

# IMPROVEMENTS IN WEATHER EXPECTED TODAY

*Story on Page 2*



A cross section of students at the Jennings Primary School. Technicians from the Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association (ABHTA) as well as the Schools Tourism Awareness Programme within the Ministry of Tourism have embarked on a programme aimed at providing primary school students with firsthand knowledge of the hospitality industry. *Story on page 4.*

# Local News



# Improvements in weather expected today

The inclement weather conditions that have affected Antigua and Barbuda for the past twenty-four hours are expected to give way to improvements in the weather today.

The Met Office has forecast gradual improvements during today (Friday) as the frontal trough that impacted the weather over the past 36 hours moves out of the area.

The system brought heavy rainfall to parts of Antigua, especially in the south and the central areas of the island. Barbuda recorded less than an inch of rain from the system.

“A frontal trough is causing unsettled conditions over the Leeward Islands. As this feature moves eastwards



beginning overnight, a reduction in moisture will result in gradual improving conditions over these islands by to-

day,” the Met Office reported.

The office is forecasting that to-  
*cont'd on pg 3*

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*cont'd from pg 2*

day (Friday) will be mostly cloudy with a 60 percent or moderate chance of brief showers in the morning becoming sunnier in the afternoon.

Forecaster at the Met Office, Lennox Josiah noted that the flash flood watch that was issued on Wednesday was discontinued at midday on Thursday. While there has been heavy rainfall in some areas, there have not been any reports of flooding.

The rainfall amounts up to 5:00 pm on Thursday are;

Coolidge	2.08 inches
Bethesda	1.22 inches
Cobbs Cross	1.38 inches
Diamonds	2.37 inches
Orange Valley	4.46 inches
Stadium	2.24 inches
Barbuda	.96 of an inch
Crabbes	1.01 inches

Josiah explained that at this time of the year, the region is impacted by these weather systems. The difference with this system that has been impacting the islands over the past 36 hours, has been that there have been what he termed 'enhancements' and it was because of concerns rising out of this development that led to the issuing of the flash flood watch on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the head of NODS, Sherrod James, said his department had not received any reports of flooding in any area, nor were there any weather-related activities to report.

"We opened a few of the shelters that are close to flood-prone areas on Wednesday night. This was

done as a precautionary move; however, no one took up the offer to go to or to stay in these shelters," he revealed.

In related developments, Director of Education, Clare Browne announced that the school system is expected to return to normality on Friday. This after the entire school system was shut

down on Thursday due to the weather.

"We expect that we will be able to reopen the schools on Friday as our information from the Met Office is that the weather will improve.

"In the event that the anticipated overnight showers continue into Friday, then we may have to revisit our decision," he told Pointe Xpress

newspaper.

The Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre suspended Outpatient Clinics (inclusive of Rehab and Oncology) on Thursday due to the inclement weather. It also announced that the suspension of services for the drawing of blood for tests will end today as these services too, resume at the hospital.

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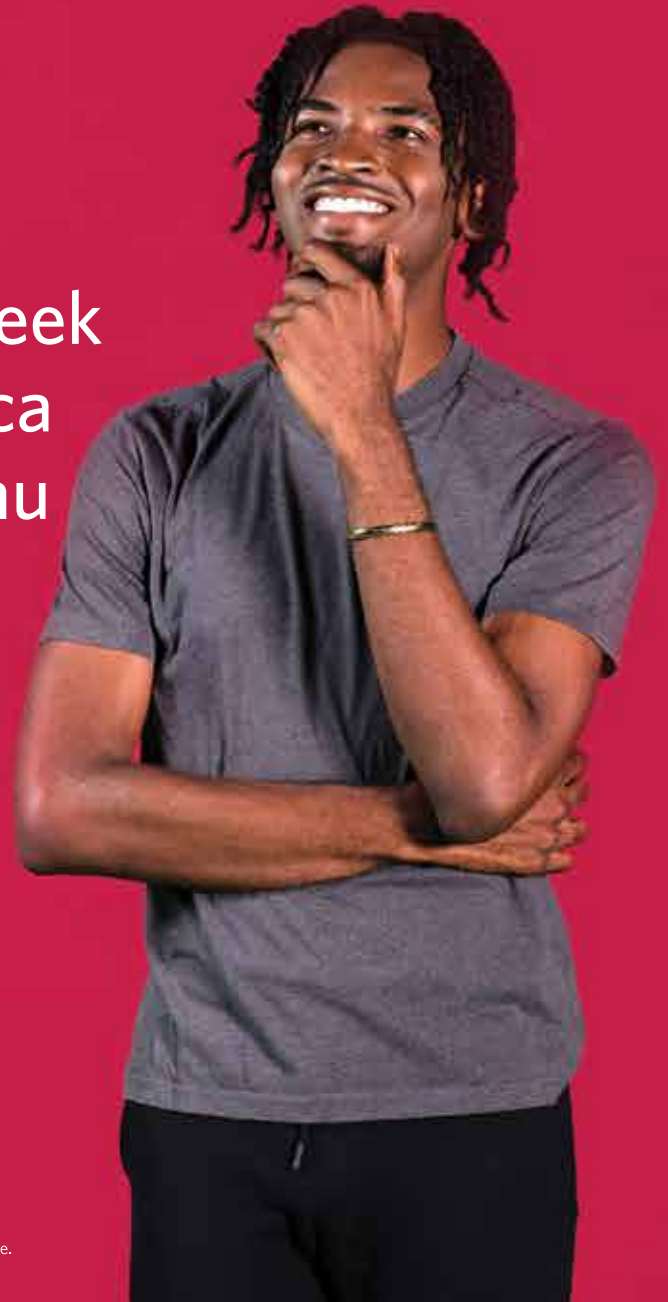
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Mrs Paula Joseph - Golden Grove Primary



Ms. Michelle Seaforth and Mrs. Paula Joseph - Newfield Primary.

