



ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

POINT EXPRESS

TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

TUESDAY 11TH JUNE 2024

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10

Years

of Progress

2014-2024...

PEOPLE'S PLACE,

6.30 P. M, WEDNESDAY JUNE 12TH 2024

As the ABLP prepares to celebrate 10 years in government, the Party declares Wednesday 12th June, 2024 as RED DAY. Wear your Party color, Give God thanks and celebrate

Gov't to launch major community road programme

Relief is coming to residents in the several communities on Antigua who have been complaining about the state of the roads in their areas.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has announced that a major community-road programme will be launched over the coming weeks. He revealed that the Cabinet has approved several million dollars to enable the Ministry of Works to purchase a set of equipment to undertake the initiative.

“We are going to rollout a strong community road programme as Cabinet has approved the funding and the order for the equipment is expected to go off this week and they should arrive in the country within 90 days. Through this programme, you will soon witness an expansion in the construction of roads at the community level across the country,” PM Browne revealed.

The order includes five concrete trucks, three rollers, graders and a pug mill, a piece of equipment that is used in compacting concrete for the construction of concrete roads.

PM Browne said it is important that the Ministry of Works has its own



equipment for these critical initiatives. “In the past, we have had to rely exclusively on the private sector to provide the equipment and in many cases the private sector may not have them available. We are now buying new equipment so that public works will have good capacity,” the PM affirmed.

With the anticipated arrival of the equipment, the prime minister noted that the ministry had made a decision to move away from the construction of asphalt roads, especially at the community level, and instead opt for con-

crete roads. These he said are more durable.

According to PM Browne with the government having its own concrete batch plant located at North Sound undertaking this policy change would not present an issue.

“You are going to see a significant improvement in the roads at the community level and I wish to thank residents in the communities for their patience over the years. However, I promise you, real relief is coming,” he stated.



NSWMA faces funding challenge

The National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA) is currently carrying out an extensive programme of cleaning drains here on Antigua; but it faces two challenges, the indiscriminate littering in the country and not sufficient funds to fully finance its operations.

Chairman of NSWMA, Michael Joseph, said the

authority has several teams that are carrying out drain cleaning daily across Antigua where there are fifty-one major waterways, each of which further branches off to other smaller waterways.

Beside the sheer scope of keeping abreast with the need to keep these waterways clear to prevent flooding during heavy rainfalls, littering by members of the



Indiscriminate dumping of garbage is a serious problem

public has contributed significantly to the problem.

“Recently, there was a flooding in the Jennings area that affected many residents and when our teams went to investigate, they discovered that someone had disposed of an old motor vehicle in an area that was a natural waterway. That vehicle then

blocked the water as it made its way during the rains and the backed-up water caused major flooding in the area. This is a serious challenge for us. We clean a drain and three or four months later, we have to return because of the indiscriminate littering,” Joseph explained.

cont'd on pg 4



This discarded motor vehicle caused major blockage of waterways leading to flooding.

AUCTION NOTICE

<u>REGISTRATION SECTION</u>	<u>BLOCK</u>	<u>PARCEL</u>
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Instructed by **ACB MORTGAGE AND TRUST COMPANY LIMITED**, I shall sell by **PUBLIC AUCTION** on Wednesday the 19th day of June 2024 at 11:00am the above residential property at Buckley’s Heights.

The property is under the ownership of **LOREAN DENISE ROBERTS (aka DENISE LOREAN ROBERTS)**. The land is a 10,890 sq. ft. (0.25 acre) plot with an approximate 3,841 sq. ft., 2-storey with a partial basement reinforced concrete building with 4 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms.

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Details of the Auction may be obtained from **Trevor Teddy Santos Inc., Public Auctioneer** at telephone numbers: 464-7653 and 562-7653.

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Disconnections will be carried out during the period June 12th to June 28th, 2024.

Please be advised that reconnections are carried out within 1-2 business days after payment.



Local News



More garbage ...this is an eyesore and an issue for flooding

Heavy duty equipment is used to clear this drain.

cont'd from pg 3

Another area of consideration for the NSWMA chairman is in the area of funding for the authority's operations. He said funding

comes from two main sources; visitors to the country pay a US\$1.50 tax that goes directly to NSWMA.

This applies to both cruise and airline visitors.

The other source is the Environment Levy that is paid on the importation of both new and used vehicles into the country. However, according to the NSWMS

chairman, the waiver of this tax in recent years has put a serious dent in the funding available for NSWMA operations.

He reported that he has voiced his concerns with the Cabinet to protect this funding source as the demands on NSWMA are significant especially in light of the threats of an over-active hurricane season this year.

Joseph noted also that the amounts paid by visitors fall off precipitously during the summer when cruise calls and airline flights are reduced.

Despite the odds, he said drain clearings have been completed in Golden Grove Extension, the Rural West constituency, the Point Area, Old Parham Road, and Lightfoot with Potters and Royal Gardens slated to be the areas next tackled.

Along with cleaning the drains, NSWMA is also carrying out daily flushing of the gutters in St. John's; this is to prevent flooding, which has been a common problem in some areas of the city.

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Church leaders complain of growing marijuana use in public

Church leaders have voiced concerns over the increasing numbers of persons who are openly smoking marijuana in public.

A group of church leaders met with the prime minister last Friday to express their concerns with the smoking of marijuana in public places generally, but are particularly concerned when individuals are smoking marijuana in church yards and in the cemeteries when they attend funerals.

