



ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

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WIOC MAKES \$25 MILLION IN PROFITS



West Indies Oil Company records \$25 million in profit for 2023

The West Indies Oil Company convened its annual general meeting in St. John's on Thursday during which the Board of Directors reported to the shareholders that the company's profits continue to soar reaching a total of \$25 million in the last financial year, 2023.

Chief Executive Officer, Gregory Georges reported that despite a number of challenges, several of which are external and over which the company has no control, still, the company has instituted a number of measures to deal with these challenges.

He said the solutions to these challenges have three key elements; 1. Grow revenue and diversify the company's revenue base; 2. Optimize the way the company operates making its business processes as efficient as possible to reduce costs and 3. to enhance the talent within the organization by constant training and upskilling.

"We want to improve the human capital in our business by investing in our employees to 'build them up'. It is not just about attracting talented individuals to work for the company, but we



Gregory Georges also want to train them and retain them," he noted.

In terms of growing the business, Georges said the immediate focus will be on the company's core business which includes storage, wholesale of petroleum products and the sale of LPG to business and private consumers.

"We are looking to increase our margins on the products we sell on a daily basis and our storage business.

"We are looking to invest in more infrastructure such as storage tanks and to do more long-term deals with our current partners and we are also looking to diversify our business as we give serious consideration to investing in renewable energy," he explained.

Asked to forecast the prospects for the company over the next year, Georges said the aim is to increase profits to between \$26-27 million for the 2024 financial year.

Georges also indicated that the company is hoping to be able to increase dividend payments to over \$3.00 per share when it declares its earnings next year.



Education Minister Matthew tells students to ‘embrace the power of learning’

Education Minister Daryll Matthew is encouraging students in the nation’s school system to ‘embrace the power of learning’ adding that education is an important tool that will help transform their lives.

Speaking at the annual Grade Six National Assessment Awards ceremony on Thursday at the St. John’s Pentecostal Church, Minister Matthew underscored the value of education.

“It can open doors, transform lives, and give you the ability to make a difference in the world. Continue to be curious, continue to ask questions, and continue to strive for excellence in everything you do,” he urged the hun-



dreds of young people and their families attending the ceremony.

The minister congratulated the students on their individual achievements that propelled them to the point where they were honoured at the ceremony.

“You have worked incredibly hard, made sacri-



nces, and shown a level of commitment that deserves recognition. The results of these national assessments are proof of your dedication and perseverance. You’ve met the challenges head-on, and now you’re here to enjoy the fruits of your labor. I want you to know that the effort you have put in not only reflects your intelligence but also your determination and

resilience — qualities that will take you far in life,” the minister noted.

He also singled out what he termed the ‘support system’ comprising parents, guardians, teachers, and mentors. “You have been instrumental in the success we celebrate today. You’ve guided, encouraged, and supported these students every step of

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Local News



cont'd from pg 3
the way," he declared.

The event was a joint undertaking of the Ministry of Education and CIBC Caribbean, as title sponsor. The bank's Corporate Manager, Priscilla Leonce, highlighted the significance of the awards which were presented to the students during the ceremony.

"It is more than just a recognition of academic achievement; it is a testament to your ability to think critically, to analyze, and to communicate effectively. It reflects your capacity to work collaboratively and to demonstrate creativity in solving problems. These are not just skills for school; they are the very skills that will empower you to succeed in whatever paths you choose in the future," she noted.

The 2024 Top Grade Six National Assessment Student Award was presented to Elyze M. Henry of the Minoah Magnet Academy. Governor General's Deputy, Sir Clare Roberts presented her with the award. Henry also won the Minister of Education Award presented by Minister Matthew.

Minister Matthew also presented second place winner, Naliyah Lewis of Baptist Academy of Antigua and third place winner, Keira Weekes of St. Nicholas Primary. The top Male Student in the Grade Six Assessment was Jordan Lawrence of Baptist Academy of Antigua.

CIBC also presented starter account funds of \$1,000.00 to Elyze Henry, \$5000.00 for Naliyah Lewis and \$400.00 for Keira Weekes.



Antigua and Barbuda joins with global community in observing World Sight Day

Antigua and Barbuda continues to be a shining example to the global community in raising awareness about the importance of child eye health and the critical need for accessible and early eye care interventions.

As part of the observation of World Sight Day (October 10), the Antigua and Barbuda Mission in New York has played a pivotal role in hosting sight screenings and an exhibition at UNICEF House and the United Nations headquarters.

The events represent a collaborative effort between Antigua and Barbuda, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Friends of Vision Group, which was founded by Antigua and Barbuda's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Walton Webson who also serves as its co-chair.

Certified eye care pro-



fessionals from UN Friends of Vision Secretariat as well as members of Vision Spring and OneSight Foundation and the World Council of Optometry were on hand to conduct the screenings, dispense glasses and provide

advice. The events were open to all UN and UNICEF staff as well as those working in UN Missions.

"The UN Friends of Vision group, supported by our friends in the sight sector are pleased to host these

two screenings at the UN Head Quarters and UNICEF House to raise awareness of the global issue of poor vision, especially among children around the world who need access to affordable eye health," Ambassador Webson stated.

Nearly 400 UN staff members, including everyone from Chef de Cabinet Earle Courtenay Rattray and the Permanent Representatives of Greece, Cuba, and Haiti to UN security guards, received sight tests during the two events.

Speaking at the event Andrés Franco, Secretary of the Executive Board, UNICEF said "UNICEF house is the house of children, everything that matters to children matters to us, this event shows how important it is to take care of children's eyes."

Co-chair of the UN Friends of Vision Group Ambassador Fergal Mythen,

cont'd on pg 6



Local News



cont'd from pg 5

Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nation noted: “Eye health is an agenda that is so positive, it’s so achievable, so doable across the globe. Yes, today is about eye health, but it’s also about education, sustainable development, gender, but above all it’s about unleashing the potential of so many people.”

“Half of sight loss in children can be easily prevented or treated, most often with nothing more than a pair of glasses,” stated Caroline Casey, President of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB).

