

# DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AGREES TO REPLACE HOLY TRINITY SCHOOL

*Story on Page 2*



Minister of Education Daryll Matthew, left, and Foreign Affairs Minister E.P. Chet Greene, second right, along with representatives from the Dominican Republic display the signed agreement.

## A&B, Dominican Republic sign agreement for construction of primary school in Barbuda

The Governments of Antigua and Barbuda and the Dominican Republic have signed an agreement for the construction of a primary school on the sister island of Barbuda.

The agreement was signed by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Trade and Barbuda Affairs, Hon. E.P Chet Greene, Minister of Education, Sports and Creative Industries, Hon. Daryll Matthew and the Dominican Republic's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Roberto Alvarez.

Both countries inked the agreement on the margins of the Fourth International Conference for Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) underway at the American University of Antigua (AUA). The delegation from the DR is among more than one hundred and thirteen countries attending the major conference organised by the United Nations.

The agreement provides for the construction of a primary school on Barbuda at a cost of US\$1.5 million. The next steps in the planning stages of the project are the completion of architectural drawings to be followed by the selection of a construction company.

The donation of a primary school on Barbuda follows a commitment made



by the former government in the DR, which the current administration has agreed to honour.

Immediately following the passage of Hurricane Irma in 2017 that decimated 90 percent of the buildings on Barbuda, including the historic Holy Trinity School, the replacement of the public school was one of the commitments made to Prime Minister Gaston Browne when he reached out to the then president of the DR, Danilo Medina, seeking assistance for the Barbuda recovery efforts.

In brief remarks, Foreign Minister Greene said he is particularly pleased that another Caribbean government has reached out to

Antigua and Barbuda to offer assistance in a time of need. "The point I wish to emphasise is that this initiative is coming from a friendly Caribbean government. We have been accustomed to assistance coming from the North American or European governments in times of disaster, but to have this support from the Dominican Republic is so very important. It speaks to the long-standing relationship and the benefits that accrue to our two countries through people to people and trade exchanges," he remarked.

Education Minister Daryll Matthew, joined the foreign affairs minister in thanking the government of the DR for the gift of a

school for the people of Barbuda. For Minister Matthew, the key is the investment that is being made in education. "Supporting the construction of a school on Barbuda is a remarkable step in supporting education in Antigua and Barbuda. It is said when you plant a seed, you invest in the future, building a school is therefore like planting a seed," he stated.

Foreign Minister Alvarez said the donation strengthens the ties between the peoples of Antigua and Barbuda and the Dominican Republic.

"This will also be a symbol of the relationship, but it will also go way beyond that," he concluded.

## Antigua and Barbuda launches Debt Sustainability Support Service (DSSS) as major outcome of SIDS4

The historic launch of a new plan aimed at alleviating crippling levels of debt and building economic resilience among Small Island Developing States (SIDS) was a major outcome of Day 2 of the SIDS4 Conference now taking place in Antigua and Barbuda.

President of the conference, Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne and the President of the Republic of the Maldives, jointly lead the initiative, which established the Global SIDS Debt Sustainability Support Service.

The plan was co-designed with the assistance of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), in close consultation with a panel of world leaders and industry representatives.

Prime Minister Browne emphasized that the support service will provide strategic advice on breaking the cycle of debt and options for SIDS to seek new investment opportunities in climate resilient infrastructure.

“Resilient prosperity is crucial within the next decade with the adaptation of ABAS. This launch signifies the collective resolve to combat climate change and debt. It will pave the way to provide better lending terms for SIDS. This is really a matter for our



survival and our sovereignty,” Prime Minister Browne emphasized.

The service will recognize the social, economic, legal and environmental challenges affecting SIDS, while focusing on four key pillars. These would be a multi-layered approach to debt, the protection against future economic threats, fostering climate-resilient infrastructure investment and the provision of expert advisory and legal support. The latter, will provide SIDS with the capacity to adequately navigate international debt and finance negotiations, otherwise unreachable due to various disadvantages.

Speaking on behalf of the Republic of the Maldives, the country’s Minister of Environment, Climate Change



and Energy, Thoriq Ibrahim stated that the plan comes at a crucial juncture for small island nations. He added that the climate crisis and associated external shocks are heavy burdens for SIDS.

He further indicated that the new plan of service is a monumental step towards addressing debt challenges.

“The SIDS represent approximately 1% of the world’s population. However, these countries are at the forefront of multiple global crises, notably climate change,” he said.

Moving ahead, it is anticipated that the next stage of the plan involves the meeting of SIDS leaders to decide on the best way to establish the service in individual countries.



## Minister of Culture calls for embracing technologies as tools to enhance and preserve cultural expression

The Antigua and Barbuda minister responsible for culture wants to see Caribbean small island developing states (SIDS) embrace the technologies of the 4th Industrial Revolution to preserve, enhance and to benefit from the cultural expressions of the region.

Minister for Creative Industries, Daryll Matthew made the call when he spoke on the topic: The Role of Technology-driven Artistic Expression in Cultural Tourism, Cultural Valorization and Cultural Institutions in Caribbean SIDS held as one of the side events associated with this week's Fourth International Conference of SIDS taking place here in Antigua and Barbuda.

The minister observed that technologies are transforming societies the world over.

"This era of rapid technological advancement offers unprecedented opportunities for cultural tourism, cultural valorization, and cultural institutions, especially in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS). By integrating technology-driven artistic expression, our small island nations can enhance the cultural landscape, preserve heritage, and stimulate economic growth, while navi-



Minister for Creative Industries, Daryll Matthew

gating the unique challenges posed by our geographic and economic contexts," he stated.

According to Minister Matthew one area where the new cutting-edge technologies can be exploited for the overall benefits of Caribbean SIDS is in the area of cultural tourism. Already, he noted, this is a vital component of the Caribbean economy, attracting visitors drawn to our region's rich cultural heritage, vibrant arts, and historical significance.

The culture minister also identified three of these new technologies and the ways they are changing how cultural artifacts may be enjoyed. The technologies of which he spoke are virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence (AI), which revolutionize how cultural

experiences are delivered and consumed.

"VR and AR can create immersive experiences that allow tourists to engage deeply with Caribbean culture. For instance, VR can recreate historical events like the Haitian Revolution or Bryan Lara's world record cricketing exploits here in Antigua and Barbuda, offering tourists a visceral understanding and appreciation of these significant moments. AR can enhance physical tours of cultural sites, overlaying historical narratives, 3D reconstructions, and multimedia content onto real-world environments," he explained.

