



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

POINTEXPRESS

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PRICE \$3

COVID CASES HOLD STEADY

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**COVID - 19
UPDATE**

**Ban on Commercial
Flights Continues - Pg 4**

YIDA admits to landscaping

Controversy is again brewing around the multi-million tourism and investment project being undertaken by

the Chinese company, YIDA International (Antigua) Ltd. on the northeast coastline of Antigua.

The company issued a statement Thursday responding to what it termed 'reports that are being made on social me-

dia and elsewhere' claiming that the company is currently engaged in the 'unlawful destruction of mangroves'.

The statement was responding to a video that has been shared on social media since last week, that alleges that the company was destroying mangroves that lie on the water's edge of its property. The social media postings have generated much concern from members of the public. It also prompted the Development Control Authority to visit the site last Saturday and to issue a 'Stop' order thereby halting whatever work that was being carried out at the site.

"The company wishes to
cont'd on pg 3

Adventist Church Donates To Anti-COVID Fight

The South Leeward Conference of Seventh-day Adventist church has joined the fight to combat the spread of COVID-19 disease in Antigua and Barbuda.

Through its president, Dr Carson Greene, presented a cheque for 2-thousand dollars to the ministry of health to go towards testing of persons suspected of being infected with the virus. Dr Greene said the church

wanted to contribute based on the seriousness with which the virus not only affects individuals but also how it has also crippled the national economy.

Health Minister, Molwyn Joseph, said the government was under 'tremendous pressure' to keep up with the expenses associated with the fight against the virus and that it needed all the help it can get.



Dr Carson Greene

DAY 3/25

Max UV Index: 12 Extreme
 Wind: E at 17 km/h
 Wind Gusts: 22 km/h
 Probability of Precipitation: 41%
 Probability of Thunderstorms: 20%
 Precipitation: 0.6 mm
 Rain: 0.6 mm
 Snow: 0.0 cm
 Ice: 0.0 mm
 Hours of Precipitation: 1
 Hours of Rain: 1

30° Hi



Mostly sunny with a stray shower

NIGHT 3/25

Wind: E at 13 km/h
 Wind Gusts: 20 km/h
 Probability of Precipitation: 56%
 Probability of Thunderstorms: 20%
 Precipitation: 1.0 mm
 Rain: 1.0 mm
 Snow: 0.0 cm
 Ice: 0.0 mm
 Hours of Precipitation: 0.5
 Hours of Rain: 0.5

23° Lo



Patchy clouds with a passing shower late

SUNRISE/SUNSET

Sunrise AST
 5:50 AM

Sunset AST
 6:24 PM



Duration
 12:34hr

MOONRISE/MOONSET

Moonrise AST
 2:37 PM

Moonset AST
 2:15 AM



Duration
 11:38hr

COVID cases static for now

Health Minister Molwyn Joseph has declared himself “very pleased with the trend of what’s happening in Antigua and Barbuda” as the country went through four consecutive days without any further increase beyond the 23 cases of COVID-19 virus infection that have so far been detected in the two-island state.

Three of those who tested positive have died, while three formerly confirmed cases have subsequently returned negative tests, marking recovery from the dreaded disease that has proven to be a death sentence for hundreds of thousands around the world.

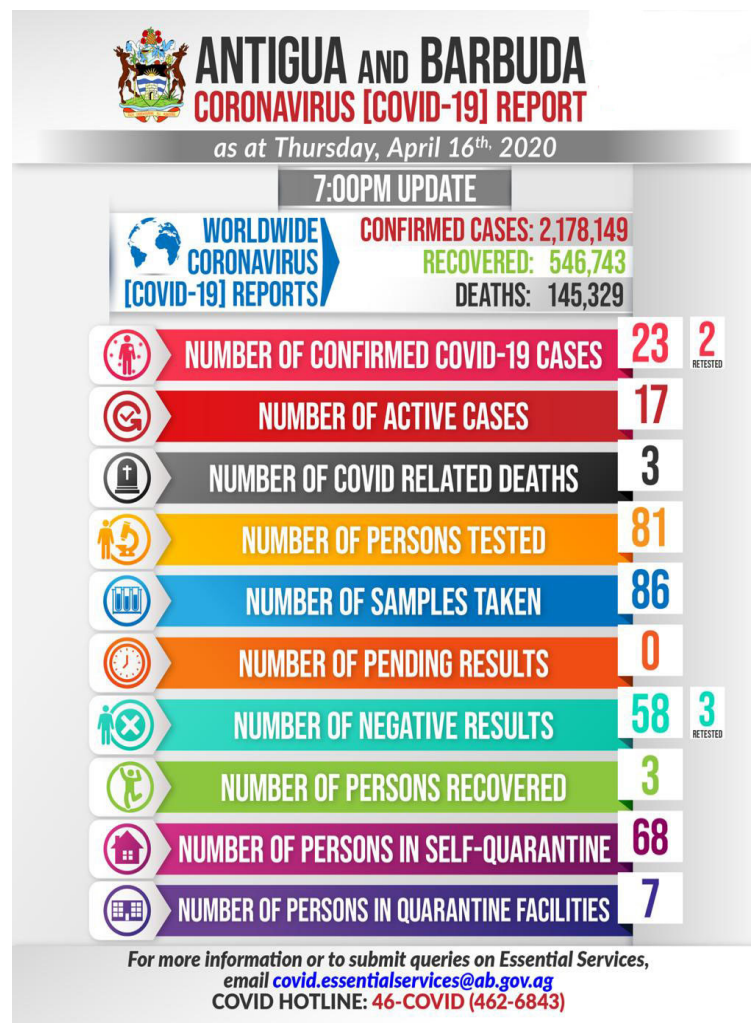
Speaking on State television Thursday night, Joseph referenced figures on the latest COVID-19 status update “dashboard”.

