

AUBREY WEBSON HAILED FOR LEADERSHIP OF SIDS4 CONFERENCE

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The flags of Antigua and Barbuda and the United Nations are lowered, signalling the end of the 4th Conference of Small Island Developing States that was held at the AUA Conference Centre from 27th to 30th May, 2024.

Ambassador Webson praised for leadership of SIDS4 Conference

Dr. Walton Aubrey Webson has received high commendation for his leadership in the planning and execution of the SIDS4 Conference that came to a close yesterday afternoon.

The Antiguan and Barbudan Diplomat who serves as Permanent Representative to the United Nations, has been at the forefront of the government's bid to host the international summit and the coordination and execution of the conference that followed.

Yesterday, Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene, heaped praise on the diplomat, noting it was Ambassador Webson's recommendation that Prime Minister Gaston Browne

and his administration seize the opportunity to make Saint John's the venue for Small Island Developing States to discuss the issues of climate change and their effects on them and to chart the way forward.

It was his unrelenting efforts and leadership that aided in the conference's success.

"When the opportunity arose, he [Ambassador Webson] flagged it and suggested to myself and Prime Minister Browne that we should take an interest in hosting. Prime Minister Browne, as we know, very quick to respond to these kinds of situations, always able to see the opportunities in these kinds of situations, agreed



Dr. Walton Aubrey Webson

and here we are today reviewing what I would now call a very successful undertaking on the part of Antigua and Barbuda," FM Greene said.

He insisted it was a united effort, devoid of politics that won the admiration of delegates, making it a historic national event.

"At every level of society, we had some level of input, not to mention support."

Hundreds of ordinary Antiguan and Barbudans signed up as volunteers and gave of their time and energies in key areas to include security, accommodation, catering, meet and greet and finance in the execution of the SIDS4 Conference. Minister E.P Chet Greene stated that their roles in the process have not gone unnoticed.

"I saw in this the coming together of Antiguan and Barbudans in one grand effort of promoting our country. It tells me we can do much more than we have been doing in some instances," Minister Greene concluded.



An image of patriotism at the recently concluded SIDS4 Conference.

SIDS Centre of Excellence launched in Antigua and Barbuda

In delivering one of the most anticipated mechanisms to address the unique vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Antigua and Barbuda officially launched the SIDS Centre of Excellence on Thursday.

As the minutes of the historic 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States, SIDS4, ticked away, the details of the ground breaking initiative were unveiled during a launch in the Media Zone of the conference venue on the AUA campus in Antigua and Barbuda.

“We thought that this needed to be an institution that can respond in differ-



ent ways to address the many crises that we face as SIDS,” stated Antigua and Barbuda’s Ambassador to the United Nations Dr. Walton Webson.

The Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister the Hon.

Gaston Browne, in setting the tone for the launch, reflected on the many obstacles that stand in the way of island nations reaching their fullest potential.

He made mention of the retrogression in the achieve-

ment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but noted that the SIDS Centre of Excellence is one of the direct developments from the established Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS), the final outcome document of the SIDS4 Conference.

He explained that the Centre of Excellence will have three corner stone pillars – a Global Data Hub, an Innovation and Technology Mechanism and the Island Investment Forum.

“We recognize that SIDS have not been attracting significant investments. In fact, the investment flow generally goes to the larger

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and developing countries, so we have decided to establish as a mechanism in the Centre an investment forum which result in biannual investment conferences to attract investment and certainly technological advancement to ensure that we have the resources in order to achieve prosperity," Prime Minister Browne asserted.

He also added that the issue of debt sustainability is a fundamental and ongoing problem facing SIDS. The nation's leader added that the institutional arrangements that will spring from the establishment of the centre will address the issue of debt in a more holistic way. United Nations Office for Project Services' (UNOPS) Senior Advisor for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Simona Marinescu, expressed her elation that the beneficial institution is finally a reality.

"I would like to congratulate the government and people of Antigua and Barbuda for finally bringing the cycle of 10-year agendas from the shelf. The action on this agenda will generate involvement of multi-stakeholder partners, which will be a crucial part of its success," she expressed.

Executive Chairman of the PVBLIC Foundation, Sergio Fernandez de Cordova, one of the major contributors in the initiative pointed out that a multi-stakeholder approach is a necessity for the Centre to be a success. He also advocated for continuous work and collaboration to ensure that the Centre features the latest technological innovation, all with the common goal of bringing needed assistance to SIDS.

International SIDS Advocate, Dr. Gene Leon, further expounded on the significance of what he described as

an institution which will foster a united way to mobilize finances to truly yield resilient prosperity for all SIDS.

"SIDS still face a tri-factor of problems, inadequate access to affordable financing and inadequate recognition of the nexus between vulnerability and resilience and how that prevents us from getting to those goals. What we need now is not to get rid of but to compliment the various frameworks that exist in a unified way to strengthen strategic partnerships," he stated.

Prime Minister Browne further noted that the Centre of Excellence, which will be located at Barnacle Point, has gone well beyond a theoretic idea as the furnishings and the technology including the necessary broadband are already in place to ensure that the initiative truly emerges as a lasting legacy of the historic SIDS4 Conference.

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Concerns among youth embedded in final SIDS4 document

Young people who participated in meaningful ways in the just-concluded Fourth International Conference for Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) have presented their concerns to be included in the final document that will emerge following four days of high-level and intense discussions.

Member of the Youth Steering Committee, Horisha Savy of Seychelles, shared the impactful outcomes of the SIDS Children and Youth Action Summit held last Saturday and Sunday.

“We brought together over 90 young people from 35 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and engaged over 8,500 participants in both online and in-person consultations. This collective effort culminated in a 10-year Commitment to Action re-



Member of the Youth Steering Committee, Horisha Savy

flecting our shared vision for the future. Our projects focus on four key themes: Safe and Prosperous Societies, Resilient Economies, Secure Fu-

tures, and Environmental Integrity and Planetary Sustainability. These themes align with the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS – a Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity,” she reported to the conference closing exercise.

