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ERNESTO... MORE WIND THAN RAIN

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Ernesto...more wind than rain

Tropical Storm Ernesto did not produce the amount of rainfall that had been predicted. Instead, it turned out to be a storm that produced wind gusts up to 45 miles per hour at the VC Bird International Airport.

That's the assessment coming from senior forecaster at the Met Office,

Orville Paige, who is reporting that the strong winds were recorded in Antigua and in the sister isle, Barbuda, as well.

But the heavy rainfall that was expected did not happen. "Many of our weather stations across both islands reported high wind gusts and windy conditions as the storm passed

just south of Antigua. It turned out to be more winds than rain," he revealed.

Ernesto passed closest to Antigua between 9:00 am and 11:00 am on Tuesday.

According to Paige most of the rainfall occurred in the southern corridor of Antigua. However, he noted that with the nearest station located at Orange Valley, higher rainfalls may have been experienced further south.

At Orange Valley, the rainfall totals were 32 millimeters or 1.25 inches.

- Cobbs Cross - 25.4 mm
- Dunbars - 16.9 mm
- Airport - 19.8 mm
- Diamond - 2.5 mm
- Barbuda - 1.3 mm

There were no immediate readings from the station located at the Botanical Gardens which would have provided a better insight into the amount of rainfall experienced in St. John's.



Disruptions in electricity distribution, downed trees attributed to TS Ernesto

There were several disruptions to the distribution of electricity across Antigua caused by Tropical Storm, Ernesto, which passed south of the island on Tuesday morning.

Head of APUA’s Electricity Business Unit, Andre Matthias, said the system had a number of fires as falling trees brought down electricity wires and poles at several locations island-wide.

“We did not experience any major damage but the disruptions were scattered across the island thus af-

fecting consumers in all locations. Our crews have been working assiduously over the past several hours as we expect that more than ninety percent of customers will have their electricity restored by the end of Tuesday,” Matthias reported late Tuesday afternoon.

He added that by late afternoon 22 of the 26 feeders were back in service delivering electricity to 85 percent of customers.

TS Ernesto passed over the northern tip of Guadeloupe heading towards

Montserrat. The storm packed winds up to 40 miles per hour with higher gusts.

Meanwhile, the National Office of Disaster Services is confirming that there was only minor damage caused by the storm and that its preliminary report is that there were no injuries or loss of life caused by the storm.

“There have been no reports of injuries however there is some minimal damage from the weather associated with Tropical Storm Ernesto. A few dis-

trict disaster coordinators reported downed and uprooted trees and damaged electrical posts.

“As a precautionary measure, shelters throughout the island were opened Monday night but only two individuals occupied a shelter in St Paul.

“The tropical storm warning has since been lifted and the all-clear given but residents are advised to continue to be safe as there is still a risk of flooding,” NODS Communications Officer,” Midcie Francis indicated.

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Local News



VC Bird International Airport to return to normality today

Operations at the country's sole international airport – VC Bird International Airport - are expected

to return to normal today (Wednesday) following the forced closure on Monday night due to the passage of

Tropical Storm, Ernesto.

Airport sources revealed that the airport opened to accommodate

commercial flights at 3:00 pm on Tuesday. Only one airline – Inter Caribbean - had any flights into the airport Tuesday afternoon.

All international flights into and out of the airport were cancelled due to the storm.

However, the sources have reported that at least one airline – American Airlines – will operate a special flight into VCBIA on Wednesday specially to accommodate those travellers whose flights were cancelled because of the storm.

This is in addition to the regular three flights that the airline currently operates into the country from Miami and New York.

All other operators are expected to have their schedules returned to normal now that the airport is fully opened.

Meanwhile, the Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority has expressed its appreciation to all those affected by the closure occasioned by the passage of Ernesto.

“We extend our sincere gratitude to the travelling public and stakeholders for their patience and understanding which allowed us to prioritize all precautionary and safety measures during the passage of Ernesto,” a media release stated.

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SLBMC resumes regular operations following storm

The Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre has announced that all services will return to normal effective today (Wednesday), August 14.

“Thank you for your patience. We are happy to announce that we will resume normal operations today August 14, 2024,” the Communications Manager, Salma Crump wrote in a social media post.

“If you have a scheduled appointment for tomorrow (Aug. 14th), you are encouraged to keep it.



“If you missed a scheduled procedure or appointment, a member of our care team will be reaching out to reschedule,” she stated.

On Monday, SLBMC announced that all outpatient services were being cancelled due to the passage of Tropical Storm Ernes-

to. Now that the storm has moved beyond Antigua and Barbuda, the hospital has announced that is resuming normal operations.

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UN adopts MVI, a new mechanism that Antigua and Barbuda helped to create

The United Nations on Tuesday formally adopted the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI), successfully culminating four years of tireless work by a dedicated team of experts led by Antigua and Barbuda and opening a new chapter in the ongoing effort to safeguard the future of vulnerable developing countries, in particular Small Island Developing States.

In reflecting on the body of work and the steep climb that led to the milestone achievement, Antigua and Barbuda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Walton Webson pointed out that it all started 30 years ago when Small Island Developing States called for a tool that would accurately assess the vulnerability of their nations.

Tuesday's adoption of the MVI at the level of the United Nations General Assembly provides overwhelming consensus on a new metric that unlocks concessional financing for countries who were previously denied urgent financial support in moments of crisis.

Antigua and Barbuda played a pivotal role throughout the process after Prime Minister Gaston Browne along with former Prime Minister of Norway Erna Solberg were appointed Co-Chair of the High-Level Panel to spearhead the creation of the ground-breaking tool that is now giving new hope to SIDS.

