

# PRIME MINISTER BROWNE LAUNCHES ABAS BOOKLET

*which he says offers tailored  
solutions to challenges of SIDS*



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Prime Minister Gaston Browne, second right, speaks with other Heads of State on the margins of the 79th General Assembly of the United Nations.

# Local News



## Prime Minister Browne launches ABAS booklet which he says offers tailored solutions to challenges of SIDS

In yet another landmark moment, the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS - the ABAS is now in the hands of the Heads of State and Government of SIDS.

The launch of the pocket-size booklet of the ABAS, took place Monday during a Breakfast Leadership meeting of the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS), which was held on the margins of the 79th General Assembly of the United Nations.

The ABAS has been creatively reproduced in the form of a pocketbook with images that capture some of the special moments of SIDS4 in Antigua and Barbuda in May of this year. It is now a handy tool that details the new 10-year framework that was adopted at SIDS4 in Antigua

in May of this year. The ABAS outlines the requirements for SIDS to achieve resilient prosperity and sustainable development.

The project was undertaken by the Antigua and Barbuda Mission in New York and was warmly welcomed by Prime Minister Browne who is in New York leading a high level delegation to the UN General Assembly.

Prime Minister Browne told the assembly of leaders who convened for the breakfast meeting that it was incumbent on them to place their full political weight behind the ABAS, as it is now in a form that allows for an easy read that will help to increase their familiarity with the details of the ABAS.

Prime Minister Browne



also reflected on key aspects of the ABAS and the overall ambition for SIDS as they seek to escape the grasp of external shocks, climate change and its severe consequences.

“The ABAS offers highly tailored solutions. These are not one-size-fits-all mandates but bespoke strategies specifically crafted to meet the unique challenges we face,” Prime

Minister Browne noted.

He referenced initiatives like the SIDS Centre of Excellence, the SIDS Debt Sustainability Support Services and the MVI as robust solutions that will place SIDS solidly on the road to building a resilient future for generations to come.

He emphasized that these are among the deliverables contained in the ABAS that leaders need to have prime focus to ensure that there is no delay in their implementation “or else we would have failed in our shared mission to transform the lives of our people and save our islands,” he said.

Key members of the Antigua and Barbuda Mission joined Prime Minister Browne at the AOSIS leaders meeting to include Permanent Representative Walton Webson, Deputy Permanent Representative Tumasie Blair and First Secretary Claxton Duberry.



## PM Browne tells 'big oil' companies their days are numbered

Heads of State and Governments emphasized the need to rethink global governance and create a fairer, more inclusive multilateral system that will “benefit all countries” rather than “increase the power of a few”, as the Summit of the Future concluded its second and final day.

Warning that inaction could lead the planet “to a dark future”, they stressed the need for Security Council reform, greater youth engagement in decision-making and bold actions to address the adverse impacts of climate change.

Member States highlighted these and other global concerns on Sunday, when they



unanimously adopted the Pact for the Future, an ambitious commitment to a new start in multilateralism. Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Gaston Browne, emphasizing that those who have contributed least to the climate

crisis are suffering its worst impacts, said: “Big oil, hear this: your days of exploiting the Global South’s natural resources are numbered.”

In the move to renewable energy, “rich industrialized nations must pay for the loss

and damage that have devastated our communities”, he added.

Wealthy countries and their industrial giants must pay their dues and invest in a sustainable, equitable future for all, he stressed, adding that bold new international agreements to end fossil fuel proliferation, innovative financial instruments and advanced technology are urgently needed.

Recalling the recently adopted Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS, he called on the international community to “be as bold as SIDS and to shift focus, not just to sustaining our damaged ecosystems, but also ensuring equity and fairness providing climate and financial justice to all”.

He further called upon leaders and policymakers to commit to an international financial architecture that bridges gaps, alleviates inequalities and fosters sustainable development.



Sending a happy 96th birthday to Mr. James Matthias of St. George's Street, coming from all his children, grandchildren and the entire home circle.

# Local News



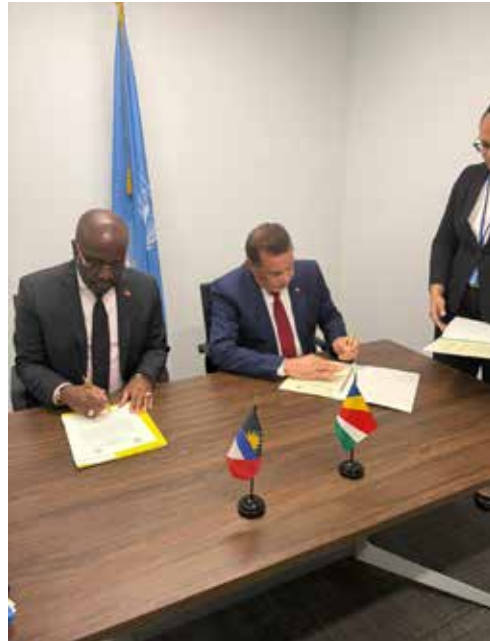
## Antigua and Barbuda seeks opportunities to maximize benefits from bilateral ties

A series of engagements led by Antigua and Barbuda's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, E.P. Chet Greene at the United Nations this week is ensuring that the country gains maximum benefits from its diplomatic ties with countries around the world.

Since his arrival in New York for the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Minister Greene has been kept busy with a number of bilateral meetings with his counterparts from countries across the globe.

On Monday, he met with the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Dr. Ian Borg of Malta, an island nation in southern Europe, which boasts a well-developed economy, to discuss matters of mutual interests between their two countries.

Minister Greene expressed his profound gratitude to Dr. Borg for



his country's support of Antigua and Barbuda and Prime Minister Browne in getting the Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) adopted at the United Nations.



Dr. Borg praised Antigua and Barbuda for hosting a successful SIDS4 Conference and indicated strong interest in providing his country's support

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## Back to School

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*cont'd from pg 4*

for the establishment of the Centre of Excellence, a major outcome outlined in the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS).

Minister Greene also signed unto documents establishing diplomatic relations with Seychelles, whose economic wealth comes from the tourism industry, similar to Antigua and Barbuda.

