

# PM ELATED OVER THE NEW ROYALTON CHIC

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## PM elated over the new Royalton Chic

Prime Minister Gaston Browne was highly impressed with the transformation that is taking place at the former Rex Halcyon Cove hotel, now the Royalton Chic.

Following a tour of the hotel property on Thursday morning, Prime Minister Browne described what he saw as a ‘most impressive’ transformation of the Rex Halcyon Cove hotel.

“This transformation of what we know to be the Rex Halcyon Cove into the Royalton Chic is most impressive. The property is extremely gorgeous with a number of amenities; amenities that you would find in any 5-star or 6-star hotel globally. I think, it is now one of the finest hotels in the entire Caribbean region and beyond.

“This now signifies the transformation of our tourism product, the diversification of our tourism product as we seek to position Antigua and Barbuda at the high-end of the spectrum so



that we can have increased yields,” he remarked.

The prime minister said it is important that properties such as Royalton Chic do well and be profitable as the government’s revenues will get a boost based on their expenditures as well as from the taxes that they pay. He also noted that the staff should receive a premium pay compared with other properties.

“We are very excited about this transformation, and I am certainly very happy to be leading this country at this time as we see the expansion and overall transformation of our tourism product into a high-end,



luxury tourism product,” he stated.

PM Browne also commended the owners and managers of the Royalton Chic for their vision and the outstanding work that they have done. “I want to congratulate Stephen Hunter, the senior executives as well

as the staff on a job well done. Congratulations on your vision to transform this property into one of the finest hotels in the Caribbean region and I have no doubt that this will be great value for money so I’m absolutely excited about this product,” he declared.

The Royalton Chic will employ up to 800 staff members. It recently launched a job-fair and now employs some 350 persons.

Royalton Chic Beach hotel - A most gorgeous five-star resort located at Dickenson Bay, Antigua. It has some of the best amenities to include seven restaurants, coffee bars, four pools, swim up suites, over the water bungalows, spa, tennis courts, among others.



## Royalton Chic to welcome first guests on April 29

The new Royalton Chic hotel, constructed on the site of the former Rex Halcyon Cove Hotel, is gearing up to welcome its first guests on April 29.

Regional Manager for Royalton, Craig Marshall reported that the construction work is completed and all that is now being done at the property is the ‘tidying in’ ahead of the arrival of the first guests later this month.

“We are just excited that in a few weeks we will begin welcoming our guests. We have lots in store for them



from seven restaurants and five bars in a very luxurious setting including our signature Diamond Club where the amenities include butler

service, concierge service, all at an upgraded level. So regardless of where you are staying, you are going to have an amazing time at

Royalton Chic Antigua,” he emphasized.

Marshall revealed that the current staff complement is approximately 350 residents but the plan is to increase that number to 500 persons by the time the season starts.

“We will be having our ‘soft’ opening in April and May but by June with the ICC T20 World Cup Cricket and the number of rooms we have already sold, we will be up in the higher levels of occupancy,” he noted.

The Regional Manager reported that the company has spent in the region of US\$70 million on the project with further opportunities for investments in another year or so.

According to Marshall the resort will benefit from group business especially coming out of the US and indications are that the property will enjoy very brisk business during the summer months.



# Local News



## ABUT, government sign new collective bargaining agreement

The Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers says it is 'elated' to have signed a new collective bargaining agreement with the Antigua and Barbuda government.

The signing ceremony took place on Thursday with the Chief Establishment Of-

ficer, Francia Shepperd representing the government and the ABUT represented by its President, Casroy Charles and Secretary General, Sharon Kelsick.

The agreement covers the 14 percent increase that all classes of public sector

workers received and it is backdated to January 2018. It expires in December 31, 2024.

Shepperd stated that this is the first agreement signed between the two parties since 2008, and she is particularly pleased that as

an executive that was elected in 2022, it has been able to finally reach and sign an agreement with the government.

The new collective bargaining agreement also covers several of the issues over which the union and the government have been at loggerheads over the past several years.

These include increased security at the nation's schools, duty-free allowances for teachers on the purchase of a motor vehicle as well as a re-classification of all teachers.

"It was a hard-fought battle and it took a long time to be completed but we finally got to this point and much of this has been based on the good working relationship between the Chief Establishment Officer and ourselves.

"We wish to also thank our negotiation team led by former president, Dr. Colin Greene, the executive of the ABUT and our membership for supporting us all the way," she remarked.

The ABUT has a membership of approximately 1300 teachers from the public sector as well as members from a number of private schools in the country.

Kelsick described the process as providing many challenges but the negotiation team 'worked hard' and now they are seeing the 'fruits of their labour'.

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## Antigua and Barbuda undergoes European Union audit of fisheries sector

The European Union, one of the main export markets for Antigua and Barbuda lobsters, is currently conducting an audit of the fishing sector of the country.

According to Chief Fisheries Officer, Ian Horsford, the audit started in November 2023 and it is still ongoing. Antigua and Barbuda successfully completed six such audits in the past.

Horsford sits in the National Trade Council and this week he told the council of the challenges his department faces in exporting fish and fish projects to markets such as the EU and the United States.

“Under EU regulations, in terms of food safety, they are looking at whether or not Antigua and Barbuda continues to meet the requirements for exporting fisheries products to the EU. They are therefore looking at the competency of our staff, the processes we use to ensure that the food is safe to enter their markets as well as to ensure that the products that reach the EU are legal,” he explained.

According to Horsford it is critical that Antigua and Barbuda ‘passes’ this latest audit as a ‘failure’ would mean a total ban on exports of fish products to the EU. He said the EU market remains an import-

ant market for fisheries products from Antigua and Barbuda although the dollar-value for the products exported has declined significantly.

“In the past, our total value for the lobsters and fish that we exported to the EU was around \$10 million. That is down to roughly EC\$3 million today. The main reason for the decline is that we no longer are able to export fish. Our exports have now been confined to live lobsters only,”

he further explained.

Horsford added that the EU is considered ‘the gold standard’ when it comes to food safety and getting a certificate from the EU means you can also export to third party countries that are not part of the bloc. “For example, when we were able to access mainland China, a lot of this hinged on our ability to export into the EU,” he revealed.

