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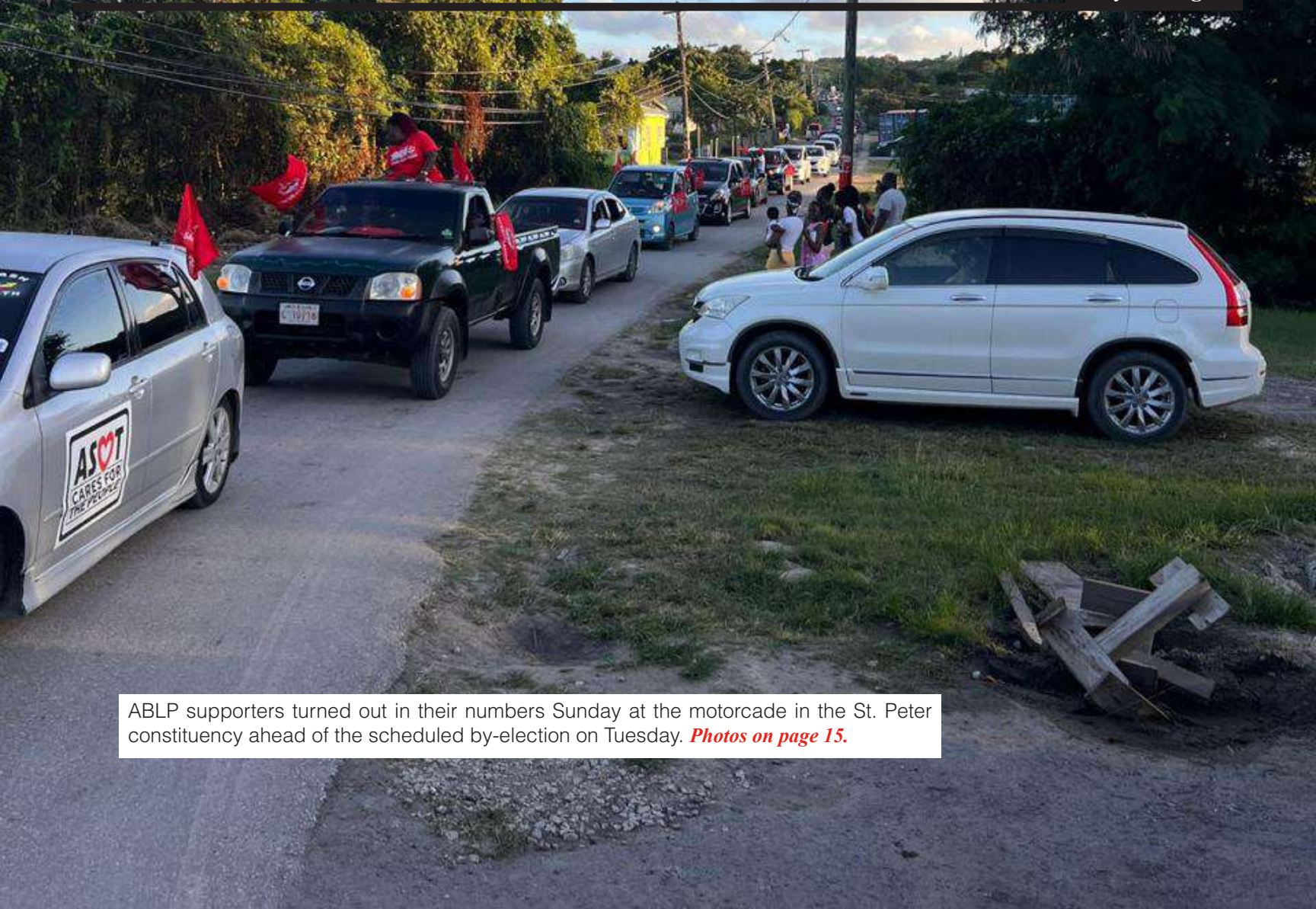
MONDAY 13TH JANUARY 2025

| VOLUME 6 ISSUE 8 |

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PM BROWNE: ST PETER ROADWORKS WILL CONTINUE

Story on Page 2



ABLP supporters turned out in their numbers Sunday at the motorcade in the St. Peter constituency ahead of the scheduled by-election on Tuesday. *Photos on page 15.*

PM Browne: Roadworks in St. Peter will continue after by-election

Prime Minister Gaston Browne is giving the people of St. Peter the assurance that the current roadworks now underway in the constituency will continue after the by-election which takes place tomorrow (January 14).

Speaking on the Browne and Browne show on Saturday, PM Browne noted that the roadworks in the constituency had started since August last year, but he acknowledged that since the untimely death of the former representative, Asot Michael, necessitating a

by-election, the work to repair the roads in the constituency has accelerated.

“We had previously prioritized road repairs in St. Peter as part of a timetable developed by the Ministry of Works. It so happened that for St. Peter the work started early in the second half of the year. There are areas in the constituency that have been without proper roads for several years. These include areas of Gunthorpe’s and Lightfoot. These are the areas where we are now focusing on and it is clear that the amount of work needed

will not be completed by the by-election. However, the work in these areas will continue after the by-election,” the prime minister declared.

He added that the acceleration of the roadworks in the constituency at this time is to demonstrate to the residents that the government is serious about tackling one of their core complaints head-on; the poor state of the roads in the various communities comprising the constituency.

He also said there is a need for additional equipment such as crushers as the demand for materials for the roadworks is quite high.

“I have suggested to my colleagues that we need to invest in at least two more crushers so that we can increase the amount of aggregates that we produce so that at a minimum the communities can have a well-compacted road, even

if it is not surfaced. I believe that we have to scale-up our production with two crushers at each plant and to employ more people because we have a number of areas across the island that need assistance,” he observed.

The prime minister identified a number of areas such as Follies in All Saints East constituency as one such area that requires ‘a significant amount of work’. However, he does not believe that at the rate at which the aggregates are being produced currently is sufficient to maintain the present momentum.

He also commended the Ministry of Works, including Minister Maria Browne and the Director of Works, Adin Crump, for answering the call for an increase in the roadworks, noting that crews have been working into the night to get the work done.

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PLEASE NOTE

SECTION 34 (1) – THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE (AMENDMENT ACT) 2001 NO.17 OF 2001

34. (1). Every employer shall, on polling day, allow every voter a period of four consecutive hours for voting and no employer shall make any deduction from the pay or other remuneration of any such voter or impose upon or exact from him penalty by reason of his absence during such period.

PM Browne calls out ABWU over its ineffective representation of hotel workers

The prime minister is calling out the Antigua and Barbuda Workers Union (ABWU) over what he described as its ‘ineffective representation of hotel workers’ which has confined these workers to making a little more than minimum wage despite working in one of the more profitable industries.

In a letter to the ABWU General Secretary, Senator David Massiah, Prime Minister Gaston Browne is suggesting that the poor representation from the ABWU comes as a result of the ‘compromised’ position which some union leaders find themselves because of their relationship with top hoteliers.

Additionally, the prime minister wants to see hotel workers jettison the ABWU and establish their own trade union which he believes will offer them much better representation.

According to the prime minister real wages for hotel workers have remained relatively constant despite the massive gains that are experienced by the hotel sector each year. Hotels, he noted, contribute nearly sixty percent of the nation’s GDP, yet workers in the sector have little to show for it.

PM Browne is therefore advising hotel workers to look about their own trade union, credit union and a super-market and he has indicated that his government would be willing to offering lands to the union at a price to enable to undertake a housing project for its members.

The full text of the PM’s letter to Sen. Massiah is featured below;

Dear Senator Massiah,

We all know that you are singing for your supper to retain your ap-

pointed position in the Senate so that you could earn a full pension.

Your assertion that workers do not have the right of association is a figment of your warped imagination.

How does an increase in the minimum wage becomes an election gimmick?

You are fully aware that there is a minimum wage committee that invariably consults broadly to deter-

mine the amount of the increase, yet you have deliberately sought to mislead workers into thinking that there would be no consultation.

It is obvious that you and the union that you lead, have become irrelevant in promoting and satisfying the empowerment of workers.

