



ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

POINT EXPRESS

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LANDSLIDE IT'S TURNER ALL THE WAY!!!

Story on Page 2



Local News



It's Turner all the way!!!

Rawdon Turner of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party is the new Member of Parliament for the St. Peter constituency.

He emerged victorious in a landslide victory over his United Progressive Party opponent, George Wehner by beating him by a whopping 1,674 votes to Wehner's 570 votes.

The final vote count is significant as it sends a clear signal that the ABLP supporters who had voted

for the former candidate, the late Asot Michael, in the 2023 general elections have largely returned to the folds of labour.

Turner bettered his general elections vote count of 899 by an impressive 775 votes. It also means that Turner received almost three times the amount of votes that his opponent secured.

Another interesting fact is that whilst the ABLP *cont'd on pg 3*



Rawdon Turner to be named Minister in the Gaston Browne Administration

Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne has announced that newly elected representative of the St. Peter Constituency Rawdon Turner is to be named a Minister in his administration.

The country's leader outlined that the people of St. Peter overwhelmingly showed confidence in the ability of Rawdon Turner to address the needs of the constituency.

"Even though he was defeated in the last general elections in 2023, Turner never gave up on the people of St. Peter. He continued to advocate for them and worked with various ministries to improve the infrastructure of the constituency. But most importantly, he was able to show the



people of St. Peter that he had a plan for the constituency. That is the level of commitment that Turner has for the constituency and the people have rewarded him with a victory," said

Prime Minister Browne.

The country's leader further announced that Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams will tomorrow at 11:30 a.m. at Government House, present the instruments of appointment to Rawdon Turner as a member of the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda.

At the time of going to press, Rawdon Turner won seven of the 11 boxes in the St. Peter By-Election held on January 14. After seven boxes, Turner secured 1152 votes, while his opponent, George Wehner for the opposition United Progressive Party gained 401 votes. The by-election was called by Prime Minister Gaston Browne following the sudden passing of former representative Asot Michael.

cont'd from pg 2

didate almost doubled his 2023 vote count, Wehner fell short of the total votes secured by the former UPP candidate, Peter Reds Derterville, by 31 votes.

Speaking with Point Express newspaper after he was declared the winner, Turner reaffirmed his commitment to continue the roadworks in the constituency; a promise made by both he and Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

"My main goal is to deliver for my people. Gone are the days when a representative can make promises and not deliver. I intend to deliver on my promises. I am happy that the hardcore supporters of the ABLP have returned and it is now my job to ensure that they remain," he remarked.

The by-election became necessary following the untimely death of Michael on November 5, 2024. Turner will be appointed as a minister effective today.

Turner got 74.6 percent of the vote compared with Werner's 25.4 percent.




THE ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA ELECTORAL COMMISSION
 DAVID SHOUL BUILDING, QUEEN ELIZABETH HIGHWAY, P.O. BOX 664, ST. JOHN'S, ANTIGUA
 Tel: (268) 562-4191/6/8, Fax: (268) 562-4331, E-Mail: abecpublicities@gmail.com, Web: www.abec.gov.ag

January 15, 2025

DECLARATION OF RESULTS

In accordance with Section 30 (5) of the Representation of the People (Amendment) Act 2001, the following person was duly elected for the By-election held on 14th January, 2025:

St. Peter	Rawdon Turner	ABLP Candidate
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 H.E. Arthur G. B. Thomas
 Chairman-Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission

An initiative to stimulate youth involvement in agricultural sector poised for relaunch

Two government ministries are pooling their resources to relaunch the Antigua and Barbuda Agricultural Forum for Youth (ABFFY).

The initiative, designed to empower youth, foster innovation and strengthen food security, was celebrated in a dynamic event hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.

Featuring passionate addresses from former ABAFY members as well as several dignitaries, the relaunch underscored the critical role of young people in shaping the future of agriculture.

The relaunch of ABAFY was presented as a turning point, incorporating innovative strategies and prioritizing technology and energy-efficient practices. By fostering opportunities for young persons interested in a profession within the sector and young farmers, the ministries aim to secure food security while positioning agriculture as a viable and rewarding career path.

Minister of Agriculture, Anthony Smith Jr., reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment to empowering youth in agriculture.

"Agriculture is not just about farming: it's about creating value, exploring



business opportunities, and ensuring the sustainability of the nation's resources," the Minister declared. The minister also called on schools, businesses, and community organizations to collaborate in nurturing young talent.

"These partnerships are envisioned as the foundation of a future where agriculture thrives on creativity, innovation, and sustainable practices," he noted.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Walter Christopher, highlighted the urgent need to revitalize the agricultural practices amidst challenges such as an aging farming population and declining youth interest in the sector.

"The key to sustainable development lies in engaging youth and equipping them with the tools and knowledge to revolutionize agriculture," the PS asserted.

A global outlook, linking agriculture to broader challenges like climate



change, food supply disruptions, and the decline of traditional farming methods was given by Director of Agriculture, Gregory Bailey.

He emphasized that ABAFY's relaunch represents a renewed commitment to addressing these challenges while empowering the next generation to lead transformative change.

The feature address was done by IICANational Representative and ABAFY 1st President (2001), Craig Thomas.

Thomas shared how his participation in agricultural initiatives as a youth shaped his destiny as an adult and urged young people to view agriculture as a global opportunity, emphasizing the importance of teamwork, strategic planning and perseverance. He also implored the policy makers to be on board and urged everyone to do their part for the sector.

