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VOL 34 NO. 019

Monday, June 17, 2024

US\$ 1.00 / Naf. 1.80 / EC\$ 2.50

Unions say Collectivité Director of General Services 'has to go'

MARIGOT--Hôtel de la Collectivité was blocked again by the three main unions on Friday, preventing services from being offered to the public.

The three unions UNI.T 978, Union National des Syndicats Autonome (UNSA) and Confédération Générale des Travailleurs de Guadeloupe (CGTG) continue to attempt to negotiate with

the Collectivité over a 10-point list of demands, negotiations that have been ongoing since May 29 but have not yet been resolved to the satisfaction of both parties.

The list of demands mostly pertains to employee working conditions, careers, salaries, prospects for promotion, and so forth.

According to the unions, high-

Continued on page 9

NA, DP want GEBE meeting to be open

PHILIPSBURG--National Alliance (NA) and Democratic Party (DP) have both issued calls for the meeting on utilities company GEBE to be open and not held behind closed doors.

NA said in a press release on Friday that its faction is pushing for transparency regarding the recent changes to the parliamentary schedule about GEBE. In a letter to President of Parliament Sarah Wescot-Williams, Members of Parliament Silveria Jacobs and Cloyd Marlin questioned the postponement of the crucial meetings originally set for Friday, June 14, and the decision

to reschedule them behind closed doors on Monday, June 17.

"Why can't the public be informed along the way?" asked the MPs. "The Prime Minister and other ministers have emphasised the urgency of these meetings, so it's essential for the public to be kept in the loop."

NA stressed the importance of keeping such discussions open to the public. "This is a matter of significant public interest. While we understand some details may need confidentiality, these can be handled in subsequent closed sessions. The people deserve to hear what's happening.

"During crises it is not a time to withdraw from the people. Much like we saw during the pandemic, a crisis calls for constant updates from the Prime Minister to the public to avoid unrest. Providing information helps ease the minds of the public and maintains trust."

The NA faction also called out the current coalition's shift in stance. "Some coalition members were once against closed-door meetings at any cost. Where are they now? What has changed? Why are they okay with such an

Continued on page 8



Prime Minister Luc Mercelina addresses the St. Maarten Youth Brigade during their annual Rank Promotion Ceremony at Cyrus Wathey Square in Philipsburg on Friday. The ceremony celebrated the promotion of members ages 12-21 to new ranks. The Youth Brigade, which values equality, justice, compassion and resilience, welcomes individuals from all backgrounds interested in the paramilitary field and community service.

Police investigate death of one-month-old infant

PHILIPSBURG--St. Maarten Police force KPSM regrets to announce the death of a one-month-old infant girl. St. Maarten Medical Center (SMMC) reported the tragic event to police as the circumstances leading up to this tragedy are not clear.

At approximately 5:00pm on Sunday, detectives from KPSM responded to a call from the hospital. A baby had been brought in with life-threatening symptoms. Despite the efforts of the medical personnel to resuscitate the child, she sadly succumbed to her condition.

Detective personnel were dispatched to SMMC to initiate an inquiry. Following initial discussions with the parents, it became evident that the circumstances surrounding the infant's untimely death were not immediately clear.

Subsequently, the detectives informed the Prosecutor's Office of the situation. A decision was made to conduct an on-site in-

vestigation at the location where the incident is believed to have occurred. KPSM is currently conducting a comprehensive investigation to ascertain the facts and circumstances leading to this tragic event.

KPSM extends its deepest condolences to the bereaved family and loved ones of the infant. De-

tectives assigned to this case urge anyone with knowledge or information concerning this incident to contact KPSM's Major Crimes team at +1 721 542 2222, ext. 208, 223, or 214. Alternatively, individuals can provide anonymous tips by calling the anonymous tip line at 9300.

IN BRIEF

- Philipsburg SAM APPROVED**
 The Soualiga Action Movement (SAM) political party has officially been approved by the Electoral Council to participate in the upcoming snap parliamentary elections scheduled for August 19. Page 7.
- Philipsburg PLATES ARRIVED**
 Persons who have paid their 2024 motor vehicle tax (road tax) and are awaiting the arrival of their number plates and those who are using temporary plates will be able to pick up their plates this week. Page 6.
- The Hague NEW STATE SECRETARY**
 Ferenc Zsolt Szabó, a seasoned former VVD politician, has been appointed as the new Dutch State Secretary for Digitalization and Kingdom Relations, representing the Pvd. Page 5.

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Kotai proposes APS finance to buy new engines for GEBE

PHILIPSBURG--Democratic Party (DP) Member of Parliament (MP) Viren Kotai has proposed seeking funding to the tune of US \$30 million from the General Pension Fund APS to acquire new generators for the ailing utilities company GEBE.

Kotai said in a press statement on Sunday that he will present the proposal and other points during the parliamentary meeting sched-

uled today, Monday, June 17, about the ongoing GEBE crisis.

"By collaborating with the Council of Ministers (COM), APS and GEBE, we can address the funding needs for new generators." He emphasized that APS,

Continued on page 7

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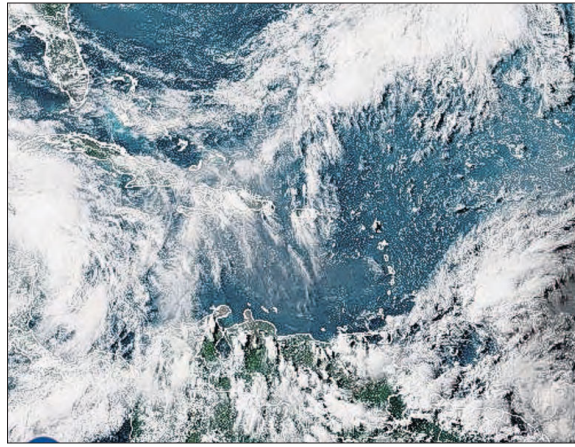
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Weather

Today: Fair to partly cloudy, with brief local showers possible.
Winds: Southeasterly, 4-12mph, becoming variable at times.
Sea conditions: Light.
Seas: 2-4 feet.
Forecast high: 33°C 91°F
Forecast low: 28°C 82°F

SYNOPSIS: Patches of moisture drifting with the warm southeasterly wind flow could trigger brief showers. Hot and humid conditions will persist. Stay hydrated and keep to the shade whenever possible. Tranquil seas will prevail.
SPECIAL FEATURE: Names for this year’s hurricane season (now to November 30): Alberto, Beryl, Chris, Debby, Ernesto, Francine, Gordon, Helene, Isaac, Joyce, Kirk, Leslie, Milton, Nadine, Oscar, Patty, Rafael, Sara, Tony, Valerie, William.
Outlook through Tuesday evening: Partly cloudy to cloudy, with isolated showers.

Sunrise: Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 5:37am.
Sunset: Friday and Saturday, 6:49pm; Sunday, 6:50pm.
Sunrise: 5:37am.
Sunset: 6:50pm.

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Meeting 1st. Thursday of month at Sun Flower Kinder Garden School, Union Rd. Cole Bay at 7:30pm

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meets every Wednesday at 12:30 p.m. at 79 Bush Rd., Unit#10 (Le Grand Marche Complex). Rotary Mid Isle meets every Tuesday 7 p.m. at Pineapple Pete’s, Simpson Bay. Rotary Sunrise meets every Tuesday at 7am at Gingerbread Cafe located in Belair Beach Hotel Terrace Restaurant. Rotary Club St. Martin Nord meet at the Grand Case Beach Club Sunday at 7:30 p.m.
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SUNRISE meets every 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month at 7pm at The University of St. Martin.
Email: rotaractxsm sunrise@outlook.com
LIONS meeting at the Upper Princess Quarter Community Centre Lions Den in Sucker Garden every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m.
ST. MAARTEN LEO CLUB meeting at the Lions Den every 1st, 3rd Saturday every month at 11:00 am.
JOCI ST. MAARTEN (JAYCEES) meeting at the Philipsburg Jubilee Library every last Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Business attire required.
PHILIPSBURG TOASTMASTERS CLUB bi-monthly sessions every first and third Thursday of every month at the Library conference room at 8:00 p.m.
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Treated as such

Whatever option is chosen to bridge utility provider GEBE’s acute lack of energy capacity, it best happen soon because the social, economic and financial damage keeps growing. Following Canada earlier, the United Kingdom has now advised potential travellers to the Dutch side about frequent lengthy electricity outages.
Some might argue that the high season is over anyway, but that’s actually when every remaining visitor counts most. Suffice to say that the negative impact on both residents and the local business community is substantial.

Whether it’s a power barge, containerised generators or a combination of the two, at least alleviating the problem has become increasingly urgent and badly needed in a matter of weeks, not months. Speeding up the process may cost more, but that should be weighed against the continued loss of production and earnings.

Just as an example, after a similar situation occurred at Aqualetra in 2010, then Curaçao Prime Minister Gerrit Schotte approved the quick lease of Aggreko generators. They performed so well that when the old turbines at KAE’s Mundo Nobo plant had to be decommissioned a few years later, those same units were rented once again to serve as buffer while the new diesel central at Dokweg was further expanded.

Perhaps in St. Maarten’s case perhaps the 36-month lease-to-purchase mentioned by Prime Minister Luc Marcelina (see last Thursday’s newspaper) is not a bad deal, because it will probably take that long before a structural solution can be implemented. Everyone involved, including the Dutch government and the World Bank, must understand that this crisis is a true emergency and ought to be treated as such.

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TEATT Minister Grisha Heyliger-Marten (right, head of table) listens to participants during the strategy meeting to plan for the FCCA Conference scheduled to be held in St. Maarten, October 21-25.

Grisha holds strategy meeting to plan for FCCA conference

PHILIPSBURG--Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) will be celebrating its 35th anniversary with a conference, hosted by St. Maarten from October 21-25.

The conference is expected to attract between 800 and 900 participants. Noting that some stakeholders, like Princess Juliana International Airport (PJIA), were unaware of this conference until recently, Minister of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Traffic and Telecommunication (TEATT) Grisha Heyliger-Marten held a strategic planning meeting Friday with representatives of Port St. Maarten Group of Companies, PJIA, immigration services and the St. Maarten Tourist Bureau.

The minister said she was in the process of establishing a Steering Committee to liaise with FCCA to ensure a smooth coordination and execution of conference plans. The committee will oversee all preparatory activities leading up to the event. The meeting discussed conference logistics, including accommodation, with Sonesta Maho Beach Resort chosen as the primary conference hotel. Other accommodation options are The Morgan Resort, Simpson Bay Resort and J.W. Marriott.

Arrival procedures will be streamlined for a smooth processing of visitors, who

will proceed through a special lane with identifiable tags on their luggage prior to departure, it was stated in a press release.

Given that many FCCA Executive Board members will be flying in privately, the completion of the renovated fixed-base operator (FBO) building will be essential, it was stated in the release. However, if this is not ready, there would be a need to set up a temporary location to handle those arriving on private jets.

Heyliger-Marten said the FCCA coordinating team is scheduled to arrive on the island on June 24. The Airport managing team will provide a comprehensive tour and demonstrate the arrival and departure processes at the airport to ensure seamless coordination.

"The conference is expected to have a significant and positive impact on our economy," the minister said. "Taxi drivers, bars, restaurants, stores and other businesses will benefit greatly from the influx of participants."

Heyliger-Marten emphasized the importance of providing a warm St. Maarten welcome to the visitors. "We have to ensure that the island has a welcoming atmosphere and is clean. I will coordinate with the minister of VROMI in order to achieve this."

The minister said she was

pleased to learn that the island's rich cultural heritage will be showcased at the conference, with the yellow sage, St. Maarten's national flower, chosen as a theme.

Heyliger-Marten encouraged the involvement of students, particularly from schools offering hospitality studies, to give them the opportunity to gain experience.

"I cannot stress enough the importance of team work to ensure the success of this conference," Heyliger-Marten said. "In fact, it has a double significance since it is being held when our port is celebrating its 60th anniversary. Our goal, therefore, is to exceed the experience our guests had when the FCCA conference was held here ten years ago."

Follow-up meetings will be scheduled to review progress and address any potential issues, Heyliger-Marten said.

4-year prison sentence for slicing open neighbour with "sharp or heavy" object

PHILIPSBURG--The Court of First Instance on Thursday sentenced a former resident of Cay Hill to four years in prison, of which half are conditional, for slicing his neighbour's head open with a "sharp or heavy" object during a dispute over a utilities bill.

Marlon Smith (38) stood trial on Thursday on one count of attempted manslaughter for allegedly striking his neighbour with a machete on July 27, 2023.

The victim had to be flown abroad for medical treatment after suffering a fractured skull and "acute profuse bleeding" from a 14-centimetre-long gash on the head, according to a medical report read by the prosecutor in court.

Smith told the court that his neighbour was the one who started the attack, claiming the man had suddenly charged at him with two rocks and a knife. This happened while he and the neighbour's spouse were having a dispute about an unpaid bill from utilities company GEBE, the defendant said.

Smith said he had tried to run away, but his neighbour threw one of the rocks, which hit him in the head and caused him to fall on the ground. This, Smith claims, is when the neighbour stood over him with the knife, and, fearing for his life, he grabbed a dustpan off the ground and swung wildly to avoid being stabbed.

"How can you crack someone's skull open with a dust-

pan?" the judge asked the defendant, seemingly sceptical of his testimony.

"I didn't have a machete; I didn't use a machete," Smith told the court. "I'm not a violent person."

The prosecutor attempted to discredit Smith's story by falling back on the testimony of the victim's spouse and an uninvolved bystander, neither of whom mentioned to police that the victim had come after Smith with a knife. The spouse also told police that Smith had a machete in his hand, the prosecutor said.

Smith's actions could not be seen as self-defence, the prosecutor argued, calling it disproportional to use a machete against someone attacking with rocks. Additionally, despite multiple interrogations by police, Smith never mentioned that he had tried to run away until the trial, the prosecutor said.

Considering Smith guilty of attempted manslaughter, the prosecutor called for a four-year prison sentence, of which two years would be conditional, on three years' probation.

The prosecutor said he asked for less punishment than the sentencing guideline of five to six years in prison for the charge of attempted manslaughter with a sharp object, because Smith is a first-time offender and because he had been assaulted first.

Smith's lawyer pleaded for his acquittal, describing her client as a "kind and peaceful" man who had been

forced to defend himself "in a matter of seconds" while unarmed.

The judge found Smith guilty as charged in his verdict and sentenced him according to the prosecutor's demand.

As only one witness put a machete in Smith's hands and none had been found at the crime scene, the judge ruled that there was insufficient evidence to prove the defendant used a machete, but he must have at least wielded a "sharp or heavy object" to cause the victim's injuries.

The judge rejected Smith's claim of self-defence, ruling that the defendant could not have been hit in his face with a rock if he had been running away with his back turned.

The judge also ruled that the victim could not have had the knife in his hands, as Smith claimed, because the knife which police recovered near the scene had no blood on it. If Smith's testimony were true, the judge said, the knife "would have been full of blood" from the open, bleeding gash on the victim's head.

Smith's trial was originally slated for January, but was pushed back to allow the victim time to submit a compensation claim. However, the victim did not appear in court on Thursday to submit a claim, and the prosecutor told the court that authorities had no success trying to contact him, either by telephone or sending a bailiff to his home multiple times.

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Arrindell awaits answers on GEBE power supply issues

PHILIPSBURG--United People's UP party Member of Parliament (MP) Akeem Arrindell says he is concerned about Parliament's handling of the GEBE matter.

Arrindell said he had posed questions in a formal letter sent to the Chairperson of Parliament on May 31, and not only has he not received answers, but he has also recognized the decision to cancel a crucial public meeting of Parliament to discuss NV GEBE, on Friday last week.

In Arrindell's letter to the President of Parliament, he requested answers to questions that concern the community of St. Maarten, mainly aimed at clarifying the current situation and plans regarding the island's energy stability. He has asked what the short-term and long-term plans are for diversifying energy production in St. Maarten, emphasizing the need to explore alternative energy sources to reduce dependency on a single form of energy. Arrindell

also inquired whether the government and GEBE will prioritize implementing and allowing consumers to access alternative forms of energy, which could significantly enhance energy security and sustainability.

Arrindell also questioned why clients were still receiving bills for amounts that were already paid. He said this causes frustration and financial strain on many households. Also wanted to know who currently holds responsibility for the IT environment at GEBE and requested information on whether there are any reports regarding the testing of IT security strength at GEBE.

He also asked whether the government has sought assistance from the French side of the island in addressing energy issues, noting that collaboration could provide valuable resources and expertise to improve energy stability.

"What I want to know now is when will the government provide BTP (Bureau Tele-

communications and Post) with the resources needed to regulate the energy market effectively?" Arrindell asked. He said strong regulatory oversight is essential to ensure fair practices and reliable services. He demanded answers on when GEBE will correct the bills impacted by previous hacks, as many people still face incorrect outstanding balances.

Why are some clients receiving bills that include only water charges but not electricity? Arrindell queried. He sought clarification on the current concession regarding residents having solar panels while still connected to GEBE, asking whether this is allowed and to what capacity.

Arrindell also asked if the Claims Office oversees all claims paid from 2020 to 2024 and requested a detailed breakdown of how the claims department operates. He also proposed that MPs visit the GEBE's power plant to gain first-hand insight into the utility company's operations and challenges.



VSA Minister Veronica Jansen-Webster engaged in discussions at the forum.

ILO requests that govt. establish clear criteria for employer rep.

PHILIPSBURG--The International Labour Organization (ILO) Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) has requested St Maarten to establish clear criteria for the representation of employers' and workers' organisations through consultation with social partners.

The request was made during the 112th session of the ILO in Geneva, Switzerland June 3-14. Minister of Public Health, Social Development and Labor (VSA) Veronica Jansen-Webster attended the forum.

St. Maarten was called before the CAS to address two labour-related complaints. One of the complaints dealt with the identification of employer organisations in the country. This issue had caused delays in appointing members to the Social Economic Council SER for more than a year due to a dispute over the legitimate representation of employer organisations.

The CAS committee reviewed the information from the government of St. Maarten and requested that the government establish clear criteria for the representativeness of employers' and workers' organisations through consultation with

social partners. The committee also urged the government of St. Maarten to engage in effective dialogue with these organisations on all relevant issues, adhering to the convention, including the composition of the socio-economic council.

Additionally, the committee called for measures to ensure SER representatives are appointed by fully autonomous organisations chosen by workers and employers and to convene the SER promptly. The committee also asked for updates on these recommendations and any outstanding information by September 1, 2024.

The other complaint concerned the right to strike, with uncertainties about whether people could strike without facing penalties.

CAS Director Corinne Vargha personally thanked the minister for attending in person and providing a clear explanation of the situation. The delegation from Aruba's government supported St Maarten, participating in numerous meetings during the conference.

During the ILO conference, Jansen-Webster also met with Dutch ambassador Paul Bekkers and the Netherlands' Minister of Labour Karien van Gennip. Accord-

ing to a press release from the minister, these discussions were fruitful, leading to a report with several recommendations for St. Maarten to ensure compliance with international labour covenants.

The ILO is the only tripartite UN agency that brings together governments, employers and workers from its member states to promote decent work worldwide.

Two more suspects in death of marechausee

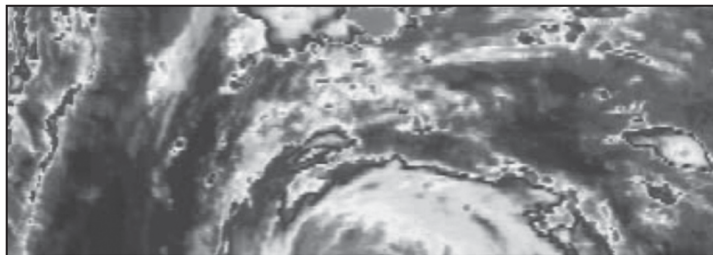
WILLEMSTAD--A 22-year-old man turned himself in at a police station on Curaçao Wednesday evening. He is the second suspect in the fatal robbery of Dutch Royal Marechausee Toon Brood. Late Friday night around 1:15am they also held the 26-year-old man with initials G.H.Z on F.D. Rooseveltweg near a restaurant, as a third suspect.

Following his arrest, police searched an address on Kaya Tamburero and seized key items for the investigation. The second suspect had meanwhile been brought before an assistant public prosecutor and was detained pending further investigation.

Brood, a 49-year-old border control officer, was shot dead at his home on Reigerweg during the night of May 31, when three men broke in.

On Friday, June 7, a first suspect, a 25-year-old man, turned himself in. He remains in custody as part of the investigation.

Last week, Brood was honoured with a ceremony at the Sufissant Marine Barracks on the island. His body has been flown back to the Netherlands, where he will be buried.



Hurricane Clean Up Schedule 2024 (July/August)

Parcel #3 ALL WASTE IN PLACE NV

NEIGHBORHOOD	PERIOD	PICK UP TIME	BIN LOCATION
Belvedere Estate / Bishop Hill	July 2024 2 nd - 8 th	7 am - 4 pm	BIN # 1 Belvedere Across the Roundabout
Dutch Quarter/ Union Farm / 911	July 2024 9 th - 15 th	7 am - 4 pm	BIN # 2 911 Emergency Housing District
Defiance Middle Region	July 2024 16 th - 22 nd	7 am - 4 pm	BIN # 3 Sister Marie Laurence School
Middle Region / Mount William Hill	July 2024 23 rd - 29 th	7 am - 4 pm	BIN # 4 Middle Region Entrance A.T.Illidge Rd
Oyster Pond / Dawn Beach	July/August 2024 30 th - 5 th	7 am - 4 pm	BIN # 5 Oyster Pond, Former Lucian Bar corner

CENTRAL BIN LOCATION:
 BIN # 1: Belvedere Across the Roundabout
 BIN # 2: 911 Emergency Housing District
 BIN # 3: Sister Marie Laurence School
 BIN # 4: Middle Region Entrance A.T.Illidge Rd
 BIN # 5: Oyster Pond, Former Lucian Bar corner
 CONTACT NUMBER(S): 5430551 // 5205526
 E-MAIL: Abegall@awipnv.com//Sandra@awipnv.com//James@awipnv.com//Luciano@awipnv.com



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Grisha discusses product enhancement with SHTA

PHILIPSBURG--Minister of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Traffic and Telecommunications, Grisha Heyliger-Marten, met with the Executive Board of St. Maarten Hospitality and Trade Association (SHTA) on Friday, June 14.

During the meeting, part of the minister's continued efforts to engage stakeholders in her plans to revitalise the country's economy, she outlined her primary goals, focusing on product enhancement and beautification efforts to improve St. Maarten's tourism experience.

The minister emphasized the marketplace as the first significant area for vendors, set to improve the vendor and visitor experiences.

The project is a Public-Private Initiative (PPI) with a cruise line and aims to boost the local economy and tourism. Discussions are planned with the co-financier of the marketplace project following which more details will be provided to the public and stakeholders, said the minister.

Regarding the beautification plans, Heyliger-Marten

highlighted initiatives like providing free Wi-Fi in town along with other smart city strategies. In response, the SHTA suggested charging stations and Internet access for vendors, citing the Aruba model as exemplary.

According to SHTA, May 2024 showed positive trends in hotel and timeshare occupancy.

It, however, stressed the need to focus on the summer period for sustained growth. The association further disclosed that 2016 was its benchmark year for Return on Investment (ROI), attributing success to a robust marketing campaign.

The organisation also called for increased marketing activities in the Puerto Rico market, especially with the Frontier flight launched recently. SHTA expressed concerns about communication with regard to the challenges GEBE is facing relative to stable and reliable power supply and stressed the need for proactive crisis management strategies in all the island's source markets.

The minister said there is a robust crisis management strategy in place, with regu-

lar meetings to stay ahead of potential issues. Other topics discussed included a request by SHTA for the association to be represented on the Socio-Economic Council SER in line with International Labour Organization (ILO) standards.

Similarly, enhancing public awareness and establishing a tourism curriculum for schools were identified as key initiatives that need to be pursued, along with the training of hotel workers, taxi drivers, and other front-line workers to improve service quality and the tourism experience.

Heyliger-Marten informed SHTA about the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) conference, which St. Maarten will host this October. The minister said she is setting up a Steering Committee to ensure coordination among the Airport, harbour, immigration and the tourist office.

Heyliger-Marten thanked the SHTA Executive Board for the valuable input and reaffirmed her commitment to keeping the organisation informed and involved in ongoing projects.



Dr. Vincent Jones II and Raymond Jessorun with participants in the Social Media Research workshop.

20 attend USM workshop on social media research, sparks interest

PHILIPSBURG--University of St Martin (USM) hosted on Wednesday, June 12, what it referred to as "an enlightening workshop" on how research on social media platforms can be used for the common good.

USM invited Dr. Vincent Jones II, a regular visitor to the island, to share his expertise with the community. The event brought 20 participants from various public and private entities who were interested in how the methodology could inform policy.

Jones, who is an assistant professor of Community Health and Director of the Health Promotion Center at York College, City University of New York, first explained the need for social media research and gave an overview of research methods. Because social media reflect reality, valuable insights can be derived from the analysis of these platforms.

Jones used two of his co-authored TikTok content analyses as teaching tools.

One documented discrimination against Black people attempting to flee at the onset of the 2022 Russo-Ukrainian war, and the other focused on racial discrimination against Asians and Asian Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic, USM said in a press release. These studies highlighted the need for mental health and policy resources for those represented in the videos.

Social media can provide awareness and draw attention to people in crisis and issues that affect their mental health. Using social media research can address public health inequalities for under-represented groups in society.

Attendees brainstormed issues they may be interested in researching using this methodology, including poverty, firearms, affordable housing, the decline of strong families, vote-buying and corruption, access to quality education, and the legal status of children born in St. Maarten. They were

provided with resources to continue the work.

USM research coordinator Dr. Raymond Jessorun offered the participants interested in conducting this social media research the support and facilities of USM's St. Martin Science and Research Institute. Jones also offered his help in kind. "We are optimistic about strengthening our relationship, recognising the importance of research in providing for a better society," USM said in its release.

Ferenc Zsolt Szabó new state secretary

THE HAGUE--Ferenc Zsolt Szabó, a seasoned former VVD politician, has been appointed as the new Dutch State Secretary for Digitalization and Kingdom Relations, representing the PVV. Szabó, 62, currently serves as Vice President at Capgemini, an IT company with significant government contracts.

Szabó's appointment raises some questions, given his apparent lack of connections with the Caribbean parts of the kingdom. His background is primarily rooted in ICT and development cooperation, areas in which he has extensive experience. Szabó's Hungarian heritage adds a unique dimension to his profile.

In addition to his role at Capgemini, Szabó is also the Vice Chairman of ECP, a platform dedicated to advancing the information society. His political career includes a tenure from 2003 to 2006 as the VVD's spokesperson for ICT and development cooperation.



WINAIR acquires Twin Otter aircraft to enhance operations

SIMPSON BAY--In a landmark move, WINAIR transitioned from a fully leased fleet to ownership with the acquisition of a Twin Otter DHC6 aircraft. This investment marks a strategic move towards greater operational control and efficiency, solidifying the company's commitment to providing exceptional service in the Caribbean.

"For nearly five decades, Twin Otter aircraft have been the backbone of our operations, particularly for essential routes to Saba and St. Barth," said WINAIR Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Hans van de

Velde. "The decision to acquire this aircraft reflects our long-standing experience with the Twin Otter's reliability, coupled with the current economic climate and the health of our company. This strategic purchase allows us to reduce our reliance on leasing and paves the way for future growth."

Demonstrating the aircraft's importance to WINAIR's operations and the current economic climate, a strong business case was presented to the shareholders of the airline, with country St. Maarten being the main shareholder. Rec-

ognising the long-standing success with Twin Otters, the improved efficiency, and the potential for a more competitive future, WINAIR's shareholders responded positively and overwhelmingly approved the acquisition of this DHC6.

Prime Minister Luc Mercelina said, "This is a significant development for WINAIR and for St. Maarten as a whole. The acquisition of the Twin Otter DHC6 represents a commitment to enhancing our aviation infrastructure and supporting economic growth in our region. We are proud to see

WINAIR taking such strategic steps to strengthen its operations and continue its legacy of reliable service."

The Twin Otter DHC6 is the latest addition to WINAIR's fleet. "It represents the latest evolution in the Twin Otter series," Van de Velde said. "Equipped with a state-of-the-art Garmin 950 glass cockpit, this aircraft offers enhanced navigational capabilities, improved pilot situational awareness, and a smoother flying experience for passengers. This advanced technology positions WINAIR at the forefront of regional aviation, setting a

new standard for efficiency."

WINAIR is confident that this acquisition will not only enhance operations but also contribute to the company's long-term financial stability.

"We hope and expect this is a first step, to be followed

by the acquisition of other Twin Otters in the upcoming years," said Van de Velde. "Owning aircraft allows for greater control over maintenance schedules and operational cost, ultimately allowing us to continue delivering exceptional service and value to customers."

Consular representative to hold appointments for U.S. Citizens

MARIGOT--A Consular Officer from the U.S. Embassy will visit Anguilla and St. Martin June 25-28 to accept applications for U.S. passports and Consular Reports of Birth Abroad. This visit will not include discussion on visa cases or address visa questions.

Limited appointments in Anguilla will be held at Caribbean Juris Chambers, Hannah Waver House, The Valley, on Wednesday, June 26, from 9:00am to 5:00pm.

In St. Martin on Thursday, June 27, from 1:00pm to 5:00pm and Friday, June 28, from 9:00am to 5:00pm.

Limited appointments in St. Martin will be held at Hommage Hotel and Residences, 173 Rue de la Baie Nettle, 97150, in the conference room.

Each applicant must have an appointment. Schedule the appointment at

<https://bb.usembassy.gov/consular-outreach-visits-for-u-s-citizen-services>.

Important: We are unable to assist walk-ins or other persons who accompany individuals with appointments.

Additional plates have arrived, controls start soon after June

PHILIPSBURG--Persons who have paid their 2024 motor vehicle tax (road tax) and are awaiting the arrival of their number plates, and those who are using temporary plates, will be able to pick up their plates this week.

Minister of Finance Marinka Gumbs said in a statement issued late Sunday evening that the additional licence plates have been received and are now ready for distribution.

The distribution process will take place from today, Monday, June 17, to Wednesday, June 19. Individuals with temporary plates are requested to exchange them for the correct plates.

"Please note that temporary plates must be handed in at the time of collecting the new plates. Also, starting Thursday, June 20, individuals who are awaiting their new plates can collect them. To replace or collect your new licence plates, please bring the following documents: Receipt of payment for the current year's road tax; valid vehicle insurance and necessary in-



Marinka Gumbs

spection documents."

The minister urges all individuals who have not yet paid their road tax for the current year to do so without delay. "It is imperative that all vehicles display the correct plates and stickers by the end of June 2024. Compliance checks will commence shortly after this deadline," it was stated in the release.

"I appeal to all those who have not yet paid their road tax to do so promptly. We will begin enforcement measures soon after the end of the month," said Gumbs.



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Kotai proposes APS finance

Continued from page 1.

as a government-funded pension fund and GEBE, being entirely government-owned, make this collaboration both logical and feasible.

According to Kotai, GEBE has not invested in new engines, resulting in inadequate electricity production amidst the growing demands of the St. Maarten community.

"To resolve this issue, GEBE urgently requires funding to purchase new engines. While alternative energy sources present a promising long-term solution, the immediate need is best met through acquiring reliable, brand-new engines. I propose that APS finance the US \$30 million required for the purchase of new engines," Kotai said.

"Given the national emergency's gravity, we must expedite this process. The government could safeguard the funds by offering a government guarantee or pledging shares toward the loan. This approach ensures immediate acquisition of new engines and mandates GEBE to stabilise its finances within a year."

Kotai also wants to collaborate with the Council



MP Viren Kotai

of Ministers in reaching out to the APS, seeking the best way forward in making this a reality.

Kotai highlighted the mutual benefits of this solution: "APS invests in St. Maarten, securing a healthy return for its pensioners, while St. Maarten gains reliable energy. Once GEBE's financial health is restored, we can then focus on exploring alternative energy sources. Comprehensive studies will be necessary to identify the best options for sustainable energy, particularly during hurricane seasons."

Kotai also pointed out that GEBE's concession obligates it to invest in renewable energy, a requirement

that has been neglected. "It is imperative that our COM enforces this concession to ensure GEBE meets its obligations," he urged.

Drawing a parallel, Kotai recalled that Princess Juliana International Airport also received government assistance for its financing, setting a precedent for such collaborative efforts.

