

JAPAN TO FUND NEW APUA REVERSE OSMOSIS PLANT

Story on Page 2



An agreement to install a second Japanese-funded reverse osmosis plant at the Ffryes Beach facility was signed by Prime Minister, Gaston Browne and the Japanese Ambassador to the Eastern Caribbean, Yutaka Matsubara.



APUA to add another RO plant with funding provided by Japan

APUA is adding more water production capacity with the signing on Monday of an agreement between the Antigua and Barbuda government and the Government of Japan for the installation of another reverse

osmosis plant to be sited at Fryes Beach.

An agreement to install a second Japanese-funded plant at the Ffryes Beach facility was signed by Prime Minister, Gaston Browne and the Japanese Ambassador to the Eastern Caribbean, Yutaka Matsubara. Under the agreement, Japan will finance the second plant at a cost of US\$1.4 million. It will have the capacity to produce 332-thousand gallons of water daily. After it is erected, the combined production of the new plant coupled with the other plant installed in 2022, will amount to 1.2 million gallons of water daily.

Prime Minister Browne said the grant from the Japanese government will assist Antigua and Barbuda achieve its water production goals and it signals the very close relationship that

currently exists between the two countries.

“What Japan has done is to help us sustain water sustainability, recognizing that Antigua and Barbuda is one of the most water-stressed countries in the world. This is not a new phenomenon; it is something that the country has been wrestling with for decades. However, it has in more recent times been aggravated by the persistent droughts. We have seen rainfall drop from an average of about 35 inches annually to 18 inches of rain recorded one year during the drought just ended,” he recalled.

He added that residents of Antigua and Barbuda have over the years had to contend with water scarcity, although he recognises that there have been improvements in the water supply in *cont'd on pg 3*

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more recent times.

Utilities Minister, Melford Nicholas expressed appreciation to the government of Japan for helping Antigua and Barbuda through APUA to build-out its water production capabilities. The addition of the new plant and the existing plant, also financed by Japan, will allow APUA to better serve customers in the southern corridor of Antigua.

“This means we will have yet another plant added to the facilities at Fries which have already been built out to accommodate this new expansion, which will bring APUA capacity on completion to 1.2 million gallons daily,” he revealed.

Nicholas noted that the Japanese government has been financing a number of projects in Antigua and Barbuda through its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects, which are designed to help community-based initiatives and programmes.



These include the Antigua and Barbuda Waste Recycling Cooperation, the Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross, the construction of the Hospitality Training Facility at the GARD Centre, and agricultural education through hydroponics at the All Saints Secondary and the St Mary’s Centre of Excellence.

Japanese Ambassador Matsubara said the new plant serves to improve the country’s water infrastructure

given its perennial problems with droughts, now being worsened by the effects of climate change. “This plant is to help supply this valuable resource, at an affordable price, and which can also be made available to the agricultural sector to improve food security,” he stated.

It is the second water production agreement signed within a week that will result in increased water production for the country.

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Primary results to go before ABLP executive

The executive of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party will on Friday discuss the outcome of the just-concluded primary election that was held in the All Saints West Constituency last Friday night.

The results of the primary were announced following the poll with Lamin Newton, securing the most votes at 157. Regis Burton followed with 142 and Arry Simon with 60 votes.

Since Newton was the candidate with the plurality of the votes cast, he was being declared a winner by some officials of the party.

However, based on an agreement signed between all three candidates prior to the contest which stipulated that there shall be a run-off if no candidate attained 50 percent plus one of the votes cast.

There were 359 votes cast in the primary and none of the candidates was able to gain the required threshold of 50 percent of the votes cast or 180 votes.

“That all competing members of the All Saints West constituency primary accept that only one candidate can emerge victorious; and the candidate who receives more than 50 percent of the votes cast shall be named



Lamin Newton

the caretaker; and, if none achieves the 50 percent threshold, then the two candidates receiving the two highest number of votes shall go forward to compete in a run-off, and, that the two candidates agree to accept the results of the first round primary and the run-off election,” the agreement initialed by the three candidates stated.

Party General Secretary, Senator Mary Clare Hurst, said meeting of the executive will be the final arbiter of what happens in this matter but she fully expects that based on the agreement between the candidates, the only way forward is for there to be a run-off involving both Newton



Regis Burton

and Burton to determine the eventual winner and the person who would be named caretaker for All Saints West constituency.

Pointe Xpress consulted with the Attorney General, Sir Steadroy Benjamin who stated that it was ‘very clear’ from the agreement that a vote tally of over fifty percent was required to be named winner (caretaker) and since no one achieved that amount, his recommendation is for there to be a run-off of the two candidates who garnered the most votes.

He added that the agreement represented a legal document signed by all parties involved.

Re-registration of voters slated for October this year



The Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission (ABEC) has announced that it plans to commence a complete national re-registration for all eligible voters in Antigua and Barbuda starting in October this year.

Supervisor of Elections, Ian Hughes, said the process will likely run for one month in the first instance with a period for claims and objections taking place sometime afterwards.

“ABEC is of the considered opinion that the process of re-registration is the best method of maintaining the integrity of the Voter’s List. It is important to emphasize that ALL eligible persons (18 years and over) will be required to re-register when the process officially begins.

Persons whose cards will expire prior to the re-registration
cont’d on pg 5

PM Browne talks UN Human Development Report 2023-24

Prime Minister Gaston Browne is celebrating the positive assessment that Antigua and Barbuda achieved in the latest United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) report that was issued last week.

The report said Antigua and Barbuda has seen positive improvements in the lives of nationals and residents of the twin-island state. Antigua and Barbuda currently ranks 54th of the 193 countries listed by the UN HDI report. Only St. Kitts-Nevis ranks higher within the Caribbean. at #51.

Speaking on the Browne and Browne show over the weekend, PM Browne said the latest ranking by the UN HDI is a reflection of the hard work that his administration has performed on behalf of the people over the last almost ten years.

“I believe that the period we have served in office has been a very impactful period as we have lifted the country’s economy; we have lifted the people; we have enlarged their prospects and that has been demonstrated by the recent UN HDI. It is the first time that we have seen an improvement in our rankings,” he stated.

