

ECCB GOVERNOR: FDC 'CRAFTED BY ANTIGUANS'

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Prime Minister Gaston Browne could not contain himself when his personal theme song 'I am blessed' started playing at the joint Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Christmas party held at Casa Palmadita on Sunday night... he took the microphone and started to sing with everyone else joining in.



Local News



ECCB Governor: FDC 'crafted by Antiguans...for Antiguans'

Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB), Timothy Antoine, has lavished praise on the Finance and Development Company, and its founders, the Hadeed family, for the 40 years of support it provided for those who were erstwhile shut out from the financial system of the day.

Governor Antoine was speaking Saturday night at a celebratory dinner held at Sandals Resort to mark the 40th anniversary of FDC, which had its genesis in providing loans to a section of the society who, forty years ago, could not access loans to purchase big-ticket items such as motor vehicles.

"I am delighted to be here in Antigua celebrating with you this momentous milestone that you are observing. I must say that as a central bank that was crafted by the people of the currency union, for the currency union, it is with great pride that I recognize that FDC was crafted by the hands of Antiguans...for Antiguans and Barbudans; that is worthy of celebration!" he declared.

Speaking metaphorically, the ECCB Governor observed that as individuals or as a nation there are choices that can be made every day; individuals/society may choose the darkness or they may choose to 'light a candle'. He noted that when the late founder of FDC, Sir Ramez Hadeed, aided by his brother Aziz Hadeed, encountered a problem with limited access to the financial system by many in the society, they chose to light a candle of hope through the creation of FDC...rather than submit to the 'darkness' and despair.

"Forty years ago, they could have joined the lamentations about the exclusion of Antiguans and Barbudans from the financial system or they could have lighted a candle which was to increase access to the financial system through a system of financial inclusion and empowerment; that's what they did with FDC and the rest is history," the governor stated.

He told the audience that the story of FDC must be one to inspire and that



Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB), Timothy Antoine

is why he made every effort to ensure that he was able to attend because of the profound impact FDC has had on the lives of thousands of Antiguans and Barbudans.

For Governor Antoine, the story of FDC must be seen as having implications not just for Antigua and Barbuda, but for the entire EC Currency Union. "I recognized in coming here both in symbolism and substance, that this is a very important occasion. We in this region, have to craft arrangements that work for us and I know that too well, as the Governor of your Central Bank, because we came together to craft an arrangement that works for us, the ECCB. This was at a time when many thought that we could not make it as small islands. But by coming together we have demonstrated that we can craft our own institutions and be successful at it," he remarked.

Another important point, noted by Governor Antoine, is that FDC has worked well with governments across the political divide here in Antigua and Barbuda. This, he believes is one of the key ingredients for the success of the financial institution.



Finance and Development Company celebrates 40 years

Finance and Development Company Ltd., one of the companies within the Hadeed Group of Companies, celebrated its 40th anniversary with a gala dinner held at the Sandals Grande Resort on Saturday night.

With a guest list that included, Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams, who attended in his capacity as both head of state and as a personal friend of the Hadeed Family, to the Attorney General, Sir Steadroy Benjamin, the Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, Timothy Antoine, Cabinet members, the banking fraternity representa-

tives, friends and members of the Hadeed Family from home and abroad, the event was as much a celebration of the remarkable milestone that the company has achieved as it was a tribute to the life and memory of Sir Ramez Hadeed KCGN, the man whose idea it was to start FDC 40 years ago.

In his remarks, Sir Rodney mentioned the close ties that have existed between the Hadeed Family and the Williams Family spanning multiple decades.

“We have been privileged to witness, firsthand, the remarkable growth and success of Finance and De-

velopment Co. Ltd. as it rose from humble beginnings to become a cornerstone of our commercial sector. To the founders who are still with us, I offer my heartfelt congratulations on your vision, dedication, and resilience, which laid the foundation for this company’s enduring success,” he stated.

Attorney General, Sir Steadroy Benjamin addressed the function in place of Prime Minister, Gaston Browne, who was unavoidably delayed from a visit to Venezuela. He chose as his theme: Achievements without rancour.

“The Finance and Development Company, has demonstrated its love and concern for the ordinary man and woman in this state in a completely different way...And, especially in its dealings with the young people; the poor, the down-trodden, the oppressed and those persons who were and are unable to obtain financing from those other finan-



Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams.

cial institutions, Finance and Development Company came to the rescue,” he observed.

One man who was able to provide clear insights into the conditions that existed that led to the formation of FDC was Aziz Hadeed, younger brother to Sir Ramez.

He said in 1984, Hadeed Motors had a large inventory of used vehicles but that the commercial banks declined to provide financing for potential buyers. After failing to get an understanding from the banks, Hadeed

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discussed the matter with Sir Ramez whose suggestion was for the formation of FDC.

"Thus, Finance and Development Company was born in 1984 with an initial paid in capital of EC\$1 million. Today, 40 years later,

that capital has grown to \$17.5 million with an asset base of EC\$265 million. Over the decade alone, we have helped over 11,000 citizens of Antigua and Barbuda achieve their dreams of owning vehicles and other life necessities," Aziz Hadeed revealed.

During the ceremony several persons were recognized for contributing over 25-years of service to the company.

These were, Sharon Meade, Eustace Gonsalves, Leah Liverpool, Don Meade, Myron Williams, Joycelyn Merchant, Elroy Jeffrey Gore, and directors,



Raddy Hill, Aziz Hadeed, Francis Hadeed, Andrew Hadeed and Riad Hadeed of Trinidad and Tobago who was represented at the function by Dominic Hadeed.

The awards were presented by Managing Director of FDC, Jason Weste.

During the event, a video tribute to FDC Founder, Sir Ramez Hadeed, was played. A commemorative magazine making the 40th anniversary of FDC was presented to those who attended the gala.



Ministry of Health issues alert over presence of Oropouche virus in Barbados

The Ministry of Health has issued a public alert following notification that two confirmed cases of the Oropouche virus infection has been detected in Barbados.

