

REMOTE WORK FOR AGRICULTURE MINISTRY HQ STAFF

Story on Page 2



Dr. Howard Dodson, Director Emeritus of the Schomburg Centre for Research in Black Culture (top left), was the featured presenter at the second Rex Nettleford Distinguished Lecture under the theme "Negro history, black studies, African Diasporan Paradigm." *(Full story in Friday's issue of Pointe Xpress)*



Ministry of Agriculture headquarters staff to work from home

Staff of the Ministry of Agriculture headquarters at Country Pond are to begin working from home effective today (Thursday March 21) following a series of industrial actions to bring attention to their claims of poor working condition.

Minister of Agriculture, E.P Chet Greene, who was in Guyana attending an FAO meeting, is apologizing to the staff for the new arrangement noting that it will last no longer than two weeks in the first instance.

“We have made a decision to have workers at the ministry’s headquarters, with immediate effect and until further notice, to operate in ‘pandemic mode’, that is, working from home with assignments given by their superiors and reporting back to their superiors via agreed platforms,” he said in a statement issued overnight.

He offered apologies on behalf of the ministry to the general public and moreso to the affected staff

and sectoral stakeholders for interruptions which are scheduled to end within the next two weeks.

According to Minister Greene the episode at the ministry of agriculture is another manifestation of the many challenges the government faces with respect to buildings that house government ministries and departments.

“The government is working through a series of challenges to public infrastructure and wishes to assure affected workers and the general public that no effort is being spared to improve the air quality and general conditions of the several workplaces,” he explained.

Both the Antigua and Barbuda Public Service Association and the Antigua Trades and Labour Union are fully onboard with the move to remote work.

The AT&LU also issued a statement overnight indicating that it had reached an agreement with the

minister regarding non-established workers which it

represents.

(See attached release)

ANTIGUA TRADES & LABOUR UNION

"EMANCIPATION HOUSE"
P.O. BOX 3, 46 NORTH STREET
ST. JOHN'S, ANTIGUA, W.I.
E-MAIL: atandlu@hotmail.com

Telephone: 462-0090/5622501
Fax: 462-4056

All communications should be addressed to the General Secretary

Press Release

20th March, 2024

Following consultation today with the Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. E.P. Chet Greene and the Antigua Trades and Labour Union (AT&LU), the following schedule has been agreed upon:

1. All Non-Established Workers attached to the Ministry of Agriculture Headquarters are asked not to report to work from tomorrow Thursday, 21st of March 2024, without loss of pay for approximately two weeks,
2. With immediate effect and until further notice, workers will work from home with assignments given by their superiors and report back to their superiors via agreed platforms.
3. The Antigua Trades and Labour Union will provide further updates and guidance should the Ministry of Agriculture need further extensions.

The Antigua Trades and Labour Union and the Ministry of Agriculture thank you, the Non-Established Workers for your continued cooperation and understand during this period.

-END-

PRESIDENT
ANTIGUA TRADES & LABOUR UNION

Fuel price increase coming

The West Indies Oil Company (WIOC) has reported a seven (7) per cent increase in the cost of gasoline and a two (2) per cent decline in the cost of diesel.

Based on the refined pass-through mechanism for fuel prices, which takes into account revenue assurance, price stability, and maintenance of subsidies for certain petroleum products, the Government has decided

to adjust retail prices at the pump.

Effective Friday 22, March 2024, fuel prices will be as follows:

- Gasoline: \$14.50 per gallon
- Diesel: \$14.25 per gallon
- 20 Pound LPG: \$32.00 per Bottle
- 25 Pound LPG: \$40.00 per Bottle
- 100 Pound LPG: \$155.00 per Cylinder



The average regional prices for gasoline and diesel are currently \$15.45 and \$15.91 respectively while the regional average for the 20 pound and 100-pound cylinder of LPG is \$38.28 and \$202.15 respectively.

To support affordability for consumers, the Government continues to provide

the following subsidies:
20 Pound LPG: Subsidy of \$5.16 per bottle
25 Pound LPG: Subsidy of \$6.45 per bottle
100 Pound LPG: Subsidy of \$17.64 per cylinder
Margins for WIOC, inland transport, and gas station dealers remain unchanged.

Important Notice

St. John's Rural West Constituency Branch will be holding Cheerleaders practice for children under the age of 5 - 15 years old on Monday 25th March 2024 at 5pm at the Greenbay Primary School. This is for the upcoming Labour Day Parade May 6, 2024. Young girls that are interested can contact Janice Benjamin Edwards at 773-8886 or Andrea Edwards 720-7839 for further information.

TUESDAYS & WEDNESDAYS

\$16.99

- *2 pcs
- Biscuit
- Drink



\$19.99

- Zinger / CCB
- Drink



2

DAYS WAYS SAVE





limitations apply

Yachting sector injects an estimated \$200 million into local economy

The yachting sector of the Antigua and Barbuda tourism industry continues to expand and it is now a major contribution to the overall tourism earnings for the country.

Chief Executive Officer of the Falmouth Harbour Marina, Robert (Bobby) Reis, said he believes the overall contribution of the yachting sector to the tourism earnings are estimated to be approximately \$200 million annually.

Reis reported that the country has four other marinas and all have been reporting brisk business this season. "This has been a superb year for the entire yachting sector. I have no complaints with the way things are going," he declared.