According to the prime minister Antigua and Barbuda attained a ranking of 29th in the world when the system was first introduced more than two decades ago. However, since then the country lost ground based on its rankings until it was ranked at number 77. Now Antigua and Barbuda at number 54, trails St Kitts Nevis by less than a percentage of a point.

PM Browne expressed confidence that Antigua and Barbuda’s rankings



Prime Minister Gaston Browne will continue to improve. “I have no doubt that based on the current trajectory with our rate of economic growth at an average of 8 percent, and with our build out in our socio-economic infrastructure such as our sea and airports and the

UWI FIC, Antigua and Barbuda will continue its upward march on the UN HDI list,” he emphasized.

This index considers factors such as life expectancy, education, and standard of living, providing insights into the overall well-being and development of a nation.

While these numbers indicate progress, it’s essential to continue addressing challenges and ensuring sustainable development for all.

In summary, the report observed, while Antigua and Barbuda has made progress, ongoing efforts are necessary to enhance well-being, address vulnerabilities, and promote sustainable development in the context of SIDS.

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tion exercise, are kindly asked to keep them secure and to use alternative forms of national identification for business purposes,” ABEC announced in a statement.

Hughes noted that the process will cost approximately \$5 million noting that Prime Minister Gaston Browne, under whose portfolio elections fall, has indicated that he will make available the funding to conduct the exercise.

He revealed that ABEC will work along with CBN of Canada which supplied the cards and other systems needed to carry out the exercise.

“We are going to issue new cards with

new security features, new systems as our computers have been around for the past ten years and need to be replaced; that means both hardware and software needing to be replaced,” he noted.

Additionally, Hughes anticipates that ABEC will need to hire temporary workers to assist it with the re-registration exercise. That will also necessitate arranging training sessions for the temporary workers. He added that the human resource requirements to conduct the training is currently available at ABEC.

There are just over 60 thousand registered voters on the official register of elections for Antigua and Barbuda.

Opinion



The Human Development Index and the Caribbean (Party Time?)

By Prof. C. Justin Robinson
Principal UWI Five Islands Campus & Pro Vice
Chancellor Planning & Academic Industry
Partnerships

On March 14 2024 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released the 2023/2024 edition of its annual Global Human Development Report (HDR). The report which has been published since 1990 provides insights into the performance of 193 countries in terms of access to health care, education and the general standard of living. In reviewing the current report, I take a five-year perspective and compare the performance of countries relative to the 2018/2019 report.

One of the key outputs of the HDR is the Human Development Index (HDI) which places countries into one of four categories, (1) Countries with Very

High Level of Human Development, (2) countries with High Human Development, (3) countries with Medium Human Development, countries with Low Human Development. The 2023/2024 edition of the HDI classifies sixty-nine countries of the 193 countries ranked as having achieved a Very High Level of Human Development, up from sixty-two in the 2018/2019 report. Switzerland is ranked number one in the world in terms of human development, replacing Norway which was ranked number one in 2018/2019.

A striking feature of the HDI over the years is that the world's richest and most powerful nations are rarely, if ever, in the top ten on this index. For example, the USA, Japan and China, the three largest economies in the world, are ranked at numbers 20, 24 and 75 respec-

tively, while the three richest countries in the world based on Gross Domestic Product Per Capita, Qatar, Luxembourg and Brunei are ranked at numbers 40, 20 and 55 respectively. The HDI rankings have consistently suggested that while a strong and relatively prosperous economy is necessary to support a Very High Level of Human Development it is not sufficient. Alongside a strong economy, the critical element in the level of human development attained by a nation appears to be the philosophical approach to the degree of access citizens and residents are to be provided to social services such as health care and education. The HDI rankings are dominated by countries with strong economies which provides the financial means to support a high level of human develop-

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**Table 1. Caribbean Countries in The Human Development Index:
A Five-Year Comparison**

Country	Rank 2023/2024 (Out of 193 Countries)	Rank 2018/2019 (Out of 188 Countries)	2023/2024 Classification	2018/2019 Classification
St. Kitts & Nevis	51	73	Very High Level of Human Development	High Human Development
Antigua & Barbuda	54	74	Very High Level of Human Development	High Human Development
Bahamas	57	60	Very High Level of Human Development	Very High Level of Human Development
Trinidad & Tobago	60	63	Very High Level of Human Development	High Human Development
Barbados	62	56	Very High Level of Human Development	Very High Level of Human Development
Grenada	73	78	High Human Development	High Human Development
Saint Vincent & The Grenadines	81	94	High Human Development	High Human Development
Guyana	95	123	High Human Development	Medium Human Development
Dominica	97	98	High Human Development	High Human Development
Saint Lucia	108	89	High Human Development	High Human Development
Jamaica	115	96	High Human Development	High Human Development
Belize	118	103	High Human Development	High Human Development

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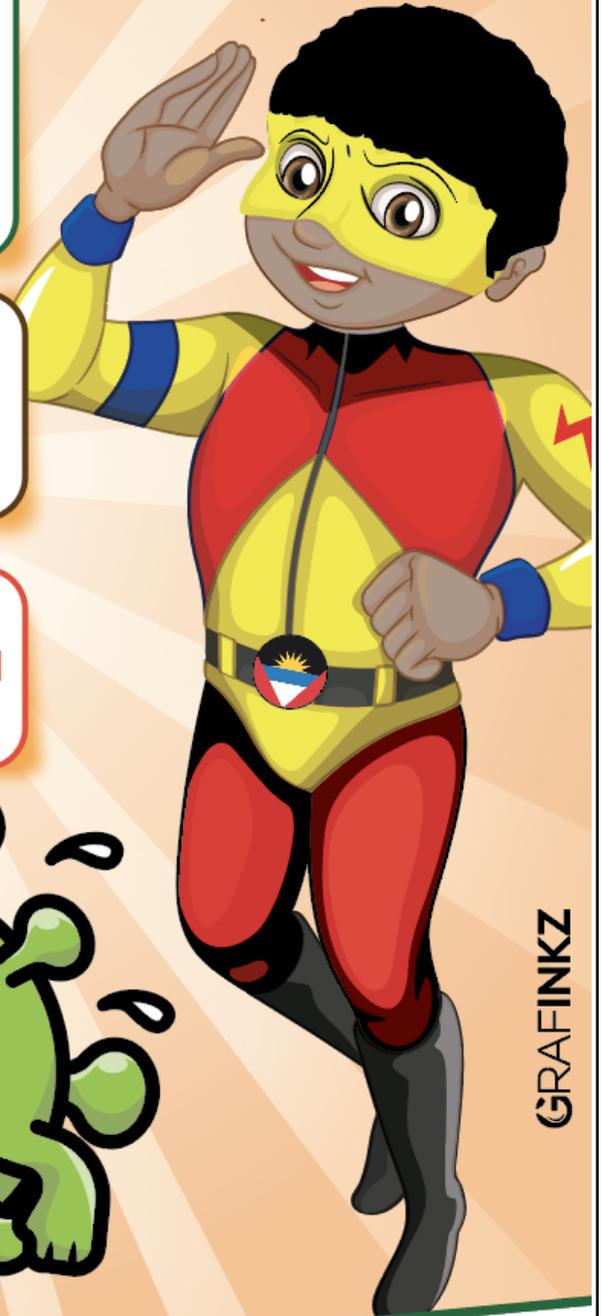
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Opinion