First Secretary Claxton Duberry has been spearheading the activities as coordinator on behalf of the Antigua and Barbuda Mission.

“The importance of eye care for our children cannot be overstated. It’s



a critical aspect of their overall health and development. I’m very proud that Antigua and Barbuda is taking a leading role in promoting this vital cause on the global stage.”

The event also featured a photography exhibition of images showcasing

the work of IAPB members in promoting child eye health. This year’s Love Your Eyes campaign for World Sight Day is highlighting the importance of children and young people leading the charge in advocating for eye care that is accessible, available and affordable.

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Guyana to review LIAT 2020 application to operate there

The Guyana Cabinet is preparing to review the application of the new LIAT 2020 airline to commence operations there within the next few weeks. This airline was established in the wake of the collapse and closure of LIAT 1974, and it has already begun serving multiple Caribbean destinations. As part of its growth strategy, LIAT 2020 is actively exploring additional routes to expand its service offerings throughout the region.



Egbert Field, the head of the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), confirmed to Guyana News

Source that the airline's application has been formally received and is currently being processed at the GCAA

level. To ensure transparency and gather community input, the GCAA recently published a public notice regarding the airline's application. This notice invites the public to submit any representations or objections they may have concerning the proposed operations.

Reports indicate that a number of objections have been received, although it is important to note that these concerns were primarily related to the operations of the previous LIAT airline, rather than the new entity. LIAT 2020 based in Antigua and Barbuda, where the government maintains majority ownership. This new airline aims to revitalize air travel in the Caribbean and provide reliable service to both passengers and cargo, addressing some of the gaps left by its predecessor. As the review process unfolds, stakeholders and the public are keenly watching to see how this development will impact regional air travel and connectivity.

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Celebrating Jetworth “Pat” Richardson: 40 Years of Sharing Barbuda’s Natural Beauty with the World

For four decades, Jetworth Pat Richardson has been a proud ambassador of Barbuda’s natural wonders, introducing visitors from around the world to the breathtaking beauty of the Frigate Bird Sanctuary. As a taxi operator and tour guide, Richardson has dedicated his life to sharing his deep knowledge and appreciation for the sanctuary, which is home to one of the largest colonies of frigate birds in the world.

Jetworth’s tours offer visitors not only an opportunity to witness these magnificent birds but also to experience an educational journey rooted in his passion for preserving Barbuda’s natural habitat. His work reflects the broader pride and environmental stewardship of the Barbudan people, who see the Frigate Bird Sanctuary as

a crucial eco-friendly area to be nurtured and protected, just as one would care for their own children.

Richardson has built a reputation for his warm hospitality and enthusiasm, turning every tour into a memorable experience for visitors. His expert knowledge, combined with his personal dedication to the sanctuary, has made him an influential figure in promoting the ecological significance of Barbuda’s natural treasures. His commitment to sharing the island’s beauty has inspired countless visitors and locals alike to embrace their role as guardians of Antigua and Barbuda’s unique environment.

Additionally, Jetworth actively encourages individuals who enjoy engaging with others to pursue opportunities in tourism. He believes that

sharing the stories, culture, and natural heritage of Antigua and Barbuda is one of the most fulfilling ways to contribute to the nation’s growing tourism industry.

The Antigua & Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association (ABHTA) proudly recognizes Richardson’s outstanding contribution to the tourism sector.

His 40 years of service and dedication to promoting Barbuda’s natural heritage have helped raise awareness of the importance of conservation and have played a significant role in the eco-tourism experience of visitors from around the world.

For more information on tours of the Frigate Bird Sanctuary or to book a tour with Mr. Richardson, please contact 1-268-721-3305.



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Statement for World Mental Health Day 2024

By Dr. Griffin C. Benjamin
 MD, MPH, MBA, DM

The Theme

October 10th is World Mental Health Day, 2024. Every year, for over thirty years, the international community has carried out a campaign to raise awareness of the importance of mental health in the lives of people around the world. This year, the celebration of our mental health is being done under the theme “It is Time to Prioritize Mental Health in the Workplace”. The World Federation for Mental Health has chosen this theme as a call to action by employers, employees and social organizations.

Healthy Lifestyle

A call to focus our attention on Mental Health in the Workplace resonates with everyone. More than 60% of the world population is in employment and they spend more than 60% of their time in the workplace. The other forty percent of the population is in school or at home as they rely on those who attend to work for economic and emotional support. It is well accepted that healthy lifestyle practices are founded principally around work and family life, evidenced by experience that employed people spend the other 40% of their time with their families.

Overcoming Challenges

Unemployment

It is estimated that only 10-15% of persons with serious mental health problems are in employment. Their absence from the workplace is a reflection on the quality of lifestyle associated with this segment of the population. Significantly, it could also reflect the overall negative attitude of the population towards persons with mental health problems. Even the small number of persons with mental health problems who are employed may choose not to

disclose their mental health issues to employers for fear of stigma and discrimination.

A systematic review done on the impact of unemployment among young people revealed a troubling connection between unemployment and mental health. High unemployment rates are associated with long term physical, mental and social difficulties. There is an increase in the incidents of cardiovascular diseases and mortality from alcohol related problems. These communities experience increased criminal behavior and negative lifestyle choices among young people. Furthermore, there is increased incidents of depression and anxiety, increased rates of suicide and alcohol and substance use problems.

Social Welfare Support

In practical terms, employment support is probably the most important social and mental health intervention that a society may provide for its citizens. Presently, it is not an integral part of the mental health services on offer. In developed countries of the world more than 20% of health budgets cater for mental health services when compared to less than 4% in the developing world. It is most likely that the social support benefits provided to the citizens of the developed world are integrated into their welfare systems and not used as political tools to control and dehumanize the vulnerable as is seen in many developing countries of the world.

Benefits of Workplaces

Employment is a positive and rewarding experience for any person. It allows an individual to utilize their physical, mental and social skills for their own development. Increased rates of employment will make people less reliant on state benefits and enhance their sense of self-worth and raise their self-esteem. A working person is

essentially a productive member of any society. Each worker contributes to the economy, nurture social cohesion and improve the quality of life for community members.