Currently, he noted, only two OECS countries

have access to the EU market. These are Antigua and Barbuda and Grenada.

According to Horsford some of the things that Antigua and Barbuda take for granted, such as running water at the facility from which the products are exported, are critical to the EU and American inspectors.

Horsford added that entering the US market for fisheries products also poses a different set of challenges.



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## UWI FIC says job fair was a 'success'

The University of the West Indies (UWI) Five Islands Campus hosted its inaugural job fair on Thursday April 11th. The event provided a unique platform for students to engage with prominent local and regional companies as well as explore exciting career opportunities.

Pro Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principal, Professor C. Justin Robinson, welcomed representatives from participating companies including Grant Thornton, BDO, Sandals, APUA, State Insurance Limited, The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, Anjo's, ACT, and Epicurean Ltd. In his opening remarks, Professor Robinson emphasised the importance of fostering strong partnerships between academia and industry. He expressed his confidence that the job fair would lead to meaningful connections and valuable career paths



ways for UWI Five Islands students. He also reaffirmed the support of the campus in fostering relationships with the corporate sector in other areas such as research and development.

Throughout the event, students engaged in lively discussions, learned about

company cultures, and explored internship and employment possibilities.

Students were able to present their cover letters and resumes to companies and sign up for summer internships.

Assistant Registrar for Student Support and Suc-

cess, Jenifer Hughes, noted that there was an excellent turn out from the students of the campus.

She noted that the event was a collaboration between the Student Support and Success Unit and the School of Business and Management and was the culmination of the World of Work Programme hosted by the unit in Semester Two (II).

The UWI Five Islands Campus remains committed to empowering its students and bridging the gap between education and employment with events such as the job fair.

The success of the 2024 job fair underscores the campus' dedication to fostering a vibrant and dynamic learning environment for citizens of Antigua and Barbuda and the wider OECS region.



## Sandals Grande Antigua welcomes regional management trainees

Sandals, one of the leading resorts in the Caribbean, has welcomed two new trainees, Dominic Wilson and Amanda Benjamin, to its team here in Antigua.

The two trainees – one from Grenada and the other from Jamaica, have been selected to participate in Sandals' prestigious Management Trainee Programme.

Over the next two months, they will undergo training in the human resource and engineering departments, gaining valuable skills and experience in the hospitality industry.

Both team members are graduates of prominent universities in their respective countries and are eager to put their knowledge into practice in a real-world setting.

They were selected from a pool of highly qualified candidates and are thrilled to have been given the opportunity to join the Sandals team.

During their time in the programme, Dominic and Amanda will be mentored by experienced managers and will have the chance to work on various projects and tasks that will challenge and develop their skills.



Dominic Wilson

They will also have the opportunity to interact with guests and learn about the importance of creating a positive and memorable experience for each and every one of them.

The Management Trainee Programme at Sandals has been running for over 30 years and it is highly regarded for its ability to develop young talent



Amanda Benjamin

and prepare them for successful careers in the hospitality industry.

With a strong emphasis on providing top-notch service and creating unforgettable experiences for guests, Sandals recognizes the importance of investing in the development of young professionals to maintain their high standards.

## ICC trophy tour Antigua – April 16 and April 18

The ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 'Out of this World' Trophy Tour will arrive in Antigua and Barbuda this April, as fans count down to the T20 cricket World Cup 2024 hosted in the West Indies and USA.

The Trophy Tour provides the opportunity for fans to get a glimpse of T20 cricket's trophy before it is lifted by the winning captain at the finals in Barbados on 29 June.

The Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority is the coordinating agency for the tour with events planned for the Antigua Recreation Grounds in St. John's.

April 16 – Arrival of the Trophy at the V.C. Bird International Airport from Barbuda.

Trophy to be received by Senior Government and Cricket Officials

April 18 – Trophy Tour within the city of St. John's,



(Culminating with the Antigua Receptions Ground at 4 p.m. with appearances by Chickie and Posse, Panache Steel Or-

chestra and more).

The stop at the historic ARG is seen as an opportunity for the general public to interact with the trophy.

# Photo Essay

PM Gaston Browne expressed delight at the new Royalton Chic Beach hotel - A most gorgeous five-star resort located at Dickenson Bay, Antigua.







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# Opinion



## Embassy raid sparks outcry: Urgent healing action needed

By Sir Ronald Sanders

On April 10, the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS) passed a resolution firmly denouncing the government of Ecuador for authorising an intrusion of the Mexican Embassy in Quito by Ecuadorian police and for the use of force against diplomatic staff.

The resolution arose because, on the evening of April 5, the Ecuadorian police intruded into the Embassy to arrest a former Vice President of Ecuador, Jorge Glas, who had sought refuge in the Mexican Embassy and had been granted political asylum by the government of Mexico just hours before the raid. The police action against Glas was brutal.