## ABHTA, MOT jointly undertake awareness programme in the schools

Two entities within the tourism sector have combined efforts to undertake a programme aimed at providing primary school students with firsthand knowledge of the hospitality industry.

The programme brings together technicians from the Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association (ABHTA) as well as the Schools Tourism Awareness Programme within the Ministry of Tourism.

Leading this initiative is Paula C. Joseph, the Community Education and Training Officer, who is delivering crucial information profiling key areas of the industry, illustrating its economic benefits, and emphasizing how everyone can contribute to its success.

Minister of Tourism Charles "Max" Fernandez, remarked that "the Schools Tourism Awareness Programme has been in both government and private primary schools for some 25



Mr. Antonio Figus at the Cobbs Cross Primary School

years.

The main reason for visiting the schools is to sensitize our students about their role in the tourism product, since it is our main industry. The students are encouraged to keep their school campus clean, and by extension the country, by not littering.

They are doing this first for themselves because they have civic pride, and as a plus our visitors come and enjoy a clean Antigua & Barbuda. They are also encouraged to be polite and friendly to our visitors and

to assist with directions when necessary. The programme continues to be a welcomed feature each term at all primary schools."

During a visit to Jennings Secondary School, Rachel Browne, 2nd Vice Chair of the ABHTA, emphasized the association's commitment to educating the next generation of hospitality professionals.

She stated, "There is a myriad of roles available in the hospitality sector, and we are pleased to bring this wide cross-section of roles upfront and personal to the

students.

"In addition to school visits, we are also excited to involve our members in ensuring that primary school students in 5th and 6th grades have an opportunity to visit tourism businesses across the country."

The Primary School partnership programme commenced in the 1st term, with visits already conducted in sixteen (16) schools. The programme is set to continue throughout terms 2 and 3, fostering a sustained and impactful engagement with the students.



## The School of Midwifery Programme moves to UWI FIC

The Antigua State College’s School of Midwifery Programme, dormant for three years, has been resurrected and relocated to The University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus.

The woman who headed the unit when it was part of the ASC, Laurelyn Williams, announced that the school commenced teaching of the first cohort on January 22, 2024, and is set to conclude on August 1, 2025.

Previously integrated into the three-year Registered Nursing (RN) Programme at the Antigua State College, midwifery training faced a hiatus due to the programme’s transition to a bachelor’s degree. Consequently, nursing training was transferred to the UWI FIC, and the Antigua State College’s School of Nursing was dissolved in 2020 with no immediate midwifery training plans.

The revived midwifery training has been extended from fifteen to eighteen months, in line with global standards and recommendations from the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM).

Eleven nurses from various healthcare sectors, including the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre, Fiennes Institute, Clarevue Psychiatric Hospital, and Community Nursing Services, are currently enrolled in the pro-



Students attending class at the School of Midwifery at its new home, UWI FIC

gram. A three-year bond is mandated for nurses undertaking the training, ensuring retention in the country post-completion.

Upon successful programme completion, licensure exams are required for midwifery practice.

The Ministry of Health collaborated with the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) will review and update the Midwifery curriculum, aligning it with ICM recommendations, focusing on competency rather than content.

Identified competencies include autonomous practice, facilitating normal birth processes, providing anticipatory guidance, and managing complicated pregnancies.

The ICM, an international organization, sets standards for midwifery ed-

ucation and practice, aiming to ensure globally qualified midwives provide comprehensive sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, and adolescent health services.

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

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

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

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# Japan is helping Antigua and Barbuda tackle NCD's

Antigua and Barbuda is turning to Japan for assistance in its fight to combat Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD's).

A recent training program sponsored jointly by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Antigua and Barbuda government has sparked a new initiative aimed at improving healthcare standards in the region.

The training session was held in Japan towards



## Japan International Cooperation Agency

the end of last year and it brought together health professionals from various island nations, including Antigua and Barbuda. Dr. Anju

Smith, a community health specialist, represented Antigua and Barbuda in the programme.

The initiative, facilitated

by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, focused on developing countermeasures for the prevention and control of NCDs. Participants were required to conduct a situation analysis of NCDs in their respective countries as a prerequisite for the training.

Impressed by the high standard of community health services in Japan, Dr. Smith is eager to implement aspects of the Japanese healthcare system in Antigua and Barbuda. Specifically, she plans to introduce worker's health checkups, inspired by Japan's comprehensive healthcare approach.

The proposed two-year worker's health checkup, health promotion, and activity programme are scheduled to commence in February 2024 and conclude in November 2025. Discussions have already begun with JICA and the acting Chief Medical Officer to ensure the successful implementation of the initiative.

In addition to worker's  
*cont'd on pg 8*



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## Foreign Minister congratulates Grenadian counterpart on Grenada's 50th anniversary of independence

Antigua and Barbuda's Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene, has extended congratulations to his Grenadian counterpart Joseph Andall, on the occasion of that country's celebrations of 50 years of political independence.

"Happy Independence to the government and people of the Spice Isle. After 50 years of self-rule there is much to be proud of and the future looks bright," Greene wrote to Minister Andall.

On February 7, 1974, Grenada became the first territory within the Windward and Leeward Islands grouping to attain its political independence.

