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Two full emergencies at VCBIA in 12 hours

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Two full emergencies at VCBIA in 12 hours

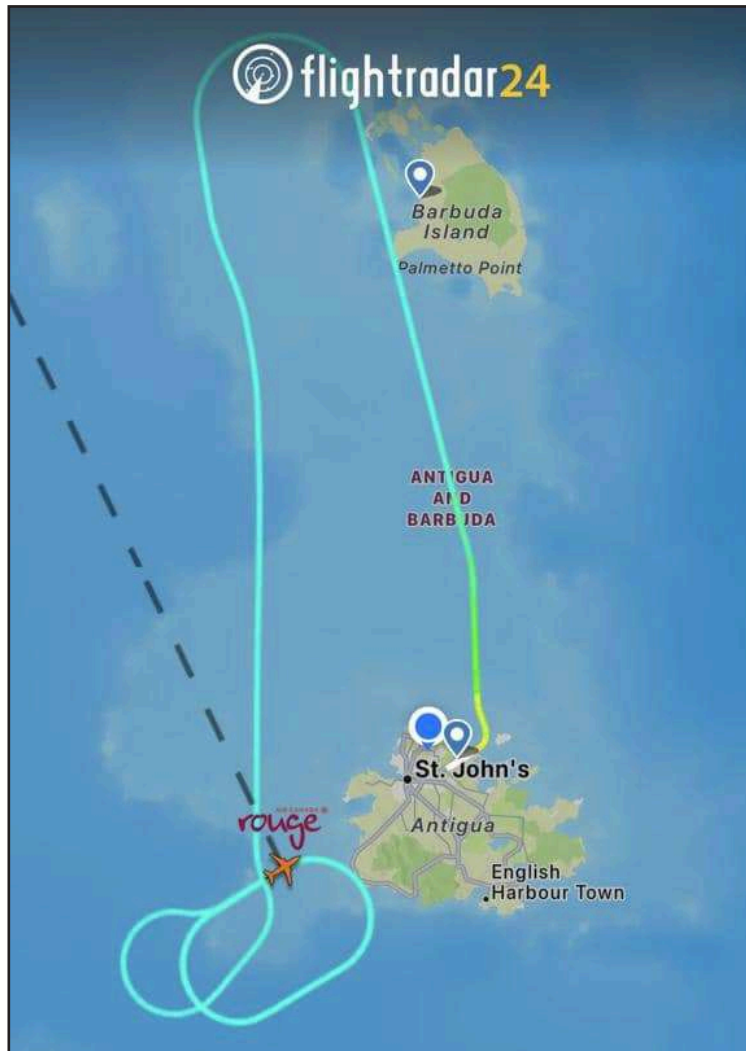
The VC Bird International Airport went into full emergency mode twice within a twelve-hour period on Thursday as two separate aircraft made emergency landings at the airport. Fortunately, there were no injuries reported from either incident.

Full emergencies were declared after the pilot of an Amerijet aircraft requested emergency landing at mid-morning on Thursday and again just after 9:00 pm by an Air Canada aircraft heading to Toronto.

Airport sources say the Amerijet cargo plane, a Boeing 767, that was bound for St. Maarten from Miami requested emergency landing in Antigua after the aircraft reportedly had problems with its flaps. It requested to land at Antigua because VCBIA had a longer runway as this may become necessary for safe landing. The flaps help the aircraft to reduce its speed quickly and therefore is crucial in landings.

The flight landed at 10:57 am Thursday morning without incident. The four crew members aboard reported no personal injuries. In the afternoon, there was an attempt to get the aircraft to leave, but it was determined that there was an issue with the engine and the flight had to be aborted.

It has been reported that a second Amerijet aircraft will fly to Antigua to take the goods destined to Sr.



Maarten there, while a team from Amerijet is expected in Antigua today (Friday) to rectify the problems with the aircraft.

Less than 12 hours later, an Air Canada aircraft, an Airbus 319, left Antigua at

8:57 pm bound for Toronto. Twenty miles into the flight when the aircraft was at an altitude of 11-thousand feet west of Antigua, the pilot radioed the tower to report problems with the landing gear and he requested emer-

gency landing.

The entire emergency architecture was activated to include the fire department, the police, EMS, the SLB-MC, the defense force and the coast guard along with senior personnel from the airport.

According to the airport sources, the pilot spent some time circling the island as he jettisoned fuel in preparation for the emergency landing. That flight eventually landed safely at 10:34 pm at the airport and was parked some distance from the terminal building at 10:42 pm. Immediately after, the fire department crew went into action examining the aircraft to ensure that all is well.

However, while the all clear was given by the fire department that it detected no issues with the aircraft it wasn't until approximately an hour after that the 120 passengers and crew started to deplane from the aircraft.

The airport sources say the pilot had been in contact with head office to determine the next move.

The sources say some passengers who have friends or family in Antigua were allowed to leave the airport, but others were likely to have remained at the airport overnight.

The pilot indicated that the flight to Toronto will take off on the same aircraft sometime today (Friday).

Rodney Jarvis scores impressive win in SJCW branch elections



Rodney Jarvis is the new chairman of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party branch in the St. John's



challenger, Kem Hodge's 85. The position of Vice Chairman of the branch went to Lisa Christian



Bobb's 89. The treasurer is Anika Lee. That position was also unchallenged. For the Women Devel-

Pearson's 77. The members of the management team are; Manass "Satti" Carbon 147,



City West constituency. He emerged victorious following branch elections held at the Villa Primary school on Thursday. He received 179 votes against his

(both candidates named her as part of their respective slates). The new branch secretary is Phyllis Davis who received 147 votes to Samantha

opment Officer, Keriann George received 177 votes to Jean Mari Baptiste 53. The Youth Development Officer is Kavi Roberts who secured 147 votes to Erika

Arleney Emmanuel 135, Tabitha Ephraim 157, Caleb Gardiner 158 and Jessica Jackson 147.

Local News



Training of Ministry of Works staff ahead of roll-out of roadworks



new equipment for the roadworks.

The first set of equipment has arrived through the dealer, Caribbean Premium Motors, located on Utility Drive. The equipment was acquired from an Indian firm, Ammann, which has sent one of its senior officers to Antigua to conduct the training on how to operate the two road-paver machines that are part of the package already on island.

“The training is about the complete training techniques; how the paver should be used



Several members of the road construction unit within the Ministry of Works have been undergoing two days of intense training on how to operate the new equip-

ment that the government has acquired to be used in the massive road construction and repair programme.

