



ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

POINTVILLE EXPRESS

TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

FRIDAY 10TH MAY 2024

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 91

WWW.POINTVILLE.AG

JUDGE ALONE TRIALS TO BE PERMANENT

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The University of the West Indies (UWI) Five Islands Campus and the Lions Club of Antigua held a tree planting exercise on Thursday, at the Five Islands Campus. *Story on page 6.*

Judge alone trials to be permanent

The government is going to parliament today to enact legislation to make permanent the law providing for trials at the High Court to be presided over by a judge sitting alone without a jury.

Attorney General, Sir Steadroy Benjamin will introduce the Criminal Proceedings (Trial by Judge Alone) (Amendment) Bill, 2024, when the House of Representatives convenes a sitting at the parliament chambers today.

The amendment is designed to make trial by judge alone a permanent feature of the legal system of Antigua and Barbuda. The original law was introduced in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic and given a two-year



Attorney General, Sir Steadroy Benjamin

life-span. Last year, it was extended by a year to expire on June 7 this year. By way of the amendment, government is moving to have the law made permanent before it expires next month.

“The rationale for making the judge alone trial permanent is that it has helped to reduce significantly the backlog of cases that has

been an issue for the High Court for several years. Additionally, whilst there have been issues with juries in the past, having a judge sitting alone makes for timely efficiency in the court system,” legal sources told Point Express newspaper.

The Ministry of Legal Affairs held discussions with the Bar Association as

well as criminal lawyers to get some input in the proposed legislation. The main recommendation coming from the Bar Association was that the accused should have a choice in determining whether he/she wanted to be tried before a jury or a judge alone. On the other hand, the criminal lawyers did not have much concerns with its extension.

The original law had a list of offences that would be tried by Judge Alone and according to the legal sources, there have been no significant changes under the proposed legislation. The legislation lists all indictable offences under the Larceny Act, the Forgery Act, the Misuse of Drug Act,

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Antigua experiences another day of heavy rains

Continuing instability in the upper atmosphere gave rise to heavy downpours on several parts of Antigua on Thursday forcing the cancellation of a number of events.

Heavy rains from mid-morning resulted in many roadways in and around St John's turning to rivers of water making driving hazardous for many motorists.

There was a lull in the rainfall after several hours, but by mid-after-

noon the downpours resumed causing traffic jams and bottlenecks at many intersections and highways.

The Met Office said instability from the trough that affected the area earlier in the week, coupled with moisture in the atmosphere triggered the heavy downpours.

The system remained in the area overnight and the Met Office said while it expects rain to continue into Friday, it would not be to the intensity

as happened on Thursday.

Rainfall amounts varied depending on the areas of the island. Most of the rains fell in the northern, north-western and northeastern sections of the island.

This included St. John's. But in the south, southeast and eastern sections of the island the rainfall was minimal.

Improvements are expected for Friday.

New legislation could be on the cards to tackle abandonment of senior citizens

There seems to be a growing social issue in the country where the care of the elderly is concerned as almost a dozen senior citizens have been abandoned by relatives and are presently residing at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLB-MC).

It was the Minister of Health Sir Molwyn Joseph who made the revelation during Wednesday's Cabinet meeting.

With this troubling news, suggestions were offered for the introduction of

new legislation "to protect the rights of these vulnerable citizens".

Presently, there are no legal standings to hold anyone accountable.

"There is no legal liability at the moment that can be imposed upon a child or a relative but that does not mean they ought not be called to account especially where the relative or child is using the resources that are due to the parent each month, let's say by Social Security, and using those resources for his or her



Minister of Health Sir Molwyn Joseph

own benefit. So, we want to bring that to an end. That is the first step and I believe the Minister will devise some other systems that are

lawful which would impose some liability on children", Chief of Staff in the Prime Minister's office Lionel 'Max' Hurst added.

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Money-laundering and Prevention Act, the Proceeds of Crime Act, the Firearms Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act as among those matters that will fall under Judge Alone trials.

"Once an offence goes before the High Court for trial, then it would be subject to Judge Alone trial," the legal sources stated.

Meanwhile, another legislation – the Legal Aid and Advice Centre Bill, 2024,

will have its first reading in the House of Representatives today. Debate on this legislation will take place at a later sitting as the Ministry of Legal Affairs is still accepting recommendations from the public on how best to operationalize the arrangement. The idea is to set up this centre that will help the less fortunate with legal representation before the courts. It will also provide for a public defender as part of the arrangement.

According to the Cabinet notes, the 'Abandonment of the Elderly and Protection of their Assets' Act, would provide legal safeguards to ensure that the rights and well-being of elderly citizens are protected and respected, even in cases when their own relatives have failed to provide the necessary care and support.

Local News



Tomlinsons cemetery work progresses

Work at the new public cemetery is said to be moving along swiftly.

A brief update was given in this week's Cabinet Notes.

According to the Notes, the fence is near completion and is to be followed by paved roads, a parking lot, and an administrative building.

Plans for the Tomlinsons public cemetery were revealed back in 2003 by the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party (ABLP) but it was delayed for several years. The delays were previously blamed on funding issues and the Covid-19 pandemic but in 2023 those plans came back on stream and fast for-

warding to this year, work on the fence surrounding the grounds began.