The signing ceremony was conducted with his counter-part Foreign Minister of the Seychelles, His Excellency Sylvestre Radegonde. Minister Greene believes their shared economic



aspirations are a welcomed opportunity for Antigua and Barbuda to earn major ben-

efits in achieving further growth in the sector.

During the opening

day of the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday, Minister Greene held bilateral discussions with the Foreign Affairs Minister of Rwanda, His Excellency Olivier Nduhungirehe. Both officials committed to build on the strong ties between their two countries.

Minister Greene also sought the country's support and collaboration in improving Antigua and Barbuda's community health care services and in stemming the rise in youth violence.

He also expressed the country's interest in establishing mutual visa exemption agreements to allow for seamless travel between Rwanda and Antigua and Barbuda.

Minister Greene continues the week with several other high-level engagements as Antigua and Barbuda participates in the most significant diplomatic event on the United Nations calendar.



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# Local News



## IICA provides update on Antigua Black Pineapple revival project

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) has provided an update on its efforts to revive the Antigua Black Pineapple in the country and the agency has reported some success in its endeavor.

Country Coordinator of IICA, Craig Thomas provided the update during an Accountability Seminar held on Tuesday during which he provided insights into the work of the organization over the past year.

The request to revive the popular fruit came out of a request from the government to IICA against the backdrop of concerns that the ‘authen-

tic’ Antigua Black Pineapple may be disappearing due to a number of reasons, including a reduction of pineapple cultivation generally.

According to Thomas IICA provided technical support to local farmers with the assistance of the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and the ministry of agriculture to facilitate Antigua Black Pineapple Tissue Culture through which plantlets were sent to the IICA facility in St. Vincent and the Grenadines for propagation.

“Twenty-five (25) local Antigua Black Pineapple suckers were collected, treat-



IICA Eastern Caribbean representative, Gregg Rawlins (left) with PS Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Amb. Clarence Pilgrim

ed and shipped to St. Vincent for “clean-up” tissue culture. The farmer received a 1st batch of 1000 cultured materials, which was considered a milestone given that this was the first time in history the Antigua Black pineapple has been propagated using this mechanism in Antigua and Barbuda. The farmer should be collecting a total of 10,000 plantlets over a period of time to complete the process in 2024,” Thomas reported.

According to the IICA coordinator this action aligns with a signed Letter of Agreement between IICA and FAO during Covid-19 in 2021 whereby both institutions agreed to implement activities to strengthen the Antigua Black pineapple value chain.

Thomas also reported that discussions are ongoing

to determine what is the ‘authentic’ Antigua Black Pineapple and the agency is currently conducting a series of tests to help it make a final determination.

The Antigua Black Pineapple has earned a reputation as being the ‘sweetest’ pineapple available anywhere.

Meanwhile, the IICA Eastern Caribbean Representative, Gregg Rawlins, has been making a number of courtesy calls during his visit to Antigua and the seminar.

He has met with the new Minister of Agriculture, Anthony Smith and his senior management team, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Clarence Pilgrim and officials at the Environment Division with whom a Memorandum of Understanding was signed.

### NOTICE

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TO: Commissioner of Police  
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Antigua

I, **Brian Benjamin**, of Ottos New Town, St John’s, Antigua, **DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE** that it is my intention to apply at the ordinary session to be held at the Magistrate’s Court, Perry Bay, St. John’s, Antigua on Thursday the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of October, 2024 for a Tavern License in respect of premises known as “**SWEET WATER TAVERN**” situated at Ottos New Town pursuant to Section (11) (5) of the Licensing (Intoxicating Liquor) Act Cap 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda, Revised Edition 1992.

Dated the 24<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2024

.....  
Brian Benjamin

## CalvinAir Helicopters awards \$83,000 scholarship to employee

An employee of CalvinAir Helicopters – Adriel Sobers – is the recipient of a scholarship valued at \$83,000 awarded by CalvinAir Helicopters, in partnership with the Calvin Ayre Foundation.

In a statement, the company said this award underscores the Ayre Group's dedication not only to supporting external educational pursuits, emergency assistance and social initiatives, but also to fostering growth and development within its own workforce.

“Adriel, who has been employed with CalvinAir Helicopters for approximately two years, was selected for



his exceptional work ethic and professional contribution to the team. This opportunity will advance Adriel's desire

to pursue a career as an Aircraft Maintenance Engineer,” the statement noted.

Chief Executive Officer

of CalvinAir Helicopters, Mark Fleming, spoke very highly of Adriel, during a

*cont'd on pg 8*

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# Local News



*cont'd from pg 7*

brief farewell ceremony, held at the CalvinAir Helicopters hangar at the V.C. Bird International Airport.

“Adriel has been with us for two years now and is really thriving as an aircraft maintenance engineer apprentice. Adriel is off to aircraft maintenance technician school in Canada. In fact, the same school that I went to over 25 years ago, Canada College, which is widely regarded as one of the top aviation schools in Canada. We really believe that every young person deserves the chance to pursue his/her dreams and achieve his/her fullest potential. That’s why we’re proud to have individuals like Adriel as part of the CalvinAir family,” Mark Fleming emphasized.

Media Relations Specialist, Ayre Group) Jamilla Kirwan explained that this charitable donation towards Ariel’s future gives credence to that, saying “Charity begins at home”. “Here at the Calvin Ayre Foundation and the Ayre



Group on a whole, we not only believe in inspiring and empowering externally, we also in empowering from within. Adriel is a part of the Calvin Ayre Group of Companies family. We want to wish him all the very best. We know that he’s going to do an excellent job, and when he comes back, he’s not only going to make a contribution to the Ayre Group of Companies, but Antigua and Barbuda on a whole,” she stated.

Sobers expressed his thanks and his appreciation to the Ayre Group for the award of the scholarship that will allow him to fulfill his dream in the aviation industry. “This opportunity to go to school to study will allow me to become the first Antiguan helicopter engineer on island. My passion for this field is unexplainable and I hope to make a change for other young up and coming Antiguanians who want to be a part of this field. I would like to personally thank the Calvin Ayre Foundation and CalvinAir Helicopters for this wonderful opportunity,” he remarked.