Executive member of the Evangelical Alliance of Antigua and Barbuda Pastor Fitzgerald Semper, revealed that one church leader reported that one individual had entered his church with the marijuana spliff tucked between his fingers. At the time, the pastor said while the marijuana spliff was unlit, he felt that entering the sanctuary with the marijuana spliff was in itself a sacrilegious act.

“We asked the government to undertake a programme of education to inform the public that marijuana use in public places is not legal. He said there are those who mis-interpret the decriminalization of marijuana as permission to smoke openly in public and the Christian leaders are concerned about the message this is sending



Prime Minister Gaston Browne (centre) with members of the Evangelical Alliance

especially to the younger more impressionable members of society,” he stated.

The Evangelical Alliance is suggesting that the government agencies develop public service announcements (PSA’s) for broadcast on both radio and television to undertake this programme of education.

Last Saturday on the Browne and Browne show, Prime Minister Gaston Browne re-emphasised the fact that smoking marijuana in public is prohibited by law. He said the decriminalization allows for its use in the privacy of one’s home but smoking mari-

juana or cigarettes in public is unlawful.

He said those taking marijuana into churches and or smoking in church yards and cemeteries ‘are taking it too far’.

“We went as far as to decriminalize marijuana recognizing that it can be utilized for certain ailments and we have legalized it for certain medicinal purposes. However, marijuana has not been legalized for recreational purposes and there is a reason why we didn’t go that far.

“Based on our international obligations we could not go that far or else there would be international

sanctions against the country,” he remarked.

PM Browne said those involved in smoking in public ought to respect the rights of those around them who do not wish to inhale second-hand smoke from either marijuana or cigarette.

The members of the Antigua Barbuda Evangelical Alliance (ABEA) who met with PM Browne last Friday were; Dr. Olson Daniel, President, Rev. Christopher Weekes, Executive Member, Pastor Fitzgerald Semper, Public Relations Officer and Clovis St Romain, General Secretary.



Group photo of the Police Administration and the more than 70 recruits at the commencement of training

New police recruits begin training

More than seventy new recruits have started an intense period of training as a first step towards becoming full-fledged members of the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda.

In a statement, the pub-

lic relations department said the young men and women will spend the next six months undergoing basic police training in several subjects, including criminal law, customer service, military drills, physical and

mental fitness, and other key areas.

On Monday, a brief ceremony was held to mark the commencement of training at the Sir Wright F. George Police Academy Open Campus at the former Navy Base. Several senior executive members of the police force, including the Commissioner of Police, Atlee Rodney were present and gave brief remarks.

Commissioner Rodney thanked the young men and women for answering the call to serve their country at the highest level. He admonished them to maintain a high level of discipline, and take this calling seriously, and always give their best efforts in every undertaking. The commissioner wished the training staff success, as they embarked

cont'd on pg 7

Water Meter Change Project

The public is advised the APUA Water Business Unit is currently and will continually be inspecting and changing water meters that are found to be faulty.

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If you know of any issues with water meters please report them immediately to our fault report line 211.



Deputy Police Commissioner, Everton Jeffers



Police Commissioner, Atlee Rodney



The head table at the opening ceremony for the training of new police recruits

cont'd from pg 6
upon this journey.

Deputy Commissioner Everton Jeffers, who is the supervisor of training and administrative matters within the police force, also offered encouraging words to the young officers. He encouraged them to develop the determination to be successful in their endeavors.

This new batch of recruits consists

of 59 males and 13 females, which will be attached to both regular police and fire departments.

Superintendent Louisa Benjamin-Quashie will be leading the charge as Commandant of the Academy. She will be supported by a team of highly trained and qualified instructors.

Commissioner Rodney, in his closing remarks officially declared the training course open.

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Health minister welcomes announcement of a new medical school

The prospect of a new medical school coming to open up in Antigua and Barbuda has found favour with the country's Health Minister, Sir Molwyn Joseph.

Last week, the Cabinet invited two investors interested in opening a medical school in the country to its meeting.

Now the health minister is publicly voicing support for the initiative noting that based on past experiences, medical schools have contributed significantly to the nation's economy.

Not only do they provide employment, but their students rent apartments, motor vehicles as well as



Health Minister, Sir Molwyn Joseph

shop at supermarkets and eat at restaurants, thus supporting many local businesses.

The announcement from the Cabinet is that the proposed school will cater

largely to students coming out of Pakistan and India with faculty also recruited from those states, however, students and staff would also be selected from other nations.

During the post-Cabinet press conference last week, the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff Lionel Hurst said that talks will continue with the investors who hope to cater to the nearly 100,000 persons from India and Pakistan who are interested in accessing medical training but are unable to do so in their home nation.

According to Hurst, the demand for spaces in medical schools in these countries far exceed the available spaces. Therefore, many operators see places like Antigua and Barbuda with its Caribbean charm, as ideal centres to establish such institutions.

