

LOCAL BANKS DOING WELL

Story on Page 2



Sir James Carlisle, centre, accompanied by his wife, Lady Emma, right, made a presentation of the book 'A Life Shaped by Extraordinary Circumstances' (inset) to Prime Minister Gaston Browne on Tuesday. *Story on page 3.*

Local banks performing well

The local banking sector is on firm footing with all the key indicators trending in positive directions.

That's one of the main assessments coming out of a meeting held on Monday with the senior officers of the local banks and financial institutions and Prime Minister and Finance Minister,

Gaston Browne.

"We are committed to having quarterly meetings to review the performance of the banks and our indigenous banks in particular, looking at their capital adequacy; their level of delinquency, and I have to tell you that all our banks are sound as they exceed the minimum capital

requirement. Our banks are also among the strongest in the entire sub-region," he disclosed.

According to the prime minister the banks have also shown growth in the area of credit. "We have seen credit growth within the banking sector which is a good sign after years of stagnation or

declining credit so the fact that we are seeing an increase in credit means that the contributions by locals towards the growth and development of our country is increasing and we have asked the bank to keep a steady hand and to continue promoting policies that would lead to increased credit growth," he outlined.

The meeting also discussed Antigua and Barbuda's economic performance over the past four years where growth averaged in excess of 8 percent per annum which means that the country is doing well economically.

"We also discussed savings at the banks which have grown by over \$100 million

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UN official found dead in hotel room

An official from the United Nations who was in Antigua to assist with preparations for the Fourth Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) – a male - was found dead in his hotel room on Tuesday.

Not much information has been available regarding the circumstances of his death as officials associated with the planning exercise have been tightlipped on the issue. They however confirmed that a death has occurred.

Details regarding the incident will be made available as soon as they come to hand.

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Former Governor General Sir James Carlisle pens autobiography

Former Governor General, Sir James Carlisle, who served in the post from 1993 to 2007, has penned an autobiography that chronicles his life from humble beginnings to ascending to the office of Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda.

Sir James, accompanied by his wife, Lady Emma, made a presentation of the book to Prime Minister Gaston Browne on Tuesday. He told the prime minister that he had very good reasons for writing the book. It is entitled 'A Life Shaped by Extraordinary Circumstances' and it traces Sir James' life from childhood in Bolans to his journey to the UK and his quest for higher learning, his service in the Royal Air Force and his decision to study as a doctor specializing in dentistry.

He later returned to Antigua to open his dental office. He was appointed as Governor General following the death of Sir Wilfred Jacobs.

"I remember after Sir Wilfred Jacobs had passed and I had assumed office, a reporter came to Government House and queried



Former Governor General, Sir James Carlisle presents a copy of his book to Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

'what should I write about him. I know nothing of him (Sir Wilfred). I don't want that to happen to me. This is my attempt at leaving my footprints in the sand of time,' Sir James remarked.

The former governor general told the prime minister that despite having 'mobility issues' he felt that it was important for him to visit the Office of the Prime Minister to make the presentation to him in person.

In response, PM Browne thanked Sir James for the gift of the book and also

thanked him for his many years of service to the people of Antigua and Barbuda.

"You have certainly made your mark and it is good that you have documented it as I have seen too many instances of people trying to re-write history.

"So, where we fail to document, we allow for this mis-interpretation of facts. You are from humble beginnings and have risen to the top office in our country; you have made your contribution and having it documented is a good thing.

What is good too is that it is an autobiography written by you so it doesn't get more authentic than that," he observed.

The prime minister also expressed the hope that other officials who have made significant contributions would follow the example set by Sir James to write their respective stories.

"This would avoid leaving the interpretations to others or having them made the subject of political spin. I must give you credit for having the discipline to actually sit down and write your life's work. Others have had the ability, but did not possess that discipline which is required to undertake a project such as this," PM Browne noted.

According to the prime minister, Sir James' time in office was one of exemplary work and honour that he brought to the office.

Additionally, both Sir James and the PM Browne called on young people in the country to look past their current circumstances and to set themselves lofty goals and to strive to achieve them.

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annually," he revealed.

PM Browne used the opportunity to outline to the bankers the government's priorities over the next year would be on the physical infrastructure of the country; meaning the road networks.

"This year we will be placing increased emphasis on improving our roads.

"Over the past years, we focused on infrastructural developments such as the cruise and cargo port expansion, the water infrastructure and the major highways where we have made signif-

icant improvements. However, its now time to focus on our community or secondary roads," he stated.

The emphasis on the secondary roads repairs and improvements will come into focus in the coming months and years according to the prime minister.

Confucius Institute sets its sights on expanding teaching of Chinese language and culture



The Confucius Institute of Antigua and Barbuda is getting ready to expand the teaching of the main Chinese language, mandarin, as well as Chinese culture here in Antigua and Barbuda.

Co-Director of the Institute, Gayle Greene-Phillip, said the institute has been operating in the country for the past five years and it is getting ready to establish a

presence at the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus.

This development will see the expansion of the institute’s work with a physical unit at the university.

Greene-Phillip’s remarks came as the institute welcomed the arrival of a new Co-director from China, Joanne Li.

“We currently teach mandarin in two second-

ary schools, the Sir Novel-le Richards Academy and the Glanville Secondary. At SNRA it is a compulsory subject in the first and second forms so all students are exposed to the language. When they get to third form, then it becomes optional,” she explained.

The subject is optional at all levels at the Glanville Secondary.

The Confucius Institute was first established at the Antigua and Barbuda Institute for Continuing Education (ABICE) but went to an online format at the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Greene-Phillip said mandarin classes are also taught to adults in its adult programme. All the classes are free including the reading materials.

“The response to the classes has been absolutely phenomenal. We have had students who have done the HSK examinations (a test for Chinese proficiency) and we have had students who have completed HSK 1,2 and 3.

“The two top students we recently sent off to China on scholarships came through the institute.

“Students who complete the HSK exams also save time when they travel

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Condor Airlines to restart services into VCBIA

Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Officials now in Berlin, Germany for the tourism trade fair 'ITB' are in a celebratory mood as day one of ITB was met with positive news as Condor Airlines has announced its return to the destination with a weekly service starting November 5, 2024 until May 6, 2025 from Frankfurt.

