

SIR GERALD RETIRES



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Sir Gerald retires from the Speakership

Sir Gerald Watt, who occupied the Speakership in the House of Representatives for just over ten years, has formally stepped down from the post, bringing an end to an illustrious career of public service in Antigua and Barbuda.

The distinguished attorney, former politician and businessman, read a letter in which he said that the time has come for him to turn over the Speakership to 'younger, fresher legs'. He thanked the prime minister for the appointment and for the opportunity to serve as Speaker for the past ten plus years.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne led the way as the House went into special session on Monday to provide an opportunity for the members to pay tribute to Sir Gerald. The prime minister recalled Sir Gerald's many years of service as a member of the House first in 1971-76, to chairman of ABEC to the Speakership.

"You have had an exemplary career; one that spans sixty-odd years. To the credit of your own commitment to self-development, your discipline and your innate skills, you can be described as a lucky man who at 85 years of age, is still in con-



Sir Gerald Watt

control of his faculties," the prime minister observed.

PM Browne also called on Sir Gerald to serve as a mentor to the incoming speaker and to remain someone upon whom he can

turn to from time to time for advice and counsel. "You are an icon; someone upon whose shoulders we stand because of your contributions," he noted.

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REQUIREMENT:

- **Education:** At least 5 CXC subjects, including English and Maths.
- **Technical Skills:** Computer literate with working knowledge of Microsoft Office.
- **Driving License:** Must have a valid C1 driver's licence and a clean driving record.
- **Experience:** Two years' experience in a supervisory capacity.

IDEAL CANDIDATE:

- **Punctual and Organized:** Demonstrates punctuality and strong organizational skills.
- **Career Motivated:** Driven by career growth and professional development.
- **Team Player:** Enjoys helping others and works well in a team environment.
- **Respectful and Conflict-Resilient:** Shows respect to all team members and can handle customer conflicts effectively.

Service Centre Advisor

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- **Communication Skills:** Excellent verbal and written communication abilities.
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- **Educational Background:** At least 5 CXC subjects, including Math and English.

IDEAL CANDIDATE:

- **Punctual and Organized:** Demonstrates reliability and strong organizational skills.
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- **Team Player:** Works well in a team setting and enjoys helping others.
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Interested candidates submit cover letter and resume to hr@autoartanu.com with your name and the position you are applying for in the subject. Deadline for submission November 23rd, 2024. Only suitable applications will be acknowledged.



cont'd from pg 2

The Barbuda representative, Trevor Walker, also joined in expressing gratitude to Sir Gerald for his sterling contributions to Antigua and Barbuda and in particular, his contributions to the production of the new rules of parliament which were updated recently after it became clear that rules compiled in the 1960's were woefully inadequate for a parliament in the 21st century. For example, Walker noted that he followed British parliamentary debate and that he was always keen on the provision for questions to be asked of the prime minister. He thanked Sir Gerald for his role in making that concept now a permanent feature of the House rules.

Attorney General, Sir Steadroy Benjamin spoke of Sir Gerald's personal influence on his life and his choice of a career in law. This, he noted started when as a young trade unionist, he was included as part of a team that toured parts of the United States and Jamaica that was led by Sir Gerald and the late Donald Halstead.

Despite the fact that he was from the then opposition Antigua Labor Party, Sir Gerald ensured that he was treated equally during the trip. Additionally, when he was an officer in the Labour Department, it was Sir Gerald and others who encouraged him to pursue a law degree and to take up law as a career.

Other members of the House who joined in expressing appreciation to

Sir Gerald were Richard Lewis, Daryll Matthew, Sir Molwyn Joseph, and Maria Browne.

Following the commendations to

Sir Gerald, the House elected Osbert Frederick as Speaker of the House. He will pick up the gavel at the next sitting of the House.


 A vibrant poster for the 'ONE NATION MUSIC FESTIVAL' in Antigua and Barbuda. The poster features a large, stylized 'ONE NATION' logo with a globe and flags. The dates '11 JAN. 2025' and '12 JAN. 2025' are prominently displayed. Below the logo, it lists 'TICKET OUTLETS' including 'ROTI KING', 'COOL AND SMOOTH', 'THE LARDER', 'EXOTIC ANTIGUA', and 'CORK AND BASKET'. Ticket prices are shown as '\$100' and '\$400'. The time is '8PM'. Logos for 'ANTIGUA RECREATION GROUNDS', 'VICE VERSA LOVE ALL INCLUSIVE LOUNGE', 'CIU', and 'Carib' are also present. The slogan 'ONE PEOPLE. ONE LOVE' is at the bottom.

Local News



Sir Robin Yearwood makes surprise return to parliament

There was a spontaneous outburst of applause at Monday's sitting of the House of Representatives when the member for St.

Philip's North, Sir Robin Yearwood, made a surprise entry into the parliament chambers.

Sir Robin has missed several meetings of the House due to illnesses. But a slimmer, yet lively Sir Robin walked into the parliament chamber escorted by Prime Minister Gaston Browne to be greeted by the members of the House.

Several walked over to his chair to personally welcome him back to the house and expressed their delight and pleasure in seeing his 'triumphant' return to parliament.

Earlier in the sitting, the



members stood for a minute's silence in memory of the late member for St. Pe-

ter, Asot Michael who was found dead in his home exactly two weeks ago.

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A&B to strengthen mechanisms that meet its commitment to human rights

A two-day Capacity-Building Workshop opens in Antigua and Barbuda today which brings together representatives from several key agencies within the government framework.

The workshop will look at Interacting with International Human Rights Architecture: National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up (NMIRF).

A statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained that the National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-Up (NMIRF) are essential components of the global human rights framework, enabling countries to improve their human rights records and interact with various mechanisms of the international human rights architecture.

The ministry noted that National Mechanisms can play a central role in ensuring the coordination, reporting, and implementation of

recommendations received from UN human rights mechanisms. “They can facilitate the state’s capacity to enhance implementation, improve internal coordination, and ensure timely responses to recommendations received from international human rights reviews, including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), UN Treaty Bodies, and, when applicable, Special Procedures,” according to the release.