As a consequence of the compromised representation of certain se-

cont'd on pg 4

Antigua & Barbuda Electoral Commission

ELECTION DAY DOs AND DON'Ts

ANTIGUANS AND BARBUDANS WILL GO TO THE POLLS ON WEDNESDAY, 18TH JANUARY 2023
HERE ARE A FEW TIPS FOR YOU THE VOTER ON ELECTION DAY

DOs

- ▶ Polling begins at 6am and ends at 6pm.
- ▶ Take instructions from the Presiding Officer.
- ▶ Make sure that your voter identification card is ready.
- ▶ Pay attention to the party symbols on the ballot.
- ▶ Make your mark for ONE candidate.
- ▶ Ask questions if you are unsure about the voting procedure.

DON'Ts

- ▶ Provisions will be made for phones and smart watches to be taken upon entering the polling stations. These devices will not be allowed in the voting area.
- ▶ Electors should not be disruptive or disrespectful at the polling station.
- ▶ Electors should not mark the ballot for more than one candidate.
- ▶ Electors should not wear party colours to the polling stations.
- ▶ No Election paraphernalia within 100 yards of the polling station.

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Antigua Barbuda Electoral Commission

Local News



cont'd from pg 3

nior members of the union, who routinely enjoy gifts of free meals and sometimes cash from hoteliers; hotel workers have not gotten the type of strident and effective representation that they deserve.

Sen Massiah, the hospitality sector contributes 55 percent of GDP, but real wages in that sector have not risen correspondingly in that sector for decades. It is a shame that hospitality workers in 2025 are being paid a pittance above minimum wage.

The narrowing of the gap between minimum wage and the pay of hospitality workers is due primarily to the

poor representation by you and the ABWU that represent 95 percent of hospitality workers.

It is evident that you abhor any further increase in the minimum wage, because that will force the ABWU to negotiate better salaries and wages for hospitality workers.

Many hospitality workers are struggling to earn one third of our country's per capital income of \$60,000.

Years ago, hotel workers earned enough to service a home mortgage. Today, as a result of the stagnation in real wages, which has not kept pace with inflation, the majority of hospi-

tality workers cannot afford a home mortgage for a basic low income home.

The union also allowed hoteliers during the period of COVID to sever their higher paid employees and replaced them with lower paid employees.

At one point, the minimum wage in the hotel sector was reduced to \$9.00 per hour, mere cents above the minimum wage. One hotel, even recruited a former UPP Minister to shaft workers. Not a word was heard from the ABWU. It took myself, and broader civil society, to include Mr Anderson Carty to bring the madness to an end.

Hoteliers have been allowed to employ workers using shell companies, segregating the property from any potential claim by workers in the event of liquidation. Even tips have been taken from employees and some have been fired for accepting tips. Again, the ABWU has not advocated for any changes. It is Gaston Browne that is championing the cause to pilot legislation to bring these injustices to an end.

As a result of the abuse of workers in the sector, our nationals are no longer interested in working in the hospitality sector, resulting in an increase in immigrant workers.

All this happened under the uncaring and hopeless representation of the ABWU.

To add insult to injury, I found the recent negotiations and agreement by the ABWU on behalf of hospitality workers, to accept an increase of \$5.00 (week) which cannot even buy a bottle of beer) reprehensible.

This is tangible evidence that the ABWU leadership does not care about the workers they represent. Their interests lie exclusively in the status of senatorial appointments and gifts of free meals and others.

cont'd on pg 5

ROLES OF ELECTION DAY WORKERS

RETURNING OFFICER
The Returning Officer is in charge of all of the polling stations in a constituency during a General Election. He or she is responsible for the supervision of the Presiding Officer and Poll Clerk. He or she is also expected to carry out his/her duties in a fair and impartial manner under oath.

POLL CLERK
The Poll Clerk is one of the officers appointed by the Electoral Commission to assist the Presiding Officer in the polling station during a General Election. He or she is expected to carry out his/her duties in a fair and impartial manner.

PRESIDING OFFICER
The Presiding Officer is in charge of a polling station and reports to the Returning Officer. The Presiding Officer is the one who gives out the ballot on Election Day and aids persons who need assistance in casting their vote, for example, persons living with disabilities or persons who have interpretation challenges.

INFORMATION CLERK
He or she is responsible for the customer service aspects on Election Day. They will answer any questions or concerns relating to the process and general directions on polling day.

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cont'd from pg 4

I believe that hospitality workers deserve better. They should share equitably in the gains of the sector.

In the absence of effective representation by the ABWU, I am prepared, in the tradition of Sir Walter Citrine to assist hospitality workers in organizing themselves to form their own trade union.

By registering their own hospitality trade union which will be led exclusively by hospitality workers, they would get better, more effective and focused representation.

Hospitality workers contribute over \$2M annually to ABWU in the form of dues.

These fees could be better invested in their own union for their own empowerment. The ABWU have also wasted these dues subsidizing their loss making cafe up to \$500,000 in a single calendar year.

Accordingly, I recommend that hospitality workers create their own bespoke representative union, to be led exclusively by its members, and not by politicians and their activists.

This Hospitality Workers Union should be complemented with a Hospitality Workers Credit Union, Hospitality Construction and Housing Company and a Hospitality Workers

supermarket.

By establishing this comprehensive development infrastructure for hospitality workers, it will help to accelerate home ownership, savings and investment and lower food prices.

In addition, this would eliminate the unnecessary wastage of their dues, ensuring that the funds are utilized exclusively for the development of hospitality workers, compared to wasting up to \$500K annually on a lost making cafe.

I urge hospitality workers to organized themselves as recommended above and I am prepared to assist with

the seed funding, to cover the initial set-up costs to include any required consultancy.

I have also gotten an agreement in principle from the Cabinet to sell Crown land to this proposed Hospitality Workers Union at a concessional rate and to extend duty free concessions on the importation of building material, fixtures and fittings to construct homes for its members.

As our nation continues to advance, my administration is determined that all employees should share equitably in its gains.

*Blessings
Gaston Browne*



VOTING REQUIREMENTS

Who Qualifies To Vote?

- In order to vote in Antigua and Barbuda, you must be a duly registered elector.
- This means that your name must appear on a Register for Elections.
- You will also need your electoral identification card in order to vote.

All persons voting as electors at an election shall do so in person at the polling station allotted to them.

Exceptions

- A person serving as a member of the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda or the Antigua and Barbuda Defense Force; who is working for the process on Election Day.
- The person is employed as an election officer or polling agent on the date of the poll for a purpose connected with the elections.

These persons may vote by proxy if he/she applies to be treated as an absent voter and furnishes (in such manner as may be prescribed by regulations) the name and address of some person within Antigua and Barbuda whom he wishes to act as proxy to him.

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The High Court of Antigua and Barbuda sets benchmark with record clearance rate of 256.4%

The High Court of Antigua and Barbuda has earned commendations for achieving a remarkable clearance rate of 256%, the highest among the nine territories within the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (ECSC). This exceptional accomplishment was highlighted during the annual Law Year opening ceremony, held in St. Lucia.

The acting Chief Justice of the ECSC, Mario Michel, made the observation during his keynote address, applauding the court's efficiency in managing its caseload over the 2023-2024 period.

"This achievement by the High Court of Antigua and Barbuda exemplifies a commitment to delivering timely justice," stated Cecile Hill, Registrar

of the High Court. "A clearance rate of this magnitude is not merely a statistical triumph but a testament to the hard work and dedication of judicial officers, legal practitioners, staff of the High Court Registry and other support staff within the territory."

The clearance rate, a key performance indicator for judicial systems, measures the number of cases disposed of in a period relative to the number of cases filed. A rate above 100% indicates that the court is resolving more cases than are being introduced, effectively reducing backlogs and enhancing overall judicial efficiency.

Antigua and Barbuda's clearance rate of 256.4% not only leads the ECSC jurisdictions but sets a high benchmark

for courts across the region. In contrast, other territories have shown varied performances, with some still grappling with longstanding case backlogs and clearance rates as low as 34.62%.

Registrar Hill attributes the impressive performance of Antigua and Barbuda's judiciary to several factors:

Improved Case Management: The implementation of advanced case management systems has streamlined court processes.