The ministry is advising the Antigua and Barbuda public that as a neighbouring Caribbean nation, the government is taking proactive measures to advise and protect its citizens and visitors from the potential spread of this virus.

“The Oropouche virus infection is transmitted to humans primarily through the bite of the *Culicoides paraensis* midge, commonly referred

to as sandflies or certain *Culex quinquefasciatus* mosquitos. These insects are found in forested areas, coastlines and generally around water bodies. Symptoms of the Oropouche virus can include fever, headache, joint pain, and rash. While it is not typically life-threatening, vigilance and preventative actions are crucial,” a ministry statement disclosed.

The Ministry urges members of the public to protect themselves by eliminating sandfly and mosquito breeding sites. Standing water in flower pots, buckets, tires, and gutters should be removed or cleaned regularly to pre-

vent mosquito larvae from thriving.

Individuals are also encouraged to wear long-sleeved clothing and long pants, particularly during early mornings and evenings when mosquitoes are most active. Additionally, the use of mosquito repellents containing DEET or other approved ingredients is strongly advised.

For further protection, mosquito nets should be used when sleeping in areas without screens. Ensuring that homes are equipped with properly maintained window and door screens is also an effective method to keep mosquitoes out.



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Local News



Police Commissioner to police officers: Stay on course!

Police Commissioner, Atlee Rodney wants rank and file members of the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda to remain committed to their oath and to always act as 'police officers'.

Delivering his annual Christmas Message to members of the force, the Police Service Commission and representatives of the Ministry of Justice, Comm. Rodney noted that at the end of their training and orientation, police officers took responsibility to 'serve the organization and the country' with distinction.

"You are now expected to 'Act' in a particular way- A Police Officer," he declared.

In doing this, Rodney told the officers that their



Police Commissioner, Atlee Rodney

actions must mirror their professional ambitions.

"If your approach is going to be contrary to Police principles, quite obviously the outcome will be negative. Too often you allow the simplest things to take you off course and lose focus of who you are and

what you represent. You must never allow yourselves to be tossed to and fro like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

"As your leader, I implore you to stay on course and let your career as a police officer be one with a lasting positive impact,"

he urged.

In reflecting on the year that is now ending, the commissioner noted that Antigua and Barbuda has been able to host several successful international events this year. These include the SIDS4 conference in May as well as ICC Cricket World Cup T20 matches and he congratulated the police officers for the role they played in these events to make them successful.

Rodney also drew attention to new crime fighting methods that were deployed during the year.

"In 2024 the Police Force enhanced its technology component with the introduction of drones and several other equipment for surveillance and

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Boys Training School reopening set for first quarter of next year

There is an ongoing recruitment drive for persons to fill vacancies that are coming available with the planned reopening of the Boys Training School, expected to take place within the first quarter of 2025.

An announcement from the Ministry of Social Transformation said the recruitment process is part of efforts to reopen the Boy's Training School within a matter of months.

"Interviews started on December 12, 2024, to fill key positions vital to the smooth operation of the facility. The roles being recruited include

Juvenile Detention Officers, Cooks, Laundry Attendants, Landscapers, Maintenance Personnel, and Drivers.

"These positions are essential in creating a safe and supportive environment that promotes rehabilitation and positive development for the youths the institution will serve. While other positions will be available, those listed are critical to ensuring the facility operates efficiently.

"This initiative aligns with the Ministry of Social Transformation's mission to empower individuals and communities to reach their fullest po-

tential," a statement from the ministry said.

The release noted that the reopening the Boy's Training School demonstrates the Ministry's commitment to addressing social challenges and equipping at-risk youths with the skills and values needed for a better future.

"Preparations for the reopening are progressing steadily, ensuring the facility will be ready to serve its purpose effectively. In due course, further updates on the reopening date and other developments will be provided," the release concluded.

Judging for the home and business lighting competition is set to commence

The 2024 instalment of the Christmas Home and Business Lighting Competition is underway and judging is expected to commence by next week.

The Department of Creative Industries said in a statement that it wishes to evoke the spirit of the season through the creative and illuminating displays of the 2024 Christmas Home and Business Lighting competitors.

Thus, the Department is encouraging those interested Home and Business owners to register for this competition on or before Friday, December 20th, 2024.

Registration Forms are available Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., at the Department of Creative Industries Headquarters on Old Parham Road, upstairs INET, or at the National Festivals Office, 1st Floor Cecil George-John Building, Redcliffe Street and Corn Alley.

Pre-judging will commence on

December 28 and 29, 2024, while the final displays will be judged on January 4th and 5th, 2025.

Winners will be announced via Good Morning Antigua, Barbuda, on Friday, January 6th, 2025.

Home entries will be categorized and judged according to the zones – East, West, North, and South.

All Home participants will receive a 100% waiver on electricity service for December 2024, Duty-Free concessions on Christmas Lights and/or Decorations, and a Cash component for the top three

winners in each zone as outlined below.

First Place - \$ 3,000.00 XCD

Second Place - \$2,000.00 XCD

Third Place - \$1,000.00 XCD

Business entries will receive a 50% waiver on electricity service for December 2024, DutyFree concessions on Christmas Lights and/or Decorations, and a Cash component for the top three winners as outlined below.

First Place - \$ 3,000.00 XCD

Second Place - \$2,000.00 XCD

Third Place - \$1,000.00 XCD

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operation purposes. We also obtained additional vehicles to our fleet to improve our efficiency,” he reported.

There were also improvements to the physical spaces within which police live and work.

“Earlier this year, we saw the completion of the Bolans Police Station and officers returning to the refurbished All Saints Police Station. We look forward to the completion of St. Johns Police Station, which is crucial to the security of the business sector in the city. I also look forward with much anticipation to see some improvements to the Fire Department and to welcoming the new fire tenders,” Rodney added.



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ABRSC expresses gratitude to the Ministry of Education and celebrates Africa-CARICOM Day 2024 success

The Antigua Barbuda Reparations Support Commission (ABRSC) is thanking the Ministry of Education for its unwavering support and collaboration in celebrating Africa-CARICOM Day 2024.