She said young people commit to investing in their health, prioritizing mental health and fostering mutual support to reduce stigma around seeking care. “We advocate for the inclusion of Indigenous People and marginalized youth, ensuring every voice is heard and benefits from education, training and cultural practices. Additionally, we pledge to raise awareness of violence against children and youth, advocating for better access to protective laws,” she explained.

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On the issue of resilient economies, Savy said young people will work with policy makers to create training opportunities in non-traditional careers, aligning with global demands.

“We commit to collective actions for a greener, more sustainable society. We will advocate for sustainable

economies, renewable energy transitions, climate-resilient infrastructure, and increased awareness of climate change issues.

“Additionally, we will hold our governments accountable for their environmental commitments made at the SIDS4 Conference,” she explained.

The youth delegate noted that SIDS Youth expressed support for

establishing a SIDS Centre of Excellence in Antigua and Barbuda, launching at the Fourth International Conference on SIDS and the integration of youth within the centre.

“Our youth are calling for the further integration of youth engagement within the sustainability mechanism of the Centre of Excellence,” she added.

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FOR PICKUP/DELIVERY:

Rufus Lewis receives special welcome at SIDS4

It was one of those times when the word ‘unbelievable’ becomes the reality. It happened on Thursday when one of the oldest stalwarts of the Antigua Trades and Labour Union/Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party, Rufus Lewis of Swetes, journeyed to the campus of the American University of Antigua (AUA) to witness the Fourth International Conference of Small Island Developing States (SIDS4).

Lewis, who was born on 9th July, 1927, has been a member of the labour movement since 1939.

As a mark of the high regard with which he is held, both Prime Minister Gaston Browne, the ABLP Political Leader, and Party Chairman and Minister of Foreign Affairs, E.P Chet Greene took separate breaks from their schedule to personally welcome Lewis to the AUA Conference Centre.

“This veteran of the labour movement, would have served with the late Father of the Nation, Sir Vere Cornwall Bird Snr. and he expressed a desire to visit this major event, which according to him, is ‘unbelievable’ and represents a remarkable achievement for Antigua and Barbuda,” Greene stat-

ed.

The four-day conference wrapped up on Thursday afternoon with the lowering of the UN Flag from the building and the ‘ceremonial’ return of the facility to the people of Antigua and Barbuda.

There has been general consensus that the staging of this, the biggest conference ever to take place in this country and the biggest ever SIDS conference, has been a resounding success.

From heads of delegations to members of their respective teams, there has been an outpouring of praise for the efforts of the government and people of Antigua and Barbuda in staging this grand event; an event held every ten years.



Comrade Rufus Lewis visits the SIDS conference venue. This veteran of the Labour Movement would have served with the late Father of the Nation, Sir Vere Cornwall Bird Sr and expressed his desire to visit this major event which according to him ‘is just unbelievable and a remarkable achievement for Antigua and Barbuda.’



Tourism Minister welcomes competition in regional travel

Tourism Minister Charles Fernandez believes there is no need to be concerned about new airlines entering the regional market.

Fernandez was asked whether there is concern that carriers, the recent being Sunrise Airways, are inaugurating services ahead of the operationalisation of LIAT 2020. The Haitian-based airline commenced operations to V.C. Bird International Airport on Tuesday and will operate an Antigua and Barbuda/Saint Lucia service, which will also connect Dominica and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

“I strongly believe that the region is underserved and I think there is room for LIAT [2020] and there is room for Sunrise [Airways],” the minister said.



He welcomes the competition growing within the regional space and is con-

vinced that it will be to the benefit of passengers moving up and down the island chain.

“I welcome it, I look forward to LIAT [2020] being a home-grown airline taking to the skies in a bigger way. I think it is very much needed.

“Sunrise Airways will be dealing with a few islands and LIAT 2020, we anticipate it will ramp up to what it was before COVID serving all of the islands within the Caribbean. So, I think it is going to be a game changer for all of us and we are really looking forward to that.”

While he could not provide new updates on LIAT

2020's operations, Minister Charles Fernandez said preparation work continues ahead of the issuance of the Air Operators Certificate (AOC) by the Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority (ECCAA), pointing to the arrival of two aircraft from Air Peace and the refurbishment of two ATRs acquired by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda through the Caribbean Development Bank, which is nearing completion.

“Once the AOC is completed, then we will move to the next phase, which is the opening of the routes and really getting off the ground in a serious way,” the tourism minister noted.



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Opinion



The imperative for equal recognition in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

By Sir Ronald Sanders

In the ongoing discourse on international relations and human rights, one of the most enduring and complex issues is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Recent developments indicate a shift in the international stance towards this issue, particularly regarding the recognition of statehood for Palestine. This evolution in policy underscores the global community's attempt to foster a balanced approach towards achieving a two-state solution—a vision that has eluded numerous peacemakers over the years.

Historically, the majority of the world's nations have recognized Israel as a sovereign state since its establishment in 1948. However, recognition of Palestinian statehood has been contentious and uneven, with significant geopolitical implications. Now, as of May 2024, 146 countries have officially recognized the State of Palestine.

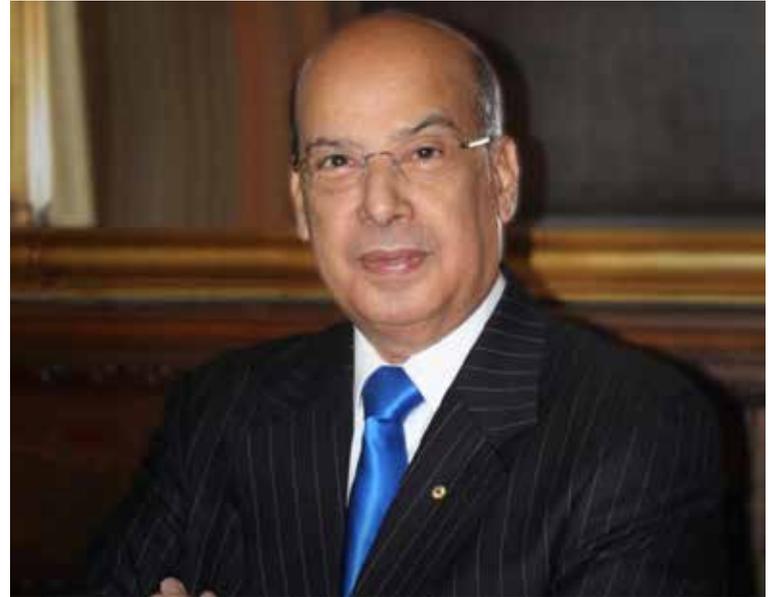
The stance of powerful nations, particularly those in the West such as the United States (US), the United Kingdom, Canada, and key European Union members like Germany and France, has often been influenced by their own political and strategic interests. These countries have historically aligned with Israel, often citing the need for any recognition of Palestinian

statehood to come through direct negotiations between the parties involved. This approach, while pragmatic in its aim to ensure peace through mutual agreement, has also been criticized for perpetuating an imbalance in negotiating power, which in turn has affected the dynamics of international diplomacy concerning this issue.

