at a private London hospital more than a week ago.

The King had chosen to go public about his prostate treatment, with the aim of encouraging more men to get prostate checks, the palace said at the time.

He was said to have been delighted to have raised awareness about the issue, with the NHS website reporting a surge in issues about prostate conditions.

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tend an invitation to the leader of the opposition to become a joint patron of the concert in its future iterations.

He also believes that the concert has

the potential to be expanded into a Caribbean Music Festival to be staged in St. John's as Antigua and Barbuda's population mix gives it credibility in hosting such an event.

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Canadian's visit ends tragically

An elderly Canadian tourist has died after encountering difficulties while swimming at the beach on Sunday.

The woman's identity has not been revealed, but she is said to be 86 years old.

According to reports, the woman

and her husband went for a swim at the beach located just outside the hotel where they were guests.

While there, she allegedly encountered difficulties in the water.

She was subsequently rushed to Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre Centre, but was pronounced dead.

An autopsy will have to be carried out on the body to determine the cause of death.

The incident took place sometime after 11 on Sunday morning.

The woman and her husband arrived in Antigua on holiday on Friday.

Venezuelan embassy resumes in-person Spanish language classes



Tutor at the Venezuelan Embassy following the resumption of spanish classes on Monday



The Venezuelan embassy is this week returning to in-person teaching of Spanish language classes at its Old Parham Road location. The classes resumed on Monday and will continue on Wednesday.

An embassy spokesman said approximately 40 students are attending the classes in three levels; beginners, intermediate and advanced.

“Within the framework of the celebration of 25 years of the Bolivarian Revolution, we resumed face-to-face Spanish classes at the IVCC. This opportunity served to highlight the achievements of the revolution and the impact of unilateral coercive measures on Venezuela,” an embassy social media post stated on Monday.

The classes will run from 5:50 to 7:30 Mondays and Wednesdays.

The in-person classes were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During that time, the classes continued online.

GERM BUSTER

HABITS

HELP KEEP YOUR HOME AND ENVIRONMENT CLEAN



Put your toys and school supplies away neatly.

Clean up after you eat.

Make sure garbage goes in the trash bin.

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Russian oil getting into UK via refinery loophole, reports claim

By Michael Race

Millions of barrels of fuel made from Russian oil are still being imported to the UK despite sanctions imposed over the war in Ukraine, research claims.

A so-called “loophole” means Russian crude is refined in countries such as India and the products sold to the UK.

This is not illegal and does not breach the UK’s Russian oil ban, but critics say it undermines sanctions aimed at restricting Russia’s war funds.

The UK government denied there had been any imports of Russian oil since 2022.

But a spokesman said internationally recognised

“rules of origin” define that crude, once refined in another country, is classed for the purposes of trade as originating from the refining country.

The UK is among many Western countries to ban the import of all oil and oil products that originate in Russia in a bid to hit the amount of cash Moscow can generate from fossil fuels.

But two separate reports, shared exclusively with the BBC, suggest the rules on refining enable products made from Russian crude oil to arrive on UK soil.

The Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) said this “refining loophole” meant countries such as India and China,

who have not sanctioned the Kremlin, are able to legally import Russian crude and refine it into oil products such as jet fuel and diesel.

They then export those products to the likes of the UK and the EU.

“The issue with this loophole is that it increases the demand for Russian crude and enables higher sales in terms of volume and pushing up their price as well, which increases the funds sent to the Kremlin’s war chest,” said Isaac Levi, head of CREA’s Europe-Russia policy and energy analysis.

In a separate research paper, campaign group Global Witness estimated that throughout 2023,

some 5.2 million barrels of refined petroleum products that had been produced from Russian crude oil were imported to the UK.

Most of the fuel imported - 4.6 million barrels - was jet fuel, which the group’s researchers suggested was used in one in 20 UK flights.

Lela Stanley, campaign lead for the Ukraine team at Global Witness, said while “the UK government falls over itself to decry the war in Ukraine, it remains complicit in the sale of Russian oil by keeping this refining loophole open”.

“Every single pound spent on Russian oil helps Putin pay for his brutal war,” she added.

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The exclusive figures shared with the BBC from CREA estimated that during the first 12 months of the Russian oil ban from December 2022, some £569m worth of oil products imported by the UK were derived from Russian crude.