Fixing the nation’s road

network on both islands, is a top priority of the government and as a consequence, the government has committed \$20 million to purchase

for a proper road-laying work and apart from that, the training is covering the various

con't on pg 5

con't from pg 4
features of the pavers.



This paver has many features; it can be used on flat surfaces as well as on slopes. These machines also have a number of sensors that enhance the road paving operation,” A. Sivakumar of Ammann stated. On Thursday, the training took the form of theoretical sessions at CPM conference room, but on Friday (today) the practical aspect of the training will take place with actual demonstrations of its capabilities. Meanwhile, a spokesman for CPM said they will begin handing over the new equipment to the government start-


ing on Friday (today). Along with the two

pavers are four back-hoes, one flatbed, three rollers, two graders and six excavators of various sizes. A total of eighteen pieces of different equipment. More equipment is on the way to comprise Phase 2, according to the CPM spokesman. Prime Minister Gaston Browne has repeatedly said that the government will undertake the roll-out of the massive road-works on both Antigua and over in Barbuda as soon as it has the equipment in hand. Government will increase the vehicle li-

censing fees to raise money to help offset the

cost of the road repairs.





Antigua Masonry Products Ltd. is seeking a suitable and qualified person for the following position: **MAINTENANCE ASSISTANT.**

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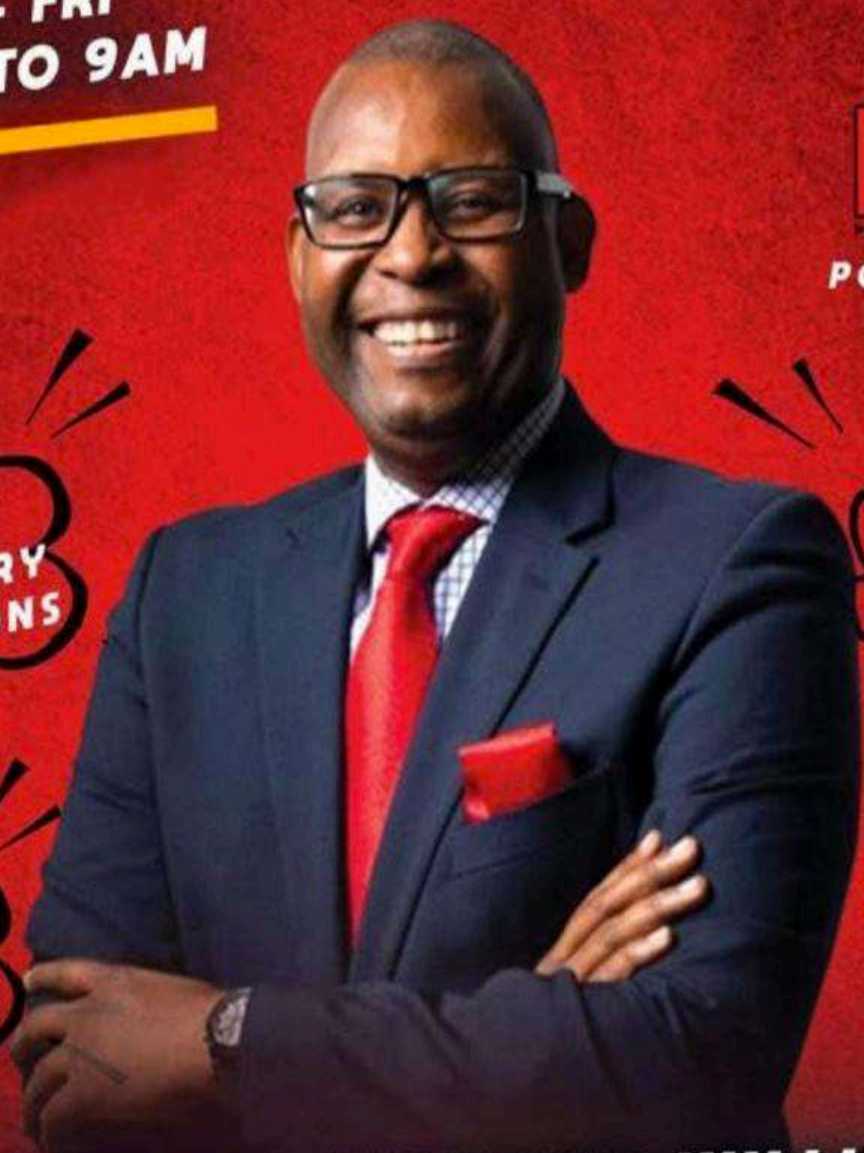
- Perform routine maintenance around the building such as cleaning, painting, fixing and repairing,
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‘Ease of doing business’ made easier with e-filing business registration system



Delores Francis, Ambassador Clarence Henry and Registrar of ABIPC Rikki Camacho

The Antigua and Barbuda Intellectual Property and Commerce Office (ABIPC) has held a series of training sessions this week as it marks the launch of the e-filing system for business names and companies. During the week, staff of ABIPC were trained on the use of the system while on Thursday and Friday (today), it was the turn of members of the legal fraternity and accountants. Registrar at ABIPC, Rikki Camacho said this innovative step represents a significant milestone in modernizing our business registration process and enhancing efficiency for entrepreneurs and businesses alike.

“By embracing technology, we aim to simplify the registration journey, making it faster, more convenient, and accessible for everyone. This e-filing system is not just a leap forward in ease of use; it is a step toward a more transparent, secure, and streamlined process for

business owners and for service providers to offer more efficient services to their users,” Camacho explained. Also speaking at Thursday’s opening ceremony for the training, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Trade, Ambassador Clarence Henry described the launch as an important milestone in the government’s drive to make doing business in Antigua and Barbuda much easier. “This initiative is a clear demonstration of our commitment to fostering a more efficient, transparent, and business-friendly environment. By digitizing the registration process, we are not only simplifying the experience for business owners but also reducing barriers to entry, ultimately encouraging more innovation and entrepreneurship. This aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, which promotes policies that support entrepreneurship, job creation, and economic resilience,”



Delores Francis

Ambassador Pilgrim stated. He added that with this system, entrepreneurs and businesses can now register and manage their business details with ease and speed, without the need for lengthy paperwork or in-person visits.

In his remarks, Director of the Information Technology Centre, Luxmore Edwards, said ABIPC now stands on the precipice of a new era of efficiency and accessibility with the launch of its e-filing system for the registry.

“This system will revolutionize the way businesses, organizations, and individuals interact with the Companies Registry, streamlining processes based on the law, and reducing the need for paper transactions, and minimize the time it takes to drive to ABIPCO’s office to conduct business,” he remarked.