The new public cemetery is set to be constructed under the name Tomlinsons Park or Tomlinsons Garden Cemetery and is expected to feature a non-denominational church, crematorium, and an ecumenical center spread across about 10 acres.

The need for an additional public cemetery is quite dire in the country as reports over the past few months have revealed that not only is the St. John's public cemetery almost at capacity but several of the community cemeteries were also running out of burial spaces.

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New Catamaran Haul Out and Boatyard Facility opens at Jolly Harbour Marina and Boatyard

The Jolly Harbour Marina and Boatyard (JHMB) announced the official opening of its Marina and Boatyard expansion project. The event marked the unveiling of a second mega travelift and the introduction of a new boatyard, enabling the marina to offer haul out and storage services to boats up to 34 feet wide and 75 feet long.

With this significant development, JHMB now boasts dual operations, including two haul/launch areas, two 75-ton travelifts, two boat movers, and three individual boatyards capable of providing safe and secure storage for up to 240 boats. This expansion positions JHMB to provide comprehensive services to yachties, catamaran



Jo Lucas, General Manager JHMB (left) with Governor General Sir Rodney Williams, and Minister of Tourism Charles Fernandez as they cut the ribbon.



Joseph Krohn- CEO and CFO of Sabana Holdings

operators, visitors, and residents alike. The main marina docks accommodate boats up to 80ft long, and the Super Yacht dock can accommodate vessels, alongside, up to 200ft.

Established in 1992, Jolly Harbour Marina and Boatyard was recently acquired by Sabana Holdings in May 2021. Ms. Jo Lucas, General Manager of JHMB, highlighted the evolving landscape of the yachting community, noting a substantial shift from single

hull vessels to multi hulls, particularly catamarans. She remarked, “We have always been able to cater to catamarans on the docks but we were faced with limitations in offering boatyard services... Having observed the very clear trends... the owners of JHMB decided it was time to expand to accommodate them by offering haul out and yard maintenance and storage services.”

The project, which commenced in mid-December 2023 and was completed on April 30th, 2024, underscores the efficiency and dedication of the team involved. Speaking at the grand opening ceremony, Joseph Krohn, CEO and CFO of Sabana Holdings, emphasized the significance of the marina’s redevelopment, positioning ECMBL as a world-class Marina & Boatyard facility. He stated, “Today is a special day... to celebrate the repositioning of ECMBL, as one of the preeminent world class Marina & Boatyard facilities globally.” He reiterated the commitment to excellence and the ability to provide a full range of services to loyal customers.



Jolly Harbour Marina and Boatyard staff.

cont'd on pg 6

The UWI Five Islands and Lions Club of Antigua collaborate on tree planting exercise

The University of the West Indies (UWI) Five Islands Campus and the Lions Club of Antigua held a tree planting exercise on Thursday, at the Five Islands Campus. The event took place as part of the celebrations of the 44th Regional Multiple District 60 Convention of Lions Club International which is being held at the Royalton in Antigua and Barbuda

Principal of The UWI Five Islands, Professor C. Justin Robinson, emphasized that collaboration is part of the mandate of The UWI. "This event is a reflection of our commitment to fostering partnerships that contribute to the betterment of our environment especially in this age of climate change" said Professor Robinson. He thanked the Lions Club of Antigua for this collaboration and expressed the campus' willingness to create more engagements



with organizations such as the Lions Club of Antigua.

Joanne Ogden, Lions International Director, expressed her gratitude to The UWI for the collaboration. She highlighted the urgency of addressing climate change and the role organizations like Lions Club In-

ternational play in this global effort. "It is an honour to be part of this event as the Lions of Antigua repopulate the flora environment. With the change in the environment, with the rains coming more often in some areas and less snow in others, we want to thank you for do-

ing your part in planting the trees and doing your part for Lions International." said Director Ogden.

The tree planting exercise saw seven (7) trees being planted on the campus as part of the exercise. It forms a larger part of the celebrations being held as the Lions Club of Antigua hosts the 44th Regional Multiple District 60 Convention of Lions Club International. Multiple District 60 comprises of Lions Clubs in Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saba, St. Eustatius, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and U.S. Virgin Islands.

cont'd from pg 5

The ceremony also featured remarks from Minister of Tourism, Charles Fernandez, who commended Sabana Holdings and the management and staff of JHMB for their contribution to the industry and the economy of Antigua and Barbuda. He praised their resilience, commitment, and vision for the future growth of the yachting industry.

Among the distinguished guests were Governor General Sir Rodney Williams, Governor General Emeritus Sir James Carlisle & Lady Carlisle, Parliamentary Representative, Kelvin Simon, Caretaker - Senator Dwayne George, Commission-

er of Police: Atlee Rodney, Member of The Four Cricketing Knights Sir Anderson Roberts, and the Principals of Sabana Holdings.

Jolly Harbour Marina and Boatyard, currently employing twenty professionals, is dedicated to providing the best possible experience for customers and yachties during their stay in Antigua. With the addition of catamaran haul outs, ECMBL has also commissioned a first of its kind Marine Travelift custom made expandable self-propelled boat transporter, specifically streamlined to catamaran movements. This equipment is due to arrive by end of third quarter this year.

Sandals honours outstanding team members at annual Prestige Awards

Sandals Grande Antigua Resort and Spa recently held its annual Prestige Awards ceremony to recognize and honour its most outstanding team members for the year 2023.

