

# TWO DAYS OF NATURAL PHENOMENA

*Story on Page 2*



The Cabinet invited 17 officials from the country's law enforcement establishments to its meeting on Wednesday to discuss the recent spate of criminal activities perpetrated by a particular segment of the population. *Story on page 4.*



Students and teachers at many of the nation's schools gathered outside in open spaces immediately following the earthquake.

## Two days of natural phenomena, floods, earthquake, water-spout

It has been two days of natural phenomena with Antigua experiencing flooding in the southern corridor on Tuesday and on Wednesday both Antigua and Barbuda were shaken violently by an earthquake that sent many residents scampering for cover. To top it off, the Met Office reported that a water spout was spotted just off the northern coast of Antigua. This phenomenon was visible around 3:00 pm

Wednesday. (These special weather systems are called tornadoes over land and water spouts over water).

According to the Met Office the earthquake's epicenter was located some 27.3 miles southeast of Antigua making it closer to Guadeloupe. It had a depth of 6.2 miles and it measured 5.4 on the Richter Scale. It occurred approximately 10:43 am on Wednesday.

The Met Office de-

scribed it as moderate to high in terms of its intensity and according to reports from residents about their experiences. Many residents however reported hearing a loud noise at the same time they felt the earth shaking.

The National Office of Disaster Services (NODS) said it did not receive any reports of injuries or damage to property as a result of the earthquake.

The quake was report-

edly felt throughout the islands and other nearby territories such as St. Kitts/Nevis, Montserrat, St Martin and Dominica.

According to the UWI Seismic Research Centre in Trinidad that monitors earthquakes and volcanoes for English-speaking islands of the Eastern Caribbean, confirmed the findings of the Met Office.

NODS reported that there was no tsunami threat following the earthquake. It is important to note that the threat of a tsunami comes from an earthquake measuring magnitude 6.5 or more.

NODS encourages residents to be better prepared for such hazards by engaging in regular drills to include practicing to "Drop, Cover and Hold" – a safety measure advised by regional technicians during an earthquake. If inside a building,

*cont'd on pg 3*





## PM Browne calls on workers to unite against opponents of development

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has called on the workers of Antigua and Barbuda to unite on issues of national interest and not engage in the ‘scorched earth politics’ of those seeking power at any cost.

Prime Minister Browne was speaking at the annual Labour Day celebrations organized by the Antigua Trades and Labour Union and the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party in St. John’s on Monday. The Prime Minister referred to an article in Newsweek magazine which attempted to cast a negative shadow over the 41-year relations between Antigua and Barbuda and the People’s Republic of China.

“I say to workers in this country, when it comes to issues of the national interest we must unite. We cannot follow and should not follow the scorched earth politics of those who want power at all cost, to tear down every institution, to tear down every relationship in this country. I bring to the attention of workers

in this country the recent pronouncement by the senior leadership of the UPP in which they joined with Newsweek to literally tear down Antiguans and Barbudans, to tear down our country and to undermine the relationship with the People’s Republic of China; one of the most benevolent countries in the world that has contributed significantly to the development of Antigua and Barbuda,” said Prime Minister Browne.

The country’s leader was referring to an article in Newsweek Magazine by Didi Kirsten Tatlow which attempted to paint a distorted picture of Chinese involvement in Antigua and Barbuda. Among other things stated in the article, and supported by members of the opposition party here, it claimed to reveal information from leaked documents referring to a “Chinese-run special economic zone.” This has been proven as false as the economic zone is a private venture and not operated by the government of China.



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

Prime Minister in his remarks on Labour Day, spoke of the many positive contributions made by the Chinese government towards the development of Antigua and Barbuda.

“They did not have the decency to remember and recall that during the leadership of the UPP, it is the same People’s Republic of China that built out the airport facility with a concessional loan along with the Wadadli Power Plant, that ill-fated investment; the same People’s Republic of China funded it under the UPP,” said the Prime Minister.

ister.

The Prime Minister also mentioned the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, which was a gift to the government and people of Antigua and Barbuda, along with the Five Islands facility that was repurposed to house the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus - that too was gifted to the people and government of Antigua and Barbuda during the tenure of the UPP, but yet still they have sought to demonize the People’s Republic of China and the relationship with Antigua and Barbuda,” said the country’s leader.

Prime Minister Browne however warned members of the Opposition that “ungratefulness is worse than witchcraft and I say to you my comrades, no matter the circumstances, never fail to give thanks. No matter how small your achievement, never fail to give thanks,” he said.

### *cont’d from pg 2*

individuals should not run outside, but get under a sturdy desk, table or bed and hold on. Persons should not use elevators, they should move away from windows, glass doors, mirrors, hanging and heavy items.

It is also important that individuals follow the building code when constructing their homes.

NODS wishes to commend those

schools and other institutions that have been participating in regular drills which ensures that individuals know what action they should take whenever an earthquake occurs.

Reports from several schools were that teachers and students took the necessary precaution which was to drop, cover and hold and assemble in an open area afterwards, and account for everyone.



## Cabinet invites law-enforcement officials to discuss criminal activities

The Cabinet invited 17 officials from the country's law enforcement establishments to its meeting on Wednesday to discuss the recent spate of criminal activities perpetrated by a particular segment of the population.

The Cabinet Notes report that in attendance were the top brass of the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda, the Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force, the Organiza-

tion of National Drug Control and Money Laundering Policy (ONDCP), the Fire Department, and an IT Specialist within the government service who collaborates with law enforcement.

One of the main themes that came up for discussion was what has become evident in recent times; the increase in the number of robberies by young males and other crimes involving the use of

firearms.

"The Prime Minister explained that the Cabinet stands full-square with law enforcement, and the resources of the Treasury are to be made available in order to stem the tide of these violent crimes," the Cabinet Notes reported.