The release recalled that in December 2023, during the commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Antigua and Barbuda pledged to establish a formal NMIRF and to enhance reporting and engagement with treaty bodies and implement development recommendations. More specifically, Antigua and Barbuda noted that this national mechanism “will serve as a dedicated platform to coordinate, share exper-

tise, prepare reports for and engage with regional and international human rights and other treaty mechanisms.”

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda requested technical assistance and support from the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office, its Human Rights Adviser and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to establish this mechanism.

For this purpose, a two-day workshop, jointly organized, will take place 19 and 20 November 2024, with the aim to equip stakeholders with relevant information for consideration in setting up this mechanism, as well as to offer an opportunity for dialogue and discussion on the

various functions and components of a NMIRF in Antigua and Barbuda.

This workshop is designed for a diverse group of participants, notably representatives/focal points from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Trade and Barbuda Affairs, Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Legal Affairs, Public Safety, Immigration and Labour, Ministry of Social Transformation and Gender Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda, Statistics, as well as any other relevant ministries.

Some civil society organizations and relevant institutions are also invited to participate in this workshop.

SPECIAL NOTICE RE: CLOSURE OF SSWH

The Project Implementation Management Unit within the Ministry of Works has carefully taken the feedback provided by its stakeholders and the general public into consideration.

As a result, all stakeholders are hereby notified that the planned closure of the Sir Sydney Walling Highway (SSWH) between Pares Village and Collins junction, scheduled for November 18th, 2024 has been postponed to allow an alternative route to be investigated.

A further update will be issued early next week.

-ends-

**Contact: Miss Makeida Antonio
Phone: 722-7025**

NOTICE

To: The Commissioner of Police
Police Headquarters
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To: Your Worship
Magistrate’s Court
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Dear Sir/Madam,

Notice: Application for Tavern license

We, Mr. Lionel and Lesley Joseph of Oliver’s Farm All Saints Road, with registered business situated at Oliver’s Farm All Saints Road St. John’s, Antigua and Barbuda DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that it is our intention to apply at the next sitting of the Liquor Licensing Court to be held at the Magistrate’s Court High Street, St. John’s Antigua on 2nd January 2025, next ensuring for the Bottle Licensing pursuant to section (11) (5) of the Licensing (Intoxicating Liquor) Act Cap.249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda 1992 Revised Edition, in respect of premises know as Buck West Barn Yard Bar and Restaurant situated at Oliver’s Farm All Saints Road in the Parish of St. John, Antigua and Barbuda.

Dated the 23rd day of October 2024

Tel# 782-3758

Local News



Traffic adjustments at VC Bird International as maintenance work begins on fire hydrant system

The Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority has commenced necessary maintenance work on a portion of its fire hydrant system at the VC Bird International Airport.

In a statement, the ABAA said the work is being done in recognition that safety is a critical priority at airport facilities in Antigua and Barbuda.

The repair and improvement project will focus on the fire hydrant service line, which runs between the long-term car park and Terminal A building, located



in front of the stairway. 28.

The project commenced on Monday November 18, and it is scheduled for completion by Thursday November

During this period, the Airport Authority kindly requests drivers to be aware of the well-marked work area

and adhere accordingly to the temporary traffic adjustments.

The authority expects the work to be completed on schedule and thanks the public for its patience, as it works to ensure the airport continues to operate at its usual high standards of safety and operational efficiency.

ABAA said it will continue to keep the public updated on the progress of work and when the usual traffic flow into the airport has been returned to normal.



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Daina Barnes honoured with 2024 Crystal Volunteer Award from Halo

Popular singer and educator Daina Barnes has been presented with the prestigious 2024 Crystal Volunteer Award by Sandra, Lady Williams, President of the Halo Foundation, at a ceremony held at Government House.

Daina is the inaugural recipient of this award, which will be given annually to an individual who exemplifies exceptional dedication and willingness to support the Halo Foundation's mission of caring for the vulnerable and needy in Antigua and Barbuda and beyond. This recognition highlights the invaluable contribution of those who donate their time

and talent to uplift various worthy causes through volunteerism.

"We are so proud to present this award to Daina," said Lady Williams. "Her unwavering commitment to our initiatives, such as Wings of Charity in London and Music For A Cause during the Christmas season in Antigua, showcase her deep involvement in helping others."

"Daina is a true advocate for all of the areas in which Halo is active: art and culture, community outreach, support for the differently abled, education, the elderly, history and heritage, environmental sustainability,



Daina Barnes, left, and Sandra, Lady Williams

health, sports, women's empowerment, world peace, and youth development."

Daina Barnes first gained prominence as a finalist in the Pan Caribbean Singing Competition (The Digicel Rising Star Com-

petition) in 2007. In addition to her successful music career, she is a dedicated primary school teacher and has released some popular singles and albums, further illustrating her passion for both education and the arts.

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Local News



Partial retroactive payments now likely for January next year

The government is actively seeking ways to raise approximately \$35 million dollars to make a payment towards outstanding back-pay due to public servants.

And according to Prime Minister Gaston Browne all efforts are being made to enable the government to make that payment by the latest January 2025.

The prime minister gave the update as he responded to a question posed by opposition parliamentarian,

Richard Lewis, during the Questions to the Prime Minister agenda item at Monday's sitting of the House of Representatives.

PM Browne noted that there has been a history where public servants are owed back-pay for multiple years, but that his administration will not follow that path and delay making these payments.

"We have made a determination to pay the back-pay as frequently as possi-

ble.

"The last negotiating period dating back to 2021 to 2023, we are now seeking to cover the back-pay. You would recall that in 2022, we made a payment of one month's salary so we estimate that the back-pay will be approximately \$100 million and instead of burdening the government to come up with that amount, we plan to make the payments in tranches. So we are hoping by January (2025) that

we can make a second payment," he stated.

The prime minister disclosed that the monthly wage bill for the government is approximately \$35 million.

"Assuming all goes well and we are able to raise the money and the government is able to make the payment in January next year, the government would have paid seventy percent of the outstanding amount," he declared.