He then went to highlight AI and how this technology can shape how visitors' experiences can be made fuller. "AI and data analytics can personalize the tourist experience. By

analyzing visitor preferences and behaviors, AI can recommend tailored cultural itineraries, ensuring that tourists engage with experiences that resonate most with their interests," Matthew detailed.

The minister emphasized that the integration of technology into artistic expression and cultural heritage initiatives in Caribbean SIDS has significant economic implications. "Cultural tourism, enhanced by technology, generates revenue and creates jobs, contributing to the overall economic development of the region," he remarked.

Despite the many benefits of the new technologies, the minister cautioned that there are some challenges. He identified these to include access to technology and digital literacy as significant barriers, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

Ensuring equitable access to technology and providing digital education are essential for inclusive cultural development, he suggested.

Additionally, he wants to see steps taken to ensure Caribbean artists, especially those with barriers to the full integration, are properly compensated for their contributions

# Photo Essay



PM at one of several meetings held Tuesday



PM Browne with the president of the Maldives and his team



PM Browne embraces his Barbadian counterpart, Mia Amour Mottley



PM Browne with a Cuban Government representative.



PM Browne with President of the Maldives



PM Browne raises a toast for a successful SIDS4





## High-level panel discusses connectivity issues at SIDS4

A high-level matchmaking event aimed at connecting stakeholders, development partners, and the private sector to deliver concrete commitments for digital connectivity projects in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) was held during the SIDS4 conference hosted in St. John's, Antigua.

The event marked a significant initiative focused on enhancing digital connectivity in SIDS, bringing together various stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, private sector entities, and civil society, to collaborate on projects and initiatives aimed at improving access

to digital technologies and services in SIDS.

The distinguished high-level panel and discussants included the H.E. Melford Nicholas, Minister of Information, Communication Technologies (ICTs), Utilities, and Energy of Antigua and Barbuda, H.E. Naadir Hassan, Minister of Finance, National Planning and Trade, Republic of Seychelles, Ms. Lisa Simrique Singh, UN Resident Coordinator for Mauritius and Seychelles, Mr. Rodney Taylor, Secretary-General, Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU), Ms. Kimberly Brown, Head of Mobile for Humanitarian Innovation, GSMA, and Ms.

Hermina Johnny, Founder, Aspire Artemis Foundation.

The meeting was expertly moderated by Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau at ITU, who engaged both panelists and discussants on the status of ICTs in their respective territories, exploring their current situations, historical contexts, and future aspirations.

Building on ITU's core mandate and work in SIDS, the high-level session underscored the critical importance of universal and meaningful connectivity for social and economic development, as well as the achievement of the Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs). The event also served as a platform to showcase ITU's commitment and concrete initiatives to support SIDS in their connectivity journey.

Prominent policymakers and practitioners shared their experiences, challenges, and solutions to accelerate progress towards universal and meaningful connectivity, particularly in the context of SIDS. During the interactive discussion, it was emphasized that ITU is actively working to connect pledge makers and development partners with SIDS stakeholders to deliver concrete commitments, shape specific projects, and support countries and communities.

The focus was on mobilizing collective action and resources to accelerate progress towards achieving universal and meaningful digital connectivity in SIDS, thereby contributing to the socio-economic development and sustainable growth of these island nations.





Minister of Environment, Sir Molwyn Joseph with participants at SIDS4 side discussion

## Making climate finance work is a key focus at SIDS4

CANARI, the Caribbean Climate Justice Alliance, Antigua Barbuda Department of Environment and United Nations Human Rights kicked off the discussion at Monday's side event on how to scale up finance and partnerships for just and inclusive outcomes

for the #Caribbean.

Hon. Sir Molwyn Joseph, Minister of Health, Wellness and Environment, Antigua and Barbuda highlighted the need for a 'whole of society' approach and reforming the global financial architecture to truly meet the needs of

#SIDS and to ensure they have improved access and receive the funds at the scale to address the climate crisis.

These priorities were echoed by the high level panel including Racquel Moses, Caribbean Climate-Smart

*cont'd on pg 8*

**TUESDAYS & WEDNESDAYS**

**2 DAYS WAYS SAVE**

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

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

**KFC**

**\*limitations apply\***

Available on the App Store | Google Play

#KFC | @kfcanu

## EAG takes proactive role at SIDS4

The Environmental Awareness Group (EAG) wants mechanisms put in place to ensure the decisions arrived at during the current Fourth International Conference for Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) 'trickle down' to the levels of the non-governmental organisations.

The EAG's Off-shore Islands Programme Coordinator, Shanna Challenger said arriving at key decisions such as the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) is good but the people at the grassroots level need to be part of the process of implementation of these decisions.

"If these decisions stay among the government (the public sector) they may not trickle down to civil society organisations, the grass-roots people who are doing the work.

"So, the topics that are being covered, we want to emphasise the role that we play in training up the next generation of officers who will attend the conference at the end of ten years who will be technicians helping to fight the climate crisis," she stated.



The EAG official said her organisation's hope is for the conference not to end up as 'just another' talk-show, but that is followed by meaningful action.

Challenger noted that organisations such as the EAG have been monitoring what has been happening with the environment globally and so they were not surprised at the current heat-wave affecting many parts of the globe.

"Our partners at the National Park Authority told us that at thirty feet down under the water, they



The EAG's Off-shore Islands Programme Coordinator, Shanna Challenger

recorded temperature at up to 86.5 degrees. If the wa-

ter that far down is so hot, this means you can't go under the water to escape the heat anymore," she observed.

Representatives from the EAG have been attending several of the side meetings at the conference that address matters related to environmental protection.

### *cont'd from pg 7*

Accelerator, Dr Mark Bynoe, Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, Lilia Burunciuc, World Bank and Ayesha Constable, GirlsCARE and Young People for Action on Climate Change.

Dr. Ainka Granderson, CANARI, also highlighted a pledging platform that was launched at #SIDS4 to action the Caribbean

an Climate Justice and Resilience Agenda developed by the Caribbean Climate Justice Alliance and stressed the importance of strategic partnerships and getting finance to those on the frontlines for real impact on the ground.

Pledge to deliver just and inclusive climate actions for the Caribbean here: <https://resiliencecanari.org/pledge/>



## Sunrise Airways launches Antigua/Saint Lucia service

Air travel within the sub-region has been boosted with the launch of Sunrise Airway's service between Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Lucia.

