

# PM BROWNE QUESTIONS MOTIVES

*Story on Page 2*



Students from three primary schools visited the Mosquito Village display mounted by the Central Board of Health at its former head office compound on the Lower All Saints Road. *Story on page 7.*

# Local News



## PM Browne questions the motives of the EU on who ends up on its 'black-list'

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has expressed displeasure with the manner in which countries such as Antigua and Barbuda and others in the Caribbean find themselves placed on a so-called 'black-list' for non-compliance with the financial standards set by the European Union and other entities.

Speaking in parliament on Monday, PM Browne said the unilateral manner in which countries are placed on the black-list or the grey-list, is arbitrary, and offensive as his pref-

erence would be for there to be dialogue between the respective countries and the EU before such actions are taken.

"We have said consistently to the European Union that they should see countries as a partner in these issues of fighting money-laundering, terrorism financing to ensure tax transparency. This type of offensive approach in which in many instances they take these measures without any dialogue, without any warning, that

*cont'd on pg 3*



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

DESIGNED TO STAND OUT  
 ENERGY WITHIN  
 PERFORMANCE AND COMFORT IN EVERY RIDE  
 ROBUST PROTECTION  
 .....that's the Suzuki S.Presso

HADEED MOTORS LTD

Give us a call....481-2500 or  
 Visit us on Old Parham Road

## Government and opposition join hands to address 'grey/black' listing

In a rare show of unity, the government and the opposition members of the House of Representatives joined hands to pass legislation aimed at having Antigua and Barbuda removed from the so-called 'grey-list' of countries deemed to be 'not fully' compliant with the requirements of the international financial architecture.

Attorney General, Sir Steadroy Benjamin on Monday guided the House through the debates on the several bills that the country needed to update in order to be judged to be compliant leading to the eventual removal from the Grey-List.

During his presentation, Sir Steadroy made an appeal for support for the various measures noting that they were not contentious but were designed to get Antigua and Barbuda off the 'grey list' upon which it ap-



Attorney General, Sir Steadroy Benjamin appeared in February this year.

"These amendments are being done to put Antigua and Barbuda in a position where we can be removed from the 'black-listing'. Indeed, my two main drafters are now in Jamaica, and it was early this morning when they were sending me further amendments suggested by the global partners who want to see our laws correspond with theirs," Sir Steadroy explained.

According to the government's chief legal officer the country has no choice but to go to parliament to update the relevant laws to comply with the requirements of the international bodies such as the European Union.

"Let us get it done; they have a few days to go before they meet again, so let's do it so that no matter what they come with, we have to come here and make the

changes," he emphasized.

He urged the entire house to deal with the matter responsibly, without politics, in the interest of Antigua and Barbuda.

The member for St. John's Rural West, Richard Lewis, and the member for Barbuda, Trevor Walker, both spoke in favour of joining with the government in making the changes so that Antigua and Barbuda could then be removed from the 'grey-list.'

The measures passed on Monday include; the Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, the Companies (Amendment) Bill and the mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

The House also passed the Prevention of Terrorism (Amendment) Bill 2024, which was introduced by Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene.

### *cont'd from pg 2*

you take punitive action and place you on a sanctioned list; that is totally inappropriate," he argued.

The prime minister noted that small states often lack the capacity to keep up-to-date with the myriad of chances that the EU and others are demanding.

He suggested that often the EU may 'flag' any particular issue, whilst Antigua and Barbuda may have a different interpretation, nonetheless the amendments are made.

He is recommending to the EU that it adopts a different approach to

these issues; one that focuses on co-operation rather than to be constantly taking punitive actions.

"We have a common interest to fight money-laundering and terrorism financing.

"So, we continue to advocate for that level of cooperation between countries like ours and the EU. I have also noticed that there is a tendency to focus on small states that are led by people of a certain ethnicity.

"When you look at these countries in the Caribbean, they are poor and are run by black leaders. There are those who harbour the view that

black leaders are intrinsically corrupt.

"We have to say these things because we have to determine what is driving this type of focus on small states that are operated by black leaders," he suggested.

The prime minister also suggested that in the larger countries are where many of the things they are asking the Caribbean to adopt laws to fight, are happening in many of those centres.

"Why then are they targeting these small countries in the Caribbean?" he asked rhetorically.

## Revision of the laws of the land placed on ‘front burner’

The Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs is to spearhead a drive to revise the laws of Antigua and Barbuda, making them more relevant to today’s conditions and to be more accessible as well.

Word of this comes from the Attorney General, Sir Steadroy Benjamin in a statement to the House of Representatives on Monday.

“Mr. Speaker, the laws of this country were last revised in 1994, 30 years ago, and no administration saw it fit to revise the laws to make it one comprehensive law; one book, one law in one place where we can find the necessary laws with which we are concerned today.

“For example, later today, we shall be looking at the Companies

Act, which has had six amendments, 1995, 2004, 2009, 2017, 2020 and 2023.

“Now when parliamentarians, students or persons overseas are trying to follow the law, the various amendments they are all over the place,” he asserted.

The AG explained that the same circumstances existed with the rules of parliament which were updated last year; the first time since 1967.

“It was this government, with your assistance, Mr. Speaker, and others who made the Standing Orders relevant for today,” he noted.