Chief Executive Officer of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA), Colin C. James expressed much joy with the prospects of increased flights between the destination and Europe. "We are excited about the resumption of the direct service from Condor next winter season. The German speaking market is our second most important European market, with the flight acting as a major gateway creating access from central Europe to Antigua," he stated.

"We appreciate the efforts of the partners with us at ITB: Elite Island Resorts, Royalton and Carib-



bean Beach Cottage that as a whole represent 10 properties in Antigua as well as our sailing fraternity KH+P and Sailing Classics.

"Through a collaborated effort and strong partnerships, we will make the flight a success and increase visitor numbers. Additionally, we are delighted that the service will end after Sailing Week which provides a seamless departure for our European sailors", added

James.

Tourism Officials expect that this new longer flight schedule which now covers Sailing Week will ensure more German participation in the signature yachting event.

The brand new A330-900 aircraft will have a total of 27 rotations tagged with Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic.

The configuration of the aircraft can hold a to-

tal of 310 passengers with 30 business class seats and 64 premium economy seats, ideal for Antigua and Barbuda's target audience.

The Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority will be planning immediate robust sales and marketing activities to educate the trade and further build awareness of the flight.

A workshop will take place on Tuesday 19 March 2024, for Antigua and Barbuda's on-island partners to learn more about how they can capitalise on this opportunity to diversify.

For more information on the workshop contact the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority on 562-7600.

The Condor Flight to Antigua can be booked from March 7.

cont'd from pg 4

to China to study as it allows them to go directly to their classes without having to spend a year learning the language," she further explained.

Since its establishment, the CI has always had a co-director from China. Li said she has already visited the UWI FIC and a nearby school and that she hopes to visit more schools in the coming weeks.

"I have been thinking about starting classes in local areas for people who work during the day as I have been contacted by potential students who are eager to learn. It is exciting and a good background for me and the teaching of Chinese education in this country," she stated.

The CI Centre at the UWI FIC will open ahead of the start of the 2024-25 academic year in September.

Minister Greene headed Antigua and Barbuda's delegation at the WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference

Under the auspices of the World Trade Organisation and the United Arab Emirates, the WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) convened on 26th February 2024 in Abu Dhabi, UAE. Antigua and Barbuda's Delegation headed by the Honourable Foreign Minister, E.P Chet Greene and consisting of the nation's Permanent Representative to the World Trade Organisation H.E Colin Murdoch and Director of International Trade, Miss Joy-Marie King, were locked in intense negotiations. During the engagement, a plethora of international trade issues within the multilateral sphere were negotiated at the political level in accordance with the MC12 mandate.

Minster Greene in his address to the Ministerial Body on the matter of dispute settlement on behalf of the Organisation of African Caribbean and Pacific States (OACP), asserted to members "the need to accelerate the formalization of discussions as soon as practicable within a reasonable period after the conference and must be conducted based on the longstanding WTO principles of transparency, inclusiveness, openness, member-driven and consensus".

Initially scheduled for 26-29 February, the Conference was extended in a final push to reach outcomes on the various issues at stake. These outcomes are detailed in the adopted Abu Dhabi Ministerial Declaration, where members amongst others committed to preserving and strengthening the ability of the multilateral trading system, with the WTO at its core, to respond to current international trade challenges.

Outcomes in the following areas were achieved to include:



Development - the role that the multilateral trading system can play in contributing towards the achievement of the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals was recognized in addition to the contribution of women's economic empowerment and women's participation in trade to economic growth and sustainable development;

The role and importance of services to the global economy as they generate more than two-thirds of global economic output and accounts for over half of all jobs were acknowledged and the relevant WTO bodies were encouraged to continue their

work to review and build on all the lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic and to build effective solutions in case of future pandemics in an expeditious manner;

Dispute settlement reform, members recognised the progress made with the view to having a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all members by 2024. Officials were instructed to accelerate discussions, build on the progress already made, and work on unresolved issues;

The review of special and differential treatment (S&DT) provisions for

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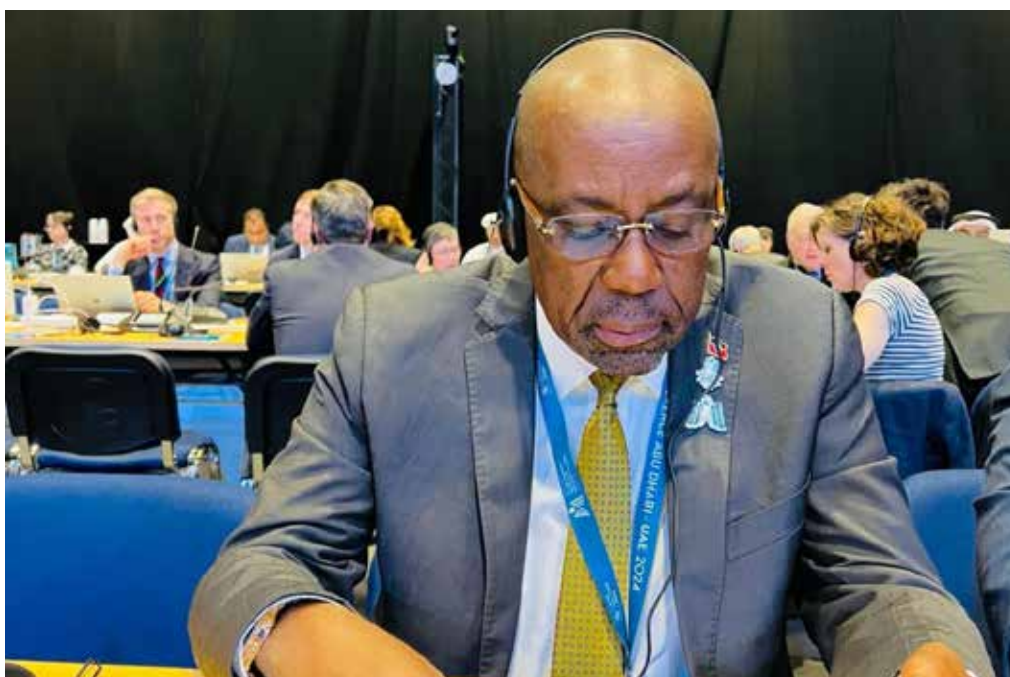
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developing and least developed countries (LDCs) with a view to making them more precise, effective and operational;

The reaffirming of the Work Programme on Small Economies;

Electronic commerce, the General Council was instructed to hold periodic reviews on the E-commerce Work Programme with a view to presenting recommendations for action to the Ministerial Conference. Members also agreed to maintain the current practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions until the 14th Session of the Ministerial Conference (MC14) or 31 March 2026, whichever is earlier; and

The adoption of a Ministerial Decision to extend the moratorium on non-violation and situation complaints regarding the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) until MC14.



