



ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

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# HISTORIC!!!

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## Historic!!!

It was an emotional scene at the VC Bird International Airport on Tuesday when scores gathered to witness the arrival of the first two E-145 jet aircrafts that will form part of the new Antigua-based airline, LIAT 2020 Limited.

For those who gathered, including senior government officials, travel agents, airport officials and representatives of the new airline, witnessing the arrival of the two aircraft not only brought back fond memories of emotional attachment to the former LIAT (1974) Ltd., but also stirred up feelings of goodwill and for success of the new airline venture.

The aircraft arrived minutes apart with the new company logo – LIAT 20 – and were greeted with a water cannon salute provided by the Fire Department along with cheers from those gathered. The event was streamed live on several platforms thus ensuring that people here in Antigua and Barbuda and across

the world could watch the events unfold as they happened.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne described the event as ‘a momentous occasion’ signaling an important event in Caribbean aviation history. PM Browne said he was moved by the occasion, but rather than being overwhelmed with pride he felt a deep sense of humility.

He recalled that it was back in 2020 during the dark days of the COVID-19 pandemic, that the government had the vision to register the company LIAT 2020, and now, four years later, everyone is celebrating the full coming into being of LIAT 2020, which he views as a resounding success for Antigua and Barbuda and the Caribbean people.

He further recalled that he urged the nation at the time to learn to live with COVID-19 and not to be daunted by what at the time was seen as a menacing disease, but the nation had to learn to live and work with it



Prime Minister Gaston Browne and continue to plan for the advancement of the country.

“No one would have expected that a small island state, one of the most vulnerable countries that had endured a most devastating impact from COVID-19 in 2020, would have the courage to plan the start of a new airline,” he emphasized.

PM Browne again expressed his disappointment that other Caribbean leaders did not see the vision and the opportunity that COVID provided. They, he stated, wanted to bury LIAT (1974) Ltd., but he saw the pandemic as an opportunity to ‘right-size’ the airline.

Two of the motivating factors for the prime minister was the perseverance of

jobs and the maintenance of connectivity within the CARICOM region

Ambassador Daven Joseph, who was tasked with the responsibility to get LIAT 2020 started, reported that both he and the team he led, sought to have involvement and partnerships with other governments and entities in the Caribbean without success. In the end, it was the Nigerian airline, Air Peace, that came forward and joined with the Antigua and Barbuda government to get LIAT 2020 operational.

The two planes form part of Air Peace’s contribution to LIAT 2020. Two more aircraft will arrive over the coming months, to include a 120-seater jet.



## LIAT 2020 prepares to take to the skies

The arrival of two jet aircraft for LIAT 2020 has created greater sense of urgency to staff up the airline quickly and to put systems in place to enable full operations to take place as soon as possible.



Representative for Air Peace Caribbean, Hafsah Absulsalam

Representative for Air Peace Caribbean, Hafsah Absulsalam, said the first order of business is to acquire the Air Operators Certificate which is being processed with the Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority (ECCAA). So far two training flights have been conducted with the ART aircraft acquired through the Caribbean Development Bank. She said demonstration flights are expected to take

place over the coming week. "Within weeks we are hoping to launch the airline. We will be hitting the road with our marketing campaign to tell you what our services are about. Naturally, the islands where we take our demonstration flights will be the first to be added to our schedule. With that in mind we are getting our op-



erational readiness in place to ensure us able to begin operations," she explained.

Absulsalam, a Nigerian with more than twenty years in the aviation industry, described herself as the 'Project Lead' for getting the airline off the ground. She said staffing and other consideration are top of her agenda as

efforts to get the airline started move to a higher gear.

The two islands where the demonstration flights will land are St. Kitts and St. Lucia. These are the first destinations for LIAT 2020 and according to the Project Lead, tickets are likely to go on sale shortly as the airline scales up to full operations.

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## Antigua Cruise Port, IMO and ADOMS hold port security workshop

Antigua Cruise Port recently teamed up with the International Maritime Organisation to organize a special training workshop on passenger and baggage security on ships. The activity was hosted in partnership with the Antigua and Barbuda Department of Marine Services and Merchant Shipping (ADOMS) team.

ACP Officer-in-Charge, Cynthia Jacobs-Browne, gave opening remarks at the workshop that brought together twenty-five participants, including the port facility security team, Heritage Quay security staff members, and other government employees. The participants completed training to enhance the effectiveness of screening and searching cruise passengers, crew, and other port partners to detect prohibited items. The instructors placed special emphasis on identifying firearms and improvised explosive devices.

Jacobs-Browne spoke



enthusiastically about the collaboration between the IMO, the government of Antigua and Barbuda, and Antigua Cruise Port through this valuable and informative workshop. "As the number of cruise ship calls and the number of passenger traffic that we receive continue to grow, so too does our security risk. By collaborating with the IMO and the government to enhance the practical security management skills of our team and our partners, we

are creating a safer environment for our guests and community and securing the future of the local cruise sector."

"This information," she continued, "coupled with the international security management practices that we consistently implement and enhance as a member of the Global Ports Holding network of ports, will ensure that Antigua Cruise Port is second-to-none in port security management and development."

The comprehensive training session was completed as Antigua Cruise Port finalizes plans to construct a permanent terminal facility and a highly anticipated, multi-million-dollar Antigua Day Club experience. The new 11,000 square foot terminal facility will include security screening, customs and immigration offices, check-in stations, luggage areas, kiosks, retail, restrooms, and administrative offices. Construction is set to begin in Q4 2024.

## National Secondary Schools Theatre Festival takes centre stage

The annual showcase of the creative talents of students in the nation's secondary schools is now underway with performances taking place every night until Friday night when it ends.

It's the National Secondary Schools Theatre Festival put on by the Cultural Division to provide an avenue for the young 'creatives' to develop and portray their skills in dance, playwrighting, directing, lighting, acting, and theatrical skills such as audio-visual technicians.

The venue for the festival is the Multi-Purpose Cultural Centre where the interior has been trans-



The interior of the Performing hall of the Multi-Purpose Cultural Centre has been transformed for the National Secondary Schools Theatre Festival.

formed with a stage and lighting system to enhance the different performances.