The MVI now gives international financial institutions access to another tool that comprehensively assesses a country's vulnerability to external shocks, including economic, climate, and health-related disruptions, and its capacity to respond and recover. It will act as a complement to GDP in better guiding lending institutions in determining a country's eligibility for fi-



Ambassador Webson at UN General Assembly.

ancial support.

Ambassador Webson, who was one of the Co-Chairs of the intergovernmental process, while addressing the General Assembly Tuesday acknowledged that "we have just adopted an instrument that authentically captures the true and multifaceted vulnerabilities faced by developing countries.

"We commend the visionary efforts embodied in the MVI, which aligns with our efforts to reform the international financial architecture and provides the type of guidance required in the current discussions of "beyond GDP" that aims to recalibrate our collective approach to development and sustainability," Ambassador Webson affirmed.

But with the formalities fully aside, Ambassador Webson emphasized to UN member states that while adopting the MVI marks a significant milestone, the real challenge lies ahead, as there needs to be urgent action in delivering on the MVI's promise of a better deal for vulnerable countries.

"The adoption today must be matched by the expeditious implementation and active utilization of the MVI

by the UN, our developed partners, international financial institutions and other stakeholders," Ambassador Webson stressed.

The UN General Assembly resonated with a similar appeal from the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

"AOSIS, in line with the tenets of the resolution calls for the immediate testing of the MVI, by the UN system, by donors and by development banks and financial institutions. We wish to see the MVI deployed in real-world contexts, and through its testing and eventual refinement, that it will unlock a new way of thinking and acting on development," stated AOSIS Chair Ambassador Fatumanava Pa'olelei Luteru.

Meantime Ambassador Webson heaped praise on all involved in bringing the MVI to reality including his fellow Co-Chairs from Portugal, Ambassador Rui Vinhas and Ambassador Ana Paula Zacarias.

"The success of the MVI would not have been possible without the expert advice of our colleagues Mr. Tumasie

cont'd on pg 7

Voter ID Cards Replacement exercise to continue following Ernesto

The Voter ID Card Replacement exercise will resume today (Wednesday) in all sixteen constituencies on Antigua as the process has not yet started in Barbuda due to technical problems.

Supervisor of Elections, Ian Hughes said the first day of the exercise (Monday) went well, with all the registration units on Antigua reporting that there was a steady stream of people showing up to begin the process of replacing expired voter ID cards. Day One of the exercise ended prematurely due to the passage of Tropical Storm Ernesto.

Hughes reported that there was no deluge of persons showing up at the units to have their cards replaced. Instead, different units reported varying numbers of

persons who applied to have the process started. In total, Hughes said the numbers on day one was close to one thousand persons.

Based on media reports, it is anticipated that the opposition United Progressive Party has decided to drop its threat of legal actions against the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission over the issue of carrying out a card replacement programme, rather than a full re-registration of all voters as the party had been demanding. Persons

supportive of the opposition are therefore likely to present themselves at the registration units to have their expired cards replaced.

On the issue of Barbuda, Hughes disclosed that ABEC is sending a team over to the sister island to help resolve the technical issues that the registration unit there has been experiencing.

“I have notified the chairman of the Barbuda People’s Movement, Devon Warner, and the ABLP caretaker, Senator Knackcynta Nedd about

the problems and the steps we are taking to have the issues resolved,” he stated.

The ABEC team will travel to Codrington as soon as travel arrangements can be finalized.

The replacement card exercise will continue indefinitely in all seventeen constituencies. There are an estimated 40-thousand expired voter ID cards that are to be replaced.

ABEC reported earlier that it is fully prepared to undertake this massive exercise.

cont’d from pg 6

Blair of Antigua and Barbuda and Mr. Afonso Lages of Portugal and the support by the MVI secretariat - the SIDS Unit of UNDESA and OHRLLS and the many expert negotiators,” he affirmed.

Ambassador Webson concluded his remarks by emphasizing that “The Government of Antigua and Barbuda urges all stakeholders to embrace the MVI with the vigor and immediacy it demands. Let us turn its consensual adoption into a clarion call for swift, coordinated, and resolute action”

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Ghana's FA Minister Botchwey advocates for intra-Commonwealth trade with Mauritian leaders

Ghana's Foreign Minister, Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, has held meetings with the Mauritian Prime Minister, Pravind Jugnauth, and Foreign Minister Maneesh Gobin, in the capital, Port Louis, and discussed bilateral issues, as well as her agenda as candidate for Secretary-General of the Commonwealth.

"We had a very fruitful meeting. Our two countries have very close bonds," Ms. Botchwey told journalists after the meeting with Mr. Jugnauth which was held behind closed doors.

"I also presented my candidacy and vision for the commonwealth," she said, highlighting democracy and good governance; the threat of climate change to Small Island Developing States such as Mauritius, skills-training and jobs for young people, and trade and investment among mem-

ber-countries – along lines similar to that of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Significantly, Ghana is due to hold an investment promotion event in Mauritius later this month (26-27th). The event is at the initiative of the Ghanaian Consulate in collaboration with the Economic Development Board of Mauritius (EDBM), and is under the theme "Ghana, the preferred Investment Destination in W. Africa."

In her meeting with her counterpart, Ms. Botchwey who has been an advocate for more intra-Commonwealth trade and investment, complimented Trinidad and Tobago whose Republic Bank has established a trans-Atlantic footprint in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa.

"This must be encouraged; we must see more of



this in the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is at a crossroads. The Commonwealth is a very important organization with immense potential yet to be fully realized," she said.

The Commonwealth comprises 56 countries with a population of 2.6 billion people and a combined annual output of over US\$13 trillion.