Recent statements from leaders like French President Emmanuel Macron, who expressed openness to recognizing Palestinian statehood at a “useful moment,” signify a potential shift in this longstanding policy framework. Such developments are vital as they highlight a growing recognition of the need for a more equitable approach in addressing this conflict.

The recognition of Palestine as a state is not merely a symbolic gesture. It has profound implications for the rights of Palestinians in international law, their ability to engage in diplomacy, bargain in trade and investment, and pursue legal actions internationally in protection of their territory and autonomy. This move could pave the way for more balanced negotiations, potentially leading to a sustainable peace agreement.

However, the path to peace is fraught with challenges. Recent escalations in violence and the human-



Sir Ronald Sanders

itarian crisis in Gaza have underscored the dire consequences of prolonged conflict. Statements from global leaders and actions by countries in recognizing Palestine reflect an urgency to address these issues comprehensively.

Israel's security concerns and the historical context of its geopolitical stance must also be acknowledged. However, the Israeli government's actions, often described as measures for national security, have significant repercussions for the peace process because in Gaza they have crossed the line, in the view of many, that demarcates legitimate action in defence of national security.

The actions of the Israel army in Gaza, acting on the instructions of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, has brought the accusation of genocide into sharp fo-

cus. In a powerful essay in the *New York Review of Books*, Aryeh Neier, quotes the historian, Raul Hilberg's argument that “the elimination of a people is ‘a step-by-step operation.’ First comes defining the group, then expropriating its resources, then concentrating its members in one place, and finally annihilating them”.

In his essay, Neier concluded that “Israel is engaged in genocide against Palestine in Gaza”. There is, he says, “a sustained policy of obstructing the movement of humanitarian assistance into the territory”.

He went on to say that he believed that “Israel had a right to retaliate against Hamas for the murderous rampage it carried out on October 7”, but he also said that “to recognize this right to retaliate is not to mitigate Israel's culpability

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for the indiscriminate use of tactics and weapons that have caused disproportionate harm to civilians". He draws attention to the words of Israeli Defence Minister, Yoav Gallant, "I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed. We are fighting human animals, and we act accordingly."

I cite Neier because he is a Jew and a survivor of the holocaust against the Jewish people in Nazi Germany. He cannot be accused of being antisemitic. Further, his work at Human Rights Watch (HRW), which he co-founded in 1978, is globally respected.

The repercussions of Gallant's actions extend far beyond the tragic loss of 36,000 lives in Gaza.

Despite clear warnings from its closest allies against missile strikes on densely populated areas, these advisories were ignored, leading to an attack on Rafah where over 46 civilians were killed—an incident Netanyahu later termed a "tragic mistake", but did not halt the military action. This disregard for allied counsel and the resulting civilian casualties have precipitated a severe humanitarian crisis.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports that the intensification of hostilities and the evacuation orders by Israel "have displaced more than

940,000 people from Rafah" in May alone. That number is greater than the entire population of Barbados and six independent countries in the Leeward and Windward Islands of the Caribbean. There is, the UN says, "the unconscionable prospect of a man-made famine".

Recent charges by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Israeli and Hamas leaders for alleged war crimes, and the claims by US President Biden that there is "no equivalence" between them illustrates the complexities of balancing justice, accountability, and

national interest.

President Biden's position, along with the broader US policy, will play a critical role in determining the trajectory of the peace process. To gain support from the international community—where 146 nations advocate for the recognition of Palestine as a state—the US approach must be, and must be seen as, balanced and fair.

This commitment to impartiality is essential for upholding the global consensus on the necessity of fairness in resolving this conflict.

The international com-

munity must foster an environment where both parties can negotiate as equals, unencumbered by the disproportionate influence or preconditions that have historically skewed the peace process.

Only through a genuine and balanced dialogue can the long-standing aspirations for peace in the region be realized.

(The writer is Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the US and the OAS. The views expressed are entirely his own. Responses and previous commentaries: www.sirronaldsanders.com)



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Black men sue American Airlines for racial discrimination

By Max Matza

Three black men have filed a racial discrimination lawsuit against American Airlines, alleging that the carrier briefly removed them from a flight after a complaint about body odour.

The men, who were not seated together and did not know each other, say that every black man was removed from the 5 January flight from Phoenix, Arizona, to New York.

“American Airlines singled us out for being Black, embarrassed us, and humiliated us,” the men said in a joint statement on Wednesday.

The Texas-based airline said it was investigating the matter as the allegations did not align with its values.

According to a federal lawsuit filed by consumer advocacy group Public Citizen, the men had already taken their seats and were preparing to depart Phoenix when a flight attendant approached each of them and asked them to exit the plane.

Alvin Jackson, Emmanuel Jean Joseph, and Xavier Veal allege that, as they were leaving, they realised that “every Black man on the flight was being removed”.

Each of the men had flown from Los Angeles earlier that day, with no issue.

At the flight gate, the three men, along with five others, were told by an airline agent that they had been “removed because a white male flight attendant had complained about an unidentified passenger’s body odour”.

“There is no explanation other than the color of our skin,” the men said in a statement on Wednesday, adding: “Clearly this was racial discrimination.”

American Airlines employees tried to re-book the men on other flights,



From left: Alvin Jackson, Emmanuel Jean Joseph and Xavier Veal.

but there were no other services to New York that night. The group was at that point allowed to re-take their seats on their original flight.