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Senator Kiz Nathaniel-Johnson who is representing Antigua and Barbuda at the Women Political Leaders (WPL) high-level convenings in New York City during the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA79).

## Caribbean Beach Cottages convenes crucial meetings with airline partners

Caribbean Beach Cottages has announced continued collaboration with major airline partners to enhance the tourism experience in Antigua and Barbuda. This initiative aims to provide visitors with an authentic Caribbean experience, ensuring the sustained success of the local tourism industry.

In a strategic meeting held recently, General Manager of Hawksbill Hotel, Arlene Marsh met with stakeholders from several airlines to discuss and explore avenues for improving services and experiences for tourists. The event was marked by the presence of key industry players, including Vancero and Rene from American Airlines, Arlene and Mario from Hawksbill, Michelle and Avery from Virgin Airlines, Patrice Skeritt from British Airways, and an additional representative from Virgin Airlines. These attendees shared insights and strategies to bolster tourism in the region.



Marsh emphasized the importance of these collaborations, stating, "Our goal is to create a seamless and memorable experience for every visitor who steps foot on our beautiful islands. By working closely with our airline partners, we can ensure that the journey to and from Antigua and Barbuda is as enjoyable and comfortable as their stay at our resorts."

The discussions centered on enhancing flight connectivity, improving customer service, and offering unique

travel packages that highlight the rich culture and natural beauty of the Caribbean.

This meeting marks a significant step forward in

strengthening the tourism infrastructure and positioning Antigua and Barbuda as a top destination for travelers worldwide.

## Barbuda man arrested for cannabis

A 43-year-old Barbuda man is due in court on September 30, to answer two drug charges.

On Monday, September 23, police in Barbuda executed a search warrant on a property occupied by Michael Smith and found him with 71 Ziploc plastic bags of the controlled substance

cannabis. He was taken into custody and charged with possession of cannabis, and possession with Intent to transfer.

The substance weighs 139 grams and is valued at \$1,370.00. He was granted bail in the amount of \$10,000 with no cash deposit and two sureties.

### In Loving Memory



Those special memories of you

Will always bring a smile,

If only we could have you back,

For just a little while.

Then we could sit and talk again

Just like we used to do.

You always meant so very much

And always will do too,

The fact that you are no longer here,

Will always cause us pain,

But you're forever in our hearts

Until we meet again.

**In loving memory of Errol Thwaites late of Bethesda Village who departed this life eight years ago on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2016.**

**Ever to be remembered by his siblings, Sylvia, Pam, Lynette, Kenneth, Andrea and Audwin. His nieces, nephews, aunts and uncles and his many, many family members.**

**May his Soul continue to Rest in Peace.**

# Lifestyle



## 'The violence is getting out of hand': Crime grips Cuba's streets

By Will Grant

The late leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, once famously called Cuba "the safest country in the world".

In terms of the island's low rates of violent crime and the scarcity of guns circulating among the civilian population, he may well have had a case for that title.

His critics, of course, responded that the low crime rate was achieved through intimidation, that Castro's Cuba was – and still remains – a police state which brokered no criticism of its communist-led government, and which rode roughshod over its opponents' human rights.

However it was done, few could deny that Cuba's streets have traditionally been among the safest in the Americas.

Yet it doesn't feel to Samantha González like she lives in the world's safest nation. Her younger brother, an aspiring music producer called Jan Franco, was murdered two months ago in an apparent gang-related dispute.

From the low-income Havana neighbourhood of Cayo Hueso and



Jan Franco (left) was stabbed to death in Havana, aged just 19.

just 19 years old when he was killed, Jan Franco was stabbed twice in the chest outside a recording studio, caught in the middle of an argument when someone pulled a knife.

"I still can't understand it," says Samantha, struggling to express her grief as she scrolls through old photos of her brother on her phone.

"He was the light of our family."

Just 20 herself and mother of a one-year-old boy, Samantha says that Jan Franco was one of many young people to lose their lives in the streets

in recent months:

"So many young people have been killed this year," she explains.

"The violence is getting out of hand. They're basically gangs, and they fall out with each other as gangs. That's where it's all coming from, these killings and deaths of young people."

They often solve their quarrels with knives and machetes, she says.

"Almost no-one settles an argument with their fists anymore. It's all knives, machetes, even guns. Things I just don't understand," her voice trails off.

The situation has been worsened by a new drug in Cuba called "quimico" – a cheap chemical high with a cannabis base. Samantha says that it's increasingly popular among Cuban youth in the parks and on the streets.

Previously, even suggesting that Cuba had a problem with opioids and street gangs – especially to a foreign journalist – could land you in difficulties.

The Cuban authorities have always been fiercely protective of their island's reputation as crime-free and

*cont'd on pg 11*



Supreme Court Vice-President Maricela Sosa Ravelo told the BBC people still trust Cuban authorities to maintain law and order.

*cont'd from pg 10*

quick to point out that the its streets are demonstrably safer than those of most cities in the US. Anything that highlights Cuba's social problems is generally painted as biased criticism of their socialist system or as anti-revolutionary fabrications originating from Miami or Washington.

However, such has been the public perception of a worsening crime rate, a perception shared by many Cubans on social media, that the authorities have openly addressed it on state television.

In August, an edition of nightly talk programme Mesa Redonda – in which Communist Party officials are invited on air to deliver the party line – was titled Cuba Against Drugs.

During the broadcast, Colonel Juan Carlos Poey Guerra, the head of the interior ministry's anti-drug unit, acknowledged the existence, production and distribution of the new drug, químico, and its impact on Cuba's youth. He insisted the authorities were tackling the issue.

In another edition, on crime, the government denied the situation was worsening, claiming only 9% of crimes in Cuba were violent and just 3% were murders.

However, critics question the transparency of the government's statistics and say there's no independent oversight of the bodies which produce them or the methodologies they use.



Even Cuban authorities have admitted that drugs have become a problem.

For its part, the government largely blames the old enemy, the United States, for both the existence of synthetic opioids in Cuba and for the decades-long US economic embargo on the island which they say is the reason some Cubans have resorted to crime.

In a rare interview, the vice-president of Cuba's Supreme Court, Maricela Sosa Ravelo, told the BBC the problem was being blown out of proportion on social media.

