

JAPAN TO HELP A&B WITH WATER RECYCLING PLANTS

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Antigua and Barbuda's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Tumasie Blair, right, shared details on the proposed Centre of Excellence, which will be launched at the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States, SIDS4 in Antigua and Barbuda at the United Nations Headquarters on Tuesday. *Story on page 5.*

Local News



Japan to help Antigua and Barbuda with 'grey-water treatment' plants

Antigua and Barbuda is poised to get more assistance from the government and people of Japan. This time the assistance comes in the form of assisting the twin-island state establish recycle water treatment plants in the country.

Utilities Minister Melford Nicholas has welcomed the announcement that a team from Japan will arrive in the country next week for the signing of an agreement for the project.

Nicholas said the plants are needed to help the country deal with grey-water, which can be recycled and reused for landscaping and other purposes.

"There have been discussions for a long time now about setting up recycle plants around St. John's. We know of the bad odor that emanates from the effluent water that is piped into the open

drains which is neither wholesome or a healthy environment and we are looking forward to see what assistance the Japanese will be able to offer," he noted.

According to the Cabinet Notes, Prime Minister, Gaston Browne, Environment Minister, Sir Molwyn Joseph Minister Nicholas and the Minister of Works, Maria Bird-Browne, will welcome the team from Japan in a few days.

The Japanese Investment Bank team will sign an Agreement on a Recyclable Water Project, treating grey water.

The small recycling plants are to be installed in hotels, government buildings, businesses and homes that will allow water from showers, kitchens and other domestic uses to be treated

and used again.

The plants would also be very helpful in reducing unwanted malodorous emanations that now affect the air quality in commercial St. John's, where waste water is discharged in the gutters.

Several cities and countries are moving to these small plants rather than having a single large recycling plant that requires underground pipes, pumps and other paraphernalia that can be very costly to operate.

Greywater is lightly used water from clothes washers, showers, bathtubs, and bathroom sinks. It contains some soap and detergents but it's a safe and effective water supply for most landscapes. Water from toilets or wash water from diapers is never considered greywater.

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UWI FIC is critical to improvements in the Human Development Index

The continued expansion of the physical structure and the programme offerings at the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus are critical to Antigua and Barbuda’s improvements on the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI).

Last week, the latest HDI report placed Antigua and Barbuda at number 54 out of the 193 countries that were ranked. That means the twin-island state improved by twenty points since the last report was compiled five years ago.

Speaking at Thursday’s meeting of the UWI FIC University Council, Educa-

tion Minister, Daryll Matthew said the presence of the university here in Antigua and Barbuda is critical to sustaining improvements in the HDI.

“We speak about the movement of some of the OECS countries in the HDI, but to continue to sustain that upward trajectory we have to have institutions like this, properly positioned, to drive the development trajectory of our country; to drive the thought processes of our country,” he emphasized.

Minister Matthew said the government recognizes its commitment and responsibility to support the



Daryll Matthew

continued expansion of the university as he announced that ground breaking of the first phase of the expansion programme will take place in the third quarter of the year. The first phase is the construction of a new primary school.

He revealed that the selection of design consultants is a ‘mere weeks away’. The consultants will be responsible for taking the master-plan and turning them into a set of architectural drawings.

In addition, he reported that the tendering for contractors for phase one will also begin shortly.

According to Minister Matthew, the UWI FIC has to continue to grow and to expand to meet the develop-

ment needs not just of Antigua and Barbuda, but for the rest of the OECS as well.

“It is no longer a small institution with a set of buildings originally meant for a secondary school, but it is now being built out to become a state-of-the-art institution; a model university; a model campus that will be the envy of many,” he declared.

The education minister added that he anticipates that the physical expansion of the university to include dormitories, will over time see a greater percentage of the student body coming from the other OECS countries and beyond.

Currently, the rate is 91 percent Antigua and Barbuda residents.

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Local News



Prof. Robinson: UWI FIC must be a thought-leader for A&B, OECS

Principal of the University of the West Indies Five Island Campus, Professor C Justin Robinson, wants the university to be a leader in thought and advocacy for Antigua and Barbuda and the rest of the OECS.

Prof. Robinson, who took up the leadership at the university in August last year, shared his vision at Thursday's meeting of the University Council.

"I see a critical role for the campus as we go forward and since we came into existence. From the outset, the campus has been exhibiting thought-leadership for Antigua and Barbuda and the OECS and being an agent for advocacy.

"A key objective of the campus has been to create an OECS-focused research culture targeting areas that are of special importance to the East-



Professor C Justin Robinson
ern Caribbean," he stated.

Prof. Robinson identified the areas as;
Artificial Intelligence,

The Blue Economy and Oceanography

Crime and Criminal Justice
Chronic Non-Communicable Disease and Public Health

Climate Change Adaptation
Disaster Risk Management
Food Security
Inter-Island Transportation
Water Resources management

He said these are the areas that the UWI FIC has been focusing on because of the special niche and because of the special resonance of these matters for Eastern Caribbean countries.

With respect to AI, Prof. Robinson said there is need to see OECS leadership in this regard, noting that the UWI FIC is the only campus within the university family that currently offers a programme in this new emerging field.

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Antigua and Barbuda shares bold and ambitious SIDS driven initiatives with UN members

Member states of the United Nations have been exposed to revolutionary approaches being pursued by Antigua and Barbuda in placing Small Island Developing States on track to securing a resilient and prosperous future.

At the United Nations Headquarters on Tuesday of this week, Antigua and Barbuda updated member states on the key principles behind two important initiatives geared at providing the necessary support and mechanisms for SIDS to overcome their significant challenges, build resilience from external shocks and achieve sustainable development.