Ministers also engaged in a discourse on how international trade relates to two pressing issues that go to the heart of current political, economic and environmental challenges, namely sustainable development and socioeconomic inclusion.

The conference also formally approved the WTO membership terms of Comoros and Timor-Leste, the first new members in almost eight years. Members also agreed on a Ministerial Decision on concrete measures to ease the path to graduation from the category of least-developed countries.

Additionally, Minister Greene within the margins of the conference engaged in several bilateral meetings including with the Minister of Foreign, European Affairs and Trade of Malta His Excellency Ian Borg where brief discussions on matters related to climate change and vulnerability, Second phase of MoU on water cooperation, support of Antigua and Barbuda's leadership regarding SIDS 4, an upcoming Ministerial visit to Malta and Antigua and Barbuda's aspirations for increased engagement with the European Union.

Minister Greene also met with Dr. Thani Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade for the United Arab Emirates. The discourse focused on trade and investment opportunities between both countries including but not limited to the hospitality industry, aviation and the fisheries sector. Both Ministers agreed to follow up at the technical level.

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National Literacy Festival planned for this Friday

The National Literacy Festival 2024 organised by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Creative Industries will place emphasis on literacy within communities and the importance of lis-

tening and spelling.

Director of Education, Clare Browne, has called on schools to execute “activities that will impact the communities of their location in a powerful way,” on

Friday, 8th March, 2024.

In a communiqué addressed to principals of public and private secondary schools, Director Browne proposed the hosting of literacy fairs, marches, work-

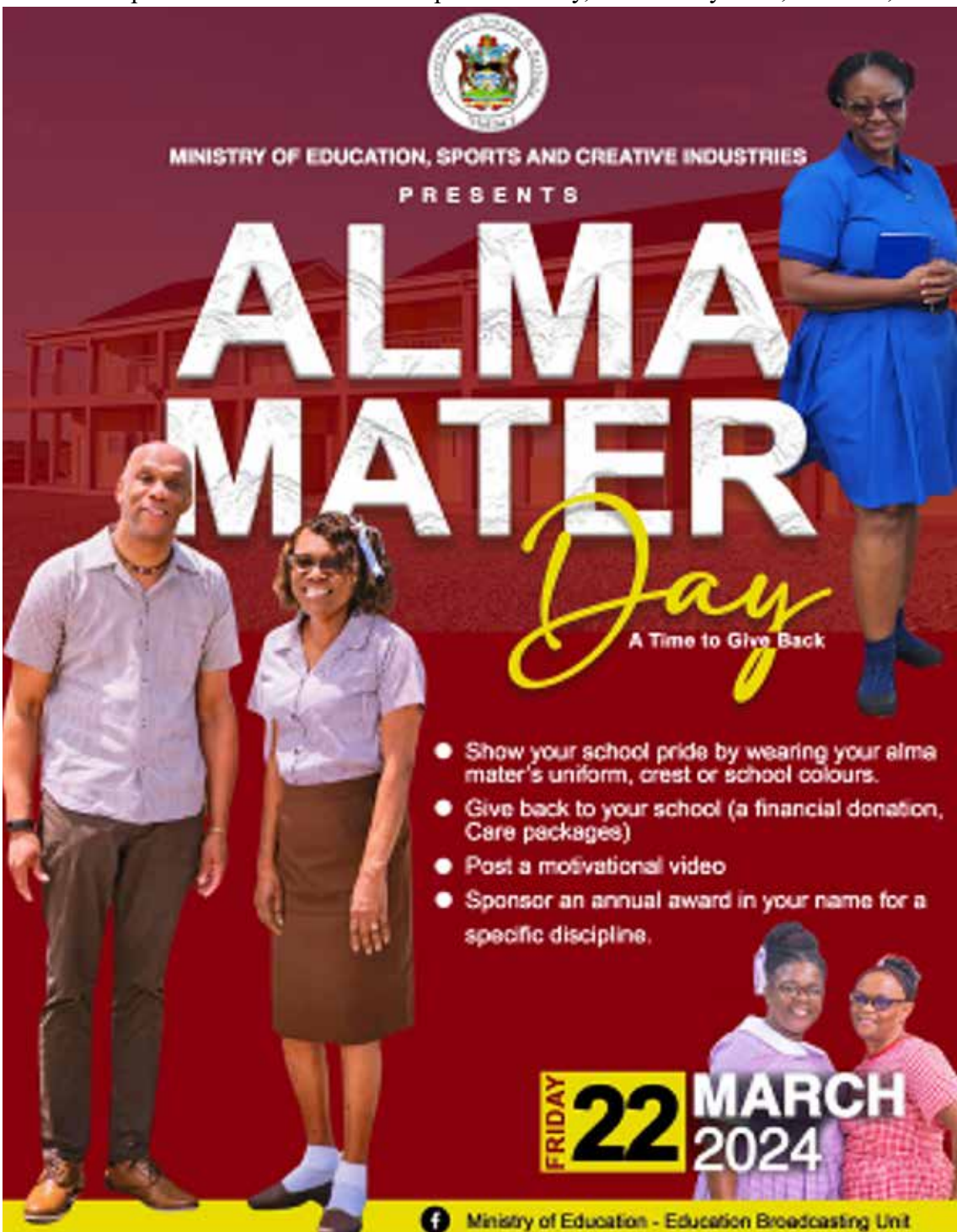
shops and other planned events under the theme: “Promoting literacy in our communities for a sustainable tomorrow”.

