

WATER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OUTLINED

Story on Page 2



Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne was honoured on Tuesday with a replica of the Ayodhya Ram Mandir Temple by Senior Indian Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Leader Dr. Vijay Jolly and his businessman son Kabir Jolly and Honorary Indian Consul Mr. Vijay Shiv Kumar Tewani who had an engagement with the Prime Minister. *Story on page 8.*

Water development strategy outlined

The short, medium and longer development plans for APUA’s Water Business Unit were presented to the nation this week by the Minister responsible for Utilities, Melford Nicholas.

Minister Nicholas was speaking at the signing ceremony where APUA and Seven Seas Water Group (SSWG), a US-based company, signed an agreement where the company will produce approximately 3 million gallons of water daily over the duration of a 12-year agreement.

Nicholas outlined that following the commissioning of the two plants one in six months and the other 18 months later – APUA’s water production capacity will reach roughly 12 million gallons daily.

He said water production has been one of the main challenges that the utilities company faces in meeting demand.

The minister explained that the growing dependence on reverse osmosis for the production of water, comes with a number

of setbacks, chief of which has been the condition of the seas which affects the amount of water produced at specific times of the year.

“The demand for water has been growing exponentially over the last several years due to several factors.

“These include the rapid expansion in the number of homes, over one thousand in the last several years completed by two government agencies.

“Then we are also supplying cruise ships, a key ingredient of our tourism

industry.

Added to this is the expansion in the number of hotels, many of which are opening for longer periods during the year. The end result is that all these entities are demanding more and more water,” he disclosed.

APUA will sign a second agreement with another company and it will soon commission another plant of its own at Bethesda.

According to Minister Nicholas the aim is to have productive capacity of 12-14 million gallons of water per day. That he stated is the goal.

However, Nicholas noted that settling the production challenge will not completely solve the water situation as the distribution of the water is another pressing issue.

“Distribution is the next phase that we will tackle. That means replacing the aging distribution network, which is some 80-years old.

“During the recent visit to China, the Prime Minister and his team were able to secure a commitment from the Chinese government for assistance in this regard.

“Following which we want to ensure that no matter where you live on Antigua, we will be able to get water to you.

The systems and investments necessary to achieve this remain a critical part of the equation,” he stated.

DEWS

NEED AN ESTIMATE?

WE'VE GOT YOU!

GET YOUR MATERIAL LIST PRICED IN-STORE AND VIA WHATSAPP OR EMAIL

DEWS
 dewspro
 info@dewspro.com
 729-3397/ 729-1210

UK trade mission deemed a success

The trade and investment mission to Antigua and Barbuda involving business entities out of the UK has been deemed successful as many useful business contacts have been made between the local business community and members of the visiting mission.

Sources in the Ministry of Trade, one of the organizing agencies for the mission, said the response from the local business people to meet with and to hold meaningful interactions with members of the mission was quite good.

The spokesman noted that it was now up to the local business men and women to do the follow-up discussions in order to concretise any



Trade Minister, E.P Chet Greene

deals which they may have initiated during the course of the trade mission. "It is up to them to do that additional leg work. We in the ministry of trade are merely the facilitators. We helped to make

the contact, now the onus is on them to see these initial engagements through to fruition," the source added.

The organisers took the members of the mission on a tour of several areas of Antigua to expose them to the several business opportunities that are available particularly in the hospitality sector.

On Wednesday, the team will visit Barbuda to explore opportunities on the sister island.

At a social held in their honour on Tuesday night at the residence of the acting UK Resident High Commissioner, Trade Minister, E.P Chet Greene, said he

was pleased with the reports he had received of positive engagements between the UK business people and representatives from the local business community. Greene said he too, is looking forward to see tangible outcomes from the two days of interactions between local business interests and the visiting trade mission members.

"We look forward to the continued negotiations, the inking of agreements as well as the people-to-people exchanges as ultimately, what we are doing is building relationships and we look forward to increased trade between our two countries," he remarked.

UK High Commissioner to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean Scott Fursse-donn-Wood congratulated the members of the mission for participating in the exercise as it demonstrated their belief in the potential for increased trade between Antigua and Barbuda and the UK. He said despite the challenges of history the trade mission offers an opportunity to explore new ways to build on the existing relationship for the future.



UK High Commissioner, Scott Fursse-donn-Wood

Commercial Space For Rent

A 1500-square foot commercial space is now available for rent on the corner of Alfred Peters and Bennett Streets. Viewing can be arranged by calling the following numbers: 461-3041/781-3496/727-0300. Price negotiable.

Local News



Sir Ron Sanders: Haitian PM Dr. Ariel Henry's resignation welcomed

Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the United States and the Organization of American States, Sir Ron Sanders, has welcomed the announcement that the Haitian Prime Minister Dr. Ariel Henry will step down from office, paving the way for new leadership in that troubled Caribbean territory.

Sir Ron, who has been a constant voice calling for change in Haiti and for peaceful resolution of the myriad of issues that confront that country, noted that 'it was the right thing to do'.

He said it was obvious that Dr. Henry did not have any support among the Hai-

tian people, except perhaps, a small cabal of persons who may have benefitted from his time in office.

"It's very positive development. It's what needs to happen. Dr. Henry who is clearly unpopular, commanded no support in Haiti, except for a small cabal with which he had formed the government, and he needed to go," he declared.

Sir Ron felt that Dr. Henry could not have been part of the plans for Haiti going forward as he was seen as an obstacle to a peaceful resolution of the ongoing crisis in that country of 11 million people.

"He had become an ob-



Sir Ron Sanders

stacle to solving the problems of Haiti; no one had

any confidence in him," he *cont'd on pg 5*

TUESDAYS & WEDNESDAYS

2 DAYS WAYS SAVE



\$16.99

- *2 pcs
- Biscuit
- Drink



\$19.99

- Zinger / CCB
- Drink

limitations apply



UWI FIC to add more undergraduate programmes

The University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus is introducing five new programmes to its list of Undergraduate Degrees come September, 2024.

Psychology, Sports Coaching, Sport Kinetics, Pharmacy and Generative Pharmacy.

The five new programmes are all Bachelor's Degrees that will be offered by UWI FIC.

Dr. Adeola Matthew is the Recruitment Officer for the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus.