Antigua and Barbuda's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Tumasie Blair shared details on the proposed Centre of Excellence, which will be launched at the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States,



SIDS4.

The Centre of Excellence is a direct response to the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS and is planted on three corner stone pillars - a Global Data Hub, an Innovation and Technology Mechanism and the Island Investment Forum.

“We see the Centre of Excellence as a game changer in the way the nations of SIDS are treated.

“It is truly an empowering mechanism that leverages our human capacity in creating our own solutions to the diverse issues we face arising

from our unique vulnerabilities,” Blair stated.

He also discussed the fine points of an innovative response to the increasing debt burden which limits the fiscal space for small island developing states to take care of even the very basic needs of their economic and social development.

This initiative, the SIDS Debt Sustainability Support Services, will also be launched at the SIDS4 Conference in Antigua and Barbuda and is being envisioned as an inclusive and ambitious

capacity-building solution to ridding SIDS of their debt burdens.

To drive the process, the plan will establish a broad based Strategic Advisory Group, co-chaired by Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne and President of the Maldives, the Hon. Mohamed Muizzu.

The advisory group will include representatives of International Financial Institutions, Multilateral Development Banks, regional development banks, the private sector, members of civil society, academic institutions, think tanks and leading global economists, lawyers, debt experts and development planners.

Chairing the event was Antigua and Barbuda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Walton Webson, who placed on record his profound appreciation for the support that the two initiatives are already receiving from major development partners and other SIDS.



Mary John found guilty

Mary John who has been at the centre of a precedent-setting case under the Electronic Crime Act, has been found guilty on two counts in the High Court.

John was found guilty in the case presided over by Justice Ann-Marie Smith.

She was found guilty of sending a message by electronic means for the purpose of causing insult and sending a message by electronic means for the purpose of causing hatred.

The Justice has ordered



John to the courtroom on April 30 for sentencing. She was represented by Justin Si-

mon, KC. The case has been the subject of much public debate

as it seeks to set boundaries on the limits of free speech and online engagements.

Police searching for suspects involved in robbery

The Police are searching for three suspects alleged to have been involved in the robbery of a restaurant at Matthew's Road, All Saints.

It was reported that around 9 pm on Wednesday, March 20, three men wearing masks and hoodies robbed the owners of Johnny's Restaurant of an undisclosed sum of money.

The assailants reportedly have dark complexion and are between 5ft-9ins and 6ft tall.

A male employee was struck in the head by one of the assailants and was also shot in the right knee. He was transported to the Sir Lester Bird Medical Center, where he is receiving medical treatment.

His condition is said to be stable. The assailants were last seen leaving the scene in a red vehicle, heading in a southerly direction.

The police are asking anyone with information to contact the All Saints Police Station at 460-1000 or call the Criminal Investigations Department at 462-3913.

Teen involved in OCS Sports Day shooting remanded

One of the three accused in the shooting incident that left students and teachers at the Ottos Comprehen-

sive School traumatized has been remanded to His Majesty's Prison.

The 14-year-old Villa

resident, the youngest of the three charged, appeared before the Child Justice Board on a charge of shooting with intent to murder following the February 14 incident at the YMCA Sports Complex.

According to reports, the three assailants, the 14-year-old boy, Jaheim Mannix, 18, and Ackeilo Bell, 19, reportedly fired shots into the complex while the secondary school

held its annual sports day activities, leaving students and staff running for safety.

The event was then canceled and the students and faculty were transported back to the school.

Mannix and Bell pleaded not guilty to discharging a gun in public during their court appearance.

They are expected back in court sometime this week.

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.

Legal dispute between PM and Queen Ivena still ongoing

It's been almost seven years since the controversial song "Nastiness" burst the airwaves, prompting a major dispute between calypsonian Lena 'Queen Ivena' Phillip and Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

And while legal moves have been made with the PM drafting a defamation suit, not much has happened

since then in the matter.

The matter could proceed to trial or be settled outside of the courts but that solely rests on the two parties.

In fact, Master Carlos Cameron Michel informed both Phillip and PM Browne last week to come to some sort of resolution on how they will proceed.

If they cannot reach a consensus, then the case will go before the High Court and a ruling will be made.

Prime Minister argues that Phillip's 2017 calypso song, "Nastiness", contained defamatory remarks towards him using "innuendos".

He asserts that certain

portions of the song insinuated "criminal corruption" and "misconduct" in public office on his part.

He seeks damages for libel or slander related to the song's publication and broadcast.

Phillip has remained steadfast that she did nothing wrong and the song has no true link to the PM.

Forestry Unit, Royalton Antigua to commemorate International Day of Forests

The Forestry Unit in the ministry of Agriculture collaborated with the Royalton Antigua resort to observe International Day of Forests, March 21, 2024.

Both entities planted a number of trees in the Body Pond area to emphasize the resort's commitment to environmental stewardship as well as to highlight the vital role of public-private partnerships in promoting sustainable land management practices.

"At the heart of this initiative lies the introduction of a specially selected *Gmelina arborea* (locally known as white peak or beechwood) plant



at a designated pond site, chosen for its ability to withstand forest fires

and contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity in the area. The *Gmelina arborea* represents a symbolic gesture towards fostering a healthier and more resilient ecosystem," a note from the ministry of agriculture revealed.

The Forestry Unit noted that the planting exercise on Thursday marked a historic moment as the Royalton's staff planted the first generation of this specific plant and paved the way for future generations to thrive in the rejuvenated landscape. It is anticipated that seeds from this plant

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Local News



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able propagation cycle that will be collected, signaling the beginning of a sustain-

able propagation cycle that promises to further enrich the biodiversity of the area.