Both reports claimed the so-called loophole indirectly provided the Kremlin with more than £100m in tax revenues.

They also said the bulk of the imports came mainly from three oil refineries in India - Jamnagar, Vadinar and New Mangalore, along with nine others in several countries including China.

Most of the estimates made by CREA and Global Witness were based on analysis of oil shipment figures from data and analytics firm Kpler, with pricing data based on Eurostat along with some other data sources.

Both CREA and Global Witness said the two research papers were based on assumptions and admitted there were challenges and limitations around analysing such trade.

Figures from the International Energy Agency show that Indian imports of Russian crude have increased since the war in Ukraine began. In response to sanctions, Russia dropped its oil prices to attract new buyers.

Since the invasion, UK imports of Indian jet fuel and diesel have also risen.

Russia is the world's third largest oil producer. It extracts crude oil from the earth, which is then exported to refineries and turned into products such as petrol, diesel, jet fuel and various plastics.

The Russian economy is highly dependent on such exports.

Western allies have hit Russia with numerous sanctions including an oil price cap, which aims to prevent Moscow getting more than \$60 for a barrel of crude oil.

But there are questions over whether the measures are as harsh as hoped after the International Monetary Fund recently upgraded its forecast for Russia's economic growth in 2024 from 1.1% to 2.6%.

The sanctions have also had an impact on the countries imposing them, with prices for both oil and gas soaring as nations, mainly those in the EU, scrambled for new supplies away from Russia.

In January last year, trade statistics suggested the UK had imported no fossil fuels from the country, whereas in 2021 imports of gas, oil and coal from Russia to the UK were worth a combined £4.5bn.

A UK government spokesman said since sanctions had come into effect, there had been "no import of Russian oil and oil products into the UK".

He said in addition to "providing proof that goods are not of Russian origin, importers must now include the country of last despatch to ensure oil from Russia is not being diverted through other countries".

Brian Mulier, co-head of the international trade and customs group at law firm Bird & Bird, said rules of origin ultimately meant that Russian crude oil refined in a country such as India would be classed as Indian oil.

"A change in origin is determined based on substantial processing," he said. "Once Russian refined oil products are substantially processed off the water in a jurisdiction other than the Russian Federation, they are no longer considered to originate in the Russian Federation."

An oil industry source added that as the UK is not self-sufficient in diesel it has to buy it from somewhere, and if it doesn't get it from India it risks paying a higher price elsewhere, and passing the cost on to the consumer.

But Oleg Ustenko, economic adviser to Ukrainian President Volody-

myr Zelensky, called on Western allies of Ukraine to toughen up the current sanctions to include a full ban on all refined oil products derived from Russian crude.

"We have to do everything possible to cut off finance to Russia. We have to make sure they do not have enough cash in their hands to continue this bloody war against us," he said.

"It should be done in these countries who are... really our allies. Starting in the UK, EU and US. It's not difficult for the UK to introduce that kind of ban."

CREA's Mr Levi agreed that such a move would close the refining loophole.

Matt Smith, an analyst at Kpler which is the source of much of the research, said while it is impossible to separate which refined oil products are produced from Russian material, "it is fair to say at least some of the refined products going into Europe are produced from Russian material".

The UK was therefore receiving oil products from India that were "likely to have been refined from Russian crude", he said.

Mr Smith said while the so-called loophole was undermining sanctions, the situation was complex.

"It is impossible to extricate Russian crude or products created from Russian material from the global market," he said.

"Russia is also such a key player that the powers that be don't want to completely eradicate Russian supply from the global market because it would cause prices to spike."

Last year, some US lawmakers also pushed for a ban on fuel imports from refineries that use Russian crude oil, with US representatives Lloyd Doggett and Joe Wilson introducing a bill to close the refining loophole.

All three Indian oil refineries did not respond to the BBC's requests for comment.



Snap to lay off 'approximately' 10 per cent of its staff

Social media giant Snap, which operates Snapchat, has announced plans to cut "approximately" 10% of its staff.

The firm said in November 2023 it had 5,000 employees, suggesting around 500 people are facing redundancy.

It comes a day before Snap reports its fourth-quarter results - having reported a net loss of \$368m (£294m) in the previous quarter in October 2023.

Snapchat said the move would "reduce hierarchy and promote in-person collaboration".

"We are focused on supporting our departing

team members and we are very grateful for their hard work and many contributions to Snap," a spokesperson told the BBC.