"We know that mental health issues are at the forefront so no longer are we going to wait on someone else to come and give us advice on certain problems, we really are developing into societies where we have good

mental health specialists who are able to do that. So, we have brought on a full degree in psychology. Presently, we have it as a minor in our School of Business and Management but we see the need to upgrade it to a full degree programme in psychology," she stated.

Generative Pharmacy involves the use of Artificial Intelligence. The UWI FIC, seeing its importance, is adding the Bachelor's pro-

gramme to its list. It is also a way in which the shortage of pharmacists in the country can be addressed.

"The idea is that this programme is intended to make pharmacy more efficient and even safer. One important function that a pharmacist has is to ensure that the cocktail that is being prescribed to you is suitable for you and your specific condition, in collaboration with your physician. So

generative pharmacy is able to use your medical history, look at the general prescription that is there for you and to be able to help make critical decisions. We are therefore hoping to train our pharmacists for the future," Dr. Mathew noted.

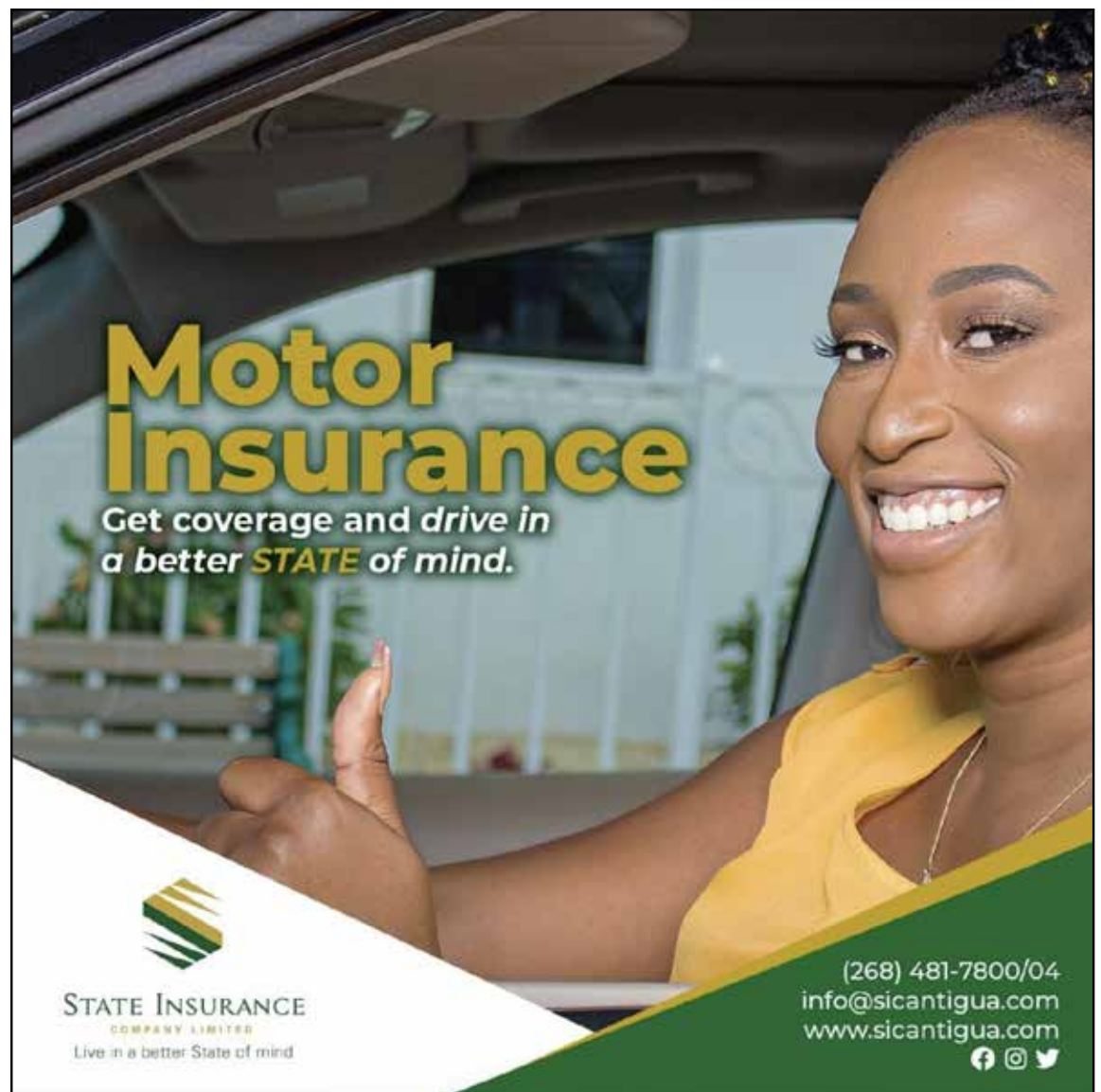
Interested individuals can visit the campus' website for more information on the new programmes that will be added and how to go about applying as a student.

cont'd from pg 4
emphasized.

Under an arrangement hammered out by the leaders of CARICOM on Monday, a transitional presidential council will be put in place to oversee the process leading, at some point, to fresh elections.

An interim prime minister is also to be appointed following the resignation of Dr. Henry.




These announcements were made Monday night by the Chairman of CARICOM and President of Guyana, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali.



Motor Insurance
Get coverage and drive in a better **STATE** of mind.

STATE INSURANCE
COMPANY LIMITED
Live in a better State of mind

(268) 481-7800/04
info@sicantigua.com
www.sicantigua.com



Thousands converge on St. John's when five cruise ships call

Taxi drivers, vendors and souvenir shop operators all reported a brisk day of activity and business on Tuesday with five cruise ships calling at the St. John's Harbour.

The vessels were; the Enchanted Princess of Princess Cruises, Costa Serena and Costa Pacifica of Costa Cruises, AIDA Perla of AIDA Cruises and Explorer of the Seas from Royal Caribbean International. While these larger cruise ships called at the St. John's Harbour the smaller luxury yacht, SeaDream 11 docked at the Falmouth Harbour.

Overall, it was a busy day for all as both vendors and taxi drivers were joyous in their response to the business that the visitors generated during their stay.

Even some of the visitors were full of praise for Antigua and Barbuda stating that they would like to return for an extended visit.

The Antigua Cruise Port has reported that already, the number of visitors to the country so far this year has already surpassed the figure for last year at the same time.

The ACP is confident that cruise

passenger arrivals this year will top the total for 2023.