This year's event hosted over 100 nominees across 17 categories, awarding the top performer in each one.

The evening's winners were chosen based on their exceptional work ethic, dedication, and commitment to providing excellent service to guests. Marsha King, a Club Sandals cabana attendant, kicked off the winners' circle by receiving the Mover and Shaker Award for the most improved team

member. Restaurant server Normalyn Williams followed closely behind with the Legendary Award for the most guest mentions, while Teppanyaki chef Teddy Caleb from Kimono's Japanese restaurant took home the third award of the evening, the Circle of Joy (Smile Award).

Some of the other notable winners included Kavel Davis, who received the Sandals Earth Guard Award, and Luana Johnson, who won the Sandals Foundation Sentinel Award. The Standing Ovation Award went to assistant bar manager Vanessa Sauers, and Kim

cont'd on pg 8



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Local News



cont'd from pg 7

Johnson, the resort shop supervisor, received the Financial Controller's Money Maker Award.

The Heart of the House Award was won by Gary Robins from the stewarding department, and Oshane Alexander from the entertainment department received the General Manager's Pacesetter Award.

One of the most coveted awards of the evening was the People's Choice, which was voted on by the resort's team members. This year, the award went to Masadie Isaac from the weddings and romance department.

Courtney Anthony from the restaurant department received the All Rounder of the Year Award for supervisors, while Jhavline Montoban-Patrick, secretary in the executive office, won the Founder's Circle Award. The top two awards of the evening, Platinum and Diamond Team Member of the Year, were awarded to Butler Vanessa White-Edwards and Accountant Marisa Lynch, respectively.

These two team members were recognized for their exceptional contributions and dedication to their roles at the resort.





Insane Carnival announces children's mas for 2024

Insane Carnival is celebrating its 10th Anniversary this year and it is using the occasion to introduce a children friendly mas band for their young ones to participate in the Carnival festivities.

In a statement, Insane Carnival said the children's mas band will be done in keeping with the Insane's standard of beautiful costumes, exceptional customer service, the evolution of mas



RELOCATION NOTICE

Please be advised that the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs head office is in the process of relocating to the NTTC building located on Nugent Avenue and to the west of Yasco.

It is anticipated that from Monday 13th all businesses will be in full operation at the new location. Thank you for your patience while we transition. Please contact us via office #462-1007/8/9 or 462-1213 for any further information.

Sandra Joseph (Miss)
Permanent Secretary

and most importantly safety and security.

“As such, we all know that it takes a village to raise our children. We are mindful of this and as such, in keeping with our 10-year anniversary celebrations, we feel it is the right time to branch into INSANE KIDS replicating four of the adult sections trans-

forming them into modern mas, children-friendly costumes.

“This will be open to the general public and we are catering to children ages 5-13,” the statement added.

To this end, Insane Kids will participate in Children's Carnival and potentially Tuesday Mas.

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Spotify paid the UK music industry £750m last year

Spotify says music by UK recording artists generated £750 million in royalties on its platform last year.

Almost 1,000 artists were played often enough to generate at least £100,000 in royalties each, the company added.

The figures were revealed as part of Spotify's "Loud and Clear" campaign, which aims to provide transparency on how it pays the music industry.

However, the company is unable to say how much of those royalty payments actually goes to musicians.

That's because every artist has a different contract with their record label and publishers, which determines how the money is divided.

The artist's share is often around 16%, a committee of MPs heard in 2021.

That would mean an artist whose music generated £100,000 on Spotify might only receive £16,000 in royalty payments, before tax.

However, Spotify is not the only source of revenue.

The Swedish company has about a 50% share of the UK music streaming market, according to the CMA, which means artists could make the same amount again via platforms like Apple Music, Amazon Music and Tidal.

Ed Sheeran was the most popular British artist on Spotify last year, with his songs played 6.35 billion times.

Coldplay came second with 5.58 billion streams, followed by Harry Styles with 5.11 billion streams.

However, British artists were unable to crack Spotify's Top 10 most-played chart, which was topped by Taylor Swift (on 29 billion streams) and also featured Puerto Rican star Bad Bunny, Mexico's Peso Pluma and



Ed Sheeran was the most-streamed British artist on Spotify last year.

Colombia's Karol G.

The shift suggests that speaking English is no longer a pre-requisite for global music success.

More than half the artists who generated \$10,000 (£8,000) on Spotify last year are from countries where English is not the first language, the company said.

English is still the top language for music globally, accounting for 54.9% of the top 10,000 songs. But its share of the market is falling, with languages like Hindi and Japanese making gains.

"It's really interesting time for music," said Spotify UK's head of artists and industry partnerships, Bryan Johnson.

"In the past few years, we've seen genres like K-pop and Amapiano take off, and now Music Mexicana is really starting to travel.

"The choice now for fans and listeners is incredible."

He noted that 75% of all the royalties paid to UK artists came from international listeners - suggesting there is still a "huge export opportunity" as the streaming market matures.

Johnson added that independent

artists and labels received 40% of the UK's royalty payments - a total of £300 million.

They typically receive a higher share of the proceeds, with artists who self-release music (ie without the help of a record label or distributor) sometimes keeping 100% of the income their songs generate.

However, Spotify has come under fire recently for demonetising songs with fewer than 1,000 streams.

That means the copyright holders will not be paid at all, if the song falls below that threshold in a 12-month period.