Antigua and Barbuda and Grenada are now part of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) which came into being in 1981.

Both countries have enjoyed strong fraternal relations as they share a common heritage and history.



Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene



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## Study opportunity for local journalists

The UK government is funding a programme to train regional journalists, including from Antigua and Barbuda, in the area of

investigative journalism. “The UK is happy to announce this opportunity to media professionals, a proud continuation of our

work and partnership with the Media Institute of the Caribbean.

This latest initiative, open to residents in Anti-

gua and Barbuda, is a series of workshops on Investigative Journalism,” a circular from the UK High Commissioner Representative’s Office stated.

It said the fellowship is designed for Caribbean journalists who wish to develop their knowledge within this area.

Interested individuals are encouraged to apply and explore this fully-funded opportunity.

The training will be done by the Media Institute of the Caribbean in Jamaica.

*cont’d from pg 6*

health checkups, the training covered various topics including dental perspectives on NCDs, epidemiological surveys, community health promotional activities, anti-smoking measures, and metabolic syndrome and exercise programs for the elderly.

Dr. Smith’s proposal for worker’s health checkups has garnered support from various stakeholders, including lab technicians at Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre and representatives from the Medical Benefits Scheme. Plans are underway to form a committee or working group to further refine the proposal and gather assistance for its successful rollout and completion.

The collaboration between JICA and Antigua and Barbuda health officials underscores the commitment of both parties to improving community health and addressing the challenges posed by NCDs in the region. With the adoption of innovative approaches inspired by the Japanese healthcare model, Antigua and Barbuda are poised to make significant strides in healthcare delivery and disease prevention.

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## Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine conflicts should not be chess pieces

By Sir Ronald Sanders

If governments, around the world have become confused about support for Ukraine in defence of its sovereignty and territorial integrity against Russian aggression, the US Congress is responsible.

Over recent weeks, a contentious negotiation has unfolded between Republicans and Democrats, overshadowing the urgent matter of authorizing continued funding for Ukraine. Republicans seek to tie increased aid to Ukraine with the closure of the US southern border, citing concerns about escalating migrant numbers. Despite Democrats acquiescing to this demand, Republicans, influenced by Donald Trump's campaign strategies, have hesitated to act on border closure, potentially using the migrant issue as a political tool against Joe Biden.

The theatrics exhibited by representatives of both the Republican and Democratic parties in the US Congress have been broadcasted globally, prompting onlookers to question whether Ukraine should consider alternative avenues to resolve the conflict with Russia. However, Ukraine faces a dire predicament with limited favorable options. Without adequate military support, it is left with the grim choice of either engaging in a potentially more devastat-

ing conflict with Russia or acquiescing to significant territorial concessions and ceding control over crucial aspects of its affairs to Russia.

Ukraine bears no responsibility for igniting this conflict; rather, it was instigated by Russia, blatantly violating international law and the principles outlined in the Charter of the United Nations. Russian President Vladimir Putin has frequently cited the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) into Eastern Europe as justification for his country's invasion of Ukraine, despite NATO never formally agreeing to Ukraine's membership, both then and now. It's plausible that NATO refrained from extending membership to Ukraine precisely due to concerns about provoking Russia, given that its 31 members, predominantly European states along with Canada and the US, aimed to avoid escalating tensions.

Hence, the more plausible motive behind Russia's aggression towards Ukraine, which commenced with the invasion and annexation of Crimea in 2014, long predating the current military escalation, is Vladimir Putin's persistent aspiration to absorb Ukraine into Russia.

Any act of aggression against a sovereign state warrants universal condemnation to preserve peace



Sir Ronald Sanders

and stop war. This principle holds particular significance for smaller nations, whose defence against aggression by more powerful entities relies heavily on worldwide adherence to international law. The toxic behaviour exhibited in the US undermines the credibility of the Congress in upholding international principles.

It is the behaviour of the US Congress that is causing other nations to ponder other choices for Ukraine.

Mixed-up with the global attitude to the Russian-Ukraine conflict is the Israeli war against Hamas in Gaza, which is now in its fourth month since October 7, 2023, when Hamas militants killed some 1,200 Israelis and took more than 200 hostages. Whatever Hamas thought it would

achieve by its actions, it succeeded in giving a license to Israeli leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, to rain down a war of hell in Gaza. Israeli military forces are now responsible for the deaths of more than 27,000 people. The war's death, destruction and displacement are without precedent in the decades of conflict between Israel and Palestine. Netanyahu's confrontational stance has sparked international outrage, prompting South Africa to file a case with the International Court of Justice. The case accuses Israel of genocide in its campaign against Hamas, alleging a deliberate intent to annihilate Palestinians in Gaza as part of the broader Palestinian community.

Netanyahu's persistent  
*cont'd on pg 11*



*cont'd from pg 10*

and aggressive stance against Palestinians, exemplified by his rejection of a Hamas ceasefire proposal as “delusional,” has stirred international frustration. Of greater concern is Netanyahu’s decision to intensify military operations in Gaza, despite the support of influential Arab states like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar for a peace plan that includes the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Netanyahu’s insistence on pursuing “absolute victory” and opposing a Palestinian state further complicates the situation.

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is actively pursuing what has been termed as “a practical, timebound, irreversible path to a Palestinian state,” as part of negotiations involving the US, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and Saudi Arabia. While there are no assurances that such a deal could be reached or effectively implemented, Blinken’s efforts are set

against a backdrop where the reputation of the US government has, in the eyes of many governments, been tarnished by its previous staunch support for Israel.