Stressful Workplaces

Some patterns of work can be very detrimental to the health of persons employed. Conditions of work are not favorable when work is organized around stressors that negatively affect the body and minds of people. Unfavorable working conditions could include long working hours, night shifts, weekend work, working around harmful substances and the consequences of are manifested by increased reports of absenteeism and presenteeism, burnout, low productivity.

It is true that some societies have a greater tolerance for the operations of negative workplaces. However, the right to work is an internationally recognized right. Companies and institutions that abuse the rights of workers must be held accountable by the greater community.

Call to Action

Work at home and flexible working hours are positive workplace strategies developed during the COVID 19 pandemic.

When workers are engaged and thriving in their workplaces, it creates a high-performance environment for the employee and the employer. Therefore, employers must make their employee Wellbeing a priority.

Every organization needs more resilient employees. Let us discuss the cost of poor employee Wellbeing on your business organization. We can help you partner with your employees to improve their Wellbeing.

It is time to reimagine the Mental Health and Wellbeing of your employee. We can work with you to help Create a thriving organization.

Second Dialogue under the United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme

Event Page: [Second Dialogue under the United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme 2024 | UNFCCC with webcast links.](#)

Website: [United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme | UNFCCC](#)

General information:

The Second Dialogue under the United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme took place on 02 – 03 October 2024 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt with the theme Ensuring support for people-centric and equitable just transition pathways with a focus on the whole-of-society approach and the workforce. Under this overall theme, the specific areas of focus of the dialogue were:

1. Approaches for empowering all actors and segments of the society for a fair and inclusive workforce transition to meet Par-

is Agreement goals;

2. Unpacking the full range of means of implementation (Finance, Technology and Capacity Building) for a just transition of the work force, exploring current approaches, opportunities and gaps; and

3. International cooperation and partnerships for people-centric and equitable just transitions.

The second hybrid dialogue saw a combined number of (virtual: 73, in-person:70) 143 participants total, from Parties and observer States, UN/IGOs and NGOs.

The Opening plenary was chaired by Harry Vreuls, Chair of the SBSTA, and the Introduction to the second hybrid dialogue was delivered by Nabeel Munir, Chair of the SBI, virtually. Welcome remarks were made by Khaled Hashem, Counselor, Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,



Daniele Violetti, Senior Director, Programmes Coordination, UNFCCC, and Iman Ustadi, Deputy Chief Negotiator, outgoing COP28 Presidency. A Scene Setting Presentation was delivered by Moustapha Kamal Gueye, Director, Priority Action Programme on Just Transitions, ILO.

Concrete outcomes:

The Dialogue provided a space for open and constructive engagement on the topic of integrating people-centric and equi-

table just transition pathways with a focus on the whole-of-society approach and the workforce, through a number of formats: Participants, consisting of Parties as well as Non-party stakeholders, including representatives of UNFCCC observer constituencies and UN entities, reflected in smaller groups during World café sessions, as well as in breakout discussion rooms which provided a space for more focused interaction, in addition to engaging in open discussions in a plenary setting.

The discussion, complemented by a series of scene-setting presentations, allowed participants to identify opportunities, best practices, actionable solutions, challenges, and barriers by responding to a series of guiding questions:

How can a holistic approach that integrates social, economic, and environmental dimensions be

cont'd on pg 11



cont'd from pg 10

adopted to support people-centric just transitions?

What strategies can be implemented to ensure that workforce transitions are equitable, create decent work, and uphold labor rights in line with nationally defined development priorities?

How can inclusive and participatory approaches be integrated into just transition pathways to ensure that all segments of society, including vulnerable groups, are actively engaged and represented?

What could be the role of social protection in the context of just transition pathways that leave no one behind?

How can the integration of upskilling, reskilling, and adaptable education systems ensure the success of just transition pathways?

How can inclusive consultation practices enhance social dialogue and stakeholder engagement in the context of just transitions?

How could financing mechanisms for just transitions of the work force be



designed to overcome investment barriers in developing countries and reach those in the most vulnerable situations?

How could international cooperation and public-private partnerships be designed and leveraged to accelerate and sustain technology transfer for just transitions of the work force in developing countries while fostering inclusivity?

How can capacity building efforts be enhanced to contribute to the successful implementation of just transition strategies in developing countries, and what metrics can be used to measure the effective-

ness and inclusiveness of capacity building programs in preparing workers and communities for these transitions?

Next steps:

Under the guidance of the SB Chairs, the secretariat will prepare an informal summary report, and an Annual Report ahead of COP29. There is an upcoming High Level Ministerial on Just Transition in November.

The overall big picture on how this fits into COP29:

CMA 5 decided that at least two dialogues shall be held each year as part of the United Arab Emirates just transition work programme,

with one to be held prior to the first regular sessions of the subsidiary bodies, starting with SB 60, and one prior to the second regular sessions of the subsidiary bodies, starting with SB 61.

This second dialogue was important for Parties as it provided a space and opportunity for parties to continue the conversation on the just transition work programme, and to gain valuable insights which they will carry with them on the road to Baku and will likely feed into the important considerations taking place at the upcoming High Level Ministerial on Just Transition.

The overall big picture on how this fits into climate action in general:

Just transition can be a powerful tool to enable ambitious climate action by generating the buy-in of all societal groups for transformational development, and the dialogues provide a safe space for parties to advance meaningful discussions which support just transition and climate action

MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT

Notice to Structural Engineering Service Providers

The Heritage Trust Antigua and Barbuda Inc. (HTAB), entrusted with the responsibility for the restoration of Government House, is inviting structural engineering service providers to bid for services required for the main house on the Government House property.

Information regarding the specific areas of work are included in the bid document.

Please note that all work must adhere to the government regulations and industry best practices, with special consideration given to the historical significance of the site.