Sir Steadroy asked members on the opposition bench to cooperate with the government in this revision exercise as it will redound to their benefit as well.

“I expect to have discussions with your side (the opposition) on the matter.

“Let us get the laws revised this year,” he urged.

He revealed that he has already instructed the Law Revision Commissioner, to start the process as the revision must be done as a matter of urgency.

“It is an expensive process but that will not deter us from getting the laws revised in the interest of all,” he emphasised.

The attorney general relayed to parliament that he himself had difficulties finding relevant portions of the law in preparation for the debate and therefore had to rely on the staff of the ministry to assist with the research.

**TUESDAYS & WEDNESDAYS**

**2 DAYS WAYS SAVE**

**\$16.99**  
- 2 pcs  
- Biscuit  
- Drink

**\$19.99**  
- Zinger / CCB  
- Drink

\*limitations apply\*

FOR EXCLUSIVITY ONLY

Available on the App Store | Google Play

#kfcanu

## Delta Airlines adds more flights to Antigua and Barbuda

Delta Airlines, the US largest carrier, will be adding additional flights into the VC Bird International Airport for the upcoming winter months.

Both the Minister of Tourism, Charles Max Fernandez and CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, Colin C. James are said to be very elated with this development according to a release from the ABTA.

Minister Fernandez, said, “The heightened demand for Antigua and Barbuda is evident, and we are pleased to see airlines like Delta, confidently boosting their services to the V.C. Bird International Airport as our US market continues to show the most expansion”.

Accordingly, Minister Fernandez feels that the surge in travelers choosing to visit Antigua and Barbuda is



a direct result of new accommodations and a robust marketing campaign by the tourism offices and stakeholders.

For his part, CEO James, expressed his satisfaction with legacy carrier Delta’s new schedule.

“Delta Airlines will com-

mence daily flights from Atlanta International Airport from December 7, 2024, until January 7, 2025. Delta will return to its twice-weekly service on Tuesdays and Saturdays following this period.

“Most notably, we are ex-

cited that starting January 11, 2025, Delta will introduce weekly service from John F. Kennedy International (JFK) in New York to V.C. Bird International,” said James.

James further emphasized, “The launch of the Delta service from the large JFK hub is a major development for the destination. The New York tri-state area remains the strongest catchment area within our US market. With Delta now operating from JFK, we are providing another airlift option for travelers from the tri-state area seeking to experience Antigua and Barbuda.”

Delta’s expanded flight frequency, combined with the increased flight service from other US carriers for the summer and winter months, will enhance accessibility to the destination from the United States.



# Local News



## Missing 14-year old girl found in house during a police search

A fourteen-year-old girl who was reported missing for more than a week was found at a house during a police search for illegal drugs.

A police report said that on Saturday, May 11, they effected several search warrants in the Grays Farm, Five Islands, and Nut Grove areas and seized large portions of controlled drugs, firearms, ammunition, and suspected stolen items.

“During the search of a property at Five Islands, the police confiscated a portion of cannabis and several cases of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. A 14-year-old girl, who went missing for more than a week was also found on the said property.

A 24-year-old man was taken into custody and is assisting the police with their investigations,” the report revealed.

It stated that the police also found one 9mm Glock pistol and seven rounds of matching ammunition during their search of a property at Federation Road, Grays Farm. A male suspect was taken into custody as a result.

Meanwhile, the police seized a sheet of plywood, a digital camera, a tent, a bicycle, camouflage clothing, and controlled substances found at two separate properties, also in Grays Farm.



Several persons were arrested and taken into custody. Investigations are still ongoing in those matters.

In other developments, following a weekend of anti-crime measures, the police have turned their attention searching for the suspects involved in a drive-by shooting incident.

The police say they are on the look-out for those involved in the drive-by shooting incident in Grays Farm that left one man nursing a gunshot wound to his back.

It was reported that sometime around 12:10 am on Sunday, 12 May, a 23-year-old man of #2 Armstrong Road was standing on Christian Street when a small dark vehicle drove into the area and two shots were fired.

The said vehicle was spotted speeding away from the scene on Christian Street and Armstrong Road. The victim received a gunshot wound to his upper back and was transported to the hospital by a family member. His medical condition is said to be stable.

The police are appealing to anyone with information surrounding this incident to contact the Grays Farm Police Station at 462-0481 or call the Crimestoppers Hotline at 800-Tips (8477).

In related police developments, the lawmen have reported that on Monday Christopher Hope of Cashew Hill was fined \$25,000 for the unlawful possession of a firearm and ammunition.

The 39-year-old appeared before Magistrate

Ngaio Emmanuel in the All Saints Magistrate’s Court charged with possession of one .380 Pistol, and 10 matching rounds of ammunition. He was convicted and fined \$15,000 for the firearm and \$1,000 for each round of ammunition.

He was given 6 months to pay the fine for the firearm or serve 15 months, and 9 months to pay the fine for the ammunition or serve 1 year at His Majesty’s Prison.

Police officers attached to the Coolidge Police Station were carrying out investigations into a report made against the Cashew Hill resident and found him in possession of the illegal weapon at Jabberwock Beach on Saturday. He was arrested and taken into custody.



## Primary school students visit Mosquito Awareness Week display

Students from three primary schools visited the Mosquito Village display mounted by the Central Board of Health at its former head office compound on the Lower All Saints Road.