The allocation of this area to Royalton Antigua signified the resort's role as a responsible corporation dedicated to supporting environmental conservation efforts.

By partnering with the Forestry Unit, Royalton demonstrated its commitment to create collaborations between tourism and environmental conservation, thereby contributing to the long-term sustainability of Antigua and Barbuda's natural resources.

"Integral to the success of this initiative is the implementation of geo-tagging technology by the Forestry Unit, enabling real-time tracking of the tree planting process.

"Through geo-tagging, Royalton's management team and stakeholders can stay informed about the progress of the planted trees, ensuring transparency, accountability, and ef-

fective monitoring of the project's outcomes.

By actively participating in this tree planting initiative, the Royalton representatives set an inspiring example of leadership and environmental stewardship.

Their participation underscores the hotel's dedication to promoting sustainable tourism practices and fostering a culture of corporate social responsibility," the release stated.

It described the collaboration between the Forestry Unit and the Royalton Antigua resort as a testament to the power of collective action in safeguarding the planet's precious natural resources.

"By working together to plant trees, we not only contribute to the fight against climate change but also pave the way for a more sustainable and resilient future for generations to come," it reiterated.

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All communications should be addressed to the General Secretary

Press Release

21st March, 2024

Following a further consultation earlier 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. With Immediate Effect, All Non-Established Workers attached to All Outpost Stations within the Ministry of Agriculture are asked to report to work until Midday (12:00PM) from tomorrow Friday, 22nd of March 2024, without loss of pay for approximately two weeks.
2. 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-

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Opinion



Thirsty future? Urgent action for Caribbean and Latin America

By Sir Ronald Sanders

In the face of escalating global environmental challenges, water scarcity and water stress have emerged as critical issues that threaten the livelihoods and well-being of millions of people.

Nowhere are these challenges more acute than in the Caribbean and Latin American regions, where countries grapple with the harsh realities of limited freshwater resources. Among these, Antigua and Barbuda stands as a poignant example of struggle in the face of severe droughts and the pressing need for potable water.

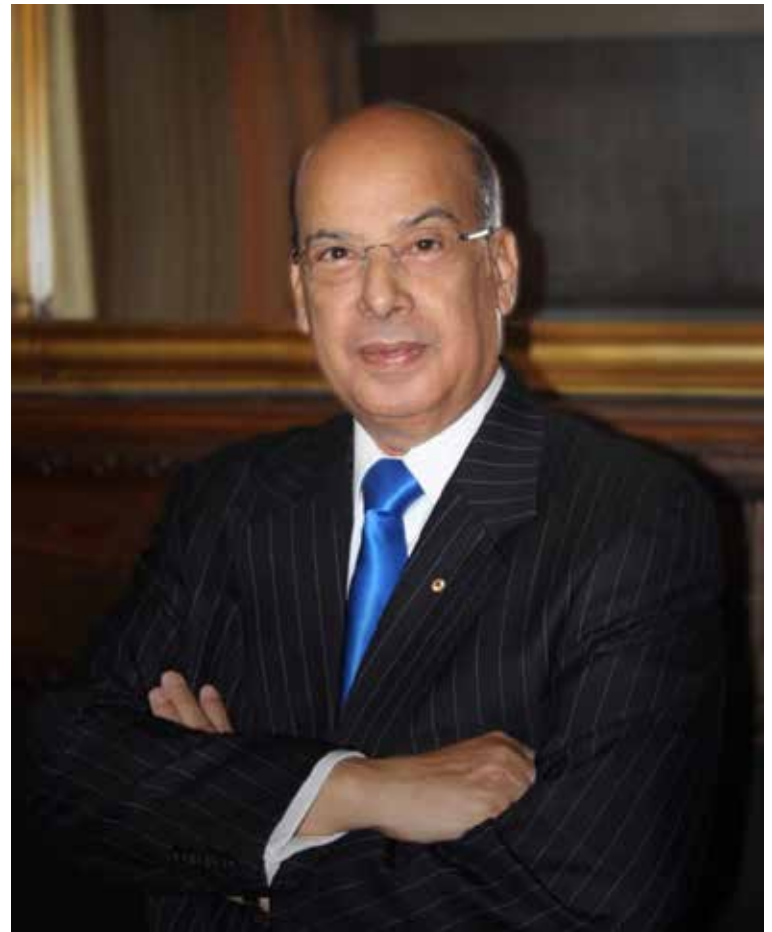
Antigua and Barbuda is a drought-ridden country, surrounded by the Caribbean Sea. The line in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem of the Ancient Mariner, "Water, water, everywhere; nor any drop to drink", has applied to the country before when it has experienced periods as long as seven years without rainfall to fill reservoirs.

That situation could still exist today if it were not for a deliberate policy position by the present government to invest heavily in desalination and reverse osmosis plants, as a priority, to satisfy the need for water by the local population and the tourism industry on which the country's economy depends.

The Antigua and Barbuda government and its public utilities supplier have spent large sums of money on desalination and Reverse Osmosis plants to convert seawater into a lifeline. Yet, this solution comes at a steep price, making the cost of water in Antigua and Barbuda per head of population amongst the highest in the world. Recently, in order to continue to manufacture water to satisfy the needs of the country, the utilities provider has had to raise water rates. This decision has escalated expenses at a time when disruption of global supply chains, resulting from the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and conflicts, such as the Russian war against Ukraine, has already raised the cost of living.

The gravity of the situation in the Caribbean is underscored by the World Resources Institute, which identifies several Caribbean nations as experiencing "extremely high" levels of water stress. These countries include Dominica, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and St. Kitts-Nevis, with the latter three also being designated as water scarce.

