

UWI FIC EXPANSION DISCUSSED AT MARGINS OF SIDS4



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UWI FIC expansion discussed at margins of SIDS4 conference

The multi-million dollar expansion of the physical plant at the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus was the main topic of discussion held Wednesday between representatives of the Antigua and Barbuda government and the Saudi Development Fund.

Minister of Education, Sports, and The Creative Industries, Daryll S. Matthew, convened a meeting with a high-level delegation from the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) on the margins of the SIDS4 Conference being held at the American University of Antigua (AUA).

Minister Matthew hosted the Saudi delegation for a strategic meeting with the SDF team and to bring them up-to-date with the progress towards the expansion of the university, which is being financed by the Saudis.

The meeting brought together key implementation

stakeholders of the UWI FIC Expansion Project including the Project Coordinator, Colin John Jenkins and his team and representatives from the Ministry of Finance, to review the status of the project and to confirm strategies to ensure its successful implementation.

During the meeting, the Project Coordinator presented a comprehensive update to representatives of the SFD.

In response and on behalf of the SFD, His Excellency Abdullah Alsaif expressed satisfaction with the progress to date and commended the government for its commitment to the project's success. For his part, Minister Matthew underscored the catalytic nature of the project and expressed gratitude to the SFD for working together with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda to foster an open and collaborative space to ensure the achieve-



ment of shared goals. The Minister further expressed his optimism about the project's trajectory and reiterated Government's commitment and dedication to ensuring the successful implementation of this project.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda looks

forward to the continued collaboration with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and remains dedicated to ensuring the successful implementation of the UWI FIC development project, valued at US\$80 million and financed by the Saudi Fund for Development, which promises to provide exceptional educational opportunities for future generations.

The meeting ended on a positive note with representatives of the Saudi Fund for Development sharing the Minister's optimism and going further by expressing a desire to see the success of this project act as an impetus for increased investment by the SFD in the socio-economic development of Antigua and Barbuda



Antigua and Barbuda seeks training courses from friendly countries

Antigua and Barbuda wants to take advantage of the several bilateral meetings held this week on the margins of the Fourth International Conference of Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) to seek training opportunities for nationals.

Foreign Affairs Minister E.P Chet Greene has been meeting with representatives of the various delegations and agencies that are attending the SIDS4 conference which concludes at the American University of Antigua today.

During these discussions, Minister Greene has emphasized two main themes that will benefit Antigua and Barbuda in the long run; support for the Centre of Excellence - Data Hub that will be established here as one of the outcomes of the conference as well as training courses to upskill nationals in the areas of agriculture and diplomacy.

On Wednesday, discussions were held with the rep-

resentative of Romania who is offering immediate courses in those areas. In fact, the Romanian representative is asking the ministry of foreign affairs to name an individual almost immediately so that arrangements can be made for that person to begin studies within the next few months.

In discussions with the Foreign Minister of Singapore, Greene noted that the southeast Asian country stands as a model for SIDS, such as Antigua and Barbuda to follow.

According to Minister Greene...SIDS lag behind developed countries in terms of the use of data and other research material. He said the Centre of Excellence – Data Hub will go a long way to reduce or eliminate the gap in data usage.

The Singaporean Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Education, Dr. Mohammad Maliki Os-



Foreign Affairs Minister E.P Chet Greene with the representative of Romania.

man said his country had announced a policy; SIDS for Change, through which it will offer training to these countries in a variety of areas. He said there are training programmes for developing countries to take advantage of in areas such as Artificial Intelligence, e-commerce, cyber security, and digitalization.

Minister Greene promised the Singapore official that Antigua and Barbuda is eager to accept the offers. Notes were exchanged for later discussion on these issues.

With the representative from India, Foreign Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kavan Kapoor, Minister Greene noted that both India and Antigua and Barbuda have enjoyed excellent relations in the past and he thanked India for the many areas of assistance, including during the COVID-19 pan-



Foreign Affairs Minister E.P Chet Greene with Singaporean Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Education, Dr. Mohammad Maliki Osman.

demic when India provided vaccines to this country.

On the issue of training, the Indian representative expressed his country's desire to continue to offer training for Antigua and Barbuda nationals in agriculture, diplomacy, fisheries and technologies.

In accepting the offers of training, Minister Greene suggested the possibilities of experts from India traveling to St. John's to conduct such training through a programme with the University of the West Indies FIC. This way, he noted, more people would be exposed to the training adding that they could be compacted to cover a shorter time frame.

"Given the current state of the world, with conflicts in Ukraine and in Gaza, there is a need for more of our people to be trained in the area of diplomacy," the minister noted.



Foreign Affairs Minister E.P Chet Greene with members of the delegation from India.

Details of a USD\$135 million initiative unveiled at SIDS4 in Antigua and Barbuda

Fifteen Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are set to benefit from a historic partnership that will make available some USD\$135 million for the expansion of nature-based solutions to combat environmental degradation.