The director of education believes the National Literacy Festival, which forms part of the activities in observance of Education Month, 2024, creates an avenue “to raise awareness and concern for the many literacy challenges and problems that exist in our local communities and are evident among students”.

In public and primary schools throughout Antigua and Barbuda, the literacy festival will highlight the importance of listening and spelling under the theme: “Promoting literacy for personal growth – Effective listening and spelling for all”.

“This year, we have decided that based on our observations and the performance of students in the National Assessments, it is crucial that we underscore the need for effective listening and conventional spelling,” Education Officer-Language Arts, Dr. Desryn Collins informed primary school principals.

Education Month 2024 commenced on Monday 5th March, 2024 and is being observed under the theme: “Re-Imaging Education, Colouring Outside the Lines”.



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Ministry of Education - Education Broadcasting Unit

Halo donates to youth development

The Halo Foundation donated \$5,500 to the National Youth Parliament Association of Antigua and Barbuda, keeping true to its promise to contribute towards the development of the nation's youth.

The five-year-old organization focuses on youth advocacy and places high emphasis on civic pride, the development of skills, the involvement of youth in political processes and the boundless power of the youth movement.

Outgoing President of the organization, Kamalie Mannix, accepted the donation on behalf of his team. He thanked Their Excellencies for the donation, which will offset expenses for the organization's activities for 2024.



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Bitcoin price briefly tops \$69,000 for new all-time high

The price of the world's largest cryptocurrency, Bitcoin, briefly hit a new all-time high of more than \$69,000.

It surpassed the previous record set in November 2021 - though by 2022 Bitcoin's value had sunk to \$16,500.

The new surge in price has been spurred by US finance giants pouring billions into buying bitcoins.

The cryptocurrency rose to around \$69,200 shortly after 15:00 GMT on Tuesday, before falling back. It was trading around \$62,185 by 21:00 GMT.

Bitcoin's value has spiked by more than 50% over the last month, according to cryptocurrency market data platform CoinMarketCap.

Carol Alexander, professor of finance at Sussex University, said its price could go higher than its new record but warned that crypto was "notoriously volatile."

"Too often in the past the price crash was timed so that ordinary investors buying Bitcoin during the bubble are the ones who lose out," she told the BBC.

The new record represents another dramatic moment in Bitcoin's turbulent history.

It was invented in 2009 by a person or persons calling themselves Satoshi Na-



kamoto - their true identity remains a mystery.

Conceived as a means to create money for the internet, its roots lay in an anti-establishment ethos encouraging people to live free from the existing power structure of financial institutions and governments.

However, its new all-time high value has come about precisely because those establishment firms have been pouring billions of dollars into acquiring it.

That has been made possible because, in January 2024, US regulators reluctantly approved several spot Bitcoin Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs).

That allowed giant investment firms like Blackrock, Fidelity and Grayscale to sell products based on the price of Bitcoin.

Between them, they have been buying hundreds of thousands of bitcoins, rapidly driving up their value.

Prof Alexander told the BBC these entrants "are attracting institutional investors into Bitcoin and they are putting a considerable upwards pressure on price."

But she added Bitcoin's "halving" event, expected to take place in April, may also influence the cryptocurrency's value.

"In the past, these events have been accompanied by price surges," she said.

For many holders of Bitcoin, this will be a moment to celebrate - as their own wealth will have risen a great deal.

But history suggests they should be prepared for

that to change.

Bitcoin's value tumbled to 18-month lows of nearly \$20,000 in June 2022 as investors sought to cut ties with riskier investments amid a gloomy global economic outlook.

The cryptocurrency's price slumped further later that year when FTX - the huge cryptocurrency exchange founded by so-called "king of crypto" Sam Bankman-Fried - collapsed into bankruptcy in November 2022.

Its peaks and troughs continued throughout 2023, but it managed to climb back up to trade above \$40,000 towards the end of the year.

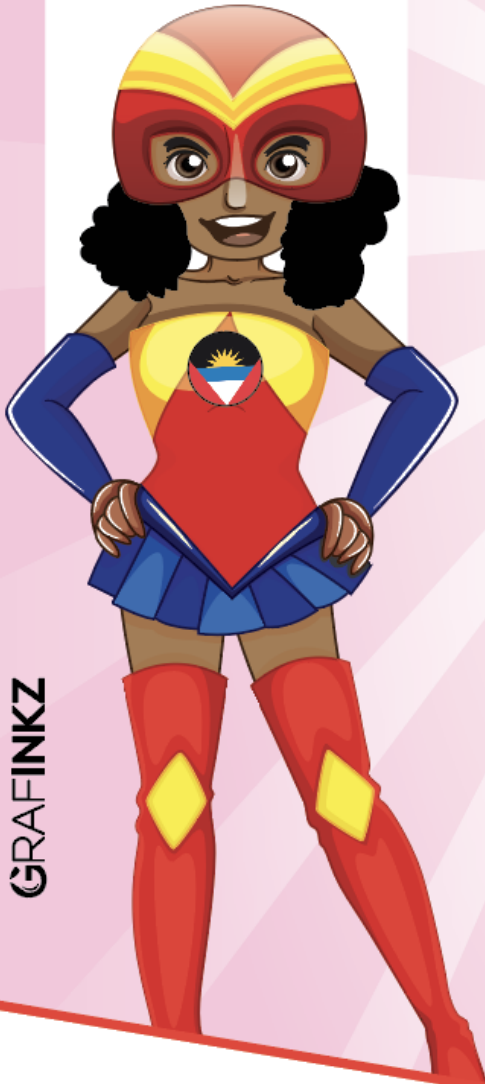
It is not just companies and individual investors who have been tracking those fluctuations closely.

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Pakistan: At least 35 die due to surprise snowfall and heavy rains

At least 35 people died while dozens more were injured as freezing rain and unexpected snowfall hit remote areas of Pakistan over the weekend.