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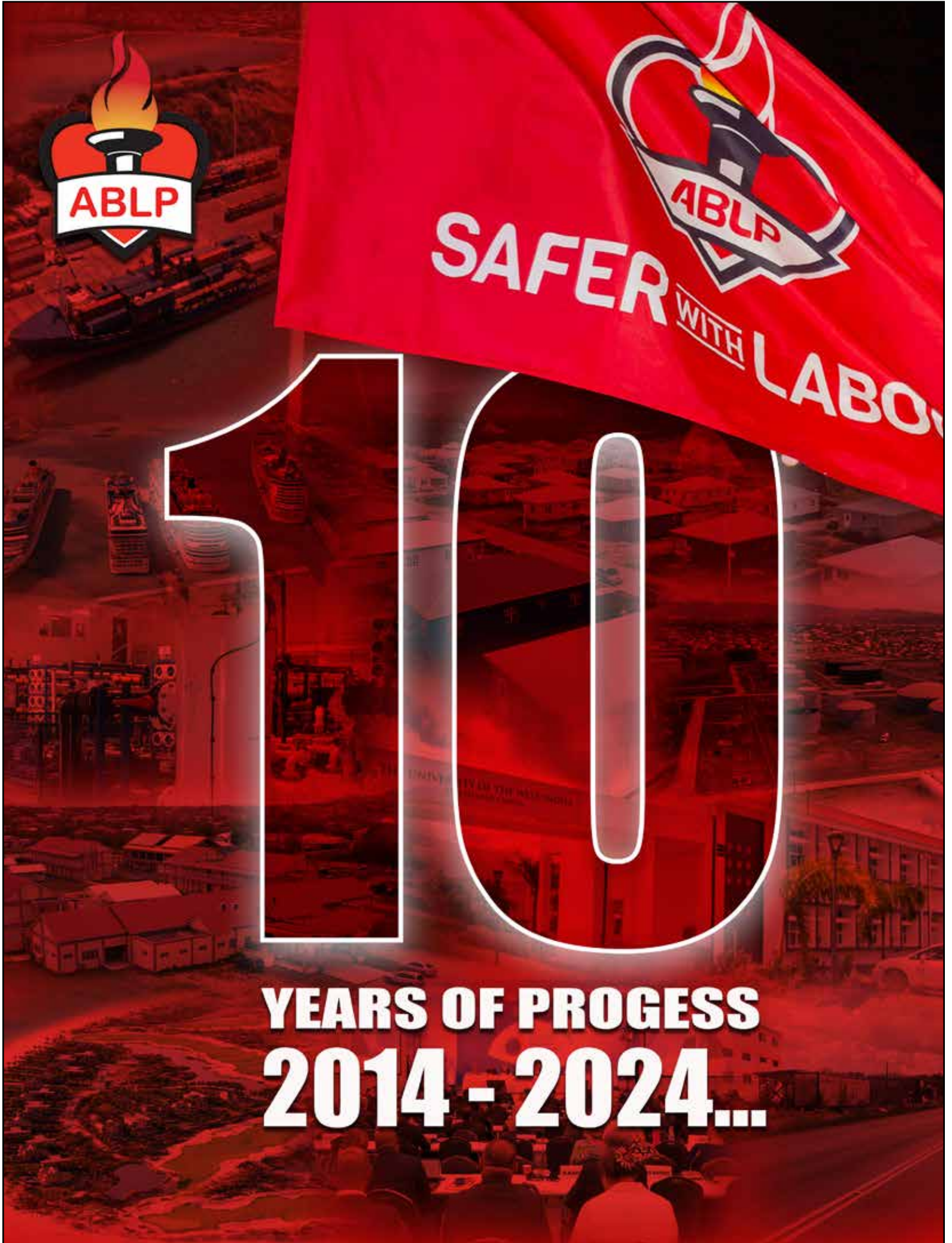
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**YEARS OF PROGRESS
2014 - 2024...**

Met Office is getting additional staff

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda is taking steps to strengthen its Meteorology Services Department.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne announced a new initiative to enhance the department's ability to predict, monitor, and respond to hurricanes and other severe weather events.

This announcement was made during the inaugural National Climate Outlook Forum.

Prime Minister Browne highlighted the urgent need for adaptation, stressing that the Antigua and Barbuda Meteorology Services must lead the way in addressing the increasing impacts of climate change.

In line with this commitment, the Cabinet has agreed in principle to create 12 new positions within the Meteorology Services Department. These new hires will include experts proficient in sophisticated weather models and algorithms.

Specific roles will encompass an

oceanographer, an agrologist, additional climatologists, a communication specialist, a project management team, and a quality management team.

Prime Minister Browne also emphasized the importance of ambition within the department, assuring that the Cabi-

net would provide the necessary funding to support increased efforts.

Just last week, Director of Met Services, Dale Destin, said there was a need for additional staff in the department to effectively handle the increasing demands that are made on the department.



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Miss Antigua and Barbuda Queen of Carnival 2024 Meet our extraordinary Contestant Number One

Shakkia Carlos

Meet the remarkable 23-year-old Shakkia Carlos, a spirited resident of the historic village of English Harbour. As a dedicated student at the University of the West Indies, Shakkia's passion lies in the realm of tourism. Her academic pursuits focus on Management with a Concentration in Tourism & Hospitality—a field where she thrives.

Shakkia's educational journey began at the All-Saints Secondary School and continued at Antigua State College, Advanced Level Department. These



formative experiences have not only shaped her intellect but also fueled her personal growth. Now, as the office manager of 'Titi' Rent-A-Car, she hopes to seamlessly blend her



Bachelor's Degree with hands-on experience in the dynamic hospitality industry.

Beyond her professional endeavors, Shakkia wears multiple hats. Pageantry, trucking, and theater arts are her creative outlets. Pageants allow her self-expression to flourish, while trucking offers a taste of freedom and adventure.

Theater arts, with their vibrant narratives and captivating performances, ignite her imagination. Together, these passions weave a multifaceted tapestry that defines her unique identity.