The airline's officials, including owner and CEO, Philippe Bayard, and members of the Saint Lucia Tourism Authority arrived aboard the inaugural flight, which landed at V.C. Bird International Airport after mid-morning yesterday.

The introduction of the service will also connect passengers traveling to and from Dominica and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Tourism Minister, Charles Fernandez, has welcomed the Sunrise Airways service, which he said will bode well in connecting travelers that are moving through the OECS.

"Regional travel I believe is still underserved and so that makes it all the more important for Sunrise Airways to be here and to link us with the other islands," Minister Fernandez told a welcome ceremony.

While acknowledging the presence of other regional carriers, he noted

that the movement of people throughout the Caribbean in large numbers means there won't be adequate airlift to meet the demand for years to come. As such, the introduction of new airlines is welcomed.

Chief Executive Officer of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABHTA), Colin James, in his remarks, congratulated Sunrise Airways, adding that the addition of Antigua and Barbuda as one of the airline's newest destinations is contributing to the growth being experienced within the local tourism industry.

"We appreciate the confidence that Sunrise Airways has placed in Antigua and Barbuda. An additional flight just means more integration, more opportunities for collaboration amongst ourselves and also inter-regional travel that is so important."

Founded in 2012 by Haitian businessman and pilot Philippe Bayard, Sunrise Airways "develops an air network with the aim of connecting capitals and islands that share the Caribbean region".



Mr. Bayard declared that adding Antigua and Barbuda to its network was a simple decision because of the benefits that can be derived. He said the country's geographical location is one of the major benefits.

"Antigua is naturally positioned as an optimal gateway to our islands. That geographic advantage though would mean little without the modern, five-star international airport that we are blest to be gathered in today. The impressive facility and its highly capable staff offer strong support, infrastructure, experience and expertise, which are the envy of many other airports around the Caribbean and beyond."

The Sunrise Airways CEO added that the country's strategic location supports his airline's "One Caribbean vision".

"Sunrise Airways will always remain dedicated to offering efficient and seamless connectivity among the Caribbean's capitals, thereby advancing regional integration toward a sustainable future. We strongly believe that the introduction of our new flights from Antigua, signifies a new chapter for the region, facilitating working, vacationing, investment and conducting business across the Eastern Caribbean. We are grateful that Antigua can serve as a prime getaway for realising these many benefits for the traveling public and the region as a whole," Philippe Bayard declared.

On the Antigua/Saint Lucia route, Sunrise Airways will transport passengers using its 30-seater Embraer EMB 120 aircraft.



## Motorcycle accident claims life of Old Road man

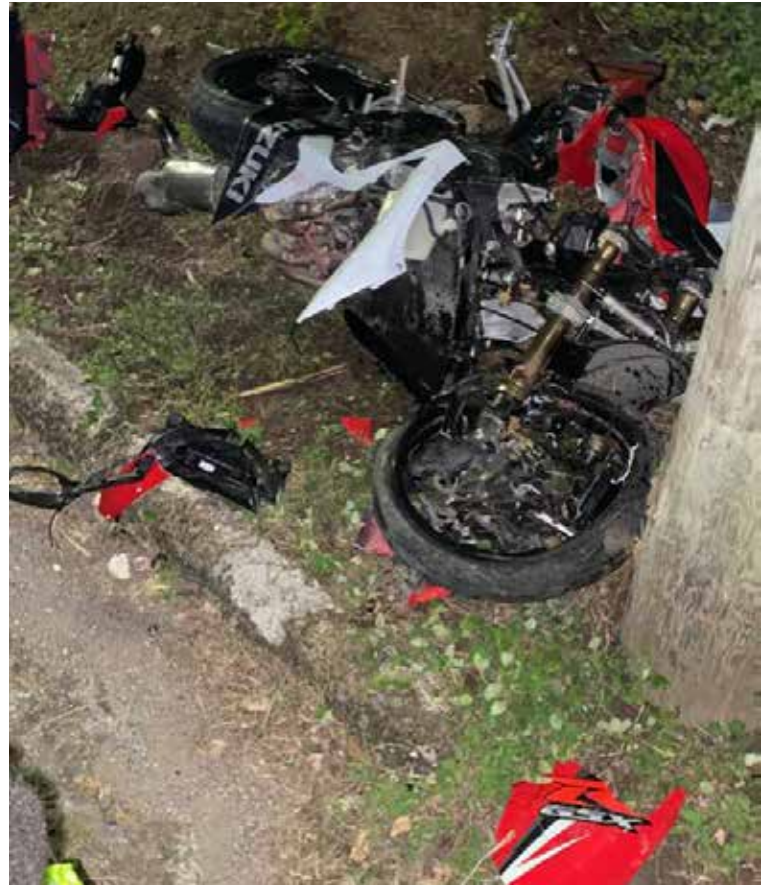
Twenty-seven-year-old Meco Pelle of Old Road is the country's latest road fatality.

The man succumbed to his injuries at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLBMC) after being involved in a motorbike accident in the village on Monday night.

According to reports, Pelle who was the lone rider on his motorcycle, lost control of his bike and crashed into a parked car.

He was thrown a few yards from the bike and sustained serious injuries to his upper right leg and other areas.

Pelle was rushed to the hospital but later passed away.



**NEW** Kentucky **KFC** **CHIZZA** SANDWICH

**Pepperoni**

**Sandwich Combo**  
(with fries & a medium drink)  
**\$27**

**Sandwich Only**  
(spicy or original)  
**\$21**

**Mozzarella Cheese**

**Marinara sauce**

**KFC**

FOR PICKUP/DELIVERY!

Available on Google Play and the App Store

@kfcanu

## Tamarind Hills resort wins TripAdvisor award

Tamarind Hills Resort and Villas, Antigua has announced that it has been recognized for the first time in TripAdvisor's® Travelers' Choice® Awards for 2024. This prestigious award honors businesses that consistently earn great reviews, placing them among the top 10% of listings worldwide on TripAdvisor.

As the world's largest travel guidance platform, TripAdvisor holds unparalleled authority with travelers and diners.

This award is based on genuine feedback from visitors who have left authentic, first-hand reviews on TripAdvisor over a 12-month period, making it a valuable and trustworthy designation of great places to visit.

Poonam Agarwalla, Co-Director of Tamarind Hills, expressed her gratitude: "This award reflects the

collective efforts of our team and the unforgettable moments shared by our guests. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to making Tamarind Hills a beloved destination. We remain committed to maintaining the high standards that have earned us this recognition."