Seven secondary schools will compete for top honours in the dance category of the festival. These are

the Jennings Secondary, All Saints Secondary, Sir Novelle Richards Academy, Christ the King High School, the Antigua Girls High School, Otto Comprehensive and Princess Margaret School.

In the drama category there are five schools participating; Princess Margaret, Ottos Comprehensive, Jennings Secondary, Christ the King High and the Sir Novelle Richards Academy.

Director of Culture Khan Cordice said the theatre festival has had an impact on the development of the creative talents of young people in Antigua and Barbuda many of whom later participate on other theatrical productions at the local or national levels such as the Police annual dramatic production.

Several others have become drama teachers within the education system.

## Symbolic Windrush Flag presented to PM

A flag symbolizing the struggles of the Windrush generation of Caribbean nationals who traveled to the United Kingdom in the aftermath of World War Two to help with the reconstruction of that country...has been presented to Prime Minister Gaston Browne, who accepted it on behalf of the people of Antigua and Barbuda.

The presentation of the Windrush Flag to Prime Minister Browne was done at the Office of the Prime Minister on Tuesday by two directors of Windrush Generations, UK, the organization that has been lobbying on behalf of the Windrush men and women and their descendants but also to bring awareness to their situation to Caribbean people at home.

Directors Nigel S. Guy, MBE, and Charles Dacres, are visiting Antigua



and Barbuda as part of a nine-country swing through the English-speaking Caribbean.

PM Browne said the Windrush issue is a personal one for him as he has had family members who had trav-

eled to the UK in the late 1940's/early 1950's to help with the rebuilding of that country following the ravages of the war.

"We too, feel very proud of the  
*cont'd on pg 6*



PM Gaston Browne joined other ALBA heads at a meeting in Caracas

## Prime Minister attends ALBA meeting

Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister Gaston Browne is in Caracas, Venezuela, for the XXIII ALBA-TCP Summit, which will take place today.

PM Browne traveled to Caracas on Tuesday and he will join other ALBA-TCP members states from the OECS, Cuba and Venezuela to discuss a range of matters of mutual interest.

The Antigua and Barbu-



PM Browne arrives in Venezuela

da leader as well as his counterparts from the sub-region were greeted at the airport with a special welcome on

arrival in Caracas.

Among the welcoming party was the ALBA-TCP Executive Director, Jorge Arreaza.

Just last month, the Executive Director of ALBA-TCP was in St. John's to hold discussions with PM Browne where they analysed regional and geopolitical realities of the day as well as the Strategic 2030 Strategic Agenda.

### *cont'd from pg 5*

contributions of our Caribbean diaspora in Britain and we felt that it was an injustice that was done to them.

"These are people who literally 'slaved' after being paid minimum wage and following which were dealt with harshly by being deported, we felt that this was an act of malevolence that some of us could not comprehend. We had asked the UK government to resolve the issue amicably," he stated.

The prime minister urged the organization to ensure that their advocacy includes financial compensation by those affected by the UK Govern-

ment's policy.

Guy explained that the UK government had put up over one million pounds to assist the Windrush generations and others affected by the UK policy, however, he suggested that payments from the fund has been miniscule because of the complexity of filling out the claim forms.

"One had to hire a solicitor or a barrister to help them fill out the forms; they were tedious and complex," he noted.

The Windrush General directors asked the prime minister to raise the flag in the Antigua and Barbuda par-

liament on May 24 to commemorate the sacrifices and struggles of the Windrush people, who started arriving in London in 1948 but who after many years of working in the UK were denied full citizenship and some were even deported or faced threats of deportation.

The team has already visited Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Barbados, St. Kitts Nevis and now Antigua and Barbuda.

The team will also visit Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada to help bring an awareness to this issue

## CDB President resigns with “immediate effect”

By Peter Richards/CMC

President of the Barbados-based Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Dr. Hyginus ‘Gene’ Leon, has resigned with “immediate effect” from the regional financial institution.

According to a three-page letter sent to the Bank by his St. Lucia-based lawyers, Leon is of the opinion that “he will never be treated fairly” after he had been sent on administrative leave in January.

“It is also evident that the Bank has lost all trust and confidence in our client by the failure of the Board of Governors to prevent the continued violations of its Charter, policies, rules and regulations with regard to its elected President.

“Our client has therefore made the extremely difficult decision to resign his elected position of the President of the Bank with immediate effect”.

The lawyers have given the regional financial institution until May 4 “to negotiate unamicable separation” indicating also that their correspondence should be viewed “as our client’s pre action protocol letter” regarding the entire situation.

In the three-page letter, dated April 21, and headlined “Re. Dr. Hyginus ‘Gene’ Leon, Resignation and Constructive Dismissal, a copy of which has been obtained by the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC), Leon’s St. Lucia-based lawyers said they would be moving to the courts in Barbados “or any other jurisdiction more appropriate, to enforce our client’s legal and constitutional rights”.

In January it was disclosed that Dr Leon, had been sent on administrative leave until April this year, as “an ongoing administrative process”



Dr. Hyginus ‘Gene’ Leon

continued at the region’s premier financial institution.

The CDB has remained mum on the circumstances surrounding the decision to send the St. Lucian-born economist on administrative leave, with the acting president Isaac Solomon, confirming at a bank news conference in February that “there is an internal administrative process involving the president”.

In February, Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne, who was attending the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) summit in Guyana, said concerns had been raised about the method used to send Leon on administrative leave.

“..at some point we will have to address the issue of the procedures and the fact that subordinates within an institution can literally take disciplinary action against their superior without even consulting with the directors or the governors of the bank”.

In their letter, the lawyers wrote that “On the 16th of April 2024, 40 hours after our client’s leave expired, our client received a letter of notification of leave extension signed by the chairman of the OAC, but

stating that it was from “the Board of Directors of the Bank (currently carrying out the functions of the OAC with respect to the investigation...).

“We are uncertain at this stage of the significance of this as the OAC is not the Board of Directors and the Board of Directors is not the OAC. The meeting on the 16th of April 2024, was another breach of the Bank’s by-laws, the Charter and its policies,” the lawyers wrote.