According to its most recent annual report, more than 500 people work for the firm in the UK. It is unclear if any of the cuts will fall in the UK.

Jasmine Enberg, principle social media analyst at Insider Intelligence, told the BBC the layoffs "don't bode well for the state of Snap's business" ahead of its latest earnings announcement on Tuesday.

She pointed to rival Meta's latest results - which showed quarterly profits tripling year-on-

year, a surge in users, lower costs and higher ad sales - as «a tough act for Snap to follow».

"Snap is likely trying to garner some goodwill with investors, who rewarded its competitor for its cost-cutting measures and its continued 'do more with less' mantra going into 2024," Ms Enberg said.

She added that Snap's advertising revenues have been "slow to recover from the digital ad slowdown".

It is the second wave of mass redundancies from the social media company, which laid off about 20% of its workers in August 2022.

Snap has attempted to expand into products beyond Snapchat, including experimenting with augmented reality (AR) glasses, dubbed Spectacles.

But the firm has been unable to find a mass market for its other products, and it subsequently closed a division that offered AR services to business customers in 2023.

The latest job cuts come as companies, including Meta and Google, have been grappling with how to balance cost-cutting measures with the need to remain competitive.

According to layoffs.
cont'd on pg 11

UWI School of Medicine on cards for Guyana

CMC - Discussions are underway to bring the University of the West Indies' (UWI) School of Medicine to Guyana, President Irfaan Ali announced on Sunday.

The school will be located in East Berbice-Corentyne, in Region Six.

Ali made the disclosure while addressing the commissioning ceremony of the Pathology Lab at Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, three weeks after the groundbreaking for the New Amsterdam Hospital which he said would have a building to facilitate classes.

"When we launched the New Amsterdam Hospital, we said that in that facility we negotiated a building for teaching services, and that message went out regionally and globally.

"Today, I'm pleased to inform you that the University of the West Indies



President of Guyana, Dr Irfaan Ali (File photo)

School of Medicine has now approached us to be part of this vision in bringing their campus to Guyana and negotiations and discussions would have commenced," President Ali said.

"Importantly, in the

negotiations, we are now working on ensuring that the rates are the same as local students in Trinidad and Tobago so there will be equity and quality matched together."

Acknowledging that the University of Guyana

has its own School of Medicine, Ali remarked that "competition is a part of life and a necessity in improving quality".

There is no timeline yet for the opening of the UWI School of Medicine in Guyana.

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fyi, which tracks job losses in the tech sector, there were more than 232,000 job cuts in the industry in 2023. Elsewhere, last week the firm's chief executive Evan Spiegel was grilled alongside the bosses of X (formerly Twitter), Meta, Discord and TikTok at a US Senate hearing about child safety online, where senators' attention mostly fell on Meta chief executive Mark Zuckerberg and TikTok boss Shou Zi Chew.

Mr Spiegel said in his opening

testimony at the hearing that he and co-founder Bobby Murphy built Snapchat as an alternative to other social media platforms, where images shared were "permanent, public, and subject to popularity metrics".

The redundancies were announced by the firm in a filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission.

Snap said that the layoffs would affect staff globally, but did not specify who would be affected further.

"In order to best position our

business to execute on our highest priorities, and to ensure we have the capacity to invest incrementally to support our growth over time, we have made the difficult decision to restructure our team," the firm said.

In its filing, it said the cuts would be "subject to local law and consultation requirements" in each country, which could extend the process.

And it estimated the move could cost it between \$55m (£44m) and \$75m (£60m) in severance payments "and other charges".

Fire destroys houses in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Police in St Vincent and the Grenadines are investigating the circumstances that led to the destruction of two wooden dwelling houses in the village of Questelles on Saturday.

A police report says one of the houses destroyed was a structure made from plywood and covered with galvanised sheeting. It was occupied by Jason Samuel, 29, a truck conductor of Questelles, his common-law wife, and their four children.

The other house was a plywood structure covered with galvanised sheeting. It was owned and occupied by Samuel's brother, David Perry, 44, a truck conductor of the same address. Samuel and his brother were not at home when the fire destroyed the houses.

Neighbours were alerted to the fire



Scene of fire in Questelles, St Vincent on February 3, 2024. (Photo credit: Royal St Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force).

and attempted to use buckets of water to put out the blaze but were unsuccessful. Officers from the Questelles Police Station responded and assisted in trying to extinguish the fire.