Twenty-two children were among the fatalities, many of whom were crushed in landslides that buried their homes, disaster management authorities said.

The extreme weather hit Pakistan's northern and western regions, clogging roads and damaging hundreds of houses.

Experts were surprised by the snow as Pakistan is typically mild in March.

Mushtaq Ali Shah, a former director of the country's meteorological department, attributed the unusual conditions to climate change.



Experts and residents are surprised by the snow as Pakistan is typically hot and humid in March.

mate change.

He added that a light hail storm that lasts "for a few moments" would not be as surprising, but it is unusual for that to continue for over 30 minutes.

According to BBC Me-

eteorologist Chris Fawkes, a westerly disturbance has been moving across Afghanistan, Pakistan and north-west India over recent days bringing extreme cold, heavy snow and torrential rain.

It has taken locals by surprise.

Hajit Shah, a resident of Kirk district in the north-western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, said that he had experienced snow in his neighbourhood only once before.

"As far as I can remember, there was light snowfall for a few minutes about 25 or 30 years ago," he told the BBC.

The heavy rains completely destroyed at least 150 houses and partially damaged 500 others, mostly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the south-western Balochistan province, authorities said.

Electricity has been completely cut off in some districts for several days.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's provincial government has provided relief supplies to affected areas and announced financial assistance for the injured and the families of those who died.

Pakistan's meteorological department said in its weekly forecast that "mainly cold and dry weather" is expected in most parts of the country for the rest of this week, although some parts of Balochistan and Kashmir should expect to see "snowfall over hills".



Life is at a standstill in parts of Pakistan's northern and western regions with roads blocked and homes damaged.

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In Central America, El Salvador's president Nayib Bukele has embraced the cryptocurrency.

The Bitcoin-loving leader has spent more than \$100m of his developing

nation's public money on buying almost 3000 bitcoins over the last few years.

His investment is now worth around 60% more than he paid for it. Although no public records have been released on the specifics.



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Haiti gangs try to take over Port-au-Prince airport

By Vanessa Buschschlüter

Soldiers have been deployed to defend the airport of the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince, from an assault by armed gangs.

Witnesses reported hearing shots ringing out in the vicinity of Toussaint Louverture Airport as security forces clashed with armed men.

The gangs' aim is to prevent the return to Haiti of Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who is believed to be abroad.

Violence has spiralled in his absence with the gangs demanding he resign.

Mr Henry left Haiti last week to attend a regional summit in Guyana. From there, he travelled to Kenya to sign a deal on the deployment of a multinational police force to Haiti.

His more recent whereabouts had been unknown but local media reported on Tuesday that he landed in Puerto Rico after the Dominican Republic closed its airspace.

Earlier, a spokesman for the US state department said: "It's our understanding that the prime minister is returning to the country [Haiti]".

While Mr Henry was in Kenya, a coalition of gangs led by a former police officer, Jimmy "Barbecue" Chérizier, went on the of-



Soldiers have been deployed to guard the international airport.

fensive, attacking police stations and storming two of Haiti's biggest prisons.

About a dozen people were killed in the attack on the prisons. Thousands of inmates escaped and remain on the loose.

A minister standing in for Mr Henry declared a 72-hour state of emergency.

Haitian newspaper *Le Nouvelliste* reports that both international and national commercial flights have been suspended for the past days due to the violence. *Le Nouvelliste* added that no private planes had landed or taken off from the airport either.

An attempt by gunmen to breach the airport compound through a hole in a wall was reportedly repelled by security forces.

Control of the airport

is key to the gangs' aim of stopping Prime Minister Henry from coming back to the country.

The gang leader known as Barbecue has been calling for his ouster since the prime minister was sworn in as the successor to President Jovenel Moïse in July 2021.

Already rampant gang violence was further fuelled by the murder of President Moïse by Colombian mercenaries, which left a power vacuum in the country.

Armed gangs, wielding weapons smuggled in from the US, have gained control of an estimated 80% of the capital in recent years.

Prime Minister Henry has asked the international community to send troops to help fight the gangs. But a plan for Kenya to send

1,000 police officers to help contain the violence stalled after the Kenyan High Court blocked it.

Mr Henry was in Nairobi for talks with Kenyan President William Ruto to try to salvage the deployment, when the latest violence flared.

In a video posted on social media, Barbecue declared last week that "the first objective of our fight is to ensure that Ariel Henry's government does not remain in power".

On Saturday, his gang attacked several police stations before freeing thousands of prisoners from the National Penitentiary and from the Croix des Bouquets jail.

Only about 100 prisoners remained in their cells

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US charges two Dominican Republic nationals for smuggling American Eels in Puerto Rico

Two Dominican Republic nationals were charged with smuggling protected American eels from Puerto Rico.

The US Justice Department said a federal grand jury in the District of Puerto Rico returned an indictment on Saul Enrique José De La Cruz and Simon De La Cruz Paredes after they presented their case in court.

Both men were detained on February 21 by the United States Coast Guard, approximately 39 nautical miles north of Arecibo, Puerto Rico.

Prosecutors alleged the coast guard found 22 bags of live juvenile American eels on the vessel they were travelling on.

They have been charged with knowingly exporting and attempting to export juvenile American eels from the United States without declaring said merchandise to officials of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and failure to heave



to the US Coast Guard.

If convicted, the defendants face a maximum penalty of twenty years in prison.

US Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico, Stephen Muldrow, said it was important for the government to combat these organised crimes as they pose a threat to the country's biodiversity.

"The US Attorney's Office is committed to enforcing federal environmental

protection laws and to holding violators responsible for the harm they cause. These laws protect the animals, resources, and habitats within Puerto Rico," said Muldrow.

Commander Gerard Wenk, Sector San Juan chief of response, said: "This case highlights the extreme measures smuggling organizations are undertaking in violation of US fishing laws to access and sell baby American eels in the international market, an activity

that threatens to endanger the American eel population in the Caribbean."

Juvenile American eels are a hot commodity on the black market due to the high demand for them in Asia.