Ronald Manser, Co-Director of Tamarind Hills, added: "We are deeply honored to be included among travelers' favorites this year.

"This recognition is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our incredible staff, who continually strive to provide exceptional experiences for our guests.

"We are truly grateful to our visitors and reviewers for their support and positive feedback."

"Congratulations to Tamarind Hills on its recognition in TripAdvi-

sor's Travelers' Choice Awards for 2024," said John Boris, Chief Growth Officer at TripAdvisor.

"Travelers' Choice honors businesses that consistently demonstrate a commitment to hospitality excellence.

"This means you have made such a memorable impact on your visitors that many of them took the time to go online and leave a great review about their experience.

"People rely on TripAdvisor's Travelers' Choice seal to help them navigate the myriad of things to see, eat, and do across the globe.

"We hope this recognition continues to drive business to you in 2024 and beyond."

In celebration of this award, the resort is offering Antigua and Barbuda nationals a special staycation package from June 1 – August 31.

All New Nissan Qashqai  
 .....find time to just drive



Visit us on Old Parham Road or call 481-2500





## Grenada to host Sargassum Conference

Grenada has been nominated to host a dedicated Sargassum Conference in September, aimed at bringing together key stakeholders to explore innovative solutions and business opportunities related to sargassum management.

This conference will bring together experts, policymakers, business leaders, and environmentalists to discuss and develop sustainable solutions for sargassum management.

It will also explore various business opportunities that sargassum presents, including its potential use in agriculture, biofuel, and other innovative industries.

The Caribbean Island was selected following a meeting with incoming CARICOM Chairman, Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell, head of Grenada's delegation at the SIDS4 Conference in Antigua & Barbuda, alongside representatives from the European Union (EU) and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

The discussions focused on collaborative strategies to manage and miti-

gate the impact of sargassum seaweed on coastal ecosystems, the tourism industry, and local communities.

The meeting highlighted the importance of a united regional approach to tackle the sargassum issue. The EU and OECS reaffirmed their commitment to supporting Caribbean nations through technical assistance, funding, and expertise sharing.

The EU has pledged increased technical support and funding to aid in the development of sargassum management technologies and practices. This support will be instrumental in enhancing the region's capacity to effectively respond to recurrent sargassum influxes.

The discussions also emphasized the dual benefit of sargassum management strategies that not only protect the marine and coastal environment, but also unlock economic opportunities.

Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "We are honoured to be chosen as the host for the upcoming Sargassum Confer-

ence. This is a critical issue that affects not just Grenada, but the entire Caribbean region. By working together with our international partners, we can find innovative solutions that protect our environment and create new economic opportunities for our people."

EU Director of International Partnerships Felix Fernandez-Shaw added, "The EU is committed to supporting the Caribbean in its efforts to combat the sargassum challenge. We believe that through collaboration and innovation, we can turn this environmental issue into an opportunity for sustainable development."

OECS Director General, Dr Didaucus Jules, highlighted, "This meeting marks a significant step forward in our regional efforts to address the sargassum problem. Grenada's leadership in hosting the conference will be pivotal in driving forward our collective goals."

Minister for Climate Resilience, the Environment and Renewable Energy Kerryne James will lead the preparation efforts for the Sargassum Conference.

# LUCKY MONEY

Featuring: **The King of Comedy**

# Oliver Samuels

## SAT. JUN. 15<sup>TH</sup> 2024

**VENUE: THE LOT (FRIARS HILL ROAD)** **Karen Harriot**

**Pablo Mallett**

**GATES OPEN: 8PM**  
**MUSIC BY: DJ MERCHY**  
**HOSTED BY: DJ JR (HITZ FM)**  
**PLUS MUSIC PERFORMANCE BY:**

### GET READY TO LOL



**TICKETS** EARLY BIRDS: \$60  
IN ADVANCE: \$75  
PREFERRED SEATING: \$125  
MORE AT THE GATE

**OUTLETS:**  
PARTY PLACE (VENDORS MALL)  
BUBBLE LUX LAUNDRY (WOODS MALL)  
BILLY'S FOOD MART (FRIARS HILL ROAD)



**AFTER PARTY FEAT:**  
**KUTTIN EDGE BAND**



# Pope apologises over reported homophobic slur

Pope Francis has apologised following reports that he used extremely derogatory language towards gay men.

A statement from the Vatican said the Pope did not mean to offend anyone and apologised to those who were “hurt by the use of a word”.

At the Italian Bishops’ Conference, the pope reportedly said gay men should not be allowed to train for the priesthood, adding there was already an air of frociaggine, which translates as a highly offensive slur.

This meeting was in private, but has been widely reported.

“Pope Francis is aware of the articles that have come out recently concerning a conversation he had with bishops... behind closed doors,” the statement quoted the director of the Holy See - the Catholic Church’s governing body - Matteo Bruni, as saying.

The Pope’s reported comments were first conveyed to the Italian tabloid website Dagspion, and were soon confirmed by other Italian news agencies.

There has been shock at the reported language, particularly as Pope Francis has often talked publicly of being respectful towards gay people.

Mr Bruni said: “As he



[the Pope] has stated on more than one occasion, ‘In the Church there is room for everyone, everyone! Nobody is useless or superfluous, there is room for everyone, just the way we are.’”

“The Pope never meant to offend or to use homophobic language, and apologises to everyone who felt offended [or] hurt by the use of a word,” Mr Bruni concluded in the Vatican statement.

Progressive supporters of the Pope have long argued that while little has tangibly changed in terms of gay rights in Catholicism, he has changed the tone of

the Church’s attitude.

When asked about gay people early in his papacy, he hit the headlines by responding, “Who am I to judge?”

He recently created consternation among Catholic traditionalists by saying priests should be able to bless same-sex couples in some circumstances and has frequently talked of gay people being welcome in the Church.

Spanish-speaking defenders of the Pope point out that he sometimes makes mistakes in Italian colloquialisms, and suggest that he did not appreciate the level

of offence he might have caused, even though he did grow up in an Italian-speaking household in Argentina.

But the head of the LGBT Catholic rights group DignityUSA, Marianne Duddy-Burke, called the reported comments “shocking and hurtful”, especially to gay priests who have served “God’s people faithfully and well”.

“Unfortunately, even if intended as a joke, the Pope’s comment reveals the depth of anti-gay bias and institutional discrimination that still exist in our church,” she told Reuters news agency.



Princess Juliana International Airport.