It was the kick-off of Mosquito Week, 2024, with students along with their teachers from Sunnyside Tutorial primary, Divine Academy and the St. Michael's primary visiting the display where they learned of the steps that they can take to control the breeding

*cont'd on pg 8*



# Local News



*cont'd from pg 7*  
of mosquitoes.

Today (Tuesday), students from the Seventh-Day Adventist and St. John's Catholic primary schools will have their turn to see the display which focuses on how mosquitoes multiply and what can be done to reduce the areas where they lay their eggs and multiply.

Under the theme, 'Small bite, big threat' and the slogan, 'Stop disease transmission, start disease reduction', the activities form part of the observance of Mosquito Awareness Week

which runs from May 13-17.

The annual event is designed to create an awareness of the need for a community-wide approach to mosquito reduction and eradication, and which calls on all sectors of the society to be actively involved in the anti-mosquito campaign.

During the week, students from other primary schools are expected to visit the Mosquito Village so that they too can be exposed to the information that is being shared by the Vector Control officers of the CBH.



**MOSQUITO AWARENESS WEEK**  
 MON MAY 13TH - FRIDAY MAY 17TH 2024

**"SMALL BITE, BIG THREAT"**

STOP DISEASE TRANSMISSION, START SOURCE REDUCTION





Sous Chef Juleen Rose

Assistant Weddings Manager - Meria Govia

## Four people graduate from SCU

Four Antiguan staff members from Sandals Grande Antigua Resort and Spa have graduated after successfully completing a fully-funded Diploma in Hospitality Leadership programme

at the Sandals Corporate University (SCU), offered in partnership with the Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism, Florida International University (FIU) and Accelerating Leaders.

They are Club Sandals supervisors Je'Mel Francis and Ieasha Tuitt, sous chef Juleen Rose and assistant weddings manager Meria Govia.

*cont'd on pg 10*



Club Sandals Supervisor - Ieasha Tuitt

Club Sandals Supervisor - Je'Mel Francis

## Republic Bank CPL launches broadcast talent search

The Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) has launched a region wide talent search to find a presenter for their broadcast of the 2024 season.

The CPL Talent Search is open to all Caribbean residents and the prize for the winner will be a contract to be a pitch side presenter for this year's event.

This groundbreaking initiative will be searching for the next sports presenting super star from within the region with training on offer for the winning participant so that they can hone their talent and use this amazing opportunity as a springboard to a career in broadcasting.

This is one of the many CPL initiatives that look



to develop the next generation of Caribbean talent, but this is the first time

that the focus will be on the CPL broadcast which was watched by 853.5mil-

lion viewers in 2023.

Those wanting to submit a performance into the contest can do so by sharing them in front of the camera presenting or interviewing someone on social media with the hashtag #CPLTALENTSEARCH.

Paul Pritchett-Brown, CPL's Head of Production, said: "We are really looking forward to seeing the submissions from the next generation of broadcasting talent from across the region.

"This is an amazing opportunity to showcase your skills in front of the camera and we are hopeful that we will get a lot of submissions as we search for the next on-screen talent."

### cont'd from pg 9

Reflecting on the experience the graduates spoke glowingly of the programme.

"The classes were designed to not only provide theoretical knowledge of the industry, but also to give us hands-on experience through case studies, group projects, and real-life simulations. This approach helped us to understand the dynamic and ever-changing nature of the industry and how to effectively adapt and respond to its challenges," assistant weddings manager Meria Govia shared.

"We were also exposed to a diverse range of perspectives and experiences through our lectures.

"This allowed us to gain a global understanding of the industry and best practices, preparing us for a successful career in any part of the world," added sous chef

Juleen Rose.

Club Sandals supervisors Ieasha Tuitt and Je'Mel Francis said, "the classes were not only focused on developing our technical skills, but also on nurturing our leadership qualities.

"We were encouraged to think critically, communicate effectively, and work collaboratively, preparing us to lead teams and manage projects in the future.

"Overall, the delivery of the classes was comprehensive and well-rounded, providing us with a solid foundation to excel in the fast-paced and competitive world of tourism and hospitality."

Upon completing the programme the scholarship recipients journeyed to Barbados to receive their diplomas at their graduation ceremony at Sandals Royal Barbados.

## New version of Chat-GPT can teach maths and flirt

By Zoe Kleinman

OpenAI has unveiled the latest version of the tech which underpins its AI chatbot ChatGPT.

It's called GPT-4o, and it will be rolled out to all users of ChatGPT, including non-subscribers.

It is faster than earlier models and has been programmed to sound chatty and sometimes even flirtatious in its responses to prompts.

The new version can read and discuss images, translate languages, and identify emotions from visual expressions. There is also memory so it can recall previous prompts.

It can be interrupted and it has an easier conversational rhythm - there was no delay between asking it a question and receiving an answer.

During a live demo using the voice version of GPT-4o, it provided helpful suggestions for how to go about solving a simple equation written on a piece of paper - rather than simply solving it. It analysed some computer code, translating between Italian and English and interpreted the emotions in a selfie of a smiling man.

Using a warm American female voice, it greeted its prompts by asking them how they were doing. When paid a compliment, it responded: "Stop it, you're making me blush!"