Humans have so far been unable to successfully breed the eels in captivity.

Poachers seek out the juveniles eels to sell them to aquaculture facilities in Asia, where they are raised into adults and sold for sushi and other foods.

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at the National Penitentiary, prison officials said.

Among those who stayed put were 17 Colombian ex-soldiers suspected of having carried out the assassination of President Moïse.

In a video, they pleaded for help, saying that other inmates were trying to get them to leave their cells and were going to use them "as cannon

fodder".

The Colombian foreign ministry later announced that the 17 had been transferred to a different prison.

Residents of the capital mainly stayed at home on Monday with only a few people venturing out to get drinking water or food, the AFP news agency reported.

Speaking from Haiti, Serge Dalexis from the International Res-

cue Committee said it had become extremely difficult for people to access basic services such as health care, food and water.

"There's a lack of everything now in Port-au-Prince," Mr Dalexis said, adding that shooting was being reported in many areas of the city.

An estimated 15,000 people have been displaced from their homes over recent weeks due to the violence.

FBI warns about Iranian spy allegedly plotting to kill US officials

By Mike Wendling

The FBI is hunting for an alleged Iranian spy it believes is involved in plots to kill current and former US government officials.

The agency accuses Majid Farahani, 42, of plotting revenge for the killing of Iranian general Qasem Soleimani.

Soleimani, commander of Iran's Quds force, was assassinated in a US drone attack in Iraq in January 2020.

The FBI says Mr Farahani has acted on behalf of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence.

In a notice posted on Friday, the FBI said it wanted Majid Dastjani Farahani for questioning in connection with the recruitment of individuals for operations in the US.

Officials say Mr Farahani travels between Iran and Venezuela and has also recruited allies for "surveillance activities focused on religious sites, businesses, and other facilities" in the US.

In December 2023, Mr Farahani and another alleged intelligence official were sanctioned by the US Treasury.

The BBC has contacted Iranian officials in Washington and New York for comment.

Iranian officials have vowed revenge for the



Mike Pompeo, the secretary of state under Donald Trump, has been provided with a security detail.

killing of Soleimani, who was widely seen as the second-most powerful person in Iran at the time of his death. He was killed at Baghdad airport along with several other Iranians on the orders of then-President Donald Trump.

The Quds force that Soleimani led is a branch of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps which specialises in unconventional warfare and military intelligence.

It operates outside Iran and supports groups including Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis in Yemen. The US considers the Quds force a terrorist organisation.

At the time of the drone strike in Iraq, Mr Trump

said the general was "directly and indirectly responsible for the deaths of millions of people".

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei responded by saying "severe revenge awaits the criminals" who carried out the attack.

As a result of Iranian threats, the US government has provided security details for former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Mr Trump's special envoy for Iran, Brian Hook. The security measures have continued under President Joe Biden's administration, according to the Associated Press.

Mr Pompeo was reportedly targeted in an Iranian assassination plot along

with Mr Trump's national security adviser John Bolton.

In August 2022, the Department of Justice charged suspected Iranian spy, Shahram Poursafi, with plotting to kill Mr Bolton.

Court filings made reference to a "second target" which was Mr Pompeo, according to the BBC's US partner CBS News.

In Iran earlier this year, 84 people died in a bomb attack on crowds commemorating the anniversary of Soleimani's assassination in Kerman in southern Iran. Iran initially alleged that Israel and the US were behind the attacks, before the Islamic State group claimed responsibility.



Ruby Johnson had to leave her home in a bathrobe during the raid.

Grandmother gets \$3.7m over false Find My iPhone raid

By Madeline Halpert

A jury has awarded a Denver grandmother \$3.76m (£2.9m) after her home was raided by police based on what turned out to be a false Find My iPhone ping to trace stolen goods.

Ruby Johnson, 78, was made to leave her home and wait in the police car while she was dressed in only a bathrobe.

The jury found the raid on 4 January 2022 was without “probable cause” and violated her constitutional rights.

She was given \$1.26m in compensatory damages and \$2.5m in punitive damages.

Denver police had issued a search warrant the day after a truck was allegedly stolen from the parking garage of hotel.

The vehicle’s owner, who was

staying at the hotel, told police that the truck contained six firearms — including a tactical military-style rifle — two drones, \$4,000 cash and an old iPhone 11, according to NBC News.

He also told officials he had used the Find My iPhone app to locate the phone near Ms Johnson’s residence.

A Denver detective and sergeant used the locator to obtain a search warrant, which was approved by Denver’s District Attorney’s Office.

Dressed in Swat gear and carrying weapons, the officers executed the search warrant at Ms Johnson’s home. They found nothing, but in the process, smashed her garage door with a battering ram, broke a collectible doll and wrecked her home, she said.

The BBC has contacted the Denver Police Department for comment.

The American Civil Liberties

Union of Colorado, which brought the suit on Ms Johnson’s behalf, called the \$3.7m compensation “a small step toward justice”.

Ms Johnson “and her home” still “carry wounds from that day that have not healed”, the ACLU said, adding that the grandmother had moved and had developed health issues from the trauma of the incident.

“[I]t is a critical case under our state’s Constitution, for the first time affirming that police can be held accountable for invading someone’s home without probable cause,” said the organisation’s legal director, Tim Macdonald.

Colorado Constitution requires that search warrants be supported by a written affidavit and adequate probable cause before police can raid someone’s home, he added.

Sports News



Wins for Spanish Heat II and Court Martials in ABBA's D-2 league

Spanish Heat II and Court Martials secured wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Division II League on Monday night.

Spanish Heat II claimed their second win in as many encounters with a 70-54 victory against Cecil Charles Cristos United in the first game of a double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Jesus Emmanuel shot a game-high 28 points and grabbed 13 rebounds; Ismael Palemo produced 16 points and snatched 13 rebounds; Gabriel Perez had 11 points, six rebounds, and six steals; and Erwin Rodriguez chipped in with eight points and five rebounds for the Spanish Heat II.

Dorian James scored 12 points;



Dwayne Samuel produced 10 points and 10 rebounds; Derryck John had 10 points and nine rebounds; and Neville Chambers chipped in with nine points and eight rebounds for Cristos United, which lost for the second time in as many games.

