

TREMENDOUS!

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The sixteen police officers who participated in a peace-keeping mission as part of the Regional Security System (RSS) mission in St Lucia last year were honoured with a ceremony at Government House on Tuesday. *Story on page 3*

Remembering Kentae
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Tremendous!

That has been the response of residents of Antigua and Barbuda who have responded to the government's call for interested persons to make available their properties to host delegates attending the Fourth Conference of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)4 here from Mary 27-30.

Project Development Officer in the Ministry of Tourism, St. Clair Soleyn has reported that the response has been tremendous from individuals who

have accepted the call to help provide accommodation for the anticipated 5,000 delegates who will attend the conference.

"It is difficult for me to put a figure as to the number of people who have responded so far because these calls have been coming in almost constantly.

"This is all happening within a matter of days as it was only last Thursday that the Information Minister, Melfod Nicholas, made the announcement of the government's deci-

sion to abandon the cruise ship option to host the delegates," Soleyn told Pointe Xpress.

The Ministry of Tourism is asking these individuals to make contact and to have their names registered so that its inspection teams can visit these properties to conduct inspections.

"We have had to add an extra two teams to do these inspections just to keep up with the demands.

"All accommodations must be licensed and inspected in order to make it to the official list of properties approved by the government," he explained.

According to Soleyn, the ministry has a set of guidelines which all properties for rental must meet.

These are the same that apply to all hotel properties which are inspected regularly.

For the SIDS4 conference the ministry wants to ensure that the properties meet a standard that is equivalent to what obtains in a 2-Star hotel property.

Each property must have the following;

- security
- hot and cold running water
- available internet

clean and well-maintained rooms

they must also provide linen and cutlery since these are short-term accommodations.

a card machine to process credit/debit card payments

The project development officer said he is confident that Antigua and Barbuda will meet the challenge and deliver an excellent conference for the thousands of delegates.

"We need 1,000 rooms and so far, it looks like we will meet that target.

"We will have a town-hall meeting next Wednesday to explain to these persons some of what we are looking for and what we expect from them," he stated.

The key areas of concern for Antigua and Barbuda as host of SIDS4 are; accommodation, health, transportation, technology, security and involvement from NODS.

Soleyn also disclosed that there are plans to develop a special app that delegates will be able to download to access information about Antigua and Barbuda such as a map to get around and other pertinent information.

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16 police officials receive medals for peace-keeping duties in St. Lucia

The sixteen police officers who participated in a peace-keeping mission as part of the Regional Security System (RSS) mission in St. Lucia last year were honoured with a ceremony at Government House on Tuesday.

Governor General Deputy, Sir Clare Roberts presented medals to the officers who assembled at Government House in the company of senior officials of the force, other officials and family members.

“History will also record that this fourth ceremony will be the first and very

likely not the last where the brave and committed men and women of the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda will be acknowledged for their contribution to the security and well-being of our region, more specifically their tour of duty to assist in the maintenance of peace in St. Lucia in March and August 2023,” Sir Clare stated.

He applauded the leadership of the Police and Defence Forces as well as the pioneers who had the vision of the Regional Security System, forty (40) years ago. At that time four Carib-

bean islands including Antigua and Barbuda, signed a memorandum of agreement after they identified a need for a collective response to security threats to the region.

The vision caught the attention of other regional island nations and is now a regionally recognized entity which has shown its value to the constituents it serves, on countless occasions.

The Citation lauded each officer individually for ‘outstanding meritorious service whilst serving as a member of the Regional Security System’s contingent in the

peace support and security related operations in support of the government and people of St. Lucia during the operational period March 17 to August 1, 2023’.

Each officer was said to have demonstrated professionalism, compassion, humanitarianism and commitment during the operations in St. Lucia despite the conditions.

Deputy Commissioner of Police, Everton Jeffers also offered words of gratitude and appreciation to the 16 officers, all of whom received the RSS Medal during the ceremony.

Police investigate suspicious death as possible homicide

The police have confirmed that they are treating the death of a Golden Grove resident as a ‘suspicious death’ which may be upgraded to a homicide.

Informed sources say a post mortem examination will be carried out on

the body of the man – Oscar Reyes, 69, to determine definitively the cause of death. The body was discovered around 3:30 on Monday afternoon and several hours later a medical doctor performed the legally required ‘pro-

nouncement of death’ at the scene.

Reyes was a Phillipino national who reportedly lived alone at Golden Grove.

The police are continuing their investigations into the matter.

A&B's Director of International Trade among experts invited to discuss Transformative Actions and Partnerships to deliver the SDGs

Under the auspices of the UK's Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office and Wilton Park, Miss Joy-Marie King, Director of International Trade, participated in a meeting of experts in the field of sustainable development, convened at Wiston House Sussex, United Kingdom, during the period 6-8 March, 2024.

This meeting was held under the theme "Towards 2030: Transformative Actions and Partnerships to Deliver the SDGs" where policies and strategies were developed and explored with the intention of fast-tracking the SDG goals. The deliverables of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are currently off track and this has been continuously emphasized during this and prior meetings.

In her presentation to the grouping that focused on tabling recommenda-



Second from left, Miss Joy-Marie King, Director of International Trade and SDGs Focal Point.

tions to drive momentum on the SDGs within the context of the upcoming 4th Small Island Developing States Conference, Miss King spoke to the synergies between the SIDS, SDGs, Climate Change and the Oceans sustainability agendas and the inconceivable absence of an International Trade perspective from the discourse.

According to King, "this absence could prove rather costly to SIDS successfully achieving its agenda premised upon five priority areas - sustainable inclusive and equitable economic growth; mitigating climate change; protection of the biodiversity of SIDS; improve human health and social development; and foster partnerships among SIDS, UN Agencies, and development partners."

She further indicated that SIDS4 provides the ideal opportunity to allow the following:

The inclusion of international trade technicians and experts in the SIDS Agenda discourse in addition to explicitly exploring the linkages of international trade to the SIDS Agenda....

Merging of agendas - that of the SIDS, SDGs,

Climate Change and Ocean Sustainability in light of their high level of complementarity. For far too long these agendas have operated in silos.

For every single challenge identified under each agenda, the solutions lie within the implementation of the SDGs. Therefore, these synergies ought to be explored and exploited soonest as 2030 is close upon us.