Digitalization Efforts: The implementation of the first two phases of the E-Litigation Portal and greater reliance on digital tools have expedited filings and hearings, especially post-pandemic.

Judicial Leadership: The court's proactive approach in addressing procedural inefficiencies.

Collaboration Among Stakeholders: The synergy between judges, attorneys, and court personnel has created a culture of shared responsibility in achieving judicial goals.

Chief Justice Michel urged all jurisdictions within the ECSC to implement robust measures to bring their clearance rates up to speed, especially those with rates below 100%.

The Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court remains committed to fostering an environment of excellence and equity across its territories. The achievements of the High Court of Antigua and Barbuda serve as an inspiration and a reminder of the critical role efficient judicial systems play in maintaining public confidence in the rule of law.

As the new law year unfolds, stakeholders across the ECSC will look to build on this momentum, striving to make justice accessible, effective, and timely for all citizens.

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Fueling Success

A DECADE OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP AT WIOC

The end of 2024 marked a significant milestone for Mr. Gregory Georges as he celebrated ten years as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the West Indies Oil Company Ltd. (WIOC). His journey to this pivotal role is a testament to faith, resilience, and visionary leadership, deeply rooted in his early years in Dominica. Reflecting on his path, Mr. Georges credits divine providence, recalling how childhood visits to Rockaway Beach with his parents most Sundays, where the WIOC service station and its illuminated logo prominently stood, first sparked his fascination with the company.

From providing audit and advisory services to later serving as WIOC's Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Mr. Georges ascended to the CEO position in 2014. His tenure has been defined by a bold vision to transition the company from the "old WIOC to the new WIOC." Central to this transformation has been his philosophy that leadership is not merely a title but the ability to inspire people and influence outcomes.

Upon taking the helm, Mr. Georges was tasked with modernizing an organization steeped in tradition, with many employees boasting over four decades of service. Recognizing the need for fresh perspectives, he prioritized building a leadership team that could drive innovation while bridging generational gaps. This included appointing Sharon Thomas as Chief Operations Manager, Carlton Bramble as Chief Financial Officer, and Ronnie Singh as Project Engineer. In 2017, he elevated the company's Personnel Department to a Human Resources Department under Marlene Bailey, later transforming it further into a Chief Human Resources Officer role in recognition of the value he places on organizational culture and people development.

A critical chapter of his tenure came with significant changes in WIOC's ownership structure. Shortly after his appointment, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda (GOAB) became the sole shareholder of WIOC. Within months, GOAB divested 49% of its shares to two additional shareholders. Mr. Georges acknowledges the support and vision of Prime Minister Gaston Browne during this period, noting that the Prime Minister's commitment to empowering the company's leadership was instrumental in its growth. He also credits Mr. Hilroy Humphreys, a WIOC

Director, for his invaluable guidance and support in navigating these transitions. Together, they enabled Mr. Georges to execute the shareholders' vision with confidence and autonomy.

To secure the company's future, Mr. Georges initiated a bold expansion of WIOC's storage capacity by one million barrels in 2016, paving the way for the diversification of revenue streams. This strategic investment facilitated new ventures, including the bunkering of cruise ships and laboratory attestation services, generating higher-margin returns. Under his leadership, WIOC achieved a pre-pandemic EBITA increase of EC\$9.5 million, with over EC\$220 million invested in infrastructure and operations in the last decade. These investments have not only strengthened the company's market position but also contributed significantly to the Antiguan economy through corporate taxes, dividends, and job creation.

One of the highlights of Mr. Georges' tenure was WIOC's listing on the Eastern Caribbean Stock Exchange, making it the first Antiguan company to achieve this milestone. This accomplishment allowed Antiguan, Barbudans, and regional citizens, particularly those in the diaspora, to participate in the company's success. Equally noteworthy was the 2020 joint venture with Rubis West Indies Limited, which enabled WIOC to provide fuel services at the VC Bird International Airport for the first time in its 55-year history. Additionally, through a Dominica partner, WIOC became the supplier of fuel to the Dominica utility provider DOMLEC, marking a significant achievement after nearly 50 years of operations in the country.

Under Mr. Georges' leadership, WIOC has significantly enhanced its contributions to communities across Antigua, Dominica, and the wider region, by more than doubling the Company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in recent years. WIOC's social investment spans key areas such as culture, sports, education, and healthcare. Particularly close to Mr. Georges' heart is WIOC's sponsorship of the Adele School's feeding program, done in partnership with PDV Caribe Antigua and Barbuda.

Despite these successes, Mr. Georges acknowledges the challenges inherent in leading an energy company in a rapidly evolving sector. Maintaining a 60-year-old facility, preparing for the global energy transition, and securing capital



for sustainable upgrades are among the company's most pressing priorities. Mr. Georges emphasizes the importance of reinvesting in the retail network and enhancing customer experiences while exploring opportunities for regional expansion.

Looking ahead, Mr. Georges envisions WIOC as a regional powerhouse, aspiring to extend its operations across the Caribbean. "I want WIOC to become a regional conglomerate, planting flags beyond Antigua, Barbuda, and Dominica," he asserts. However, he cautions that achieving this vision will require tough decisions, innovative solutions, and strategic partnerships to bolster revenue streams and sustain growth.

Reflecting on his leadership journey, Mr. Georges cites fostering internal talent development as one of his most rewarding achievements. Over the past decade, he has overseen more than 40 team member promotions, including 19 in 2022 alone. These successes, he notes, are a testament to the dedication of the WIOC team and the collaborative efforts of key stakeholders.

In closing, Mr. Georges remarks, "While the future looks bright, we must navigate challenges with collaboration, creativity, and focus. WIOC's continued success will depend on our ability to adapt, innovate, diversify and forge partnerships that support our long-term vision."

Under Mr. Georges' leadership, WIOC has not only solidified its role as a cornerstone of Antigua and Barbuda's economy but has also positioned itself as a model of resilience and transformation in the Caribbean energy sector. His decade at the helm reflects a commitment to excellence, strategic foresight, and an unwavering belief in the potential of the region.

Local News



Acting DPP welcomes strides made in the justice system, but says gaps remain

The Acting Director of Public Prosecutions here in Antigua and Barbuda, Shannon Jones-Gittens, is commending the justice systems within the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (ECSC) member territories for the strides they have made in recent years, however, she notes that many gaps hamper an equitable delivery of justice.

Speaking on behalf of Antigua and Barbuda last Friday at the ceremony marking the opening of the Law Year, Jones-Gittens expressed her support for the public education programme which the ECSC embarked upon over the past year with the Chief Justice, Mario Michel, himself

visiting a number of colleges and speaking directly with the students.

“This must have been a very impactful and unforgettable experience for these youths. The court, in its usual manner has set an example for us to follow and issued a timely reminder about an important feature of our collective work,” she remarked.

She noted that across the ECSC jurisdictions, there have been a series of initiatives designed to bring more awareness to the workings of the court and how these impact on all, both victims and accused. In other areas, such as in the crafting of sentencing guidelines, these must first have the support

of the public before they are implemented.

Jones-Gittens acknowledged that improvements have been made in the delivery of justice within the ECSC system, however, she noted that gaps still remain in the system and she wants to see improvements that will benefit all. “I will highlight a few gaps which can be found in most, if not all our jurisdictions and it should be noted that this is just the tip of the iceberg,” she observed.

One of the main areas of weakness within the system that she has highlighted is the lack of resources to properly fund all aspects of the justice system. These include basics such as ade-



Shannon Jones-Gittens

quate furniture and space in some jurisdictions, to not having adequate tools such as computers at a time when criminals are utilizing Artificial Intelligence.

“Justice should be timely, so we need more robust and effective case management and co-operation from counsel. The criminal procedure rules are almost here but it’s the implementation that will determine the success of them.

“The number of matters continue to increase, so we need more judges and staff but that would mean more physical infrastructure – our courthouses have been neglected and barely have the capacity to accommodate the present occupants,” Jones-Gittens noted.

The acting DPP also pointed to the shortage of criminal lawyers to handle the increasing number of criminal matters. She suggested that this is an area that needs immediate attention.