Hardcopies of the briefing document may be collected from Government House. Alternatively, clarification of the brief may be sought in the first instance from HTAB Directors, Dr G. Howell (gabihowell@gmail.com) or Mrs Henderson-Howell (janey-howell@gmail.com).

Opinion

Overlooked: World Bank's Report on equity and growth ignores Caribbean realities

By Sir Ronald Sanders

On Tuesday, October 8, I went to a meeting at the World Bank and listened with growing disappointment to a presentation on "Taxing Wealth for Equity and Growth," supposedly focused on Latin America and the Caribbean region.

I was less disappointed about the lack of any attention on the Caribbean and the focus on Latin America. With great unhappiness I have come to expect this distortion from all global financial institutions. It seems that the Caribbean is too small to matter, except when strictures have to be placed on initiatives for achieving social stability through financial measures. But as the representative of a Caribbean government (Antigua and Barbuda) and as a regionalist, sensitive to the implications for every Caribbean Community (CARICOM) country on the situation of all others, I was more disturbed about the paucity of data presented about Caribbean countries and the lack of any analysis on the sub-region.

Neither the October 8 presentation nor the full report released on October 9 provided any reason for optimism that the World Bank is addressing the real challenges of promoting equity and growth in the Caribbean. The

report, a precursor to discussions at the Bank's upcoming annual meeting, focused solely on "Taxing Wealth for Equity and Growth" and ignored the measures CARICOM states have long advocated as essential to achieving these goals.

The report fails to mention critical measures, such as: adopting the multidimensional vulnerability index as a criterion for concessional financing—a proposal actively advocated by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and CARICOM at various global forums but not yet fully integrated into global financial policies. Additionally, debt relief, through mechanisms such as forgiveness and restructuring, remains a critical issue for the region. While some debt relief efforts, like the IMF's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust (CCRT) and the G20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), have helped developing nations during crises, these programs primarily benefited low-income countries outside the Caribbean. Caribbean nations continue to struggle with high debt burdens and need more targeted solutions from international financial institutions.

The report also overlooks the urgent need for improved recovery windows for climate-related disasters. De-



Sir Ronald Sanders

spite irrefutable evidence of accelerating climate change, including projections that the world is on track to exceed the 1.5°C threshold within the next decade, financial responses for vulnerable Caribbean nations remain inadequate. The Caribbean's vulnerability to extreme weather events, exacerbated by climate change, makes the lack of focused attention on these issues especially concerning.

The report highlights two potential wealth tax sources. The first, championed by the leaders of Brazil and France, proposes a 2% levy on the world's 3,000 wealthiest billionaires. However, as of 2024, Latin America and the Caribbean together have only 153 billionaires, with Brazil alone accounting for 68, and Mexico for 20. CARICOM countries likely have very few billionaires—if any—with most wealth in the re-

gion concentrated in larger Latin American economies. For instance, Carlos Slim of Mexico, with a fortune of \$102 billion, and Eduardo Saverin of Brazil, with \$28 billion, dominate the region's billionaire rankings. A 2% tax on such a small number of individuals would barely generate significant revenue, especially for smaller Caribbean countries. In small nations like Antigua and Barbuda, where there may be dozens of millionaires, it is unlikely that any billionaires exist.

Moreover, as the report itself notes, taxing liquid assets is particularly challenging in countries with weak enforcement, where wealth can be easily moved offshore, a concern highlighted by the UNDP during its examination of wealth trends in Latin America and the Caribbean.

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The report then shifts its focus to taxing property, claiming that it is “a relatively fixed and easily identifiable asset” and thus less prone to evasion.

While this may be true, the Bank’s statement reveals a disconnection from the historical, social, and cultural realities of Caribbean societies. A legacy of slavery, indentured labour and worker exploitation left the majority of people in the sub-region with little or no property, though owning “a piece of the rock” and a home remains a deeply ingrained aspiration. Since gaining independence, CARICOM governments have made it a priority to encourage land and home ownership. Increasing property taxes now would undermine this policy, potentially stripping many persons of the very properties they worked so hard to acquire.

The report notes that the low contribution of property taxes to total tax revenues in Latin America and the Caribbean (2%) stems from outdated and inaccurate property valuations, often far below market value. While this broad statement may not fully reflect the Caribbean’s reality, it does raise an important point: improving property valuations and tax collection systems should be examined across the region.

Alarmingly, the report asserts that the Latin American and Caribbean region is “close to vanquishing inflation” and that lower interest rates will ease stress on households and banking sectors, potentially spurring economic growth. While this may hold true for some Latin American countries, such as Brazil and Peru, it overlooks the unique causes of inflation in Caribbean nations. Most Caribbean inflation is imported from the region’s largest trading partner, the United States, where competitive, subsidized agricultural production contrasts sharply with the high costs of small-scale farming in the Caribbean, including rising input costs.

Furthermore, Caribbean countries, excluded from concessional financing from institutions like the World Bank, are forced to borrow on the international commercial market, where interest rates remain high. Although competition among banks and credit unions in the region has led to recent reductions in interest rates, government borrowing from local banks risks crowding out private sector investment.

The World Bank’s report is useful in acknowledging that “progress on poverty and inequality remains slow” in Latin

America and the Caribbean. This growing issue lies at the heart of tensions both within and between states, particularly in smaller economies like those in the Caribbean, which are often overlooked in global financial discussions. It is something to which the Bank should formulate focussed solutions.

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



Walk for the Cure

Saturday, October 12th, 2024

Venue: West Indies Oil Sports Field - Friars Hill Road
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Price: Adults \$50, Kids \$25 (Groups of 10 or more \$40)

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Walk for
the cure

TD Bank fined \$3bn in historic money laundering settlement

By Natalie Sherman

TD Bank, one of Canada's biggest lenders, has agreed to pay more than \$3bn (£2.3bn) and pleaded guilty to criminal charges in the US after allowing drug cartels and other criminals to transfer hundreds of millions of dollars in illicit funds.