Along with the Falmouth Harbour Marina, the other marinas are the Antigua Yacht Club, the Catamaran Marina and Boathouse, the Nelson's Dockyard Marina and the Jolly Harbour Marina.

According to Reis his figures are based on a 1999 report from the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank and 2



percent increase compound every year since. Last year, the Falmouth Harbour Marina spent over \$10 million on fuel to the West Indies Oil Company just for fuel for the yachts. Additionally, it spent \$1.5 million to APUA for utility services.

Along with the marina docking fees and fuel, the yachts also pay large sums of money purchasing a host of services locally such as spending at supermarkets.

"For example, we are getting a lot more megayachts and these vessels

carry a large crew to take care of the owners and the vessels themselves.

"These numbers average in many cases between 30 and 40 persons. They only eat at restaurants when they are in port, and in addition, they will also rent two or three motor vehicles. When you add up these figures spending over a five-month period, the expenditure is quite substantial," he noted.

Apart from fuel, another big-ticket item for the yachts is expenditure at supermarkets. Reis recalled seeing the manager of a supermarket on the dock handing out discount cards to the yacht owners.

"I asked him what he was doing and the supermarket manager explained that the day before the crew from one yacht had spent \$80,000.00 in groceries at

his supermarket so he wanted to ensure that the other yachts do the same," he explained.

The Falmouth Harbour Marina recently upgraded its facilities at a cost of \$7 million to add a berth 535 feet in length which is able to accommodate the largest megayachts.

Reis said they also invested in new fuel-pumping equipment to reduce the time it takes to fill up the yachts. Because of the high level of service it offers, Reis said the marina experiences a high rate of returning yachts each year.

Reis said he was pleased when he heard the government not only acknowledge the contributions of yachting but is willing to take positive steps to ensure its continued growth and development.

Commercial Space For Rent

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

PS of Works Ministry participates in regional procurement conference

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Works, Sean Cenac, was among participants attending the 18th Annual Conference of the Inter-American Network on Government Procurement (INGP) held in Asuncion, Paraguay.

The Caribbean representatives attended through funding provided by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).

The senior procurement leaders from across the Caribbean are now better informed about regional and worldwide public procurement trends following their participation in the conference.

The INGP Conference serves as an occasion for countries to meet and share updates on the status of procurement reform and planned reforms and discuss common priorities.

Cenac described the event as an example of how shared challenges can generate shared solutions.

He added that the annual INGP conference continues to strengthen professional relationships, serve as a medium for information exchange and an impetus for advancing procurement systems among participating countries.

Cenac noted for Antigua and Barbuda, the conference re-enforced how important it is to establish procurement fundamentals, while

expanding and engendering stakeholder communities within a common objective.

The INGP Conference, he emphasized, has grown to be a vital institution offering a combination of technical and policy-level knowledge that promote insights and pathways to modernise procurement systems.

This year's event was held under the theme "Promoting Development with Public-Private Collaboration through State Procurements".



Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Works, Sean Cenac, left, is attending the 18th Annual Conference of the Inter-American Network on Government Procurement

Property Insurance
 Secure your largest investment.
 Live in a better STATE of mind.

STATE INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED
 Live in a better State of mind

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

Calls made for greater assistance in tackling Down Syndrome

As preparations get underway for Antigua and Barbuda to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day, calls have come from medical officials and parents affected for more to be done.

On March 21st, colourful socks will be the order of the day in the streets and offices of Antigua and Barbuda as the world stops to commemorate World Down Syndrome Day under the theme 'End the Stereotypes'.

According to Dr Shivon Belle-Jarvis while there has been lots of progress in bringing awareness to this disease there is still much to be done in terms of the offering of services for those affected.

One parent, who has a son affected by the disease is calling on the government to do more.

"Have more speech therapy available. Have more occupational therapy available for us as parents so we can better know how to handle our children. Let better awareness be the forefront. Speak about it more often. Don't just let it be that when March 21 comes around that we do but it be spoken about year-round. Teach other children to be acceptable of children with Down Syndrome," the mother



Dr Shivon Belle-Jarvis said.

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.

A point Dr Belle-Jarvis says needs to be addressed.

One such area she thinks can help

improve and prepare parents for dealing with these matters is specialized screening.

According to the top medical official, most parents here only find out after birth about their children's conditions and sometimes dealing with this news becomes difficult.

"I would want to see the availability of screening testing and screening be more readily available and more financially available. US\$900 is not easy to just take up right now," Dr. Belle-Jarvis added.

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.

Those figures did however increase in 2023 and saw three Down Syndrome births. A number Dr. Belle-Jarvis says is not a cause for concern but will be watched closely.

Ministry of Tourism invites property owners and caretakers to meeting on available accommodation opportunities

The Ministry of Tourism is pleased to invite all owners and caretakers of rental properties, homes, apartments, and bed and breakfast operations to an important meeting on Wednesday, March 27th, at 5:30 PM.

The meeting, which will be held at the multi-purpose

cultural center, will provide valuable information about accommodation opportunities for SIDS4.

SIDS4 is a major event that will take place from May 27th to the 30th, and there is expected to be a significant increase in demand for accommodation during this pe-

riod.

Therefore, the Ministry of Tourism is inviting all interested persons to register officially for property inspection by calling 468-4039 or 464-3007 between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:00 pm daily.