This move on the part of the government, he remarked, is to ensure that what transpired under other administrations where public servants had to wait for up to ten years in many cases before they are paid back-pay, that there is a system to make those payments in a short a time as possible.

PM Browne made it clear that whenever the payment is made, it would represent part of the back-pay owed to public servants. He indicated that at least one union representing a category of workers had raised some concerns that there is likely delay when the payments are made.

"We did indicate that we would try for December but with the union raising concerns I suspect that the negotiations would be protracted. Therefore, January seems as the earliest time when payments can be made," he explained.

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GG Sir Rodney Williams has been appointed President of the West India Committee

The Governor General Sir Rodney Williams has been appointed President of the West India Committee (WIC) the charitable organisation that has served the Caribbean for nearly 300 years. Sir Rodney succeeds Sir David Rankin-Hunt, taking on the leadership effective October 31, 2024.

Established in 1735, the West India Committee is the oldest representative body of the Commonwealth and has played an enduring role in advocating for the welfare of Caribbean peoples. "As the only Royal Charter institution of its kind, the Committee focuses on improving the lives of Caribbean communities through education, training, advocacy, disaster relief, and cultural preservation. Its recognition as a UNESCO Consulting NGO for Caribbean heritage and Small Island Developing Nations underscores its global significance," a statement from Government House disclosed.

Sir Rodney brings a wealth of experience to the role, coupled with an unwavering commitment to the Caribbean's development. As Governor General, he has championed initiatives in education, heritage preservation, and international collaboration.

Reflecting on his new appointment, Sir Rodney stated, "The West India Committee has a rich history of resilience and advocacy. I am honoured to take on this role and continue the vital work of supporting Caribbean communities and addressing the challenges they



His Excellency Sir Rodney Williams and Mrs Blondel Cluff

face today and follow in the footsteps of former Presidents, such as prominent Caribbean persons, including the late Sir Shridath Surendranath Ramphal, the longest serving Secretary General of the Commonwealth. I look forward to many years of service to this venerable charity whose work remains as relevant as ever."

The West India Committee also recognises the extraordinary contributions of its Chief Executive Officer, Blondel Cluff CBE, who has served with distinction for over 14 years. Under her leadership, the organisation has achieved significant milestones, including advocating for interim compensation payments for victims of the UK Windrush Scandal, establishing Anguilla's only maternity facility following Hurricane Irma, and leading educational and heri-

tage programmes in both the Caribbean and the United Kingdom. Her dedication and vision have been transformative, and the Committee expresses profound gratitude for her outstanding service.

The West India Committee has a storied history of impactful initiatives that have shaped the Caribbean and the Commonwealth. From founding the Thames River Police in 1798, which became a global model for policing, to supporting the establishment of the University of the West Indies in response to regional educational needs, the Committee's legacy is unparalleled.

It was also responsible for introducing breadfruit and mangoes to the Caribbean through Captain Bligh's historic 1787 voyage on the HMS Bounty, addressing critical food security challenges of the time.



Local News



Celebrating International Men's Day 2024: Shining a light on positive male role models

By Caleb Gardiner

Today, November 19, the world unites in celebration of International Men's Day 2024, honoring the theme, "Positive Male Role Models." This day serves as a poignant reminder of the pivotal role that men play in fostering strength, compassion, and leadership in our society. From successful careers to the true essence of fatherhood, positive male figures continue to shape and mold future generations, exemplifying integrity and resilience.

Men who have paved successful paths be it in business, education, sports, or community service offer young men a blueprint for building fulfilling lives.

Their stories provide tangible evidence that success is attainable with dedication and perseverance. Equally, fathers, mentors, and male guardians nurture values of love, discipline, and responsibility, influencing young men to grow into well-rounded

contributors to society. Society, too, plays a critical role in fostering environments that encourage young men to thrive. From mentorship programs to community projects, collaborative efforts between families, schools, and organizations are instrumental in guiding boys toward lives of purpose and meaning.

One shining example of positive male influence is Caleb Gardiner, former senator turned diplomat, community and youth activist, and aspiring politician. Through his involvement in several youth led initiatives, non-profit groups, such as JCI Antigua, and the Caleb Gardiner Resilience Award; Gardiner has made significant strides in shaping the lives of young males. His "Resilience Award" which is given to his alma mater, the Christian Union Jr. Academy Primary School; partners with local organizations and generous collaborators, to gift several male students with electron-



ic devices and mentorship opportunities, enabling them to overcome barriers in their educational journeys.

This award is more than just a gesture it is a promise to the future. "When we invest in our youth, we invest in a brighter tomorrow," Gardiner said. By providing tools and guidance, he aims to equip young men with the resources needed to succeed academically and personally.

Adding a fresh perspective to today's celebration, Gardiner, along with influential young men Mr. Cedric Park and T'Saun Seaman, has released a powerful clip on social media. The trio shares candid insights into how men in society can embody the theme of positive male role models.

In the clip, Gardiner reflects on the men who shaped his life, from teachers to family members, and emphasizes the importance of paying it forward. Park and Seaman echo his sentiments, highlighting the transformative power of mentorship and

their plans to contribute to the growth of younger generations. Together, they spotlight several male figures in the community who have inspired them, underscoring the ripple effect of positive influence.

This International Men's Day, the message is clear: every man has the potential to make a difference. Whether by lending an ear, sharing a lesson, or simply leading by example, men have the power to uplift, empower, and inspire the next generation.

Gardiner sums it up best: "Being a positive male role model is not about perfection it's about being present, showing compassion, and demonstrating the values we wish to see in the world."

As the day unfolds, let us celebrate the men who lead with courage and kindness. Let us honor those who inspire us to dream bigger, work harder, and live better. Above all, let us commit to being the positive change we want to see in the lives of young men everywhere.





PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

APUA Prioritizes Safety and Compliance in Renewable Energy Initiatives

ST. JOHN'S Antigua, November 18th, 2024 – The Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) is committed to ensuring that all renewable energy systems meet established policies, prioritizing safety and the stability of the national energy grid.