She refuted the suggestion that many crimes go unreported through a lack of public confidence in the police.

"In my 30 years as a judge and magistrate, I don't think that the Cuban people lack confidence in their authorities," she claimed, speaking inside the ornate Supreme Court building.

"In Cuba, the police have a high success rate in

solving crimes. We don't see people taking the law into their own hands – which happens in other parts of Latin America and elsewhere – which suggests the population trusts in the Cuban justice system," she argued.

Again, though, that wasn't the experience of another recent victim of opportunistic theft on Havana's dimly lit streets.

Shyra is a transgender activist who is used to speaking out about rights in Cuba. She says that her story, of being robbed by a man brandishing a knife one evening, is common.

But it was the police response which disillusioned her the most.

"Just after I was attacked, I came across two motorcycle police in a side street," Shyra recalls. Despite her obvious distress, the police ignored her pleas for help, she says.

"They openly told me: 'We're not here for stuff like that.' It was such a shocking thing to hear because I told them where they could find the attacker, showed them which direction he was headed in, what he was wearing. But they just didn't pay me any attention."

In the small apartment she shares with her mother, Samantha González watches videos of her younger brother's wake. A crowd of Jan Franco's friends appeared outside his home and began singing the songs which he'd produced before his fledgling music career was cut short.

As his coffin was loaded onto the hearse, the mourners fell silent, except for the soft murmur of weeping and prayer.

Buried with him, and every young victim of violence on the island, is another piece of Cuba's claim to be the world's safest nation.

# Technology



## Caroline Ellison sentenced to two years for role in FTX crypto fraud

Caroline Ellison has been sentenced to two years in prison for her role in the collapse of the cryptocurrency exchange FTX, which has been described as one of the biggest financial frauds in US history.

Ellison was a top executive at the firm and is also the ex-girlfriend of its founder, Sam Bankman-Fried, who was sentenced to 25 years in prison for stealing more than \$8bn (£6.3bn) from customers.

As part of a plea deal, Ellison admitted charges including wire fraud and money laundering, and testified against Bankman-Fried. She was also ordered to forfeit more than \$11bn (£8.2bn) to the court and could pay more if she's ordered to hand over any restitution.

She had faced a maximum sentence 55 times what she was given - 110 years in prison.

While Judge Lewis Kaplan called her cooperation with prosecutors "remarkable", he said she was "gravely culpable" and that her help and remorse for the crimes should not be a "get out of jail free card", according to Reuters.

FTX was founded in 2019. Just two years later it had grown into the third biggest crypto exchange in the world, valued at \$32bn (£26bn).

Its apparent success



Caroline Ellison

turned Bankman-Fried into a billionaire and business celebrity.

But, in 2022, rumours of financial trouble sparked a run on its deposits, precipitating the firm's implosion and exposing Bankman-Fried's crimes.

He was convicted by a New York jury last year on charges including wire fraud and conspiracy to commit money laundering, after a trial that detailed how he had used customers' money for property purchases, investments and political donations.

Ellison was one of Bankman-Fried's closest lieutenants and lived and worked in the company's offices and luxury apartments in The Bahamas. The on-and-off couple built the

dual empire of FTX and Alameda Research.

While Bankman-Fried was arrested and spent time in prison before his trial, Ellison remained free and agreed to help the criminal investigations.

The revelation that she would testify against her former boyfriend and boss added to the drama of the high-profile trial.

Ellison testified over three days, telling the jury that Bankman-Fried directed her and others to take money from FTX's customers without their knowledge.

In tearful testimony, she said she felt "indescribably bad" about the fraud.

Prosecutors said Ellison met them about 20 times to help them piece together

FTX's unravelling, and make their case against Bankman-Fried.

Prior to the sentencing, Ellison's legal team had argued the help she provided meant she should not be sent to jail.

The US Attorney's office in Manhattan, which brought the charges, had declined to call for a particular sentence, but acknowledged what it called her "extraordinary" cooperation and expression of remorse.

In May, Ryan Salame, the co-CEO of FTX's Bahamian subsidiary, was sentenced to 90 months in prison. Salame pleaded guilty in September last year to violating political campaign finance laws and operating an illegal money-transmitting business.



## US accuses Visa of debit card monopoly

By Natalie Sherman

The US has filed a lawsuit against Visa, accusing the financial giant of illegally stifling competition to maintain a monopoly over the debit card market.

It said Visa had punished companies that wanted to use alternative payment networks and paid off potential competitors to keep its hold over the market.

The Department of Justice said the moves had slowed innovation and led to significant additional fees for American consumers and businesses.

Visa said the claims were “meritless” and it would defend itself in court.

Julie Rottenberg, Visa’s general counsel, said businesses and consumers chose Visa because of its “secure and reliable network”.

“Today’s lawsuit ignores the reality that Visa is just one of many competitors in a debit space that is grow-

ing, with entrants who are thriving,” she said.

“This lawsuit is meritless, and we will defend ourselves vigorously.”

The filing against Visa is the latest competition lawsuit from the Biden administration, which has taken a more aggressive approach to monopoly concerns, known as antitrust in the US, than previous administrations.

The company’s practices have also faced lawsuits and scrutiny from merchants and competition regulators in other parts of the world including in Europe and Australia.

The Department of Justice started investigating Visa in 2021.

The company processes more than 60% of debit transactions in the US, according to the complaint, bringing in \$7bn in fees annually. As of 2022, its debit card business was bigger by revenue than its credit card unit, and highly profitable.

Attorney General Merrick Garland

said Visa’s dominance had allowed it to extract fees that were far higher than it could have charged in a “competitive market”.

“Merchants and banks pass along those costs to consumers, either by raising prices or reducing quality or service,” he said. “As a result, Visa’s unlawful conduct affects not just the price of one thing – but the price of nearly everything.”

Shares in the firm fell more than 5%.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court in New York, said Visa had used a “web of contracts” that required businesses to commit to routing a certain volume of transactions to the Visa network or face higher fees - effectively creating illegal “exclusive deals”.