## SXM: Airport reconstruction to be completed soon

The reconstruction of the Terminal Building at the Princess Juliana International Airport in Sint Maarten will be completed by this October.

The management of the airport gave this assurance to Minister of Tourism Grisha Heyliger-Marten during a recent tour of the facilities.

In her discussions with the airport management (PJIAE) team, the minister emphasized the critical importance of completing the terminal building which has been ongoing for the last seven years.

“This project is vital not only for the residents of St Maarten but also for visitors and neighbouring islands that rely on SXM as a hub airport,” Heyliger-Marten said.

The minister expressed concern about the delays in reconstruction

which she said has resulted in a significant \$7 million cost increase due to an oversight.

Of particular concern to her was the issue of travellers opting for direct flights to Anguilla or choosing routes via Puerto Rico to St Barths instead of using St Maarten as a hub.

Heyliger-Marten noted that American Airlines has increased its direct service to Anguilla and other neighbouring islands, further diminishing the hub function of SXM Airport.

The minister is awaiting detailed figures and responses to several inquiries she made during the previous week.

In addition, Heyliger-Marten said the current state of the arrival hall negatively impacts the island’s first impression on visitors and high-

lighted that poor arrival experiences can contribute to a decline in repeat visitors and a potential loss of market share.

Furthermore, as St Maarten prepares to host the upcoming Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) conference in October, the Minister highlighted the necessity of ensuring that cruise industry partners and visitors have a seamless and positive first and lasting impression of the island. Over 500 delegates are expected to attend the conference.

Heyliger-Marten also expressed concerns regarding employee satisfaction at PJIAE and the turnover rate. The management of PJIAE informed her that they are actively recruiting St Martiners from the Netherlands.

# Regional News



## Bahamas Prime Minister says his country is 'burning'

CMC - Bahamas Prime Minister Phillip Davis has told delegates attending the Fourth International Conference on Small Island States (SIDS 4) that his country "is burning".

"Bushfires stubbornly burn throughout our islands in the heat of the Bahamian dry season. The flames have scorched our coppice and pine forests, unleashing an ashy haze that has spread across our communities. Bahamians living near these fires have been forced to breathe smoke-filled air and endure these hazardous conditions," Davis said.

Davis told the more than 3,000 delegates attending the four-day event under theme "Charting the course toward resilient prosperity," that at one point, the bushfires seriously compromised visibility, forcing the Lynden Pindling International Airport to temporarily halt all incoming and outgoing air traffic for several hours.

"Our fear is that this new, fiery reality will become the norm, and April showers will now be replaced by May blazes," Davis said, noting that bushfires are but the latest disaster in an escalating climate crisis facing SIDS.

He said while this problem is not unique to The Bahamas, in the past five years, every island in the Caribbean has experienced



Bahamas Prime Minister Phillip Davis addressing Fourth International Conference on Small island States in Antigua and Barbuda.

some degree of water scarcity.

"The people of the Caribbean live in one of the most water-stressed regions in the entire world. Short-term droughts have developed in Suriname, Tobago, Guyana and Grenada. Meanwhile, long-term droughts continue to afflict Trinidad, Belize, Cuba, and Dominica. Jamaica and Barbados have been compelled to implement policies limiting water usage," Davis said, warning "the region is more water-insecure than it has ever been, and we, the people of the Caribbean, are thirsty for change."

Davis said that while he has no intention of becoming a climate martyr, the deadline for climate reform is long gone, reiterating that the time has come for climate revolution.

"Human action caused this crisis, and only humane actions can fix it. To empower SIDS, we need

sustainable, long-term solutions, not quick fixes or gimmicks. Continuing this trend of band-aid solutions without addressing the root of the problem will, quite frankly, kill us."

Davis warned the international community that "if we keep kicking the can down the road, eventually we will run out of road.

"We, as small island developing states, cannot afford to wait any longer. Every year, severe droughts, raging fires, and extreme storms claim more lives. We are past the point when platitudes about corporate responsibility are enough to excite us. We need far more than the empty promises and policy paralysis currently offered by the global north."

The conference is aimed at assessing the ability of SIDS to achieve sustainable development, including the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. It will result in an in-

ter governmentally agreed, focused, forward-looking and action-oriented political outcome document.

Davis said that another significant challenge facing SIDS pertains to the financial systems that govern their recovery efforts.

"Recently, we have seen how blacklisting in international finance disproportionately affects our nations, particularly when it comes to insurance claims in the aftermath of disasters. Such punitive measures, often imposed without adequate representation or input from SIDS, only exacerbate our vulnerabilities and hinder our recovery processes.

"This is not just a matter of financial policy but of justice and equity. Therefore, I call upon the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) and the European Union to join forces with the United Nations to formulate a global tax treaty that truly represents the interests of all nations, particularly those of us who are often left out of the conversation."

Davis said that this treaty should aim to provide a voice for SIDS, ensuring that their unique challenges and perspectives are acknowledged and addressed in global financial regulations. "The OECD cannot give with one hand and take

*cont'd on pg 17*



*cont'd from pg 16*

back with the other; true partnership requires consistent and fair support,” Davis said, noting “furthermore, the unfair financial practices imposed on Small Island Developing States by global institutions can be likened to a knee on our necks, restricting our growth and suffocating our recovery efforts.

“These practices are not merely bureaucratic hurdles; they are existential threats that impede our ability to breathe freely in the wake of disasters.

“Again I call on behalf of all SIDS to ‘Take your knees off our necks!’ We seek not just survival but the opportunity to thrive without these oppressive constraints.

“If we want to secure a safe and just future for small island developing states, we must lead the discussions and drive the changes ourselves. It will take a serious reckoning with the fact that the major polluters have reaped economic benefits while disproportionately offloading environmental costs onto vulnerable nations like ours.”

Prime Minister Davis said accountability mechanisms will also be key in operationalising the Loss and Damage Fund established at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai last year.

“We have secured less than one per cent of the estimated US\$400 billion per year needed to assist

the most severely impacted societies. Colleagues, it is more important than ever that we work together to operationalise this Fund. No SID can do it alone.

We must unite because unity will be the key in unlocking concessional finance from the very creators of this most dire emergency.”

The Bahamas Prime Minister said that climate and debt are twin crises, which the Caribbean countries know all too well.

“My nation has incurred billions in debt due to recovery efforts from climate-driven disasters and

billions more are needed to meet climate change targets. We cannot and should not take this tremendous burden on alone while those who created this problem do the bare minimum to take accountability for the impact they have had on our nations.