American Airlines said in a statement: “We take all claims of discrimination very seriously and want our customers to have a positive experience when they choose to fly with us.

“Our teams are currently investigating the matter, as the claims do not reflect our core values or our purpose of caring for people.”

The lawsuit adds that while the men waited outside the plane, the pilot made an announcement telling passengers that there was a delay due to an issue with “body odour”. The plaintiffs say the claim about odour was false.

“Throughout the flight - from the moment of their reboarding, in each interaction with the white male flight attendant, and continuing until landing - Plaintiffs experienced profound feelings of embarrassment, humiliation, anxiety, anger, and distress,” the lawsuit states.

“The act of returning to their seats after the unwarranted delay, navigat-

ing past the predominantly white passengers, several of whom eyed them with anger and undue suspicion, compounded their humiliation.”

The lawsuit says that the airline should be forced to pay unspecified damages for the “trauma” the men endured.

One of the men suing, Mr Joseph, told the BBC that the “alienating” experience reminded him of Civil Rights hero Rosa Parks being forced to move to the back of an Alabama bus in 1955 due to state-sanctioned racial discrimination.

“It’s a strange, crazy story that in 2024 we are still going through stuff like this,” said Mr Joseph.

He added that the lawsuit is necessary to make sure American Airlines does not end up “with a slap on the wrist”.

In 2017, the NAACP, a civil rights group, issued a travel advisory telling black Americans to avoid American Airlines due to discrimination.

They lifted the advisory the following year after the carrier announced it had made changes to its operations.

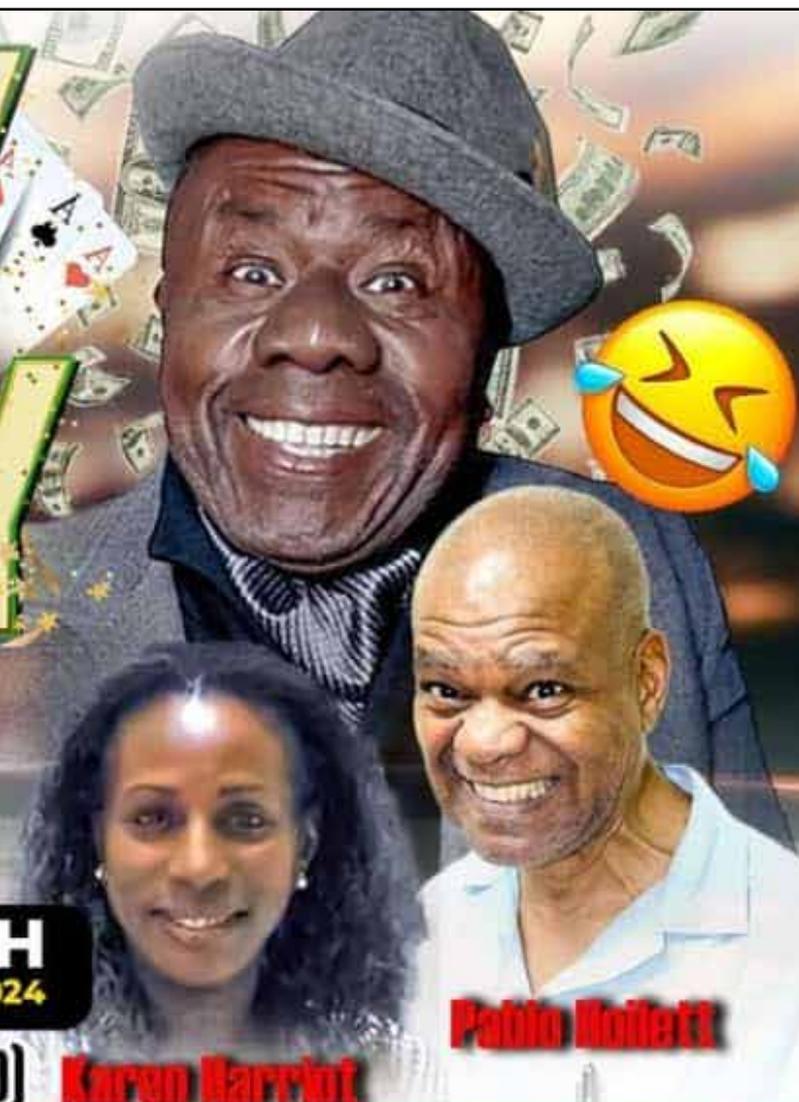
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Political analyst takes Suriname before CCJ

CMC - Trinidad and Tobago political analyst Derek Ramsamooj has filed a lawsuit against Suriname at the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) following his detention in the Dutch-speaking CARICOM country in 2020.

The CCJ, which also functions as an international tribunal interpreting the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas that governs the regional integration movement, CARICOM, has both an Original and Appellate jurisdiction.

Earlier this month, lawyers representing the regional political analyst and pollster, had written to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, indicating that their client intends to challenge the conduct of the State of Suriname “both regionally and internationally if necessary,” following his detention.

The Trinidad-based CCJ has confirmed that Ramsamooj had filed the case against “the State of Suriname” and has since been given a case number.

In the May 15, 2024 letter to the Guyana-based CARICOM Secretariat and copied to the Attorney General in Suriname and the Barbados-based Office of Trade Negotiations, the law firm, Justin Phelps wrote of “the politically controlled prosecution” of their client in Suriname “which has involved serious violations of international law”.

The letter, a copy of which had been obtained by the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC), noted that following a working visit in early 2020, Ramsamooj’s departure from Suriname was delayed due to the COVID -19 pandemic and that two days before he was expected to depart Suriname, he was detained at his hotel and told that he had been placed on a “no-fly” list as a witness in connection with fraud allegedly committed “by the previous



government.”

The lawyers said that their client, who has advised political parties across the region for over 25 years, “was interrogated about the work he had done for the previous government” and “thereafter held without access to a court or counsel for 18 days, and for a further 57 days without charge after access to counsel was permitted”.

