



ANTIGUA & BARBUDA
POINT EXPRESS
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Exposed!!!

Story on Page 2 & 3



Antigua and Barbuda's High Commissioner to the UK, Karen-Mae Hill (second from left) Prime Minister Gaston Browne (on her left) with members of the visiting Commonwealth Secretariat team

Story on Page 4

Exposed!!!

The leaders of the Barbuda Council, including the Parliamentary Representative, Trevor Walker and chairman, Devon Warner, have been exposed as being untruthful when they claimed that there were no consultations between them and the Cabinet over the proposed development of the Luis Hill area of the island for a housing project for Barbudans.



This contention by the Council members is at the heart of recent protests in Barbuda to stop the clearing of the lands to make way for the housing devel-

opment. The matter reached a standoff between protesters and the police after two pickup trucks were used to block the road leading to the development. It is

widely believed that the trucks were placed there by elements associated with the Council.

There have been a number of videos that have shown

Walker and others hurling abuse at police officers who have the task of maintaining law and order.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne said the government is determined to ensure that Barbuda is not 'left behind' in terms of its development and it will proceed with the project despite the protestations from Walker and others. He described the action as 'lawlessness'.

"I want to remind them that we are all subject to the laws of Antigua and Barbuda and that no one is above the law. I also want to emphasize here that whereas the remit of law enforcement is to ensure that they keep the peace and that the laws are not broken, I want to make it abundantly clear to those who believe that they can break the laws of this country with impunity that we will spare no efforts in pursuing them legally by bringing them before the courts of the land," he cautioned. *con't on pg 3*

Dear Madam Secretary,

Prime Minister Gaston Browne is requesting a meeting with the Barbuda Joint Consultative Meeting to be held on Thursday 10th October, 2024 at 11:00a.m. at the Conference Room at the Office of the Prime Minister.

- Agenda Items to include:
- Road Construction
- Expansion of Renewable Energy Plant
- Establishment of a Plant Nursery
- Fixing and operationalization of the Shredder
- Construction of new primary school
- LUIS Hill Housing Projects
- Expansion of RO Capacity
- Agricultural Development
- Relocation of Cargo port
- Beach Access
- Establishment of Golf Course

Kindly acknowledge receipt and confirm attendance.

Regards!

Lynette Thwaites
 Administrative Assistant/Events Planner
 Office of the Prime Minister
 Queen Elizabeth Highway,

con't from pg 2

In the matter regarding

ing US\$2 million into the

Lester Bird Administration.



BARBUDA LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Correspondence on this matter should be addressed to:

THE BARBUDA COUNCIL
 Codrington Village Barbuda,
 Via St. John's Antigua W. I.
 Tel. (268) 736-5111
 Secretary@BarbudaCouncil.com

9th October, 2024 Ref. No.

Ms. Lynette Thwaites
 Administrative Assistant/Events Planner
 Office of the Prime Minister
 Queen Elizabeth Highway
 St. John's, Antigua

Dear Ms. Thwaites,

Re: Request for Meeting of the JCC

We acknowledge receipt of your email on 7th October 2024 requesting a meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) on Thursday 10th October 2024 at 11:00 am at the Conference Room of the Office of the Prime Minister.

Further to our conversation, please be advised that we are unable to attend the requested meeting. Noting that this would be the first meeting of the JCC prior to our discussions with Cabinet on 4th September 2024, we wish to convey that the Barbuda Council has not established the membership on our side for the JCC. Additionally, the matters proposed for the agenda must be discussed in a formal meeting of the Council before we are able to speak on those issues. Therefore, we will advise of our availability to meet after these discussions have been conducted.

Thank you for your understanding.

Respectfully,

O. Shari Cannegieter (Ms.)

At the heart of the protest is the refusal of the Barbuda Council to accept the ruling of the Privy Council, in a matter which the Council brought before the highest court, which determined that the lands of Antigua and Barbuda (not privately owned) are vested in the crown, represented by the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda.

consultation, PM Browne revealed that plans for the Luis Hill developments date back to 2020 with the Council backing the move. There have also been television appearances where a representative from the Prince's Trust (now King Charles) appeared with the representative from Calvin Ayre, who is pump-

project.

Just last year, according to the prime minister, the Council approached the government and expressed a desire for a more harmonious relationship and both sides agreed to the re-constitution of the Joint Consultative Committee, which functioned under the Sir

The prime minister produced letters to indicate that the Cabinet invited the Council to a meeting as recent as last October and to take date the Council has not indicated when they will be available for the meeting.

Additionally, PM Browne noted that over the past five budget cycles, developments in Barbuda, including housing development have formed part of the budget presentation. "There are no secrets about our plans and the Council has been aware of them for years," he emphasized.

Attorney General, Sir Steadroy Benjamin said the issue regarding the lands in Barbuda 'is a settled matter' as determined by the Privy Council and the notion of 'ownership in common' as being advanced by the Council, has no basis in law. He noted that the Privy Council had been consistent in its judgement on this issue over several lawsuits. He too agreed that there have been various forms of consultations with the Council on the housing development.

Another indication of the acceptance of the housing project by the council came when the ABLP caretaker for Barbuda, Senator Knackcynta Nedd, revealed that she chaired a meeting last Thursday at the Office of the Prime Minister in which Council Chairman Warner was present and where he offered no objections to the project.

PM Browne initiates planning countdown for hosting CHOGM in 2026

Prime Minister Gaston Browne is leading efforts to kick-start the planning process for hosting the 28th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), scheduled to be held next year in St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda.

The planning process was initiated over the past week with the visit from a delegation from the Commonwealth Secretariat. The historic CHOGM meeting is expected to welcome the Head of the Commonwealth, His Majesty King Charles III, and many Heads of



Government of the Commonwealth, approximately 6,000 delegates, and women, youth, business and civil society leaders, making it the largest international event ever hosted by Antigua and Barbuda. “We are looking forward to welcoming the entire Commonwealth family of 56 nations so they can experience the richness of our culture, our eco-

logical heritage and the warmth of our people,” stated Hon. Prime Minister Browne, adding, “the conference will showcase Antigua and Barbuda as a premier global conference destination, which will provide both immediate and long-term financial benefits to our country and its people.”