During the discussion, the Police Commissioner Atlee Rodney, noted that there can be no statistics for crimes

prevented; however, patrols and 'Stop-and-Search' by the police and military act as a deterrent. The Police noted that there is a worrying trend where young men of a younger age are choosing to become criminals, and to seek out victims that are easier to rob.

It was agreed that all the data collected required analysis in order to determine the best strategy. Collaboration between the Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board and the Police to provide plate numbers as part of the anti-crime strategy has been assured. The security that has been organized for the SIDS4 conference, ICC T20 World Cup, and even Carnival 2024, is in place and will deter criminal activity.

The IT Specialist provided assurances that the public cameras are working and that the monitors will show images of events that are taking place on the ground.





## Murder-accused to make first appearance today

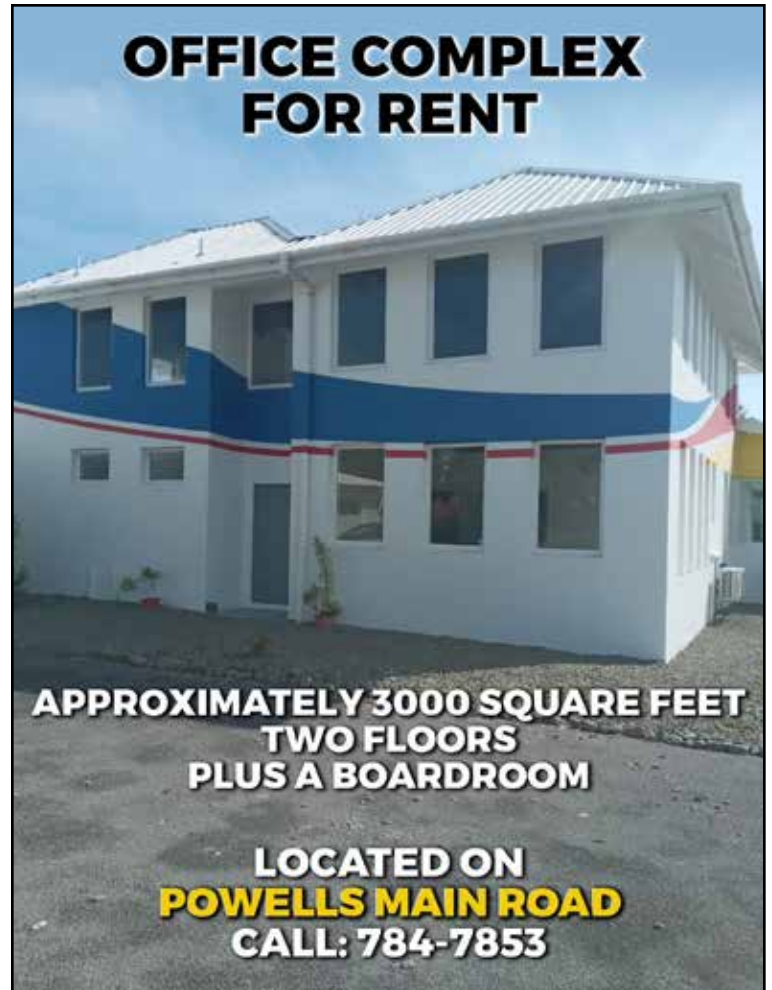
Murder-accused, 19-year-old Clarence Cameron of Bendals will be making his first court appearance today when he will have the charge of murder formally read to him following which he is expected to enter a plea.

The police reported on Wednesday that they arrested and charged Cameron with the murder of 17-year-old Omarrie Graham, also of Bendals.

It was reported that Graham and Cameron were involved in an altercation on Middle Road, Bendals, when he was allegedly stabbed with a sharp object.

The incident occurred on Saturday, May 4, around 9:35 pm. Graham was pronounced dead at 12:44 am at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre. The police later detained Cameron in connection with the homicide.

Meanwhile, the police are once again appealing to the general public to find non-confrontational ways of resolving differences, other than resorting to violent behavior. Members of the public are further encouraged to seek professional help in conflict resolution when it comes to settling family disputes.



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## Antigua and Barbuda to welcome 500-thousandth cruise passenger today

Much excitement is expected at the St. John's Harbour today with the expectation that Antigua and Barbuda will create history by welcoming 500-thousand cruise ship passengers in just over four months.

Operations Manager at the Antigua Crise Port, Rawle Reynolds, said the achievement of 500-thousand cruise passengers ((half a million) in less than five months is a new record for Antigua and Barbuda.

"For the calendar year, 2024, to date we have welcomed 253 calls up to Sunday, May 5 and a total of over 496-thousand cruise



Celebrity Beyond of the Celebrity Cruises

passengers. However, as of Thursday (May 9) two cruise ships are sailing into

port with a combined total of more than 4-thousand passengers. This will bring our total from January 1 to May 9, 2024, to just over 501-thousand passengers," he reported.

The vessels arriving on Thursday are the Celebrity Beyond of the Celebrity Cruises and Norwegian Sky of the Norwegian Cruise Lines. They are expected to

bring more than 4,400 cruise passengers to the country to enjoy its hospitality and many attractions.

The Antigua Cruise Port, the local subsidiary of Global Ports Ltd. is anticipating a bumper year for cruise passengers for 2024. Already, bookings for the summer have surpassed the usual numbers for previous summer periods.



Norwegian Sky of the Norwegian Cruise Lines

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# Restaurant Week

## Indulge in a taste of Antigua with celebrity chef, Andi Oliver's new 100-day pop-up

Explore a fusion of culture and cuisine as Andi Oliver's best-selling cookbook, The Pepperpot Diaries, is transformed into a festival of food, mixology, and culture in a unique and immersive 100-day experience on the twin-island of Antigua and Barbuda.

