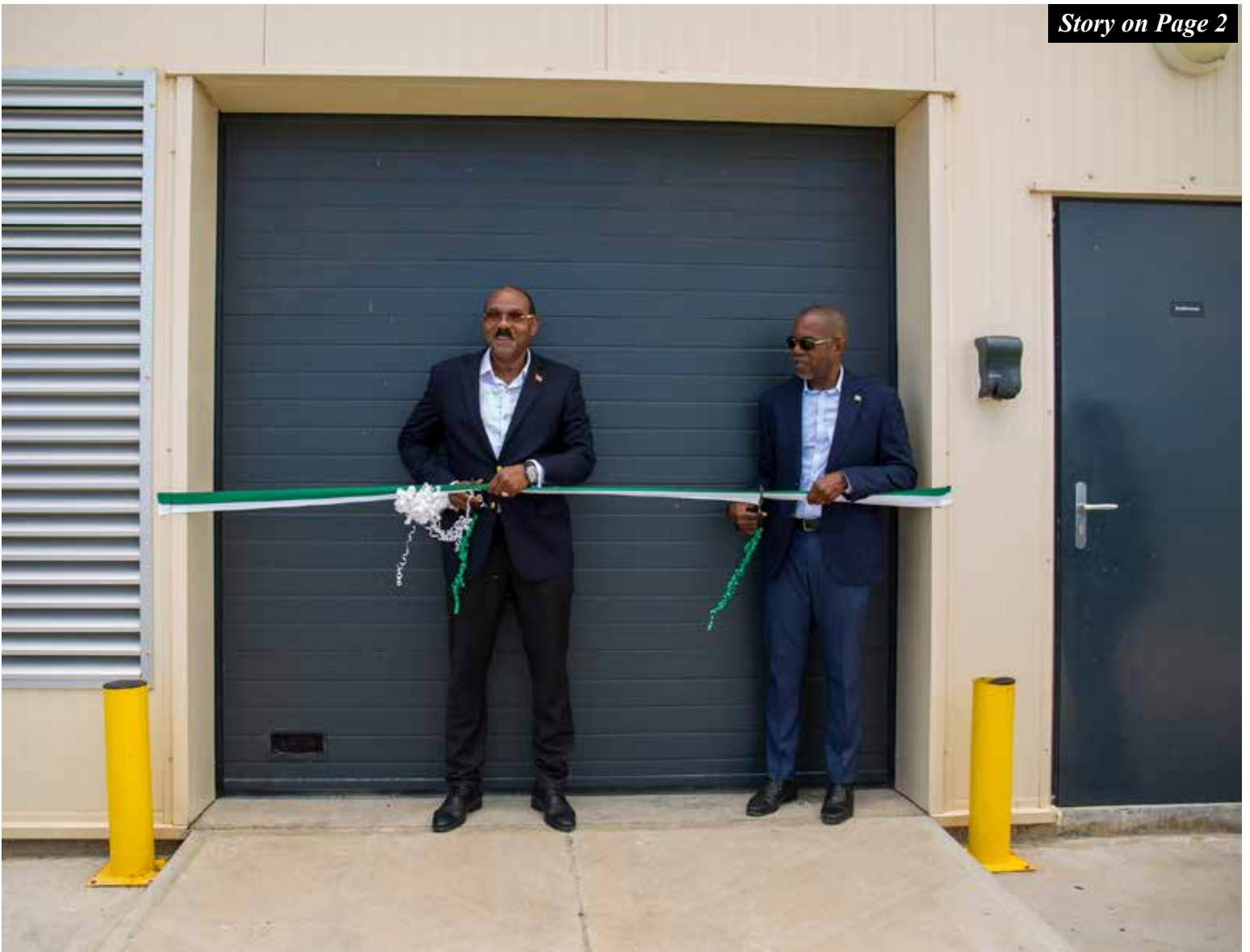


# PM: STAND ON THE TRUTH!

*Story on Page 2*



Prime Minister Gaston Browne, left, and Parliamentary Representative for Barbuda, Trevor Walker, cut the ribbon at the opening of Antigua and Barbuda's first hybrid power station on Barbuda.

## PM Browne tells Barbuda councilors: Stand on the truth!

Prime Minister Gaston Browne called out members of the Barbuda Council at Friday's handing over of the Green Barbuda power plant in Codrington telling them to stop trying to block the development for the island and to join his government in spearheading progress for Barbuda.

In delivering the feature address to the ceremony, PM Browne started off noting that the opening of the plant was for him 'a special moment'. He recalled the many struggles that were involved in getting the project to fruition reminding the audience that it was his government's vision that Barbuda should be an island community fully powered by renewables.

He said he recognized Barbuda's potential when he visited back in 2012 and it was then that he gave a commitment to do everything so that Barbuda would develop alongside Antigua as an equal partner in the unitary state.

According to the prime minister some of the plans suffered a setback because of Hurricane Irma, but since then there has been a rapid growth in the island's economy as the govern-



Prime Minister Gaston Browne ment has attracted billions of dollars in investment for Barbuda.

PM Browne also made a fervent call to the members of the Barbuda Council to lock arms with the government in an effort to move the island ahead. Throughout this aspect of his presentation there were loud comments from several ladies who were members of the council.

Rather than becoming daunted by their comments, PM Browne decided to deal with them directly. "There seems to be some sort of disconnect

here in which members of the Barbuda Council do not want to give the government credit for developing this great island. I have said before, stand on the truth. You cannot see the advancement of Barbuda taking place and then argue that nothing is being done," he indicated.

The prime minister even raised the issue of lands, noting that in discussions with the members of the council prior to the start of the ceremony they were accusing his government of wanting to steal their lands. "Let me say in passing; the land issue is a settled issue. This was done by the highest court in the land, the Privy Council. If you wish to stand on lies, then that is your problem; we will always stand on the truth," he retorted to their hecklings.

PM Browne affirmed that despite the 'obstructionist posture' of the Barbuda Council, his government will continue to advance Barbuda and its people as his vision includes seeing the island eclipse many other high-end Caribbean destinations as the leading such vacation spot in the region.





## Utilities Minister Nicholas explains 'Green Barbuda Project'

Utilities Minister, Melford Nicholas, provided detailed insights into the rationale for and the operation of the country's first hybrid power plant that was formally handed over to the government of Antigua and Barbuda and the Barbuda Council on Friday.