During a brief ceremony, Ambassador Anthony Liverpool, Vice Chair of the ABRSC, presented plaques to Philip Lloyd, Education Officer at the Ministry, as a token of appreciation for the Ministry's instrumental partnership in this year's observance. The plaques, generously sponsored by Community First Credit Union, were also



awarded to the eleven participating schools that brought the celebration to life on September 27, 2024.

Schools across Antigua and Barbuda, including The Princess Margaret, Glanville's, Pares, All Saints, and Jennings Secondary Schools, along with Irene B. Williams, Better Chance, Mary



E. Pigott, Freetown, Pares, and Christian Union Primary Schools, showcased vibrant, informative, and creative displays highlighting the rich

cultural heritage of Africa and the Caribbean.

This year's celebration spotlighted several African and Caribbean nations, including Benin, Senegal, Haiti, Ethiopia, and Nigeria. The exhibits showcased fascinating details about each country's geographical location, capital, population, national languages, political leadership, cuisine, music, cultural traditions, national flags, mottos, and anthems. The effort and creativity exhibited by students, teachers, and principals demonstrated a remarkable commitment to ed-

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"This stunning calendar is far more than a collection of artistic wear and imagery; it is a profound statement about life and the human experience. It reminds us that aging is not a diminishing process but rather a journey of growth, refinement, and empowerment."

Sir Rodney further acknowledged the models featured in the calendar, describing them as:

"The living embodiment of this theme. Each of you represents the vibrancy and possibilities of life's later chapters... reminding us that elegance, confidence, and joy are ageless qualities."

The evening, filled with art, community, and celebration, was a testament to the power of creativity to uplift and inspire.

Doram's "Aging Like Fine Wine" calendar not only showcases artistic brilliance but also encourages us to embrace the seasons of life with grace, dignity, and joy.

Local News



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- Perform audits and support internal/external audit requests.
- Mentor and guide the accounting team, ensuring service standards and team morale are upheld.
- Ensure compliance with tax regulations and internal controls.
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educating the public and fostering cultural pride.

Ambassador Liverpool commended the dedication and ingenuity of all involved, stating:

“The active participation of our schools speaks volumes about their enthusiasm and dedication to promoting the shared history and heritage between Africa and the Caribbean. The Commission is truly impressed by the vibrant and meaningful presentations that each school prepared. These efforts not only honor our ancestors but inspire future generations to embrace their identity with pride.”

Ambassador Liverpool also expressed gratitude to Community First Credit Union for its steadfast partnership and generous support, which made these recognitions possible. He emphasized the importance of community collaboration in preserving and promoting the Caribbean and African heritage.

The Africa-CARICOM Day program, originally piloted in Jamaica, is part of a regional initiative to bridge historical gaps and dispel misconceptions about Africa, fostering a deeper understanding of its connection to the Caribbean.

As the curtains close on this year's celebration, the ABRSC eagerly looks forward to even greater participation and engagement in Africa-CARICOM Day 2025. The Commission remains committed to working with schools, the Ministry of Education, and community partners to ensure the continued success of this vital cultural observance.

CIBC Christmas Caravan donates \$40-thousand to the needy of society

The annual charitable initiative, the CIBC Christmas Caravan has made Christmas very special for those in need. This year the bank contributed \$40,000 to individuals and local organisations as part of its community outreach programme.

Following her interactions with special needs children at two institutions - the Adele School for Special Children and the Victory Centre for Special Children, the bank's Country Manager, Ladesa James-Williams shared a very special message.

"As we embrace the spirit of the Christmas season, CIBC Caribbean continues its tradition of communi-



ty engagement through our annual Christmas caravan initiative. This

year, we chose to focus our efforts on supporting organizations that serve individuals with different abilities, recognizing their invaluable contribution to our society.

"Our outreach included visits to the Adele School for Special Children, the Victory Centre for Special Children, and the Antigua and Barbuda Association of Persons with Disabilities, along with our annual recipients - Clarevue Hospital and the Soup Kitchen. We also extended private support to families facing special circumstances.

"During our visit to the Adele School, I had the privilege of meaningful conversations with both students and teachers. One particularly touching moment was hearing a young man share his story about his hotel internship experience - his pride and joy were palpable. These interactions highlighted an important reality: while these individuals possess unique abilities and tremendous potential to contribute to our society, they continue to face significant stigma and discrimination," she observed.

James-Williams is calling on other entities in the society to support those in need within the community at this the season of giving.



Photo Essay



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The Django Unchained star was celebrating his 57th birthday.

Jamie Foxx injured in altercation at his birthday dinner

Hollywood actor Jamie Foxx's birthday dinner was cut short after he was involved in an altercation at a Beverly Hills restaurant, leaving him needing stitches, his representative said.

The Django Unchained and Ray star was celebrating his 57th birthday on Friday.

Someone at another table "threw a glass that hit him in the mouth" and the matter is now in "law enforcement's hands," a representative for Foxx told the BBC's US partner CBS News.

They added that the actor "had to get stitches and is recovering".

Officials from Beverly Hills Police Department confirmed police attended Mr Chow, a high-end Chinese restaurant, after reports of an assault

with a deadly weapon.

Police found there had been a physical fight between two parties at the restaurant, and that reports of assault with a deadly weapon were unfounded. They did not elaborate on what sparked the fight.

The representative told CBS News Los Angeles that Foxx was at the restaurant for a celebration, even though police did not specifically name him.

The police were called around 10:10 p.m.

It's unclear whether any arrests have been made and no other information was provided.

The incident comes after Foxx revealed the cause of his hospital admission in April last year.

Speaking during a Netflix special

earlier this month, the actor told the audience he'd suffered a "brain bleed that led to a stroke".

He said he had a bad headache one day and asked for an aspirin, but before he could take it he "went out (blacked out). I don't remember 20 days".

At the time, his daughter Corinne Foxx said he had experienced a "medical complication" but the family did not share details about his health issues.