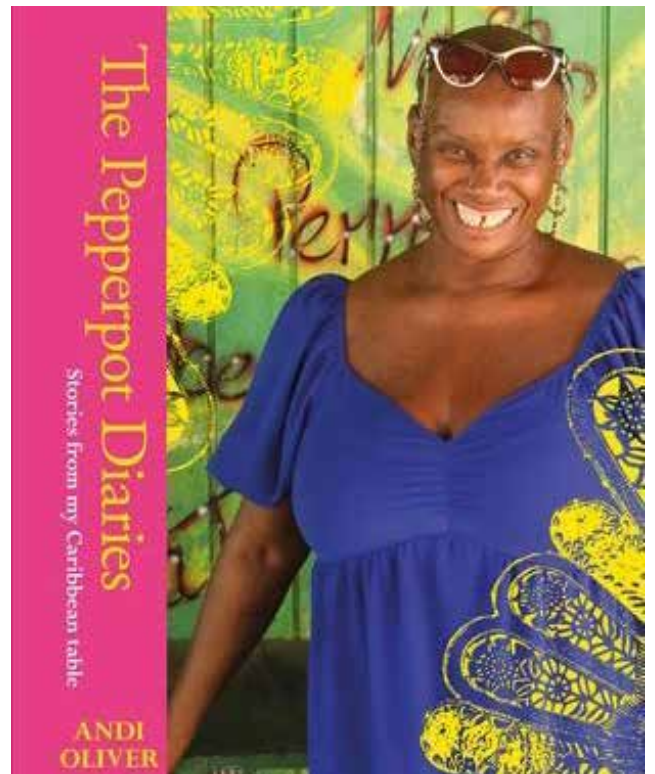
Details have been announced for the inaugural Pepperpot Rum Shop pop-up experience in the historic Fort James area of Antigua. The collaboration between celebrity Chef Andi Oliver, the Treehouse Beach Club and the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority launches today, 9th May.

Over 100 sun-soaked days,

the Pepperpot Rum Shop will showcase a melting pot of delicious food, drinks and iconic cultural touchstones inspired by Andi's recipes and Antiguan heritage. Set in a prime location at one of Antigua's newest beachfront venues, the Treehouse Beach Club, the launch also coincides with the vibrant Antigua and Barbuda Restaurant Week (5th-19th May) which attracts food lovers and travellers from around the world. These innovative island experiences will be a true celebration of Caribbean gastronomy and culture.

Inspired by some of the dishes created for Andi's successful

*cont'd on pg 8*



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# Restaurant Week



*cont'd from pg 7*

London restaurant Wadadli Kitchen, and Andi's touching foodie memoir, Pepperpot Diaries, visitors will be treated to some of Andi's most celebrated dishes, like chocolate curried goat, alongside some innovative new recipes created for the event based on the availability of locally sourced ingredients.

Andi says, "I'm so thrilled to be showcasing some exciting recipes as part of Pepperpot Rum Shop on the stunning twin island of Antigua and Barbuda. Caribbean food hasn't been codified in quite the same



way as French and Italian and yet there are more than 5 ways you can make rice and peas, countless recipes for BBQ chicken and at least three different kinds of pepperpot! I can't wait

to share some of the dishes inspired by friends, family and my Antiguan heritage."

The highly anticipated T20 CRICKET WORLD CUP will also be taking place during the Pepperpot

Rum Shop 100 days. Antigua and Barbuda are proud to announce that it will host the second-highest number of matches among all hosting venues, with a total of 8 action-packed games scheduled.

As part of the celebrations, The Pepperpot Rum Shop will be setting up a dynamic location where cricket fans can come together to soak up the energy and enjoy a variety of activities. Adding to the excitement, the legendary West Indies captain Sir Richie Richardson will be joining the festivities as an ambassador, engaging with fans and participating in various activities throughout the Pepperpot Rum Shop.

The Pepperpot Rum Shop 100 Days will also include a curated programme of events including film, wellness, art, and music. This not-to-be-missed event is perfect for independent travellers, digital nomads, families' foodies, and all those looking to dive head-first into a truly authentic and incomparable Antigua and Barbuda experience.

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It remains unclear if Drake was at home when the shooting occurred.

## Security guard shot at Drake's Toronto home amid beef with Kendrick Lamar

By Sam Cabral

Toronto police have said a security guard was shot overnight outside the home of Canadian rapper Drake.

Police said suspects in a vehicle shot the guard at the corner of the Park Lane Circle mansion around 02:00 EDT (06:00 GMT) on Tuesday before fleeing the scene.

It remains unclear if Drake was at home when the incident occurred or whether he was a target of the shooting.

He is currently embroiled in a war of words with US rap rival Kendrick Lamar.

But police said it was too early in their investigation to speak about a motive.

"We are in contact with [Drake's] team and they are cooperating," Inspector Paul Krawczyk of the Integrated Gun and Gang Task Force told reporters on Tuesday morning.

He said police are currently assessing video that captures the shooting but is not releasing information about it due to video quality issues.

The victim is in hospital and is in serious condition, he added.

Witnesses told Canadian media he had sustained several gunshot wounds, including one to the chest.

Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow told reporters she had been briefed by police about the shooting but declined to provide details.

"Any shooting is not welcome in this city and I hope the police will find the people that are violating the law and catch them," she said.

The lyrical beef between Drake and Lamar has grown bitterly personal, with a flurry of "diss tracks" exchanged between two of hip-hop's biggest stars over the weekend.

The Canadian's house, in the ritzy Bridle Path neighbourhood of Toron-

to, is the subject of cover art for Lamar's latest song Not Like Us, which is currently topping US and global music charts.

In the song, Lamar accuses Drake of having relationships with underage women, and of harbouring a secret love child, with the image appearing to suggest he is housing multiple sex offenders under his roof.