During the meeting, attendees will learn more about

the accommodation requirements for SIDS4 and how they can participate in this exciting event.

The Ministry of Tourism is committed to working with property owners and caretakers to ensure that visitors have a comfortable and enjoyable stay in our beautiful country.



ON AIR

STAY ON POINTE

POINTE FM 99.1

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

6:30pm - 8:30pm

Host Michael Freeland

Antigua and Barbuda highlights plans and urges other vulnerable islands to move to a more inclusive, green economy

Globally, the clean energy sector is growing exponentially with clean energy employment surpassing that of fossil fuels in 2021, according to the IEA World Energy Report 2023. This presents significant opportunities for small island developing states, and climate policy experts are calling for the Caribbean region to get ahead of the curve on a just transition. Antigua and Barbuda in particular is taking a cogent approach and laid out a clear just transition pathway in its national climate change plans.

At the Climate Analytics Caribbean session, “A Just Transition: Empowering inclusive climate action for the Caribbean” on March 12th, Ms. Ezra Christopher, Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Department of Environment, noted, “The Government of Antigua and Barbuda places tremendous weight on achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement through its gender responsive transition to a low emission, climate resilient economy.”

“Given the risks Antigua and Barbuda faces and its vulnerability to climate trends, the country is highly motivated to embrace an energy transition,” said Ms. Christopher. “Antigua and Barbuda has been strategic in how it has used its Readiness Support from multilateral climate funds and technical assistance from such partners like the NDC Partnership and Climate Analytics to support its long-term strategic vision for climate action, enhancing capacities and strengthening enabling environments to translate its climate change priorities into investment plans.”

“We have aligned key technical assistance to our country’s Readiness Preparatory Support Programme with



the Green Climate Fund to support us in investment planning, implementation and in upscaling. This support was instrumental in developing our climate strategies, advancing implementation of our NDCs, and developing projects.”

Ms. Christopher highlighted the following key pillars of Antigua and Barbuda’s just transition advancement:

- Seek to drive the transformation of sectors and creation of jobs,
- Build the entrepreneurial capacity of women, youth, and micro, small and medium enterprises,
- Provide education, training, and certification programmes for the workforce in mitigation and adaptation technologies,
- Develop and integrate specialist programmes into existing educational institutions,
- Involve multi-stakeholder consultations and social dialogues,
- Promote economic diversification by providing new and innovative job opportunities,
- Encourage participation of both men and women in just transition ini-

tiatives, and

- Establish a Just Transition Framework for monitoring, and reporting on progress of the transition process.

Ms. Christopher was joined by Climate Analytics Caribbean’s Climate Diplomacy Advisor, Ms. Kristin Qui, and Climate Policy Advisor, Mr. Carlon Mendoza.

Mr. Mendoza shed light on the seminal Just Transition Work Programme which was agreed at the international climate change summit, COP28, noting this is a prime opportunity for a focus to be placed on how small island developing states (SIDS) will be impacted through the global just transition.

“Antigua and Barbuda has already started thinking about just transition and how that will flow into policy. Along with the ratification of Escazú Agreement, this just transition work programme can provide a setting point and guidance. The decisions taken at the international level are agreed by consensus and will inform countries’ policies and legislation. This facilitates a holistic approach to ensure no one is left behind.”

BECOME A

GERM BUSTER

GERMS ARE EVERYWHERE!
WASH YOUR
HANDS
REGULARLY
WITH SOAP.



GRAFINKZ



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



Building a Research and Innovation Culture through Collaboration

By Dr Ilenius Ildephonce, Lecturer & Interim Head, School of Science, Computing & Artificial Intelligence, The UWI, Five Islands

Innovation doesn't just happen; it results from continuous research and refinement of ideas.

The persistent evaluation of the effectiveness of solutions and the continual improvement of these solutions to critically study new ways of improving the state-of-the-art lead to the discovery of new methods of adapting to the changes brought about by these innovations and our changing world.

This also allows for the steering and managing of the evolution of solutions and related applications. Establishing a culture centred on research is vital for the sustainable progress of any society. It relies on the government, academia, and social and private sectors collaborating to achieve shared objectives.

The UWI campuses, with their focus on research, house a team of researchers who are experts in various fields of study.

However, there is an urgent need for a collaboration mechanism to apply their research and directly influence governance, policy, politics, and business.

This collaboration has not naturally developed due to our society's lack of a research ethos. The absence

of a unified research framework or a culture of evidence-based practices and continuous evaluation and improvements has resulted in scientists working in isolation on projects that only target academic journals.

I believe that UWI-Five Islands is in a good position to stimulate the research culture.

The campus is in its building phase, presenting unique opportunities to embed an applied research culture in close collaboration with industry and government partners. Research on interdisciplinary academic-industry collaborations reveals that one of the underlying barriers to success is due to universities not being properly structured to promote and reward this initiative.

It is now time for the university, private sector and government to ensure that our campus, in its core DNA, facilitates and rewards industry partnership and applied research, resulting in on-the-ground impacts toward longer-term, resilient societal outcomes.

I believe that discussions on how government entities and public, social, and private partners can work together with university academics to identify areas of opportunity for development or challenges and develop mechanisms to solve them are needed.