Prosecutors said the bank operated with inadequate guards against money laundering for nearly a decade, failing to act even when staff flagged obvious cases of abuse, such as a customer making daily deposits of \$1m in cash.

The lender is now facing restrictions on its growth in the US - as well as the biggest fine ever under anti-monetary laundering law.

The chief executive of TD Bank said the bank was taking "full responsibility" for its failures.

Bharat Masrani said the bank had the financial strength to weather the situation and would be making "the investments, changes and enhancements required to deliver on our commitments".

The bank said it would be a multi-year process, but it had already taken some steps to overhaul its anti-money laundering programme, adding more than 700 new staff specialised in the issue.

"This is a difficult chap-



ter in our bank's history. These failures took place on my watch as CEO and I apologise to all our stakeholders," he said on Thursday.

Mr Masrani announced last month he would retire in April 2025 after a decade at the bank's helm.

TD Bank is the largest lender in US history to plead guilty to failures under the Bank Secrecy Act and the first to plead guilty to conspiracy to commit money laundering, the US justice department said.

The growth restriction its US retail business faces under its agreement with regulators is unusual - reserved for severe cases of wrongdoing, such as the fake account fraud uncovered at Wells Fargo several

years ago.

Attorney General Merrick Garland said the bank was cooperating with the investigation and further individual prosecutions were expected.

"By making its services convenient for criminals, TD Bank became one," he said.

At a press conference announcing the charges, US officials said the bank - the 10th largest in the US - had "starved" its compliance programmes of investment, even as it grew.

By 2018, it failed to monitor more than 90% of the transactions on its network, activity worth more than \$18tn, prosecutors said at a press conference.

The gaps in compliance were so well-known inter-

nally that staff joked that the bank's motto - "America's most convenient bank" - was marketed toward criminals, they said.

Officials said one customer used TD Bank to launder more than \$470m in drug proceeds, making large cash deposits and bribing staff with gift cards.

The scheme allowed payments from fentanyl users to flow back to drug networks in Mexico and China, officials said.

Officials said another scheme involved participation of five bank staff, who helped to issue dozens of ATM cards, facilitating the transfer of \$39m in illicit funds to Colombia.

TD is the sixth largest bank in North America by *cont'd on pg 15*

One dead, 12 police injured as riot in Martinique escalates

A new wave of unrest on the French Caribbean island of Martinique has resulted in one death and numerous injuries as protests over high prices escalate.

Authorities reported Thursday that a man succumbed to gunshot wounds amid violent clashes between demonstrators and police, which also left 12 officers injured.

The island, home to approximately 350,000 residents, has faced weeks of turmoil fuelled by rising living costs.

AFP reports that from Wednesday night into Thursday, protesters looted shops, set up burning barricades, and clashed with law enforcement.

According to the local prefecture, the deceased was found by police responding to looting reports at a shopping centre in Robert.

He was later declared dead in the hospital, prompting an investigation into the circumstances of his death as authorities confirmed that police did not fire their weapons during the unrest.

Preliminary reports indicated that among the injured



Protests escalate in Martinique on Wednesday night into Thursday morning. Photo: Martinique la 1ère FB

officers, one suffered gunshot wounds. Sources also revealed that at least three stores and several parking lots were set ablaze during the riots.

Clashes continued throughout the night, with burnt-out vehicles obstructing traffic on a major road in Fort-de-France, the island's capital.

Footage shared on social media depicted a burning barricade on the ring road

and projectiles being hurled at vehicles attempting to navigate the area. By early morning, firefighters were still extinguishing smouldering debris in the city.

Schools across the island remained closed on Thursday as a precaution.

Earlier in the week, four officers were reported injured while dismantling a roadblock in the town of Carbet.

The unrest stems from

long-standing grievances among residents of France's overseas territories regarding the high cost of living. In Martinique, food prices are reported to be 40 per cent higher than in mainland France.

The protests, initiated by the Assembly for the Protection of Afro-Caribbean Peoples and Resources (RPPRAC) in early September, demand that food prices be adjusted to match those on the mainland.

In response to the violence, authorities previously imposed a nighttime curfew in several neighbourhoods of Fort-de-France and Lamentin, though that measure has since been lifted.

cont'd from pg 14

assets and serves over 27.5 million customers around the world.

The settlement announced on Thursday will include a period of outside monitoring.

The penalties includes \$1.8bn to the

justice department and \$1.3bn to the Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, as well as payments to other regulators including the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency and the Federal Reserve.

Shares plunged more than 5% on the news.

Suriname: Maroons call for respect, demand land rights

CMC - Members of various Indigenous communities are marking Maroon Day on Thursday with a warning that they are not prepared to “give up our traditional habitats without a fight”.

“It is time for the Surinamese government to take responsibility and recognize the land rights of the Okanisi Maroon community and those of the other Maroon and Indigenous communities. We demand immediate action,” said the Gaanma (the paramount chief) of the Okanisi people, Bono Velantie.

“Any further delay will be seen as a deliberate attempt to deprive us of our rightful heritage. We are prepared to continue this fight with all legal means available, determined to defend our rights as our ancestors did,” he added.

Velantie, who has been appointed for life by the Maroon people and is also recognised and sworn in by the Surinamese government, said the Okanisi people will no longer be misled by the continued delay and lack of respect of the Surinamese government regarding the recognition of land rights.

“For centuries we have lived on the land of our ancestors, lands that were fought for and protected by their blood, sweat and sacrifices.



Gaanman Bono Velantie of the Okanisi Maroons. Photo: CMC

“These lands are more than just pieces of earth; they are the soul of our people, the source of our culture, our identity and our existence,” he said.

“I, the Gaanman of the Okanisi people, da Bono Velantie, speak emphatically: we will not give up our traditional habitats without a fight. Our rights to them are non-negotiable. The continued delays and evasive attitude of the government do not do justice to us, our communities and our heritage.

“It is a gross insult to us. This is not just a legal issue, but a struggle to preserve our dignity, our livelihood, our history and our future,” Velantie said, reminding the

country that “on this day, October 10, Maroon Day, we commemorate the historic victory of our ancestors in 1760 who their freedom with courage, struggle and dignity.