Drake's response, The Heart Part 6, denies the allegations and says he "feels disgusted" by them.

The rapper has discussed his home, which he refers to as The Embassy, in his own music and on social media. Its gates are twice as high as permissible under city law, because of his security needs.

Pictures online show the property has been cordoned off with caution tape as police investigate the shooting.

The BBC has reached out to representatives of both artists for comment.



## Scientists decode 'whale language' around Dominica

Scientists studying the sperm whales that live around the Caribbean island of Dominica have described for the first time the basic elements of how they might be talking to each other, in an effort that could one day help better protect them.

Like many whales and dolphins, sperm whales are highly social mammals and communicate by squeezing air through their respiratory systems to make strings of rapid clicks that can sound like an extremely loud zipper underwater. The clicks are also used as a form of echolocation to help them track their prey.

Scientists have been trying for decades to understand what those clicks might mean, with only minimal progress. While they still don't know, they now think there are sets of clicks they believe make up a "phonetic alphabet" that the whales can use to build the very rough equivalent of what people think of as words and phrases.

"We're now starting to find the first building blocks of whale language," said David Gruber, founder and president of the Cetacean Translation Initiative or CETI, an effort devoted to translating the communication of sperm whales.

In a study published Tuesday in the journal *Nature Communications*, re-



A sperm whale swims off the coast of Dominica in March 2024. Photo: Samuel Lam/AP

searchers analyzed more than 8,700 snippets of sperm whale clicks, known as codas. They say they have found four basic components they think make up this phonetic alphabet.

Pratyusha Sharma, the paper's lead researcher, said this alphabet could then be used by the whales in an unlimited number of combinations.

"It doesn't appear that they have a fixed set of codas," said Sharma, an artificial intelligence and computer science expert at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "That gives the whales access to a much larger communication system," she said, explaining it was as if the whales had a very large dictionary.

Sperm whales have the biggest brains of any animal on the planet at up to 20 pounds, as much as six times the size of an average human brain. They live in ma-

triarchal groups of about 10 and sometimes meet up with hundreds or thousands of other whales. Sperm whales can grow up to 60 feet (18 meters) long and dive to nearly 3,280 feet (1,000 meters) to hunt for squid. They sleep vertically, in groups.

Gruber, a biology professor at the City University of New York, said sperm whales seem to have sophisticated social ties and deciphering their communication systems could reveal parallels with human language and society.

To get enough examples of the sperm whale clicks in Dominica, where there is a resident population of about 200 whales, scientists created a giant underwater recording studio with microphones at different depths. Tags on the whales also record what position they are in when clicking — for example diving, sleeping, breathing at the surface — and if there

are any other whales nearby they might be communicating with.

Jeremy Goldbogen, an associate professor of oceans at Stanford University, called the new research "extraordinary," saying it had "vast implications for how we understand ocean giants."

Goldbogen, who was not involved in the study, said that if we were one day able to understand what sperm whales were saying, that knowledge should be used for conservation purposes, like minimizing their risk of being hit by ships or reducing ocean noise levels.

Sperm whales are classified as "vulnerable" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. The whales were hunted for centuries for the oil contained in their giant heads and the species is still recovering.

Diana Reiss, a marine mammal behavior and com-

*cont'd on pg 12*

# Regional News



## Bahamas minister warns of reprisal murders in his constituency

CMC - Foreign Affairs Minister, Fred Mitchell, is warning of reprisal killings in his Fox Hill constituency after a 37-year-old man was gunned down on Monday.

Mitchell in a WhatsApp message to his constituents, said he had been informed by Police Commissioner Clayton Fernander there could be reprisal killings after the man police described as major gang member was murdered this week.

“Good morning, the commissioner of police spoke with me this morning about a heightened state of alert in the Fox Hill area as a result of the murder of a fellow named Fox on Fleming Street.

“The police are expecting a set of tit-for-tat shootings in the area, and they will be increasing patrols in the area over the next period.

“Please exercise the appropriate level of caution, particularly around the public spaces in the parks,” Mitchell said in his social



media message to his constituents.

Chief Superintendent of Police, Chrislyn Skippings, told reporters that initial information suggested that Michael Fox Jr, had pulled up to a residence on Fleming Street where he was immediately accosted by three masked males who exited another vehicle.

“These males, all of whom were armed with high-powered weapons, opened fire on the victim, shooting him multiple times,” she said, adding that the deceased was well known to police and was

associated with the Outlaws gang.

“He was on bail for firearm possession, but I’m going to limit my comments, any other information surrounding him and just leave it to that. He was a prolific offender that was well known to us. We’ve had him in our custody a number of times. We’ve spoken to him.”

Fox’s father, Michael Fox Sr, said his son was paralysed eight years ago after he was shot and that his son had been freed of gun related charges three years ago, but was picked up almost

three years later and charged with the same offence.

“Every week he’s arrested, and now you stating he’s well known by police, but yet his record is clean. He can travel. He goes up and down. They take him off the plane the other day and arrest him by taking him off a plane travelling to go for therapy in the US, and they take him off the plane,” he said, denying that his son was part of a gang.

Last month, the government tabled the Anti-Gang Bill (2024) bill, saying that it is a “critical step forward as we make our communities safer and more prosperous.

“Today, we are seeking to make it clear that this administration is willing to take on the organised gangs who destroy lives and communities. As they often say, enough is enough, Prime Minister Phillip Davis said, adding “we cannot tolerate the cycles of violence and retaliation that leave entire communities in fear.”

*cont’d from pg 11*

munication expert at the City University of New York, said that scientists understand certain aspects of marine animals’ communication reasonably well, including the whistles used by dolphins and the songs sung by humpback whales.

But when it comes to sperm whales, even that basic knowledge is lacking.