A media release from the High Commission Office in the UK, noted

that CHOGMs typically boost revenues for airlines, hotels, family-run bed and breakfasts and other businesses such as bars, restaurants, taxi and tour operators, as well as souvenir stores.

According to the release the Prime Minister will lead all preparations and several task teams responsible for planning logistics, transport, security, accommodation and

communications for the prestigious event. High Commissioner, Karen-Mae Hill, will serve as the focal point.

The Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting will begin with an opening ceremony and include meetings among Heads of Government and foreign ministers on pertinent global issues such as peace, partnerships, trade,

con't on pg 5

New Barbuda International Airport to be included in new 'paperless ED card' system

The Barbuda International Airport will not be left behind when the new paperless ED card system goes into effect at border control points in Antigua and Barbuda sometime within the coming month.

This is according to the ICT Minister, Melford Nicholas, who, working along with the border control agencies – Immigration and Customs – has secured what they believe to be an appropriate IT Platform which is now being tested before final roll out during February.

“We launched the new Barbuda International Airport in October of last

year and the new system allows for flexibility at the Immigration Department as one of the things that it allows them to do is that the system is portable using a tablet or laptop. It also allows for similar operations at the cruise port giving the immigration the same access to information as at the airport,” Minister Nicholas explained.

The ICT minister noted that the border control agencies have been lobbying for the adoption of the system as it meets much of their requirements.

He revealed that he did a physical ‘walk-through’

with the border control agencies to see first-hand the system in operation and that he too, came away feeling quite confident in its ability to meet Antigua and Barbuda border control needs in an effective and efficient manner.

The new BIA is of particular concern for the Antigua and Barbuda government given the large number of private jets that have landed there within its first three months of operation. It is generally accepted that what happened at BIA from October to December last year is just precursor of what can be expected in the

coming months and years.

Having the paperless entry at BIA at the same time that it is available at VCBIA only adds to the overall efficiency of both airports.

Ports of entry at Heritage/Redcliffe Quay, Falmouth Harbour, Jolly Harbour and Crabbes will all benefit from the portability of the system.

Minister Nicholas said the system was developed by a company, Zen Communications Systems. Government will pay an undisclosed user fee and an annual subscription for using the App.

con't from pg 4

investments, and other relevant issues for all Commonwealth countries. In addition to the official meetings, the 28th CHOGM will include four forums for civil society, youth, the business community and women. A spouses' and partners programme is also being planned under the leadership of Works Minister, Maria Browne. CHOGM will conclude with a leaders' retreat and a closing press conference. More than 300 journalists from across the Commonwealth are expected to attend the meeting and will shine a global spotlight on the country's tourism and



conference-related infrastructure. A CHOGM theme, logo, and an exact date for the meeting will be announced by Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Secretariat

shortly. Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings are held every two years, and the last one was held in Apia, Samoa, which became the first blue Pacific

Island nation to host the summit. Earlier CHOGMs have been hosted by Trinidad and Tobago in 2009; Canada in 1987 as well as in 1973; Bahamas in 1985; and Jamaica in 1975.

Antigua and Barbuda joins in celebrating Chinese New Year



Scores and Antigua and Barbudans on Sunday joined officials and staff of the Chinese Embassy in St. John's

as well as members of the local Chinese community to celebrate the Chinese New Year, the Year of the Snake.

The activities included cultural performances by local and Chinese artists. Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams, Education Minister, Daryll Matthew, Non-Resident Ambassador to China, Brian Stuart-Young and Ambassador Dean Jonas were among the officials who joined students from several of the nation's schools who participated in the celebrations in one way or another.

Sir Rodney noted the Year of the Snake represents wisdom, resilience, and transformation. These attributed, he noted, resonate deeply with the evolving global landscape and the shared aspirations of Antigua and Barbuda and the People's Republic of China.

"Antigua and Barbuda remains steadfast in its support for the One China Principle, a cornerstone of our diplomatic relations. We recognise the importance of this principle in maintaining stability and fostering mutual respect in international affairs," Sir Rodney observed. He also commended the Chinese people for the advances they are making in Artificial Intelligence, Electric Vehicle and the Belt and Road Initiative.

Minister Matthew spoke of the significant contributions which the Chinese government has made towards the development of Antigua and Barbuda which he described as 'transformative'.

"Whether through the construction of vital infrastructure such as the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, the expansion of the cargo

port at Deep Water Harbour, or the construction of schools and other educational facilities, China's support has played a pivotal role in shaping our nation's progress. These projects stand as a testament to the power of partnership and the positive impact that can be achieved when nations work together for the common good," he remarked.

Also addressing the celebrations was the Chinese Ambassador to St. John's, Zhang Yanling. She described 2024 as a year of much accomplishments for both her country and Antigua and Barbuda relations.

"The year 2024 is a year of impressive accomplishments in exchanges and cooperation between China and Antigua and Barbuda in various fields. Guided by the consensus reached by our leaders, we have done so much together.

"We have witnessed the progress of the Booby Alley housing project, the training programme on hybrid pepper breeding, the cultivation technique on broccoli. we also have together made it possible for 260 Antiguan and Barbudan participants to attend training courses in China covering the fields of agriculture, fisheries, trade, Blue economy, to green transition, AI technology, information and communication, etc." she revealed.

Among the local artists performing were Pandemonium Steel Orchestra which has benefitted significantly from support from the Chinese Embassy as well as Calypsonian, Lady Falcon.



A note to our Clients: Adjusted Opening Hours

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Customs Division celebrates its own on Customs Day 2025

Customs and Excise Division celebrated the hard work and

worldwide to adapt to new challenges and ensure smooth

walk as part of the celebrations, embracing the message

church service, where their remarkable service was ac-



dedication of Customs officers as customs administrations across the globe observed International Customs Day on January 26th, 2025.