However, conflating the plight of Ukraine, a victim of Russian aggression, with the Israeli-Hamas conflict is a misstep.

Refusing to address the Ukrainian crisis unless Gaza receives comparable focus is counterproductive. What is necessary is equal global attention to both crises and a steadfast commitment to actively pursue their resolution.

As UN Secretary-General António Guterres emphasized to the UN General Assembly when outlining priorities for 2024: “Peace is the missing piece across the globe and across a spectrum of issues. People yearn for peace and security, peace and dignity, and quite frankly, peace and quiet”.

Representatives in the US Congress should reconsider their posture

of bargaining for domestic political advantage over global issues that is costing lives and disrupting the world. All other nations should refrain from treating the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine conflicts as bargaining chips. These crises demand urgent humanitarian attention and the application of international justice.

If the US Congress and governments around the world continue the present approach to these two conflicts, much more destruction and many more lives will be lost. This will exacerbate the current global instability, and potentially expand into other countries, pushing the prospect of global peace further out of reach.

*(The writer is Antigua and Barbuda’s Ambassador to the US and the OAS. He is also the current President of the OAS Permanent Council. The views expressed are entirely his own. For comments and previous commentaries, see: [www.sirronald-sanders.com](http://www.sirronald-sanders.com))*



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## Super Bowl: Usher promises to roller-skate during half-time performance

By Mark Savage

R&B singer Usher has promised to roller-skate during his Super Bowl half-time show, in Las Vegas, on Sunday.

He would recreate a skating sequence that had become a viral highlight of his recent Vegas residency, he said.

And the show would be a “crescendo” marking a “new beginning” in his 30-year career.

Previous Super Bowl half-time show performers include Katy Perry, Prince and Beyoncé.

But Usher will be the first independent artist to take the stage, having left his previous record label, RCA, to self-release his album, *Coming Home*, this weekend.

Interviewed by Apple Music’s Nadeska Alexis, he ducked several questions about his setlist.

“It definitely has been a challenge to squeeze 30 years in to 13 minutes,” Usher said, eyes hidden behind dark sunglasses.

He had been “very mindful of my past” and the “songs I feel people know me for”, as well as iconic dance routines from his career.

Asked about potential guest performers, Usher hinted he would be joined by singers who featured “on songs that became hit records”.

“That gave me the greatest point of reference,” said the singer, whose collaborators include Beyoncé, Jay-Z, Alicia Keys and Lil’ Jon.

Usher will play at the Allegiant Stadium, as the Kansas City Chiefs take on the San Francisco 49ers.

He follows Rihanna, who performed the 2023 half-time show while pregnant, and 2022’s all-star team of Dr Dre, Kendrick Lamar, Mary J Blige, Snoop Dogg, Eminem and 50 Cent.

Usher himself has previously ap-



Usher learned to skate for his Las Vegas residency, which ran for 100 sold-out shows.

He appeared on the Super Bowl stage. As a special guest with the Black Eyed Peas, in 2011, he performed a breathtaking leap over will.i.am, landing in the splits.

Country singer Reba McEntire will perform America’s national anthem. Post Malone will sing America the Beautiful. And Andra Day will conclude the pre-game concert with Lift Every Voice and Sing, often called the black national anthem. While dance musician Tiesto will be the Super Bowl’s first-ever in-game DJ.

Usher Raymond IV started singing in church in Tennessee at the age of nine. He joined a group called NuBeginning a year later and they recorded an album in 1991, which only came out after Usher hit the big time.

After the family moved to Atlanta, Usher was spotted at talent show and signed by LA Reid, the executive who also discovered TLC, Toni Braxton, and OutKast.

His first song, *Call Me A Mack*, appeared on the soundtrack to the Tupac Shakur and Janet Jackson film *Poetic*

Justice when he was just 15 years old, but his debut album, produced by P Diddy, tanked.

He tried again with producer Jermaine Dupri, who made his name working with Da Brat and Mariah Carey.

Together, they figured out a sound for Usher’s second album, *My Way*, that combined his buttery smooth tenor with stuttering, hip-hop beats that allowed him to show off his skills as a dancer.

The first single, *You Make Me Wanna*, was only held off the US number one spot by Elton John’s tribute to Princess Diana, *Candle in the Wind*, in 1997. The follow-up, *Nice & Slow*, made it to the top, and Usher never looked back.

Over the next decade, he sold 80 million records worldwide, won eight Grammy Awards and scored four consecutive US number ones - *Yeah*, *Burn*, *Confessions Pt II* and *My Boo* - which are all-but-guaranteed to feature in his

*cont’d on pg 14*



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# Regional News



## Grenadian PM proposes halt to raw nutmeg and chocolate exports

By Dillon De Shang

In a bold move aimed at reshaping Grenada's agricultural landscape, Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell has advocated for the cessation of nutmeg and chocolate exports from the island famously called the "Spice Isle".

Mitchell shared his thoughts on what Grenada's nutmeg industry can achieve on Monday evening as he presented "Vision 75", a roadmap for the country's development over the next 25 years.

Agriculture is a key pillar in the road map as Mitchell said it is important for Grenada to be able to feed itself.

"We produce hands down the finest nutmegs. But after 100 years, we still export our raw nutmegs. And it begs the question does exporting our raw nutmeg create one single additional job in Grenada? The

answer is no," he stated.

Nutmeg has long been hailed as one of Grenada's primary exports, contributing significantly to the nation's economy and global reputation. But, the country's nutmeg industry has struggled over the last two decades after Hurricane Ivan destroyed over 90 per cent of fruit bearing trees.