“What’s new in this study is that they are trying to look at the basis for

the whales’ communication system ... not just particular calls they’re making,” she said.

Reiss, who was not involved in the new research, said she hoped we would one day be able to match the whales’ clicks to behaviour.

“We will never understand what the clicks mean to another whale, but we may be able to understand what the clicks mean enough to predict their behaviour,” she said. “That alone would

be an amazing achievement,” she said.

CETI founder Gruber said millions and possibly billions of whale codas would be needed to collect enough data to try to work out what the whales are saying, but he expects AI to help speed the analysis.

He said other sperm whale populations — the whales are found in deep oceans from the Arctic to the Antarctic — likely communicate in slightly different ways.



## Grenada moving closer towards policy stance for cannabis industry

The Government of Grenada in keeping with its stated intention to develop a cannabis industry that will focus on the medical and industrial uses of the plant, is working to develop a comprehensive approach to the issue, ultimately leading to the passage of cannabis legislation.

The Ministry of Agriculture in an update said legislation will address the medical and scientific purposes of cannabis, as well as its potential to create employment and generate foreign exchange.

Minister for Agriculture and Lands, Forestry, and Marine Resources, Lennox J. Andrews, has expressed confidence in the members of a new working committee, saying they are committed to the mandate by the Cabinet to submit proposals on the way forward for the cannabis industry by September 2024.

“I have met with the committee, and they have all given their commitment to the task at hand, and I have full confidence that the committee will go to work within the time frame and deliver on time,” he said.

The term of engagement of the previously established commission expired in November 2023.

After careful review and to expedite informed decision-making, the Cabinet opted to establish



a streamlined Cannabis Working Committee.

The Committee was established in April 2024 and consists of the following:

- Anselm Clouden, Attorney at Law
- Dr Shawn Charles, Chief Medical Officer
- ACP Vannie Curwen, Acting Commissioner of Police
- Tonja Alexander, a cannabis expert and Rastafarian representative.
- Betty Ann Lazarus, Public Relations, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Forestry, and Marine Resources

The Cannabis Working Committee’s primary mandates includes engaging with the Grenadian community through extensive consultations in which the committee aims to understand the public’s views on cannabis use and reclassification.

It also includes shaping Legislative and Regulatory Framework. Through informed public consultations, the committee will advise on designing a new legal and regulatory framework for cannabis.

At this stage, the Working Committee is moving beyond discussion and taking decisive action to achieve its mandates from the Cabinet.

The Working Committee’s activities focus on gathering data and public opinion. The plan includes:

1. Publishing a Policy Statement: This document will outline the government’s direction on cannabis legislation.

2. National Panel Discussion: Bringing together regional experts, this event will offer an opportunity to demystify cannabis, explore the realities of medical and

scientific cannabis legalisation, and kick-start the national conversation.

3. Data Compilation and Analysis: Information gathered through all consultation processes will be meticulously compiled and analysed.

4. Collaboration with the Ministry of Legal Affairs: The committee will work closely with the Ministry of Legal Affairs to research and recommend legislative amendments for cannabis decriminalisation and depenalisation in this initial phase.

The Government of Grenada said it acknowledges the growing interest in cannabis legalisation as well as recognises the experiences of those impacted by current laws and appreciates public enthusiasm.

However, a responsible approach is crucial.

## German politician attacked in library as violence spreads

By Paul Kirby

A Berlin senator and former mayor of the German capital has been attacked by a man in a local library in the latest of a spate of assaults on German politicians.

Franziska Giffey, a well known figure in Germany's centre-left SPD, was briefly treated in hospital after she was hit on the head and neck with a bag "filled with hard contents", police said.

Politicians and campaign workers have been targeted in recent days, especially in eastern Germany.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said the attacks were "outrageous and cowardly... Violence does not belong in a democratic debate".

Last Friday, a lead SPD candidate in next month's European elections was seriously hurt while putting up posters in Dresden.

Matthias Ecke, 41, had to have surgery in hospital after he was attacked by four people. Four teenagers are currently under investigation and at least one has been linked to the far right.

A campaign worker for the Greens in the city was beaten and kicked moments earlier.

Separately, a female Greens politician in Dresden also came under attack from two people while putting up posters on Tuesday evening.

Yvonne Mosler was pushed and spat on while she was out filming with a TV crew.

Dresden police said the two suspects, a man and a woman, had been part of a group that had been giving the Hitler salute when she began putting up election posters.

Colleagues reacted with shock to the attack on Franziska Giffey, Ber-



Franziska Giffey said she never imagined coming under attack in the library.

lin's senator with responsibility for the economy. Ms Giffey served in Angela Merkel's last federal government as minister for women and families before becoming mayor of Berlin in 2021.

Ms Giffey wrote later on Instagram that she had visited the Alt-Rudow library in the Neukölln district of south-east Berlin because it was a special place for her: "I would have never have thought it possible that I might come under attack there."

The Berlin ex-mayor said she was shocked at how people engaged in politics had increasingly become "fair game" for attack: "There is no justification for these attacks. A boundary has been crossed and we as a society must resist it decisively."

Police said they had detained a 74-year-old man already known to them for "state security and hate crimes". Prosecutors said there were indications the man was suffering from "a mental illness" and were assessing whether he should be admitted into psychiatric care.

Berlin centre-left senator Iris

Spranger condemned the spate of assaults on all politicians and campaign workers, "all of whom are committed to a robust democracy".

Federal and state interior ministers met on Tuesday to assess how to respond to the attacks.

Michael Stübgen, the Brandenburg minister who chairs the conference of interior ministers, told reporters that criminal law no longer gave politicians and campaigners adequate protection.

"Unfortunately we have see this spiral for years, and this year we are dealing with a violent spiral of physical attacks on female and male politicians, which I'm extremely worried about," he told local radio in Berlin.