It wasn't perfect – at one point it mistook the smiling man for a wooden surface, and it started to solve an equation that it hadn't yet been shown. This unintentionally demonstrated that there's still some way to go before the glitches and hallucinations which make chatbots unreliable and potentially unsafe, can be ironed out.

But what it does show us is the direction of travel for OpenAI, which I think intends GPT-4o to become the next generation of AI digital assistant, a kind of turbo-charged Siri or Hey, Google which remembers what it's been told in the past and can interact beyond voice or text.

If there was an elephant in the room, alongside the enthusiastic off-camera audience whooping and applauding, it was the environmental price tag of this technology.

We know that AI is more power-hungry than traditional computing tasks, and that the more sophisticated it becomes, the more computing power it requires. There was no mention of sustainability during the evening.

We have seen chatbots like Elon Musk's Grok and Pi, from DeepMind co-founder Mustafa Suleyman, prioritise the "personality" of their products, but the way in which GPT-4o seamlessly handled the combination of text, audio and images with an instant response appears to put OpenAI ahead of the competition.

Of course, at the moment we only have the firm's word for it – it was their demo, carefully curated and managed by them. It will be interesting to see how GPT-4o copes at scale with the millions of people who already use ChatGPT as it rolls out.

OpenAI's chief tech-

nology officer Mira Murati described GPT-4o as "magical" but added that the firm would "remove that mysticism" with the product's roll-out.

An interesting and emotive choice of words: while this tech is rapidly becoming more sophisticated and increasingly convincing as a companion – it is not sentient or magic, it is complex programming and machine learning.

There have been rumours about a partnership between OpenAI and Apple and while this has not yet been confirmed, it was telling during the presentation that Apple products were used throughout.

Another shot across the bows was the timing of this event, 24 hours before its rival Google is due to show off its latest AI developments at its annual conference, Google IO.

# Shein suppliers still work 75-hour weeks - report

By Charlotte Edwards

Workers for some suppliers of Chinese fast fashion giant Shein are still working 75 hours a week, despite the company promising to improve conditions, a report suggests.

A new investigation by Swiss advocacy group Public Eye has followed up on its 2021 report, which found a number of staff across six sites in Guangzhou were doing excessive overtime.

According to the group, who interviewed 13 employees from six factories in China supplying Shein for its latest investigation, excessive overtime was still common for many workers.

Shein told the BBC it was “working hard” to address the matters raised by the Public Eye report and had made “significant progress on enhancing conditions”.

Shein has grown rapidly since it was founded in 2008, and was one of many online businesses to boom during the Covid pandemic lockdowns.

Its formula of offering a wide range of cheap clothes - backed up with campaigns on Instagram, TikTok and other social media - has turned it into one of the biggest fashion retailers in the world.

It relies on thousands



of third-party suppliers, as well as contract manufacturers, near its headquarters in Guangzhou, and is able to turn around a new item in a matter of weeks, rather than months.

However, an employee who has worked at sewing machines for 20 years told Public Eye: “I work every day from 8 in the morning to 10.30 at night and take one day off each month. I can’t afford any more days off because it costs too much.”

The 13 factory employees were interviewed in the summer of 2023.

Interviewees worked at production sites west of Nancun Village in the Guangzhou area in southern China.

Public Eye did not return to Nancun itself, which was the location of

the original interviews, claiming “the atmosphere was too risky” due to media attention from its initial report.

Interviewees, aged between 23 and 60, said they worked 12-hour days on average, which did not include breaks for lunch and dinner.

They said they usually work six to seven days a week.

Shein’s Code of Conduct for its suppliers states that workers should not work longer than 60 hours a week, including overtime.

The brand acknowledged this was a long-term issue when Public Eye first raised it in 2021.

In its response to the latest report, Shein said long working hours in the sector were a “common challenge that brands, manufacturers,

and other ecosystem players must work together to address”.

It added that this was not a problem unique to Shein, but said it was “committed to playing our part to improve the situation in our own supply chain”.

Workers also claimed their wages had hardly changed since the first investigation and fluctuate between 6,000 to 10,000 yuan per month (£663 to £1,104 a month).

Public Eye says the basic wage for workers after deducting overtime pay is 2,400 yuan (£265).

According to the Asia Floor Wage Alliance, a living wage in China is around 6,512 yuan (£719).

Interviewees claimed if they made a mistake, they would have to make any al-

*cont’d on pg 13*

*cont'd from pg 12*

terations to the clothes unpaid.

“Whoever makes the mistake is responsible for putting it right. You have to fix the problem in your own working time,” a 50-year-old supervisor told the investigation.

Workers also claimed to have noticed a rise in surveillance cameras in the factories, and said they believed the footage was sent to Shein in real time so regulations could be enforced.

Public Eye also said it observed toddlers being babysat in the factories, teenagers packaging items and a smoking ban not being enforced.

In a statement to the BBC, Shein said it was investing tens of millions of dollars “in strengthening governance and compliance across our supply chain”.

“We are actively work-



ing to improve our suppliers’ practices, including ensuring that hours worked are voluntary and that workers are compensated fairly for what they do, and also recognise the importance of industry collaboration to ensure continuous improvement and progress in this area,” it said.

“As a result of our efforts, research we have

conducted with our third party auditors has found that workers at Shein supplier facilities in China earn basic salaries that are significantly higher than the average local minimum wage.”