In their letter, the lawyers noted that the Board of Governors has “never responded” to them regarding “our letters of complaint about the manner in which the investigation has been initiated, and allowed to continue.

“Our many letters consistently complained that the Bank has breached and is in violation of its own charter, laws, rules, regulations, and policies as regards the conduct of an investigation pertaining to the elected president”.

They wrote that central to the complaint is that their client “has only been informed of the general, barebones nature of the wide complaints levelled against him”.

“These complaints continue to be bare, nonspecific, allegations without condescending to any particulars of the circumstances of the complaints including but not limited to dates, subjects, places or references to the evidence to support the grave and serious allegations made against our client”.

The lawyers wrote that the initiation of the investigations “was and continues to be in violation of Annex 10 of the ICA Procedures for Special Investigations, the Code of Conduct for Directors, and Uniform Principles

*cont’d on pg 8*

# Local News



*cont'd from pg 7*  
and Guidelines for investigations and many other policies of the Bank and its Charter”.

The lawyers said in their view, the conduct of the investigation has been “unconventional, does not follow due process, and does not adhere to the best practices reflected in the more established Multilateral Development Banks.

“All of these complaints have been meticulously set out in our previous letters,” they said, adding “we are therefore of the opinion that the grave procedural irregularities fatally taint

the initiation and continuation of the investigation, rendering it null and void ab initio”.

The lawyers said that Leon’s “wrongful suspension” ended on April 14 this year and that he endeavoured to return to work the following day “despite the embarrassment of his forced and unlawful leave and the humiliation of not having received any communication prior to the expiration of leave.

They said Leon also wrote the Director of Human Resources to have his access to the Bank restored and to have returned to

him, his lap top, Ipad and Iphone ”so that he could carry out his duties as President’.

“We also sent a letter to the Board of Governors suggesting an orderly process for our client’s return to work, consequent on the termination of the “forced” leave and wrongful suspension imposed on him.

“Our client received an email after the end of the working day from the Director, Human Resources, stating that he had no authority to so act, to restore our client’s access to the Bank, and the return of his devices”.

The lawyers said given the publicity “surrounding the President’s suspension for unethical conduct and the severe reputation damage so far to our client, the non-communicated, abrupt extension of leave is clearly a less than stellar commitment by the Bank to its adherence to integrity and transparency”.

The lawyers also made reference of a letter they received from the Washington-based law firm, Arnold & Porter indicating that the Board of Directors was convening a meeting on April 16 to determine whether to extend Leon’s paid administrative leave “pending the conclusion of the investigation”.

Leon is the sixth president of the regional development finance institution. He was elected at a special meeting of the CDB Board of Governors held on January 19, 2021, for a five-year term, and assumed office on May 4, 2021.

Leon heads a team of more than 200 employees headquartered in Bridgetown and came to the assignment with 35 years of experience in economics, financial policy development, and executive management, more than 20 of which were spent working with the Washington-based International Monetary Fund (IMF).

He had succeeded the Jamaican-born Dr. Warren Smith who retired in 2021 after serving as president for 10 years.



# Photo Essay



## Tesla profits nosedive as more job cuts announced

Tesla has seen its profits more than halve this year, and says it will bring forward the launch of new models and cut thousands more jobs to try to reverse its fortunes.

The electric vehicle (EV) maker said on Tuesday it had made \$1.13bn (£910m) over the first three months of the year, compared with \$2.51bn (£2bn) a year earlier.

Tesla, owned and run by the billionaire Elon Musk, said it would also axe more than 6,000 jobs at its sites in Texas and California.

The company has suffered from falling demand and competition from cheaper Chinese imports which has led its stock price to collapse by 43% over 2024.

Earlier this month, it said it would shed 10% of its global workforce.

Figures for the first quarter of 2024 revealed revenues of \$21.3bn, down on analysts' predictions of just over \$22bn.

But the decision by Tesla to bring forward the launch of new models from the second half of 2025 boosted its shares by nearly 7% in after-hours trading.

The EV maker did not reveal details on pricing of the new vehicles.

Mr Musk will face investors in a conference call on details of the new models, possibly to include the Model 2 (a cheaper Tesla vehicle which Reuters reported had been shelved in April).

However, the company has already been on a charm offensive, trying to win over new customers by dropping its prices in a series of markets in the face of falling sales.

Tesla said its situation was not unique.

"Global EV sales continue to be



under pressure as many carmakers prioritize hybrids over EVs," it said.

Chinese models have also flooded the market and undercut Tesla's price point, while still providing reliability.

Its stock has fallen to \$142 (£114) as a result, a 15-month low for the company.

But Tesla has faced similar issues with its stock price in the past - falling as low as \$113 in January 2023 - before it more than doubled.

And that is not the end of Tesla's troubles, after the car firm had to recall thousands of its new Cybertrucks over safety concerns.

But despite plans to bring forward new models originally planned for next year the firm is cutting its workforce, again.

Tesla said it would lose 3,332 jobs in California and 2,688 positions in Texas, starting mid-June.

The cuts in Texas represent 12% of Tesla's total workforce of almost 23,000 in the area where its gigafactory and headquarters are located.

However, Mr Musk sought to downplay the move.

"Tesla has now created over 30,000 manufacturing jobs in California!" he

said in a post on his social media platform X, formerly Twitter, on Tuesday.

Another 285 jobs will be lost in New York.

Tesla's total workforce stood at more than 140,000 late last year, up from around 100,000 at the end of 2021, according to the company's filings with US regulators.

The car firm is also facing other issues, with a struggle over Mr Musk's compensation still raging on.

On Wednesday, Tesla asked shareholders to vote for a proposal to accept Mr Musk's compensation package - once valued at \$56bn - which had been rejected by a Delaware judge.

The judge found Tesla's directors had breached their fiduciary duty to the firm by awarding Mr Musk the pay-out.

Due to the fall in Tesla's stock value, the compensation package is now estimated to be around \$10bn less - but still greater than the GDP of many countries.