Extension Officer and former ABAFY president,



Ika Fergus, shared his experiences as a past president, while Agricultural Science Education Officer in the Ministry of Education, Nicollete Francis, thanked the student for attending and showing the interest not only in Agriculture but also in education.

An overview of the history of ABAFY was given by Head of Communications in the Ministry of Agriculture and former ABAFY Director, Carol-Faye Bynoe-George.

As the nation embarks upon this renewed journey, ABAFY's relaunch reflects through the Ministry of Agriculture the government's commitment for the advancement of the industry and affirmed its dedication to empowering youth and ensuring the sustainability of the agricultural sector.

By investing in the next generation, Antigua and Barbuda is sowing the seeds for a resilient, sustainable and prosperous future.

Groundbreaking of UWI Expansion set for this week

The groundbreaking for the expansion of the University of the West Indies (UWI) Five Islands Campus (FIC) is slated to take place this Thursday.

The UWI FIC Principal Professor Justin C Robinson revealed this while speaking on state media earlier this week.

The first phase of the Saudi-funded US \$80 million expansion will be the construction of the new Five Islands Primary school.

Once completed, the current location of the school will be demolished and dorms erected.

The Saudi Fund for Development is a Saudi Arabian government agency that provides development assistance to developing countries by financing social and infrastructure projects.

The project will see the campus built out to encompass far more than the current offerings – to include student housing, administrative buildings, a library, a sports complex, and recreation facilities, among others.

Previously, Project Coordinator Colin John Jenkins explained that the relocation of the primary school is expected to take two years of construction effort with the second and third phases beginning after.

According to Jenkins, the relocated school is ex-



pected to have 21 classrooms, capable of holding 20 students per room, be climate resilient, and provide accessibility amenities.

“That’s a critical aspect for the expansion of the campus. That’s a key part of the business model having students from the rest of the Caribbean and world come here and we do have a shortage of dormitories,” Robinson said.

In the meantime, work has been ongoing on the current campus to accommodate the increasing number of students.

The programs are also being broadened to appeal to a wider range of persons.

“We have upgraded lab facilities that are going to be available for the start of this semester beginning next week, as well as, some additional admin, also we are in

the process of investing and having the installation of the university-wide enterprise computer management system which again will be necessary to managing an expanded campus,” Robinson explained.

The newly installed 5 million dollar computer system should be fully operational by August 1st.

Regarding degrees, there are presently two that are under review.

Both are centered around Artificial intelligence and according to Professor Robinson could be game changers for the Five Islands campus.

One is a bachelor’s degree in education technology, which would train educators to optimize the use of technology in the delivery of their teaching and also expose children from an

early age to modern technology.

The other degree will be in financial technology.

“I think that’s a game changer. We see that with AI and data analytics, that is something that everyone is going to use in their jobs and in their own lives...and we plan to continue this expansion into areas of criminology and healthcare so that professionals across the spectrum in our society are tech savvy and are able to utilize AI and data analytics,” Robinson added.

Robin mentioned that UWI FIC can become a new hub for the country not only by enhancing the productivity of its people but as an economic engine creating a new sector like what has happened with the American University of Antigua (AUA).



PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

APUA Water Business Unit Provides Update on Water Production and Distribution

ST JOHNS ANTIGUA, 13th January 2025 - The Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) Water Business Unit wishes to inform customers of temporary reductions in water production, which have impacted distribution to several communities.

Currently, our average daily production is approximately 6 million imperial gallons (IG), falling short of the estimated daily demand of 9 million IG. This deficit is due to several factors, including mechanical and technical challenges, unfavourable sea conditions, infrastructural disruptions, and the natural wear and tear of our Reverse Osmosis (R.O.) plants.

APUA is steadfast in its commitment to enhancing water production capacity by increasing surface and groundwater supplies through the exploration and inclusion of additional wells in its production network. Moreover, we have expanded our investment in reverse osmosis technology via strategic agreements with NS Management and The Seven Seas Water Group. These initiatives are set to boost water production by an additional 5 million imperial gallons (IG) by the end of 2025, including 1 million IG from the Ffryes R.O. facility, scheduled for commissioning by January 2025. This enhanced capacity will meet the growing needs of communities in the southern region of the island and strengthen storage capabilities at the Grays Hill Reservoir, which serves the western and southwestern areas.

In the interim, APUA has established a strategic committee tasked with reviewing and implementing an improved distribution strategy to ensure equitable water delivery to areas currently experiencing challenges by **Thursday 16th January 2025**. APUA recognises the essential need for reliable water supply and assures all customers of ongoing efforts to address these issues.

APUA also urges customers to store at least 60 gallons of potable water per person to cover basic household needs for at least three days in the event of disruptions. Consumers are also reminded of the importance of practicing water conservation and recycling measures in homes and businesses to prolong a limited and precious resource.

Furthermore, residents who use community standpipes are reminded to use them responsibly and only for their intended purpose of supporting residential water consumption. Any misuse, such as attaching hoses or tampering with the standpipes, is considered an offence and can lead to contamination, presenting serious public health risks.

APUA deeply regrets any inconvenience caused and asks for your understanding and cooperation as we work to improve water production and distribution.

-END-

The winners of the Christmas lighting competition announced

The winners of the 2024 Christmas Home and Business Lighting Competition have been announced.