The far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party is challenging for second place in European Parliament elections on 9 June, and hopes to become the dominant political party in state elections in eastern Germany in September.

However, it has been hit by spying allegations, with an aide to its top EU candidate in custody.



## Biden to halt some arms supplies if Israel invades Rafah

President Joe Biden has warned Israel that the US will stop supplying some weapons if it launches a major ground operation in the Gaza city of Rafah.

“If they go into Rafah, I’m not supplying the weapons that have been used historically to deal with Rafah,” he said during an interview with CNN.

He added that he would “continue to make sure Israel is secure”.

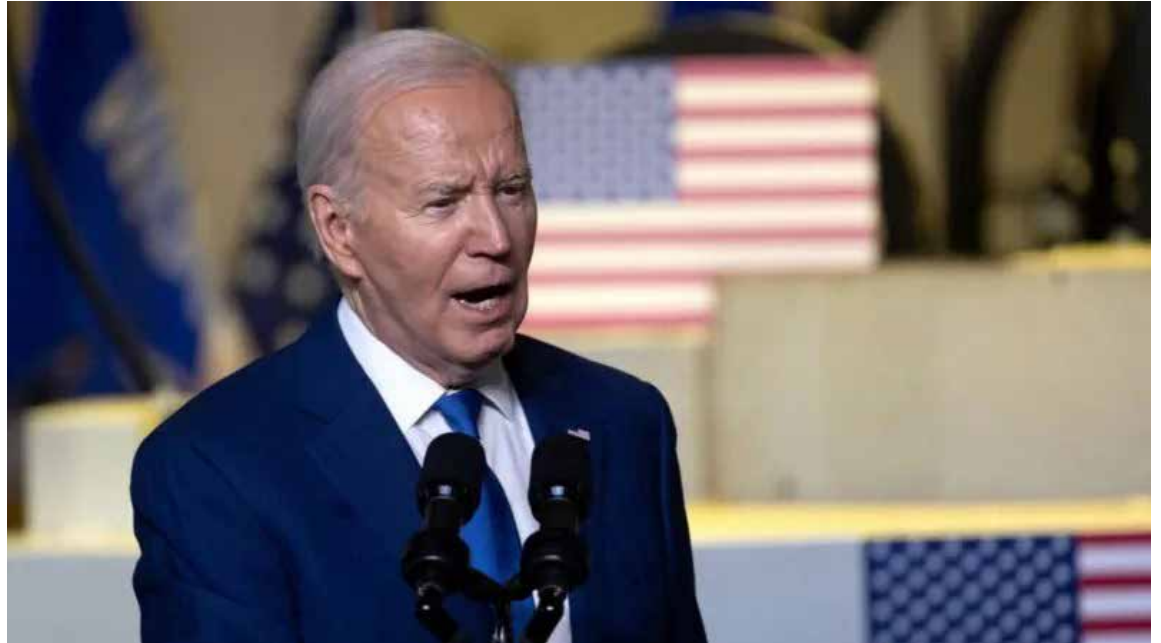
Despite firm and vocal US opposition, Israel appears poised to mount a large-scale invasion of Rafah.

The congested part of southern Gaza is Hamas’s last major stronghold in the territory. US officials have warned that an operation in the city - where the population has swelled with refugees from other parts of Gaza - could lead to extensive civilian casualties.

“We’re not going to supply the weapons and artillery shells,” Mr Biden said in the interview, which will air later on Wednesday.

He said the US did not define the current situation in Rafah as a ground operation. “They haven’t gone into the population centres. What they did is right on the border,” he said.

“But I’ve made it clear to [Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu] and the war cabinet, they’re not going



The comments amount to the president’s strongest warning yet to Israel over a potential ground invasion of Rafah.

to get our support, if in fact they go in these population centres.”

Mr Biden acknowledged that US weapons had been used by Israel to kill civilians in Gaza,

The comments amount to the president’s strongest warning yet over a potential ground invasion of Rafah, and mark the first time he has said the US could stop shipments of American weapons to Israel.

The US has already delayed a shipment of thousands of bombs to Israel, and has said it is reviewing future deliveries.

On Wednesday, Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin confirmed the delay of the bomb shipment - some of the most destructive munitions in Western military arsenals - while testifying in

front of the Senate.

The Israeli government said it was disappointed by the move.

The weapons being held back by the US are related to a future delivery, so the move is unlikely to have an immediate impact. But given the rate at which Israel is bombing it will probably affect future strikes fairly soon.

The Israeli military, meanwhile, has said that the two countries will resolve disagreements “behind closed doors”.

President Biden faces mounting domestic pressure - from some Democrats and parts of the US public - to rein in Israeli operations in Gaza amid rising civilian deaths and a worsening humanitarian situation.

US officials confirmed

that no new aid supplies had been delivered in Gaza via two gates in the south since Israeli tanks rolled into southern Rafah and took control of the Palestinian side of the crossing with Egypt this week.

Israeli military spokesman Daniel Hagari said the US had provided “unprecedented” security assistance since the beginning of the war, adding that disputes between the allies were resolved “behind closed doors in a matter-of-fact way”.

But a leading member of Mr Netanyahu’s Likud party in Israel told BBC’s Newshour on Wednesday he believed US domestic political considerations were behind the decision to halt the delivery of bombs.

“I totally disagree that

*cont’d on pg 16*

# Sports News



## Stingerz advance to ABBA's Division 1 playoffs finals

Second-seed Northside Stingerz have advanced to the finals of the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) First Division playoff championship.

The Stingerz booked their spot in the finals by clinching the decisive Game 3 to win their best-of-three semi-final series 2-1 against the Potters Steelers at the JSC Sports Complex on Tuesday night.