The nutmeg fruit can be used to create food, medicine and cosmetics.

Mitchell said he has suggested ceasing the export of raw nutmegs to the Grenada Cooperative Nutmeg Association (GCNA) but they questioned how they were going to pay farmers.

The prime minister said his government is willing to work with the GCNA to secure financing for at least two years to purchase all raw nutmegs to stockpile them and then work towards creating a processing plant where products such as nut-



meg oil, syrups and fat are created locally.

Mitchell noted that while Grenada cannot compete with major producers of nutmeg such as India and Indonesia in terms of volume it can make gains in other areas.

"We cannot compete for volume, therefore we must compete for value added. It is not that difficult, we do not have to wait 25 years to take decisions like this," he said.

Mitchell told the audience at his presentation that

his vision for Grenada's nutmeg and cocoa sector piggybacks on what Ghana and Ivory Coast, the world's largest producers of cocoa beans, did when they introduced a policy to reduce exports of the product in favour of local bean to bar initiatives.

Grenada already has a local chocolate production industry.

The world famous Belmont Estate produces high-quality chocolate products from bean to bar in a sustainable manner.

*cont'd from pg 12*

Super Bowl performance.

The 2010s were less kind - the title of his eighth album *Hard II Love* was unintentionally prophetic - but his reputation as a dazzling live performer remained.

After a stint as a judge on *The Voice*, he launched a Las Vegas residency in 2022, culminating in 100 sold out shows and, ultimately, the Super Bowl.

Usher will take to the stage midway through the Super Bowl on Sunday.

The match will start at 23:30 UK time (15:30 in Las Vegas). Depending

on how the game progresses, half-time will be about an hour-and-a-half or two hours into the action.

That puts Usher's performance at around 01:00-01:30 UK time (17:00-17:30 in Las Vegas).

In the US, the match will be screened on CBS and streamed on Paramount+. Viewers in the UK can follow it on ITV1 and ITVM from 22:45.

If you don't want to stay up and watch the concert live, the NFL typically puts the whole show on YouTube immediately after its broadcast.

The Super Bowl is always the most-watched programme on US television -

and the half-time show regularly pulls in more viewers than the match itself.

Rihanna got the biggest-ever audience in 2022, with 121 million people tuning in. Even when the bookings aren't as stellar - like Maroon 5 in 2019 - the viewership has been close to 100 million.

The platform is so big that many performers, including Rihanna, play for no fee.

Usher is definitely aware of the opportunity - he's announced a new album and a US tour to coincide with his performance. Fans are already clamouring for UK dates.



## Haiti leader urges calm as protesters call for his resignation

By Vanessa Buschschlüter

Haiti's Prime Minister Ariel Henry took to the airwaves on Thursday to urge Haitians to unite to "save" the country.

Mr Henry gave the national address as violent protests calling for his ouster mounted.

Haiti has been mired in gang violence for years.

In the most recent incident, police killed five armed members of an environmental patrol, which some say has morphed into a paramilitary group.

Tensions had been rising in Haiti in the days leading up to 7 February, the day that new presidents are traditionally sworn into office.

Haiti has not had a president since Jovenel Moïse was assassinated by Colombian mercenaries in July 2021.

Mr Henry had been chosen by Mr Moïse as his prime minister just 24 hours before the former president was gunned down. He was sworn into office two weeks after Mr Moïse's assassination.

He has been ruling the country since, repeatedly promising to pave the way for long-delayed elections to be held.

In December 2022, he signed a deal with representatives of political parties and civil society organisations in which he agreed to hold elections in 2023 in order to have a new government ready to be sworn in on 7 February 2024.

But 2023 came and went without elections being held and with Mr Henry arguing that worsening levels of gang violence made it impossible to ensure a free and fair election.

The repeated failure to hold not just presidential but also legislative elections means Haiti has not had a single elected government official



Protesters have been calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Ariel Henry.

since the term of the last elected senators expired in January 2023.

Anger about the political vacuum, as well as at shocking levels of violence, which according to United Nations figures have internally displaced almost 314,000 people, have fuelled protests.

"The country is being held hostage by gangs. We can't eat. We can't send our children to school," one demonstrator told AFP news agency.

Another protester told AFP that "this Wednesday is D-Day". "It's the day when Ariel Henry must leave office."

The already tense situation has been exacerbated by the return of Guy Philippe, a former police chief who played a key part in the ouster of former President Bertrand Aristide 20 years ago.

Philippe was repatriated to Haiti in November from the United States, where he had served a prison sentence after admitting taking bribes to protect narcotics shipments.

Since his return, he has been sharing video messages on social media in which he calls for a "rebellion" against

Mr Henry.

And on Tuesday, Philippe was spotted in the capital, Port-au-Prince, shaking hands with his supporters. He later called into a live radio show, telling listeners that "the fight is just the beginning".

Tensions rose even further as police confronted armed members of Haiti's Security Brigade for Protected Areas, known as BSAP, shooting five of them dead.

Some of BSAP's members are said to be allies of Philippe and the brigade has been accused of having evolved into a paramilitary group rather than an environmental protection agency.

Mr Henry has tried to rein in the brigade's power by sacking the head of the department in charge of the group, but that move just further angered its members.

He has also called on the United Nations to dispatch an international force to Haiti to help control the gangs, but so far only Kenya has promised to send officers.

And even Kenya's help hangs in the balance after a court blocked the deployment.

## State of emergency declared in Iceland after volcanic eruption

A state of emergency has been declared in Iceland after lava from a volcanic eruption damaged key hot water pipes.