Critics have complained that the policy means will "enrich the top of the pyramid" and starve working musicians of money.

But Johnson said the policy was designed to filter out "spam", and thwart fraudulent activity.

Spotify has previously noted that 1,000 plays only generates a "micro-payment" of around \$0.25 (£0.20) that artists rarely see - because distributors often set a minimum threshold before artists can withdraw money.

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Venezuela may be first nation to lose all its glaciers

By Aleks Phillips

Venezuela may be the first nation in modern history to lose all its glaciers after climate scientists downgraded its last one to an ice field.

The International Cryosphere Climate Initiative (ICCI), a scientific advocacy organisation, said on X that the South American nation's only remaining glacier - the Humboldt, or La Corona, in the Andes - had become "too small to be classed as a glacier".

Venezuela has lost at least six other glaciers in the last century.

With global average temperatures rising due to climate change, ice loss is increasing, helping to raise sea levels around the world.

"There has not been much ice cover on the last Venezuelan glacier since the 2000s", Dr Caroline Clason, a glaciologist at Durham University, told Newsround. "Now it's not being added to, so it has been reclassified as an ice field."

In March, researchers at the University of Los Andes in Colombia told AFP the glacier had shrunk from 450 hectares to just two.

Luis Daniel Llambi, an ecologist at the university, told the Guardian that it had now shrunk to less than that.

While there is no global standard for the minimum size a body of ice must be to qualify as a glacier, the US Geological Survey says a commonly accepted guideline is around 10 hectares.

One study, published in 2020, suggested the glacier shrank to less than this sometime between 2015 and 2016 - though it was still considered Venezuela's last glacier by Nasa in 2018.

Dr James Kirkham and Dr Miriam Jackson, glaciologists with the ICICI and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development respectively, explained that "glaciologists recognise a glacier as an ice mass that deforms under its own weight".

They told the BBC in a



Humboldt peak seen in 2008, before its glacier melted away.

joint statement: "Glaciologists often use a criteria of 0.1 sq km [10 hectares] as a common definition, but any ice mass above that size still has to deform under its own weight [to count]."

They suggested that there may have been issues accessing the Humboldt glacier in recent years, which could have delayed the publication of the measurements.

Professor Mark Maslin, a professor of earth system sciences at University College London, said an ice field like the Humboldt - roughly equivalent to the area of two football pitches - "is not a glacier".

"Glaciers are ice that fills valleys - that's the definition - and therefore I would say Venezuela has no glaciers whatsoever," he told the BBC.

In December, the Venezuelan government announced a project to cover the remaining ice with a thermal blanket it hoped would stem or reverse the thawing process.

But the move drew criticism from local climate scientists, who warned that the covering could contaminate the surrounding habitat with plastic particles as it degraded, according to Spanish newspaper El Pais.

Prof Maslin said mountain glacier loss was "not directly reversible" as to survive through the summer months they needed enough ice to reflect sunlight and keep the air around it cool.

"Once a glacier's gone, the sunlight heats the ground, makes it much warmer and makes it much less likely to actually build

cont'd from pg 10

In 2024, the company expects that the new policy will divert \$40 million (£32 million) to more popular songs.

"This is not something that Spotify takes," said Johnson. "The money goes back into the pool... to emerging and professional artists."

This year marks the first time that Spotify has disclosed its figures for UK payouts. It says the total of £750 million has

doubled since 2017.

Earlier this year, the company announced it had paid \$9 billion (£7.2 billion) in royalties worldwide last year, making it the biggest single contributor to the music industry's revenues.

YouTube, once the thorn in the industry's side, is thought to be the industry's second largest source of income. In February, it said it had paid out \$6 billion (£4.8 billion) to rights-holders last year.

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Regional News



Grenada's Tourism Minister assures hotel water needs will be met

By Dillon De Shang

Water restrictions, which will go into effect on Sunday in Grenada, are not expected to have a major impact on the country's vital tourism industry.

Minister of Tourism Adrian Thomas said contingency plans are in place to ensure hotels, schools and private residences have the water they need.

"You're going to have water every day. The point about it is you may not have it throughout the entire day. For the last couple of years, climate change has impacted Grenada extremely hard in regards to getting a long spell of dry seasons," he told Loop News in a interview on the sidelines of today's launch of the Pure Grenada Expo in Port of

Spain, Trinidad.

"This period now is tourist season. All the hotels are filled with people so you have more consumption of water and schools are in full gear. Things are busy in Grenada, so obviously water is being consumed. But once the rain starts to fall, the situation is going to be remedied."

He continued: "But let me say that we have large trucks that ensure that hotels in particular have water. So, in the hotel, we don't really have a problem that the guests cannot get water. And as a matter of fact, what the guests are doing, they are spending the entire day on the beach and it's just to rinse off their skin and go to bed."

Thomas said there is



no need for hoteliers to cut back on the number of guests they have at their properties.

At a media conference today, Terrence Smith, National Water and Sewerage Authority (NAWASA) Acting General Manager, announced that approval was given for the agency to impose limits on water use.

Smith said NAWA-

SA tried over the last few weeks to ensure there was equitable distribution of the limited supply of water to Grenadians.

But he noted "very little" water is left in Grand Etang Lake to pump to the Annandale Water Treatment Plant, which supplies a large part of Grenada.