“If you ask me, there is nothing to celebrate as long as the Surinamese government continues to refuse to recognise our land rights.

“The politicians who organise parties, give nice speeches, but their words sound hollow as long as our rights to the land, for which our ancestors fought, are not guaranteed.”

Velantie said he is calling on “all Maroons and Indigenous people to stand up together for our land rights.

“This is the moment to

stand up like our ancestors and to defend our ancestral areas, our land rights, with all legal means.

“We, the Maroons, stand strong, but our strength is even greater when we fight in unity with our Indigenous brothers and sisters. Together we can ensure that our land rights are recognized and respected.”

He said he also wanted to “make it clear that I am not in favour of changing the group name MARRONS. This name is a tribute to our ancestors who fought for their freedom”.

The Surinamese Maroon culture is one of the best-preserved pieces of cultural heritage outside of Africa.



Eritrea's President Isaias Afwerki (R) has been holding talks with his Egyptian counterpart Abdul Fattah al-Sisi (C) and Somalia's Hassan Sheikh Mohamud (L) in Asmara.

Eritrea, Egypt and Somalia cement 'axis against Ethiopia'

By Teklemariam Bekit

The leaders of Egypt, Somalia and Eritrea – countries which all have strained relations with Ethiopia – have been meeting in the Eritrean capital, Asmara.

An Eritrean statement wrapping up the summit made reference to “respect for the sovereignty... and territorial integrity of the countries in the region”.

This could be taken as a pointed reference to landlocked Ethiopia's ambitions for access to a sea port, but the country was not specifically mentioned.

A recent diplomatic disagreement has pushed Somalia into closer ties with Egypt and Eritrea, both of which have long-standing disputes with Ethiopia.

There have been fears that the growing tension could spill over into some sort of conflict.

“This is an axis against [Ethiopian capital] Addis Ababa,” Hassan Khannenje, director of the Horn International Institute for Strategic Studies, told the BBC's Focus on Africa programme.

“I think it's an attempt to bring the hate together in trying to increase pressure against Addis Ababa.”

But Somalia's Information Minister Daud Aweis denied this saying that the meeting was only about co-operation between the three countries.

“We are not determined to instigate anything against Addis Ababa,” he told Focus on Africa.

“Addis Ababa is our neighbour

we have been co-operating together for a long time, although later on their leadership came up with a factor of instability in the region. But still we stand for peace and we don't think that such a meeting in Asmara has anything to do with Ethiopia.”

A photograph released by Eritrea in the wake of the meeting shows President Isaias Afwerki clasping hands with his counterparts from Egypt, Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, and Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.

A statement said the three men had “agreed to... enhance the Somali state institutions to confront various internal and external challenges and to enable the Somali National Federal Army to confront terrorism in all its forms”.

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22 killed in Israeli strike on Beirut, Lebanon says

Twenty-two people have been killed and 117 injured in Israeli air strikes on central Beirut, Lebanon's Health Ministry said.

BBC reporters heard loud explosions echoing from the site of a strike in Bachoura, a small Shia area in the Lebanese capital. Rescuers were seen digging through rubble at the scene.

Ambulances rushed many injured to the American University hospital.

Unconfirmed media reports suggested the apparent target was Wafiq Safa, Hassan Nasrallah's brother-in-law and one of Hezbollah's high-ranking security officials. The group's media office has not yet commented.

The Beirut strikes came after two relatively calm days in Lebanon's capital, which has felt unusual after intensive strikes in recent weeks.

There was no warning beforehand.

This is the third time Israel has launched air strikes on the city outside of the suburb of Dahieh, where it has struck repeatedly, killing Hezbollah commanders and destroying munitions caches.

One woman outside the hospital, who did not want to be named, said she was in the building next-door to the blast and heard the explosion.

She said the building which was hit was entirely residential, adding that it was about four or five floors high. One of her relatives was being treated for head injuries.

The Beirut attack came hours after two Indonesian peacekeepers were injured in southern Lebanon when an Israeli tank fired at a watchtower, according to the UN.

An observation tower at a UN base in Naqoura was directly hit, causing the peacekeepers to fall, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (Unifil) said in a statement.

Unifil is a UN peacekeeping mission created in 1978, monitoring hostilities and helping to ensure humanitarian access to civilians in southern Lebanon.

The UN said Israeli forces had "repeatedly hit" UN positions in the last 24 hours. Israeli soldiers are also accused of deliberately shooting at the cameras and lights at two other Unifil bases.

The IDF said its troops had fired from the area around the base after ordering members of the base to remain in "protected places".

Both peacekeepers were not seriously injured but remain in hospital, the UN said, adding that deliberate attacks on its peacekeepers were a "grave violation of international law".

In a separate incident, Israeli soldiers fired at a base in Naqoura, "hitting the entrance to the bunker where

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This was Sisi's first visit to Asmara, while the Somali president had already been three times this year.

Ethiopia has for years been a staunch backer of the government in Mogadishu in its fight against al-Qaeda-linked militant group al-Shabab.

But Somalia is furious that Ethiopia signed a preliminary deal at the beginning of this year with the self-declared republic of Somaliland to lease a section of its coastline. Soma-

lia sees Somaliland as part of its territory.

Meanwhile, Addis Ababa and Cairo have been at loggerheads for more than a decade over Ethiopia's construction of a vast hydroelectric dam on the River Nile. Egypt sees this as a possible threat to the volume of water flowing down the river, which it relies on.

Last month, an Egyptian ship delivered a significant consignment of military equipment to Somalia.

This came after two

Egyptian military planes landed in the Somalia capital with arms and ammunition in August.

In 2018, it was hoped that the fractious relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which followed the bloody border war two decades earlier, were over.

It was then that Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed signed a "declaration of peace and friendship" with Eritrea.

The agreement won him the Nobel Peace Prize the following year.

But ties between the

Horn of Africa neighbours again deteriorated following the end of the two-year civil war in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region, which borders Eritrea.