The prioritization of specific SDGs including the identification of policies that could have a significant multiplier effect in delivering across multiple SDGs, whilst minimising trade-offs

Call for collaboration, policy coherence, initiatives and complementarity of work among multilateral organisations as these organisations effectively can either undermine the agendas of each other or rather complement each other allowing for the more efficient use of scarce resources.

Within the context of prioritizing the protection of biodiversity of SIDS, the conference ought to urge the WTO to complete its negotiations on Fisheries Subsidies in full accordance with SDG 14.6 and that the global north divert the financial resources originally earmarked to fund these harm-

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NOTICE

The Ministry of Tourism is inviting owners and caretakers of available rental properties (homes, apartments, bed and breakfast operations) to a very important meeting on Wednesday 27th March at 5:30 pm at the Multi-purpose cultural center.

Information relating to available opportunities in the accommodation sector for SIDS 2024 which will run from May 27th to 30th will be shared.

The Ministry is currently asking all interested persons to signal their interest by registering officially for property inspection. Please contact Ms. Nicholas by calling 468-4039 or 464-3887 between the hours of 8 am and 4:30 pm daily.

Residents encouraged to 'rock colored' socks' in support of World Down Syndrome Day

On March 21st, colourful socks are expected to be on display in the streets and offices of Antigua and Barbuda as the world stops to commemorate World Down Syndrome Day.

Each year, medical officials at the Paediatric Unit at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre flash their crazy-coloured socks to bring awareness to the disease and this year will be no different.

World Down Syndrome Day has been observed each year on March 21, since 2006.

International statistics say that around one in every 800 babies will be born with Down Syndrome – a condition in which a person has an extra chromosome – and which has no known cause.

In 2022, Antigua and Barbuda had one baby born with the condition out of 931 live births.

And while numbers remain limited for those affected, medical officials over the years have called for continued improvement of services to assist those affected and their families.

Additional special education facilities and more financially friendly treatment centres were just a few of the areas, they men-

tioned need to be addressed.

There are presently three special needs institutions on the island while 16 children with Down Syndrome are enrolled in either public or private schools.

Presently, families spend thousands of dollars for treatment services like sight and speech classes.

This year's theme is 'End the Stereotypes'.

A stereotype is a set idea that people have about what someone or something is like.

For people with Down syndrome and intellectual disabilities, stereotypes can stop them from being treated like other people. They get treated like children, they are underestimated and often times excluded.



cont'd from pg 4

ful subsidies towards SDGs acceleration in SIDS;

Getting the private sectors of the SIDS involved in the discussion including framing of priorities and achievement. Additionally, let them become advocates seeking the support of the private sector counterparts in the global north some of which they do business with.

The launch of a Global public advocacy campaign clearly outlining the challenges faced by SIDS, justifications for merging agendas including that of the SDGs and what every nation, private sector entity, international agency and citizens of the world can do to aid the SIDS in achieving its agenda;

For every multilateral organization that a SIDS State is a member of, it needs to bring the SIDS agenda to the forefront;

Re-intensification of the sharing of best practices and replication of policies and strategies among SIDS even if these require tweaking in response to individual domestic realities; and

The availability of quality data needs to be prioritized and SIDS initiatives bolstered by sound research to avoid any watering down by countries outside the grouping. The meeting conclusions and recommendations catered to policy makers will serve as a stepping stone for other high-level discussions scheduled in 2024 including the Hamburg Sustainability Conference and the Summit of the Future.

Local News



New high tech app launched offering greater digital accessibility to Antigua and Barbuda

Finding information about Antigua and Barbuda just got a bit easier for residents and tourists with the launch of the new platform, Dadli Directory.

Dadli Directory is an online platform that allows people to find everything Antiguan and Barbudan, businesses, events, and real estate compactly.

Dwayne Simon, one of

the creators behind the directory, shared details about the program.

“This is a platform for local business owners and entrepreneurs to showcase their talent. If you are an artist, for example, you can share pictures, and videos of your work that allows future customers to connect with you.

“We have additional fea-

tures on there. There is the GPS, a chat function where you can talk to customers directly, a booking option where clients can book with you directly, and review sections. We also have an events section which showcases not only the fetes and parties but other events as well,” Simon explained.

Simon revealed they have added up to 100 events

thus far on the platform

“If you are looking for something to do today, you can find something that’s not just limited to parties and fetes,” he added.

The plan, Simon says, is to develop the platform to a point where it elevates the digital storefronts for small businesses and events.

“As it is right now, we were able to include everything we were interested in, in the launch but in the future, we want to optimize that. So, in the first instance perhaps persons may just have a picture up but we want to encourage persons to have an entire catalog so they can treat Dadli Directory as their own website,” Simon said.

For those businesses and other entities who want to be featured on the map, you must log on to the website at dadlirectory.com and fill out that section.

“Go to dadlirectory.com and there is a section there for anybody who would like to add their business, you will see a section there called ‘add your business’.

If it is you have an apartment that you would like to promote, we have that section too.

The user-friendly software can be accessed via the website or app at Dadli Directory.

Additional information can be found on their social media pages as well.



JCI Antigua names recycle competition winners

The prize giving ceremony for participants of the JCI Antigua recycle and create competition was held at the Multi-Purpose Cultural Centre on Tuesday.

The competition was held as the organisation's observance of March 18 as Global Recycle Day, 2024. The theme for this year's Global Recycling Day was #RecyclingHeroes, recognising the people, places, and activities that showcase what an important role recycling plays in contributing to an environmentally stable planet and a greener future which will benefit all. Winner: Akiera Colbourne - Pares Primary

- 1st place - Alina George
- 2nd place - La'Neiyah Richards
- Most creative - School for the Deaf, Eukeem Kirwan
- Most creative - Old Road primary school, Alexia Stoute



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2

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Rastaman Kentae

A poem by Donna Chaia to honour the late Albert 'Kentae' Semper, whose birthday would have been today

Sudden couldn't go so fu true
 You be too much of a good man fu dat happen to you.
 Little after 3am when Big Brother Luther call
 Me spring out me bed and start to bawl.
 The shock was like a bolt of electricity.
 He said, Kentae The Electrician
 Had died in his car
 suddenly.

Dead? Really?
 Little Rastaman Kentae
 Who was larger than life
 And ever so lively?
 Dead?
 Couldn't be.
 We went to Bendals immediately,
 Me, Luther and his wife Cicely
 With our hearts bleeding and heavy,
 Along with family and
 members of the community
 We were grief stricken
 As we faced the solemn reality,
 You had departed from us.
 Your soul transitioned into eternity.