Shein told Public Eye that suppliers were required to ensure they met local laws and regulations governing wages and working

hours.

“Where violations [of our governance policies] are found, we take firm action... [including] termination of the business relationship.”

With regards to surveillance cameras, Shein told Public Eye that suppliers made their own decisions to install cameras in their facilities, and the company did not have access to suppliers’ security camera feeds or footage.

Regarding children in factories, the company told Public Eye: “We strictly do not tolerate child labour. We treat any violations with utmost severity.”

It acknowledged that some factory staff faced a challenge of balancing work and childcare, which “can result in workers bringing their children to their workplace”.

“Being aware of this, we provide financial support for suppliers to create childcare centres within or near their premises.”



## Connect Caribe pushes forward start of regional ferry service

CMC – The private sector-led ferry service, Connect Caribe, Monday announced that it had reached an agreement with the Caribbean Private Sector Organisation (CPSO) and the Dubai-headquartered Jampur Group enabling it to begin its ferry service much earlier than had been expected.

Pleion Group Inc, which described itself as a Caribbean and US-based company with offices in the United States, Barbados, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica, said its purpose is to trigger economic growth through business development in the Caribbean and beyond.

“We are excited, we have reached a milestone in the development and implementation of this project earlier than we had anticipated and the reason for that is that there are two major partnerships that have turbo charged and accelerated the process of taking this maritime initiative from concept to reality,” Pleion Group Chairman Dr Andre Thomas told a virtual news conference.

“The first would be our partnership with the CPSO whose data, guidance and leadership in the implementation of the project has served to really accelerate us. Their understanding of the trade landscape has



Pleion Group Chairman Dr Andre Thomas.

been indispensable in guiding us in making strategic and logical decisions where this project is actually concerned,” he added.

He said that the second major announcement is “our partnership with our new partner, which is the Jampur Group,” which he described as a “very strong company operating out of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) working across the continent of Africa” over 30 years and has a fleet of ships.

He said that the partnership will allow the Group to advance the Connect Caribe venture much faster than initially planned. Originally, it was envisaged that the ferry service, its first phase at least, would be operational by November 2024.

“We have entered into an agreement with them and they will be providing our

first set of ships, which are being acquired as we speak and very soon will be on their way to the Caribbean waters.

“So the news that we have...the decision making in terms of our business development, our routes, our understanding of how to integrate our cargo platform with a travel platform, all that market information has been made available through our discussions with the CPSO and have been indispensable in accelerating that side of the business,” Thomas told reporters.

He said the Jampur Group has its own shipyard, repairing ships, noting that all aspects of the venture in the Caribbean are being met.

“We are very excited to announce this and so this

will accelerate our launch date ...that was due to be in the month of November. This definitely will accelerate it by a few months earlier and the approach that we are taking is going to be slightly different marked by the consultations we have had with the CPSO and also with the Jampur Group.

“So we are going to begin with a lot more ships, but slightly smaller ships that would go to many more places and we will begin with a very strong emphasis on the cargo element with also travel and then build towards having the two much larger cruise ships which we are actually working on and that would house over a thousand people each in the second phase of acquisition,” Thomas added.

Thomas said simultaneously, the group is working on integrating e-commerce options to make payments easier and that the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS), a cross-border, financial market infrastructure, offered through the African Exim Import Bank is being seriously considered.

“I believe it (the PAPSS venture) will be game-changing for Caribbean economies,” Thomas said.

PSO chief executive officer, Dr. Patrick Antoine

*cont'd on pg 15*

## St Vincent & the Grenadines to get money from Saudi Fund

CMC - The Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) is providing St. Vincent and the Grenadines with an EC\$135 million loan for a number of projects in the education, national security, health, youth and sports and housing sectors.

Finance Minister Camillo Gonsalves signed the agreement with Saudi officials in Washington last month, and parliament gave the green light to the accord as it debated the Natural Disaster (Construction and Rehabilitation Project) Loan Authorisation Bill.

The loan is at two per cent interest to be repaid over 20 years with a five-year grace period and was included in the EC\$1.6 billion budget for 2024 that Parliament approved in January.

“That means that the first payment on the loan will be made in 2029 and the final payment on the loan will be made in 2043,” Gonsalves told lawmakers, noting that it will fund projects expected to be completed by the end of 2026.

“However, the closing date of the loan is the end of 2027,” Gonsalves said, adding that this gives “a little bit



Finance Minister Camillo Gonsalves.

of leeway, a little bit of flex time on the back end in case things don't proceed as quickly as you would expect them to proceed and so on”.

Gonsalves told Parliament that the money is divided into various components ranging from EC\$6.8 million to EC\$35.1 million and will cover projects ranging from the construction of a secondary school to the rehabilitation and rebuilding of homes damaged by the eruption of La Soufriere volcano.

Opposition Leader Godwin Friday said he hopes that projects in his Northern Grenadines constituency, will be addressed under the loan pro-

gramme.

“But how the allocations are made and who gets onto the priority list, these are things that have to be more transparent because there's a lot of people who feel that they are simply not being given the attention even though their needs are very urgent,” Friday told Parliament.

He said that while the opposition is always concerned about the effects of further borrowing for the government, “we understand this is a developing country.