In addition, Tesla wants its shareholders to agree to the firm being moved from Delaware to Texas - which Mr Musk called for after the judge rejected his payday.

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**WE ARE GETTING STRONGER**

## How robots are taking over warehouse work

By Ben Morris

Shoppers probably don't think much about what happens next when they place an online grocery order.

But it sets-off an intricate dance of software, artificial intelligence, robots, vans and workers.

At an Ocado warehouse just outside Luton, I'm in the middle of such a dance.

As far as I can see, hundreds of robots whizz around a grid, fetching items for online orders. They move with dizzying speed and precision.

In the early days of online shopping, when you placed an order, humans would dash around a warehouse or a store collecting your items.

But for years now, Ocado has been using robots to collect and distribute products, bringing them to staff, who pack them into boxes for delivery.

And Ocado is not the only firm investing in such automation.

In its warehouses, Asda uses a system from Swiss automation firm Swisslog and Norway's AutoStore. In the US, Walmart has been automating parts of its supply chain using robotics from an American company called Symbotic.

Back in Luton, Ocado has taken its automation process to a higher level.

The robots which zoom around the grid, now bring items to robotic arms, which reach out and grab what they need for the customer's shop.

Bags of rice, boxes of tea, packets of crumpets are all grabbed by the arms using a suction cup on the end.

It might seem like a trivial addition, but training a robot to recognise an item, grab it successfully and move it, is surprisingly difficult.

At Ocado around 100 engineers



Symbotic provides automation technology for Walmart.

have spent years training the artificial intelligence (AI) to take on that task.

James Matthews, chief executive of Ocado Technology explains the AI has to interpret the information coming from its cameras.

“What is an object? Where are the edges of that object? How would one grasp it?”

In addition the AI has to work out how to move the arm. “How do I pick that up and accelerate in a way without flinging it across the room? How do I place it in a bag?” he says.

The Luton warehouse has 44 robotic arms, which at the moment account for 15% of the products that flow through the facility, that's about 400,000 items a week. The rest are handled by staff at picking stations.

The staff handle items that robots are not ready for yet, like wine bottles which are heavy and have curved surfaces, making them difficult to grasp.

But the system is ramping up. The company is developing different attachments for the robot arms that will allow them to handle a wider variety of items.

“We're just playing it carefully

and ramping slowly over time,” says Mr Matthews. “It's a deliberate constraint on our behalf, so we continue providing good service to people, and not crushed custard creams in every order, or worse, putting stuff on the track that goes under the wheels of one of the bots and creates an incident.”

In two or three years Ocado expects the robots will account for 70% of the products.

This inevitably means fewer human staff, but the Luton warehouse still has 1,400 staff, and many of those will still be needed in the future.

“There will be some sort of curve that tends towards fewer people per building. But it's not as clear cut as, ‘hey, look, we're on the verge of just not needing people’. We're a very long way from that,” Mr Matthews says.

Ocado is hoping to sell its automation technology to companies outside the grocery sector. Late last year it announced a deal with Canada's McKesson, a large pharmaceuticals distributor.

*cont'd on pg 14*



ON AIR

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## High Court strikes down buggery laws among consenting adults

High Court judge, Justice Kimberly Cenac-Phulgence Monday ruled that sections of the Sexual Offences Act contravene the Dominica Constitution as she ruled in favour of a “gay man” who challenged legislations that criminalises buggery and other sexual activity between consenting partners, including and in particular, partners of the same sex.

In a 40-page ruling, the judge said that sections 14 and 16 of the Sexual Offences Act contravene Sections One and 10 of the Dominica Constitution and their rights to liberty as enshrined in the Constitution.

The un-named “gay man” had brought the lawsuit, claiming that the law violates “numerous rights guaranteed in the Constitution of Dominica” with his lawyers making particular ref-



erence to sections 14 and section 16 of the Sexual Offences Act.

Section 14 is a sweeping law criminalising gross indecency which is defined as any act (other than penile-vaginal sex) by anyone “involving the use of the genital organs, breast or anus to arouse or gratifying sexual desire.”

The maximum penalty is 12 years

in prison, if the act is committed with a person aged 16 or older, while section 16 of the Act criminalises buggery, which the Act defines as anal sex between two men or between a man and a woman.

The maximum penalty is 10 years imprisonment plus the possibility of forced psychiatric confinement.

### *cont'd from pg 12*

“Think about which industries have the need to move things around efficiently inside of warehouse... it’s endless,” says Mr Matthews.

So where will the automation of warehouses end? Are we heading to human-free warehouses that can run 24 hours a day?

Not so fast, says Sarah Bolton, who specialises in commercial real estate at law firm Taylor Wessing.

“It’s almost prohibitively expensive, we’re talking hundreds of millions of pounds to fully automate a warehouse,” she points out.

“So you’re really only talking about the big tenants in the really big warehouses looking at full au-

tomation, just because you have to have that size to make it anywhere near financially viable.”

She also points that automation needs modern buildings, including floors that can stand heavy weights, large spaces without support columns, so there’s less for the robots to crash into. Reliable electricity connections are also vital.

“You’re reliant on new build, and there’s a massive undersupply of new build warehouse stock in the UK at the minute,” says Ms Bolton.

AutoStore is tackling some of those challenges. It has a company called Pio which is developing automation for smaller busi-

nesses.

It uses much of the same technology that AutoStore supplies to big firms - robots buzzing around on a storage grid where goods are stacked vertically. However the upfront costs of Pio’s system are lower, with the cost related to the volume of goods the system handles. The software is simpler and designed to integrate easily with common e-commerce systems like Shopify.

“It’s a complete offering... where the upfront cost is very reduced. So it’s quite affordable for these companies to get access to automation and start to get the benefits out of it.

“And since the technology is very flexible and

scalable, you can continue to basically increase volume by adding more robots rather than more storage capacity,” says Carlos Fernández, chief product officer at AutoStore.

At the moment 10 clients are running Pio’s automation system with another five customers signed up.

Mr Fernández sees huge growth potential.

“Over the coming years, there’s going to be a journey of making the technology simpler and more affordable.

“It won’t require you to be a large corporation to run complex automation projects, and you won’t need to invest big amounts of capital also to start getting the benefits.”