On Day 3 of the SIDS4 Conference which continues at the American University of Antigua (AUA), the United Nations Development Programme and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) unveiled the contents of the Blue and Green Integrated Programme during a press conference.

UNDP's Administrator Achim Steiner and CEO and Chairman of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, jointly indicated that the programme, will result in the improvement of food systems, support sustainable agriculture and fisheries mechanisms and promote nature friendly tourism.

The UNDP's Administrator told the

press that the programme represents a new wave of support for SIDS as they embark on the Decade of Action from 2024 to 2034.

"SIDS are on the frontlines of climate change and nature loss as they face harsh realities of sea level rise, more unpredictable weather patterns, and degraded ecosystems, yet their unique situation also means that they are also driving forward a remarkable range of innovative and interconnected solutions," Steiner explained.

GEF's Chairman indicated that the project will also facilitate the development of needed mechanisms to develop and maintain sustainable environmental practices that will help to protect island nations from certain impacts of climate change.

"Nowhere is the connection between a strong economy, a healthy environment, and a healthy people, clearer than in the SIDS. Given their unique

vulnerabilities to loss of biodiversity, plastic and waste pollution, and climate and socio-economic changes and shocks, SIDS are the best incubators of innovation for sustainable development with many initiatives that can have substantial impact on the planet and the people,"

Beneficiaries of the programme will come from a competitive "Expressions of Interest" process, representing all SIDS sub-regions: the Caribbean, the Pacific, and the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS).

It will provide communities with the resources to expand successful initiatives that solve challenges faced by residents in those areas.

In partnership with UNEP, FAO, the World Bank, WWF-US, IUCN and UNCCD, among others, the initiative will provide a crucial and substantial means of support for sustainable economic diversification and job creation.

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Ministers of Education to discuss CXC syllabus suspension

Minister of Education, Sports and Creative Industries, Daryll Matthew is expected to be among his colleagues from CXC territories that will meet with the examinations body to discuss syllabus suspension.

The announcement was made by the Barbados-based Caribbean Examinations Council yesterday, after it was revealed last week that a decision was taken to suspend four subjects, Agriculture Science Double Award, Green Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Electrical and Electronic Engineer-

ing and Technology at the CSEC and CAPE levels due to low student enrollment.

The suspension is expected to take effect in September, 2025.

In a statement yesterday, CXC said the information on syllabus suspension was meant only for ministers of education and not for public consumption, describing it as a “premature release of correspondence addressed to the Ministries of Education concerning syllabus suspension”.

The Caribbean Examinations Council has admitted that the recent developments



would have caused worry among key stakeholder groups. As such, education ministers are expected to come together to discuss the intended withdrawal of the four (4) subjects. A date was not announced.

“In order to address the matter, CXC® has scheduled

a meeting with the Ministers of Education and will provide a full update to the public, through a press release, thereafter. CXC® assures our valued stakeholders that the requisite actions will be taken in the best interest of all,” the examinations body concluded.

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Host Minister visits Cultural Village

Following complaints from vendors and artisans participating in the Cultural Village mounted within the SIDS4 compound of the American University of Antigua (AUA), Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene, under whose portfolio hosting the conference falls, paid a visit to the village on Wednesday.

The minister said he sees it as his responsibility to visit the Cultural Village to see what the artists and crafts people had on display but also to show solidarity to them and to let them know that they too are important in the overall hosting of the conference.

More than one hundred and thirteen countries, several of the agencies associated with the United Nations and other observers are represented here at the Fourth International Con-



ference of Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) which ends today.

The Cultural Village was established to be that place where souvenir items to include, arts, craft, jewelry and paintings as well as local food and music were put on display for the benefit of the thousands of delegates and observers.

Reports are that business has been slow for the people at the Cultural Vil-



lage and the minister said he wanted to show that he heard their complaints and wanted to do something positive to change the situation.

According to the latest reports, the organisers arranged for buggies to transport delegates to the Cultural Village and back and this move has helped to generate more business.

With Thursday being the final day of the event, expected to end earlier than the other days, organisers are hoping that delegates will use the opportunity to browse in the Cultural Village and to patronize the vendors and crafts people.



Republic of Latvia representative makes inaugural visit to St. John's

Antigua and Barbuda and the Republic of Latvia have committed to deepen the diplomatic relations that have been flourishing since March 1993 between both countries.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Anthony Liverpool, met with Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia,

Dace Melbārde. This meeting underscored a mutual commitment to enhancing collaboration and exploring new avenues for cooperation between the two nations.

During the discussion, both parties expressed enthusiasm for strengthening ties in areas such as sustainable development and economic cooperation. Ambassador Liverpool highlighted

the significance of such partnerships, especially for small island developing states, in facing global challenges like climate change and economic resilience.