Kentae,
 who love to argue so?
 Who will dissect one topic
 Drill down to the root of it
 With discretion, intelligence and authority?
 "Un momento, por favor".
 And if you scored more points than he
 He would promise
 Some of his 2028
 box money?
 Not Kentae?
 Cathia and Tangier Daddy.
 Grandpa of Baby Royalty
 And adopted dad of Okera Lee.
 A Brother with a million sisters,
 some of whom are
 teachers,

A Rasta with a brother for a pastor
 and a special baby-sister
 San-Joy Semper
 Who just recently celebrated his 60th birthday with a

grand party.
 Not the boisterous Prince Albert, who was favored by his
 mammy.

Not the Real Talk, Reasoning host of a
 popular night show on PFM
 Where political, moral, cultural, social, soulful, spiritual
 issues were examined with sensitivity.
 I was in disbelief.
 The shock was devastating.
 To accept the reality
 Of your sudden passing.

You Rastaman Kentae
 Was so very genuine,
 jovial, charismatic, and very charming.
 With twinkling eyes
 Words, wise and
 smooth as oil.
 Compassionate and thoughtful
 Confident and faithful.
 He was unique and unpretentious,
 Just as as he was contentious.
 He was inquisitive and perceptive.
 With a laugh so infectious.
 He was respectful, honorable and serious.

For about two months,
 Three nights a week
 we co-hosted Real Talk Show.
 Every night I would get upset
 Time to start,
 Kentae no reach yet,
 Then in he comes with his sweet words:
 "Good night young-lady,
 hope you had a good day".
 With his pleasantries
 My frustrations would fade
 away.

He was extremely late
 And, as usual did not communicate
 I won't lie,
 I was upset as I waited.
 Again, frustrated,
 Never ever would I have anticipated,
 The game-changing news he was faced with.
 Dear Karen in Connecticut had gotten into an accident
 And didn't make it.
 My dear Brother Kentae was devastated.

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At his 60th birthday party
 Everybody told the same story.
 Except his brother-in-law who said he was on time with
 his baby-sister's number.
 Sean eventually married her.
 Everybody else had the same story.
 Kentae would leave on time
 But could never arrive early
 Because he either stopped to talk, or to help somebody.
 Also, that he earned good money,
 But he was so generous,
 He never had any.

He was the host who I loved the most
 on Real Talk.
 He was very articulate
 had his opinion.
 He used that medium
 To inspire and uplift the nation.
 He admonished us to live in love with each other,
 To be more moral, ethical,
 To be our brother's keeper.
 After the show
 He would insist to accompany me
 To ensure that
 I got home safely.
 I had to protest.
 His list of good nights was
 the longest.
 He was encroaching on my night's rest.
 I said "Kentae,
 Me can't wait while you
 call out that long list day.
 So I refused to be escorted.
 And just as I said.
 I would get home,
 lie in my bed,
 And listen to him,
 call he million sisters by name and location.
 His Brother, Pastor

Fitzgerald Semper.
 He call out de Mafia Gallery
 and his people at One-Stone Posse.
 He call out one lady whose glasses always clean, clean.
 And another whose smile was broad.
 He call Norma and she brother, Fox
 and Ms Hamlet in Barbuda.
 What I came to understand
 Is that Kentae touched many hearts and showed
 people his love and appreciation.

Rastaman Kentae was his own man.
 He was resolute in his own conviction.
 He was not entrapped by
 Society's expectations or religion.
 Many people are really true hypocrites.
 They openly condemn a behavior and secretly
 indulge in it.
 Some profess Christianity
 While practicing infidelity.
 They claim relationships are to be monogamous.
 But engage in deceit and distrust.
 Not Rastaman Kentae
 Who embraced his African DNA.
 He honored and respected
 His queens equally
 And treated the significant women in his life with dignity.
 His male counterparts could learn to preserve their rela-
 tionships by adopting his honesty.

This popular Rastaman
 Was loved by many.
 He bought a bicycle,
 For Bendals community.
 When that one got old,
 He bought another one I'm told.
 I'm told he had a party annually

Even when faced with financial difficulty.
 He refused to be daunted by lack of money,
 As his main commitment was to bring his people together
 in unity.

So, it's with great regret,
 Grief and sadness
 That we lay our brother
 Rastaman Kentae to rest.
 We will remember him with fondness
 For his contribution to
 nation, in sports, electrical service, generosity, outspoken
 activist, an exciting, captivating personality, a homemade
 man who gave himself humbly.
 My Brother as we reverence your mortality
 we truly give thanks for your life that you shared with
 exuberance.
 As we celebrate your life
 We give thanks for your
 light that you shared with the world with unrestricted,
 unrestrained abundance.
 Thank you Rastaman Kentae, Prince Albert,
 Brother Barry, for your blessed journey
 We will keep our love for you
 In our hearts and memory.

Feature

Reflecting on the life and legacy of Mr. Albert “Kentae” Semper on his first birthday since his passing

By Jason “Bassue” Peters

Today, as we commemorate the first birthday since the passing of our dear friend, brother, and mentor, Mr. Albert “Kentae” Semper, we reflect on the profound impact he had on those around him. His legacy of mentorship, community spirit, and unwavering support continue to inspire and guide us.

Kentae was more than just a mentor. He was a guiding light, a source of wisdom, and a pillar of strength. Bassue fondly recalls, “You have been like a big brother to me. Although your methods are unorthodox, I learned a lot from you and you have made a significant impact on my life.” Kentae’s belief in the potential of others and his dedication to nurturing growth and development left an enduring mark on all who crossed his path.

Kentae’s commitment to community and fostering relationships with young people through sports exemplified his belief in the power of unity and support within the village. His influence extended beyond the sports field, as he played a pivotal role in guiding me in my aspirations as the political hopeful for in

St. Mary’s North. I admired Kentae’s dedicated force for the Antigua Barbuda Labour Party (ABLP), unafraid to stand tall and defend the RED FLAG. His unwavering commitment to the party’s principles was exemplified in the party’s anthem, “Raise the scarlet high. Beneath its folds we’ll live and die. Though cowards flinch and traitors sneer, we’ll keep the Red Flag flying here.” Kentae embodied the spirit of the ABLP, advocating for its ideals and values with passion and dedication.

Reflecting on their deep connection, Bassue shared a poignant memory from their early years, stating, “Kentae and I shared one-on-one personal time going back to our early teens when we would meet before the crack of dawn venturing out to the pasture to look for our animals and engaged in deep conversations. Those life conversations have been the cornerstone guiding me forward.”