One Nation Festival; a resounding success

The Antigua Recreation Grounds came alive this past weekend as the One Nation Music Festival 2025 delivered two unforgettable nights of music, unity, and celebration. Held on January 11th and 12th, the festival embraced its tagline, “One People, One

Love... One Nation,” captivating audiences with high-octave performances from a stellar lineup of local and international artists.

The festival’s extension to a two-night international event proved to be a significant success, drawing massive regional attention to Antigua and Barbuda. The vibrant atmosphere at the grounds, with a large crowd, created an electrifying experience. Patrons were treated to a diverse array of performances that highlighted the rich cultural tapestry of Antigua and Barbuda and beyond.

Chair of the Antigua and Barbuda Festival Commission, Ambassador

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Local News



cont'd from pg 9

Elizabeth Makhoul, expressed her delight, stating, "I am very happy and elated with the successful staging of our first multi-night Music Festival. We provided a first-class event that received overwhelming support from both patrons and sponsors. The festival has evolved from a single-night event into a multi-night spectacle, and the response has been phenomenal."

Looking forward, Makhoul shared that an immediate review of the event will be conducted to evaluate its success and explore areas for improvement. "Our review will naturally cover all aspects of the festival, including the effectiveness of staging it over multiple nights compared to a sin-



gle night. Additionally, we will consider the timing of the event, as January can be a challenging month following the Christmas season. We will assess whether another time of year might be more advantageous," she explained.

The insights gained from this review will play a crucial role in shaping the future of the One Nation Music Festival, ensuring it continues to grow as one of the premier cultural events in Antigua and Barbuda.

The One Nation Music Festival 2025 has set a new benchmark for excellence, and the organizers are committed to building on this success for future editions and are already looking forward to next year's One Nation.

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Photo Essay

ABLP St. Peter Motorcade



Nation's oldest centenarian honoured: A remarkable journey to 104

The community of Jonas Road, All Saints, came alive last Friday as residents and dignitaries gathered to honour Hermena Winifred Goodwin, the nation's oldest centenarian, who has reached the remarkable milestone of 104 years.

Organized by the Community Development and Citizens Engagement Division under the Ministry of Social Transformation and in collaboration with the office of the Governor General, the event highlighted Goodwin's extraordinary life, accomplishments, and lasting contributions to Antigua and Barbuda.

Born on the historic Betty's Hope Estate on December 28, 1920, Goodwin's life is a testament to resilience, faith, and hard work.

Official records list her birth date as January 10, 1921, due to the delayed registration practices of the time, but Goodwin has always proudly celebrated her December birthday.

From her early days walking miles to learn sewing in St. John's to becoming a celebrated seamstress crafting wedding gowns and Carnival Queen costumes, Goodwin's impact on her community is undeniable.

Her dedication to ensuring her children received quality education further cemented her role in nation-building.

Though the day was designed to honour Goodwin, she turned the



occasion into an opportunity to give back.

In a remarkable gesture, she donated books, bicycles, and other gifts to the students of J.T. Ambrose Primary School in All Saints Village, a school she once influenced during her earlier years.

The students, who attended the celebration, expressed gratitude for Goodwin's kindness.

Her selflessness underscores her lifelong commitment to education and empowering the younger generation.

At 104 years old, Ms. Goodwin radiated such vibrant energy that everyone was eagerly searching for the "centenarian of the day." She

was lively, sharp, and full of wisdom, with quick, insightful, and humorous responses to the audience's questions, showing that age had not diminished her wit or vitality.

Her contagious enthusiasm infused the ceremony with a unique energy, and her lively spirit was a true reflection of her positive outlook on life and her deep sense of community.

The ceremony was graced by several dignitaries, including Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams, and Lady Sandra Williams, Junior Minister of Health, Wellness, Social Transformation, Senator Michael Joseph and Permanent Secretary Mr Colin O'Keiffe.



Deon Lloyd charged with murder

Police have arrested and charged 42-year-old Deon Lloyd of Lower Otter with murder.

He is accused of killing 35-year-old Javorn Williams of Old Road following

a shooting incident at Mount Obama (Boggy Peak) on Thursday, 2nd January. Williams was pronounced dead on the scene.

The accused was also treated at the

hospital for injuries he sustained during the said incident.

He is due in court this week when the charge will be formally read out to him and he is expected to enter a plea.

Kevin Schulth charged for committing multiple offences

Police have formally arrested and charged Kevin Schulth for committing multiple offences.

The Golden Grove resident was charged with insulting language, failure to

comply with lawful directions, indecent language, failure to produce a valid drivers' licence, disorderly conduct by making noise, refusing to give name, and refusing to give address.

The offences occurred at Long Street on 28 December, 2024. The accused was being ticketed for a traffic violation when he began hurling several expletives at a traffic police officer.

Despite his insults and appalling conduct, the traffic officer kept his composure and professionalism throughout the ordeal.

Schulth is expected in court sometime this week.

BREATHTAKING VIEWS
ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

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Declaration by Caribbean delegations attending the closing of the World Festival of Anti-Fascist International in Venezuela on January 11, 2025

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), at the Closing Session of the World Festival of Antifascist International, thank the Bolivarian Government of Venezuela and the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), for hosting the several meetings that have led to the launch of this august international body, in and from the Caribbean and Latin America.

We also thank the Bolivarian Alliance for Our America (ALBA) and participating Caribbean Community (CARICOM) governments, for their respective roles in supporting this vital historic initiative, which will contribute greatly to the fight against the accelerated revival of fascism in The Americas, as in Europe.

We also declare the following:

1. We unreservedly support the positive role being played by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in taking the initial steps to launch the Anti-Fascist International in the Caribbean and Latin America

2. We fully support the backing of all other nations and social movements that have indicated a will to be part of this global initiative

3. We fully support the

continuity of progress undertaken by the Governments of the Bolivarian Republic since 2013, when President

Nicolas Maduro assumed the reigns of leadership of the PSUV from President Hugo Chavez

4. We fully support President Maduro's inauguration for a third consecutive
cont'd on pg 15

Position Description: Assistant Auto-Parts Manager

Position Summary:

The Assistant Automotive Parts Manager strives to assist the Parts Manager in returning a satisfactory profit on dealer capital invested in parts inventory. Accomplishes objectives using proper purchasing procedures, inventory control, staff utilization, security and pricing.

Key Tasks and Responsibilities include:

- Assist the Parts Manager with forecast goals and objectives for the department and strives to meet them.
- Monitors the performance of all parts department staff.
- Assist with the preparation of the annual operating budget for the parts department.
- Ensure adherence to established individual parts inventory levels and balances for maximum turnover.
- Ensures that parts inventory turns at least four times per year.
- Monitors and adjusts inventory to minimize obsolescence.
- Supervises stock order procedures.
- Enforce the policy on the special ordering of parts.
- Analyzes inventory, sales and expenses monthly to maintain profit goals.
- Analyzes departmental operations and storage layout and make recommendations as needed for maximum effectiveness.
- Provides technical assistance to parts department employees.
- Coordinates a prompt, efficient and timely flow of paperwork.
- Supervise shipping and receiving efforts to ensure timely processing.
- Monitors daily reports such as sales productivity.
- Handles customer complaints immediately and according to the dealership's guidelines.
- Understands, keeps abreast of, and complies with local regulations that may affect parts sales.
- Maintains professional conduct with staff and customers.
- Assist with organizing the physical annual stock taking with the auditors
- Ensures that all stock received is adequately processed and entered into the inventory.
- Assist with the quarterly reconciliation of physical stock levels to computerized stock levels for selected stock items.

Skills

- Ability to read and interpret documents such as safety rules, operating and maintenance instructions, and procedure manuals.
- Ability to read, analyze and interpret general business periodicals, professional journals, technical procedures, or governmental regulations.
- Ability to write reports, business correspondence, and procedure manuals.
- Ability to effectively present information and respond to questions from groups of managers, clients, customers and the public.
- Ability to respond to common inquiries or complaints from customers, regulatory agencies or members of the business community.
- Ability to apply concepts such as fractions, percentages, ratios and proportions to practical situations.