Denise Boris, NAWASA's inhouse legal counsel, said from Sunday it will be illegal to fill swimming pools, large manmade ponds and use hoses to wash vehicles, irrigate gardens and wash homes.

Anyone caught breaking the water restriction can be fined EC\$500 or be imprisoned for one month if in default.

"This is not something NAWASA takes lightly and wants to go around enforcing the regulations. So, we are asking the general public to cooperate with NAWASA during this period and restrict the use of your water as we have asked you to do," Boris said.

cont'd from pg 11

ice up over the summer," he said.

Maximiliano Herrera, an extreme weather researcher, wrote on X/Twitter that the next countries that were likely to become glacier-free were Indonesia, Mexico and Slovenia. Prof Maslin said these suggested nations "make logical sense" because of their relative proximity to the equator and relatively low-lying mountains, which made their ice caps more susceptible to global warming.

"The warm zones are just expanding upwards and outwards with climate change," he said, pushing the point at which snow and ice can form year-round higher.

The author of several books on climate change said these smaller glaciers – like the one recently lost in Venezuela – did not

contain enough ice to substantially raise sea levels when they melt. But in some regions, glaciers play a crucial role in supplying communities with fresh water, particularly during hot, dry periods.

"Once you get rid of that, the problem is you're then purely reliant on spot rainfall," he said.

Dr Kirkham and Dr Jackson said: "The latest projections show that between 20 and 80% of glaciers globally will be lost by 2100 (with significant regional variation), depending on the emissions pathway followed."

They said that even though "a portion of this loss is already locked in", rapidly lowering CO2 emissions could save other glacial deposits, "which will have enormous benefits for livelihoods, and energy, water and food security".

IACHR welcomes Dominica High Court ruling in favour of equality

CMC - The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) is calling on all Caribbean countries that still maintain forms of criminalisation that interfere in aspects related to the private lives of individuals to repeal such laws that facilitate their persecution.

“In addition, the States of the region are urged to continue advancing the social inclusion and real equality of LGBTI people. The IACHR reaffirms its commitment to States and Civil Society Organisations to assist in the processes to create a legal framework that protects LGBTI persons from all forms of violence and discrimination,” IACHR said in a statement.

The IACHR called on all regional states to repeal legislation “that facilitate the persecution of LGBTI persons in any form and that encourage acts of violence due to prejudice and discrimination”.

Section 14 of the Sexual Offences Act 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.

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.

Last month, in a 40-page ruling, Justice Cencac-Phulgence agreed that the two sections contravened Sections 1 and 10 of the Dominica Constitution and persons’ rights to liberty as enshrined in the Constitution.

The IACHR, which is an autonomous body of the Organisation of American States (OAS), said legislative provisions that criminalize private consensual same-sex relations are against international human rights standards, as they violate human dignity, privacy, and freedom of expression.

“It is also worth noting that the Dominica High Court in its decision high-

lights international and Inter-American standards which stipulate that laws criminalising consensual intimate relations between persons of the same sex are against the principles of equality and non-discrimination in the American Convention.”

The IACHR said with “this landmark decision, Dominica has aligned itself with other nations whose courts have struck down criminalisation provisions as human rights violations”.

It said most Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries now comply with Inter-American standards on decriminalisation.

The IACHR has noted that even when these laws are not enforced, they have a negative impact on society, “as they foster prejudice, encourage acts of violence, and enable a culture of impunity”.

In 2020, the IACHR

emphasised that such criminal prohibitions interfere in aspects related to the private lives of individuals on the basis of a protected category of the American Convention without reasonable justification, in violation of human rights standards.

“Furthermore, they constitute barriers for persons with non-normative sexual orientations and gender identities to access other rights, such as freedom of association, freedom of expression, health, employment, access to justice, among others.”

The lawsuit in Dominica was brought by an un-named “gay individual” identified only as “BG” against the Attorney General, the Bishop of Roseau, The Methodist Church and the Anglican Church.

The Dominica Association of Evangelical Churches was listed as an interested party.

Polish security finds cabinet meeting room bugged

By Adam Easton

Special services in Poland have discovered and removed bugging devices in a room where cabinet ministers were due to meet.

The weekly cabinet meeting normally takes place in the prime minister's office in Warsaw.

But Tuesday's session was relocated to the southern city of Katowice because several ministers, including Prime Minister Donald Tusk, were due to attend a major economic conference there.

Poland has seen increased spying activity since it became an international hub for military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine following Russia's 2022 invasion.

In a separate case this week a judge has sought asylum in neighbouring Belarus, and Mr Tusk said on Tuesday he had access to confidential documents.

"The State Protection Service, in co-operation with the Internal Security Agency, detected and dismantled devices that could be used for eavesdropping," wrote security services spokesman Jacek Dobrzynski on X. "The services are carrying out further activities in this matter."

Mr Dobrzynski told the TVN24 broadcaster the devices were found during a routine security sweep of the room. Poland's Internal Security Agency is now investigating what the devices were, and who could possibly have installed them.

Following the security check, the cabinet meeting went ahead in the building as planned.

A spokeswoman for the Silesia regional authorities, Alicja Waliszewska, told state news agency PAP that the device may have been part of the



Prime Minister Donald Tusk convened a cabinet meeting in Katowice on Tuesday in a room with a room's old communication system that was no longer operational.