Both Kentae and Bassue shared a common bond in their Rastafarian beliefs, embodying principles of unity, brotherhood, and spiritual connectedness. In the words of the legendary Bob Marley, “The greatness of a man is not



the late Albert 'Kentae' Semper (left) and Jason 'Bassue' Peters

in how much wealth he acquires, but in his integrity and his ability to affect those around him positively.”

As we honor the memory of Mr. Albert “Kentae” Semper on this significant day, we celebrate his life, his teachings, and the everlasting impact he had on all who knew him.

Special Programming for Wednesday March 20th

Albert “Kentae” Semper Day, 20th March

Morning News

The Morning Pointe Show -6:30-9AM

Talk your Mind 9AM - 10: 45

The Hulk Show -11- 2pm

Quiet Reflections - 2pm - 3pm

Special Programming- Reasonings with Jermaine and Teacher and the Family of Albert “Kentae” Semper 3- 5:30pm

Point FM Evening News

3 the Hard way - dedicated to Kentae 6:30 -8:30

Special Programming Reasonings 8:30pm - until

Move Over 12 midnight until

Quo Vadis UPP? - Part 1

By Cecil E. W. Wade

If the current trend continues, the UPP will soon become DDD. Diminished, since so many supporters have been leaving. Disintegrated since there appears to be much disagreement within the organization, and Demised, which is the natural result of such calamities.

Over the past several years, many of its talented and productive members have been exuding the party. Some of whom migrated to the Antigua and Barbuda labour Party. Some initiated their own party; and others fell into political oblivion. Maybe it is time for the party to engage in a serious introspection surrounding the reasons for the current exodus.

Perhaps it needs to rede-

fine itself as an alternative party, rather than an Opposition: as was declared by its former leader, in parliament, that his job in opposition is to oppose. If this is really the culture of the UPP, then the party is stuck in the opposition mode. They should seek creative means by which they can become the legitimate government!

The opposition party continuously demands that the government consults them before making certain decisions, but that would not be prudent, because it would further assist the opposition to effectively oppose and obstruct every activity the government engages; bearing in mind that a former senior minister in the UPP government said,

in Parliament, that: the easiest thing to do while in opposition, is to oppose. But when you get unto government it is a different kettle of fish!

Why would any sane government consult anyone whose sole ambition is to replace them in office. That would be tantamount to Mike Tyson consulting Evander Holyfield about the fight before they meet in the ring. The public should be informed about what the government is doing, and that is a daily occurrence in Antigua and Barbuda, by way of various media.

There is daily and nightly government news, there is the Cabinet report on Thursdays, and there is The Browne & Browne radio program on Saturdays

– all disseminating current information. But consultation should be engaged only with those who share the same goals of moving the country forward, and who would suggest alternative means to those ends.

History has shown, that at no time the opposition had ever supported the efforts of the government to improve the existing conditions of the country.

In 2004, the UPP won a resounding victory at the polls, defeating the ABLP; but by 2009, they had lost so much support that they barely retained the government by a narrow margin.



It was believed that, had it not been for mitigating circumstances, the UPP Government would have lost the elections.

The polls were opened very late, the polling stations ran out of ballot forms, and the printing machines overheated, and the printers ran out of ink --- causing the UPP to win by default.


The opposition habitually opposed every project the government pursued to advance the economic progress of the country.

They demonstrated against the Old Road project, which had to be scaled-down. They opposed the dredging of the harbour, and complained to neighbouring Islands, that the Antigua Government was dumping dredged materials

cont'd on pg 12

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Opinion



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on their fishing banks.

They demonstrated and picketed at Heritage Quay on Thursdays whenever cruise ships were in port. And during the Covid19 pandemic, they criticized the government for closing down the country, and when the country was reopened, they criticized the government for doing so.

They admonished their supporters against taking the vaccine, and demonstrated against it on Market Street, and at the Prime Minister's office. However, the UPP leaders were

among the first to obtain the vaccine. They appear to be terribly confused!

The UPP opposition has fought against the government's policy to enable all Barbudans to own the piece of land they now occupy, for one dollar.

And also the acquisition of an additional acre for a dollar also! The people of Barbuda are being empowered by land ownership, instead of squatting on Crown lands.

The opposition has vehemently opposed every development project on Barbuda, in spite of it being of

tremendous economic benefit to Antigua and Barbuda; and they mount international pickets and demonstrations to negate any grants and contributions to develop Barbuda, ignoring all the economic benefits accruing to the state.

On Antigua, the antagonism is even more acute. The People's Republic of China, with whom Antigua and Barbuda has had diplomatic relations for more than forty years, who has contributed tremendously to the economic development of the country, has granted a housing development project

for the worst slum area in the country, Booby Alley.

For more than six years, the Antigua Government and the PRC have not been able to make this project a reality.

The residents of the area have been conditioned by the opposition to believe that the development was to their detriment.

Therefore, they revolted, demonstrated, and protested, by blocking the streets with old furniture and household equipment, and burning car tires.

The chief instigator being a pretender to the City West Constituency, a senior citizen of diminutive stature, and a spent politician who places excessive emphasis on every word he speaks; to the extent that some are inclined to believe that: Puer cum diabolo ambulat! (latin: The little boy walks with the Devil!)

Antigua needs a competitive alternative party, not just an opposition, because a confident government appreciates a challenge that gives them the satisfaction of knowing that they can defeat a formidable foe.

Therefore, what the UPP opposition party needs to do, is to consolidate itself, and depart from merely criticizing the government; and position themselves to take the baton of progress, and bolt like Usain, to establish a new record of economic development. Hence the question: Wither goest thou UPP?

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Ariana Grande and Dalton Gomez.

Ariana Grande and Dalton Gomez divorce is official

By Nadine Yousif

The divorce between US singer Ariana Grande and Dalton Gomez is now official, after nearly three years of marriage.

A Los Angeles Superior Court judgment on Tuesday finalised the split between the 30-year-old pop star and the 28-year-old real estate broker.

Under their settlement, Grande will make a one-time payment of \$1.25m (£980,000) to Mr Gomez.

Grande filed for divorce six months ago, citing irreconcilable differences.

The couple's relationship began in January 2020 shortly before the Covid-19 pandemic, and they wed in a "tiny and intimate" ceremony at her home in Montecito, California, in May 2021.