Thousands of people in the Reykjanes Peninsula have been urged to limit their hot water and electricity use as the pipes could take days to fix.

There are concerns that other crucial pipelines close to the Svartsengi power station could be affected if the lava flow does not ease soon.

It is the third such eruption on the peninsula since December.

Aerial video of the area shows a new 3km-long (1.8 mile) fissure - a crack in the Earth's surface - spraying streams of lava high up into the air.

Smoke illuminated by the lava could be seen in the capital, Reykjavik - roughly 40km (25 miles) away.

The Blue Lagoon, one of Iceland's top tourist attractions, has been forced to close again due to the lava flows. It is expected to remain closed on Friday.

Iceland's Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management said it was trying to figure out how to guarantee the hot water supply to more than 20,000 people who have reportedly had their access disrupted.

Schools in the areas affected by the lack of hot water will also remain shut, the Icelandic National Broadcasting Service (RUV) reported.

RUV also said that the Keflavik Airport had been impacted but that its services were running as usual.

Volcanologist Dr Evgenia Ilyinskaya told the BBC that while the Svartsengi power station itself is protected to some extent by barriers that have been built around it, there are pipes providing hot water to a further 30,000 people across the peninsula



Smoke from the eruption could be seen from the capital, Reykjavik.

that are at more immediate risk.

However, she said the hope was that the speed of the lava flow would soon drop off, in a similar way to earlier eruptions, and the pipeline would be undamaged.

According to the Icelandic Meteorological Office, the strength of the eruption is decreasing.

All of the recent eruptions in southern Iceland have involved lava pouring from fissures, rather than volcanic explosions that cause ash to be sent into the atmosphere - such as the country saw in 2011.

Dr Ilyinskaya, an associate professor of volcanology at Leeds University, said Thursday's eruption was in the same general area as one in December - meaning it is unlikely to cause more damage to the abandoned town of Grindavik.

Three homes in the town were destroyed last month when molten lava spewed through two other fissures.

Some of the around 4,000 residents of Grindavik have told the BBC they do not expect to ever return to

live in their homes.

Iceland has 33 active volcano systems and sits over what's known as the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, the boundary between two of the largest tectonic plates on the planet.

The last time the Reykjanes Peninsula had a period of volcanic activity was 800 years ago - and the eruptions went on for decades.

This is now the sixth eruption since 2021, and scientists believe that the area is entering a new volcanic era.

"This is proceeding as expected at the moment," Professor Tamsin Mather, a volcanologist from the University of Oxford, said of the volcanic activity.

"What we're expecting is a series of these relatively small, relatively short-lived eruptions, pushing out lava flows through fissures and building up the peninsula further."

The question is how long such activity will go on for. Scientists think it could last for many years or even centuries.



# Five US Marines dead in California helicopter crash

By Nadine Yousif

Five Marines flying from Nevada to California have died in a helicopter crash, US military officials confirmed.

A search-and-rescue operation was launched for the CH-53E Super Stallion after it was “reported overdue” on Wednesday.

The helicopter was on a training flight from a Nevada Air Force base to an air station near San Diego.

Officials said its last reported location was received on Tuesday evening at about 23:30 local time.

The helicopter was later found on Wednesday morning in the snow-covered California mountains - about 45 miles (74km) from its destination.

“It is with a heavy heart and profound sadness that I share the loss of five outstanding Marines from 3d Marine Aircraft Wing and the ‘Flying Tigers,’” Maj Gen Michael J Borgschulte, commander of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, said in a statement on Thursday.

As the Marines’ families are being notified, their names were not immediately released.

US president Joe Biden offered his condolences to the families of the troops after the news broke on Thursday morning.

“Our service members



represent the very best of our nation - and these five Marines were no exception,” Mr Biden said in a statement.

Efforts are now underway to recover the troops’ bodies, Maj Gen Borgschulte said. The Marines have also launched an investigation into the crash.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin acknowledged the ongoing investigation in a statement on Thursday afternoon.

He added that the incident served as a reminder of service members’ sacrifice and said his “prayers are with these brave Marines and their families, loved ones, and teammates”.

The five service members were assigned to Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 361, part of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

They had departed for Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in San Diego late

on Tuesday following a training at Creech Air Force Base near Las Vegas.

The Marine Corps said that the helicopter was reported overdue at 01:00 local time (08:00 GMT) on Wednesday. Fire crews were then alerted to the missing aircraft shortly thereafter at 02:20 local time.

The crews were dispatched to an area near Lake Morena, California. They were able to locate the aircraft hours later near Pine Valley, California, in the Cuyamaca Mountains.

Rescuers were “using ground and aviation assets to locate the aircrew in co-ordination with the San Diego County Sheriff’s Department and multiple federal, state and local agencies”, the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing had said in a statement.

The search efforts were hindered by heavy snow

and wintry conditions in the area, officials said.

The incident comes in the wake of a powerful winter storm in the region that dumped heavy rain and several inches of snow in mountainous areas.

The CH-53E Super Stallion is among the largest helicopters used by the military. Over the past three decades, it has often been brought in for heavy-lifting operations.

But it has a chequered safety record, and there have been several serious accidents involving the helicopter in recent years.

In April 2018, four troops were killed when their Super Stallion crashed near El Centro, California, while on a training mission.

In a separate incident in January 2016, 12 Marines were killed when two Super Stallions collided over the Pacific near Oahu in Hawaii.

# Sports News



## Andrew continues rich batting form for AGS in school cricket

Fresh from his impressive display for the West Indies at the ICC Men's Under-19 World Cup in South Africa, Jewel Andrew has continued his productive batting form for the Antigua Grammar School in the Inter-School Cricket Championship.