At the handing over ceremony in Codrington, Minister Nicholas explained that the Barbuda project is an integral part of the government's overall policy of greater reliance on renewable energy over the next decade.

"The UN International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) calculates that based on available solar and wind regimes, that Antigua and Barbuda, with financial support, could achieve 90% renewable energy penetration by 2030. Considerable investment would however be required to achieve that level of penetration.

Against that background the Green Barbuda project represents a model for a phased transition by utilizing available renewable energy (solar) in alignment

with conventional fossil fuel sources with scope for upscaling as the demand for electricity increases," he told the gathering.

According to the Utilities Minister it was felt that given its unique topography features, Barbuda is calculated to have significant potential for wind and solar energy, helping the government to achieve the 80% electricity from renewable energy by 2030 to which it has committed.

Minister Nicholas explained that the Green Barbuda project is based on a commitment by both the Prime Minister and the Cabinet to a green electricity sector in Barbuda. He added that this was first evidenced in the plans for a 1Mw solar plant as part of the PV Energy project. Unfortunately, the infrastructure work for that project was completely destroyed in Hurricane Irma in 2017.

Funding for the project was sought by the Prime Minister during a visit to Dubai in 2018. After getting an agreement for the funding, work started in 2019.



Utilities Minister, Melford Nicholas

Total Cost US\$6 million. Consisting of:

US\$4m from UAE Government through its Caribbean Renewable Energy Fund and its Ministry of Foreign Affairs

US\$1m CARICOM Development Fund (loan to GoAB)

US\$0.5 million grant from Government of New Zealand

US\$0.5 million Government of Antigua and Barbuda Counterpart Costs

The project consists of 3110 sq. ft. state-of-the-art solar hybrid electricity plant utilizing a 720 Kw solar photovoltaic system, an 863 Kwh battery storage system, and an 800 Kw diesel generator.

Operation of the plant results in savings of 69,000 gallons of diesel annually as

well as an annual avoidance of 7,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions which would have been produced in a fossil fuel business-as-usual scenario.

Minister Nicholas emphasized that the project allows for a scalable modular approach to the energy transition. Renewable energy capacity currently supplies virtually all the island's daytime load demand, with batteries providing load stability and daytime and evening power.

Diesel generation allows for satisfying nighttime demand as well as redundancy and resilience in the event of disruptions to solar and battery capacity. APUA is currently expanding its diesel capacity to respond to growth in electricity demand.

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## The country's first-ever hybrid power station opens in Barbuda

The government's stated goal of making Barbuda a 'green' island took a major step towards becoming a reality with the opening on Friday of Antigua and Barbuda's first hybrid power station on Barbuda.

The occasion brought together the leaders of the government and the Barbuda People's Movement and Council to share the stage and to express support for the project where the island is powered during the daylight hours by power from the solar panels. In the evening, the engines are powered by diesel fuel.

Despite the gulf in their views on several issues, both the government and the council converged on their outlook for Barbuda regarding the utilizing of renewable energy sources.

Parliamentary Representative Trevor Walker said Barbuda is leading the charge in terms of decreasing its reliance on fossil fuel power to renewable sources.

"Barbuda will be leading the charge on renewable Energy in the Eastern Caribbean with the commissioning of this new solar plant. We are committed to ensuring that Barbuda's environment remains and will continue to make every effort to transition to a greener community to tackle the climate crisis," he remarked.

Going greener, Walker contends,



has several benefits including savings on the cost for the purchase of fuel estimated at several thousand gallons annually. Additionally, he sees adopting renewable energy assist with the country's commitment to climate change and it also serves as a strong tourism marketing tool.

"It will be a huge boost to our tourism promotion; we are totally committed to sustainable practices, including the use of green energy, which will enhance our appeal as an eco-friendly destination. This will attract environmentally conscious tourists and support the local tourism industry," he stated.

The main funding for the Green Barbuda power plant was provided by the United Arab Emirates. Its Ambassador to Cuba, H.E Hazza Ahmed Al Kaabi, revealed that the Barbuda project is just one of several that the UAE is funding in the Caribbean. He said his country is happy to assist developing states with the transition to renewable energy sources.

The project was coordinated by Masdar, a company set up by the UAE to manage its renewable energy projects around the world.

Masdar spokesman, Basel Dahleh revealed that the preparation for the project was carefully studied as even the site was selected on the basis that it was further inland than the old electricity plant and it was built to with-



stand hurricanes of well over 150 miles per hour winds. Consultations were held with the Environment Division to ensure minimum harm was done to the environment at all stages of the project.

Funding was also provided by the Caribbean Fund for Development, CDF, through a loan of US\$1 million. CDF's Director of Regional Development, Lenox Forte, said the formal commissioning of this power plant marks a significant milestone in the region's collective journey towards a brighter and environmentally sustainable future. It represents a leap forward in our pursuit of energy independence and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

"This power plant is not merely a structure of concrete, steel, solar panels and dials; it is a beacon of hope, progress, and resilience. It is a testament to the collective efforts of a dedicated project management team, engineers, technicians, and workers who have toiled with us to bring this project to fruition and who deserve our applause," he noted.



## Antigua and Barbuda’s position on freedom of movement further clarified

Antigua and Barbuda remains committed to the full free movement of CARICOM nationals within the community...however, it will not remove the remaining restrictions immediately.

That’s the word of Prime Minister Gaston Browne, as the decision by Antigua and Barbuda not to fully implement the freedom of movement regime as agreed to at this month’s CARICOM 46th Heads of Government Summit in Guyana has sparked widespread discussion throughout the region.

“Our derogation is to avoid a sudden increase in the numbers, as the largest “CARICOM diaspora” in the Community and especially considering that we are presently accommodating the movement of over 1,000 persons from the region annually with restricted free movement. Every four years, we have an amnesty in which over 4,000 CARICOM nationals are given the opportunity to regularise their immigration status,” PM Browne explained.

He noted that people with the ability to move without restrictions normally move to places where they have relatives and friends. Therefore, he added, out of an abundance of caution, Antigua and Barbuda derogated to avoid any potential over capacity and the attendant socio- economic consequences.

However, according to the prime minister his government is committed to drop the restrictions in ‘due course’. In the interim, the country will continue to facilitate regulated free movement.

“We are not participating in the full free movement regime. However, we continue to implement the skills regime, which in itself is a form of free movement where the country is allowing necessary skilled community nationals to enter

and work according to our labor market needs,” he further explained.