Court Martials recorded their first win in two games with an 80-72 victory against the Rebels in Monday's second encounter.

De-Lornge Jules shot a game-high 31 points and grabbed 10 rebounds; Baldwin Anthony produced 19 points, 14 rebounds, and six blocked shots; and Victor Horseford contributed 12 points and six steals for Court Martials.

Buell Henry produced 20 points, 16 rebounds, and five steals; Zuri Nesbitt had 20 points, eight rebounds, eight assists, and six steals; Tyndale Telemaque converted 15 points; and Kirwan Peterson contributed eight points and eight rebounds for the Rebels, who lost for the first time in two games.

Mixed fortunes for Strictly Business in softball cricket contest

Rackaman Construction Strictly Business had mixed fortunes in the opening round of matches in the Everyday Store 24/7 Limited/Alva Joseph Antigua and Barbuda Softball Cricket Association's (ABSCA) Male 10 overs competition on Sunday.

Marco Inc.'s Grill Box Buckley's 3J's defeated Rackaman Construction Strictly Business by nine wickets.

Strictly Business won the toss and batted, scoring 57 for three from their allotted 10 overs. Raymond "Rackaman" Leadette made 21, and Clinton "Sensi" Benjamin scored 16. Steve Martin claimed two wickets

for seven runs.

Buckley's 3J's achieved victory at 59 for one in 6.5 overs. Randino Turner made 23, and Nigel Fergus scored 22.

Rackaman Construction Strictly Business rebounded to beat Construction Solutions PMS by seven wickets. PMS made 43 for four from their 10 overs. Walter Carr got 14, while Owen Graham claimed two for 12.

Strictly Business secured victory by scoring 44 for three in three overs, with Clinton Benjamin getting 13.

There was success as well for Dredgers and Bryson's Shipping and Insurance Bullets. Dredgers

defeated Lees Landscaping 300 by eight wickets.

300 won the toss and batted, scoring 64 for seven from their 10 overs. Charles James hit 29 not out, and Denfield "Mandy" Weatherhead scored 17 not out. Kirk Douglas captured four for 15, and Ricky Buckley grabbed two wickets for two runs.

Dredgers made 65 for two in 7.2 overs. Mervin Higgins struck 22, and Rae Charles hit 17 not out. Zach Thomas picked up two for 17.

Bryson's Shipping and Insurance Bullets defeated Sisserou by 79 runs. The Bullets made 94 for four from their 10 overs. Mor-

rison Browne cracked 41 not out, and Kenroy Simon scored 16.

In reply, Sisserou crashed to 15 all out in 5.3 overs. Dorian Grant snatched three wickets for one run, and Kimani George grabbed three wickets for six runs.

Action also commenced in the Saigcor Enforcers ABSCA Female 10 overs competition on Sunday.

Alzarie and Sharon Joseph Flyers prevailed by 10 wickets against Rackaman Construction Strictly Business. Strictly Business won the toss and batted, scoring 34 for four from 10 overs. Muriel Theodore made 13

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Clare Hall beat Princess Margaret School in schools' basketball league

Clare Hall Secondary School beat defending champion Princess Margaret School in the Senior Boys Division of the Cool and Smooth Inter-Schools' Basketball Championships on Monday.

Clare Hall Secondary School romped to a 60-49 victory against Princess Margaret School in the second game of a double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Aiden Christian sank 20 points, and Orion Seraphin scored 18 points for Clare Hall Secondary School. Craig Massiah shot a game-high 30 points for Princess Margaret School.

Their latest win came after Clare Hall Secondary School snatched a 61-56 victory against St. Anthony's Secondary School in their previous outing.

Orion Seraphin converted 21 points, and Kevin Pimental sank 20 points for Clare Hall Secondary School. Devonte Carter produced



Players of Clare Hall Secondary (blue uniform) compete against the player of Princess Margaret School in their senior boys division encounter at the JSC Sports Complex on Monday, March 4, 2024. (Photo courtesy of the School Basketball Unit)

22 points, and Jabin Silston scored 11 points for St. Anthony's Secondary School.

St. Anthony's Secondary School rebounded to secure victory, prevailing 47-33 against Antigua Grammar School in their senior boys encounter on Monday.

Devonte Carter and Jabin Silston each converted 13 points for St. Anthony's Sec-

ondary School. Najee Simons scored seven points for Antigua Grammar School.

In other results, Post Millennial Academy claimed a 9-1 victory against Liberta Primary in the Minigirls Primary Division. Katelyn Pasula scored seven points for Post Millennial Academy.

Post Millennial Academy also recorded a 15-2 victo-

ry against S.R. Olivia David Primary in the Miniboys Primary Division. Jeren Jeremy scored eight points, and Tristan Nicholas had seven points for the Post Millennial Academy.

Jermiah Buckley and Emmanuel Busgall each scored four points to lead Villa Primary to an 8-1 victory against S.R. Olivia David Primary.

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not out, while Gaynel O'Garro took two wickets for three runs.

The Flyers achieved victory by scoring 40 without loss in three overs. Makada Samuel hit 27 not out, and Gaynel O'Garro made 15 not out.

The Flyers also beat Goody's Taxi Services and Tours Jennings Rockets by nine wickets. The Jennings Rockets scored 66 for three from their 10 overs. Kushana David struck 21, and Ann-Marie Parker made 20.

The Flyers cruised to victory at 68

for one in six overs. Makada Samuel cracked 44 not out, and Gaynel O'garro struck 15 not out.

Bryson's Shipping and Insurance Bullets defeated Wayne's Electrical Services Survivors by 10 wickets.

The Survivors made 51 for four from their 10 overs. Cerie Richards got 16 not out, and Mauricia Willette claimed two wickets for eight runs.

The Bullets scored 52 without loss in five overs, with Cheryl Williams hitting 37 not out.

The Bullets also snatched a

two-wicket win against the Potters Uprising Serpents, who won the toss and batted, scoring 54 for three from their 10 overs.