The discovery follows news on Monday that a Polish judge is seeking asylum in neighbouring Belarus.

Tomasz Szmydt, a judge at the Voivodship Administrative Court in Warsaw, told a news conference in Minsk his actions were in protest against Poland's "harmful" policy towards Belarus and Russia that could result in armed conflict between the countries.

Investigators are checking whether the judge had been spying. He was reportedly due to rule next month on cases concerning security clearance for confidential information on Nato, of which Poland is a member.

Commenting on the affair, Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski wrote on X: "A traitor. The only question is since when."

Mr Szmydt gained notoriety in Poland for his involvement in an online smear campaign that was allegedly run from the justice ministry against judges who opposed the judicial reform introduced by the previous Law and Justice-led government.

Donald Tusk has convened a meet-

ing of the Secret Services College for Wednesday to discuss potential Russian and Belarusian influence in Polish politics in recent years.

"We must be aware that services, in this case Belarusian ones, worked with a person who had direct access to the minister of justice... who had access to various classified documents to which no intelligence service should have had access," the prime minister told a news conference.

Former Justice Minister Zbigniew Ziobro has denied ever meeting the judge.

Mr Tusk added that "the fact that judge Szmydt's relationship with the Belarusians has a long history... must raise our greatest concern".

Last year, the Polish authorities charged several members of an alleged Russian spy network who were tasked with preparing sabotage acts to paralyse the supply of weapons and aid to Ukraine.

Cameras were discovered near the Rzeszow-Jasionka airport near the Ukrainian border that serves as a logistics hub and is protected by American troops and Patriot missile batteries.

US airman shot and killed by police in Florida

By Nadine Yousif

A US Air Force member was fatally shot by police who entered the wrong address, a lawyer for his family says.

Senior Airman Roger Fortson, who was 23 years old, died after a deputy sheriff shot him while responding to a disturbance call.

Police earlier said the deputy reacted in self-defence after he saw Fortson armed with a gun.

Citing a witness, the lawyer alleges that police burst into the wrong home. He is demanding a full investigation.

The airman was shot on 3 May at his home, located 5 miles (8km) from the Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt Field, Florida, where he is based.

Fortson was taken to a hospital where he died, officials said.

The deputy who shot him - whom police have not named - has since been placed on administrative leave, according to a statement on Tuesday by Okaloosa County Sheriff Eric Aden.

The incident is now being investigated by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the State Attorney's Office, Sheriff Aden added.

"At this time, we hum-



Senior Airman Roger Fortson enlisted in the US Air Force in November 2019.

ly ask for our community's patience as we work to understand the facts that resulted in this tragic event," he said.

The lawyer for the Fortson family, Ben Crump, has called for transparency from the police on what transpired.

"Roger Fortson was the best America had to offer. He was a patriot. He was a US airman, special ops. He was fighting for our way of life. He was fighting for everybody," Mr Crump said at a news conference on Thursday. "They took a patriot from us."

His mother, Chantimekki Fortson, broke down crying as Mr Crump

recounted the moments before the airman was shot.

"My baby was my everything," she said.

Mr Crump said at the time of the shooting Fortson was on a video call with a friend, who described what she heard to his family's legal team.

The friend said the airman heard a knock on his apartment door and asked who was there, but received no response. He then heard a second, "very aggressive knock" but did not see anyone when he looked through the peephole.

It is at this point that Fortson is said to have grown concerned and retrieved his gun, which the

lawyer said was legally owned.

As Fortson returned to his living room, the witness said police burst through the door, saw that the resident was armed and shot him six times.

Mr Crump said the witness believed the officers were in the wrong apartment, as Fortson was alone at the time with no disturbance at his residence.

In a statement released on 4 May, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office said the deputy "reacted in self defence after he encountered a 23-year-old man armed with a gun and after the deputy had identi-

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Sports News



Da Squad and Stoneville win again in volleyball league

Reigning women's and men's division 1 champions Caribbean Alliance Insurance (CAI) Da Squad and Stoneville, respectively, maintained their successful form in their latest encounters in the ABAVA's Local League.

Female Division 1 champions Da Squad extended their unbeaten run as they claimed their seventh win in as many games with a 3-0 victory against former champions Paragons at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex on Wednesday night.

It took Da Squad an hour and 15 minutes to prevail 25-16, 25-12, and 25-20 against the Paragons, who lost for the fourth time in seven games.

Stoneville cruised to their ninth win in 10 games with a straight-set 3-0 victory against the bottom team, TOA Media and MKUU Tours Chargers Velocity, in the Men's Division 1 League.



The Stoneville men's volleyball team. (Photo courtesy of the ABAVA)

Stoneville secured victory in approximately an hour by prevailing 25-18, 25-7, and 25-19 against the Chargers Velocity, which remains in the cellar after losing for the ninth time in as many games.

There were wins as well for High Flyerz 1 and the Top Ranking Storming Lions in the Men's Division 1 Volleyball League.

High Flyerz 1 recorded their fifth win in nine games by soaring to a 3-0 victory

against the Sharks, who lost for the eighth time in nine encounters.

The High Flyerz 2 took an hour and nine minutes to beat the Sharks 25-11, 25-16, and 25-9.

The Top Ranking Storming Lions notched up their seventh win in nine games by securing a 3-1 victory against Phoenix High Flyerz 2, who lost for the seventh time in 10 games.