Bermuda’s intention to opt out of the free movement of people if it becomes a full member of the Caribbean Community is being followed by another associate member.

“The Premier of the British Virgin Islands has expressed concerns about the proposal, claiming that it “would not be desirable for us”. Natalio Wheatley’s comments echo those

of David Burt, who has already stated that Bermuda will not open its borders to CARICOM nationals,” he observed.

Since Antigua and Barbuda’s announcements over a week ago, the subject of Freedom of Movement has become a topical issue for discussion throughout the region. Perhaps, this is due to the fact that Antigua and Barbuda has been the leader in implementing the freedom of movement, almost without restrictions.

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- ◆ Experience with airport/aviation-related engineering and/or construction initiatives and projects;
- ◆ Proven knowledge of local laws governing and related to the Authority;
- ◆ Thorough knowledge of Aerodromes Policies, Procedures and Compliance Standards;
- ◆ Ability to formulate clear organizational goals for the Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority and its programmes
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# Immigration chiefs, Customs heads converge on Antigua and Barbuda this week

Immigration Chiefs and Comptrollers of Customs from the six host countries for the 2024 ITC Cricket World Cup T20 in June are meeting in St. John's this week to work out common strategies for dealing with the large influx of people who will be traversing the region for the matches.

Chief Immigration Officer, Katrina Yearwood, and Comptroller of Customs, Raju Boddu, will jointly host their counterparts from Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Guyana as well as officials from several regional security agencies for two days of intense discussions.

Yearwood said the meeting will primarily hammer out common modalities to deal with the processing of the cricketers and other officials who will arrive for the cricket matches.

"We want to ensure that the procedures that we put in place to handle the cricketers and other officials are the same for Antigua and Barbuda and the five other territories.

"So, over the next two

days, our focus will be on putting in place those parameters that will govern our processing arrangements. We recognize that this is a major event for all of us and we want to make their process as hassle-free as possible, while maintaining those elements that are key to securing our respective borders," she stated.

In addition to the matters related to the T20 World Cup matches, the immigration chief and customs heads will also discuss decisions arrived at during the 46th CARICOM Heads of Government in Guyana that are of concern to the immigration and customs departments.

Attendees at the two-day meeting will also represent the Regional Security Services, the Joint Regional Communications on Crime Centre, and CARICOM IMPACS.

The meeting starts with an opening ceremony were Public Safety Minister, Sir Steadroy Benjamin, Head of CARICOM IMPACS, Earl Harris, Yearwood and Boddu will speak. It will be held at the Trade Winds hotel.



## Women’s growing influence within public and private sectors highlighted

As women in Antigua and Barbuda joined women across the globe in celebrating International Women’s Day on Friday, the increased presence of women in senior positions within the public and private sectors came into sharp focus.

In remarks to celebrate the achievements on women on that special day, Prime Minister Gaston Browne observed that women’s increased role in senior positions in the country is something that everyone should celebrate.

“Women have done very well within the public and private sectors as we see many of the positions are dominated by women. For example, in government, most of our permanent secretaries are females. Women are also taking up senior management positions in our financial institutions

and other major businesses and that is cause of celebration,” he remarked.

The prime minister also pointed to several of the government statutory bodies that are currently headed by women; including the Antigua Port Authority, the Board of Education, and Petro Caribe. Senior executive positions in several statutory boards are also held by women, such as the Citizenship by Investment Unit, the National Park Authority and the State Insurance Corporation.

PM Browne indicated that his administration has been intentional in its policies to ensure that women are given all the opportunities to excel and to flourish within the public sector and he is encouraging the private sector to follow the government’s lead.

“My administration has taken steps to ensure gender equity and gender

parity and we have gone the extra mile to empower women not just in words but by deliberate action,” he stated.

The prime minister did however express one regret regarding the advancement of women. He wants to see better female representation in the lower of House of Parliament, the House of Representative. There is one single female sitting in the Lower House (Member of Parliament for St John’s Rural East, Maria Bird-Browne).

“I am calling on the population to give women their full support in the future so that at the minimum, we achieve some level of gender parity within the parliament,” he urged.

PM Browne noted that his government has appointed more female senators in the Upper House. Currently, there are more female senators than males in the Senate.

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## UK-Antigua and Barbuda trade and Investment mission starts today

Representatives from approximately one dozen UK companies are currently in Antigua for a three-day trade and investment mission which opens Monday at the Sir John E. Luce Conference Centre.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne will deliver the feature address while Trade Minister E.P Chet Greene as well as UK Barbados and Non-Resident High Commissioner to the Eastern Caribbean, Scott Furseddonn-Ward, will also deliver remarks at the opening ceremony to be chaired by Antigua and Barbuda's High Commissioner to the UK, Karen-Mae Hill.

"The United Kingdom-Antigua and Barbuda Trade and Investment Mission is a multi-sector, three-day

event focused on trade and investment and will include general economic briefings for attendees, networking opportunities with local and international businesses, sector-specific roundtables, and success stories.

"Delegates from these companies will be predominantly at the level of CEOs, CFOs, Boardroom Directors and Business Strategy Directors of leading UK companies that have an interest in learning more about the trade and investment opportunities in the twin-island state," according to the literature.

Whilst the mission will be multi-sector, it will focus on the key economic sectors of growth for Antigua and Barbuda namely: infrastruc-

ture, renewable energy, tourism, agriculture, fast moving consumer goods (FMCGs) and the blue and green economy.

Minister Greene expressed his enthusiasm for the trade mission.

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

"A sizeable portion of the country's economic activity is strongly linked to global markets. The UK market represents significant potential for growth in agriculture, renewable energy, fast moving consumer goods and the blue and green economy."



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## CIBC Caribbean awards four bursaries for International Women's Day

Four women have been awarded bursaries for continuing their educational journeys through grants presented by CIBC Caribbean as part of its International Women's Day observance.

The first two recipients are students at University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus. During the presentation Registrar at the Five Islands Campus, Hiram Forde, made a call to the private sector to collaborate with the university, to help develop the nation's human capital.

Forde lauded CIBC Caribbean for its partnership with the university. He informed the bank officials that last year's recipients of the bank's bursaries were doing well with their studies. He thanked the bank for its support and said that the Five Islands Campus looked forward to a more sustainable collaboration.