Carla Weatherhead hit 18, and Orenthia Bisasor made 15. Mary Browne captured two for 12.

In reply, the Bullets achieved victory at 55 for eight with two balls to spare. Anette Frank got 13, and Karen Cort made 11. Carla Weatherhead snapped up three wickets for five runs, and Stacey Telemaque claimed two wickets for six runs.

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Jamaica, Windward Islands, and Guyana secure wins in Women's Super50 Cup

Jamaica, Windward Islands, and Guyana all kicked off the 2024 CG United Women's Super50 Cup with comfortable wins in St. Kitts on Monday.

Jamaica were the most dominant on the day, securing a massive 200-run win over defending champions Barbados at Warner Park.

The Jamaicans first piled up an intimidating 289 all out off 46.5 overs, thanks to a top score of 97 from Captain Stafanie Taylor, and a rapid 93 from all-rounder Chinelle Henry. Aaliyah Alleyne claimed three for 24, and Allison Gordon took two for 35.

In reply, Barbados tumbled to 89 all out in 37.4 overs. Taylor claimed two for 16, and Vanessa Watts claimed two for 24. NaiJanni Cumberbatch top scores for Barbados with 22.

Full Scores: Jamaica Women 289 all out off 46.5 overs (Stafanie Taylor 97, Chinelle Henry 93, Aaliyah Alleyne 3-24, Allison Gordon 2-35); Barbados Women 89 all out 37.4 overs (NaiJanni Cumberbatch 22, Stafanie Taylor 2-16, Vanessa Watts 2-24).

At Conaree Sports Club, the Windward Islands won a thriller against Trinidad & Tobago by two wickets. The Windwards first restricted



Jamaica Captain Stafanie Taylor made 97 against Barbados.

T&T to 185 all out off 48.2 overs.

Lee Ann Kirby hit 59 off 40 balls, and Samara Ramnath and Captain Britney Cooper each made 28. Windwards skipper Afy Fletcher took three for 40, and Carena Noel had two for 18.

The Windwards then recovered from being 53 for five after 14.3 overs to reach 186 for eight off 49 overs and secure a fantastic win. Malika Edward was the only top order batter for the Windwards to reach double figures with 22.

Jannilea Glasgow top scored with 62 off 114 balls, and Nerissa Crafton made 45 off 77 balls. The pair embarked on an 86-run sixth wicket partnership before

Crafton fell.

Glasgow and Pearl Etienne, who made a 22-ball 23, then put together a 43-run seventh wicket partnership to all but seal victory. Karishma Ramharack captured two for 19.

Full Scores: Trinidad & Tobago Women 185 all out off 48.2 overs (Lee Ann Kirby 59, Samara Ramnath 28, Britney Cooper 28, Afy Fletcher 3-40, Carena Noel 2-18); Windward Islands Women 186-8 off 49 overs (Jannilea Glasgow 62, Nerissa Crafton 45, Pearl Etienne 23, Malika Edward 22, Karishma Ramharack 2-19).

Guyana secured a comfortable 56-run win over the Leeward Islands at St. Paul's Sports Complex.

Guyana made 139 in 37

overs with Antiguan pacer Shawnisha Hector grabbing three wickets for nine runs, and off-spinner Rozel Liburd bagging three for 21. Realeanna Grimmond top scored with 38, and Shabika Gajnabi made 20.

In reply, the Leewards were dismissed for 84 off 36.5 overs. Plaffiana Millington snapped up four for 10, and Nyia Latchman took three for 25.

Full Scores: Guyana Women 139 all out off 37 overs (Realeanna Grimmond 38, Shabika Gajnabi 20, Shawnisha Hector 3-9, Rozel Liburd 3-21); Leeward Islands Women 84 all out off 36.5 overs (Divya Saxena 18, Plaffiana Millington 4-10, Nyia Latchman 3-25).

The Ultimate Force retains title in female domino competition

The Ultimate Force achieved a hat-trick of wins to retain the title in the D'Gala Bar and Restaurant Female Domino Competition.

The Ultimate Force captured the 2024 title by accumulating an overall total of 27 points to finish at the top of the standings after 18 weeks of competitive matches.

Xandapay Warriors Reloaded clinched the runner-up position ahead of Unstoppables after both teams finished the competition jointly tied with 26.5 points.

However, Xandapay

Warriors Reloaded clinched second place by virtue of having more sixes during the round-robin competition.

They were followed by Miserable and Triple Dynamite, who also finished jointly tied with 24 points each.

Next were Super Nova with 23 points and Remix with 22 points. Highly Favoured finished in the cellar of the eight-team competition with 19 points.

Natasha Edwards of Xandapay Warriors Reloaded captured the D'Gala Restaurant and Bar Most Valuable Player Award.



The Ultimate Force domino team. From left to right: Lorraine Richardson, Pearson Robinson, Amsha Ann Eusebe, Renfield Davis, Natalee Heron, captain Carol Ann Skepple, Adeillia John, and Joy Ann Davis. (Photos courtesy of ABNDA)

Edwards finished as the competition's leading player by accumulating 144 points in 10 matches at an average of 14.40.

She clinched top honours ahead of Calvin Gordon of Super Nova and the captain of The Ultimate Force, Carol-Ann Skepple.

Gordon scored a total of 112 points in eight matches at an average of 14, while Skepple achieved 110 points in eight matches at an average of 13.75.

The Minister of Public Works, Maria Browne, and Senator Rawdon Turner sponsored the competition, which commenced and concluded in February.

The Ultimate Force

received EC\$2,000, Xandapay Warriors Reloaded got EC\$1,200, and the third-place finishers Unstoppables collected EC\$900.

Additional prizes, including awards to the most valuable players, were also presented to outstanding performers.

Meanwhile, a new executive will be elected to administer the affairs of the Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Association (ABNDA) later this month.

All positions to form the new ABNDA executive for a two-year term will be up for grabs during the election of officers at its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on March 23.



Xandapay Warriors Reloaded domino team. From left to right: Dale Henry, Patricia Lewis, Sonika Regis, Natasha Richardson, Kaid Jarvis, and Ruth Ralph.