Parliamentary Secretary Melbārde reiterated Latvia's support for small island states, emphasizing Latvia's readiness to share its technological advancements and sustainable practices. The meeting concluded

ed with a pledge from both nations to pursue concrete initiatives that will benefit their respective countries and support broader global sustainability goals.

This meeting not only celebrates over three decades of friendly relations between Antigua and Barbuda and Latvia but also sets a forward-looking agenda for meaningful collaborations at the international level.

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Antigua and Barbuda, Singapore discuss intra-regional travel

Members of the Antigua and Barbuda Cabinet have been kept busy this week attending multiple side meetings daily at this week's Fourth International Conference of Small Island Developing States (SIDS4).

One such meeting took place Wednesday between Ms. Karen Tan, Ambassador and Plenipotentiary Representative of the Republic of Singapore to CARICOM, who has engaged with various dignitaries on the island, and Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Transportation, and Investment, Charles Max Fernandez.

Ambassador Tan explained that she has met with the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister on the fringes of the CARICOM Heads of Government meet-



ing and seeks to continue strengthening the strong linkages with the country while also exploring ways to expand the scope of their collaboration.

The Ambassador inquired about the status of LIAT, reminiscing on how convenient it was to travel throughout the region when

the airline was operational.

Minister Fernandez, with responsibility for aviation, spoke about the efforts to save the airline and the ongoing work to get LIAT 2020 operational again. He explained that from a tourism perspective, having LIAT operational is vitally important as the Carib-

bean ranks among the top three source markets for the country's tourism.

Both dignitaries discussed at length the importance of sustainable tourism and the necessity of sustainably managing the marine environment in this regard.

Ambassador Tan also informed the Minister about the initiative 'SIDS of Change', which prioritizes capacity building through training and development from Singapore for Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The dignitaries renewed their commitment to continued collaboration in the best interests of both countries, recognizing that both Small States and SIDS share similar constraints and ambitions.

ABHTI launches recruitment drive

The Antigua and Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute (ABHTI) has launched its 2024 registration campaign, Choose ABHTI.

This inspiring initiative shines a spotlight on industry professionals who are now excelling in leadership positions within the hospitality and tourism sector. With registration opening June 1, and the new academic year set to begin in September 2024, ABHTI is excited to celebrate the accomplishments of some of its alumni and highlights the promising futures that await new students.

The release of the campaign video features several distinguished ABHTI alumni and professionals who are

making significant contributions to the industry. Among them are Mataru Murphy, the Regional Training Manager for the West Indies at Blue Diamond Resorts; Eustace Cabral, Sous Chef at Jumby Bay Island; Patel Phillips, Assistant Head of Food and Beverage at Jumby Bay Island; and Ryancia Henry, Director of Rooms at Rosewood Miramar Beach, California. These professionals exemplify the excellence and dedication that ABHTI instills in its students.

Executive Director of ABHTI, Raynel Carroll, expressed her excitement about the campaign, saying, "We are delighted to showcase the incredible potential and bright futures that

ABHTI helps to create. These success stories are a testament to the education and training provided at the institute. We are extremely proud to be shaping the leaders of tomorrow in the hospitality and tourism industry."

ABHTI remains committed to nurturing talent and equipping students with the skills necessary to thrive in this dynamic industry. The institute offers four associate degree programmes: Culinary Arts, Food and Beverage Management, Hospitality Management, and Tourism Management. Additionally, ABHTI provides short courses and two certificate programmes in Basic Cookery and Front Office and Restaurant Operations.

Winsia West to represent A&B at Young Leaders Forum

Winsia West, Food & Beverage Supervisor, at Blue Waters Resort & Spa, has been selected to represent Antigua and Barbuda in the prestigious Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) Young Leaders Forum (YLF), Class of 2026.

Winsia joins an elite group of 27 candidates from across the Caribbean, including representatives from Barbados, Jamaica,

St. Lucia, St. Maarten, The Bahamas, and Turks and Caicos.

In a statement, the Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association said the selection committee, comprised of esteemed industry professionals such as Sanovnik Destang, CHTA’s President-Elect and Executive Director of Bay Gardens Resorts; Paul Collymore, CEO of The Landings Resort and

Spa; Laudra Maurille-Willie, Assistant Human Resource Manager at The Landings Resort and Spa; Anice O’Neil, Commercial Director at Bay Gardens Resorts; and Vanessa Ledesma, CHTA’s Acting CEO and Director General, rigorously evaluated each candidate to ensure the highest standards of excellence.

When notified of her selection, Winsia West ex-

pressed her gratitude and pride: “I am greatly honoured. I was not really expecting this, but the honest truth is that I am honoured. I am grateful and proud. The only Antiguan – that’s a big thing. And I will say that without my team and the great leaders here who I look up to, I know I will be able to do this. It is an honour.”

The YLF programme aims to equip emerging leaders with the skills and knowledge to excel in the rapidly evolving hospitality and tourism industry.

