

# A&B SIGNS MOU WITH OTHER CIP COUNTRIES

*Story on Page 2*



Scores of people desirous of offering their properties for rent to delegates attending the Fourth Conference for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)4 (May 27-30 in Antigua and Barbuda) turned out to a meeting held Wednesday afternoon at the Multi-Purpose Cultural Centre. Tourism Minister, Charles Fernandez, (top right inset) thanked the property owners for their interest in coming to the aid of the country in this critical moment. *Story on page 5*

## Antigua and Barbuda signs MOU with other CIP countries

Antigua and Barbuda is among four countries from within the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States with CIP programmes who have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly pass legislation in a move to protect the programmes.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne signed on behalf of Antigua and Barbuda with the prime ministers of the other states – St. Kitts and Nevis, Grenada and Dominica – signing for their respective countries.

The initiative is seen as a significant move towards cooperation and standardization, to align their Citizenship by Investment Programs (CIPs).

This agreement introduces a uniform minimum investment price of USD 200,000; enhances regulatory collaboration, promotes transparency, and establishes a regional authority for

oversight. This measure will prevent any nation from undercutting others, ensuring a level playing field and maintaining the value of the investment required for citizenship.

This initiative aims to address and alleviate the concerns expressed by European countries regarding the CBI schemes.

European Union (EU) member states, particularly those that have halted visa-free travel for nationals from certain countries, have voiced apprehensions regarding the CBI.

The CBI allows foreign investors to obtain citizenship in an OECS nation in exchange for significant economic contributions. The concerns revolve around the potential risks these programmes may pose to European countries.

They aim to adopt uniform legisla-

tion and practices to enhance the integrity and security of the CBI.

These steps include standardizing application forms, harmonizing due diligence processes, and sharing relevant information among the participating nations.

This agreement is expected to fortify the position of OECS countries in addressing the EU's concerns, showcasing their dedication to responsible and secure citizenship by investment practices.

This collective effort marks a significant step towards mitigating potential risks and enhancing the credibility of the CBI programs within the international community.

St. Lucia signed the MOU for joint legislation, but opted out of the agreement setting a threshold below which they should not price their programmes.

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## PM Browne: WIOC operates independently of the government

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has made a clear distinction between the operations of the government and privately owned companies into which government has shares.

Speaking in the House of Representatives on Tuesday, PM Browne explained the difference in response to queries from the Opposition Leader, Jamale Pringle, regarding a decision that the West Indies Oil Company's board took.

He emphasized that any company in which the government owns shares operates independently of the government and the Cabinet. "For example, WIOC is involved in significant contracts and procurements through its petroleum and storage operations. However, it is not the Cabinet that determines with whom the company does business. We are an investor and what we expect WIOC to do is to operate profitably and at the end of the year, we will get a cheque covering the taxes that are due and another cheque as our share of the profits," he told the parliamentarians.

He described WIOC as a separate limited liability company in which the government has shares, but not that the government is involved in its day-to-day operations.

Following the prime minister's explanation, Speaker of the House, Sir Gerald Watt, advised the opposition members that asking the prime minister to speak on the operations of a private company was improper as such questions should be directed to the company's board.


"WIOC is a company limited by share-holding. It is a legal entity in its own right. Its decisions are taken by a board, not by the prime minister or the executive.

Therefore, whether or not the private company wishes to disclose to a political entity its affairs is quite permissible, but it is not a proper question to be asked under agenda item: Questions to the Prime Minister," he stated.

Sir Gerald cautions the opposition bench to limit their questions to the areas over which the prime minister has direct responsibility such as the general operations of the government and its departments.



Prime Minister Gaston Browne



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## Airlines commit to additional flights into VCBIA this winter

Minister of Tourism, Charles Fernandez, earlier this month led a tourism delegation to the 'Routes Americas', air service development event, in Bogota, Colombia.

Joining the Minister from the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) were, Director of Tourism, Caribbean & Latin America - Charmaine Spencer, Sales & Marketing Manager (USA) - Norrell Joseph, Business Development Manager (UK) - Joel Henry, along with Managing Director, Blue-Sea - Maria Britto-Bettini.

Antigua and Barbuda Tourism officials had a packed agenda, with thirty-five meetings conducted with airline executives over three days.

Following successful discussions with American Airlines, an immediate result was an increase in flights.

Daily flights from Charlotte, NC, into V.C. Bird International Airport, will commence on December 5, 2024, and continue throughout the winter season.

The Miami route will also continue operating two daily flights throughout the summer and winter, offering a year-round service from Miami International.

Delta will also increase service to twice weekly



Tourism team led by Minister Charles Fernandez at 'Routes Americas' in Colombia during the winter seasons for 2024 and 2025.

The Tourism Minister said, "We are enjoying increases in airlift from our established markets, with the US continuing to show the most expansion, with more daily flights added for the critical summer and winter months.

"We're excited that American Airlines will be offering daily flights into Antigua from JFK and Charlotte in the winter and maintaining double daily services from Miami, boosting air connectivity through the carrier's major hubs".

In addition to increased

air services with American Airlines, out of the US, the destination will also see JetBlue increase flights from three times weekly to daily in summer 2024.

Delta will increase flights out of Atlanta to twice weekly for winter 2024, along with United offering daily services during the winter months.

This growth in airlift from the largest source market will be vital to support the increase in rooms with new properties opening such as the Royalton Chic.