In addition to the one-time payment, the settlement also awards Mr Gomez

half the proceeds from the sale of their Los Angeles home.

Grande will also pay up to \$25,000 towards his lawyers' fees, and no future alimony.

According to court papers, the two separated more than a year ago and had a prenuptial agreement in place. There were also no legal disputes, and they had no children, allowing the divorce to be finalised quickly.

Mr Gomez, who was raised in southern California, has been working in the luxury real estate market for a decade, according to his profile on the AKG website.

He and Grande were first spotted kissing in February 2020 at a restaurant in Los Angeles.

In May that year, they made their first public appearance together as a couple in the lockdown music video for

Grande and Justin Bieber's collaboration, *Stuck With U*.

That December, the pop star announced her engagement in an Instagram post, captioning it "Forever n then some".

Grande, a two-time Grammy Award winner, released her seventh studio album, titled *Eternal Sunshine*, on 8 March.

She will also be starring in the film adaptation of the musical *Wicked*, as the good witch Glinda, along with English Tony-award winning actress Cynthia Erivo, Oscar-winning Malaysian actress Michelle Yeoh and US actor Jeff Goldblum. The film is scheduled to be released in November.

In 2017, a terrorist detonated a suicide bomb following a Grande performance at the Manchester Arena in the UK, killing 22 people.

Haiti central bank raid leaves at least three dead

By Sam Hancock

Police in Haiti have killed at least three people while repelling an attack on the country's central bank.

A "group of criminals" targeted the Bank of the Republic of Haiti (BRH) on Monday, an employee told AFP, leaving up to four dead and a guard injured.

The bank itself thanked security forces for "protecting our community".

Haiti has been rocked by weeks of violence after gangs raided prisons, released thousands of inmates and forced the prime minister to resign.

In a statement on X, BRH said: "Following an incident yesterday near [our] site on Rue Pavee, security forces and the bank's security team acted with professionalism and efficiency."

The bank is one of a few key institutions still running in Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince, where hundreds of hospitals have closed.

BRH added that it was "deeply grateful to our officers and the state police for their vigilance".

The employee, who spoke to AFP on the condition of anonymity, said "three or four" of the criminal gang had been killed in the attack.

They also told the news agency that the injured



The Bank of the Republic of Haiti sits in the business district of Port-au-Prince, where armed gangs are battling authorities for control. (File photo)

guard had sustained gunshot wounds.

BBC News was not able to independently verify these claims.

Police have been trying to recapture areas of Port-au-Prince held by notorious gang leader Jimmy Chérizier, nicknamed "Barbecue".

The power struggle has led to an uptick in violence - including gun fights - on the streets of Haiti, a country which struggled with gang violence long before the recent crisis.

Haitians told the BBC they could see no end to what is happening in the Caribbean country, with Port-au-Prince and the surrounding region under a month-long state of emergency.

Last week, following mounting pressure, Ariel Henry agreed to step aside as prime minister to allow the formation of an interim government.

Mr Henry had not been allowed back into Haiti after leaving in late January for visits to Guyana and Kenya, where he had signed a deal on the deployment of an international security force to help tackle the violence.

The Caricom group of Caribbean nations subsequently outlined plans to set up a transitional presidential council, comprising - among others - seven voting members, two observers and a religious leader.

One of those put forward to be a member was Leslie Voltaire, a government minister under former

Haitian President Jean Bertrand Aristide.

He told BBC World Service's Newshour programme that Haiti was in "a grave crisis" - but refused to accept that "bandits" could one day rule the country.

"They [armed gangs] say that they have put Ariel Henry out, but they cannot enter into the palace, they cannot enter into the prime minister's office," Mr Voltaire said.

Describing the chaos, he said "something" had to be done - and fast - "because now all the ports are blocked, the airport is blocked, and even if you want to go to the beach you cannot go".

He continued: "There is a lot of kidnappings, a lot of

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UN Rights body told Guyanese nationals will decide on death penalty

CMC - Guyana has told the United Nations Human Rights Committee that its citizens will decide on the issue of the death penalty, even as there are no plans by the government to boost the capacity to execute anyone under the current laws.

Governance Minister, Gail Teixeira said a similar process was undertaken between 1999- 2001 and the popular view was that the death penalty should remain on the books.

“So, there is no view in Guyana right now that we go back to executions of any kind and so it is a ad hoc or informal moratorium that we have maintained from 1997 to now,” she told the UNHRC during her virtual address.

“To further strengthen our argument, the government has put no heads of prison service, no heads of the Ministry of Home Affairs, put any investments of funds into developing any capacity to execute anyone,” she added.

Guyana has not carried out an execution since 1997 and political and legal observers said that although the death penalty has not been removed from the



Constitution or the statute, the matter will have to go back to Parliament.

Guyana and other Caribbean countries have come under pressure from several international agencies, including the International Commission against the Death Penalty, to abolish the death penalty that they consider to be cruel and inhumane punishment.

In 2022, The Guyana Court of Appeal refused to strike down the death penalty as unconstitutional.

During her appearance, Teixeira told the UNHRC that Georgetown could not at the moment implement Public Disclosure and Whistleblowers laws.

“We are unable to, at this point, to activate the Public Disclosure and Whistleblower Act because there are genuine problems of

implementation,” she said, noting however that witnesses are offered “safe haven” protection by police.

With regards to the implementation of the now repealed State Assets Recovery Act (SARA) following the closure of the agency in 2020, Teixeira said that “monolithic” body “had to be repaired” because its head could have become the Chief Immigration Officer, Police Commissioner, Director of Public Prosecutions among others.

Instead, she said government was relying on the Guyana Police Force’s Special Organised Crime Unit (SOCU), Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Director of Public Prosecutions through strengthening of the Anti-Money Laundering and

Countering of Financing Terrorism Act (AML/CFT) “to have a modern confiscation framework inclusive of an asset recovery fund as well as asset sharing arrangements domestically and internationally”.

She said an AML/CFT amendment in 2023 provides for civil forfeiture. She said a number of assets had been confiscated under the new legislative regime.

On the issue of no investigation into alleged corruption by Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo, the governance minister said no one had lodged a police complaint about the claims that had been made in a US Vice News report.

“There is no follow-up on it because there was no police report made by Vice News or anybody else and so the police cannot investigate without some form of report or complaint,” she told the UN Human Rights Committee, adding that Jagdeo had publicly responded to those allegations in media that had carried the issue.