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ment, and who are governed by a philosophy of providing citizens and residents whatever their economic means with universal or widespread access to a certain level of education and healthcare among other social services. The pursuit of Social Democratic ideals along with a strong economy appear to be the critical ingredients for a nation to achieve a very high level of human development.

In the 2018/2019 edition of the HDI, two Caribbean nations, Barbados and The Bahamas were classified as enjoying a Very High Level of Human Development. I

find it a cause for celebration that in the 2023/2024 edition of this report, three Caribbean nations countries, St. Kitts & Nevis, Antigua & Barbuda and Trinidad & Tobago joined Barbados and The Bahamas in being classified in the Very High Level of Human Development category.

In fact, these three nations surpassed their Caribbean neighbors. St. Kitts and Nevis is the number one ranked Caribbean country in terms of human development, ranked at number 51 in world from among 193 countries, up from number 73 in 2018/2019. Antigua and Barbuda surged to be the

number 2 ranked Caribbean country in terms of human development, at number 54 in the world up from number 74 in 2018/2019, while Trinidad and Tobago is number 3 in the Caribbean, ranked at number 60 in the world, up from number 63 in 2018/2019. It is also noteworthy and preworthy that with the exception of Haiti all other CARICOM member nations are classified as achieving High Human Development, with Guyana which was previously classified as having Medium Human Development moving into the High Human Development category (see table 1 for a full Caribbean

ranking).

In the discussion of the 2018/2019 After 20 years of progress UNDP states, “for the first time on record, inequalities in Human Development Index (HDI) values—which measure a country’s health, education and standard of living—are growing between countries at the bottom and countries at the top of the index.

Following the 2020 and 2021 declines in the global HDI value, the world had the opportunity to build forward better. Instead, this Human Development Report shows that our global community is falling short.” In the face of the growing inequality highlighted by UNDP and a “world on fire” as stated by my colleagues Prof. Don Marshall, it is a stupendous and extraordinary achievement for five Caribbean nations to be in the elite category on this global ranking, as some of the smallest and most vulnerable nations in the world and their limited resources and horrible legacy of slavery and colonialism. The significant leaps made by the tiny nations of St. Kitts and Nevis and Antigua & Barbuda are an immense source of pride.

Caribbean nations should not rest on laurels but should recommit to Social Democratic principles and creating societies where universal access to health care and education are seen as national imperatives alongside growing their economies and improving the material standard of living.

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How Temu is shaking up the world of online shopping

By Sam Gruet

A record 123 million Americans tuned into this year's Super Bowl.

But as well as getting the nation's biggest sporting event, a blockbuster halftime performance and several camera cutaways of Taylor Swift in the crowd, they also got six 30-second commercials for Temu - a Chinese-owned e-commerce company.

The shopping giant has been criticised by politicians in the UK and US - a US government investigation finding an «extremely high risk» that products sold on Temu could have been made with forced labour.

Temu says it “strictly prohibits” the use of forced, penal, or child labour by all its merchants.

The company, which sells everything from clothes to electronics and furniture, first launched in the US in 2022 and later in the UK and the rest of the world.

Since then, it has consistently topped global app download charts, with just under 152 million Americans using it every month, according to data gathered by analyst SimilarWeb.

It's “Amazon on steroids,” says retail analyst Neil Saunders, and with the tagline “shop like a billionaire” it has exploded in popularity, shipping to 49 countries worldwide.

A typical 30-second Super Bowl commercial costs around \$7m (£5.5m), during this year's event Temu had six of them.

“It's a lot of money for a very, short commercial,” Mr Saunders says.

“But it is seen by an enormous number of people and we know that after that commercial Temu's downloads spiked,” he adds.

SimilarWeb data suggests indi-



It's estimated that 152 million Americans use Temu every month.

vidual visitors to the platform worldwide were up by nearly a quarter on the day of the Super Bowl compared with the previous Sunday, with 8.2 million people browsing the website and app. In the same period, Amazon and Ebay's visitors were down by 5% and 2% respectively.

“They've also spent a lot of money on micro-marketing, persuading influencers to push products and to suggest buying things on the platform via social channels like TikTok and YouTube,” says Mr Saunders.

These influencers typically have fewer than 10,000 followers according to Ines Durand, an e-commerce expert at SimilarWeb.

“Micro-influencers have strong communities, so their endorsement means a strong trust towards these products,” she explains.

Temu is owned by Chinese giant Pinduoduo - “a monster in Chinese e-commerce,” according to Shaun Rein, founder of the China Market Research Group.

“Throughout China, everyone buys products on Pinduoduo, from speakers to t-shirts or socks,” he says.

The company consistently trades places with rival Alibaba for the top spot of most valuable Chinese firm listed on a US stock exchange. Its current worth sits at just under \$150bn (£117bn).

With the Chinese consumer market under its spell, Pinduoduo expanded overseas with Temu, using the same model that had ensured its previous success.

According to Mr Rein, who is based in Shanghai, the firm has become a great source of pride and patriotism.

“They're proud that Chinese companies can slay the e-commerce dragons from the United States like Amazon,” he adds.