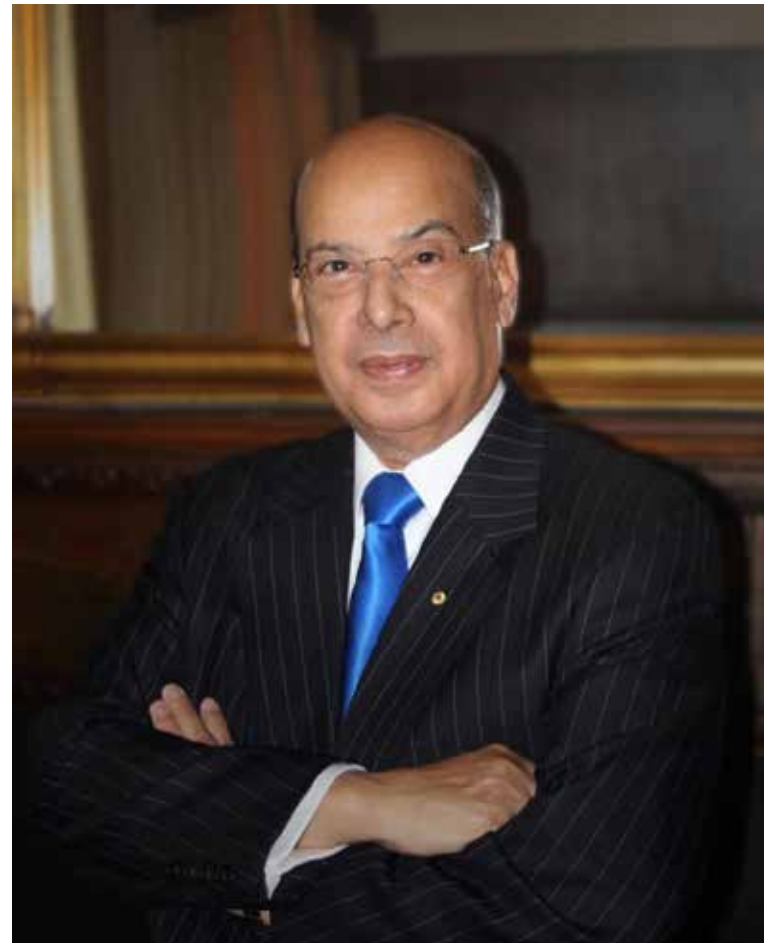
Tension, between the governments of Mexico and Ecuador which already existed, escalated the day before the violation of the Mexican Embassy when the Mexican President, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, made a statement implying that the election of Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa was influenced by the assassination of a presidential candidate, Fernando Villavicencio. President López Obrador suggested that the murder created a “rarefied atmosphere of violence” and affected the election outcome.

The Mexican President’s remarks were described pub-

licly by the Ecuadorian government as “very unfortunate”, but subsequent events demonstrated that President Noboa resented the remarks more deeply. He promptly ordered that the Mexican Ambassador be declared “persona non grata” on April 4, the day before the police raid on the Mexican Embassy.

All of this was fuel for a conflict between the two governments that was already in play. The Mexican Embassy in Quito had given Jorge Glas refuge since 17 December 2023 on the basis of his claim that criminal charges against him were acts of political persecution by the Noboa government. Prior to the police violation of the Mexican Embassy, Ecuadorian authorities had sought permission from Mexico to enter the embassy and arrest Glas, who had been sentenced to six years in prison in 2017 after being found guilty of receiving bribes from the Brazilian construction firm, Odebrecht, in exchange for awarding it government contracts. However, Mexico did not agree.

It was in the height of these difficulties that the Ecuadorian police intruded into the Mexican Embassy to seize Glas in contravention of Article 22 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, which underlines the sacrosanct nature of diplomatic premises and mandates the host country to pro-



Sir Ronald Sanders

tect them from any intrusion or violation.

This contravention alarmed the overwhelming majority of member states of the Organization of American States (OAS), which rightfully regard the rights and immunities granted to diplomatic missions not as a mere legal formality, but as the bedrock of peaceful and respectful international relations. By invading the Mexican Embassy, the Ecuadorian government eroded the role of essential communication that embassies represent and the critical work of diplomatic personnel in fostering con-

structive relationships with host governments.

Therefore, whatever concerns the Ecuadorian government had about Mexico granting Glas political asylum, invading the Embassy, violently seizing and beating him and manhandling Embassy officials, cast the government of Ecuador squarely in the wrong.

This was not a matter other governments could overlook. It had to be condemned in order to send a strong message to the Ecuadorian government and all governments that such violations of inter-

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national law are unacceptable.

Hence, on April 10, after consultations between member states, 29 of the 32 active OAS member states voted in favour of the Resolution which condemned Ecuador's action. Only Ecuador opposed, and only one country, El Salvador abstained.

Mexico was absent from the meeting, likely due to the presence at the meeting of a Vice Minister from Ecuador with which Mexico had severed diplomatic ties immediately following the assault on its Embassy.

Having rightly condemned the government of Ecuador for intruding into the Mexican Embassy, thereby violating international law and eroding a pivotal cornerstone of peaceful international relations, a continuing dispute between Mexico and Ecuador has repercussions which must be avoided in the interest of the two countries and the broader hemisphere.

The ongoing dispute between Mexico and Ecuador risks disrupting unanimity within the OAS's Group of 10 and could extend its divisive effects to the Latin American and Caribbean group (GRULAC) at the United Nations, potentially hampering consensus on important issues. Recognizing the critical need for resolution, the OAS resolution encourages dialogue, with the Permanent Council offering its support to mediate efforts towards reconciliation.

Navigating such a path may be difficult in the present circumstances where both Mexico and Ecuador feel aggrieved with each other. Indeed, on April 11, the Mexican government filed an Application instituting proceedings against Ecuador before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), contending that "Ecuador has violated Mexico's rights under customary and conventional international law, as well as fundamental principles upon which the international legal system is based".

Mexico has asked the court to in-

dicate provisional measures pending a final judgment in the case, including that "Ecuador refrains from any act or conduct likely to aggravate or widen the dispute".

In its full hearing of the case, the ICJ, the Court may have to assess the merits of a counter claim from Ecuador, which has publicly stated that the Mexican asylum offer to Jorge Glas was wrongful under international law because individuals facing criminal charges should not be granted asylum.

The Ecuadorian government bases this contention on Article III of the 1954 Caracas Convention on Diplomatic Asylum which is legally binding only on 14 States that have ratified it – 13 from Latin America and one (Haiti) from CARICOM.

However, the 1954 Convention may have been superseded by the Convention on Diplomatic Relations which came into effect in April 1964 and to

which 193 states are signatories, including Ecuador and Mexico. Additionally, Article IV of the 1954 Convention also states, "It shall rest with the State granting asylum to determine the nature of the offense or the motives for the persecution".

It will be for the ICJ to decide whose legal arguments concerning granting asylum is right, but what cannot possibly be justified is the invasion of an Embassy. On that, Ecuador will undoubtedly be rebuked.

Notwithstanding these circumstances Mexico and Ecuador, in their own interest, should try to overcome this problem which, while framed in legal terms and now before the ICJ, has strong political overtones.