The lawyers said that the “political prosecution” of their client by the current government headed by Chandrikapersad “Chan” Santokhi, a former police chief and minister of justice, involved serious violations” of their client’s basic human rights and international law.

“He has been denied counsel, proper medical treatment, access to the courts and a fair and impartial judicial tribunal. He was forced to place his signature on documents in the Dutch language (which he does not understand), subjected to prolonged detention without being taken before a court of law or being charged, was detained in conditions unfit even for animals and subjected to lengthy interrogation without the provision of basic human amenities such as food, medicine and sleep.”

The letter notes that the “acts at-

tributable to the State of Suriname include the fabrication of charges” against their client, “motivated by the fact that he had worked for a rival political party.”

The lawyers claim that the “authorities in Suriname have for more than two years had in their possession documentary evidence” proving their client’s “innocence beyond any doubt and exposing the charges as utterly contrived and baseless”.

Meanwhile, the lawyers have written to Suriname’s Attorney General, Garcia Paragsingh, complaining that the Suriname government has sought to give the public the perception that Paramaribo had not been officially informed of the actions to be taken up by their client.

The May 27, 2024 letter quoted Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation Minister, Albert Ramdin as saying that the Santokhi government is unaware of the pending legal action.

“If this report is accurate, Mr. Ramdin’s comments are false/and misleading. We have not seen any correction to this statement in subsequent media reports,” the lawyers wrote, adding that having regard to the “serious nature of the events which

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Guyana's Linden-Lethem Corridor impacted by road collapse

A section of the Linden-Lethem Corridor in Guyana collapsed yesterday when a truck attempted to cross an eroded section of the roadway.

The road collapse occurred in the Iwokrama Concession.

Guyana's Ministry of Public Works said the roadway was under sustained pressure from a storm surge caused by heavy rains that began over the weekend.

The ministry said KP Thomas, the contractor responsible for maintaining the roadway, was not on site when the incident occurred.

"In the last 48 hours, Ministry of Public Works engineers have alerted all contractors to monitor areas where they have active worksites," the ministry said in a statement last evening.

The ministry has activated an emergency team to restore the roadway, which



is the thoroughfare for traffic between the capital city Georgetown and Annai/Lethem.

The road remains inaccessible to vehicular traffic and the ministry said people attempting to cross will face delays.

Meanwhile, the ministry has warned drivers of heavy vehicles to avoid crossing the Pirara Bridge via the Timber Bypass due to high water levels covering the approach road and bridge.

"Light traffic is requested to exercise extreme caution

if attempting to cross the bypass. We do not recommend the crossing of any heavy equipment over the bypass at this time," the ministry said. "Emergency teams have been mobilised, and efforts are underway to assess and repair the damage."

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have occurred in Suriname involving my client, we wish to urge upon you a greater degree of accuracy and transparency in your public statements regarding my client and his challenge to the serious violations by the State of Suriname of its international and regional obligations".

The lawyers said that they were also urging the Attorney General in the future to "acknowledge receipt of our correspondence" sent to the official email of his office.

Ramsamooj, 62, who holds both Trinidad and Tobago and British pass-

ports, was summarily detained in Paramaribo in October 2020 and was not allowed to leave the country until September 2022.

His lawyers say he suffers from a range of medical issues including diabetes, hypertension and severe coronary artery disease.

A presiding judge had ordered the authorities in Suriname to return his passports, noting that Ramsamooj had, at all times, demonstrated a willingness to support due process, and had consistently stated his desire to clear his name through the legal routes.

The analyst, who has worked in

several Caribbean countries, including Jamaica, Guyana, Grenada, St Lucia and St Kitts and Nevis, was told by Suriname police on October 6, 2020, that they only wanted a statement to support an enquiry into operations at the Surinamese Post Savings Bank (SPSB).

Ramsamooj had conducted for the SPSB customer surveys, as well as bank employee surveys, in addition to conducting two country risk assessments of Suriname in his capacity as an analyst and researcher. The activities were paid for by the financial institution.

Deadly end to Mexico campaign as local candidate shot

A mayoral candidate in the Mexican state of Guerrero has been shot dead in the latest attack on an aspiring politician, ahead of this weekend's elections.

Alfredo Cabrera, who was running for mayor in the town of Coyuca de Benítez, was killed by a gunman at a campaign rally.

The run-up to the vote, in which a new president as well as members of the legislature, nine governors and almost 20,000 local officials will be chosen, has been the most violent in recent history.

More than 20 candidates have been killed and hundreds more have been threatened.

Video footage shared by local media shows Alfredo Cabrera shaking hands with supporters ahead of his closing rally in Guerrero state.

Someone can then be seen approaching him when, suddenly, shots ring out.

Some 15 shots can be heard. Guerrero state officials said that members of Mexico's National Guard returned fire, killing the gunman at the scene.

According to local media, Cabrera was under police protection after having been the target of a previous attack in 2023.

An investigation has been launched to determine what the possible motive of the attack may have been.

Government figures suggest 22 people running for local office have been murdered across Mexico since last September but non-governmental groups say the number is even higher.

Alfredo Cabrera's murder was condemned by Xóchitl Gálvez, who is running for president for the centre-right opposition coalition.



Alfredo Cabrera was running for mayor of a town in Guerrero.

Ms Gálvez said there were “no words to express the indignation I feel”.

She added that she had met Alfredo Cabrera and found him to be “a generous and upstanding man”.

Ms Gálvez, 61, is backed by a coalition of opposition parties whose aim it is to remove the governing Morena party from office.

The current president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, is limited by the constitution to a single six-year term but his Morena party has put forward the former mayor of Mexico City, Claudia Sheinbaum, as its candidate.

Opinion polls have given Ms Sheinbaum and Ms Gálvez a wide lead over their other male rival for the presidency, Jorge Álvarez Máynez, which means it is almost certain that Mexico will get its first female president in this election.

Both women held their final campaign rallies on Wednesday.

Ms Sheinbaum, who is the clear favourite in the polls, told a crowd in Mexico City's central Zócalo Square that Mexico had “changed profoundly for the better” since Andrés Manuel López Obrador was elected in 2018.