Meanwhile, stay over visitor numbers this year will almost certainly surpass those for last year as this year is turning out to be one of the busiest ever on the calendar of events for Antigua and Barbuda.

Among the events taking place this year are the Small Island Developing States 4th Conference in May, World Cup T-20 Cricket in June, Carnival in July/August, and matches in the CPL in August/September.

Winners for WCW art competition announced

The winners of the art competition organized by the Consumers Affairs Division as part of the World Consumer Week activities have been named.

The competition ran from January 10 to February 29 and it was designed to showcase the talents of the young people as they were required to reflect their interpretation of the theme in an artistic manner.

The theme of the World Consumer Rights Week activities is: Fair and Responsi-

ble AI for Consumers.

The competition was judged in four categories;

5 – 7 Category;

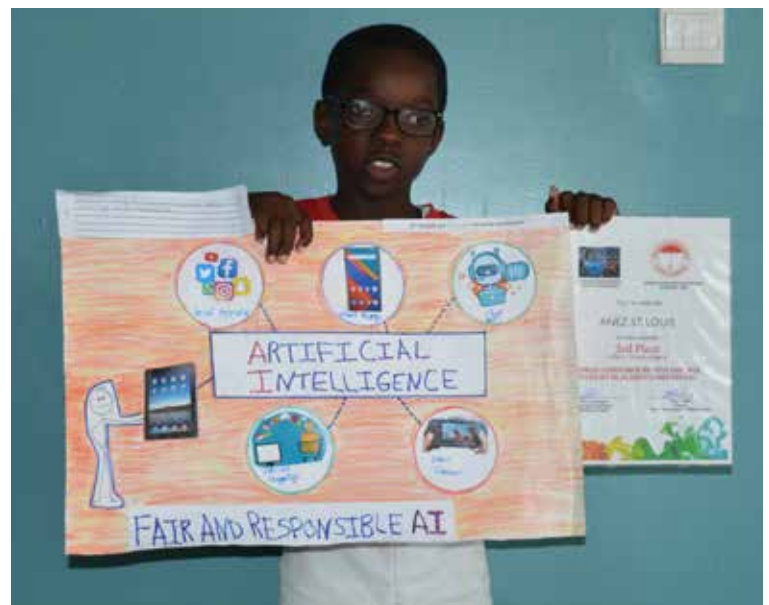
1ST Place: Adriel Kheang – St. John's Lutheran

2ND Place: Sekani Gregory Fearon – St. John's Catholic Primary

3RD Place Anez St. Louis – New Bethel SDA Academy

8 – 12 Category

1ST Place: Malachi John – Christian Union Junior Academy



5-7- Anez St.Louis

cont'd on pg 8



ON AIR

STAY ON POINTE

POINTE FM 99.1

Your **Monday Conversations**,
this and every **Monday!**

6:30pm - 8:30pm

Host Michael Freeland

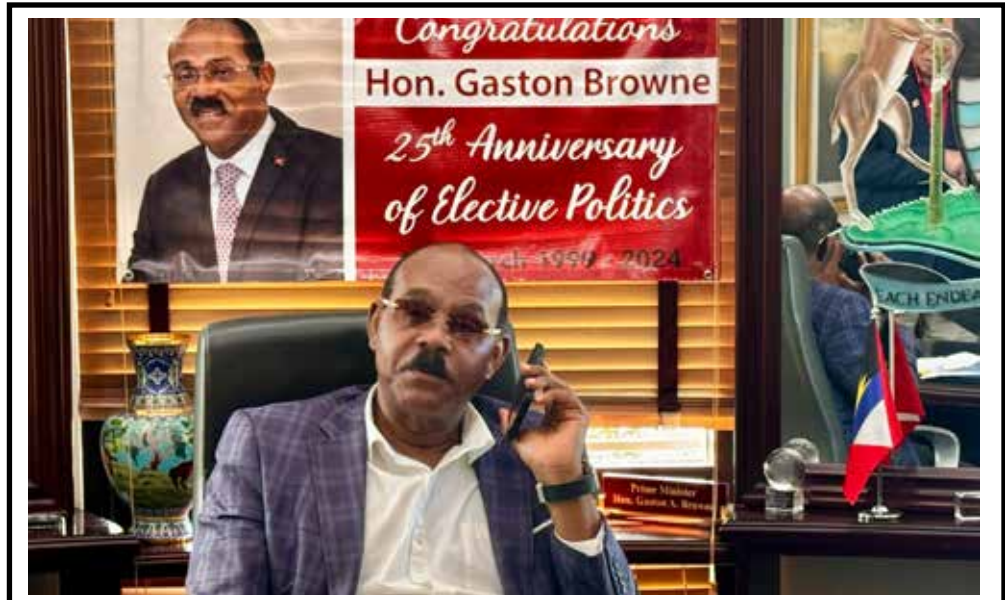
CALL 562- 3989 OR 562-2991 (US) 718-285-7889 FACEBOOK LIVE @POINTE FM99.1

Prime Minister honoured

Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne was honoured on Tuesday with a replica of the Ayodhya Ram Mandir Temple by Senior Indian Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Leader Dr. Vijay Jolly and his businessman son Kabir Jolly and Honorary Indian Consul Mr. Vijay Shiv Kumar Tewani who had an engagement with the Prime Minister.

The Ram Mandir is a Hindu temple complex in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, India. Many Hindus believe that it is located at the site of Ram Janmabhoomi, the birthplace of Rama, a principal deity of Hinduism.

The temple was inaugurated on 22nd January after a prana pratishtha (consecration) ceremony.



Prime Minister Gaston Browne is celebrating 25 years of unbroken service as the representative for the St. John's City West constituency.

cont'd from pg 6

- 2ND Place: Anree St. Louis – New Bethel SDA Academy
- Under 14 winners
- 1ST Place: Paris Turner – Christ The King High School
- 2ND Place: Bretania Christopher – Christ The King High School
- 3RD Place: Sanaa Si-

- mon – Christ The King High School
- Over 14
- 1ST Place: Malik Watkins – Antigua Grammar School
- 2ND Place: T-Jahrie Lockhart – Antigua Grammar School
- 3RD Place: D'Neil Benjamin – Antigua Grammar

School
Meanwhile, other activities held to mark World Consumer Week included a church service on Sunday, on Monday, a team traveled to Barbuda for interactions with students of both the Holy Trinity and the Sir McChesney George Secondary School, on Tuesday after-

noon, a business forum was held where a discussion was held that explored the benefits and challenges of utilizing Artificial Intelligence in business.
On Friday, World Consumer Day, the Consumers Affairs Division will stage an awareness march through the streets of St. John's.