"The urgency of this situation demands immediate action," Kotai asserted. "We must unite these two entities, eliminate bureaucratic delays, and implement decisive measures. The short-term solution is nearing finalization, and our next step is to secure financing for new engines at GEBE. Our long-term vision will prioritize alternative energy avenues," he added.

The ongoing crisis at GEBE, emphasizes the critical principle of the 5 Ps: Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance. "The previous administration's lack of vision and preparation has brought us to this juncture," Kotai stated. "However, it is time to shift our focus from past shortcomings to viable solutions."

Brisson to contest election, wants taxes on tips, pension abolished

PHILIPSBURG--Former Member of Parliament (MP) Rolando Brisson is set to make a comeback in the political arena by contesting the August 19, parliamentary election as he announced on his weekly radio programme "You Have The Word."

Brisson, who says he is the MP with the most legislative accomplishments, will be running with the United People's (UP) party.

He already has two proposals ready for public presentation. The first proposal involves the abolishment of taxes on tips (gratuities), particularly within the hospitality sector. Brisson explained that many employees do not currently declare their tips, leading to unnecessary administrative cost. By removing this tax, he argues, the economy would benefit from increased spending power, which in turn would boost turnover tax revenues without the need for direct taxation on

tips.

"The spending power of individuals will have a cumulative effect within the economy," Brisson stated. "By allowing people to keep their tips untaxed, we can stimulate economic growth and simplify the tax administration process."

The second proposal focuses on relieving the tax burden on pensioners. Brisson is advocating for the elimination of income tax for those receiving social pensions, emphasising that the revenue generated from taxing these pensions is minimal compared to the relief it would provide.

Further expanding on his commitment to seniors, Brisson announced a comprehensive care package to be implemented in his next four-year term. This package includes subsidies for utilities, rent and food purchases for seniors, achieved through partnerships with GEBE and retailers. These measures, Brisson said in a

press release, aim to ensure that seniors receive the best possible prices, with tax incentives provided to participating companies.

"This care package will be a significant step in ensuring that our seniors live comfortably and with dignity," Brisson emphasised. "It is both a realistic and compassionate approach that balances government support with practical collaborations."

The former MP is also focused on other pressing issues, including GEBE, which he assured has his undivided attention and his plan will be presented in a comprehensive and clear manner. He also proposes a gradual and responsible increase in the hotel tax, which is currently one of the lowest in the Caribbean, while keeping it below the regional average. A plan for public housing, finally addressing teacher issues, and a "no child left behind" approach becomes the norm of governing.



The main entrance to Secrets Hotel in Anse Marcel boarded up. (Robert Luckcock photo)

Secrets St. Martin Resort & Spa closed since May 1

ANSE MARCEL--Secrets St. Martin Resort and Spa in Anse Marcel has been closed since May 1. Questions have been circulating about why the property should close suddenly without seemingly any official public statement from the hotel management.

Various theories have spread about the reasons for the closure, from shoddy maintenance work to non-payment for services to bankruptcy, none of which have been confirmed.

St. Martin Tourism office stated when asked: "The hotel is closed for renovation, to re-open in December, but possibly not as a Secrets resort."

A post online from Secrets said the resort is "temporarily closed due to an extensive enhancement project. The resort will welcome guests again in 2025."

Trip Advisor.com has listed several complaints from guests. One from May says: "Secrets huge disappointment! Arrived and found they would be closing after we leave for re-modelling and updating. Pool had some green scum on walls and sand on the bottom. No activities people. Some staff unfriendly."

Another review described Secrets as "a shabby location" and "not worth the money."

Purchase of the former hurricane-damaged Riu Palace Hotel for US \$62 million was announced by new owner Sole Resorts, a partner of the Apple Leisure Group (ALG), in July 2018.

In 2019 a resort management agreement was signed to open a Secrets Resort and Spa brand with opening expected in the third quarter of 2019 after a \$20 million renovation. It was touted as

the first all-inclusive luxury resort in St. Martin. However in 2020 the resort was still beset by construction delays.

No clarity could be obtained over the weekend from any persons connected with the hotel.

SAM approved for participation in snap parliamentary elections

PHILIPSBURG--The Soualiga Action Movement (SAM) political party has officially been approved by the Electoral Council to participate in the upcoming snap parliamentary elections scheduled for August 19.

SAM said in a press statement that its leadership was formally notified of this "significant milestone" via letter, marking the beginning of SAM's journey towards "reshaping the political landscape of St. Martin."

Party leader Franklin Meyers expressed his enthusiasm about this achievement, emphasizing SAM's commitment to presenting a roster of candidates who have "St. Martin" at heart and are dedicated to bringing meaningful change. "As I stated before, our country is in dire need of responsible leaders in government. We will therefore put forward a list of highly qualified candidates that are dedicated to bringing this country forward," Meyers stated.

Meyers said in the release that he believes that the key to progress lies in effective governance, well studied policies and prioritizing the needs of the people. "SAM is dedicated to ensuring that our candidates are not only like-minded, but also possess the necessary skills and vision to tackle the challenges facing our nation. Hence the reason for the official SAM slogan: Serious people for serious times."

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MP Lacroes and Justice Minister Lewis engage in personal attacks via media

PHILIPSBURG--Following a stern warning from acting Minister of Education Lyndon Lewis to school bus operators to refrain from misconduct towards minors, issued during the Council of Ministers press briefing on Wednesday, Member of Parliament (MP) Francisco Lacroes said in a press release that Lewis was "making unfounded allegations." Lewis replied with a press release on Friday, which prompted Lacroes to write another press release that same day in which he accused Lewis of "staging media stunts."

According to Lacroes, "the blanket allegation of inappropriate behaviour" has irked seasoned school bus operators.

"They say the minister should address his concern directly to the individual accused and not make it appear as if this is the general practice of school bus operators," said Lacroes, who claimed that Lewis' insistence on moving forward with a proposed service level agreement (SLA) by June 28 and "the threat of a public

bid" have also drawn sharp criticism from the school bus operators. Lacroes made it clear that he shares the bus operators' concerns.

In response to the Lacroes' comments, Lewis emphasised that he does not devote his time to pandering for votes. He stressed that these initiatives are primarily focused on enhancing student safety and bringing St. Maarten's school transportation system up to regional and global standards.

"Moreover, we are talking about the well-being of children, and the MP actually wants me to stop investigating the matter? As if I would fabricate such reports? The MP's priorities are unfortunately, but not surprisingly, sorely misplaced," Lewis said.

Lacroes called on Lewis to reconsider his approach. "We must not forget the decades of dedicated service these operators have provided. They deserve our respect and fair treatment, not threats and unwarranted accusations," said Lacroes who criticised Lewis for threaten-

ing the bus operators' livelihoods.

Lewis replied that it is regrettable that Lacroes has chosen to so casually dismiss the concerns raised by parents and female students. "I am not irresponsible; I would not make claims without substantial grounds," Lewis asserted. "The concerns brought forward are based on real issues that need to be addressed to ensure the safety and well-being of our students."

The new regulations seek to prevent unfair labels being placed on dedicated drivers, by ensuring that any inappropriate behaviour is addressed transparently and justly, Lewis said. "The SLA is designed to protect both students and responsible operators, fostering a safe and respectful environment for all."

Lewis plans to adopt advanced tracking systems for school buses, which according to Lacroes is not the best solution. "While tracking systems are a step forward, they do not address all the safety concerns and could potentially invade operators' privacy," Lacroes said, highlighting that previous discussions in the Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication (TEATT) had proposed installing security cameras on school buses, a more comprehensive measure that the Minister of Education has overlooked.

"This Minister [Lewis - Ed.] was a member of the TEATT cabinet before he left for an unauthorised extended vacation for over five months. He would have known about the security cameras and other measures discussed had he not spent most of his time staying away from work to conduct personal business, while collecting taxpayers' money," Lacroes said.

He advised Lewis to tread carefully, urging him to pay special attention to the pro-

cedures used in the past when handling the SLA for school bus drivers.

Lewis replied that Lacroes should be the last individual to speak of procedures, as his reported involvement with transportation licences reeks of suspicion and is currently being investigated.

"The fact that an MP would say that a public bid is a threat tells you what's at the core of that MP and fits with the behaviour of the past four years. They ran from

transparency and chose secrecy. Four years and three Ministers later, I'm acting on the issues with integrity and transparency, and the MP is asking me not to. Are you not ashamed, sir?" Lewis asked.

In his latest press release Lacroes addressed the Lewis' "baseless allegations" about his involvement with transportation licences, emphasising that any investigations should include the facts and not theatrics that Lewis

and colleague ministers are using as a diversion from the fact that they cannot manage the affairs of their ministries effectively.

"The Minister's attempt to deflect from his lack of concrete solutions by casting aspersions on me is not only unprofessional but also unproductive," Lacroes said. "Minister Lewis, your focus should be on implementing effective solutions, not staging media stunts."

GEBE meeting

Continued from page 1.

important meeting of public interest being closed-door? The people have the right to know and should be able to follow these discussions closely."

The faction urges Wescot-Williams and the Council of Ministers to maintain the transparency and involvement of the public they once championed.

In a press release on Sunday Wescot-Williams, leader of the Democratic Party and Parliament Chair, advised Prime Minister Dr. Luc Merceлина to reconsider the presentation to parliament on GEBE behind closed doors. "It has nothing to do with any demands for an open meeting," she said adding that while she understands the sensitivity of some of the negotiations regarding GEBE, she suggested to Merceлина that "whatever can responsibly be divulged should be done in an open meeting of Parliament."

"Although information has been shared with the public at different intervals and by different parties, it is Parliament's right and duty to question the government, and government's duty to provide information and answers publicly, once release of the information is not harmful to the country," Wescot-Williams said.

"Our rules of order are clear in this regard and the ministers also have the right to request a closed-door meeting. It will always be a discussion about having closed door meetings of parliament or not. GEBE has not arrived at this point where it is at 'out of the blue' and this parliament has not reneged on its duty to hold the government responsible and ask the government to give account

for its actions or the lack thereof.

"This is evidenced from the fact that the current pending public meeting of Parliament was requested on September 29, 2023 with questions remaining unanswered for months. In fact, answers that were provided in writing to the Parliament by the previous ministers painted a picture of GEBE that belied the actual situation of the company," said Wescot-Williams.

She said that while solutions appear on the surface to be feasible, these could contain risks that should be avoided in the interest of the country. "Had the government been transparent during its interaction with GEBE especially during the past governing term, we just might not have been in this dilemma. Again, I emphasise that from the limited information I have been able to garner, there is no quick fix solution for the challenges we currently face and in my view, this conclusion would necessitate that government undertakes some intermediate action in the social domain, such as purchase of solar fans for the elderly and the most vulnerable ones in our community.

"We also, in collaboration with the relevant organisations already operational in the field, need to ensure that the same vulnerable groups are assured of one daily meal at least. This must be an island-wide undertaking," said Wescot-Williams.

On the topic of renewable/alternative energy, she said the NA/UP government approached the matter of alternative energy with a lot of talk, fluff and hype, but in reality, nothing. "Four

years of underperforming or overdoing and this is the result. Discounting 18 months for the COVID pandemic and even then, 2½ years of underperforming or overdoing," Wescot-Williams bluntly stated.

"Former ministers have spoken about accessing funds for alternative energy programmes, but did nothing concretely to access these funds. We are awaiting the results of Energynautics GmbH's analysis supported by the Trust Fund, which is ironically co-managed by the government, and are yet to hear the previous government's take on this and the relationship of this project with the government-commissioned Grid Market study, which according to the NA-led government was confidential, due to an NDA [non-disclosure agreement - Ed.]."

"My decision to request Prime Minister Merceлина to reconsider his proposal for a closed door meeting and allow the people of St. Maarten to hear from the respective minister(s) on GEBE has nothing to do with any demand by the opposition for an 'open door' meeting, but all to do with allowing the government to balance providing the public with information and safeguarding any national interest that could be affected by untimely and incomplete information that could jeopardize GEBE's long-term survivability.

"This survivability is more than a corporate issue. It is the livelihood of the people of St. Maarten who are entitled to an uninterrupted supply of basic commodities such as electricity and water."

Delays at Hato due to airspace problem

WILLEMSTAD--Passengers on WINAIR flight 804 from Curaçao to St. Maarten were already taxiing towards the runway on Thursday when the plane stopped and everyone had to disembark. Ultimately, issues with air traffic control in San Juan, Puerto Rico, turned out to be the cause.

A bus picked up the passengers and brought them back to the terminal. Three flights of American carriers heading to Miami also had to wait before departure.

WINAIR eventually departed around 4:00pm and landed shortly after 6:00pm at Princess Juliana International Airport (PJA).

Puerto Rico has been experiencing power outages and blackouts for weeks. This led to issues with air traffic control. A JetBlue pilot also returned to the gate on Friday.

According to local newspaper "El Nuevo Dia" this was due to problems with an internal US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) system.

San Juan has also faced flight disruptions due to weather conditions in the southeastern United States. Friday, there were approximately 27 incoming and outgoing flights affected by cancellations or delays.

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WINAIR and Air Caraibes offer interline ticketing and booking

SIMPSON BAY--Windward Islands Airways International Winair and Air Caraibes have renewed their interline agreement. "We are very happy to continue our successful collaboration with Air Caraibes," said Hans van de Velde, chief executive officer of Winair.

The renewed agreement strengthens Winair's commitment to providing passengers with a wider network and a smoother travel experience, Van de Velde said.

Christine Ourmieres-Widener, President of Air Caraibes, said: "Collaborating with Winair allows

us to expand our offerings for both Caribbean and European travellers, meeting the increasing demand in this market. We believe this agreement will create new business opportunities for local territories, reinforce our regional roots, and enhance our customers' journeys. We are confident this will positively impact the experience of our passengers."

The interline agreement between Winair and Air Caraibes offers several advantages for passengers, Winair said in a press statement. With simplified travel, passengers can book a single ticket for

their entire journey, even if it involves flights on both airlines. This ensures a hassle-free experience as baggage can be checked through to the final destination without the need for re-checking during transit, and boarding passes are provided for the entire journey at check-in. Additionally, the agreement provides more travel options, giving passengers access to a wider network of destinations served by both airlines.

Air Caraibes connects Europe through Paris' Orly Airport via Fort-de-France, Martinique, and St. Maarten to all destinations on Winair's Caribbean network. This opens a variety of connection possibilities, Winair said.

For example, passengers flying from Paris with Air Caraibes can connect seamlessly with Winair at St. Maarten to reach island destinations, such as Antigua, St. Barths,

Dominica, Saba, St. Eustatius, Tortola or St. Kitts. Additionally, passengers traveling to Fort-de-France can connect with WINAIR for Dominica.

St. Maarten Minister of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication (TEATT) Grisha Heyliger-Marten said she is delighted by the renewal of the interline agreement between Winair and Air Caraibes.

"This partnership is a testament to our commitment to enhancing connectivity and providing seamless travel experiences for our visitors," Heyliger-Marten said. "By expanding access to our beautiful island and the wider Caribbean, we are fostering tourism growth, strengthening regional ties, and showcasing the unparalleled beauty and hospitality of St. Maarten."



Acting Minister of Education Lyndon Lewis.

Minister Lewis closer to finalizing SLA and addressing misconduct of bus drivers

PHILIPSBURG--Acting Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport Lyndon Lewis convened with school bus drivers on Saturday morning to discuss a proposed service level agreement (SLA) and the implementation of an advanced tracking system. Lewis described the meeting as "very fruitful."

The meeting, held at the Government Administration Building on Pond island from 9:00am to 10:30am, is considered one of the final steps towards finalising an SLA with the operators. "This agreement is important to professionalise the school bus transport system up to improved and acceptable standards," Lewis said. "The SLA also outlines the obligations of government to the bus operators, including payment and reporting periods."

Lewis had obtained results of an investigation he commissioned into allegations of improper behaviour towards students by bus drivers, including a case of sexual harassment that was reported to authorities. "The suspected driver has been identified and documents are being prepared for his immediate suspension pending further investigation," Lewis said. "Additional comment on this matter will be provided later."

He lamented that a child had to go through such a traumatising situation and assured that everything would be done within the scope of the law to address it. He also repeated his call to parents to not sweep this kind of incident under the rug if their child brings it up. "Report all incidents to the relevant authorities," he said.

Lewis stressed to the bus operators the importance of drivers showing exemplary conduct when transporting children. He stressed that he is taking the matter seriously and expects them to do the same within their ranks.

Unions say Director 'has to go'

Continued from page 1.

ranking Director of General Services (DGS) Albert Holl, who has the power to make decisions and is a key member of the Collectivité's negotiating team, has been uncooperative, refusing to meet with the unions, they claim.

"We are seeing the face of the DGS less and less. We had a meeting on Thursday and after an hour and a half we realised he wasn't coming," UNIT 978 General Secretary, Albert Blake, told Radio St. Martin. "We need more minds around the table for these technical issues. We found out he was upstairs recruiting instead. We found that a lack of respect and that's why we are here today."

Another union representative said: "It's so shameful that no one is taking us seri-

ously. We have our careers that are not moving. The elected body is letting the DGS do what he wants. We, the three unions, have a just cause and we need support.

"There are people coming here to St. Martin and reaching a certain level, but we categories C, B and A are moving nowhere and that's the problem we are having today. They [Collectivité - Ed.] want us to have the competency but are not giving us the conditions to exercise that competency."

UNSA regional delegate Hubert Fleming said the 10-point list now has an extra point, discussing the departure of the DGS.

The unions are hopeful negotiations can resume today Monday if conditions are satisfactory.

Same-sex marriage ban in Parliament this week

WILLEMSTAD--The amendment proposed by TPK leader Rennox Calmes to the Constitution of Curaçao prohibiting same-sex marriage will be discussed this week in a meeting of the Central Committee of Parliament.

Calmes aims to allow only marriages between people of the opposite sex. He considers marriage only between a man and a woman a fundamental part of Curaçao society.

According to the opposition member, heterosexual marriage aligns with the island's norms and values, and is crucial for stability and cohesion among people. Previously, the court ruled that excluding same-sex marriage violates the prohibition of discrimination in the Constitution.

The latter can only be amended with a two-thirds majority. The debate is set for Wednesday at 9:00am.

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS St. Maarten, June 12th, 2024

To whom it may concern:

By order of the Court of First Instance St. Maarten who has appointed the daughters of Ms. Inez Richardson as the personal representatives of her estate. All persons having claims against the below estate are required to present the personal representatives in writing, within three weeks after the date of this publication, or be forever barred.

Representatives:
Maybeline Richardson
Florissia Rohan
Marigot Hill Road #23
Cul de Sac, St. Maarten

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Cooper regrets the sale of UTS

WILLEMSTAD--Of the 339 million Netherlands Antillean guilders that the sale of United Telecommunications Services (UTS) generated in 2019, NAF. 87 million was used to complete the new Curaçao hospital. Furthermore, it was already known that NAF. 95 million was invested in economic growth projects, including feasibility studies by development corporation Korpodeko.

Minister of Traffic, Transport and Spatial Planning VVRP Charles Cooper (MFK) said this during question time in Parliament at the request of faction leader Gilbert Doran (MFK). He wanted clarity where proceeds from the former government-owned company were spent and whether it was true that the Committee for Financial Supervision CFT had never been officially notified.

However, then Finance Minister Kenneth Gijsbertha (MAN) informed CFT by letter in 2021 about the sale of UTS, what that meant for the country's budget and how the money was spent, Cooper explained.

Five million guilders also went to the holding company of Dataplanet data centre, which includes "Antilliaanse Televisie Maatschappij" (ATM), parent

company of TeleCuraçao. And US \$8 million is still parked in an escrow account as disputes continue but are not resolved, said Cooper, over laying off the former directors Paul de Geus and Kevin Carthy from respectively UTS Curaçao and UTS St. Maarten.

An escrow account is a blocked bank account held by a neutral and financially reliable third party, the escrow agent. The latter pays out money for invoices only on the basis of an agreement between the buyer and seller, but that amount is also shrinking, because the manager's salary continues every month.

For Cooper, it is still clear that the sale of UTS, both the shares and the infrastructure to Cable & Wireless has been very bad for society. "While the budget was possibly replenished, we are now left with a monopoly through Flow, with price increases we as government cannot do anything about."

The MFK politician went as far as to call the sale a "criminal act" by then VVRP Minister for PAR Zita Jesus Leito. However, current PAR-faction member Ana Maria Pualetta Cooper pointed out that no charges were ever filed, let alone a penal investigation conducted.

Two concessions have since been issued for telecommunication services: TeraMobil and Aquatel. But the former had requested a one-year extension before rolling out their system, because they needed more frequencies from Bureau Telecommunication & Post BTP. The release of such took place a month ago.

Aquatel was delayed due to internal management problems at parent company utilities provider Aqualectra, after the resignation of director Derek Jonis and the supervisory board following yet another power blackout. The required changes to the government-owned company's statutes must be completed within one month.

Furthermore, Cooper noted that Flow (Cable & Wireless) no longer wants to invest in cabling under the ground. So no copper, but also not even fibre optic.

"They prefer to pay Aqualectra monthly for the use of diesel generators and cables above ground, which now make light poles a tangle of wires, giving Curaçao the image of a third world country."

The file on the sale of UTS will be available for inspection by Parliament within a few weeks. It concerns shares (87.5% Curaçao and 12.5% St. Maarten) as well as real estate such as the buildings on Rigelweg and the museum in Punda; not the Blue NAP data centre at Mahuma, but all cables including those on the seabed.

A report by consultant BDO should have been made up and Cooper is also still looking for that.

Fire at landfill

WILLEMSTAD--On Thursday morning, fire broke out in the north-west section of Curaçao's landfill at Malpais, as announced by "Servisio di Limpieza Korsou" Selikor in a press release. The government-owned waste management company and firefighters were still battling the partially underground blaze and minimising smoke emissions on Friday.

Individuals looking to dispose of trash were redirected to the Koraal Specht substation. Selikor assured residents it was monitoring the situation closely.

In April, a major fire caused significant smoke disturbance at the landfill. It took several days to bring that one under control.



Minister Hato cut the ceremonial ribbon.

Opening of obstacle course, kitchen ORV

WILLEMSTAD--Curaçao's Law Enforcement & Security Training Institute ORV officially opened their new kitchen and obstacle course. The latter was designed to provide both physical and mental challenges, and is suitable for participants of all ages and skill levels.

Minister of Justice Shalten Hato (MFK) attended the official ceremony, where he could also see demonstrations and everything the track has to offer. According to him, the police academy is in excellent shape.

"What I didn't expect is development of this complete sports field, but I was also surprised by a kitchen



Demonstration

ready to be put in use. After 22 years, ORV finally obtained the necessary funds and attention has been paid to better training of our colleagues in the judicial system. There's more to come," he added.

At the official opening of the kitchen, the ribbon was cut by Hato in the presence of director Alpha Falbru and other staff members of the minister's cabinet and MFK Member of Parliament (MP) David Seferina.

Curaçao jazz fest line-up complete

WILLEMSTAD--The organisation of Curaçao North Sea Jazz Festival (CNSJF) announced the final names for the upcoming edition. AFRO 23 was added to the line-up on Thursday, August 29, and Joss Stone on Friday. Aloe Blacc and Kamasi Washington complete Saturday's programme.

The festival opens on Wednesday, August 28, with a free concert by Candy Dulfer at Kura Hulanda Village.

Cuban singer, pianist and producer AFRO 23 was a "timbalero" in the Caisimu Orchestra and musical director of the Salsa Candela Orchestra, played piano in the Sonido Caliente Orchestra and collaborated with many more Cuban music orchestras. After travelling the world, discovering rhythms and sounds along the way, he settled in Miami and signed his first record contract in 2022, before releasing his single "Soy Afro" 23.

British soul singer Joss Stone has been in the business for over 20 years. At the time of her debut in 2003

with The Soul Sessions, she was only 16 years old.

Since that debut, she has released eight more studio albums, won a Grammy and two BRIT Awards and performed with the likes of greats such as James Brown, Herbie Hancock, Stevie Wonder and Mick Jagger. She is currently on a promotional tour for her live album "20 Years of Soul".

Aloe Blacc is an American singer, rapper and musician. After his break-out hit "I Need A Dollar" he put himself even more firmly on the map in 2013 with the single "Wake Me Up", which he co-wrote and sang with the late Swedish DJ Avicii.

His fifth and latest album "All Love Everything" was released in 2020 but in May this year, he announced a two-part series of EPs called "Rock My Soul", with soul covers of rock songs and due for release this year.

Multi-instrumentalist, composer and bandleader Kamasi Washington took the music world by storm in 2015 with his three-hour-long debut album "The Epic". The saxophonist has collaborated with varied artists, including Kendrick Lamar, Herbie Hancock, Chaka Khan and Snoop Dogg, to name just a few.

Washington scored the Michelle Obama documentary "Becoming", earning Emmy and Grammy nominations for his work, and co-founded the supergroup Dinner Party with Terrace Martin, Robert Glasper and 9th Wonder in 2020. His latest album "Fearless Movement" was released earlier this year.

Dutch saxophonist Candy Dulfer earned international fame for her collaborations with Prince, Van Morrison and Dave Stewart of Eurythmics, among others. With the latter, she scored a global hit with the song "Lily Was Here".

Her debut album "Saxuality" was nominated for a Grammy Award and several of her singles reached number one in the United States. She has been touring the world with her band almost continually for over 30 years. In 2022, she released her latest album, "We Never Stop".

Happy 50TH BIRTHDAY

*To my wonderful wife.
Celebrating your 50th birthday.*

*Oh what a joy: A pleasure to be with
you on this milestone day.*

*We are thankful to God and continue to pray:
You are a pillar of strength.*

*Full of wisdom, the Kings and Queens blink.
The ups, there are many. And the downs, so much more.*

*God Almighty has been with you, for sure.
He promised to never leave you, nor forsake you.*

*And to that end, we cling to his words,
His grace and mercies.
As we continue our journey of life together.*

Work on agreement for multidisciplinary team

WILLEMSTAD--The government of Curaçao is finalising an agreement to enable the operation of the multidisciplinary team. Composed of relevant entities such as the Ministry of Health, Environment and Nature GMN, Foundation Tax Accountants Bureau SBAB, the Ministry of Social Development, Labour and Welfare SOAW, Foundation Government Accountants Bureau SOAB and Ministry of Economic Development MEO, it is currently at a standstill due to disputes among civil servants regarding responsibilities.

The proposed agreement is now with Legal Affairs for review. Once their advice is received, the Council of Ministers can approve it.

The new policy focuses on ensuring businesses comply with hygiene regulations and expiration dates of products. It mandates that every business must have a quality manager responsible for such.

This person must maintain a list of all products in stock and their expiration dates. Intention is to simplify internal controls and reduce the likelihood of issues during inspections.

Public Health Inspector Sirving Keli explained that the new policy is more flexible. Businesses will not be shut down immediately if issues are found. Instead, they will be given the opportunity to rectify problems.

“Our goal is not to punish but to inform and educate,” said Keli. “Shutting down a location is a last resort.”

Inspections will no longer occur in the evenings when businesses are busy. Instead, business owners must be prepared for inspections outside of operating hours. Each business will receive two visits per year, depending on its risk level. High-risk businesses may receive up to four.

The new policy, which will gradually come into effect starting in July, requires all products to have an expiration date and a label in Papiamentu, Dutch, English or Spanish. A control leaflet will be distributed so businesses are aware of the compliance requirements.

Regarding communication about closures, Keli emphasised that the aim is to minimise damage to the business. Nothing will be posted at the business to indicate it is closed and no public announcements will be made. Businesses are encouraged to take responsibility themselves.

GMN Minister Javier Silvanía added that it is important to have clear agreements between the ministries to ensure the team operates effectively. GMN has the authority to conduct inspections independently, without needing to collaborate with SBAB or the Curaçao Police Force KPC.



Meeting between Anguilla and St. Martin officials.

Officials from Anguilla and St. Martin meet

ANGUILLA--On Thursday, June 13, Governor Julia Crouch hosted a meeting with Préfet Vincent Breton and a delegation from St. Martin. Present at the meeting from Anguilla were Deputy Governor Perin Bradley, Head of Governor's Office Orlando Ames-Lewis, Commissioner of Police, Robert Clark and other government officials.

The meeting was described as productive and friendly. It included discussions on various regulations in regard to fishing, as well as enhanced cooperation between the law enforcement agencies of the two islands ahead of the Summer Festival and the hurricane season.



Zorg en Jeugd Caribisch Nederland
Ministerie van Volksgezondheid,
Welzijn en Sport

Health Insurance Office of Care and Youth Caribbean Netherlands (ZJCN) closed

Due to staff training, the office of Care and Youth Caribbean Netherlands (ZJCN) on Saba and St. Eustatius will be closed for visitors from Monday the 17th until Friday the 21st of June 2024.

In the event of an emergency, ZJCN can be contacted via telephone at +599 715 8899 or via email at info@zorgverzekeringskantoor.nl

Starting Monday, June 24th, we will be happy to assist you again at our offices.

Note: The above is only applicable for the Health Insurance Office and not the Youth Care office.

We apologize for any inconvenience



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QTY	PRODUCT TYPE	PRODUCT NAME	KW	STATUS
1	DG16V2000B1N	MTU 16V2000 DS1000 OPU (//)	1000	IN STOCK
1	DG06RJ150A2N	MTU 6R0150 DS250 SB 1080GAL	250	IN STOCK
1	DG06RJ113A3N	MTU 6R0113 DS200 SB 850GAL	200	IN STOCK
1	DG04RJ113A5N	MTU 4R0113 DS80 / NO TANK	80	IN STOCK
1	DG06RJ113A3N	MTU 6R0113 DS200 / SB 370 GAL	200	IN STOCK
1	DG06RJ150A2N	MTU 6R0150 DS250 / NO TANK	250	IN STOCK
4	DG04RJ113A6N	MTU 6R0113 DS100 / SB 125 GAL	100	IN STOCK
3	DG06RJ113A1N	MTU 6R0113 DS150 / SB 850 GAL	150	IN STOCK
4	DG06RJ113A3N	MTU 6R0113 DS200 / NO TANK	200	IN STOCK
1	DG12V1600B2N	MTU DS800 / L2 / NO TANK	600	IN STOCK
3	DG06RJ150A2N	MTU 6R0150 DS250 / SB 1060 GALS	250	IN STOCK
2	DG06RJ150A4N	MTU 6R0150 DS300 / NO TANK	300	IN STOCK
2	DG16V2000B2N	MTU 16V2000 / OPEN / PARALLELING	1250	IN STOCK
1	GPM600	MTU 10V1600 - CANOPY - NO TANK	540	IN STOCK
1	GPM720	MTU 10V1600 - CANOPY - NO TANK	640	IN STOCK
2	GPM1100	MTU 12V2000 - CANOPY - NO TANK	1000	IN STOCK
2	GPM1100 20FT	MTU 12V2000 - 20FT CONTAINER - NO TANK	1000	IN STOCK
1	GEPM1250E	MTU 16V2000 - CANOPY - 264 GALS	1000	IN STOCK
2	GPM1100	MTU 16V2000G26 - CANOPY	1000	IN STOCK
1	18EK0ZD	MARINE DIESEL GENERATOR 1PH	16	IN STOCK

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AGENDA

ST. EUSTATIUS

Police Station 182333
Emergency 111
Hot Line 108
Fire Department 120
Hospital 182211/182371
Landsradio 182210
Post Office 182207
St. Eustatius Historical Foundation Museum 182288
Winair Office 182362
Lions Club meets every 1st and 3rd Wednesday at the "Den" next to the Airport
Drug Prevention Foundation meets every Tuesday 5:30pm at the Golden Era Hotel.
Coastguard NA&A 113
St. Eustatius National parks: Gallows Bay: 318 2884

SABA

Police Station
The Bottom, tel. 4163237
Emergency 111/112
Hospital
The Bottom, tel. 4163288/4163289
Fire Department Airport
Flat Point tel. 4162210
SATEL
The Bottom, tel. 4163211
WINAIR, Airport
Flat Point, tel. 4162255/2713
Taxi Service Airport
Flat Point, tel. 160
Administration Building
The Bottom, tel. 4163311/4163312/4163313
Tourist Office
Windwardside, tel. 4162231
Harbour Office
Fort Bay, tel. 4163294
Saba Marine Park
Fort Bay, tel. 4163295
Nature & Hike Guide
James Johnson
The Bottom, tel. 4163307
Service Club
Saba Lions Club general meeting every 1st and 3rd Tuesday 8:00 p.m. at Eugenius A. Johnson Center.
Coastguard NA&A 113
Red Cross
General meeting every last Monday, 6 p.m., Eugenius A. Johnson Center.