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rape, a lot of burglaries. One has to decide if you want to live like that, or if you want to fight. I want to fight.”

Countries including the United States and Germany last week evacuated embas-

sy staff from Port-au-Prince, with the violence showing no sign of easing.

The US State Department then said over the weekend that it planned to charter a flight to rescue its remaining citizens still stranded.

Supreme Court says Texas can arrest and jail migrants

By Bernd Debusmann Jr

The Supreme Court has allowed Texas to enforce one of the toughest immigration laws enacted by any US state in recent memory.

The measure allows police to arrest and prosecute those suspected of illegally crossing the US-Mexican border.

The Biden administration has challenged the law, calling it unconstitutional.

Crossing the US border illegally is already a federal crime, but violations are usually handled as civil cases by the immigration court system.

One reason the Texas law, SB4, is so controversial is because courts have previously ruled that only the federal government can enforce the country's immigration laws, not individual US states.

SB4 gives local and state police officers the ability to stop and arrest anyone suspected of having crossed the border illegally, except in schools, healthcare facilities and places of worship.

Punishments would range from misdemeanours to felonies and potential imprisonment, or fines of up to \$2,000 (£1,570).

Penalties for those who illegally re-enter Texas after having been deported could go up to 20 years in prison, depending on a person's im-



SB4 gives police officers in Texas broad powers to arrest migrants.

migration and criminal history.

On Tuesday, the Supreme Court said the measure can take effect while a lower federal appeals court weighs its legality. A day earlier the nation's highest court placed a temporary pause on SB4.

President Joe Biden's White House sharply criticised the latest decision.

"SB4 will not only make communities in Texas less safe, it will also burden law enforcement, and sow chaos and confusion at our southern border," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement.

But Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton hailed the Supreme Court decision as a "huge win" against the Biden administration and the American Civil Liber-

ties Union (ACLU), which has also challenged the law in court.

"As always, it's my honor to defend Texas and its sovereignty, and to lead us to victory in court," he wrote in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

The ACLU vowed that it "won't back down until this extreme anti-immigrant law is struck down for good".

Top Mexico diplomat Roberto Velasco Álvarez posted on X that Mexico will not accept migrants being sent back across the border by the state of Texas.

"The dialogue on immigration matters will continue between the federal governments" of Mexico and the US, he wrote in Spanish.

The court's three liberal justices - Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Ketanji

Brown Jackson - disagreed with the majority ruling.

"The court gives a green-light that will upend the longstanding federal-state balance of power and sow chaos," Justice Sotomayor wrote in the dissenting opinion.

She also wrote that the law could "disrupt sensitive foreign relations, frustrate the protection of individuals fleeing persecution, hamper active federal enforcement efforts" and keep migrants from reporting abuse or trafficking.

As well as arguing that SB4 infringes on the federal government's authority to secure the US border, the justice department has warned it could harm relations with Mexico, which has condemned the law as "anti-immigrant".

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Dozens jailed in France's largest cyberbullying case

By Ian Casey

Twenty-eight people have been jailed for up to 18 months for the harassment of an influencer in France's largest cyberbullying case to date.

Judges found the accused guilty of harassing Magali Berdah, spurred on by a campaign by the French rapper Booba against "thieving influencers".

The court in Paris heard that the harassment had "real consequences" to Ms Berdah's mental health.

Booba is facing a separate trial and denies aggravated harassment.

Ms Berdah has built a prominent career in France as a lifestyle and fashion expert, while also marketing other social media stars through her company Shauna Events.

Her lawyers said posts from Booba, real name Élie Yaffa, encouraged a "mob" of people online to send



Influencer Magali Berdah was the focus of a cyberbullying campaign, a French court found.

hateful and insulting messages to their client, something Booba denied.

The court said that each of the defendants "made a conscious choice to join in" with the cyberbullying.

The accused, aged between 20 and 49, received jail terms ranging from four to 18 months, some of which were suspended.

Ms Berdah, known as

"the queen of influencers" in France, hailed the sentencing as a "beautiful victory" after previously telling the court that the bullying brought her "within a whisker of throwing (herself) out of the window".

"My life was destroyed for two years because of this," she said. "Finally, I've been recognised as a victim."

Her lawyers said the convictions showed "no one is safe behind their keyboard".

The defendants were fined 700 euros (£598) and were ordered to pay an additional combined 54,000 euros (£56,100) in compensation to their victim.

Booba denied in December that he had put himself at the head of an online "mob".

The rapper made headlines in 2018 after being involved in a brawl at a Paris airport with fellow rapper Kaaris, for which both received an 18 month suspended jail sentence.

Ms Berdah is due in court on a separate charge of money laundering and her marketing company Shauna Events is being investigated for fraud.

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Historically, the federal government has created laws and regulations on immigration, even though the US Constitution does not explicitly grant it those powers.

It is also the federal government which negotiates treaties and agreements with other countries.

SB4 was signed into law in December and was initially due to come into effect on 5 March.

The case will now head back to a three-judge panel from the New Orleans-based US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

Following the Supreme Court decision, the appeals court said it would hear arguments on Wednesday.

Whoever loses there would have the option of taking the case back to the Supreme Court.

The implementation of SB4 comes amid rising public concern over the US-Mexico border.

A Gallup poll released in February showed that nearly one-third of Americans believe immigration is the single greatest problem the country faces, ahead of the government, the economy and inflation.

Browne wins second race of new ABCF's season

National teenage cycling sensation Tahje Browne left the pack trailing once again to win the second race of the 2024 Antigua and Barbuda Cycling Federation's (ABCF) domestic season on Sunday.

Browne, who captured the overall title in the season's opening race from the Pan Am Base to Willikies and back on March 3, secured victory in the Pan Am Base Circuit Race on Sunday, March 17.

Browne, who contested the junior male class, clocked the fastest overall time to win the race, which comprised completing 25 laps of the Pan Am Base Circuit in Coolidge.

The Antigua Grammar School student, who rides for Wadadli Cycling Academy, clocked one hour, 46 minutes, and 09.01 seconds to win the junior male category.

Jomari King of Vipers finished second in the category with a time of one minute, 46 minutes, and 38.66 seconds.

Marcos Ozuna won the elite male class in a time of one hour, 46 minutes, and 38.13 seconds. Conroy



Junior male division and overall winner Tahje Browne celebrates after completing his final lap during the Pan Am Base Circuit Race on Sunday, March 17, 2024. (ABCF)

Thomas came in second in a time of one hour, 46 minutes, and 47.42 seconds. Cosmos Richardson finished in third place with a time of one hour, 49 minutes, and 53.83 seconds.