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



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## COMMUNITY NOTICE

11<sup>th</sup> April, 2024

The Ministry of Education, Sports and Creative Industries wishes to inform the general public of the closure of its headquarters located in the Government Office Complex on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2024.

This is to allow for fumigation of the building.

Regular hours of operation will resume on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2024.

The Ministry apologises for any inconvenience this closure may cause.

## OJ Simpson, NFL star acquitted in 'trial of the century', dies aged 76

By Graeme Baker

OJ Simpson, the former American football star turned actor who was controversially cleared of double murder, has died aged 76.

San Francisco-born Orenthal James Simpson rose to fame in college before playing in the NFL.

In 1995, he was acquitted of the murder of his former wife Nicole Brown and her friend in a trial that gripped America.

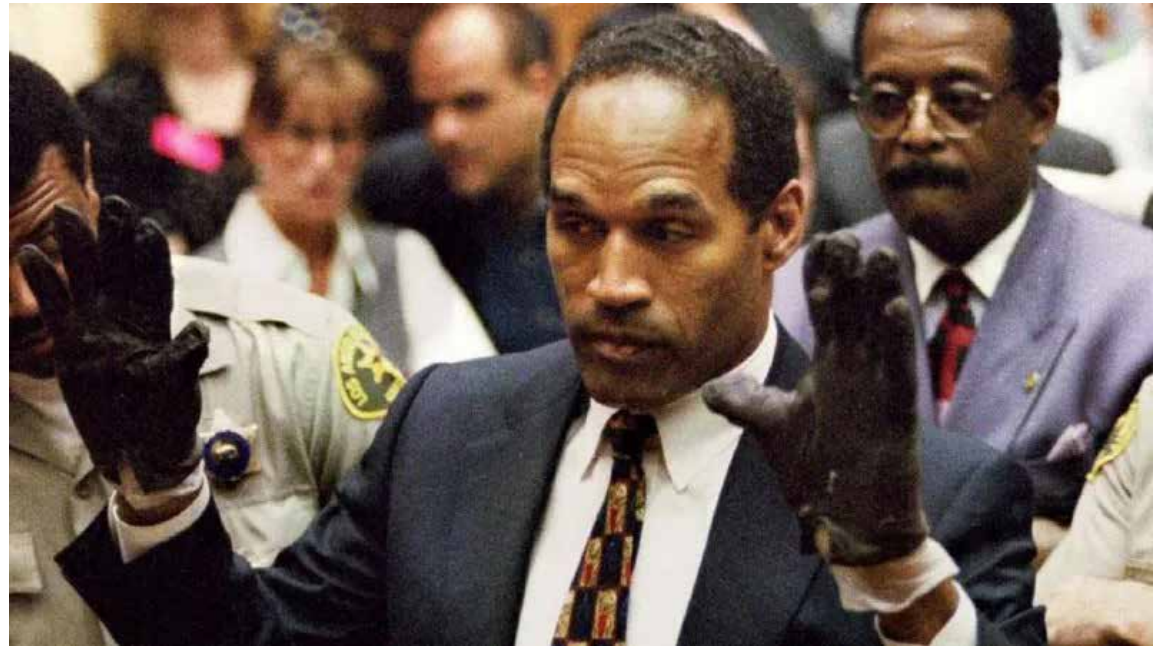
In 2008, he was sentenced to 33 years' imprisonment on unrelated charges of armed robbery. He was released in 2017.

Simpson died of cancer on Wednesday "surrounded by his children and grandchildren", a family statement read.

In 1994, Simpson was arrested as a suspect in the murder of his ex-wife Nicole Brown and her friend Ron Goldman. The pair were found stabbed to death outside Ms Brown's home in Los Angeles. Simpson became an immediate person of interest in the case.

On the day he was due to turn himself in, he fled in a white Ford Bronco with a former teammate, and led the police on a slow-speed chase through the Los Angeles area.

That chase engrossed audiences in the United States and abroad as it was



broadcast live on "rolling" 24-hour news channels still in their relative infancy.

In the ensuing court case, dubbed the "trial of the century" by US media, prosecutors argued Simpson had killed Brown in a jealous fury. Evidence included blood, hair and fibre tests linking Simpson to the murders.

The defence argued Simpson was framed by police who were motivated by racism.

In one of the trial's most memorable moments, prosecutors asked Simpson to put on a pair of blood-stained gloves allegedly found at the scene of the murder, but Simpson struggled to fit his hands into them. It led to one of Simpson's lawyers, Johnnie Cochran, telling the jury in his closing arguments: "If it doesn't fit, you must acquit."

The jury ultimately sided with Simpson, who had declared he was "absolutely 100% not guilty". The acquittal proved hugely controversial.

The families of Ms Smith and Mr Goldman did not give up - they pursued a civil case against Simpson in 1997 and a jury found Simpson liable for the two deaths. He was ordered to pay \$33.5m (£25.8m) in damages to their families.

In 2006, Simpson sold a book manuscript, titled "If I Did It", and a prospective TV interview, giving a "hypothetical" account of the murders he had always strenuously denied.

Public objections ended both projects, but Mr Goldman's family secured the book rights, added material imputing guilt to Simpson and had it published.

Simpson's final disgrace

came in 2008, when he was convicted of armed robbery for breaking into a Las Vegas hotel room with four accomplices, holding two sports memorabilia dealers at gunpoint and stealing items related to his NFL career.

He was sentenced to 33 years in jail, but was granted parole after serving the minimum of nine years.

Before his legal problems, Simpson was well-liked, known as an athlete, actor and the face of several major companies.

He was a college football star at University of Southern California before signing with the Buffalo Bills in 1969, where he played until 1977.