APUA launched a comprehensive survey across the island to confirm that all renewable energy systems comply with its interconnection policy. The assessment has revealed several unregistered renewable energy systems, including batteries.

APUA's support for registered renewable energy systems is a vital step towards minimizing carbon emissions. Dedication to this is evident in the addition of solar farms at the V.C. Bird International Airport, Bethesda, and most recently in Barbuda.

Aligning with this policy is essential for ensuring grid stability, as the fluctuating output from solar energy can influence voltage and frequency, thereby affecting the overall quality of power. Moreover, unregistered or incorrectly installed systems can create serious safety hazards, as power from these unregistered renewable energy systems could potentially feed back into the grid.

In accordance with the Public Utilities Act, subject to section five; subsection (2) *“the Authority may give written permission to any person to generate and supply electricity at any place within Antigua and Barbuda.”* Subsection (3) also states: *“Any person who generates, distributes, supplies or sells electricity without the prior written permission of the Authority shall be guilty of an offense and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding three thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months.”*

The safety of the Authority's line crews could be at immediate risk due to the illegal installation of batteries, so these systems should be turned off right away. The application process, along with the technical inspection, must be carried out without delay to enhance compliance and ensure the safety of the installations.

While the safety of those using the unregistered installation without batteries may not be at immediate risk, the application process should be completed within five business days to enhance compliance and ensure the safety of the installation.

Owners of these systems are encouraged to reach out to APUA's Customer Service Department at tel. 480-7150 or email: customerservice@apua.ag to begin the application process.

The Authority's technicians will be visiting homeowners and business owners with unregistered renewable energy installations to carry out a technical inspection of their systems.

APUA is committed to the safeguarding of customers while ensuring the reliability of renewable energy systems. In doing so, APUA continues to play a vital role in the transition towards a more sustainable and resilient energy future for residents in Antigua and Barbuda.

-END-

Local News

Police recruits visit Sir Wright George

Police recruits of Course 49 made a special visit to Sir Wright George in celebration of his 94th birthday Monday 18 November.

Present were senior police officers, the academy training team, the police band, retired officers and members of Sir Wright's family. He expressed his absolute delight and pleasure with the visit by the recruits as well as past and current members of the force, some

of whom served with him when he was Commissioner of Police. He stated that the visit will rank among his best birthday celebrations in recent memory.

Sir Wright, who was instrumental in creating a training institute in Antigua and Barbuda, had the school named after him. Unfortunately, due to his recent illness he will not be able to attend the graduation exercises on Thursday.



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Business



German manufacturers warn of the sector's 'formidable crash'

By Carrie King

In the 44 years since Beckhoff Automation opened for business, owner Hans Beckhoff says he hasn't seen an economic crisis like this one.

"You can usually expect a crisis about once every five to eight years," says Mr Beckhoff. "This time it's a formidable crash, a really deep one."

A German company, Beckhoff Automation makes automated control systems for a wide range of industries, including manufacturing and the energy sector.

It belongs to Germany's famous Mittelstand, the often highly specialised small and medium-sized enterprises that make up 99% of German companies, provide around 59% of German jobs, and are considered the "hidden champions" of the German economy.

The Mittelstand's ability to take a long view on business performance rather than scrambling for annual dividends is part of what has made German manufacturing so robust. However, the global economy is shifting rapidly, and pressure is mounting.

"We're still doing well, though the economic situation has really slowed down," says Frederike Beckhoff, corporate development manager at Beck-



German manufacturers say that they face a number of problems

hoff Automation and Hans' daughter. "This year's results won't be anywhere close to what we achieved over the past three years."

German firms have been hit by a number of problems in recent years. These include the steep energy price hikes that followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, rising general inflation, and increased competition from China.

Companies also complain about rundown German infrastructure, such as the country's much criticised rail network, bridges and roads, all three of which state-owned broadcaster Deutsche Wells describes as "aging and crumbling".

Other businesses highlight what they see as a heavy bureaucratic burden at both national and European levels, inconsistent

government decision-making from Berlin, plus higher labour costs and staff shortages.

"The last three years have not been easy in Germany," says Joachim Ley, chief executive at Ziehl-Abegg, a manufacturer of ventilation, air conditioning, and engineering systems.

"What we really need is reliable [government] decision making instead of 180-degree turns. Even if you don't like decisions, you can at least plan and adjust if the decision is reliable. This back and forth is putting a lot of burden on companies in Germany."

Germany's coalition government fell apart earlier this month, and a general election is now set for 23 February, with a confidence vote before that on 16 December.

U-turns the government has made in recent years include walking back subsidy programmes for heat pumps and electric vehicles. This hit both domestic sales and net-zero targets. Berlin declined to comment.

But while political flip-flopping hasn't helped German companies, many look to China as the key strain, especially on Germany's carmakers, which have been hit by two problems.

Domestic demand for vehicles has cooled in China, and China now has a strong car industry of its own, with an aggressive export policy.

"Since the start of 2021, the Chinese export of electric vehicles has gone up by 1,150%," says Dr Cyrus de la Rubia, chief economist at Hamburg Commercial

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Volkswagen workers recently protested outside of its factory in Osnabrueck, Germany.

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Bank.

“That’s only EV [electric vehicles]. If you take all cars, including those running on fossil fuels, then you still get an increase of Chinese exports of 600%. During the same period, German exports increased by 60%. So there is obviously a shift in market shares happening here.”

The result of this is Volkswagen, Germany’s largest private-sector employer, threatening domestic plant closures for the first time in its 87-year history. It could result in tens of thousands of German job losses.

In October, the car manufacturer reported a 64% drop in third-quarter profits compared with a year earlier, primarily blaming a slump in demand from China, traditionally a key market for Germany’s premium car brands.

Mercedes-Benz reported a 54% decline over the same period, and BMW has also issued profit warnings, both also citing reduced Chinese orders.

Ms Beckhoff says that carmakers and the wider German manufacturing sector need to increase their competitiveness. “I really do think that pro-

ductivity is something we have to take really seriously,” she says.