Latin American countries are not immune. According to the World Bank,



Sir Ronald Sanders over the last two decades, Latin America has experienced 74 droughts, causing more than US\$ 13 billion in damage. The Bank says that this phenomenon impacts agricultural and livestock production and farmers' livelihoods, especially those living in vulnerable conditions.

For example, more than 50 percent of 1.9 million small-scale farmers live under these conditions in the Dry Corridor, an ecological region on the Central American Pacific coast affected by drought and food insecurity.

While the World Bank

and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) have acknowledged the crisis—highlighting the need for investment in non-conventional water sources and advocating for integrated water resources management—their actions fall short.

The crux of the issue lies in the misalignment of their concessional financing lending policies with the urgent needs of the most affected countries. This gap between recognition and response leaves nations, like Antigua and Barbuda, to bear the brunt of securing

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water for their people and economies.

The repercussions of this financing misalignment extend beyond economic strains, touching the very core of societal health and food security. The global water crisis, with over 703 million people lacking access to clean water, is not just a statistic but a daily reality for many in the Caribbean and Latin America. The time spent by women and girls fetching water and the deaths of children from water-related diseases are heart-wrenching reminders of the human cost of inaction.

In the case of Antigua and Barbuda, its policy decision to invest in manufacturing water to fulfil the needs of the population, undoubtedly results in higher costs now.

However, it also puts the country in a better position to alleviate the water scarcity and stress problem which will intensify through factors, such as population and tourism growth and the impacts of climate change. The strain now will considerably ease the pressure in the future, contributing to both tourism development and public safety.

This brings us to a pivotal moment where the urgency to act cannot be overstated.

While Antigua and Barbuda and similar nations undertake significant financial burdens to address water scarcity, the role of interna-

tional financial institutions to support these efforts is indispensable.

It is imperative that these institutions realign their lending policies to offer low-cost financing for urgent water infrastructure projects, enabling equitable access to water for all.

With the global investment need in the water sector surpassing \$1.37 trillion and a sixfold increase required to meet UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, the time for real action on water issues is overdue.

The cost of inaction will be measured in human suffering and lost opportunities

for sustainable development.

Critical to this is a change in policy by the Boards of Directors of the World Bank and the IDB. That change must come from the major governments that control the policies of these institutions.

They must ensure that lending policies match real development needs and provide financing on terms that will allow vulnerable countries to purchase the desalination and reverse osmosis plants they require, through affordable repayment schemes.

Today, with 2.2 billion

people globally lacking safely managed drinking water, 3.5 billion lacking access to safely managed sanitation, and 2 billion lacking access to basic hand hygiene facilities, the importance of urgent and aligned action is great.

The time for action on addressing the real water issue, rather than talking about it, has long past.

(The writer is Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the US and the OAS. The views expressed are entirely his own. Responses and previous commentaries: www.sirronaldsanders.com)

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We thank all applicants for their interest, however, only those short-listed will be contacted.

Apple lawsuit: US accuses tech giant of monopolising smartphone market

The US has filed a landmark lawsuit against Apple, accusing the tech giant of monopolising the smartphone market and crushing competition.

In the lawsuit, the justice department alleges the company abused its control of the iPhone app store to “lock in” customers and developers.

It accuses the firm of taking illegal steps to thwart apps seen as a threat and make rival products less appealing.

Apple has vowed to “vigorously” fight the lawsuit and denies the claims.

The sprawling complaint, filed at a federal court in New Jersey, marks one of the biggest challenges to date for Apple, which has been fending off mounting complaints about its practices in recent years.

It alleges that Apple used “a series of shapeshifting rules” and restricted access to its hardware and software, in a bid to boost its own profits while raising costs for customers and stifling innovation.

“Apple has maintained monopoly power in the smartphone market not simply by staying ahead of the competition on the merits but by violating federal anti-trust law,” Attorney General Merrick Garland said at a press conference announcing the suit.

“Customers should not have to pay higher prices because companies break the law.”

The complaint focuses on five areas where Apple allegedly abused its power.

For example, the US alleges that Apple used its app review process to thwart development of so-called super apps and streaming apps, because it was worried such apps would provide less

incentive for customers to stick with iPhones.

It also says Apple has made it difficult to connect iPhones to smart watches made by rivals and blocked banks and other financial firms from accessing its tap-to-pay technology, allowing Apple to earn billions in fees from processing Apple Pay transactions.

The complaint also focuses on the way Apple treats messages sent from rival phones, distinguishing them with green bubbles and limiting videos and other features. It says Apple’s moves have created “social stigma” that has helped the tech giant maintain its grip on the market.

Apple said customers were loyal because they were happy and that under US law it was free to choose its busi-

ness partners. It has pointed to privacy and security concerns to justify its rules.

The company said it would ask the court to dismiss the lawsuit, which it predicted would fail.

“We believe this lawsuit is wrong on the facts and the law, and we will vigorously defend against it,” the company said.

Proving that security and privacy concerns - not efforts to boost its own business - will be key if Apple hopes to fend off the case, said Bill Baer, a visiting fellow at Brookings who was an anti-trust official under the Obama administration.

“It’s a question of what the motivation is,” he said. “Anti-trust laws and the courts’ interpretation of them sug-

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gest that once you're a monopolist, if you do engage in behaviours that have no legitimate business justification other than to limit competition and cement your monopoly, then that is problematic."

It is the third legal action Apple has faced from the US government since 2009 and the first anti-trust challenge filed against the company under President Joe Biden's administration.

If the government wins its case, it could force Apple to overhaul its current contracts and practices - or even lead to a break up of the company.

Shares in Apple fell more than 4% as investors digested the implications of the legal battle.