Dr Ilenius Ildephonce

As our Campus Principal, Professor Robinson has constantly alluded, in the five years of our campus, we have provided access to tertiary education, and our research can now address local issues. Through that, a profound impact of the UWI Campus on Antiguan society will be visualised.

The research will have a greater impact, especially if the direct involvement of decision-makers, the public, and businesses is visualised and enablers are put in place to seamlessly support this research, linking science to the application of economics, politics, risk manage-

ment, health, wellness, etc.

The role of research in propelling industries forward and enhancing the efficiency of any society is indisputable.

This culture of research, born out of collaboration, can be seen when government units, the private sector, and individuals' partner with academics and invest in supporting research that aligns with their interests.

For us researchers, our task is to present our research highlighting how it can have a positive and direct impact on different application areas and the society.

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



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

TALKING POINT

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

WE ARE GETTING STRONGER



Ted Baker jobs at risk as administrators appointed

By Tom Espiner

High Street fashion chain Ted Baker is set to be put into administration, putting hundreds of jobs at risk.

Authentic Brands Group, the Ted Baker brand owner since 2022, said “damage done” during a tie-up with another firm was “too much to overcome”.

Ted Baker will continue to trade and customer orders will be fulfilled, the US group said.

Authentic is in “advanced discussions” with several potential buyers for the Ted Baker brand, it added.

Ted Baker has about 975 employees and runs 46 stores, plus an e-commerce platform and department store concessions.

Authentic did not give any indication of job loss numbers in a statement.

Authentic Brands Group chief strategy and transition officer John McNamara said: “We wish that there could

have been a better outcome for the Ted Baker employees and stakeholders.”

He added that it is “hopefully some consolation for customers” that Ted Baker “will continue to trade online and in stores.”

He said Ted Baker’s holding company in the UK and Europe - No Ordinary Designer Label (NODL) - had “built up a significant level of arrears” during a tie-up with Dutch firm AARC and the damage done “was too much to overcome”.

The partnership with AARC, which ran Ted Baker’s shops and online business in Europe, ended in January.

Ted Baker began as a menswear brand in Glasgow in 1988, and grew to have shops in the UK and US, as well as concessions in department stores.

It also has licensing agreements in place for stores in cities in Asia and the Middle East.

Authentic owns brands including

Reebok, Hunter and Juicy Couture, and bought Ted Baker two years ago in a £211m deal.

The plan to appoint administrators, which the BBC understands will be restructuring firm Teneo, comes after long-running instability at the firm.

In 2019, Ted Baker founder Ray Kelvin resigned after allegations of misconduct, including “forced hugging”.

Mr Kelvin, who denied the allegations, was at the time accused by staff of engaging them in unwelcome embraces, and having asked young female members of staff to sit on his knee, cuddle him or let him massage their ears.

His successor Lindsay Page and chairman David Bernstein resigned the following year amid a profit warning. Shares also plunged after an accounting error.

Mr Kelvin came back to the firm on an advisory basis about a year after the “forced hugging” scandal.



Travis Scott founded the musical festival, which 10 people died at in 2021. A grand jury declined to indict him for the deaths.

Travis Scott: Astroworld organisers foresaw overcrowding at fatal concert

Organisers of rapper Travis Scott's Astroworld music festival foresaw the crowding issues in 2021 that led to 10 deaths, new court documents show.

Ten days before, the festival's safety head raised concern about the number of people who would be near the stage.

"I feel like there is no way we are going to fit 50k in front of that stage," Seyth Boardman wrote to the festival's operations director.

The exchange was one of many included in recent court filings.

The family of those who died at Astroworld submitted the documents that contained the alleged conversations and supporting information as evidence in the mass civil litigation

they have filed against the festival's organisers.

Expert evidence submitted by the plaintiffs claims that festival planners miscalculated the number of people that could be legally allowed on the premise to avoid overcrowding.

The new court documents show that organisers mistakenly thought the fire code allowed for seven square feet per person, but the actual number was five.

That seems to have contributed to a crowd of roughly 50,000 cramming into a space meant for only 34,500 people.

The defence team's have not yet filed their expert reports in court.

The documents also illustrate that

organisers appeared to be concerned that gate-crashers, those who try to attend events without a ticket or an invitation, could exacerbate the situation and further increase the crowd size.

"We are going to be absolutely screwed when the sun goes down," one organiser wrote, warning about the crowds of un-ticketed people who gather around the venue's exterior perimeter.

That issue was compounded by security lapses on the day of the event and a failure to monitor the crowd for signs of a potential crowd crush, experts alleged in the court filings.

This civil case is set to begin in May, and the defendants include Mr *cont'd on pg 14*



St Vincent: Suspects held in connection with hospital shooting

Several individuals believed to be connected to a daring shooting incident involving a male patient at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital (MCMH) in St Vincent have been held.

The Royal St Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force (RSVGP) said

around 11:25 pm on Tuesday, a male patient was receiving medical care at the facility's Male Surgical ward. An unidentified individual bypassed security measures at the checkpoints and gained unauthorised access to the hospital grounds. The suspect locat-

ed the male patient and discharged a firearm twice before making an attempt to escape.

The shooting prompted an immediate response from law enforcement which led to the arrest and detention of several individuals believed to be con-

nected to the incident.

In addition, the individual believed to be responsible for the shooting incident was successfully apprehended by police.