The two scholarships were granted as part of the bank's celebration of International Women's Day to Shari-da Gregory of the School of Science, Computing and Artificial Intelligence and Jannique Blackstock from the School of Health and Behavioural Sciences.



CIBC Caribbean's Country Head Ladesa James-Williams, Awardee Ms. Drusilla Henry and GARD Centre's Makalsia Shepherd.

Meanwhile speaking on behalf of the bank, Jesseca Ormond, the bank's Human Resources Officer, said that CIBC believes in gender equality and will continue to invest in women.

While accepting her award, Shari-da Gregory said the award would take care of her fees. She also used the opportunity to appeal to more women to embrace the field of technology which she said is male nominated at present.

"This is a good cause by CIBC Caribbean, because it is setting up a good foundation for women in Antigua and

Barbuda," she said.

This is the second successive year that CIBC Caribbean has presented these bursaries to students of UWI Five Islands for International Women's Day.

Following the presentations at the Five Islands Campus, officials of the bank next visited the GARD Centre where two bursaries were presented to cover registration and tuition.

Drusilla Henry, an educator and farmer, is enrolled in the course – Climate Smart Agriculture –Backyard Gardening and Hydroponics and Nichelle Baptiste is pursuing a course in Business Entrepreneurship.

Speaking on behalf of the GARD Centre, Makalsia Shepherd thanked CIBC Caribbean for their partnership. She noted that for the past 34 years the GARD Centre, which is a non-profit organization, has been providing vocational, technical and hands-on training in Agriculture, Business, Hospitality among other areas. The Centre seeks to develop and enhance the lives of at-risk youths and young adults especially women from vulnerable communities.

CIBC FirstCaribbean was recently rebranded to CIBC Caribbean.



UWI Presentation: L to r: CIBC Caribbean's Country Head Ladesa James-Williams, Sharida George, CIBC's Jesseca Ormond, Jannique Blackstock and UWI Registrar Hiram Forde.



## Kelendria Hunte wins Rotary Club's Book Reading competition

Kelendria Hunte from the St. Michael's Anglican School is the winner of the 2024 Rotary Club of Antigua's annual Book Reading Competition.

The 10-year-old emerged victorious in the competition after impressing the team of judges following two rounds.

In the first round, the students were required to read a specified portion from this year's featured book, "Timothy Pratt's, Big Opportunity", written by local author, Mrs. Jessie Grindley-Lewis. In the final half of the competition, the students were required to present a selected news item as a newscaster.

The activity, which took place at the Methodist Church Hall, saw the participation of eight students from eight public and private primary schools across the island.

The 2nd place position was awarded to Shanee Francis from the Five Islands Primary School, while Adalia Mills from the S.R. Olivia David Primary School was awarded third place.

The most promising reader went to Zorique Charles from the Sunnydale Primary School.



The other participating students in the competition were: Justis Floyde from Grace Christian Academy, Malachi John from Christian Union Junior Academy, Shakeel Matthew from the Green Bay Primary School and Zaier Matthew from the New Winthropes Primary School.

The competition's judges were Cathy- Ann Tonge-James, Marcia Chatham and Ulric Smith.

Chairperson of the 2024 Book Reading, Rotarian Anastasia Wilson, congratulated all the participants and the winners on a job well done and hailed the competition as another literary success.



The Rotary Club of Antigua wishes to thank all of the sponsors and Rotarians who contributed to the various prizes presented to the students.

These include ACB Caribbean, A S Bryden & Sons, Frank B Armstrong, Cindy's Bookstore, Happy Kids, JMVI Realty, Paper Clips, Cricket West Indies, Tucker-on-the-Grill, An Anonymous Rotarian, Assistant Governor Evangeline Allen, Past President Denise Armstrong, Director Kirk Francis, Rotarian Anastasia Wilson and Past President Tuffida Stewart.

The competition was facilitated by Past President Ato Kentish.





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# Opinion



## Better bed than dread

By Tony Deyal

Some people might say, "For almost all my many years of living, I've danced with the sun, twirling in its golden embrace." Not me. I take things as they come or, as one of my female friends looking directly at me pointed out, "Even if they don't come."

Knowing her, and expecting a lot more things to come, I did what most Caribbean people do. I took in front before in front take me. I coughed.

Unlike the retort I had learnt from schooldays and still hear from my friends, "For Cough- Use Vicks", my friend came up with a new twist. "I don't like people coming close to me and coughing down the place, you know. What I tell people who start coughing while they next to me, and what I will tell you now, is Far Cough!"

I thought of a response like, "No, it was a near miss". She would then reply, "Who you calling miss? Eh mister man?" So I considered, "Why did the pony need cough syrup?" His throat was a little horse.

Actually, I had a problem just like that one. However, in my case, I didn't kick the bucket. I was just a little pail. Not too long ago, I was tempted to pass on some "Use Vicks" to a doctor who examined me and then went on his high horse with, "Ah, I see your cough

is getting better!" I was very close to telling him, "Yeah, well I was practising for the whole night."

What I did tell my friend was, "I heard that when you were a teenager you went to the doctor because you had a coughing problem and he took out his stethoscope and told you, 'Big breath' and you boasted, 'Yes, and you know doctor, I am only sixteen'."

Then, before she could shout at me, I added, "What does a cough syrup have in common with an undertaker?" I told her, "They both take away the coffin." She almost suffered a coughing fit and a coffin fit at the same time

A 'coffin fit' is the dimensions and size of a coffin. When I was growing up, coffins scared the heck out of me and the other village kids. We ran inside and hid while my Mum and my auntie went outside to take in the spectacle. They watched and even called out to the people behind the hearse. I was so scared that I got nightmares and not only begged my mother to let me sleep with her but clung tightly to her.

This was my idea of a coffin fit. However, it never stopped me from making other jokes about coffins like, "Mom, you know, those coffins we see passing must be really comfortable. All the people just dying to get in."



Tony Deyal

Now, if you think I've been shifting from coughing to coffin and dilly-dallying because I've lost the plot, think again, or, better yet, hang around and enjoy the scene. Like the period before the hearse takes off, it remains to be seen. In fact, that is when some of the ladies at funerals put down some serious scenes.

My auntie specialised in that and always gave the impression she was diving into the grave with whoever it was for whom the bell had tolled.

From the coughing to the coffin let's move on to the coffeing and even the cuffing. I will explain later why we're taking this route. In Trinidad, the word 'cuff' is not just a part of a sleeve or glove, or (as in medicine) an inflatable band wrapped around your arm or leg to control blood flow.