The 17-year-old Andrew, who was the leading run scorer for the West Indies at the Under-19 World Cup with a total of 207 runs at an average of 69, slammed a century for the Antigua Grammar School in their two-day match against Clare Hall Secondary, just mere hours after arriving back home in Antigua from South Africa on Tuesday.

Andrew slammed 114, and Matthew Miller struck 104 not out to guide An-



Jewel Andrew

tigua Grammar School to 279 for six on the opening day of the two-day match. Amos Christian captured four wickets for 60 runs.

However, the players

of Clare Hall Secondary failed to show up on the second day and forfeited the match to Antigua Grammar School.

Jennings Secondary

beat Pares Secondary by 78 runs. Jennings were all out in their first innings for 66 in 18 overs. Dale Johashen made 15. William Pitman snapped up four wickets for one run, and Mekali Tonge captured four for 23.

In reply, Pares Secondary were all out for just 31 in 9.2 overs, with Pitman getting 13. Omarie Browne picked up four wickets for five runs, and Johashen claimed three for 11.

Jennings Secondary declared their second innings on 98 for eight in 16.3 overs. Johashen made 20, and Tanez Francis scored 16. Jevonte Joseph took two for 18, and Pitman captured two for 39.

Set 134 runs to win, Pares Secondary were all

*cont'd on pg 19*

## Urlings trounce ABAYA in Second Division League

Urlings claimed victory by the biggest margin in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division on Wednesday.

Kion Jackson scored twice as Urlings trounced ABAYA 6-0 at the Parham playing field. Jackson scored in the 48th and 55th minutes after Jahmiah Daniel converted a penalty kick in the 41st minute.

Conrad Willock scored in the 57th minute to make it four-nil, and goals by Shaquan Telemaque in the 58th minute and Devlyn Williams in the 76th minute completed the rout.

It was the third win in nine match-

es for Urlings, who will advance to 13 points, while ABAYA will remain third from the bottom of the standings on three points after suffering their eighth loss in nine games.

Golden Grove, Blackburn Palace, and Glanvilles also recorded wins in the latest round of Second Division matches.

Tyler Anthony struck a hat trick to propel Golden Grove to a five-nil drubbing of the JSC Progressors at the ABFA Technical Center.

Their fifth win in nine matches carries Golden Grove to 15 points, and the JSC Progressors will remain second from the bottom of the league

without a win or a point after tumbling to their ninth loss in as many games.

Blackburn Palace snatched a 2-1 victory against FC Master Ballerz at the Princess Margaret School playing field.

Jahren Thomas scored twice as Glanvilles came from behind to secure their third win in 10 matches by pulling off a 3-1 victory against Belmont FC at the ABFA Technical Center. Due to inclement weather conditions, all matches scheduled for yesterday (Thursday), February 8, were postponed by the ABFA until further notice.



## Clare Hall Secondary maintain winning form in Junior Boys Division

Defending champions Clare Hall Secondary School recorded another win in the Junior Boys Division of the Cool and Smooth Inter-School Basketball Championships on Wednesday.

Clare Hall Secondary prevailed 31-22 against the second team of the Antigua Grammar School in the first of four games at the JSC Sports Complex.

Aiden Tonge sank 12 points, and Tajahron Davis had 11 points for Clare Hall Secondary School.

The first team of the Antigua Grammar School recorded two wins in the same division on Wednesday.

They romped to an emphatic 55-13 victory against Sir Novelle Richards Academy in the day's second encounter.

Najee Simons shot a game-high 22 points, and Roen Christopher converted 10 points for the first team of Antigua Grammar School. Jaron Morris had five points for Sir Novelle Richards Academy.

The first team of Antigua Grammar School also claimed a 46-15 victory against St. Mary's Secondary School.

Najee Simons scored 21 points, and Victor Edwards produced 14 points for Antigua Grammar School's first team. Yohan Nicholas had seven points for St. Mary's Secondary School.

Princess Margaret School trounced Ottos Comprehensive School 55-19 in the day's final encounter.

Craig Massiah shot a game-high 27 points, Tyrese White scored 12 points, and Malinga Bruney chipped in with 10 points for Princess Margaret School. Joel Boreland had eight points for Ottos Comprehensive School.

Meanwhile, the first team of Antigua Girls High School (AGHS) and Princess Margaret School (PMS) both claimed wins in the 18 and Under Division of the Cool and Smooth Inter-School Netball League at the YMCA Sports Complex on Wednesday.



Aiden Tonge, left, and Tajahron Davis were the leading scorers for Clare Hall Secondary against Antigua Grammar School in the Junior Boys Division of the Cool and Smooth Inter-School Basketball Championships at the JSC Sports Complex on Wednesday, February 7, 2024. (Photo courtesy School Basketball Unit)

The AGHS first team recorded a 21-4 victory against the second team of the AGHS. Goal shooter Joy Shaw sank 18 of her 29 attempts, and goal attack Keandra Aska scored three of her four shots for the first team of Antigua Girls High School.

Goal attack Terisha

converted four of her 10 attempts for the second team of Antigua Girls High School.

Princess Margaret School prevailed 10-6 against Ottos Comprehensive School. Goal shooter Kenithea Deschamps scored four of her five attempts, and Khaiva Knowles converted four of her eight shots for Princess Margaret School.

Goal shooter Jessica Massicott sank four of her eight attempts for Ottos Comprehensive School.