The curriculum covers key areas including Emotional Intelligence, Leading a Merging Workforce, Employee Experience Enhancement, Hospitality Forward (integrating technology within the industry), AI and Leadership, Process Optimization and Digitization, and strategies for developing team proficiency in digital tools and technologies.

A structured mentorship programme pairs participants with iconic industry leaders, providing invaluable insights, guidance, and support.

This initiative fosters a culture of continuous learning and development, preparing young leaders for the dynamic nature of the hospitality industry.



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Photo Essay



PM Browne meets with foreign delegations

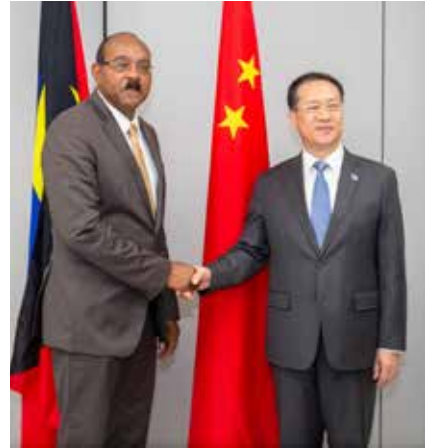


Photo Essay





The magma intrusion is moving closer to the town of Grindavík, officials have said.

Concern for Iceland town following new eruption

Another volcanic eruption has begun in south-west Iceland, forcing the evacuation of the famous geothermal Blue Lagoon spa and the small fishing town of Grindavík.

The new fissure opened up near Sundhnuksgigar on the Reykjanes peninsula, the fifth eruption in the area since December.

The Icelandic Meteorological Office (IMO) said the fissure was longer than 2.5km (1.5 miles) and was continuing to grow.

A state of emergency has been declared but air travel to and from Iceland was not expected to be affected.

Fannar Jónasson, the mayor of Grindavík, told state broadcaster RUV that he was worried about the amount of lava flowing towards the town, which was of a “much larger

volume” than had been seen following recent eruptions.

Energy provider HS Veitur said power had been cut off to Grindavík as a precaution.

Three people had refused to leave the town, according to local media.

Officials later issued a statement to “strongly emphasise that all those who are in or near Grindavík leave the area and get to a safe distance”.

All but one road in and out of the town is now reported to be inaccessible.

Footage from the site of the eruption showed a wall of molten rock shooting up to a height of 50m, and huge plumes of ash covering most of the sky.

Natural history cinematographer, Benjamin Hardman, has been documenting Iceland’s volcanoes and was

near the volcano when it erupted.

“It is totally surreal to be here today,” he told the BBC.

“This is a strange time on the Reykjanes peninsula.”

The Svartsengi power plant, which provides electricity and water to thousands of people on the peninsula, has also been evacuated.

Barriers have been built up around the facility, as well as Grindavík and the Blue Lagoon, to try to protect them from lava flows caused by the ongoing eruptions.

Keflavik international airport said it was operating as usual and did not expect to be affected.

Officials reported “intense earthquake activity” prior to Wednesday’s eruption.

Geophysicist Ari Trausti Gud-
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Rapper Sean Kingston agrees to return to Florida in \$1m fraud case

By Laura Blasey

Rapper Sean Kingston has agreed to be extradited to Florida, where he and his mother face allegations of committing more than \$1m in fraud and theft.

Mr Kingston signed paperwork waiving his right to challenge the extradition in a California court, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department confirmed to the BBC.

He was arrested on 23 May in Fort Irwin, southern California, the same day Florida police raided his Fort Lauderdale home and arrested his mother.

It is not clear when Mr Kingston will return to Florida.

The Broward County Sheriff's Office accused Mr Kingston, 34, and his mother Janice Turner, 61, of taking jewellery, money, a luxury car and more in an alleged scheme to defraud several businesses out of more than \$1 million, according to arrest warrants.

Florida police raided



a residence near Fort Lauderdale at which the singer - whose legal name is Kise-an Anderson - was named as living in court documents from February.

The Jamaican born singer, known for hits such as Beautiful Girls, Fire Burning, and Eenie Meenie, reportedly remained in a Southern California jail on Tuesday, according to the Associated Press news agency. California sheriff's officials told the news agency they would

coordinate with the Broward County Sheriff's Office on his extradition.

In a separate lawsuit, a company accused Mr Kingston of not fully paying for a large TV and sound system.

The company claims Mr Kingston "induced" the business to install the products with "as small a downpayment as possible" by making "numerous false representations", including a suggestion that he would create promotional videos

for the company with Justin Bieber.

Following the installation, the company claims Mr Kingston failed to make the remaining payments and it sued him for breach of contract and fraud.

Representatives for Mr Kingston have been contacted for comment.

Before his arrest, Mr Kingston shared a statement on his Instagram account.

"I am good and so is my mother," the singer said in response to reports that his mother had been arrested.