It is not even handcuffing someone, or speaking off the cuff. It is more like speaking of the cuff and not

arguing about French Cuffs, Barrel Cuffs and other shirt cuffs. When Beyoncé sang "Cuff it", she didn't mean any danger to her arm or other parts. However, when a Trini or Caribbean person, man or woman, talks about cuffin, it is all hands on. Unless, like some Asian countries, it is coffee dung and you plan to lick it down.

Their "naturally refined" coffee is made from high-end beans removed from the dung of civets, elephants and birds.

The 'Kopi Luwak' is a coffee made of partially digested coffee cherries which were eaten and defecated by a mammal known as an Asian palm civet. If you want a cup plucked from the poops of elephants, and like it enough to buy it by the pound, you have to pay US\$1,500. As I told a Canadian friend who knew Blake Dinkin, the Canadian who launched the elephant venture in 2012, if he tries

*cont'd on pg 13*



*cont'd from pg 12*

that crap on me I will “coffee” down.

This brings me to the Cuffing Season in the US and elsewhere. No lashing with that but some licking might be involved in more ways than one. Cuffing Season is a time when single people link up romantically during the fall and winter months, generally from October to March, culminating with Valentine’s Day.

While many of you may not have known about it, you can start planning for October this year until February 14, 2025 (next year). The reason I took so long to get to the point was that I mixed up Cuffing, Coughing, Coffing, Coffeeing and Cuff and then had to find out what was the real McCoy. Lucky for me, my school principal wasn’t around.

A New-York City psychotherapist, Kathryn Smerling, sees the Cuffing

Season as the winter equivalent to a summer fling, or what a certified sex coach with an organisation known as Beducated refers to as “situationship”. Ms Smerling says there are multiple explanations for Cuffing Season, the first and foremost of which is that “it’s a time for intimacy and reflection and a time when we stay at home a bit more”.

Unlike a Trini or Caribbean ‘cuff’, mental health experts have found that the permanently cuffed live longer and have less depression than those who are single, divorced or widowed, and that the percentage of suicide is lower than in many long-term relationships. Ms Smerling says, “If you’re going to cuff, it’s important that good communication and clear boundaries remain a priority, so that emotions and the connection are protected. If these parameters are in place, cuffing can be a good

thing.”

One writer saw it as more than merely good, “Ah, cuffing season! That delightful time of year when the air gets colder and suddenly everyone wants to be handcuffed to someone else. It’s like Mother Nature herself is playing matchmaker, whisper, ‘Hey, you! Year, you! Find yourself a snuggly buddy, pronto’.”

Another advised, “Remember, whether you’re single, coupled up, or somewhere in between, cuffing season is impossible to ignore. So embrace the cosy vibes, steal hoodies, and enjoy the warmth of human connection . . . Happy cuffing.” That is them. I can tell you flat that, as a Caribbean person, once I hear cuffing, that’s it for me. I get out of there Chop Chop.

*Tony Deyal was so sick and tired of all the cuffing that, if you trouble him, expect to get a “Use Vix”.*

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## Guyana: Boy witnesses murders of family members by escaped convict

CMC - The police on Saturday reported that they are investigating a double murder believed to have been committed by an Akeem Wong, an escaped prisoner.

The victims have been identified as David Gomes, a 49-year-old taxi driver and his mother, Elizabeth ‘Nellie’ Gomes, 75.

In a statement, the police said that Gomes, his mother and his six-year-old son were cleaning their house and surroundings when Wong reportedly went to the house and asked for something to eat and directions.

The six-year-old, who

witnessed the incident told the police that Wong given something to eat and then spent some time with the family at the location.

The child also stated that he later saw the suspect arm himself with a cutlass and chopped his father several times. The boy’s grandmother then went to Gomes’ rescue but she was also severely chopped.

Sometime during the ordeal, the suspect who the police said is believed to be prison escapee Akeem Wong was also chopped by Gomes.

Later, he attempted to wash down the blood but



reportedly heard a boat approaching and ran into some nearby bushes where he made good his escape.

The child related that after the ordeal he took his father’s cellular phone and sent a voice note to one of his father’s friends.

Wong, a convict serving a 15-year sentence for rape,

reportedly escaped from the Mazaruni Prison in Region Seven, on February 14.

Crime scene technicians processed and photographed the scene and it was observed that Gomes and his mother were chopped multiple times about their bodies, with both of them sustaining several chops to their heads.





## Haiti: US evacuates embassy staff amid gang violence

By George Wright

The United States says it has airlifted non-essential embassy staff from Haiti, as the country spirals further into gang violence.

The Americans have also boosted security at their mission in the capital, Port-au-Prince.

It follows attacks by gangs on the airport, police stations and prisons this week. They are pushing for Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry's removal.

A three-day state of emergency has been extended by a month.

"Heightened gang violence in the neighbourhood near US embassy compounds and near the airport led to the State Department's decision to arrange for the departure of additional embassy personnel," the embassy posted on social media.

It added that the embassy will remain open.

The pre-dawn operation appeared to be conducted by helicopter, the AFP news agency reports, citing nearby residents who described hearing the sounds of aircraft blades overhead.

On Sunday, Germany's ambassador to Haiti also left, travelling to the Dominican Republic, along with other EU representatives, the German foreign ministry told AFP.

It comes as the situation



Police patrol a street in Port-au-Prince.

in Haiti has deteriorated.

The country's main port said it was suspending operations on Thursday due to sabotage and vandalism.

Gangs in the violence-racked city stepped up their attacks when Mr Henry left for a regional summit last week.

Mr Henry attempted to fly back to Port-au-Prince on Tuesday but ended up in the US territory of Puerto Rico instead.

He could not land in the Haitian capital because its international airport was closed as soldiers repelled attempts by gunmen to seize it.

Civil aviation authorities in the neighbouring Dominican Republic also turned the prime minister's plane away, saying that they had not been provided with the necessary flight plan.

Mr Henry has not given any public statements since he visited Kenya, where he met President William Ruto to salvage a deal for the east African country to lead a multi-national force to help restore order in Haiti.

The two leaders signed a reciprocal agreement which paves the way for 2,000 Kenyan police officers to be sent to Haiti but a Kenyan opposition politician says he will challenge the deal in court.