Shakkia's journey

through the spotlight includes being a 2016 Teen Splash Contestant and a 2019 Antigua & Barbuda Labour Queen contestant, where she earned the esteemed title of First Runner-up. It's not all glamour; during her downtime, she seeks solace in luxurious hotels, indulges in beachfront dining, and engages in leisurely conversations with friends.

Her philosophy is simple yet profound: Independence hinges on productivity. Shakkia embodies this ethos—a strong, resilient young woman who embraces each new chapter with gratitude and unwavering optimism."



Carnival Queen Contestants



Miss Antigua and Barbuda Queen of Carnival 2024 Meet our extraordinary Contestant Number Two *Desrie Markham*

Meet Desrie Markham, a dynamic 25-year-old Attorney-at-Law who was called to the Antiguan and Barbudan Bar in December 2022. Currently serving as a Crown Counsel II within the Attorney General's Chambers, Desrie boasts three years of private professional legal experience—a journey that began with her stint as a paralegal. Her initial passion lay in Criminal Law and Criminology, earning her the prestigious 'Top Student' award at the University of the West Indies Mona. However, her legal voyage has led her to embrace Civil Litigation, Family Law, and International Climate Change Law and Policy. Despite her relatively short time at the Bar, Desrie's prior service at O.M.O Law and Williams Grant Inc. exposed her to a rich tapestry of



legal disciplines.

Beyond the courtroom, Desrie thrives on challenges. In 2017, she founded the Theatre Club at Antigua State College, igniting creativity and fostering artistic expression. Her leadership journey continued as the Public Relations Officer of the Antigua Barbuda Student Association in 2018 and later as the Vice President in 2019. An ardent health and fitness enthusiast, Desrie's athletic prowess extends from secondary school



to university sports teams. She even dabbled in bodybuilding during 2017-2018.

Hailing from a humble background, Desrie's heart beats for giving back. Through 'Youth Arise Anti-

gua,' she channels her volunteer efforts—repainting schools, donating supplies to students, and empowering young women with hygienic knowledge. Desrie creates safe spaces for those who fear being their authentic selves.

As an advocate for the National Secondary School Drama Festival, Desrie has been an active member of the National Youth Theatre for seven years. In her senior role, she imparts proper speech practices, inflection, stage directions, and unwavering concentration to younger members. Whether in the workplace or on the theatrical stage, Desrie's positive attitude and tireless energy inspire others to strive for excellence.



Miss Antigua and Barbuda Queen of Carnival 2024 Meet our extraordinary Contestant Number Three

Kevinya Joseph

Meet Kevinya Joseph, a beacon of determination and lifelong learning. Armed with both a Bachelor's and a Master's Degree in Business Management with a concentration in Health Care, Kevinya exemplifies unwavering commitment to education and personal growth.

Her journey through the world of pageantry commenced at the tender age of 10, and since then, she has etched her name in the annals of success.

Notably, she secured the 1st Runner-up position in the prestigious Miss



Commonwealth held in St. Lucia in 2015.

Furthermore, Kevinya clinched victory as the crowned Miss Caribbean



Student Association (CSA) in 2019, leaving an indelible mark on the Florida pageant scene.

Beyond the spotlight, Kevinya is an artist at heart. Her canvas becomes a sanctuary where she paints her emotions and expresses her innermost self.

Her artistry extends beyond aesthetics; it's a medium for empowerment and self-expression.

Kevinya's compassion transcends mere words. She tackles critical societal issues head-on, particularly homelessness and

depression.

Her actions speak volumes: assembling gift baskets brimming with essential items and uplifting note cards.

Through these simple yet profound gestures, she not only provides material support but also kindles hope and encouragement for those in need.

In Kevinya's world, limits are meant to be shattered, and compassion knows no bounds. Her legacy is one of resilience, creativity, and unwavering dedication to making a tangible difference.



Genetic testing firm 23andMe investigated over hack

By Imran Rahman-Jones

The data watchdogs of the UK and Canada will investigate genetic testing company 23andMe over a data breach in October 2023.

Hackers gained access to personal information of 6.9 million people, which in some cases included family trees, birth years and geographic locations, by using customers' old passwords.

One of the things the joint taskforce will investigate is whether adequate safeguards had been put in place to protect such data.

"We intend to cooperate with these regulators' reasonable requests," 23andMe said in a statement.

The data stolen in October did not include DNA records.

23andMe is a giant of the grow-

ing ancestor-tracing industry, offering genetic testing from DNA, with ancestry breakdown and personalised health insights.

The company was not hacked itself - but rather criminals logged into about 14,000 individual accounts, or 0.1% of customers, by using email and password details previously exposed in other hacks.

The criminals downloaded not just the data from those accounts but the private information of all other users they had links to across the family trees on the website.

At the time, 23andMe said it informed affected customers and made them change their passwords and update account security.

According to the UK Information Commissioner's Office (ICO),

the data stored by 23andMe "can reveal information about an individual and their family members, including about their health, ethnicity, and biological relationships".

It said this means it is "essential" for the public to trust the service.

The joint investigation between the data watchdogs will look at the size of the hack and its potential harm to users as well as whether adequate safeguards were in place.

It will also look into how 23andMe reported the breach, and if the firm followed the correct processes in the UK and Canada.

"In the wrong hands, an individual's genetic information could be misused for surveillance or discrimination," said Canada privacy commissioner Philippe Dufresene.

Apple brings ChatGPT to iPhones in AI overhaul

By Zoe Kleinman

Apple is to boost its Siri voice assistant and operating systems with OpenAI's ChatGPT as it seeks to catch up in the AI race.