“Of course, as we forge new pathways here at SIDS4, it is important to not just point fingers but to take a good look at what is going on inside our own countries.”

He said the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing global conflicts have underscored the need to strength-

en health systems, invest in social protection, and address food insecurity.

Davis said economic diversification will be the key to increasing our resilience to external shocks. And investments in clean energy and digital transformation remain vital for the sustainable development of all small island developing states.

“As we look ahead to the next 10 years, let us commit to holding major polluters accountable, securing the financing we need, and developing the best future we can for our people,” Davis added.



STATE INSURANCE  
ESTABLISHED 1914  
 Live in a better State of mind

## BARBUDA WE'RE HERE!

OPEN 8:15AM - 4:30PM MON-FRI

RIVER ROAD | MADISON SQUARE  
 CODRINGTON | BARBUDA

🏠 LIFE & MEDICAL 🚗 MOTOR 🏠 PROPERTY 🏢 COMMERCIAL

☎️ (268) 727-7422 📞 (268) 729-7422 ✉️ INFO@SICANTIGUA.COM 🌐 WWW.SICANTIGUA.COM 📱

## Diane Abbott readmitted as Labour MP after race row probe

Diane Abbott has been readmitted as a Labour MP, the BBC understands, but it is unclear whether she will stand for the party at the general election.

The former shadow home secretary was suspended in April 2023 after saying Jewish, Irish and Traveller people do not face racism “all their lives”.

Her suspension meant she would not be able to stand for Labour on 4 July.

Party officials had tried to broker a deal by which she would get the whip back in return for standing down.

It is not clear if the Hackney North and Stoke Newington MP has accepted that arrangement.

Labour has not said who its candidate will be in the Hackney North and Stoke Newington seat. Ms Abbott has been contacted for a comment.

The party is currently selecting remaining candidates before a meeting to endorse them next week, before nominations legally close on Friday.

Labour branches are no longer able to put forward their own candidates, after a deadline passed on Monday.

Labour launched an investigation in April last year after Ms Abbott wrote in the Observer that Irish, Jewish and Traveller people “undoubtedly experience prejudice” which she said is



Diane Abbott

“similar to racism”.

The letter added: “It is true that many types of white people with points of difference, such as red-heads, can experience this prejudice.

“But they are not all their lives subject to racism.”

Ms Abbott apologised and withdrew her remarks shortly after they were published.

BBC Newsnight revealed earlier that the party’s investigation was completed in December 2023.

Labour’s National Executive Committee (NEC) issued her with a “formal warning” for “engaging in conduct that was in the opinion of the NEC, prejudicial and grossly detrimental to the Labour Party”.

It said it expected her to undertake an “online,

e-learning module” which a source said was a two-hour antisemitism awareness course.

Ms Abbott did the module in February, after which it is understood she received an email from Labour’s chief whip acknowledging she had completed it.

As recently as Friday, Sir Keir had been saying the investigation into her comments was not “resolved”.

Conservative Party chairman Richard Holden said it was “inconceivable” that the Labour leader “wasn’t told the process had finished and a warning issued”.

Questioned about the situation earlier, Sir Keir told reporters that “the process overall” was “obviously a little longer than the fact-finding exercise”.

Ms Abbott, who be-

came the first black woman to be elected to Parliament in 1987, was a close ally of former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and served as his shadow home secretary.

Mr Corbyn, who was suspended as a Labour MP in 2020 for saying the scale of antisemitism within Labour’s ranks had been “dramatically overstated” by his opponents, has confirmed he will stand against the party.

He will contest Islington North, which he has held since 1983, as an independent candidate.

A complete list of candidates standing in the seat will be available on the BBC website after nominations close.

Momentum, the left-wing campaign group set up support Corbyn’s lead-

*cont’d on pg 19*

## Deadly landslide threatens thousands more as hopes for survivors fade

Papua New Guinea authorities say nearly 7,900 people living near the site of a deadly landslide are “at risk” as rock and debris continues to move down the hillside.

An alert for potential evacuation has been put out, with a province official saying the mountain remains “very active”.

Rescuers say it is increasingly unlikely that victims will be found alive in the rubble.

The country’s disaster agency says it fears about 2,000 people were buried when a mountain side collapsed last Friday.

This is much higher than the UN’s estimate of about 670 victims.

The UN says it has been difficult to establish an exact death toll as access to the site and those buried under the mass remain difficult.

Part of that is due to complications around the search and recovery mission, which has now largely turned into a retrieval operation of bodies, various UN officials have said.

“It is not a rescue mission, it is a recovery mis-



Villagers have been using shovels, sticks and their bare hands to try and remove huge rocks and rubble.

sion,” Niels Kraaier from Unicef Papua New Guinea told news agency AFP. “It is very unlikely they will have survived.”

Only six bodies had been recovered as of Tuesday, according to local officials.

Villagers have been using shovels, sticks and their bare hands to try and remove huge rocks and rubble amid hold-ups in the arrival of heavy machinery, and also cultural sensitivities around the use of such machines like excavators near bodies.

Standing in a crowd of

mourners on Monday, local resident Jiman Yandam said people would keep digging manually to try and recover victims.

“We don’t know where the bodies are buried, but we will not give up, we will keep going,” the former community leader told Reuters news agency.

One woman, standing in the wreckage, described feeling helpless.

“I have 18 of my family members buried under the debris and soil that I am standing on, and a lot more family members in the village I cannot count,”

Evit Kambu said.

“But I cannot retrieve the bodies so I am standing here helplessly.”

The terrain remains dangerous as rocks continue to fall. Videos taken during the day have shown rocks tumbling down the mountain.

“It’s still very active. The mountain is breaking up,” Sandis Tsaka, Enga Provincial Administrator told the BBC.

“There’s continuous movement of rock and debris which is making our search and rescue and recovery operations a challenge,” he added.

The rubble remains 10m deep in some places and the mass of debris is still moving down the hillside, prompting authorities to alert nearby communi-

*cont’d on pg 20*

*cont’d from pg 18*

ership, said it would be “outrageous” for the party not to pick her as its candidate, having readmitted her as an MP.

“Anything less is a slap in the face to Diane, her constituents and the millions inspired by her example,” it added.

Labour’s full list of candidates is set to be endorsed at the NEC on Tuesday next week.

Parliament is due to be formally shut down on Thursday, triggering the official five-week election campaign ahead of polling day on Thursday 4 July.