Organised by the Ministry of Creative Industries, this annual event is aimed at capturing the festive spirit through dazzling and innovative lighting displays and featured Home and Business categories.

The Home category was divided into four zones (East, West, North, and South), while the Business category covered everywhere. The competition showed exceptional creativity and festive spirit, illuminating the holiday season with vibrant and artistic light displays.

Prize Details:

Winners in both categories will receive cash prizes as follows:

First Place: \$3,000.00 ECD

Second Place: \$2,000.00 ECD

Third Place: \$1,000.00 ECD

Home category participants will also benefit from a 100% waiver on their December 2024 electricity bill, while Business participants will receive a 50% waiver.

The Ministry congratulates all winners and thanks all the participants for their remarkable and creative contributions.

Winners by Category:
EAST ZONE:

Winner: Chatura Philip - 324 points

1st Runner-Up: Marilyn Jones-Marsh - 307 points

WEST ZONE:

Winner: Joel Rayne - 330 points

1st Runner-Up: Alix Xenne John Purple - 279 points

2nd Runner-Up: Rawlins D. Andrew - 250 points

NORTH ZONE:

Winner: Jean Pierre

Shoul - 326 points

1st Runner-Up: Gerard Shoul - 302 points

SOUTH ZONE:

Winner: Vernelle Weste - 400 points

1st Runner-Up: Roland Joseph - 349 points

2nd Runner-Up: Philmore Braithwaite - 300 points

BUSINESS CATEGORY:

Winner: Shouls Toys

and Gifts - 317 points

1st Runner-Up: Falmouth Harbour Marina - 296 points

2nd Runner-Up: Pigotts Mall - 224 points

The Ministry of Creative Industries congratulates this year's winners and looks forward to the continued growth and prominence of the annual Christmas Home and Business Lighting Competition as a highlight of the Christmas season.

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Shania Samuel to represent Antigua and Barbuda in Miss OECS Pageant this month

The second runner-up in the 2024 Queen Carnival competition, Shania Samuel, is one of five talented women from across the Eastern Caribbean who will compete for the coveted title of Miss OECS 2025.

Samuel will join contestants from Dominica, Montserrat, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines who are all ready to showcase their grace, intelligence, beauty, and talent under the theme “Elysian Elegance and Empowerment”, according the pageant committee in a state-

ment. The names of the other contestants for this year’s pageant are:

- Kyanna Dyer – Dominica
- Mauricia Barzey – Montserrat
- Timiqua B. Deterville – St Lucia
- Lisha Beache – St Vincent and the Grenadines

The committee describes the pageant as a celebration of Caribbean womanhood, highlighting the qualities that define the region’s women. Through

the competition, contestants will have the opportunity to represent their countries, boost their confidence, and promote their cultures on a regional stage.

The pageant will feature six segments: a promotional video, creative national wear, a speech, a talent performance, swimwear, and evening wear.

Reigning Miss OECS, Claire Marissa Smart of St Lucia, will participate in the official opening parade of Mas Domnik on January 18.

“The other contestants will arrive in Dominica the weekend before the show and will receive the opportunity to meet dignitaries and the media, explore Dominica’s tourist sites, witness our spectacular culture and promote our country,” the committee indicated.

The Miss OECS Queen Pageant is set 8:00pm on January 31 at Carnival City,



Roseau.

A spokesman for the Festivals Commission said Samuel is representing Antigua and Barbuda in the pageant as it seeks to give all top three placed contestants an opportunity to represent the country.

The reigning queen, Desrie Markham will participate in the Caribbean Queen pageant in St. Maarten, the first runner-up, Dominique Trotman represented the country at the Caribbean Culture pageant in Nevis where he placed 1st runner up and Samuel will compete in Dominica at the Miss OECS pageant.

No foul play is suspected in sudden death of Jennings resident

Police at Bolans Police Station are investigating the sudden death of Joel Carbon of Jennings. The 37-year-old was found lying motionless inside his vehicle at Bolans around 10:55 pm on Monday, 13 January.

It was reported that the deceased went to the area to transport a worker and fell ill while waiting in the parking lot. He was pronounced dead at the scene at 1:20 am, Tuesday.

While no foul play is suspected, an autopsy is however expected to be performed.

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Thank you

The Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission, under the auspices of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to all who contributed to the successful staging of our first One Nation Music Festival.

We are immensely grateful to our esteemed sponsors for their unwavering support and belief in the vision of this festival. Special thanks to our executive producers: Antigua Barbuda Tourism Authority and Citizenship by Investment Unit. Our Partner Producers: Brydens, Carib, Remy Martin, INET, Arton Capital, Kingdom Soundz Ministries Antigua, Point Broadcast Network, and LAVA International. Our Media Partners: ABS – TV & Radio, Bakanal TV, Flava FM, Jump FM, and VIBZ FM. Your contributions were instrumental in bringing this event to life.

To my amazing One Nation Team, from Management to Logistics, Marketing, Hospitality, Drivers, Engineers and the Men-At-Work, this festival was executed at the highest level of professionalism and expertise. I want to extend my sincerest gratitude for your hard work and dedication.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our service providers who went above and beyond the call of duty. Your dedication and professionalism ensured the festival's seamless execution.

To the incredible lineup of artists, from nightly hosts and DJs to our musicians, local, regional, and international, you were all selected with intention and purpose. You understood the assignment and delivered first-class performances that made One Nation Music Festival high-energy, electrifying, memorable, emotional and almost magical.