Ms. Botchwey referred to current political unrest in some Commonwealth countries, and reiterated the

importance of good governance and democracy, supported and made relevant by what she called "the democratic dividend".

This refers to economic advantages – such as greater investments, employment opportunities, innovation, and human development – that should accrue to democratic countries and benefit their citizens and, in her words, "especially the youth".

Ms. Botchwey and Mr. Gobin expressed concern over the destabilizing threats posed by misinformation and disinformation on social media to Commonwealth nations, particularly for multi-ethnic and multicultural countries.

Mr. Gobin and Ms. Botchwey flagged a number of bilateral issues and projects whose implementation were pending, including a "smart city" project in Ghana, an air services agreement, and a circular migration protocol.

Circular migration en-
cont'd on pg 9



Despair as the sea slowly swallows a Kenyan beauty spot

By Wycliffe Muia

When Roberto Macri built his luxury hotel in the Kenyan coastal village of Kipini, it was about 100m (330ft) away from the beautiful waters of the Indian Ocean.

For nearly two decades his business thrived as tourists arrived in droves to enjoy the pristine beach and sunny weather.

The Tana Lodge Hotel, which was built on top of sand dunes, offered a spectacular view of the ocean.

But in 2014 people started to notice a change. The sea level had begun to rise and within five years, the hotel's nine guest cottages had been swallowed by the sea - one after the other.

"The ocean changed steadily and started encroaching the hotel. The last standing cottage was gulped by the sea in 2019, marking the end of my glorious hotel," Italian businessman Mr



The remains of a mangrove forest can be seen washed up on Kipini's beach.

Macri told the BBC.

Now other residents of Kipini village, whose houses are located further back from the hotel, are facing the same prospect.

Kipini - built at the mouth of Kenya's longest waterway, the Tana River, which flows into the Indian Ocean - is among several coastal villages that are slowly disappearing.

"The ocean advances every day and our houses are becoming weaker. We are afraid and distressed but there is nothing much we can do," Saida Idris, a community leader, told the BBC.

She said several people had died and an unknown number were missing after being swept away by the rise in sea levels, coupled

with strong winds and heavy tides, especially at night.

The depletion of mangrove forests along the shoreline - the coast's main line of defence against erosion - is to blame.

Mangrove forests are full of salt-tolerant trees and shrubs that prevent sea water from advancing into farmlands by stabilising soil that otherwise could be washed away.

The cause of their disappearance appears to be a combination of deforestation by locals wanting coveted hard wood - and rising sea water as a result of climate change, which scientists feel is the major factor.

"The shoreline in Kipini is very exposed to the effects of strong winds that strengthen the ocean waves," George Odera, a

cont'd on pg 10

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ables citizens of two or more countries to migrate to work in a partner country under a legal and regulated arrangement.

Ms. Botchwey would become the first female African Commonwealth Secretary-General after Chief Emeka Anyaoku of Nigeria if she's elected by Heads of Government at their summit in Samoa in October.

Ms. Botchwey has been Ghana's minister for foreign affairs and regional integration and a member of the country's Security Council since 2017. She was a

four-term legislator, high ranking member of the ECOWAS parliament and former Chair of the regional body's Council of Ministers.

Ghana was the first African country to join the Commonwealth in 1957 after independence from Britain.

Editor's note: Ghanian Foreign Affairs Minister Botchwey was in Antigua and Barbuda in May to attend the 4th SIDS conference. Antigua and Barbuda has already signaled its support for her candidacy for Commonwealth Secretary-General.

Environment

cont'd from pg 9

scientist with Fauna and Flora, a nature conservancy group, explained.

Kipini, with its welcoming palm trees and smells of spice and barbecuing seafood, evokes what every Kenyan pictures of laid-back coastal life.

But this idyll is under threat as the seawater levels continue to rise.

According to Omar Halki, a local administrator, nearly 10km (6.2 miles) of what used to be dry land have been swallowed by the sea in the last 10 years.

“It’s just a matter of time before the whole region goes under water,” he told the BBC.

Kipini has a population of about 4,000 people and residents told the BBC they could no longer dig or build strong foundations for their homes because of the rising sea levels.

Some in Kipini estimate that more than 1,000 people have relocated to other villages over the last decade.

Most of the wells or boreholes that used to give them fresh water have now turned saline, forcing them to look for alternative sources of drinking water.

The increasing salinity in groundwater has also severely affected farming.

Crabs and prawns, which have also served as a source of livelihood for locals, are now scarce as their breeding grounds are within the mangrove swamps.

The rising waters have affected almost all facets of life, including how people are buried.

“Graves are shallow because if we dig the recommended six feet, the dead will be buried in water,” one resident told the BBC.

Kipini is within Tana River county, which is facing multiple climate emergencies - from severe drought and water shortages in some places to flooding in others.

It is the county’s first recorded in-



stance of a village being overtaken by rising sea levels.

But some locals say the geography of the coast has always changed – pointing to how the small fishing community of nearby Ungwana Bay was swept away years ago.

Others say the Tana River could be changing its course.

“Our forefathers showed us where the original waterway used to pass,” resident Rishadi Badi told the BBC, explaining that he was told the river used to pass through Kipini generations ago.

But Mr Odera, who studies the calamity facing Kipini, puts the blame squarely on climate change.

“What is happening in Kipini is not history, it is a recent occurrence and the bitter truth is, it is not getting better,” he said.

Local authorities want to build a sea wall along the 72km (45-mile) coastline to save the village from further intrusion by the ocean.

Although the authorities acknowledge the situation is dire, the wall project is yet to start because of a lack of funds, says Mwanajuma Hiribae, a senior land official in the county.

“The seawater intrusion is a deeper problem affecting about 15 other villages and the county government alone cannot undertake to solve it,” she told the BBC.