On Saturday, the US State Department said Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with the Kenyan president about the Haiti crisis and the two men underscored their commitment to a multinational security mission to restore order.

Gangs in Port-au-Prince have taken advantage of the

prime minister's absence to unleash a series of co-ordinated attacks.

Among their targets was the airport - which they want to control to prevent Mr Henry from flying back in - and two prisons, from which they freed thousands of inmates.

At least six police officers have been killed while the National Police Academy has been destroyed.

The bodies of several prisoners were also left lying on the streets after the storming of the national penitentiary.

The violence has caused Haiti's humanitarian crisis to deteriorate even further.

The gangs have not said what their aim is beyond the ouster of Mr Henry.

Jimmy "Barbecue" Chérizier, a former police *cont'd on pg 16*

## Red Sea: US, UK and French destroy dozens of Houthi drones

US, British and French forces say they repelled a series of Iranian-backed Houthi attacks off the coast of Yemen.

US military said at least 28 uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs) were downed over the Red Sea early on Saturday.

Along with coalition forces, the US said it acted after determining the “large-scale” attack “presented an imminent threat to merchant vessels”.

The Houthis said they had targeted a commercial ship, *Propel Fortune*, and a number of US destroyers.

A statement from the US Central Command said no US or coalition military vehicles were damaged and there were no reports of damage from commercial ships.

Since November, the Houthis have been attacking ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden in what they say is a campaign of solidarity with Palestinians during Israel’s war in Gaza.



The Royal Navy frigate downed two drones launched by the Houthis in the latest incident in the Red Sea.

UK Defence Secretary Grant Shapps said the Royal Navy frigate HMS *Richmond* downed two drones launched by the Houthis on Friday night.

Mr Shapps said: “The UK and our allies will continue to take the action necessary to save lives and protect freedom of navigation.”

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) said the Type 23 frigate and international allies “fully repelled” a Houthi drone attack with no injuries or damage sustained.

A French warship and fighter jets also shot down four drones to stop an attack targeting a European naval mission and a cargo ship being towed in the Gulf of Aden.

The mission was protecting a cargo ship, *True Confidence*, which was being towed after it had been struck by a missile on Wednesday.

Three sailors were killed - two Filipinos and one Vietnamese - the first fatalities since the Houthis started their attacks.

The recent wave of attacks has been one of the largest by the Houthis.

As a result, vessels using the Red Sea have been diverting around southern Africa rather than using the Suez Canal between Europe and Asia, adding to costs and creating a potential global economic risk.

The latest action suggests that despite repeated strikes by the US and UK against sites linked to Houthi activity, there seems to be little sign of the threat to shipping abating.

### *cont'd from pg 15*

officer who leads an alliance of gangs called G9, has threatened that if Mr Henry does not step down there will be a “civil war” which he said could end in “genocide”.

The unrest has seen 362,000 Haitians internally displaced - more than half of them children, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) says.

“Haitians are unable to lead a de-

cent life. They are living in fear, and every day, every hour this situation carries on, the trauma gets worse,” Philippe Branchat, IOM’s chief in Haiti, said in a statement.

“People living in the capital are locked in, they have nowhere to go,” he said. “The capital is surrounded by armed groups and danger. It is a city under siege.”

Aid group *Medecins Sans Frontieres* estimates that at least 2,300

people were killed in the violence in 2023 in the Port-au-Prince neighbourhood of Cite Soleil alone, home to 9% of the capital’s population.

In other news, five people who were kidnapped in Haiti last month, including four missionaries, have been freed from captivity, their Catholic congregation said Sunday.

The missionaries were abducted in Port-au-Prince, where kidnappings for ransom are commonplace.





The six set off from Zermatt, which is home of the famous Matterhorn, in Switzerland.

## Switzerland: Six skiers missing in Swiss Alps near Matterhorn

By Imogen Foulkes

A huge search and rescue operation is under way in the Swiss Alps after six skiers went missing.

They set off from Zermatt, home of the famous Matterhorn mountain, on Saturday, on a ski tour towards Arolla, along the Swiss-Italian border.

Somewhere close to the 3,706m high Tete Blanche mountain, they went missing.

Local police say all available rescue teams on both sides of the route have been alerted, but severe weather is hampering the operation.

Swiss police confirmed to the BBC that the skiers are all Swiss nationals, and range in age from 21 to 58 years old.

There have been high winds in the Alps for some days, and over the past

24 hours, heavy snowfalls. Saas-Fee, a winter resort neighbouring Zermatt, is currently cut off by snow.

Anjan Truffer, the head of Zermatt's air rescue service, told the BBC the weather is currently so bad that "flying is not an option", with "very strong winds, heavy snow, high avalanche danger, and zero visibility".

Mr Truffer said that the group may have been overcome by the bad weather, rather than struck by an avalanche, because they went missing on a part of the Zermatt Arolla route where the risk of avalanche is low.

Ski tourers typically follow unprepared alpine routes, and should be equipped with location finders and avalanche shovels.

The last signal from the group was recorded overnight. It was "not

verbal", Mr Truffer said, but allowed rescue services to get a rough idea of their location.

The route from Zermatt to Arolla is part of the famous 120km (75 miles) "Haute Route" from Zermatt to Chamonix.

It is very popular, but suitable only for the most experienced skiers, and can take several days.

The rescue services say there is a good chance the missing skiers can survive, despite temperatures of -16C (3.2F) and winds of up to 80km/h (50mph), if they have managed to dig themselves a snow hole. The hope now is that the weather will clear, allowing the rescue helicopters to fly.

"We can land up there, that's not the problem, we do that all the time. But we need the flying condition," said Mr Truffer.

# Sports News



## Asafa Powell, Olympic Gold Medalist will give keynote speech at the 2023 National Sports Awards

The Ministry of Sports is thrilled to announce that former 100 m record holder Asafa Powell is the keynote speaker at the 2023 National Sports Awards.

Powell is famously known for his impressive running career, having completed over 90 sub-10second 100m races, earning him the nickname "Sub-10 King". He has won numerous titles and championships, including five World Athletics Final Championships and two Commonwealth Championships.

He has also won gold medals as part of Jamaica's relay teams in the World Championships and the Olympics. In 2007, he was nominated for the prestigious Laureus Sportsman of the Year award.

Powell set the world record twice, first in 2005 at 9.77 seconds and again in 2007 at 9.74 seconds. He still holds the record for the fourth fastest time

ever recorded at 9.72 seconds, which he achieved in 2008. Although Powell retired from professional athletics in November 2022, he remains passionate about the sport.