To our amazing patrons, thank you for entrusting us with your presence at this festival. Your support, compliance with changes, and unwavering pursuit were vital to its success. You helped create an atmosphere of unity and celebration that truly embodied the spirit of **"One Nation, One People."**

This inaugural One Nation Music Festival was historic, representing inclusiveness and unity. As we reflect on this achievement, we look forward to building upon this foundation for an even more spectacular festival in 2026.

Yours in Gratitude,

Amb. Elizabeth Makhoul
Chairperson, Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission

ONE PEOPLE. ONE LOVE

Local News



Canada names new High Commissioner to Antigua and Barbuda

The new Canadian High Commissioner to Antigua and Barbuda has paid her first courtesy call on the senior members of the Antigua and Barbuda government during which she presented her credentials.

with Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams, Prime Minister Gaston Browne, to whom she presented her credentials, and Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P Chet Greene.

Her Excellency Brenda Wills spent Tuesday in St. John's holding meetings

High Commissioner Wills is headquartered in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.



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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

ABIA and CDB offer Financial Literacy training

Training Opportunity: The Antigua and Barbuda Investment Authority (ABIA) in conjunction with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) is offering training to the general public on the topic: Financial Literacy

Who Should Apply: The training is specifically designed for small business owners and individuals who are seeking to learn how to improve their financial knowledge management skills.

Date of Training. The training will be held from February 4th to 6th, 2025, at the Inland Revenue Department Conference Room from 5:30 pm –

7:30 pm nightly, cost of \$150.00

How to Register: Interested persons can register through the following link shown below.

<https://forms.gle/u7EKZJs6T-teR35xQ9>

- The Benefits of Attending:**
- Enhanced ability to make informed financial decisions
 - Understand and interpret financial statements
 - Improve cash flow management in your business
 - Explore financing options and investment opportunities
 - Network with like-minded individuals and business owners

viduals and business owners

Action required: Do not miss this opportunity to improve your financial knowledge. Register today and take the first steps towards a more informed and decisive approach to making financial decisions.

Media contact: For questions and additional information, please contact Jacqueline Yearwood at 481-1015

About the ABIA: The Antigua and Barbuda Investment Authority (ABIA) offers various training programs and technical assistance to support micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs).

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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER**



Meta cuts 5% of jobs to lose 'lowest performers'

By Natalie Sherman

Meta, the owner of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, is preparing to cut about 5% of its global workforce, as the company looks to drop “low performers faster”.

In a memo to staff, boss Mark Zuckerberg said he had made the decision to speed up the firm’s regular performance-based cuts in anticipation of an “intense year”.

He said the company would “back-fill” the roles later in 2025.

The company, which employs about 72,000 people globally, did not say how the cuts would be distributed around the world.

Workers in the US who are affected will know by 10 February, according to Mr Zuckerberg’s memo. Those outside the US will be informed “later”.

“This is going to be an intense year, and I want to make sure we have the best people on our teams,” he wrote.

“I’ve decided to raise the bar on performance management and move out low performers faster.”

The move comes on the heels of other big decisions by Mr Zuckerberg, including moves to end the company’s fact-checking and diversity programmes. Performance-based job cuts are common in corporate America. At Meta, they would normally unfold over the course of a year, Mr Zuckerberg said, but the process is being accelerated this year.

Roughly 3,600 people could be affected this move. They will receive “generous severance”, he said.

The last big cuts at Meta came in 2023, when the company cut about 10,000 positions in a cost-cutting

drive after Mr Zuckerberg declared it the «year of efficiency». It cut about 11,000 roles in 2022.

Mr Zuckerberg also appears to be overhauling his own public image.

On a recent podcast with Joe Rogan, Mr Zuckerberg said he thought companies needed more “masculine energy” and discussed taking up martial arts, which he said he enjoyed because he felt he could more fully express himself, than in his corporate role.

“When you’re running a company, people typically don’t wanna see you being like this ruthless person who’s just like I’m gonna crush the people I’m competing with,” he said. “But when you’re fighting, it’s like no.”

“I think in some ways when people see me competing in the sport they’re like oh no, ‘That’s the real Mark.’”

Andrew Tate released from house arrest

Controversial online influencer Andrew Tate has been released from house arrest by a Romanian court, pending the outcome of a criminal investigation, his spokesman has said.

He has instead been put under judicial control, meaning he can travel through Romania “while adhering to the required legal conditions”, the spokesman added.

Tate, 38, is facing allegations of trafficking of minors, sexual intercourse with a minor and money laundering, alongside his brother Tristan. Both have strongly denied the charges.

The spokesman added: “Andrew Tate and his team remain committed to full cooperation and the pursuit of justice.”

Tate was put under house arrest in August when prosecutors launched a second criminal investigation against himself and Tristan Tate, as well as four other suspects, over allegations of trafficking of minors, sexual intercourse with a minor and money laundering. They all deny wrongdoing.

A first, separate case against the brothers was sent back to prosecutors by the Court of Appeals in Bucharest in December for the second time, saying it could not proceed in its current



Andrew Tate is accused of human trafficking and sexually exploiting women alongside his brother Tristan.

form.

In this case, Andrew and Tristan Tate were accused of human trafficking and forming an organised group to sexually exploit women.

They deny these allegations too, as well as those of rape and human trafficking that have been made against them in the UK, where police are seeking to extradite the dual UK-US nationals.