The Fire Department later arrived on the scene and extinguished the blaze. Both families have been relocated.

The cause of the fire remains unknown at this time.

The Bahamas: Woman shot after she allegedly tried to knock down cops

Police in The Bahamas shot and wounded a 43-year-old woman after she attempted to knock down police officers with

a vehicle after being pulled over.

According to the Royal Bahamas Police Force, around 2 am officers were

alerted that a blue Volvo was reportedly stolen and seen travelling west along Marathon Road onto Independence Highway.

Officers responded to the alert and once in the area of Baillou Hill Road, the driver came to a stop.

It is reported as the officers exited their vehicle, the woman accelerated the Volvo in the direction of the officers, which resulted in her being shot by police.

The driver continued to speed away in an attempt to evade the police however, the vehicle was intercepted.

The woman was taken into custody and then to hospital for medical attention.



Senegal on the brink after elections postponed

By Yusuf Akinpelu

Senegal's reputation as a bastion of democracy in an unstable region is on the line as protesters clash with police outside the National Assembly.

Inside, lawmakers have passed a contentious bill to extend President Macky Sall's tenure and delay elections after he called off a planned election with just three weeks to go.

Khalifa Sall, a leading opponent and a former mayor of Dakar, who is not related to the president, called the delay a "constitutional coup" and urged people to protest against it. His political coalition has vowed to go to court.

Thierno Alassane Sall, another candidate, also no relation, called it "high treason" and urged his supporters to gather in front of the National Assembly to protest and "remind MPs to stand on the right side of history".

The proposal needed the support of three-fifths (i.e. 99) of the 165 deputies to pass. The ruling Benno Bokk Yakaar coalition, of which President Sall's Alliance for the Republic party is part, has a slight majority in parliament.

There was a heated atmosphere in the chamber, and it was reported that some opposition MPs had



Protests erupted across Senegal over the weekend.

been removed by security forces after they tried to block proceedings.

In the end 105 MPs voted for the proposal. A six-month postponement was originally proposed, but a last-minute amendment extended it to 10 months, or 15 December.

Mr Sall reiterated that he was not planning to run for office again. But his critics accuse him of either trying to cling on to power or unfairly influencing whoever succeeds him.

No sooner had he announced the unprecedented postponement than protesters marched across the capital, Dakar, to call for a reversal.

Senegal has long been seen as one of the most stable democracies in West Africa. It is the only coun-

try in mainland West Africa that has never had a military coup. It has had three largely peaceful handovers of power and never delayed a presidential election.

Until now.

In 2017, Senegalese troops led the West African mission sent to neighbouring The Gambia to force out long-time ruler Yahya Jammeh after he refused to accept he had lost an election. And in a region beset by coups, President Sall has been a key actor in the push by the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) to force military leaders to conduct elections and hand over power to civilians.

But Senegal's democratic credentials now hang in the balance, and a constitutional crisis is brewing. The

country faces a critical test of its electoral integrity and judicial independence, analysts say.

Tensions have been rising for more than two years following what the opposition say was a deliberate attempt to exclude them from the election by having their candidates charged with crimes they had not committed. One major opposition party was even banned.

The authorities have denied using the legal system for political gain and President Sall said he was trying to calm things down by delaying the vote but this does not appear to have worked so far.

"The decision has thrown Senegal into uncharted waters of a constitutional crisis," Mucahid

cont'd on pg 14

cont'd from pg 13

Durmaz, senior West Africa analyst at risk intelligence company Verisk Maplecroft, tells the BBC.

“The constitution requires elections to be organised at least 30 days before the end of the incumbent president’s mandate. Sall’s rule expires on 2 April. And the decree detailing the electoral calendar must be released 80 days before the vote takes place. Even if he appoints a transitional president after 2 April, the legality of it will be disputed.”

Authorities restricted access to mobile internet services on Monday to prevent what they called “hateful and subversive messages” from spreading online and posing a threat to public order - in other words to make it harder for protesters to organise.

Some residents tell the BBC they have been using wifi and Virtual Private Networks (VPN’s) to bypass the curbs but not everyone is able to do this.

The opposition has condemned the shutdown of the signal of private television channel Walf TV for “incitement to violence” over its coverage of the demonstrations.