Although she said the UN Envi-

ronment Programme and UN Habitat had expressed support for the wall project.

Similar walls have been built at the historical sites such as Fort Jesus in Mombasa and Vasco Da Gama Pillar in Malindi after the rise in seawater threatened these tourist attractions.

But climate experts say building a wall in Kipini is a “mechanistic solution”, and there needs to be conservation initiatives, like the restoration of mangrove forests.

“The sea is not something that the government will just wake up and stop. We need to help our communities to adapt and become more resilient to these climatic changes,” Mr Odera said.

Locals say that they feel like they are temporary visitors in their own homes, walking to the shore every day to check how far the ocean has moved.

“If no help comes within three years, the entire Kipini region will be swallowed by the ocean,” Mr Halki said.

For Mr Macri, the whole situation has been devastating and he has now moved to the coastal town of Malindi town, 170km (100 miles) from Kipini.

“The area was like gold - a calm village with beautiful sand dunes surrounded by coconut trees and historical buildings just next to the beach,” he said.

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Starbucks replaces chief executive after sales slump

By Natalie Sherman

The boss of Starbucks is leaving the company after less than two years in charge as the coffee chain looks for a fix for its flagging sales.

Chief executive Laxman Narasimhan is stepping down and will be replaced by Brian Niccol, the head of Mexican grill chain Chipotle, the company said.

The shake-up comes as Starbucks is grappling with a slump in sales amid a backlash to price increases and boycotts sparked by the Israel-Gaza war.

Howard Schultz, a former executive who oversaw the growth of the coffee chain into a global powerhouse, said he believed Mr Niccol was “the leader Starbucks needs at a pivotal moment in its history”.

“He has my respect and full support,” Mr Schultz said.

Shares in Starbucks jumped more than 20% following the announcement.

A change in leadership at the coffee chain has been brewing for the last two months, Starbucks board



member Mellody Hobson told the Wall Street Journal.

Last month, the firm said global sales fell 3% annually in the three months to the end of June amid weakness in the US and China.

The company has faced criticism for long waits for drinks and a sharp rise in prices.

Activist investors such as Elliott Investment Management, a firm known for taking stakes in companies and pushing for leadership and other changes, have also been piling on pressure.

Mr Schultz had selected

Mr Narasimhan, a former executive at PepsiCo and Reckitt, as his successor in 2022, who took up the reins full-time in March 2023.

But despite his choice, Mr Schultz voiced concerns publicly about the direction of the company in the spring, after it reported an unexpectedly severe sales fall.

Incoming boss Mr Niccol has led Chipotle since 2018, helping the brand recover from a crisis after food poisoning outbreaks.

Sales doubled during his tenure and the chain's share

price surged from less than \$7 to more than \$50, as the burrito-maker opened nearly 1,000 new stores and introduced robotic grills and automated processors to make guacamole.

In recent months, it has been seen as a bright spot in the restaurant industry, where many businesses have reported customers cutting back.

“It's hard to leave such a great company and all of the talented people I've had the pleasure to work with, but I depart knowing the business is in great shape and poised for growth with a strong, experienced leadership team,” Mr Niccol said.

Shares in Chipotle dropped more than 9% after his departure was announced.

But Sharon Zackfia,
cont'd on pg 14

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All that remains of his \$460,000 investment is what used to be the manager's house, standing less than 50m from the sea and awaiting its fate.

Out of the 10 acres (four hectares) on which the hotel stood on, four are fully submerged.

Mr Macri is holding on to his remain-

ing six acres hoping to return and invest again once the ocean has been stopped from encroaching on to land.

His former managing director, Joseph Gachango, is equally bereft.

“It broke my heart to see the hotel that used to attract guests from as far as Italy wiped out with about 50 workers losing their jobs,” he said.



Caribbean Beach Cottages

seeks

TOP TALENT

Caribbean Beach Cottages Resorts began as COCOS Hotel, co-founded by Andrew Michelin in 1997 with five wooden cottages and an eight-table restaurant under a tree. Michelin's vision was to create an authentic Caribbean experience, featuring chattel-styled wooden cottages with outdoor showers and a select Caribbean menu using fresh, locally sourced ingredients.

Furniture and light fixtures are crafted by local artisans using local materials. Local seamstresses make staff uniforms, cushions, and curtains. The hotels are built with local stones, landscaped with local plants, and staffed by individuals from surrounding communities.

The food and beverage concept at the founding hotel was motivated by the Caribbean dishes Michelin enjoyed at his grandmother's house in rural Jamaica. This focus on fresh, locally produced food limited the need for processed items, creating a unique and healthy culinary experience cherished by guests.

Today, Caribbean Beach Cottages operates three resorts:

- **COCOS Hotel:** 45 cottages, 4-star rating
- **Keyonna Beach:** 46 cottages, 5-star rating
- **Hawksbill Hotel:** 110 rooms, with plans to expand by 40 more cottages in the next 24 months.

With the advent of online booking engines utilizing AI, room rates are now dynamically priced like airlines, based on demand. To match the heightened expectations, associated with these higher rates, Caribbean Beach Cottages is committed to elevating its standards. On Trip Advisor for Antigua, currently, Keyonna Beach is ranked number 4, and COCOS Hotel is ranked number 6, with the Hawksbill Resort soon to be in the top 10.

The higher the ranking, the higher the rates!

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Michelin's philosophy is that the Caribbean is a world-class destination with unique experiences and immense potential. Raised in St. Ann, Jamaica with a no limits mentality, the same parish as Marcus Garvey and Bob Marley, Michelin is inspired to transition from Team Captain to Coach and needs a stellar team to drive his vision forward.