ANGUILLA

EMERGENCY
Police 911
Fire 911
Ambulance 911
Police Station 497 2333
Hospital 497 2551
Disaster Department 497 2926
Radio Anguilla 497 2218
Tourism 497 2759

AIRLINES
Anguilla Air Services 498 5922
Trans Anguilla 497 8690

COURIER SERVICE
DHL 497 3400
Fedex 497 2719
UPS 497 2239

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Soroptimist International
Meets at Day Care Centre
2nd Tuesday in month 4.30 pm
Lions Club
1st and 3rd Tuesday
Arts and Craft Centre 5.30 pm
Toastmasters Club
Every 2nd and 4th Saturday
Anguilla Community College
6.45pm

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New St. Eustatius Lions Club President Shanna Mercera-Gibbs called persons who have helped the club over the years to stand and be honoured.

Lions Club in Statia installs new board



The new St. Eustatius Lions Club board for 2024-2025. From left: Ramona Hendricks-Duinkerker, Cherile van Putten, Rohan de Graf, Charmaine Turner, Shanna Mercera-Gibbs, Bernadine Pandt and Koos Sneek.

ST. EUSTATIUS--The Centre/Lions Den last Wednesday, with Shanna Mercera-Gibbs becoming in a ceremony at Ernest "Mike" van Putten Youth



John Soliano

Bonaire has new Island Governor

KRALENDIJK--John Soliano will become the new Island Governor of Bonaire. Outgoing Dutch State Secretary Alexandra van Huffelen has nominated him to the Kingdom Council of Ministers in The Hague.

Soliano (52) was born on Bonaire and has been Director of Operations and Support at the public entity. From 2022 to 2024, he was an independent consultant in the field of personnel policy, organisational development, leadership and corporate governance.

Before that he worked more than six years as manager at Orco Bank Bonaire and served as director from 2012 to 2016, responsible for the reorganisation of Bonaire Holding Company BHM. He also held various positions as interim manager and human resources manager at, among others, Bonaire telephone company Telbo NV and Water & Energy Bonaire WEB.

Soliano studied Personnel and Labour at West Brabant University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands and graduated from University of the West of England with a Master of Arts in Managing Human Resources.

Soliano's appointment as Island Governor of Bonaire is to take effect on August 1.

Police report recent offences

ANGUILLA--The Royal Anguilla Police Force reports that officers are currently investigating a series of offences, including burglary, criminal trespass, taking a conveyance and theft from vehicles.

On Friday, June 7, Micor Franklyn of Sachasses was arrested and charged with taking a conveyance and theft of cash from a motor vehicle. On Tuesday, June 11, Marco Hernandez Mena of Cauls Bottom was arrested and subsequently charged with burglary and criminal trespass. He is currently assisting with several other investigations.

The police are warning the public to take precautionary measures to secure their property and to avoid leaving cash or valuables in their vehicles, especially at night. "Stay vigilant and report any suspicious activities to the authorities immediately. Your active participation is crucial in maintaining a safe environment for everyone in our community," the police statement advised.

The advice includes locking vehicles, hiding valuables, using anti-theft devices, parking in well lit areas, and installing security cameras.



The crew of 'MV Waterman' at Charles A. Woodley pier. From left: Prince Mills (captain), George Pemberton, Colin Parris and Fritzroy Duporte.

Waterman back to St. Eustatius

ST. EUSTATIUS--Persons in St. Eustatius lined the area near Charles A. Woodley pier around 9:00am Sunday to witness the return of *MV Waterman*, a sea vessel that plied local waters from 1996 to 2016, when it was taken out of service due to engine problems.

The local government auctioned off the boat last year, citing the costly repairs needed to get it back in working order. The vessel left the island last November.

Now under new ownership and up-and-running, the boat is slated to offer twice-weekly ferry services between St. Eustatius and neighbouring St. Kitts, captain Prince Mills told *The Daily Herald*.

A mermaid has been newly painted on the vessel's wheelhouse.

Mills thanked Irvin Buiten, David Ignacio, Salsoy Ponit and Nadjeska Jack for their help. The captain said Jack will be the ferry's contact person when the boat returns to service, a date which has not been disclosed.

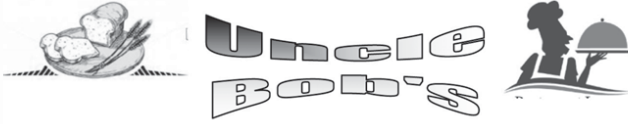
Gemeenschappelijk
Hof van Justitie

SAB20240015
BEKENDMAKING

Bij beschikking van het Gerecht in eerste Aanleg van Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba van 5 juni 2024 is op grond van de wettelijke regeling voor langdurig onverdeeld gebleven gemeenschappen (artikel 3:200a BW BES) een onroerende zaak in eigendom toegekend aan de verzoeker het Openbaar Lichaam Saba. Het betreft de onroerende zaak:

THE BOTTOM, Kerkstraat, 1.069 m2
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- Strong communication skills
- Excellent organizational skills

Qualifications:

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Requirements:

- Between the ages of 20 – 55.
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Please call +1721 587 3391 for and appointment



FOUNDATION CATHOLIC EDUCATION ST. MAARTEN RECRUITMENT DATA BANK FOR 2024-2025

The Foundation Catholic Education St. Maarten is accepting applications for the following vacancy at its **English and Dutch Primary Schools** for the school year **2024/2025**:

VACANCIES

1) Teacher's Assistant

Language of Instruction English / Dutch

Requirements:

- SPW 4 or Teacher's Assistant diploma.
- **Our preference goes out to Teachers, who:**
 - Have the Dutch nationality and the Catholic denomination.
 - Are competent in the use of computers and other multimedia.
 - Are fluent in the English / Dutch languages.

Interested persons should send application letters with complete Curriculum Vitae including copies of diplomas or certificates a.s.a.p. within fourteen (14) days of this ad to:

Foundation Catholic Education St. Maarten

Attn: Human Resources

Email: hr@skos-sxm.org

2) Human Resources Manager Foundation Catholic Education St. Maarten

- **Qualified Teachers M/F**
- Summary:
- The Human Resources Manager guides and manages the overall provision of Human Resources services, policies, and programs for an organization. HRM is also a strategic and comprehensive approach to managing people and the workplace culture and environment. Effective HRM enables employees to contribute effectively and productively to the overall organization direction and the accomplishment of the organization's goals and objectives. HRM is expected to add value to the strategic utilization of employees and that employee programs impact the organization in measurable ways.
- **Essential duties and responsibilities:**
- Develops and maintains a Human Resources system that meets top management information needs.
- Identifies legal requirements and Government reporting regulations affecting human resources functions and ensures policies, procedures, and reporting are in compliance. Writes and delivers presentations regarding human resources policies and practices.
- Create onboarding and offboarding procedures.
- Keeps records of benefits plans participation such as insurance and pension plan, personnel transactions such as hires, promotions, transfers, performance reviews, and terminations, and employee statistics for Board and government reporting.
- Administers performance review program & salary administration to ensure effectiveness, compliance, and equity within the organization.
- Prepares reports and recommends procedures to reduce absenteeism and turnover.
- **Requirements:**
- Bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management, Business Administration, Psychology or related study. • Language skills (fluency in the Dutch and English languages, written and spoken).
- Mathematical skills.
- Proficient with Microsoft Office.

Candidates with strong ties to St. Maarten and the Catholic Faith preferred. Reference checks of both Academic and Professional background will be performed prior to an offer being made.

Application letters and Curriculum Vitae have to be sent to:
Foundation Catholic Education St. Maarten

Attn: Human Resources

Email: hr@skos-sxm.org

VACANCIES 2024-2025 | ST. DOMINIC HIGH SCHOOL SECONDARY SCHOOL CXC/CSEC AND IB DIPLOMA PROGRAM

Qualified Teachers M/F

- Dance Teacher
- Visual Arts Teacher
- Dutch Subject Teacher

Preference goes out to Teachers with C.X.C. / pre-university level teaching experience in required subjects.

Requirements and preference goes out to Teachers, who:

- Have the Dutch nationality and the Catholic denomination.
- Are in possession of at least a Bachelor's degree in the specific subject area and have a teaching diploma. A Master's degree is a plus.
- Are innovative in their teaching approach and student assessment.
- Are willing to actively contribute to the school's and IB's philosophy and are team players.
- Are competent in the use of technology.

Interested persons are invited to submit a cover letter and a comprehensive Curriculum Vitae including copies of diplomas, certificates and ID card as follows:

Foundation Catholic Education St. Maarten

Attn: Human Resources

Email: hr@skos-sxm.org

Stripping hotel next step to redevelop Waterfort Plaza

WILLEMSTAD--The vacant former Plaza Hotel in Curaçao will soon be stripped. This is necessary to ensure the safety of the surrounding area and to prevent damage to the historic Waterfort from falling objects.

The work involves salvaging all loose and potentially dangerous building elements such as windows, doors, balconies, furniture, ceilings, electrical wiring, carpeting and other parts. It represents the next crucial step for General Pension Fund APC in the sustainable urban development of Waterfort Plaza.

Last year, the asbestos present in the structure was successfully and safely removed and disposed of.

The stripping job will be carried out by the contractor MNO Vervat, under the direction of an expert team, prioritising the safety of both workers and the surrounding area. To ensure such and minimise potential inconvenience, strict safety protocols will be followed and specialised tools and equipment will be used.

The work is scheduled to start at the end of June and is expected to be completed by the end of October this year. To facilitate logistics

and ensure safety, parts of the former Plaza Hotel will be temporarily closed.

Stakeholders in the area will be informed in a timely manner. APC will communicate the progress through various channels.

As part of APC and MNO's sustainability ambitions, usable materials are selected for recycling and reuse during the stripping process. Together, parties will organise a MarketPlaza to offer these to the public.

The date will be announced later in the media.

APC and MNO Vervat say they appreciate the cooperation with the safety rules and the understanding of everyone for the temporary inconvenience while working carefully and safely on the sustainable redevelopment of Waterfort Plaza.

For more information, interested parties can visit the information centre Road2Plaza at Gomezplein 7 on Thursday afternoons, from 2:00 to 5:00.



In the presence of Curaçao Prime Minister Gilmar Pisas (MFK), Minister of Economic Development MEO Ruisandro Cijntje (PNP) and other guests, the "Biofuel Production Plant" of Energis was officially opened. The company will produce fuel naturally at this location, mainly by processing of waste oil. To achieve this, they use the most innovative technologies and operate in an environmentally responsible manner, it was stated.



St. Maarten Medical Center

VACANCY: Project Procurement Associate



St. Maarten Medical Center (SMMC) is an ambitious and growing hospital organization on St. Maarten. With more than 425 FTE's, 28 Specialists and a capacity of 80 beds, we continuously strive to ensure safe, quality health care. Our primary service area of St. Maarten, Statia and Saba, represents a total population of approximately 60.000 people, constituting a multi-cultural mix with more than 100 different nationalities. In addition, we also offer health care services to the two million visitors annually. SMCC has started the construction of the new St. Maarten General Hospital (SMGH) to expand its services in order to accommodate the increased care demand of the people of St. Maarten, its visitors and neighboring islands. The new hospital is planned to be operational in 2026.

Your Profile:
As a **Project Procurement Associate**, you oversee and execute operational and tactical level procurement activities for the SMGH project. This role involves hands-on collaboration with various departments, managing timelines, and ensuring the efficient procurement of materials and/or services. This individual should be highly motivated, detail oriented and able to prioritize tasks efficiently.

What we offer:
We offer you a versatile position with a great deal of responsibility in an open and professional organization. You will work in a pleasant and rewarding atmosphere within a dedicated team for the duration of the project.

- Requirements:**
- A Bachelor's degree in a relevant field of Business Administration, Procurement, or related field and/or certification in Project Management, Procurement and/or Change Management is an asset;
 - A minimum of 5 years of relevant experience on a tactical level in procurement administration and/or management, supply chain at a national or international level in dealing with procurement practices;
 - Proven experience in the usage of ERP and Microsoft Office software packages and advanced knowledge of spreadsheet and database packages;
 - Fluency in written and oral English is essential.

- Tasks:**
- Ensure full compliance of procurement activities with SMMC rules and regulations, policies and strategies;
 - Conduct market research to determine reliable sources of medical equipment, furniture, fittings and consumables by using existing global market channels and other services;
 - Ensure that procurement, delivery, installation and commissioning timelines are established and met within budget;
 - Maintain vendor relationships and a database, ensuring the effective use of the system to record the listing, updating, evaluation and monitoring of the performance of vendors;
 - Perform other duties that may be assigned.

Interested?
For more information, contact the HR Department at + 1 (721) 543-3154 ext. 201 or 203. Your motivation letter and resume can be submitted to the HR Department via careers@smmc.sx. A copy of both should be submitted to the Labor and Social Affairs Dept. located on Squaliga Road #1, Philipsburg, St. Maarten.

Deadline to apply is: June 21st 2024

Body found in Curaçao

WILLEMSTAD--A lifeless body was discovered Thursday evening in an empty house at Berg Altena, the Curaçao Police Force KPC reported.

A passer-by saw a man lying motionless among a pile of debris in the abandoned home. When he did not respond, authorities were notified.

They arrived quickly and found the man, dressed in jeans and sneakers, lying on his stomach amidst the trash. Beside him was an old mattress, indicating that he might have been sleeping there.

Officers called in other specialists, including a police doctor, a pathologist and the Forensic Team, who arrived at the scene to begin the investigation. At first glance, there appeared to be no sign of foul play, but the probe is ongoing to determine the cause of this man's death.

Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Bill, 2024, successfully passed in Federal Parlt.

ST. KITTS--The Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Bill, 2024, was successfully passed in the Federal Parliament in St. Kitts and Nevis on Friday, June 14. The bill, championed by Attorney General (AG) Garth Wilkin, represents a robust response to the growing issue of migrant smuggling within the Federation's territorial waters.

The legislation aims to deter the smuggling of migrants into St. Kitts and Nevis and aligns national laws with the international Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Attorney General Wilkin said that over the past five years, St. Kitts and Nevis has witnessed a concerning rise in smuggling incidents, predominantly involving Haitian nationals and Cameroonian. These individuals, often transported under perilous conditions, have faced life-threatening voyages and

subsequent detention under distressing circumstances.

"We have had four incidents in less than a year where migrants were smuggled out of Dominica and Antigua, ending up on our shores. This bill is crucial to protect our borders and uphold the safety and dignity of all individuals within our jurisdiction," AG Wilkin said while highlighting the urgency of the matter.

He added that the existing legislation proved insufficient to address these challenges, prompting his office to take decisive action. In September 2023, an emergency meeting of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Legal Affairs Committee was convened to foster regional cooperation and develop a model law to combat migrant smuggling. The meeting underscored the shared experiences of OECS territories and the need for harmonised anti-smuggling legislation.

"It is imperative that OECS member states enact stricter laws and enhance collaboration among law enforce-

ment agencies. This bill not only penalises those directly involved in smuggling, but also addresses the broader network supporting these illegal activities," AG Wilkin emphasised.

The Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Bill, 2024, introduces comprehensive measures to prevent and combat the smuggling of migrants, protect their rights and promote international cooperation. The legislation establishes the Agency for the Prevention and Countering of the Smuggling of Migrants, tasked with coordinating policy formulation, monitoring immigration patterns and advising the government on related issues. The bill also outlines severe penalties for those involved in smuggling activities, ensuring that justice is served and deterrence is achieved.

"This legislation sends a strong message that human smuggling will not be tolerated in St. Kitts and Nevis. By imposing harsher penalties and enhancing support for smuggled migrants, we aim

to uphold the values of compassion, justice and human dignity that our nation holds dear," AG Wilkin further elaborated.

He added that the Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Bill,

2024, marks a pivotal step in safeguarding the Federation's borders and protecting the lives of vulnerable individuals. The government of St. Kitts and Nevis remains committed to upholding the rule

of law and fostering regional cooperation to combat the scourge of human smuggling.

The Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Bill, 2024, had its first reading on February 22.

Ministers need to live with criticism

WILLEMSTAD--Curaçao Minister of Traffic, Transport and Spatial Planning VVRP Charles Cooper (MFK) must be able to handle criticism. Public figures like him often face sharp comments and harsh words, which fall under the right to free speech, a cornerstone of a democratic society.

This is the essence of a verdict in summary proceeding the minister had filed against Elvis De Andrade of "Union i Progreso" (UP). The legal dispute arose from a video on UP's Facebook page that Cooper deemed offensive and threatening.

De Andrade accused the minister of corruption and sexual misconduct, even stating that Cooper should be ready to use

his weapon because he was going to "wage war" against him. De Andrade also posted an image of a shooting target with bullet holes.

The judge ruled that De Andrade can no longer publicly share the related video in any accessible manner. If he does, he could face a fine of 50,000 Netherlands Antillean guilders per day, up to a maximum of NAF. 100,000.

However, Cooper's request to prohibit De Andrade from making inflammatory, violent or defamatory statements about him after the verdict was denied. Although threats are prohibited and Cooper should not be lightly subjected to allegations, the court concluded that De Andrade's statements

fall within the bounds of permissible criticism.

They were not so grievous as to exceed what is acceptable. Such statements can sometimes be hurtful or shocking, but this is part of being in public office.

Future expressions by De Andrade cannot be pre-judged because their content is not yet known. Therefore, the request to prohibit De Andrade from making inflammatory, violent or defamatory statements about Cooper on his Facebook page, UP's page or elsewhere was denied.

Cooper posted the court's decision on his Facebook page. He noted that "Elvis de Andrade was convicted in the case he initiated."

Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst
Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid

Adjusted opening hours IND CN

The naturalisation desks of the IND in the Caribbean Netherlands will be closed from the **1st of July to the 16th of August 2024** for new applications and status information.

The other services will be open as usual during this period

Want to ask questions?

Email: IND@rijksdienstCN.com

Call: +599 715 8330 (accessible between 8 a.m.-12 noon)

More information?

Visit our website

www.rijksdienstcn.com

Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland
RCN-Unit Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid

Do you need school supplies for your children in secondary education?

The SZW unit of RCN can help you!

Every year you can apply for a contribution towards the costs of school supplies and uniforms. If you have one or more children, you can apply for a contribution with an income of up to 2.100 dollar on St. Eustatius.

Visit our website at www.rijksdienstcn.com or call us at **318 3376** on Statia or send us a whatsapp message via **790 0052**.

On Saba you can visit the Saba Community Development Department, Upper Road 4, The Bottom.



Minister of State Phillip (right) addressing the media while PS Clarke (left) looks on.

LIFT Programme opens to new applicants today Mon., June 17

ST. KITTS--The application process for the government's primary social programme, Livelihood Improvement for Family Transformation (LIFT), will open for new applicants today, Monday, June 17 (see related story).

The online portal for new applications is lift.gov.kn. It will go live at 9:00am and will remain open as registration will be continuous. Persons without Internet access or who are not familiar with technology can get in-person

assistance at community centres or at the Department of Social Development and Gender Affairs administration office on Victoria Road. Assistance will also be available to seniors by calling the Seniors Services Unit at 665-3983, while persons living with a disability can contact the Disabilities Unit at 665-3984.

At a press conference on Thursday, June 13, at the Solid Waste Management Corporation Conference Room, Minister of State responsible for Social Development and Gender Affairs, Isalean Phillip said that the LIFT programme is designed to "assist more families in need by putting more money into households, with benefits ranging up to [EC - Ed.] \$600 per month."

She added that LIFT also seeks to promote equity, and the threshold of EC \$2,500 "better targets those who earn the least and are subject to more indicators of poverty."

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Social Development and Gender Affairs, Azilla Clarke shared that there are five priority categories for the social assistance programme. These are individuals and families that are employed, particularly those with children; single-parent families; persons with disabilities; caregivers of children with disabilities; and seniors, particularly those receiving minimal pension benefits with no other sources of income.

New applicants are strongly advised to register with a valid email address that they or a trusted individual access regularly. This will ensure timely communication and facilitate efficient information processing.

LIFT SKN Programme launches new era of support for vulnerable families

ST. KITTS--Azilla Clarke, Permanent Secretary (PS) in the Ministry of Social Development and Gender Affairs, presented the operational framework of the Livelihood Improvement for Family Transformation (LIFT) SKN Programme at a press conference at the Solid Waste Management Corporation Conference Room, on Thursday, June 13, highlighting its role in supporting vulnerable families.

"The LIFT SKN Programme's application process begins a new phase on June 17, 2024, providing ongoing access for new applicants," Clarke stated, adding that assistance is available for those needing help with the application process, ensuring inclusivity.

PS Clarke noted that verification involves a meticulous review of submitted documents and cross-referencing with existing data. The collaboration with the Social Security Board plays a crucial role in maintaining programme integrity.

According to PS Clarke, the programme prioritises support for unemployed families, single parents and persons with disabilities, with eligibility based on an income threshold of EC \$2,500 per month. Approved beneficiaries will receive support for up to 24 months, with pos-



PS Azilla Clarke

sible extensions.

Clarke emphasised that the LIFT SKN Programme will reintroduce a case management approach aimed at connecting individuals and families with essential information, services and opportunities. The programme is designed to foster independence and assist individuals and families in realising their full potential. Regular meetings with assigned officers will facilitate the creation and adjustment of care plans tailored to the specific needs and goals of the participants.

The permanent secretary assured that an established Appeals and Grievance Process will allow applicants to contest decisions or report unfair treatment. The LIFT SKN Programme represents a commitment to empowering lives and transforming communities, with expectations for a positive impact.

Cutting 30% ruling will damage the Dutch economy, report says

THE HAGUE--Cutting back a tax break for foreign workers whose skills are not available in the Netherlands will lead to fifteen to twenty per cent fewer highly-skilled migrants, according to an analysis for the Dutch Ministry of Finance.

The tax break, known as the 30% ruling, originally gave a select group almost a third of their income free from Dutch tax for a period of five years, the typical length of stay.

An independent review by economic research bureau SEO has now found that the 30% ruling was both effective and efficient, and contributed to the Dutch economy. A cut, passed by government last year, will lead to a drop in highly-skilled migrants "and have a negative effect on the business climate," it found.

This confirms concerns from businesses and experts raised last year that they will soon be unable to fill jobs and that the largely symbolic change to the allowance will actually do the Netherlands economic damage.

Since this year, the tax break has moved onto a sliding scale, with 20 months at a 30% tax-free allowance, 20 months at 20% and the final 20 months at 10%. But this is dramatically more costly to administer than a flat rate, the report found.

"A higher percentage attracts a larger number of highly-skilled migrants, improving the business climate and making a positive contribution to the economy," it found. Scrapping the tax break entirely would lead to 40% fewer knowledge migrants.

Cutting it back will negatively impact all kinds of Dutch businesses from start-ups to major firms.

"The positive effect of the scheme on the influx of highly-skilled migrants yields more in budgetary terms than the scheme costs because all users pay less tax," the SEO report added.

The researchers did not calculate indirect positive economic effects of the tax break, but said they included more value-added tax (VAT) revenue, more jobs due to a greater demand for services and higher salaries for other employees "as a result of knowledge spillovers".

In 2022, there were around 110,000 people in the Netherlands - about 0.6% of the population - with the tax break, fulfilling specialist skill gaps and a number of other requirements. They are more likely to be highly-educated men, under 35 years old, childless, have a

higher than average income and work full-time.

A questionnaire filled out by around 7,000 people with the ruling found that three in 10 said they were spending more on living cost in the Netherlands. Many chose the Netherlands over other countries because of the tax perk, and when it was reduced from eight to five years in 2019, their numbers dropped by 19.6%.

The scheme brings in a net tax revenue averaging 128.5 million euros per year, due to jobs in the Netherlands that would otherwise not be based there.

The report also debunks the idea that people with the 30% ruling are responsible for significantly higher rent prices in places like Amster-

dam, as alleged during the election campaign by Pieter Omtzigt, leader of centre-right party NSC.

"Compared to the whole population, there is virtually no price effect of economic significance," according to the report. "In some areas such as Amsterdam, there may be an effect on rent and purchase prices, which is very modest compared with the total price increase during the evaluation period."

In 2022, the effect of the 30% ruling in Amsterdam increased rent prices by 0.9% and house prices by 1.8%, the report calculated. This was roughly a tenth of the total price inflation that year from other causes, such as domestic tax incentives and landlord price gouging.

Federal Parliament of St. Kitts & Nevis passes Immigration (Amendment) Bill

ST. KITTS--In a concerted effort to strengthen the nation's immigration laws, the Federal Parliament has successfully passed the Immigration (Amendment) Bill, 2024. This significant legislation, moved through Parliament by Attorney General Garth Wilkin, complements the recently passed Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Bill, 2024 (see related story), and aims to deter the shielding, harbouring or transportation of smuggled migrants into St. Kitts and Nevis.

Attorney General Wilkin said that over the past five years, St. Kitts and Nevis has experienced a troubling rise in incidents involving smuggled migrants. These individuals have often been intercepted in the Federation's waters under perilous conditions, raising serious concerns about the adequacy of existing laws to address such violations. The notable increase in smuggling-related incidents underscored the necessity for a critical review and strengthening of the country's immigration laws to effectively deter and prosecute those involved in these illegal activities.

The Immigration Act, Cap. 6:02, previously imposed penalties on individuals who smuggle, conceal, harbour or shield migrants from detection. The Immigration (Amendment) Bill, 2024, proposes substantial increases in fines and imprisonment terms for these offences. For concealment offences, the penalties have been raised from a fine not exceeding EC \$50,000 and a maximum imprisonment term of three years to a fine not exceeding EC \$100,000 and a maximum imprisonment term of five years. For transportation offences, the penalties have been increased from a fine not exceeding EC \$100,000 and a maximum imprisonment term of five years to a fine not exceeding EC \$200,000 and a maximum imprisonment term of seven years.

Additionally, the bill defines "financial or other material benefit" to include any type of financial or non-financial inducement, payment, bribe, reward, advantage, privilege or service, including sexual or other services. This definition aims to close loopholes and ensure comprehensive prosecution of those benefiting from smuggling activities.

Attorney General Wilkin emphasised the importance of these legislative changes.

"By aligning the penalties with those in the Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Bill, 2024, we are sending a clear message that St. Kitts and Nevis will not tolerate human smuggling or any ancillary activities. These amendments are crucial in protecting the integrity of our immigration system and ensuring the safety and dignity of all individuals within our borders," said the attorney general.

The bill underwent extensive consultations with key stakeholders, including the director of Public Prosecutions, controller of Customs, chief Immigration officer, permanent secretary in the Ministry of National Security, commissioner of Police, White Collar Crime Unit, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

First tabled on February 22, the bill's passage marks a significant step forward in the Federation's ongoing efforts to combat human smuggling and uphold the rule of law.

A Publication by the Department of Communication

Government Info Page

WWW.SINTMAARTENGOV.ORG 170624

HURRICANE SEASON 2024 DON'T DELAY PREPARE TODAY!! JUNE 1 - NOVEMBER 30

VACANCY

Ministry of Public Health, Social Development & Labor
The Division of Labor Affairs

Permit Officer

DESCRIPTION

The Division of Labor Affairs is a government executing agency that falls under the Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labor for Country Sint Maarten. The division is charged with the execution of all matters pertaining to labor, such as labor & business registration, dismissals & complaints, vacancies & employment mediation, and employment permits, just to name a few. The division is currently seeking a new team member who will contribute positively to the Section Permits – as the Permits Officer. The suitable candidate needs to possess the following core competencies and abilities:

FUNCTION RESPONSIBILITY & DUTIES

- Customer service processing of Employment Permit applications
- Ensure proper adherence to intake processes for the Employment permits
- Provide information and data to the Senior Officer and Section Head on matters relating to the Employment permit process application
- Guiding clients on the process of Employment permits
- Executing of information sessions for clients

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- MBO / associate in business administration or an Academic level High School degree (CXC, CAPE)
- Minimum 2 years' experience in a related field or function
- Knowledge of the applicable legislation governing Permits
- Advanced organizational and administrative knowledge and skills, advanced knowledge of all Microsoft Applications
- Strong command of the Dutch & English languages (verbal and written)
- Competency skills set inclusive of solid interpersonal skills, proven results-oriented performance and ability to work in a team;
- Ability to work with diverse cultures and socio-economic backgrounds.

COMPENSATION

Salary ranges from minimum NAF. 2,478.00 to maximum NAF. 5,388.00. Salary based on experience and qualifications, within the established salary range, plus a benefits package that includes, and medical coverage.

APPLICATION PERIOD

If you are the right candidate for the position above, please send your application letter and resume no later than **June 24th, 2024** to:

The Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labor
The Department of Labor Affairs
Attn: Mrs. Peggy-Ann Dros-Richardson
Soualiga Road #1, Pond Island
Philipsburg, St. Maarten
Email: Peggann.Dros@sintmaartengov.org
Cc: Careers@sintmaartengov.org

ST. MAARTEN

Ministerie van Financiën

De overheid van Sint Maarten is op zoek naar professionals met een administratieve, en bij voorkeur fiscale, achtergrond die een actieve bijdrage willen leveren aan de ontwikkeling van het land.

De Belastingdienst is verantwoordelijk voor het op uitermate efficiënte, effectieve, klantgerichte en integere wijze uitvoering geven aan de wet- en regelgeving bij het heffen en innen van, en het uitvoeren van controle op, belastingen met als doel stabiele en groeiende belastingopbrengsten. De dienst is onderverdeeld in de Sectie Ondersteuning en de Afdelingen Ontvanger, Inspectie, en Controle & Opsporing.

Onderstaande vacature is momenteel beschikbaar binnen de Belastingdienst Afdeling Inspectie:

Medewerker Heffingen Z en P

Voornaamste taken:

- Registreren van binnengekomen stukken;
- Controleren van aangiften;
- Opleggen/vermindere van aanslagen;
- Administratief afhandelen en opleveren van bezwaarschriften;
- Data invoer, archiveren, kopiëren en vervaldata voor de afhandeling van werkzaamheden, aanmaningen, bezwaarschriften en dergelijke;
- Controleren of bestaande bedrijven voldoen aan de belastingplicht en indien nodig dit signaleren aan de leiding;
- Opmaken van verklaringen, beschikkingen en andere documenten op verzoek van belastingplichtigen en/of de leiding;
- Voeren van diverse overige administratieve activiteiten.

Veristen en competenties:

- Minimaal een afgeronde MBO-opleiding
- Goed organisatorisch vermogen;
- Dynamische en ondernemende persoonlijkheid;
- Minimaal 1 jaar ervaring in een soortgelijke functie;
- Uitstekende schriftelijke en mondelinge vaardigheden in de Engelse en Nederlandse taal;
- Computervaardig;
- Goede communicatieve eigenschappen en een klantvriendelijke houding;
- Beheersing van de Franse en/of Spaanse taal is een pré;
- Fulltime (40 uur) beschikbaar en voor langere tijd;
- Integer en een "teampayer".

Salaris:

Het salaris bedraagt, afhankelijk van kennis en ervaring, minimaal NAF. 2.478,00 en maximaal NAF. 5.388,00.

Informatie:

Voor nadere informatie kan contact opgenomen worden met het Waarnemend Hoofd van de Afdeling Inspectie, Belastingdienst Lisanly Vanblarcum via email: lisanly.vanblarcum@sintmaartengov.org of wvd. Sectiehoofd van de Sectie Zakelijke Heffingen van de Belastingdienst: Inspectie, Sharon Washington-Philips via email: sharon.washington-philips@sintmaartengov.org.

Sollicitanten:

Als u geïnteresseerd bent in deze functie kunt u uw CV, brief en kopieën van uw diploma(s) vóór **25 juni 2024**, met vermelding van de functie in het onderwerp, sturen naar het volgende emailadres: careers@sintmaartengov.org, en annan.benjamin@sintmaartengov.org of verzend uw sollicitatie naar het Bestuurskantoor, postadres Soualiga Road #1, Pond Island, Great Bay.

Employability Enhancement

WORKSHOP EVENT SCHEDULE 2024

13th June	St. Peters Community Center	8:30am - 2pm
22th August	Belvedere Community Center	8:30am - 2pm
26th September	Carl & Sons Conference Room in Cole Bay.	8:30am - 2pm
24th October	Government Administration building room 1+2	8:30am - 2pm
21st November	Government Administration building room 1+2	8:30am - 2pm

Contact us on via WhatsApp for more information. Limited seating register Today!!