It said the firm started making such deals after a new law in 2012 tried to bolster competition in the debit market, by requiring that banks make

*cont’d on pg 14*

# Regional News



## Dominica to host OECS Credit Union conference

CMC - Dominica will host the week long 17th annual conference of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Credit Union conference from today with the organisers saying it provides an opportunity for the sub-region to reflect on the progress made over the past years.

The September 24-29 event is being held under the theme "Credit Unions: Empowered to Thrive in an Evolving Landscape," and will feature panel discussions and interactive sessions aimed at promoting innovation and development within the credit union sector.

President of the Dominica Co-operative Societies League Ltd, Dr Damien Dublin, said that the conference "serves as a pivotal moment for us to reflect on our progress, share insights, and strategise for the future.

He added: "As we gather here, I am confident that the collaborations, discussions, and partnerships we foster will strengthen our movement, empower our communities, and prepare us to embrace the opportunities and challenges of the rapidly changing financial environment."

"Our heartfelt gratitude to all our sponsors, partners, and participants."

The Deputy Governor of the St. Kitts-based Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB), Dr Valda Henry, will be



Deputy Governor of ECCB, Dr Valda Henry will be the keynote speaker at the conference. Photo: CMC

the keynote speaker at the conference.

Organisers say that she is well-regarded in the fields of finance and leadership and will share insights regarding the changing financial environment and the essential role credit unions play in enhancing economic resilience.

Dominica's Finance and Economic Development Minister, Dr Irving McIntyre, will present his perspectives on regional economic growth and financial inclusion.

Among the other speakers are Jose Vargas from Mastercard, Patrick George, Daryl Thomas, Michel Wil-

liams, Philomena Lee, Trevor Blake, Alouis Faisal from the Eastern Caribbean Securities Exchange (ECSRC), and Omar Burch Smith, and Eleni Giakoumopoulos from the Global Women's Leadership Network.

"These experts will provide attendees with advanced knowledge on various subjects, including digital transformation, investment strategies, governance, and community impact," the organisers said.

The agenda for the conference features a range of activities aimed at equipping credit unions to adapt to the changing financial landscape.

*cont'd from pg 13*

debit cards usable on at least two competing payment networks.

The Department of Justice said Visa also used its dominance of the market to threaten tech firms such as PayPal with significant fees, unless they signed deals

committing them to routing payments through the firm.

It asked the court to rule that Visa is a monopoly and bar it from continuing the alleged "anticompetitive" practices.

George Alan Hay, a professor at Cornell Law School and expert in anti-

trust law, said the case was not radical, but would still be a challenge for the government. Among the sore points, he said, would be the question of how the debit card market is defined - and whether 60% is enough to constitute a monopoly.

"It's going to be diffi-

cult," he said.

He added that Visa, after facing scrutiny from regulators for decades, will have anticipated litigation while structuring its fees.

"They're going to have answers," he said. "It's not like this is sprung on them by surprise."

## Bermuda: Canadian “mule” jailed on drug charges

CMC – A 25-year-old Canadian woman has been sentenced to two years in jail for her involvement in a plot to import an estimated US\$1.8 million worth of cocaine into the country two years ago.

In passing sentence on Mara Faiazza, who earlier this year had pleaded guilty to a charge of importation of a controlled drug related to an incident on May 19, Justice Juan Wolffe said that while the offence was serious, the defendant had showed genuine remorse and provided “substantial” help to officials.

He noted the large amount of drugs seized, adding that that while the offence would usually carry a sentence of eight years in prison, Faiazza was entitled to a 75 per cent discount for her assistance.

“I trust and hope that, during the time you are incarcerated and once you finish, you do provide advice to those young women and men that they must be very careful about who they associate with, because it could end literally in tears,” he said.

Prosecutor Adley Duncan told the court that Faiazza flew to the country from Toronto with a checked grey suitcase and that Customs K9 unit showed interest in Faiazza’s checked-in suitcase as it sat on the baggage carousel waiting to be collected.

After Faiazza picked up her luggage, she was selected by customs officers for a secondary inspection. The woman initially said she had packed her bag herself but when she was asked for the combination to open the locked suitcase, she said it belonged to a friend.

She told officials that her friend had given her the suitcase at Toronto



Pearson International Airport before her flight and that someone else who knew her was supposed to collect it from her in Bermuda.

The suitcase was later searched and the authorities found 40 heat-sealed bags containing 17,779 grams of cannabis with a street value of up to US\$1,777,900.

When cautioned, she told the officers: “I guess I trusted the wrong person.”

Duncan said the offence was very serious, particularly given the quantity of drugs discovered and that the starting point for such an offence was eight years.

However, he said that the defendant was entitled to a significant discount because of the assistance she had provided.

Attorney Charles Richardson, said his client was a young woman with a previously clean record and that she had made a “careless mistake” in bringing the suitcase to Bermuda without knowing its contents.

“She would be a clueless mule. She was used by those who packed the bag and gave her very little informa-

tion.”

Faiazza told the court that she was immensely apologetic and wanted to do whatever she could to give back and prevent others from finding themselves in the same position.

She told her family: “This is no reflection on any of you. You are really amazing and beautiful people and I don’t want these actions to be a reflection on you because it’s not.”

Justice Wolffe said there was no doubt the defendant’s actions were “extremely egregious,” noting “being a part of an offence which had the potential of putting drugs on to the streets of Bermuda is reprehensible.

“A very clear message must be sent to those who decide to import drugs into Bermuda that they will be treated harshly by these courts. Having said this, I am obliged to take into consideration the level of amends that the defendant has taken to right her wrongs”

The judge said that drugs had torn the fabric of Bermuda apart and any assistance given that could help to prevent further harm should be acknowledged.

## Boat with 30 decomposing bodies found off Senegal coast

At least 30 decomposing bodies have been found on a boat off the coast of Senegal, military authorities say.

The navy was informed of a vessel that was adrift about 70km (45 miles) from the capital Dakar, according to a military statement on X. They brought the wooden canoe, or pirogue, into port on Monday morning.

“Recovery, identification and transfer operations are being made extremely delicate by the advanced state of decomposition of the bodies,” the statement said.

There has been a recent increase in migrants setting off from Senegal for Spain’s Canary Islands - a journey of more than 1,500km (950 miles) across the Atlantic Ocean.