Over-14 Malik Watkins



Over-14-T-Jahrie-Lockhart

5 WAYS YOU CAN BE A

GERM BUSTER

STOP BAD GERMS FROM SPREADING BY TAKING CARE OF YOUR BODY.



GRAFINKZ



Eat healthy foods, fruits and drink lots of fluids.



Get plenty of sleep and exercise often.



Wash your hands frequently with soap or hand sanitizer.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.



Avoid contact with people who are sick. Stay up-to-date with your vaccines.



For more information or assistance: Call (268) 462-5522 or visit us on Lower High Street, St. Johns, Antigua.



US inflation edges up as Fed debates interest rate cuts

The inflation rate in the US picked up in February, as prices for petrol and housing pushed higher.

The annual rate, which measures the pace of price increases, was 3.2% in February, up from 3.1% in January, the Labor Department said.

Airfare, car insurance and clothing were among the items driving the increase over the month.

Grocery prices, which have jumped in recent years, fuelling public discontent, were unchanged.

The monthly report comes during a critical presidential election year and as the US central bank, the Federal Reserve, is debating the next step in its fight to rein in prices.

Inflation has slowed significantly since the Fed started hiking borrowing costs sharply in 2022 and the bank is expected to start reversing course and cutting interest rates sometime this year.

But calls for the first cut to come as soon as March have been revised as recent inflation readings show progress stalling, with many now expecting its first move in June or later.

Analysts said the figures were affected by seasonal price adjustments tied to the start of the year, but that the overall report was likely to reinforce the Fed's determi-



nation to remain cautious.

"This print is just about enough to keep rate cut expectations for June stable - but another print like this next month would push the first cut into the second half of the year, putting the soft landing narrative in question," said Seema Shah, chief global strategist at Principal Asset Management.

The US economy has so far held up better than expected in the face of inflation and higher borrowing costs, but persistent price rises have hampered President Joe Biden's ability to sell his policies to voters and could pose risks to the economy in the months ahead.

The Labor Department said petrol prices rose by 3.8% between January and February, while airline fares

rose 3.6%.

Grocery prices showed little change over the month, as higher prices for items such as cereal, bread and eggs were offset by lower meat and fresh fruit costs.

Overall, grocery prices were 1% higher than a year earlier.

Housing costs rose 0.4% over the month and 5.7% from February 2023.

Housing plays a major role in US inflation calculations, amounting to roughly a third of the consumer price index.

The department's inflation measure takes into account both rental rates and "owners' equivalent" rent, an estimate of what a homeowner would have to pay to rent their own property.

If housing costs are excluded, the inflation rate in the US is far lower than the

official rate - with prices up about 1.8% compared with February 2023.

Joe Brusuelas, chief economist at consultancy firm RSM, who last year had predicted that housing costs would remain an inflation driver, said he now saw that changing in the months ahead.

"If you're looking at the US from externally, you should be able to begin to make some judgment that the US is rapidly approaching the point at which we can say we've obtained price stability," he said.

The latest report, Mr Brusuelas said, suggested "a lot of noise and not the development of a new trend".

But he added, "We're not quite there yet to the point where the Fed's ready to declare the all-clear".

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



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

TALKING POINT

**CALL: 562-3989 OR 562-2991 | US: 718 285 7889
FACEBOOK LIVE @ POINTE FM99.1
WE ARE GETTING STRONGER**

South Georgia: Bird flu infects penguins at famous wildlife haven

By Jonathan Amos

Bird flu has been confirmed in 10 penguins on South Georgia, one of the world's great wildlife havens.

Avian influenza had already infected other seabirds and mammals on the British Overseas Territory, but scientists report gannets and king penguins have now fallen victim, too.

The breeding season is closing on the sub-Antarctic island so the immediate impacts are likely to be limited.

But there'll be concern for next season when wildlife gathers again en masse.

The beaches on South Georgia are famous for their spectacular aggregations - a million-plus individuals all jostling together to court, mate and bring up their young.

"I liken South Georgia to the Alps with Serengeti-style wildlife around it. The wildlife concentrations around the coast are just phenomenal - multiple species of penguins, albatrosses, and seals," explained Dr Norman Ratcliffe, a bird ecologist from the British Antarctic Survey.

"If bird flu were to take a hold and cause very high mortality across the island, it would be of conservation concern globally. But at the moment, it does seem to be somewhat limited in the way it's spreading," he told



Penguins gather on South Georgia in prodigious numbers.

BBC News.

High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) has been in existence for decades but the world is currently in the grip of a major flare up, with the H5N1 strain of the virus causing the deaths of countless wild and domesticated birds.

Antarctica and its outlying islands have escaped the worst due to their remoteness. But this situation is on the turn.

Bird flu was first identified on South Georgia in October 2023, in the large scavenging seabird known as the brown skua, with detections in kelp gulls shortly after.

Then, in January this year, cases were confirmed in elephant and fur seals.

It's also spread to Antarctic terns and wandering albatrosses.

Penguins are the latest

animal group to be infected, with five gannets and five kings testing positive.

The cases were confirmed in samples sent back to the UK to the International Reference Laboratory for Avian Influenza at the Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA) laboratories in Weybridge.

It's not a great surprise. The virus has already got to gannets on the Falklands some 1,500km to the west, so it was probably only a matter of time before South Georgia's also became infected.

"Skuas winter around South America as do giant petrels and we think these birds are the vector that brought the disease into South Georgia," said Dr Ratcliffe.

"Skuas are constantly in amongst the penguin colonies scavenging and prey-

ing on eggs and chicks. If there's a surprise, it's that it's taken this long for the virus to be manifested in the penguins."

Scientists are watching closely now to see how bird flu interacts with the different penguin species, which on South Georgia include kings, gannets, macaronis and chinstraps.

Macaronis, for example, will spend much of the coming southern winter at sea, which will help them avoid infection. Kings and gannets, however, will continue to roost on shore, leaving them open to further exposure.