Joshua Minner shot a game-high 25 points and snatched seven rebounds to lead the Stingerz to their 83-64 victory against the Steelers.

In support, Jayzee Saltibus converted 16 points and grabbed 10 rebounds; Keroi Lee produced 10 points, seven rebounds, and six assists; and Devonte Carter chipped in with nine points for the Stingerz.



Marlon Charles sank 16 points and claimed nine rebounds; Cohen Desouza converted 13 points and snatched nine rebounds; and Raymond Dickenson scored 10 points and grabbed 17 rebounds for the Potters Steelers.

It means the two top

teams will battle for the Division 1 playoff championship.

The Stingerz will take on top-seed and defending champions the EZ Fit Flyers in the best-of-five Division 1 playoff finals.

The Flyers, which won the league title, are on course to complete the double after advancing to the finals by dispatching the fourth-seed Spanish Heat 2-0 in their best-of-three semi-final series.

The Flyers and the Stingerz will clash in Game 1 of the finals at the JSC Sports Complex today at 8:30 pm.

Tonight's opening game of the final will be preceded by a Second Division League encounter between the Court Martials and the Honourable Daryl Matthew Ottos Clippers at 6:45.

### *cont'd from pg 15*

the American election has nothing to do with it," said Boaz Bismuth, a member of the both the Israeli parliament and the foreign affairs and defence committee.

Rafah has been a key entry point for aid, and the only exit for people able to flee, since the start of the war between Israel and Hamas last October.

The crossing remained closed on Wednesday morning, but the Israeli military said it was reopening the nearby Kerem Shalom crossing, which had been closed for four days because of Hamas rocket fire.

On Monday, the Israeli military ordered tens of thousands of civilians to begin evacuating eastern parts of Rafah city, ahead of what it called a "limited" operation to eliminate Hamas fighters and dismantle infrastructure.

Meanwhile, efforts continue to reach a ceasefire, alongside the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners. In Cairo, delegations from Israel and Hamas have resumed negotiations through mediators.

A US official said that talks with Israel were "ongoing and have not fully addressed our concerns" and the US had been reviewing its weapons transfers to Israel since April.

Israel launched a campaign to destroy Hamas in response to the group's cross-border attack on southern Israel on 7 October, during which about 1,200 people were killed and 252 others were taken hostage.

More than 34,780 people have been killed in Gaza since then, according to the territory's Hamas-run health ministry.

A deal agreed in November saw Hamas release 105 hostages in return for a week-long ceasefire and some 240 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. Israel says 128 hostages are unaccounted for, 36 of whom are presumed dead.





Players of the Oman cricket team

## Barbados to welcome Oman for a camp ahead of T20 World Cup

As the much-anticipated ICC Men's T20 World Cup draws closer, Barbados will welcome West Asian team Oman to the island for their pre-tournament camp ahead of the global showpiece to be hosted jointly in the Caribbean and the United States of America (USA).

While in Barbados, Oman's camp, scheduled for May 14 to 24, will also include three T20 matches – two against a Barbados Select XI, and one match against University of the West Indies -- as they fine tune their preparations for the June 1 to 29 cricket World Cup.

The camp is being organised by former England batsman and West Indies senior men's selector Roland

Butcher, who saw it fit to assist Oman in getting acclimatized to the Eastern Caribbean Island, which will host a number of games throughout the tournament, including the final.

"It is great that the Oman team will be coming out to Barbados early for their pre-tournament camp. They will use the period to get acclimatized to the conditions, as quick as possible. We are delighted to have them in Barbados; this country is the ideal place to start their preparations," Butcher said.

"We believe the time spent here will be hugely beneficial towards them putting on a good showing in the 2024 ICC Men's T20 World Cup," he added.

Duleep Mendis, the former Sri Lanka captain and Oman's Head

Coach, expressed his team's delight and anticipation ahead of their arrival in Barbados.

"It is one of the cricket locations which we all dream of visiting and we want to make the most of our time as we prepare. We have high ambitions in this tournament, and we want to focus on our plans from the moment we touch down in a country, which is known for its cricket culture and heroes," Mendis shared.

Oman recently named their World Cup squad, which will be led by all-rounder Aqib Ilyas, who takes the reins from Zeeshan Maqsood. This year's World Cup will mark Oman's third appearance in the last four edi-

*cont'd on pg 18*

# Sports News



## Triple Dynamite leads ABNDA's three-hand domino competition

Despite the recent tragic passing of one of its players, Dale Willock, Triple Dynamite has taken over first place in the opening three-hand competition of the 2024 Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Association's (ABNDA) domestic season.

Willock left his colleagues and members of the national domino fraternity in mourning when he passed away after being involved in a vehicular traffic accident.

On behalf of the ABNDA and its members, the executive has expressed its condolences to the family, teammates, and friends of Dale Willock on his passing.

But Willock's death did not stop Triple Dynamite from leaping from fourth to first place in the standings after the third round of matches in the Three-Hand Competition, which is being conducted in the accumulated points format, at the ABNDA's headquarters in Ottos.

Triple Dynamite advanced to the top of the standings with an overall to-

tal of 234 points after winning their third-round encounter by scoring 78 points to prevail against Double Six Ice with 73 points and Legacy Lightening with 71 points.

Despite their second-place finish in their third-round match, Double Six Ice still remains in third place by advancing to an overall tally of 231 points.

Double Six Diamond also held on to their second-place position by advancing to an overall total of 232 points despite only managing to secure a second-place finish in their third-round encounter, which was won by the Parham Strikers.

The Parham Strikers secured victory by scoring 81 points to finish ahead of Double Six Diamond with 73 points and the SK Eagles with 63 points.

Despite their third-round win, the Parham Strikers, who got a bye in the first round, are only fourth from the bottom of the standings with an overall total of 158 points from two matches.