Given how decomposed the bodies were, the migrants were probably adrift on the Atlantic Ocean for many days before fishermen found them.

Investigations are underway to determine when and where the boat departed, and how many people were on board, the army said.

“We must avoid this type of journey. It is a kind of suicide,” said Dakar boat owner Mandiaye Diène.

He told the BBC that swordfish fishermen, who go more than 60km off the coast, often come across



Migrants use wooden boats like this to try and reach the Canary Islands across the Atlantic Ocean.

floating bodies or boats with lifeless bodies drifting on the waters.

“It’s a sad fate. I certainly don’t support this form of emigration, but people are desperate,” said Bassirou Mbengue, a fisherman and boat owner.

Some Senegalese fishermen say they can’t survive by fishing any longer because of the presence of foreign trawlers off the coast, so they turn to either migration, or offering their boats to be used by people smugglers.

“It’s dangerous to travel by sea to Europe. I would never do it and neither would my children. But you can’t blame those who go. There are no fish left on our coasts and fishing equipment is expensive,” said Mr Mbengue, 50.

In August, at least 14 decomposing bodies, believed to have been Senegalese migrants, were found off the

coast of the Dominican Republic by a local fisherman.

Senegal’s government announced a 10-year plan in August to tackle illegal migration amid a surge in migrant-related deaths.

The authorities have intercepted hundreds of migrants on boats off the country’s coast in recent weeks.

Despite frequent tragedies, unemployment, conflict and poverty drive young men to risk the route from West Africa to Spain’s Canary Islands.

Boubacar Sèye, President of Horizons sans Frontières, an NGO that raises awareness on the effects of illegal immigration, told the BBC that “given the recurrence of this type of tragedy, we can say that this is no longer a cyclical phenomenon, but rather a structural one”.

“To stop this, we need to attack the problem at source, with new ways of

raising awareness in the most vulnerable areas”, says Mr Sèye.

For him, “despair is total”, for many people to the point where “the most vulnerable people think they have no future in the country”.

Young West African migrants have been increasingly using the Canary Islands route to reach Europe because it involves a single, albeit dangerous, journey rather than needing to cross both the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea.

Frontex, the European border agency, reported that in 2023 the Atlantic route saw a 161% increase compared to the previous year.

The UN says about 40,000 migrants made it to the Canary Islands last year.

Nearly 1,000 are known to have died or disappeared on the way. Although the real number is likely to be far higher.

## Biden struggles to contain conflict as Israel and Hezbollah on the brink

By Tom Bateman

US President Joe Biden has spent nearly a year vowing his determination to prevent the war in Gaza engulfing the wider Middle East. On Tuesday, he repeated that resolve in his last ever United Nations speech as president, as he addressed the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

"A diplomatic solution is still possible. In fact, remains the only path to lasting security," Biden said.

"Full scale war is not in anyone's interest," he added.

But the Israel-Lebanon crisis is now on the brink.

And Biden's calls for restraint from the podium of the UN, like his pleas for Israel and Hamas to finally reach a ceasefire and hostage release deal, are being heard in the hall but not in the region.

On Monday, Israel unleashed hundreds of airstrikes on Lebanon, inflicting the deadliest day on the country since the end of its bloody, sectarian civil war more than three decades ago. Israel's bombardment killed more than 500 people, according to Lebanese health officials.

Hezbollah, the Iran-backed armed group that dominates the country – reeling and damaged from Israel's wave of exploding pager attacks last week – launched hundreds of rockets into northern Israel, smashing homes and setting streets ablaze.

Once again the US is trying to restrain Israel, the key regional ally it arms, and urging its adversaries against escalating too, all the while seeking a diplomatic outcome that the sides themselves lack either the ability or will to agree.

Israel says it's acting to disarm the Lebanese militia so Israeli residents can return to their homes in the north. Hez-



bollah says it's been striking Israel for the past 11 months to deter and degrade Israeli attacks on Palestinians in Gaza. Months of shuttle diplomacy by the US envoy Amos Hochstein – building on already established UN Security Resolutions on Israel and Hezbollah – have come to nothing.

Instead, in another split screen moment as Biden was urging calm at the podium at the UN, the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu posted a video on X vowing: "We will continue to hit Hezbollah. He who has a missile in his living room and a rocket in his garage – he will not have a home."

The White House supports what it calls Israel's right to hit Hezbollah. But the often dysfunctional political relationship with the Israeli leadership has again become apparent over recent weeks, amid serious concerns in the administration that the exploding pager attacks and subsequent Israeli airstrikes could lead to all out war.

No call between Biden and Netanyahu was announced despite the crisis of the last week. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken recently made his tenth trip to the region since the 7 October attacks but for the first time did not

visit Israel. Critics both within and outside the administration have repeatedly blamed an inability of the White House to wield influence over Netanyahu on a failure to condition US weapons supply. The administration categorically rejects this, saying it is committed to Israel's defence.

President Biden always believed the key to solving the crisis on the Israel-Lebanon border, involving 11 months of cross border fire and tens of thousands of people displaced on either side, was instead clinching the ceasefire deal in Gaza. But this is badly stalled with few signs either side is willing to reach it. Blinken recently pinned this on a lack of "political will" by both Israel and Hamas.

The White House denies that it is pursuing a diplomatic effort doomed to defeat – and that President Biden, with four months left in office, has given up hope of achieving a breakthrough.

"No, he absolutely hasn't given up," White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said of Biden's attempts to reach a deal that would end the war in Gaza.

"There have been difficulties and  
*cont'd on pg 18*

# Sports News



## Sandals stay unbeaten in Business Basketball League

Sandals extended their unbeaten run in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Cool and Smooth Business Basketball League on Monday night.

Sandals maintained their perfect record by romping to their fourth win with an 88-49 victory against Lion Feast in the second game of triple header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Scotty Nelson converted 17 points; Keroi Lee sank 16 points and grabbed eight rebounds; T-Shawn Lewis scored 16 points and snatched seven rebounds; and Selassie Brathwaite had 12 points and

four assists for Sandals.