Powell's visit to Antigua & Barbuda has been made possible through the sponsorship of the National Olympic Committee. He will inspire the nation's best athletes across various disciplines to strive for greatness and represent the nation at the highest level - the Games of the 32nd Olympiad, as Antigua & Barbuda looks forward to record qualification and participation in the Paris Olympics this year.

The Ministry of Sports is honored to have Mr. Powell as the keynote speaker at the 2023 National Sports Awards. The auspicious ceremony will be held on Saturday 16, March 2024, at the SJPC House



Asafa Powell

of Restoration Ministries on Lauchland Benjamin Drive.

## Flyers extend unbeaten run in ABBA's Division I League

The Flyers maintained their perfect run to remain the only unbeaten team in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Division I League on Saturday night.

The Flyers recorded their sixth win in as many games with an 84-42 drubbing of Kennedy's Club Ottos Full Throttle at the JSC Sports Complex.

Selassie Brathwaite had 18 points, eight rebounds, and five steals; Kenya Ahcom produced a triple double of 10 points, 10 rebounds, and 11 assists; Javonte Daley chipped in with 10 points and five assists; and Craig Massiah

and Donte Trimmingham each contributed 10 points for the Flyers.

Warren Bogle scored 16 points and snatched six rebounds; Morlon Davis converted 12 points and grabbed 11 rebounds; and Akeem Davis sank 10 points and claimed nine rebounds for the Ottos Full Throttle, who suffered their third loss in five games.

Meanwhile, Court Martial and Lava Smoke Shop Lower Ottos Warriors have secured wins in ABBA's Division II League.

Court Martials claimed their second win in three games by romping to a 97-33 victory against MJ

Gray's Green Phoenix.

De Lornge Jules produced a game-high 28 points, seven rebounds, and six steals; Baldwin Anthony sank 26 points and grabbed 12 rebounds; and Proctor Truvaurnie scored 14 points and snatched eight rebounds for Court Martials.

Dimetre Leitch had seven points and 13 rebounds, and Ajani Adams produced seven points and 10 rebounds for MJ Gray's Green Phoenix, who suffered their second loss in as many games.

Lava Smoke Shop Lower Ottos Warriors recorded their second win

in three games with a 72-62 victory against the Old Road Daggers. Victor Osbourne and Kwame Huntley each scored 14 points; Ariel Quallis produced 13 points, 11 rebounds, and six assists; and Ernesto Calero had 11 points and seven steals for the Lower Ottos Warriors.

Braulio Lopez produced 22 points, seven steals, and five rebounds; Kareem Jacobs had 13 points and 10 rebounds; and Kedar Clarke chipped in with 13 points, seven rebounds, and five assists for the Old Road Daggers, who suffered their third loss in as many games.



## Pares Secondary and PMS get wins in schools' cricket

Pares Secondary and Princess Margaret School (PMS) secured wins in the latest round of two-day matches in the Under-19 Boys Division of the Ministry of Sports Schools' Cricket Championships.

Pares Secondary School trounced Clare Hall Secondary School by an innings and 62 runs.

William Pitman slammed 56, and Kyanoo Goodwin struck 46 as Pares Secondary made 163 for three in 26 overs. Jordan Castello claimed all three wickets for 15 runs in nine overs.

Clare Hall Secondary fell in their first innings for 35 in 9.3 overs. Corey John Charles got 10, while Mekali Tonge snapped up five wickets for 10 runs.

Asked to follow on 128 runs behind, Clare Hall Secondary was dismissed in their second innings for 66. Castello made 25, and Charles scored 17.

Tonge grabbed five for 13 to end with a match haul of 10 for 23, and Goodwin captured four for 19.

Princess Margaret School beat Sir Novelle Richards Academy by seven wickets.

Sir Novelle Richards Academy was dismissed in their first innings for 81 in 23 overs. Evrick Chambers, who scored 16 not out, Raffique Mohabir

with 12, and opener Cheldon Charles with 10, were the only batsmen to reach double figures.

Ondre Peters grabbed five for 18, and J'Quan Athanaze claimed three for 24.

In reply, Princess Margaret School made 71 in 16 overs, with Athanaze hitting 53 off 53 balls, including six fours and two sixes. Shawn Harris took three for 24, and Shaun Balgobin snapped up two wickets for three runs.

After gaining a lead of 10 runs, Sir Novelle Richards Academy was dismissed in their second innings for 101 off 26.5 overs. Brian Balgobin hit 23, Charles scored 22, and Shaun Balgobin got 13.

Peters snatched six for 19 to end with a match haul of 11 for 37, and Kerique Mentore captured two for 12.

Athanaze then struck his second half century of the match to lead Princess Margaret to their victory target of 112 for the loss of one wicket in 16.5 overs.

Athanaze, who opened the innings, hammered 87 not out off 63 balls, including five sixes and three fours, and fellow opener Mentore scored 16.

The match between Ottos Comprehensive School and Jennings Secondary School ended in a draw.



From left to right: Xaveek Toppin, Ozan Williams, Tanez Francis and Mekaili Tonge were all members of the Leeward Islands Under-17 squad in 2023. These players continue to shine for their respective schools in this year's Ministry of Sports Schools' Cricket Championships. (File photo)

Ottos Comprehensive School made 94 all out in 19.4 overs in their first innings. Xaveek Toppin struck 36, and Vonda Bowens got 30.

Tanez Francis bagged five for 29, and Giovanni Thomas grabbed four for 14.

In reply, Jennings Secondary School declared their first innings at 113

for seven off 26 overs. Ramez Prince made 16 not out, while Toppin claimed two for 39.

Training by 19 runs, Ottos Comprehensive was dismissed in their second innings for 105 in 19.1 overs when the match ended. Toppin slammed 69, while Francis took four for 39, and Dale Joheshen picked up two for 17.



Players of the Attacking Saints football team. (File photo)

## Jennings United and Attacking Saints battle to draw in First Division

Jennings United and Attacking Saints battled to a 1-1 draw in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division League at Jennings on Friday.

Daryl Massicot put Jennings United ahead in the 19th minute, and Ronaldo Fenton converted a penalty kick in the 41st minute to equalize for the Attacking Saints.