A judge in Bucharest has

previously said that extradition request will be dealt with after the conclusion of the case in Romania.

The brothers have also been accused of tax evasion in the UK. Last month, a British court ruled that police could seize more than £2m (\$2.4m) from them for failing to pay tax on £21m in revenue from their online businesses.

Andrew Tate said the

ruling was “not justice” and called it a “co-ordinated attack”.

He is a self-described misogynist and has previously been banned from social media platforms for expressing those views.

A former kickboxer, he has gained millions of followers online and has lived in Romania for a number of years, having previously been based in the UK.

IICA, IAEA work to strengthen nuclear technology in disease control

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) have signed a memorandum of understanding in Vienna, a first step in their partnership to apply nuclear technologies to agriculture.

They plan to implement multiple joint initiatives in the areas of food security, water and soil management, pest and disease control and animal health.

Rafael Grossi, IAEA Director General, and Manuel Otero Director IICA signed the MOU to undertake a project aimed at preventing and controlling screwworm in cattle.

Both organisations are already working in Latin American and Caribbean to combat this disease, which is causing serious harm to meat and milk production and to the farmers' income.

Grossi and Otero stressed the importance of synergy among international organisations, including national authorities and the private sector, as the only way to tackle the challenges of food security that today top the global agenda.

"We signed an agreement that will strengthen the cooperation we already have to disseminate nuclear technologies that have a positive impact on agriculture and the welfare of rural communities," Grossi said shar-



Manuel Otero, Director General of IICA and Rafael Grossi, Director General of the IAEA. Photo: IICA

ing further that the two will work on specific initiatives and expressed hope that the collaboration will grow and produce positive results.

"IICA's territorial presence in the Americas and their technical knowledge are fundamental in strengthening the arrival and application on the continent of nuclear science to help control pests in agriculture and livestock.

"IICA is also a key ally in ensuring the technical projects that have greater political impact," added Grossi.

Nuclear science has been used successfully around the world for over 50 years to combat pests that impact agricultural and animal production. Techniques have been developed that offer sustainable, cost-effective,

and environmentally friendly insect control.

Otero highlighted the importance of nuclear science and technology in combating pests and diseases that were believed to be eradicated but have reappeared due to climate change, limiting productivity.

IICA's Director General underscored that the joint projects aimed at applying nuclear technologies to agriculture are a step toward making the "Atoms of Peace" principle a reality, which has governed the work of the IAEA since its inception in 1957.

"The partnership between IICA and the IAEA that we are strengthening has a concrete objective, which is to work together to address the main challenges and obstacles facing agri-

culture in the Americas," he said.

"A key issue is controlling pests that not only affect production but also impact the well-being of farmers," Otero stated further.

He added that losses caused by the screwworm are enormous. The disease has reappeared just like other diseases of the past. "It is time to work in coordination with other international agencies and the private sector and to join forces to combat this scourge," he added.

The IAEA and IICA have been collaborating and exchanging information since at least 2007. The joint work has focused on confronting new challenges related to food health and safety.

US to remove Cuba from state sponsors of terror list

President Joe Biden is to remove the US designation of Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism as part of a prisoner release deal, the White House said on Tuesday.

Shortly afterwards, Cuba announced it would release 553 prisoners detained for “diverse crimes”. It is hoped these will include participants in anti-government protests four years ago.

President-elect Donald Trump reinstated the country’s terror designation in the final days of his first presidency in 2021, banning US economic aid and arms exports to the country.

But on Tuesday, a Biden administration official said an assessment of the situation had presented “no information” that supported the designation.

Cuba said Biden’s move was a step “in the right direction” despite its “limited nature”.

“This decision puts an end to specific coercive measures that, along with many others, cause serious damage to the Cuban economy, with a severe effect on the population,” the country’s ministry of foreign affairs said in a statement.

Hundreds of prisoners will “gradually” be freed following talks brokered by the Catholic Church, a separate statement read a few hours later.

Details about the prison-



US President Joe Biden gave his final foreign policy address earlier this week.

ers have not been announced - it was hoped the deal would prompt the release of some protesters imprisoned after large anti-government protests in Cuba over the nation’s economic decline in 2021.

Cuba currently sits alongside North Korea, Syria and Iran on the US State Sponsors of Terrorism list.

This means they are deemed by the US to have “repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism”.

Adding Cuba back to the list after its removal in 2015 by President Barack Obama, Trump cited the communist country’s backing of Venezu-

elan leader Nicolas Maduro.

At the time Cuba called the move “cynical,” “hypocritical” and an act of “political opportunism”.

Alongside prompting the prisoner release, this decision is also significant because it can be seen as a step towards normalising relations between Cuba and the US.

This could pave the way for dialogue on other contentious issues.

It could also help Cuba’s dire economic situation, as some major banks and foreign investors have struggled to operate there legally.

Biden is to notify Congress of his plans, which also

include reversing Trump-era financial restrictions on some Cubans, a White House statement said.

He will also suspend the ability of individuals to make claims to confiscated property in Cuba, the statement read.

It is unclear whether Trump will reverse this latest decision when he returns to office on 20 January.

The president-elect’s nominee as the next US secretary of state, Marco Rubio, has long advocated for sanctions on Cuba.

His family left the country in the 1950s before the communist revolution that put Fidel Castro in power.