# Sports News



## Wins for Under-21 and Pacesetters in ABNA's netball league

The Under-21 team and Cool and Smooth Pacesetters recorded wins in the Cool and Smooth Antigua and Barbuda Netball Association's (ABNA) League on Monday.

The Under-21 romped to a 31-16 victory against Roman Hill United in their A Division encounter at the YMCA Sports Complex.

Zhanira Peiera sank 20 from 22 shots, and Joy Shaw scored eight from 15

attempts for the Under-21 team. Everdine Bannard converted 14 from 22 attempts for Roman Hill United.

The Pacesetters crushed the Flyballers 33-11 in the Mixed Division. Randy Frederick sank 28 of 34 attempts, and Penelope Adams scored five goals from eight shots for the Pacesetters.

Zellene Edwards converted seven of her 15 at-

tempts, and D'Andre Harris scored four of his 12 shots for the Flyballers.

In previous encounters, Cool & Smooth Pacesetters B defeated Defante Stingers 18-2 in the B Division.

Karel Knight sank 16 goals from 27 attempts, and Jahida Payne scored two goals from six shots for the Pacesetters B. Shaquarah Prince converted two goals from five

attempts for the Defante Stingers.

The Cool & Smooth Pacesetters snatched a 24-18 victory against S.W. Electronics Black Lightning in the A Division.

Penelope Adams converted 16 goals from 29 attempts, and Ronita Baptiste scored eight goals from 14 shots for the Pacesetters B.

Zhanira Peiera sank 14 goals from 22 attempts, and Kizzy Hughes scored four goals from 10 attempts for S.W. Electronics Black Lightning.

The Under-21 team prevailed 31-21 against the Eastsiders in another A Division affair.

Joy Shaw sank 13 goals from 17 attempts, and Zhanira Peiera scored seven goals from 21 shots for the Under-21 team.

Amey Lake converted 17 goals from 27 attempts, Tenecia Harris scored two goals from two shots, and Christina Lloyd sank two goals from three attempts for the Eastsiders.

The ABNA League will continue at the YMCA Sports Complex today. Eastsiders will meet Roman Hill United in the A Division at 6:30 pm, and All Saints Attackers will clash with S.W. Electronics Black Lightning in the Mixed Division at 7:45 pm.

### *cont'd from pg 19*

ties to the risk and issuing evacuation notices.

"Because of the landslide, the impact area of the landslide is gradually increasing.

"So the homes and properties that were not affected by the original landslide area are growing every day," Mr Tsaka said.

Another village close to the first-hit Yambali village was now also in danger, he said.

There is also growing alarm over the risk of infection and disease in the area as the mass of bodies trapped under the rubble begin to decay.

The UN had warned that currents were flowing down the hillside under the rubble.

"The water that is stuck between the ground and the debris is flowing - and the bodies are starting to decay. Can you imagine [the impact] on more than 2,000 bodies buried under this land- unable to be removed," UN migration agency official Serhan Aktoprak told the BBC on Tuesday.

Amid the treacherous conditions, aid groups say they are focusing on the immediate task of getting basic supplies

like food, water and hygiene kits to residents.

But there have been several barriers- including the highway to the village being blocked and damaged by the landslide.

On Tuesday, it was reported that a bridge south of the landslide area, connecting province centres Hagen and Wabeg, had also collapsed making it more difficult for humanitarian groups delivering relief.

Australia has pledged an air lift of supplies which is expected to arrive on Wednesday.

Local officials say about 3,800 people had been living in the hillside village prior to the landslide, which took place around 03:00 on Friday morning and flattened more than 150 homes.

The mountain's collapse has been attributed to weeks of heavy rain and other wet conditions in the area.

Prime Minister James Marape had earlier in the week sent his condolences and directed national response teams to the region.

The disaster comes as Mr Marape faces political pressure - parliament was expected to vote on a no-confidence motion against him on Tuesday.



The Kensington Oval in Barbados

## Lynch says Kensington Oval just about ready for T20 World Cup

With the ICC Men's T20 World Cup now just only a few days away, Chairman of the National Organising Committee Noel Lynch says the iconic Kensington Oval is just about ready for the showpiece, which is scheduled to begin on Saturday.

Lynch's confirmation came during a media tour of the venue, which will host nine matches, including the June 29 final.

"Kensington Oval has never looked as good as it does right now. The field, in particular, is in its best condition ever, and those who have played on it are nodding in agreement," Lynch opined.

Though some finishing touches are

still being applied, Lynch praised the dedication and hard work of the curators and groundsmen, as he declared the Oval is ready to host cricket matches.

"We are not boasting, but we are ready. We're 95 per cent to 99 per cent ready," he declared.

The infrastructural improvements to the Oval include upgrades to the bathroom facilities, the inclusion of a three-tier hospitality suite, upgrades to the media centre and the erection of a temporary stand with a 2,500 seating capacity.

Aside from the World Cup, Lynch pointed out that they are also engaging the local community through the

KOMI Good Neighbour Programme.

The programme focuses on involving residents from nearby areas, providing them with job opportunities related to the Oval's upkeep.

"This isn't just about the World Cup; it's about an ongoing, sustainable programme," Lynch said.

"We have walked every avenue in Pickwick Gap, gone house to house with the member of parliament, and engaged with the community directly," he added.

There will be an open house on Wednesday, where Barbadians and visitors are invited to get a firsthand look on the upgraded Oval ahead of the World Cup. Gates will open at 1 pm.



Players of the Five Islands teams after a game in the First Division at the ABFA Technical Center in May 2024. (ABFA)

## Five Islands return to Premier League after finishing second in First Division

Five Islands have finished second in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division and have secured the second automatic promotion spot to return to play in the Premier Division next season.

With the top two finishers gaining automatic promotion to next season's Premier Division, Five Islands snatched second place after they won their final match by default against Bolans, which failed to show up for the encounter at the ABFA Technical Center on Monday.

The victory by a 3-0 margin allows Five Islands to finish their First Division campaign in second place with 44 points from their quota of 20 matches.

Bolans finished their First Division campaign in seventh place with 20 points from their quota of 20 matches.

It means that the Attacking Saints clinched third place ahead of the Police on goal difference after both teams finished tied with 42 points from their quota of 20 matches.

The Attacking Saints and Police will contest a playoff with Swetes for the chance to compete in the Premier Division next season. Swetes entered

the playoffs after finishing 12th in the Premier Division and avoiding automatic relegation to compete in the First Division next season.