The star won an Oscar for best actor for playing musician Ray Charles in Ray in 2005. He was also nominated for best supporting actor the same year for his role in Collateral.

His other films include Baby Driver, Annie and The Amazing Spider-Man 2.

Oxford and the cusswords

By Tony Deyal

My son went to Oxford on a scholarship and I used to joke about my own earlier visit there. I had gone for a meeting and was reading the dictionary in bed one night. But I didn't finish. I got up to 'P'. Then there was this thing with their special way of placing a comma in a list of three or more terms. In other words, instead of "Tom, Dick and Harry" they would write, "Tom, Dick, and Harry."

This is why an Englishman was left as almost a total vegetable after being hit by a car, bus, tractor, and trailer. It was an Oxford coma. Actually, after years of research, Oxford came up with two major things. The first was that its leading Oxonians finally developed a three-part questionnaire to help men understand if they were suffering from a middle-age crisis: Life sucks? Job sucks? Wife doesn't?

The other is an annual 'Word of the Year' which was easy to understand until this year. Previously, in the last few years at least, there were words like "austerity" in 2015, "paranoid" in 2016, "homer" in 2022, and "hallucinate" in 2023. But then they stopped hallucinating after that. Last year, it was "manifest" and, if that was not enough for any man to 'fess' that he was not sure what that meant, this year, they refused "demure" for "brain rot".

I can understand "demure" without a problem. My best example of "demure" the merrier is when a young Chinese couple got married. In the hotel room that evening, the bride blushed demurely: "I am very shy. Please, husband, tell me what to do." The husband, a gentle and thoughtful young man, said: "Why don't you tell me what you might like to do?" The blushing bride hesitated before replying: "Well ... husband... I would like to try a ... try a 69!" The husband was perplexed and asked, "But wife! This is our first night together and you want fried rice, beef and black bean sauce?" What I found very hard to understand is that the Brits did not bother to consider the choice of dictionary.com from Random House, which went for "addle". I suppose that's because it means "to become rotten or confused" and the Brits consider it too close for comfort. What was worse is that the famous Merriam-Webster, a trusted dictionary with 'Word of the Day' and lots of wordplay, has 10 words which they considered as defining 2024. What got to me and many others is that their best word for the year, "polarization", was refused by the Brits. The reason, many of us believe, is that Merriam-Webster is "America's Most Trusted Dictionary" and that would never



Tony Deyal

ever do for the Brits.

I still think "polarisation", which means "division into two sharply distinct opposites" or "opposing extremes", actually made the point about the Brits versus the Americans. But, even so, any one of the other 10 from Webster would have worked better than "brain rot". One I liked was "Barbicare". As one young lady said, the word is really the core of Barbi. She said that a man who wanted to buy a doll for his niece for Christmas asked the salesperson if Barbie came with Ken and she replied, "Oh no! Barbie dates Ken but she comes with G.I. Joe." Then there is "bed roffing" or "the practice of spending many hours in bed during the day, often with snacks or a phone, so you can avoid burnout." One man was really upset that his girlfriend thought he was terrible in bed. He saw it as an unfair judgement to make in less than a minute. Another Webster word is "girl dinner" which, for

the bright nuclear radiation specialist, can be "fission chips", but for the vegan it is just "peas and quiet". The one that I would have used is "Bussin". This is because it is straight from the USA where the capital city is also the place of most successful laundry businesses because they're "washing tons".

One of my other colleagues preferred "vivacious" and told me the story of the new husband and wife. A small tourist hotel was all abuzz about an afternoon wedding where the groom was 95 and the bride was 23. The groom looked extremely feeble, and everyone felt that the wedding night would kill him. The bride was indeed a healthy, vivacious young woman. What stunned everyone was that the next morning the bride came down the main staircase slowly, step by step, hanging on to the banister. She finally managed to get to the counter of the little shop in the hotel. The

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Regional News



DR: 134 pellets of cocaine found in stomach of Nigerian

A 58-year-old Nigerian national with Spanish citizenship was apprehended at Punta Cana International Airport after authorities discovered he was attempting to smuggle over two kilograms of cocaine inside his body.

Agents from the National Drug Control Directorate (DNCD) and the Specialized Airport Security Corps (CESAC) intercepted the man before he could board a flight to Paris, France. Following routine inspection protocols, medical professionals detected suspicious foreign objects in his digestive tract.

At a local health centre,

doctors assisted the suspect in expelling 134 pellets of what is presumed to be cocaine, with the total weight exceeding two kilograms.

The Public Prosecutor's Office and DNCD have

launched an investigation to determine potential additional connections to this drug trafficking operation.

The suspect was transferred to the Permanent Care jurisdiction of La Al-

tagracia province to face legal proceedings.

The 134 recovered bags have been sent to the National Institute of Forensic Sciences (INACIF) for further analysis.

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clerk looked really concerned, "Whatever happened to you, miss? You look like you've been wrestling an alligator!"

The bride groaned, held on to the counter, and finally while crying said, "Oh God! He told me he'd been saving up for 75 years, and I thought he meant his money!" Obviously, in her case, what was supposed to be funny, and money, had become "Brain rot". Maybe that is why it became the Word of the Year.

According to the Brits, "Brain rot", which includes doomscrolling and social media addiction, is a modern condition familiar to most of them, or at least the 37,000 who with public commentary and analysis voted before their brains rotted. The Oxford University Press defined "brain rot" as

"the supposed deterioration of a person's mental or intellectual state, especially viewed as the result of overconsumption or material (now particularly online content) considered to be trivial or unchallenging."

What brought it so totally into the Brit limelight was that "brain rot" rose 230 per cent for the year. One reason for this is that it demonstrates "a somewhat check self-awareness in the younger generations about the harmful impact of the social media that they've inherited. Just to let you know how far down the Brits are in the rot, some of the quintessential examples are "Riz", "Skibbity", "Yacht", "Ohio", "Phantom Tack", "Mewing" and "Mogging".