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- **IT Specialist:** Manage all technical logistics at the hotels.
- **Other Top Talents:** If you have unique skills, let us know how you can contribute.

Successful candidates will join a dynamic and goal-driven team led by hospitality guru Michelin, who co-founded and opened Cocobay, Hermitage Bay, Sunseakers, and Antigua Farm & Garden. Michelin also started a banana ripening room in Point for rejected bananas from Dominica. Despite Covid-19 delays, plans are in place to roll out five lodges in Guyana, starting with Letterwood Lodge, a Wellness and Gastronomic Rainforest Boutique Resort.



If you are passionate and want to be part of an innovative team driving world-class Caribbean experiences, apply by emailing jobs@caribbeanbeachcottages.com.

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Regional News



Man arrested in Guyana after discovery of illegal AK-47 and ammo

A 42-year-old businessman from Herstelling, East Bank Demerara, was taken into police custody following the discovery of an illegal AK-47 assault rifle and ammunition at his residence.

The arrest took place on Sunday evening during a police operation led by an Assistant Superintendent from the Providence Police Station.

At approximately 6:25pm, a team of officers conducted a search at Weston Pickering's home in Somerset Court Housing Scheme.

Upon arrival, Pickering was informed of the purpose of the search and consented to the procedure.

During the search, officers made a discovery inside a washing machine on the lower floor of the two-storey property.

An AK-47 rifle, wrapped in a brown tow-



Illegal AK-47 assault rifle and ammunition reportedly discovered at the home of Weston Pickering of Guyana. Photo: Guyana Police Force

el, was found along with 29 live rounds in a magazine and an additional 30 rounds concealed in a pair of socks. The upper floor of the house yielded six live 9mm rounds in a bedroom.

When questioned about

the firearm, Pickering admitted to not possessing a license and remained silent when cautioned about the allegation.

In addition to the weapons and ammunition, the search uncovered a substantial amount of foreign

and local currency.

A brown suitcase in one of the rooms contained various denominations including Canadian, US, and Guyanese dollars, as well as Chinese Yuan, Trinidad and Tobago dollars, Barbados dollars, Jamaican dollars, British pounds, and Euros. The total value of the seized currency is estimated to be significant.

All evidence, including the firearm, ammunition, and cash, was transported to the Providence Police Station.

The money was counted and sealed in Pickering's presence, while the weapons and ammunition were properly logged as the investigation continues.

cont'd from pg 11

an analyst at investment bank William Blair, said the new chief executive could be inheriting a tougher challenge at Starbucks than at Chipotle, noting that the company is both bigger and its problems more complex.

"While we cannot help but be more optimistic on today's news, we suspect the path to recapturing lost sales will be less linear than it was at Chipotle, which did not face boycott pressures, perceived value questions or material speed of service issues," she wrote.

Starbucks saw its sales boom as the

economy re-opened from the Covid pandemic lockdowns.

But the firm soon found itself embroiled in fight with staff in the US, thousands of whom have voted to join a union, tarnishing its progressive reputation.

Last year, after Starbucks sued the union for a social media post expressing "solidarity" with Palestinians, the dispute landed it in the middle of debates over Israel's war in Gaza, sparking global boycott calls. Starbucks has blamed misinformation about its views, after issuing a blanket statement condemning violence in the region.

Barbados: Tribunal rules against transgender dismissal by law firm

CMC - The Employment Rights Tribunal (ERT) has dismissed a case in which a transgender woman challenged her “unfair” dismissal against a legal firm because the laws of Barbados are silent on transgender identity.

The ERT dismissed the claim brought by Alexa Hoffmann, a former clerical officer at Court Caribbean Law Practice, who had contended that the firm terminated her contract without notice on October 26, 2018, alleging the dismissal was based on gender discrimination.

In delivering the tribunal’s decision on Monday, deputy chair Kathy-Ann Hamblin SC, said that Hoffmann had no standing to bring a complaint based on gender discrimination.

“As a transgender person, claimant Hoffmann has no standing to bring a complaint for unfair dismissal based on gender discrimination, since ‘transgender’ is not a status which is recognised under the laws of Barbados,” Hamblin stated.

The tribunal also ruled that neither Hoffmann nor any representative group had made a written complaint of unfair dismissal to the chief labour officer within the statutory limitation period. But Hamblin suggested that Hoffmann’s claim might have had a better chance of success had she pursued a different legal strategy.

“We thought that a more viable option would have been a claim of constructive dismissal because this claimant was not given a reason and sent home without being paid; and once you don’t pay your employee, that’s a fundamental breach . . . of the contract,” the Senior Counsel said.

The ERT deputy chair was critical of the law firm’s decision to send



Alexa Hoffmann (Photo: CMC)

Hoffmann home without reference to the Fourth Schedule of the Employment Rights Act, which outlines disciplinary procedures.

“The Act as interpreted by the apex court of Barbados, outlaws arbitrary decisions by employers to send home employees for any reason, or for no reason at all, without observing the standard or modified disciplinary procedures set out in the Fourth Schedule,” Hamblin said.

The tribunal heard that Hoffmann had applied for the position using the name Alexa Hoffmann and attended an interview presenting as such. Her transgender status was not disclosed until approximately two weeks into her employment.

Nigel Bennett, the firm’s managing partner, had asked Hoffmann to use her legal name at work, citing the nature of the job and the name on her identification documents.

But Hamblin said “the Laws of Barbados make absolutely no provision for the claimant to insist on be-

ing, or request to be addressed by a feminine pronoun. Similarly, no one, employer included, given the current state of the law, can be compelled to refer to the claimant by a feminine pronoun if they choose not to.”