The iPhone maker announced the Siri makeover along with a number of other new features at its annual developers show on Monday.

It is part of a new personalised AI system - called "Apple Intelligence" - that aims to offer users a way to navigate Apple devices more easily.

Updates to its iPhone and Mac operating systems will allow access to ChatGPT through a partnership with developer OpenAI.

ChatGPT can also be used to boost other tools, including text and content generation. The test version will become available in the autumn.

Tim Cook, Apple chief executive, said the move would bring his company's products "to new heights" as he opened the Worldwide Developers Conference at the tech giant's headquarters in Cupertino, California.

The announcement was not welcomed by all. Elon Musk, the owner of Tesla and Twitter/X, threatened to ban iPhones from his companies due to "data se-



Apple boss Tim Cook pictured on-stage at WWDC 2024.

curity". "Apple has no clue what's actually going on once they hand your data over to OpenAI," Mr Musk said on X. "They're selling you down the river."

Apple has faced pressure to introduce new AI features to its products after the rapid rise of rivals who have adopted the technology.

After it was usurped by Microsoft as the world's most valuable company in January, Apple was overtaken again by Nvidia in early June.

Ben Wood, chief analyst at CCS Insight, said that while Apple's new personal AI system "should help placate nervous investors", its ChatGPT integra-

tion may reveal and create deeper problems for the firm.

"Arguably this sees Apple admitting its limitations given ChatGPT will kick in at a point where Siri is no longer able to help a user," he told the BBC.

Apple has been largely absent in the avalanche of AI products released by tech firms in recent months.

Mr Cook told investors in 2023 that the company would approach the tech with care. On Monday, those plans were finally laid out.

"Apple Intelligence" is not a product nor an app in its own right.

It will become part of every app and Apple product customers use - whether

it's a writing assistant refining your message drafts or your diary being able to show you the best route to get to your next appointment.

In that sense, it is similar to Microsoft's AI assistant Copilot - but you won't have to pay extra to activate it.

Siri, the voice assistant Apple acquired in 2010, has been refreshed with a new interface and chattier approach to help users navigate their devices and apps more seamlessly.

Apple was keen to stress the security of Apple Intelligence during Monday's keynote.

Some processing will be carried out on the device

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Regional News



Malawi President cancels Bahamas trip after VP's plane crash

CMC - Malawi President Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera has cancelled a visit to the Bahamas after a plane carrying the Vice President Dr Saulos Klaus Chilma and nine other people crash landed in the Chikangawa forest on Monday.

Chakwera was due in the Bahamas to participate in the 31 African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) annual meeting and Afri-Caribbean Trade and Investment Forum that will be held in Nassau from June 12-14.

The bank said that the meeting will be attended by more than one thousand delegates including African, Caribbean leaders and senior government officials, African and non-African policymakers, corporate and business leaders, bankers, entrepreneurs, academics and other thought leaders.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that his participation comes at the invitation and sponsorship of the Afreximbank and would have been the



President Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera.

bank's first ever annual meeting to be held in the Caribbean.

"Malawi is poised to benefit immensely from its participation at the meetings as it will garner more support and forge more partnerships in line with the Agriculture, Tourism,

and Mining (ATM) Strategy and the special economic zones and industrial parks initiative that President Chakwera launched recently," the Ministry had indicated.

Chakwera was also due to travel to Bürgenstock in Switzerland to attend the Global Peace Summit on the June 15-16.

A statement issued by the Malawi government said that the Vice President and others were on a Malawi Defence Force aircraft and was scheduled to land at the Mzuzu International Airport.

"All efforts by aviation authorities to make contact with the aircraft since it went off the radar have failed thus far," the statement said, adding that the "President has since cancelled his scheduled departure for the Bahamas".

He said ordered all national and regional agencies to conduct an immediate search and rescue operation to locate the aircraft, the statement said.

cont'd from pg 15

itself, while larger actions requiring more power will be sent to the cloud - but no data will be stored there, it said.

This is vital to customers who pay premium prices for Apple's privacy promises.

The system "puts powerful generative models right at the core of your iPhone, iPad and Mac," said Apple senior vice president of software engineering Craig Federighi.

"It draws on your personal context to give you intelligence that's most helpful and relevant for

you, and it protects your privacy at every step."

Apple's decision to integrate OpenAI's ChatGPT tech had been widely anticipated but it is an unusual move for a company that so closely guards its own products.

Google and Microsoft have recently faced scrutiny over errors made by their AI products in recent months, with the search giant rolling back a new feature in May after its erroneous answers went viral.

For years Apple also refused to allow its customers to download any apps outside of the App Store on

the grounds that they might not be secure, and would not allow any web browser other than its own Safari for the same reason.

It only changed when forced to by EU legislation.

Is it a sign of recognition that even Apple can't compete with ChatGPT right now?

If so, it tells us a lot about the current power of the AI supergiant OpenAI.

The firm did say it would integrate other products in future, but did not name any.

Apple announced that its mixed reality headset, the Vision Pro, will go on

sale in the UK on 12 July. It has been available in the US since February.

Other new features announced on Monday include:

- sending texts via satellite
- scheduling messages to send at a later point
- using head gestures (nodding for yes or shaking head for no) to control AirPods Pro
- a dedicated app for passwords that is accessible across devices
- the ability to hide certain apps or lock them away behind Face ID or passcodes.