At this point, I packed up the rationale. I was not amused or a mews. For me, it is the same as the politics, politicians and parties preparing for

elections within the next year. It is very much like what I call "a politician with half a brain". The word is, "Gifted!" Or we can consider the prime ministers and what's wrong with their brains. As my friend told me, "On their left side, there is nothing right, and on their right side there is nothing left." Then he asked me, "What's the difference between a politician's brain and manure?" His response, "Tony, manure can be useful." What I told him was, "Go easy on them. You know that jellyfish have survived for 650 years despite not having brains? This gives me some hope, not much but a very slight hope, for politicians."

Tony Deyal was last seen talking about a politician who went to the doctor complaining about a brain tumour. The doctor told him that it was all in his head.

Barbados: Luxury yacht Emerald Sakara docks in Bridgetown

By Rosemary Forde

Ninety-three guests onboard a luxury superyacht made history on December 15, as the first small cruise vessel to utilize the moorings installed off Speightstown, St Peter.

Barbados' Minister of Tourism and International Transport, Ian Gooding-Edghill welcomed the captain, guests and crew servicing Emerald Sakara to Bridgetown, Barbados. He was joined by officials from the Ministry, Barbados Port Inc, and Platinum Port Agency Inc, who exchanged plaques with Captain Robert O'Leary.

Gooding-Edghill said that this was a "defining moment" in enhancing Barbados' luxury tourism offerings and signifies the beginning of a new chapter for the island's tourism product, which aligns with the Ministry's vision and strategy of diversifying and enriching its tourism product.

"It aligns very closely with our airlift strategy, not only to increase the arrivals but also to bring smaller vessels to Barbados, and we will continue to build out that strategy," Minister Gooding-Edghill stated.

He said this arrival will afford the entire Speightstown community an op-

portunity to take advantage of all of the economic benefits, as he is aware that there are several planned tours for the community, as well as for the northern part of Barbados.

The Tourism Minister said: "This is exciting news, and it also demonstrates the commitment on the part of smaller ships to go into Speightstown."

Emerald Sakara has a carrying capacity of 100 passengers. The yacht's next port of call is Kingstown, St Vincent.

In addition to the Emerald Sakara, five other cruise vessels were in the Barbados' port, bringing a total of 4,274 cruise passengers to the island.



Captain of the Emerald Sakara, Robert O'Leary, and Minister of Tourism and International Transport, Ian Gooding-Edghill, following a plaque exchange ceremony onboard the vessel. Photo:PR



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Several hundred feared dead after Mayotte cyclone

By Rachel Hagan

Hundreds, and possibly thousands, of people are feared dead in Mayotte after the French Indian Ocean territory was devastated by a powerful cyclone.

Rescue workers are still attempting to reach some communities as they search for survivors.

Entire settlements were flattened when Cyclone Chido brought wind speeds of more than 225km/h (140mph), with the poorest living in makeshift shelters particularly hard hit.

Some of Mayotte's population of 320,000 have said they are struggling with severe shortages of food, water and shelter.

One resident of the capital city, Mamoudzou, waiting in line for supplies said: "We've had no water for three days now, so it's starting to be a lot.

"We're trying to get the bare minimum to live on, because we don't know when the water will come back."

Another Mamoudzou resident, John Balloz, said he was surprised he did not die when the cyclone struck.

"It was the wind, the wind blowing, and I was panicked, I screamed, 'We need help, we need help.' I was screaming because I could see the end coming for me," he said.

Mohamed Ishmael, who also lives in the capital, told Reuters news agency the situation there was "a tragedy" and said: "You feel like you are in the aftermath of a nuclear war... I saw an entire neighbourhood disappear."

Another said they had used a nearby school for shelter, adding: "We can still take refuge with our neighbours, and we're still sticking together and being cautious. We need everyone to hold hands."

Mayotte's impoverished communities, including undocumented migrants



Images emerging from Mayotte have revealed widespread devastation.

who have travelled to the French territory in an effort to claim asylum, are thought to have been particularly hard hit due to the vulnerable nature of their housing

Its population is heavily dependent on French financial aid and has long struggled with poverty, unemployment and political instability.

About 75% of the population lives below the national poverty line and unemployment hovers at around one in three.

French President Emmanuel Macron said his thoughts are with "our compatriots in Mayotte, who have gone through the most horrific few hours and who have, for some, lost everything, lost their lives".

While some French aid and rescue workers have reached Mayotte, efforts to get to some communities are still under way.

Francois-Xavier Bieuville, the island's prefect, told local media the death toll could rise significantly once the damage is fully assessed. He warned it will "definitely be several hundred" and could reach the thousands.

French Interior Minister Bruno Re-

tailleau, who is scheduled to visit the island, acknowledged the "exceptional severity" of the cyclone and assured that efforts to assist the population are being ramped up.

Cyclone Chido also brought strong winds and heavy rainfall to Mozambique, making landfall early Sunday about 25 miles (40.2km) south of the northern city of Pemba, according to weather services.

The cyclone caused structural damage and power outages in the northern coastal provinces of Nampula and Cabo Delgado on Saturday morning, authorities reported.

Guy Taylor, a spokesperson for aid agency Unicef in Mozambique, said "we were hit very hard in the early hours of this morning".

"Many houses were destroyed or seriously damaged, and healthcare facilities and schools are out of action," he added.

Mr Taylor said Unicef is concerned about "loss of access to critical services", including medical treatment, clean water and sanitation, and also "the spread of diseases like cholera and malaria".

South Korean MPs impeach president over martial law attempt

South Korean lawmakers have voted to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol over his failed attempt to impose martial law, which sparked massive protests across the country.

He was suspended after some members of Yoon's own People Power Party (PPP) voted with the opposition - though the decision still needs be ratified by the constitutional court.

Thousands of anti-Yoon protesters celebrated outside the National Assembly on Saturday evening after the impeachment motion passed, with the crowd singing as fireworks broke out overhead.

Yoon has vowed to fight on and said he "will never give up", describing the vote as a temporary pause to his presidency.