A quick scroll through the Temu app or website will bring up anything from steel-toecap trainers to a device designed to help the elderly and pregnant women put on socks. A menagerie of manufactured goods, almost entirely produced in factories in China, Mr Rein explains.

“Temu use an amazing, system that relies on, heavy data collection at

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scale,” says Ines Durand.

“They collect data on consumer trends, the most searched and clicked products, which they give to individual manufacturers.”

Ms Durand says that while Amazon sells this data to manufacturers at a premium, Temu gives it to producers free of charge - information they use to “test the market” with a relatively small number of products.

The platform often uses AI-generated images to keep up to date with the very latest trends, so the product on sale may not even exist yet, according to Ms Durand. Then they are shipped by air.

“It means products don’t need to be stored. They don’t need to go to warehouses once it’s shipped by aeroplane, you go straight to the customer,” says Ines Durand.

A third of parcels that came into the US last year under a shipping loophole known as the de minimis threshold were from Temu and competitor Shein, according to a report from US Congress.

Many countries - including the UK and USA have a de minimis threshold, designed to help citizens to import goods.

So as Temu’s goods are shipped directly from the factory floors, cutting out the middlemen, they become essentially duty-free.

More regulation may be on the horizon to close up

shipping loopholes, however, according to Mickey Diaz, chief operating officer at global freight company Unique Logistics.

“The UK has already started to look at Temu with some scrutiny, including the sale of weapons that are otherwise not allowed into the UK, which were being imported because of these loopholes,” she explains.

Temu has been criticised for its supply chains too, with UK and US politicians accusing the e-commerce giant of allowing goods produced with forced labour to be sold on its site.

Last year, Alicia Kearns MP, head of the foreign affairs select committee, told the BBC she wanted greater scrutiny of the online marketplace to make

sure «consumers are not inadvertently contributing to the Uyghur genocide”.

Temu says it “strictly prohibits” the use of forced, penal, or child labour by all its merchants.

It told the BBC anyone doing business with it must “comply with all regulatory standards and compliance requirements”.

“Temu’s merchants, suppliers, and other third parties must pay their employees and contractors on time and comply with all applicable local wage and hours laws.

“Our current standards and practices are no different from other major e-commerce platforms trusted by consumers, and allegations in this regard are completely unground-

ed,” a spokesperson added.

Despite the controversy, analysts expect further expansion for Temu.

“We’ll probably see teams start to round out its offer more, perhaps pushing into some slightly higher priced products” predicts retail analyst Neil Saunders.

According to Shaun Reid, the focus will be on grabbing an even bigger slice of the market.

“For the next two to three years, their strategy is just to grow brand awareness and market share. They don’t care about profits.

“That’s exactly what happened with Pinduoduo when it launched in China. They were giving incredibly cheap deals just to grab market share.”



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Ed Sheeran

Ed Sheeran: Fans in Mumbai thrilled as star sings in Punjabi

By Noor Nanji

Ed Sheeran has sung in Punjabi for the first time during his concert in Mumbai, leaving fans stunned and setting social media ablaze.

During the show on Saturday night, the English superstar invited the Indian singer Diljit Dosanjh to perform with him on stage.

Crowds went wild when the duo gave a rendition of Dosanjh's hit track *Lover* in Punjabi.

On Instagram, one fan said it was "the crossover we never knew we needed".

Another said: "I think I have seen history in the making," while a third said Sheeran's Punjabi was "perfect".

After wrapping the performance, both artists posted a clip from the

performance from their Instagram handles.

The *Shape Of You* singer wrote: "Got to bring out Diljit Dosanjh tonight in Mumbai and sing in Punjabi for the first time. I've had such an incredible time in India, more to come!"

Meanwhile, Dosanjh shared the video with the caption: "Brother singing in Panjabi for the first time."

In the comments section, celebrities also expressed their excitement at the collaboration, with the actor Varun Dhawan simply writing: "Global domination."

Dosanjh, 40, is a huge star with fans in India and around the world.

It's not the first time he's paired up with a Western star in Punjabi.

Last year, he dropped a song called *Hass Hass*, which he worked on in collaboration with Cheap Thrills singer Sia.

Fans were quick to heap praise on Dosanjh for getting another big name to sing in the Indian language.

"First Sia, now Ed, Diljit gonna make everyone sing in Punjabi," wrote one on Instagram.

"Hats off to Diljit," wrote another. "This man has literally blow up Punjabi music scene making other artists [sing] in Punjabi."

Sheeran is one of the biggest stars on the planet, with multiple hits under his belt. He released his latest album *Autumn Variations* last September.

His Mumbai concert was part of his Asia and Europe Tour.

Cubans in eastern city of Santiago protest blackouts and food shortages

Small groups of protesters took to the streets in the eastern city of Santiago on Sunday, decrying power outages lasting up to eight hours and food shortages across Cuba.

Videos on social media showed demonstrators on the outskirts of the city, which is about 800 kilometres (500 miles) from Havana.

State media confirmed the protests in Santiago, while the US Embassy in Havana said there were also reports of protests in a number of other provinces across the island. Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel also referred to protests in a social media post, though he did not specify where they occurred.

In reporting on events in Santiago, the government-linked news organization El Necio said, “Due to the long hours of power outages from lack of fuel and other situations arising from the current economic crisis, several people took to the streets” to protest.

Cuba is facing one of the worst economic and energy crises in its history. Waves of blackouts have grown worse in recent weeks, adding to frustrations over food shortages and inflation that have made it increasingly difficult to make ends meet on the communist-governed island. Hundreds of thousands of people have migrated, with many headed to the United States.

Videos showing people chanting “Electricity and food” were quickly shared by Cubans on and off the island on platforms like X and Facebook.

One person, who spoke to The Associated Press in a phone call from Santiago on condition their name not be used, said internet service in the area was shut off after the demonstrations. Several users on the social network X also reported internet outages in Santiago.



Cuba President Miguel Díaz-Canel walks through the COP28 UN Climate Summit, Saturday, December 2, 2023, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. (AP Photo/Peter Dejong, File)

In recent years, the internet has become an important tool in Cuba to facilitate and distribute news of protests against the government, but it has also been used to spread false information about supposed protests.

It was most notably used during mass demonstrations in 2021 that saw the arrests of some demonstrators and mass internet outages. Those protests were also triggered by power and food shortages.