Other noticeable successes were, Westjet main-

taining two weekly flights all year round from Canada, while Condor restarts direct service from Frankfurt during the winter season from November 2024 – April 2025.

British Airways, the largest carrier serving the destination from the UK, is currently also exploring arrangements for daily service from the UK for the upcoming winter season.

All airlines that currently serve Antigua and Barbuda reported seeing a growing demand for the destination as a result of the aggressive marketing campaigns being rolled out by the Tourism Authority.



## Scores attend meeting pertaining to SIDS accommodation

Scores of people desirous of offering their properties for rent to delegates attending the Fourth Conference for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)4 (May 27-30 in Antigua and Barbuda) turned out to a meeting held Wednesday afternoon at the Multi-Purpose Cultural Centre.

The meeting was called primarily to inform the property owners of what was involved in the process to have their properties registered, inspected and listed on the official website for the conference.

Project Development Officer in the Ministry of Tourism, St. Clair Soleyn explained that the properties must all meet a standard set by the United Nations and enforced locally here by the ministry. Properties, will be graded in categories A, B, and C each of which will come with its own price range.

Soleyn said the government is commissioning a special App which will, among other things, assist with the payment of fees from the guests. All payments will be done prior to the guests' arrival.

During the session, there was a question-and-answer period when a number of queries were made by the property owners. Policy and Project Officer, Sim-

one Richards and Quality Assurance Officer in the Ministry of Tourism assisted Soleyn in responding to the questions and in providing elucidation.

Tourism Minister, Charles Fernandez thanked the property owners for their interest in coming to the aid of the country in this critical moment. He likened it to the staging of the first One-Day International match in Antigua back in 1979 and how there were many who doubted the country's ability to host such an international event.

In the end, he noted, Antigua and Barbuda rose to the challenge and produced a wonderful atmosphere for the cricket match. Everything was ready



Tourism Minister, Charles Fernandez when the first ball bowled off and locals and visitors alike enjoyed a successfully staged cricket match.

This, according to Minister Fernandez is the attitude he wants all of Antigua and Barbuda to adopt...rising to a challenge and overcoming that challenge.



## Twenty-nine Nursing Assistants graduate

Twenty-nine young people graduated from the Nursing Assistant Programme 2024 at a ceremony held at the Nurses Headquarters on Wednesday.

The Ministry of Health officials along with family and friends gathered at the ceremony to congratulate the graduates as these individuals stand on the precipice of a new chapter in their lives, having completed a journey marked by dedication, perseverance, and a commitment to excellence in healthcare.

The graduation ceremony serves as a testament to the hard work and determination of these aspiring healthcare professionals. Through countless hours of intensive training and practical experience, they have emerged ready to embark on their noble mission of caring for others.

The Nursing Assistant Programme,

a six-month endeavor, equips students with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide essential care services to patients in various healthcare settings. Commencing their training on July 3rd, 2023, and concluding on December 29th, 2023, this cohort has undergone a comprehensive curriculum comprising 320 hours of classroom lectures, 180 hours of practical demonstrations, and 340 hours of clinical attachment. Additionally, students were required to demonstrate competence in 21 mandatory patient care skills, ensuring their readiness for professional practice.

“We gather today to celebrate the remarkable achievements of these graduands,” remarked Margaret Smith, Principal Nursing Officer. “Their dedication, resilience, and unwavering commitment to excellence serve as an inspiration to us all. Each graduand

has demonstrated not only proficiency in their skills but also compassion and empathy—the hallmarks of exceptional healthcare professionals.”

The Ministry acknowledges the diverse academic abilities within the cohort and commends the spirit of collaboration and support that characterized their journey. Special recognition is extended to outstanding performers and most improved students for their exemplary efforts and dedication to continuous improvement.

As these nursing assistants prepare to embark on their professional careers, they are encouraged to pursue further avenues of self-development, including enrollment in the Registered Nursing programme or medical schools on the island. The Ministry reaffirms its commitment to supporting their ongoing education and professional growth.

**AUCTION NOTICE**

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Instructed by **ACB MORTGAGE AND TRUST COMPANY LIMITED**, I shall sell by **PUBLIC AUCTION** on Wednesday the 03<sup>rd</sup> day of April 2024 at 11:00am the above residential property at Buckley’s Heights.

The property is under the ownership of **LOREAN DENISE ROBERTS (aka DENISE LOREAN ROBERTS)**. The land is a 10,890 sq. ft. (0.25 acre) plot with an approximate 3,841 sq. ft., 2-storey with a partial basement reinforced concrete building with 4 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms.

The property is in a quiet residential area with a commanding view of the surrounding area.

The Auction shall be held on site.

Details of the Auction may be obtained from **Trevor Teddy Santos Inc., Public Auctioneer** at telephone numbers: 464-7653 and 562-7653.

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## Bendals man slapped with more drug charges

The police have reported that Damar Stappleton of Bendals has been remanded to His Majesty’s Prison for the second time on separate drug charges.

The police arrested and charged the 37-year-old man for the importation of 20 pounds of cannabis into the country on March 13. He was further charged with possession of cannabis, possession of cannabis with intent to transfer, and being concerned in the supplying of cannabis. The alleged offences occurred at the Deep Water Harbour.