Any potential changes would take years to materialise as the case makes its way through the courts.

Vanderbilt University professor Rebecca Allensworth called the case "a blockbuster", following other law-

suits the justice department has brought against the major tech giants.

She said at its core, it was about increasing functionality between smartphones and making the technology and software more accessible to consumers and other businesses.

"It's not about breaking up Apple into small units or spinning off divisions," she said.

Apple has faced a growing legal backlash over its iOS ecosystem and business practices. It is engaged in a lengthy legal battle with Epic Games, which makes Fortnite.

Last month, it was fined €1.8bn (£1.5bn) by the EU for breaking competition laws over music streaming.

The firm had prevented streaming services from informing users of payment options outside the Apple app store, the European Commission said.

Competition commissioner Margrethe Vestager said Apple had abused its dominant position in the market for a

decade, and ordered the tech giant to remove all of the restrictions. Apple said it would appeal against the decision.

Anat Alon-Beck, a business law professor at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio, said the justice department's new lawsuit was "far more extensive" than its previous legal challenges in the EU.

"It's not just about the 30% app store fee, but about the core unfair practices of Apple," she said, adding that it was "about time" that the DOJ took action.

"Apple systematically excludes rivals from the Apple ecosystem. By doing that, Apple is hurting so many start-up businesses, stakeholders, customers and, in my opinion, its shareholders," she said.

According to the justice department, Apple's share of the US smartphone market exceeds 70%, and its share of the broader smartphone market exceeds 65%.



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Grenada: Parliament scheduled to debate gun amnesty law

CMC - The Government of Grenada, will be seeking the approval of Members in both Houses of Parliament to allow a gun amnesty as part of a strategy to reduce the potential of violent crimes and firearms related incidents.

Scheduled to be discussed and debated at the March 26 sitting of the Lower House, the explanatory note to the Bill says the Government believes that the power to declare a firearms amnesty is one of the approaches which may help to achieve the stated objectives.

In March 2023, the police in disclosing the number of illegal firearms confiscated by law enforcement officers in the last three years said it would be a breach of national security and safety.

This was in response to an inquiry submitted to the Commissioner.

However the explanatory note stated that: "The Government intends to lessen the potential for the commission of violent crimes and firearms-related incidents by reducing the number of firearms and ammunition circulating illegally in the State.

In furtherance of this objective, the Government believes that the power to declare a firearms amnesty is one of the approaches



which may help to achieve the stated objectives."

Once approved, the amendment to the legislation will see a new section that will empower the Minister to declare a firearms amnesty in Grenada or any part thereof, by Order subject to affirmative resolution.

"During the amnesty period, a person who is in unlawful possession of firearms or ammunition may surrender the same in such manner as may be specified and no proceedings shall be taken against the person in respect of his or her unlawful possession of said firearm or ammunition," the note added.

Speaking during a re-

cent news conference Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell said the amnesty will be for a period of 90 days.

He explained that the amnesty will grant them the opportunity to hand in firearms without being prosecuted.

"In order to do so we must amend the legislation so we are taking the necessary steps to get the policy approved and to have the legislation read and supported in parliament so that the amnesty can be granted," he said.

In Grenada "firearm" refers to a lethal barrelled weapon of any description from which any shot, bullet or other missile can be discharged and includes a

prohibited weapon and a restricted weapon, whether a lethal barrelled weapon or not.

Under the 1968 Firearm Act, any person who on summary conviction is found guilty of illegal possession will be subjected to a fine of not less than four thousand dollars and not more than twenty thousand dollars and to imprisonment for not less than two and not more than five years.

However, if it's a conviction on an indictable charge, it will be a fine of not less than EC\$20,000 and not more than EC\$60,00 and imprisonment for not less than five and not more than twenty years.

Venezuelan authorities arrest campaign staff of opposition candidate

Venezuela's top prosecutor on Wednesday announced arrest warrants for the presidential campaign manager of opposition powerhouse María Corina Machado and eight other staffers, accusing them involvement in a violent anti-government conspiracy.

Attorney General Tarek William Saab said in a nationally televised news conference that campaign manager Magalli Meda and the other Machado staffers were accused of being part of a "destabilizing" plot that included demonstrations, a media campaign and plans to attack military barracks.

Two of the staffers, including political coordinator Dignora Hernández, already were arrested Wednesday, Saab said, but Meda had not yet been detained.

A person familiar with Hernández identified her as the woman seen in a video circulating on social media in Venezuela in which she screams "Help! Help, please! No!" while at least three uniformed officers try to wrestle her into the back of an SUV. The person asked not to be identified for fear of retribution.

Saab said the warrants stemmed from what he called a confession by another Machado staff member, Emill Brandt, who was detained earlier this month and whose attorney, Omar Mora, told The Associated



Opposition leader María Corina Machado speaks during a press conference regarding the arrest order for her campaign manager and eight other opposition members for alleged involvement in a conspiracy plot to destabilise the government, in Caracas, Venezuela, Wednesday, March 20, 2024. (AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos)

Press he has been denied legal counsel of his choice.

Machado, who has insisted on pressing forward with her campaign despite an administrative ban on her holding office, accused the government of unleashing "brutal repression against my campaign teams."

The announcement of the arrest warrants came hours after an independent panel of experts investigating human rights violations in Venezuela told the U.N. Human Rights Council that the government of President Nicolás Maduro had increased repression efforts against real or perceived opponents ahead of this year's presidential election.

"The mission confirms that, as has happened in the past, the authorities invoke real or fictitious conspiracies to intimidate, detain and prosecute people who oppose or criticize the government," panel head Marta Valiñas told the council, which authorized the investigative mission.