Relatives wait for news as body bags hauled from South African mine

By Mayeni Jones

Rescuers have spent Tuesday pulling body bags and survivors from a South African mine where scores of illegal miners are still thought to be at least 2km (1.2 miles) underground.

Eighty-two people have surfaced alive from the shaft in Stilfontein since the rescue mission began on Monday, police say, while 36 dead bodies have been retrieved.

On Tuesday, the BBC saw dozens of emaciated miners - wearing tattered clothes and no shoes or socks - being escorted to a medical tent.

Some of the body bags appeared so light that they were only carried by one person.

This story contains a video that some people may find distressing.

The men have been underground since police operations targeting illicit mining started last year across the country.

More than 100 of the illegal miners, known locally as “zama zamas”, have reportedly died underground since the crackdown on their activities began at the mine some 145km (90 miles) south-west of Johannesburg last year.

The authorities however, have not confirmed this figure as it is yet to be “verified by an official source”, a spokesperson told the BBC.



Relatives, union staff and members of the local community have been protesting outside the mine.

Relatives and community members have been protesting at the mining site, armed with placards urging the authorities to rescue the miners.

They look weary and tell the BBC on Tuesday that they have tired of speaking to the media.

Zinzi Tom explained that her 29-year-old brother, Ayanda, went down the mine in June because he was unemployed and wanted to make a living.

“We questioned whether he should do it, but he’s of age, he can do whatever he wants. But now that’s not the point. The point is that we want to save him. We want him out,” she said.

Some of the miners that managed to escape have told Ms Tom that her brother is not well. She hopes he will be one those rescued soon.

Ms Tom describes her

brother as quiet and private, adding: “I need to be strong for him, because I can’t be weak now. He needs me more than ever.”

The mood among the relatives outside the mine turned sour when a convoy carrying Mineral Resources Minister Gwede Mantashe and the police minister arrived at the site.

The government has been criticised for taking a hard line on the illegal miners by blocking their food and water supplies. They also shut off all but one of the mine’s exits.

Last week a court ordered the government to facilitate a rescue operation that had been long-delayed.

The authorities have defended their robust response to the miners and in a press conference outside the mine Mantashe said the “fight against illegal mining”

should be intensified.

“It’s a crime against the economy, it’s an attack on the economy,” he said.

Sanco, a national umbrella body for NGOs, has been sending volunteers down the shaft with the rescue teams and advocating for the miners.

“We had initially requested that we take out the dead bodies first, so that we avoid a situation where they decompose to an extent that their families cannot identify them anymore, because these are the dead bodies which have been there for quite some time,” Sanco provincial spokesperson Mzukisi Jam told the BBC.

He added that they are also prioritising getting out the very sick and have sent some food and water down the shaft.

On Monday, disturbing
cont’d on pg 19

South Korea begins impeachment trial of suspended president

South Korea's Constitutional Court has held its first hearing to decide if suspended President Yoon Suk Yeol should be removed from office after his shock martial law attempt last month.

The hearing ended within four minutes because of Yoon's absence - his lawyers had earlier said he would not attend for his own safety, as there is a warrant out for his arrest on separate charges of insurrection.

In December, Yoon was suspended after members of his own party voted with the opposition to impeach him.

However he will only be formally removed from office if at least six of the eight-member Constitutional Court bench votes to uphold the impeachment.

According to South Korean law, the court must set a new date for a hearing before they can proceed without his participation.

The next hearing is scheduled for Thursday.

Yoon's lawyers have indicated that he will show up for a hearing at an "appropriate time", but they have challenged the court's "unilateral decision" on trial dates.

The court on Tuesday rejected the lawyers' request for one of the eight justices to be recused from the proceedings.

Yoon has not commented publicly



Yoon is South Korea's first sitting president to face arrest.

since parliament voted to impeach him on 14 December and has been speaking primarily through his lawyers.

Investigators are also separately preparing for another attempt to arrest Yoon for alleged insurrection, after an earlier attempt on 3 January ended following an hours-long standoff with his security team.

Yoon is South Korea's first sitting president to face arrest. The second attempt to take him into custody could happen as early as this week, according to local media.

The suspended leader has not commented publicly since parliament voted to impeach him on 14 December and has been speaking primarily through his lawyers.

Yoon's short-lived martial law declaration on 3 December has thrown South Korea into political turmoil. He had tried to justify the attempt by saying he was protecting the country from "anti-state" forces, but it soon became clear it was spurred by his own political troubles.

What followed was an unprecedented few weeks which saw the opposition-dominated parliament vote to impeach Yoon and then Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, who succeeded him briefly as acting president.

The crisis has hit the country's economy, with the won weakening and global credit rating agencies warning of weakening consumer and business sentiment.

Former presidents Roh Moo-hyun and Park Geun-hye did not attend their impeachment trials in 2004 and 2017 respectively.

In Park's case, the first hearing ended after nine minutes in her absence.

Roh was reinstated after a two-month review, while Park's impeachment was upheld.

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videos emerged showing the dire situation at the disused gold mine.

In one of the films, which the BBC has not independently verified, corpses wrapped in makeshift body bags can be seen. A second shows the emaciated figures of some miners who are still alive.

During the press conference,

Mantashe said that in 2024 the trade of illicit precious metal was estimated at \$2.4bn (£2bn).

Mantashe also attempted to talk to the protesters but was drowned out by angry speeches.

There is a feeling at Stilfontein that more could have been done to prevent the build-up of the dozens of corpses said to be underground.