Stappleton is presently on remand for similar offences he allegedly commit-



Damar Stappleton was arrested on March 7, 2024. The police and customs were conducting a joint operation at the main seaport, when they discovered 41 packages of cannabis with an overall weight of 41 pounds.

Police investigations into both matters resulted in his arrest and subsequent charges. He is now awaiting trial set for July 9, 2024.



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Caleb Gardner (far left) attends conference in Japan

## Caleb Gardner attends Japan-CARICOM young diplomats exchange programme

Former Government senator, Caleb Gardner is in Japan attending the launch of the CARICOM-Japan Friendship Year 2024, and JUNTOS, Japan-CARICOM Exchange Programme for Young Diplomats.

Gardner is part of a delegation visiting Japan which is led by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretary-General, Dr. Carla Barnett who met with high-level government

officials among other engagements.

2024 was designated CARICOM-Japan Friendship Year to mark the 30th anniversary of the first Japan-CARICOM Consultation, and the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, respectively.

The inaugural Japan-CARICOM Friendship Year was celebrated in 2014

to mark the 20th anniversary of the first Japan-CARICOM Consultation. Several high-profile events were held that year including the first CARICOM-Japan Summit in Trinidad and Tobago.

The summit was attended by the late Prime Minister of Japan, H.E. Shinzo Abe, the first Japanese Prime Minister to visit the region.

Speaking at the reception in Tokyo on 26 March,

Dr. Barnett said Japan has remained an important partner for the Community since they established formal diplomatic relations in 1993.

“We attach great value to the enduring bonds of friendship that have been forged over the years. Our partnership is built on a foundation of mutual respect, shared values, and a genuine desire to collaborate for the benefit of our peoples,” the Secretary-General said.

## Arica Hill is leading the EAG

The Environmental Awareness Group (EAG) has been operating for over 30 years with a strong emphasis on working with people to ensure that nature is managed sustainably for the benefit of all.

A critical component of the ability of a non-governmental organisation to function effectively is having strong leadership - and for the past five and a half years, Arica Hill has been that leader.

Starting her journey with the EAG in 2018, Arica has been at the helm overseeing a full overhaul of the operations of the EAG.

When she first began her role as Executive Director, Arica started with a small team of four and asked them to rethink what conservation could, and should look like in Antigua and Barbuda.

She wanted conservation to be reflective of our culture, but also to be

impactful, all-inclusive and life-altering. She wanted it to not just feel like something that was accessible to the rich, but made sense to every person.

Arica’s mantra at the EAG has been a ‘Discipline of Hope’ - that we could achieve beyond our wildest imaginations once we believe.

Looking back over the years, she expanded that small team to a growing staff complement of 11 vibrant and

*cont'd on pg 10*



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# Letter to the Editor

*Dear Editor,*

The UPP celebration of Baldwin Spencer was a Jumbie Jamboree, celebrating failure, incompetence and mismanagement.

It was a Jumbie Jamboree because it was based in illusion, fantasy and fiction. None of what they celebrated occurred and no accolade was deserved.

Ten years of the UPP left Antigua and Barbuda financially bankrupt, hugely indebted, no progress in housing, education or health, highest unemployment since the 1930's, no investor confidence in the country.

It was leadership into the wilderness, into hopelessness, and into a colossal mess. No false claims and self-serving celebrations will change the harsh reality of the UPP's incompetent governance.

In fact, this Jumbie Jamboree was just devised and developed by Richard Lewis to promote his leadership bid in the UPP. Did everyone notice that poor Pringle was not in any of the photographs of the official published photos?

So, Baldwin was so great, that suddenly and out of the blue, the UPP remembered to honour him. When he

retired there was no fanfare, no official retirement function.

Mr. Spencer should not have allowed himself to be used in this manner.

After all, even though his tenure was a disaster for the country, he was still a two-term Prime Minister and the office must be respected.

This Jumbie Jamboree was not so much about Spencer but more about the disrespect shown to Opposition Leader Jamal Pringle. He is now learning the hard way how the UPP uses people and then spits them out.

*D. Warner*

*cont'd from pg 8*

dynamic individuals from Antigua and across the Caribbean.

She also helped to develop volunteer programmes that have increased the number of people who give

their time on weekends and week-nights to conservation from a mere 10 to well over 100.

This growing cadre of environmentalists have undergone intense in-class and field training, making them reliable field scientists who now support the collection of data that is used in international reports by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda.

On May 1st 2024, Arica will join the EAG's long-time partner, Fauna & Flora, as the Caribbean Lead for their Caribbean programme.

We are proud that she has been selected among many candidates to build ambition, inspire hope, and drive change along with conservationists across the region, in the face of the persistent threats of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Not only do we wish her well, but we are grateful that Arica joins an organisation that has and will continue to support the EAG's growth and development, and that of so many others within Antigua and Barbuda.



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## Baltimore bridge crash causes supply chain concerns

By Christy Cooney

Concerns have been raised of a “ripple effect” on global supply chains after a container ship crashed into a bridge in the US city of Baltimore.

The ship, named the Dali, hit a support column of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in the early hours of Tuesday morning, causing it to collapse.

The bridge spanned the entrance to the Port of Baltimore, the busiest port in the US for car exports and the ninth-busiest for foreign cargo.

Six people are missing presumed dead.

Officials have said that maritime traffic through the port - which last year amounted to more than 47 million tonnes of foreign cargo - will be suspended “until further notice”.