Grenada gov't demands former senator pays outstanding telephone bill

CMC - The Grenada government Monday said it intends to pursue civil and criminal proceedings against a former government minister who racked up a telephone bill of more than EC\$100,000 (One EC dollar=US\$0.37 cents) during the period of July 2016 to July 2019.

Attorney General and Legal Affairs Minister, Claudette Joseph, told a news conference that the matter against Sheldon Scott, who served as a senator from 2013 to 2016, is being pursued because he failed to stop using a mobile telephone that was issued to him in his capacity as Parliamentary Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister following the 2013 general elections.

“On demitting office, without authorisation or permission, and in breach of the conditions under which the mobile phone was issued, Mr Scott retained it and unlawfully used it for his personal or other purposes.

“During such unauthorised use, the government continued to pay the service provider, Digicel, for all charges incurred. This state of affairs continued until July 2019 when the matter was brought to the public domain,” Joseph told reporters.

That matter came into the public domain after



Kem Jones, a political talk show host, who is known to be associated with ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) said on his radio programme in 2019 that the number used by Scott showed that for the months of April to June 2019 he incurred almost EC\$70,000 in charges.

An investigation conducted by the telecommunications providers, noted that it can safely conclude and publicly state that the leak of the government associate's bill did not originate from within the operations of Digicel Grenada Ltd.

“When the allegations arose, we made it a priority to conduct an internal audit in order to establish the facts, ensure that there was no breach of information on our part and confirm that we did everything possible to protect the confidentiality of our customers. Our cus-

tomers can continue to rely on us and to trust that we will treat their personal information with the strictest confidence,” the company said in a statement then.

Scott in a statement after the scandal broke accepted full liability and responsibility for all charges incurred on the number that was assigned to him and promised to repay. However, Joseph told reporters on Monday that no payment was made to the government.

“Despite the admissions and undertaking cited...the record shows that to date he made no repayment to the government of Grenada. The sum in unauthorized charges unlawfully incurred by you, and paid by government between July 3, 2016, and July 2, 2019, is EC\$115,393.32” said Joseph, noting that the records at all government ministries show no evidence of repay-

ment.

Last weekend, Scott was served with a pre-action protocol letter giving him seven days to work out a formula for a 90 day repayment plan.

“On behalf of the Government of Grenada we hereby DEMAND that within 90 days of receipt by you of this letter, you pay into the Treasury of Grenada, with due notice to the office of the Attorney General, the sum of EC\$115,393.32 together with interest in the sum of EC\$41,544.30, for a total of EC\$156,937.62,” said Joseph, reading from the document.

Besides the demand notice, Joseph said that the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) had conducted an investigation and the findings have been sent to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) for its criminal determination.

Macron takes huge risk with surprise election

By Hugh Schofield

President Emmanuel Macron has called snap parliamentary elections later this month in the wake of a big victory for his rival Marine Le Pen's National Rally in the European Parliament vote.

The far-right party is on course to win 32% of the vote, exit polls say, more than twice that of the president's Renaissance party.

Announcing the dissolution of parliament, he said the two rounds of voting would take place on 30 June and 7 July, a few weeks before the Paris Olympics.

Mr Macron made the dramatic and surprise decision in a televised address from the Élysée Palace an hour after voting closed and exit polls had been declared in France's EU elections.

His decision came not long after National Rally's 28-year-old leader, Jordan Bardella, had openly called on the president to call parliamentary elections.

"I have heard your message," the president told French voters, "and I will not let it go without a response."

"France needs a clear majority in serenity and harmony," he said, adding that he could not resign himself to the far-right's progress "everywhere in the continent".

Now barely two years into his second term as president, Mr Macron al-



President Macron's announcement came as a surprise, despite defeat in European elections.

ready lacks a majority in the French parliament, and though this European vote in theory has no bearing on national politics, he clearly decided that continuing his mandate without a new popular consultation would place too much of a strain on the system.

The upcoming parliamentary elections also won't affect Mr Macron's own job, as they are separate from the presidential elections and his term as president still runs for three more years.

Ms Le Pen, who has twice been defeated by Mr Macron in presidential elections, immediately reacted, saying her party was "ready to exercise power, ready to put an end to mass immigration".

Calling a snap election is a huge surprise for the country, and a huge risk for President Macron.

He could have reacted

differently. He could have just kept going, explaining the far right's massive victory as a European aberration which would be corrected at more important elections.

He could have trusted to the impending European football championship in Germany and above all the Paris Olympics to keep people's minds off politics for a couple of months.

That was certainly how the Paris commentariat thought he would take his party's rout.

But one can only assume the president had seen this coming, and planned his response in advance.

Certainly the result was an almost exact replica of the polls, so he would have had plenty of time to consider his options.

The fact is that he is stuck.

Without a majority, getting any bill through the Na-

tional Assembly is already a struggle. With most of the country now so clearly against him, any new legislation – for example the upcoming budget – could have proved explosive.

So he has plumped for "clarity". If National Rally has the votes then, he says, they should be given the chance to govern.

Obviously the president will hope his own Renaissance party can mount a fight-back at the elections on 30 June and 7 July - or that other parties will do better too.

But he must appreciate that the odds favour another victory for National Rally. Maybe not one so sweeping as Sunday's result, but enough for it to become the biggest party in parliament.

At which point we might well have a Prime Minister Marine Le Pen, or indeed Jordan Bardella.



Dozens of computers were seized in a recent raid by officials.

Long jail terms for Chinese cybercrime gang in Zambia

Lengthy jail terms have been handed to 22 Chinese citizens - and a Cameroonian man - for cyber-related crimes in Zambia.