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AGHS among winners in schools' volleyball championships

The Antigua Girls High School recoded wins in their latest outings in the girls division of the Inter-Schools Volleyball Championships at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex.

Antigua Girls High School beat Christ the King High School 2-0, 25-23, and 25-16. Antigua Girls High School also prevailed 2-0

against Sir Novelle Richards Academy, winning 25-14 and 25-14.

Pares Secondary secured a 2-0 win against Princess Margaret School in the boys division. Pares Secondary won 25-14 and 25-15.

The second team of Islands Academy also secured 2-0 wins in both the girls

and boys divisions.

Island Academy's second team beat Ottos Comprehensive School 25-9 and 25-10 in the girls division, while the second team of Island Academy prevailed 25-14 and 25-11 against Sir Novelle Richards Academy in the boys division.

All Saints Secondary also defeated Princess Mar-

garet School 25-16, 25-13 in a boys division encounter.

In the development league, Clare Hall Secondary beat Sir Novelle Richards Academy 15-13, 15-9.

Island Academy beat Christ the King High School 15-4, 15-9, and Antigua Girls High School prevailed 15-4, 15-11 against Irene B. Williams Secondary.

Rebels snatch one-point win against Fearless Crew in ABBA's Division II League

The Rebels snatched a one-point win against Jim Nance Jan Serve Fearless Crew in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Division II League on Monday night.

The Rebels claimed their second win in four encounters by snatching an 88-87 victory against the Fearless Crew in the second game of a double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Tyndale Telemaque shot a game-high 21 points and grabbed 11 rebounds, and Buell Henry snapped up 29 rebounds and sank 19 points for the Rebels.

In support, Kiwan Peterson scored 15 points and claimed seven rebounds;

Zuri Nesbitt produced 11 points, nine steals, eight assists, and six rebounds; Bruce Whyte converted 10 points; and Kentacka Lake scored nine points for the Rebels.

Ronel Gomes sank 17 points and snatched seven rebounds; Ralph Spooner grabbed 20 rebounds and scored 16 points; Rafiki Harris also had 16 points with 10 rebounds and six steals; and Ricky Willock converted 13 points for the Fearless Crew, who lost for the first time in four games.

Cecil Charles Cristos United won for the first time in four encounters, staving off a tough challenge to pre-

vail 46-42 against MJ Gray's Phoenix in the opening game on Monday night.

Manlight Simmons produced 15 points, 14 rebounds, five steals, and five blocked shots; Dwayne Samuel converted 10 points and snatched eight rebounds; and Thomas Skerit chipped in with eight points, five rebounds, and five steals for Cristos United.

Nicholas Simpson shot a game-high 20 points and grabbed nine rebounds, and Ajani Adams scored nine points and snatched 14 rebounds for MJ Gray's Green Phoenix, who suffered their fourth loss in as many games.

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Vaughn Gomes captured the masters' category, completing the required 20 laps of the circuit in one hour, 28 minutes, and 16.94 seconds. Tiziano Rosignoli claimed second place with a time of one hour, 28 minutes, and 37.76 seconds.

Lone competitor Telsha Choy won the female division by completing the 20-lap course in one hour, 40 minutes, and 46.30 seconds.

Brent George captured the sports class by clocking one hour, 42 minutes, and 34.86 seconds to complete the 20 laps of the circuit. Miguel Williams took second place with a time of one hour, 50 minutes, and 11.95 seconds.

Elite Thomas secured victory in the Cadets 11-13 category by completing the required 15 laps in 50 minutes and 38.13 seconds.



Top national cyclist Tahje Browne leads the pack during the Pan Am Base Circuit Race on Sunday, March 17, 2024.

Jaheel Lewis finished second in one hour and 07.93 seconds.

Three of the 16 cyclists who contested the event failed to finish the second race of the season. They are

Newell Mack, Delvin Peters, and Randy Simon.

The ABCF and the cycling fraternity will join the Pediatric Department of the Sir Lester Bird Medical Center (SLBMC) in a fun

ride on Sunday, March 24.

The fun ride, which is being held to bring awareness to Down's syndrome, will take place at the Pan Am Base Circuit and will commence at 8 am.

GERM BUSTER

TIPS!

1

WASH YOUR HANDS WITH SOAP FOR AT LEAST 20 SECONDS

- Before eating or handling food
- After using the bathroom
- After touching pets or animals
- After handling rubbish