International Customs Day is set aside each year to commemorate the inaugural session of the World Customs Organization (WCO) in 1953 and it is a moment to acknowledge the critical role customs officers play in global trade facilitation, border security, and international cooperation.

International Customs Day 2025 was held under the theme:

“Customs Delivering on its Commitment to Efficiency, Security, and Prosperity.”

In a media release, the Customs Division said the theme reflected the ongoing efforts of customs departments

and secure trade across borders. It also highlighted the importance of continual improvement in customs operations for the prosperity of nations and the global economy.

“To mark this special occasion, a cross-section of customs officers participated in a training session on conflict management and self-development, with a focus on transformational leadership. This training aims to empower officers to further enhance their professional skills, foster positive working environments, and strengthen their ability to navigate the challenges of the evolving customs landscape,” the release stated.

According to the release in an effort to promote the importance of health and wellness, officers also participated in a

that health is wealth. This activity not only emphasized the importance of physical well-being but also served as a reminder of the need for balance in both professional and personal lives.

“In recognition of their long-standing commitment, the department honoured Annmarie Dowe, Sandra Glasford, and Yvette Jacobs for their exceptional service of over 40 years. These officers have made invaluable contributions to the success of customs operations, and their dedication to excellence has set a high standard for others to follow,” the release reported.

The long-serving awardees were celebrated during the

knowledge, and their contributions were honoured by their colleagues and the wider community.

Staff members are to receive a token of appreciation in recognition of their vital role in the department. Additionally, several officers and stakeholders will receive the World Customs Organization Certificate of Merit for their outstanding contributions to customs and trade.

“As we reflect on the progress made in customs operations and look forward to the future, we reaffirm our collective commitment to delivering efficiency, security, and prosperity for nations around the world,” the release concluded.

Shania Samuel departs for OECS pageant in Dominica

Shania Samuels, the 2nd Runner-Up in the Queen of Carnival Competition 2024, departed Antigua and Barbuda Sunday for Dominica to compete in the prestigious Miss OECS Pageant. The event is set to take place on Friday, January 31st, at the Windsor Park Sports Stadium, where Shania will compete against four other delegates from the sub-region.

Present to witness her send-off were Minister of State in the Ministry Creative Industries, Senator Shenella Govia, along with Ayana Dorsette from the Department of Creative Industries. On behalf of the Minister of Creative Industries, Daryll Matthew, the government, and the people of Anti-

gua and Barbuda, Senator confidence in her ability to whom she shares a special



Govia extended best wishes to Shania, commending her dedication and expressing

perform well. Shania is being chaperoned by Renika Isaac, with

bond as both are constables in the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda.

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Local News



New Electronic Health Information System goes into effect at SLBMC today



A new Electronic Health Information System is going into effect at the Emergency Department of the Sir Lester Bird

Medical Centre effective today, Monday 27 January.

In a statement, the hospital said this is an im-

portant step in enhancing the quality and efficiency of care it provides to its patients.

“As with any new sys-

tem, there may be a few initial adjustments as our team gets familiar with the new technology. We are confident that any challenges will be minor, and we remain committed to ensuring that patient care continues without disruption.

“We appreciate your understanding and patience during this transition, and we are excited to offer an even higher standard of care as we continue to improve our services for you and your loved ones,” the statement cautioned.



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PRESS RELEASE

Home Office Announces Proposed Fee Increase for UK Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) and New Airside Transit ETA Exemption

Antigua and Barbuda High Commission, London, [24th January 2025] – The Home Office has announced its intention to increase the fee for the UK Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) as part of efforts to ensure the UK migration and border system remains sustainably funded.

The proposed fee increase, which is subject to Parliamentary approval, would see the cost of the ETA rise from £10 to £16.

Key Details

Proposed ETA Fee Increase

- The UK Government intends to increase the fee for the ETA from £10 to £16.
- Until the Parliamentary process is concluded, eligible non-European nationals will continue to be able to apply for an ETA at the current cost of £10.
- Eligible European nationals, who will be able to apply for an ETA from 5th March 2025, will also pay the current fee of £10 until the fee increase is approved.

The Government will confirm the implementation date for the fee increase following the conclusion of the Parliamentary process.

Airside Transit Exemption

In addition, the Government has introduced a temporary exemption for passengers transiting airside. Travellers who do not pass through UK border control while connecting flights at Heathrow and Manchester Airports will not require an ETA.

This exemption came into effect on Thursday, 16th January 2025 and will be kept under review.

END

Local News



Jamaican escapee recaptured

Akido McDonald, the Jamaican national who had escaped from Immigration Authorities, has been recaptured.

Following an intelligence-driven operation between Police and Immigration officers on Saturday, the fugitive was successfully recaptured at a property in Swetes.

Two other persons, a male and a female were also taken into custody. The Immigration Department is con-



Akido McDonald, the Jamaican national who had escaped from Immigration continuing its investigations, individuals.

and it is likely charges will be brought against all three The 26-year-old resident of St. Ann was denied entry

into the country on Thursday, 23rd January 2025, and was detained at the Immigration Detention Centre at Coolidge. He somehow managed to escape from the facility around 3:40 pm on Friday and was on the run for approximately 48 hours before his recapture.

The Immigration Department has repeatedly reminded residents that it is a serious offence to harbor or assist anyone to elude law enforcement agencies.

Tesfa Luke Fined \$30-thousand For Possession of Cannabis

Tesfa Luke of Swetes has been fined \$30,000.00 for Possession of Cannabis in the Magistrate's Court on Friday.

The accused was charged and taken before the court for unlawful possession, after officers attached to the Criminal Investigations Department Task Force found him with the substance on Tuesday.

The magistrate ordered that the fine is to be paid within 18 days; failure to do so, he will serve 2-year term at His Majesty's Prison.