"At the same time, the Attorney General's Office continues to operate as part of the government's repressive machinery to grant the appearance of legality to the persecution of critical voices," Valiñas said in Geneva.

Machado last year overwhelmingly won a primary election held by an opposition faction. But the coun-

try's Supreme Tribunal of Justice in January affirmed an administrative order barring the former lawmaker from holding public office for 15 years.

Machado, however, has continued her campaign, rejecting calls from inside and outside Venezuela to exit the race in time for another candidate to build up a viable campaign.

At a news conference Wednesday, she again side-stepped questions about her next steps, only broadly saying her campaign will keep organizing and expects "much more than just well wishes" from the international community.

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Delhi's chief minister arrested over corruption claims

By George Wright

Prominent opposition politician and Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has been arrested by India's financial crime agency, his party said.

The arrest is in connection with corruption allegations relating to the city's policies over alcohol sales.

Mr Kejriwal and his party, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), deny any wrongdoing and say the case is politically motivated.

His arrest comes weeks before voting begins in India's general election.

Police surrounded Mr Kejriwal's home on Thursday as it was searched by members of the Enforcement Directorate agency.

The case is over allegations that an alcohol sale policy implemented by the Delhi government in 2022



Police surrounded Arvind Kejriwal's home as it was searched.

- which ended the government monopoly - gave undue advantages to private retailers.

Mr Kejriwal has ignored numerous summonses in the case.

The AAP has accused the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of playing

"dirty politics" and says it will seek an urgent hearing at the Supreme Court to secure Mr Kejriwal's release.

India's general election will take place in seven phases over April and May, with the results to be announced on 4 June.

Ahead of the vote, oppo-

sition parties have accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi's BJP government of misusing government agencies for political ends.

Dilip Pandey, AAP lawmaker and chief whip in the Delhi assembly, told the BBC the arrest shows that

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"This is not a sign of strength but of profound weakness because... they know that we are stronger with each passing day," Machado said, referring to the government. "If the regime believes that with these actions they are going to isolate me, let me be clear: my team is Venezuela."

She called Saab "the prosecutor of terror" and said all the allegations against her staffers are false.

In October, representatives of Maduro and the opposition's Unitary Platform coalition agreed to work toward electoral conditions that would allow a more level playing field. The

deal, signed in the Caribbean island of Barbados and blessed by the US government, called for the presidential election to take place in the second half of the year, extend invitations to international electoral observers and allow parties to choose their candidates so long as they comply with the law.

The agreement earned Maduro relief from some economic sanctions on the oil, gas and mining industries. But the US government already reversed part of the relief over what it considers Maduro's noncompliance with the agreement.

Brian Nichols, US assistant sec-

retary of state for western hemisphere affairs, in a tweet Wednesday condemned the arrests and warrants against the members of the opposition.

"Maduro's escalating attacks on civil society and political actors are totally inconsistent with Barbados Accord commitments but will not stifle the democratic aspirations of the Venezuelan people," he tweeted. "We call for the immediate release of these individuals and all those unjustly detained."

The election is scheduled for July 28. The candidate registration period runs from March 21-25.

Canada to set first-ever cap on temporary residents

By Nadine Yousif

Canada is planning to set limits on the number of temporary residents it lets in for the first time in its history.

Immigration minister Marc Miller said on Thursday that the number will be reduced over the next three years, with the first cap to be set in September.

It will apply to international students, as well as foreign workers and asylum claimants.

The minister has previously spoken about revising immigration targets due to an affordability and housing crisis.

In his announcement, Mr Miller said that Canada plans to reduce the number of temporary residents to 5% of the population, down from the current 6.2%.

He added that the move is to ensure “sustainable” growth in the number of temporary residents coming into Canada.

In recent years, Mr Miller said Canada has seen a



Canada's immigration minister Marc Miller.

“sharp increase” of temporary residents admitted to the country.

As of 2024, the minister said there are a total of 2.5 million temporary residents in Canada. This is up from nearly one million in 2021, according to figures by national data collection agency Statistics Canada.

The country relies heavily on temporary foreign workers to fill labour shortages, Mr Miller noted, but said “changes are needed to

make the system more efficient”.

It also has international obligations to let in those who are fleeing war and political prosecution.

“To be clear, these are important global commitments to Canadians,” Mr Miller said. “At the same time, there should be an honest conversation about what the rise of international migration means for Canada as we plan ahead.”

As part of the new poli-

cy, officials said some Canadian businesses will have to reduce the number of temporary foreign workers they rely on by 1 May, and will have a shorter window to prove that these jobs could not be filled by a permanent resident or a Canadian citizen.

Two exceptions to the rule will be workers in the construction and healthcare sectors - both of which are facing labour shortages in Canada. These workers will be allowed to enter the country at current levels until at least 31 August.

According to Statistics Canada, the majority of temporary residents - around 40% - in 2021 had a work permit. Students represented 22% of temporary residents, and asylum claimants accounted for 18%.

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Mr Modi “is scared of Kejriwal”.

“They can arrest Kejriwal but not his thoughts. We will continue to fight his arrest and the unjust policies of Mr Modi’s government,” Mr Pandey said.

Two other AAP leaders, Sanjay Singh and Manish Sisodia, were arrested last year in the same case.

They are among several prominent opposition leaders subject to criminal in-

vestigations many say are politically motivated.

Rahul Gandhi, the most prominent member of the opposition Congress party, was convicted of criminal libel last year after a complaint by a member of the BJP.

His two year prison sentence saw him disqualified from parliament for a time until the verdict was suspended by a higher court, but this has raised concerns over the state of democracy in India.