Rikki Camacho

Also speaking at the opening exercises, was the Senior Technical Specialist for Trade at the OECS Commission, Delores Francis. She hailed the introduction of the One-Stop-Shop e-filing system being introduced in Antigua and Barbuda.

“Over the next two days, the in-person presence of the Contractor to deliver direct, hands-on assistance to you, our valued stakeholders, to navigate and manipulate the new features, understand the steps necessary for executing several functions as well as identifying the various automated service components of the One-Stop Shop For Business Registration (OSS-BRS),” she stated. She added that the 11th European Development Fund Programme is one of the agencies responsible for funding the training.

Consultation on Consumer Protection Bill, 2025



The Prices and Consumer Affairs Division in the Ministry of Trade will hold a public consultation on the new **Consumer Protection Bill, 2025** to seek views on issues related to consumer protection.

The consultation slated for Feb-

ruary 18, 2025, from 9:30 am to noon at the Parliament Building, will examine the adequacy of the rules outlined in the Bill to deal with consumer protection issues such as the consumer's right to authorize services, consumer's right to cancel a reservation, right to information in official language, disclosure of price of goods or services, dual pricing, damage resulting from use of service or goods, conditions of demanding and accepting payment amongst others. It aims to establish whether additional legislation or other action is required to ensure fairness between consumers and traders/service providers.

The Division is seeking feedback from all interested parties, particularly from consumers, traders (e.g. shops, stores, supermarkets, hardware stores, construction material suppliers etc.), service providers (tour operators, travel agencies, mechanics, plumbers, contractors, caterers etc.) and organizations with an interest in consumer protection issues. This is important to ensure public confidence in the Bill and protect the interests of consumers.

To access the Bill visit [CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL, 2024 No. of 2024 - Laws](#).

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Antigua and Barbuda champions gender equality and women empowerment at UN



Antigua and Barbuda's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Walton Webson

Antigua and Barbuda continues to play a prominent role in advocating for the introduction of policies, programmes and initiatives necessary in achieving empowerment opportunities for women and girls.

During the first regular session of the UN-Women Executive Board at the United Nations headquarters this week, Antigua and Barbuda's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Walton Webson said a concerted effort is required in developing these policies and the required legislation that align not only with the needs of women and girls, but persons living with disabilities, the elderly and men and boys.

Ambassador Webson proudly shared that Antigua and Barbuda's strong partnership with the UN has yielded tangible results, with significant

progress made in addressing the challenges facing women and girls in reaching their fullest potential.

"The UN footprint in Antigua and Barbuda has expanded with the opening of UN project offices by eight development agencies. UN Women opened its first project office in 2024 and hired a UN Volunteer Specialist to be fully based in Antigua & Barbuda," Ambassador Webson advised the meeting.

But he feels strongly that more can be achieved by pursuing the reforms of the Resident Coordinator programme, which coordinates the support and initiatives by the United Nations in respective member countries. He expressed full support for the reformed RC initiative and called for reliable core funding to finance the project.

According to Ambassador Webson, Antigua and Barbuda's track record in advancing its agenda for a just and equitable society stands as a worthy example of the steadfast advocacy for the mission and work of UN Women and demonstrates the country's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment.

"We commit our unwavering support for the work of UN women and call upon UN-Women to continue its support to enhance its alignment with internationally agreed agendas such as the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS)," he stressed.

In making his case, he highlighted the strides Antigua and Barbuda has been making in advancing gender equality, through initiatives and programmes that continue to empower women and

girls.

"Our national gender machinery, The Directorate of Gender Affairs leads the charge, as they mainstream Gender equality across sectors, executing awareness raising and programmatic activities around pressing issues such as gender-based violence," he stated.

Antigua and Barbuda was the first country in the Caribbean to establish a one-stop mechanism to coordinate the national response to gender-based violence. It offers services to survivors, through the Support and Referral Centre (SARC).

Other examples he pointed out were collaborating with UN Women in updating the National Policy and Action plan to end Gender Based Violence and playing host to UN Women in hosting the Gender Equality Forum as part of the SIDS4 Conference last year.

Two secondary schools to participate food security training



Granville Secondary School



Pares secondary school

The Gilbert Agricultural and Rural Development Center (GARD Center) has been awarded a grant from the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP) implemented by the United Nations Development Programme, named “Scaling up local Food Security through a network of Climate Smart Agricultural Systems.” This project is to promote and foster Food Security.

Two secondary schools in the rural area have been selected to be a part of this important training that is already in progress. These are Glanvilles Secondary and Pares Secondary. It is hoped that at least 25 persons from each school, to include at least one teacher and a farm attendant would be trained in Hydroponics. Additionally, members of the vulnerable community, to include ten inmates at His Majesty’s Prison, will

benefit from this training. In addition, twenty (20) women from Community Groups, Churches, and other civil society organisations will be awarded scholarships for this training. GARD Center is responsible for the administration of this entire project, to include procurement for all supplies relating to the project for a successful completion. Sessions will be conducted at GARD Center for eight (8) weeks in duration and on days and times to be determined. Participants will learn how to construct, manage and monitor Hydroponics systems. All participants must attend at least 85% of sessions and activities to be held, to receive a certificate.

Both schools and His Majesty’s Prison will have systems constructed and installed at their sites, (with assistance from the Teachers/ Supervisors, Volunteers and Participants) while

the 20 women who have successfully completed the training will each receive a start-up kit. This will

include a mini-hydroponics container; air pump; rock-wool; net-cups, and other necessary items.

Antigua and Barbuda Set to Host Historic Rally Cross and Rally Sprint Competition



Antigua and Barbuda will make history this week as the nation hosts a Rally Cross and Rally Sprint competition from February 14 to 16. This highly anticipated event follows the grand opening of the Reservoir Range Racetrack on last Saturday, marking a significant milestone in the country's sporting landscape. This event will be the first-ever competition on the new racetrack at the Reservoir Range Racetrack. Located at Potworks Dam, St. Phillip, the newly constructed Reservoir Range Racetrack offers a state-of-the-art facility designed to elevate Antigua's profile in motorsport and outdoor recreation. It will provide a venue for competition, skill development, and economic growth, positioning the island as a new hub for motorsports in the region. The facility is easily accessible and features a prominent sign outside, labelled 'Reservoir Range' with a canon. In addition to motorsport competitions, the facility will also host activities such as clay shooting, paintball, and motocross on other days.