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2025 is a Year of Visionary Development and Empowerment for Antigua and Barbuda



Winston Vincent D. Williams Jr.

As Antigua and Barbuda strides confidently into 2025, the nation stands at the culmination of remarkable economic achievements and the dawn of even greater possibilities. The twin-island state's trajectory, marked by strategic development and inclusive growth, serves as a compelling blueprint for small island nations worldwide.

The numbers tell an impressive story: a robust 6% GDP growth pushing the national economy to \$6.0 billion, coupled with record-breaking tourism figures of 1.1 million visitors. Yet, these statistics only scratch the surface of a deeper transformation taking place across our twin islands. The real story lies in how this prosperity is being channeled into empowering local citizens and building sustainable infrastructure for the future.

Tourism, long the backbone of the economy, has evolved beyond traditional models. With 85% of Airbnb properties now locally owned and over 450 tour-

ism-related enterprises in the hands of Antiguan and Barbudans, the industry has become a vehicle for local entrepreneurship and wealth creation. The government's initiative to provide additional plots for Airbnb development at Pensioners, Morris Bay, and Shell Beach further demonstrates a commitment to democratizing economic opportunities.

Education stands as a cornerstone of this transformative vision. The Harrison Centre, with its 800-strong student body, is addressing critical skills gaps in construction and technical fields. This push is made all the more critical by our construction sector's record growth, contributing nearly \$1 billion in economic value during the previous fiscal year. Meanwhile, the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus, poised for a \$200 million expansion, is nurturing the intellectual capital that will drive our innovation and competitiveness in the global knowledge economy.

Today, infrastructure development is being approached with unprecedented ambition. The \$165 million upgrade of V.C. Bird International Airport, combined with Barbuda's new international airport, positions the nation for increased global connectivity. The government's further \$110 million investment in water infrastructure demonstrates a serious commitment to addressing fundamental quality-of-life issues, targeting a

daily water production capacity of 13 million gallons by the end of 2025. The development and maintenance of our road infrastructure has also received a boost, with \$21 million invested to acquire new equipment.

Environmental stewardship and climate leadership have also become defining features of Antigua and Barbuda's international presence. Prime Minister Gaston Browne's advocacy for climate justice and sustainable development has elevated the nation's global standing while attracting environmentally conscious investors and tourists. Further, our nation's emergence as a regional diplomatic center, exemplified by hosting the UN Small Island Developing States conference, speaks to a broader vision of self-determination and international influence. This strong global positioning will ensure that our stellar tourism marketing, new investment projects and aggressive development of critical infrastructure results in our nation hitting the coveted target of 1.5 million visitors in the coming years.

National Housing's remarkable milestone of 1,100 affordable homes speaks to the government's continued commitment to the empowerment of all citizens and residents. In all areas, from home ownership to constantly expanding entrepreneurial support, the Gaston Browne Administration has demonstrated empowerment leadership with con-

sistency and determination.

As we look ahead, 2025 represents more than just another year of growth; it embodies the culmination of visionary leadership and collective ambition. The blueprint for success lies in the continued balance of tourism excellence, educational advancement, infrastructure development, and environmental stewardship, all while maintaining a steadfast commitment to local empowerment.

For Antigua and Barbuda, the future is not merely about economic metrics but about creating a sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous society that benefits all its citizens. The nation's journey serves as a testament to what can be achieved when visionary leadership meets strategic execution, setting a powerful example for other small island nations aspiring to punch above their weight in the global arena.

The success of this vision relies not just on government initiatives but on the active participation of every citizen and resident in building a more prosperous and equitable future for all. The road ahead will require continued vigilance, innovation, and adaptation. Yet, with our strong foundation of economic growth, commitment to education, and focus on sustainable development, Antigua and Barbuda is well-positioned to make 2025 a landmark year in its rapid progress.

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WE ARE GETTING STRONGER

Roman Catholic priest injured, not shot in robbery



Roman Catholic priest Father Maurice White was injured, but not shot, during a robbery this morning in Sangre Grande.

“The Archdiocese of POS is deeply saddened to share that RC priest, Fr Maurice White, resident at St Francis RC Church, Sangre Grande was injured in a robbery early this morning, Saturday, January 25, 2025, at Vega de Oropuche, Sangre Grande,” a post

by the Roman Catholic Church stated. “Medical personnel have advised he is receiving treatment and is stable,” it stated.

The Roman Catholic church has called for prayers for White’s recovery and for all involved.

“Let us remain united in faith, trusting in God’s healing and peace in our nation,” it stated. (*Trinidad Express*)



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Columbian charged with murder in Barbados

A Columbian national, staying at Blackman Road, Maxwell, Christ Church, John Esteban Ariza Hernandez, has been formally charged with the murder of Pedro Berrio, which occurred on Thursday, January 16, 2025.



Hernandez appeared at the Oistins Magistrate's Court on Thursday before Magistrate Deidre Mckenna, and was remanded to the Barbados Prison Service Dodds until March 20, 2025. (*Loop Caribbean*)

Bodies found in drifting pirogue



Police and the Coast Guard were responding last evening to a report of a number of bodies found in a pirogue drifting off the east coast of Trinidad yesterday.

Police sources confirmed that officers had received a report that the bodies were found in the small boat near an offshore rig.

Officials of the Coast Guard and the Police Service's Marine Unit were dispatched to confirm the information.

One source said the vessel appeared to be wooden and "foreign".

In May 2021, a fishing boat with the bodies of 15 men was found adrift off Toba-

go.

Aboard, the authorities found the bodies of 14 men, and the skull and bones of a 15th person.

There was no identification, but the corpses were dressed in track pants and rain jackets.

In March of that year, a

similar fishing vessel was found off Nicaragua's Caribbean coast with six decomposing bodies aboard.

Nicaragua's interior Ministry said a Republic of Guinea passport belonging to a 31-year-old man was found on one of the bodies, and that all the victims may have died from dehydration and heatstroke.