In the evening, Cuba’s president accused anti-government “terrorists” that he said were located in the United States of inciting the protests, saying they were “encouraging actions against the internal order of the country.”

“Several people have expressed their dissatisfaction with the situation of the electricity service and food distribution. This context is being exploited by the enemies of the Revolution in order to destabilize” the government, Díaz-Canel wrote on X.

The US Embassy urged the Cuban government to respect the protests in a post on its Facebook page.

“We are aware of reports of peaceful protests in Santiago, Bayamo, Granma and elsewhere in Cuba,” it said.

“We urge the Cuban government to respect the human rights of the protesters and attend to the legitimate needs of the Cuban people.”

Earlier in the day, Beatriz Jhonson Urrutia, secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba in Santiago, showed up at the protests in that city to “have a dialogue with the people and hear their complaints,” El Necio said. Police were also present but there were no reports of arrests or violence.

Images and videos of purported protests in Cuba were spread around social media in recent days. Some were images from older protests or from other countries, and AP could not independently confirm whether the others were authentic.



Home Affairs Minister Robeson Benn and United States Ambassador to Guyana, Nicole Theriot, sign security agreement on Monday. Photo: US Embassy Georgetown.

Guyana and US strengthen security relationship

CMC - United States Ambassador to Guyana, Nicole Theriot, Monday welcomed a “deeper U.S.-Guyana security relationship,” as Washington announced additional funding to help the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) country better combat crime, enhance the rule of law, and integrate effectively into the Regional Security System (RSS).

Addressing the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) signing ceremony, the US diplomat said that she welcomed the deepening of the US partnership with Guyana under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) to address shared security challenges and to support the government’s objectives of building an inclusive, transparent, and more efficient criminal justice system.

She said under CBSI, the US Department of State’s INL partners with

like-minded policymakers to deliver holistic, tailored, and strategic capacity-building programmes in Guyana and across the region to help disrupt organized crime and to promote citizen security and criminal justice institutional reforms.

She said the INL’s partnership with Guyana is based on mutual respect, collaboration, and friendship, adding “most importantly, our work together is rooted in our shared commitment to the rule of law, democracy, and human rights”.

The diplomat recalled that earlier this year, the US Embassy was proud to partner with the Guyana Judiciary and National Centre for State Courts to launch the cutting edge, digital Court Case Management System to ensure criminal cases are handled expeditiously, to reduce case backlogs, and to improve the criminal jus-

tice system’s response to combatting transnational organized crime.

We are proud of our ongoing work to partner with the GPF Training Academy’s international accreditation with the Pan American Development Foundation, or PADF. In the coming year, we have a unique opportunity to build off this very strong momentum.”

She said under the latest cooperation initiative, Washington will be providing an additional US\$300,000 “on our existing Letter of Agreement to help Guyana better combat crime, enhance the rule of law, and integrate effectively into the Regional Security System.

“This bilateral assistance is complimented by more than \$US2.5 million in CBSI regional programming designed to promote regionalisation, because we all know regional prob-

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Trump unable to get \$464m bond in New York fraud case, his lawyers say

By Madeline Halpert

Donald Trump cannot find a private company to guarantee the \$464m (£365m) he has been ordered to pay in a New York civil fraud case.

The former president must either pay the full amount in cash or secure a bond in order to continue his appeal.

Mr Trump's lawyers said on Monday that securing a bond of that size was a "practical impossibility".

For a fee, a bonding company would guarantee the full amount to the New



Mr Trump's lawyers say they have approached dozens of bond companies but cannot secure one.

York court.

to pay it if Mr Trump loses himself.

They would then have his appeal and cannot do so

cont'd on pg 16

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lems require regional solutions".

She took the opportunity to also announce several new areas of partnership.

She said crime and illicit narcotics trafficking threaten Guyana's security, stability, and economy and pose a direct threat to the national security of both our countries, adding "that's why I'm pleased to announce the US Embassy and INL will soon begin a capacity-building program with the US DEA to bolster Guyana's counternarcotics capacity to address the large amounts of cocaine transiting the country and to help the GPF provide critical casualty and trauma care for officers and community members in rural environments".

Theriot said sophisticated criminal and malign actors continue to leverage Guyana's borders for their illicit activities and that strengthening border security is essential in the fight against transnational crime.

"That's why I am pleased to an-

nounce the deployment of a technical FBI team to Guyana to partner with you as you upgrade your Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) at major ports throughout the country and ensure interoperability with U.S. law enforcement."

She said Washington will also make a US\$350,000 investment in Guyana under the "Better Police Readiness Programme" implemented by PADF to support the GPF's implementation of its Strategic Management Plan.

"Specifically, we will work hand-in-hand with the GPF to improve training academy curriculum, enhance the GPF's strategic planning and management, bolster the GPF's forensic and crime scene investigation capabilities, and train the GPF on crisis communications, hostage negotiations, and best practices to engage vulnerable populations.

"Together, our partnership will help pave the way for Guyana's deep-

er integration into regional security cooperation; it will support a more inclusive criminal justice system, and it will further attract international investment as Guyana rapidly grows, transforms, and diversifies its economy," the diplomat added.

Home Affairs Minister, Robeson Benn, who signed the agreement with Theriot, spoke of the significance of enhancing narcotics interdiction and preventing drug use in Guyana.

"We are aware and have been working at stemming the flow with particular success this year for sure in relation to narcotics trafficking.

"We want to point out the regional and global nature of this fight, because the neighbouring countries both in the Caribbean region and in South America, all are suffering from negative effects of narcotics trafficking, the trafficking in firearms which supports the trade and the crime and violence which is as a result of narcotics trafficking, not to mention money laundering," Benn said.

US reports death of senior Hamas military leader Marwan Issa

By Phil McCausland

Hamas leader Marwan Issa died in an Israeli air strike, White House official Jake Sullivan has said.

As deputy military commander, Mr Issa would be Hamas's most senior leader to die since the war began on 7 October.

The Palestinian group, which controls Gaza, has not officially commented on reports of his death.

On Monday, US President Joe Biden held a high-stakes call with Israel's

Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, about the war's direction.

Israeli media sources have reported that Mr Issa was killed in an Israeli air strike that targeted a tunnel complex under the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza a week ago.