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Prosecutor demands three-year prison sentence for rapper Ali B

HAARLEM--Public prosecutors have demanded a prison sentence of three years for two counts of rape and one of sexual assault against Dutch rapper and television presenter Ali B.

The 42-year-old from Almere, whose full name is Ali Bouali, is the only man caught up in the scandal at the television talent show The Voice of Holland to face charges.

A new witness came forward in the middle of court hearings this week, and now the prosecution has finished presenting its case. "The defendant has taken no responsibility, has made false statements and lays the blame elsewhere," the public prosecution department said in a statement.

The rapper allegedly assaulted three women between 2014 and 2018. One is a woman who claims Bouali raped her during a writers' camp in Heiloo in August 2018, when she was



Ali B

20 years old.

Another was a participant in The Voice of Holland in 2013. The public prosecution department says that when they later met at an event in 2018, he invited her to his car so she could play him one of her songs, but instead drove her to a deserted forest track and assaulted her.

The third is an alleged rape of a 47-year-old woman during the making of a television show in Morocco in April 2014. The public

prosecution department says there is no reason to doubt the women's testimony.

A report on YouTube channel Boos in early 2022 claimed several dozen women had been harassed and abused by men behind the scenes at The Voice of Holland. After the broadcast, the public prosecution department appealed for victims to come forward and started a formal investigation.

"Although the defendant presents himself as a victim of changing social norms, or more prudish social sexual morality, the prosecution does not agree," the department said. "The defendant's behaviour occurred well before the rise of the 'me too' movement and the Boos programme. [It was - Ed.] already wrong, is wrong today, and will be wrong in the future."

Bouali denies all the charges.



Richard van Zwol (right) talks to the press after the meeting. Photo by Robin Utrecht via DutchNews.nl.

Faber will be asylum minister, parties agree after crisis talks

THE HAGUE--A far-right Member of Parliament (MP) who has been nominated for the role of Minister of Asylum and Migration in the new Dutch cabinet will remain on the list of potential candidates despite questions about her suitability, chief cabinet negotiator Richard van Zwol told reporters on Friday evening.

PVV parliamentarian Marjolein Faber was Geert Wilders' second choice for the job after his first nominee, Israeli-born Gidi Markuszower, failed the screening process.

On Friday morning, VVD leader Dilan Yesilgoz said she had doubts about Faber's nomination, given her previous public comments and her "tone and attitude".

This statement led to crisis talks between the four party leaders, Van Zwol and the incoming Prime Minister Dick Schoof late on Friday afternoon.

Faber is known as a hardliner on asylum, refused to concede she was wrong about the ethnicity of a stabbing suspect, and has labelled her colleagues in provincial government as "fake".

Faber said in a social media post that she "understood" the commotion about some of her previous comments, but emphasised that as minister she would abide by the coalition agreement and respect the rule of law.

After the meeting, Van Zwol told reporters that political parties "always" have comments about other nominees and said the four

party leaders had taken the time to go through the case thoroughly.

Faber had been properly vetted and there were no obstacles to her candidacy, Van Zwol said.

Reporter Albert Bos for public broadcaster NOS said VVD had not dared press ahead with its protest but had delivered a warning shot to both Wilders and Faber.

The whole affair is a "sign of how the parties relate to each other and the underlying confidence ... and the real job has yet to begin," he said.

Opposition MPs have also been questioning VVD's and NSC's acceptance of

Markuszower, as well as Reinette Klever, put forward by PVV as Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Aid even though she had previously called for the ministry to be closed down. Klever is also a founder of far-right broadcaster ON, which has been fined for spreading fake news.

Frans Timmermans, leader of left-wing alliance GroenLinks-PvdA, said on social media that Wilders had made "blunder after blunder".

"And time and time again, the silence from VVD and NSC is deafening," he said. "Embarrassed, or is this the new governance culture?"

Agema replaces Markuszower as PVV Deputy Prime Minister

THE HAGUE--Fleur Agema is far-right party PVV's newly proposed Deputy Prime Minister in the incoming Schoof Cabinet, leader Geert Wilders wrote on social media platform X, affectionately calling her "our star player".

Agema was already the intended Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport.

Wilders originally had Gidi Markuszower in mind as Deputy Prime Minister, and the current Member of Parliament (MP) was also slated to become the Minister of Asylum and Migration.

However, Markuszower did not pass the screening of prospective ministers (see related story). As a

result, Marjolein Faber has been appointed as his replacement to this cabinet post.

Agema belongs to Wilders' small circle of confidantes and was closely involved in coalition negotiations with parties VVD, NSC and BBB.

She has been a member of the Dutch Second Chamber of Parliament for PVV since the party first ran in national elections in 2006.

Faber's nomination as Minister of Asylum and Migration led to crisis talks between the coalition parties on Friday after VVD leader Dilan Ye ilgoz pointed out previous controversial statements made by the PVV politician.

Amsterdam court orders porn site to remove unlicensed films

AMSTERDAM--Appeal court judges in Amsterdam have ordered porn site xHamster to remove all footage featuring Dutch people who have not given their permission for their images to be used.

The site, owned by Cyprus-based Hammy Media, is one of the largest providers of online pornography in the world, with tens of millions of users a month.

The case was brought

by Dutch campaign group Offlimits, which had received reports that some films had been uploaded to the site out of revenge, while others had been stolen via hacking.

The appeal court, which upheld a lower court decision, said the company must remove all unlicensed footage within three days or face a fine of 10,000 euros per illegal video. The fines will increase the longer the

company waits, up to a maximum of 500,000 euros.

"This ruling underlines the fact that this sort of footage should not be on the Internet unless explicit permission has been given," said Offlimits director Robbert Hoving. "Porn sites should take more responsibility for ensuring everything is in order, for everyone who is depicted."

Philips to slash jobs, shift production to Indonesia

DRACHTEN--Electronics giant Philips is planning to cut another 400 jobs at its production site in the Frisian town of Drachten, of which 200 are permanent positions.

The job cuts have been prompted by a decision to shift the production of baby bottles and other domestic goods to Indonesia and an external supplier, the company said on Wednesday. The move is

part of efforts to make the company more competitive, a Philips spokesman said.

Philips currently employs 1,700 people in Drachten and will continue to produce electric toothbrushes and shavers at the factory.

The decision still needs to be approved by the company's works council. Philips is not ruling out forced redundancies, but says it hopes the jobs can

be cut naturally by the deadline of 2027.

Trade union federation FNV said the decision is a blow to the local economy.

"Philips is opting to export jobs to Indonesia and China and leave hundreds of households here in the cold," a FNV spokesman told local broadcaster RTV Noord.

Appointed members opine on 'exceptional circumstances' in firearm possession cases

COCKBURN TOWN, Turks and Caicos—The recent arrests of several US citizens and subsequent rulings in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) for firearm possession have sparked concerns among the public and Members of the Parliament, prompting discussions in the House of Assembly regarding the nation's strict firearm laws and the application of exceptional circumstances in these cases.

During a recent House of Assembly sitting, the Opposition's Appointed Member Alvin Garland raised the issue during his two-minute speech, highlighting the arrest of five American citizens over the past six months for firearm possession while vacationing in the country.

He called on the House of Assembly to clarify the intention of the 2022 amendment to the territory's firearm ordinance.

He acknowledged the public's concern and commended the leadership of the gov-



Alvin Garland

ernor and the government in handling the situation, given the implications for the territory's tourism sector.

Garland also referenced communication between the US and TCI governments regarding the arrests and the visit of a US delegation to discuss concerns about the detained US citizens. He underscored the importance of following the legal process to secure their release and return to their families in the US.

He said: "We must first al-



Willin Belliard

low the process to take place through the federal court system.

"As I've stated earlier, the governor is correct to not interfere or to be safe sharing with the judicial process.

"The doctrine of the separation of powers must be upheld and followed at all times."

Garland explained the role of the three branches of government in the TCI, emphasising the separation of powers and the responsibility of the judiciary in overseeing laws and sentencing offenders.

He detailed the country's history of implementing stringent firearm laws, including mandatory minimum sentences of imprisonment, in response to the increase in firearm-related offences and murders.

The laws were amended in 2010, 2018 and 2022 to increase the mandatory minimum sentence, making firearm offences indictable only.

The amendments also introduced the concept of "exceptional circumstances" to allow for flexibility in sentencing, considering factors such as the offender's previous convictions and the public interest.

He emphasised the distinction between finding exceptional circumstances and the subsequent sentencing, highlighting the judge's discretion in determining the length of imprisonment and the size of the fine based on the specific circumstances of each case.

Garland shared his personal experience representing a client who was arrested on similar charges in December 2023.

Witnessing the impact of the arrests on the families involved, he stressed the importance of allowing the legal process to unfold and expressed confidence in the attorneys representing the American tourists to make persuasive arguments for exceptional circumstances during sentencing.

However, he also acknowledged a drawback from a recent Court of Appeal ruling, which mandates a custodial

sentence combined with a fine even when exceptional circumstances are found, limiting the judge's discretion to impose non-custodial sentences.

Garland concluded by highlighting the need for a solution to address this issue and ensure fairness, particularly for Turks and Caicos Islanders who may unintentionally find themselves in possession of ammunition.

He called on the House of Assembly to clarify the intention of Parliament in passing the 2022 amendment, opining that the original intent was to allow judges the discretion to impose non-custodial sentences when exceptional circumstances are

found.

"I believe this is a very narrow issue ... this honourable house does have the responsibility and the power to make a correction or make it clear as to what the intention of Parliament was when they had passed the 2022 ordinance."

Coupled with this, the government's Appointed Member Willin Belliard also spoke on the matter, defending the TCI against unfair criticism and emphasising the importance of upholding the rule of law and democratic institutions.

He commended the executive, the governor, the premier, the commissioner of police and others for stand-

ing their ground and defending the principles of the rule of law. Belliard stressed the importance of allowing the judicial process to take its course and expressed surprise at the approach taken by some, suggesting that it deviated from established legal procedures.

He emphasised the need for the court to make a finding and issue a sentence before further action can be taken, such as issuing a pardon.

Belliard concluded by calling for wisdom and understanding, acknowledging the complexity of the situation and the need for a fair resolution. ~ Turks and Caicos Weekly News ~

Gang-ravaged Haiti to replace national police head with former Chief Normil

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—Haiti will replace the head of its national police force, Frantz Elbe, with former Chief Rameau Normil, the Prime Minister's Office said on Friday, as the country faces a gang crisis that has displaced over half a million people.

The Haitian National Police, or PNH, has been at the forefront of a battle against powerful armed gangs that have taken over most of the capital, Port-au-Prince.

A spokesperson from the Office of Prime Minister Garry Conille, who was named to the post two weeks ago, confirmed the change by telephone following local media reports and shortly after Conille appointed his cabinet.

The effective date was not clear, but the decision will likely go into force after a decree from Conille and the presidential transition council.

The Caribbean nation's fast-shrinking police force has suffered from a lack of resources while fighting the criminal groups, armed with high-calibre weapons, the United Nations says are largely trafficked from the nearby United States.

Normil headed the PNH from mid-2019 to late 2020. Elbe was one of his successors, replacing a chief who served during the 2021 assassination of Haiti's last president, Jovenel Moïse, and the kidnapping of 17 US and Canadian missionaries by the 400 Mawozo gang.

Moïse's assassination opened a political vacuum that allowed gangs to expand their territories, while



From left: US ambassador to Haiti, Dennis Hankins talks with Police Chief Frantz Elbe after Haiti's transitional council ceremony, on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on April 25, 2024. File photo credit Reuters/Ralph Tedy Erol.

ransom kidnappings have since become rife.

A recent survey by local rights group RNDDH found that 20 police officers have been killed so far this year and more than 320 since 2015.

Police officers also reported late pay, insufficient training, workplace harassment, dismissal threats, knife and gunshot injuries and equipment shortages – including of weapons, ammunition, shields and vehicles.

"The results of Elbe at the helm of the police are catastrophic," RNDDH director Pierre Esperance told Reuters, saying he believed Elbe should be prosecuted.

"He spent his whole time establishing relationships with the gangs, reinforcing the gangs and preventing cops from doing their job and risking their lives."

Elbe did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Haiti's ombudsman, the Citizens' Protection Of-

fice, meanwhile asked that Normil produce a plan to control the gangs and improve the police force "without delay".

It also called for authorities to offer explanations for the many killings and "spectacular" escape of some 4,500 prisoners under the "complete indifference" of previous authorities.

The gang violence has, according to the UN's latest estimates, pushed 578,000 people from their homes. Thousands have been killed and millions pushed into acute hunger.

The PNH, Haiti's main security agency, has been in talks with counterparts from Kenya, which pledged to lead a long-delayed UN security support mission requested by Haiti in 2022.

RNDDH's Esperance said his organisation hopes Normil will "work to 'de-gangsterise' the country and dismantle the gangs so the Haitian population can breathe." ~ Reuters ~

Springett new UN Resident Coordinator in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados—United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has appointed Simon Springett of the United States as the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, with the host government's approval. As the highest-ranking official of the UN development system in the Eastern Caribbean, Springett will lead the UN Sub-regional Team (UNST) across ten countries and territories.

Springett of the US brings 30 years of international experience in humanitarian, development and peacebuilding operations. Previously he served as the UN Resident Coordinator in the Republic of Moldova; and as the UN Resident Coordinator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative, and the United Nations Population Fund UNFPA Representative for both Mauritius and the Seychelles.

In his new role, Springett will champion the UN's mandates and advocate for the delivery of the Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (MSDCF) in close collaboration with national governments and regional institutions. A key focus will be strengthening co-operation and effectiveness of UN operational activities throughout the region.

Before joining the United Nations, Springett was Chief



António Guterres

Operating Officer and Deputy Director for Response Operations at the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom/Palladium. Prior to this, he worked in senior management posts with international nongovernmental organisation (NGO) Oxfam (specialising in rapid humanitarian responses) and served as director and trustee in a number of international organisations.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Geology from the College of Wooster (Ohio, USA) and a Master of Science in development practice (humanitarian protection) from Oxford Brookes University (United Kingdom).

In addition to his development expertise, Springett will also serve as the Designated Official (DO) for Security, ensuring the safety and security of all UN personnel and their dependents in the region. ~ United Nations ~



EUX202400015
BEKENDMAKING

Bij beschikking van het Gerecht in eerste Aanleg van Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba van 5 juni 2024 is op grond van de wettelijke regeling voor langdurig onverdeeld gebleven gemeenschappen (artikel 3:200a BW BES) een onroerende zaak in eigendom toegekend aan de verzoekers James Noel Gibbs en Movin Almando Gibbs, wonend te Sint Eustatius. Het betreft de percelen:

UNION ESTATE (4x circa 703 m2)
Rosemary Lane, Sint Eustatius,
meetbrieven 97,98,99,100/1994.

De beschikking is met als zoekterm EUX202400015 te vinden onder Uitspraken op www.rechtspraak.nl



EUX202400024
BEKENDMAKING

Bij beschikking van het Gerecht in eerste Aanleg van Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba van 5 juni 2024 is op grond van de wettelijke regeling voor langdurig onverdeeld gebleven gemeenschappen (artikel 3:200a BW BES) een onroerende zaak in eigendom toegekend aan de verzoekster Merle Steffanie York-Patrick, wonend te Sint Maarten. Het betreft de onroerende zaak:

ORANJESTAD (circa 187 m2), Sint Eustatius,
omschreven in rooibrief nummer 5/1950

De beschikking is met als zoekterm SAB202400024 te vinden onder Uitspraken op www.rechtspraak.nl



SAB202300027
BEKENDMAKING

Bij beschikking van het Gerecht in eerste Aanleg van Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba van 5 juni 2024 is op grond van de wettelijke regeling voor langdurig onverdeeld gebleven gemeenschappen (artikel 3:200a BW BES) een onroerende zaak in eigendom toegekend aan de verzoekster Lockie Jayne Johnson-McGehee, wonend te Saba. Het betreft de onroerende zaak:

COVE BAY (circa 1135 m2)
Meetbrief 16/2023 te Saba.

De beschikking is met als zoekterm SAB202300027 te vinden onder Uitspraken op www.rechtspraak.nl



SAB202300030
BEKENDMAKING

Bij beschikking van het Gerecht in eerste Aanleg van Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba van 5 juni 2024 is op grond van de wettelijke regeling voor langdurig onverdeeld gebleven gemeenschappen (artikel 3:200a BW BES) een onroerende zaak in eigendom toegekend aan de verzoeker Clifton Dominic Gumbs, wonend te Saba. Het betreft de onroerende zaak:

ST. JOHN / JOHN EVERY (circa 239 m2 en circa 354 m2,
meetbrieven 27 en 28 van 1994)
te Saba.

De beschikking is met als zoekterm SAB202300030 te vinden onder Uitspraken op www.rechtspraak.nl



SAB202400001
BEKENDMAKING

Bij beschikking van het Gerecht in eerste Aanleg van Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba van 5 juni 2024 is op grond van de wettelijke regeling voor langdurig onverdeeld gebleven gemeenschappen (artikel 3:200a BW BES) een onroerende zaak in eigendom toegekend aan de verzoeker Maria Filomena Patricia Mawell, wonend te Sint Maarten. Het betreft de onroerende zaak:

SPRING BAY PROPERTY (circa 970m2)
meetbrief 7 van 2000

De beschikking is met als zoekterm SAB202400001 te vinden onder Uitspraken op www.rechtspraak.nl



SAB202400003
BEKENDMAKING

Bij beschikking van het Gerecht in eerste Aanleg van Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba van 5 juni 2024 is op grond van de wettelijke regeling voor langdurig onverdeeld gebleven gemeenschappen (artikel 3:200a BW BES) een onroerende zaak in eigendom toegekend aan de verzoekster Wilma Myntruu WOODS-EVERY, wonend te Saba. Het betreft de onroerende zaak:

THE BOTTOM (circa 227 m2 en 226 m2 en 427 m2)
meetbrieven 3, 4 en 5 van 2009

De beschikking is met als zoekterm SAB202400003 te vinden onder Uitspraken op www.rechtspraak.nl



SAB202400004
BEKENDMAKING

Bij beschikking van het Gerecht in eerste Aanleg van Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba van 5 juni 2024 is op grond van de wettelijke regeling voor langdurig onverdeeld gebleven gemeenschappen (artikel 3:200a BW BES) een onroerende zaak in eigendom toegekend aan de verzoeker Bonnie C. Mintun, wonend in de Verenigde Staten. Het betreft de onroerende zaak:

UPPER HELL'S GATE (circa 321m2 en 256m2)
Meetbrieven 11 en 12 van 2001

De beschikking is met als zoekterm SAB202400004 te vinden onder Uitspraken op www.rechtspraak.nl



SAB202400007
BEKENDMAKING

Bij beschikking van het Gerecht in eerste Aanleg van Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba van 5 juni 2024 is op grond van de wettelijke regeling voor langdurig onverdeeld gebleven gemeenschappen (artikel 3:200a BW BES) een onroerende zaak in eigendom toegekend aan de verzoeker Valentino Andre Chance, wonend te Curacao. Het betreft de onroerende zaak:

THE BOTTOM (550 m2, meetbrief 39 van 1970)
te Saba.

De beschikking is met als zoekterm SAB202400007 te vinden onder Uitspraken op www.rechtspraak.nl



Rochester Hills, Michigan at the scene of the shooting .

Suspect dead, 9 wounded including children in shooting at water park

DETROIT—An armed man shot and injured nine people, including two children, at a water-park near Detroit on Saturday evening before shooting himself after being cornered by police, authorities said.

Authorities called the incident random gunfire and said they cornered the suspect in a house nearby, where he died after shooting himself.

The local sheriff showed an image of a semiautomatic rifle from inside the house to which the unnamed suspect was tracked. A handgun was recovered from the scene of the shooting, officials added. The suspect was described as a 42-year-old man, while the motives for the shooting were not clear.

An 8-year-old boy was in critical condition after being shot in the head while his 4-year-old brother was also wounded but stable. Their mother was in critical condition, too, after being hurt in the abdomen and leg, Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard told reporters.

The other six victims, all aged 30 or older, were in stable condition according to Bouchard.

The suspect had got out of a vehicle in front of Brooklands Plaza Splash Pad park in Rochester Hills, Michigan, about 5 p.m. (2100 GMT) and fired about 30 shots from a 9mm semiautomatic Glock, reloading several times, Bouchard said in a press conference.

Rochester Hills is about

30 miles (50 km) north of Detroit. The neighboring community Oxford Township, also in Oakland County, was the scene of a 2021 mass school shooting where student Ethan Crumbley, then 15, killed four students and wounded six other students and a teacher at Oxford High School.

"It's a gut punch, obviously, for us here in Oakland County," Bouchard said on Saturday. "We've gone through so many tragedies, you know. We're not even fully comprehending what happened at Oxford."

Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer said on X, "I am heartbroken to learn about the shooting in Rochester Hills."

US Catholic bishops apologize to Native Americans for abuses, promise new outreach

SOUTH DAKOTA—U.S. Catholic bishops offered an apology to Native Americans on Friday for the church's role in inflicting trauma on their communities and adopted new guidelines for ministering to indigenous Catholics.

The new policies, approved by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, call on church leaders to set up listening sessions with local Native leaders, incorporate tribal customs into sacred rites and improve access to Catholic universities and other educational opportunities for Native Americans, among other directives.

The document chronicled some of the abuses that Native Americans suffered at the hands of the church, including its operation of more than 80 government-sponsored boarding schools that were part of a decades-long forced assimilation program.

The schools were created by the federal government in the 19th century and lasted for 150 years, during which Native children were removed from their homes, forbidden to speak their own languages and given new English names.

A government investigation into the system found widespread physical, sexual and emotional abuse, as well as hundreds of deaths.

"The Church recognizes that it has played a part in traumas experienced by Native children," the document

said, saying "these tragedies" led to addiction, domestic abuse, abandonment and neglect that harmed families.

Elsewhere, the bishops said, "We apologize" for the wrongs.

The guidelines call on church members to "be open to cooperating with Tribal and other government investigations into any Catholic involvement in ethnic abuse," including boarding schools.

Many of the new policies are aimed at addressing the chasm that some Native Americans believe separates their tribal backgrounds and

their Catholic identities, the document said.

"For Native Catholics who feel this tension, we assure you, as the Catholic bishops of the United States, that you do not have to be one or the other," the document said. "You are both. Your cultural embodiment of the faith is a gift to the Church."

More than 340 U.S. parishes out of more than 16,000 serve predominantly Native American congregations, and approximately 20% of all Native Americans consider themselves Catholics, according to the bishops conference.

Wildfire burns 12,000 acres, forces evacuations

CALIFORNIA—A wildfire burning northwest of Los Angeles on Sunday has forced the evacuation of over 1,000 people from a popular outdoor recreation area and burned over 12,000 acres, authorities said.

Some 400 firefighters armed with 70 firetrucks and two bulldozers are battling the Post fire, which is just 2% contained, according to Cal Fire. It is burning south of Gorman, California, about 60 miles (96.5 km) northwest of Los Angeles.

The fire, which started Saturday afternoon, is moving to the southeast, toward Pyramid Lake, Cal Fire said.

Some 1,200 people have been evacuated from the Hungry Valley recreation area, which has trails for motorcycles and off-road vehicles, since the fire broke out. Two structures have been destroyed so far.

Cal Fire said that efforts to contain the wildfire are being hampered by high temperatures, low humidity and strong winds, forecast to continue through Sunday night.

Water-dropping aircraft are working to halt forward progress of the fire, while firefighters are constructing perimeter fire lines in an effort to get the blaze under more control.

Biden slams Court at \$30 mln fundraiser with Obama, Clooney, Julia Roberts

LOS ANGELES—President Joe Biden slammed the U.S. Supreme Court as "out of kilter" at a glitzy fundraiser in Los Angeles on Saturday with former President Barack Obama and top Hollywood celebrities that has raised over \$30 million.

Late-night TV host Jimmy Kimmel began by showing a video montage contrasting Biden's record with that of his predecessor and current Republican challenger Donald Trump. He drew cheers from the audience at a packed Peacock Theater in downtown Los Angeles, where Hollywood celebrities George Clooney and Julia Roberts were among the guests.

Biden, a Democrat who has frequently denounced specific decisions but resisted a full-throated attack on the court itself, said on Sat-

urday "the Supreme Court has never been as out of kilter as it is today."

"The fact of the matter is that there has never been a court that is this far out of step," Biden said. He noted that conservative Justice Clarence Thomas had said the court, which overturned the half-century-old federal right to abortion, should reconsider such things as in vitro fertilization and contraception.

Trump nominated three of the six conservatives who control the nine-member court. He and Biden are in a tight rematch race for the Nov. 5 election.

If Trump is elected again, Biden said, he "is likely to have two new Supreme Court nominees."

"The idea that if he's reelected he's going to appoint two more who are flying flags upside down... I

think it is one of the scariest parts," Biden said.

He was referring to a recent controversy involving Justice Samuel Alito, who allowed flags associated with the movement to reverse Trump's 2020 loss to Biden - including an upside-down American flag - to fly outside his homes in Virginia and New Jersey.

Democratic lawmakers, citing the flag displays, have said Alito should recuse himself from a case involving Trump's claim of presidential immunity from prosecution on federal criminal charges relating to his efforts to overturn the 2020 results.

Since Biden took office, the court's conservative majority has also restricted affirmative action, gay rights, gun control and environmental regulation. It has blocked the president's

agenda on immigration, student loans, vaccine mandates and climate change.

Obama said "the power of the Supreme Court is determined by elections. What we're seeing now is a byproduct of 2016" when Trump was elected. "Hopefully we have learned our lesson. Because these elections matter."

Obama also invoked Trump's felony convictions to applause from the crowd. Trump was convicted by a New York jury on May 30 of 34 felony counts of falsifying business records.

'LARGEST DEMOCRATIC FUNDRAISER'

The Biden campaign hoped the star-studded event would display strength and momentum despite Biden's low approval ratings and concerns about the age of the president, who is 81.

"This will be one of the biggest fundraisers we've had," said Ajay Jain Bhutoria, deputy finance chair at the Democratic National Committee. A Biden campaign spokeswoman said "\$28 mln heading into President Biden's LA fundraiser - and counting. This is the largest Democratic fundraiser in history."

The Biden campaign outraised the \$26 million a March fundraiser in New York City generated where comedian and TV host Stephen Colbert hosted Biden, Obama and former President Bill Clinton. The top-ticket package for the LA event costs \$500,000, campaign officials said.

Other celebrities who took the stage at the Saturday event included Jack Black, Jason Bateman, Kathryn Hahn and Sheryl Lee Ralph.

In recent weeks, Mark Hamill of Star Wars fame made a White House briefing room appearance to praise the president, Robert De Niro showed up in lower Manhattan for a press conference at the Biden campaign's behest and Steven Spielberg has been helping the Biden campaign with storytelling.

Actor Michael Douglas held a fundraiser for the president and artists Queen Latifah, Lenny Kravitz, Lizzo, James Taylor, Christina Aguilera and Barbra Streisand have all performed to help Biden raise money.

Biden campaign's fundraising in April lagged Trump's for the first time, after the former president ramped up his joint operation with the Republican National Committee and headlined high-dollar fundraisers.

Global audiences suspicious of AI powered newsrooms, report finds

NEW YORK - Global concerns about the use of AI in news production and misinformation are growing, a report published by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism found, posing fresh challenges to newsrooms already struggling to engage audiences.

The institute's annual Digital News Report published on Monday, which this year is based on surveys of nearly 100,000 people across 47 countries, offers a picture of the hurdles news media faces in lifting revenue and sustaining business.

Newsrooms globally are working to address a new challenge with generative artificial intelligence, as tech giants and startups like Google and OpenAI build tools that can offer summaries of information and siphon traffic from news websites.

But the report found that consumers are suspicious about the use of AI to create news content, particularly for sensitive subjects such as politics.

According to the survey, 52% of U.S. respondents and 63% of UK respondents said they would be uncomfortable with news produced mostly with AI. The report surveyed 2,000 people in each country, noting that respondents were more comfortable with behind-the-scenes uses of AI to make journalists' work more efficient.

"It was surprising to see the level of suspicion," said Nic Newman, senior research associate at the Reuters Institute and lead author of the Digital News Report. "People broadly had fears about what might happen to content reliability and trust."

Concerns about false news content online rose by three percentage points from last year, with 59% of survey respondents saying they were worried. This figure was higher in South Africa and the U.S. at 81% and 72%, respectively, as both countries hold elections this year, the report said.

Another challenge facing news organizations is the general unwillingness of audiences to pay for news subscriptions. Following some growth during the pandemic, 17% of respondents across 20 countries said they paid for online news, a figure that has been unchanged for the past three years, the report said.

A significant proportion of news subscribers in the U.S. were also likely to be paying discounted rates due

to trials or promotions, with 46% paying less than the full price for their subscriptions.

TURNING TO ALTERNATIVES

News influencers are playing a bigger role than mainstream media organizations in delivering the news to users of popular online platforms like TikTok.

In a survey of more than 5,600 TikTok users who said they used the app for news, 57% said they mostly paid attention to individual personalities, versus 34% who said they mainly followed journalists or news brands.

The findings show that newsrooms need to build a direct relationship with their audiences while also "strategically using the platforms to connect with people who are trickier to reach, like younger audiences," Newman said. "We see that these influencers have a bigger role on the platforms."

Vitus "V" Spehar, a TikTok creator with 3.1 million followers, was one news personality cited by some of the survey respondents. Spehar has become known

for their unique style of delivering the top headlines of the day while laying on the floor under their desk, which they previously told Reuters is intended to offer a more gentle perspective on current events and contrast with a traditional news anchor who sits at a desk.

The Digital News Report surveyed people in the U.S., UK, France, Argentina and Brazil, asking them to name up to three mainstream or alternative accounts they follow for the news.

The top 10 individuals cited by respondents in the U.S. are most known for offering political commentary rather than original news-gathering, the report noted. These personalities included Tucker Carlson, a former Fox News anchor, Joe Rogan, who hosts the top podcast on Spotify and David Pakman, a progressive talk radio host.

The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism is funded by the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Thomson Reuters TRI.TO.

Europe must catch up in green tech race, Spain's climate minister says

BRUSSELS-- The next European Commission must do more to help European industry catch up in the green tech race with China and the U.S., said Spain's climate and energy minister Teresa Ribera, a front-runner to be the EU's next head of green policies.

EU country leaders meet on Monday in Brussels to discuss the top jobs in the next European Commission, in which each of the 27 EU countries will have a member.

Ribera, who Spain's government has put forward to seek a senior climate-related Commission post, rebuffed some politicians' calls for the EU to slow its green transition, but said greater effort would be needed to address its fallout for citizens and industries.

"This is going to be a very critical period for Europe, and either we manage to overcome all the difficulties and become this strong, positive power. Or, we implode," Ribera told Reuters in an interview.

"The green agenda is a good driver to catch up and to get back in a relevant position," she said.

Green parties performed badly in this month's European

Parliament elections, while far-right parties sceptical of climate policies gained seats.

Ribera said future climate policymaking would be harder. But she said delaying Europe's green shift would ultimately backfire, by costing European companies their edge in low-carbon industries and subjecting farmers to more extreme drought and crop-shrivelling heat.

As global competition in green technologies sharpens, Europe is adopting a tougher stance against China. Brussels last week announced tariffs on imported Chinese electric cars, and is investigating Chinese subsidies for wind and solar suppliers.

Ribera said the next Commission should consult local industries to understand what conditions could help them get "back in this race" with the U.S. and China - be it more public investments in next-generation technologies, or simpler bureaucratic rules.

"The United States realized that they needed to invest in their own (industry), so they are attracting money and investment from all over the world - including European money," she said. "Why do we not do that in our own countries?"



Thailand's Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin looks on during an interview with Reuters in Koh Samui, Surat Thani province, Thailand, April 7, 2024. REUTERS/Chalinee Thirasupa/File Photo

Four Thai court cases that could unleash political crisis

BANGKOK - Thailand faces a critical week of court cases that could trigger a political crisis in Southeast Asia's second-largest economy, with the fate of the prime minister and the main opposition hanging in the balance.

Four cases before the courts on Tuesday involve the country's most powerful politicians: Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin, former prime leader Thaksin Shinawatra, the popular opposition Move Forward party and upper-house lawmakers.

For decades, Thailand's politics has been shaped by a struggle between its conservative-royalist establishment, supported by the military, and populist parties such as those backed by Thaksin and the current opposition Move Forward party.

"These cases highlight the fragility and complexity of Thailand's political climate," ANZ Research said in a note.