Migrants from Africa's west coast often make the perilous journey aboard rickety boats in an attempt to get to Europe, with some vessels sinking and others drifting into the open Atlantic.

In 2006, a vessel turned up off Barbados with 11 petrified corpses in its cabin.

The authorities said the men, who all died from starvation, had set out from the coast of west Africa headed to the Cape Verde Islands. Their vessel was set adrift in the Atlantic Ocean and drifted all the way to the Caribbean. (*Trinidad Express*)

St Kitts prosecutor charged in murder coverup

The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) of Saint Kitts and Nevis has leveled serious charges against Crown Counsel Prosecutor Shantrice Dorset in connection with the murder of 29-year-old Akeem Archibald.

Archibald, a resident of Conaree Village, was fatally shot while riding his motorcycle near his home on July 20, 2024, at 9:39 pm. The main murder suspect, Khyron Philip, was initially



Crown Counsel Prosecutor Shantrice Dorset

identified by the Royal St. Christopher and Nevis Police Force.

Dorset now faces multiple grave charges, including, accessory

after the fact to murder, attempting to pervert the course of justice, misconduct in public office and corruption.

The prosecutor is specifically accused of using her official position to influence the surrender of the firearm used in Archibald's murder through an amnesty program.

Authorities allege she assisted Philip in fleeing the country to avoid judicial proceedings. *(Loop Caribbean)*

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Mexican workers set up tent city to house deportees from US

In the shadow of a vast crucifix, labourers and construction workers in the Mexican border city of Ciudad Juarez are building a small city of their own. A tent city. On the old fairgrounds, beneath an altar constructed for a mass by Pope Francis in 2016, the Mexican government is preparing for thousands of deportees they expect to arrive from the United States in the coming weeks. Juarez is one of eight border locations along the 3,000-kilometre-long (1,900 miles) border where Mexico is getting ready for the anticipated influx. Men in boots and baseball caps climb on top of a vast metal structure to drape over thick white tarpaulin, erecting a rudimentary shelter to temporarily house men and women exactly like themselves. Casual labourers, domestic workers, kitchen staff and farm hands are all likely to be among those sent south soon, once what President Donald Trump calls

“the largest deportation in American history” gets under way.

As well as protection from the elements, the deportees will receive food, medical care, and assistance in obtaining Mexican identity documents, under a deportee-support programme which President Claudia Sheinbaum’s administration calls “Mexico Embraces You”.

“Mexico will do everything necessary to care for its compatriots and will allocate whatever is necessary to receive those who are repatriated,” said the Mexican Interior Minister, Rosa Icela Rodriguez, on the day of Trump’s inauguration.

For her part, President Sheinbaum has stressed her government will first attend to the humanitarian needs of those returning, saying they will qualify for her government’s social programmes and pensions, and will immediately be eligible to work.

She urged Mexicans

to “remain calm and keep a cool head” about relations with President Trump and his administration more broadly – from deportations to the threat of tariffs.

“With Mexico, I think we are going very well,” said President Trump in a video address to the World Economic Forum in Davos this week. The two neighbours may yet find a workable solution on immigration which is acceptable to both – President Sheinbaum has said the key is dialogue and keeping the channels of communication open.

Undoubtedly, though, she recognises the potential stress President Trump’s declaration of an emergency at the US border could place on Mexico.

An estimated 5 million undocumented Mexicans currently live in the United States and the prospect of a mass return could quickly saturate and overwhelm border cities like Juarez and Tijuana.

It’s an issue which wor-

ries Jose Maria Garcia Lara, the director of the Juventud 2000 migrant shelter in Tijuana. As he shows me around the facility, which is already nearing its capacity, he says there are very few places he can fit more families.

“If we have to, we can maybe put some people in the kitchen or the library,” he says.

There comes a point, though, where there simply isn’t any space left – and donations of food, medical supplies, blankets and hygiene products will be stretched too thin.

“We’re being hit on two fronts. Firstly, the arrival of Mexicans and other migrants who are fleeing violence,” says Mr Garcia.

“But also, we’ll have the mass deportations. We don’t know how many people will come across the border needing our help. Together, these two things could create a huge problem.”

(BBC News)

Amid charred hills and lingering questions, investigators seek cause of Palisades Fire



As the charred hills of the Pacific Palisades continue to smolder and rainstorms approach, investigators are racing to uncover the origins of the devastating Jan. 7 fire that claimed 11 lives and destroyed more than 6,800 structures.

Covering up to 10 miles of terrain each day, they have amassed more than 235 leads in their search for answers, with attention turning to a suspicious fire that started days earlier in the same area.

The investigation has zeroed in on a scorched ridgeline above an exclusive neighborhood known as the Highlands, a community perched in the mountains overlooking the Pacific Ocean. This area is near the site of a smaller blaze that the Los Angeles Fire Department said was contained in the early hours of Jan. 1, just six days before the catastrophic Jan. 7 fire erupted.

Earlier this week, yellow caution tape blocked off access to a trailhead linking the Highlands to a popular hiking area in Topanga State Park. Many houses surround-

ing the trail were untouched by the inferno. But just blocks away, the scorched remains of once grand homes and blackened trees dotted

the landscape.

Some 75 personnel from local, state and federal agencies have fanned out around the state park, known for its stunning views of the ocean and popular landmarks like the eponymously named Skull Rock boulder and little Buddha sculpture.

Both are points of particular interest in the investigation because of their proximity to the two fires, according to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' Los Angeles office.

The Los Angeles Fire Department referred all questions regarding the Jan. 1 and Jan. 7 fires to the ATF. *(NBC News)*

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South Korean prosecutors indict impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol over his martial law

South Korean prosecutors on Sunday indicted impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol on rebellion in connection with his short-lived imposition of martial law, a criminal charge that could incur the death penalty or life imprisonment if convicted.

This is the latest blow to Yoon, who was impeached and arrested over his Dec. 3 martial law decree that plunged the country into political turmoil, shook its financial markets and hurt its international image. Separate from criminal judicial proceedings, the Constitutional Court is now deliberating whether to formally dismiss Yoon as president or reinstate him.