The suspension could have a “significant ripple effect on global supply chains”, Marco Forgione, director

general at The Institute of Export and International Trade, told the BBC.

More than 750,000 cars and vehicles passed through Baltimore in the last year, he told Radio 4’s The World Tonight.

These include US, UK and EU brands such as General Motors, Ford, Jaguar Land Rover, Nissan, Fiat, and Audi.

Baltimore is the busiest US port for car shipments, and also the largest US port by volume for handling farm and construction machinery.

It is also the second biggest port for US coal exports.

US Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg said at a briefing there was “no question that this will be a major and protracted impact to supply chains”.

“It’s too soon to offer estimates on what it will take to clear the channel

and reopen the port,” he said.

However, Baltimore is also one of the smallest container ports in the north-east US, handling 265,000 containers in the fourth quarter of last year, according to container shipping expert Lars Jensen.

By contrast, the Port of New York and New Jersey handled about 2 million containers in that same period, and Norfolk Port in Virginia handled 850,000.

The flow of containers to Baltimore can probably be redistributed to bigger ports, Mr Jensen said.

Initially there were concerns that liquified natural gas (LNG) exports could be affected, but Cove Point LNG terminal on Chesapeake Bay, which typically exports about 500,000 tonnes of LNG per month to markets including the UK and the EU, said

*cont’d on pg 13*

## Taylor Swift's father escapes charge over alleged Australia assault

By Tiffanie Turnbull

Taylor's Swift's father will not be charged over accusations he assaulted a paparazzo in Australia.

Ben McDonald, 51, told police Scott Swift, 72, struck him in the face on a Sydney wharf on 27 February. He did not need medical help.

A spokesperson for Swift at the time said two people had been behaving aggressively towards the megastar.

After a month-long investigation, New South Wales police on Tuesday said no further action would be taken.

The confrontation happened after Mr Swift and his daughter disembarked from a yacht, in the hours after her final Eras Tour show in Sydney.

A video published by Australian media shows the singer, who is concealed be-



Taylor Swift with her parents in 2013.

neath an umbrella, walking with her father and security guards along Neutral Bay Wharf at about 02:30 local time (15:30 GMT).

Cameras flash before two voices - reported to be a photographer and a guard - accuse each other of touching umbrellas. It is unclear whether the footage captures the alleged incident.

Mr McDonald previous-

ly told the BBC Swift was already inside a car when Mr Swift "charged in" and attacked him without provocation.

"I've been doing this for 23 years and I haven't been in a situation where someone's hit me in the chops," he said.

However, the singer's representative said: "Two individuals were aggres-

sively pushing their way towards Taylor, grabbing at her security personnel, and threatening to throw a female staff member into the water."

Known as "Papa Swift" by fans of the pop icon, Mr Swift has been accompanying his daughter on her global Eras Tour and left the country shortly after the incident.

*cont'd from pg 12*

its operations had not been hit by the bridge collapse.

President Biden told reporters that the US government would "move heaven and earth to reopen the port and rebuild the bridge as soon as humanly possible", but added that the process was going to "take some time."

As well as maritime traffic, the Port of Baltimore is directly responsible for some 15,000 jobs and supports an estimated 140,000 more.

Following the accident, Danish shipping giant Maersk, whose cargo the Dali was carrying, said it would be "omitting Baltimore on all our ser-

vices for the foreseeable future".

A number of rail and coal companies have also warned their customers of disruption to coal exports.

The US Coast Guard has suspended its search and rescue operation and begun a recovery mission for the missing people.

The focus is now turning to the investigation into what went wrong, with a team of transportation safety experts hoping to board the stricken ship and recover its data recorder.

The exact cause of the crash is still being established, but officials have said the ship suffered a "power issue" and issued a distress call before hitting

the bridge.

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, where the Dali was flagged, said the ship's certificates covering its structural integrity and the functionality of its equipment were valid at the time of the incident.

It also said the ship had passed two separate foreign port state inspections in June and September 2023.

Synergy Marine Group, which manages the Dali, said there were 22 people on the ship, including an all-Indian crew and two US harbour pilots, but no reports of any injuries.

It added that it was "fully co-operating" with federal agencies.

## State of emergency declared in parts of Belize

CMC - The Commissioner of Police, Chester Williams, has welcomed the decision by Governor General, Dame Froyla Tzalam, to declare a state of emergency (SOE) in south-side Belize City and specific sections of the Cayo District, insisting however that it should not be regarded as an admission of defeat by the police in dealing with the crime situation.

The SOE will remain “in force for a period not exceeding one month; but may be extended from time to time by a resolution passed by the National Assembly for further periods”.

It comes amid an upsurge in gang related activity.

Speaking to reporters, Williams dismissed suggestions that the SOE is contravention of the human rights of citizens in the area.

“I have never heard the government being critical of it. I’ve heard that the SOE must be used as a measure of last resort. I don’t think that any reasonable Belizean would ever say that the government and the police are not doing enough,” Williams said, noting that there are programmes geared towards helping young people get out of the life of crime.

“We are doing interven-



State of Emergency declared in certain parts of Belize.

tions. They are given employment opportunity. So the truth is that the government and the police are trying but again, we all know that there are going to be those persons who will not want to live a peaceful life and may continue to live that violent lifestyle.