Asmara had been an ally of the Ethiopian government in that conflict but has been lukewarm about the accord that ended the fighting in November 2022.

Relations were further aggravated by Abiy's pronouncement last year that his country wanted to secure access to a port on the Red Sea.



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peacekeepers were sheltering, and damaging vehicles and a communications system,” the UN added.

An Israeli drone was also spotted flying above the bunker entrance.

Also in Naqoura, Hezbollah said it fired rockets at Israeli soldiers on the ground and used guided missiles to destroy a tank heading towards the area, leading to casualties.

There are now four divisions of Israeli soldiers fighting inside Lebanon as it continues its ground operations against Hezbollah, launched on 30 September.

A spokesperson for Unifil told the BBC on Thursday the force was “alarmed” and “deeply concerned” by the Israeli army’s activity in the area where peacekeeping troops are based. Positions hit by Israeli forces are well known as UN sites, Andrea Tenenti said, adding it would be important to have a discussion with Is-

raeli authorities “to understand what happened”.

Since 1978, Unifil has been operating in southern Lebanon, between the so-called “Blue Line” - the unofficial boundary separating Lebanon from Israel and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights - and the Litani river, about 30km (20 miles) to the north.

Last week, Unifil refused to leave its positions near the Blue Line after being ordered to do so by the IDF.

There are around 10,000 Unifil military peacekeepers in Lebanon, from 50 contributing countries. There are also about 800 civilian staff.

Indonesia, where the injured peacekeepers are from, supplies more than 1,200 troops to Unifil, more than any other country.

The defence minister in Italy, which contributes more than 1,000 troops to Unifil, said the incidents were “intolerable” and must be

“carefully and decisively avoided”.

Around 190 rockets were fired from Lebanon into Israel by Hezbollah on Thursday, the Israeli military said.

Earlier on Thursday, the Lebanese ministry of public health said an Israeli air strike on the village of Karak in eastern Lebanon had killed four people, injuring 17.

Lebanon’s government says as many as 1.2 million people have fled their homes over the past year.

Hostilities in the region have escalated steadily since Hezbollah began firing rockets into northern Israel on 8 October 2023, the day after its ally Hamas’s deadly attack on southern Israel, which killed about 1,200 people. A further 251 were taken to Gaza as hostages.

Since 7 October, nearly 42,000 people have been killed during Israel’s offensive in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run health ministry.

Sports News



ABICE and Clare Hall make winning starts in Under-20 boys division

The Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education (ABICE) and Clare Hall Secondary got off to winning starts in the Under-20 Boys Division in the Ministry of Sports, Cool and Smooth, Joma Patrick C. Whyte Cup on Wednesday.

Karique Knigh and Imar Nicholas each scored twice as ABICE romped to an emphatic 7-0 victory against Jennings Secondary in their opening match of the 2024 secondary schools' football league at the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park.

Knight scored in the 11th and 50th minutes, and Nicholas had conversions in the 29th and 45th minutes.

The other goals for ABICE were scored by Malik Charles in the 18th minute, player of the match Jahlanie

Barzey in the 58th minute, and Rasheim Richards in the 66th minute.

It was the second defeat in as many matches for Jennings Secondary after suffering a 4-0 loss against defending champion Antigua State College in their opening encounter.

Clare Hall Secondary School kicked off their campaign by snatching a 2-1 victory against Irene B. Williams Secondary in their opening encounter at the Clare Hall School playing field.

Robert Jeffrey scored in the 8th minute, and Leon Cort had a 64th-minute conversion for Clare Hall Secondary. Najae Mirton scored in the 35th minute for Irene B. Williams Secondary.

cont'd on pg 21



Jahlanie Barzey of ABICE

Anjo Wholesale stay unbeaten in Business Basketball League

Anjo Wholesale extended their unbeaten run in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Cool and Smooth Business Basketball League on Wednesday evening.

Anjo Wholesale claimed their seventh win in as many games with an 81-65 victory against winless Christos Supermarket United in the opening game of a double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Steven Andrew shot a tournament-best 60 points and had four assists and four steals for Anjo Wholesale.

sale.

David Mensah converted 19 points and grabbed six rebounds, and Delroy Foster Jr. sank 15 points and claimed 10 rebounds for Christos Supermarket United, which crashed to their 10th defeat in as many games.

H. Wright Promotions secured their eighth win in nine matches by snatching a 51-46 victory against the Antigua Power Company in Wednesday's second game.

Donte Trimmingham shot a game-high 23 points for H. Wright Promotions.

Tristan Jacobs scored 19 points and snatched nine rebounds, and Sergio Symister had 10 points, nine rebounds, and four steals for the Antigua Power Company, which suffered their third defeat in eight encounters.

The business basketball league will continue with a double header at the JSC Sports Complex on Saturday.

Lion Feast will take on the Antigua Power Company at 6:45 pm, and the Board of Education will meet the Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board at 7:45 pm.



The Royalton Chic will go in search of their second win during the fourth round of matches in the 2024 JOMA Caribbean Ministry of Sports Business Football League Championship this weekend. (Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Sports)

Action resumes in the Business Football League this weekend

The 2024 JOMA Caribbean Ministry of Sports Business Football League Championship will continue with the fourth round of matches at four venues on Saturday. His Majesty's Prison (HMP) United will face West Indies Oil Company (WIOC) at 4:45 pm in one of three matches at

the Radio Range playing field in Ottos.

The General Post Office will tackle the Immigration Department at 6:15 pm, and Macky Enterprises will take on the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHAPA) at 7:30 pm.

At Jennings, Public

Works Department (PWD) Asphalt will tackle Hermitage Hotel at 4:45 pm, the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will challenge Cocos/Keyonna at 6:15 pm, and Royalton Strikers will oppose the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus (UWI FIC) at 7:30 pm.

At Golden Grove, the Antigua Rainforest will challenge the Antigua Plumbing and Hardware Center at 4:45 pm, the Antigua Port Authority will take on Sandals at 6:15 pm, and defending champions APUA Telecoms will clash with the Ministry of Tourism at 7:30 pm.