### *cont'd from pg 18*

out in their second innings for 55 in 11.4 overs. Tonge made 31. Giovanni Thomas snapped up four wickets for one run, and Francis claimed two for 17.

Princess Margaret School claimed

first-innings honours in their drawn encounter with Ottos Comprehensive School.

The match between Irene B. Williams Secondary and Sir Novelle Richards Academy was not played because of one of the school's sports day activities.



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## National swim team depart for World Aquatic Championships

Four swimmers will be representing Antigua and Barbuda at the World Aquatic Championships, which are being held in Doha, Qatar, from February 11 to 18. The team comprises Ellie Shaw, Aunjelique Liddie, Stefano Mitchell, and Jadon Wuilliez.

Nelson Molina is serving as the team's coach, with Daniella Shaw acting as the team manager. The Antigua and Barbuda swimmers departed for Doha on Wednesday night.

In the competition, Ellie Shaw will compete in the female 50 and 100-meter breaststroke races, while Aunjelique Liddie will participate in the 50 and 100-meter freestyle events.

Stefano Mitchell will



Traveling contingents pose with members of the Antigua and Barbuda Swimming Federation (ABSF). From left to right: National Coach Nelson Molina, Team Manager Daniella Shaw, ABSF VP Pool Kem Warner, swimmer Ellie Shaw, swimmer Aunjelique Liddie, President ABSF Edith Clashing, and Treasurer ABSF Pooja Tivary. (Photo courtesy of ABSF)

compete in the men's 50 and 100-meter freestyle events, and Jadon Wuilliez will represent in the 50 and 100-me-

ter breaststroke races.

It is noteworthy that the Doha Championships, which run from February

2-18, 2024, are a pre-qualifier for this summer's Olympic Games in Paris, France.

### cont'd from pg 22

"As an institution that cherishes these very values, AUA stands firmly in support of this inspiring event. We believe it will continue to serve as a beacon of hope, perseverance, and unity for our entire community, inspiring future generations and empowering individuals of all abilities to achieve their full potential."

This year, the addition of Dwayne Simon, Andre's brother, to the Rohrman Triathlon organizing committee enriches the event with a deeper connection to its founding vision and enhances the commitment to its enduring legacy.

"Joining the Rohrman Triathlon team is not just an honour, but a heartfelt journey for me. It's about continuing Andre's dream and honouring Jon-

athan's memory. We aim to inspire and unite through this event, just as they did," Simon said.

The Rohrman Triathlon, which began in 2012 with 70 athletes, now attracts nearly 400 participants. It epitomizes the spirit of bringing people together through sport, promoting healthy lifestyles, and leveraging sports tourism for the benefit of Antigua and Barbuda.

The event features 10 triathlons, including Olympic and sprint distances, as well as categories for various age groups starting from 6 and under, and includes both team and individual competitions.

Adding to the excitement, this year introduces a Day 2 event with diverse options for participants. Athletes can choose between an approximate 10k

swim from Morris Bay to Ffreyes Beach, a road run/walk, or a trail hike/run, all starting at Morris Bay and culminating at the scenic Ffreyes Beach.

These additions offer new challenges and opportunities for participation, further expanding the event's appeal.

The Rohrman Triathlon stands as a non-profit initiative, committed to fostering community spirit, athletic development, and the enriching experience of sports tourism in Antigua and Barbuda.

This prestigious event is also supported by several generous sponsors, including Aqua Panna, Pellegrino, Island Provision, Ticketing, Margrie Hunt, The Athlete's Foot, SO Ltd., HG Paints, Hurricane Power Athletic Club, and Frank Wall Ltd.

## AUA commits to help revive Rohrman Triathlon in 2024

The American University of Antigua (AUA) is partnering with the Rohrman Sports Association to revive the Rohrman Triathlon later this year.

The Rohrman Triathlon is scheduled to make a return at Ffreyes Beach on Saturday, August 24, 2024. This would mark the event's triumphant comeback following a three-year absence.

It would be the first staging of the event, which was last held in 2020 and was halted due to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vernon Solomon, Vice President of Administration, Director, Emergency Medicine Training Centre & Clinical Simulations, and AHA ITC Programmes Director at AUA, expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "The revival of the Rohrman Triathlon holds pro-



Vernon Solomon, right, with winners on the podium during a presentation of awards at one of the Rohrman Triathlon events.



From left to right: Cofounders of the Rohrman Triathlon, the late Jonathan Rohr (left), the late Andre Simon, center, and Wayne Henry. (Photos courtesy Rohrman Triathlon)

found significance for the American University of Antigua.

"It embodies the very essence of the AUA spirit – resilience, dedication, and unity – and serves as a powerful testament to the enduring spirit of those we've lost and a celebration of the values they held dear.

"We are deeply proud to support this event, which not only fosters a spirit of resilience and community but also encourages healthy living and reminds us of the transformative power of coming together."

The Rohrman Triathlon, a festival of endurance and spirit, is dedicated to the memory of its co-founder and late AUA student, Jonathan Rohr.

Rohr's vision and passion for triathlon continue to inspire the event,

even after his untimely passing before the inaugural event.

The 2024 edition holds special significance as it celebrates the legacy of another founding member, Andre Simon, who played a crucial role in the event throughout the years. Tragically, Simon passed away in 2023, a year after a severe cycling accident.

Solomon added, "We are particularly moved by the dedication of the event's organizers and participants in keeping the legacies of Jonathan Rohr and Andre Simon alive.

"The exciting direction the triathlon is taking, emphasizing inclusivity and accessibility, further aligns with our mission of fostering collaboration and well-being for all.

*cont'd on pg 21*