## Sustainable Tourism Conference 2024 launches in Grenada

The Caribbean Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development, better known as the Sustainable Tourism Conference (STC), launched on Monday at the Radisson Resort in Grenada.

Regional and international experts will be meeting during this time to discuss the issues, challenges, and opportunities that face tourism in the Caribbean, and the best ways to move forward to ensure a profitable and sustainable industry.

The event will host over 50 speakers over two days who will shine a spotlight on the essential pillars that are crucial for fostering a legacy, that is both transformational and regenerative, under the theme, "The 5 Ps for a Legacy of Caribbean Tourism Sustainability: People, Planet, Prosperity, Purpose & Partnership."

The opening ceremony saw a litany of speakers including Prime Minister of Grenada Dickon Mitchell, Grenada's Minister of Tourism Adrian Thomas, head of the Caribbean Tourism Organization Dona Regis Propser, Head of the Grenada Tourism Authority, Petra Roach, and Adam Stewart, the Executive Chairman of Sandals Resorts.

Stewart delivered the



keynote address to the attendees and reiterated the importance of sustainable tourism, not only for Grenada, but for the entirety of the Caribbean as a whole.

He called on the Caribbean to work together and to use these two days, not only to hold discussions on the best way forward, but to find solutions.

"The time for talk is coming to an end. We need to band together and fight for our people fight for our region...fight for the ability and capacity to earn cashflows across all fields. Let us make today and tomorrow decisions that will be acted on.

"Because the future takes planning. Everything takes planning. So we have to take concrete steps to move forward. Let us work together. Because we can go island to island, desti-

nation to destination in this region and I promise you, we are more similar than we are not.

"We face similar challenges. So those of us who have the capacity to make changes, let us do so. Let us come together.

"Those in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, Those in the public and private sectors, let us work together across the region and work in a non adversarial and inclusive manner so that we can all succeed with one another. So that we all win," Smart said.

He added that no other region has bounced back after the COVID-19 pandemic as the Caribbean, and this he attributed was to the warmth of the people of this area.

"You need to find what makes you stand out, what

makes you a brand.

"There are beaches in Europe, there are things that will drive younger persons to other areas... but there is nothing like the warmth of the people of this region.... and this is something we need to capitalize on and not take for granted...we cannot be stagnant.

"You will see many people noting that the Caribbean has a high return rate currently.

"But if you do not keep on reinventing yourself it will keep going down. You have to stop and take pause to evaluate your customers.

"Because the generations now are not as loyal as previous ones. And their interests to return can be easily swayed. So we need to be mindful of this," Smart said.

## Baltimore sues owner and manager of 'unseaworthy' Dali over bridge collapse

By Sam Cabral

Baltimore has sued the operators of the container ship that hit and destroyed one of the US city's main bridges last month, killing six people.

The city says the Dali was "clearly unseaworthy" and accuses its owners and manager of negligence.

The ship's Singapore-based owner and manager have already asked a court to limit their liability.

The region is reeling from the closure of its busiest maritime transit port after the span collapsed on 26 March.

"None of this should have happened," attorneys representing the Baltimore mayor and city council argued in a federal lawsuit.

The city is asking the US District Court of Maryland for a jury trial to hold the defendants fully liable.

Naming the Dali's owner, Grace Ocean Private Limited, and its manager, Synergy Marine Private Limited, the suit alleges the Francis Scott Key Bridge's collapse was a direct result of their "gross negligence, and recklessness, and as a result of the unseaworthiness of the Vessel".

On 1 April, Grace Ocean and Synergy Marine petitioned the same federal court in Maryland to cap its responsibility for the incident.

Citing a pre-Civil War



The Dali was a 'clearly unseaworthy' ship with 'an incompetent crew', the city of Baltimore argued in a lawsuit filed Monday.

maritime law, the pair of companies estimated their liability for the vessel and the cargo's value at \$43.6m (£35m).

Monday's court filing from the city of Baltimore rebuts that number as "substantially less than the amount that will be claimed for losses and damages arising out of the Dali's allision with the Key Bridge".

The path taken by the cargo ship - which was exiting the Port of Baltimore under the Key Bridge - is "no stranger to large freighters", the city's representatives wrote.

They said the vessel "had been experiencing an inconsistent power supply" that was either not investigated or not fixed.

"The Dali left port any-

way, despite its clearly unseaworthy condition," said the lawsuit.

The filing also says the Dali was manned by "an incompetent crew that was inattentive to its duties" and "lacked proper training".

On Friday, port officials opened a third temporary channel for boats to enter and exit the corridor, but these channels can only sustain about 15% of pre-collapse commercial activity.

A fourth channel, that will allow most traffic back into the port, is expected to open by the end of the month.

Darrell Wilson, an attorney who represents Synergy Marine and is also handling media inquiries on behalf of Grace Ocean,

told the BBC it would be inappropriate to comment on the litigation while federal investigations into the collapse were ongoing.

Six construction workers who were fixing potholes died when the bridge collapsed. Two of the bodies have yet to be recovered.

Workers are still extracting thousands of tonnes of debris from the water and from atop the stationary Dali, whose original schedule would have seen it arrive at a Sri Lankan port on Monday.

Apart from two of the ship's pilots, 21 crew members - almost all of whom are of Indian origin - remain on the ship. There is no timeline yet for when the crew will disembark or head back to sea.



## UN rights chief 'horrified' by mass grave reports at Gaza hospitals

By David Gritten

The UN's human rights chief has said he is "horrified" by the destruction of Gaza's Nasser and al-Shifa hospitals and the reports of "mass graves" being found at the sites after Israeli raids.

Volker Türk called for independent investigations into the deaths.

Palestinian officials said they had exhumed the bodies of almost 300 people at Nasser. It is not clear how they died or when they were buried.

Israel's military said claims that it buried bodies there were "baseless".

But it did say that during a two-week operation at the hospital in the city of Khan Younis in February, troops "examined" bodies buried by Palestinians "in places where intelligence indicated the possible presence of hostages".

Ten hostages who have now been released have said that they were held at Nasser hospital for long periods during their captivity.