“I'm clear that my obligation is to take Mexico along the path of peace, security, democracy, freedom and justice,” she said.

Ms Gálvez, who has criticised President López Obrador for the prevalence of organised crime in the country, held her closing event in the northern city of Monterrey.

“You are going to have the bravest president,” she said. “I am going to defend your family. I am going to protect your sons. I am going to take care of your daughters. Don't forget that.”

Whoever wins the presidency will be faced with tackling a stagnant economy, rising violence and the continuing flow through Mexico of migrants trying to reach the United States.

What Trump's conviction means for US election

By **Anthony Zurcher**

Donald Trump's criminal conviction presents a remarkable collection of historic firsts.

He's the first former or serving US president to be found guilty of a crime. He's the first presumptive major-party nominee to become a convicted felon as well.

While Trump plans his appeal in the hush-money case, and awaits a sentence on 11 July that could in theory include prison time and a hefty fine, it's not too early to consider the political fallout.

That will be difficult, however, given this has never happened before.

"We often look to history to find some kind of hint of what's going to happen," says Jeffrey Engel, director of the Center for Presidential History at Southern Methodist University. "But there is nothing in the record that comes even close to this."

Trump secured the Republican presidential nomination earlier this year and is scheduled to be crowned at the party's convention just days after his sentencing.

Polls indicate he is in a statistical dead heat with President Joe Biden and maintains a slight edge in many key swing states that



Donald Trump has campaigned on his claim he is being unfairly prosecuted.

will decide the election. But those surveys also provide evidence that this conviction might change all of that.

In exit polls conducted during the Republican primaries this winter, double-digit numbers of voters said that they would not vote for the former president if he were convicted of a felony.

An April survey by Ipsos and ABC News found that 16% of those backing Trump would reconsider their support in such a situation.

Those were hypothetical convictions, however. And at the time he was facing four criminal cases, including charges related to an alleged conspiracy to overturn the result of the 2020 election and his

handling of classified documents once leaving the White House.

Now those voters can make their judgement based on a real conviction.

"The real verdict is going to be [on] 5 November, by the people," Trump said, moments after leaving the courtroom.

Doug Schoen, a pollster who worked with Democratic President Bill Clinton and independent New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, says American voters may feel less strongly about the hush-money case by then because it relates to events that took place eight years ago.

"While it's not a great thing to be convicted of a crime, what voters will be thinking about in No-

vember is inflation, the southern border, competition with China and Russia and the money that is being spent on Israel and Ukraine," he said.

Even a slight drop in Trump's support, however, might be enough to matter in the kind of razor-thin race this presidential contest could become. If a few thousand voters who would have otherwise backed the former president stay home in a key state like Wisconsin or Pennsylvania, it could make all the difference.

"I do think it will have an impact and damage him as a candidate," says Ariel Hill-Davis, co-founder of Republican Women for Progress, a group that has sought to move the party

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Spanish Heat 2 and Rebels take leads in semis of Division II playoffs

Third-seed Spanish Heat 2 and the eighth-seed Rebels have taken one-nil leads in their respective best-of-three semi-finals of the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division playoff championship on Wednesday evening.

The Spanish Heat 2 snatched a 73-69 victory against second-seed Da Project in Game 1 at the JSC Sports Complex.

Jesus Emmanuel produced a game-high 29 points, seven rebounds, and seven steals; Wilkin Floyd had a triple double with 18 points, 13 rebounds, 10 steals, and eight assists; Ismael Palemo sank 11 points and grabbed 15 rebounds; and Rohland Hamilton scored eight points and snatched 19 rebounds for Spanish Heat 2.

Bryan "Hollywood"

Matthew converted 21 points and claimed nine rebounds; Eric Joseph produced 17 points, 11 rebounds, and eight steals; Tyler Jacobs sank 15 points and snatched seven rebounds; and Nyique Watkins had 12 points and 10 assists for Da Project.

The Rebels prevailed 74-54 against the fifth-seed Jim Nance Jan Serv Fearless Crew in Game 1 of their series in the second game of Wednesday's double header.

Kareem Blair converted 18 points and grabbed 12 rebounds; Zuri Nesbitt produced 17 points, seven assists, six rebounds, and five steals; and Ryan Noel scored 14 points and snatched 17 rebounds for the Rebels.

Ronel Gomez produced 16 points and five steals, Takeem Martin sank 12 points and grabbed 10 rebounds, and Rafiki Harris had nine



points and five rebounds for the Fearless Crew.

The semi-finals of the second division playoff championship will resume with Game 2 of both series

at the JSC Sports Complex on Sunday, June 2.

Fearless Crew will face the Rebels at 6:45 pm, and Spanish Heat 2 will clash with Da Project at 8:30 pm.

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away from Trump.

She says younger voters and those who are college-educated and live in the suburbs have been concerned about Trump's demeanour and his approach to governing.

"Those voters are really hesitant to get back in line with the Republican Party headed by Donald Trump," she says. "The guilty verdict is going to further shore up those concerns."

But leading Republicans, many of whom attended the trial in a show of loyalty to the party nominee, were quick to rally behind him.

House Speaker Mike Johnson called it a shameful day in American history. "This was a purely political exercise, not a legal one."

For eight years, experts and opponents have been predicting Trump's impending political collapse, only to be proven wrong. His 2016 presidential campaign was punctuated by scandals that would have likely felled a typical politician, including Trump's recorded Access Hollywood conversation about groping women that was referenced multiple times in this trial.

Mr Trump's party largely stuck

with him through two impeachments and the chaotic end of his presidency, during which the US Capitol was attacked by a mob of his supporters.

All this did not prevent the former president from undertaking a political revival that has put him in position to win back the White House in November.

"It's axiomatic at this point, but Trump's continued support, despite the kind of scandal that would have scuttled literally any other previous candidate in American history, is truly astounding," says Mr Engel.