“And so the SOE is geared at going after those persons. The amount of persons we expect to be detained from the SOE is not a huge number. It’s going to be a small number of persons because we just want to be able to pluck out the bad seeds,” he said.

He insisted that the human rights of those persons are not being violated.

“Which rights is more important? The rights of 50

persons who hold the country, the city hostage? Or the rights of 50 people? Over 140,000 in a city or the rights of 400,000 people.

“We have to strike a balance and I’m sure that some human rights activists are going to agree that as a part of human rights, we have to look at the greater picture to see if we’re going to allow these people whose right we believe should be protected to continue to extinct themselves.

“I think that if we allow the extinction to continue, then we will be in breach of human rights norms because we are seeing a trend and we just allow it to continue. The fact that we step in and do the SOE, so get

them to have a pause and to rethink, I think goes in line with maintaining human rights norms.”

The Police Commissioner said that he does not believe that the SOE is an admission of defeat by the police.

“To say a failure of the police, what does the police have to deal with? The police have to deal with the failure of society. You’re brothers, you’re children, your uncles, those persons who choose to live a violent lifestyle.

“They’re raised in their respective homes and they turn out to be what many families do not desire them to have become, but that’s how they become. And so

*cont’d on pg 15*

## Bahamian charged for role in fatal human smuggling conspiracy

An indictment was unsealed in the Southern District of Florida on Tuesday charging a Bahamian national for his alleged role in a human smuggling conspiracy that resulted in multiple migrant deaths.

Vandrick Nelson Smith, also known as Muggy and Vans, 33, was arrested on March 6 in the Bahamas pursuant to a request by the United States involving charges filed under seal in the Southern District of Florida in November 2023.

According to court documents, Smith was allegedly involved in a human smuggling organisation that attempted to bring migrants illegally from The Bahamas to the United States by boat.

The migrants were nationals of Colombia, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti, among other countries. The migrants (or their families and friends) allegedly paid the organisation money to



be smuggled to the United States.

The indictment alleges that Smith was personally involved in three maritime human smuggling incidents — including one that resulted in five deaths.

Smith allegedly was involved in three maritime human smuggling events that occurred on or about March 6, 2021; January 22,

2022; and August 8, 2022.

On the evening of January 22, 2022, the indictment alleges that numerous migrants boarded a vessel in The Bahamas destined for Florida. Shortly after the vessel's departure, the engines allegedly stopped functioning and the vessel capsized. On January 25, 2022, the US Coast Guard rescued the sole surviving

migrant, who was found clinging to the top of the overturned vessel.

Smith is charged with five counts of attempting to bring noncitizens to the United States resulting in death stemming from the January 2022 venture.

He is also charged with conspiring to bring noncitizens to the United States for profit, placing in jeopardy the life of noncitizens and resulting in death; attempting to bring noncitizens to the United States for profit; and attempting to aid and assist certain noncitizens to enter the United States.

If convicted of attempting to bring noncitizens to the United States resulting in death, Smith faces a maximum penalty of life in prison.

*cont'd from pg 14*

the police have to end up dealing with those persons. And yes, the country is huge.

“We all have a certain number of police officers. We can't tag police to every criminal to make sure that we babysit them, that they don't go and commit crime,” he said.

Williams said he believes that the police have been doing “fairly well in making sure that we, we police the entire country in the most peaceful way that we

can and try to make people feel comfortable.

“When we have parents who are condoning what their children is doing, it is going to create problems.

“And already we are seeing where parents are calling, my son not this, my son not that, when in fact they know they pikney shoot gun.

“Right, but the minute the child is dealt with by the police, the parents want to come forward and swear for their children, we have to be real,” Williams said.



The headteacher of the Maurice Ravel Lycée thanked his colleagues for their support (file pic of school).

## French school head resigns over Paris veil row and death threats

By Hugh Schofield

There is indignation in France after the headteacher of a Paris school resigned because of fears for his life.

The head was sent death threats after he insisted that a teenage girl remove her Islamic head-covering inside the school, in accordance with French law.

His name has not been made public. Two people, who had no link with the school, have been detained.

The Islamist threat to French schools is taken extremely seriously since the murders of two teachers.

Samuel Paty was decapitated on the street in a Paris suburb in 2020 and Dominique Bernard was killed at his school in Arras five months ago.

The Paris school headteacher announced his decision in an email sent on Friday to colleagues at the Maurice

Ravel Lycée in the 20th district of Paris.

“I have finally taken the decision to quit my functions,” he explained, “out of concern for my own safety and that of the establishment.”

“I leave after seven years, rich and intense, spent at your side, and after 45 years in public education,” he wrote, thanking his colleagues for the support they had shown him over the past three weeks.

In the incident, which took place on 28 February, the head told three female pupils they should obey the law by removing their head coverings.

Two complied, but the third did not and there was an altercation.

In the days that followed, the head was the object of death threats on social media, which were signalled by the school to an interior ministry ho-

ttline.

Police were sent to patrol around the school, which also received a visit from Education Minister Nicole Belloubet.

Politicians from both left and right expressed outrage that the career of a respected teacher should be ended by a hate campaign on the Internet.

“This government is incapable of protecting our schools,” said Marine Le Pen of the hard-right National Rally on X, formerly known as Twitter.

“It is defeat for the state... and the gangrene of Islamism gains yet more ground,” said her niece Marion Maréchal of the rival hard-right party Reconquest.