The deputy commander of Hamas's military wing, the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades, was considered one of Israel's most-wanted men. The European Union, which placed the Hamas

leader on its terrorist blacklist, linked him directly to the 7 October attack led by the group which killed approximately 1,200 people and sparked the war.

He had been jailed by Israel for five years during the First Palestinian Intifada and detained by the Palestinian Authority in 1997 until the start of the Second Intifada in 2000.

The Israeli military has killed a number of Hamas's senior leaders since 7 October. Hamas political leader

Saleh al-Arouri died in an explosion in Beirut's southern suburb of Dahiyeh. Israel is widely considered responsible for that attack.

Mr Sullivan, the White House's national security adviser, said other Hamas leaders were believed to be in hiding, "likely deep in the Hamas tunnel network" in Gaza.

He pledged that the US would aid Israeli in its continued hunt for top Hamas leaders, adding, "Justice *cont'd on pg 17*

cont'd from pg 15

Mr Trump's team spent "countless hours negotiating with one of the largest insurance companies in the world", the lawyers wrote in a court filing, but concluded that "very few bonding companies will consider a bond of anything approaching that magnitude".

The lawyers said they had approached 30 companies without success. Mr Trump's two eldest sons also must pay millions of dollars in the case.

Along with ordering Mr Trump to pay the penalty, New York Judge Arthur Engoron banned him from running any businesses in the state for three years after he found the former president falsely inflated assets to secure better loan deals.

A judge paused Mr Trump's business ban last month, but denied his bid to provide a smaller bond amount, \$100m, to cover the fine.

In the latest filing, the former president's lawyers included an affidavit from a president of a private insurance firm, who said that "simply put, a bond

of this size is rarely, if ever, seen".

"In the unusual circumstance that a bond of this size is issued, it is provided to the largest public companies in the world, not to individuals or privately held businesses," the lawyers also said.

Mr Trump's unprecedented legal situation makes it difficult to predict next steps, said former federal prosecutor Diana Florence, who also said that penalties on this scale are usually levied against large companies.

His legal team has been playing a delay game as he appeals the verdict, she said, but now "he might be out of rope".

New York's attorney general has vowed to seize his assets if he does not pay the fraud judgement. There is also interest on the penalty hanging over his head, which is accruing by at least \$112,000 per day until he pays.

Trump's lawyers said bond companies would not accept "hard assets such as real estate as collateral" for the bond, but only cash or "cash equivalents", such as investments that can be quickly liquidated.

"He's facing the very real possibility that the AG will begin to liquidate [his assets], and he's really dependent on whether a court is willing to give him more time," Ms Florence said.

According to a Forbes estimate, Mr Trump is worth about \$2.6bn. He also testified last year that he had \$400m in liquid assets.

But the \$464m judgement is not his only expense. He was ordered to pay \$83m in January after losing a defamation case to E Jean Carroll, a woman he was found to have sexually abused. He has already posted a bond in that case.

Mr Trump had another legal setback on Monday in one of four criminal cases he faces.

A New York judge denied the former president's bid to block two key witness testimonies in the case where he is accused of falsifying business records to hide a hush money payment.

Judge Juan Merchan said Michael Cohen, Mr Trump's former lawyer, and Stormy Daniels, an adult film star, may give evidence in the case, which could begin as soon as April.



Members of the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades in Gaza (file image from 2022)

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will come for them, too.”

But while he noted Israel’s numerous military successes against Hamas since the start of the war, he also emphasised President Biden had expressed his growing alarm over the rising number of civilian deaths in his call to Mr Netanyahu.

The president reiterated his commitment to Israel and its “right to go after Hamas”, according to Mr Sullivan, but he also said that it would be a “mistake” for Israel’s military to invade Rafah - a city in southern Gaza that an estimated million refugees have fled to during the war.

The invasion “would lead to more innocent civilian deaths, worsen the already dire humanitarian crisis, deepen the anarchy in Gaza and further isolate Israel internationally”, the US national security adviser told reporters.

More than 31,000 Palestinian civilians have died since the war started on 7 October, according to the Hamas-led health ministry in Gaza. The death toll

has drawn international condemnation and alienated many of Israel’s allies.

President Biden pushed Mr Netanyahu for a “clear, strategic end game” in Gaza during the call, Mr Sullivan said.

“The president told the prime minister again today that we share the goal of defeating Hamas, but we just believe you need a coherent and sustainable strategy to make that happen,” he said.

Mr Biden was able to get the Israeli leader to agree to sending a “senior interagency team composed of military, intelligence and humanitarian officials” to Washington in the coming days to discuss US concerns over an invasion of Rafah.

The expectation is that Israel will delay its assault until that meeting is held, Mr Sullivan said.

Mr Netanyahu confirmed the call on X, formerly Twitter, and said the two had “discussed the latest developments in the war” as well as Israel’s goals in the conflict.

The Israeli prime minister said those objectives included: “Eliminating Hamas, freeing all of our hostages and ensuring that Gaza never gain constitutes a threat to Israel - while providing the necessary humanitarian aid that will assist in achieving these goals.”

Prior to Mr Biden’s call, senior Democrats in the US had grown more vocally critical of Mr Netanyahu.

On Thursday, Chuck Schumer - the top Democrat in the Senate - called for new elections in Israel, saying that Mr Netanyahu was prioritising his “political survival” over the country’s needs.

Mr Netanyahu’s Likud party pushed back, saying Israel was not a “banana republic” and that the prime minister’s policies were “supported by a large majority”.

Mr Biden told reporters in the Oval Office on Friday that he knew Mr Schumer’s remarks were coming. The president said, however, that the Senate leader had “expressed serious concern shared not only by him, but many Americans”.

Sports News

Spanish Heat upset Stingerz, Steelers win in ABBA's Division I league

The Spanish Heat upset the Northside Stingerz to snatch their first win in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Division I League on Sunday night.

Andrew Venture sank 21 points and dished out six assists as the Spanish Heat snatched a narrow one-point victory, prevailing 75-74 against the Stingerz in the second game of a double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Steven Matthew produced 17 points with five assists; Damian Floyd converted 12 points and grabbed 15 rebounds; and Kelvyn Pimental scored nine points for the Spanish Heat, which won for the first time in six games.