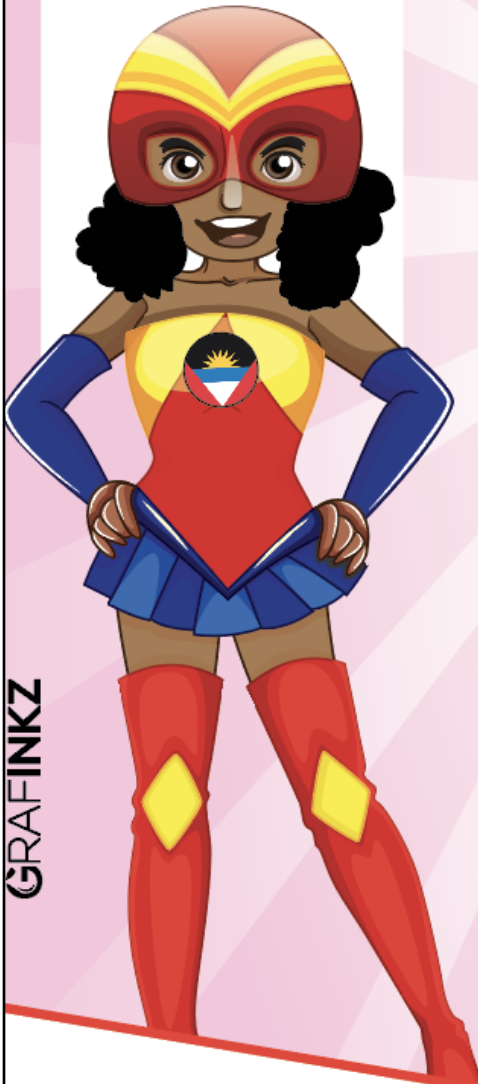
He became one of the greatest ball carriers in NFL history. In 1973, he was the first NFL player to "rush"

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## Four Colombians charged in Puerto Rico for drug smuggling bust off T&T

By Dillon De Shang

Four Colombian nationals have been indicted by a US federal grand jury in Puerto Rico for their alleged roles in a drug smuggling operation that was busted near Trinidad and Tobago.

The US Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico announced Juan José Castaño-Palomo, a dual French and Colombian national, and Colombian nationals Carlos Alberto Bravo-Sarasty, Gustavo Rodríguez-Salazar, and Emilson Yordao Quiñonez-Hachito have been charged with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance aboard a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States



Members of the United States Coast Guard (USCG) Law Enforcement Detachment Team board a self-propelled semi submersible vessel that they intercepted on March 21, 2024.

in violation of the Maritime Interdiction Act (DTVIA). The four defendants made their initial court appearances in the US District Court for the District of Puerto Rico. *cont'd on pg 15*

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- running to advance the ball for his team - more than 2,000 yards in a season. He retired in 1979 to concentrate on a career in film and television. His credits include roles in the Towering Inferno, Capricorn One and the Naked Gun series.

Broadcaster Bob Costas, who worked with Simpson on NBC's American football coverage, said that while he was not the first African American star, "he was the first to do it in a big way, an African American who broke through".

The Heisman Trophy organisation, which names college football's player of the season, said in a tweet that it

mourned the 1968 winner and extended sympathies to his family.

Attorney Carl Douglas, who represented Simpson alongside Robert Kardashian and Johnnie Cochran, said that he was "shocked and surprised" to learn of the football star's death. The attorney said that his and Simpson's names will "forever be linked together in some way".

In a statement, the Pro Football Hall of Fame outlined Simpson's achievements as an NFL player, and said records of those contributions would be preserved in its archive.

Fred Goldman, Ronald's father, described Simpson's death as "no great loss".

"The only thing I have to say is it's just further reminder of Ron being gone all these years," he told NBC News. "It's no great loss to the world. It's a further reminder of Ron's being gone."

Gloria Allred, an attorney who represented Nicole Brown Simpson's family during the murder trial, said that Simpson's death served as a reminder that the justice system failed abused women and allows "celebrity men to avoid true justice", according to a statement obtained by CNN.

Caitlyn Jenner, once part of Simpson's social circle, echoed Mr Goldman, posting two words on Twitter/X: "Good riddance."

## St Kitts & Nevis mourns passing of sports icon Alphonso Bridgewater

The sporting community of St Kitts and Nevis is mourning the loss of Alphonso Bridgewater, the President of the St Kitts and Nevis Olympic Committee (SKNOC), who passed away on April 10.

News of Bridgewater's death was announced by the SKNOC on social media.

SKNOC said Bridgewater should rest well knowing his legacy lives on.

Bridgewater, 72, served as the president of the SKNOC for over 30 years, during which time he made significant contributions to the advancement of sports in the twin-island nation.

He was recently honoured by the SKNOC for his efforts to promote the Olympic Movement and sports in St Kitts and Nevis.

Members of the SKNOC voted to rename its headquarters at Taylor's Range to the "Alphonso E Bridgewater Olympic House".

Sporting organisations have come out to pay trib-

ute to Bridgewater.

The St Kitts and Nevis Football Association (SKNFA) said Bridgewater gave his all to push sport in the twin-island nation.

"Mr Bridgewater played a pivotal role in nurturing and propelling our athletes to greater heights. His unwavering dedication to fostering athletic excellence in St Kitts and Nevis have been a source of inspiration to many," SKNFA stated.

"The SKNFA remains profoundly thankful for Mr Bridgewater's support and mentorship.

"His willingness to offer guidance, whether through administrative insights or personal advice, showcased his genuine commitment to uplifting everyone around him.

"Mr Bridgewater's readiness to extend a helping hand, to answer a call, or to impart wisdom, will be fondly remembered and sorely missed."

St Kitts and Nevis Athletics (SKNA) said Bridgewater was a powerhouse in sport administration and



Alphonso Bridgewater.

help the world know about St Kitts and Nevis.

"Mr Bridgewater has been very instrumental in the development of track

and field spanning over 4 decades.

"He ushered our sport into the Olympic Era as a force to be reckoned with," SKNA said.

"His dedication and love for the sport and more importantly the athletes, is one which is forever etched in the minds of the many athletes past and present. SKN Athletics is forever grateful for the contribution and service of Mr. Bridgewater."

### cont'd from pg 14

Puerto Rico on April 2, 2024, before US Magistrate Judge Marcos Lopez.

Documents presented in court alleged a United States Coast Guard (USCG) Law Enforcement Detachment Team was patrolling in international waters approximately 132 nautical miles northeast of Trinidad and Tobago on March 21, 2024 when the spotted and intercepted

a semi-submersible.