“The wealth we enjoy here in most parts of Germany and Europe, we can’t take it for granted.”

German manufacturers that require low-cost margins may struggle, says Mr Ley, but he believes there is hope for high-quality products with innovative features that rely on world-class engineering and intellectual property.

Dr Klaus Günter Deutsch, head of industrial and economic policy research at the Federation of German Industries (BDI), believes “much will depend on whether we are able to pull the innovation levels much faster, better and more consistently across Europe”.

There is no doubt that job losses and restructuring on their home soil will be a painful process for German manufacturers such as Volkswagen, and chemicals firm BASF, which has also warned of cuts.

However, Mr Beckhoff believes this reality check may be healthy in the longer term. “I think it is good for German industry that Volkswagen is running into some problems because it

will increase motivation,” he says.

“It’s finally understood that we really have to do something. What is it that Winston Churchill said? Never waste a good crisis!”

So while there is hope for a positive transformation in the manufacturing sector in the longer term, the shorter-term outlook will continue to be challenging. Whoever forms the next German government will have to make some difficult calls.

“I am still optimistic,” says economist Dr de la Rubia, who says that the need to upgrade Germany’s infrastructure is now “so obvious” that whoever forms the country’s next government will have to take action.

“I think they will say, ‘okay, the crisis is really there and now we will make a big leap’. That is my hope and my conviction.”

And many agree that this crisis may be just what Germany needs. In the post-war years, the country proved it had the capacity to produce an “economic miracle” against the odds. The circumstances now may be different, but it’s not unthinkable that, with concerted action, it could do so again.

Regional News



SVG: PM Gonsalves urges OECS to support CDF

CMC - Prime Minister Dr Ralph Gonsalves is urging members of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) to contribute to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Development Fund (CDF), saying that his administration has always been supportive of the regional integration movement.

The CDF provided at least half of the US\$60 million used to construct the 93-room Holiday Inn Express and Suites, which was handed over to the government over the weekend.

Gonsalves told the ceremony that Vincentians and other people have been very impatient about the 15-member regional integration movement, acknowledging “we have made very important strides.”

Gonsalves said that while the treaty that established CARICOM also established the CDF, the funding took some time to become operational.

“And that fund having been created has led to us getting a grant of US\$700,000 for this project and a soft loan of 10 million, approximately, close to 50 per cent of the cost of this facility. It’s about \$29 million we got from the CDF, and this project is \$60 million.”

The CDF is an insti-



Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves (file photo)

tution of the CARICOM whose mandate is to provide financial or technical assistance to disadvantaged countries, regions and sectors in the bloc.

In this capacity, the CDF is central to addressing the disparities among the member states of CARICOM, which may result from the implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) that allows for the free movement of goods, services, labour and finances across the region.

Gonsalves said there was a recent replenishment of the CARICOM Development Fund and that the Parliament allocates money annually for Kingstown’s contribution to the Barbados-based CDF.

“And I urge everybody

in the OECS to do so,” he said, suggesting that OECS countries stand to benefit most from the CDF. The OECS groups the islands of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts-Nevis and Montserrat.

“The ECGC (East Caribbean Group of Companies), whose chief executive officer is here, benefits from chapter seven, the protection of our flour inside of the OECS market, because if we don’t have these compensatory mechanisms, CARICOM will not be held together, because we will be unequally yoked,” he said, referring to the St Vincent-based company that produces, flour, rice and animal feed.

Gonsalves said that he

told the Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago prime ministers at a CARICOM meeting earlier this year “that if they do not put in the resources in accordance with the assessment, which is done for the second cycle, the replenishment we’re going to have problems”.

He said Port of Spain is supposed to contribute close to US\$40 million to replenishing the CDF.

“Otherwise, how are we going to allow your products to come in from Trinidad duty-free?” Gonsalves said.

“You have cheap energy in Trinidad, you can out-compete any country in the Caribbean, and certainly in the Eastern Caribbean, in the manufacturing sector, except for particular niches...” the prime minister said.



Dominica: WCMF brings 12 percent increase in visitor arrivals in 2024

Dominica saw a 12 per cent increase in visitor arrivals this October for its biggest festival, the World Creole Music Festival (WCMF).

Minister for Tourism Denise Charles Pemberton said her ministry is encouraged by the festival's impact on the tourism sector.

"I am pleased to announce the success of the 2024 World Creole Music Festival which has once again showcased the vibrant culture and rich musical heritage of Dominica. This year's festival attracted thousands of visitors from around the world," she reported.

Pemberton reported this year's increase over 2023 and revealed that 2024 figures also surpassed that of five years ago.

"We are very pleased with the

numbers. October 2024 arrivals surpassed 2023 figures by 12 per cent and 2019 figures by 4 per cent," she said.

The increase in numbers was also reflected in festival attendees the minister said.

"Preliminary figures indicate that ticket sales increased by 4 per cent and ticket revenue increased by 16 per cent over 2023."

Pemberton thanked the Government of Dominica, the festival's main benefactor and other sponsors and partners for the success of the event which she said brought a significant boost to local business including hotels and restaurants.

"This event continues to reinforce Dominica's reputation as a premiere cultural destination and emphasizes

the importance of tourism in our national development.

"We remain committed to boosting arrivals to Dominica year-round and during our festive season as part of our ongoing efforts to expand our events and festivals pillar," the tourism minister said as she revealed plans for 2025 have already been set in motion.

"We are getting ready for 2025, our silver jubilee year and we can't wait to start planning for this milestone edition of the festival.

"As we reflect on our 25 years, we will set up a special committee to plan for this occasion. I am confident we will elevate the World Creole Music Festival to even greater heights in the years to come and expect 2025 to be the best year yet."

US awaits Lebanon response to Hezbollah-Israel ceasefire plan

By Hugo Bachega

Efforts for a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah have intensified, with Lebanon's government expected to respond to a draft deal presented by the US, amid an escalation of Israel's air attacks across the country.

The strikes in the past week, which have killed dozens of people in Lebanon, appear aimed at putting pressure on both Hezbollah and the Lebanese government to accept an agreement to end more than a year of conflict.