Gonsalves told Parliament that the terms of the loans are different from other agreements in that Kingstown must employ Caribbean or Saudi consultants acceptable to the SFD to assist in project tendering and supervision.

Similarly, the country must employ Saudi and Caribbean regional suppliers and contractors acceptable to the fund upon the terms and conditions satisfactory to the fund.

“And clearly, that includes contractors and suppliers in St Vincent and the Grenadines,” Gonsalves told lawmakers.

### *cont'd from pg 14*

said this private venture has the backing of the body because there is a huge need for intra-regional transportation solutions.

“In working with them, our focus is going to continue to be to try to support the initiatives with Connect Caribe or other initiatives for this whole conundrum of successful connectivity in the Caribbean,” Antoine said, making references to the number of mandates

given by the regional governments to the private sector group.

“One such is the project we are engaged in this morning, which is to contribute to a private sector solution to address the challenges of maritime transportation and at the time the focus was on the southern Caribbean, which we defined as all of the countries in the Eastern Caribbean, plus Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Suriname.

“So we are very focus on that,” he said, noting that he is also pleased that together with Connect Caribe, they are achieving this mandate.

“We want to say how happy we are that Connect Caribe has really taken this initiative really quite seriously and themselves pursued and championed this mandate...and they have formed a number of very interesting partnerships to form themselves into a con-

sortium and I think what we seeing here this morning is a manifestation of that,” Antoine added.

During the virtual news conference, it was announced that former Harbourmaster of the port of Barbados, Richard Allen, has joined the Connect Caribe team and will be engaging customs and port authorities in the region so that the ports are ready to accept and accommodate the much-needed vessels.

# Gunman arrested at Louisiana church during First Communion Mass

By Brandon Drenon

A 16-year-old was arrested after entering a Catholic church in Louisiana with a gun, inciting panic among children gathered for their First Holy Communion last weekend.

When police arrived to St Mary Magdalen in Abbeville, they found a teen unarmed and pinned to the ground by parishioners, according to local news.

No one was harmed during the incident, which was captured on a livestream.

The FBI is assisting Abbeville Police with the investigation.

Footage from the incident over the weekend shows a man walking up to the priest mid-ceremony to whisper something in his ear. The priest then stops the ceremony and asks the congregation to join him in prayer - then panic erupts.

According to a St Mary Magdalen Catholic Church Facebook post, "a suspicious person opened the back door of the building". Witnesses told local news that he was armed and dressed in black.

Churchgoers slowly noticed him, and in the footage, cries and screams erupt from the church pews



St Mary Magdalen Catholic Church in Abbeville Louisiana.

as the priest is seen slowly ducking behind the altar. Multiple children are seen running across the screen.

The church described the encounter over the weekend as a "frightening experience" that "understandably caused a panic" in the post.

"The individual was immediately confronted by parishioners, escorted outside and the police were called," a church Facebook post said.

"It was the scariest thing I have ever gone through," one woman wrote on social media.

When police arrived

at 10:35 CST (16:35 BST), they "made a sweep through the church to make sure there was no additional threat", the Abbeville Police Department said.

Abbeville Police Chief Mike Hardy told local news that the suspect said there was a second shooter nearby. However, police said they didn't find evidence of that.

The suspect was taken into custody and questioned, then taken to be medically evaluated. He is charged with terrorizing and two counts of possession of a firearm by a juvenile, police said.

In the Facebook post, St Mary Magdalen thanked its parishioners and police for "acting quickly to ensure safety for all" and said uniformed police will be at all upcoming Masses "out of an abundance of caution".

The encounter follows a similar scene also captured on video in Pennsylvania. On 5 May, a man walked into a church service, aimed a gun at the pastor and pulled the trigger. The gun jammed, sparing the pastor.

The man was restrained by parishioners until police arrived and placed him under arrest.





The vast advert fell on top of a petrol station and some houses in Ghatkopar, a suburb of Mumbai.

## Eight killed and dozens injured after Mumbai billboard collapse

By Tom McArthur

A least eight people have been killed and about 60 injured after a giant billboard collapsed during a sudden storm in the Indian city of Mumbai, authorities said.

The billboard, measuring 70m by 50m according to the police, fell onto houses and a petrol station in the city's financial district on Monday.

About 20 to 30 people are still feared to be trapped with a rescue operation under way, emergency services said.

The billboard fell after a rain and dust storm hit the city of Mumbai, ripping up trees and causing travel chaos and power outages.

Footage on local news channels shows the huge billboard swaying

in the wind before giving way and crashing into the buildings near a busy road in the city's eastern suburb of Ghatkopar.

Video posted on social media appears to show the immediate aftermath at the petrol station, with vehicles crushed under the fallen advertisement hoarding.

In photos from the scene, emergency teams can be seen working through the wreckage. dramatic video footage also shows rescue workers pulling out a victim from under the fallen billboard and using power tools to cut the metal.

In a statement posted on X, formerly known as Twitter, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation said "speedy winds" caused the collapse and that several agencies including

police, fire and national disaster response teams were involved in the rescue operation.

Devendra Fadnavis, the deputy chief minister of Maharashtra state, said a "high-level inquiry has been ordered into the incident."

She added that the state government would provide financial assistance of 500,000 rupees (£4,767) to the families of those killed and wounded in the incident.