Three West Indians among officials for ICC U/19 Women's T20 World Cup

Three West Indians have been named among the 20 match officials appointed for the International Cricket Council (ICC) Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup, set to take place in Malaysia.

Trinidad and Tobago's Candace La Borde, who officiated the semi-finals and final of the 2023 edition, which saw India being crowned champions, headlines the list.

She will be joined by the first qualified Vincentian female umpire, Maria Abbott, and former West Indies pacer turned official, Reon King of Guyana, in representing the Caribbean at the global tournament.

Bangladeshi umpire Shathira Jakir Jessy, a trailblazer in her home country, is also among the appointed officials. Shathira was the first female umpire appointed by the Bangladesh Cricket Board and recently stood at the 2024 Women's T20 Asia Cup.

Dedunu De Silva, who was also a part of the officiating team for the inaugural tournament final, also makes a return.

South Africa's Kerin Klaaste will make her second appearance as an umpire at the tournament, while India's pioneering officials, Narayanan Janani and Gayathri Venugopalan, have been selected for the



Umpire Candace LaBorde first time. Both made history as the first women to umpire men's domestic fixtures in India.

Shivani Mishra, who became the first female on-field umpire to officiate in a men's T20I in January 2019, is also part of the officiating team.

Sean Easey, ICC's senior manager in charge of umpires and referees, praised the diversity of the appointed officials and expressed confidence in their abilities.

"Congratulations to the umpires and match referees who have been selected for this event. These individuals have earned selection by performing well in bilateral cricket. It is a wonderfully diverse group, just like the game that they

represent," Easey said.

"Similar to the players at this event, these officials have been identified as having high potential. We are confident that they will perform well and that some will progress to officiate at the higher levels of the game," he added.

The tournament, scheduled to bowl off on January 18, will feature representation from 14 nations, including Qatar, Ireland, the USA, and Oman.

The West Indies young women's outfit are scheduled to open their account on January 19 against defending champions India in Group A. They will then face Sri Lanka on January 21, before closing the group stages against the host on January 23.

Umpires: Ashlee Gibbons (Australia), Shathira Jakir Jessy (Bangladesh), Gayathri Venugopalan (India), Narayanan Janani (India), Aidan Seaver (Ireland), Nitin Bathi (Netherlands), Rizwan Akram (Netherlands), Rahul Asher (Oman), Saleema Imtiaz (Pakistan), Shivani Mishra (Qatar), Kerrin Klaaste (South Africa), Dedunu De Silva (Sri Lanka), Vijaya Prakash Mallela (USA), Candace La Borde (West Indies), Maria Abbott (West Indies), and Forster Mutizwa (Zimbabwe).

Match referees: David Gilbert (Australia), Dean Cosker (England), Trudy Anderson (New Zealand), and Reon King (West Indies).

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

The champions of the Under-20 Boys Division of the 2024 Ministry of Sports, Cool and Smooth and Joma Patrick C. Whyte Cup Secondary Schools' Football Competition will be crowned on Friday.

Princess Margaret School (PMS) and the Antigua and Barbuda International Institute of Continued Education (ABICE) will clash in the championship decider at the Antigua Recreation Grounds (ARG) at 3:30 pm.

The final was initially slated to take place on Friday, December 20, 2024, but was postponed and re-scheduled to take place in the New Year.

Both teams had advanced to the Under-20 Boys Division final by recording impressive victories in their respective semi-finals at the ARG on Friday, December 13, 2024.

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

Greg Williams, Jermarion Edwards, and Dahvia Hughes each scored once for Princess Margaret School. Jevaughn Jarvis scored the only goal for All Saints Secondary by converting a penalty kick.

Karique Knight struck a hat trick to lead ABICE, the 2022 champions, to a



The PMS Under-20 Boys football team

surprising 5-0 drubbing of last year's winners, Antigua State College, in the other semi-final.

Deante Anthony and Jahmar Malone were the other goal scorers for ABICE.

The final will be preceded by a playoff for third place between losing semi-finalists, All Saints Secondary and Antigua State College, at 1:30 pm on Friday.

The Ministry of Sports also indicated its intention to stage the female division of the Cool and Smooth and Joma Patrick C. Whyte Cup Secondary Schools' Football Compe-

tion during this year.

The other two boys' divisional competitions were completed in December last year.

The Antigua Grammar School captured the Under-14 Boys Division title. Antigua Grammar School secured the title by virtue of a superior goal difference to Clare Hall Secondary and defending champions Princess Margaret School after all three teams finished the 10-team round-robin competition with 22 points apiece.

Antigua Grammar School finished with a goal difference of +28, Clare Hall Secondary claimed

the runner-up position with a goal difference of +24, and Princess Margaret School finished in third place with a goal difference of +23.

The Princess Margaret School retained the Under-16 Boys Division league title.

Princess Margaret played unbeaten to finish the competition at the top of the standings with 28 points, one more than Ottos Comprehensive School, which clinched second place.

All Saints Secondary claimed third place with 21 points from their quota of 10 matches.

John Hughes end Premier League's first round with victory

Island Original John Hughes wrapped up their first-round campaign in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League with a victory on Monday.

John Hughes claimed their fourth win in their last first-round match with a 2-0 victory against Green City FC at the ABFA Technical Center.

Troy Jules scored both goals for John Hughes. He converted a penalty in the 33rd minute to give his team a one-nil halftime lead and scored his second in the 71st minute to wrap up the victory.