Initial investigations have further uncovered that the alleged assailant incurred self-inflicted injuries during an attempt to flee the scene and required medical treatment which he is presently receiving at MCMH and is also aiding police with investigations.

Two firearms were also seized during the incident.

The police force notes no other patients or hospital staff were targeted or harmed during the isolated incident.

Measures are being taken to enhance security in and around the facility.

cont'd from pg 13

Scott, concert company Live Nation Entertainment and venue manager ASM.

Mr Scott's live performances are known to be lively, so much so that crowd surges at his shows have been so strong that they have registered on earthquake monitors.

But the crowd crush during his set at Astroworld on 5 November 2021 caused ten young fans to suffer fatal injuries.

An independent investigation into the fatalities was rejected by Harris County commissioners in 2021. A jury also declined to charge Scott criminally in June

2023.

Mr Scott has contended with numerous lawsuits since the concert, and he has successfully settled some of them. But he still faces several active civil cases.

Drake, the rapper whose real name is Aubrey Drake Graham, performed with Mr Scott at the festival and was named in some of the lawsuits as well.

He is seeking to be dismissed from those cases.

His lawyers have argued that he had no involvement in the planning of the festival and was unaware of any safety problems before joining Mr Scott during his set.

High Court rejects Bouterse's latest appeal against murder conviction

CMC - The Court of Justice Wednesday rejected an appeal by ex-president Desi Bouterse and his four co-convicts that sought to suspend their lengthy jail terms after they had been convicted of murder.

The appeal of the five were declared inadmissible, which meant that it was not dealt with substantively by the Court.

In its judgment, the Court said that although the legal rules used to submit the notice of appeal offer citizens room to take action against the Public Prosecution Service, their scope is too limited to deal with the substantive handling of the complaint and the appeal was therefore rejected.

According to the Court, the relevant article of law was used as a supra appeal remedy and, in its opinion, this could not be possible in its application.

Bouterse, 78, whose whereabouts remains a mystery after he first failed to keep his scheduled appointment to report to the prison in Santo Boma just south of the capital Paramaribo, had been sentenced to 20 years in jail last December.

Three of the co-convicted retired soldiers, Ernst Gefferie, 81, Stephanus Dendoe 68 and Benny Brondenstein 68, all reported to prison.

Police in the



Desi Bouterse.

Dutch-speaking Caribbean Community (CARICOM) country have since launched a search for both Bouterse and Iwan Dijksteel, even as the main opposition National Democratic Party (NDC), which the former president heads, maintains that the trial was political and directed by The Netherlands.

The former military officers and civilians had been charged with the December 8, 1982, murders

of the 15 men that included journalists, military officers, union leaders, lawyers, businessmen and university lecturers.

The prosecution had alleged that the men were arrested on the nights of December 7 and 8, and transferred to Fort Zeelandia, the then headquarters of the Surinamese National Army. They said the men were tortured and summarily executed.

During that period,

Bouterse was in charge of the military junta that ruled the country after his successful coup on February 25, 1980.

Wednesday's ruling brings an end, the criminal case that lasted no less than 16 years.

Following the court ruling, the lawyers for the convicted men told reporters that they will study the verdict and then decide what to do next.

They insist that the "last word" in this drawn-out and controversial case has not yet been said.

Earlier this month, the International Police (INTERPOL) said it has placed Bouterse on its Red Notice list, nearly three months after he was sentenced.

He is on the INTERPOL list with a photo, his age and appearance description. A 'Red Notice' is an official request to law enforcement authorities worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest an individual pending extradition, surrender or similar legal action. It is based on an arrest or court order issued by the judicial authorities in the requesting country.

In January, the Public Prosecution Service (OM) announced that it was in the process of issuing an international arrest warrant for the former president after he failed for a second time to report to a local prison.

HK security law is final nail in coffin, say critics

By Kelly Ng

Western leaders, the UN and rights groups have joined a chorus of criticism of Hong Kong's new security law, saying it further erodes freedoms.

Article 23, as it's known locally, was unanimously passed by the city's pro-Beijing parliament, targeting a range of offences deemed treasonous.

Officials say the law is essential for stability but opponents called it a "nail in the city's coffin".

China has long pushed for the law and said "smears" by critics would fail.

The new law allows for closed-door trials, gives the police rights to detain suspects for up to 16 days without charge and penalties including life sentences, among other things.

"The new national security legislation is going to double down the repression on freedoms in Hong Kong with extended egregious sentences and a broadened definition of national security," said Frances Hui, an activist now based in the US, who described the legislation as a "final nail in a closed coffin".

A group of 81 lawmakers and public figures from across the world, including in the UK, US, Canada and South Korea, issued a joint statement on Tuesday expressing «grave concerns» over the legislation, which expands on the National Security Law imposed by Beijing in 2020, and criminalises secession, subversion, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces.

"The legislation undermines due process and fair trial rights and violates Hong Kong's obligations under international human rights law, jeopardising Hong Kong's role as an open international city," the statement said,



More than 260 people were arrested since the huge protests against the 2020 national security law.

calling it yet another "devastating blow" for freedom.

The US said it was "alarmed" by the "sweeping and... vaguely-defined" provisions in the legislation, a concern echoed by the EU, which said the law could affect the city's status as a business centre.

Meanwhile, the UK's Foreign Secretary David Cameron said the law would «further damage rights and freedoms» and «entrench a culture of self-censorship" in the former British colony. Hongkongers have told the BBC how they are already being careful with what they say to friends and colleagues, fearing an «informant culture» has developed in the city.