Desired Qualifications & Experience:

- A university graduate
- Three (3) to five (10) years related experience and/or training; or equivalent combination of education and experience in inventory management preferably auto-inventory.
- Knowledge of automotive dealership software (especially CDK) would be an assets
- Sound knowledge of the automotive industry

cont'd from pg 14

term and the 'Seven Transformations' to be undertaken during his current six-year term

5. We totally condemn the continuing efforts by the fascist and extreme right-wing elements in Venezuela and abroad, to destabilize and undermine President Maduro, the PSUV and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

6. We totally condemn the decision by the outgoing Biden Administration, just days before demitting office, to recognize a 'President of Venezuela' other than he who was elected and inaugurated on January 10, 2025, in the presence of over 2,000 delegates from 120 nations

7. We also totally condemn the absurd and fascist decision by outgoing one-term US President Joseph Biden, to impose a US \$25 Million bounty on the head of President Maduro on the same day he was inaugurated for a third consecutive term until 2031; and we demand the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of American States (OAS) likewise condemn this fascist proposal of the outgoing US President, which is also illegal under the charters of both the UN and the OAS

8. We totally reject the failed efforts by the Venezuela opposition, present and (some) former Latin American presidents and their US and European-based governments and so-called human rights' bodies, to undermine President Maduro and the PSUV, after the latter has

won 28 of the 30 national elections held since the establishment of the Bolivarian Republic by President Chavez in 1999

9. We eagerly look forward to the Anti-Fascist International eventually achieving the aim of burying fascism in Latin America; and

10. We together reiterate our everlasting support

for the Bolivarian Socialist Revolution envisaged and launched by President Hugo Chavez and its continuity, against all odds, by President Maduro and the PSUV.

Signed by representatives of:

Barbados (David Denny, J.P.)

Commonwealth of Dom-

inica (Meritta Hyacinth) Grenada (Peter David, MP)

Jamaica (Trevor Brown) Saint Lucia (Earl Bousquet)

Saint Vincent & The Grenadines (Dexter Rose)

Trinidad & Tobago (David Abdullah)

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The truth behind your £10 dress: Inside the Chinese factories fuelling Shein's success

By Laura Bicker

The hum of sewing machines is a constant in parts of Guangzhou, a thriving port on the Pearl River in southern China.

It rattles through the open windows of factories from morning until late at night, as they finish the t-shirts, shorts, blouses, pants and swimwear that will be shipped to fill wardrobes in more than 150 countries.

This is the sound of Panyu, the neighbourhood known as the "Shein village", a warren of factories that power the world's largest fast fashion retailer.

"If there are 31 days in a month, I will work 31 days," one worker told the BBC.

Most said they only have one day off a month.

The BBC spent several days here: we visited 10 factories, spoke to four owners and more than 20 workers.

We also spent time at labour markets and textile suppliers.

We found that the beating heart of this empire is a workforce sitting behind sewing machines for around 75 hours a week in contravention of Chinese labour laws.

These hours are not unusual in Guangzhou, an industrial hub for rural workers in search of a higher income; or in China, which has long been the world's unrivalled factory.

But they add to a growing list of questions about Shein, once a little-known Chinese-founded company that has become a global behemoth in just over five years.

Still privately-owned, it is estimated to be worth about £36bn (\$60bn) and is now eyeing a listing on the London Stock Exchange.

Its meteoric rise, however, has been dogged with controversy about its treatment



The BBC spoke with factory workers in Guangzhou's Panyu neighbourhood, the so-called "Shein village".

of workers and allegations of forced labour.

Last year it admitted to finding children working in its factories in China.

The company declined to be interviewed but told

the BBC in a statement that "Shein is committed to ensuring the fair and dignified treatment of all workers within our supply chain" and is investing tens of millions of dollars in strengthening governance and compliance".

It added: "We strive to set the highest standards for pay and we require that all supply chain partners adhere to our code of conduct. Furthermore, Shein works with auditors to ensure compliance."

Shein's success lies in volume - the inventory online runs into the hundreds of thousands - and deep discounts: £10 dresses, £6 sweaters, prices that hover below £8 on average.

Revenue has soared, outstripping the likes of H&M, Zara and the UK's Primark.



Workers are paid per piece. A basic t-shirt earns them less than a dollar.

cont'd on pg 19

cont'd from pg 18

The cut-price sales are driven by places like the Shein village, home to some 5,000 factories, most of them Shein suppliers.

The buildings have been hollowed out to make way for sewing machines, rolls of fabric and bags brimming with cloth scraps. The doors to their basements are always open for the seemingly endless cycle of deliveries and collections.

As the day passes, the shelves fill up with warehouse-bound, clear plastic bags labelled with a now-distinctive five-letter noun.

But even past 22:00, the sewing machines - and the people hunched over them - don't stop as more fabric arrives, in trucks so full that bolts of colour sometimes tumble onto the factory floor.

"We usually work, 10, 11 or 12 hours a day," says a 49-year-old woman from Jiangxi unwilling to give her name. "On Sundays we work around three hours less."

She is in an alleyway, where a dozen people are huddled around a row of bulletin boards.

They are reading the job ads on the board, while examining the stitching on a pair of chinos draped over it.

This is Shein's supply chain. The factories are contracted to make clothes



The den of factories in Panyu is integral to China's supply chain supremacy.

on order - some small, some big. If the chinos are a hit, orders will ramp up and so must production. Factories then hire temporary workers to meet the demand their permanent staff cannot fulfil.

The migrant worker from Jiangxi is looking for a short-term contract - and the chinos are an option.

"We earn so little. The cost of living is now so high," she says, adding that she hopes to make enough to send back to her two children who are living with their grandparents.

"We get paid per piece," she explains. "It depends how difficult the item is. Something simple like a t-shirt is one-two yuan [less than a dollar] per piece and I can make around a dozen in

an hour."

Examining the stitching on the chinos is crucial for making that decision. All around her, workers are calculating how much they will get paid to make each piece of clothing and how many they can make in an hour.

The alleys of Panyu function as labour markets, filling up in the mornings as workers and scooters rush past the breakfast dumpling cart, the cups of steaming soybean milk and the hopeful farmer selling chicken and duck eggs.

Standard working hours appear to be from 08:00 to well past 22:00, the BBC found.

This is consistent with a report from the Swiss advocacy group Public Eye, which was based on interviews with 13 textile workers at factories producing clothes for Shein.

They found that a number of staff were working excessive overtime. It noted the basic wage without overtime was 2,400 yuan (£265; \$327) - below the 6,512 yuan the Asia Floor Wage Alliance says is needed for a "living wage". But the workers we spoke to managed to earn anywhere between 4,000 and 10,000 yuan a month.

"These hours are not unusual, but it's clear that it's illegal and it violates basic human rights," said David Hachfield from the group. "It's an extreme form

cont'd on pg 20



Many factories remain open well into the night, with some people working until midnight.

Regional News



BVI bars sweep top spots in USA TODAY Caribbean rankings

Three bars in the British Virgin Islands have earned top positions in USA TODAY's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards 2025, with the Soggy Dollar Bar leading the rankings as the #1 Caribbean Beach Bar.

Hendo's Hideout and Poor Man's Bar rounded out the BVI's strong showing, ranking fourth and fifth respectively in the Caribbean Beach Bar category. Additionally, the territory's historic Callwood Rum Distillery/Arundel Cane Rum was named the fourth Best Caribbean Rum.

"We are thrilled to have three of our iconic beach bars recognized among the best in the Caribbean, a re-



gion celebrated for its vibrant bar scene," said Clive McCoy, Director of Tourism for the British Virgin

Islands.

"These establishments, along with their dedicated teams, have played a signif-

icant role in enhancing the BVI's reputation by delivering exceptional experiences to our visitors."

The recognition comes on the heels of the British Virgin Islands' inclusion in The New York Times' "52 Places to Go in 2025" list.

The USA TODAY 10Best Awards, which attract approximately 5 million monthly visitors to their platform, are determined through a combination of expert nominations and public voting.

McCoy expressed gratitude to voters, saying, "We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the readers who voted and continue to support our beloved islands."

cont'd from pg 19

of exploitation and this needs to be visible."

The average working week should not exceed 44 hours, according to Chinese labour laws, which also state that employers should ensure workers have at least one rest day a week. If an employer wants to extend these hours, it should be for special reasons.

While Shein's headquarters are now in Singapore, there is no denying the majority of its products are made in China.