2

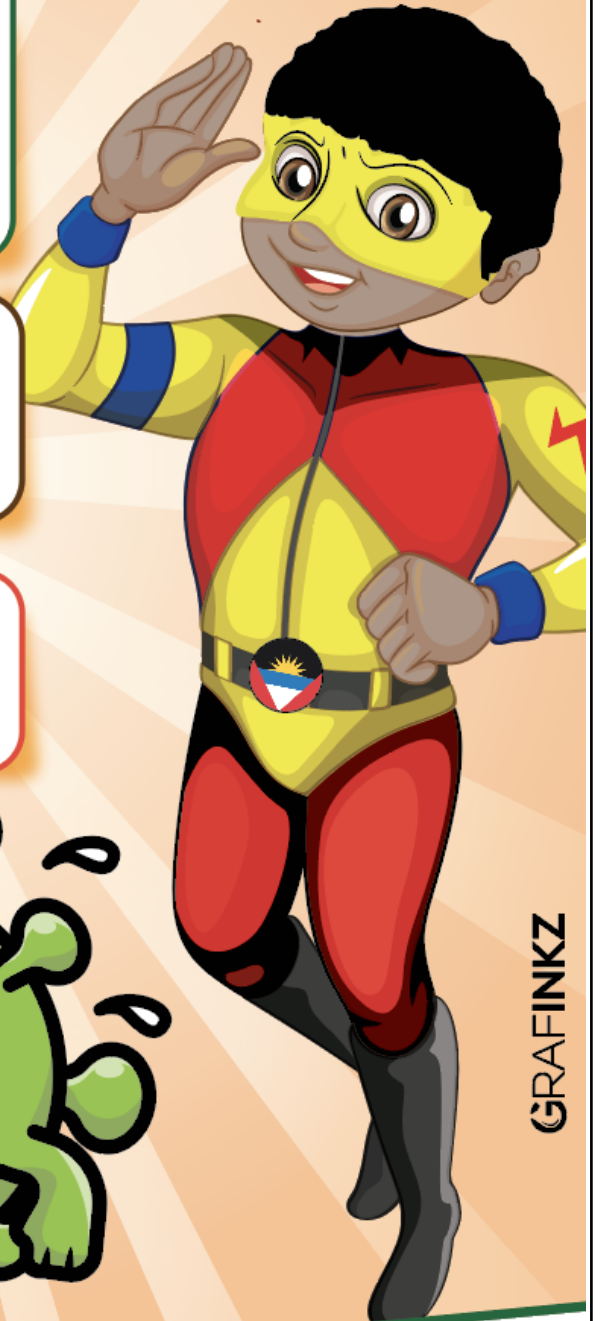
CATCH YOUR COUGH OR SNEEZE IN A CLEAN TISSUE, AND TOSS IN THE BIN

- Then wash your hands or use hand sanitizer

3

AVOID PUTTING YOUR HANDS IN YOUR EYES, EARS, NOSE OR MOUTH

- Germs spread this way



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Players of the Green City football team. (File photo)

Willikies and Green City draw Premier League encounter

Neither Willikies nor Green City could secure victory in their latest match in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division.

Both teams played to a goalless draw when they met in the Premier League at the ABFA Technical Center on Monday night.

The results meant that both teams will advance to 14 points each, but Willikies will remain in ninth place on goal difference after draw-

ing for the fourth time in 12 matches.

Green City will remain in 10th place after securing their second draw in 13 matches.

Bethesda will remain in fourth place in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division after recording a 3-0 win against Real Blizzard at the New Winthropes playing field on Monday.

O'Shale Simon scored twice, with conversions

in the 74th and 82nd minutes, after Calvin Goodwin scored in the 16th minute to give Bethesda a one-nil halftime lead.

Millique London missed an opportunity to score for Real Blizzard when he failed to convert a penalty kick in the 53rd minute.

Their ninth win in 15 matches carries Bethesda to 30 points, the same as English Harbour, who occupy third place by virtue of a superior goal difference.

Real Blizzard will remain in 13th place with 15 points after suffering their sixth defeat in 13 matches.

But Monday's scheduled Second Division match between West Ham and the Celtics at the Princess Margaret School playing field was postponed.

The Second Division will continue with four matches today (Wednesday).

In a double header at the ABFA Technical Center, JSC Progressors will face ABAYA of Parham at 4:15 pm, and Belmont FC will clash with Urlings at 6:15 pm.

Blackburn Palace will take on Golden Grove at the Princess Margaret School playing field at 4:15 pm, and the Young Warriors will tackle FC Master Ballerz at the Buckley's Primary School playing field at 4:15 pm.

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vivors beat Alzarri and Sharon Joseph Flyers by nine wickets. Flyers were restricted to 75 for three off their 10 overs. Makada Samuel slammed 41, and Sevly Ireland scored 21. Sacha Michael took two wickets for five runs.

Survivors achieved victory by scoring 77 for one with nine balls to spare. Sacha Michael cracked 33 not out, Lokuelle Pelle hit 21, and Cerie Richards struck 11 not out.

The Bryson's Shipping and Insurance

Bullets snatched a five-run win against Goody's Taxi Service & Tours Jennings Rockets. The Bullets won the toss and batted, scoring 75 for three off their 10 overs.

Cheryl Williams cracked 36, and Annette Frank made 20. Ann-Marie Jarvis-Parker captured two wickets for eight runs.

Jennings Rockets were restricted to 69 for five off their 10 overs. Ann-Marie Jarvis-Parker hit 33, and Chemique Benjamin scored 16. Cheryl Williams had two for 12, and Annette Frank claimed two for 18.

Strictly Business and Survivors win Softball cricket titles

Rackaman Construction Strictly Business and Wayne's Electrical Services Survivors have captured male and female titles, respectively, in competitions staged by the Antigua and Barbuda Softball Cricket Association (ABSCA) in conjunction with corporate sponsors We The People (WTP) 98.5 FM, St. John's Co-Operative Credit Union, and Natural Construction & Goody's Taxi Service & Tours.

Rackaman Construction Strictly Business won the Everyday Store 24/7 Limited/Alva Joseph ABSCA Male 10 overs competition, while Wayne's Electrical Services Survivors captured the title in the Enforcers ABSCA Female 10 overs competition on Sunday.

Rackaman Construction Strictly Business defeated Grill Box Buckley's 3J's by six wickets in the final. Buckley's 3J's won the toss and batted, scoring 78 for six off their allotted 10 overs.

Ashfield Weatherhead hit 17 not out, and D'Andre Harris and Denley Thomas each made 14. Arthur Crogman claimed two wickets for six runs, and Kenroy



Rackaman Construction Strictly Business softball team. (File photo)

Frederick picked up two for 21.

In reply, Strictly Business achieved victory by scoring 83 for four with three balls to spare. Raymond Leadette struck 35, and Kim George cracked 26. Richie Thomas took two wickets for eight runs.

In the semi-finals, Strictly Business prevailed against the Dredgers by nine wickets. Dredgers were restricted to 48 for seven off their 10 overs, with Derval Phillip getting 11.

Arthur Crogman snatched three wickets for three runs, Owen Graham snapped up two wickets for seven runs, and Kenroy

Frederick claimed two for 12.

Strictly Business then raced to victory at 54 for one in just 3.1 overs, with Kerry Mentore smashing 36.

Grill Box Buckley's 3J's trounced Lees Landscaping 300 by 54 runs. 3J's won the toss and batted, scoring 101 for four off their 10 overs.

Denley Thomas hit 40, Randino Turner scored 17, and Dequan Martin made 15. Vernell Isadore picked up two for 16.

In reply, 300 tumbled to 47 all out with three balls to spare. Jared Roberts made 13. Gregson Merrick grabbed four wickets for two runs, and D'Andre Har-

ris took two for 17.

Wayne's Electrical Services Survivors claimed their title honours by defeating the Bryson's Shipping and Insurance Bullets by 10 wickets in the final.

Bullets won the toss and batted, scoring 50 for five off their 10 overs. Annette Frank got 15, and Sherilyn Watkins captured two wickets for seven runs.

The Survivors secured victory by scoring 51 without losing a wicket in 5.5 overs. Sacha Michael slammed 35 not out, and Lokuelle Pelle hit nine not out.

In the semi-finals, Sur-

cont'd on pg 21