Two opposition politicians, including former Prime Minister Aminata Touré, once a close ally of President Sall but now one of his harshest critics, were both briefly detained following the protests.

Critics fear that this clampdown could plunge the country into further political turmoil which, by extension, could be dangerous for the whole West African region.

Satisfaction with democracy in Senegal has declined sharply under Mr Sall. In 2013 Afrobarometer, a pollster, found that after Mr Sall had taken office, more than two-thirds of Senegalese people were fairly or very satisfied with democracy. By 2022 less than half were.

However, Durmaz says he does

not foresee the possibility of a military coup because Senegal has a “diverse range of political parties, a robust civil society and influential religious leaders who step in to mediate political disputes between the politicians”.

Twenty candidates had made the final list to contest the elections, but several more were excluded by the Constitutional Council, the judicial body that determines whether candidates have met the conditions required to run.

Prominent among them were firebrand opposition leader Ousmane Sonko barred because of a libel conviction, and Karim Wade, the son of a former president, who was accused of having French nationality. They both say the cases against them are politically motivated.

Despite the delay, it is unlikely Mr Sonko will be able to participate in the election, as his party has already replaced him with Bassirou Faye who is also in jail but remains eligible to run, Mr Durmaz says.

Mr Sonko has shown that he is able to mobilise his supporters on to the streets and so while he remains barred, tensions are likely to stay high.

His banned Pastef party has vowed to push back against the delay, calling it a “serious threat to our democracy” and “contempt for the will of the people”.

This is not the first time leading opposition candidates have been barred from running in presidential elections. Both Karim Wade and Khalifa Sall were jailed for corruption in 2015 and 2018 respectively, and barred from running in 2019.

This time, allegations of judicial corruption involving the Constitutional Council, brought by Karim Wade’s party, prompted a parliamentary inquiry.

President Sall justified the election delay by saying time was needed to resolve the dispute that ensued between the Council and some members of par-

liament.

Despite the widespread anger over the delay, Mr Wade’s Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS) has backed it, and if its MPs vote with the government, the bill could pass.

But Wole Ojewale, Dakar-based regional co-ordinator for Central Africa at the Institute for Security Studies, says the delay is not justified.

“The president is not in charge of the electoral process, and to the extent to which the electoral umpire has not raised doubts about their capacity to undertake the election. I don’t think anything should derail the political process.”

Mr Sall’s critics suggest he may have feared his chosen successor, Prime Minister Amadou Ba, was in danger of losing the election.

“His [President Sall’s] party is losing momentum. There are indications that they probably want to see how they can rejig, or probably replace their candidate,” Ojewale says.

He says there is still a window to conduct the election as scheduled. Otherwise, the country may be plunged into widespread unrest, becoming a police state where civil liberties are eroded, a view Durmaz shares.

Ecowas and the African Union have called for dialogue. France, the US and the EU have all called for an election as soon as possible.

However, Durmaz says President Sall’s international image would minimise any external pressure on him.

“I do not expect a firm push by Ecowas to reverse the postponement of the election in Senegal,” he says, noting that the credibility of regional organisations such as Ecowas and the AU “has been significantly tarnished due to their inability to confront the democratic deficit in civilian-run countries”.

All eyes will now be on the regional blocs to see how they treat yet another democratic headache in West Africa.

Atmospheric river: Storm kills three as California battles floods and landslides

At least three people have been killed by falling trees as a powerful storm moved across California bringing flooding, mudslides and power outages.

Fire officials have responded to over 130 flooding incidents and conducted several rescues since the storm began.

About six months of rain was expected to fall in Los Angeles and surrounding areas in just 24 hours.

Forecasters say heavy rain with life-threatening flash flooding will continue into Tuesday.

The storm is due to an “atmospheric river” effect, a phenomenon in which water evaporates into the air and is carried along by the wind, forming long currents that flow in the sky like rivers flow on land.

It is the second atmospheric river to hit California in two weeks.

Officials have issued evacuation orders for some hilly neighbourhoods in southern California, including in Los Angeles, where city leaders declared an emergency.

“It is vital now more than ever, stay safe and off the roads,” LA Mayor Karen Bass said on Monday. “Only leave your house if it is absolutely necessary.”

A state of emergency has also been declared by the governor in eight state counties.



The LA River is around 10-12ft above flood stage.