Baldwin Anthony sank 17 points and snatched six rebounds, and Felix Hamilton produced 17 points, seven rebounds, and four assists for Lion Feast, which suffered their fourth loss in as many games. After losing their first three matches, Lava Smoke Shop claimed their first win with a 63-57 victory against Eye Mobile Vision Care in Monday's opening game.

Lincoln Weekes produced a game-high 31 points; Michael Barton produced 14 points, 23 rebounds, five assists, and five blocks; and Jason Phillip scored 10 points

for the Lava Smoke Shop.

Jaylele Joseph had 14 points, five steals, and five blocks, and Tristan Richards scored 10 points for Eye Mobile Vision Care, which suffered their third loss in four games.

After winning their opening game, last year's third-place finishers, Richie's Shooterz, suffered defeat in their second outing, losing 49-54 against the Antigua Power Company in the last game on Monday.

Akeem Davis led the Antigua Power Company to their second win in three games. Davis sank 16 points,

Tristan Jacobs supported with 15 points, and Judah Ferris chipped in with 10 points.

Ariel Quallis had 14 points and six rebounds, and Nickon McGregor converted 14 points for Richie's Shooterz.

The business basketball league will continue with a triple header at the JSC Sports Complex on Wednesday (today).

Christos Supermarket United will meet Lion Feast at 6:30 pm, Lava Smoke Shop will take on the Antigua Power Company at 7:30 pm, and Sandals will face Sledge O'Ballers at 8:30 pm.

### *cont'd from pg 17*

setbacks. We've had challenges getting the [Israeli] prime minister across the line. We've had challenges getting Hamas's leader Sinwar across the line. But we're determined to keep at it," Mr Sullivan told CNN.

"The president this week in New York will be huddling with other leaders to try to bring about a ceasefire and hostage deal in Gaza and really critically, to try and avert an all-out war in the Middle East."

Behind the scenes here in New York, a stream of diplomacy is taking place. According to a senior state department

official, the US is presenting allies with potential plans to resolve the crisis between Israel and Hezbollah.

"We've got some concrete ideas we're going to be discussing with allies and partners this week to try to figure out the way forward on this," said the official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Pressed on what the "concrete ideas" were, the official would not be drawn, noting instead that while the US does not speak directly to Hezbollah, some of its allies gathered in New York do and these partners "might have a more refined sense of Hezbollah thinking so we

can stress test our ideas."

But the official also renewed US opposition to any Israeli ground invasion of Lebanon. And they rejected Israeli officials' reported belief that ramping up the conflict with Hezbollah could force them into cutting a diplomatic deal that would stabilise the situation on either side of the Israel-Lebanon border – a strategy referred to as "de-escalation by escalation".

"I can't recall, at least in recent memory, a period in which an escalation or intensification led to a fundamental de escalation and led to profound stabilisation of the situation," said the official.

**2024 MATCH SCHEDULE**

WED 25 SEP GAW v BR 7:00 PM GUYANA

## Andre Russell puts retirement on hold

After hinting at retirement from international cricket following the ICC Men's T20 World Cup back in June, West Indies all-rounder Andre Russell has made an about turn and is now aiming to parade his skills at the next global cricket showpiece in 2026.

Russell, who ahead of that World Cup, said he believes the region possesses enough young talent to fill the gap after his departure, in the same breath, declared that he would be happy to return, if needed.

As such, the 36-year-old Jamaican will stick around just a bit longer, thanks to some convincing from West Indies white ball head coach Darren Sammy.

Interestingly, Russell's return to international T20 action against England late last year, after a two-year absence, was also based on a conversation with Sammy, but beyond that, the explosive all-rounder pointed out that the emergence of exciting young talent in the region also influenced his decision to stay put—at least for another two years.

"I've talked with Sammy, and he said he wants me to keep playing some international cricket, and I think by looking around and seeing the talents that's in the Caribbean, I think I'm going to push my body and push myself to play international cricket for another two years," Russell



Andre Russell

declared.

One of the most feared all-rounders in T20 cricket, Russell, a two-time T20 World Cup winner for the West Indies, packs incredible power-hitting and athletic prowess that can change the course of a game single-handedly.

Though he has graced other formats of the game before, it is as a T20 legend, sought after by every franchise league in the world, that he will be remembered.

Russell has experience in over 500 T20 matches with over 8,000 runs to his

credit at a strike rate of just over 169. He also has over 450 wickets at a remarkable bowling average of 25.31.

Russell's ability to clear the boundary with ease and finish innings on a high note is unparalleled, a quality he consistently demonstrates, both internationally and in franchise leagues.

While he will be 38 at the time of the next T20 World Cup to be hosted jointly in India and Sri Lanka, Russell said he still has enough in the tank to significantly contribute to the team's future success both

on and off the field.

"I could have walked away from the game internationally-wise, but I just want to see the youngsters do well in terms of all-rounders. So I definitely want to play the World Cup of 2026 because there is a lot of talent that you know we have, and I want to help nurture those young talents," he said.

"I still can hit the ball anywhere I want to hit the ball, still bowling at a good pace, still fit, and can move around, so I don't see why I should stop," he added.

# Sports News



## Buckley's 3J's among winners in IBSC Tape Ball Classic

Buckley's 3J's were among the winners in the latest round of matches in the LL Supply Limited and Total Imports Island Boys Sports Club (IBSC) 20 over Tape Ball Classic on Sunday.

Buckley's 3J's romped to a crushing 165-run victory against PEL Desi Boys at the Potters playing field. Buckley's 3J's made 217 for five declared off 15.2 overs after

winning the toss and opting to bat.

Kenrick Scott slammed 88, Steve Martin hit 33, and Uri Smith made 22. Abishek Goud captured two for 25. In reply, Desi Boys were dismissed for 52 in 7.1 overs.

Satyjit Behera made 16, and Iverson Joseph got 14. Player of the match Richie Thomas captured four for 25, and Zavear Otto claimed four for 26.

Pete's Landscaping 300 trounced Mix Up Stars by 133 runs. 300 made 190 for eight off their 20 overs after being sent in to bat.

Damon Valentine struck 66, and Isiah Sheckles hit 39. Isiah Viville took three for 21, Alfred Jarvis claimed two for 20, and Karl Simon captured two for 24.