“This is where you end up when your policy is ‘don’t make waves’. This is where all those little surrenders

*cont’d on pg 17*



## Son of Guinea-Bissau's ex-president jailed in US for trafficking drugs to fund coup

By Gloria Aradi

The son of Guinea-Bissau's ex-president has been sentenced to over six years in prison by a US court for leading an international heroin trafficking ring.

Malam Bacai Sanha Jr, 52, planned to use the proceeds to fund his ambitions to become Guinea-Bissau's president through a coup, authorities say.

He is the son of Malam Bacai Sanha, who led the West African country from 2009 until his death in 2012.

Sanha Jr has been linked to a failed coup in February 2022.

He was extradited to the US in August 2022, following his arrest in Tanzania a few weeks earlier.

His trial began soon afterwards and in September last year, he pleaded guilty to conspiring to illegally import drugs.

"Malam Bacai Sanha Jr wasn't any ordinary international drug trafficker," said FBI agent Douglas Williams on Tuesday.

"He is the son of the



Malam Bacai Sanha Jr was an economic adviser to his father Malam Bacai Sanha (pictured), when he served as president.

former president of Guinea-Bissau and was trafficking drugs for a very specific reason - to fund a coup that would eventually lead him to the presidency of his native country where he planned to establish a drug regime."

Sanha Jr is accused of importing heroin from several countries to Portugal, and also from Europe to the United States.

US authorities say he could be deported follow-

ing his imprisonment as he is not an American citizen.

The 52-year-old, known as "Bacazinho" in Guinea-Bissau, has held several roles in the government, including as his father's economic adviser.

He reportedly revealed that he was "personally involved" in the foiled 2022 coup attempt to unseat President Umaro Sissoco Embaló, which left 11 people dead, most of them members of the security

forces.

Sanha Jr allegedly told undercover agents of the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) that he used drug proceeds to fund the coup plotters, German state-owned broadcaster Deutsche Welle reported last year.

Guinea-Bissau is a notorious drug trafficking hub. It is a key conduit for cocaine from Latin America destined for Europe, which led to the US and the UN designating it a "narco-state" more than a decade ago.

Experts say that drug traffickers and networks are highly influential and well-entrenched in the country's government, often funding election campaigns for politicians they can rely on to protect the illegal trade.

*cont'd from pg 16*

lead to," said Bruno Retailleau of the centre-right Republicans.

"It's unacceptable. When a headteacher steps down because of death threats, it is a collective failure," said Boris Vallaud of the Socialist Party.

In a separate development, several Paris schools were forced to close on Wednesday after they received bomb threats from apparent Islamists.

Last week around 30 other schools in the Paris area received similar threats, accompanied by a video of a beheading.

While investigators are obliged to take the threats seriously, they cannot rule out that they are part of a Russian disinformation campaign. Prime Minister Gabriel Attal warned earlier this month that the Kremlin had embarked on a "massive destabilisation enterprise" to undermine French support for Ukraine.

## Shallow reaffirms commitment to reinforcing CWI's governance structure

In a pivotal moment at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Cricket West Indies (CWI) held in Antigua on Saturday, March 23, 2023, President Dr. Kishore Shallow tabled a series of resolutions aimed at implementing governance reforms recommended by the Wehby Report.

However, despite extensive consultations and deliberations, some of the resolutions failed to secure the absolute majority threshold required for passage.

President Shallow expressed optimism despite the setback, stating, "While it is disappointing that some resolutions did not find favor with majority on this occasion, I remain committed to ensuring that CWI governance structure is always at its most robust. We will return to consultation with our shareholders to sensitize and advocate further for adopting modern corporate best

practices."

The resolutions tabled were derived from the Wehby Report, a comprehensive document that followed a period of significant consultations within the cricketing community. President Shallow emphasized the importance of these reforms in advancing the integrity and effectiveness of CWI.

President Shallow affirmed his resolve to fostering positive change within CWI. He echoed, "Our effort toward improvement on all fronts continues unabated.

"We will engage rigorously with our stakeholders, leveraging their insights and expertise to navigate this intricate process while re-examining CWI's governance structure."

The AGM attained a full quorum with shareholders present from Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Leeward Islands, Trinidad & Tobago, and Windward Islands.



Cricket West Indies President Dr. Kishore Shallow

## Primary School Cup takes break to facilitate Easter vacation

The Primary School Cup football competition will embark on a two-week break from Good Friday (March 29) to coincide with the annual Easter Vacation, which is taken by all public and private schools in Antigua and Barbuda.

The competition, which is played on Fridays, is likely to resume on April 12 because the public schools will still be closed on Friday, April 5, as part of their one-week Easter holi-

day break.

Three-peat defending champions Golden Grove Primary continued their winning form in Group A during the second round of matches in this year's competition, which kicked off on Friday, March 15.

For the second time in as many games, Golden Grove won by a 7-0 score line, with their latest victory achieved against Old Road Primary at the Golden Grove playing field.

Jennings Primary, which played to a draw in their opening affair, claimed their first win during the second round of matches in Group A.

Jennings Primary prevailed 4-0 against Foundation Mixed School, which suffered a 7-0 drubbing against Golden Grove in their opening encounter.