After losing the opening set 0-25, the Storming Lions recovered to prevail 25-22, 25-17, and 25-14 against Phoenix High Flyerz 2 in an hour and 10 minutes.

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fied himself as law enforcement.”

Speaking to reporters, Mr Crump accused police of trying to “justify unjustifiable excessive use of force.”

Mr Crump noted that private gun ownership is allowed in the State of Florida.

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office has not responded to Mr Crump's comments.

Fortson was assigned to the 4th Spe-

cial Operations Squadron, according to the US Air Force, and entered active duty in November 2019.

According to Mr Crump, he enlisted in the military after graduating from high school in Atlanta, Georgia with honours.

Mr Crump, a civil rights lawyer based in Florida, has worked on multiple high-profile cases of police-involved deaths of black Americans, including George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Trayvon Martin, Tyre Nichols and Breonna Taylor.

Former Sri Lanka skipper Mathews named in T20 World Cup squad

COLOMBO (Reuters) - Sri Lanka have included veteran all-rounder Angelo Mathews and uncapped bowler Dunith Wellalage in their 15-man Twenty20 World Cup squad, which will be captained by Wanindu Hasaranga, the country's selection committee said on Thursday.

The 36-year-old Mathews, who lifted the trophy in 2014, will make his sixth T20 World Cup appearance at the biennial tournament, which will be co-hosted by twice champions West Indies and the United States of America from June 1-29.

Mathews made his T20 comeback for Sri Lanka in January after a three-year gap.

Hasaranga, meanwhile, returns after missing last year's Asia Cup and 50-overs World Cup,



Angelo Mathews (Getty Images)

as well as the current Indian Premier League (IPL), Bowler Matheesha Pathirana is also part of the squad, although the 21-year-old is nursing a

hamstring injury he picked up playing for the Chennai Super Kings in the IPL.

Sri Lanka, who will leave for the World Cup on May 14, kick off their campaign against South Africa in New York on June 3.

They will also face Bangladesh, Nepal and Netherlands in Group D.

Sri Lanka Squad: Wanindu Hasaranga (captain), Charith Asalanka (vice-captain), Kusal Mendis, Pathum Nissanka, Kamindu Mendis, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Angelo Mathews, Dasun Shanaka, Dhananjaya De Silva, Maheesh Theekshana, Dunith Wellalage, Dushmantha Chameera, Nuwan Thushara, Matheesha Pathirana, and Dilshan Madushanka. Travelling Reserves - Asitha Fernando, Vijayakanth Vijaykanth, Bhanuka Rajapaksa, and Janith Liyanage.

Pigotts trounce Sunnyside Tutorial in Primary School Cup

Kalique Martin scored twice to lead Pigotts Primary to a 6-0 drubbing of Sunnyside Tutorial School in Group C of the Primary School Cup football competition on Wednesday.

Michael Moses, Jaquan Hunt, Special Jarvis, and Ashawn George each converted once for Pigotts Primary in the rescheduled encounter at the TN Kirnon Primary School playing field.

It was only the second win in six

matches for Pigotts Primary, which advanced to joint-third place with Potters Primary in Group C. Sunnyside Tutorial remains second from the bottom of the group with one point after suffering their fourth loss in five matches.

The bottom team, Villa Primary, picked up their first point in Group C after salvaging a 2-2 draw with Greenbay Primary at the same venue on Wednesday.

Their third draw in five matches allows Greenbay Primary to drop into fifth place by advancing to six points. Villa Primary remain in the cellar on goal difference with one point from five matches.

In previous matches, Pigotts Primary prevailed 4-1 against Villa Primary, Group C leaders TN Kirnon Primary trounced Sunnyside Tutorial School 4-0, and New Winthorpes Pri-

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Parish League cricket continues with Curtly Ambrose contest

The Antigua Commercial Bank (ACB) Caribbean Parish League will begin its third limited-overs competition of the 2024 domestic cricket season this weekend.

Following the completion of the Richie Richardson one-day contest and the Dave Joseph limited-overs championship, action will commence in the Curtly Ambrose competition on Saturday.

Five teams will continue to compete in the current Parish League season, and four of them will be in action during the two opening-round matches on Saturday.

Stingray City Seatons will face Mahico at Seatons, and Freetown will take on Dreams 2 Reality Sea View Farm at Freetown.

Dirk Schouten and Otis Burton will umpire at Seatons, and Garfield Ja-



cobs and Llewellyn Simon will officiate at Freetown.

The Curtly Ambrose one-day contest will continue with the second round of matches on Sunday. Sea View Farm will challenge Seatons at Sea View Farm, and Mahico will face Masters at Clare Hall.

Nigel Browne and Garfield Jacobs will umpire at Sea View Farm, and Dirk Schouten and Llewellyn Simon will officiate at

Clare Hall.

Freetown beat Mahico in the final to win the Dave Joseph competition, while Seatons defeated Freetown by 38 runs in the final to capture the Richie Richardson limited-overs championship.

Meanwhile, cup-holders PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks remain on course for a successful title defense of their Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) Su-

per40 Cup.

The Blackhawks will enter this weekend's semi-finals as the top seed and will host the fourth-seed WES Rising Sun Spartans in their final four encounter at Ball Beef on Saturday at 11 am.