Yoon has become South Korea's first president who has been indicted while in office. He will remain jailed and be escorted from a detention facility to a Seoul court for hearings in the trial, which is expected to last about six months.

Yoon's defense team confirmed his indictment on a rebellion charge, calling it "the worst decision" by prosecutors who they say are trying to curry favor with political forces who want Yoon's exit.

"Today's indictment of the president will remain as



a shame in the history of South Korean prosecutors that they cannot erase," Yoon's defense team said in a statement. "We stress once again that a president's declaration of martial law can never be rebellion."

Prosecutors indicted Yoon on charges that he directed a rebellion when he imposed martial law, according to local media. Repeated calls to prosecutors' offices in Seoul went unanswered. Investigative authorities have alleged that Yoon's imposition of martial law amounted to rebellion, because he

staged riots with the purpose of undermining the constitution.

Yoon has presidential immunity from most criminal prosecutions, but the privilege doesn't extend to allegations of rebellion or treason. By law in South Korea, the leader of a rebellion can face a life sentence or capital punishment.

Yoon, a conservative, has steadfastly denied any wrongdoing, calling his declaration of martial law a legitimate act of governance meant to raise public awareness of the danger of the lib-

eral-controlled National Assembly, which obstructed his agenda and impeached top officials. During his announcement of martial law, Yoon called the assembly "a den of criminals" and vowed to eliminate "shameless North Korea followers and anti-state forces."

After declaring martial law on Dec. 3, Yoon sent troops and police officers to the assembly, but enough lawmakers still managed to enter an assembly chamber to vote down Yoon's decree unanimously, forcing his Cabinet to lift it.

The martial law imposition, the first of its kind in South Korea in more than four decades, lasted only six hours. However, it evoked painful memories of past dictatorial rules in South Korea in the 1960s-80s when military-backed rulers used martial laws and emergency decrees to suppress opponents.

South Korea's constitution gives the president the power to declare martial law to keep order in wartime and other comparable emergency states, but many experts say the country wasn't under such conditions when Yoon declared martial law. (*Associated Press*)

Israeli forces kill 15 people in south Lebanon as residents try to return, Lebanese authorities say

Israeli forces killed 15 people in south Lebanon on Sunday as a deadline for their withdrawal passed and thousands of people tried to return to their homes in defiance of Israeli military orders, Lebanese authorities said.

Israel said Friday it would keep troops in the south beyond the Sunday deadline set out in a U.S.-brokered ceasefire that halted last year's war with Hezbollah, saying Lebanon had not yet fully enforced terms requiring south Lebanon to be free of Hezbollah arms and the Lebanese army to be deployed.

Lebanon's U.S.-backed military, which reported one of its soldiers among those killed by Israeli forces on Sunday, has accused Israel of procrastinating in its withdrawal.

The Hezbollah-Israel conflict was fought in parallel with the Gaza war, and peaked in a major Israeli offensive that uprooted more than a million people in Lebanon and left the Iran-backed group badly weakened.

Lebanon's health ministry said 15 people were killed and another 83 wounded in numerous locations in the south as a result of what it described as Israeli attacks on citizens while they were trying to enter their still-occupied towns.

The Israeli military said its troops "operating in southern Lebanon fired warning shots to remove threats in a number of areas where suspects were identified approach-

ing the troops." It also said "a number of suspects ... that posed an imminent threat" were apprehended.

Hezbollah's al-Manar television, broadcasting from several locations in the south, showed footage of residents moving towards villages early on Sunday, some holding the group's flag and images of Hezbollah fighters killed in the war.

An Israeli military spokesperson, addressing the people of south Lebanon in a post on X, accused Hezbollah of trying to "heat up the situation" and said the Israeli army would "in the near future" inform them of places to which they can return.

Hezbollah has put the onus on the Lebanese state to ensure Israel's withdrawal.

Hezbollah lawmaker Hassan Fadlallah said Lebanon is committed to the ceasefire deal but that Israel had turned against it with U.S. support. The White House said on Friday that a short, temporary ceasefire extension was urgently needed.

"What is happening in the border villages is a liberation by the power of the people, and our people will not be broken by the Israeli army," he told Reuters. "We want the state to play its full role, and the army to be deployed in the villages."

"We cooperate with it to facilitate its mission."

The top U.N. official in Lebanon and the head of the U.N. peacekeepers in the south said conditions were "not yet in place" for the safe return of Lebanese citizens to villages near the border. "The fact is that the timelines envisaged" in the ceasefire "have not been met", they said in a statement.

The agreement set out a 60-day timeline for implementation.

President Joseph Aoun, Lebanon's army commander until parliament elected him head of state on Jan. 9, called on the people of the south to exercise self-restraint and trust in the Lebanese military.

"Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity are non-negotiable, and I am following up on this issue at the highest levels to ensure your rights and dignity," he said in a statement.

Israel has not said how long its forces would remain in the south, where the Israeli military says it has been seizing Hezbollah weapons and dismantling its infrastructure.

Israel said its offensive against Hezbollah aimed to secure the return home of tens of thousands of Israelis who were forced to leave homes at the border by Hezbollah rocket fire.

Hezbollah opened fire in support of its Palestinian ally Hamas at the start of the Gaza war on Oct. 8, 2023. (*NBC News*)

Sports News

Rangers and SAP move to the top of the First Division League



The Ottos Rangers and SAP FC recorded wins during the latest round of matches to move to the top of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) First Division League.

Josue "Naymar" Arias struck a hat trick as the Rangers hammered Bolans FC 4-0 at the Radio Range playing field in Ottos. Arias had conversions in the eighth, 21st, and 42nd minutes, while Junior Benjamin scored the other goal for Rangers in the 55th minute.

Their seventh

win in 10 matches allows the Ottos Rangers to move to 21 points at the top of the First Division, while Bolans FC will remain on 15 points after suffering their fourth defeat in 11 matches.