"I will take your criticism, praise, and support to the heart and do my best for the country until the end," Yoon added.

His defiant words are a marked change from his apologetic tone earlier this month over his short-lived martial law declaration.

Yoon attempted to impose military rule after months of political deadlock, saying it was necessary to block supposed North Korean efforts to undermine his government - but the declaration was overturned after a matter of hours by MPs.

There has been strong public support for Yoon's impeachment, with recent polls finding three-quarters of South Koreans wanted to see him go.

Following days of public pressure the PPP had decided to let its lawmakers vote on the motion, after an effort to impeach Yoon last week failed when its lawmakers boycotted the hearing.

On Saturday, the impeachment motion reached the two thirds threshold needed to pass after 12 members



The joy was palpable after the result was announced, with many erupting in cheers and singing in jubilation.

of Yoon's party voted in favour.

"To the people, we hope your end of year will be a little happier now, and all your cancelled year-end celebrations to be restored," said National Assembly Speaker Woo Won-shik, as he announced the result.

"The future of the Republic of Korea and our hope is in the hands of the people, our hope is strong," Woo, a member of the main opposition Democratic Party, added.

The constitutional court now has 180 days to rule on whether Yoon's impeachment should be upheld or whether he can return to office. If it rules in favour of impeachment, an election for the next president must be called within 60 days.

Yoon has been suspended while Prime Minister Han Duck-soo has taken over as acting president.

Han said his focus is to "stabilise the situation" and "bring back normalcy for the people".

However, both Han and finance minister Choi Sang-mok, who is next in line for the presidency, are both involved in an ongoing police probe over last week's events.

Outside the National Assembly, where tens of thousands of protesters gathered throughout the day despite the bitter cold, people hailed the vote as a victory for democracy and spoke of their determination to see Yoon permanently leave office.

"I'm so happy that the bill passed... At the same time, the fight is not over," physical therapist Sim Hee-seon told the BBC as she wiped her tears.

"We'll have to wait for the court's judgment for his impeachment to be finalised. We will keep watching."

Two women decked out in Rudolf costumes held signs that read: "[It will be] a merry Christmas only if Yoon Seok Yul disappears".

Across town at a pro-Yoon rally in Gwanghwamun Square, it was a different story. His supporters fell silent after hearing the news of the vote. Some people uttered angry insults before leaving the scene.

The success of the vote had depended on the support from the PPP, as the opposition lawmakers who tabled the motion needed just eight more to join them. Last Saturday, when the

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Sports News



PMS and ABICE to clash in final for Under-20 Division title

Princess Margaret School (PMS) and the Antigua and Barbuda International Institute of Continued Education (ABICE) have advanced to the Under-20 Boys Division final in the Ministry of Sports, Cool and Smooth, and Joma Patrick C. Whyte Cup Secondary Schools' Football Competition.

Both teams booked their spots in the championship decider by recording impressive victories in their respective semi-finals at the Antigua Recreation Grounds (ARG) on Friday.

Princess Margaret School prevailed 3-1 against All Saints Secondary in the first semi-final.

Greg Williams scored in the eighth minute, Jermarion Edwards had a 28th-minute conversion, and Dahvia Hughes scored in the 37th minute for Princess Margaret School.



The PMS Under-20 Boys football team

Jevaughn Jarvis scored the only goal for All Saints Secondary by converting a penalty kick in the 23rd minute.

Karique Knight struck a hat trick to lead ABICE, the 2022 champions, to a surprising 5-0 drubbing of last year's winners, Antigua State College, in the other semi-final.

Knight benefitted from a number of crucial mistakes made by State College's goalkeeper, Myer Bailey, who also plays for Parham in the premier division league.

Knight had conversions in the seventh, 31st, and 57th minutes, while the other goals for ABICE were scored by Deante Anthony

in the 34th minute and Jahmar Malone in the 48th minute.

PMS and ABICE will clash in the Under-20 Boys Division final at the ARG on Friday, December 20.

The final will be preceded by a playoff for third place between losing semi-finalists, All Saints Secondary and Antigua State College.

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opposition first tried to impeach Yoon, they fell short by just a few votes as the PPP staged a walkout.

On Saturday, the party held a marathon meeting that began at 10am and lasted till just minutes before the voting session began, as PPP lawmakers struggled to reach a consensus on the party's stance.

In the end, the party agreed to take part and allowed their lawmakers to vote according to their conscience. It appeared that at least 12 of them crossed the floor. Another 85 voted against impeachment.

South Korea has faced nearly two weeks of chaos and uncertainty since Yoon's short-lived martial law attempt late last Tuesday.

Yoon had cited threats from "anti-state forces" and North Korea but it soon became clear that his move had been spurred by his own domestic political troubles, not by external threats.

Hours later he reversed the order after 190 MPs voted it down, with many of them climbing fences and breaking barricades to get into the voting chamber.

Yoon later apologised but on Thursday he defended his actions, say-

ing he had sought to protect the country's democracy and vowed to "fight on until the end".

That speech galvanised people, and the president's approval rating tumbled to a record low of 11%, according to a poll by Gallup Korea.

The impeachment of a president is not uncharted territory for South Korea, which last removed former president Park Geun-hye through this process in 2016.

Yoon - then a prosecutor - had led the investigation against Park, which ultimately resulted in her impeachment.

United crush Hoppers to remain top of Premier League

Cup-holders Special Security Services and Bitar Pizza All Saints United romped to an emphatic 6-0 drubbing of the Greenbay Hoppers in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Saturday.

Raheem Deterville scored twice as All Saints United extended their unbeaten run and remained at the top of the standings with their latest victory against the Hoppers in the last game of a triple header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Deterville had conversions in the 39th and 55th minutes. The other goals for All Saints United were scored by Dorien Cole in the 44th minute, Tiquan Isaac in the 55th minute, Vashami Allen in the 67th minute, and D'Andre Bishop in the 87th minute.

All Saints United remain at the top of the Premier Division by advancing to 22 points after securing their seventh win in eight matches.