This inaugural competition will feature exhilarating races in the Open Class and Bimma Cup categories. With drivers from across the Caribbean already preparing for the challenge, the competition promises to be a thrilling showcase of

speed and skill. An ambitious and passionate entrepreneur, Carlo Falcone, has been a driving force behind this event. Known for his significant contributions to both sailing and motorsport, Falcone emphasized the broader impact of this event, noting it will help elevate Antigua and Barbuda's standing in the global motorsport community. "As a member of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), the governing body for motorsports worldwide, Antigua Pro Racing is proud to be affiliated with FIA, who

works towards obtaining the highest standards for safety, sustainability, and inclusivity," said Falcone. "This competition is not only a thrilling event for motorsport fans but also a key development in fostering a culture of sports and recreation in Antigua and Barbuda." The event will kick off with a day of testing on Friday, followed by the highly anticipated Rally Sprint on Saturday. The competition will conclude on Sunday, with the exciting Rally Cross event and a prize-giving ceremony.



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CARICOM Nations Should Respond Together To new U.S. Policies



By Sir Ronald Sanders

Two Executive Orders issued by U.S. President Donald Trump have sparked concern across the Caribbean, much as they have in Central America and beyond. One mandates the removal of illegal migrants from the U.S., while the other shuts the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), an institution that has long been a symbol of American foreign assistance.

The alarm within the 14 independent Caribbean Community (CARICOM) nations arises from the belief that they will suddenly face an influx of deported nationals from the U.S., many perceived as hardened criminals. This pros-

pect raises concerns among governments and citizens alike about their capacity to absorb these returnees. However, as this commentary will later illustrate, this problem may be more imagined than real.

Another source of anxiety stems from the recent actions of the U.S. Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), led by Elon Musk, which has closed down USAID—an agency established in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy to provide aid and development assistance to foreign nations. In reality, apart from Jamaica, USAID's role in CARICOM has not been significant for many years, as will be detailed later in this com-

mentary.

Dealing first with the removal or deportation of non-detained CARICOM nationals in the U.S. These CARICOM nationals are not hardened criminals. If they were, they would be detained, not “non detained”. All of them would be classified as having broken U.S. law and, in that sense, to have committed crimes. Among these crimes would be remaining in the U.S. beyond the time that their visas allowed, or for offences committed while they were in the U.S. illegally. Among these offences would be possession of prohibited drugs or being arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol.

The deportation of such individuals is not a recent development; it has been an ongoing practice since the Obama administration. Governments have been compelled to accept their deported nationals or face the prospect of tighter visa issuance restrictions for all their citizens, including businesspersons and government officials. This policy did not commence with President Trump's tenure; it has been in place for over a decade.

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) faces a significant challenge: while they possess lists of individuals residing illegally in the U.S., compiled from immigration

records and law enforcement encounters, they often lack precise information on these individuals' whereabouts. Moreover, even if apprehended, ICE does not have sufficient facilities to detain all of them. This logistical reality means that mass deportations are not feasible, and any removal process will be gradual.

Among the nearly 1.5 million individuals identified for deportation, CARICOM nationals account for 42,289 cases, with Haiti comprising 32,363 and Jamaica 5,120. The remaining 4,856 are distributed among the other 12 CARICOM countries. Importantly, these individuals cannot be deported all at once; each must be located, apprehended, brought before a court, and detained until repatriation.

Moreover, ICE's priorities lie elsewhere. Countries like Honduras (261,651 non-detained individuals), Guatemala (253,413), Mexico (252,044), and El Salvador (203,822) have far higher numbers of undocumented nationals in the U.S. Since President Trump's second-term inauguration on January 20, mass deportations have targeted these nations: Mexico (4,094), Colombia (306), Guatemala (265), and Ecuador (80). Notably, these 4,856 individuals were already in detention

con't on pg 13

con't from pg 12
awaiting removal.

CARICOM countries have the opportunity to proactively plan for the return of their nationals. Governments should initiate these plans now to prevent strain on social welfare systems and rising unemployment. Additionally, while recognizing the U.S. administration's right to deport illegal immigrants—an action they themselves undertake—CARICOM nations must insist that this process is conducted lawfully, with respect for human dignity and without discrimination.

Regarding the closure of USAID and its impact on CARICOM countries: In the 2023 fiscal year, USAID disbursed approximately \$44 billion across 160 countries and regions worldwide. Ukraine was the top recipient, receiving over \$16 billion. Israel received more than \$2.2 billion, while Ethiopia and Jordan each received over \$1 billion. Other major beneficiaries included Somalia, Afghanistan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In contrast, CARICOM countries were not significant recipients of USAID funds.

In 2023, U.S. assistance to CARICOM countries, including contributions from USAID, totalled approximately \$456.2 million - representing just about 1% of USAID's total disbursements that year and less than 0.1% of the total aid programme of the U.S.

government. Haiti was the primary beneficiary, receiving \$393.8 million. Jamaica followed with \$26 million, and Belize with \$19.8 million. Beyond these, U.S. assistance contributions sharply declined: Dominica received \$86,000; Suriname, \$371,000; St. Vincent and the Grenadines, \$474,000; and Antigua and Barbuda, \$558,000. Notably, the aid to Antigua and Barbuda was specifically allocated for combating drug trafficking, primarily targeting narcotics destined for the U.S. market.

Therefore, while USAID's assistance has been valuable, it was not invaluable; nor was it evenly distributed—some countries benefited more than others. Carib-

bean leaders in government, the private sector, and the labour movement should now adjust their strategies to address the closure of the USAID agency, and any meaningful assistance it may have provided.

The shuttering of USAID as an agency does not mean aid from the U.S. will end. However, with the resources and functioning of USAID being transferred to the U.S. State Department, the disbursement of aid will become more political than in the past.

But it should be noted that in 2023, the U.S. benefited from a trade surplus of \$7.45 billion with CARICOM countries. This indicates that CARICOM

nations effectively financed the \$456.2 million they received in U.S. aid through their substantial purchases of U.S. goods, accounting for over 60% of their imports.

The trade and aid figures underscore that CARICOM countries have room for negotiating a continuing mutually beneficial relationship between the U.S. and CARICOM countries, provided they act together.