"On the economic front, the immediate concerns are the potential for disruptive protests and delays to fiscal policy implementation."

How Is The Prime Minister Involved?

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin, a political novice who took office last August, has been accused by a group of conservative senators of breaching the constitution when he appointed a former lawyer with a conviction record to his cabinet.

Srettha, who denies any wrongdoing, could face dismissal if the Constitutional Court rules against him.

If Srettha is removed from office, a new government must be formed and his ruling Pheu Thai party would need to put forward a new candidate for premier to be

voted on by parliament.

The court will likely announce the next hearing or verdict date on Tuesday.

What Is The Case Against Thaksin?

Thaksin, the influential former premier who was ousted in a 2006 military coup, is to be formally indicted in a criminal court in Bangkok for allegedly insulting the royalty and other charges linked to a 2015 media interview on Tuesday.

The court will then decide whether or not to grant bail to the billionaire politician, who has said he is innocent. "This case has no merit at all," he told reporters earlier this month.

Thailand's lese-majeste law, one of the world's toughest, carries a maximum jail sentence of up to 15 years for each perceived royal insult.

The 74-year-old returned to Thailand to a rock star's reception last August after 15 years of self-imposed exile.

Hours after his arrival, Shinawatra family-backed Pheu Thai and Srettha sailed through a parliamentary vote to pick the prime minister, fuelling speculation that Thaksin had struck a deal with his former enemies in the conservative establishment.

Thaksin and the Pheu Thai party have denied this.

Is The Opposition Under Threat?

Another case could lead to the dissolution of the progressive Move Forward party, which has 30% of seats in the lower house after winning last year's closely-fought election but was blocked by conservative lawmakers from forming a government.

The dissolution of Move Forward's predecessor party, Future Forward, in 2020 over a campaign funding violation was among the factors that triggered massive anti-government street protests.

The Constitutional Court is considering an Election Commission complaint that alleges the Move Forward party breached the constitution with an election campaign to reform the country's royal insult law.

Move Forward, which denies any wrongdoing, ceased efforts to change the law following a January verdict from the same court that ruled the party's plan to amend the law was a hidden effort to undermine the monarchy.

The court is expected to announce the next hearing or verdict date on Tuesday.

What About The Senate Election?

The Constitutional Court will also deliver a verdict on Tuesday on the ongoing selection of a new 200-member Senate, after accepting a petition questioning whether parts of the complex, three-tier process were lawful.

If the process is cancelled or delayed, it would temporarily extend the term of military-appointed lawmakers who have been central in determining government formation, including last year's manoeuvre to block Move Forward from forming a government.

The current upper house was hand-picked by the military following a 2014 coup that ousted an elected Pheu Thai government that had been led by Thaksin's sister, who still lives in self-imposed exile.



SIMPSON BAY RESORT announces a vacancy for a

BAKER specialized in Mexican pastries

Vacancy # 10087

- Job requirements:** Preferably at least five years of baking experience. General knowledge of Yucatecan, Jalisco, and Poblana Pastries. Must have a clean police record. Positive attitude. Able to work under pressure. Must be able to speak, read, and write English, (Spanish, French an asset).
- Minimum education:** High School.
- Specialized in:** Mexican Pastries – Conchas, Chilindrinas, Cuernitos, Corbata, Pastel, 3 Leches, Telera.
- Salary & benefits:** Commensurate with experience.

Candidates must be Antillean or be in the possession of a valid residence permit. (6 months or more)

Submit application and resume to:
National Employment Service Center (NESC)
via email: apply.nesc@sintmaartengov.org within 2 weeks to the attention of Employment Services Center and Simpson Bay Resort Human Resources Department
via email: sbrhr@outlook.com

Application should include an application letter, copy of identification, copy of diplomas and certificates where required.

Chinese outbound travel recovery lags due to costs, visa snags

BEIJING/SHANGHAI - A recovery in Chinese overseas travel from the COVID-19 pandemic is fading as rising costs and difficulties in securing visas cement a preference for local and short-haul destinations.

The delay in a revival to pre-COVID levels by China's outbound travellers, the world's top spenders on international tourism and airlines, is hitting travel-related companies, hotels and retailers globally.

Eighteen months after China dropped strict zero-COVID policies and reopened its borders, the recovery in overseas travel is lagging behind market expectations and the shape of Chinese travel is changing, with a surge in domestic trips.

Pressured by a prolonged property crisis, high unemployment and a gloomy outlook in the world's second-biggest economy, Chinese consumers have become more frugal since the pandemic, prompting discount wars on everything from travel to cars, coffee and clothes.

Chinese people took 87 million trips abroad last year, down 40% from pre-COVID 2019, and industry observers say the pace has slowed since the Lunar New Year in February. China's travellers spent 24% less last year than in 2019, while U.S. travellers' spending was up 14%, according to U.N. Tourism data.

The Chinese lag is bad news for countries like France, Australia and the U.S., which were among the top destinations for Chinese travellers before the pandemic.

Liu Simin, vice president of the tourism branch of the China Society for Futures Studies research institute, forecasts China's international travel might not recover to pre-pandemic levels for another five years.

"The recovery is a lot slower than expected," Liu said. "The devaluation of the Chinese yuan combined with inflation in the U.S. and Europe is a double blow."

The Chinese currency has fallen more than 2% against the dollar since the

start of the year, raising costs in yuan terms for Chinese travellers abroad.

Consultancy Oliver Wyman last month pushed its estimates for China's international travel recovery to late 2025, half a year later than it forecast last year.

"I would actually argue that consumers are even more cost-conscious than last year, and you'll also see that feed into travel trends," said Imke Wouters, Hong Kong-based partner at Oliver Wyman.

To be sure, overseas travel is rebounding, with Chinese travellers again the world's top spenders on international tourism last year after falling behind the United States in 2022, according to U.N. Tourism data.

This summer 8% of flights at Chinese airports have been international, up from just 1% in 2022, according to aviation data provider OAG.

FLIP TO DOMESTIC TRAVEL

That recovery, however, is overshadowed by the surge in domestic trips, which hit

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BOVIN Steak & Wine at SIMPSON BAY RESORT & SPA is pleased to announce a vacancy of

STEAK HOUSE LINE COOK

Vacancy #10089

Job requirements:

- Preferably 3 years of experience as Steak House Line Cook.
- Attention to detail.
- Must have a clean police record.
- Team Work.
- Positive attitude.
- Able to work under pressure.
- Must be able to speak, read and write English, (Spanish, French an asset).

Minimum education:

Culinary Technical career or 3 years plus of experience.

Specialized in:

- Specialized in charcoal grilling for fine cuts.
- Braise and grill meat and vegetables with high degree skill.
- Knowledge in handling broilers and charcoal grills.
- Knowledge of handling different types of high cut meats.
- Knowledge of Butchery.
- Knowledge of Vast Gastronomical culture.

Salary & benefits: Commensurate with experience.

Candidates must be Antillean or be in the possession of a permanent residence permit.

Submit application and resume to:
National Employment Service Center (NESC) via email: apply.nesc@sintmaartengov.org
within 2 weeks to the attention of Employment Services Center and Simpson Bay Resort Human Resources Department via email: sbrhr@outlook.com
Application should include an application letter, copy of identification, copy of diplomas and certificates where required.



BOVIN Steak & Wine at SIMPSON BAY RESORT & SPA is pleased to announce a vacancy of

MIXOLOGIST

VACANCY # 10066

Job requirements:

- Preferably 3 years of experience as a Mixologist
- Must have a clean police record
- Positive attitude
- Able to work under pressure
- Ability to perform specific recipes
- Design Cocktails
- Pairing with agave spirits and wines
- Must be able to speak, read and write English, (Spanish, French an asset)

Minimum education: Bachelor degree or 3 years plus of experience

Specialized in: Cocktail combinations of Mezcal, Tequila and Sotol

Salary & benefits: Commensurate with experience

Candidates must be Antillean or be in the possession of a permanent residence permit. Submit application and resume to:
National Employment Service Center (NESC) via email: apply.nesc@sintmaartengov.org within 2 weeks to the attention of Employment Services Center and Simpson Bay Resort Human Resources Department via email: sbrhr@outlook.com. Application should include an application letter, copy of identification, copy of diplomas and certificates where required.

South Korea's loudspeakers face questions over reach into North

SEOUL-- The loudspeakers deployed by South Korea to wage psychological warfare against North Korea faced audits and legal battles claiming they are too quiet, raising questions over how far into the reclusive North their propaganda messages can blast.

South Korea resumed loudspeaker broadcasts directed at North Korea on June 9 for the first time since a now-defunct inter-Korean agreement banned them in 2018.

The current speakers were among 40 systems purchased in 2016 after the two Koreas exchanged artillery fire in a 2015 dispute over the broadcasts.

The military says the systems were designed to blare pop music and political messages as far as 10 kilometres (6.21 miles), enough to reach the city of Kaesong and its nearly 200,000 residents.

But audits released at the time, seen by Reuters, showed the new speakers did not meet those standards and were not as powerful as the military called for.

According to former navy officer Kim Young-



South Korean soldiers work on a loudspeaker that is set up for propaganda broadcasts during a military drill near the demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas in Paju, South Korea, in this handout picture provided by the Defense Ministry and released on June 9, 2024.

su, although the speakers passed two out three initial tests in 2016, the trials took place in the morning or at night, when sound travels furthest.

South Korea rarely operates the speakers during those times now, so as not to disturb nearby South Korean residents as much, said Kim, who investigated and raised the issues to gov-

ernment corruption watchdogs and the police.

The issues led the Ministry of National Defence to sue the manufacturer, but a court dismissed the case, saying that too many environmental factors can affect the performance.

Tests in 2017 showed that messages or songs from the speakers could not be understood further than

7 kilometres, and more often closer to 5 kilometres, according to the audit and Kim, not enough to reach a city such as Kaesong.

The ministry told Reuters in a statement that performance may vary depending on conditions such as temperature, humidity, and terrain, but that it did not consider the loudspeakers' performance to be restricted.

Kim Sung-min, who defected from the North in 1999 and runs a Seoul radio station that broadcasts news into North Korea, said the mountainous border terrain and North Korea's own loudspeakers in the area further diminish the reach of South Korea's psychological warfare.

North Korea's broadcasts are less aimed at winning over people in the South and more at "suppressing" the South's broadcasts by overpowering or muddling the message, he said.

Still, for North Koreans who hear the South Korean messages or catchy K-pop tunes that are banned in

the North, the broadcasts can have a significant psychological impact, Kim Sung-min said.

"These broadcasts play a role in instilling a yearning for the outside world, or in making them realize that the textbooks they have been taught from are incorrect," he said.

At least two North Korean soldiers from the frontlines defected to the South in 2017 after listening to loudspeaker broadcasts, local media reported, citing South Korean officials.

The angry North Korean reaction to the broadcasts also suggests the loudspeakers strike a nerve with the authoritarian country, said Steve Tharp, a retired U.S. Army officer who spent years working along the border.

"We know that the North Koreans find them partly effective because they have spent a lot of time getting them turned off," he said.

CHINESE TRAVEL

Continued from page 24.

a record 295 million during the five-day May Day holiday, up more than 20% from 2019, official data showed.

Domestic airlines seats were up 16% in May from the same month in 2019, while international flights were down 30%, Cirium data shows.

Wouters at Oliver Wyman said 40% of those who travelled abroad in 2023 for the first time since borders reopened had decided not to travel internationally again this year, mainly due to inconvenience and long visa processing times for many European destinations.

Beijing resident Wang Shu, 38, vacationed domestically after cancelling a trip to France because he could not get a visa, despite trying to book a visa appointment months ahead.

"I tried booking the interview in late March, as I planned to attend the French Open tennis in late May, but the earliest date

that I could book was June 19," Wang said.

Wang instead vacationed in Changsha, the capital of Hunan province, known for its spicy food.

"The food was great, I watched a concert and spent one-tenth of the money I'd have spent in France," he said.

Australia's top source of tourists before COVID, China is now number four, with arrivals down 53% in March from March 2019, said Margy Osmond, chief executive of Tourism & Transport Forum Australia. Chinese travellers to France, the most visited country in the world, have reached only 28.5% of 2019 levels, according to airport operator ADP.

Capacity on U.S.-China routes remains down more than 80% from 2019 levels, weighed by intensifying bilateral political tensions. The U.S. National Travel and Tourism Office expects Chinese tourism to the

U.S. to recover fully only in 2026.

By contrast, countries with visa-free policies have received strong growth in Chinese visitors.

These include Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, where flight capacity has also increased.

Switzerland, growing in popularity with high-end travellers on Trip.com, boasts a seven-day visa process, said Jane Sun, CEO of Trip.com Group 9961.HK. Japan has also received a surge in Chinese travellers this year, boosted by a plunge in the yen's value.

"We are not just seeing a market re-growing, we are seeing a market reshaping," Gary Bowerman, director of tourism intelligence firm Check-In Asia, told an OAG webinar last month.

Top spenders in international travel <https://reuters/4c5pzc0>



SIMPSON BAY RESORT & SPA

is pleased to announce a vacancy for a:

F&B KITCHEN EQUIPMENT TECHNICIAN

Vacancy #10088

Job requirements:

- Proficiency in diagnosing and repairing kitchen equipment.
- Experience in preventive maintenance and routine inspections.
- Ability to work independently and prioritize tasks.
- Attention to detail and adherence to safety protocols.
- Strong communication skills.
- Flexibility for emergency repairs and service calls.
- Commitment to continuous learning.
- Reliable and punctual work ethic.

Minimum education: Bachelor degree or High School(Baccalaureate)

Specialized in: Gas equipment, ovens, stoves, grills, tortilla machines, coolers, freezers, and AC units.

Salary & benefits: Commensurate with experience

Candidates must be Antillean or be in the possession of a permanent residence permit.

Submit application and resume to:

National Employment Service Center (NESC) via email: apply.nesc@sintmaarten.gov.org

within 2 weeks to the attention of Employment Services Center and Simpson Bay Resort Human Resources Department via email: sbrhr@outlook.com

Application should include an application letter, copy of identification, copy of diplomas and certificates where required.

World falling behind on environment, health and hunger goals, UN report says

SINGAPORE - The world is way off track on most of the sustainable development targets agreed in 2015, such as tackling poverty and hunger, says a United Nations report which cites funding shortfalls, geopolitical tensions and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The U.N.'s annual Sustainable Development Report ranks the performance of its 193 member states in implementing 17 wide-ranging "sustainable development goals" (SDGs), which also include improving access to education and

health care, providing clean energy and protecting biodiversity.

It found that none of the 17 goals were on course to be met by 2030, with most targets showing "limited or a reversal of progress". It urged countries to address chronic funding shortfalls and also revamp the U.N. system itself.

"What this report is showing is that even before the pandemic hit, progress was already too slow," said Guillaume Lafortune, Vice President at the U.N. Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)

and lead author of the report.

"Once the pandemic hit, and other crises - including military conflicts - then it is a story of stagnation."

The report identified the tackling of hunger, the creation of sustainable cities and the protection of biodiversity on land and water as particular areas of weakness. Political goals like press freedom have also seen a "reversal of progress".

It said Finland, Sweden and Denmark ranked at the top of the list of countries, and China has also made faster than average progress, but the world's poorest countries have fallen further behind.

Lafortune said developing countries needed more access to international finance, adding that institutions like credit rating agencies should be encouraged to take a country's long-term environmental and economic wellbeing into consideration, rather than just its short-term liquidity.

The report also assessed countries on their willingness to cooperate globally through U.N. institutions. The United States was ranked in last place.

"A large majority of countries are supportive of collaborating... but there are a number of great powers that do not play by the rules of the game," said Lafortune.



Chinese Premier Li Qiang meets with Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese at the Australian Parliament House in Canberra, Australia.

Australia's Albanese, China's Li to discuss trade, jailed writer

CANBERRA - Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Chinese Premier Li Qiang met on Monday in the first visit to the country by a Chinese premier in seven years, with trade ties, regional security and a jailed Australian writer on the host's agenda.

The visit by Li, China's top-ranked official after President Xi Jinping, marks a stabilisation in relations between the U.S. security ally and the world's second-biggest economy, after a frosty period of Beijing blocking \$20 billion in Australian exports and friction over defence encounters.

"Engagement is important and necessary to manage some of the serious challenges that we have, as well as looking to coop-

eration," Foreign Minister Penny Wong said in a radio interview on Monday.

Australia and the United States worked through the QUAD partnership with Japan and India, and the AUKUS defence agreement with Britain, to "ensure we have a safer and more stable region", she said.

China has criticised the QUAD and AUKUS as efforts to contain it, a topic likely to be discussed by the leaders.

Protesters and supporters gathered on Monday morning on the lawn outside parliament house in Canberra, where there was a heavy police presence, as a ceremonial welcome was held for Li.

Barricades separated Tibetan, Uyghur, Hong Kong and Falun Gong protesters from a large contingent of pro-China supporters.

Tibetan Tenzin Wougyal, 37, a Canberra resident, said he came to show Tibet's culture, religion and language are at risk.

"Australia should be cautious about what it is doing - don't sacrifice human rights for short term economic business," he said.

Tan Zhu, 50, said he travelled from Sydney to welcome Li, and was also at Canberra airport when he arrived.

"The relationship with Australia has become much better. That's very positive," he said.

Beginning with some panda and wine diplomacy on Sunday, Li is on a four-day visit which the Chinese leader said showed bilateral relations were "back on track".

Without China - which receives one-third of Australia's exports and supplies one-fourth of Australia's imports - Australians would pay 4.2% more for consumer items, the Australia China Business Council said on Monday.

Trade between Australia and China reached A\$327 billion (\$215.95 billion) last year as Beijing's trade blocks eased.

Australia is the biggest supplier of iron ore to China and China has been an investor in Australian mining projects.

Li's visit will likely raise the issue of whether Australia will continue to accept high levels of Chinese investment in its critical minerals sector, as Western security allies push to reduce reliance on Beijing for the rare earths vital to electric vehicles. Australia last month blocked several Chinese investors from increasing stakes in a rare earths miner on national interest grounds.

Albanese has said he will raise human rights issues in his talks with Li.

The suspended death sentence for China-born Australian writer Yang Hengjun was upheld by a Beijing court ahead of Li's visit, his supporters said on Sunday.

They urged Albanese to ask Li to allow Yang's transfer to Australia on medical grounds, saying in a statement it was "not possible to achieve a stable, respectful bilateral relationship with China while their officials are threatening to execute an Australian political prisoner".

US ready to reopen oil stockpile if petrol prices surge again, FT reports

WASHINGTON - The Biden administration is ready to release more oil from the U.S. strategic stockpile to stop any jump in petrol prices this summer, the Financial Times reported on Monday.

Senior Biden adviser Amos Hochstein told the newspaper that oil prices are "still too high for many Americans" and he would like to see them "cut down a little bit further".

Hochstein, speaking to the FT said that the U.S. would "continue to purchase into next year, until we think that the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) has the volume that it needs to serve its original

purpose of energy security"

The Energy Department this year has been buying about 3 million barrels of oil per month for the SPR after selling 180 million barrels in 2022 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The move was an effort to curb gasoline prices that spiked to more than \$5.00 a gallon, but it also reduced the reserve to its lowest level in 40 years.

Earlier this month, Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm told Reuters that the U.S. could hasten the rate of replenishing the SPR as maintenance on the stockpile is completed by the end of the year.

Vacancy #10084
U.N.T. Wholesale B.V.
has a vacancy for a:

Warehouse Attendant

Duties:

- Maintaining and organizing inventory in the warehouse.
- Processing data entry work & verifying shipment orders.
- Arranging, labeling and packing products on pallets.
- Inspecting the goods to make sure there are no damages/defects and report to management if any issues.
- Responsible for the distribution of merchandise to drivers for the clients.

Qualifications:

- High School diploma.

Requirements:

- Minimum 2 years of experience.
- Able to lift heavy items and physically fit.

Applications accepted up to July 4th, 2024.
Only Dutch nationals or persons with valid working papers need to apply.

Send applications to brotherstradingsxm@gmail.com

All interested candidates MUST submit their application to the National Employment Service Center (NESC) preferably via apply.nesc@sintmaartengov.org within two (2) weeks to the attention of Employment Services Center.

The applications should include an application letter, copy of identification, copy of diplomas and or certificates, where required.

All suitable applicants will be contacted for an interview to be held with a representative of the business and a Business Service Officer representing NESC.

Vacancy #10054
Jai Kalima N.V.
has a vacancy for:

Cooks

Duties:

- Responsible for preparing the meals in the restaurant.
- Experience in the preparation of Indian & Tandoorian Meals.
- Able to work shifts.

Qualifications:

- High school diploma.
- Diploma in Cooking.
- At least two years of experience.

Only Dutch nationals or persons with valid work permit need apply.

Deadline for submittance of applications is June 18th, 2024.
Salary - Naf. 2.069,60 - Naf. 2.32825 based on experience.

Forward all applications to: shaktishiv05@yahoo.com

All interested candidates MUST submit their application to the National Employment Service Center (NESC) preferably via apply.nesc@sintmaartengov.org within two (2) weeks to the attention of Employment Services Center.

The applications should include an application letter, copy of identification, copy of diplomas and or certificates, where required.

All suitable applicants will be contacted for an interview to be held with a representative of the business and a Business Service Officer representing NESC.

Indian suspect in plot to kill Sikh separatist extradited to US

WASHINGTON - An Indian man suspected by the U.S. of involvement in an unsuccessful plot to kill a Sikh separatist on American soil has been extradited to the United States from the Czech Republic, according to the federal Bureau of Prisons website and a source familiar with the matter.

Nikhil Gupta has been accused by U.S. federal prosecutors of plotting with an Indian government official to kill Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a U.S. resident who advocated for a sovereign Sikh state in northern India.

Gupta traveled to Prague from India last June and was arrested by Czech authorities. Last month, a Czech court rejected his petition to avoid being sent to the U.S., clear-

ing the way for the Czech justice minister to extradite him.

An inmate search by name on the Bureau of Prisons website showed on Sunday that Gupta, 52, is being held at the Metropolitan Detention Center, Brooklyn, a federal administrative detention facility. A source familiar with the matter, who did not want to be identified, separately confirmed Gupta's extradition and his detention in Brooklyn.

A U.S. Justice Department spokesperson declined to comment. Gupta's U.S.-based lawyer, attorney Jeffrey Chabrowe, had no immediate comment. There was also no immediate comment from Czech authorities.

The discovery of assassination plots

against Sikh separatists in the U.S. and Canada has tested relations with India, seen by Western nations as a counter to China's rising global influence. India's government denies involvement in the plots.

Canada said in September its intelligence agencies were pursuing allegations linking India's government to the murder of Sikh separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar in June 2023 in Canada.

In November, U.S. authorities said an Indian government official had directed the plot in the attempted murder of Pannun, who is a U.S. and Canadian citizen. Gupta is accused of involvement in that plot.

Pannun told Reuters on Sunday that while the extradition was a welcome step, "Nikhil Gupta is just a foot soldier." He alleged that those who hired Gupta were senior members of the Indian government who act on the direction of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

India's government has dissociated itself from the plot against Pannun, saying it was against government policy. It has said it would formally investigate security concerns raised by Washington.

New Delhi has long complained about Sikh separatist groups outside India, viewing them as security threats. The groups have kept alive the movement for Khalistan, or the demand for an independent Sikh state to be carved out of India.

Last month, Washington said it was satisfied so far with India's moves to ensure accountability in the alleged plots, but added that many steps still needed to be taken.



Alexandra Vashchuk, who was in a relationship with Gordon Black, a U.S. Army staff sergeant detained in Russia on May 2 on suspicion of stealing from her, speaks with reporters in front of a court building after a hearing, in Vladivostok, Russia.

US soldier held in Russia pleads not guilty to threat charges, RIA reports

VLADIVOSTOK - U.S. serviceman Gordon Black, detained in the Russian city of Vladivostok, has pleaded not guilty to charges of threatening to kill his girlfriend and partially guilty to theft charges, RIA news agency reported on Monday.

The state Russian agency, reporting from Black's second court hearing in

Vladivostok, in Russia's Far East, said the U.S. soldier, who was stationed in South Korea but detained in Russia on May 2, spoke in court through an interpreter.

"No (I don't plead guilty to threatening to kill)," RIA cited Black as saying. "Partially (to the theft), there was no intent."

Black was detained on suspicion of stealing from

his Russian girlfriend. Citing local prosecutors, Russian independent media reported he had also subsequently been charged with threatening to kill her.

RIA reported that Black pleaded guilty to theft charges in May but would enter a plea later and that he was co-operating with the investigators.

Taiwan is not seeking war with China, defence minister says

TAIPEI- Taiwan is not seeking war with Beijing, and its policy is to build up a defensive, multi-level deterrence capability to make it harder for China to capture the island, Taiwan Defence Minister Wellington Koo said on Monday.

Democratically governed Taiwan, which China views as its own territory, has faced a stepped-up military and political pressure campaign from Beijing to accept sovereignty claims that the government in Taipei rejects.

Taiwan President Lai Ching-te on Sunday said that China views the annexation and "elimination" of Taiwan as its great national cause, telling Taiwanese military cadets not to give in to the defeatism of "the first battle is the last battle", a theory that Taiwan could collapse as soon as China launched an attack.

Asked at parliament by reporters how long Taiwan could hold out without U.S. support in the event of a Chinese attack, Koo said that was not the point of their strategy.

"It's not an issue of how long we can last. Our strategy, our hypothesis, is asymmetric warfare to build our multi-domain deterrence, and during this process to weaken" China's ability to invade, he said.

As part of ongoing military reforms, Taiwan is promoting the idea of "asymmetric warfare", to make its forces, which are much smaller than China's, more mobile and harder to attack, with for example vehicle-mounted missiles and drones.

China says Lai is a "dangerous separatist" who risks conflict by pushing for Taiwan's formal independence. Lai says only

Taiwan's people can decide their future, and has repeatedly offered talks with Beijing but been rebuffed.

Koo said it was China who is the "trouble maker" and provoker of tensions across the Taiwan Strait.

"We have never sought war. We are very clear that our entire strategy is defensive operations," he added.

U.S. President Joe Biden has upset the Chinese government with comments that appeared to suggest the United States would defend Taiwan if it were attacked, a deviation from a long-held U.S. position of "strategic ambiguity".

Koo said the whole point of U.S. strategic ambiguity was to complicate China's plans for any invasion of Taiwan.

"They will never be able to rule out the possibility of a U.S. military intervention," he said.

US rebukes Vietnam ahead of expected visit by Russia's Putin

HANOI - The United States criticised Vietnam for having invited Russia's President Vladimir Putin to Hanoi, the U.S. embassy in Hanoi said ahead of an expected state visit this week.

Putin is expected to visit Vietnam on Wednesday and Thursday, after repeated invitations from Vietnamese leaders.

The U.S. has led Western sanctions on Russia following its invasion of neighbouring Ukraine in February 2022. In March last year, the Hague-based International Criminal Court's (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for the Russian president over alleged war crimes in Ukraine.

"No country should give Putin a platform to promote his war of aggression and otherwise allow him to normalize his atrocities," a spokesperson for the U.S. embassy in Hanoi said when asked about the impact of the expected visit on ties with the United States.

"If he is able to travel freely, it could normalize

Russia's blatant violations of international law," the spokesperson added, referring to the invasion that Russia describes as a "special operation".

The U.S. upgraded relations with Hanoi last year and is Vietnam's top trading partner.

Vietnam's foreign ministry did not reply to a request for comment.

Putin's visit has not yet been formally announced, but multiple officials have confirmed the trip, which would be his first to Vietnam since 2017. The two countries have historically close ties.

"We cannot return to business as usual or turn a blind eye to the clear violations of international law Russia has committed in Ukraine. There needs to be accountability for those responsible for war crimes," the U.S. embassy spokesperson added.

Neither Vietnam, Russia or the U.S. are members of the ICC.



Test tubes are seen labelled "Bird Flu" words in this illustration taken, June 10, 2024.

Bird flu spreads to seventh Australian poultry farm

CANBERRA-- Highly pathogenic avian influenza has spread to a seventh poultry farm near Melbourne, the government of Australia's Victoria state said on Monday.

Six of the properties have an H7N3 flu strain and a seventh has an H7N9 strain, it said. Neither is the H5N1 type of avian flu that has infected billions of wild and farmed animals globally and raised fears of human transmission.

"Restricted and control areas are in place surrounding all infected premises," Victoria's agriculture department said in a statement.

The infected properties include six egg farms and a duck farm. Around 1 million chickens, roughly 5% of Australia's egg-laying flock, have been or will be killed at affected farms to contain the virus, the government said last week.

There has not yet been

any shortage of eggs, though some retailers have put in place limits on purchases.

Before the latest cases, the first of which was reported last month, Australia had experienced nine outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza since 1976, the government says. All were contained and eradicated.

Authorities say duck and chicken eggs and meat remain safe to eat.

EU leaders to discuss top jobs with line-up seemingly set

BRUSSELS - European Union leaders will debate policy goals for the next five years from defence to the economy, and who to place in top EU jobs, when they convene in Brussels on Monday.

The informal meeting will be the first leaders gathering since the European Parliament election, which proved good for the centre-right and right-wing nationalists, but humiliating for French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

The leaders are to discuss who should be the next presidents of the European Commission and European Council, and the foreign policy chief, but their minds seem already made up.

Germany's Ursula von der Leyen is in prime position to secure a second term as head of the EU executive, buoyed by gains for her centre-right Euro-

pean People's Party.

Thirteen of the 27 EU leaders are from parties belonging to the EPP. With French and German support too, she would have the qualified majority she requires to be nominated.

France had previously weighed alternatives to von der Leyen, but with a snap parliamentary election called by Macron from June 30, the government now prefers EU stability.

Former Portugal Prime Minister Alberto Costa is set to become the next president of the European Council, which would see the socialist chair submits from December.

Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, a liberal, is then in line to be nominated high representative for foreign affairs, ensuring a balanced geographical and political spread of jobs across the bloc.

The leaders' are due to confirm their choices at an EU summit on June 27-28.

Von der Leyen would still then need backing from the European Parliament, which votes in its first session from July 16.

The full 27-member Commission, including the foreign policy chief, also needs parliamentary support.

EU leaders are also expected to discuss the next five-year legislative cycle, with a stress on common values, defence and economic competitiveness. They are due to confirm their "strategic agenda" guidance at the end-June summit.

The leaders should shortly have a report by Mario Draghi, former Italian premier and president of the European Central Bank, on boosting the EU's economic prospects. In a speech on Friday, he said the bloc needed cheaper energy and a capital markets union to steer private savings towards investment.

Thousands of Rohingya feared trapped in fighting in western Myanmar

MYANMAR- Tens of thousands of Muslim minority Rohingya are feared to be caught in fighting in western Myanmar, as a powerful armed ethnic group bears down on junta positions in a coastal town on the country's border with Bangladesh.

The Arakan Army (AA), which is fighting for autonomy for Myanmar's Rakhine region, said late on Sunday that residents of Maungdaw town, inhabited primarily by the Rohingya, should leave by 9 p.m. ahead of a planned offensive on the settlement.

The AA's attack on Maungdaw is the latest in a months-long rebel onslaught against the Myanmar junta, which took power in a February 2021 coup, and now finds itself in an increasingly weakened position across large parts of the country.

"We are going to attack the remaining posts" of junta, the AA said in a statement, asking residents to stay clear of military positions in Maungdaw for their own safety.

A junta spokesman did not respond to a call seeking comment.

Around 70,000 Rohingya who are currently in Maungdaw are trapped

as the fighting draws closer, said Aung Kyaw Moe, the deputy human rights minister in Myanmar's shadow National Unity Government.

"They have no where to run to," he told Reuters.

Thousands of Rohingya fled towards neighbouring Bangladesh last month, seeking safety from the escalating conflict, although the neighbouring country is reluctant to accept more refugees.

Their movement was triggered by battles in and around the town of

Buthidaung, around 25 km (15 miles) away to the east of Maungdaw, that was captured by the AA after intense fighting during which the rebel group was accused of targeting the Rohingya community.

The AA denies the allegations.

Rohingya have faced persecution in Buddhist-majority Myanmar for decades. Nearly a million of them live in refugee camps in Bangladesh's border district of Cox's Bazar after fleeing a military-led crackdown in Rakhine in 2017.

Passenger train hit by goods train in India's West Bengal, state chief minister says

WEST BENGAL - A passenger train was hit by a goods train in Darjeeling district of India's eastern state of West Bengal, the state's chief minister said on Monday.