USCG law enforcement boarded the vessel and allegedly found 2,370 kilograms of cocaine and the four men.

Castaño-Palomo, Bravo-Sarasty, Rodríguez-Salazar and Quiñonez-Hachito face a maximum penalty of life in prison on the drug trafficking charges and a maximum sentence of fifteen years in prison for violations of the DTVIA.

## Key power plant near Kyiv destroyed by Russian strikes

A major power plant near Kyiv was completely destroyed by Russian strikes early on Thursday, energy company Centrenergo said.

Trypillya power plant was the largest electricity provider for three regions, including Kyiv, officials said.

“The scale of destruction is terrifying,” said Centrenergo chairman Andriy Hota.

Russia has long been deliberately and systematically targeting Ukraine’s energy system.

Mr Hota told the BBC that Thursday morning’s strikes destroyed “the transformer, the turbines, the generators. They destroyed 100%”.

A fire broke out in the turbine workshop of the Trypillya plant - located 50km (31 miles) to the south of Kyiv - following Thursday’s large-scale airborne attack.

The Centrenergo boss said the plant was targeted by multiple missiles. Staff on shift were able to escape, he said, because they ran for cover as soon as the first drone hit.

Residents were urged to shut their windows, charge all their devices and stock up on water.

More than 80 missiles and drones targeted sites across Ukraine in the early



hours of Thursday. Many targeted energy infrastructure and almost a third made it through Ukraine’s air defences.

Hours later, Centrenergo confirmed its Trypillya plant had been put out of use. Mr Hota said his company’s entire generative capacity in Ukraine was now destroyed.

It was one of Ukraine’s largest providers of electricity and heat. It operated two other power plants - one in the Kharkiv region which was destroyed in late March, and one in an area of the Donetsk region that was taken over by Russia in 2022.

The Kharkiv and the Trypillya plants used to generate some 8% of the country’s electricity, according to Mr Hota. The Trypillya thermal plant provided power to the three

central regions of Zhytomyr, Cherkasy and Kyiv.

The destruction of the Trypillya plant would not be a critical issue for Ukraine in the summer, he believed, although by winter it would become a “giant problem”.

While the plant can be rebuilt with help from spare parts from Europe, he says it will remain vulnerable to attack without Ukraine’s allies providing powerful air defences.

“We can repair. We can do the impossible. But we need protection.”

At least two more thermal power plants suffered “significant damage” overnight in the west of Ukraine, placing even more strain on electricity supply nationwide.

The DTEK power company was already down to 20% capacity after repeat attacks in March.

The company told the BBC that the latest missile and drone strike on these “purely civilian power stations” would make the task of providing critical power to the grid harder.

“Attack by attack, Russia is trying to strangle Ukraine’s energy system and with it our hard-won freedom,” DTEK said.

The Kharkiv region in the north-east has been hard hit again after its power plants suffered major damage in late March.

The mayor there described the situation as “very difficult” and announced more blackouts for households and businesses.

For a time on Thursday, the Kharkiv metro stopped running to save power. It has since resumed, but the power supply is dipping and surging so the trains are

*cont’d on pg 17*



## South Korean opposition wins parliamentary vote in landslide

South Korea's liberal opposition party has won a landslide majority in the country's general election to retain control of parliament.

The Democratic Party (DPK) and smaller opposition parties jointly won 192 of 300 seats in the National Assembly.

The vote is widely seen as a midterm referendum on President Yoon Suk Yeol, who has three years left in office.

His party leader Han Dong-hoon has resigned and Prime Minister Han Duck-soo has offered to resign.

This is a crushing defeat for Mr Yoon and his People Power Party (PPP), which has been struggling to achieve its agenda in a legislature dominated by the DPK. The DPK's win means they will be able to fast-track and push legislation through parliament.

Both the DPK and PPP



Lee Jae-myung, leader of the Democratic Party (R) has declared the win a 'victory for the people'.

use breakaway satellite parties to maximise their vote under South Korea's electoral system, which assigns some seats to smaller parties whose seat counts fall short of their overall support.

"This isn't the Democratic Party's victory but a great victory for the people," said DPK leader Lee Jae-myung on Thursday.

"Politicians on both

sides of the aisle must pool our strength to deal with the current economic crisis. The Democratic Party will lead the way in solving the livelihood crisis," he told reporters.

Today's result could embolden Mr Lee, who narrowly lost the 2022 presidential election to Mr Yoon, to make another presidential run.

without power - hospitals and the like. But after a series of attacks on our power facilities, we had to respond."

"Strikes on energy", he added, were part of Russia's aim of "demilitarising" Ukraine - one of his stated goals when the invasion began in February 2022.

In a separate development, four people died and several more were injured in the southern city of Mykolaiv in a rare series of daytime strikes on Thursday.

The Ukrainian Southern Military Command said on Telegram that private houses, cars and industrial facilities were damaged in the "insidious" attack.

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only working very intermittently.

President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that Russia had been "obliged to respond" to the strikes on Ukrainian energy sites following Kyiv's attacks on Russian targets, although this is a war he launched without cause two years ago.

"Unfortunately, we observed a series of strikes on our energy sites recently and were obliged to respond," he said.

"I want to emphasise that, even for humanitarian reasons, we did not carry out any strikes in winter. What I mean is that we didn't want to leave social institutions

Mr Yoon is under pressure to address a number of issues including rising food prices, a rapidly aging population and an ongoing doctor's strike.

In recent weeks, he has been criticised for appearing to be out of touch with the impact of inflation on voters.

Just last month, he was criticised for commenting during a visit to a Seoul supermarket that a bundle of green onions priced at 875 won (£0.51; \$0.65) was "reasonable".

The item had been priced at discount because of subsidies and would normally have cost between 3,000 and 4,000 won.

The comment sparked a backlash, with bundles of green onions later being used as props at farmers' protests and DPK election rallies.

# Sports News



## Action resumes in Gomez/Netherlands Insurance Youth Football League

Following a two-week break, action has resumed in the Gomez/Netherlands Insurance Youth Football League.

Defending Under-7 champions Pigotts Bullets kept their unbeaten run intact when the youth league resumed with the fourth week of matches at St. Anthony's Secondary School at Langfords.