Lord Cameron's comments sparked a strong response from the Chinese Embassy in the UK, which rubbished his remarks as "a serious distortion of the facts".

China's government also hit back at the criticisms of Article 23, saying it is "unswervingly determined to safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests, implement the 'one country, two systems' policy,

and oppose any external interference in Hong Kong affairs".

"All attacks and smears will never succeed and are doomed to fail," foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a regular press conference in Beijing.

Hong Kong's leader John Lee had earlier also defended the law - which was fast-tracked through its final phase on Tuesday - saying the legislation would help the city "effectively prevent, suppress and punish espionage activities, conspiracies and traps from foreign intelligence agencies, and infiltration and sabotage by hostile forces".

"From now on, the people of Hong Kong will no longer experience these harms and sorrows," he added.

But those who led the pro-democracy protests against China's increasing influence on the city see the new law as yet another lost battle.

It brings Hong Kong "one step closer to the system of mainland China", former Hong Kong lawmaker Nathan Law, who is now in exile in the UK, told the BBC's Newsday pro-

cont'd on pg 17

Brazil: Police accuse Bolsonaro of fraud over Covid vaccine records

By George Wright

Brazilian police have formally accused former President Jair Bolsonaro of fraud relating to his Covid vaccination records, paving the way for possible criminal charges in the Supreme Court.

His health records say he received the vaccine in Sao Paulo in 2021.

But an investigation later found he was not in the city at the time.

Mr Bolsonaro, a Covid sceptic who publicly vowed never to have the vaccine, has denied any knowledge of records being tampered with.

Almost 700,000 people have died of Covid-19 in Brazil, according to Johns Hopkins University in the US.

The federal police accuse Mr Bolsonaro - who regularly downplayed the severity of the virus - and eight other people of plotting to issue "false certificates to obtain undue advantages" during the pandemic.

Vaccination was an entry requirement for many countries, including the US.

Brazil's attorney general's office will now decide whether to charge the former president.

The 68-year-old was questioned by police in connection with the al-



Former President Jair Bolsonaro

legations in May last year and his house was raided.

He denied the accusations and accused authorities of trying to "fabricate a case" against him.

The new indictment is just the latest legal battle he is facing as the former president had to surrender his passport last month over an investigation into accusations he tried to overturn the October 2022 election results and pressure military chiefs to join a coup attempt.

After he lost to left-winger Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva in the presidential poll thousands of his supporters stormed government buildings in the

capital Brasília - including the presidential palace, the Supreme Court and Congress - looting and vandalising the buildings.

Mr Bolsonaro is still barred from running for office for eight years for undermining the electoral system in Brazil and claiming the last election was fraudulent, despite there being no evidence of electoral fraud.

He was in the US when the attack on Congress happened. He returned to Brazil in March 2023, saying he had nothing to fear.

He remains the most influential figurehead for the right in Brazilian politics.

cont'd from pg 16

gramme.

"The chilling effect... and the result of a collapse of civil society is impacting most Hong Kong people."

Ms Hui said she is also concerned the law could also be used to target Hong-Kongers overseas, or their families and friends back home. The city has previously offered bounties for

information on activists who fled overseas, and arrested four people in Hong Kong for supporting people abroad who «endanger national security».

Ms Hui left Hong Kong in 2020 after Beijing imposed the NSL that has since seen more than 260 people arrested. It was introduced in response to massive pro-democracy protests which en-

gulfed the city in 2019.

She said civil liberties in Hong Kong are "long gone" four years after the NSL took effect.

Chris Patten, Hong Kong's last British governor, described the legislation as "another large nail in the coffin of human rights and the rule of law in Hong Kong and a further disgraceful breach of the Joint Dec-

laration".

Hong Kong was handed back by the UK to China in 1997 under the principle of "one country, two systems", which guaranteed the city a certain degree of autonomy. While Beijing and Hong Kong both insist this is still the case, critics and international rights groups say China's grip on the city has only tightened with time.

Sports News



PMS clinch one-point win against AGHS in schools' basketball

Princess Margaret School (PMS) snatched a narrow one-point win against Antigua Girls High School (AGHS) in the Senior Girls Division of the Cool and Smooth Schools' Basketball Championships on Tuesday.

Princess Margaret School prevailed 27-26 against Antigua Girls High School in the encounter at the JSC Sports Complex.

Kayla Melvin shot a game-high 21 points for Princess Margaret School and Aliana Jack converted eight points for Antigua Girls High School.

St. Anthony's Secondary School romped to an emphatic 51-14 victory against Irene B. Williams Secondary.

Jenah Andrew and Al-
cont'd on pg 19



Coach Cedric 'Supa' Davis engages the players of the Princess Margaret School's senior girls team during a timeout in one of their encounters in the schools' basketball championships at the JSC Sports Complex. (Photo courtesy of the CPTSA Wings Sports Club)

Spanish Heat II stay unbeaten in ABBA's Second Division

The Spanish Heat II extended their unbeaten run in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division League on Tuesday night.

Spanish Heat II claimed their fourth win in as many encounters with a 76-58 drubbing of the Honourable Daryll Matthew Ottos Clipper in the first game of a double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Ismael Palemo sank 16 points and grabbed 18 rebounds, and Rohland Hamilton converted 13 points and claimed 16 rebounds for Spanish Heat

II.