"Shocked to learn, just now, about a tragic train accident, in Phansidewa area of Darjeeling district," Mamata Banerjee said in a post on X, adding that details were awaited.

Banerjee said the Kanchanjunga Express, which links the north-eastern states of Assam and Tripura with West Bengal, was hit

by a goods train.

"Doctors, ambulances and disaster teams have been rushed to the site for rescue, recovery, medical assistance. Action on war-footing initiated," Banerjee said.

Local media videos showed a pile-up between the two trains with one compartment nearly vertical in the air with rescue workers and locals milling around at the accident side.

It was not immediately clear if there were casualties in the accident.

China coast guard: Philippine supply ship bumped Chinese ship at Second Thomas Shoal

BEIJING-- A Philippine supply ship dangerously approached a Chinese ship resulting in a slight collision after it illegally intruded into waters adjacent to the Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea, the Chinese coast guard said on Monday.

The Philippine transport and replenishment ship ignored China's repeated solemn warnings, the coast guard said in a statement.

The guard said the vessel deliberately and dangerously approached the Chinese ship in an unprofessional manner, resulting in a collision. The state-

ment made no mention of injuries or damage to either vessel.

For months, China and the Philippines have traded accusations over dangerous maneuvers and collisions at the Second Thomas Shoal, an atoll in the Philippines' exclusive economic zone.

Several incidents have happened when the Philippines deploys resupply missions for Filipino soldiers living aboard an aging warship there deliberately run aground to protect Manila's maritime claims.

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, a conduit for more

than \$3 trillion of annual ship-borne commerce, including parts claimed by the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei.

China had previously warned the Philippines about intruding into its territorial waters and the country has issued new rules, which went into effect on June 15, that would enforce a 2021 law allowing its coastguard to use lethal force against foreign ships in waters that it claims.

The new rules allows China's coastguard to detain suspected trespassers without trial for 60 days.

Asia shares brace for China data, euro pressure

SYDNEY-- Asian share markets were mostly softer on Monday ahead of a slew of Chinese economic news, while political uncertainty in Europe soured risk appetites and kept the euro on the defensive.

Analysts expect annual growth in China's retail sales picked up to 3.0% in May, from 2.3%, with some upside risk thanks to holidays that month. Industrial output is seen slowing a little to 6.0%, from 6.7%, with growth in urban investment steady.

There was also talk the People's Bank of China (PBOC) could cut a key lending rate by 10 basis points, in part due to surprisingly weak bank lending data released

on Friday.

That made for a cautious start, and MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan .MIAPJ0000PUS was a fraction softer.

Japan's Nikkei .N225 slipped 1.7%, with investors now facing a six-week wait to hear details of the Bank of Japan's next tightening steps.

S&P 500 futures EScl were flat, while Nasdaq futures NQc1 edged up 0.1% after a run of record finishes.

Analysts at Goldman Sachs have raised their year-end target for the S&P 500 to 5,600, from 5,200 and the current 5,431.

"Our 2024 and 2025 earnings estimates remain unchanged

but stellar earnings growth by five mega-cap tech stocks have offset the typical pattern of negative revisions to consensus EPS estimates," they wrote in a note.

The main U.S. data of the week will be retail sales for May on Tuesday, where a 0.4% bounce is expected after a 0.3% drop in April, while markets have a holiday on Wednesday.

At least 10 policy makers from the Federal Reserve are due to speak this week and will no doubt address the market's wagers for two rate cuts this year.

While the Fed itself sounded a hawkish note last week, a trio of soft inflation numbers led futures 0#FF: price in a 76% chance of a cut as early

as September and 50 basis points of easing for the year. FEDWATCH

EYES ON SNB

Central banks in Australia, Norway and the UK are all expected to hold rates steady at meetings this week, though the Swiss National Bank (SNB) might well ease given the recent strength of the Swiss franc.

Markets have boosted the probability of a cut to 75% as political uncertainty in France drove the euro to a four-month trough at 0.9505 francs EURCHF= on Friday. 0#SNBWATCH

French markets endured a brutal sell-off last week ahead of a snap election that might give a majority to the far right, with risks to the

country's fiscal position and

the stability of the euro zone. European Central Bank policymakers told Reuters they had no plans to launch emergency purchases of French bonds to stabilise the market after yield spreads over German bunds widened dramatically amid a flight to safety.

"A French challenge to the region's fiscal arrangements would be problematic and have far-reaching implications," warned analysts at JPMorgan. "At this stage, the situation in the run-up to the first round of voting is still very fluid."

That left the euro pinned at \$1.0706 EUR=EBS, after shedding 0.9% last week to touch a six-week low of

\$1.06678.

The dollar was a shade firmer on the yen at 157.54 JPY=EBS, after briefly spiking above 158.00 on Friday when the BOJ said it would start tapering bond buying a little later than many had wagered on.

In commodity markets, gold held at \$2,326 an ounce XAU=, after bouncing 1.7% last week. GOL/Oil prices eased a touch after rallying 4% last week amid hopes for stronger demand from the U.S. driving season. O/R

Brent LCOc1 dipped 17 cents to \$82.45 a barrel, while U.S. crude CLc1 also fell 17 cents to \$78.28 per barrel.

Dollar firm as euro wallows near recent lows; market braces for China data

TOKYO-- The dollar was firm on Monday as the euro hovered near a more than one-month low amid continued concerns about the political outlook in Europe.

The market also braced for a slew of top-tier economic data from China as investors sought clarity on how much the world's second-largest economy is struggling to gain momentum.

The euro EUR=EBS was nearly flat at \$1.0703, picking up somewhat after falling to its lowest since May 1 at \$1.06678 on Friday. The currency also logged its biggest weekly decline since April at 0.88% last week.

Investors have been contemplating the risk of a budget crisis at the heart of the euro area, as far right and leftist parties gain momentum ahead of France's surprise parliamentary election, pressuring President Emmanuel Macron's centrist administration. Even after the French financial markets endured a brutal sell-off late last week, European Central Bank policymakers have no plan to discuss emergency purchases of French bonds, five sources told Reuters.

Although the political turmoil is a euro-bearish story, "as the euro accounts for around 57% of the US

dollar index weighting, the fall of the euro has indirectly benefited the dollar," said Matt Simpson, senior market analyst at City Index.

The dollar index =USD, which measures the greenback against a basket of peer currencies, was little changed at 105.49, after touching its highest since May 2 at 105.80 on Friday. Minneapolis Federal Reserve President Neel Kashkari on Sunday said it's a "reasonable prediction" that the U.S. central bank will cut interest rates once this year, waiting until December to do it.

The Fed published updated projections last week that showed the median forecast from all 19 U.S. central bankers was for a single interest rate cut this year.

The week is light on major U.S. economic data to help clarify the Fed's outlook, although U.S. retail sales on Tuesday and flash PMIs on Friday may give hints about consumption and economic strength.

"Data would likely have to miss estimates by a wide margin to rekindle bets of more Fed cuts, with the FOMC meeting still freshly in the minds of investors," said City Index's Simpson.

Sterling GBP=D3 was last trading at \$1.2687, up

0.04% on the day. Britain's inflation pressures still appear too hot for the Bank of England to cut rates at its June 20 meeting. A Reuters poll published last week showed 63 of 65 economists thought a first cut would not come until Aug. 1.

The yen struggled to gain its footing after the BOJ surprised markets

when the central bank announced kept bond buying unchanged at its meeting on Friday, instead pushing details of its tapering plan to its July policy meeting. Governor Kazuo Ueda said, however, he would not rule out raising interest rates in July as weakness in the yen pushes up import costs.

The yen was last up

0.05% at 157.41 per dollar JPY=EBS, after slipping to 158.26 after Friday's decision, its lowest since April 29.

The yen's decline to a 34-year low of 160.245 per dollar at the end of April triggered several rounds of official Japanese intervention totaling 9.79 trillion yen.

Japan's core machinery or-

ders fell 2.9% in April from the previous month, Cabinet Office data showed on Monday.

Elsewhere, the offshore Chinese yuan CNH=D3 held around 7.2699 per dollar ahead of the dump of domestic data in the Asian morning.

In cryptocurrencies, bitcoin BTC= last rose 1.62% to \$66,794.00.

NATO in talks to put nuclear weapons on standby, boss tells UK's Telegraph

LONDON-- NATO is in talks to deploy more nuclear weapons, taking them out of storage and placing them on standby, in the face of a growing threat from Russia and China, the head of the alliance said on Monday.

Jens Stoltenberg told Britain's Telegraph newspaper that there were live consultations between members to use transparency around its nuclear arsenal as a deterrent.

"I won't go into op-

erational details about how many nuclear warheads should be operational and which should be stored, but we need to consult on these issues. That's exactly what we're doing," he told the paper.

"Transparency helps to communicate the direct message that we, of course, are a nuclear alliance."

"NATO's aim is, of course, a world without nuclear weapons, but as long as nuclear weapons exist, we will remain a nuclear alli-

ance, because a world where Russia, China and North Korea have nuclear weapons, and NATO does not, is a more dangerous world."

Stoltenberg said last week that nuclear weapons were NATO's "ultimate security guarantee" and a means to preserve peace.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly warned that Moscow could use nuclear weapons to defend itself in extreme circumstances.

It accuses the U.S. and its European allies of pushing the world to the brink of nuclear confrontation by giving Ukraine billions of dollars worth of weapons, some of which are being used against Russian territory.

NATO, which has taken on a greater role in coordinating arms supplies to Kyiv, rarely talks about weapons publicly, although it is known that the U.S. has deployed nuclear bombs to several locations in Europe.

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China's factory output disappoints, property sector stuck in doldrums

BEIJING - China's May industrial output lagged expectations and a slow-down in the property sector showed no signs of easing despite policy support, adding pressure on Beijing to shore up growth.

Apart from retail sales that beat forecasts due to a holiday boost, the flurry of data on Monday was largely downbeat, underscoring a bumpy recovery for the world's second-largest economy.

May industrial output grew 5.6% from a year earlier, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data showed, slowing from the 6.7% pace in April and below expectations for a 6.0% increase in a Reuters poll of analysts.

However, retail sales, a gauge of consumption, in May rose 3.7% on year, accelerating from a 2.3% rise in April and marking the quickest growth since February. Analysts had expected a 3.0% expansion due to a five-day public holiday earlier in the month.

"May activity data and our high-frequency trackers for the first half of June suggest significant cross-sector divergences remain in the economy - strong exports and manufacturing activity, relatively stable consumption, and still-depressed property activity," Goldman Sachs analysts said in a note.

Fixed asset investment rose 4.0% in the first five months of 2024 from the same period a year earlier, versus expectations for a 4.2% rise. It grew 4.2% in the January to April period.

Manufacturing investment in the first five months showed robust growth of 9.6%, underpinned by China's emphasis for "quality growth" through technological breakthroughs and innovation this year.

But economists have warned that rising trade tensions with the West over China's so-called overcapacity may impose more challenges to Chinese solar and electric vehicle producers.

Private sector investment grew 0.1% in January-May, down from 0.3% in the first four months, pointing to still weak confidence among private businesses. By comparison, investment in the state sector jumped 7.1% in the first five months.

Asian share markets

were mostly softer following the mixed data with the Chinese blue chip CSI300 index .CSI300 slipping 0.2%.

EXPORTS-LED RECOVERY

Exports helped bolster the economy, with steel and aluminium output posting sharp jumps in May.

"Exports drove industrial growth and manufacturing investment significantly, but real estate weakness still hit household consumption and investment," said ZhaoPeng Xing, senior China strategist at ANZ.

China's property market slump, high local government debt and deflationary pressure remain heavy drags on economic activity. The latest figures point to an uneven growth that reinforces calls for more fiscal and monetary policy support.

With banks facing narrowing interest margins and a weakening currency remaining key constraints limiting Beijing's scope to ease monetary policy, China's central bank left a key policy rate unchanged as expected on Monday.

"We still see the likelihood of a cut to the Loan Prime Rate (LPR) this month, particularly on the 5-year tenor, as this will

help banks to retain households' mortgage loans," said Zhou Hao, chief economist at Guotai Junan International.

But chief China economist at Citi Yu Xiangrong expects a total 20-basis-point policy rate reduction in the second half of this year, but no LPR cut on June 20.

PROPERTY DATA WORSE

China's economy grew a faster-than-expected 5.3% in the first quarter, but analysts say the government's annual growth target of around 5% is ambitious as the property sector remains in the doldrums.

Property investment fell 10.1% year-on-year in January-May, deepening from a decline of 9.8% in January-April.

New home prices slipped 0.7% in May from April, marking the 11th straight month-on-month decline and steepest drop since October 2014, according to Reuters calculations based on NBS data.

The central bank last month announced a relending programme for affordable housing to accelerate sales of unsold housing stock.

NBS spokesperson Liu Aihua told a media briefing

on Monday that the property market is undergoing adjustment and it will take some time for policy measures to kick in.

The property sector, which accounted for around a quarter of economic output before the downturn, has been hit by a regulatory crackdown as well as demographic and broad economic pressures. The government has launched a slew of measures to help homebuyers, such as easing mortgage rules.

But tepid demand at home has kept a lid on consumer prices as confidence remains low in the face of a protracted property sector crisis. New bank lending rebounded far less than expected in May and some key money gauges hit record lows.

The job market overall was steady. The nationwide survey-based jobless rate hit 5.0% in May, the same as that in April.

Beijing has vowed to create more jobs linked to major projects, promote domestic demand and pledged greater fiscal stimulus to shore up growth.

Holidays boost China's retail sales but factory output lags <https://reuters.com/4cp3i8w>

China bank leaves key policy rate unchanged as expected

SHANGHAI/SINGAPORE, - China's central bank left a key policy rate unchanged as expected on Monday when rolling over maturing medium-term loans, and drained some funds from the banking system.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The steady MLF rate comes in line with market expectations, as narrowing interest margins and a weakening currency remain key constraints limiting Beijing's scope to ease monetary policy to support the world's second-largest economy.

The MLF rate serves as a guide to the loan prime rates (LPRs) and markets mostly use the MLF rate as a precursor to any changes to the lending benchmarks. The monthly fixing of LPRs is due on Thursday.

BY THE NUMBERS

The People's Bank of China (PBOC) said it was keeping the rate on 182 billion yuan (\$25.08 billion) worth of one-year medium-term lending facility (MLF) loans CNMFL1YRRP=PBOC to some financial institutions unchanged at 2.50% from the previous operation.

In a Reuters poll of 31 market watchers, 30, or 97%, of all respondents expected the PBOC to leave the interest rate on MLF rate unchanged.

Net interest margin, which measures lenders' profitability, narrowed to 1.54% in the quarter from 1.69% in the previous three months.

China's yuan CNY=CFXS has lost more than 2.1% against a resurgent U.S. dollar so far this year, pressured by its relative low yields versus other economies.

CONTEXT

China still has room to lower interest rates, but its ability to adjust monetary policy faces internal and external constraints, the official Financial News said, citing industry experts.

QUOTES

"The slow pace of government bond issuance and weak private sector credit demand have led to ample front-end liquidity recently, reducing the urgency for the PBOC to cut the reserve requirement ratio (RRR) in the near term," economists at Goldman Sachs said in a note.

"We push back our monetary easing forecast by one quarter, and now expect the PBOC to deliver one 25-basis-point RRR cut in Q3 and one 10-basis-point policy rate cut in Q4."

From Swahili to Zulu, African techies develop AI language tools

LAGOS/NAIROBI/JOHANNESBURG- - When the Nigerian government announced plans in April to develop a multilingual AI tool to boost digital inclusion across the West African nation, 28-year-old computer science student Lwasinam Lenham Dilli was thrilled.

Dilli had struggled to scrape datasets from the internet to build a large language model (LLM), used to power AI chatbots, in his native Hausa language as part of his final-year project at university.

"I needed texts in English and their corresponding translation in Hausa but I couldn't get anything online, (there was) no clean data," Dilli told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"(Creating local language LLMs) is a way to ensure that our local dialects and languages will not be forgotten or left out of the AI ecosystem," he added.

The world has been swept up in a whirlwind of AI mania, with tools such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, Meta's Llama 2, and Mistral AI captivating millions globally with their ability to generate human-like text.

But for many tech-savvy Africans, the excitement has been tempered by a frustrating reality: when languages like Hausa, Amharic, or Kinyarwanda are entered into the chat, many of these advanced systems falter, often producing nonsensical responses.

Technology experts warn the lack of LLMs in African languages will lead to the exclusion of millions of people on the continent, increasing both the digital and economic divide.

The Nigerian government-led initiative to develop a multilingual LLM aims to level the playing field.

"The LLM will be trained on five low-resource languages and accented English to ensure stronger language representation ... for development of artificial intelligence solutions," said Nigeria's Digital Economy Minister Bosun Tijani in April.

The government will partner with Nigerian AI startups, and local data will be collected by volunteers who are fluent in any of five Nigerian languages: Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Ibibio, and West African lingua franca—Pidgin.

To build the model, the project will also draw on the expertise of more than 7,000 fellows from Nigeria's tech talent programme - a government scheme to train three million people in skills such

as coding and programming. Silas Adekunle, co-founder of Awarri, an AI startup that is part of the initiative, said building a nuanced AI tool that understood Nigeria's unique language and cultural landscape presented many challenges.

"We have so many different accents and languages, and this (LLM) will enable many people and developers to build products that leverage AI but are for the Nigerian market," said Adekunle.

"The scale of the project, especially with limited resources, has required us to be creative in how we train the model, gather the data, compute and label what we have."

CLOSING THE AI LAN-

GUAGE GAP

Africa is home to more than 2,000 languages spoken across 54 countries, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

However, the majority of African languages remain underrepresented on the internet. English dominates the digital space, accounting for around 50% of all websites, followed by Spanish, German, Japanese, and French.

Along with the Nigerian government initiative, there are also a small but growing number of African startups rising to the challenge of developing AI tools in languages like Swahili, Amharic,

Zulu and Sesotho.

In Kenya, for instance, health tech firm Jacaranda Health has pioneered the first LLM operating in Swahili to improve maternal healthcare in East Africa.

Built on Meta's Llama 3 system, UlizaLlama (AskLlama) aims to refine Jacaranda Health's SMS service for low-income Swahili-speaking expectant mothers who have queries ranging from dietary concerns and fetal movement to exercise during pregnancy.

The platform currently provides pre-written automated responses, but once UlizaLlama is integrated by the end of June, it will tailor responses to individual needs, offering more detailed pregnancy guidance

and emergency support.

"A lot of these expectant moms can't just do a Google search. UlizaLlama's goal is to make sure that we get them the accurate answers in the fastest possible time," Jay Patel, Jacaranda Health's director of technology, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"We're shooting for about 85% accuracy to start with and a faster response time. At the moment, it takes a few minutes to respond, but we are hoping to get that down to less than a minute in the future."

In South Africa, the Masakhane initiative is using open-source machine learning to translate African languages. Lelapa AI, a South

African AI research lab, has pioneered VulaVula - a for-profit language processing tool that translates, transcribes and analyses languages in English, Afrikaans, Zulu and Sesotho.

DATA SCARCITY, ETHICAL CONCERNS

But AI experts say building LLMs in African languages poses significant challenges, ranging from availability of data to ethical concerns over consent, compensation and copyright.

Many African languages are low-resource languages, meaning there is a scarcity of data to train these models effectively - unlike high-resource languages such as English or French.

Michael Michie, co-founder of Everse Technology Africa, an AI startup building intelligence into data protection and privacy, said collecting the data needed to train LLMs also raised ethical questions.

In many African communities, oral tradition predominates, and certain communities may not be interested in sharing their language to train LLMs and this should be respected.

"There are currently no regulations or laws in African countries that address issues related to consent, privacy and compensation to communities when collecting data to train AI tools - this needs to be addressed," said Michie.

"There are questions of who owns the language and who benefits. There needs to be guidelines to prevent exploitation and ensure the development of these LLMs benefits the people they are meant to serve," he added.

Open-source initiatives like Creative Commons, which allow creators to legally share their work with specified conditions like ensuring attribution and non-commercial use, are also not a perfect solution, said some AI experts.

"At the moment there's this push of saying everything should just be under Creative Commons," said Vukosi Marivate, associate professor of computer science at the University of Pretoria and co-founder of Lelapa AI.

But if everything is open source, it may be harder to properly reimburse and acknowledge the original contributors to these language models, he said.

"A lot of people are working on LLMs now because of the prestige, that's where the money is, but we need to make sure that our languages are actually being taken care of."

Global central banks recalibrate as the big policy easing of 2024 fizzles

WASHINGTON- - Six months ago the world's major central banks were primed for a move that anyone with a credit card or hoping to buy a home or run a business would cheer: A global shift to lower interest rates that would make borrowing cheaper and loans more available across the board.

Rate cuts are "a topic of discussion out in the world and also a discussion for us," Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said in a press conference last December, when the mood among investors was giddy over the prospect of looser financial conditions, and organizations like the International Monetary Fund worried that Powell and company would jump the gun, cut rates too fast, and undermine efforts to tame inflation.

Those fears were misplaced, it turns out.

The joint easing of monetary policy that appeared imminent at the end of 2023 has largely fizzled as major central banks confronted inflation that proved more persistent than expected, and economic and wage growth that proved more resilient.

Some modest steps have been made, including initial cuts this month by the European Central Bank and Bank of Canada.

But that was largely to deliver on a promise made when inflation seemed to be falling fast, and the mood in Frankfurt, London, Washington and elsewhere has since shifted from the central bank version of "start your engines" to something more akin to "hold your horses."

After rapidly raising in-

terest rates in 2022 and 2023 to fight inflation, the initial move to loosen policy will be "consequential," Powell said at a press conference last week when new projections from Fed policymakers showed them anticipating only a single quarter-percentage-point rate cut by the end of the year, down from the three projected in December and March.

"When we do start to loosen policy, that will show up in significant loosening and financial market conditions," Powell said. "You want to get it right."

BUMPS ALONG THE WAY

Most economists polled by Reuters now expect only one or two Fed rate cuts this year instead of the four seen in a survey last December, before Powell surprised markets by suggesting a pivot to lower rates would come relatively soon. But economists have been more consistent in their views than market pricing.

Economists polled by Reuters six months ago expected the Bank of England to wait until the third quarter to cut borrowing costs, in line with current nearly-unanimous expectations for a move in August. Market pricing back in December, meanwhile, implied a first cut in May followed by three more over the year.

While headline inflation has tumbled to close to the BoE's 2% target, it was much higher than expected in the key services sector in April, and 6% annual wage growth in May remained roughly double the level consistent with the target.

Accordingly, the BoE is expected to keep rates on hold in its last policy meeting of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's term - meaning that the move towards lower borrowing costs will await Britain's next government instead.

Economists' predictions for the ECB's first move have also held up, correctly forecasting a cut in June. But again, market pricing has shifted dramatically: back in December it implied 140 basis points of cuts in the year ahead, starting in March. Now market prices barely correspond to one further rate cut this year.

ECB policymakers, however, have long warned of "bumps in the road" as they bring inflation back to target and - by indicating early on that the first cut would not come until June - signalled markets might have been getting ahead of themselves.

Those "bumps" may now include how markets have been unnerved by French President Emmanuel Macron's decision to hold a snap parliamentary election that could usher in a far-right government in Paris next month.

But for now, ECB President Christine Lagarde and her team remain broadly confident that inflation will still tick down to the 2% target by the end of 2025.

"Central banks are managing the trade-off between inflation and economic growth," aware that overly restrictive policy could undermine a fragile recovery in the euro zone economy, ECB policymaker Mario Centeno told Reuters in an interview.

"In the end, the difference between now and a few months ago is not so big. The disinflation story is still intact," the Portuguese central bank governor said.

NO VICTORY DECLARATION

As always, managing expectations is part of the story.

Back in December when the three-cuts-for-2024 outlook first appeared in Fed policymaker projections, Powell in his post-meeting press conference cautioned that "no one is declaring victory" over inflation. But the general tenor of his remarks - with references to "real" and "great" progress being made on inflation - appear to have cemented views that rate cuts were about to commence.

From one perspective, while the first cut may as Powell said last week be "consequential," the symbolic opening of an expected steady decline in borrowing costs, the exact timing may be less so in terms of its macroeconomic effect.

The current strict language about cuts, from Powell at least, may even be more about managing expectations than they are about the actual outlook - of keeping the door open for rates to stay where they are longer again still than anticipated.

Data just before and after the Fed's meeting last week pointed strongly to weakening price pressures, and investors have largely sloughed off Powell's comments and Fed policymakers' new projections to stick with bets that rates will be lowered beginning in September.

Is Donald Trump okay?

By Eugene Robinson

It is irresponsible to obsess over President Biden's tendency to mangle a couple of words in a speech while Donald Trump is out there sounding detached from reality. Biden, who is old, at least makes sense. Trump,

who also is old, rants like someone you'd cross the street to avoid.

We in the media have failed by becoming inured to Trump's verbal incontinence — not just the rapid-fire lies and revenge-seeking threats, but also the frightening glimpses into a

mind that is, evidently, unwell. In 2016, Trump said outrageous things at his campaign rallies to be entertaining. In 2024, his tangents raise serious questions about his mental fitness.

His rally on Sunday in Las Vegas offered a grim smorgasbord of examples, but the obvious standout (and not in a good way) is the story he told about being aboard a hypothetical electric-powered boat. He posits that the battery would be so heavy that it would cause the craft to sink, and he relates his purported conversation with a knowledgeable mariner about this scenario. Bear with me, but it's worth reading the passage in full:

"I say, 'What would happen if the boat sank from its weight, and you're in the boat, and you have this tremendously powerful battery, and the battery's now underwater, and there's a shark that's approximately 10 yards over there?'"

"By the way, a lot of shark attacks lately, do you notice that?"

Lot of sharks. I watched some guys justifying it today: 'Well they weren't really that angry, they bit off the young lady's leg because of the fact that they were not hungry but they misunderstood who she was.' These people are crazy. He said, 'There's no problem with sharks, they just didn't really understand a young woman swimming.' No, really got decimated, and other people, too, a lot of shark attacks.

"So I said, 'There's a shark 10 yards away from the boat, 10 yards, or here. Do I get electrocuted if the boat is sinking, water goes over the battery, the boat is sinking? Do I stay on top of the boat and get electrocuted, or do I jump over by the shark and not get electrocuted?' Because I will tell you, he didn't know the answer."

"He said, 'You know, nobody's ever asked me that question. I said, 'I think it's a good question. I think there's a lot of electric current coming through that water.' But you know what I'd do if there was a shark or you get electrocuted? I'll take electrocution every single time. I'm not getting near the shark. So we're going to end that, we're

going to end it for boats, we're going to end it for trucks."

Trucks? He's actually talking about the transition to electric vehicles, which he has vowed to halt. That entire hallucination is part of Trump's rationale for one of his major policy positions.

Trump has told the electrocution-or-shark story at least once before, at a rally in Iowa last October. Stormy Daniels, the adult-film actress who received \$130,000 in hush money to keep quiet about her sexual encounter with Trump — a payment that led to the former president's conviction on 34 felony charges — has said that Trump is "obsessed with sharks, terrified of sharks." Way back in 2013, he declared on Twitter: "Sharks are last on my list — other than perhaps the losers and haters of the World!"

The White House press corps would be in wolf pack mode if Biden were in the middle of a speech and suddenly veered into gibberish about boats and sharks. There would be front-page stories questioning whether the president, at 81, was suffering from dementia; and the op-ed pages would be filled with

thumb-suckers about whether Vice President Harris and the Cabinet should invoke the 25th Amendment. House Republicans would already have scheduled hearings on Biden's mental condition and demanded he take a cognitive test.

The tendency with Trump, at 77, is to say he's "just being Trump." But he's like this all the time.

Also during the Las Vegas speech, Trump tried to deny the allegation by one of his White House chiefs of staff, retired Marine General John F. Kelly, that he refused in 2018 to visit an American military cemetery in France, saying it was filled with "suckers" and "losers." Trump told the crowd on Sunday that "only a psycho or a crazy person or a very stupid person" would say such a thing while "I'm standing there with generals and military people in a cemetery."

But he wasn't "standing there" with anybody. He never went to the cemetery.

Except in his mind, perhaps, which is a much bigger problem than Biden fumbling a name or garbling a sentence.

UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle

		9	1	8		2		
8		3	7	4	9	1		
		1	9		2	6		4
7	6							9
6	3		9		7	4		
1				7		2		
3	7	2		5	4			
	2	4	8	1	3		6	
	6		4	9	1			

Complete the grid so every row, column and 3 x 3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9, inclusively.

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

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Previous puzzle solution

6	3	7	9	1	2	4	8	5
5	4	2	3	7	8	9	1	6
8	9	1	4	5	6	7	2	3
7	6	8	2	4	3	1	5	9
1	5	9	8	6	7	2	3	4
4	2	3	1	9	5	8	6	7
3	1	4	6	8	9	5	7	2
9	7	6	5	2	1	3	4	8
2	8	5	7	3	4	6	9	1

- #### ACROSS
- 1 "Great minds think ___"
 - 6 DC lobbying group: Abbr.
 - 9 Actor Colin
 - 14 Office messages, for short
 - 15 HDTV brand
 - 16 Nasty smells
 - 17 Land-sea border
 - 18 Organ with a canal
 - 19 The Devil
 - 20 The World Series, e.g.
 - 23 Greek H
 - 24 Scott of "Happy Days"
 - 25 Makes right
 - 30 Flowers and trees
 - 34 Fast-running bird
 - 35 Popular ratings website
 - 37 Be nosy
 - 38 Hit the ground
 - 40 Shelled garden critter
 - 42 Location
 - 43 "___ Eyes Were Watching God"
 - 45 Use a keyboard
 - 46 Actor Mineo
 - 47 Was rude to
 - 49 Beach collectible
 - 52 Hair holder
 - 54 Compass point: Abbr.
 - 55 Saying in other words
 - 60 Gem surface
 - 61 "That had to hurt!"
 - 62 Dental hygiene product
 - 65 Say OK
 - 66 Sweden neighbor: Abbr.
 - 67 Word often confused with "less"
 - 68 Runs into
 - 69 Moody music genre
 - 70 ___ up (coordinates)
- #### DOWN
- 1 Movie theater chain

Created by Stella Zawietowski

Friday's Puzzle Solved

W	A	S	P	S	C	R	U	B	S	A	T	M		
A	R	E	A	T	O	U	P	E	E	A	R	E		
S	T	A	R	S	A	N	D	S	T	R	I	P	E	S
				T	H	R	E	E	T	I	D	I	E	S
G	R	A	B	A	T			S	E	E				
A	O	L		M	A	T	H		S	A	T	U	P	
M	O	P		T	E	E	T	H		L	A	N	A	
I	M	A	M		A	L	L	I	E	S	T	I	R	
N	I	C	E		B	E	L	L	A		T	S	E	
G	E	A	R	S		O	L	D	S		L	O	N	
				G	P	A			L	A	M	E	N	T
G	O	V	E	R	N		S	H	I	N	E			
R	H	O	D	E	I	S	L	A	N	D	R	E	D	S
O	I	L		E	M	P	I	R	E		R	E	A	N
W	O	E		S	E	A	T	E	D		Y	E	L	L

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Father's Day Message 2024

Dear Fathers of St. Maarten, As Prime Minister and a father myself, it is a profound privilege to address you on this special occasion of Father's Day. Today [Sunday - Ed.], we come together to celebrate and honor the dedication, strength, and love that fathers and father figures contribute to our lives and communities. Fatherhood is a journey filled with challenges, sacrifices, and immeasurable rewards. It is a role that goes beyond providing and protecting; it involves nurturing, guiding, and inspiring our children to become the best versions of themselves. I have experienced first-hand the joy and responsibility of being a father, and I understand the profound impact we have on our children's lives.

who may be struggling to realize the importance of their role, I encourage you to embrace this responsibility with earnestness and dedication. Your love and support are vital to your child's growth and development. Let us also remember and honor the fathers who are no longer with us, cherishing the memories and lessons they have imparted. Their legacy lives on through the values and principles they instilled in us.

On behalf of the Government of St. Maarten, I wish all fathers a joyful and blessed Father's Day. Your contributions are invaluable, and your efforts do not go unnoticed. May you continue to be a source of strength and inspiration to your children, and may you receive God's blessings and grace in abundance. With warmest regards, Dr. Luc Mercelina Prime Minister of St. Maarten

Hooray! Emmanuel Macron made an excellent move by calling election in 2024

Dear Editor, Oh, how I prayed and wished election would be held in the UK this year 2024, just as the USA is having their election this year 2024.