Joshua Minner shot a game-high 31 points and snatched 10 rebounds; Kareem Edwards sank nine points; Jayzee Saltibus had eight points and 16 rebounds; and Keroi Lee scored six points and grabbed 16 rebounds for the Northside Stingerz, who



Players of the Potters Steelers basketball team.

suffered their second loss in six games.

The Potters Steelers recorded their fourth win in six games by romping to

an emphatic 108-63 victory against the All Saints Slam in Sunday's opening game.

Jaheem James sank 16 points; Kevorn Corn-

wall and Marlon Charles each converted 12 points; and Felix Hamilton had 11 points and 10 rebounds for

cont'd on pg 19

Wins for Masters and Mahico in Parish League cricket

Masters and Mahico recorded wins in the Antigua Commercial Bank (ACB) Caribbean Parish League Dave Joseph Limited Overs Competition over the weekend.

The Masters trounced the Stingray City Seatons by 110 runs.

Masters made 201 for six off 25 overs. Richie Thomas hit 47 not out, Dean Williams struck 44, and

Gershum Phillip scored 30.

In reply, Seatons were dismissed for 91, with Eon Lawrence getting 20. Frankie Francis grabbed four for 13, Michael Harrilall bagged three for 13, and Harry Douse claimed two for 25.

Mahico prevailed by three wickets against Freetown. Mike France snapped up four wickets for eight runs

in six overs, and Ian Tittle picked up two wickets for one run in three overs as Freetown crashed to 50 all out.

Mahico achieved victory by reaching the required target of 51 for the loss of seven wickets in 19 overs.

Hughan Tonge captured three wickets for nine runs in 5.4 overs, and Antwone Willock claimed two wickets for nine runs in five overs.

Dynasty outlasts Royal Cruisers 2 in volleyball contest

The inaugural Division 2 of the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association's (ABAVA) Local League got off to a thrilling start with Dynasty snatching a narrow 3-2 victory against Royal Cruisers 2 in the opening encounter on Sunday.

The Royal Cruisers seemed on course to sail their way to victory by taking a two-nil lead, winning the first two sets 26-24, 25-23 at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex.

But the Dynasty hit back by taking the next three sets, 25-17, 25-14, and 15-12, to eventually reign supreme in victory in the keenly contested affair, which lasted two hours and five minutes.

Meanwhile, Starz 1 (Seniors) and the Top Ranking Storming Lions made successful starts to their campaigns in the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association's Local League.

Starz 1, who captured the runners-up position in last year's female division,



Reigning national volleyball local club league female Division I champs, Caribbean Alliance Insurance Da Squad. (ABAVA)

launched their 2024 campaign with a 3-1 victory against former champions Paragons.

Starz 1 needed one hour and 51 minutes to beat the Paragons. The Starz 1 won the opening set 25-12, but the Paragons hit back to draw level at 1-1 by taking the second set 25-20.

However, Starz 1 were not going to be denied, as

they secured victory by winning the next two sets, 25-22 and 25-15.

The Storming Lions, who finished third in the men's division last year, opened their 2024 campaign with a straight-set 3-0 victory against newcomers, the Invaders, in their opening encounter.

The Storming Lions won the keenly contested

affair 25-21, 25-22, and 25-21. Reigning champion Caribbean Alliance Insurance (CAI) Da Squad also made a successful start in defense of their female division title.

Da Squad beat the Royal Cruisers 3-0, winning 25-11, 25-17, and 25-15 in their opening affair. Pytonz, who captured second place in the men's division last year, also got off to a winning start in this year's competition.

The Pytonz prevailed 3-0 (25-9, 25-10, and 25-6) against newcomers TOA Media and MKUU Tours Chargers Velocity in the Men's Division I contest.

cont'd from pg 18
the Steelers.

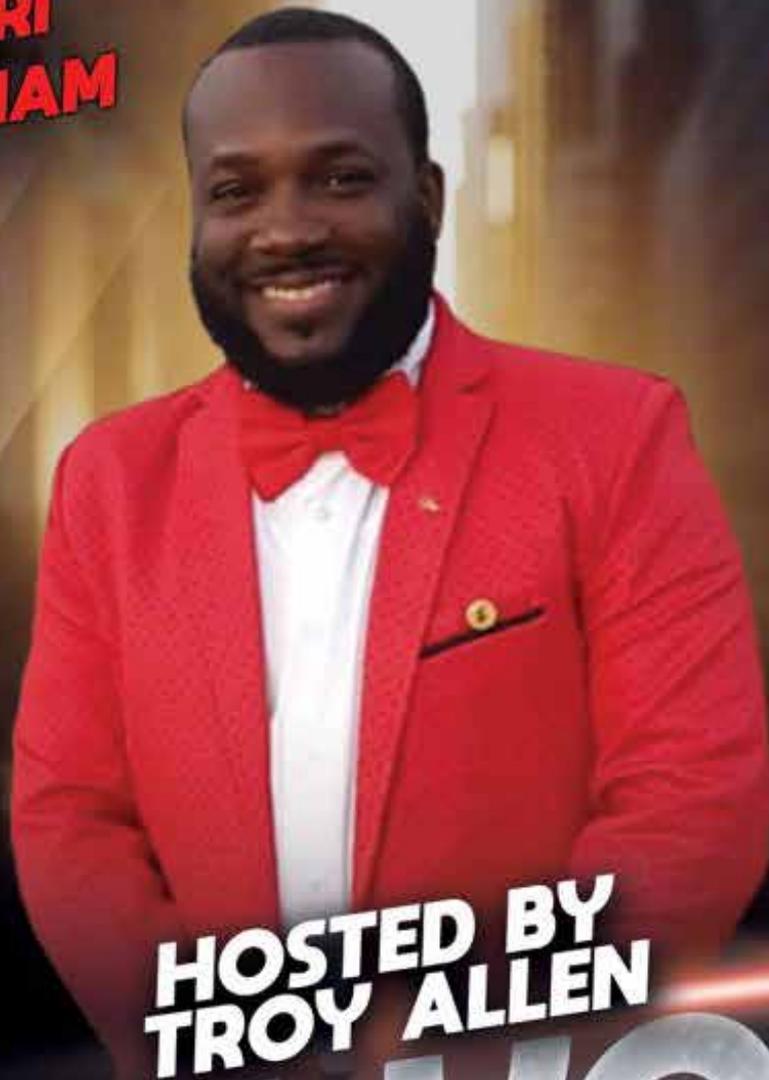
In support, Humroy Wright scored 11 points and snatched six rebounds; Iornie Joseph and Cohen Desouza each produced 10 points and seven rebounds; and Ammiel Williams chipped in with 10 points and five assists for the Potters Steelers.