(The writer is Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the US and the OAS. The views expressed are entirely his own. Responses and previous commentaries: www.sirronaldsanders.com)



Antigua Masonry Products Ltd. is seeking a suitable and qualified person for the following position: **REDI-MIX CONCRETE TRUCK DRIVER.**

Job Functions:

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- Documenting any maintenance as required
- Driving truck to job site and unloading
- Assembling concrete chute and attaching chute to truck back
- Protecting truck using protective compound and performing minor maintenance task
- Washing and cleaning of trucks or equipment used in the concrete production line
- Backing truck under loading hopper and starting the mixer to get concrete

Qualifications & Skills:

- Must be able to operate truck and its auxiliaries such as levers, chutes and mixing drums efficiently
- Have a good understanding of mixing procedure and knowledge of adjusting the mixing speed
- A valid truck driver's license
- Have at least 2 years' truck driving experience

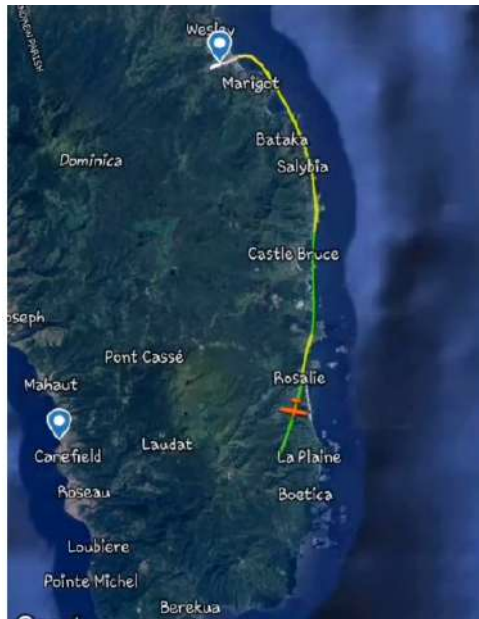
Interested persons should send their application to hr@amp.company no later than **Friday 21st February, 2025**. Only suitable applications will be acknowledged.

Last two Bodies recovered from Dominica Cessna 172 crash site

The remaining two bodies have been recovered from the wreckage of a Cessna 172 aircraft that tragically crashed in the mountains of La Plaine, Dominica, late last month, as reported by RCI Martinique.

Recovering all four bodies posed significant challenges due to the difficult terrain surrounding the crash site. Two bodies were retrieved in early February, while the other two remained trapped in the wreckage. On Wednesday, February 12, the French High Mountain Gendarmerie Platoon successfully intervened to recover the final two bodies.

Following the recovery, the bodies were handed over to local authorities for medicolegal processing be-



fore being returned to their families, according to RCI Martinique.

Access to the crash site was perilous due to the aircraft's positioning on the mountaintop. The Cessna

had crashed at an altitude of 750 metres on a rocky ridge, with the wreckage precariously hanging vertically, supported only by vegetation and at risk of falling at any moment.

The tragic accident occurred on January 26 when the small plane departed from the Douglas-Charles Airport en route to Martinique. Communication was lost shortly after takeoff, and search and rescue teams located the wreckage the following day atop a mountain in La Plaine, on the island's southeast coast.

In the wake of the crash, French authorities have launched a judicial investigation into involuntary manslaughter against Dominica. (*Loop Caribbean*)

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Holness names three new government senators

Prime Minister Dr Andrew Holness has announced medical doctor, Elon Thompson, senior adviser and strategist in the Ministry of Tourism, Delano Seiveright, and senior member of the Jamaica Labour Party's Communication Task Force Marlon Morgan will fill three vacant seats on the Government side of the Senate.

In a media release late Wednesday, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) also announced the resignation of Ransford Braham from the Senate. Senators Matthew Samuda and Delroy Williams had already resigned.

Holness said he has written to Sir Patrick Allen, the Governor-General of Jamaica, recommending the new appointments.

Thompson is a medical doctor by profession with specialisation in the field of Urology. He is employed to the South East Regional Authority (SERHA) and leads the recently started Urology service at the Spanish Town Hospital and also practices privately in Kingston, Portmore and Mandeville. Thompson served as president of the Jamaica Medical Doctors Association from 2016 to 2020. He is a member of the Jamaica Urological Society, Caribbean Urological Association, American Urological Association and Association of Surgeons in Jamaica.

The OPM noted that Morgan is a communications



specialist with over 15 years of experience at the senior executive level in shaping public policy. Over the years, Morgan has served as a director/council member on the Board of the following organizations: The Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), HEART/NSTA Trust, Agro-Investment Corporation (AIC) and the Spectrum Management Authority. In 2016, Morgan served as a Senior Aide to Holness and for two years thereafter as senior advisor in the then Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture & Fisheries. He is also the former Vice President of the Jamaica Labour Party's young professional affiliate – Generation 2000 (G2K).

Meanwhile, the OPM said Seiveright is a strategist,

public policy expert, and advocate with extensive experience in governance, tourism development, corporate communications, and stakeholder engagement. It said as Senior Advisor and Strategist to Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett, Seiveright plays a pivotal role in expanding and modernising Jamaica's tourism sector, which has become a key pillar of the nation's economy. Seiveright has also held leadership roles in youth and professional organisations, including serving as President of Generation 2000 (G2K), where he was the youngest person to hold the position.

Holness said the nominations reflect his administration's continued commitment to strong, effective

leadership and governance. He highlighted that the new Senators bring a wealth of experience and expertise that will bolster the Government's legislative efforts and further national priorities.

"The Senate plays a critical role in our democracy, ensuring the thorough review and passage of legislation that impacts the lives of all Jamaicans. I have strategically selected these professionals because of the immense expertise they bring to Jamaica. I have every confidence they will uphold the highest standards of public service, contribute meaningfully to the legislative process and, ultimately, accelerate Jamaica's development," said Holness. (*Jamaica Gleaner*)

Gunmen come for victim sitting in cop's car

A man was shot and injured in Laventille earlier today when gunmen opened fire on a car.

The Express was told that at around 12.27 p.m, a police officer driving his private car stopped at Parris Boulevard, Laventille to purchase food.

In the car was the officer, a toddler, and two men.

A Hyundai Ioniq which had been tailing them suddenly stopped alongside the Sentra. Two men armed with assault rifles got out and opened fire, aiming specifically for one of the men seated in the car.

He was shot multiple times but he ran into some bushes at the side of the road. The occupants of the Ioniq sped off.

Police said that officers of the Port of Spain Division Task Force arrived on the scene but by that time the Hyundai Ioniq was nowhere to be seen.

The officers who had to climb a hill, got to the man and took him to

the Port of Spain General Hospital.

Police said earlier that day the off-duty officer who is from Blanchis-

seuse had taken some of his relatives to the Port of Spain General Hospital for an appointment in the hospital's outpatient clinic and

believe that they were following from the hospital by the gunmen. (*Trinidad Express*)

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Gas explosion at Taiwan food court kills 4 and injures 26



A gas explosion at a department store in Taiwan on Thursday killed four people and injured 26, fire authorities said.

The blast occurred at the food court on the 12th floor of the Shin Kong Mitsukoshi department store in Taichung city, the Taichung Fire Bureau said. The higher floors of the upscale department store were blown out,

raining debris on pedestrians below.