SAP FC joined the Ottos Rangers at the top of the First Division after recording their seventh win in 12 matches by snatching a 3-2 victory against Urlings FC at the Bolans playing field.

Peter Byers scored twice with conversions in the eighth and 87th minutes, while

Tyrique Tonge converted the other goal for SAP in the 13th minute.

Kion Jackson scored in the 55th minute, and Devlyn Williams had a 63rd-minute conversion for Urlings FC.

The result allows SAP FC to join the Ottos Rangers on 24 points. However, SAP FC has played 12 matches, two more than the Ottos Rangers.

Both teams are one point ahead of the Freeman's Village Scorpions, who have played 11 matches.

Urlings remain in the cellar on two points after suffering their eighth defeat in 11 matches. Urlings opening encounter with Bolans FC ended prematurely.

Tryum FC recorded their fourth win in nine matches by snatching a 3-1 victory against the Liberta Blackhawks at the St. Johnstone's Village Stadium.

Leon Moses scored twice with con-

versions in the 20th and 22nd minutes, and Odaine Fisher scored the other goal for Tryum FC in the 54th minute.

Ky-Mani Francis scored the only goal for the Liberta Blackhawks in the 41st minute. Tryum FC moved on to 12 points from nine matches, while the Liberta Blackhawks remain second from the bottom of the 14-team standings with three points after suffering their ninth loss in 10 encounters.

However, the match at the ABFA Technical Center between Empire FC and Swetes FC ended prematurely.

Both teams were deadlocked at 1-1 when the referee abandoned the match in the 26th minute after a spectator in the stands threw a bottle onto the field of play.

Both teams will remain tied on 20 points, but Empire FC has played 10 encounters, one more than Swetes FC.

Blue Jays soar in Second Division League

The Cedar Grove Blue Jays have moved into joint second place with National Parks English Harbour after the latest round of matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division League.

The Cedar Grove Blue Jays achieved the feat by soaring to their ninth win in 11 matches after coming from behind to claim a 3-1 victory against Belmont FC at the Cedar Grove playing field.

Zamaal Green put Belmont FC ahead with a 30th-minute conversion, and Kishorn Hamilton scored in the 39th minute to equalize for the Blue Jays as both teams reached halftime deadlocked at 1-1.

But goals by Jahrohn Thomas in the 52nd minute and Tizone Matthew in the 67th minute secured victory for the Blue Jays.

Belmont FC remains in joint fourth place with Golden Grove FC on 24 points after suffering their fourth loss in 12 matches. However, Golden Grove has played 11 matches.

The result allows the Cedar Grove Blue Jays to join English Harbour in second place on 28 points from 11 matches. Both teams are three points adrift of Second Division League leaders Sea View Farm FC, which has played 12 matches.

Earthquake FC claimed their fifth win in 11 matches with a 3-1 victory against the Young Warriors at the Buckley's playing field.

Elson Douglas scored an

own goal in the 23rd minute to give Earthquake FC a one-nil lead at halftime. Shumba Thomas scored in the 50th minute to give Earthquake FC a two-nil lead.



Players of the Cedar Grove Blue Jays

Caric James had a conversion in the 68th minute for the Young Warriors to reduce the deficit, but Marlon Matthew scored in the 72nd minute to restore Earthquake's two-goal lead and wrap up the victory.

Earthquake FC will move on 16 points from 11 matches, while the Young Warriors will remain on seven points after slumping to their seventh defeat in 10 encounters.

Anderson Herbert scored twice as West Ham FC claimed back-to-back wins and recorded their second victory in nine matches with a 3-0 triumph over Glanvilles FC at the PMS playing field.

Following a goalless first half, Herbert scored twice, and Jahmarley Barzey added a

third goal for West Ham with a 56th-minute conversion.

The result allows West Ham FC to move on to six points from nine matches. Glanvilles FC will

remain second from the bottom of the standings in the 17-team league on goal difference with two points after suffering their seventh defeat in nine matches.

TAMO FC and Herberts FC fought to a 1-1 draw at the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park.

Jaheim Grant's eighth-minute conversion gave TAMO FC a one-point halftime lead, while Jon-te Wyre scored in the 65th minute to equalize for Herberts FC.

The result allows TAMO FC to advance to eight points after securing their second draw in 12 matches. Herberts FC will move on to two points but will remain in the cellar on goal difference after recording their second draw in 10 matches.

Windies women eye consistency after win over Bangladesh

Having secured a confidence-boosting 2-1 ODI series win over Bangladesh, West Indies Women's head coach Shane Deitz and captain Hayley Matthews are hoping the team can build on their momentum in the upcoming T20 series and address key areas of improvement as they set their sights on the more important World Cup qualifiers.

In fact, Deitz was quick to point out that the team remains focused on delivering consistent, disciplined performances to achieve their ultimate goal, following an eight-wicket win in the series decider at Warner Park in St. Kitts on Friday.

Led by a stellar bowling performance from spinner Karishma Ramharack, who registered career-best figures of four for 12, the Windies restricted Bangladesh to a modest 118.

Contributions from Qiana Joseph (39), Deandra Dottin (33 not out), Shemaine Campbelle (25 not out), and Matthews (22) then sealed the chase with ease.

"Yeah, good win. Players played pretty well for most of the games. Obviously, the second game we didn't perform as we wanted to with the bat, so we're a bit disappointed

we didn't win 3-0. But a 2-1 series win is good, and we take a bit of momentum into the T20s starting next week," Deitz said.

The batting department, which has often relied heavily on Matthews, saw other players stepping up in the series, which was a welcome return for the coach.

"Qiana played two good innings this series, and obviously Deandra's power—we all know about that. Minnie (Shemaine Campbelle) played a good anchor innings, so that was pleasing. But we need to see more of it, more often," Deitz remarked.

Matthews echoed the sentiment, as she too highlighted the importance of team contributions.