And Shein's success has drawn the attention of Washington, which is increasingly wary of Chinese firms.

In June, Donald Trump's pick for US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, said he had "grave ethics concerns" about Shein's "deep ties to the People's Republic of China": "Slave labour, sweatshops, and trade tricks are the dirty secrets behind Shein's success," he wrote.

Not everyone would agree with Rubio's choice of words to describe the conditions at Shein's suppliers. But rights groups say that the long working hours, which have become a way of life for many in Guangzhou, are unfair and exploitative.

The machines dictate the rhythm of the day.

They pause for lunch and dinner when the workers, metal plates and chopsticks in hand, file into the canteen to buy food. If there is no more space to sit, they stand in the street.

"I've been working in these factories for more than 40 years," said one woman who spent just 20 minutes eating her meal. This was just another day for her.

Inside, the factories we visit are not cramped. There is enough light and industrial-sized fans have been brought in to keep workers cool. Huge posters urge staff to report underage workers - likely

a response to finding two cases of child labour in the supply chain last year.

The BBC understands that the company is keeping a closer eye on its suppliers ahead of plans to go public on the London Stock Exchange.

"This is about their reputation," says Sheng Lu, a professor in Fashion and Apparel Studies at the University of Delaware. "If Shein can successfully achieve an IPO then it means they are recognised as a decent company. But if they are to keep the confidence of investors, they have to take some responsibility."

One of the biggest challenges Shein faces is accusations that it sources cotton from China's Xinjiang region.

Once touted as among the world's best fabric, Xinjiang's cotton has fallen out of favour after allegations that it is produced using forced labour by people

cont'd on pg 21

Dominica police destroy over \$36.9 million in illegal drugs

The Commonwealth of Dominica Police Force has successfully destroyed more than EC\$36.9 million worth of illegal drugs seized during various operations. The destroyed drugs included marijuana valued at over EC\$3 million and cocaine worth more than EC\$33 million, totaling EC\$36,968,668.

Most of these drugs were seized during the final quarter of 2024, though some were from earlier operations and concluded court cases. The destruction took place under the supervision of the Inspector of the Drug Department, Clinton Hilaire who emphasized the police force's firm stance against illegal drug activities.



Dominica police destroy over EC\$36m in illicit drugs.

In a public statement, the Inspector issued a strong warning to drug traffickers, reaffirming the police's ongoing commitment to combatting the illicit drug trade in the country.

"We will fight relentlessly to curb drug trafficking, the importation, the production, and all elements

surrounding the illicit drug trade," the Inspector stated.

The event was attended by key stakeholders, including the Director of the Drug Prevention Unit, the Deputy Chief of Police and senior officers.

This coordinated effort underscores the police's dedication to ensuring pub-

lic safety and maintaining control over the drug situation in Dominica.

With the destruction of these illicit substances, the police force has reinforced its commitment to the safety and well-being of Dominica's citizens, sending a clear message to those involved in the illegal drug trade.

cont'd from pg 20

from the Muslim Uyghur minority - a charge that Beijing has consistently denied.

The only way to get around this criticism is to be more transparent, Prof Sheng says.

"Unless you fully release your factory list, unless you make your supply chain more transparent to the public, then I think it's going to be very challenging for Shein."

A major advantage, he adds, is that Shein's supply chain is in China: "Very few countries have a complete supply chain. China has this - and nobody can compete."

Aspiring rivals like Vietnam and Bangladesh import raw materials from China to make clothes. But Chinese factories rely entirely on local sources for everything, from fabric to zippers and

buttons. So it's easy to make a variety of garments, and they are able to do it quickly.

That especially works for Shein whose algorithm determines orders. If shoppers repeatedly click on a certain dress, or spend longer looking at a wool sweater, the firms knows to ask factories to make more - and fast.

For workers in Guangzhou, this can be a challenge.

"Shein has its pros and cons," one factory owner told us. "The good thing is the order is eventually big, but profit is low and it's fixed."

Shein, given its size and influence, is a hard bargainer. So factory owners have to cut costs elsewhere, often resulting in lower staff wages.

"Before Shein, we produced and sold clothes on our own," said an owner of three factories. "We could estimate

the cost, decide the price and calculate the profit. Now Shein controls the price, and you have to think about ways to reduce the cost."

When orders peak, however, it's a bonanza. The company ships around one million packages a day on average, according to data from ShipMatrix, a logistics consultancy firm.

"Shein is a pillar of the fashion industry," said Guo Qing E, a Shein supplier.

"I started when Shein started. I witnessed its rise. To be honest, Shein is an awesome company in China. I think it will become stronger, because it pays on time. This is where it is most trustworthy.

"If payment for our goods is due on the 15th, no matter whether it's millions or tens of millions, the money will be paid on time."

US returns \$50m in alleged stolen funds to Nigeria

Close to \$53m (£43m) in alleged illicit funds recovered from Nigeria's former oil minister Diezani Alison-Madueke among others will be used to fund public services, the country's justice ministry says.

The money is being sent back to Nigeria from the US, whose authorities allege that Alison-Madueke enriched herself, and others, while leading Nigeria's state oil firm by awarding contracts in exchange for bribes.

The US alleged that the money was then used to buy a 65-metre superyacht called the Galactica Star plus multiple luxury properties in California and New York.

Alison-Madueke, 64, has always denied all allegations of wrongdoing.

Her alleged ill-gotten gains are also under scrutiny in the UK, where two years ago she was charged with bribery offences including gifts of Louis Vuitton luxury goods, payment of private school fees, and at least \$127,000 in cash.

A key figure in the administration of former President Goodluck Jonathan, she also served as the first female president of the oil exporters group Opec.

Her time as Nigeria's minister of petroleum resources began in 2010 and



Diezani Alison-Madueke has been dogged by corruption allegations since leaving office, which she denies.

ended in 2015. She previously served as transport minister, and the minister for solid minerals and steel development.

The US Department of Justice announced in 2023 the final resolution of two civil cases on the forfeiture of assets that were reportedly laundered in and through the US by Alison-Madueke and her associates.

On Friday, the US and Nigeria confirmed that the sum of \$52.88m would be repatriated to the West African nation.

This will be the first repatriation to Nigeria of assets outside the West African country linked to Alison-Madueke, the Reuters

news agency reports.

Speaking at the formal signing ceremony in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi, said the return of the funds marks a significant step in the ongoing efforts to combat corruption.

Fagbemi said \$50m of the money will go through the World Bank to support rural electrification projects, and the remaining \$2.88m will be directed to the International Institute of Justice to strengthen the justice system and promote anti-corruption efforts.

Meanwhile the US Ambassador to Nigeria, Richard Mills, has emphasised

the need for accountability as well as the careful monitoring of the returned funds.

“The ministry of justice must guarantee that these funds are used transparently and effectively to improve the lives of Nigerians,” he said.

In November 2022, the US government repatriated to Nigeria, \$20.6m in assets allegedly stolen by former Nigerian military leader Gen Sani Abacha.

Five years ago, Washington transferred \$311.8m to the Nigerian government as part of a previous agreement to repatriate assets that traced back to the Abacha regime.

Zelensky offers exchange of North Korean soldiers

By Mallory Moench

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky says he is willing to hand over two captured soldiers from North Korea back to their home country in exchange for Ukrainian prisoners of war in Russia.

“For those North Korean soldiers who do not wish to return, there may be other options available,” Zelensky said on social media, adding “those who express a desire to bring peace closer by spreading the truth about this war in Korean will be given that opportunity”.

Ukraine said on Saturday that the men were captured on 9 January.

When asked last year, President Vladimir Putin did not deny Russia was using North Korean troops in its war on Ukraine, saying it was Russia’s “sovereign decision”.

The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) said the two men are in Kyiv and receiving medical care.

They only speak Korean and are being questioned with the assistance of the South Korean NIS (National Intelligence Service), the intelligence service said.

Zelensky posted photos on social media on Saturday showing the men, who are injured.



Zelensky shared an image of a wounded man reported to have been captured in Russia’s Kursk Oblast.

He also shared a photo of a red Russian military card that gives the place of birth as Turan, in the Tuva Republic, which is close to Mongolia.