Among the dead were two people visiting from Macau, Macao's Tourism Office confirmed Thursday. Local media reported that they were part of a family of seven who were there for tourism. The other five were also injured and are now being treated at local hospitals in Taichung.

Part of the store was under renovation, but it's not clear if the work was connected to the explosion, Taichung Vice Mayor Cheng Chao-hsin told reporters at the scene. "If it's found there were illegal actions or parts that violated renovation regulations, it will be dealt with appropriately," Cheng said.

Dozens of firefighters were deployed to the scene at about 11:30 am. Parts of the building's exterior were damaged and scattered fragments were strewn on the streets.

Taichung Mayor Lu Shioh-yen told reporters at the scene that she felt the shock at her office nearby. She said the fire bureau would focus on a rescue operation first, but an investigation was also underway and officers were checking whether there were other sources of danger.

Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te said he had asked all relevant government agencies to investigate the cause of the accident. *(Loop Caribbean)*

At least 25 Palestinians killed by Israeli forces in Jenin this year

Israel's continuing deadly raids in Jenin have killed at least 25 Palestinians and displaced nearly 20,000 this year, the camp's media committee said.

On Thursday, it said that the Israeli army has also prevented water from reaching four main hospitals in the region and said that 35 percent of Jenin city's residents have also been deprived of water.

Since a ceasefire in Gaza was announced last month, Israel has increased the frequency and intensity of its attacks in Jenin and across the occupied West Bank, leaving behind widespread destruction and a humanitarian crisis.

On Thursday, the Israeli army launched an attack on a parked ve-



hicle in Jenin. No injuries have been reported so far.

The Jenin refugee camp, set up in 1953 by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) to accommodate

displaced Palestinians, is a hub for Palestinian resistance groups operating under the umbrella of the Jenin Brigades and has long been a focal point for Israeli military incursions. *(Al Jazeera English)*

White House terminates top federal prosecutors amid DOJ, FBI purge

The White House terminated multiple U.S. attorneys on Wednesday evening amid a period of upheaval at the Justice Department initiated by President Donald Trump, who was himself a criminal defendant in two separate federal cases until they were dropped after his election in November.

The full extent of the terminations was not clear as of Thursday morning. The White House did not respond to a request for comment, and a Justice Department spokesman could not immediately provide a figure for how many of the nation's 93 U.S. attorneys in federal court districts across the country were impacted.

The departure of the remaining U.S. attorneys who were nominated by former President Joe Biden and confirmed by the Senate was expected at some point, but their immediate terminations by the White House were a departure from history. In the past, politically appointed U.S. attorneys had been asked to resign by the Justice Department.

The terminations impacted at least two court-appointed U.S. attorneys, including one career federal prosecutor who had previously worked Jan. 6 cases. A spokesperson for

that court-appointed U.S. attorney did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of California Tara McGrath was "informed of her termination in a communication from the White House, at the direction of the President of the United States,"



according to a press release from McGrath's office.

U.S. Attorney for Maryland Erik L. Barron and U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina Dena J. King both announced their departures Wednesday but did not provide reasons. McGrath, Barron and King were Biden nominees confirmed by the Senate.

U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Washington Tessa Gorman, who was a court-appointed top federal prosecutor, "was removed from her post," a

spokesperson said. Gorman first took on the role in an acting capacity before she was named to the role by former Attorney General Merrick Garland. The judges of the Western District of Washington named her to the position in May 2024.

A source familiar with the matter told NBC News

nated after they refused to resign.

During Biden's term, Trump-appointed U.S. attorneys were asked to resign, and were given three weeks to depart at a set date, while a number of interim U.S. attorneys who were not Senate-confirmed (including those appointed by courts) remained. That action also originated from the Justice Department.

Since Trump took office 24 days ago, the Justice Department has been through a tremendous period of unrest. It started on the day of Trump's inauguration, when he issued a mass pardon for Jan. 6 rioters convicted in the biggest federal investigation in American history and then named an advocate for Capitol rioters the interim U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia.

Since then, Trump's acting deputy attorney general — who himself worked Jan. 6 cases — fired federal prosecutors who had originally been hired to work Capitol cases and demanded a list of FBI employees who investigated the Capitol siege. The Trump administration also demanded a list of probationary FBI employees, raising fears of mass firings that would impact the bureau for years to come. (*NBC News*)

that one of the fired U.S. attorneys received a letter from Trent Morse, the deputy director of the Office of Presidential Personnel, that read: "At the direction of President Donald J. Trump, I am writing to inform you that your position as U.S. Attorney is terminated, effective immediately."

The White House's direct involvement in the firings is unusual, as such decisions typically come from the Justice Department. During Trump's first term, Attorney General Jeff Sessions asked U.S. Attorneys to resign, and only one U.S. attorney was termi-

Blackhawks seek more success in ABCA's two-day contest



Defending champions PIC Insurance Libertas Black Hawks will be seeking more success when the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) two-day competition resumes this weekend.

After soaring to emphatic victories against the Bolans Blasters and WES Rising Sun Spartans, the Libertas Blackhawks will be aiming to extend their perfect unbeaten run in one of the five third-round two-day matches that will take place across five venues in Antigua on Saturday.

The Libertas Blackhawks will take on the All Saints Pythons at the Mack Pond playing field in All Saints.

The All Saints Pythons will be encouraged after beating the Bolans Blasters by an innings and 35 runs at the Mack Pond playing field in All Saints in the second round last weekend.

Two teams who are searching for their first win in the competition, the Jennings Tigers and Tertiary Institutions and School, will clash at the Jennings playing field. Both teams secured draws in their two previ-

ous matches.

Empire Nation, which won their opening game and drew their second-round encounter, will hope to return to winning ways when they host the Bolans Blasters at the Keithley Sheppard Recreational Park.

Two teams with identical records comprising a win and a draw from their two previous matches, the New Winthropes Lions and the Pigotts Crushers, will battle at

the New Winthropes playing field.

Struggling teams, WES Rising Sun Spartans and Caribbean Union Bank (CUB) Bethesda Golden Eagles, will seek a change in fortunes and record their first win when they clash at the Bethesda playing field.

All matches will commence on Saturday at 10 am.

Joseph 'shocked and honoured' by ESPN Cricinfo Awards recognition

Shamar Joseph, the rising fast-bowling star from Guyana, took to Instagram to express his gratitude and excitement after winning two prestigious honours at the ESPN Cricinfo Awards for 2024.

Joseph was awarded for Best Test Bowling Performance and Test Debutant of the Year, following his unforgettable seven for 68 against Australia in Brisbane in January 2024.