She urged Parliament to consider amending the law “to reflect an evolving Barbadian society, a changing world view, and to meet the State’s international obligations”.

She said that in the absence of a legislative framework, transgender individuals are entitled “to freedom of choice in their private life, and to basic human dignity”.

Hamblin said that the case has highlighted the need for clearer legal protections for transgender individuals and may prompt discussions about potential legislative changes to address gender identity in the workplace. She noted that had Hoffmann pursued a claim of constructive dismissal, it “would likely have withstood the respondent’s defence of job

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UN chief calls for permanent Africa Security Council seat

By Claudia Efemini

UN chief António Guterres has called for Africa to be given a permanent seat at the UN Security Council as part of reforms to correct historical injustices.

The Security Council - the five permanent members of which are China, France, Russia, the UK and the US - has long been criticised for representing the realities that prevailed at the end of World War Two when much of Africa was still under colonial rule.

“The world has changed since 1945. But the composition of the Council, despite a few changes, has not kept pace,” Mr Guterres said.

The 10 non-permanent members of the body are allocated by region, but



UN officials, including António Guterres, feel the Security Council should reflect the world as it is, not as it was 80 years ago.

unlike the five permanent members, they do not have the power of veto.

The African Union has long been pushing for the continent to have two per-

manent representatives on the council and an additional two seats as non-permanent representatives.

The debate on Monday was convened by Sierra Le-

one - and its President Julius Maada Bio made the case for the continent.

“The time for half-measures and incremental prog-

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abandonment and repudiation of the employment contract, even though the claimant had engaged in conduct which, but for the breaches identified, would have justified summary dismissal.”

The tribunal’s ruling emphasised that employers cannot arbitrarily send workers home without following proper procedures.

“Section 27 (1) of the Act was triggered immediately [after] the respondent made a unilateral decision to force the claimant to go on leave without notice and without being notified of the reasons for that action, without a hearing, a right of appeal and without pay,” Hamblin explained.

Hoffmann admitted to formally

applying for a clerical position under the name Alexa Hoffmann. The claimant thereafter attended an interview with Bennett, identifying as Alexa Hoffmann.

Hamblin said that as a result of a ‘miscommunication’, no information relating to the claimant’s gender or legal identity was disclosed to the respondent before Hoffmann was hired.

Hamblin said approximately two weeks into the employment contract the claimant was placed in a position where “I had to reveal my status as a transgender woman,” adding “that situation arose when attorney Bennett asked the claimant certain questions relating to the origin of the surname ‘Hoffmann.’”

The tribunal heard that once the

identity had been revealed, Bennett not only told Hoffman that this should, and could have been done before, but that he needed the claimant to use their legal name while at work, given the nature of the job. Bennett also reasoned that the legal name was what appeared on the claimant’s identification document.

“An immediate demand by the claimant to be referred to as ‘she’, upon the legal change of name, justified the employer, who vehemently protested that the request was inconsistent with the law, seeking clarification of its legal position,” Hamblin said, calling for “meaningful dialogue with the people of Barbados” to determine if and how the law should be amended to address these issues”.

FBI probes claims Iran hacked Trump campaign

By Max Matza

The FBI has opened an investigation into allegations from the Trump campaign that it was targeted by hackers working for the Iranian government.

“We can confirm the FBI is investigating the matter,” the agency said in a short statement on Monday without specifically naming the former president or Iran.

A Trump campaign spokesman told the BBC the documents were illegally obtained by “foreign sources hostile to the United States”.

Iranian officials have denied any connection to the hack and the US government has not formally accused Iran.

The FBI is also looking into whether Iranian hackers



targeted the Joe Biden-Kamala Harris campaign, according to CBS News, the BBC’s news partner, citing people familiar with the investigation.

The Trump campaign statement came one day after Microsoft released a

report indicating that Iranian hackers targeted the campaign of an unnamed US presidential candidate in June.

Microsoft’s Threat Analysis Center (MTAC) said that the campaign was sent a spear-phishing email

– a message designed to look trustworthy in order to get the target to click on a malicious link.

On Saturday, Trump said the hackers were “only able to get publicly available information”.

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ress is over. Africa must be heard, and its demands for justice and equity must be met,” he said.

The UN Security Council has significant responsibilities, including authorising peacekeeping operations, imposing international sanctions and determining how the UN should respond to conflicts around the world.

Other UN officials echoed the sentiments for reform, including Dennis Francis - the president of the UN General Assembly, as well as Mr Guterres.

“We cannot accept that the world’s preeminent peace and security body lacks a permanent voice for a continent of well over a billion people - a

young and rapidly growing population - making up 28% of the membership of the United Nations,” the UN chief said.

Africa was under-represented at the UN Security Council and international financial institutions but “over-represented in the very challenges these structures are designed to address”, he added.

Africa has often been at the centre of conflicts fuelled by greed for the continent’s resources, necessary to the global economy, Mr Guterres said.

He also pointed out that almost half of all UN peacekeeping operations were in Africa and 40% of UN peacekeepers were African.

The UN chief added that the body had failed to adequately align African representation with the continent’s efforts and contributions.

The UN was set up after the end of World War Two to spare succeeding generations from the scourge of armed conflict.

Only four African nations - Egypt, Liberia, Ethiopia, and South Africa - were amongst the founding members.

For Mr Guterres, the need for change was not only about ethics and justice.

“It is also a strategic imperative that can increase global acceptance of the council’s decisions - benefitting Africa and the world,” he said.

Bangladesh include five pacers for Pakistan Test series

DHAKA (Reuters) - Bangladesh have named five pacers in their squad for the upcoming two-Test series in Pakistan, though Taskin Ahmed will only be available for the second match of the tour, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) said.