"Yeah, it was a great opportunity for us to see some of the other girls as well. Getting Shemaine and Deandra out in the middle, spending some time together—it was great to see. The way they went about it, too, so aggressively, really stamping their authority in those final few overs," she said.

To address the batting concerns, Deitz pointed to upcoming regional cricket as a key preparation phase for the World Cup qualifiers, as he stressed their push for consistency.



West Indies Women's head coach Shane Deitz, right, and captain Hayley Matthews

"In the qualifiers, you can't afford to have one bad day. We've got to be more consistent and disciplined for the whole qualifier. Our goal is to win every game, and the qualification process will take care of itself then. But we've got to be consistent for 100 overs in each game," he stated.

"We'll work on some things there (regional games) to make sure the girls come out with good form. We've played two series in the last two months, so we're now in ODI mode. We'll review this series, see what worked well, and take those things into the next series and qualifiers," Deitz added.

On that note, Deitz lauded Matthews, who was named in the ICC ODI Team of the Year.

"She gets into everybody's team all the time, so there's no surprise. We know how awesome she is with the bat, ball, and in the field. She's one of the best players in the world, and we're pleased for her to get those personal accolades. But I know she's determined to win games for West Indies and lead us into the World Cup," he stated.

Matthews, in turn, praised Ramharack for her outstanding bowling performance as well as the all-round experience that Dottin brings to the team.

Second Test between Pakistan and Windies hangs in balance



West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite, right, plays a shot as Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan watches during the second day of the second Test in Multan, Pakistan, on Sunday, January 26, 2025. (AP)

MULTAN (Reuters) - Pakistan needed 178 runs to win the second Test and sweep the series, while West Indies were six wickets short of levelling the two-match series after the second day at Multan on Sunday.

West Indies ended their second innings on 244 as spinners Noman Ali and Sajid Khan took four wickets each. The visitors set a target of 254 for Pakistan, who trailed by nine runs after the first innings.

Hosts Pakistan, who won the first Test by 127 runs at the same venue, were 76 for four at stumps, with Kevin Sinclair taking the crucial wickets of Shan Masood and Babar Azam, giving West Indies a

fighting chance to win their first Test in Pakistan since November 1990.

West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite (52) gave the visitors a strong start in the second innings with a 50-run opening partnership before Mikyle Louis (7) fell to Noman.

Brathwaite hit four boundaries and two sixes on his way to a half-century in 57 balls before getting beaten by Noman's spin as Mohammad Rizwan stumped him out. Rizwan also stumped Kavem Hodge (15), after Amir Jangoo (30) fell to Khan.

The West Indies were struggling at 145 for six as Noman surrounded the newly-arrived Sinclair

with two short slips and a silly point, hunting for an edge as the ball turned heavily and kept low.

Sinclair, however, scored 28 in a 51-run partnership for the seventh wicket with Tevin Imlach (35) before being bowled out by Khan.

Kemar Roach, who suffered a groin injury during a spectacular diving catch on Saturday, was the last to bat, limping and running gingerly.

But the 36-year-old did not give up his wicket, scoring four runs in a valuable 11-run partnership with Jomel Warrican (18).

Pakistan got off on the wrong foot with openers Masood (2) and Muham-

mad Hurraira (2) trapped leg before wicket, fooled by deliveries that kept straight instead of turning.

Kamran Ghulam (19) started well but mistimed an attempt to hit Warrican for six, finding Jangoo at backward point, leaving Pakistan struggling at 48 for three.

The situation soon worsened for the hosts as Azam (31) was bamboozled by Sinclair's sharp bounce and edged it to Alick Athanaze.

Saud Shakeel (13) and Kashif Ali (1) remained at the crease at stumps, with the fate of the match and the series hanging in the balance going into day three on Monday (today).

United move to the top of the Premier Division

Defending champions Special Security Services and Bitar Pizza All Saints United moved to the top of the standings in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division on Saturday.

All Saints United moved two points ahead of Sandals and APUA Inet Jennings Grenades after coming from behind to snatch a 4-2 victory against FC Aston Villa Lions in the second match of a Premier League double-header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Jordan Francis gave the Villa Lions an early lead with a conversion in the second minute of play. But All Saints United rebounded to score three goals and took control of the match with a 3-1 advantage at halftime.

Shalon Knight scored two headers with conversions in the 13th and 41st minutes, and Tiquan Isaac added a third goal by hitting the back of the net in the 43rd minute.

National winger Raheem Deterville scored United's fourth and final goal in the 57th minute, and Villa Lions got a second goal to reduce their margin of defeat when Tyrik "Cas-

tro" Hughes blasted home a penalty kick in the 76th minute.

The result allows

Green City and the Attacking Saints also wrapped up their first-round campaign by playing to a

their second draw during their quota of 13 matches.

At the completion of the first phase, the



Players of the All Saints United team

All Saints United to wrap up their first-round campaign with their 11th win from their quota of 13 matches.

It also allows All Saints United to overtake Jennings Grenades at the top of the Premier League. All Saints United finished the first round with 34 points, two ahead of Jennings Grenades, who have a game in hand.

The Villa Lions finished their first-round campaign in sixth place with 21 points after suffering their fourth loss during their quota of 13 matches.

1-1 draw in the opening match of Saturday's Premier League double-header.

Malik Charles scored in the 13th minute to give Green City a one-nil halftime lead. Shafeeq Joseph secured the equalizer for the Attacking Saints with a 68th-minute conversion.

The Attacking Saints finished their first-round campaign with 15 points after salvaging their third draw during their quota of 13 encounters.

Green City ended their first-round campaign on 11 points after recording

14 teams in the Premier League will be divided into two groups of seven to compete in a second and final round. Each team will play a total of six games within their respective groups.

Points achieved in the first phase will be brought forward and added to the points gained in the group stage.

The team with the highest amount of points at the end of the group stage or second round will be declared champions of the 2024/25 ABFA's Premier Division League.