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Roman Hill United maintain winning form in ABNA's Netball League

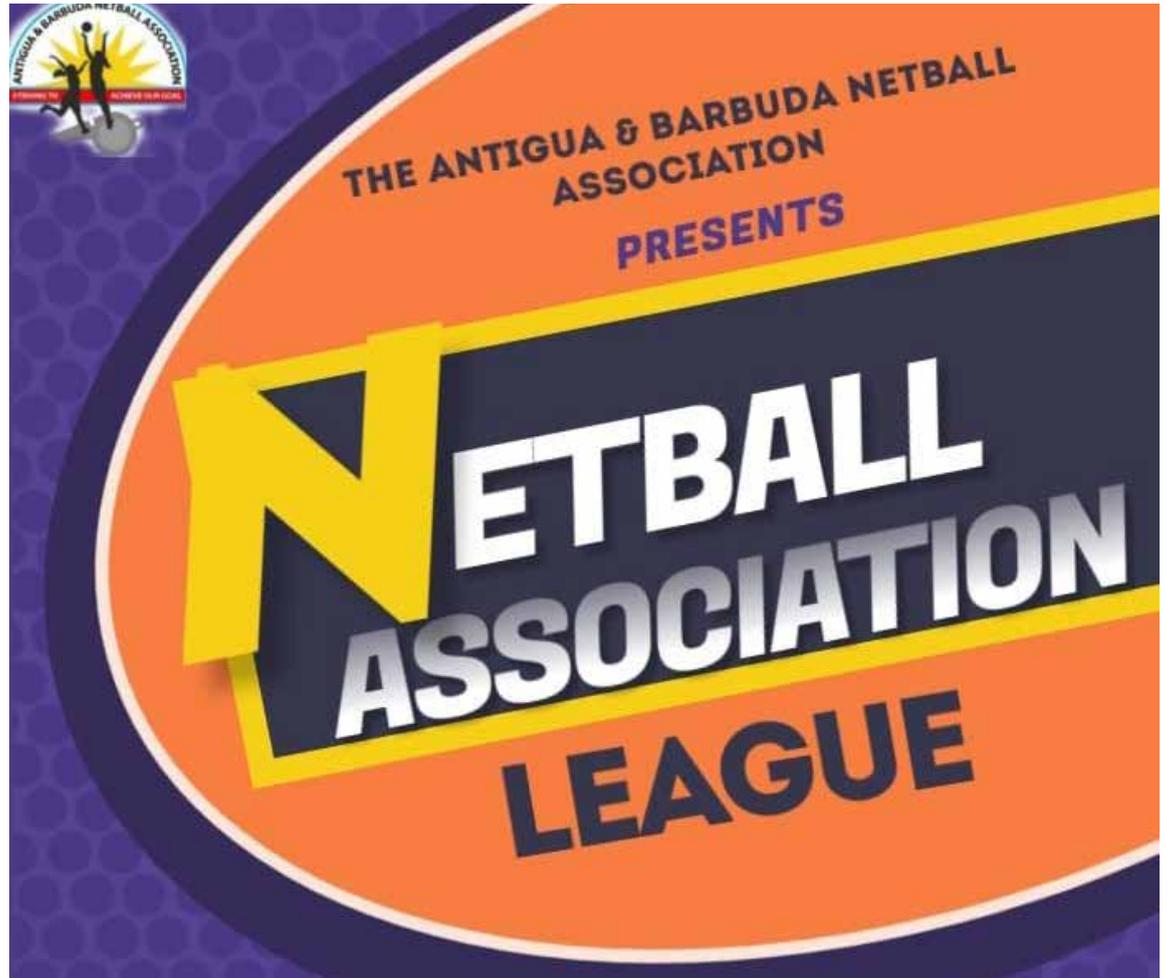
Roman Hill United continued their winning form in the Cool and Smooth Antigua and Barbuda Netball Association's (ABNA) League on Wednesday.

Roman Hill United prevailed 38-29 against the Eastsiders in their A Division affair at the YMCA Sports Complex.

Trecia Jarvis sank 21 goals from 28 attempts, Jamila Fitz converted 13 of her 21 shots, and Everdine Bannard scored three of her six attempts for Roman Hill United.

Christina Lloyd converted 15 goals from 29 attempts, Chardelle Jeremy sank 11 of her 29 shots, and Danika Bishop scored three goals from seven attempts for the Eastsiders.

S.W. Electronics Black Lightning snatched a narrow 23-21 victory against All Saints Attackers in the



Mixed Division.

Kareem Edwards converted 21 goals from his 25

attempts, and Paula Jackson scored two of her seven shots for S.W. Electronics

Black Lightning.

Keady Martin scored 11 of his 21 shots, and Andris Anthony sank 10 goals from his 16 attempts for the All Saints Attackers.

The competition will continue with three games at the YMCA Sports Complex today.

Cool and Smooth Pacesetters 1 will clash with Cool and Smooth Pacesetters 2 in the Under-16 Division.

Roman Hill United will face Cool and Smooth Pacesetters in the A Division, and S.W. Electronics Black Lightning will tackle Old Road in the B Division.

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This historic criminal conviction may prove to be different – particularly if Trump's appeals fail and he faces the prospect of prison.

Or it could just be the latest in a long series of seemingly disruptive events that, in hindsight, have only been bumps on Trump's path to power.

Allan Lichtman, a professor at American University, has constructed a political model that has successfully predicted the winner of every presidential race since 1984.

He concedes, however, that Trump's criminal conviction could be the kind of "cataclysmic and unprecedented" twist

that throws the model for a loop and changes the course of history.

"History books will record this as a truly extraordinary, unprecedented event, but a lot will depend on what happens afterwards," he says.

The ultimate judgement on the importance of Trump's conviction will come at the hands of voters in November. If the former president is defeated, his guilty verdict is likely to be viewed as one of the reasons why.

If he wins, it may become just a footnote to Trump's tumultuous yet consequential political career.

"History is written by the winners, as we all know," Mr Engel says.

Powell expects challenges, but insists West Indies ready for T20 World Cup

The West Indies captain Rovman Powell expects a challenging group stage in the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup but insists his team is ready for anything thrown at them.

The two-time champions will do battle with rapidly improving Afghanistan, perennial title-challengers New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and Uganda in Group C. The top two teams in the group will advance to the Super Eights.

The West Indies will open their account in the World Cup against Papua New Guinea at Providence in Guyana on Sunday.