At the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park, Fresh Acres Enterprise will meet the St. John's Development Corporation at 4:45 pm, APUA Water will oppose Royalton Chic at 6:15 pm, and the Ministry of Agriculture will tackle Galley Bay Resort at 7:30 pm.

cont'd from pg 20

It was also the second defeat in two outings for Irene B. Williams Secondary after suffering a 2-0 loss against Princess Margaret School in their opening encounter.

The secondary schools' football league will continue with three more second round matches in the Under-20 Boys Division on Friday (today) at 3 pm.

Defending champions Antigua State College will clash with All Saints Secondary at the Mack Pond playing field in All Saints.

Princess Margaret School will entertain St. Anthony's Secondary School at the PMS playing field, and Ottos Comprehensive will launch their campaign against Antigua Grammar School at the Radio Range playing field in Ottos.

Nadal to end stellar career after injury-hit spell

PARIS (Reuters) - Rafa Nadal will call time on his illustrious but injury-plagued career after next month's Davis Cup Finals, the 22-times Grand Slam champion announced on Thursday, as one of the greatest players in the sport prepares for an emotional farewell.

Nadal, who won a record 14 French Open titles, had said previously he expected to retire this year after a hip injury that required surgery limited his appearances in 2023.

The 38-year-old was a surprise selection for the Nov. 19-24 Davis Cup Final 8 in Malaga, after last competing at the Paris Olympics in July and subsequently missing the US Open and Laver Cup over fitness concerns.

"I am here to let you know I am retiring from professional tennis," Nadal said in a video posted on social media.

"The reality is it has been some difficult years, these last two especially. I don't think I have been able to play without limitations.

"It is obviously a difficult decision, one that has taken me some time to make, but in this life, everything has a beginning and an end, and I think it's the appropriate time to put an end to a career that has been long and much more successful than I could



Rafael Nadal

have ever imagined," added the former world number one.

Nadal, who has won two Australian Opens, two Wimbledon crowns and four US Opens plus Olympic gold and four Davis Cups on top of his multiple French Open titles, said finishing his career in Spanish colours at the team event felt right.

He will link up again with four-times major champion Carlos Alcaraz after the duo played together at the Paris Games.

"I am very excited that my last tournament will be the final of the Davis Cup and representing my country," said Nadal.

"I think I've come full circle since one of my first great joys as a professional

tennis player was the Davis Cup final in Sevilla in 2004.

Nadal has been no stranger to injuries in his 23-year career and he sustained a niggling hip problem at the Australian Open in early 2023 before missing the French Open later that year and having an operation to try to resurrect his career.

However, minor issues and fitness woes limited him to only 23 matches in the last two seasons.

Nadal returned to his favourite hunting ground of Roland Garros this season, but was beaten in the opening round by German Alexander Zverev and politely refused a celebratory farewell in the hope of a final hurrah next year.

Dubbed the "King of

Clay" for his jaw-dropping 112-4 win-loss record at the French Open, Nadal's last triumph at the tournament in Paris came in 2022.

Nadal will hang up his racket two years after great rival and Swiss maestro Roger Federer, leaving record 24-times major winner Novak Djokovic of Serbia as the only member of the "Big Three" of men's tennis still active.

Federer led the tributes to Nadal on social media, saying that he had hoped the day his friend announced his retirement would never come.

Nadal is now expected to receive what promises to be an emotional tribute at the French Open next year, with a similar celebration likely at the Davis Cup on home soil.

cont'd from pg 24

again provided the breakthrough, when the off-spinner had Mostary stumped in the 13th over.

Mostary's dismissal triggered a Bangladesh batting collapse, and West Indies leg-spinner Afy Fletcher picked up two for 25.

Sultana hit four fours but couldn't generate any more momentum with the lower middle order, and Bangladesh had to settle for a below-par total despite a slow Sharjah track.

In reply, Matthews brought her power game in 52 off 45 balls for the first wicket with Stafanie Taylor.

Matthews provided the punchy start before she was bowled in the eighth over.

Taylor scored 27 off 29 balls, including three



West Indies captain Hayley Matthews bats during their ICC Women's T20 World Cup match against Bangladesh in Sharjah, UAE, on Thursday October 10, 2024. (Getty Images)

fours, before retiring hurt. Campbelle scored 21 off 16 seven balls, including two sixes, to wrap up the victory. It didn't disrupt the West Indies, however, as Shemaine smacked an unbeaten 19 off

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Windies beat Bangladesh at Women's T20 World Cup

SHARJAH, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Off-spinner Karishma Ramharack took four for 17 as the West Indies beat Bangladesh by eight wickets in the Women's T20 World Cup at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium in the United Arab of Emirates on Thursday.

Ramharack's spell restricted Bangladesh to 103 for eight off their allotted 20 overs. Skipper Hayley Matthews led the chase with 34 off 22 balls, hitting six boundaries, to help the West Indies achieve victory at 104 for two in 12.5 overs and boost their hopes of reaching the semi-finals.

The West Indies moved atop Group B with their second win in three games.

The West Indies could still need another win in their final group game against England to qualify for the semis.

England, who have two games remaining, will face Scotland on Sunday, then take on the West Indies next Tuesday.

Second-placed South Africa also needs a win in their last group game against



West Indies spinner Karishma Ramharack, center, celebrates with captain Hayley Matthews after claiming a wicket against Bangladesh in their ICC Women's T20 World Cup match in Sharjah, UAE, on Thursday October 10, 2024.

Bangladesh on Saturday to advance to the semi-finals. Tournament host Bangladesh has lost all three of their games.

Ramharack was in ac-

tion early, having Bangladesh opener Shathi Rani stumped for nine and Dilara Akter bowled for 19.

But Shobana Mostary (16) revived the innings in

a 40-run partnership with skipper Nigar Sultana, who top-scored with 39 off 44 balls.

However, Ramharack

cont'd on pg 23