Prior to the Israeli operation at Nasser, staff there had said they were being forced to bury bodies in the hospital's courtyard because nearby fighting prevented access to cemeteries. There were similar reports from al-Shifa before the first Israeli raid on the hospital took place in November.

The Israeli military has said it has raided a number of hospitals in Gaza during the war because Hamas fighters have been operating inside them - a claim Hamas and medical officials have denied.

The war began when Hamas gunmen carried out an unprecedented cross-border attack on southern Israel on 7 October, killing about 1,200 people - mostly civilians - and taking 253



Palestinian workers are exhuming bodies at Nasser hospital with shovels because they have no heavy machinery.

others back to Gaza as hostages.

More than 34,180 people - most of them children and women - have been killed in Gaza since then, the territory's Hamas-run health ministry says.

A spokeswoman for the UN Human Rights Office said it was currently working on corroborating reports from Palestinian officials that 283 bodies had been found in Nasser hospital's grounds, including 42 which had been identified.

"Victims had reportedly been buried deep in the ground and covered with waste," Ravina Shamdasani told reporters in Geneva.

"Among the deceased were allegedly older people, women and wounded, while others... were found with their hands tied and stripped of their clothes."

Mr Türk called for independent, effective and transparent investigations into the deaths, adding: "Given the prevailing climate of impunity, this should include international investigators."

"Hospitals are entitled to very special protection under international

humanitarian law. And the intentional killing of civilians, detainees, and others who are hors de combat [not participating in hostilities] is a war crime."

On Monday, a spokesman for the Hamas-run Civil Defense force told BBC Arabic's Gaza Today programme that it had received reports from local Palestinians that the bodies of a "large number" of people who had been killed during the war and buried in a makeshift cemetery in the hospital's courtyard were moved to another location during the Israeli raid.

"After research and investigation, we learned that the occupation [Israeli] army had established a mass grave, pulled out the bodies that were in Nasser hospital, and buried them in this mass grave," Mahmoud Basal said.

Gaza Today also spoke to a man who said he was searching there for the bodies of two male relatives which he alleged had been taken by Israeli troops during Israel's recently concluded offensive in Khan Younis.

"After I had buried them in an

*cont'd on pg 18*

## Wins for Da Project and Lower Ottos Warriors in ABBA's D-2 league

Da Project and the Lava Smoke Shop Lower Ottos Warriors recorded lopsided wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division League on Monday night.

Da Project claimed their eighth win in nine encounters by securing an emphatic 77-48 victory against Cecil Charles Cristos United in the first game of a double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Nyique Watkins sank 26 points and snatched eight steals; Eric Joseph converted 10 points and claimed eight rebounds; Shomari Bass scored eight points and grabbed eight rebounds; and Doyle Carter had eight points for Da Project.

Neville Chambers converted 17 points and grabbed 10 rebounds;



Dwayne Samuel sank 14 points and snatched 17 rebounds; and Thomas Skerrit scored nine points and claimed seven rebounds for Cecil Charles Cristos United, which lost for the ninth time in 10 games.

The Lower Ottos Warriors recorded their seventh win in nine games by romping to a comfortable 89-66 victory against the Honourable Gaston Browne Pointville Ballers in the second game on Monday night.

Michael Barton produced 22 points, 11 rebounds, and five assists; Abdul Khan converted 16 points; Faisal Obeidat had 11 points, six rebounds, and five assists; and Kwame Huntley chipped in with 11 points and six rebounds for the Lower Ottos Warriors.

Kebo Orford produced a game-high 29 points, nine rebounds, five assists, and five steals; Sky Nedd converted 15 points; and Cedric Henry had eight points and 11 rebounds for the Pointville Ballers, who lost for the eighth time in 10 encounters.

*cont'd from pg 17*

apartment, the [Israelis] came and moved their bodies," he said. "Every day we search for their bodies, but we fail to find them."

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said in a statement on Tuesday: "The claim that the IDF buried Palestinian bodies is baseless and unfounded."

"During the IDF's operation in the area of Nasser Hospital, in accordance to the effort to locate hostages and missing persons, corpses buried by Palestinians in the area of Nasser hospital were examined.

"The examination was conducted in a careful manner and exclusively in places where intelligence indicated the possible presence

of hostages. The examination was carried out respectfully while maintaining the dignity of the deceased. Bodies examined, which did not belong to Israeli hostages, were returned to their place."

The IDF said that its forces had detained "about 200 terrorists who were in the hospital" during the raid, and that they found ammunition as well as unused medicines intended for Israeli hostages.

It also insisted that the raid was carried out "in a targeted manner and without harming the hospital, the patients and the medical staff".

However, three medical staff told the BBC last month that they were

humiliated, beaten, doused with cold water, and forced to kneel for hours after being detained during the raid.

Medics who remained at Nasser after the Israeli takeover said they were unable to care for patients and that 13 died because of conditions there, including a lack of water, electricity and other supplies.

On 1 April, Israeli troops withdrew from al-Shifa hospital, which is in Gaza City, following what the IDF said was another "precise" operation carried out in response to intelligence that Hamas had regrouped there.

The IDF said at the time that 200 "terrorists" were killed in and around the hospital during the two-week raid. More than 500 others

were detained, and weapons and intelligence were found "throughout the hospital", it added.

After a mission gained access to the facility five days later, the World Health Organization (WHO) said al-Shifa was "now an empty shell", with most of the buildings extensively damaged or destroyed, and the majority of equipment unusable or reduced to ashes.

It also said that "numerous shallow graves" had been dug just outside the emergency department, and the administrative and surgical buildings, and that "many dead bodies were partially buried with their limbs visible".

The IDF also said it had *cont'd on pg 19*

## Matthews stars as West Indies Women complete series sweep over Pakistan

Captain Hayley Matthews once again played a starring role to help the West Indies Women complete a 3-0 One-Day International (ODI) series sweep over hosts Pakistan on Tuesday.

The West Indies made an imposing 278 for six off their 50 overs after winning the toss and batting first at the Karachi National Stadium.