In support, Irvin Saurez scored 10 points; Kevin Pimental had nine points and seven rebounds; and Jesus Emmanuel chipped in with eight points and 11 rebounds for Spanish Heat II.

Amare Browne produced a game-high 27 points with six rebounds and six steals, and Joshua Salmon converted 20 points for the Ottos Clippers, which lost for the fourth time in five games.

The Old Road Daggers recorded their second win in five encounters

with a 76-55 victory against Court Martials in the second game on Tuesday night.

Kelvin Simon came off the bench to score a team-high 21 points and snatch 11 rebounds; Craig Thomas sank 15 points; Kedar Clarke had 11 points and nine rebounds; and Braulio Estrada chipped in with 11 points and six steals for the Old Road Daggers.

Baldwin Anthony shot a game-high 25 points and grabbed 12 rebounds, and De-Lorngé Jules had nine points for the Court Martials, which lost for the second time in five games.

Windies women to tour Pakistan for white-ball series next month

The West Indies Women will tour Pakistan for a limited-overs series, comprising three ODIs (One-Day International) and five T20Is, scheduled to begin on April 18.

The three ODIs will form a part of the ICC Women's Championship 2022-25, and will take place on April 18, 21 and 23.

It will be followed by a five-match T20I series from April 26 to May 3, which will provide both sides with plenty of time to finalize their preparations for this year's ICC Women's T20 World Cup.

All matches games will be played at the National Bank Stadium (NBS) in Karachi.

This will be West Indies women's second tour of the country since 2021. They last visited Pakistan in November 2021 for three ODIs, which they won.

The upcoming ODI series will be Pakistan women's fourth at home, having



Players of the West Indies women's cricket team.

earlier hosted Sri Lanka (June 2022), Ireland (November 2022) and South Africa (September 2023).

Pakistan are currently third in the ICC Women's Championship standings with 16 points, while West Indies are towards the bottom in ninth place with eight points.

The T20Is will also kick start preparations for both

teams in the build-up to the Women's T20 World Cup, scheduled to take place in Bangladesh in September.

Pakistan's Head of Women's Cricket Tania Mallick said the series forms part of a strategic move.

"We extend a warm welcome to the West Indies women's team to Pakistan for the upcoming series.

Hosting the fourth women's championship series at home within the 2022-25 cycle is a testament to PCB's commitment to promoting women's cricket and providing our players with opportunities to shine on the international stage," Mallick said.

"The forthcoming series against West Indies is not just about cricket; it's about developing relationships and strengthening bonds between cricketing nations.

"The current position of the Pakistan women's team reflects our determination and dedication, and we aim to collect maximum points from the three championship matches at home," she added.

cont'd from pg 18

yssa Jardine each scored 15 points, and Kinaya Lewis sank 14 points for St. Anthony's Secondary School. Cassidy Johnson scored six points for Irene B. Williams Secondary.

Twenty-four hours earlier, St. Anthony's Secondary School recorded a 42-25 victory against Christ the King High School.

Kinaya Lewis converted 14 points, Jenah Andrew sank 13 points, and Alyssa

Jardine scored 10 points for St. Anthony's Secondary School.

Jodaliah Constant shot a game-high 21 points for Christ the King High School.

The Irene B. Williams Secondary enjoyed success as their junior boys team prevailed 36-30 against the second team of the Antigua Grammar School.

Shemiah Cochrane scored 12 points for Irene B. Williams Secondary, and Chace Joseph converted 14 points for Antigua Grammar School's second team.

Sports News



Golden Grove make winning start in defense of Primary School Cup

Reigning three-peat champion Golden Grove made an impressive start in defense of their title in the Primary School Cup football competition.

Golden Grove Primary kicked off their campaign with a 7-0 victory against Foundation Mixed School in Group A at the Golden Grove playing field.

Jennings Primary and Urlings Primary fought to a 1-1 draw in their Group A encounter at the same venue.

However, the other opening round Group A encounter between Old Road Primary and Olivia David Primary at Golden Grove was postponed.

St. Peters, Liberta, and CT. Samuel primary schools all made winning starts to their campaigns in Group B at the Buckley's Primary School playing field.

St. Peters Primary snatched a 4-3 victory against JT. Ambrose. Jah-dyme Active scored twice,

Stephen Gilgeours converted once, and JT. Ambrose conceded an own goal as St. Peters Primary secured victory.

Rayon Nicholas scored twice, and Jahrel James converted once for JT. Ambrose Primary.

Tyreke Lothian scored five goals, and Dequanis Simon converted twice as Liberta Primary romped to a 9-1 victory against Buckley's Primary. Adonis Colbourne scored the lone goal for Buckley's Prima-

ry.

CT. Samuel snatched a 5-4 victory against Cobbs Cross Primary. Malachi De Castro and Jahiem Francis each had double conversions, and Tydrick Dalrymple scored once for CT. Samuel Primary.

Asante Warner scored a hat-trick, and Sherwin Martin scored the other goal for Cobbs Cross Primary.

Sea View Farm Primary, which was placed in Group B, withdrew from the competition.

TN Kirnon Primary, which captured the runner-up position in last year's contest, also made a winning start to their campaign in Group C.