The Pigotts Bullets recorded their fourth win in as many games by surging to a 3-0 victory against Young Warriors FC, which remained in the cellar after losing for the fourth time in as many games.

Last year's third-place finishers, Generation Next Football Club (GNFC) Rebels A, claimed their third win in four games by pulling off a 3-0 victory against GNFC Rebels 1, which

lost for the second time after winning their previous two matches in the Under-7 division.

CPTSA Wings FC notched up their second win in four games by securing a 3-0 win against TAMO FC, which lost for the third time in four games.

Last year's third-place finishers in the Under-9 Division, Pigotts Bullets FC, kept their unbeaten run intact, snatching a 3-1 victory against Five Islands FC to claim their fourth win in as many games.

It was the first defeat in four matches for Five Islands FC, which had won their previous three matches.

Reigning Under-9 division champions, the GNFC Rebels, won for the third time in four outings, snatching a 2-1 victory against the Young Warriors FC.

Wings FC claimed their second win in four matches with a 3-0 victory against TAMO FC, which remained in the cellar of the Under-9 Division after suffering their fourth loss in as many games.

Action also resumed with the third round of matches in the Under-11 division. With last year's champions, GNFC Rebels 1, resting, four teams took the opportunity to secure victory and joined the defending champs with two wins.

GNFC Rebels A, Young Warriors FC, Pigotts Bullets FC, and Wings FC 1 all notched up their second win in the Under-11 Division.

GNFC Rebels A claimed their second win in three matches by snatching a 2-1 win against Wings FC A, which

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## Jennings and Pares secondary to clash in schools' cricket under-19 two-day final

Jennings and Pares Secondary have advanced to the two-day final of the Under-19 Boys Division in the Ministry of Sports Schools Cricket Championships.

Both teams booked their spots in the final after claiming first innings honours in their respective drawn semi-final matches that ended on Wednesday.

Inspired by a fine all-round performance by Leeward Islands youth player Tanez Francis, Jennings Secondary won on first innings against defending champions Antigua Grammar School.

The Antigua Grammar School was dismissed in their first innings for 103 in 25.1 overs. Matthew Miller top scored with 35, and the diminutive Tanez Francis grabbed seven wickets for 26 runs in 12.1 overs.

Francis then slammed a half century as he almost single-handedly carried Jennings Secondary to their first innings total of 126 all out in 35.2 overs.

Francis just missed out on reaching a century, as he fell for 92. Matthew Miller snapped up four wickets for 21 runs in 6.2 overs, Hosea Roberts claimed two for 21 in six overs, and Anthony Pierre picked up two for 24 in eight overs.

Pares Secondary won on first innings against Ottos Comprehensive School. Ottos Comprehensive School was bundled out in their first innings for just 34 in 9.2 overs.

Zaveek Toppin got 15. Mekali Tonge grabbed five wickets for 14 runs in 5.2 overs, and Tazio Watson claimed four wickets for 20 runs in four overs.

In reply, Pares Secondary School made 64 all out in 18.2 overs. Tayari Tonge scored 23.

J'Quan Hunte snapped up three wickets for nine runs in three overs, Zaveek Toppin took three for 16 in six overs, and Keion Knight picked up two wickets for one run in 3.2 overs.



Jennings Secondary allrounder Tanez Francis, who celebrated his birthday earlier this month.

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lost for the second time in as many games.

The Young Warriors FC won for the second time in three matches by romping to a 6-2 victory against Greenbay Hoppers FC, which lost for the first time after winning their previous two games.

Pigotts Bullets FC prevailed 3-0 against TAMO FC to record their second win in as many games. It was the third loss in as many matches for TAMO FC.

Wings FC 1 also won for the sec-

ond time in three matches by snatching a 2-1 victory against Five Islands FC, who lost for the third time in as many games.

Reigning Under-13 Division champions Villa Lions maintained their successful start in defense of their title defense by snatching a 2-1 win against Wings FC to claim their second win in as many games.

GNFC Rebels 1 prevailed 3-2 against Jennings Ebenezer FC, Greenbay Hoppers defeated TAMO FC 3-0, and the Young Warriors FC recorded a 3-1 win against Urlings Minions FC.

Reigning Under-17 Division champion New Evolution beat Wings FC 3-0 to claim their second win in two matches.

Five Islands FC and Soccer Academy also secured their first win in two matches.

Five Islands recorded a 5-2 victory against Villa Lions FC, and Soccer Academy prevailed 4-1 against the GNFC Rebels.

Willikies and Barracuda FC played to a 1-1 draw in the Under-17 Division encounters. It was the second draw in as many games for Willikies.



The Starz 1 Seniors female volleyball team. (ABAVA)

## Wins for Starz 1 and Stoneville's men in local volleyball league

Starz 1 Seniors and Stoneville have continued their impressive winning run in the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association's (ABAVA) Local League on Wednesday night.

Starz 1 Seniors kept their unbeaten run intact in the female Division 1 league by snatching a 3-2 victory against Stoneville in the first game of a double header at the indoor volleyball stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex.

Starz 1 Seniors claimed their fourth win in as many games by prevailing 25-23, 25-19, 18-25, 22-25, and 16-14 against Stoneville's women in approximately two hours and three minutes. It was the second loss in four games for Stoneville.

Reigning men's Division 1 cham-

pion Stoneville remained on course for a successful title defense by pulling off a 3-1 win against the Print Xpress Renegades in Wednesday's second encounter.

Stoneville recorded their fifth win in six games by prevailing 25-14, 24-26, 25-21, and 25-18 against the Renegades in approximately two hours and 26 minutes. It was the first loss in five games for the Renegades.

The Sharks recorded their first win in five games with a 3-0 victory against TOA Media and MKUU Tours Chargers Velocity in their men's Division 1 encounter.

The Sharks took approximately one hour and 28 minutes to secure victory by prevailing 26-24, 25-19, and 25-18 against Chargers Velocity, who were beaten for the fifth time in

as many games.

High Flyerz 2 Phoenix claimed their second win in four games in the men's Division 1 league with a 3-1 victory against the Invaders.