As for the Antarctic proper, two dead skuas infected with HPAI were recently picked up by Argentine scientists near their Primavera base on the continent's peninsula, so

cont'd on pg 14



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



**HOSTED BY
TROY ALLEN**

TALK YOUR MIND

**CALL: 562-3989 OR 562-2991 | US: 718 285 7889
FACEBOOK LIVE @ POINTE FM99.1**

WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Regional News



Guyana: Teachers Union says talks over salary increases collapse

CMC - The Guyana Teachers' Union (GTU) Tuesday said that negotiations over salary increases for its members with the Ministry of Education have collapsed after government refused to consider the 2019-2023 proposed multi-year agreement.

"Talks have collapsed because, as it is, there is no plan for a future meeting," GTU President Dr Mark Lyte said, adding that for the first time the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education attended the negotiations and informing the parties that the government did not budget for salary increases for those years.

But in a statement, the Ministry of Education, claimed that the union representatives had abandoned the talks and "walking out of the meeting."

The meeting was chaired by Permanent Secretary of the Education Ministry, Shannielle Hoosein-Outar who upheld the Government's position that discus-



sions surrounding salary increases should be from 2024 onwards.

She explained that increases for the prior years would have financial implications, and that the 2024 budget does not have the fiscal space to accommodate the retroactive payment of salaries for teachers during the period 2019 – 2023.

"Mrs Hoosein-Outar asked the Union's representatives to submit to the Ministry a proposal which would capture their request for a multiyear agreement commencing 2024."

Lyte said the Ministry of Education has asked the GTU to submit a multi-year proposal from 2024 going

forward and that the union would be seeking legal advice to return to court or to file a fresh case.

He said another option open to the union is to refer the salary dispute to arbitration.

"That would be the best recourse at this time for the matter to be sent to arbitration, providing that it is agreed on," he said, adding "we have decided that our members are going to utilise the means that is possible to show the administration that we will not be bullied in any negotiation or discussion.

The GTU-Ministry of Education Collective Bargaining Agreement provides that both sides must agree to

go to arbitration.

Last Thursday, the Ministry of Education in a statement said some of the matters identified for discussion by the GTU are the salary matters included in the multi-year proposal 2019-2023, the two per cent difference in salary for 2017 and 2018, clothing allowance increase and Whitley Council being paid every three years

It had also identified for discussion teacher absenteeism and punctuality, poor performing schools, continuous professional education, and completion of syllabus.

The GTU is seeking a 25 per cent salary increase for 2019 and a 20 per cent wage hike for each of the years from 2020 to 2023.

The collective bargaining between the GTU and the Education Ministry is in keeping with a High Court-ordered mediation agreement that led to the end of a 29-day nationwide strike by teachers.

cont'd from pg 12

the virus is unquestionably moving south.

But how far it would progress and what its impacts might be was highly uncertain, said Dr Ashley Banyard, who leads the avian virology workgroup at the APHA.

"Penguins live in very close proximity to each other, so that lends itself to the idea that they might spread the virus rapidly between each other. But we don't know how easily the virus

can get into different penguin species, what sort of clinical disease it might cause and how rapidly it might spread between birds themselves," he told BBC News.

Surveillance is key, and this is being assisted by the many cruise ships that now sail in Antarctic waters.

Members of the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) have long had protocols to prevent the accidental spread of disease by tourists in pristine en-

vironments, but these have now been stepped up because of bird flu.

"Nobody lands on a beach until there's been an assessment done to show if there's any strange behaviour or high mortality," said Amanda Lynnes, the director of environment and science coordination at IAATO.

"Antarctica is a huge continent but we're actually quite a small community in a way, so the information flow goes rapidly to all stakeholders who need to know and can advise."

Grenada: Disciplinary action for cops over escaped prisoners

By Melissa Wong

An investigation has revealed that human error and negligence played a pivotal role in the escape of three Grenadian prisoners who are charged with the murders of two American sailors, Ralph Hendry and Kathy Brandel.

In a news conference on Tuesday, Prime Minister and National Security Minister Dickon Mitchell announced that disciplinary action has been taken against four police officers who were charged this morning with serious offences under the Police Act, ranging from making a false statement, permitting the escape of prisoners and breaches of the Standing Orders.

It has finally been revealed how the prisoners, Ron Mitchell, 30, Atiba Stanislaus, 25, and Trevon Robertson, 23, escaped from the South St George Police Station on February 18, 2024. On February 26, the trio was slapped with immigration-related charges in St Vincent and the Grenadines after investigations revealed they hijacked a yacht named 'Simplicity' that was moored at Grand Anse Beach in Grenada and illegally entered the southwestern coast of SVG. Last week after being deported from SVG to Grenada, the three men were then charged with two counts of capital murder by intentionally causing

the death of American Sailors Ralph Hendry and Kathleen Brandel.

The prime minister noted that Police Commissioner Don McKenzie had indicated during a media briefing on February 25, that an investigation would be launched into the circumstances leading to the escape of the prisoners, however from preliminary investigations then, he was satisfied that if the proper standard police protocols were followed, the men should not have escaped.

Mitchell said the investigation has concluded that the pronouncement made by the Police Commissioner remains unchanged.

The investigation has revealed that four individual cells at the police station had secure, functioning locking mechanisms, however, the three prisoners had not been placed inside the individual cells which had the secure locking mechanisms, but at the time of the escape were in a corridor which had a burglar bar that was immediately located outside the locking cells.

This allowed the three prisoners to bend the wrought iron or iron grill that secures the corridor area and to escape. The prime minister said it was therefore clear that had the men been placed in the individual locking cells they



The Grenadian prisoners who were recaptured in St Vincent-L-R: Atiba Stanislaus; Trevon Roberston (upper right corner) and Ron Mitchell (below right).

would not have escaped or had the opportunity to escape.

Another startling revelation from the investigation was that warnings had been issued two days prior, that the men were high risk and were also a flight risk and based on those warnings, it was even more important all the standard operating procedures be followed to minimise any risk associated with the prisoners being at the police station.

The investigation concluded that there was a failure to heed these crucial alerts and follow standard operating procedures, supervisory negligence and improper shift handover. The prime minister said all these factors contributed to the opportunity presented to the prisoners.

Mitchell, who is the National Security Minister, said he has full confidence in the Commissioner of

Police, the executive management of the police and police officers, and expects the leadership of the police to be prepared to hold the institution of the police accountable in circumstances where officers fall below the expected standard of behaviour.