Five Islands Primary and Olivia David, which had their respective

*cont'd on pg 19*

## Rain forces abandonment of opening matches in regional Under-15 tournament

Rain forced the abandonment of all three opening round matches as there were no results in the Cricket West Indies (CWI) Regional Rising Stars Under-15 Boys Super50 Championship in Antigua and Barbuda on Tuesday.

The Leeward Islands, who won the toss and opted to bat, were struggling on 133 for seven off 32 overs when rain intervened and forced the abandonment of the encounter against Jamaica at the Coolidge Cricket Ground (CCG).

Vice-captain Lawshorn Bergan and opener Hose Roberts were the only Leeward Islands batsmen to reach double figures. Bergan hit 67 off 60 balls, including 12 fours, and Roberts made a patient 21 off 72 balls.

Eckoney Robinson claimed two for 13, and Romario Salmon captured two for 23 for the Jamaicans.

The match between defending champions Trinidad and Tobago and the Windward Islands in Bethesda was abandoned in the 18th over due to rain.

The Windward Islands won the toss and batted, reaching 83 for four in 17.2 overs when the rain ended proceedings.

Jorden Charles struck

27 off 29 balls, and opener Earsinho Fontaine made 24 off 40 balls. Spinner Ganesh Gobin took two for 12, and Aaden Owen picked up two for 22.

The other opening round encounter between Guyana and Barbados was abandoned without a ball being bowled at Ball Beef in Liberta.

The regional under-15 boys competition will continue with the second round of matches today (Thursday) at 9:30 am.

The Leeward Islands will face Barbados at the Bethesda playing field. Trinidad and Tobago will meet Guyana at the Coolidge Cricket Ground, and the Windward Islands will take on Jamaica at Ball Beef in Liberta.



Vice-captain Lawshorn Bergan hit a half century for the Leeward Islands before their opening regional Under-15 match against Jamaica was abandoned due to rain at the Coolidge Cricket Ground on Tuesday, March 26, 2024. (LICB)

### *cont'd from pg 18*

first round meetings postponed the previous week, launched their campaign in Group A with victories.

Five Islands hammered Urlings Primary 6-1, and Olivia David snatched a 4-3 victory against Bendals Primary.

St. Peters Primary made it two wins in as many games in Group B encounter at the Buckley's Primary School's playing field, prevailing 4-2 against their hosts.

Freeman's Village Primary opened their campaign in Group B with an 8-2 drubbing of Liberta Primary.

After losing 4-3 against St. Peters Primary in their opening affair, JT. Ambrose Primary rebounded to salvage a 4-4 draw

with Cobbs Cross Primary.

Last year's second-place finishers, TN. Kirnon Primary, continued their winning run in Group C, coasting to a 5-0 victory against Pares Primary at the TN. Kirnon Primary School playing field to make it two wins in as many games.

Potters Primary also made it two wins in two matches, snatching a 2-1 victory against Sunnyside Tutorial at the TN. Kirnon Primary School playing field.

New Winthorpes Primary started their Group C campaign with a 2-0 win against Villa Primary at Rising Sun.

Pigotts Primary and Greenbay Primary played to a 3-3 draw in the other Group C affair at Rising Sun.

# Sports News



## EZ Fit Flyers II still unbeaten in ABBA's second division league

EZ Fit Flyers II extended their unbeaten run in the latest rounds of games in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Division II League on Tuesday night.

The EZ Fit Flyers II won for the fifth time in as many games with a 97-32 drubbing of MJ Gray's Green Phoenix in their encounter at the JSC Sports Complex.

Harry Rashaun scored 21 points and claimed 13 rebounds; Donte Trimmingham had 17 points, nine rebounds, and five steals; and Craig Massiah produced 14 points, five rebounds, and five steals for the Flyers II.

In support, Sadiq Philip converted 12 points and grabbed 14 rebounds; Javonte Daley contributed 10 points, six assists, and five rebounds; and T-Shawn Lewis chipped in with 10 points for the Flyers II.

Kevorn Shirley scored eight points for MJ Gray's Green Phoenix, who suffered their fifth loss in as many games.

The Old Road Daggers recorded their third win in six encounters with a 67-57 victory against the Rebels in the second game on Tuesday night.

Kelvin Simon shot a game-high 22 points and snatched 12 rebounds; De-vea Aaron converted 15 points; Kedar Clarke sank 14 points and grabbed 11 rebounds; and Jesus Lopez

just missed out on achieving a triple double by scoring 13 points with nine assists and eight steals for the Old Road Daggers.

Kareem Blair converted 19 points and claimed nine rebounds; Buell Henry grabbed 16 rebounds and scored eight points; Tyn-dale Telemaque also sank eight points; Zuri Nesbitt produced 11 assists, nine rebounds, and six points; and Ryan Noel chipped in with eight rebounds and six points for the Rebels, who suffered their third loss in five games.



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

Five Islands have regained their four-point lead at the top of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division.

Five Islands moved four points ahead of the second-placed Potters Tigers with a two-nil victory against Lion Hill at the Five Islands playing field on Tuesday.

First-half goals by Jaime Jeremy in the 22nd minute and Demario Roberts in the 36th minute were sufficient to give Five

Islands their 12th win in 14 matches.

It carries Five Islands to 37 points, four ahead of the Potters Tigers, who have a game in hand. Lion Hill remains in fifth place with 15 points after suffering their sixth defeat in 13 matches.

Police strengthened their hold on third place by securing a three-nil win against the Attacking Saints at the ABFA Technical Center.