Details of the proposal remained unclear, after it was delivered last week by the US ambassador to Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, who has been backed by Hezbollah to negotiate.

Lebanese media reported the text had been received "positively".

Israel has stepped up its air attacks on Lebanon's south, where it also appears to be expanding a ground invasion, the eastern Bekaa Valley and Beirut. In the capital, it has carried out the most violent wave of strikes yet on the southern suburbs, known as Dahieh, where Hezbollah is based.

On Monday central Beirut was hit for the second consecutive day and at least five people were killed, the Lebanese health ministry said.

A day earlier, the first air strikes in the area for about a month killed seven others,



An Israeli strike on the Mar Elias area of Beirut on Sunday night killed two people.

including Mohammed Afif, who acted as the Hezbollah spokesman and was one of the few remaining public faces of the group.

The recent attacks are seen as part of Israel's strategy to force Hezbollah and Lebanon to agree to a ceasefire, and an indication that it is prepared to expand its offensive by killing non-military members of the group and striking places outside areas where the movement has a strong presence, possibly to stir anti-Hezbollah sentiment.

Since the conflict intensified in late September, Lebanese authorities have said any deal should be based on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel.

The resolution includes the removal of the group's fighters and weapons in areas between the Blue Line - the unofficial frontier between Lebanon and Israel - and the Litani River, about 30km (20

miles) from the boundary with Israel.

A potential agreement would likely include the creation of an international mechanism to monitor its implementation, and the deployment of thousands of additional troops of the Lebanese army to southern Lebanon.

The deal would also stipulate a timeline for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the south.

A sticking point remains, however, related to Israel's demand to have the right to act inside Lebanon if there is any violation of a deal - something the Lebanese authorities consider unacceptable.

Amos Hochstein, who has led the Biden administration's diplomatic efforts, was expected to return to Beirut on Tuesday, but his trip has been delayed until there are more clarifications about the Lebanese position, the Axios website reported, quoting unnamed US officials.

Israel's stated goal in

its war against Hezbollah is to allow the return of about 60,000 residents who have been displaced from communities in the country's north because of Hezbollah's rocket fire.

The group launched its campaign the day after the Hamas attacks on southern Israel last year, saying it was acting in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza.

In the past year, Israel's attacks in Lebanon have killed more than 3,840 people and wounded nearly 15,000 others, according to the Lebanese health ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants.

More than one million people have been displaced, putting more pressure on a country that was already struggling to cope after years of a severe economic crisis.

Hezbollah's attacks have killed 31 soldiers and 45 civilians inside Israel, Israeli authorities say.

On Monday, a woman was killed when a rocket hit a building in Shfaram, in the north, according to Israel's ambulance service. Another 45 Israeli soldiers have been killed fighting in southern Lebanon.

Israeli air strikes have destroyed large parts of Hezbollah's infrastructure and killed many of its leaders, but the group continues to carry out daily attacks, although not with the same intensity.

Russia vows 'tangible' response if US missiles used against its territory

By Paulin Kola

Russia says the use of US long-range missiles by Ukraine will lead to "an appropriate and tangible" response.

Such an attack inside Russian territory "would represent the direct involvement of the United States and its satellites in hostilities against Russia", a foreign ministry statement said.

President Joe Biden approved the use of the missiles on targets in Russia in a major change of US policy - two months before he is due to leave the White House.

It is not clear if his successor, President-elect Donald Trump, was consulted or whether he will stick by the decision, having promised to end the Russia-Ukraine war.

Ukraine has had US ATACMS (Army Tactical Missile System) with a range of 300km (190 miles) - as well as French and British Storm Shadow missiles of a similar range - but the Western allies had barred Kyiv from hitting Russia with them.

Biden's decision to lift that condition is a significant moment in the war, which marks its 1,000th day on Tuesday.

Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

Moscow has now intensified attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure as the sides appear to have reached a stalemate on the battlefield.

The US decision also follows the arrival in Russia's Kursk region - where Ukrainian forces captured and are holding onto a small piece of territory - of more than 10,000 troops from North Korea to help President Vladimir Putin's forces.

Unconfirmed reports say North Korea may send as many as 100,000



The US has approved the use of ATACMS missiles against targets inside Russia (file photo)

soldiers, in addition to artillery and other weapons to its ally.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky has indicated there may be no formal announcement of the US deal - "the missiles will speak for themselves," he said on Sunday.

Ukraine may use the ATACMS in Kursk first - in fact some reports suggest the US may have restricted their use there as a signal to North Korea to stop sending aid to Russia and to Moscow itself.

Biden's approval of the long-range missiles - which may be followed by similar authorisations by the UK and France - is being seen in the West as a way of signalling to the Russian leader that he cannot win the Ukraine war militarily.

Putin has not commented on the latest move.

In September, the Russian leader said the use of such missiles by Ukraine would represent the "direct participation" of Nato countries in the war.

On Monday, Putin's spokesman said the US was "adding oil to the fire".

But Jon Finer, US deputy national security adviser, said Washington had made it "clear to the Russians that we would respond" - both to the presence of North Korean forces and the "major escalation" in Russian aerial attacks on infrastructure across Ukraine.

The weekend saw intense Russian attacks against Ukraine's power grid, causing large-scale blackouts. Several people were killed or injured.

On Monday, a Russian strike on Odesa killed another 10 people and injured nearly 50.

Donald Trump has not reacted to Biden's decision so far.

He swept to victory on 5 November and will return to the White House on 20 January.

Trump has promised to end US involvement in foreign wars and use the taxpayers' money to improve the lives of Americans.

He has also said he will end the Ukraine war within 24 hours, but has not given details how.

Zelensky recently said he expected Trump to exert pressure on Ukraine and Russia to agree a peace deal within the next year.

Sports News



PMS goes joint-top in the Under-20 Boys Division school league

The Princess Margaret School (PMS) has joined All Saints Secondary School at the top of the Under-20 Boys Division in the Ministry of Sports, Cool and Smooth, and Joma Patrick C. Whyte Cup football league.