Ahmed, who last played a Test in June 2023, focused on white-ball cricket ahead of this year's Twenty20 World Cup while also dealing with a shoulder injury.

He will play for Bangladesh A, who are also touring in Pakistan, before returning to the first team.

"He hasn't bowled in a Test since June last year and we have decided to include him in the A team for the second four-dayer against Pakistan A to get him into the rhythm for longer version matches," chief selec-



Taskin Ahmed

tor Gazi Ashraf Hossain said in a statement on Sunday.

Wicketkeeper-batter Mushfiqur Rahim is set to

add to his 88 Test caps after returning to the 16-man squad in place of 22-year-old Shahadat Hossain, who

debuted last year.

"The likes of Mushfiqur, Mominul (Haque) and Shakib (Al Hasan) have played 216 matches combined and there is no substitute for that kind of experience," Hossain said.

Bangladesh traveled to Pakistan ahead of schedule on Tuesday to hold practice sessions in Lahore. The first Test will begin in Rawalpindi on August 21.

Bangladesh squad: Najmul Hossain Shanto (Captain), Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Zakir Hasan, Shadman Islam, Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, Litton Kumer Das, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, Nayeem Hasan, Nahid Rana, Shoriful Islam, Hasan Mahmud, Taskin Ahmed, and Syed Khaled Ahmed.

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The FBI began the investigations in early summer after both campaigns experienced attempted phishing schemes, CBS News reported.

According to the Washington Post, three staff members of the Biden-Harris campaign were also targeted by phishing emails in the days before President Joe Biden announced that he was quitting the race.

A Harris campaign spokesperson said in a statement to the media that the campaign "vigilantly monitors and protects against cyberthreats, and we are not aware of any security breaches of our systems".

The BBC has asked the Harris campaign for comment.

According to the Washington Post, the FBI probe into the hacking attempts was first opened in June.

Democratic Congressman Adam Schiff was among several lawmakers calling for the FBI to reveal what it knows about the hacking attempts.

He said that the US intelligence community "moved much too slow to properly identify the hacking and dumping scheme carried out by Russia" in 2016 and "should act quickly here".

It comes after Democratic Congressman Eric Swalwell said he was requesting a briefing from the Department of Homeland Security on the "alleged hack of Trump's presidential campaign".

"Yes, Trump is the most despicable person ever to seek office. He also sought foreign hacking in a past election... But that doesn't mean America ever tolerates foreign interference," he posted on X/Twitter on Saturday.

At campaign rallies in 2016, he asked Russia to hack his opponent in the race, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. US security sources had previously warned of an Iranian plot to assassinate Trump, unconnected to last month's attempted shooting in Pennsylvania.

And on Tuesday, the US justice department charged a Pakistani man alleged to have ties to Iran with plotting to assassinate US officials, potentially including the former president.

Hamby sues WNBA, Aces alleging discrimination

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Los Angeles Sparks All-Star Dearica Hamby sued the WNBA and her former team in federal court Monday regarding her treatment from the Las Vegas Aces while pregnant.

Hamby's lawsuit alleged the Aces discriminated and retaliated against her, leading to her January 2023 trade to the Sparks.

"We are aware of today's legal filing and are reviewing the complaint," a WNBA spokesperson said.

The Aces did not immediately respond to requests for comment, but the club and coach Becky Hammon previously refuted the allegations. Hammon said in May 2023 that Hamby was traded for strategic reasons, namely putting the club in position to sign likely future Hall of Famer Candace Parker.

"We made the decision to move Hamby because we could get three bodies in her one contract, and we wanted to get three more people in," Hammon said at the time.

"I think it's very evident (with) who we signed on why we made the move."

Hamby, a bronze-medal winner in 3X3 women's basketball in the recently completed Olympic



Chicago Sky's Angel Reese (5) drives to the basket as Los Angeles Sparks' Dearica Hamby defends during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Chicago, May 30, 2024. (AP File Photo)

Games, twice previously made public claims against the Aces.

The WNBA investigated the matter and in May 2023 suspended Hammon for two games without pay. The club also was docked their first-round 2025 draft pick for providing impermissible player benefits involving Hamby.

Hamby, however, insisted the league didn't go far enough. She filed a complaint with the Equal

Employment Opportunity Commission in September saying she was discriminated against and amended the filing in October.

According to the lawsuit, the EEOC ruled in May she had a "right to sue."

"The WNBA is, at its core, a workplace, and federal laws have long shielded pregnant women from discrimination on the job," Hamby's attorneys said in a statement.

"The world champion Aces exiled Dearica Hamby for becoming pregnant and the WNBA responded with a light tap on the wrist.

"Every potential mother in the league is now on notice that childbirth could change their career prospects overnight. That can't be right in one of the most prosperous and dynamic women's professional sports leagues in America."



Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini, second left, and Mateo Retegui, second right, during training ahead of the UEFA Super Cup at the National Stadium, Warsaw, Poland, on Tuesday, August 13, 2024. (Reuters)

Underdogs Atalanta face Real Madrid in UEFA Super Cup

WARSAW (Reuters) - The stakes will be high for Europa League winners Atalanta when they face the Spanish giants Real Madrid in the Super Cup on Wednesday but coach Gian Piero Gasperini believes they can pull off another surprise.

Atalanta defeated Bayer Leverkusen 3-0 in May, ending the German champions' remarkable unbeaten streak, and will be up against European champions Real who beat Borussia Dortmund 2-0 to lift their record-extending 15th Champions League trophy.

"On paper we're even more of an underdog than we were against Leverkusen, who were coming into the (final) game unbeaten in an entire season," Gasperini told a press conference on Tuesday.

"Real Madrid will be an even great-

er hurdle but that means we're even more motivated. It doesn't happen often but you can overturn the odds in football."