The result also allows the Greenbay Hoppers to stay second from the bottom of the standings on goal difference by remaining on three points after suffer-



Players of the All Saints United Starting XI
 ing their seventh loss in eight matches.

The other two matches during Saturday's Premier League triple header ended in draws.

Garden Stars and Old Road fought to a 1-1 draw in the second encounter. Shackwon Simon scored in the 44th minute to give Old Road the lead at halftime, and Jahred Williams equalized for Garden Stars with a conversion in the 68th minute.

The result allows the Garden Stars to move on to 20 points after securing their second draw in nine matches. It allows Old Road FC to advance to 19

points after recording their first draw in eight matches.

Jahiem Ferron scored in the first minute of added time to allow the Aston Villa Lions to snatch a 1-1 draw with Terminix Pigotts Bullets in Saturday's opening encounter.

Akeem Isaac shot Bullets ahead with a conversion in the eighth minute. The Villa Lions will advance to 18 points after securing their third draw in nine matches.

The Pigotts Bullets will move on to 16 points after recording their first draw in nine encounters.

More success for Blue Jays in Second Division

The Cedar Grove Blue Jays have notched up another victory in the latest round of matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division League.

Maleke Francis scored twice as the Blue Jays claimed their fifth win in seven matches with a 4-2 victory against Guydadli FC at the St. Johnstone's Village Stadium.

Francis had conversions

in the 35th and 39th minutes, and Ja-Rohn Thomas scored in the 10th minute but was later expelled in the second minute of added time after receiving his second caution of the match.

The fourth and final goal for the Blue Jays was scored by Kishorn Hamilton in the fourth minute of added time. Keyondre Hewlett scored both goals for Guydadli with conversions in the 5th and 37th minutes.

The result allows the Cedar Grove Blue Jays to move on to 16 points from seven matches. Guydadli FC will remain on nine points after suffering their fourth defeat in seven matches.

Joshua Wadi struck a hat trick as Sea View Farm FC notched up their sixth win in eight matches with a 6-1 drubbing of the Young Lions at the Old Road playing field.

Wadi had conversions

in the 67th, 87th, and 89th minutes. The other goals for Sea View Farm were scored by Azari Edwards in the second minute, Rhezal Gomes in the 36th minute, and Chevon Moore in the 52nd minute.

Zavier Joseph scored a consolation goal in the 69th minute for the Young Lions, who have suffered three consecutive losses and will remain on 10 points from

cont'd on pg 22

Sports News



Princess Margaret School retains Under-16 Division title

The Princess Margaret School has retained the Under-16 Boys Division league title in the Ministry of Sports, Cool and Smooth, and Joma Patrick C. Whyte Cup Secondary Schools' Football Competition.

Princess Margaret School clinched the title by defeating Ottos Comprehensive School 2-0 in a top-of-the-table clash in their final match of the 11-team round-robin league at the Antigua Recreation Grounds (ARG) on Thursday.

Makhi Phillip scored both goals in the 16th and 28th minutes to give Princess Margaret their ninth win in 10 matches to finish the competition unbeaten and at the top of the standings with 28 points, one more than Ottos Comprehensive School.

It was the only defeat for Ottos Comprehensive School, which won all pre-



The Princess Margaret School team with their medals and trophy after winning the Under-16 Boys Division league title in the Ministry of Sports, Cool and Smooth, and Joma Patrick C. Whyte Cup Secondary Schools' Football Competition at the Antigua Recreation Grounds (ARG) on Thursday, December 12, 2024. (Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Sports)

vious nine matches and entered their final match at the top of the standings with 27 points.

All Saints Secondary clinched third place by beating St. Joseph's Academy 3-1 in their final encounter at the ARG on Thursday.

Kamarlie Brodie scored in the seventh minute, Jalen Joseph had a 33rd-minute conversion, and Aaron Marie scored in the 56th minute for All Saints Secondary, which finished with 21 points after claiming their seventh win from their quo-

ta of 10 matches.

Ajabe Rae scored the only goal in the 50th minute for St. Joseph's Academy, which finished in fourth place with 18 points and a record of six wins, three draws, and one defeat from their quota of 10 matches.

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seven encounters. Sea View Farm will advance to 19 points from eight matches.

Bethesda ended a run of three consecutive losses by scoring all their goals in the first half to surge to a 4-1 victory against Herberts FC at the Bethesda playing field.

O'Shale Simon hit a hat trick with conversions in the ninth, 24th, and 28th minutes. Vernon Jeffers scored the other goal for Bethesda in the 31st minute.

Orane Gore scored a consolation goal in the 47th minute for Herberts FC, which will remain second from the bottom of the Second Division on one point after losing for the sixth time in seven matches.

Bethesda will advance to 10 points after recording their third win in seven matches.

But the Second Division encounter in Buckley's Village between the Young Warriors and Golden Grove FC ended prematurely with Golden Grove holding a 2-0 lead.

Kuanjah Carter had a 31st-minute conversion, and Terrence Spencer scored in the 33rd minute for Golden Grove when the match was abandoned because Golden Grove was playing with an unregistered player.

If the result is upheld by the ABFA, the match will be forfeited by Golden Grove, giving the Young Warriors their second win in seven matches to advance to six points.

Golden Grove would remain on 12 points after suffering their third loss in seven encounters.

Rangers drop points but continue to lead First Division League

Leaders Ottos Rangers maintained their unbeaten run but dropped points for the second time this season in the latest round of matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division.

The Rangers were held to a 2-2 draw by Jennings United, who are also unbeaten thus far this season, in their latest encounter at the Radio Range playing field in Ottos.

Jean-Pierre Williams gave Jennings United a 1-0 halftime lead with a 33rd-minute conversion. Clarence Francis equalized for Rangers with a strike in the 74th minute.

But two minutes later, Dravid Benjamin scored as Jennings United restored their one-goal advantage by taking a 2-1 lead. However, Kylano Isaac scored in the last minute of regulation to snatch the equalizer for the Rangers.

Rangers remained at the top of the First Division by

advancing to 20 points after securing their second draw in eight matches.