"My lawyers are handling everything as we speak," he added.

Following the arrest, a lawyer representing the pair acknowledged that allegations had been made against them, telling the AP news agency: "We look forward to addressing these in court and are confident of a successful resolution."

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mundsson said scientists had been expecting a new eruption for some time.

Most of the 4,000 residents of Grindavik were permanently evacuated in November, prior to the eruptions in December, January, February and March.

Lava flowed into its streets during the January eruption, engulfing three homes.

A few residents had since returned to live in neighbourhoods less at risk.

Iceland has 33 active volcano sys-

tems and sits over what is known as the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, the boundary between two of the largest tectonic plates on the planet.

The last time the Reykjanes Peninsula had a period of volcanic activity was 800 years ago - and the eruptions continued for decades.

This is now the eighth eruption since 2021, and scientists believe the area is entering a new volcanic era that could last for decades or even centuries.

Regional News



US opens up banking to private Cuban businesses

The US lifted some financial restrictions against Cuba on Tuesday, in a move designed to boost private businesses on the island.

The measures will allow independent entrepreneurs to open and access US bank accounts online to support their businesses.

They also include steps to open up more internet-based services and expand private companies' ability to make certain financial transactions.

"These regulatory amendments update and clarify authorisations in support of internet-based services to promote internet freedom in Cuba, support independent Cuban private sector entrepreneurs, and expand access to certain financial services for the Cuban people," the Treasury Department said in a news release.

One of the key changes will allow Cuban private business owners to open bank accounts in the United States and then access them online once back in Cuba — something they couldn't do previously. The US also is again allowing something called U-turn transactions, where money is transferred from one country to another but is routed through the United States.

"This reinstated authorisation is intended to help the



This June 6, 2019, file photo shows the U.S. Treasury Department building at dusk in Washington. (AP Photo/Patrick Semansky, File)

Cuban people, including independent private sector entrepreneurs, by facilitating remittances and payments for transactions in the Cuban private sector," the release said.

The Trump administration had removed permission for the U-turn transactions in 2019.

The Cuban authorities downplayed the announcement. Johana Tablada, deputy director of the US department in the Cuban Foreign Ministry, said the steps were "limited" and will do little to ease the embargo or sanctions that have most hurt the Cuban people.

"If these measures are serious and truly intended to

bring benefits to the population, even if they are going to bring benefits to a part of the population, they will not be hindered by the Cuban government," Tablada told The Associated Press.

The Treasury Department's updated guidance Tuesday also changed terminology that the agency uses to make clear that Cuban officials or prohibited Cuban Communist Party members were not benefiting from the changes that are aimed at the country's emerging private sector.

About 11,000 private businesses in Cuba are responsible for roughly one-third of the island's employment, Cuban officials have

said.

The changes come as Cuba struggles with one of the worst economic and energy crises in its history. Cuban citizens face waves of blackouts that have gotten worse in recent weeks and are frustrated over food shortages and inflation. Hundreds of thousands of people have migrated, many of them headed to the United States.

In Cuba, caution prevailed about what the changes would mean.

"It is a generally positive measure, but there are many hows and whys that will have to be answered in the coming days," Oniel

cont'd on pg 15

Interpol arrests fugitive Surinamese politician in Brazil

CMC – A Surinamese politician who is also a member of the ruling party, Joel “Bordo” Martinus, was arrested in Brazil on Wednesday.

This was confirmed by the Public Prosecution Service (OM) of Suriname.

“The Public Prosecutor confirms that this morning Joel Martinus Bordo was arrested in São Paulo, Brazil, based on a Red Notice issued by Interpol Suriname. The arrest was carried out professionally and effectively by the Interpol Unit of the Federal Police of Brazil,” said the Public Prosecution Service in a short statement.

Authorities suspect Martinus, the former chairman of the youth department of ABOP, the party of Vice



Joel “Bordo” Martinus.

President Ronnie Brunswijk, of murder, manslaughter, complicity in murder/manslaughter, participation in a criminal organization, violation of the Narcotic Drugs Act, and money laundering.

After investigators stumbled upon a plane that was buried in an area near the border with French Guiana, Martinus came into the picture as one of the suspects.

It’s also believed that a drug gang reportedly killed a man in connection with that case. The body was never found.

After authorities ordered an investigation against him, Martinus went into hiding. From his hiding place, he indicated in a statement on Facebook that he is innocent and that his arrest is a witch hunt set up by the ruling party because he has

seriously criticized the policies of President Santokhi. It had long been suspected that he was in Brazil.

He regularly appeared with live streams on his Facebook page, criticizing government policies and also commenting on other developments in society.

The lawsuit against Martinus and four co-suspects is still pending in court.

An arrest warrant was issued against Martinus on November 21, 2022.

After being identified as a suspect by the Public Prosecution Service, Martinus, who was appointed director of the Anthony Nesty Indoor Stadium when the Santokhi government took office, was removed from office by the government.