Sports News



Da Squad claim second win in defense of female volleyball club title

Reigning back-to-back champions, Caribbean Alliance Insurance (CAI) Da Squad, continued their successful start in defense of their Female Division 1 title in the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association's (ABAVA) Local League on Wednesday night.

CAI Da Squad won for the second time in as many games by cruising to a 3-0 victory against former champions Paragons in the first encounter of a double header at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex.

Da Squad emerged victorious over Paragons, 25-18, 25-18, 25-13, in approximately one hour and 14 minutes.

The Renegades made a winning start to their campaign in the men's Division 1 competition. The Renegades cruised to a 3-0 win against High Flyerz 2 in the second game on Wednesday.



Reigning back-to-back champions, Caribbean Alliance Insurance (CAI) Da Squad day.

The Renegades won 25-21, 25-20, and 25-15 in approximately one hour and nine minutes.

Top Ranking Storming Lions made it two wins in as many games in the Men's Division I competition by romping to a 3-0 win against the Sharks.

Man of the Match, Cairon Davis, propelled the Storming Lions to their 26-24, 25-22, 25-17 victory in approximately one hour and 22 minutes.

Defending Men's Division 1 champions, Stoneville, also made a successful start in defense of their title.

Stoneville opened their campaign with a 3-0 win against newcomers, the Invaders, who lost for the second time in as many games.

Man of the Match, Adrian Constant, guided Stoneville to their 25-23, 31-29, 25-19 victory over the Invaders in approximately one hour and 22 minutes.

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Others had a combination of permits - either study and visa, or are family members of temporary residents.

Thursday's announcement was criticised by advocates for temporary foreign workers, who told Canadian news outlet Global News that migrants work under precarious conditions and have been «scapegoated for the affordability and housing crisis».

It comes as Canada reinstated visa requirements for Mexican nationals due to a surge of asylum seekers from Mexico.

Earlier this year, Mr Miller also set a limit on the number of international students admitted to Canada for the next two years, resulting in a planned decrease of 35% in approved study permits.

Over 800,000 foreign students were in Canada in 2022, up from 214,000 a decade earlier.

That move has also been criticised, namely by some post-secondary institutions across the country, who said they worry that it will deter students from coming to Canada and drive them to study elsewhere.

Some universities said a cap would mean a loss of revenue for their institutions.

The caps represent a significant shift in policy for Canada, which has historically relied on open immigration to fill job vacancies and address its rapidly-aging workforce.

They come as the Trudeau government faces growing pressure to address an increasingly unaffordable housing market. Home prices in Canada now average C\$700,000 (\$517,400; £408,750) and rent for Canadians has risen 22% in the last two years.



The FC Master Ballerz football team. (File photo)

FC Master Ballerz win by biggest margin in Second Division this season

FC Master Ballerz recorded the largest margin of victory in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division League on Wednesday.

They achieved the feat by romping to an 18-0 drubbing of the Young Warriors at Buckley's Primary School playing field.

Brandon Satchell and Zawandi Weatherhead each scored four goals, and Teejay Roberts struck a hat-trick. Amejah Nibbs and Shareem Richards each converted twice, and Eric Moreta, Rushane Dench, and Marlon Peters each scored once.

Their eighth win in 13 matches carries FC Master Ballerz to fifth place with 28 points, while the Young Warriors, who have already conceded over 100 goals in just 13 matches, slipped into the cellar on goal difference with three points.

The JSC Progressors get their first win to move out of the cellar. They beat ABAYA of Parham 3-0 at the

ABFA Technical Center. Elmore Lewis scored twice with conversions in the 27th and 36th minutes, and Walter Bellot scored in the 31st minute.

Their first win in 11 matches allows JSC Progressors to move to second from the bottom of the standings on goal difference with three points.

ABAYA remains third from the bottom of the standings with six points after suffering their 11th defeat in 13 matches.

Urlings scored four goals in the first half to prevail 4-3 against Belmont FC at the ABFA Technical Center.

Goals by Kestone Daley in the 6th minute, Jahmiah Daniel in the 10th, Kion Jackson in the 16th, and Raheem Horsford in the 26th minute gave Urlings a four-nil lead.

But Belmont just fell short after staging a fightback to claw their way back into the match with goals from Nyah Michael in the 28th minute, Conroy Brown, who converted a pen-

alty kick in the 41st minute, and Jahvier Joseph in the 57th minute.

Their seventh win in 13 matches allows Urlings to jump above Belmont FC into seventh place with 25 points. Belmont FC dropped to ninth place with 23 points after slumping to their sixth defeat in 15 matches.

Blackburn Palace and Golden Grove battled to a 3-3 draw in their Second Division encounter at the Princess Margaret School playing field.

Diondre Harrigan struck a hat-trick for Blackburn Palace with goals in the 3rd, 31st, and 45th minutes. Atian Fabian scored in the 40th minute, Tyler Isaac had a 44th-minute conversion, and Calroy Douglas scored in the 68th minute for Golden Grove.

Their fifth draw in 16 matches allows Blackburn Palace to move up to sixth place with 26 points, while Golden Grove dropped down to eighth place on goal difference with 28 points after drawing for the first time in 15 matches.

Sports News



Teams continue to battle in Gomez/Netherlands Insurance Youth Football League

Defending Under-7 champions Pigotts Bullets kept their unbeaten run intact during the third week of matches in the Gomez/Netherlands Insurance Youth Football League.

The Pigotts Bullets recorded their third win in as many games by surging to a 3-0 victory against TAMO FC in their encounter in the annual youth league, which is being played at St. Anthony's Secondary School at

Langfords. Last year's third-place finishers, Generation Next Football Club (GNFC) Rebels A, claimed their second win in three games by pulling off a 3-0 victory against Young Warriors FC.