Three men have died from tree falls, including one in Sacramento Valley, and another when a tree toppled on to a home in Santa Cruz County, officials said.

Mudslides and debris flows have been reported. On Sunday, 16 residents were forced from their Hollywood Hills homes after mudslides flowed through houses, knocking buildings off their foundations and rupturing gas lines.

Witnesses have reported seeing refrigerators and pianos flowing through streets amid the debris.

Damage was also reported in the upmarket Bel Air and Beverly Hills neighbourhoods of LA.

Drivers stranded by flooding in Los Angeles and San Bernardino County had to be helped by rescuers.

A father, mother and

daughter were forced out of their car early on Monday and were able to climb into a tree to escape the rising flood waters, according to San Bernardino County Fire.

Fire rescue crews on the coast came to the aid of 19 boaters who became stranded on rocks near the Long Beach breakwater after their 50ft (15 metres) sail boat lost its mast in gale-force winds.

Lifeguards sent rescue swimmers to make contact with the group, who were then assisted into rescue boats with only one person suffering non-life threatening injuries.

Strong winds of up to 70mph (112km/h) have also caused power cuts and downed trees, though gusts were forecast to decrease significantly by Monday

night.

It follows what has already been a record-setting day for the state. The National Weather Service (NWS) said that on Sunday, 4.1in (10.4cm) of rain fell in downtown Los Angeles, surpassing the previous record of 2.5in set in 1927.

The storm has also forced schools in Malibu to close as some staff were not able to get there due to road flooding and closures. Schools were also closed further north in Sonoma County, near San Francisco, and in the city of San Jose.

San Francisco has also seen landslides occur inside the city, as well as the surrounding areas.

“Very heavy” snows would continue in the Sierra Nevada mountains, the NWS said, rendering travel “dangerous to impossible”.

2023 Secondary School Football Leagues conclude with awards ceremony

Several players and team officials were the recipients of awards for outstanding individual performances during a brief presentation ceremony to conclude the 2023 Ministry of Sports Secondary Schools Football League Competitions at the Antigua Recreation Ground (ARG) on Friday.



PMS forward Greg Williams with his Golden Boot Award for being the top goal scorer in the Under-16 Boys Division.

Recreation Ground (ARG) on Friday.

Irresia Allen of the Under-16 and Under-20 girls champions, Princess Margaret School, captured the Female Player of the Year title.

Allen also claimed the Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award for the Under-16 Girls Division and won the Golden Boot Award for being the top goal scorer in the same competition.

She finished with a total of 17 goals in the female under 16 league.

Eroy Gonsalves of St. Joseph's Academy (SJA) captured the Male Player of the Year Award. Gonsalves also claimed the MVP award in the Under-20 Boys Division and won the Golden Boot Award for finishing as the top goal scorer with 11 conversions.

Nafisa Quashie of Antigua Girls High School (AGHS), which finished as runner-ups behind champion PMS, won the MVP award in the Under-20 Girls Division.

Quashie also claimed the Golden Boot Award for being the top goal scorer in the same competition with a total of 10 goals.

Joshua James of St. Joseph Academy and Greg Williams of the Under-16 Boys Division champions, PMS, captured the other two golden boot awards.

James' 10-goal haul allows him to finish as the top goal scorer in the Under-14 Boys Division, which was won by PMS.

Williams scored a total of 13 goals to finish as the chief marksman in the Under-16 Boys Division.

Rolston "Lexi" Phoenix, who guided PMS to the Under-14 and Under-16 boys division titles, captured the Male Coach of the Year award.

His colleague, Devikka Tittle, who



PMS' Divikka Tittle, left, accepts her Coach of the Year Award from Minister of Sports Honourable Daryll Matthew at the Antigua Recreation Grounds on Friday, February 2, 2024. (Photos courtesy Ministry of Sports)



AGHS' Nafisa Quashie, left, accepts her Golden Boot Award for being the top goal scorer in the Under-20 Girls Division.

India beat England by 106 runs to level series

VISAKHAPATNAM, India (Reuters) - Jasprit Bumrah's craft and Ravichandran Ashwin's guile secured India's series-levelling victory by 106 runs in the pulsating second test against England on Monday.

Under Ben Stokes, England have made it a habit of chasing big fourth-innings targets, but scoring 399 against India's formidable spin attack in conditions that suit their craft was always going to be an onerous task.