Now the good news is this: the UK, USA and France are having election this year 2024. This is history for these three permanent members of the Security Council having election in 2024. French people, be wise, give Emmanuel Macron a great victory to win the 2024 election. Emmanuel Macron, Donald Trump and Kier Starmer are the best leaders being expected now to be elected 2024. If the UK, USA and French people don't elect these three leaders, they will be hurting the UK, USA, France and the rest of world. France, USA and the UK play a great role in the world and there are many problems in Europe France has to deal with. Europeans would rather French people elect Emmanuel Macron and his party.

Cuthbert Bannis

Seizing the green energy opportunity for St. Maarten

Dear Editor,

As St. Maarten grapples with an ongoing power crisis, the call for robust solutions has never been more urgent. Recent discussions by our Prime Minister about reaching out to the World Bank and the Dutch government for financial assistance underscore the critical need for substantial investment in our energy infrastructure. This juncture presents a golden opportunity to pivot towards sustainable energy solutions, rather than pouring funds into antiquated, polluting technologies that the world is steadily moving away from.

In the short term, we must unfortunately rely on the same outdated, fossil-fuel-dependent technology to meet our immediate energy demands. However, it is clear that this is only a stop-gap measure. The current crisis highlights the urgency and necessity of transitioning towards green energy

for the long-term benefit of St. Maarten. Investing in sustainable energy now is not just a forward-thinking approach – it is in fact a necessity. As the global community accelerates its shift away from fossil fuels, St. Maarten must align itself with this trajectory to ensure long-term energy security and economic stability.

The reluctance to consider green energy investments as a viable option is both surprising and short-sighted. Numerous small island states similar to ours have successfully transitioned to renewable energy sources, with some achieving more than 50% of their power from green energy.

There are also a wealth of financial mechanisms available to support our transition to a sustainable energy future, we just need to have the expertise and vision in order to navigate this path. Green and blue bonds, the Green Climate Fund, and major lenders with corpo-

rate social responsibility (CSR) strategies favoring green energy investments are all potential sources of funding.

The European Investment Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and various other international financial institutions and multi-lateral development banks are keen to support green energy projects, recognizing the dual benefits of environmental sustainability and economic resilience.

Moreover, innovative debt repayment options such as debt-for-nature swaps, biodiversity offsetting mecha-

nisms, and blue and green bonds present viable pathways to manage our financial obligations while investing in our future. These mechanisms not only provide the necessary capital but also ensure that our environmental and economic goals are aligned. Barbados especially is a shining example in the region on how these financial mechanisms are operationalized on a small island developing state, or large ocean state as I like to call it.

At this critical juncture in our national development it is critical that the government of St. Maarten

explores these possibilities and commits to creating the enabling environment and policy frameworks needed to make green energy a reality. This includes streamlined regulations, incentives for renewable energy investments, and robust support for research and development in sustainable technologies.

The time for action is now. We cannot afford to delay or divert resources into solutions that are becoming obsolete and environmentally damaging. Instead, we must harness this moment to steer St. Maarten towards a sustainable energy

future, ensuring a resilient and prosperous island for generations to come.

The call to transition to green energy is not merely a lofty ideal; it is a practical and urgent necessity. Let us all join hands – government, private sector, and citizens – to embrace this challenge and turn it into an opportunity. St. Maarten has the potential to be a leader in sustainable energy development among small island states. Now is the time to make it happen.

*Tadzio Bervoets
Caribbean Conservation
Professional*

CARICOM a reality after 20 years of advocacy for membership

By Alex Rosaria

After receiving the gratifying news that everything is set for us to become an Associate Member of CARICOM, I received numerous personal congratulations and messages via social media. I have always advocated for joining the Caribbean family, and nearly 20 years ago, I opened the door when I visited CARICOM's Secretary-General, Sir Edwin Carrington, in Georgetown, Guyana.

As the Minister of Economy and Labor in 2005, I stood almost alone on the issue of CARICOM membership because my colleagues did not see the benefits. Others were convinced that if we sought closer ties with the Caribbean, the Netherlands would be angry with us.

Beyond the political arena, I have guided dozens of students with their final theses on CARICOM. In recent years, I have also remained involved with the issue, working behind the scenes with Caribbean experts from two regional think tanks I am associated with: Global Americans and the Caribbean Policy Consortium.

I am pleased that CARICOM membership has finally been realized. Of course, some figures have already started campaigns to discredit those who stood at the cradle of this achievement. Those knowledgeable about the matter understand that these types of processes do not come to fruition in a short time. It took nearly 20 years.

Certainly, I would have liked this to be realized sooner. Dr. Carrington told me that my petition needed to be studied because he also knew the historical disdain we had shown our neighbors.

Congratulations to the government on this achievement. What I feel is missing is more transparency. On which areas is cooperation prioritized, what types of cooperation are we talking about, how much money does Associate Membership involve, and how will we ensure the representation of our people in (the various bodies of) CARICOM?

Thanks to those who valued my efforts, which were not for political gain but based on a simple conviction: it is in our best interest to seek closer ties with our neighbors and our own region.

~ Alex David Rosaria (53) is a freelance consultant active in Asia and the Pacific. He is a former Member of Parliament, Minister of Economic Affairs, State Secretary of Finance and UN Implementation Officer in Africa and Central America. He is from Curaçao and has an MBA from University of Iowa (USA). ~



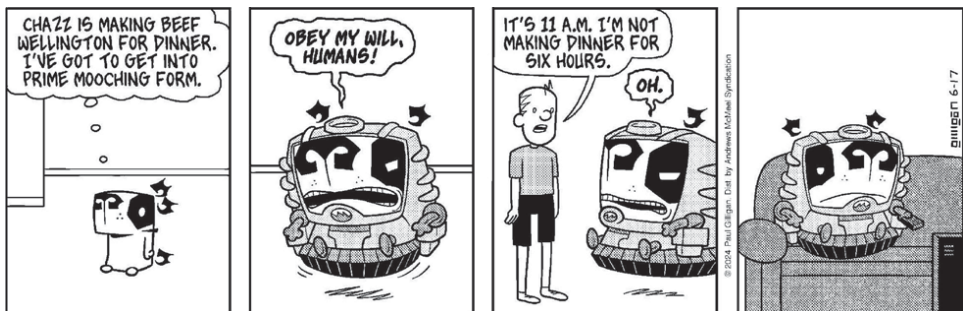
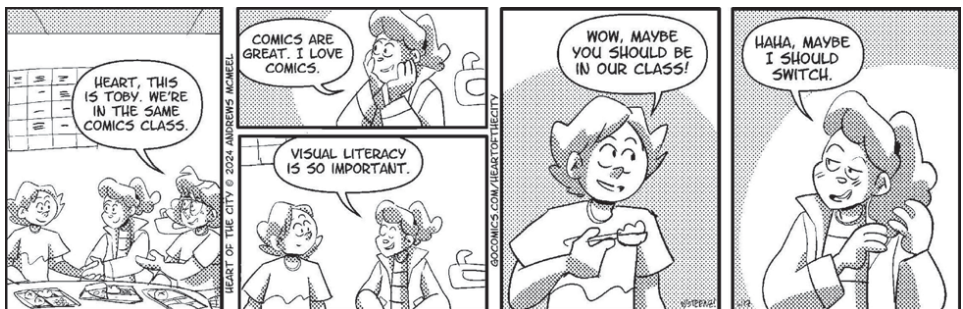
IN LOVING MEMORY OF

*Joseph
Laville*

July 7th, 1956- May 30th, 2024

"2 Timothy 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."

The Memorial Service will be announced at a later date.



HOROSCOPE

By Nancy Black

Today's Birthday (June 17) – You're especially brilliant, charming and charismatic this year. Consistent actions fulfill professional dreams. Help community friends adapt with summer obstacles, before an autumn career blastoff. Resolve winter romantic or creative challenges. Circle up family at your place next spring. Follow your own drum.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

Aries (March 21-April 19) – Today is a 7 – Family communications improve. Solutions to domestic problems arise in conversation over the next three weeks, with Mercury in Cancer. Shift from theoretical to practical.

Taurus (April 20-May 20) – Today is an 8 – Study, research and write your discoveries. Your communications and networking skills are especially hot over the next three weeks, with Mercury in Cancer.

Gemini (May 21-June 20) – Today is a 9 – Practice your moves. You can make a bundle, with Mercury in Cancer for three weeks. Communication leads to profits. Make valuable connections. Share and network.

Cancer (June 21-July 22) – Today is a 9 – Ask for what you want. Over three weeks, with Mercury in your sign, talk about personal aims, dreams and ambitions. Develop ideas in conversation.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22) – Today is a 7 – There's no place like home. Take it easy, with Mercury in Cancer for three weeks. Make long-term plans. Envision perfection and note possible options.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) – Today is an 8 – Group communications buzz for the next several weeks, with Mercury in Cancer. Friends offer good advice. Confer with your team. Network, socialize and share resources.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) – Today is a 9 – Use cleverness, communication and wit to advance professionally, with Mercury in Cancer. Determine what you want. Generate rising status over three weeks. Discuss the possibilities.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) – Today is an 8 – Dress for success. Expand your territory over three weeks, with Mercury in Cancer, including long-distance communications and transport. Study the situation. Discuss plans and destinations.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) – Today is an 8 – File papers and sign contracts. Talk about money with your partner, with Mercury in Cancer for three weeks. Discuss family financial goals and dreams.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) – Today is an 8 – Your partner has great ideas. Brainstorm and converse. Listen carefully. Discuss ideas to create together, with Mercury in Cancer over three weeks. Invent possibilities.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) – Today is a 7 – Use your communications and networking skills. Study health matters, with Mercury in Cancer. Talk with doctors, coaches and your team for higher performance.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20) – Today is an 8 – Explore new territory. Express your creativity, passion and affection over three weeks, with Mercury in Cancer. You're especially charming. Discuss what you love.



Speak your mind

By Queenie

**SEND LETTERS TO
P.O. BOX 828
FAX +721 542 5913
OR E-MAIL
queenie@thedailyherald.com**

Dear Queenie,

I'm not so young any more and I've never been married. I just never found anyone I could see myself spending the rest of my life with.

My (married) relatives keep reminding me that I'm not getting any younger and asking me if I want to spend the rest of my life alone.

I don't, but I don't think just not being alone is a good enough reason for getting married.

Queenie, what do you think? And what can I tell my relatives when they get on my case?—**Middle-aged and still single**

Dear Middle-aged and still single,

I think you are the one who has to decide if, when and whom you should marry. I also think there are worse things than being alone; for example, being married to an abusive spouse.

Tell your relatives that you will probably get married when Mr. Right comes along, but until he does, you'd rather live alone than get stuck with Mr. Wrong.

Only notices and events of non-profit or educational organisations will be placed in the Events/Notices column. Notices/Events should be sent to notices@thedailyherald.com in the wording format used on this page. Do not send films, photos, locked files or press releases to this address.

NOTICES

Student Visa Workshop

Student Support Services Division (SSSD) is hosting a workshop entitled, "Applying for a U.S. Student Visa or Canadian Permit" on June 19 from 6:00 to 7:30pm at the University of St. Martin. This free workshop will explain the documents and the steps students need to take to when applying either for their U.S. Student Visa or Study Permit.

Club Meeting

Calling all book lovers, no matter your age or gender! Join The Happy Bookers for laughs, literary love affairs (on the page!), and occasional existential crises disguised as book discussions. They meet once a month to discuss a wide array of books. WhatsApp +590690663716 for more information.

Free Seniors Yoga

Gentle stretch and breath Senior Yoga, in person, at the Lions Club Community Center in Sucker Garden, Mondays and Fridays from 10:00-11:00am. Mats provided. Also, streamed live on Facebook at Yoga with Lisa SXM. For more info contact Lisa at 554-0115 or email davisburnnett@lisa@gmail.com.

Toastmasters Meets

Creative Intellect Toastmasters meets the first and third Sundays of each month 5:00pm at the John Larmonie Center, Longwall Road 20, Philipsburg, or online via Zoom. For more information about the club, visit Creative Intellect Toastmasters Club on Facebook, email creative.intellect.tmc@gmail.com or calling: 586-5172.

Volunteer.sx Registration

St. Maarten Development Fund (SMDF) and NPOwer invite persons and non-profit organisations to register on volunteer.sx to find volunteering opportunities and/or to post volunteer events. To register go to volunteer.sx, follow the sign up process and start building a better future for St. Maarten.

Volunteers Needed

St. Maarten AIDS Foundation is looking for motivated women and men to become facilitators for Girl Power and Real talk workshops. For more information call 523-2626 or 553-2626 or email: coordinatorsxmaidsfoundation@gmail.com

Youth Wing

Persons 13-20 years old are invited to join SAF Youth wing. We organize monthly meetings at the St. Maarten AIDS Foundation office, located in the Sun Building Cole Bay. For more information call 523-2626 or 553-2626 or email: coordinatorsxmaidsfoundation@gmail.com

Volunteers Needed

Animal Defenders SXM could use some volunteers to help feed cats and dogs at several different locations (own transportation is important). We are also looking for help with admin work and creative computer skills. Please call or contact ADS for more information at 553-3116.

Prosecutor's Office Hours

Prosecutor's Office is now open in the morning and afternoon Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 12:00pm and 2:00pm to 4:00pm. During those hours, the public may visit the office to get information, pay fine (by debit/credit cards only), and accept other services. The Prosecutor's Office is located on Emmallein behind CIBC First Caribbean Bank and is also reachable via telephone +1-721-542-2243 or email infosxm@OMCarib.org.

Duplicate Bridge

The St Maarten Duplicate Bridge Club is now meeting Wednesday nights at 7:15pm at La Vista Resort on Billy Folly Road in Pelican Key. Bring a partner for a fun night of bridge. US \$10 per person, coffee and water provided, cash bar. Proof of COVID vaccination is required, masks optional. For information call Jan Peter 721-520-0594.

AA Meetings

Al-Anon is a non-profit 12-step programme of men and women who may have a common problem and solution to stop drinking. The support group meets at Red Cross on Airport Boulevard every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 6:00pm, and on Sundays at Guana Bay Beach (near old restaurant) at 8:30am.

Read a Book

Philipsburg Jubilee Library's online reading service is available to all readers. All current library members who have not yet activated their digital service are encouraged to e-mail admin@sxmlibrary.org to get this going. Non-library members are also encouraged to contact the library via admin@sxmlibrary.org for more information about activating their access to the library of digital books. For more information about the library and its services, visit www.stmaartenlibrary.org or Philipsburg Jubilee Library.

Club Meeting

Elite Soualiga Toastmasters Club meets virtually on Zoom from 2:00 to 3:30pm on the first and fourth Sunday of every month. For more information, please email: elite.soualigatm@gmail.com.

Consular Services

The Office of the Honorary Consul of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana operates on Wednesdays from 2:00 to 5:30pm and on Saturdays from 10:00am to 2:30pm by appointment only. For more information call 527-3198, or 527-0704. email: guyanaconsulatsxm@gmail.com, guyanaconsulatsxm@gmail.com

Homework Guidance

Oranje Community School is looking for dynamic youth leaders and homework guidance persons. Pass by the Oranje Community School at 11:00am or call 580-2882.

Positive Thinking

Brahma Kumaris St. Maarten invites persons to its ongoing free meditation and Positive Thinking courses at Raj Yoga Centre, 16 Front Street. Call 524-2554 or 542-0541 for more information.

Church Service

Grace International Baptist Church invites you to its services that are currently virtual-only. Follow us on Facebook at Grace International Baptist Church for the live stream of Sunday's sermon at 11:45am. Visit our website at graceinternationalbaptist.com and contact 1 721 586-2738/554-9590 or allbecauseofgrace@gmail.com for more information.

Club Meeting

Soualiga Corporate Toastmasters Club meets at the new Government Administration Building on the second and fourth Wednesday every month from 5:30 to 7:00pm.

Club Meeting

SXM Achievers Toastmasters Club meets on Zoom every second and fourth Thursday (except on holidays) of the month from 7:30 to 9:00pm. All are welcome to join. Please email sxmachieverspresident@gmail.com for the zoom meeting details.

Community Service

Is your organization seeking assistance with various tasks such as cleaning, washing, gardening, moving, carpeting, painting, maintenance, and more? Contact the SJIS-Probation Department at 526-4322, 542-3449, or lloyd.beaton@sjis-sxm.org to explore how you can become a community service workplace. This opportunity is available for non-profit community or governmental organizations. Community Service assistance is provided free of charge!

Foster Parents Needed

Foundation Judiciary Institutes Windward Islands (FJIWI)/ Stichting Justitiele Inrichtingen Bovenwinden (SJIB), is looking for foster parents: Interested persons ages 24-67 can apply. Contact 526-4310.

Volunteers Needed

St. Maarten Animal Welfare Foundation is seeking volunteers for special activities. For more information call 520-8887.

Animal Volunteer

Animals R Friends (ARF) Foundation needs volunteers 15 years and older who are not afraid of handling animals for various tasks: feeding cats and dogs, walking dogs, guest-speakers for ARF, lesson materials for schools, etc. For more information call 556-1191/520-7365/526-0113 or e-mail: arf_sxm@yahoo.com

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The Daily Herald



Lindsay Mendez, Jonathan Groff and Daniel Radcliffe, of 'Merrily We Roll Along', perform at the 77th Annual Tony Awards in New York City, United States on Sunday.

'The Outsiders', 'Merrily We Roll Along', 'Stereophonic' win big at Tony Awards

NEW YORK--"The Outsiders," a musical based on S.E. Hinton's coming-of-age novel, snagged the coveted Tony Award for best musical Sunday, while a celebrated revival of a Stephen Sondheim classic and a tale of a 1970s rock band also won big.

The ceremony took place for the first time at New York City's Lincoln Center with Tony-nominated and Oscar-winning actress Ariana DeBose hosting for the third year in a row. This year, DeBose is also producing and she choreographed the sultry song-and-dance number that opened the show.

Danya Taymor won for direction of a musical adaptation of "The Outsiders," upsetting favoured "Merrily We Roll Along" actor Maria Friedman.

Best revival of a musical award winner "Merrily We Roll Along" has been a favourite narrative of the season, delighting audiences and critics with the revived production of Sondheim's most famous flop, which closed after 52 previews and 16 performances in its first go-round on Broadway in 1981.

"Stereophonic" took the Tony Awards for best play and best direction for Daniel Aukin. David Adjmi's play about a 70s-era rock band making an album, featuring original songs by Will Butler, formerly of Arcade Fire, broke the record for the most nominations for a play in Tonys

history.

"Appropriate," playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' story about three adult siblings reuniting at their family home after the death of their father only to discover troubling family secrets, won best revival of a play.

Jonathan Groff won for best lead actor in a musical for "Merrily We Roll Along" while Maleah Joi Moon won best lead actress in a musical for her role in "Hell's Kitchen."

Shaina Taub won best score and best book of a musical for "Suffs," the story of the suffragette movement, featuring an all-woman cast.

"Succession" star Jeremy Strong won best lead actor in a play for his role in the Henrik Ibsen play "Enemy of the People,"

and Daniel Radcliffe, best known for his starring role in the Harry Potter movie franchise, won best featured actor in a musical for "Merrily We Roll Along." Sarah Paulson won best lead actress in a play for "Appropriate" while Will Brill beat out two other actors in his production, "Stereophonic," for best featured actor in a play.

Kecia Lewis, who made her Broadway debut 40 years ago in "Dreamgirls," was nominated for the first time this season. She won the best featured actress award in a musical for her role as the piano-playing mentor in "Hell's Kitchen."

Kara Young, who is the first Black actor, male or female, to be nominated

for a Tony three years in a row, won the award for best featured actress in a play for her role in "Purlie Victorious."

Justin Peck won the best choreography Tony for the dance musical "Illinois," which brought Sufjan Steven's 2005 concept album "Illinois" to the stage.

Dancers including DeBose, reviving her Oscar-winning role as Anita in Steven Spielberg's film version of "West Side Story," paid tribute to Broadway legend Chita Rivera, who died in January at the age of 91.

During a pre-show event hosted by actors Julianne Hough and Utkarsh Ambudkar and streamed on the free platform Pluto TV, Tonys were awarded mostly in technical categories.

The pre-show included the award for best regional theatre, which went to Philadelphia's Wilma Theater, and the Isabelle Stevenson Award, which was awarded to Billy Porter for his work as an activist and spokesperson for the LG-BTQ+ communities.

Director Jack O'Brien and writer, director and producer George C. Wolfe each received the 2024 Special Tony Award for lifetime achievement in the theatre.

Special Tony Awards were also presented to Alex Edelman for his one-man show "Just For Us," Abe Jacob for his work in sound design and Nikiya Mathis for her wig design in "Jaja's African Hair Braiding."

Vivienne Westwood's clothes and jewels headed for auction

LONDON--Dresses, suits, shoes and jewellery from the personal collection of late British designer Vivienne Westwood will go under the hammer this month in an auction aimed at raising funds for charity.

More than 200 lots are being offered by Christie's in London for the two-part "Vivienne Westwood: The Personal Collection" auction, made up of a live sale on June 25 and an online auction running June 14-28.

Westwood, one of British fashion's biggest names, died in December 2022 at the age of 81. Her collaborator and widower Andreas Kronthaler has selected looks spanning some 40 years for the auction, with the earliest from Westwood's Autumn-Winter 1983-1984 collection.

"These are the things that she chose to wear herself throughout the last 40 years of her life," Adrian Hume-Sayer, head of sale for the auction, told news agency

Reuters at a press preview on Thursday.

"It's very personal... These are the things you can see her on her bike, riding around London, press interviews, end of the catwalk... just conducting her day-to-day life. But she also lived... as she spoke. And so unlike many people... in her position she wore things repeatedly. She had favourites."

Westwood, whose name was synonymous with 1970s punk rebellion, was also known for her activism. Her T-shirts bore slogans against fossil fuel-driven climate change and pollution, as well as her support for WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.



BVN (Dutch/Flemish) TV
TelTV Channel 014
WTN Channel 204

Monday, June 17

12:00pm	NOS Journaal
12:15pm	Nederland in Beweging
12:30pm	Kook mee met MAX
12:45pm	Goedemorgen Nederland
1:00pm	Nu te Zien!
1:10pm	NOS Journaal
1:20pm	Goedemorgen Nederland
1:40pm	Fryslân DOK
2:10pm	NOS Journaal
2:25pm	Noord-Zuid-Oost-West
2:55pm	Rail Away
3:20pm	Sesamstraat
3:40pm	De Faker
3:55pm	NOS Jeugdjournaal
4:15pm	In de voetsporen van D-Day
5:00pm	NOS Journaal
5:15pm	BinnensteBuiten
5:50pm	EenVandaag
6:20pm	Bed & Breakfast
7:10pm	NOS Journaal
7:35pm	Weerbericht Europa/Afrika
7:40pm	Tijl in voetspoor Richard Wagner
8:20pm	Meisjes van de Goede Herder
9:15pm	Stand van Ned: Generatie Europa
9:35pm	Nieuwsuur
10:15pm	Weerbericht Amerika/Caribiën
10:20pm	NOS Studio Fu ball
10:50pm	MPS Journaal
11:10pm	Danny ter plekke: Ecuador



ST. MAARTEN
TV15 (local)
TelTV Channel 001

Monday, June 17

6:30am	TV15 News
7:00am	Fashion News
8:00am	News and Sports
9:00am	Documentary
10:00am	Dcomm Special Program
10:30am	SXM Sports
11:00am	Late Night
12:00pm	Local Entertainment
1:00pm	Romance Movies
3:00pm	International Entertainment
4:30pm	Special Events
6:30pm	TV15 News
7:00pm	Now You Know
8:00pm	Dcomm Insider News
8:30pm	Special Reports
9:00pm	Late Night
10:00pm	PBS Special
11:00pm	TV15 News
11:30pm	Theater Movies



TeleCuraçao
TelTV Channel 035
WTN Channel 202

Monday, June 17

6:30am	Môru Bon Dia
9:30am	Programa Santissima Trinidad
10:00am	TCFM ku Ulrich
12:00pm	TeleNotisia/Extra Journaal
1:00pm	Tra'i Mèrdia 3.0
3:30pm	Herensia (r)
4:30pm	America News 360 (r)
5:00pm	TCFM Live
6:00pm	Bonochi Kòrsou
7:00pm	Chet Habri (r)
8:00pm	TeleNotisia
9:00pm	Wega di Number Kòrsou
9:10pm	Partisipashon di Morto
9:15pm	Pagina Sosial
9:30pm	Punto Final
11:00pm	TeleNotisia (r)



Liza Lapira, June Squibb, Yvette Nicole Brown, Maya Hawke, Kensington Tallman, Amy Poehler, Ayo Edebiri, Tony Hale and Lewis Black attend the world premiere of the film "Inside Out 2" in Los Angeles, California, on June 10.

Wu-Tang Clan's 'amazing' album playing at Australian museum

SYDNEY--United States (US) hip-hop group Wu-Tang Clan's one-of-a-kind album "Once Upon A Time in Shaolin" began playing at an Australian museum on Saturday, organisers said, with fans in attendance describing the music as "very special" and "amazing".

All timeslots for the twice-a-day sessions at Tasmania's Museum of Old and New Art are sold out, with about 5,000 people on a waiting list. The museum is showcasing the single-print album from June 15 to 24.

"They're small sessions, they're about 30 people," said a museum spokesperson, who confirmed the start of the first listening session on Saturday afternoon.

The album, which has just one physical copy in the world, has a storied history, having been bought by convicted pharmaceutical executive Martin Shkreli in 2015 for US \$2 million.

Shkreli gave it up to as part of a \$7.4 million forfeiture order after his 2017 conviction for defrauding hedge fund investors and

scheming to defraud investors in a drugmaker.

It is now owned by non-fungible token collectors PleasrDAO who purchased the album for \$4 million from the US government. PleasrDAO is also suing Shkreli for making copies of the album and releasing the music to the public.

Music fan Cameron McBryde, who had travelled from Queensland capital Brisbane, described hearing the album as "very special".

"I don't know another song or album anywhere else in the world that holds that same value that this

one does like that," McBryde told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC).

Another attendee, Hayden Kovacic, from Hobart, said it was "amazing" to be one of so few to get to listen to the album.

"It was actually hectic," Kovacic told ABC. "The production was off its head".

The album consists of 31 new tracks recorded and produced by the New York-based group over six years from 2007 "in the original Wu-Tang style of the 90s", according to the album's official website.

'Inside Out 2' domestic box office debuts at \$155 million

LOS ANGELES--Animated Pixar movie "Inside Out 2" made an estimated US \$155 million in United States and Canadian ticket sales over the weekend, according to estimates released on Sunday.

The Friday through Sunday tally topped the \$82.5 million brought in by "Dune: Part Two" in March.

Walt Disney, which owns animation studio Pixar, said the movie in international markets brought in a

global total of \$295 million through Sunday.

The results provided a boost for theatre owners, who have fewer movies to show this year because of delays caused by strikes in Hollywood last year.

Total domestic ticket sales through Sunday are running 24% behind the same point in 2023, Comscore said.

The last two Pixar releases, "Elemental" and "Lightyear," had mediocre ticket sales. Three prior Pixar

films were sent straight to streaming during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Inside Out 2" is a sequel to the 2015 hit about the inner workings of a young girl's mind. In the second instalment, lead character Riley has become a teenager and is grappling with new emotions including anxiety and envy.

The original "Inside Out" opened with about \$90 million in its first weekend in the summer of 2015.

Gen Xers 'whip it' to get fit for marathon music festivals

PASADENA, California--At 53 years old, live music fan Ken Lawrence found his dance floor stamina waning and he wanted to do something about it.

Lawrence started hiking and lifting weights. He then joined an online community called "Whip It ... Into Shape," a group of Generation X music lovers who work to get or stay fit for all-day outdoor festivals. Over 14 months, he lost 47 pounds or 21.3 kilograms.

"I want to be the guy who's living his best life on the dance floor, or at a music festival, into my 80s," he said.

The "Whip It" group, named for a song lyric by 1980s new wave band Devo, was founded a year ago by Southern California resident Melissa Kirkpatrick.

The 43-year-old had a desire to improve her own fitness for festivals that involve many hours or days of standing, walking and dancing. She thought there might be others like her, united by a love of '80s music.

"I wanted a group for being accountable for getting fit," she said. "I let everyone know right off the bat that I wasn't a fitness professional, and that I just wanted to be their friend and we'd do this together."

Kirkpatrick launched the group on Facebook, where she serves as cheerleader for over 350 members, chronicles her own progress and creates themed workout and wellness challenges.

The Duran Duran-inspired "Hungry Like the Wolf" challenge encouraged healthy eating. "Add It Up," named after a Violent

Femmes song, called for weightlifting every two or three days.

To motivate each other, members post photos of themselves at the gym, often in band T-shirts. Others share 80s-themed workout playlists and words of inspiration.

"Sometimes, a random person on the internet telling you they believe in you is all you need to hear to get you out the door, to the gym or a hike or a yoga class," said Lawrence, who posted pictures from his scenic hikes in and around Los Angeles.

Kirkpatrick said she "set a precedent to be really positive, and everyone caught on." Small victories were applauded, and no one was judged for skipping a workout.



TV-CARIB (local)
WTN Channel 010

Monday, June 17

8:00am	Good Morning Beautiful
9:00am	Morning Show (Pearl FM)
12:05pm	Viewpoint (PJD2/3)
5:00pm	Animated Kids Program
6:30pm	Viewpoint Encore
7:30pm	TV-Carib Informer
8:00pm	Special
10:00pm	Noticias en Español
10:20pm	Late Night
Program Rotation	



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Gunnar Henderson leads Orioles' HR barrage in win over Phillies

BALTIMORE --Gunnar Henderson drilled a home run in the first inning, one of four homers for the Baltimore Orioles on their way to defeating the visiting Philadelphia Phillies 8-3 on Sunday afternoon in the rubber match of a three-game series.

Colton Cowser, Adley Rutschman and Jordan Westburg also homered in the first five innings, making it a rough game for Phillies starter Zack Wheeler.

Baltimore won the final two games of the series -- the only scheduled meetings of the season between two of the top teams in the big leagues -- after losing Friday night's opener in 11 innings.

Starting pitcher Corbin Burnes (8-2) gave the Orioles another strong outing, going six innings and surrendering two runs on seven hits. He struck out seven and walked two.

Philadelphia's Alec Bohm went 3-for-4 and drove in two runs, finishing the series with eight hits. Phillies manager Rob Thomson wasn't around to see the end of the game after his ejection in the top of the sixth inning.

Wheeler (8-4) gave up four homers -- with Westburg's three-run shot in the fifth serving as the big blow -- among the nine hits he allowed in 4 1/3 innings. Baltimore scored in four of the first five innings, getting four runs in the fifth.

Henderson's 22nd homer of the season, which ranks second in the majors, marked his first home run of the Orioles' just-concluded six-game home-stand.

Cowser hit his ninth home run of the year in the second, Rutschman's 14th blast came in the third and Westburg launched his 11th long ball in the fifth. That made the score 8-2.

Westburg and Cowser each finished with two hits.

Cionel Perez, Nick Vespi, Jacob Webb and Yenier Cano all worked out of the bullpen for Baltimore, with Cano notching his third save by recording the last out with the bases loaded.

Bohm hit an RBI single as part of a two-run Philadelphia fifth, and he added an RBI double in the seventh. Bryce Harper had two hits and a run for the Phillies.



Bryson DeChambeau hits onto the eighteenth green during the final round of the U.S. Open golf tournament. (John David Mercer-USA TODAY Sports)

Bryson DeChambeau outlasts Rory McIlroy to win U.S. Open

NORTH CAROLINA --Bryson DeChambeau parred the final three holes to complete a 1-over-par 71, and that was enough for a one-shot victory at the U.S. Open on Sunday in Pinehurst, N.C., winning the championship for the second time in five years.

DeChambeau, who began the day with a three-shot lead, finished at 6-under 274, benefitting from Rory McIlroy's late putting failures.

McIlroy, who gained the lead on the back side, bogeyed the last hole by missing a par putt from about 4 feet. Then DeChambeau, playing in the last group, clinched it with a par putt after blasting out of a greenside bunker on his third shot.

DeChambeau became the second former Southern Methodist University golfer to win a U.S. Open at Pinehurst No. 2, with this title coming 25 years after Payne Stewart's memorable championship.

McIlroy's 69 was tainted by bogeys on three of the last four holes, and he finished as the U.S. Open runner-up for the second year in a row. McIlroy, who won the 2011 U.S. Open, was trying to secure his fifth major championship and his first since 2014.