As a result of this incident, it has also become clear that leadership at the South St George Police Station is a matter that requires attention. The Top Cop has commissioned an investigation to review the role of the leadership at the station at the time. When that probe is completed, the necessary report will be submitted to the Public Service Commission to carry out its function.

This entire episode that has placed the Royal Grenada Police Force under intense public scrutiny has led the Police Commissioner to issue a communication

cont'd on pg 16

International

AROUND THE WORLD



Fifty hurt as NZ-bound flight hit by 'technical' issue

By Joel Guinto

A passenger has described the moment people hit the roof of a plane travelling from Australia to New Zealand during what was described as a mid-air "technical event".

Brian Jokat said a number of people suffered head injuries after the Latam Airlines jet dropped unexpectedly, throwing some out of their seats.

Fifty were hurt and 12 were taken to hospital on landing in Auckland.

Emergency services said one person was in a serious condition.

In total, New Zealand's St John ambulance service said it had "assessed and treated approximately" 50 patients who had been travelling on the Boeing 787 Dreamliner, which had taken off from Sydney.

Speaking to the BBC,



Latam says the incident involved a Boeing 787 Dreamliner.

Mr Jokat revealed that people had hit the ceiling with such force "some of the roof panels were broken" while others had been thrown down the aisles after the plane "dropped unlike anything" he had ever experienced before.

The person next to him, he added, appeared to be "glued to the ceiling".

"I did think for a split second: 'This is it,'" he said.

"There was blood coming from several people's

heads and people were yelling and screaming and it was chaos," Mr Jokat added.

Another passenger told Radio New Zealand they saw people "flying around" and leaving traces of their blood on the ceiling.

Some were not wearing their seatbelts, Radio New Zealand reported, quoting one of those on board.

Further details about the "technical event" or what caused it are still not

known. FlightAware, an airline tracker, shows the aircraft losing altitude about two hours into the three-hour flight between the two cities.

Chilean-Brazilian carrier Latam Airlines said it "deeply" regretted "any inconvenience and discomfort this situation may have caused its passengers".

It said "a technical event during the flight" had "caused a strong movement" but provided no further information.

"The plane landed at Auckland Airport as scheduled," it added.

The aircraft was scheduled to fly on from Auckland to Santiago, the capital of Chile.

The departure was cancelled and a new flight scheduled for Tuesday, RNZ reported.

cont'd from pg 15

to Divisional Heads about a comprehensive review and assessment of all police cell infrastructure.

Prime Minister Mitchell said many of the police stations in Grenada should not even be police stations because of their conditions. He noted some have deteriorated significantly over the years, the buildings are old and lack modern amenities even for civilian use, much less prisoners. He said this was a result of the failure of the State over decades to invest and address the infrastructure circumstances in which

the police find themselves working, The State will now have to invest in the physical infrastructure.

The prime minister said while emotions are high from the public concerning the State of crime and the response of police, citizens should not malign, hinder, or disrespect the police.

He stated this as he also expressed disappointment that in the very week the three prisoners escaped from the South St George Police Station, another prisoner, Lyvon Date, also escaped from police custody while attending

the Grenville Magistrate Court. Date, who is charged with capital murder is considered dangerous. Police have been conducting searches to apprehend him and there is also a reward of EC\$5,000 for information leading to his recapture.

The prime minister reminded citizens of Grenada that it is their obligation to assist the police with any information pertaining to Mr Date. He also cautioned persons who may be inclined to assist persons on the run to desist from doing so and to come forward with information they have.

Ex-president of Honduras found guilty of drug crimes

By Nadine Yousif

Juan Orlando Hernández, the ex-president of Honduras, has been found guilty of drug trafficking charges in a federal US court.

Hernández was convicted on Friday of conspiring to import cocaine into the US, and possessing “destructive devices” including machine guns.

Prosecutors said the ex-president ran Honduras like a “narco-state”, protecting and accepting bribes from drug traffickers.

Hernández now faces life in prison.

The 55-year-old former president had denied any wrongdoing and pleaded not guilty in the case.

He was convicted by a jury in a Manhattan federal court after about two days of deliberations.

Hernández was president of Honduras from 2014 to 2022, serving for two consecutive terms.

He initially ran as a law-and-order candidate who promised to address the issue of drug-related crime in the country.

Instead, prosecutors accused him of partnering with “some of the world’s most prolific narcotics traffickers to build a corrupt and brutally violent empire based on the illegal trafficking of tonnes of cocaine to the United States”.

Three months after leaving office, he was extradited to New York and arrested in April 2022 to face federal charges in the US.

Hernández was once seen as a strong US ally. During his leadership of Honduras, the country received more than \$50m (£39m) in anti-narcotics assistance from the US, as well as additional millions of dollars in se-



A court sketch of former Honduras President Juan Orlando Hernandez during his US trial.

curity and military aid.

In 2019, then-President Donald Trump thanked Hernández for “working with the United States very closely”.

Hernández in turn thanked Mr Trump and the American people “for the support they have given us in the firm fight against drug trafficking”.

Prosecutors later uncovered that Hernández was linked with drug traffickers as far back as 2004, long before he became president, and that he had facilitated the smuggling of around 500 tonnes of cocaine to the US.

They said drug traffickers paid him millions of dollars in bribes to allow cocaine to be smuggled from Colombia and Venezuela through Honduras on to the US.

In one allegation, prosecutors said that Mexican drug lord Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán had given Tony Hernández - the ex-president’s younger brother - \$1m (£778,450) as a bribe for Juan Orlando Hernández.

During his trial, several convicted drug traffickers testified that they had bribed Hernández.

Prosecutors also alleged that he

had used the drug money to then bribe officials to manipulate Honduras’ 2013 and 2017 presidential elections in his favour.

In his denial of the allegations, Hernández claimed that he became a “victim of a vendetta and a conspiracy by organised crime and political enemies”.

“I had a policy against all those people because I could not stand them,” Hernández said of drug traffickers when testifying at his own trial. “They did a lot of damage in the country.”

His lawyers argued that those who testified against him were doing so for their own gain.

Hernández has been held at a Brooklyn jail since his extradition.

He will be sentenced at a later date.

Hernández is not the first ex-Latin American head of state to be convicted of a drug-related crime in the US.

Panama’s Manuel Noriega was convicted on drug trafficking charges in a Miami court in 1992, and Guatemala’s Alfonso Portillo was convicted on money laundering charges in a New York court in 2014.