Flights were temporarily suspended at the city's international airport during the storm with at least 15 planes diverted, local media report.

Mumbai is one of several cities in India prone to severe flooding and rain-related incidents during the monsoon season - which is usually between June and September.

## New Winthorpes Lions advance to final of ABCA's Super40 Cup

The New Winthorpes Lions have advanced to the final of the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) Super40 Cup.

The Lions booked their spot in the final by recording a four-wicket win against the Jennings Tigers in the second semi-final in New Winthorpes on Sunday.

The Jennings Tigers were dismissed for 124 in 35.4 overs after winning the toss and opting to bat, with only four batsmen reaching double figures.

Kief Baltimore, batting at number nine, hit a top score of 36 off 33 balls, including four fours and two sixes. Emmanuel Lawrence made 19, opener Jahiem Africa scored 17, and Zavier Freeland got 15.

Captain and fast bowler Nino Henry snapped up three for 15 in seven overs; Ian Eusebe picked up three for 22 in eight overs; and Shavon Moore captured two for 27 in six overs.

Henry then played a match-winning innings of 49 not out to lead his team to victory at 130 for six in 33.3 overs.

The Lions were reeling at 34 for five when Henry and Asher Murray Cornelius staged a recovery in a

74-run sixth-wicket partnership.

Henry faced 53 balls and struck three fours and three sixes in his unbeaten knock, while Murray Cornelius made 44 off 83 balls, which included three fours and a six.

Zavier Freeland took two for 21 in eight overs, *cont'd on pg 19*



New Winthorpes Lions captain Nino Henry

**STATE INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED**

GET COVERAGE WITH **STATE** ... ONE LESS THING TO WORRY ABOUT

Live in a better STATE of mind.

- HEALTH INSURANCE WHEN YOU NEED IT MOST
- COVERAGE TO SUIT YOUR NEEDS
- PROTECT YOUR MOST IMPORTANT ASSETS
- OTHER POLICIES TO PROTECT YOU

(268) 481-7800/04 | info@sicantigua.com | www.sicantigua.com f @

## Matthews wins third ICC Women's Player of the Month award

Hayley Matthews has been named as the ICC Women's Player of the Month for April after spearheading the West Indies' success in Pakistan across both ODI and T20I series.

Matthews celebrates her third ICC Women's Player of the Month award after previously winning in November 2021 and October 2023.

Her most recent success comes thanks to an array of eye-catching all-round performances resulting in 451 runs and 12 wickets across both shorter formats.

The West Indies began their tour of Pakistan with three ODIs, and skipper Matthews set the tone early with a dominant display in the opening encounter, blasting an unbeaten 140 from atop the order and following up with three wickets for 17.

More success followed with Matthews replicating her heroics in the third fixture, scoring 141 in 149 balls and taking two wickets for 26 in another comfortable victory to seal the ODI series sweep.

When the attention turned to the subsequent T20I series, the 26-year-old reinforced her position as the top-ranked Women's T20I all-rounder.

Back-to-back half-centuries in Karachi and six wickets at an average of 10.50 told the tale of her series, as she inspired the tourists to another emphatic 4-1 series triumph.

"I am really happy to win the award again. These performances resulted in the team's success and that's the most important thing for me as



Hayley Matthews

captain," Matthews told the ICC.

"To win in Pakistan was always a big goal. I wanted to perform well and contribute to the team's success so to be able to have performances and get the results, that was really good and showed that the hard work and the concentration in Pakistan paid off.

"Being able to set some new records and achieve some new milestones as well was good for me so I'm extremely happy.

"We have confidence and we will take this with us going into the tour of Sri Lanka and look to secure more crucial points in the ICC Women's Championship."

### cont'd from pg 18

and Samuel Peters also claimed two for 21 in seven overs.

The New Winthropes Lions will face defending

champions the PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks in the final at Ball Beef in Liberta on Sunday, May 19, at 11 am.

The Blackhawks

booked their spot in the final with an eight-wicket victory against the WES Rising Sun Spartans in the other semi-final.

The two losing semi-fi-

nalists, the WES Rising Sun Spartans and the Jennings Tigers, will clash in a play-off for third place at Jennings on Saturday, May 18, at 11 am.



Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic (15) goes up for a shot as Minnesota Timberwolves guard Anthony Edwards, bottom, defends during the first half of Game 4 of an NBA basketball second-round playoff series in Minneapolis, Sunday, May 12, 2024. (AP)

## Nuggets tie Timberwolves with second straight road win

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The Denver Nuggets were far from done after dropping the first two games of the Western Conference semifinals at home in humbling fashion.

Nikola Jokic scored 16 of his 35 points in the fourth quarter, and Aaron Gordon had 27 points on 11-for-12 shooting to propel the Nuggets to a series-tying 115-107 victory over the Timberwolves on Sunday night in Game 4.

“It’s just like a laser-sharp focus,” Gordon said, “and a surgical execution.”

Jamal Murray had 12 of his 19 points in the third quarter for the de-

fending champion Nuggets in a momentum carryover from his buzzer-beating swish from behind half court, and the Wolves only had the deficit below double digits in the second half for a total of 3:19.

Anthony Edwards scored 44 points in another spectacular performance for Minnesota that set the franchise postseason record, shooting 16 for 25. But despite a 42-31 rebounding edge, the Wolves were beaten at their own game for the second straight time at home.