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Díaz, manager of AUGÉ, a Cuban corporate services company, told the AP.

Díaz said it could open up avenues for Cuban businessmen who import everything from food to automobiles and help them make payments to suppliers, for example. But he questioned whether banks would want to do operations with businessmen on the island due to the perception of risks.

Díaz recalled that during the Obama administration there was a provision that allowed — albeit in a more limited way — Cubans to open US-based accounts, but the banks did not show “great enthusiasm” for it.

Tuesday’s announcement comes a few weeks after the US removed Cuba from the State Department’s short list

of countries that it deems less than fully cooperative against violent groups. However, the US still lists Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism — a description that often scares away banks because they don’t want to become the target of lawsuits in US courts.

Ties between the US and Cuba were essentially frozen after the 1959 revolution that saw Fidel Castro rise to power and install a Communist government.

There was a wave of nationalisations of large companies, although some small private businesses were allowed to stay open until 1968.

The US implemented a full-scale economic embargo on Cuba in 1962 under President John F. Kennedy.

It wasn’t until former President

Barack Obama was elected that relations began to thaw a bit, with some restrictions lifted in 2017. Following Obama, then-President Donald Trump largely shut down Obama’s cooperation with Cuba. In the waning days of the Trump administration, his government redesignated Cuba as a “state sponsor of terrorism” and hit the country with new sanctions.

Cuba has also slowly opened up its economy to more privately owned enterprises.

In 2010, President Raúl Castro began reforms that expanded independent work for individuals but not for companies. In 2021, Cuban authorities allowed the creation of the first small- and medium-sized companies - called Pymes in Spanish.

Man accused of punching TikToker charged with hate crimes

A man suspected of random assaults in New York City - including an attack on a woman who posted about it in a widely shared social media video - has been charged with hate crimes.

Skiboky Stora, 40, was accused by the Manhattan district attorney on Tuesday of “assaulting, stalking and harassing strangers in a series of anti-female, anti-white, and antisemitic incidents”.

One of the alleged encounters included one that received wide coverage when the victim uploaded a TikTok video in which she talked about being punched in the face.

Mr Stora has pleaded not guilty on all the charges.

He has been charged with three counts of assault in the third degree as a hate crime and one count of stalking in the third degree as a hate crime and aggravated harassment in the second degree, according to the Manhattan district attorney.

One of the cases for which Mr Stora is accused is that of Halley McGookin, 23, who was assaulted in late March in Manhattan.

She documented her injury in a video on TikTok video that has been watched over 50 million times.

“You guys, I was literally just walking and a man came up and punched me in the face,” she said. “Oh, my God, it hurts so bad. I can’t



Skiboky Stora appeared in court on Tuesday.

even talk.”

The district attorney’s office said Mr Stora allegedly “struck her in the head, causing her to fall to the ground”, which left her with pain and swelling.

In another case, in September of last year, a 17-year-old student walked past Mr Stora, who allegedly elbowed him in the neck and said, using an expletive: “You people think you can do whatever you want.”

He is accused of elbowing a 37-year-old woman’s shoulder, causing pain and bruising, in October 2023.

In a fourth incident in November 2023, he allegedly followed and harassed a young Jewish couple when

they confronted him for tearing down posters of kidnapped Israeli hostages.

He was arrested on 27 March.

He was arraigned in New York on Tuesday and given permission to represent himself in court, according to the BBC’s US partner network, CBS News.

“You know, it’s a low-life individual that would do something like that, ma’am, but I never met this woman [Ms McGookin] a day in my life,” he told CBS outside the courtroom.

Mr Stora said he believes the charges against him are retaliation for a lawsuit he filed against New York City Mayor Eric Ad-

ams.

He will be back in court in August.

Last month another man, Daquan Armstead, was arrested by New York police and accused of unprovoked attacks in March and April on eight women.

Mr Armstead faces charges of hate crime/assault, attempted hate crime/assault and aggravated harassment, a New York Police Department spokesperson said at the time.

There have been more than 90 unprovoked assaults on people in Manhattan, including 50 on women, according to police figures cited in late April by NBC News.



The incident is reported to have involved a stationary KLM Embraer jet.

Person killed by jet engine at Amsterdam airport

By **André Rhoden-Paul**

A person has been killed after ending up in the running jet engine of a KLM passenger plane at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport.

The death happened as the KL1341 flight was getting ready to fly to Billund, Denmark, on Wednesday afternoon.

The airline said it was taking care of passengers and employees who witnessed the incident and it was investigating.

Netherlands's military police also said it had started an investigation.

Royal Netherlands Marechaussee force added in a post on X that all passengers and employees had been removed from the flight.

The deceased has not yet been identified and it is too early to say whether it was an accident or a form of suicide, a spokesperson told Reuters new agency.

Various Dutch media outlets have suggested the victim could be an employee involved in pushing back an airplane before it takes off.