The Potters Tigers, who won the First Division title, wrapped up their campaign with a 14-0 drubbing of Fort Road in their final encounter at the ABFA Technical Center.

Keon Greene scored four goals, Xavon Browne converted a hat-trick, and Delon Moore scored twice for the Potters Tigers, as they claimed the First Division title by recording 52 points from their quota of 20 matches, including 16 wins.

Fort Road finished second from the bottom of the standings in their First Division campaign, with 14 points from their quota of 20 matches.

Fort Road will contest a playoff with Sea View Farm and Urlings, with the winner getting the opportunity to compete in the First Division next season.

Sea View Farm finished third with 52 points, and Urlings claimed fourth place with 47 points in the second division.

The Young Lions have been rele-

gated and will compete in the Second Division next season. The Young Lions ended their First Division campaign in the cellar with 12 points from their quota of 20 matches.

Meanwhile, Keon Greene of the champions Potters Tigers was named the Most Valuable Player of the First Division. Greene also captured the Golden Boot, or Top Goal-scorer, award with 21 goals.

Five Islands goalkeeper Daniel Perez won the Golden Glove award for being the goalkeeper who kept the most clean-sheets in the First Division League.

Bethesda's O'Shale Simon captured the Golden Boot award for being the top goal-scorer in the Second Division with 31 goals. FC Master Ballerz goalkeeper Eric Moreta won the Golden Glove award in the Second Division.

FC Master Ballerz (52 points) clinched second place ahead of Sea View Farm on goal difference to join Second Division winners Freeman's Village Scorpions (57 points) in gaining automatic promotion to compete in the ABFA's First Division next season.



Boston Celtics guard Jaylen Brown, center, celebrates with his teammates after Game 4 of the NBA Eastern Conference basketball finals against the Indiana Pacers in Indianapolis, Monday, May 27, 2024. The Celtics won 105-102. (AP)

## Celtics close out Pacers for 4-0 sweep in Eastern Conference finals

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Derrick White stood stoically at midcourt as his teammates celebrated Monday night.

He saw Jayson Tatum toss the ball high into the air, Al Horford run toward the coaching staff and looking for his son long before Jaylen Brown hoisted the Eastern Conference finals MVP trophy. Even coach Joe Mazzulla shared the moment with his wife.

White, meanwhile, seemed ready to get back to work after making the tie-breaking 3-pointer with 43 seconds left, giving the Boston Celtics a 105-102 victory and their second trip in three years to the NBA Finals with a 4-0 sweep over the Indiana Pacers.

“Great shot. We work on that all the time, two-on-one reads,” Brown

said after scoring 29 points, grabbing six rebounds and blocking a key shot with 65 seconds left to preserve the lead.

“Before that, I told D White just to stay ready and that was a big shot, a big shot to send us to the finals.”

White scored just 16 points and made just 1 of 8 3s before making the decisive shot from the corner. Until then, he seemed to have taken a back seat to Brown, Tatum, who had 26 points, 13 rebounds and eight assists, Jrue Holiday, and even the 37-year-old Horford.

But when the Celtics needed a basket to chase the 18th NBA title in franchise history, the poised White delivered with a shot that will be remembered forever in Boston. The

Celtics will now face either Dallas or Minnesota, which met Tuesday night in Game 4.

The Mavericks have a 3-0 lead in the best-of-seven Western Conference finals.

“We feel confident, we feel comfortable in any type of game, and we feel we’ve got answers for anything at us,” White said. “We’ve just got to find the right ones.”

Boston’s victory came exactly one year after White’s tip-in rallied from the Celtics from a 3-0 deficit to tie the conference finals against the Miami Heat — only to lose Game 7 at home.

This year, they’ve won seven straight playoff games, are 6-0 on the road, and are 3-0 in elimination games.

# Sports

WEDNESDAY 29TH MAY 2024

POINTVILLE EXPRESS  
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA  
TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

## Fearless Crew and Spanish Heat 2 advance to semis

Fifth-seed Jim Nance Jan Serv Fearless Crew and third-seed Spanish Heat 2 have advanced to the semi-finals of the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division Playoff Championship.

Both teams booked their spots in the semis by claiming contrasting wins in the decisive Game 3 to clinch their best-of-three first-round series 2-1 at the JSC Sports Complex on Monday evening.

The Fearless Crew snatched a narrow 83-80 victory in overtime against fourth-seed EZ Fit Flyers 2 to win their series decider.

Both teams finished deadlocked at 75-75 at the end of the fourth quarter, and the Fearless Crew outscored the Flyers 2 8-5 in the extra five minutes to clinch victory in overtime.

Rafiki Harris produced a triple double with 23 points, 12 assists, 11 rebounds, and five steals, and Takeem Martin converted 14 points and grabbed 14 rebounds for the Fearless Crew.

In support, Romel Diggs sank 10 points and snatched five rebounds; Ronel Gomez had 10 points and seven assists; Ricky Willock also



Players of Jim Nance Jan Serv Fearless Crew compete against EZ Fit Flyers 2 in their first-round series of the ABBA Second Division playoff championship at the JSC Sports Complex in May. (ABBA)

scored 10 points; and Delroy Foster converted nine points and snatched nine rebounds for the Fearless Crew.

Javonte Daley produced a game-high 28 points and eight assists; Sadiq Phillip had 17 points, 11 rebounds, and five steals; Craig Masiah contributed 12 points, seven rebounds, five assists, and five steals; and Donte Trimmingham chipped in with 12 points and five rebounds for Flyers 2.

The Fearless Crew will move on to face the eighth-

seed Rebels in a best-of-three semi-final series, with both teams set to clash in Game 1 at the JSC Sports Complex today at 8:30 pm.

Spanish Heat 2 cruised to a 68-54 victory against the sixth-seed Old Road Daggers in their decisive Game 3.

Jesus Emmanuel sank 24 points and claimed nine rebounds; Ismael Palemo scored 14 points and grabbed 12 rebounds; Gabriel Perez converted 12 points and snatched 12 rebounds; and

Wilkin Floyd chipped in with eight points, seven rebounds, and seven steals for Spanish Heat 2.

Kelvin Simon converted 19 points and grabbed 19 rebounds, and Craig Thomas and Jesus Lopez each scored 11 points for the Old Road Daggers.

Spanish Heat 2 will advance to face second-seed Da Project in their best-of-three semi-final series, with both teams slated to meet in Game 1 at the JSC Sports Complex today at 6:45 pm.