John Hughes finished the match with 10 players after Hanel Burrell was expelled in the 43rd minute after picking up a second caution (yellow card).

The result allows John Hughes to advance to 15 points from their quota of 13 matches in the first round. Green City FC will remain on 10 points after suffering their seventh defeat in 11 encounters.

Meanwhile, Golden Grove FC won their latest match to move within a point of joint leaders National Parks English Harbour and Sea View Farm in the ABFA's Second Division League.

Golden Grove notched



Players of the John Hughes starting XI.

up their eighth win in 11 matches with a 4-0 drubbing of the CPTSA Wings at the St. Johnstone's Village Stadium on Monday.

Goals by Stephen Hughes in the second minute and Adonijah Dyett in the 32nd minute gave Golden Grove a 2-0 halftime lead, and conversions by Tyler Anthony in the 79th minute and Terrence Spencer in the 84th minute completed their commanding victory.

The result allows Golden Grove to join Belmont FC, which has played 10

matches, on 24 points. Both teams are one point adrift of English Harbour and Sea View Farm, who have each played 10 matches.

The CPTSA Wings will remain on 14 points after suffering their third loss in nine encounters.

Blackburn Palace notched up their fourth win in eight matches by snatching a 2-1 victory against Bethesda at the Bethesda playing field.

Diondre Harrigan scored both goals for Blackburn Palace with conversions in the 25th and

87th minutes.

Xaroy Martin scored the only goal for Bethesda in the 55th minute. The result allows Blackburn Palace to advance to 12 points from eight matches.

Bethesda FC will remain on 10 points after suffering their fifth loss in nine matches.

The Second Division league will continue with one match on Wednesday (today) at 4:20 pm.

Belmont FC will meet the Young Lions of Old Road at the ABFA Technical Center.



Players of the West Indies Under-19 team

West Indies win first warm-up match at ICC U/19 Women's T20 World Cup

The West Indies women secured a tense nine-run win over Nepal women in their opening International Cricket Council (ICC) Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup Warm-up match at the Kolej Tuanku Ja'afar Ground in Malaysia on Monday.

The young West Indians posted 109 for four from their 20 overs after winning the toss and choosing to bat.

Captain Samara Ramnath led the way with 25, while Asabi Callender and Jahzara Claxton made 23 and 22

not out, respectively. Abigail Bryce also contributed an unbeaten 19 off 11 balls.

Rachana Chaudhary and Seemana KC split two wickets for Nepal, while the other two wickets fell via the run-out route.

Trisha Hardat, Aaliyah Weekes, and Amiah Gilbert then combined for six wickets between them to help the West Indies bowl out Nepal for 100 with five balls left in the innings.

Seemana KC hit 23, while captain Puja Mahato and Kiran Kunwar

each made 18.

The West Indies took on New Zealand in their second warm-up game on Tuesday.

Full Scores: West Indies Under-19 Women 109-4 in 20 overs (Samara Ramnath 25, Asabi Callender 23, Jahzara Claxton 22 not out, Abigail Bryce 19 not out).

Nepal Under-19 Women 100 all out in 19.1 overs (Seemana KC 23, Puja Mahato 18, Kiran Kunwar 18; Trisha Hardat 2-9, Aaliyah Weekes 2-16, Amiah Gilbert 2-18).

Sports

WEDNESDAY 15TH JANUARY 2025

2025 Inter-School Basketball League to tip off on January 20

The 2025 Inter-School Basketball League, which is organized by the Ministry of Sports and sponsored by Cool and Smooth, will commence on Monday, January 20.

The annual league, which provides competitive sporting engagement for both school boys and girls, will commence with the parade of teams and official opening ceremony at the JSC Sports Complex.

Like the previous two years, the league, which facilitates competitive basketball contests in six categories in primary and secondary schools' divisions, will culminate with the 'Night of Champions' in March.

The St. Joseph's Academy (SJA) was the only team to retain their playoff title during the 'Night of Champions' in the 2024 Cool and



Principal Rudolph Davis, right, and Minister of Sports Honourable Daryll Matthew, right foreground, pose with the St. Joseph's Academy team retain their title in the Miniboys Secondary Division at the JSC Sports Complex on Sunday, March 24, 2024. (File photos)

Smooth Inter-Schools' Basketball Championships.

St. Joseph's Academy prevailed 30-27 in overtime against Antigua Grammar School in the playoff final to retain their title in the Mini-

boys Secondary Division.

Sea View Farm Primary was the only school to claim two playoff titles. Sea View Farm won the league title and captured the Minigirls Primary Division crown.

Sea View Farm Primary also captured the overall Miniboys Primary Division championship. Princess Margaret School won the league and playoff titles in the junior boys' division.

The Antigua Girls High School won the playoff championship, while St. Anthony's Secondary captured the league title in the senior girls' division.

St. Anthony's Secondary School also won the playoff championship, while Clare Hall Second took the league title in the senior boys' division.

Jenah Andrew of St. Anthony's Secondary School was named Female Player of the Year, while Craig Massiah Jr. of Princess Margaret School won the Male Player of the Year award for the second successive year.

Edward Shaw of Clare Hall Secondary and Tyea Ladoo of Antigua Girls High School were named joint winners of the Coach of the Year award.



Sea View Farm Primary pose with their trophies after capturing the league and playoff titles in the Minigirls Primary Division.