“Game 2 definitely woke us up,” Murray said. “We realized we can’t hold ourselves back.”

The series goes back to Denver for

Game 5 on Tuesday night.

“This is a series. We won two games, but we didn’t think it was going to be easy,” Edwards said.

Mike Conley had 15 points, Karl-Anthony Towns went just 5 for 18 from the field for 13 points and 12 rebounds, and Rudy Gobert came alive late to score 11 points and grab 14 rebounds. Still, the Wolves were on their heels at home for a second straight game.

The Nuggets scored eight straight points in 20 seconds to close the first half, highlighted by Murray’s improbable heave.

*cont’d on pg 21*



The Jets female volleyball team

## Wins for Jets and Renegades in ABAVA volleyball league

The Jets and Print Xpress Renegades recorded hard-fought 3-2 wins in tough five-setters in the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association's (ABAVA) Local League at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex over the weekend.

The Jets claimed their third win in seven games by snatching victory against the bottom team, the Royal Cruisers, in their Female Di-

vision 1 encounter that lasted two hours and 16 minutes.

The Jets prevailed 25-15, 23-25, 20-25, 25-19, and 15-13 against the Royal Cruisers, who remain in the cellar after losing for the seventh time in as many games.

The Print Xpress Renegades secured their seventh win in 10 games by snatching victory in an hour and 45 minutes against the Top

Ranking Storming Lions.

The Renegades prevailed 25-21, 18-25, 25-10, 20-25, and 15-11 against the Storming Lions, who suffered their third loss in 10 games.

The Pytonz maintained their perfect run during their latest encounter in the Men's Division 1 competition of the Local Volleyball League.

The Pytonz claimed their 10th win in as many games with a straight-set

3-0 victory against the bottom team, TOA Media and MKUU Tours Chargers Velocity, which remains in the cellar after losing for the 10th time in as many games.

The Pytonz took 58 minutes to dispatch Chargers Velocity, as they won the encounter 25-2, 25-18, and 25-6.

Starz1 came from two sets behind to claim their sixth win in seven games with a hard-fought 3-2 victory against Stoneville in the Female Division 1 League.

Starz1 took two hours and 15 minutes to prevail 23-25, 23-25, 25-23, 25-22, and 15-7 against Stoneville, who lost for the fifth time in seven games.

### *cont'd from pg 20*

Gordon didn't miss until there was 3:39 to go. Most importantly, he took the lead in hounding Towns and even took some turns trying to slow Edwards.

"The shot-making, the play-making, the physicality, the defense on two All-

Stars, so much is being asked of him right now," the Nuggets' coach Mike Malone said.

"What you love about Aaron Gordon since Day 1, when he put on that Nuggets uniform, It's always been about the Nuggets first. He is truly selfless."

# Sports

TUESDAY 14TH MAY 2024

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA  
**POINT EXPRESS**  
TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

## Flyers soar past Stingerz once again

Reigning champions EZ Fit Flyers are just one win away from retaining their Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Division 1 playoff title as well as completing the double during this season.

The top-seeded Flyers, who have already secured this year's league title, took a 2-0 lead against the second-seeded Northside Stingerz in their best-of-five Division 1 playoff finals on Sunday night.

The Flyers soared to an 87-75 victory in Game 2 in the second game of a double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Xavier "X-Man" Meade shot a game-high 34 points and claimed nine rebounds; Kenya Ahcom produced 15 points, eight rebounds, and eight assists; David Hernandez sank 11 points; and Selassie Brathwaite had 10 points and six assists for the Flyers.

Joshua Minner converted 15 points and snatched eight rebounds, while Jaiden Andrew and Kareem Edwards each scored 11 points and claimed five rebounds for the Stingerz.

In support, Keroi Lee sank 10 points and grabbed eight rebounds; Jayzee Saltibuz converted 10 points and claimed seven rebounds; and Devonte Carter scored 10 points for the Northside Stingerz.

It means the Flyers are just one win away from retaining the Division 1 playoff title and will be seeking to



The Flyers basketball team

accomplish the feat by sweeping the Northside Stingerz 3-0 when both sides clash in Game 3 tonight at the JSC Sports Complex.

Meanwhile, Spanish Heat II wrapped up their campaign in the round-robin preliminary round stage of ABBA's Second Division with a 92-85 victory against the Old Road Daggers in Sunday's opening game.

Jesus Emmanuel shot a game-high 28 points and grabbed 14 rebounds to lead Spanish Heat II to their ninth win in their quota of 12 games.

In support, Kevin Pimentel sank 21 points and had five assists; Ismael Palemo converted 15 points and grabbed 13 rebounds; Gabriel Perez

produced 13 points, 10 rebounds, and eight assists; and Rohland Hamilton scored nine points and snatched 16 rebounds for Spanish Heat II.

Kedar Clarke produced 21 points, seven rebounds, five assists, and five steals, and Braulio Lopez converted 15 points and had five assists for the Old Road Daggers.

In support, Kelvin Simon sank 14 points and grabbed 14 rebounds; Devea Aaron had 10 points, seven rebounds, and five assists; and Obediah Browne had nine points and eight rebounds for the Old Road Daggers, who also ended their league campaign with their sixth loss from their quota of 12 games.