Zak Crawley smashed a belligerent 73, while Ben Foakes and Tom Hartley produced defiant 36s down the order, but England were all out for 292.

England were cruising at 95 for one in their pursuit of a big total before Axar Patel removed nightwatchman Rehan Ahmed to trigger a top order collapse.

Ashwin, who took three for 72, then rattled England by dismissing Ollie Pope and Joe Root in his successive overs.

An unfazed Crawley batted with



India's Jasprit Bumrah celebrates the wicket of England's wicketkeeper Ben Foakes after taking his catch on the fourth day of the second cricket test match between India and England in Visakhapatnam, India, Monday, Feb. 5, 2024. (AP)

the kind of aggression that has become the hallmark of the side under Stokes.

India took a gamble when Kuldeep Yadav's lbw appeal against Crawley was turned down and challenged it, and were ecstatic after the decision was reversed.

Jonny Bairstow could not convert his start and England were effectively out of the game after Shreyas Iyer ran out Stokes.

Foakes and Hartley refused to throw in the towel, though, and the mounting frustration prompted Rohit to turn to Bumrah, who claimed three for 46, his pace spearhead.

Bumrah, whose match haul of nine wickets fetched him player-of-the-match award, did not let his captain down. He foxed Foakes with a slower ball to elicit a return catch and flattened Hartley's off-stump to seal India's victory in the second session on day four.

India would be mighty relieved to have levelled the series despite missing three key players.

Virat Kohli skipped the first two tests for personal reasons, while both batters KL Rahul and all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja missed the match with injuries sustained in the series opener in Hyderabad.

England would fly to Abu Dhabi for a short break before returning to India for the third Test in Rajkot, beginning on Feb. 15.

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guided PMS to the Under-16 and Under-20 girls division titles, claimed the Female Coach of the Year award.

Paula Jackson of All Saints Secondary, which finished in third place in the Under-20 Boys Division, captured the Manager of the Year award.

Antigua State College won the Under-20 Boys Division league title by beating Ottos Comprehensive School 4-2 in the final.

Right:

PMS's Rolston 'Lexi' Phoenix, right, accepts his Coach of the Year Award from Minister of Sports Honourable Daryll Matthew.



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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Crushers end Empire Nation unbeaten run in ABCA two-day contest

The Pigotts Crushers have ended the perfect unbeaten run of Empire Nation in the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) two-day competition.

After winning their first three matches, the Empire Nation's unbeaten run ended in an eight-wicket loss against the Pigotts Crushers in their fourth-round encounter in Pigotts over the weekend.

Empire were all out for 101 in 27.5 overs after being sent in to bat, with captain Kenrick Scott getting 37. Demari Benta snapped up four wickets for seven runs, and pacer Jawaki Joseph claimed four for 50.

In reply, the Crushers

declared their first innings at 222 for nine off 45 overs. Opener Uri Smith slammed 76 off 54 balls, and Essan Warner struck 60. Justin Athanaze captured five for 53.

Trailing by 121 runs, Empire were dismissed for 211 in 46.3 overs in their second innings.

Tyrone Williams Jr. cracked 67, and Joseph picked up four for 59. Set 91 to win, the Crushers coasted to victory by scoring 94 for two in 15.3 overs.

The WES Rising Sun Spartans and Jennings Tigers also recorded wins in the fourth round of matches. The Spartans claimed their second win of the contest by trouncing the Bolans



Uri Smith

Blasters by an innings and 204 runs at Rising Sun.

The Jennings Tigers recorded their second win of the contest by beating the Caribbean Union Bank (CUB) Bethesda Golden Eagles by 89 runs in Bethesda.

The Tigers were all out in their first innings for 105 in 27.3 overs after being sent in to bat. Jamaul Fernandez scored 47, while pacer Mekali Tonge captured five for 41 and Oshane Simon snapped up four for 13.

The Golden Eagles were all out in their first innings for 71 in 18.2 overs, with Teron Payne getting 34.

Left-arm spinner Glenton Williams bagged five for 17, and pacer Jedidiah Martin took five for 28.

The Jennings Tigers

made 125 all-out in 34.4 overs in their second innings. Tehrique Mason had three for 15, Simon claimed three for 25, and Tonge captured three for 36.

Chasing a victory target of 160, the Golden Eagles were bundled out in their second innings for 70 in 22 overs.