The gang's only female convict, Gu Tianjiao, reportedly cried out "papa, papa" as her seven-year sentence was announced in the Lusaka Magistrates Court on Friday.

Some in the gang - including its mastermind Li Xianlin - received up to 11 years in prison.

The group's members were also fined between \$1,500 and \$3,000 (£1,180 and £2,360) each.

Victims as far afield as Singapore, Peru and the United Arab Emirates fell prey to their online scams, say Zambian authorities.

After a trial lasting several weeks, the perpetrators pleaded guilty on three charges - computer-related misrepresentation, identity-related crimes, and illegally operating a network or service.

The 22 people jailed on Friday were among a bigger group of 77 suspects arrested in April, in connection

with what authorities called a "sophisticated internet fraud syndicate".

The swoop on a Chinese-run company in the capital, Lusaka, followed an alarming rise in internet fraud cases in the country, targeting people in countries around the world.

Growing numbers of Zambians losing money from their mobile and bank accounts through money-laundering schemes which extend to other foreign countries, the Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC) said in April.

Dozens of young Zambians were also arrested after allegedly being recruited to be call-centre agents in the fraudulent activities, including internet fraud and online scams, the DEC said during the arrests.

The 22 people convicted in Lusaka on Friday held different positions in the Chinese-run Golden Top Support Services, the company at the centre of the raid.

The company, located in Roma, an upmarket suburb of Lusaka, is yet to comment on the allegations.

The Zambian nationals were charged in April and released on bail so they could help the authorities with their investigations.

Authorities said the Zambians involved had been tasked "with engaging in deceptive conversations with unsuspecting mobile users across various platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, chatrooms and others, using scripted dialogues".

Among equipment seized were devices allowing callers to disguise their location and thousands of Sim cards.

During the raid, 11 Sim boxes were discovered - these are devices that can route calls across genuine phone networks.

More than 13,000 Sim cards, both local and foreign, were also confiscated, demonstrating "the extent of the operation's reach," according to the DEC.

Two firearms and about 78 rounds of ammunition were confiscated and two vehicles, belonging to a Chinese national linked to the business, were also impounded during the raid.

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AFTER PARTY FEAT:
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Boston Celtics guard Jrue Holiday takes a shot over Dallas Mavericks forward P.J. Washington (25) during the first half of Game 2 of the NBA Finals basketball series in Boston, Sunday, June 9, 2024. (AP)

Celtics beat Mavericks to take 2-0 lead in NBA Finals

BOSTON (AP) — Jrue Holiday led the scoring. Derrick White added a chase-down block. Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown pitched in, too — with their passing and defense.

The Mavericks can stop worrying about who Boston's best player is. Everyone is contributing to the Celtics' quest for an unprecedented 18th NBA championship.

Holiday had 26 points and 11 rebounds, and White sprinted down the court to swat away the Mavericks' last chance on Sunday night as Boston beat Dallas 105-98 to take a 2-0 lead in the NBA Finals.

Tatum made up for a rough shooting night with 12 assists and nine rebounds to go with his 18 points. Brown scored 21 with three steals, White had 18 points and three steals, and Payton Pritchard's only basket of the game was a banked

half-court shot to beat the third quarter buzzer and give Boston an 83-74 lead.

"That's why they are the No. 1 team in the NBA with the No. 1 record," said Mavericks star Luka Doncic, who scored 32 with 11 rebounds and 11 assists — the first NBA Finals triple-double in Dallas franchise history. "They have a lot of great players. Basically, anybody can get off."

Doncic, who was listed as questionable to play less than two hours before the opening tipoff, had his 10th career playoff triple-double. But he scored only three points in the fourth, converting a three-point play with 1:15 left as Dallas scored nine in a row to cut a 14-point deficit to 103-98.

After Derrick Jones Jr. blocked Tatum's dunk attempt, White ran down the court, joining with Brown to block P.J. Washington's potential dunk.

Brown made a layup at the other end, and then Doncic missed a one-footed, running floater from 3-point range with 28 seconds left, ending Dallas' last chance at a comeback.

"It's not all on him. It's a team," Dallas coach Jason Kidd said of Doncic, who had been battling chest, knee and ankle injuries.

"He put us in a position. He was really good tonight. Unfortunately, we just couldn't get over the hump. We've got to find someone to join Luka and (Kyrie Irving) in that scoring category."

Games 3 and 4 are Wednesday and Friday in Dallas; Boston has not lost on the road this postseason.

It was the ninth time the Celtics have won the opening pair in the NBA Finals: They have won the previous eight, and have never been forced to a Game 7 in any of them.



TOA Media and MKUU Tours Chargers Eagles female volleyball team.

Wins for Chargers Eagles and Da Squad in female volleyball league

TOA Media and MKUU Tours Chargers Eagles, and Caribbean Alliance Insurance Da Squad 2 have notched up wins in the latest matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association's (ABAVA) Female Second Division Development League.

The Chargers Eagles joined Paragons 2 at the top of the standings with identical records of six wins and one defeat by beating the Royal Cruisers

3-0 in the first game of a double header at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex on Sunday.

The Chargers Eagles took an hour to win 25-15, 25-10, and 25-12 against the Royal Cruisers 2, who lost for the fifth time in seven games.

Da Squad claimed their third win in seven games with a 3-1 victory against Starz 2 Juniors, who suffered their fourth defeat in seven matches.

Da Squad took an hour and 11

minutes to prevail 21-25, 25-14, 25-11, and 25-21 against Starz 2 Juniors.