Princess Margaret School claimed their fifth win in six matches with a 3-0 victory against Clare Hall Secondary at the PMS playing field in the only one of the three Under-20 boys matches that was played in the latest round.

Player of the Match Greg Williams had a double conversion, and Dearnre Ralf scored the other goal for Princess Margaret School.

The result also allowed Princess Margaret School



The Princess Margaret School Under-20 Boys football team

to join All Saints Secondary School at the top of the league by advancing to 15 points from six matches.

They are three points ahead of defending champions Antigua State College and Antigua Grammar School, who both have 12 points and a game in hand.

The other two Under-20 Boys Division games in

the latest round were not played. The Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education (ABICE) was to tackle St. Anthony's Secondary School at St. Anthony's playing field, and defending champions Antigua State College was slated to clash with Antigua Grammar School at the AGS playing field.

The schools' football league will continue with five matches in the Under-14 Boys Division on Tuesday (today).

In a double header at the PMS playing field, Sir Novelle Richards Academy will take on Princess Margaret School at 2:15 pm, and Ottos Comprehensive School will meet All Saints Secondary at 3:15 pm.

In a double header at the Antigua Grammar School playing field, St. Anthony's Secondary School will tackle Antigua Grammar School at 2:15 pm, and St. Joseph's Academy will meet St. Mary's Secondary School at 3:15 pm.

Clare Hall Secondary will take on Pares Secondary School at the Clare Hall playing field at 2:15 pm.

Cornwall helps Hurricanes secure Super50 Cup semis berth

A Man of the Match performance with both ball and bat from Antiguan Rahkeem Cornwall, helped the Leeward Islands Hurricanes to a six-wicket victory over the Combined Campuses and Colleges (CCC) Marooners at the Queens Park Oval, as the round robin phase of the CG United Super50 Cup came to an end in Trinidad and Tobago on Sunday.

Over at the Sir Frank Worrell Ground in St. Augustine, the match between the West Indies Academy and the Windward Islands Volcanoes ended in a no-result due to rain.

The Volcanoes, batting first, posted 278 for five with Sunil Ambris scoring an unbeaten 70. He got good support from Jeremy Solozano who made 55, Shadrack Descarte with 52 and opener Stephan Pascal with 47.

The Academy team reached 69 without loss when heavy persistent rain ended play. Ackeem Auguste hit 42 not out and Teddy Bishop struck 21 not out.

Cornwall first did the demolition job with the ball, bagging six wickets for 20 runs to help restrict the CCC to

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Rahkeem Cornwall bats against the Combined Campuses and Colleges Marooners in their CG United Super50 Cup match at the Queens Park Oval in Trinidad on Sunday, November 17, 2024. (CWI Media)

Wins for Bullets and Villa Lions in Premier League

Aston Villa Lions and Pigotts Bullets recorded wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Sunday.

Forward Joshua Ferdinand hit a second-half hat trick to fire the Villa Lions to a 4-0 victory against Premier Division newcomers, the Attacking Saints, in the second game of a double header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Ferdinand wrapped up the match with goals in the 46th, 56th, and 61st minutes after midfielder Kwame "Munchie" Kirby scored in the 14th minute to give the Villa Lions a one-nil half-time lead.

The Villa Lions advance to fourth place on goal difference with 10 points after claiming their third win in five matches.

The Attacking Saints will remain in the lower half of the 14-team standings



Players of the Aston Villa Lions football team. (ABFA Media)

on four points after suffering their third defeat in five matches.

The Pigotts Bullets recorded back-to-back wins by surging to a 4-1 victory against the Potters Tigers in the opening game on Sunday.

Akeem Isaac scored twice in added time in the second half to complete victory for the Bullets. Isaac

scored in the first minute of added time (90 + 1 minute) and the third minute of added time (90 + 3 minutes).

Xavier Smith had a ninth-minute conversion, and Shafeeq Joseph scored in the 11th minute to give Pigotts Bullets a 2-0 lead. Watendy Grayman scored the only goal for the Potters Tigers in the 13th minute.

The Pigotts Bullets ad-

vanced to fifth place on goal difference with nine points after securing their third win in five matches.

The Potters Tigers will remain in the lower half of the standings with four points after crashing to their third defeat in five matches.

Meanwhile, action will resume in the ABFA's First Division League on Tuesday (today) with three matches, all starting at 4:30 pm.

Bendals FC will tackle Urlings FC at the Bendals playing field, Swetes FC will meet the Ottos Rangers at the Radio Range playing field in Ottos, and SAP FC will take on the Freeman's Village Scorpions at the Bolans playing field.

Belmont FC and Herberts FC will clash in a Second Division affair at the ABFA Technical Center on Tuesday (today) at 4:20 pm.

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151 all out in 36 overs.

Jonathan Drakes led the resistance for the Marooners, scoring 48 with Shaqkere Parris getting 38.

Cornwall, batting at number six, then hit a blistering unbeaten 84 from just 39 balls to guide the Hurricanes over the line at 154 for six in just 19.4 overs.

Seamer Akeem Jordan put in a decent effort with the ball, bagging five wickets for 33 runs.

The win was the Hurricanes' fourth of the campaign, pushing them to 51 points

and third place in the standings, two points behind the Jamaica Scorpions who they will face in the second semi-final at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy (BLCA), in Tarouba, on Thursday.

The first semi-final will see leaders and defending champions Trinidad and Tobago Red Force (63 points) squaring off against the fourth-placed Barbados Pride (46 points) at the same venue on Wednesday.

The winners of the two semi-finals will clash in the final on Saturday, November 23.

Sports News



Final T20I ends in ruins as England claim 3-1 series win

England's white-ball tour of the West Indies suffered a rather damp ending on Sunday, as the fifth and final T20 international at the Daren Sammy Stadium in St Lucia was washed out after only five overs.

England claimed the T20I series 3-1 courtesy of victories in the first three matches, making up for a 2-1 defeat in the preceding ODIs.