In reply, Mix Up Stars were dismissed for 57 in 10 overs. Mark Wright scored 16, and Alfred Jarvis got 15. Player of the match Lynton Africa snapped up five for 13, Vernal Isidore picked up two wickets for four runs, and Cheston Scotland claimed two for 11.

Bryson's Shipping and Insurance Bullets snatched a three-wicket win against the GP Eagles at the Powells playing field. GP Eagles made 188 for four off 20 overs after winning the toss and batting.

Kerry Mentore cracked 77 not out, Melvin Charles made 35, and Rolston "Triss" Phillip hit 32. Andra Samuel captured two for 28.

The Bullets achieved victory by scoring 191 for seven with three balls to spare. Man of the Match Deran Benta hammered 82, George "Nick" Elvin struck 48 not out, and Essan Warner made 28.

Dredgers beat PMS by eight wickets on a faster scoring rate in a



Deran Benta match affected by rain at Powells.

PMS were dismissed for 108 in 12.5 overs after winning the toss and electing to bat.

Vishual Gobin struck 39, and Charanlall RamJohn made 24. Player of the match J'Quan Athanaze grabbed four for 12, Justin Athanaze picked up two for 12, Mike France had two for 27, and Javaughn James claimed two for 28.

In reply, the Dredgers were 89 for two in seven overs when rain stopped play. Mervin Higgins slammed 56, and Tyrone Williams Jr. was not out on 16.



Lynton Africa



Jacqueline Williams

## Williams among all-female cast to officiate at Women's T20 World Cup

Jamaica's Jacqueline Williams is among 10 umpires and three match referees set to officiate in the ninth edition of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup scheduled for October 3 to 20.

Though being played in the United Arab Emirates, Bangladesh will still serve as host of the tournament, which will see 23 matches contested over 18 days in Dubai and Sharjah to crown a 2024 champion.

Along with Williams, who will be standing in a fourth ICC Women's T20 World Cup, the experienced group of umpires comprises seasoned officials, including Claire Polosak, who will be umpiring in her fifth, while Kim Cotton is also set to make a fourth Women's T20 World Cup appearance.

Both Williams and Cotton took charge of the final in Cape Town between hosts South Africa and eventual champions Australia last February.

Sue Redfern, who was the TV umpire for that final, is also back for her fourth appearance in the tournament.

At the other end of the spectrum, Sarah Dambanavana of Zimbabwe, will make her debut appearance.

The match referees' team features GS Lakshmi, who refereed her first T20I back in 2012 and oversaw the final in 2023. She is joined by Shandre Fritz and Michell Pereira, who will both be officiating in their second ICC Women's T20 World Cup.

ICC's Senior Manager of Umpires and Referees, Sean Easey, beamed with pride about the quality of the officiating team.

"The ICC is proud to be contributing to the advancement of women in our sport. To be announcing this all-female lineup of match officials for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 is wonderful.

"This group, selected as the most deserving umpires for this event following their recent form in bilateral and other cricket, are some of the very best from around the world.

"We are confident that they will

do a great job at this event. I wish them the best of luck as they oversee the world's top women's cricketers in what will be an exciting tournament for all involved," Easey said.

The ICC supports the ongoing development of all international umpires via a clear high performance officiating programme, through the appointment of ICC Umpire Coaches, by working with Full Member Board officiating managers and coaches to align practices, by employing two full-time data and digital video specialists to help review decisions, and by conducting regular performance reviews either online or in Dubai as the officials pass through on assignment.

Panel of Match Referees: Shandre Fritz, GS Lakshmi, and Michell Pereira. Panel of Umpires: Lauren Agenbag, Kim Cotton, Sarah Dambanavana, Anna Harris, Nimali Perera, Claire Polosak, Vrinda Rathi, Sue Redfern, Eloise Sheridan, and Jacqueline Williams.\*

## Antigua lose to St. Lucia at International Netball Series

Antigua and Barbuda's senior female team suffered defeat in their second match at the Fourth Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) International Netball Series in St. Lucia on Monday.

After snatching a surprising 39-37 victory against defending champions Grenada in their opening game, Antigua and Barbuda tumbled to a 38-55 defeat against St. Lucia in their second outing at the Beausejour Indoor Facility in Gros Islet.

Goal shooter Rayana Regis sank 34 of her 35 attempts, and goal attack Amey Lake scored three of her six shots for Antigua and Barbuda.

Goal shooter Merlessa Alfred converted 28 of her 35 attempts, and goal attack Dasha Eugene sank 21 of her 28 shots for St. Lucia.

Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Dominica also recorded wins in the other second-round matches in the eight-team round-robin regional competition.

Grenada rebounded from their opening-round loss with a 47-35 victory against the Cayman Is-

lands.

Goal shooter Amy Nixon sank 19 of her 21 attempts, goal shooter Carlene Alexander scored 17 of her 19 shots, and goal attack Celine Brown converted 11 of her 15 attempts for Grenada.

Goal shooter Kay Copeland sank 28 of her 33 attempts, and goal attack Rose Wilson converted eight of her 16 shots for the Cayman Islands.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines made it two wins in as many games, romping to an 87-8 victory against Anguilla, which suffered their second defeat in two matches.

Goal shooter Mary-Ann Fredericks scored 49 of her 50 shots, goal shooter Jamarah Coombs sank 20 of her 28 attempts, goal shooter Shellisa Davis converted 10 of her 16 attempts, and goal attack Kristiana Christopher scored eight of her nine shots for St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Zoey Roach scored eight of her 18 attempts for Anguilla.

The Commonwealth of Dominica also recovered from an opening round loss



Players of Antigua and Barbuda (yellow top) compete against Grenada during their opening match of the ECCB International Netball Series at the Beausejour Indoor Facility in Gros Islet, St. Lucia, on Sunday, September 22, 2024.

to surge to a commanding 58-16 victory against Montserrat, who crashed to their second loss in as many games.

Goal attack Galeine Gordan-Seraphine scored

sank 30 of her 34 attempts, and goal shooter Ann-Maria Panthier converted 22 of her 25 shots for Dominica.

Goal shooter Juana Osbourne scored 13 of her 36 shots for Montserrat.