Both teams stared the match level on points,

but at the end, Police had moved three points clear of their rivals, thanks to a double conversion by Clinton Daniels in the 66th and 78th minutes that sealed the victory after Dimitri Scotland's 24th minute goal gave the law enforcers a one-nil lead at halftime.

The Police tightened their grip on third place after recording their eighth win in 14 matches to advance to 27 points.

Their second successive defeat and the fourth in 14 matches have left the Attacking Saints in fourth place on goal difference above Jennings United.

The Attacking Saints have 24 points, the same as

Jennings United, who have a game in hand.

Meanwhile, the ABFA's Second Division will continue with four matches today (Thursday).

JSC Progressors will tackle Bethesda in the first match of a double header at the ABFA Technical Center at 4:15 pm, and Lingies CPTSA Wings will meet Urlings Golden Stars in the second encounter at 6:15 pm.

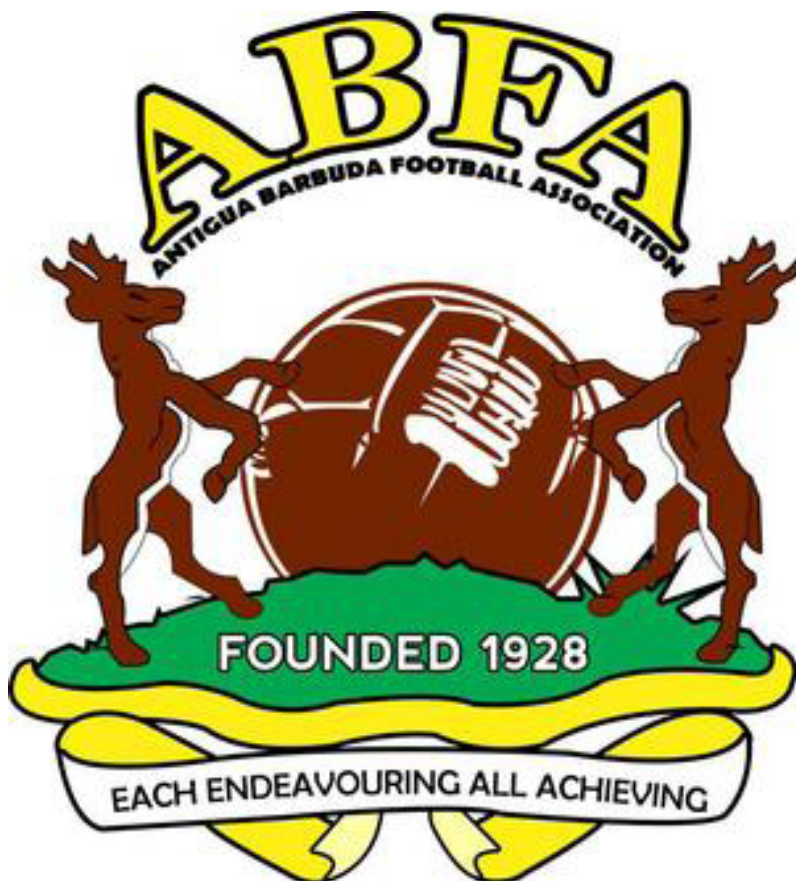
In the other two matches, which will kick off at 4:15 pm, Golden Grove will face Earthquakes at Fort Road, and Glanvilles will take on FC Master Ballerz at the Radio Range playing field in Ottos.

**AT&LU'S SOCIAL NIGHT LABOUR DAY EDITION**

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**6:00 PM - 12:00 AM**  
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Antigua Trades Labour Union



## Island Academy retains title; Stoneville get back to winning

Island Academy retained the girls division title in the Ministry of Sports Schools' Volleyball Championships at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex on Tuesday.

The second team of Island Academy beat Antigua Girls High School 2-0 in the final to capture the girls championship. Island Academy's second team won the keenly contested affair 27-25 and 25-23.

Both teams advanced to the final after securing 2-0 wins in their respective semi-finals. Island Academy's second team ousted Christ the King High School 25-11 and 25-14.

Antigua Girls High School defeated Sir Novel-le Richards Academy 25-19 and 25-23.

Christ the King High School captured third place. Christ the King High School beat Sir Novel-le Richards Academy 2-1 in the playoff for third place, winning 25-9, 14-25, and 15-8.

All Saints Secondary School captured fourth place. All Saints Secondary defeated Ottos Comprehensive School 2-1 in the playoff for fourth place,



Stoneville men's volleyball team. (ABAVA)

winning 25-19, 23-25, and 15-9.

Meanwhile, reigning champions Stoneville returned to winning form in the men's division of the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association's (ABAVA) Local League on Tuesday night.

After losing the last year's second-place finishers, the Pytonz, in their previous outing, Stoneville

rebounded to claim their second win in three games by beating the Top Ranking Storming Lions 3-0 in the first match of a double header at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex.

Stoneville prevailed 25-19, 25-16, and 28-26 in approximately one hour and 23 minutes against the Storming Lions, who suffered their first loss in three

games.

Print Xpress Renegades notched up their second win in as many games by pulling off a 3-0 victory against the Sharks in Tuesday's second encounter.

The Renegades easily disposed of the Sharks in just one hour and three minutes. The Renegades won 25-10, 25-19, and 25-14, giving the Sharks their second loss in as many games.