The intelligence service said that when the prisoners were captured, one of the soldiers had a Russian military ID card issued in the name of another person with registration in the Tuva Republic. The other had no documents.

The intelligence service said that during interrogation, one of the soldiers told security personnel that he had been

issued the document in Russia during the autumn of 2024.

He is alleged to have stated that at that time, some of North Korea’s combat units had one-week interoperability training.

“It is noteworthy that the prisoner...emphasises that he was allegedly going for training, not to fight a war against Ukraine,” the SBU statement said.

Zelensky’s office said in a statement on Saturday that the Russians “are trying to hide the fact that these are soldiers from North Korea by giving

them documents claiming they are from Tuva or other territories under Moscow’s control”.

The intelligence service reported that the soldier carrying the ID card said he was born in 2005 and had been serving North Korea as a rifleman since 2021.

The second prisoner is reported to have given some of his answers in writing because he had an injured jaw, according to SBU.

The intelligence service said it believed he was born in 1999 and had

cont’d on pg 24

Sports News

Wins for SAP and Tryum in the First Division League

SAP FC and Tryum FC recorded wins during the latest round of matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division League.

SAP FC recorded their sixth win in 11 matches by snatching a 3-2 victory against FC Master Ballerz at the Bolans playing field.

Devonta Geran scored in the sixth minute, Jermaine Browne had a 37th-minute conversion, and Do-Quane Lewis scored in the 47th minute for SAP FC.

Greg Eustace Williams scored both goals for FC Master Ballerz with conversions in the 17th and 62nd minutes. The result allows SAP FC to join the Ottos Rangers at the top of the First Division.

Both teams have 21 points, but SAP FC has played 11 matches, two

more than the Ottos Rangers.

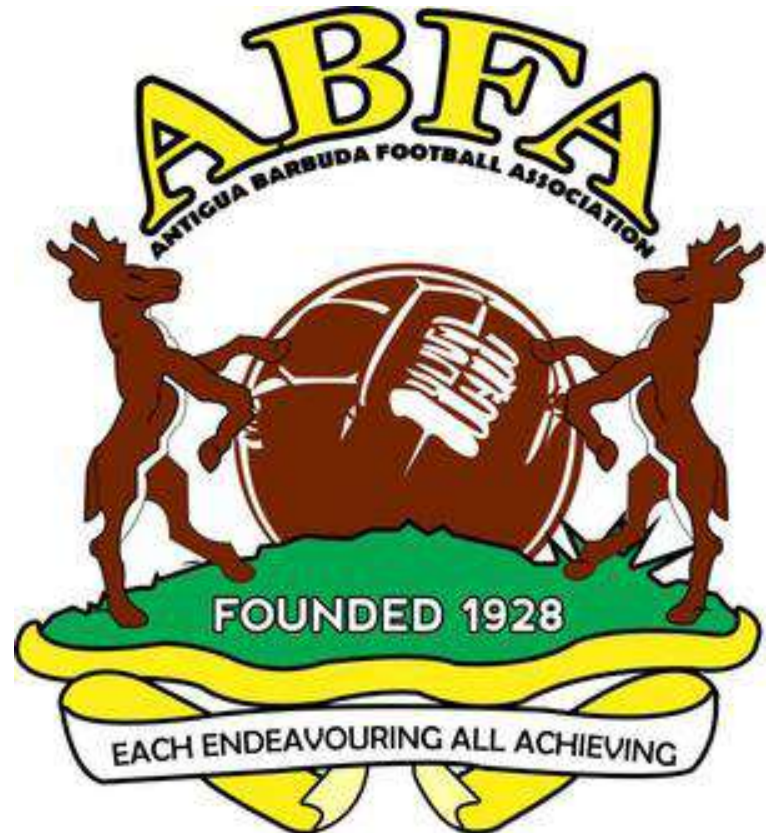
FC Master Ballerz will remain on seven points after suffering their fifth loss in eight matches.

Tryum FC recorded their third win in eight matches by snatching a 1-0 victory against Urlings FC at the Urlings playing field.

Following a goalless first half, Zabuda McCoy broke the deadlock by scoring the only goal of the match in the 69th minute.

Tryum FC moved on to nine points from eight matches, while Urlings remain in the cellar on two points after suffering their seventh defeat in 10 matches. Urlings opening encounter with Bolans FC ended prematurely.

The Ottos Rangers extended their unbeaten run but were held to a goalless draw by Empire FC at the



Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park.

The Ottos Rangers advanced to 21 points after securing their third draw in nine matches. Empire FC moved on to 19 points after recording their second

draw in 10 encounters.

The Freeman's Village Scorpions and Swetes FC fought to a 1-1 draw at the Freeman's Village playing field. Following a goalless first half, Andre Kellman gave the Scorpions the lead with a conversion in the 75th minute.

But Wayne Phillip snatched the equalizer by converting a penalty kick in the 82nd minute to salvage a draw for Swetes FC.

The Freeman's Village Scorpions advanced to 20 points after securing their second draw in 10 matches. Swetes FC also moves on to 20 points after recording their second draw in nine encounters.

cont'd from pg 23

been serving North Korea as a scout sniper since 2016.

The Geneva Convention states that the questioning of prisoners should be carried out in a language they understand and prisoners must be protected against public curiosity.

BBC News and other international media have not yet verified Ukraine's account of the prisoners and their capture.

Ukraine and South Korea reported late last year that North Korea had sent

at least 10,000 troops to Russia.

The White House said North Korean forces were experiencing mass casualties.

In December, South Korea's intelligence agency reported that a North Korean soldier believed to have been the first to be captured while supporting Russia's war in Ukraine had died after being taken alive by Ukrainian forces.

Zelensky said on Sunday "there should be no doubt left that the Russian army is dependent on military assistance from North Korea".

Bascombe says new T20 contest to spotlight emerging talent

Cricket West Indies (CWI) Director of Cricket Miles Bascombe says the primary goal of the upcoming regional T20 tournament is to provide a platform for emerging players who often miss out on opportunities in the Caribbean Premier League (CPL).

The CPL, which began in 2013, implemented a rule over the years that required each franchise to play two emerging Under-23 players for a combined total of five matches.

Bascombe said it is with that in mind that this new tournament was conceptualized. This, as it will not only help bridge the gap for players who fall outside that framework but also unearth new talent while addressing the need for a broader talent pipeline in regional T20 cricket.

“The cry has been that since the (2013 inception of the) Caribbean T20 there hasn’t been a platform for emerging T20 players,” Bascombe explained during a recent appearance on the Mason and Guest Show.

“It’s pretty much a case of whether you’re good enough to make it into a CPL franchise, in which case then you have to be good enough to consistently make it into the final XI to be able to really play



CWI Director of Cricket Miles Bascombe

consistent T20 regionally,” he reasoned.

The new regional T20 tournament, tentatively scheduled for April 18 to May 11, aims to target youth players under 23, while also offering opportunities to those slightly older who have yet to break into international cricket.

He added that the tournament’s design reflects the fact that players in their

late 20s still have the potential for lengthy careers, particularly with the T20 World Cup being played every two years.

“The aim of this tournament is to target those players who are still emerging and those players coming through who are beyond that age of 23. But we’re still working out the actual parameters that qualify players,” he said.

“Players who have extensive international experience will not qualify to play. We’ve discussed something around less than ten T20 internationals,” Bascombe noted.

Bascombe pointed out that in order to manage costs, the inaugural edition will be held in a single country, with Trinidad and Tobago as the preferred host.

“The intention is for us to make that tournament the highest standard possible.

“We want to have it broadcast, and as soon as you start to move countries, then the cost of the tournament rises exponentially because it is not only the players you have to transport, but the TV equipment, TV crew, and so on,” Bascombe stated.

“So, we are looking to have it in one country. At this point, we are looking at Trinidad just because of the time that we have and the support we are accustomed to getting out of Trinidad.

“But the plan is for that tournament to move around the region to get them exposed to different conditions as well as giving the public in each of the territories an opportunity to actually come out and see the inspiring T20 players ply their trade.”

Stuti shines at WTT Youth Contender in San Francisco

The Antigua and Barbuda Table Tennis Association has announced that its representative, Stuti Kashyap, delivered an outstanding performance at the recent WTT Youth Contender Tournament held at the renowned 888 Table Tennis Center in San Francisco, USA.