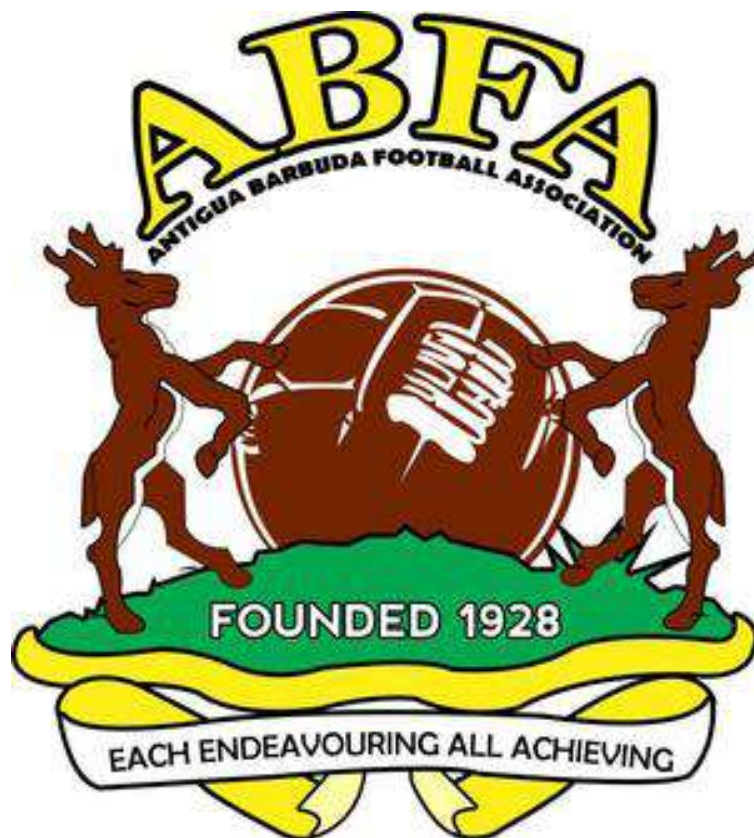
The result ensured that Jennings United maintained their unbeaten run by recording their third draw in six matches to advance to 12 points.

The Freeman's Village Scorpions claimed their fourth win in seven matches with a 1-0 victory against FC Master Ballerz at the Freeman's Village playing field.

Following a goalless first half, Malik Charles scored the only goal of the match in the 62nd minute.

The result allows the Freeman's Village Scorpions to advance to 16 points from eight matches, while FC Master Ballerz will remain on seven points after suffering their third loss in six matches.

Tryum FC recorded their second win of the season with a 2-0 victory against Police at the Cashew Hill playing field.



The goals for Tryum FC were scored by Ahdonis Henry in the 17th minute and Francois Joseph in the 85th minute.

The result allows Tryum FC to advance to six points from seven matches, while Police will remain on six points after suffering their fourth defeat in six encounters.

ters.

Urlings FC and Lion Hill FC fought to a 1-1 draw at the Urlings Village playing field.

Jermani Benjamin scored in the fourth minute to give Lion Hill the lead, and Urlings FC equalized via Daniel Joseph's 30th-minute conversion.

The result allows Lion Hill to move on to five points after securing their second draw in six encounters.

Urlings will remain in the cellar but will advance to two points after achieving their second draw in eight matches. Urlings have lost five of those matches, and their opening encounter with Bolans FC ended prematurely.

cont'd from pg 24

two losing semi-finalists, Nate's Photography took Game 1 of the series 2-0 in 57 minutes by prevailing 25-21, 25-22 against APUA Inet.

Several awards were presented to rookies or beginners as well as most improved players during the business volleyball league's closing ceremony on Saturday. Danesia Wilson of the Antigua and Barbuda International Institute of Technology (ABIIT) and Cassie Seraphine of Sandals won rookie awards in the women's category.

ry.

Kwame Braithwaite and Adonis Humphreys of EZ Fit Flyers captured rookie awards in the men's category.

Awards for the most improved female and male beginners from last season were captured by Tasia Barriero of Royalton and Dante Ryan of Police, respectively.

This year's business volleyball championship, which is organized by the ABAVA, was sponsored by Subway, Frank B. Armstrong, Cool and Smooth, ALB Tiles and Construction, and VJ's Bakery.

ICONS win business volleyball league title

The 2024 Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Volleyball Association's (ABAVA) Business League Championship concluded on Saturday night with ICONS capturing their first ever title in the competition at the indoor stadium at the YMCA Sports Complex.

The ICONS won their maiden title by wrapping up their best-of-three finals 2-0 against the Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank (ECAB) with a two-nil victory in Game 2 on Thursday evening.

The ICONS took 50 minutes to win the encounter and claimed an unassailable 2-0 lead by prevailing 26-24, 25-19 in another keenly contested affair.

The ICONS snatched a 2-1 victory against the Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank in Game 1, prevailing 19-25, 25-19, and 25-17.

The result ensured that the ECAB finished in the runners-up position in the business volleyball league for the third consecutive year.

ICONS celebrated their maiden title by romping to a 2-0 victory against the Busi-

ness League All Stars in an exhibition game on Saturday. The ICONS took just 42 minutes to prevail 25-11, 26-24 against the All Stars.

Meanwhile, APUA Inet, which captured the title for the past two years, clinched third place in this year's competition.

APUA prevailed 2-1 in Game 3 against Nate's Photography to win the decided and the best-of-three third place playoff series by the same margin on Saturday.

For the second successive game, Nate's Photography won the opening set 26-24, but APUA Inet hit back to clinch the match that lasted one hour and 19 minutes by winning the following two sets 25-21 and 15-12.

After losing Game 1 to Nate's Photography, APUA Inet hit back to win the second game 2-1 and leveled the series.

Nate's Photography secured the opening set 25-23, but APUA Inet showed their resilience by taking the next two sets 25-20 and 15-9 to win the match in an hour and four minutes.

In a battle between the
cont'd on pg 23