Pictures obtained by Dutch national broadcaster NOS show emergency services surrounding the passenger jet on the airport's apron - where aircraft are parked.

According to reports, the aircraft involved was a short-haul Embraer jet used by KLM's Cityhopper service operating flights between near-by destinations within Europe.

Schiphol airport said: "Our thoughts go out to the [deceased's] relatives and we care for the passengers and colleagues who saw this."

Infrastructure Minister Mark Harbers said on X: "Terrible news about a fatal accident today at Schiphol."

Schiphol is one of Europe's busiest hub airports. It made headlines last week when rapper Nicki Minaj was arrested there.

Almost 5.5 million passengers used the airport last month, according to its website.

Last year a 27-year-old airport employee died after being sucked into a Delta passenger plane engine in San Antonio, Texas.



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Highly Favoured leads ABNDA's 3-hand domino competition

Highly Favoured has taken over the lead in the opening three-hand competition of the 2024 Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Association's (ABNDA) domestic season after the latest round of matches.

Highly Favoured jumped from third to first place with an overall total of 442 points after the sixth round of matches in the Three-Hand Competition, which is being conducted in the accumulated points format, at the ABNDA's headquarters in Ottos.

They moved to the top of the standings in the 20-team round-robin competition by scoring 81 points to win their sixth-round match, in which the Ramplers finished second with 65 points and Double Six Diamond came in third with 55 points.

The Rising Stars slipped from first to second place with an overall total of 430 points after scoring just 65 points to finish joint-second with Double Six Ice in their sixth-round match, which was won by the Parham Strikers with 67 points.

Fire Police, which occupied second place at the end of the fifth round of matches with an overall total of 361 points, was not involved in the sixth round of matches after gaining a



Players compete during the sixth-round of matches in the opening three-hand competition of the 2024 Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Association's domestic season at the ABNDA's headquarters in Ottos. (ABNDA)

bye.

Triple Dynamite capitalized on Fire Police inactivity to jump from fourth to third place with an overall total of 427 points after winning their sixth-round match by default.

Triple Dynamite and the A team of Bolans Revellers were awarded 70 points each after winning by default against Bravo, which failed to field a team for their sixth-round encounter.

The A team of Willikies Super Stars jumped from sixth to fourth place with an overall total of 424 points

after scoring 65 points to finish second in their sixth-round match.

Their sixth-round encounter was won by Legacy Lightning, which advanced from ninth to share joint fifth place with the B team of the Willikies Super Stars with an overall total of 410 points.

Legacy Lightning scored an impressive 94 points to win the encounter, ahead of the A team of the Willikies Super Stars, and the A team of Full Clip came in third with 61 points.

The B team of Willikies Super Stars remains in fifth place after sharing a victory by default with Legacy Thunder in their sixth-round match.

The B team of Willikies Super Stars and Legacy Thunder were awarded 70 points each after winning by default against the B team of Full Clip.

The other sixth-round match was won by the Unstoppables with 79 points. Dominatrixx finished second with 77 points, and SK Eagles came in third with 68 points.

Sports News



Four teams to contest Thursday League T20 contest

Four teams, two less than last season, will be contesting this year's Antigua Commercial Bank (ACB) Caribbean Parish League Sir Vivian Richards Thursday League.

The Thursday League, which is now in its 42nd year, will once again be contested using a T20 format for the second successive year.

The competition will bowl off with the opening round of matches today (Thursday), starting at 2:45 pm.

Defending champions WES Spartans Rising Sun will face Masters at Rising Sun in St. John's, and



the PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks will meet Mahico at Clare Hall.

Melissa Lawrie and Garfield Jacobs will umpire at Rising Sun, and Nigel Browne and Calvin Thom-

as will officiate at Clare Hall.

The WES Rising Sun Spartans won the inaugural T20 competition of the Sir Vivian Richards Thursday League last year.

The Spartans secured the T20 title by pulling off a six-wicket victory against favourites, the PIC Insurance Liberta Black Hawks, in the final at the Ball Beef playing field in Liberta.

Cup-holders Golden Grove crash out of Primary School Cup

Defending champion Golden Grove Primary's successful run in the Ministry of Sports Primary School Cup football championship has been ended by Freeman's Village Primary School.

Golden Grove Primary, which won the title for the past three years, was ousted in the quarter-finals stage of this year's competition.

Freeman's Village Primary, one of the four teams to advance to the semi-finals, snatched a 2-1 victory against Golden Grove Primary in the quarter-finals at the Buckley's Primary School playing field.

Dimique James and D'Jarie Gregory each converted once for Freeman's Village Primary, and Collin Wright

scored for Golden Grove Primary.

Freemansville got into the quarter-finals as runner-up in group B, while Golden Grove advanced to the knockout stage by finishing as runner-up in Group A.