The West Indies earned a consolation win in the fourth T20I, chasing down 219 in a high-scoring clash. And for the first five overs of Sunday's series finale-- played on the same pitch-- it appeared that a similar scenario was playing out.

England's captain Jos Buttler, having won the toss for the fourth time out of five, inserted the West Indies and openers Evin Lewis and Shai Hope-- fresh from quick-fire half centuries in the fourth T20I-- hammered 44 from the first five overs before the rain arrived.

Lewis (29 not out) was the main aggressor, smacking two sixes and three fours off pacer Jofra Archer, and smashing 16 runs off the fifth over, which was bowled by fast bowler John Turner, as play was halted.

In fact, the most notable incident was when Lewis was struck on the helmet by a fierce Turner delivery that would turn out to be the last of the match, as just as he was about to be checked over with the usual concussion protocol, the rain ultimately proved heavy enough to prevent any further play.

Captain Buttler was delighted with the effort of his England team in securing their T20I series win in the Caribbean.

"We're delighted with the series



Ground staff move the covers as rain delays the fifth T20 cricket match between West Indies and England at Daren Sammy National Cricket Stadium in Gros Islet, St. Lucia, Sunday, Nov. 17, 2024. (AP)

win. We've played some brilliant cricket," Buttler said.

"I've been happy with how we've started games, setting the tone with the power-play wickets, as we've seen from Saqib being named player of the series. We've had lots of different guys chipping in at various times, so I'm really pleased for everybody.

"The fast-bowling department is looking good, and they all bring something different with their variety, so it's exciting for English cricket to have that.

"I enjoyed it (being captain without wicket-keeping), I felt like I had a bit more time, and it was nice to be out there running around and closer to the bowlers. I got everything I wanted out of doing that. It's great to have the winning habit back."

West Indies struggled to carry over their ODI form into the T20I series but were looking to restore

some pride in the final match, having impressed in the fourth. Captain Rovman Powell is now hoping they can find some consistency.

"It's been a tough series and credit Jos Buttler and his team, who came to these conditions and dominated. Having said that, we played good cricket in patches but not in long enough periods," he said.

"I think we always, as a batting group, use a template, but that didn't work in our first few games. As a team, we need to assess faster. It took us two or three games. The bowling group needs to sharpen up in a few areas.

"It's always a problem with the Caribbean cricketers, we always wander off when we are not playing for West Indies. It's a treadmill, and we don't spend time together. We have to keep our communication with players and ensure they are ready to go."



Players of the Sandals volleyball team. (ABAVA)

Police and Sandals get first win in business volleyball league

Police and Sandals both claimed their first win in the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association's (ABAVA) Business League Championship on Saturday evening.

After losing their first two matches in the competition, the Police rebounded to snatch a 2-1 victory against newcomers, EZ Fit Flyers, at the indoor volleyball stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex.

The Flyers took the opening set 25-21, but the Police leveled the match by winning the second set 25-17.

The Police won the match, clinching victory by taking the third and deciding set 15-12 to send the EZ Fit Flyers to their second loss in as many games.

After losing their opening encounter against Nate's Photography, San-

dals also rebounded to claim their first win in the competition.

Sandals cruised to a 2-0 victory against Royalton, who lost for the third time in as many games. Sandals wrapped up the match in just 38 minutes, prevailing 25-18, 25-20.

Defending champions APUA Inet and last year's second-place finishers, the Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank (ECAB), have also reaped more success in the Business Volleyball League. APUA Inet continued their title defense in their quest to become three-peat champions with their third win in as many games.

The defending champions took just 35 minutes to cruise to a straight forward 2-0 victory against 77 Bus, prevailing 25-7, 25-23. The 77 Bus lost for the second time in as many games.

The Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank, which finished in the runners-up position for the past two seasons, notched up their second win in as many games with a straightforward 2-0 victory against newcomers the University of the West Indies.

The ECAB utilized their experience and guile to cruise to their 25-10, 25-15 victory against the University of the West Indies, who lost for the second time in as many encounters.

The business volleyball league will continue with a double header at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex on Tuesday (today).

The Media will take on the ICONS in the opening game at 7 pm, and Island Academy will meet Nate's Photography in the second encounter at 8 pm.

More success for Antigua Bikini Fitness Queen

Antigua and Barbuda's top bikini fitness professional, Ambassador Kimberly Percival, added another title to her impressive collection in Mexico over the weekend.

The Antigua and Barbuda bikini fitness queen won the title at the IFBB (International Federation of BodyBuilders) Pro Cancun in Mexico on November 16 and 17.

The Antiguan demonstrated exceptional grace, poise, and determination, solidifying her reputation as a global fitness icon to win the bikini fitness title and the top prize of US\$2,500.

Yissel Leon of Mexico claimed the runner-up position ahead of fellow compatriot Julia Prado. Jamaica's Deidre Lewis took fourth place, and Mexico's Raquel Ramos claimed fifth place.

Her victory in Cancun, Mexico, came less than a month after Ambassador Percival became the IFBB World Champion for the second time in her career.

Ambassador Percival, who won the event



Antigua and Barbuda's top bikini fitness professional, Ambassador Kimberly Percival, center, is flanked by the other top finishers on the podium after winning the title at the IFBB Pro Cancun in Mexico on November 16 and 17.

for the first time in 2021, was crowned the 2024 IFBB World Champion at the Arnold Classic World Championships in Madrid, Spain, from October 10 to 13.

The Antiguan then won another title at the IFBB Pro Grand Gala in St. Vincent, Italy, on October 20.

Ambassador Percival,

who is the reigning Antigua and Barbuda Sports-woman of the Year, continued her outstanding run of form with a silver medal in the Bikini Fitness class at the 2024 IFBB's Night of Champions in London, England, on October 26.

This latest victory in Mexico marks another achievement for the Anti-

guan ambassador-at-large, whose dedication continues to bring accolades to her nation.

Previously, Percival clinched the 2022 Elite Pro Diamond Cup at the Prague Bikini Fitness Championship and the Jantana Pro Bikini Fitness Championship at the Finland Nordic Fitness Expo.