The second-seed New Winthorpes Lions will clash with the third-seed Jennings Tigers in the other semi-final in New Winthorpes on Sunday at 11 am.

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mary snatched a one-nil win against Potters Primary.

But the encounter between Pares and Greenbay Primary was postponed.

TN Kirnon Primary, which captured the runner-up spot last year, currently leads Group C with 15 points after winning all five matches thus far.

In Group B, which is being contested at the Buckley's Primary School playing field, there were wins for St. Peters Primary and Freeman's

Village Primary.

St. Peters Primary extended their unbeaten run, securing their fifth win in as many games, by snatching a 4-2 victory against Cobbs Cross Primary to remain at the top of Group B with 15 points.

Freeman's Village Primary claimed their third win in five matches by hammering Buckley's Primary 5-0 to move into second place with 10 points.

But the Group B encounter between CT Samuel Primary and Liber-

ta Primary ended in a 3-3 draw.

Liberta Primary currently occupies third place with eight points from five matches, while Cobbs Cross Primary is in fourth place on goal difference with five points from five matches.

Five Islands Primary won all five matches thus far to lead Group A with 15 points. Reigning three-peat champions Golden Grove Primary remain second in Group A with 12 points after recording four wins in five matches.

Wins for Old Road Daggers and Rebels in second division basketball

The Old Road Daggers and the Rebels recorded wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division League on Wednesday night.

The Old Road Daggers claimed their sixth win in 11 games with a 68-48 victory against MJ Gray's Green Phoenix in the second game of a double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Kelvin Simon converted 17 points and grabbed 18 rebounds; Jesus Lopez produced 13 points, seven rebounds, and six steals; and Devea Aaron chipped in with eight points and nine rebounds for the Old Road Daggers.

Tyreke Lewis produced 18 points, seven rebounds, and five steals, and Di-

metre Leitch converted 12 points and grabbed 17 rebounds for MJ Gray's Green Phoenix.

It was the final game for MJ Gray's Green Phoenix in the round-robin league competition. The MJ Gray's Green Phoenix finished in the cellar without a win after suffering their 12th defeat in as many games.

The Rebels claimed their sixth win in 11 games by snatching a narrow 73-69 victory against the Honourable Gaston Browne Pointville Ballers in Wednesday's opening encounter.

Kareem Blair sank 19 points and claimed seven rebounds; Ryan Noel sank 13 points and snatched six rebounds; Zuri Nesbitt produced 12 points, six re-



bounds, and five assists; and Tyndale Telemaque had 10 points and five steals for the Rebels.

Kebo Orford produced 19 points, 10 rebounds, and seven steals; Skyy Nedd converted 18 points and snatched seven rebounds; Connell Nedd sank 17 points and claimed seven rebounds; and Khalid Shabazz scored 13 points and grabbed 13 rebounds for the Pointville Ballers.

It was also the last game for the Pointville Ballers in the round-robin league competition. The Pointville Ballers finished their campaign with a record of three wins and nine losses from their quota of 12 games.

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and 85th minutes.

Calvin Goodwin also scored in the 48th minute, and Chevez Davis had a conversion in the 50th minute for Bethesda.

ABAYA was reduced to 10 players in the 53rd minute when Keun Wyre was expelled after receiving a second caution (yellow card), which is an automatic red card.

Their 12th win in 21 matches allows Bethesda to remain in seventh place by advancing to 40 points. ABAYA will remain second from the bottom of the standings on goal difference with six points after los-

ing for the 19th time in 21 matches.

Golden Grove also won by default against the Young Warriors, who failed to show up for their encounter at the Golden Grove playing field.

The win by a 3-0 margin allows Golden Grove to advance to 41 points, the same as Urlings and Soccer Academy.

However, Golden Grove will remain in sixth place due to an inferior goal difference to both the fifth-placed Urlings and Soccer Academy in fourth place.

The Young Warriors will remain in 17th place with nine points after losing for the 18th time in 21 matches.



Players of the English Harbour football team

Goal-fest for English Harbour and Bethesda

English Harbour and Bethesda recorded wins by big margins in the second phase group stage of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division on Wednesday.

Oshane Blackwood scored a hat-trick and Yakira Hughes had a double conversion as English Harbour defeated Glanvilles 8-2 in their encounter at the Glanvilles playing field.

Blackwood converted a penalty in the 48th minute and also had conversions in the 73rd and 84th minutes to

achieve his hat-trick.

Hughes scored in the 30th and 77th minutes. The other goals for English Harbour were scored by Shadaeki Frederick in the 23rd minute, Jaquon Watts in the 40th minute, and Antoniel Campbell in the 74th minute.

Scian Hastings scored in the 11th minute, and Xarik Richards had a 59th-minute conversion for Glanvilles, who remain in 16th place in the standings with 14 points after suffering their 15th loss in 21 matches.

Their 12th win in 21 matches al-

lows English Harbour to remain in eighth place by advancing to 39 points.

O'Shale Simon scored five goals, Devin Martin scored a hat-trick, and Chunsae Martin converted twice as Bethesda achieved a 12-0 victory against ABAYA at the Parham playing field.

Simon had conversions in the 32nd, 39th, 56th, 71st, and 79th minutes; Devin Martin scored in the 19th, 41st, and 63rd minutes; and Chunsae Martin converted his goals in the 51st

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