The result ensured that the Attacking Saints maintained their fourth-place position on goal difference ahead of Jennings United as both teams advanced to 20 points each. Attacking Saints have played 11 matches, one less than Jennings United.

The other First Division match scheduled for last Friday between Fort Road and the Potters Tigers at Fort Road was postponed.

Meanwhile, Sea View Farm has

overtaken English Harbour and moved into second place in the ABFA's Second Division League.

Sea View Farm moved within two points of leaders Freeman's Village by coming from behind to pull off a 3-1 victory against English Harbour at the ABFA Technical Center in the latest round of matches.

Oshane Blackwood put English Harbour ahead with a 21st-minute conversion, but Klyster Rowe scored an equalizer for Sea View Farm in the 27th minute.

Bertrand Chastenet scored in the 40th minute to give Sea View Farm a 2-1 lead at halftime. Aijalon Joseph scored in the fourth minute of added time (90+4 minutes) to wrap up Sea View Farm's victory.

Their ninth win in 12 matches carries Sea View Farm to second place

with 28 points, two adrift of Freeman's Village.

English Harbour dropped to third place by remaining on 27 points after suffering only their second loss in 13 matches.

Michael Peters scored five goals as Soccer Academy hammered the Young Warriors 10-0 at Buckleys.

Their fifth win in nine matches allows Soccer Academy to move up to 11th place by advancing to 18 points. The Young Warriors remain second from the bottom with three points after crashing to their 10th defeat in 11 matches.

Blackburn Palace advance to seventh place in the 20-team round-robin competition by recording a 4-1 victory against West Ham at the Princess Margaret School's playing field.

Their sixth win in 14 matches carries

*cont'd on pg 21*



## CWI strengthens partnerships with St. Kitts and Nevis

Cricket West Indies (CWI) recently convened a courtesy meeting with the Prime Minister of St. Kitts & Nevis, Dr. Terrance Drew, and Minister of Sports, Samal Duggins.

The meeting underscored a collective commitment to advancing cricketing initiatives within the Caribbean region.

President of Cricket West Indies, Dr. Kishore Shallow, engaged in discussions with Prime Minister Drew to explore ongoing collaborations and future opportunities aimed at enhancing cricketing prospects and fostering regional cooperation.

The meeting served as a platform to strengthen the relationship between CWI and the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, emphasizing shared values in promoting sports excellence and youth development.

In acknowledgement of the partnership, Prime Minister Drew remarked, "We are honoured to host the CG United Women's Super50 Cup and the T20 Blaze regional tournaments, events that highlight the vibrancy and passion for cricket in



From left to right: St. Kitts and Nevis Minister of Sports Hon. Samal Duggins, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis Hon. Dr. Terrance Drew and CWI President Dr. Kishore Shallow. (CWI Media)

our nation.

"It's a testament to our commitment to promoting sports excellence and fostering regional cooperation. I take immense pride in witnessing the remarkable achievements of our young athletes across various sporting disciplines. It's truly inspiring to see our youth excel in sports, knowing that the lessons they learn on the field extend far beyond the boundaries of the game."

President Shallow expressed his enthusiasm for the burgeoning cricketing

talent within the region, stating, "This meeting signifies a pivotal moment in our ongoing efforts to nurture cricketing talent and strengthen partnerships within the Caribbean community.

"We are committed to working closely with the Government of Saint Kitts & Nevis, particularly through Minister Duggins' Sports Ministry, to provide opportunities for our young cricketers to thrive and excel on the international stage."

His words underscored a resolute dedication to cul-

tivating a supportive ecosystem where talent can be honed and celebrated, paving the way for the next generation of cricketing stars to emerge from the Caribbean.

In his closing remarks, President Shallow stated, "I wish to commend the cricket administrators in St. Kitts and Nevis, who have been pivotal in growing the sport over the years.

In conclusion, Prime Minister Drew emphasized, "The Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis remains steadfast in its commitment to investing in our young people. While sports undoubtedly play a significant role in this investment, we also recognize the importance of nurturing their abilities to make positive contributions to nation-building."

*cont'd from pg 20*

ries Blackburn Palace to 22 points, while West Ham will remain in 15th place with eight points after crashing to their eighth defeat in 12 games.

TAMO FC and the Celtics played to a goalless draw in their encounter at the

Golden Grove playing field.

The result ensures that TAMO FC remains in 14th place by advancing to 11 points from 11 matches, while the Celtics will remain third from the bottom of the standings by moving on to seven points from 12 encounters.

## Old Road and Hoppers stay in top four of Premier Division League

Old Road and Greenbay Hoppers both recorded wins to remain among the top four teams in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League.

Old Road consolidated their position in third place with a five-nil drubbing of Parham in the second game of a triple-header on Saturday, as the premier league resumed at the ABFA Technical Center following a two-week break to facilitate Antigua and Barbuda's hosting and participation in Group B of the Concacaf Men's Under-20 Qualifying Championship at the same venue from February 23 to March 2.

Old Road's Rodney Lawrence scored twice with conversions in the 44th and the third minute of added time (90+3 minutes).

Goals by Raheem Deterville in the 23rd minute and Saviola Elva in the 29th minute gave Old Road a two-nil lead. Jaheim Hazelwood scored Old Road's other goal in the 58th minute.



National winger Raheem Deterville was among the scorers for Old Road against Parham in the Premier Division on Saturday, March 9, 2024.

Their ninth win in 11 matches carries Old Road to 28 points, while Parham remains in 13th place on six points after crashing to their seventh loss in 11 matches.

Greenbay Hoppers strengthened their fourth-place position by recording a three-nil victory against John Hughes in the last game on Saturday night.

Kadeem Campbell

scored in the second minute to give Hoppers a one-nil lead at halftime. After the interval, Hoppers were reduced to 10 men in the 57th minute, losing the services of Jamal Parkinson, who was expelled for denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity.

Cuban forward Yasney Torres doubled Hoppers' lead with an 86th-minute conversion, and Jashine Lawrence scored his team's third and final goal in the third minute of added time (90+3 minutes).

Their eighth win in 11 matches carries the Hoppers to 24 points, while John Hughes remains on 16 points after suffering their seventh loss in 13 matches.

Garden Stars and Ottos Rangers played to a goalless draw in Saturday's opening game.

Their third draw in 11 matches carries the Garden Stars to 18 points, while the Ottos Rangers ended a seven-match losing streak by earning their third draw in 12 matches to advance to nine points.