"Thank you @espnCricinfo it is a shock and an honour," Joseph wrote. "Last year I was thinking about how to make a life to support my family. This year I am working to teach my two boys that life's journey is about always building, creating new ambitions, and never settling for where you are."

Joseph, who played a key role in the West Indies' famous win over Australia early last year, acknowledged the support of his coaches and past West Indian legends who have helped him along his journey.

He also reflected on how special the experience in Australia was and his determination to return stronger for future series.

"That month in Australia was a very special time for our squad, and my



Shamar Joseph

big wish for 2025 is to go back and take plenty more wickets. We have a series versus Australia in the Caribbean this July, and my aim is to perform to prove that I can come back to Australia and give the fans entertainment. Aussies still message me every day. The BBL is a big goal for 2025—if a team will pick me, I will take wickets."

Joseph's incredible performance in Australia won him many admirers, including fans at the Gabba and Adelaide Oval, something that has stayed with him.

"I will always be grateful for those fans

in Adelaide and Gabba who cheered me even (though) I am not Aussie. I want to visit Adelaide or Queensland no matter what."

The 24-year-old speedster, who also represents the Lucknow Super Giants in the IPL, relished the opportunity to be listed among some of cricket's biggest names, including Ellyse Perry, Pat Cummins, and Jasprit Bumrah.

"God first, I represent Guyana, West Indies, and Lucknow Super Giants, and I am blessed to support my family and represent my country on the cricket field. It is amazing to have

my name alongside Elyse Perry, Bumrah, Cummins, and Sophie Devine in this ESPN Awards. To be included just makes me work harder. See you in the IPL."

Joseph's remarkable rise from uncertainty about his future to one of the most exciting fast-bowling prospects in the game is an inspiring tale. With his sights set on future series and tournaments, including a potential stint in the Big Bash League, fans can expect to see much more of his electrifying pace and match-winning performances in the years to come. (Sportsmax)

Sports News



Wins for Spanish Heat and Flyers in Division 2 basketball league



Spanish Heat 2 and EZ Fit Flyers 2 both recorded their second victories in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Division 2 League on Wednesday evening.

Spanish Heat 2 made it two wins in as many matches with an 88-65 victory against Da Project 2 in the second game of a double-header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Wester Baptiste produced 26 points, seven assists, and six rebounds; Erwin Rodriguez sank 23 points and grabbed 22 rebounds; Jesus Emmanuel converted 18 points and claimed 16 rebounds; and Charlie Daniel scored 10 points and secured 20

rebounds for the Spanish Heat 2.

Aiden Tonge converted 20 points; Nathan Matthew sank 16 points; Donald Hunte and Gabriel De-Suza each scored nine points; and Iczjaire Sebastian had eight points and seven rebounds for Da Project 2, who suffered their second loss in as many games.

The EZ Fit Flyers soared to their second win in three encounters with a 66-43 victory against Cristos United in the first game of Wednesday's double-header.

Piper Hansel produced 14 points and five rebounds, Tyrese White sank 12 points, Rashaun Harry had 10 points and

nine rebounds, and Delroy Foster scored eight points for the EZ Fit Flyers.

Neville Chambers converted 16 points and claimed eight rebounds, and Manlight Simmons sank 15 points and grabbed 10 rebounds for Cristos United. Wednesday's loss was the first completed match for Cristos United.

The ABBA First Division League will resume with another

double-header at the JSC Sports Complex on Saturday (tomorrow).

Spanish Heat will face Kennedy's Club Ottos Full Throttle at 6:45 pm, and Lava Smoke Shop Warriors will tackle All Saints Slam at 8:30 pm.

In Sunday's Division 1 double-header, the Northside Stingerz will take on Da Project at 6:45 pm, and the EZ Fit Flyers will clash with Total Imports Potters Steelers at 8:30 pm.

Success for Greenbay Primary in school basketball league



Greenbay Primary's Esther Hunte, second right, dribbles the ball up-court against Golden Grove Primary in their Minigirls Primary Division match in the Cool and Smooth Inter-School Basketball League at the JSC Sports Complex on Wednesday, February 12, 2025. (Photo courtesy of the school basketball league)

Greenbay Primary recorded victory in the Cool and Smooth Inter-School Basketball League on Wednesday.

In the only encounter that was played, Greenbay Primary romped to an emphatic 26-2 victory against Golden Grove Primary in the Minigirls Primary Division at the JSC Sports Complex.

Esther Hunt produced a game-high 14 points for Greenbay Primary.

Meanwhile, the first team of the Antigua Girls High School (AGHS-1) was among the winners in the Ministry of Sports, Joma Caribbean, Cool and Smooth Schools' Netball Competition on Wednesday. AGHS-1 romped to a 13-0 victory against Pares Secondary School in the Under-16 Secondary Division. Jennings Secondary also pulled off an 11-3 victory against Sir Novelle Richards Academy (SNRA) in the same category.

The Antigua State College defeated Christ the King High School in the Under-18 Secondary Division.

There were wins as well for Ottos Comprehensive School and All Saints Secondary School in the 13 and Under Secondary Division.

Ottos Comprehensive School prevailed 7-1 against Clare Hall Secondary School, while All Saints Secondary School snatched

a 5-2 victory against Sir Novelle Richards Academy.

In the Under-13 Development Division, Buckley's Primary prevailed 4-1 against Mary E. Pigott Primary. C.T. Samuel Primary snatched a 2-0 victory against Golden Grove Primary, and Five Islands Primary recorded a 1-0 victory against Freemans Ville Primary.

In the Under-13 Primary Division, Jennings Primary snatched a 1-0 victory against St. Andrews Primary. J. T. Ambrose Primary prevailed 3-2 against Buckley's Primary, Liberta Primary recorded a 2-1 win against Potters Primary, and snatched a 1-0 victory against Sunnysdale Primary School.



Antigua Masonry Products Ltd. is seeking a suitable and qualified person for the following position: **LABOURER.**

Job Functions:

- Assist customers and vendors with loading and unloading of products/materials
- Maintain the operations of the Crusher, as well as, cubing, batching and operating machines and equipment
- Cleaning and maintaining machines and equipment
- Periodic inspection of plant equipment
- Complete all duties in accordance with company health and safety regulations.
- Demonstrate a continuous effort to improve operations, reduce turnaround times and streamline work processes.
- Work independently and collaboratively with other team members to achieve common objectives.

Qualifications & Skills:

- Prior experience working in a construction environment
- Previous experience with stocking and loading
- Multi-tasker and ability to work in a team environment

Interested persons should send their application to hr@amp.company no later than **Friday 21st February, 2025**. Only suitable applications will be acknowledged.