TN Kirnon defeated Pigotts Primary 5-1 at the TN Kirnon Primary School playing field, while Potters Primary converted two penalty kicks to come from behind and snatch a 2-1 victory against Villa Primary at the same venue.

Pares Primary and Sunnyside Primary played to a goalless draw in another Group C encounter at Rising Sun.

The matches between Five Islands and Bendals in Group A at Golden Grove and the encounter between New Winthropes and Greenbay Primary in Group C at Rising Sun were postponed.



FOLLOW US ON
FACEBOOK!

DEWS 




DEWS


dewspro


info@dewspro.com


729-3397/ 729-1210

Five Islands re-open four-point gap atop First Division League

Leaders Five Islands reopened their four-point gap at the top of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division League.

Five Islands claimed their 11th win in 13 matches with a four-nil drubbing of Bolans at the Jennings playing field.

Demario Roberts scored a hat-trick with conversions in the 26th, 59th, and 73rd minutes, and Jamal Joseph scored the other goal for Five Islands in the 35th minute.

The result allows Five Islands to advance to 34 points, four ahead of the second-place team, the Potters Tigers, who have played 12 games, one less than the current First Division leaders.

Bolans remain in seventh place with 13 points after suffering their seventh loss in 12 matches.

Jennings United leapfrogged the Police from fifth to fourth place on goal difference by recording a 3-1 victory against Bendals at the Bendals playing field.

Kemon Samuel scored twice with conversions in the 18th and 20th minutes, and Daryl Massicot converted the other goal for Jennings United in the 71st minute. Darren Stevens scored the lone goal for Bendals in the 26th minute.



Daryl Massicot scored one of the goals for Jennings United against Bendals in their First Division encounter on Tuesday, March 19, 2024. (File photo)

Their seventh win in 13 matches carries Jennings United to 24 points, the same as Attacking Saints, who currently occupy fourth place by virtue of a superior goal difference and also have a game in hand.

Bendals remain in eighth place with 12 points after losing for the eighth time in 14 matches.

Two lowly placed teams, the Liberta Blackhawks and Fort Road, played to a goalless draw at the ABFA Technical Center

in their First Division encounter on Tuesday.

The result ensures that both teams advance to 10 points each. Their first draw in 13 matches ensures that Fort Road remains third from the bottom of the standings and just above the Liberta Blackhawks on goal difference.

It was also the first draw in 14 matches for the Liberta Blackhawks, who remain second from the bottom of the 11-team round-robin First Division League.

Matches in the ABFA's

Second Division will continue today (Thursday). Soccer Academy will face English Harbour in the first game of a double-header at the ABFA Technical Center at 4:15 pm, and Sea View Farm will meet Glanvilles in the second encounter at 6:15 pm.

In two other matches at 4:15 pm, TAMO FC will take on Earthquakes at the Golden Grove playing field, and Freeman's Village will oppose Lingies CPTSA Wings at the Freeman's Village playing field.

Holder rates West Indies chances to deliver third title

Despite the pressure to live up to expectations where delivering another ICC Twenty20 (T20) World Cup title is concerned, West Indies all-rounder, Jason Holder, says it is important that players also enjoy the experience of the global showpiece to be hosted in United States and the Caribbean from June 1-29.

Holder, who expressed his excitement ahead of the tournament, believes the Darren Sammy-coached team possesses enough firepower to prove as competitive as any other team, but is also mindful that efficient execution will be crucial to their chances of securing the title.

“We’ve got a team with depth. I think it is very, very important to have depth. We’ve got mostly two-dimensional cricketers...some three, and it’s a matter for us just to come and deliver,” Holder said.

“I think like anybody else in the competition, I think we’ve got really good chances, we’ve got to hold our nerve, deliver, and enjoy doing what we’re doing.

“I think we wouldn’t be a West Indies team if we didn’t enjoy what we’re doing and play the cricket we know



Players of the West Indies T20 team celebrate after taking a wicket in a T20 encounter. (File photo)

how to play,” he added.

That said, Holder, 32, pointed to the significance of starting the tournament –which bowls off with United States against Canada at the Grand Prairie stadium, in Texas –on a high to set the foundation for how they want to proceed throughout.

“We’ll probably know the conditions better than anybody else. T20 cricket is one of those formats where it doesn’t matter the names on paper, it’s all about what you deliver on the day.

“And it’s really important for us to start the competition well and set a really good precedent going throughout the entire competition,”

Holder reasoned.

Cricket’s shortest format remains a strong suit for West Indies, who won both their T20 World Cup titles in 2012 and 2016 under Sammy’s captaincy.

The regional side again showcased their prowess when they won T20 series against South Africa, India and England in 2023, and posted three successive 200-plus scores in Australia earlier this year, despite losing that series 2-1.

Those results, coupled with their current vein of preparations, have left Holder upbeat about the prospects for the tournament.

“I think our prep coming

into the World Cup when it comes to a match-play perspective has been really good. We’ve won the last three out of four series and more than likely we’ll be going into this World Cup in good spirits,” Holder said.

“There’s lots of cricket going on, plenty of T20 cricket leading up to the World Cup, which a lot of the boys will be involved in. So, I think preparations-wise, I think we’ll be in good stead heading into this competition,” the former captain ended.

The West Indies have been installed in Group C alongside New Zealand, Afghanistan, Papua New Guinea, and Uganda.