McIlroy drew even at 6 under with birdies on Nos. 9 and 10. McIlroy birdied at No. 12 and, in the following group, DeChambeau bogeyed as the Northern Irishman jumped into the lead.

DeChambeau drove the green on the par-4 13th but left an eagle putt short. It was tied again after McIlroy's tee shot at the par-3 No. 15 was long and he failed to get up and down.

Ten years ago at Pinehurst No. 2, McIlroy tied for 23rd at 6 over, but his improvement from that outing won't be much of a consolation.

Tony Finau (67) and Patrick Cantlay (70) tied for third place at 4 under, France's Matthieu Pavon (71) claimed fifth at 3 under and Japan's Hideki Matsuyama (70) was sixth at 2 under.

Only eight golfers finished under par for the week.

World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler never got untracked, shooting 72 in the final round and tying for 41st place at 8 over. Just like the second round, he had no birdies in his final 18-hole tour around the course.

"I feel like I did some good things this week, but overall I definitely need to do some things better," Scheffler said.

Neal Shipley, who posted 72 on Sunday, was the low amateur at 6 over. The 2022 Pennsylvania State Amateur champion, a native of Pittsburgh, played three years of college golf for James Madison before a two-year stint that ended this spring at Ohio State.

Dodgers' Glasnow gets powerful support in shutout of Royals

LOS ANGELES--Tyler Glasnow threw seven shut-out innings and the Los Angeles Dodgers used three solo home runs to beat the visiting Kansas City Royals 3-0 on Sunday afternoon to win the three-game series.

Dodgers superstar Shohei Ohtani ripped solo homers in the third and sixth innings and Freddie Freeman followed Ohtani's second homer with one of his own to account for all the game's scoring.

The Royals got through a tough stretch of 12 games against first-place teams -- the Cleveland Guardians, Seattle Mariners, New York Yankees and the Dodgers are all division leaders -- with a 5-7 record.

The Dodgers have won six of their last 12 going back to June 4 in Pittsburgh.

Dodgers superstar short-stop Mookie Betts came out of the game in the seventh inning Sunday after getting hit in the left hand on a 97.9-mph fastball from Royals right-handed reliever Dan Altavilla and exited the game.

The game shaped up to be a pitchers' duel between Glasnow and Royals ace

Brady Singer. Ohtani got ahold of a 2-1 sinker from Singer and crushed it 451 feet to deep center field for a 1-0 lead.

Ohtani struck again in the sixth. The Dodgers designated hitter connected on a first-pitch slider from Singer and knocked it 400 feet into the right-field seats for his 19th homer of the season.

Three pitches later, Freeman ripped a 2-0 slider from Singer 401 feet out to right for a 3-0 Dodgers' lead. It was Freeman's 10th homer of the year.

Ohtani's first homer came on Singer's 50th pitch of the game and his second homer came on Singer's 80th.

Singer (4-4) allowed three runs on five hits over six innings, with two walks and four strikeouts in a 90-pitch outing to take the loss.

Glasnow (7-5) got the win, allowing just three hits and a walk over seven innings, striking out nine.

Daniel Hudson threw a scoreless eighth for the Dodgers before Evan Phillips came in to pitch around a one-out walk to Bobby Witt Jr. to record his 10th save.



Mariners starting pitcher Logan Gilbert (36) throws against the Texas Rangers during the second inning at T-Mobile Park. (Joe Nicholson-USA TODAY Sports.)

Logan Gilbert dominates in Mariners' shutout of Rangers

SEATTLE -- Logan Gilbert pitched eight scoreless innings as the host Seattle Mariners completed a three-game sweep of the defending World Series champion Texas Rangers with a 5-0 victory on Sunday afternoon.

Rookie Tyler Locklear homered for the Mariners, who won for the seventh time in eight games and increased their lead over the Rangers atop the American League West to 8 1/2 games, the largest margin in any division in the major leagues.

Gilbert (4-4) allowed two hits, didn't walk a batter and struck out nine. It was the right-hander's first win in eight starts since May 5 despite a 2.48 ERA in that span.

The only hits Gilbert allowed were a two-out single by Andrew Knizner in the third inning and a two-out double by Nathaniel Lowe in the fourth.

Reliever Austin Voth retired the side in order in the ninth to complete the shutout.

Rangers starter Dane Dunning (4-6) took the loss. The right-hander gave up two runs on four hits in 4 2/3 innings, with three walks and eight strikeouts.

The Mariners scored the first run in the fourth. With two outs, Mitch Haniger doubled into the left-field corner and Luke Raley followed with a run-scoring double into the right-field corner.

Seattle scored again in the fifth after Josh Rojas lined a two-out double to left-center. Dunning's wild pitch bounced off the brick wall behind the plate

and caromed toward the Mariners' dugout on the first-base line. Catcher Knizner tracked down the ball and threw to Dunning covering the plate, but Rojas just beat the tag with a head-first slide. The Rangers challenged the call but a video review confirmed Rojas was safe, giving the Mariners a 2-0 lead.

Locklear led off the bottom of the seventh and went deep off reliever Jose

Leclerc, the blast landing in Edgar's Cantina on the second deck in left field.

The Mariners added two insurance runs in the eighth after Haniger was hit by a Cole Winn pitch with two outs. Pinch runner Ryan Bliss stole second and, after Raley walked, Dominic Canzone singled to left, scoring Bliss and sending Raley to third. Raley scored on a wild pitch to make it 5-0.

Back home, Celtics try again to close out Kyrie Irving, Mavericks

BOSTON -- If any player knows how badly the Boston Celtics want to close out the Mavericks in Game 5 of the NBA Finals on Monday night, it's Dallas guard Kyrie Irving.

Irving spent two seasons with Boston (2017-19), but he's been a villain in the eyes of Celtics fans since leaving to sign with the Brooklyn Nets in the summer of 2019. Chants raging on Irving frequently echoed throughout TD Garden in Games 1 and 2 -- a pair of Mavericks losses -- before Boston hit the road and came out of Dallas with a 3-1 lead in the series.

And with the Celtics now knocking on the door of the 18th title in franchise history, Irving has seemingly found peace with his place in Boston history as he prepares to return to a hostile environment.

"Now being older with hindsight looking back, I definitely would have taken

time to know the people in the community and talked to some of the champions that have come before me," Irving told reporters on Sunday. "They have championship pedigree here. ... They expect you to seamlessly buy into the Celtics' pride, buy into everything Celtics.

"And if you don't, then you'll be outed. I'm one of the people that's on the outs. I'm perfectly fine with that, you know what I mean. I did it to myself."

But the Celtics greats of years past are the last thing on Boston coach Joe Mazzulla's mind.

Mazzulla was asked how special it would be to join coaches such as Red Auerbach, Bill Russell and K.C. Jones as those to lead a Celtics team to a championship. Without hesitation, he immediately shifted the focus to Game 5.

"That will never happen if you don't run back on

Pirates rack up 15 hits to win series finale vs. Rockies

DENVER--Rowdy Tellez went 3-for-5 with two RBIs, Jason Delay hit a three-run double and the Pittsburgh Pirates beat the Colorado Rockies 8-2 on Sunday in Denver.

Jared Triolo added two hits and drove in a pair of runs for Pittsburgh, which also received two hits from Andrew McCutchen, Nick Gonzales and Jack Suwinski. Oneil Cruz singled and doubled in his return to the lineup after missing two games with ankle soreness.

Bryan Reynolds singled to extend his hitting streak to 14 games as the Pirates pounded out 15 hits to win two of three in the series.

Nolan Jones had three hits and Jacob Stallings contributed two hits for Colorado, which has lost five of its last six home games.

The Pirates jumped out to a lead in the second inning when Triolo doubled with two outs and scored on Jack Suwinski's single. Suwinski was thrown out trying to steal second to end the frame.

Pittsburgh starter Josh Fleming held Colorado to a

pair of hits through the first four innings before giving up two singles to lead off the fifth. Carmen Mlodzinski, Friday night's starter, relieved Fleming and got Hunter Goodman to hit into a double play and Adael Amador to ground out to first to escape the fifth with no damage.

Fleming struck out two and didn't walk a batter in four-plus innings and Mlodzinski (1-2) got the win with two innings of relief.

The Pirates added to their lead in the sixth. Dakota Hudson gave up a pair of one-out singles and both moved up when Tellez grounded out to first

against reliever Victor Vodnik.

Triolo singled in both runners to make it 3-0. Suwinski singled and Michael A. Taylor walked to load the bases. Delay ripped a bases-clearing double to the gap in right field to cap the five-run inning.

Hudson (2-9) allowed three runs on seven hits and struck out five in 5 1/3 innings.

Tellez added a two-run single in the seventh to extend the lead. Colorado avoided the shutout when Stallings scored on a fielder's choice in the bottom of the seventh, and Jones had an RBI single in the ninth.

Braves feel power coming back on in time for visit from Tigers

ATLANTA --The Braves hope to see more of the power they displayed over the weekend when they host the Detroit Tigers for a three-game series that starts Monday.

The Tigers began their six-game road trip by dropping two or three against Houston,

losing the rubber game 4-1 on Sunday. Atlanta won its three-game series against Tampa Bay but lost the finale 8-6.

The Braves took two of three games last season in Detroit. The Tigers lead the all-time series 15-12.

The Atlanta offense, which had been dormant on its previous nine-game road trip, flashed its power in the series against Tampa Bay. The Braves hit nine home runs against the Rays -- three by Austin Riley, two by Marcell Ozuna (who leads the National League with 20) and two from Jarred Kelenic. Riley homered in every game in the series.

"They're starting to be more like themselves," Atlanta manager Brian Snitker said. "They've been fighting. They've been battling. They've been working really hard. Hopefully, it's something we can continue to build on."

The pitching matchup for the series opener features Detroit right-hander Reese Olson (1-8, 3.68 ERA) against Atlanta southpaw Max Fried (6-3, 3.20).

Olson has lost his last three starts, most recently to the Washington Nationals on Wednesday. He worked 5 1/3 innings and allowed five runs (four earned) on 10 hits and two walks with three strikeouts. It was the second straight outing in which he has allowed double-digit hits.

"Another one where I wasn't good enough," Olson said. "I let the team down. Just didn't get enough outs. I feel like this one is on me."

our team unique and special."

Luka Doncic went for 29 points and Irving supplied 21 on Friday to keep Dallas' season alive. The Mavericks are trying to become the first team in NBA history to overcome a 3-0 deficit in a best-of-seven series.

Teams are 0-156 when losing the first three games of a series.

"I think the most important thing is to show that we believe," Doncic said. "I think we showed in Game 4. If not, if we wouldn't believe, we probably wouldn't have won that game. So I think obviously the talk is easy to talk about it, but then showing it is another thing."

The stars could be aligning for Boston, though, as Monday marks the 16-year anniversary of the Celtics' 2008 title. Boston hasn't gone all the way since.

defense, rebound, execute and get to your spacing," Mazzulla said. "That's the most important thing."

Boston lacked those fundamentals on Friday, failing to put the Mavericks away while ending up on the wrong end of a 122-84 blowout in Game 4.

Jayson Tatum finished with a team-high 15 points for the Celtics, and he's hoping that Boston rediscovered the brand of basketball that has led it to 79 wins in 100 games between the regular season and playoffs here in 2023-24.

"I think we maybe put too much pressure on ourselves at that moment to be perfect or think it was going to go how we wanted it to go," Tatum said of why the Celtics came up short on Friday. "Joe did a great job (Sunday) of reminding us that it's OK to smile during wars. It's OK to have fun during high-pressure moments. That's what makes

Hosts Germany crush 10-man Scotland 5-1 in Euro opener

MUNICH, Germany- - Germany thrashed 10-man Scotland 5-1 on Friday with three goals in the first half to make a triumphant start to their Euro 2024 campaign and lay down a marker with the biggest opening game margin of victory in the tournament's history.

The Germans, hunting a record fourth European title and first major trophy after a barren decade, scored through Florian Wirtz, Jamal Musiala and a Kai Havertz penalty before Niclas Füllkrug and Emre Can added two more late in the second half.

Scotland, who had defender Ryan Porteous sent off on the stroke of half-time, got on the scoresheet in the 87th minute courtesy of Antonio Ruediger's deflected own goal.

Julian Nagelsmann's Germany next face Hungary on Wednesday before taking on Switzerland in their final Group A match.

"We played with a lot of intensity and played the right spaces, took some risks and that is why we scored. We played an outstanding first half and we were up 3-0," Germany captain Ilkay Guendogan said.

"That is how we wanted to start. I had a good feeling before the game and I was proved right."

"The start is what we wanted but still the goal we let in showed that all teams have quality and if you don't pay attention you will be punished."

The Scots, who lost Porteous for a studs-up challenge on Guendogan that earned the hosts their penalty, must quickly go back to the drawing board and regroup if they are to make it past the group stage for the first time in a major tournament.

POWERFUL START

The Germans, who lost their opening matches at

the 2018 and 2022 World Cups as well as the previous Euros in 2021, dominated possession from the start with the Scots defending high.

That ambitious strategy proved fatal for the visitors, who left far too many open spaces at the back, and it did not take long for the hosts to punish them.

Toni Kroos flighted a perfect 30-metre cross for Joshua Kimmich who timed his pass to Wirtz perfectly for the winger to drill home for a 10th minute lead and become the youngest scorer for Germany at a Euros aged 21.

With Scotland still recovering, Germany struck again nine minutes later, with Guendogan slipping another ball past the Scottish backline, this time for Havertz on the left, with the forward laying it off for Musiala in the box to rifle home.

It was the start all of Germany was hoping for as hundreds of thousands of supporters across several fan zones erupted with joy, but there was more to come with Porteous' reckless challenge and dismissal conceding a spot kick Havertz easily converted.

It was one-way traffic again after the break and Germany added a fourth through substitute Füllkrug's fiercely struck shot in the 69th as Scotland coach Steve Clarke, the first man to lead the team to back-to-back Euros, looked on helplessly.

"First half, we just got it all wrong really, didn't show up, weren't aggressive enough, and we let good players get on the ball," said Scotland captain Andy Robertson.

"Second half, we're down to 10 men and I thought the lads dug in really well. We have to bounce back quickly because there was lots wrong here and it's a quick turnaround now."

Scotland, who did not have one effort on or off target, pulled a goal back late on when Ruediger inadvertently headed the ball into his own net but substitute Emre Can then curled home a fine shot in stoppage time for the Germans' fifth goal.

The reeling Scots next play the Swiss on Wednesday.



Spain's Alvaro Morata scores their first goal against Croatia during their Euro 2024 Group B match at Berlin Olympiastadion, Berlin, Germany.

Spain's "vertical football" too much for ageing Croatia

BERLIN- - Having dominated international football for years with their possession-based "tiki-taka" style, Spain's switch to a faster, more direct approach saw them cruise to an easy 3-0 win over Croatia on Saturday as they laid down a marker for Euro 2024.

The previous day, Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic had spoken about how the current Spain side tried to move the ball into attacking areas more quickly, and when Croatia failed to make the ball stick in attack midway through the first half, the Spaniards showed exactly what he meant.

Marc Cucurella's clearance found Rodri in midfield, and he passed calmly to Fabian Ruiz - a couple of touches later, the midfielder split the defence with a sublime ball to Alvaro Morata and he slotted it home. Croatia never recovered.

For all the success Spain had with tiki-taka, winning the Euros in 2008 and 2012 either side of a World Cup win in South Africa in 2010, it was often criticised as being a style based on passing for the sake of it, rather than trying to score.

Instead, the Spaniards held possession for long periods, tiring out opponents with their patient probing before striking quickly in the final third for simple, devastating goals.

The adoption of a more modern and energetic pressing style by many teams blunted their previous possession game, but it also gave rise to their current take on attacking play, which seeks to create goal-scoring chances more quickly.

The Spanish attack was not limited to rapier-like thrusts through the middle either - though Lamine Yamal's name will be in the headlines as he became the youngest player ever to play at the Euros, his fellow winger Nico Williams also deserves his share of the plaudits.

Though he crossed perfectly for Spain's third goal, the 16-year-old Yamal took time to grow into the game, but Williams was a threat from the off, constantly trying to get his defender onto the wrong foot and steal into the space behind him.

TASTE OF THE FUTURE

The introduction of Dani Olmo after the break gave a mouth-watering taste of what the future of Spanish football might look like, with Yamal, Williams and Olmo all looking to square their shoulders toward the opponent's goal and attack with gusto.

In contrast, it looks like the end of the road for some of Croatia's greatest-ever players.

Luka Modric can still put a pass through the eye of a needle, but teams no longer give him the space to do so, and the introduction of Ivan Perisic at 3-0 down seemed like an attempt to summon the past in an effort to change the present.

Croatia's afternoon was summed up when Bruno Petkovic missed a penalty and then had a goal from the rebound ruled out after his team mates encroached during his original spot kick, leaving them without even a consolation goal.

Spain, on the other hand, could cruise through the second half as if it was a friendly, testing tricks and combinations that might pay dividends later in the tournament, if their success with their new-found vertical football persists.

Mbappe rules out playing at Paris Games after Real Madrid move

SPAIN-- Kylian Mbappe confirmed on Sunday he will not play for France's Olympic team at the Paris Games as his new club Real Madrid are against the idea.

The 25-year-old said in March that he was keen on playing at his home Games but since the Olympic soccer tournament is not on FIFA's calendar clubs are not obliged to release their players.

Mbappe was not included in a 25-man preliminary squad for the Olympics ear-

lier this month, though head coach Thierry Henry left the door open.

"My club's position was very clear, so from that moment on, I think I (knew) I won't be taking part in the Games," Mbappe told reporters ahead of Monday's Group D match against Austria at Euro 2024.

"That's just the way it is, and I understand that too. I'm joining a new team in September, so it's not the best way to start an adventure.

Blanco's 7 no-hit innings lead Astros past Tigers

TEXAS--Ronel Blanco tossed seven no-hit innings and Jose Altuve clubbed a three-run home run as the Houston Astros claimed the rubber match of their three-game series against the visiting Detroit Tigers with a 4-1 victory on Sunday.

Blanco (7-2) continued his breakout campaign and flirted with a second no-hitter this season. Blanco allowed two walks and recorded seven strikeouts when he no-hit the Toronto Blue Jays on April 1 and was equally dominant against the Tigers, aside from a sudden bout of wildness with two outs in the fifth inning that likely cost him an opportunity to pitch deeper into the contest.

Blanco retired the first 14 batters he faced, eight by strikeout, before issuing a two-out walk to Gio Urshela in the fifth. Blanco then walked Akil Baddoo and Carson Kelly to load the bases before Zach McKinstry flied out to shallow center to end the threat.

Urshela later reached on a two-out throwing error by Astros third baseman Alex Bregman in the seventh. Blanco followed by retiring Baddoo on a deep flyout to center, but with 94 pitches on his ledger, his day was

complete. Blanco matched his season high for strikeouts with eight and recorded his eighth quality start, the most on the Houston staff.

Tigers rookie right fielder Wenceel Perez ended the combined no-hit bid when he dumped a two-out single to center off Astros reliever Ryan Pressly in the eighth. Houston closer Josh Hader surrendered an RBI double to pinch hitter Andy Ibanez in the ninth but preserved the win.

The Astros struck early against Tigers right-hander Kenta Maeda (2-3). Altuve drilled a leadoff single to center in the bottom of the first and moved to second on a wild pitch. Yordan Alvarez later added a sharp single to right that scored Altuve for a 1-0 advantage.

An inning later, Altuve followed a two-out walk by Chas McCormick with his 11th home run of the season -- a 402-foot shot to center that also scored Mauricio Dubon, who reached on a one-out single. The blast put Houston up 4-0.

Maeda, aided by double-play grounders in the third and fourth innings, allowed four runs on five hits and two walks to go along with one strikeout over five innings.



England's Jude Bellingham in action with Serbia's Dusan Tadic during their Euro 2024, Group C match at Arena AufSchalke, Gelsenkirchen, Germany.

England hang on to beat Serbia 1-0 with Bellingham header

GELSENKIRCHEN, Germany-- A powerful first-half header by Jude Bellingham sent England on the way to a successful launch of their Euro 2024 campaign with a 1-0 win over Serbia on Sunday that began confidently but saw the Three Lions clinging on for the points by the end.

The excellent Bellingham stormed into the box to connect with Bukayo Saka's deflected cross that sailed across the box perfectly for the 20-year-old midfielder to put the Euro 2020 runners-up ahead from close range in the 13th minute.

The result put England top of Group C after Denmark and Slovenia drew 1-1 earlier on Sunday.

Bellingham, who began the move for the only goal himself, set the tempo for much of England's attacking play and was cheered to the rafters of the cavernous Arena AufSchalke by the army of Three Lions fans following his name.

Gareth Southgate's attack-minded team initially found space down the right as Saka linked up with full back Kyle Walker, whose surging runs threatened to help add to England's advantage.

But after the break, Serbia began to threaten and England showed little of their earlier fluency.

The tally of 11 shots by the final whistle – six by Serbia, five from England – was the lowest in a European Championship match since at least 1980, according to Opta data.

Bellingham took issue

when asked by reporters if England's loss of momentum showed the team remained a work in progress.

"I don't agree with that," he said. "I think the first half shows why we can score goals against any team and the second half shows why we can keep a clean sheet against any team."

SERBIA IMPROVE

Serbia upped their game at the start of the second half after bringing on Ivan Ilic for defensive midfielder Nemanja Gudelj, and before long striker Dusan Vlahovic swept a cross dangerously across England's box, rousing their fans.

Serbia coach Dragan Stojkovic doubled down on his switch to a more attacking shape as Dusan Tadic and Luka Jovic came off the bench with just over an hour played.

Southgate responded by introducing the hard-running Conor Gallagher – replacing Trent Alexander-Arnold playing in an unfamiliar midfield role.

Another substitute, Jarrod Bowen, delivered a pinpoint cross for captain Harry Kane, whose header was pushed onto the bar by goalkeeper Predrag Rajkovic in the 77th minute.

Five minutes later, a fierce Vlahovic shot was tipped over by Jordan Pickford as Serbia kept up the pressure.

But England, with an unfamiliar-looking defence that featured the impressive Marc Guehi, playing in a major tournament for the first time, and right-footed Kieran Trippier standing in as left back, held out for the

win.

Kane acknowledged the performance was not a classic by England. "Overall a deserved win. It's just about getting through," said the England captain.

"There was a spell in the second half where we got camped in our box and we found it hard to get out but it was an important win tonight."

England next play Denmark on Thursday after Serbia take on Slovenia.

Denmark's Eriksen writes new Euro chapter after near-fatal collapse

STUTTGART, Germany-- As Denmark got ready to take the field for their Euro 2024 opening clash with Slovenia on Sunday, broadcasters around the world flashed back to three years ago when midfielder Christian Eriksen almost lost his life in very similar circumstances.

On that occasion, 1,100 days ago, the Danes were also favourites, taking on a Finland side making their first appearance at a major finals, but none of that mattered when Eriksen, then 29, slumped to the turf after suffering a cardiac arrest as his partner watched horrified from the stands.

Remarkably, both he and Denmark recovered, with Eriksen having a device to regulate his heart fitted and his team mates going on a storied run to the Euro semi-finals, where they lost to England in the first of many new chapters written since.

Khaka is top 10 as Swiss overwhelm Hungary

COLOGNE, Germany-- Granit Xhaka and Dominik Szoboszlai are the number 10s, captains and driving forces of Switzerland and Hungary, but it was Xhaka who took the plaudits with a superb all-round display in his team's 3-1 Euro 2024 victory on Saturday.

Kwadwo Duah, Michel Aebischer and Breel Embolo scored the goals in a dominant Swiss display, despite Hungary briefly rallying at 2-1 after a goal by Barnabas Varga.

With 126 caps and seven years at Arsenal under his belt, Xhaka is enjoying something of an Indian summer. He was key in Bayer Leverkusen's surprise Bundesliga title triumph and led from the front as the assured-looking Swiss got their Group A campaign off to a perfect start.

Still only 31, he is vastly experienced and that priceless ability to find space and pick a pass left the Hungarian defence flailing again and again in Cologne.

When Hungary did finally get something of a foothold in the second half, Xhaka harried to pressure them on the ball, then nearly capped a dream day with a last-minute glancing header that was well saved.

Xhaka has been taking

his UEFA coaching badges recently.

"I have the feeling that this course for the coaching licence allowed me to look at the game differently and be a step ahead of my opponents," he said. "For me, it's more important to help the team on the pitch by being positive."

It was a different story for Szoboszlai. He missed the last Euros through injury as Hungary, given no chance of progress after being grouped with Germany, France and Portugal, went within six minutes of qualifying before Germany snatched an equaliser that eliminated them.

Fully fit and firing after a move to Liverpool, he was the driving force behind Hungary's remarkable unbeaten run over the last 18 months and the theory was that with him back in harness they would be ready to make a real challenge at Euro 2024.

He turned 23 last month

and is the youngest captain in European Championship history but Saturday's first half passed with him a totally peripheral figure, deep and wide on the left, his body language of shrugs and head shakes doing nothing to disguise his frustration.

Szoboszlai's contribution was summed up by two free kicks in dangerous positions, both of which he floated too high and deep when his team were desperate for any sort of half-chance.

Szoboszlai finally came to life with a delicious curling cross for Varga's goal and, like the rest of his team, he then looked a different player as the energy coursed through him with the Hungarian fans in full voice.

He was unable, though, to impose himself enough and the Swiss rode the challenge before capping the win with Embolo's neat finish in stoppage time before Xhaka deservedly collected the man-of-the-match award.

Grit and swagger Italy survive storm

DORTMUND, Germany-- The way Italy fought back to win their Euro 2024 opener against Albania should instill new belief in a fan base badly hurt by their failure to qualify for the last two World Cups.

Although they are defending European champions, that confidence has been fuelled by the work of manager Luciano Spalletti.

Albania made a dream start when Nedim Bajrami netted the fastest goal ever scored at a European Championship, igniting their red-clad fans who bounced at Borussia Dortmund's Westfalenstadion Stadium to shake the stadium to its foundations.

Italy, however, were unfazed and looked as cool as if they were playing a practice match, with the swagger football fans would expect to expect from the Azzurri jersey which carries four World Cup championship stars.

Spalletti's Italy fought back to win in dominant fashion, playing a different style of football from what they are known for.

Instead of their trademark Catenaccio – a tactical system with a strong emphasis on defence – Italy silenced Albania's wall of noise with an attacking style of football, similar to what Spalletti deployed at Napoli who won Serie A with a month to

spare last year to end a three-decade title drought.

Italy played "Luciano's football" with control of possession, dominating small areas of the pitch with intense pressure to allow the vision and skills of Niccolò Barella and Lorenzo Pellegrini to service strikers Davide Frattesi and Federico Chiesa.

They wasted chances and could be still be short of firepower as Atalanta's Gianluca Scamacca was wasteful, but it was in defence where Italy answered many questions.

After missing Giorgio Scalvini and Francesco Acerbi to injuries before the tournament, Alessandro Bastoni and 22-year-old Riccardo Calafiori played like seasoned veterans, showing calmness and composure after the early mistake that allowed Albania to take the lead.

Spalletti is a polarising figure who divided opinion in Italy due to his progressive ideas in the home of conservative football. For much of his career, he was admired as a gifted coach and a sophisticated tactician who failed to win titles.

He finally achieved glory with Napoli and now has started on the right foot with an important win for Italy in a tough Group B ahead of games against Spain and Croatia.

Jose Siri helps Rays put away Braves

ATLANTA --Jose Siri hit a two-run home run in the ninth inning to lift the visiting Tampa Bay Rays to an 8-6 win over the Atlanta Braves on Sunday, allowing them to salvage one win in a three-game series.

Siri connected on his eighth home run of the season off Atlanta closer Raisel Iglesias (0-1), who walked Randy Arozarena to start the inning.

Pete Fairbanks worked around a leadoff walk to pitch a scoreless ninth and earn his 10th save. Jason Adam (3-1) was the winner.

Ben Rortvedt hit a grand slam to give the Rays a 6-2 edge before Atlanta rallied. The Braves tied the game in the eighth when Austin Riley homered for the third straight day. Riley's two-run shot, his sixth long ball of the year, came off Adam on the 11th pitch of the at-

bat. Tampa Bay starter Zach Eflin pitched 5 2/3 innings and allowed four runs (three earned) on seven hits to go along with one walk and seven strikeouts.

Atlanta rookie Hurston Waldrep struggled again in his second major league start. He pitched 3 1/3 innings and allowed six runs on five hits, walking four and fanning two.

Atlanta reliever Grant Holmes made his major league debut after being in the minor leagues since 2014. Holmes worked three scoreless innings and struck out two.

The Rays scored a run in the first inning for the third straight day. Yandy Diaz doubled to open the contest, extending his on-base streak to 19 games. Diaz scored on a two-out single by Arozarena, whose grounder that was headed toward

the glove of second baseman Ozzie Albies struck the base and ricocheted into left field for an RBI.

The lead didn't last long. Jarred Kelenic hit a solo homer on the second pitch he saw to tie the score in the home half of the first.

Atlanta took a 2-1 advantage in the second on a solo shot by Travis d'Arnaud, his sixth home run of the year and his first since April 22.

The Rays tied the score in the third on Brandon Lowe's fourth homer, and Rortvedt hit his first career grand slam in the fourth. Arozarena was hit by a pitch before Richie Palacios and Siri walked to load the bases for Rortvedt.

Atlanta scored twice in the sixth on Adam Duvall's RBI single and Palacios' throwing error following a single by d'Arnaud.



Netherlands' Wout Weghorst in action with Poland's Jakub Moder and Jakub Kiwior during their Euro 2024 Group D match at Hamburg Volksparkstadion, Hamburg, Germany.

Netherlands sharp-shooter shows value of killer instinct

HAMBURG, German-Modern-day football sometimes shuns the strapping centre forward but Netherlands super-sub Wout Weghorst came off the bench to spare their blushes on Sunday and show the value of a number nine with a killer instinct in a 2-1 Euro 2024 win over Poland.

There was no question that the Dutch were the dominant side against a Polish outfit who were perfectly happy to sit and wait for their moments.

Yet goals win games and if the Netherlands are to go far at the tournament they will need to sharpen their knives after a largely wasteful display in Hamburg.

The Dutch started the game with a dynamic front three of Cody Gakpo, Memphis Depay and Xavi Simons who were full of running and creative interplay, carving apart the Poles and creating chance after chance.

They had 64% of possession and 20 shots on goal but apart from Gakpo's deflected effort in the 29th minute to level the scores, the opportunities came and went.

As the Netherlands' hopes of opening their Group D campaign with a victory started to fade, boss Ronald Koeman summoned Weghorst off

the bench in the 81st minute, one of a number of changes he made as he looked to shift the dial in their favour.

Two minutes later, the Netherlands had the lead as Weghorst latched on to Nathan Ake's pass and rifled the ball into the back of the net left-footed.

Weghorst, who came on with the Dutch trailing 2-0 to Argentina at the 2022 World Cup to score twice, has netted with his past three shots at major tournaments.

And underlining his super-sub credentials, it was the third consecutive game in which he has come off the bench to score for the Dutch.

"A real No.9 knows exactly where he needs to be to get those sort of goals," said former Netherlands striker and Dutch TV analyst Pierre van Hooijdonk.

Those who have followed Weghorst's club career would be forgiven for thinking they are watching a different player from the version who lines up for the Dutch.

He scored no goals in 17 league games during a dismal loan spell at Manchester United last season, while this campaign he has scored seven in 28 games for his loan club Hoffenheim in the Bundesliga. He has bagged the same number

for the Dutch this season in 11 appearances.

While the victory was deserved, Poland can take some solace from a competitive display when many had been predicting a more comprehensive defeat.

There was some trepidation among Polish fans after they scraped into the tournament through the playoffs following a woeful qualifying campaign, even if their recent form had shown more promise.

With record scorer Robert Lewandowski, who boasts a remarkable 82 goals in 150 internationals, sidelined through injury, it was always going to be an uphill task.

There are occasions when losing your best player can be a blessing in disguise, as a team that has become overly reliant on an individual's brilliance is forced into a rethink.

In came Adam Buksa to lead the line, a big man to replace a big star and not only did the 1.93-metre striker open the scoring for the Poles but his all-round game gave the Dutch defence headaches.

Lewandowski may be fit for their second group game against Austria on Friday but Buksa may hope he has done enough to keep him on the sidelines.

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