Legacy Thunder, who



Dale Willock

was leading the competition with 164 points after the second round, did not add to their tally due to receiving a bye in the third round.

With Legacy Thunder not in action, Dominatrixx moved up the standings into fourth place with an overall total of 222 points by winning their third-round encounter.

Dominatrixx scored 85 points to beat the Full Clip B team with 71 points and the Ramplers with 58 points.

Highly Favoured

advanced to fifth place with an overall total of 221 points after winning their third-round match. Highly Favoured scored 81 points to beat the Bolans Revellers A team with 71 points and the Willikies Super Stars B team with 64 points.

The other two third-round matches were won by the Willikies Super Stars A team and the Rising Stars.

The Willikies Super Stars A team accumulated a total of 206 points after scoring 74 points to beat the Fire Police with 71 points and the Bolans Revellers B team with 68 points.

The Rising Stars advanced to a total of 213 points by scoring 83 points to prevail against Bravo with 68 points and De Unstoppables with 62 points.

### *cont'd from pg 17*

tions of the tournament, which underlines their success and consistency in performing at the global level.

Oman enjoyed a dazzling 2023 campaign, as they copped the Gulf Cricket Cup, followed by an unbeaten run in the ICC T20 World Cup Asia qualifiers, which

secured their spot in the upcoming tournament. They were also runners-up in this year's ACC Premier Cup.

The West Asian team, drawn in Group B alongside Australia, England, Scotland, and Namibia, will open their T20 World Cup campaign against the latter, in Barbados, on June 2.





A view of the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium during a cricket match

## Antigua to host two ODIs during England's 2024 tour to the West Indies

Antigua and Barbuda will host two matches at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium during England's tour of the Caribbean in October and November for a five-match white-ball series against the West Indies cricket team.

England will arrive in the Caribbean on Sunday, October 27 to play three One-Day Internationals and five Twenty20 (T20) Internationals before departing on Monday, November 18.

The West Indies and England will

clash at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in the first ODI on Thursday, October 31, and the second ODI on Saturday, November 2.

The teams will then travel to Barbados, where they will play three matches at the Kensington Oval. They will face off in the third and final ODI at the Kensington Oval on Wednesday, November 6.

They will then kick off the T20 series with the first two matches taking

place at the Kensington Oval on the weekend of Saturday, November 9, and Sunday, November 10.

The white-ball series will conclude with the remaining three matches of the T20 series taking place at the Daren Sammy Cricket Ground in St. Lucia.

The third T20 is scheduled to be played on Thursday, November 14, and the fourth and fifth T20s are slated for the weekend of Saturday, November 16, and Sunday, November 17.

### *cont'd from pg 20*

Uniqua Jeffery claimed the female 2K run by clocking nine minutes and 41.52 seconds. Littania Ranns came in second in nine minutes and 54 seconds, while T'Keyah Roberts finished third in 10 minutes and 39 seconds.

Ernest Wilkinson captured the male 5K walk in 48 minutes and nine seconds. Kenique Eugene took second place by clocking 55 minutes and 13 seconds.

Kavel Davis won the female 5K walk in 44 minutes and 12 seconds. Connie Roacher finished second in one hour, eight minutes, and four seconds.

Raonda Garnett won the female 10K walk in one hour, 40 minutes, and 34 seconds.

Nadege Agustin finished second in one hour, 40 minutes and 38 seconds, and Shamara Farrel Browne came in third in one hour, 40 minutes, and 41 seconds.

The Hurricane Power Athletic Club has expressed heartfelt thanks to its sponsors of the event.

They are Cool and Smooth, Joma Caribbean, Athletes Foot, J Tittle Construction, Mega Distributors Limited, Laville's Trucking, VAB TECH Stationary, Epicurean Supermarket, and First Choice Supermarket.



The female 10K walk winners. From left to right: Nadege Agustin (2nd place), Raonda Garnett (champion), and Shamara Farrel Browne (3rd place).

# Sports

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The male 10K run winners. From left to right: Sergio Barnwell (2nd place), Kamar Thomas (champion), and Markus Murphy (3rd place). (Photos courtesy of the Hurricane Power Athletic Club)

The female 10K run winners. From left to right: Kevina Francis (2nd place), Anika James (champion), and Perl Merry (3rd place).

## Thomas three-peat as 10K run champion

Kamar Thomas captured the 10k run men's division title for the third successive year during the Annual Hurricane Power Athletic Club's Cool and Smooth, Joma Caribbean 2K, 5K, and 10K run /walk event at the YASCO Sports Complex.

Thomas achieved the hat-trick of titles by clocking 37 minutes and 10 seconds to win the men's 10K run and capture the overall title.

Sergio Barnwell finished second in the men's 10K run in a time of 41 minutes and seven seconds. Markus Murphy claimed third place with a time of

45 minutes and 12 seconds.

Anika James captured the female 10K run title, completing the distance in one hour, three minutes, and 54 seconds.

Kevina Francis came in second in one hour, four minutes, and 21 seconds, while Perl Merry finished third in one hour, 26 minutes, and two seconds.

Chazan Gunn won the male 5K run in 18 minutes and 36 seconds. Timon Emanuel came in second in 19 minutes and 12 seconds, and Stevon Gordon finished in third place in 22 minutes and 54 seconds.

Berquincia Eugene won the female 5K run race by clocking 30 minutes, and 46 seconds. Kendra Aska took second place in 32 minutes and 21 seconds, and Jordan Bascome claimed third place with a time of 32 minutes and 27 seconds.

Mkazo Lindsay captured the male 2K run title, completing the distance in eight minutes and 11.40 seconds. Sharmani Abrams finished second in nine minutes and 49.51 seconds, and Nadique Spencer took third place with a time of 10 minutes and 28 seconds.

*cont'd on pg 19*