Joining Freeman's Village Primary in the semi-finals are Group A winners Five Islands, Group B winners St. Peter's Primary, and Group C winners TN. Kirnon Primary.

Five Islands romped to a 9-3 victory against Bendals Primary, which finished as one of the two best third-place finishers to advance to the quarter-finals.

Allan Henry scored five goals, Jaheedi Charles converted a hat-trick, and Malique Boothe scored once for

Five Islands.

Deandra Desilva, Jethel Mason, and Jahsari Mason each converted once for Bendals Primary School.

St. Peter's Primary prevailed 5-3 against New Winthropes, which finished as runner-up in Group C.

Johnathan Duberry had a double conversion, and Jahdyme Active, Nicquerate Broughton, and Shaheem George each scored once for St. Peter's Primary.

Asana Percival scored twice, and Kyle Joseph converted once for New Winthropes Primary.

TN. Kirnon Primary prevailed 4-1 against Olivia David Primary, which was the other second-best third-place

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T20 World Cup stars make rankings rise on eve of tournament

International stars from Pakistan, West Indies, and England have all made good ground on the final update of the ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings before the start of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup this weekend.

While portions of England's home series against Pakistan have been hampered by inclement weather, that has not stopped players from both sides from making inroads on the latest rankings update, just days out from the start of the T20 World Cup in the West Indies and the USA.

England's captain Jos Buttler rises one place to seventh on the updated rankings for T20I batters on the back of his superb innings of 84 in Birmingham, while teammate Jonny Bairstow jumps eight places to 36th on the same list following his knock of 21 during the same contest.

It was Fakhar Zaman, who top-scored for Pakistan during that match, and the dashing left-hander has risen six places to 51st following his innings of 45 from just 21 deliveries against England.

There is also a trio of



West Indies batsman Brandon King

players from the West Indies on the rise following their recent series sweep over South Africa, with Brandon King (up five spots to eighth), Johnson Charles (up 17 places to 20th) and Kyle Mayers (up 12 rungs to 31st) all making giant inroads on the rankings for T20I batters following some

impressive performances.

Teammate Gudakesh Motie was adjudged Player of the Series for his eight wickets during that series against the South Africans, and the left-arm spinner is the big winner on the updated rankings for T20I bowlers as he rises from outside the top 100 to 27th overall.

England's quick Reece Topley gains one spot to improve to ninth on the list for T20I bowlers, while Pakistan trio Shaheen Afridi (up three spots to equal 11th), Haris Rauf (up two places to 25th), and Imad Wasim (up 14 rungs to 38th) all make ground based on their recent performances with the ball.

India's star Suryakumar Yadav will commence the T20 World Cup as the No.1 ranked T20I batter, while England spinner Adil Rashid will start the tournament as the No.1 ranked T20I bowler.

cont'd from pg 20
finisher.

Tevon Henderson scored all four goals for TN. Kirnon Primary, and Jahvonte Limerick had the lone conversion for Olivia David Primary.

The four winners of the quarter-finals

will contest the two semi-finals on Friday at Buckley's Primary School playing field.

TN. Kirnon Primary will take on Freeman's Village Primary in the first encounter at 3 pm, and Five Islands Primary will clash with St. Peter's Primary in the second game at 4 pm.

Windies get ranking boost ahead of T20 World Cup

A thumping T20 International (T20I) series sweep over South Africa helped West Indies climb to the fourth place in the latest International Cricket Council's (ICC) Men's T20I Team Rankings.

In the lead-up to the 2024 ICC Men's T20 World Cup, co-hosts West Indies took on South Africa at home, and have made substantial gains in the ICC Men's T20I Team Rankings on the back of a 3-0 series win.

Despite missing a few big faces, West Indies managed to sweep the series. With the series win, West Indies (254 rating points), the champions of the 2012 and 2016 editions of the T20 World Cup, are at the fourth place in the latest ICC rankings.

The list is led by 2007 champions India (264 rating points), with 2021 champions Australia (257 rating points), and defending champions England (254 rating points) at the second and third place, respectively.

There were individual bright spots for West Indies in the series, who gained



Players of the West Indies T20I team. (CWI Media)

substantially in the T20I Player Rankings. This included stand-in skipper Brandon King, whose 159 runs helped him jump up five places to the eighth position in the Men's T20I Batting Rankings.

His opening partner, Johnson Charles, who hit a blistering 69 from 26 balls in a Player of the Match per-

formance in the third game of the series, gained 17 spots to reach the 20th place.

Kyle Mayers (31st place in Batting Rankings) and Gudakesh Motie (27th place in Bowling Rankings) were the other beneficiaries from the recently concluded series.

These results bode well for the men from the Carib-

bean, who will be looking for a record third title during their home T20 World Cup.

The West Indies are placed in Group C along Afghanistan, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and Uganda. The West Indies will start their campaign in the T20 World Cup against Papua New Guinea in Guyana on June 2.