Sports News

English Harbour stay fourth in Second Division League



National Parks English Harbour football team. (File photo)

National Parks English Harbour consolidated their fourth place position in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division League on Wednesday.

English Harbour strengthened their position in the top-four by recording their 10th win in 14 matches with a 5-0 drubbing of the Young Warriors at the English Harbour playing field.

Akeem Weekes struck a hat trick with conversions in the 30th, 70th, and 77th minutes. The other goals for English Harbour were scored by Delroy Simpson in the 23rd minute and Rakeem Isaac in the 72nd minute.

The result ensured that the Young Warriors will remain third from the bottom of the 17-team standings with seven points after slumping to

their 10th defeat in 13 encounters.

National Parks English Harbour will remain in fourth place by advancing to 32 points from 14 matches.

It means English Harbour moves four points clear of Belmont FC, which is in fifth place with 28 points from 14 matches.

The top two teams at the end of the competition will gain automatic promotion to the First Division next season. The third and fourth place finishers will also get a chance for promotion.

They will contest a three-team round-robin playoff with a team from the First Division. The winners of that playoff between the first and second division teams will compete in the First Division next season.

with West Ham FC at the PMS playing field.

Real Blizzard will tackle Earthquake FC at the New Winthropes playing field, and Belmont FC will meet TAMO FC at the Golden Grove playing field.

Meanwhile, the group, or second phase of the Premier Division, will continue with the third round of matches during a triple header at the ABFA Technical Center on Saturday.

Five Islands will face Parham in a Group 2 affair at 4 pm, the Willikies Warriors will meet Cool and Smooth Greenbay Hoppers in a Group 1 encounter at 6 pm, and Old Road will tackle Garden Stars in a Group 2 clash at 8 pm.

In Sunday's triple-header, Terminix Piggotts Bullets will take on FC Aston Villa Lions in a Group 1 affair at 4 pm, Sandals and APUA Inet Jennings Grenades will tackle Island Original John Hughes in another Group 1 encounter at 6 pm, and defending champions Special Security Services and Bitar Pizza All Saints United will face the Potters Tigers in a Group 2 match-up at 8 pm.

The Attacking Saints and Green City FC receive byes during the third round of matches.

The Cedar Grove Blue Jays are currently leading the Second Division with 37 points from 14 matches. They are three ahead of Sea View Farm FC, which occupies second place with 34 points from 15 encounters.

Closely following in third place is Golden Grove FC with 33 points from 14 matches. Guydadli FC occupies sixth place with 21 points from 12 matches, while the Young Lions of Old Road are in seventh place on goal difference ahead of Earthquake FC as both teams have 19 points from 12 encounters.

The ABFA's Second Division will continue on Friday (today) with four matches, starting at 4:20 pm. Glanvilles FC will challenge the CPTSA Wings at the Glanvilles playing field, and Blackburn Palace will clash



con't from pg 26

Antiguan heritage and a former student of Bede's, played a crucial role in introducing Bede's School to the Honourable Daryll Matthew, Minister of Education and Sports, and Her Excellency Karen-Mae Hill, High Commissioner of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Kingdom. On 7th November 2024, Minister Matthew, High Commissioner Hill, and cricket legend Sir Vivian Richards visited Bede's School to finalise the arrangements for the tour and to meet Dajari Barthley, an Antiguan student enrolled at Bede's in a football programme.

Director of Cricket at Bede's, Alan Wells, expressed his enthusiasm: "Twenty-six students, 15 boys and 11 girls, along with six members of staff from Bede's Senior School in the UK, are absolutely thrilled to be coming to the beautiful island of Antigua on a cricket tour for the first time. We are confident that we will have the most incredible time and make lifelong memories. We are excited to meet new friends and acquaintances and forge long-lasting relationships on the island."

Minister Matthew also commended on the initiative: "I would like to thank Mr. Peter Goodyer, Principal of Bede's School, for greenlighting this tour and facilitating such an important sporting exchange. This tour will undoubtedly enhance the skills of young Antiguan cricketers, both male and female, while also providing valuable exposure for the visiting team from the UK. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Sir Vivian Richards and High Commissioner Hill for visiting Bede's School with me last year to ensure the successful planning of this tour. Our vision is to inspire and develop first-class cricketers who will continue to compete at the international level. Special thanks also go to the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association for their support in welcoming the touring team."

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Bede's School is an independent co-educational school in the United Kingdom. It offers education from preparatory to senior levels and is known for its strong academic and sporting programmes, with a particular emphasis on cricket. Current West Indies ODI Captain Shai Hope studied at Bede's. The visit will also allow Antiguan and Barbudan students to learn about opportunities to study at Bede's. It is expected that tours such as these will be held annually and expanded to include more schools from the UK and Islands in the region.

Bede's School First 11 Arrives in Antigua and Barbuda for Cricket Tour

Antigua and Barbuda High Commission, 12 February 2025—Bede's School from the United Kingdom has arrived in Antigua and Barbuda for an exciting ten-day cricket tour.

The delegation includes two under 19 teams—15 boys and 11 girls—accompanied by 6 staff members. Their objective is to promote and strengthen cricket among both male and female students as well as develop partnerships with cricket programmes in Antigua and Barbuda.

Pigott's Sports Club, Sports Tourism Officer Karen Joseph and High Commissioner Karen-Mae Hill have collaborated closely to plan and execute this prestigious tour. President of the Pigotts Sports Club, Bakesha Francis-James, along with Hugh 'Carda' Smith, were tasked with co-ordinating a local male and female team to compete against the visitors. Former West Indies player, Winston Benjamin, along with Ajani Frederick have been coaching a 15-member male team. Keith Frederick has been working with 13 local females.

The scheduled matches include:

- Friday, 14th February: The men's team will play a 40-over match at Liberta Sports Club at 10:00am, while the women's team will compete at Pigott's Sports Club at the same time.
- Monday, 17th February – T20 matches: the men's team at Pigott's Sports Club and the women's team at Liberta Sports Club.
- Tuesday, 18th February – 40-over



match: The men's team at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium and the women's team at Liberta Sports Club for a 30-over match.

- Thursday, 20th February – Final T20 matches featuring the men's team at the Liberta Sports Club and the women's team at the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium. Outside of the cricket field, the Bede's School touring delegation will embark on an

island tour, visit Shirley Heights, and hold courtesy meetings with prominent figures, including the Honourable Daryll Matthew, Minister for Education, Sports and the Creative Industries, Honourable Charles Fernandez, Minister for Tourism and Investment; Resident British Commissioner John Hamilton; and Antigua and Barbuda's Cricketing Knights. Callaun Martin, a former Hull City player of

con't on pg 25