Captain Hayley Matthews continued her magnificent form shown throughout the series with 141 off 149 balls, including 19 fours, while Stafanie Taylor and Shemaine Campbelle both made meaningful contributions with 47 and 38, respectively.

Matthews' knock means she ends the three-match series with an impressive 325 runs. Nashra Sandhu took three for 54 to lead the bowling for the hosts, while Fatima Sana took two for 67 in support.



West Indies Women captain Hayley Matthews celebrates after reaching her century during the third One-Day International against Pakistan in Karachi on Tuesday, April 23, 2024.

An excellent all-round bowling effort then allowed the West Indians to restrict Pakistan to 190 with three overs and one ball remaining. Muneeba Ali and Aliya Riaz tried their best for the hosts with 38 and 36, respectively.

The West Indian bowling was led by Hayley Mat-

thews, Aliyah Alleyne and Stafanie Taylor who took two wickets each. Matthews was named player of the series with 325 runs and six wickets.

The teams will now turn their attention to the five-match T20 series, which begins on Friday.

Full scores: West Indies

Women 278-6 off 50 overs (Hayley Matthews 141, Stafanie Taylor 47, Shemaine Campbelle 38; Nashra Sandhu 3-54, Fatima Sana 2-67).

Pakistan Women 190 off 47.5 overs (Muneeba Ali 38, Aliya Riaz 36; Aaliyah Alleyne 2-10, Hayley Matthews 2-26, Stafanie Taylor 2-29).

### cont'd from pg 18

avoided harm to patients at al-Shifa. But the WHO cited the acting hospital director as saying patients were held in abysmal conditions during the siege, and that at least 20 patients reportedly died due to a lack of access to care and limited movement authorised for medics.

Spokeswoman Ms Shamdasani said reports seen by the UN human rights office suggested that a total of 30 bodies were buried in the two graves and that 12 of them had been identified so far.

Gaza's civil defence spokesman

told CNN on 9 April that 381 bodies had been recovered from the vicinity of al-Shifa, but that the figure did not include people buried in the hospital's grounds.

The UN human rights chief also deplored as "beyond warfare" a series of Israeli strikes on the southern city of Rafah in the past few days, which he said had killed mostly women and children.

The strikes included one on Saturday night, after which a premature baby was delivered from the womb of her pregnant mother, who was killed along with her husband and other

daughter.

Mr Türk also again warned against a full-scale Israeli ground assault on Rafah, where 1.5 million displaced civilians are sheltering, saying it would lead to further breaches of international humanitarian law and human rights law. In response, the IDF said it was "operating to dismantle Hamas military and administrative capabilities".

"In stark contrast to Hamas' intentional attacks on Israeli men, women and children, the IDF follows international law and takes feasible precautions to mitigate civilian harm," it added.



Players of the Sea View Farm football team

## Sea View Farm overtake Freeman's Village atop Second Division

Sea View Farm has overtaken Freeman's Village at the top of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division.

They achieved the feat by recording the biggest margin of victory thus far this season against the Young Warriors in their final game of the round-robin first phase in the Second Division on Monday.

Rhezal Gomes converted five goals, Markland Wright scored a hat trick, and Jayden Browne and Klyster Rowe each had two conversions as Sea View Farm romped to a 20-0 drubbing of the Young Warriors at the ABFA Technical Center.

Sea View Farm moved to the top of the Second Division as their 15th win from their quota of 19 round-robin matches allows them to end the first

phase of their league campaign with 46 points, one ahead of Freeman's Village, who have a game in hand.

The Young Warriors ended their campaign in the first phase in 17th place with nine points after losing for the 16th time in their quota of 19 round-robin matches.

FC Master Ballerz remained in third place in the Second Division.

Teejay Roberts and Kluivert Ferdinand each scored twice as FC Master Ballerz claimed a 6-0 victory against TAMO FC at Radio Range in Ottos to end their campaign in the first phase with 43 points from their quota of 19 round-robin matches, including 13 wins.

TAMO FC remains on 20 points after losing for the 10th time in 18 matches.

Glanvilles prevailed 3-0 against ABAYA at the Parham playing field. Their fourth win in 18 matches carries Glanvilles to 14 points. ABAYA ended their campaign in the first phase with six points after losing for the 17th time in their quota of 19 round-robin matches.

Golden Grove won by default against Earthquakes, who failed to show up for their final first-phase encounter at the Golden Grove playing field.

Golden Grove ended their round-robin campaign with 35 points after securing their 11th win in their quota of 19 matches.

The Earthquakes finished their campaign in the first phase with 19 points, losing 12 of their quota of 19 round-robin matches.

## Guyana Cricket Board takes legal action against CWI over appointment of Bassarath

The Guyana Cricket Board (GCB) has followed up on its threat to take legal action against Cricket West Indies (CWI) over the election of Azim Bassarath as its vice-president.

Bassarath, who is president of the Trinidad and Tobago Cricket Board (TTCB), was elected to the post at the annual general meeting of Cricket West Indies in March of 2023.

The GCB had nominated Bassarath but subsequently withdrew its nomination in writing before the elections were held, but after the nomination period had closed.

At the elections, the GCB's representatives restated the Board's withdrawal of the nomination and according to a release, objected to CWI's decision to proceed with the election of Bassarath even though the nomination was withdrawn.

The GCB said the decision to withdraw its nomination of Bassarath was taken



Azim Bassarath

after the Guyana Board, received certain information, just prior to the CWI elections, that included serious allegations of misconduct at the Trinidad and Tobago Cricket Board.

Since the March elections, the GCB had repeatedly addressed the matter of Bassarath's election with CWI.

The release said, "two letters were written to CWI

president, Dr. Kishore Shallow, requesting the legal basis upon which Bassarath was elected. There was no response to these letters."

A meeting was convened by Dr. Shallow and other CWI representatives on July 5, 2023, but the matter remained unresolved.

Dr. Shallow stated that he had received legal opinion that the subject election was properly conducted and

that he would submit that opinion, and the names of the lawyers who gave it, to the GCB and the other stakeholders. This was never done, claimed the GCB.