Matin grabbed five for 25 to finish with a match-haul of 10 for 53, and Williams captured three for 20.

The other two fourth-round matches ended in draws. Cup-holders PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks and the New Winthorpes Lions fought to a draw in New Winthorpes.

The All Saints Pythons and Combined School battled to a draw at Mack Pond in All Saints.



Kerry Mentore



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Green City's attacking midfielder Amali Colbourne (#7) scored the only goal of the match in their win against Garden Stars. (Photo Courtesy Green City FC)

Green City get second win in Premier League

Green City claimed their second win in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division on Sunday night.

Attacking midfielder Amali Colbourne scored the only goal of the match to give Green City a one-nil victory against Garden Stars in the second game of a Premier League triple header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Colbourne scored his team's winner in the 41st minute. Green City finished the game with 10 men after the expulsion of Chosniel Paul in the 85th minute.

Paul received a red card after he committed his second of two infringements for which he was cautioned (shown yellow cards) by the referee.

The result ensures that Green City advance to seven points from nine

matches. It was the third loss in nine games for the Garden Stars, who will remain in sixth place with 14 points.

Parham scored twice in the first half to record their first win in the competition by pulling off a two-nil victory against the Ottos Rangers in Sunday's opening encounter.

Parham capitalized on an error committed by Rangers' Tajae Edwards, who was given a red card and sent off for denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity in the 7th minute.

Edwards' action also resulted in the referee awarding Parham a penalty kick, which was converted by Kenja Benjamin in the 9th minute.

Steven Harriet doubled his team's lead by scoring Parham's second and final goal in the 43rd minute to secure their first win in nine matches.

The win carries Parham to six

points, while it was the sixth consecutive loss for the Ottos Rangers, who remain on eight points from 10 matches.

Mekhi Scotland scored a winner in added time to snatch a 2-1 victory for the Willikies Warriors against the bottom team, Swetes, in the last game on Sunday.

It was the second of two late goals scored by Willikies to deny Swetes their first win of the competition. Phil Nicholas snatched a late equalizer for Willikies when he scored in the 89th minute.

Following a goalless first half, Shafeez Joseph gave Swetes a one-nil lead with a 69th-minute conversion.

The result allows Willikies to advance to 12 points. Swetes remain in the cellar with two points after crashing to their seventh loss in nine matches.

ABFA set to host U-20 men's tournament

The Antigua and Barbuda Football Association (ABFA) has announced that it will be hosting matches in the highly anticipated CONCACAF Under-20 Men's Qualifying Tournament later this month.

Antigua and Barbuda will be hosting CONCACAF Group B, which is one of six qualifying group competitions that are set to take place at the ABFA's state-of-the-art Technical Center at Paynters from February 23 to March 2.

Teams from Suriname, Guyana, El Salvador, Turks and Caicos, and host Antigua and Barbuda will be competing in the group for a chance to advance to the next round.

After round-robin play between February 23 and March 2, 2024, the first-place team from each group will advance to the 2024 CONCACAF Men's U-20 Championship, joining the six pre-seeded top-ranked nations.

With only one team qualifying, the competition promises to be fierce as these talented young athletes showcase their skills and determination.



Players of the National Men's Under-20 team in training at the ABFA Technical Center at Paynters. (Photo courtesy ABFA)

Matches will be held daily at 10:30 am and 3:30 pm, providing ample opportunity for football enthusiasts and supporters to witness the action-packed games.

Antigua and Barbuda's Under-20 Men's team is already hard at work, undergoing rigorous training sessions under the guidance of head coach Kerry "Arab" Skepple and National Technical Director Sowerby Gomes.

With their commitment,

talent, and unwavering dedication, the national youth team is eager to make their mark and represent the nation of Antigua and Barbuda with pride.

Cliff Williams, the U20 Men's Tournament Chairperson, shared his excitement about the upcoming tournament.

He stated, "We eagerly anticipate an exciting and thrilling tournament where we will witness the emergence of our next generation of elite players.

"The CONCACAF U20 Men's Tournament represents an incredible opportunity for these young athletes to showcase their abilities and gain valuable experience on an international stage."

According to a media release, "The ABFA is deeply honoured to have been entrusted with hosting this prestigious event, which is a testament to our commitment to fostering the growth and development of football in Antigua and Barbuda."