“All 20 teams in the World Cup are good teams. I think we have a group that will give us some challenge. It’s T20 cricket and on a day, that is when it’s played, regardless of how strong your squad is,” Powell told the media at a training session at the UWI SPEC in St. Augustine in Trinidad on Wednesday.

“I think we have a strong enough squad to fight off any battles that these teams give us,” Powell added.

The West Indies rounded off their preparation for the tournament with a final warm-up game against likely title-challengers Australia at the Queen’s Park Oval on Thursday night.

The outing gave Powell and the players who missed the recent three-match series against South Africa because of commitments in the Indian Premier League, the chance to get some time in the middle before their opening game.

The West Indians produced some excellent cricket in the recent series against the South Africans to come out



West Indies captain Rovman Powell

3-0 winners and Powell says it’s important to keep that momentum going.

“It’s important that we keep on winning. Winning builds a very good morale in the team, so that is always very good,” he said.

One important player that the hosts will be without for the World Cup is all-rounder Jason Holder, who picked up an injury and has been replaced in the squad by left-arm pacer Obed McCoy.

“Obed is a suitable replacement. It’s a good four overs that he comes with; four overs with a lot of variation and he also comes with the left-handed factor. It’s important for him to just come on and be himself,” Powell said.

The Windies skipper also commented on the selection of fast bowler Shamar Joseph for his first World Cup.

“When we were selecting the team, there were other fast bowlers in the Caribbean that we could have selected, but he comes with a little bit of X-Factor, a little bit of cutting edge,” Powell said.

“He’s faster than the other fast bowlers around the region. He’s a little bit fitter than the other fast bowlers around the region, so we think it’s an opportunity now for us to give him a go in a World Cup like this. With his exploits in Test cricket, he should be going into it pretty confident,” he added.



Players of Aston Villa Lions compete against the Young Warriors (green and black uniform) in the ABFA's Cool and Smooth Under-17 Boys Youth Premier League at the ABFA Technical Center earlier this month. (ABFA)

ABFA suspends mid-week matches in Youth Premier League

All mid-week matches in the Cool and Smooth-sponsored Antigua and Barbuda Football Association (ABFA) Under-17 and Under-19 boys premier leagues have been suspended until the end of the current school examination period.

This decision was made by Gwendolyn Salmon, acting president of Antigua

and Barbuda Football Association.

The ABFA, in its recognition of players' participation in football, also fully understands the importance of allowing players to dedicate time specifically towards this academic period.

Matches in the leagues (U-17 and U-19) will, however, continue with matches at the ABFA Technical

Center during the weekend.

Five matches are slated to take place in the Under-17 Boys Youth Premier League on Saturday.

FC Aston Villa Lions will face CPTSA Wings, and Young Warriors FC will meet Old Road FC at 2 pm.

The Liberta Blackhawks will tackle Five Islands FC, and Antigua Bar-

racuda will take on SAP FC at 3:45 pm.

Cutting Edge and Empire FC will clash in the final encounter at 5:15 pm.

Action will also resume in the Under-19 Boys Premier League on Sunday.

Willikies FC will meet Ottos Rangers FC, and TAMO FC will face FC Aston Villa Lions at 12:45 pm.

Sea View Farm FC will take on Jennings United FC, and Greenbay Hoppers FC will challenge Urlings FC at 2 pm.

Soccer Academy will oppose CPTSA Wings, and All Saints United FC will tackle Golden Grove FC at 3:45 pm.

Garden Stars FC and Green City FC will clash in the final encounter at 5:15 pm.

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place on goal difference ahead of the CPTSA Wings after both teams ended their campaigns tied with 20 points.

The Young Warriors FC have claimed the title in the Under-11 Division with a total of 18 points from their quota of eight matches.

The GNFC Rebels 1 captured second place on goal difference ahead of the Greenbay Hoppers after both teams finished their campaigns tied with 17 points.

Cutting Edge FC captured their Under-15 Division title by recording 15 points from their quota of six matches. Five Islands clinched the runner-up spot with 14 points, and the GNFC Rebels came in third with 13 points.

Action in the Gomez/Netherlands Insurance Youth Football League will conclude with the final round of matches in the Under 13 and Under-17 divisions at St. Anthony's Secondary School playing field on Saturday.

Walsh Jr. takes up stint with Worcestershire

English County Championship Club Worcestershire has signed Antiguan, Leeward Islands, and West Indies leg-spinner Hayden Walsh for their upcoming T20 Blast campaign.

The 32-year-old Antiguan is a replacement for Pakistan spinner Usama Mir, who was unable to obtain the right paperwork for his planned stint at New Road.

Walsh, who has played 39 T20 internationals and 23 ODIs, has come on the recommendation of former West Indies skipper Jason Holder, who was with Worcestershire for the first five County Championship games of the season.

“Both Jason Holder and Alzarri Joseph have said a lot of good things about the club,” said Walsh.

“While it’s unfortunate that Usama couldn’t join us, we are confident that Hayden will fit in seamlessly,” said Worcestershire chief executive Ashley Giles.

“He comes with a glowing reference from Jason, which speaks volumes.”

Worcestershire begin their T20 Blast campaign against Yorkshire at Headingley on Thursday before their first scheduled home game, subject to the weather, against Lancashire on Friday.



Antiguan and West Indies leg-spinner Hayden Walsh Jr.

Four teams have secured titles in Gomez/Netherlands Insurance Youth Football League

Champions have already been decided in four divisions in the Gomez/Netherlands Insurance Youth Football League, which is hosted by the Generation Next Football Club (GNFC).

Pigotts Bullets was dethroned by the GNFC Rebels, which have captured the Under-7 Division title. The

GNFC Rebels won the title by recording 28 points, playing unbeaten, and winning nine of their 10 matches.

The Bullets claimed the runner-up spot with 25 points, and the CPTSA Wings FC captured their place on goal difference ahead of GNFC 1 after both teams finished their campaigns tied

with 15 points.

However, the GNFC Rebels have retained their title in the Under-9 division. The GNFC Rebels narrowly clinched the title with 21 points from their quota of 10 matches.

Pigotts Bullets FC claimed second

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