High Flyerz 2 Phoenix prevailed 25-19, 25-27, 25-17, and 25-19 against the Invaders in a match that lasted an hour and 41 minutes. It was the fifth loss in six games for the Invaders.

The ABAVA volleyball local league will continue with a double header at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex on Saturday.

The Jets will face reigning female Division 1 champion Caribbean Alliance Insurance Da Squad at 6:45 pm, and Pytonz will tackle Print Xpress Renegades in a men's Division 1 affair at 7:45 pm.

## Wins for Da Project and Court Martials in ABBA's Division II League

Da Project and Court Martials recorded wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division League on Wednesday night.

Da Project recorded their fifth win in six encounters with an 81-68 victory against the Rebels in the first game of a double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Bryan Matthew produced 24 points, 19 rebounds, and five assists; Nyique Watkins had 23 points, nine rebounds, and six assists; Tyler Jacobs converted 18 points and snatched eight rebounds; and Eric Joseph chipped in with eight points and eight rebounds for Da Project.

Zuri Nesbitt produced



15 points, seven assists, and five rebounds; Buell Henry sank 14 points and grabbed 22 rebounds; Kareem Blair had 12 points

and six rebounds; and Tyn-dale Telemaque chipped in with eight points and six rebounds for the Rebels, who suffered their fourth loss in

six games.

Court Martials claimed their fourth win in seven games by coasting to an emphatic 81-63 victory against the Wadadli Elite in the second game of Wednesday night's double header.

De-Lorge Jules shot a game-high 44 points and claimed six rebounds, and Baldwin Anthony converted 12 points and grabbed 13 rebounds for the Court Martials.

Aiden Christian sank 16 points and snatched 16 rebounds; Orion Seraphine scored 14 points and grabbed eight rebounds; and Jayleyle Joseph sank eight points and claimed nine rebounds for the Wadadli Elite, which lost for the fourth time in seven games.

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in the first minute, and Kevon Young scored in the 17th minute for TAMO FC. Xarik Richards had a 22nd-minute conversion, and Adonijah Dyett scored an own goal in the 37th minute for Glanvilles.

TAMO FC will remain in 14th place by advancing to 18 points after drawing for the third time in 16 matches. Glanvilles will remain in 17th place by advancing to eight points after drawing for the second time in 17 games.

ABCA Super40 Cup resumes this weekend

Three teams will be seeking to maintain their perfect start when the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) Super40 Cup resumes this weekend.

Defending champions PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks, Combined Schools, and Empire Nation were the only three of the 10 teams to win both games in the first two rounds of the limited-overs competition, which got underway last weekend.

They will all be seeking to extend their unbeaten run with victories in the third and fourth round matches this weekend.

The Blackhawks will host the Bolans Blasters at Ball Beef in Liberta in one of the five third-round fixtures on Saturday.

Combined Schools will face the Pigotts Crushers at Pigotts, and Empire Nation will meet the All Saints Pythons at the Mack Pond playing field in All Saints Village.

In the other third-round matches,

which will commence at 11 am on Saturday, the Caribbean Union Bank (CUB) Bethesda Golden Eagles will take on the New Winthorpes Lions at home in Bethesda, and the Jennings Tigers will tackle the WES Rising Sun Spartans at Rising Sun in St. John's.

Five fourth-round matches, starting at 11 am, will also take place on Sunday. Combined Schools will meet the Bolans Blasters in New Winthorpes.

Empire Nation and Pigotts Crushers will clash at Rising Sun, and All Saints Pythons will host the Bethesda Golden Eagles at Mack Pond.

The Jennings Tigers will take on the New Winthorpes Lions in Jennings, and the Liberta Blackhawks will face the WES Rising Sun Spartans at Ball Beef in Liberta.

## Sea View Farm drop crucial points in quest to win Second Division League title

Sea View Farm dropped crucial points in their quest to win the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division on Wednesday.

Sea View Farm, currently in second place, squandered a chance to overtake leaders Freeman's Village when they suffered a 2-1 loss against Urlings at the ABFA Technical Center.

Sea View Farm was unable to press home an early advantage in the encounter after taking a one-nil lead via Klyster Rowe's sixth-minute conversion.

Urlings recovered to snatch victory via first-half goals from Devlyn Williams in the 21st minute and Conrad Willock in the 42nd minute.

Their third loss in 17 matches left Sea View Farm in second place with 38 points, one adrift of Second Division League leaders Freeman's Village, who have played 16 matches.

Their ninth win in 16 matches allows Urlings to move into fifth place with 32 points.

Bethesda and Soccer



Players of the Sea View Farm football team. (File photo)

Academy missed a chance to gain ground on the front-runners as they both dropped points when they could only battle to a 2-2 draw in their clash at the ABFA Technical Center.

Following a goalless first half, Chunsae Martin scored twice for Bethesda, with goals in the 70th and 80th minutes.

Michael Peters had a 78th-minute conversion, and teammate Jaiden Wray scored a beautiful free kick in the 85th minute to equalize and salvage a draw for the Soccer Academy.

Bethesda will remain in fourth place by advancing to 34 points after drawing

for the fourth time in 18 matches.

Soccer Academy will drop from eighth to ninth place by advancing to 29 points after drawing for the fifth time in 14 matches.

Golden Grove advanced from ninth to seventh place on goal difference with a 4-1 win against the Young Warriors at Buckley's.

Keith Daniels scored in the 27th minute, Calroy Douglas had a 30th-minute conversion, Nyique Baptiste scored in the 34th minute, and Terrence Spencer scored the final goal for Golden Grove in the 72nd minute.

Johnathan Francis

scored a consolation goal for the Young Warriors in the 54th minute.

Their 10th win in 17 matches allows Golden Grove to advance to 31 points, the same as FC Master Ballerz, who are in sixth place due to a superior goal difference and have played only 14 matches.

The Young Warriors will remain in 16th place with nine points after losing for the 13th time in 16 matches.

TAMO FC and Glanvilles fought to a 2-2 draw in their encounter at the Golden Grove playing field.

Carlus Stephens scored

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