CPTSA Wings FC notched up their first win in three games by securing a 2-0 win against GNFC Rebels I, which lost for the first time after winning their previous two matches in the

Under-7 division. Reigning Under-9 division champions, the GNFC Rebels, won for the second time in three outings, romping to a 3-0 victory against CPTSA Wings FC.

Last year's third-place finishers, Pigotts Bullets FC, kept their unbeaten run intact, snatching a 2-1 victory against TAMO FC to claim their third win in as many games.

Five Islands FC also ex-

tended their unbeaten run to three wins in as many matches with a 3-0 victory against the Young Warriors FC.

Reigning Under-13 division champions Villa Lions launched their title defense with a 4-0 drubbing of Greenbay Hoppers FC.

Last year's third-place finishers, TAMO FC, rebounded from an opening round defeat against the Young Warriors to secure their first win in two matches with a 3-1 victory against the GNFC Rebels 1.

Pigotts Bullets FC won for the second time in as many games with a 3-1 victory against the Young Warriors FC.

Last year's second-place finishers, the GNFC Rebels, notched up their second win in the Under-15 division with a 3-1 victory against Old Road FC.

However, the GNFC Rebels lost for the first time in three matches, suffering a one-nil defeat against Cutting Edge FC, which claimed their second win in as many games.

Five Islands and CPTSA Wings also won for the second time in as many games in the under-15 division.

Five Islands romped to a 9-0 drubbing of Jennings Ebenezer FC, and CPTSA Wings FC also romped to a 7-1 victory against Jennings Ebenezer FC.



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Teams to battle in semi-finals of Dave Joseph Parish League contest

Four teams will battle for places in the final of the Antigua Commercial Bank (ACB) Caribbean Parish League Dave Joseph Limited Overs Championship this weekend.

Mahico will face Sea View Farm in the first semi-final at Clare Hall on Saturday. Otis Burton and Nigel Browne will umpire at Clare Hall.

Masters will take on Freetown at Clare Hall in the second semi-final at Clare Hall on Sunday.

Dirk Schouten and Garfield Jacobs will officiate in Sunday's encounter.

The winners of both matches, which will commence at 1:30 pm, will advance to the final.

Meanwhile, defending champion PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks and Empire Nation will clash in the



final of the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) two-day championship on Saturday.

The final, which will commence at the Pigotts playing field at 11 am, will feature the same two teams that contested the two-day championship

decider last year.

The Blackhawks claimed the two-day title last year after beating the Empire Nation on first innings of the final, which ended in a draw at King George V Recreation Ground in Gray's Farm.

Wins for Da Project and Pointville Ballers in ABBA's Second Division

Da Project and the Honourable Gaston Browne Pointville Ballers recorded wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division League on Wednesday night.

Da Project recorded their third win in four encounters with a 60-54 victory against Lava Smoke Shop Lower Ottos Warriors in the first game of a double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Bryan Matthew sank 20 points and claimed 19 rebounds; Eric Joseph converted 14 points and grabbed 11 rebounds; Tyler Jacobs sank 11 points; and Olivee Morris chipped in with eight points, six assists, and five steals for Da Project.

Ariel Quallis produced a game-high 25 points with nine rebounds and five assists, and Kwame Huntley had 10 points and nine rebounds for the Lava

Smoke Shop Lower Ottos Warriors, who lost for the second time in five games.

The Honourable Gaston Browne Pointville Ballers claimed their second win in six games with a 66-41 victory against Cecil Charles Cristos United in the second game.

Kebo Orford produced 21 points, nine rebounds, five assists, and five steals; Skyy Nedd also sank 21 points; Connell Nedd had 17 points, 13 rebounds,

seven steals, and six assists; and Khalid Shabazz grabbed 14 rebounds and scored seven points for the Pointville Ballers.

Dorian James converted 20 points and snatched 12 rebounds; Neville Chambers scored 10 points and grabbed 19 rebounds; and Manlight Simmons claimed 19 rebounds and scored nine points for Cecil Charles Cristos United, who suffered their fourth loss in five games.

Antiguan and St. Lucian boxers to clash at 'Fight Night' event

The Uprising Gym Boxing and Lucky Eddi's, in collaboration with the Ministry of Sports, will be hosting an event called "Fight Night on Saturday, March 23.

The event, which will take place at Lucky Eddi's in English Harbour, will consist of boxing matches, MMA (mixed martial arts) fights featuring the Wadadli Warriors, and arm wrestling matches, commencing at 8 pm.

Some of the five boxing matches on the card will feature Antiguan boxers against their counterparts from St. Lucia.

The feature bout or main event will be a lightweight clash between Antiguan Joshua "Pressure Cooker" Tousaint and St. Lucian Arthur "Pigeon Man" Henry.



Joshua "Pressure cooker" Tousaint
ANU



Arthur "Pigeon man" Henry
SLU

Taliek Henry of Antigua will challenge Jose Matthew of St. Lucia in the lightweight division.

There will also be a lightweight contest between St. Lucia's Danail Cooman and Antigua's Leon Laudat.

Antiguan Osahar Browne will take on Joshua Rene of St. Lucia in a heavyweight showdown.

Antiguan boxers Alex Barber and Quanlee Henry will also meet in a heavyweight clash.

Antiguans Jerrel Jules and Dane Percival will meet in an MMA super lightweight clash.

The event will also feature three right-handed arm wrestling matchups. Nickson Grove will challenge Omarion Boyle, Nivron Browne will tackle Shakumba Bright, and Kayce Simmons will take on Hennis Joseph.

Tickets for general admission cost EC\$30, ringside seats are EC\$50, and a VIP platform, inclusive of food, costs EC\$150.