Sports News



Spanish Heat II and Flyers II stay unbeaten in ABBA's Division II League

Spanish Heat II and EZ Fit Flyers II maintained their unbeaten runs in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Division II League on Monday night.

Spanish Heat II claimed their third win in as many encounters by snatching an 83-79 victory against the Rebels in the second game of a double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Jesus Emmanuel shot a team-high 24 points and grabbed 12 rebounds; Ismael Pulinario converted 20 points and snatched 14 rebounds; and Kevin Pimentel scored 15 points for Spanish Heat II.

Zuri Nesbitt shot a game-high 26 points, distributed nine assists, and snatched eight rebounds, and Tyndale Telemaque sank 16 points and claimed



five rebounds for the Rebels.

Teammate Buell Henry converted 13 points and grabbed 19 rebounds, and Ryan Noel chipped in with

10 points, nine rebounds, and five steals for the Rebels, who lost for the second time in three games.

EZ Fit Flyers II won for the third time in as

many games via an 84-48 drubbing of the Wadadli Elite in Monday's first encounter.

T-Shawn Lewis shot a game-high 24 points and claimed nine rebounds, and Donte Trimmingham sank 22 points and snatched eight rebounds for the Flyers II.

Teammate Craig Mas-siah scored 11 points, Sadiq Phillip had 10 points and 14 rebounds, and Harry Rashaun chipped in with eight points and 13 rebounds for the Flyers II team.

Aiden Christian had 12 points and 10 rebounds; Davique Osbourn produced 12 points, five assists, and five steals; and Orion Seraphine chipped in with 10 points and five rebounds for the Wadadli Elite, who lost for the second time in four games.

Mixed fortunes for Princess Margaret School in schools' volleyball championships

Princess Margaret School (PMS) had mixed fortunes in the Ministry of Sports Inter-Schools' Volleyball Championships on Monday.

Princess Margaret pulled off a 2-1 win against All Saints Secondary School in their girls division encounter at the indoor volleyball stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex.

Princess Margaret School won the opening set 25-8, but All Saints Sec-

ondary took the second 26-24 to draw level. Princess Margaret School eventually prevailed by winning the third and deciding third set 15-11.

However, Ottos Comprehensive School defeated Princess Margaret School 2-1 in the boys division. The boys of Ottos Comprehensive School won the encounter 19-25, 25-11, and 15-11.

Ottos Comprehensive School also

recorded a 2-1 win against the second team of Island Academy in the boys division. Ottos Comprehensive School secured victory with scores of 21-25, 25-14, and 15-12.

Defending girls and boys champions, Island Academy's first team, also won in both categories. The first team of Island Academy beat Princess Margaret School 2-0 in the girls division,

cont'd on pg 19

CWI Applauds St. Kitts and Nevis government's commitment to cricket infrastructure development

Cricket West Indies (CWI) commends the proactive efforts undertaken by the government of St. Kitts and Nevis to bolster cricket infrastructure within the region.

President Dr. Kishore Shallow commended the efforts by the government and the St. Kitts Cricket Association to develop Conaree Cricket Ground, marking a considerable step towards enhancing regional cricket facilities and fostering the sport's growth.

President Shallow echoed the importance of governments investing in cricket infrastructure, stating, "Cricket West Indies is impressed with the developments and prospects of Conaree Cricket Ground, which has enabled St. Kitts & Nevis to host regional matches and tournaments.

"It is imperative that governments recognize the significance of infrastructure in the development of cricket and the broader sporting community.



CWI President Dr. Shallow, left, and St. Kitts and Nevis Min. of Sports, Hon. Samal Duggins. (CWI Media)

Minister Duggins' efforts ought to be commended for his efforts in this regard."

The development of facilities and hosting of regional cricket align seamlessly with the vision outlined by Minister of Sports, Samal Duggins, who emphasized the importance

of sports development as a cornerstone of the

CWI looks forward to working closely with the government of Saint Kitts and Nevis in realizing the shared vision of enhancing cricket facilities and promoting the sport's development across the region.

President Shallow fur-

ther reiterated Cricket West Indies' commitment to collaborating with Saint Kitts and Nevis to elevate the standard of cricket facilities and nurture the development of players within the nation.

So far this year, St. Kitts and Nevis has hosted the West Indies Championship (the Men's first-class tournament) and the ongoing CG United Women's Super50 Cup.

The women will follow the Super 50 Cup with the CWI T20 Blaze. Saint Kitts and Nevis is also home to the CPL franchise, St. Kitts & Nevis Patriots.

cont'd from pg 18

winning 25-16, 25-8.

The first team of Island Academy defeated All Saints Secondary 2-0 in the boys division, prevailing 25-8, 25-14.

The Sir Novell Richards Academy also claimed wins in both categories. Sir Novell Richard Academy beat Antigua Girls High School in their girls division affair,

winning 25-19, 25-23.

Sir Novell Richards Academy overcame Princess Margaret School 2-1 in the boys division, winning 27-25, 23-25, and 15-12.

Antigua Grammar School also won the boys division, prevailing 25-15, 24-26, and 15-12 against Ottos Comprehensive School.

Sports News



Dredgers and 300 win twice in softball contest

The Dredgers and Lees Landscaping 300 each recorded two wins in the latest round of matches in the Everyday Store 24/7 Limited/Alva Joseph Antigua and Barbuda Softball Cricket Association's (ABSCA) men's 10-over competition.

Dredgers trounced Sisserou by 66 runs in the competition, which is supported by corporate sponsors We The People (WTP) 98.5 FM, St. John's Co-Operative Credit Union, and Natural Construction & Goody's Taxi Service & Tours.

Mervin Higgins struck 51 as the Dredgers won the toss and batted, scoring 118 in 9.5 overs. Anthony Mathurin grabbed three wickets for nine runs, Isaiah Viville claimed two for 11, and Sahiem Dharanjit captured two for 32.

In reply, Sisserou was restricted to 52 for six off their allotted 10 overs. Anthony Mathurin made 19. Stelbert Plant took two wickets for six runs, and Brent Bloodman claimed two wickets for eight runs.

Dredgers also prevailed by 29 runs against Bryson's Shipping and Insurance Bullets. Dredgers made 128 for five. Mervin Higgins hammered 91, which included 12 sixes and three fours, while Kerry Burton picked up two for 11.