The GCB release further stated: "The GCB, as a shareholder/full member of CWI, has a moral and legal duty to institute, promote and support the high standards and ideals of West Indies cricket and to ensure that there is full and unwavering compliance with the Articles of Association of CWI and that all elections held by CWI are conducted in accordance with the law, especially now with the emergence of the stated allegations."

### *cont'd from pg 22*

of all the athletic programmes in the successful schools. We expect this first step will lead to more steps."

The principal of Princess Margaret School, Dr. Greene, expressed his gratitude and endorsed the financial investment being undertaken by the Ministry of Sports to offer some financial assistance to the

schools.

"On behalf of the Princess Margaret School, we want to express our gratitude for the initiative by the Ministry of Education, and I agree with the minister that if we are going to set successful returns, we have to make positive investments in our athletes and our students as a whole," Dr. Greene stated.

# Sports

WEDNESDAY 24TH APRIL 2024



## Winners of inter-schools' track meet receive monetary prizes

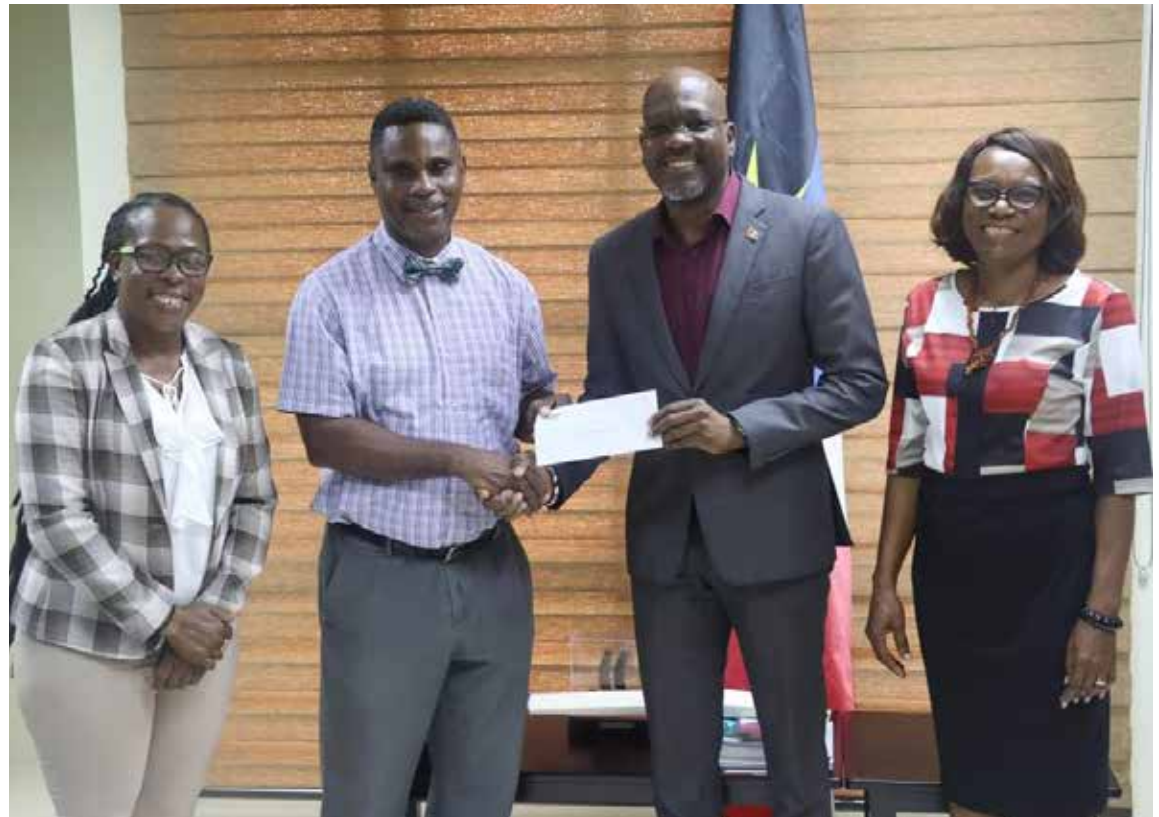
The top three finishers in both boys and girls' categories of the 2024 Cool & Smooth Inter-Secondary School Track and Field Championships were presented with their prize money during a brief ceremony at the headquarters of the Ministry of Education, Sports, and Creative Industries on Tuesday.

The Princess Margaret School (PMS) maintained its dominance by easily retaining both girls and boys division titles at the track and field event, which was held at the Yasco Sports Complex on March 9 and 10.

Led by Under-15 Girls Most Valuable Player Award winner Rolesha Humphreys, Princess Margaret won the Girls Division title by amassing 296 points.

PMS finished ahead of All Saints Secondary in second place with 147 points and Sir Novelle Richards Academy in third place with 144 points.

Princess Margaret School captured the Boys Division title by coasting to 362 points, leaving St. Joseph's Academy trailing in second place with 225 points and Antigua Gram-



From left to right: Director of Sports Heather Samuel-Daley; Principal of Princess Margaret School Dr. Collin Greene; Minister of Education, Sports, and Creative Industries Honourable Daryll Matthew; and Rosa Greenaway, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Sports. (Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Education, Sports, and Creative Industries)

mar School in third place with 112 points.

The principals accepted the prizes on behalf of the successful schools during Tuesday's ceremony, which was attended by the Minister of Sports Daryll Matthew; Permanent Secretary, Rosa Greenaway; and Director of Sports, Heather Samuel-Daley.

Principal Dr. Colin Greene represented Princess Margaret School, Principal

Sam Roberts represented Antigua Grammar School, and Principal Elvin Hodge represented All Saints Secondary School at the event.

Minister Matthew said the giving out of prize money to the winners is part of the Ministry of Sports' quest to offer more tangible support to the athletic programmes in the successful schools.

"You know, a lot of times we have expectations

of our institutions and our athletes, and a lot of times these expectations are not rational simply because the sort of support the institutions and the athletes need just isn't in existence," Matthew stated.

"So while we recognized that the issuance of prize money, that is, prize money for the schools, not the athletes, is just a first step in our tangible support

*cont'd on pg 21*