Ezekiel Francois shot a game-high 18

points along with 20 rebounds and five blocked shots; Sergio Symister sank 12 points and claimed eight rebounds; Keady Martin had nine points and five steals; Pilsmon Nelson also scored nine points; and Kim Casey chipped in with eight points and eight assists for the All Saints Slam, which lost for the fifth time in six games.



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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER



Players of the Sandals and Inet Jennings Grenades football team.

Grenades maintain perfect run atop of Premier Division League

Reigning champions Sandals and Inet Jennings Grenades maintained their perfect run and regained their five-point lead at the top of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Sunday night.

The Grenades staved off their toughest challenge in this season's competition to snatch a 3-2 victory against the Ottos Rangers in the second game of a triple header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Quinton Griffith scored the winner for the Grenades in the 77th minute after Rangers hit the goal post twice, narrowly missing the chance to take a 3-2 lead after coming from behind on two occasions to score equalizing goals.

Eugene Kiwan put the Grenades ahead with a 15th-minute conversion, and Josue "Naymar" Arias scored in the 19th minute to draw Rangers level.

Jennings regained the lead via a 28th-minute conversion by Sherman

Augustin to hold a 2-1 advantage at halftime. But shortly after the interval, Rangers once again equalized when Junior Benjamin scored in the 51st minute to make it 2-2.

Their 12th win in as many games carries Jennings Grenades to 36 points, five ahead of All Saints United and Old Road. Ottos Rangers remain in 12th place with nine points after suffering their eighth loss in 13 matches.

Malcolm Stewart and D'Andre Bishop each scored twice as All Saints United regained second place on goal difference, with a game in hand, ahead of Old Road with a 5-0 drubbing of Greenbay Hoppers in the last game on Sunday.

Stewart had conversions in the 6th and 77th minutes, Bishop scored in the 53rd and 87th minutes, and Nazir McBurnette converted the other goal in the 61st minute for All Saints United.

Their 10th win in 12 matches car-

ries All Saints United to 31 points, while the Greenbay Hoppers remain in fourth place with 24 points after losing for the fourth time in 12 matches.

Samuel Lopez struck a hat-trick to fire the Villa Lions to a 6-1 victory against Swetes in Sunday's opening game. Lopez had conversions in the 6th, 34th, and 63rd minutes. Joyland Sinclair scored in the 14th minute, Eroy Goncalves had a 24th-minute conversion, and Joshua Ferdinand scored in the 86th minute for the Villa Lions.

Shafeeq Joseph scored a consolation goal for Swetes in the 39th minute. Their seventh win in 12 matches allows the Villa Lions to move ahead of Garden Stars into fifth place with 23 points, one adrift of the Greenbay Hoppers in fourth place.

Swetes remain second from the bottom of the 15-team competition on goal difference with five points after crashing to their ninth defeat in 12 matches.

Liberta and Empire to clash in ABCA's two-day final

In a repeat of last year's final, defending champions PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks and Empire Nation will battle for the 2024 Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) two-day championship.

Both teams advanced to Saturday's final in Pigotts after coming out on top in their respective semi-finals last weekend.

Led by a double century from Leeward Islands allrounder Karima Gore, the Liberta Blackhawks prevailed on first innings against the Jennings Tigers in their drawn semi-final affair at the Bethesda playing field on Sunday.

Gore slammed 240 off 282 balls, including 24 fours and six sixes; Amahl Nathaniel struck 64; and Joshua Thomas cracked 42 to lift the Liberta Blackhawks to 454 off 72.3 overs in their second innings.

National left-arm spinner Glenton Williams captured five for 124, Samuel Peters claimed two wickets for nine runs, and Bassanio Joseph took two for 28.

Set an improbable 467 runs to win, the Jennings Tigers were reeling in their second innings at 67 for seven off 23 overs at the end of play.

Jaheim Africa made 35, while left-arm spinner Kadeem Phillip claimed three for 19, and Elroy Francis Jr. picked up two for 16.

The Liberta Blackhawks were dismissed in their first innings for 71 in 18.1 overs after losing the toss and being asked to bat. Malique Walsh top-

scored with 50. Samuel Peters grabbed five for 24, and Matthew Miller captured three for 23.

In reply, the Jennings Tigers were bundled out in their first innings for 59 in 25.3 overs. Off-spinner Kofi James snapped up six wickets for 13 runs, and left-arm pacer Javier Spencer had two for 21.

The Empire Nation beat the Pigotts Crushers, who entered the semi-finals as the number one seeded team after finishing at the top of the preliminary stage of the competition, by 73 runs at the Pigotts playing field.

Empire Nation, who qualified for the semi-finals as the fourth seed after finishing in fourth place at the end of the preliminary stage, made 106 off 32 overs in their first innings after being sent in to bat.

Opener Tyrone Williams Jr. top scored with 30 off 31 balls, while pacer Jawakie Joseph picked up four for 26 and Demari Benta claimed three for 11.

In reply, the Pigotts Crushers were dismissed in their first innings for 110 in 36.2 overs. Captain Kadeem Henry hit 43, and fellow opener Uri Smith got 31. Captain and off-spinner Justin Athanaze snatched five for 27, leg-spinner Micah McKenzie bagged three for 24, and Kershaski Jno Lewis took two for 32.

After conceding a first innings lead of four runs, the Empire Nation made 162 off 44.3 overs in their second innings. Xaveek Toppin hit 47, and Jno Lewis scored 31.



Liberta Blackhawks allrounder Karima Gore

Pacer Jared Jno Baptiste captured four for 35, Joseph had four for 55, and Henry took two wickets for six runs.

Set 159 to win, the Pigotts Crushers were dismissed in their second innings for 85 in 30.2 overs. Smith struck 44, while Athanaze snatched seven for 23, and McKenzie captured three for 23.