Bullets were then re-



Mervin Higgins of Dredgers

stricted to 99 for six off their 10 overs, with Kimani George hitting 56. Higgins bagged three for 17.

Lees Landscaping 300 beat Bryson's Shipping and Insurance Bullets by 18 runs. Charles James cracked 52, and Veston Lewis struck 51 to lead 300 to 114 for two off their 10 overs.

In reply, Bullets were restricted to 96 for five off their 10 overs. Morrison Browne hit 37, Dorian Grant made 21 not out, and Kimani George also scored 21.

Lees landscaping 300

beat Sisserou by 10 wickets. Sisserou made 64 for seven, with Rennick Esprit getting 22. Zach Thomas had two for 11, and Jared Roberts took two for 12.

300 achieved victory by scoring 68 without loss in three overs. Veston Lewis scored 29 not out, and Charles James hit 27 not out.

Marco Inc.'s Grill Box Buckley's 3J's defeated Construction Solutions PMS by eight wickets. PMS made 63 for seven, with Denfield Roach getting 21. Rodney Williams snatched

three for 11, and Steve Martin grabbed three for 17.

Buckley's 3J's secured victory at 67 for two in 3.4 overs. Steve Martin made 28 not out, and Denley Thomas scored 22 not out. Terrence Thompson captured two for 37.

Goody's Taxi Services and Tours, Jennings Rockets, and Wayne's Electrical Services Survivors recorded wins in the Enforcers ABSCA Female 10 overs competition.

Jennings Rockets prevailed by eight wickets against Rackaman Construction Strictly Business, who made 37 for seven off their 10 overs.

Pauline Shaw claimed two wickets for three runs, and Kushana David took two for 11.

Jennings Rockets achieved victory at 39 for three in seven overs, with Chemique Benjamin getting 19.

The Survivors beat the Potters Uprising Serpents by five wickets. The Serpents made 56 for six, with Stacey Telemaque hitting 24. Lokuelle Pelle grabbed three wickets for three runs, and Cerie Richards had two for 11.

The Survivors achieved victory at 60 for five in 7.4 overs. Joan Samuel and Enrika Mathew each made 20 not out.



The Pigotts Bullets football team. (File photo)

Pigotts Bullets beat SAP in Premier League

The Pigotts Bullets snatched a 3-2 victory against SAP in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Monday.

Dorisca Markens scored the winner in the 52nd minute in the lone Premier League encounter at the ABFA Technical Center. Markens' winner came six minutes after teammate Akeem Isaac scored an equalizer for the Bullets.

Isaac converted a penalty kick in the 46th minute to draw the Bullets level at 2-2 after Tyrique Tonge slotted home a penalty in the 40th minute and his teammate Peter Byers scored in the 43rd minute to give SAP a 2-1 lead at the halftime interval.

Seigel Rodney scored the first goal of the match in the 35th minute to put the Bullets ahead.

It is only the third win in 11 matches for the Pigotts Bullets, but it allows them to overtake SAP in the 15-team

round-robin competition.

The Bullets advanced to 12 points and moved into 10th place, while SAP dropped into 11th place with 10 points after suffering their fifth loss in 11 matches.

Meanwhile, the two top teams recorded wins in the ABFA's Second Division on Monday.

Freeman's Village stayed two points ahead of Sea View Farm in second place by trouncing the Young Warriors 12-0 in their encounter at the Freeman's Village playing field.

Darius Hector scored five goals, while Malik Charles and Roy Gregory each converted twice for the home side.

Mekai Lewis opened the scoring by converting a penalty in the 10th minute, Adrian Benjamin had a 30th-minute conversion, and Tyrique Bird scored an own goal in the 82nd minute to wrap up the victory.

Their 11th win in 13 matches al-

lows Freemans Village to remain top of the Second Division by advancing to 33 points, while the Young Warriors remain second from the bottom of the 20-team round-robin competition with just three points after crashing to their 11th defeat in 12 encounters.

Sea View Farm stayed within touching distance of the leaders by prevailing 3-1 against Real Blizzard at the New Winthorpes playing field.

Klyster Rowe scored twice with goals in the 56th and 74th minutes after teammate Rhezal Gomes struck in the 21st minute to give Sea View Farm a one-nil lead at halftime.

Millique London scored the only goal for Real Blizzard in the 53rd minute.

Their 10th win in 13 matches allows Sea View Farm to remain in second place by advancing to 31 points, while Real Blizzard will stay in 13th place with 15 points after suffering their fifth loss in 12 games.

New volleyball club championships set to commence today

A new division has been added to the 2024 Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association's (ABA-VA) Local League, which is set to serve off at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex today.

The teams will also be competing on a newly laid court at the indoor volleyball stadium.

A female second division is being incorporated into this year's local league competitions in the ABA-VA's quest to continue its development of young players.

Starz 2 Juniors, which competed in the sole female division league for the past two seasons, will now compete in the new female second division.

They will be joined by four other teams in the Female Division 2 competition. They are Da Squad 2, Dynasty, TOA Media and MKUU Tours Chargers Eagles, and Royal Cruiser 2.

Six teams, one less than last year, will be contesting



Teams will compete on a newly laid surface on the volleyball court at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex this season. Members of the national volleyball fraternity, including players and ABAVA executive members re-laid the surface of the court last weekend. (ABA-VA)

the Female Division I competition.

Among them is reigning back-to-back champions Caribbean Alliance Insurance (CAI) Da Squad, who will be defending their title. The other five teams that contested last year's competition will once again be participating this year.

They are perennial and former champions Paragons, Stoneville, last year's third-place finishers Jets, Royal Cruisers, and Starz 1 (Seniors), who captured the runners-up position last year.

The six teams that contested last year's competition will once again be competing for the coveted national men's division title, which was won for the sixth time by Stoneville in 2023.

The other returning teams are Pytonz, who captured the runners-up position last year; the High Flyers; the Renegades; the Sharks; and last year's third-place finishers, the Top Ranking Storming Lions.

They will be joined by three newcomers, making a total of nine teams to bat-

tle for the men's Division I championship. They are High Flyers 2 Phoenix, Invaders, and TOA Media and MKUU Tours Chargers Velocity.

The national club championship will commence with a double header at the volleyball stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex today.

Royal Cruisers will face CAI Da Squad in the female Division I at 6:45 pm, while Pytonz will meet TOA Media and MKUU Tours Chargers Velocity in the men's Division I at 7:45 pm.