Competing against some of the world's top youth players, she showcased her resilience and skill, earning a bronze medal in the U19 Mixed Doubles event alongside her partner, Tanish Pendse from the USA.

In addition to her medal-winning achievement, Stuti demonstrated her growing prowess in the sport with notable performances in the singles events:



U17Girls Singles: Quarterfinalist

U19Girls Singles: Quarterfinalist

The U17 Girls Singles event was marked by a close-fought match in the quarterfinals, where an officiating error proved costly in the decisive fifth set. Despite this setback, Stuti bounced back impressively in the U19 Girls Singles event, claiming a thrilling victory over USA's top U15 player, Mandy Yu, in another five-set battle. These results highlight Stuti's consistency and determination and contribute to her upward trajectory in the global rankings.

Current U17 Girls World Ranking: 96

Current U19 Girls World Ranking: 168

Stuti's bronze medal in the U19 Mixed Doubles and her commendable performances in the singles categories reinforce her position as one of the most promising young talents in the sport.

Upcoming Schedule



Stuti's journey in 2025 continues with an ambitious lineup of competitions. She next travels to Tunisia to participate in back-to-back WTT (World Table Tennis) Youth Star Contender Series Tournaments from January 13-16 and January 17-19. Following this, she heads to Kolkata, India, for a week of preparation before competing in Doha, Qatar, at another set of back-to-back WTT Youth Contender Series from January 27-30 and January 31-February 2. These events provide valuable opportunities for Stuti to gain further international exposure and build on her recent successes.



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West Indies opening tour-match in Pakistan ends in a draw

The West Indies XI and Pakistan Shaheens had to settle for a draw in their three-day tour match, as both teams delivered competitive performances but ultimately canceled each other out in the final push for a result in Islamabad on Sunday.

Resuming day three with a commanding 134-run lead, after the Shaheens declared their first innings at 212 for nine, the West Indies XI set the Shaheens a daunting target of 311 after they also declared their second innings at 177 for five.

The Shaheens responded with a solid batting effort, as they got to 128 for two by the close of play to ensure the match ended in a stalemate.

Alick Athanaze once again led West Indies XI from the front, adding a second half-century to his stellar 98 in the first innings.

His composed knock of 58 from 84 balls featured seven fours and two sixes, as he displayed some semblance of form heading into the more important two-match Test series against Pakistan.

Tevin Imlach also impressed with a fluent 57 off 65 balls, including nine boundaries to keep the mo-



West Indies player Alick Athanaze bats during the three-day tour match against the Pakistan Shaheens in Islamabad. (CWI Media)

mentum in the visitors' favour.

Mikyle Louis (5), Joshua Da Silva (13), Keacy Carty (1), Kavem Hodge (36) and Amir Jangoo (zero) were the batsmen dismissed.

Mohammad Musa Khan, who grabbed two wickets for five runs, and Ali Raza, who chipped in with two for 32, spearheaded the Shaheens bowling attack.

Chasing 311 for victo-

ry, the Shaheens opted for a slightly aggressive approach, anchored by opener Mohammad Hurraira's sparkling 80 off 80 balls, decorated with 12 fours and two sixes.

Umair Bin Yousaf supported with a patient 25 as the pair ensured no further wickets fell after Jomel Warrican's two early strikes. He ended with two for 23.

Scores: West Indies XI 346 for eight declared

and 177 for five declared; Pakistan Shaheens 212 for nine declared and 128 for two.

The West Indies tour of Pakistan will feature two Test matches from January 17–29 at the Multan Cricket Stadium.

The series, which marks the final installment of the two-year World Test Championship cycle, will see the West Indies playing a Test series in Pakistan for the first time in 18 years.

Success for Sea View Farm and Blue Jays in Second Division

Sea View Farm FC and Cedar Grove Blue Jays notched up wins in the latest round of matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division League.

Rhezal Gomes scored twice as Sea View Farm FC recorded their eighth win in 10 matches by snatching a 3-2 against the bottom team, West Ham, at the PMS playing field.

Gomes had conversions in the 26th and 28th minutes, and Klyster Rowe scored in the 31st minute for Sea View Farm.

Jahmarley Barzey had an 11th-minute conversion, and Kenya Hughes scored an own goal in the 81st min-

ute for West Ham. The result ensured that West Ham FC remains in the cellar of the second division without any points after suffering their seventh defeat in as many games.

It also allows Sea View Farm FC to move into joint first place in the standings with National Parks English Harbour. Both teams have 25 points from 10 matches.

Maleke Francis and Jarohn Thomas each scored twice as the Blue Jays soared to their seventh win in nine matches with a 5-1 drubbing of Glanville's FC at the Cedar Grove playing field.

Francis had conversions in the 19th and 67th minutes, and Thomas scored in the

79th and 84th minutes. The other goal for the Blue Jays was scored by Ajahrie Hosier in the 11th minute.

Jameer Daniel scored the only goal in the 61st minute for Glanville's FC, which will remain on one point after suffering their sixth defeat in seven matches.

The result allows the Cedar Grove Blue Jays to move on to 22 points from nine matches.

The Young Lions and Earthquake FC fought to a 1-1 draw at the Old Road playing field.

Demarcus Douglas scored in the 40th minute to give the Young Lions a one-nil lead at halftime. Dewey Thomas scored an equalizer

in the 83rd minute to allow Earthquake to salvage a draw and a share of the points.

The Young Lions advanced to 11 points after securing their second draw in eight encounters. Earthquake FC will move on to 13 points after recording their first draw in nine matches.

However, the Second Division encounter at Buckley's between the Young Warriors and Herberts FC was postponed.

Herberts FC will remain second from the bottom of the Second Division on goal difference with one point from eight matches. The Young Warriors have six points from eight encounters.

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The Garden Stars and the Willikies Warriors also wrapped up their first-round campaign with a 1-1 draw in the last game on Saturday.

Nadre Thomas put Willikies ahead with a conversion in the seventh minute, and Terek Charles scored in the first minute of added time in the first half to equalize and salvage the draw for the Garden Stars.

The Garden Stars finished the match with 10 men after Gerique George picked up his second caution and was expelled in the first minute of added time.

The Garden Stars finished their first-round campaign with 25 points after securing their fourth draw in 13 matches.

The result ended a dismal run of seven consecutive defeats for the Willikies Warriors, who finished their first round campaign with 10 points after recording their first draw in 13 matches.



Players of the Pigotts Bullets football team

Old Road and Bullets get wins in Premier League

Old Road and Terminix Pigotts Bullets secured wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Saturday.

Old Road claimed their ninth win in 12 matches by pulling off a 5-2 victory against the Attacking Saints in the second game of a triple header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Joshua Ferdinand scored twice with conversions in the 38th and 43rd minutes, Rodney Lawrence had a 27th-minute conversion, Shackwon Simon scored in the 37th minute, and Imran Lewis converted an own goal in the 58th minute for Old Road.

Shafeeq Joseph had a 32nd-minute conversion, and Kerron McKenzie scored in the 34th minute for the Attacking Saints.

Old Road finished the match with 10 men after Shakore Simon picked up his second caution (yellow card) and was expelled in the 58th minute.

The result allows Old Road to advance to 28 points from 12 matches, while the Attacking Saints will remain on 14 points af-



Players of the Old Road football team.

ter suffering their sixth defeat in 12 encounters.

The Pigotts Bullets completed their quota of first-round matches by claiming their eighth win in 13 encounters with a 2-1 victory against Parham in Saturday's opening game.

The match was a contentious affair in which both teams had two players expelled for violent conduct in

the 69th minute. The players who were sent off are Anderson Irish and Jahkime Gomes of Parham and Javain Linton and Shamo Andrew of Pigotts Bullets.

Andrew was dismissed shortly after he scored the second and winning goal for his team in the 61st minute after teammate Kimon Harrigan had put the Bullets ahead with a 29th-minute

conversion. Andy Daniel scored the only goal for Parham in the 66th minute.

The result allows the Pigotts Bullets to finish their first round campaign with 25 points from 13 matches. Parham also finished their first-round campaign with nine points after suffering their 10th defeat in 13 matches.

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