Atalanta will, however, face an extra challenge in Warsaw as they have travelled without injured striker Gianluca Scamacca.

The Italy forward, who scored six goals in their winning Europa League campaign, ruptured his anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in a pre-season friendly defeat by Parma (4-1) on Aug. 4 and could be out of action for at least six months.

They will also be without Netherlands midfielder Teun Koopmeiners who Italian media reports said is nearing a move to rivals Juventus.

"It's clear that you'd like to go into such a game with a full squad and play

your best players to get to the top of your game," Gasperini said.

"But even when we went to Liverpool or other (top) teams, and we often found ourselves with some difficulties, I always asked the guys to play a good game, without thinking of who's there or who's not there."

Winger Ademola Lookman said Atalanta should not be underestimated.

"We can't wait to get on the pitch. Not just me, but the whole team can't wait to play this match," Lookman said.

"We deserve to be here. Our hard work and perseverance have brought us here and tomorrow is another night to show that."

Lookman's hat-trick sealed the Europa League for Atalanta, their second major trophy after they won the Italian top flight in the 1962-63 season.

Real's Vinicius open to one billion euro Saudi offer, sources say

MADRID (Reuters) - Real Madrid and Brazil forward Vinicius Jr is open to an offer of more than one billion euros from Saudi Arabia, sources close to the player told Reuters on Tuesday.

Vinicius, 24, was approached by Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF) officials to inquire about his interest of moving to the Saudi Pro League (SPL) on a five-year contract worth around 200 million euros per season fixed, plus bonuses.

The package would also include a separate 10-year contract to become an ambassador for the 2034 World Cup, which is set to be held in the country, but those terms and financial numbers are yet to be discussed.

Although an official, formal offer has yet to be presented, Vinicius has not dismissed the move and gave permission to PIF to approach Real Madrid.

Despite being "happy and motivated" in the Spanish capital, Vinicius and his representatives believe that a lucrative offer like this needs to be studied carefully.



Real Madrid and Brazil forward Vinicius Jr

ly.

Another source close to the player said that Real have shown no interest in negotiating a transfer, highlighting the player's one billion euro buy-out clause. Real Madrid and PIF did not respond to requests for comment.

Obsessed to be taken seriously as a soccer force, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia announced a Sports Clubs Investment and Privatisa-

tion Project, with PIF taking ownership of 75 percent of the capital of the country's four main clubs: Al Ahli, Al Ittihad, Al Hilal and Al Nassr.

The biggest Saudi transfer came from the country's most successful club, Al Hilal, who spent 90 million euros to buy forward Neymar from Paris St. Germain.

With Karim Benzema at Al Ittihad and Cristiano Ronaldo at Al Nassr, PIF

tried to persuade France captain Kylian Mbappe to be the big name Al Ahli is still missing last year.

The forward, however, turned down Saudi's lucrative offer and joined Real Madrid in June.

The proposal for Vinicius is understood to be similar to the Mbappe offer. The Brazilian would join Al Ahli, linking up with former Premier League players Riyad Mahrez and Roberto Firmino.

Vinicius, who is under contract until 2027 after signing an extension in 2022, is a contender to win the Ballon d'Or award for the best player in the world after helping Real to a Champions League and LaLiga double last season.

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with the teams distributed into the leagues according to the results of the preceding 2023/24 edition.

The fourth CONCACAF Nations League Finals (CNLF) will be played in March next year, and the tournament serves as a qualifier for next summer's 2025 CONCACAF Gold Cup.

The previous edition of the CNL, which took place in 2023 and March 2024, concluded with the United States of America beating Mexico 2-0 to claim their third straight CNL crown.

In the third-place match, Jamaica clinched a 1-0 victory over Panama, making history as the first Caribbean team to secure a podium finish in the tournament.

Benna Boys to begin 2024 CNL's campaign at home

The national senior men's team, the Antigua Benna Boys, will play their first two matches in the 2024/25 CONCACAF Nations League (CNL) at home in September.

Antigua and Barbuda is one of 16 teams that will compete in League B. The 16 teams are divided into four groups of four teams. Group D of League B will feature Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Bermuda, and the Dominican Republic.

League B Group A will comprise El Salvador, Montserrat, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Bonaire. Group B will feature Curacao, St. Lucia, Grenada, and French St. Martin. In Group C are Haiti, Puerto Rico, Aruba, and Dutch St. Maarten.

The preliminary stage of the CNL will be played during the 2024 FIFA match windows in September, October, and November.

Antigua and Barbuda Football Association (ABFA) will host matches in Group D of League B at the ABFA Technical Center in the FIFA match window in September during the



Players of the senior Benna Boys team

preliminary group phase of the CNL.

Bermuda will face the Dominican Republic at 11 am, and Antigua and Barbuda will meet Dominica at 4 pm at the ABFA Technical Center on Saturday, September 7.

Dominica and the Dominican Republic will clash at 11 am, and Antigua and Barbuda will tackle Bermuda at 4pm at the same venue on Tuesday, September 10.

During the FIFA match windows of September,

October, and November, each team will play every team in its group twice, for a total of six matches per team.

For each FIFA window, matches will be played at a centralized venue per group instead of the previous home-and-away format. This format change alleviates some of the travel challenges that member associations face due to the region's unique geography and allows them to focus on delivering the best possible football.

The third-best-ranked teams in each group will host the September matches, the second-best-ranked teams will host the October matches, and the best-ranked teams will host the decisive November matches. If a team was unable or declined to host matches, CONCACAF has selected an alternative venue.

The fourth edition of the CNL continues to feature the region's 41 men's national teams divided into three leagues, A, B, and C,

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