Meanwhile, action in the ABAVA's Local League will resume with a double header in the Men's Division 1 competition at the indoor stadium on Wednesday.

Defending champions Stoneville will meet Print Express Renegades at 6:45 pm, and Top Ranking Storming Lions will face the Invaders at 7:45 pm.

Spanish Heat 2 take two-nil lead in ABBA's Division II Playoff finals

Third-seed Spanish Heat 2 has taken a two-nil lead in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division playoff finals.

Spanish Heat 2 clinched a 79-70 victory against the eighth-seeded Rebels in Game 2 of their

best-of-five finals at the JSC Sports Complex on Sunday night.

Jesus Emmanuel produced 21 points, five rebounds, and five steals; Wilkin Floyd had 15 points, 10 rebounds, seven steals, and six assists; Erwin Rodriguez sank 15 points; and

Ismael Palemo scored 14 points and grabbed 28 rebounds for Spanish Heat 2.

Buell Henry converted 14 points and grabbed 20 rebounds; Ryan Noel sank 13 points and claimed nine rebounds; Kirwan Peterson had 12 points, nine assists, and five rebounds; Zuri

Nesbitt produced 11 points, six steals, and five assists; and Roger Miller scored 10 points and snatched six rebounds for the Rebels.

Spanish Heat 2 prevailed 79-69 against the Rebels in Game 1.

Ismael Palemo shot
cont'd on pg 23



South Africa's players celebrate after Kagiso Rabada, third left, dismisses Bangladesh batsman Tanzid Hasan, center, during their Group D clash of the T20 World Cup match at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, New York, United States of America, June 8, 2024. (ICC Getty Images)

South Africa qualify for Super Eight stage with win over Bangladesh

NEW YORK (Reuters) - South Africa became the first team to qualify for the T20 World Cup Super Eight stage as spinner Keshav Maharaj defended 11 runs off the final over to help secure a nail-biting four-run victory over Bangladesh in a low-scoring Group D clash on Monday.

South Africa won the toss and elected to bat on another difficult wicket in New York, the third day in a row the same pitch has been used, and limped to 113 for six in their 20 overs having recovered from 23 for four.

Heinrich Klaasen (46) and David Miller (29) put

on 79 for the fifth wicket, a record for South Africa in T20 World Cups, to get their total past the century mark against excellent Bangladesh bowling.

The sub-continent side also found scoring difficult but when Towhid Hridoy (37) put on 44 for the fifth wicket with Mahmudullah

(20), they looked on course for their first victory over the South Africans in T20 cricket.

But when Hridoy departed the scoring rate slowed again and, needing six from the final two balls, Mahmudullah was a metre away from clearing the rope but caught on the boundary by Aiden Markram as Maharaj finished with three for 27 in his four overs.

South Africa have three wins from their three games in the pool, all on the two-paced uneven New York wicket, while Bangladesh have a win and a defeat from their two fixtures.

cont'd from pg 22

a game-high 22 points and grabbed 17 rebounds; Rohland Hamilton sank 10 points and claimed 15 rebounds; Gabriel Perez converted 10 points and snatched 10 rebounds; and Jesus Emmanuel scored 10 points for Spanish Heat 2.

Buell Henry sank 14 points and grabbed 18 rebounds; Zuri Nesbitt pro-

duced 12 points, eight steals, seven rebounds, and five assists; Kareem Blair converted 10 points and snatched five rebounds; and Ryan Noel had nine points and 11 rebounds for the Rebels.

Spanish Heat 2 can capture the title when both teams clash in Game 3 of the Division II playoff finals at the JSC Sports Complex today at 8 pm.

Sports

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Pakistani trio headline Falcons' signings for 2024

The Antigua and Barbuda Falcons have confirmed the players they have signed ahead of the Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League draft.

They have 12 confirmed players for the 2024 season and will have five spots to fill at the draft in July.

The Falcons will feature Pakistani internationals Mohammad Amir, Imad Wasim, and Fakhar Zaman.

All three players are representing Pakistan in the T20 World Cup, which is currently taking place in the Caribbean and the USA.

The Falcons overseas contingent will be rounded out by Australia's Chris Green and Afghan all-rounder Azmatullah Omarzai.

West Indies opener Brandon King and all-rounder Fabian Allen will be part of the Falcons squad for 2024, as well as hugely exciting Antiguan batter Jewel Andrew, who starred for the young West Indies at the Under-19 World Cup earlier this year. Two other Antiguan players are also in the squad. They are leg-spinner Hayden Walsh Jr. and fast bowler Kelvin Pitman.

First started in 2013, the Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) is a franchise-based T20 format cricket tournament that combines two of the most compelling aspects of Caribbean life – dramatic cricket and a vibrant Carnival atmosphere.

The 2024 tournament will take place

from August 29 to October 6. The broadcast and digital viewership in 2023 was 853.5 million, making it one of the most watched leagues in world cricket.

The Guyana Amazon Warriors are the current Republic Bank CPL champions, and the other franchise teams are the Antigua and Barbuda Falcons, Barbados Royals, St. Kitts and Nevis Patriots, St. Lucia Kings, and Trinbago Knight Riders.

The full list of signed players for the Falcons is as follows: Imad Wasim, Brandon King, Fabian Allen, Azmatullah Omarzai, Mohammad Amir, Chris Green, Fakhar Zaman, Hayden Walsh Jr., Shamar Springer, Kelvin Pitman, Jewel Andrew, and Joshua James.

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