“I think that the dashboard will show that we now have had 86 samples sent to CARPHA (the Caribbean Public Health Agency). Yesterday it was 78. The additional eight sent to CARPHA, which is reflected in the number of samples sent, we got the results today and all eight

were negative; which I think is a very good sign.”

Joseph took the opportunity to express his “appreciation to the workers in the Ministry of Health, especially the frontline workers and those in the back, not seen often; those who are doing the contact tracing. I want the people of Antigua and Barbuda to understand that these people work seven days a week and quite often 14-16 hours a day.”

The Minister described contact tracing as “the most important aspect of fighting COVID. First, you have to identify the person who is a suspected case, and then you have to test that person. When the result comes, you either isolate or declare the person free of COVID, and then the contact tracing to determine who that person might have spread or transmitted that virus to. All these workers are doing that, and it is through their hard work – the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for instance – the nurses and the doctors; and the EMS people who go house to house to take samples; I think it’s important for



me to say that publicly: that whatever we see is a direct result of this hard work. My chief medical officer and all her staff, they are the ones who are making the results that we are seeing today.”

Joseph explained that An-

tigua and Barbuda is presently seeing “a decline in the number of positives, and that is a good trend”. He however declared himself hesitant to conclude that COVID cases in the country have peaked.

cont'd from pg 2

make it absolutely clear that it is not engaged in any such activity. The company continues to abide by all relevant laws of Antigua and Barbuda and any relevant directives from any appropriate governmental authority,” the statement continued.

YIDA International admits that it is engaged in landscaping work consistent with the best environmental practices.

According to the statement, in effort to show transparency, the company in-

vited representatives from the relevant governmental agencies to the site on Wednesday April 15, for them to examine the current operations on site. The site visit was conducted having regard to the COVID-19 protocols now in place. The company repeats its commitment in being a good environmental and corporate citizen.

PointeXpress Newspaper has learnt that following the ‘stop order’ nine representatives from three government agencies – DCA, the Department of the

Environment and the Fisheries Division – did visit the site on Wednesday. The team spent approximately one and a half hours touring the site and observing the work that was being performed prior to the DCA directive.

Head of the DCA, Town and Country Planner, Fredrick Southwell, said a report is being compiled by key members of the team and a statement is expected to follow shortly.

It is expected that the report will be issued by the Chief Environment Officer.

Ban on Commercial Flights Continues

The ban imposed on commercial flights into VC Bird International airport will continue for another week... at least for the time being.

The government said the currently imposed restriction on all inbound commercial traffic runs until 23rd April 2020 in the first instance.

The ministry of foreign affairs said while the government continues to evaluate the present situation, regional inbound and outbound passenger and cargo flights by LIAT, private jets, small private aircraft, and flights, and customary small carriers will be permitted to land subject to special approval.

"All international commercial inbound flights must be empty. Any airline wishing to fly in empty aircraft for the purpose of returning stranded passengers to their originating cities will be allowed to do so with proper advance notification and authorization," the ministry said.

It explained that no nationals will be allowed entry on inbound flights organized to collect foreign nationals. During this period, citizens of Antigua and Barbuda as



well as resident diplomats will be allowed entry.

The ministry has declared that all citizens arriving on LIAT/private flights will be quarantined. Citizens returning from the Dominican Republic will be required to undergo two (2) weeks quarantine prior to return, and an additional two (2) weeks upon return to Antigua and Barbuda.

The ministry is advising flight organizers to provide advance passenger information of the scheduled arrival of citizens in order to facilitate the necessary quarantine.

Meanwhile, the government has decided to maintain the current restriction of all inbound pleasure crafts (motorized and sailing yachts),

passenger vessels and ferries into Antigua and Barbuda until next Thursday.

The ministry said this restriction does not apply to inter-island ferry services between Antigua and Barbuda. Commercial vessels engaged in regional and international trade are to follow the strict guidelines issued by the Antigua and Barbuda Port Authority for ships scheduled to transport cargo to and from Antigua and Barbuda during the State of Emergency.

"During the State of Emergency all cruise permits already issued to visiting yachts are now restricted only to the coastal waters of Antigua and shall cease to apply to coastal waters of Barbuda. Further, during the period of the current 24-

hour curfew, all vessels and tenders are to be confined to an established mooring position," the ministry determined.

Military vessels and other watercraft transporting food, medical supplies, humanitarian and emergency supplies will be given special dispensation with prior notification.

These restrictions for maritime traffic, and the consequential Port Authority guidelines, issued during the State of Emergency, shall not restrict vessels engaged in innocent passage and/or transit passage, within the territorial seas and/or archipelagic waters of Antigua and Barbuda, under the 1982 United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Schools Remain Closed Indefinitely

Schools in Antigua and Barbuda will remain closed indefinitely as the Ministry of Education announced that the tentative re-opening date of April 20, 2020, is no longer feasible.

A directive from the ministry said under the circumstances 'Learn at home' will continue as all public and private schools along with other ed-

ucational institutions in Antigua and Barbuda will remain closed until further notice

"This is a painful but necessary decision considering the COVID-19 pandemic. As the learning landscape continues to evolve, we must exploit all avenues to ensure continued student learning is supported by the delivery

of, at a minimum, basic education," the release stated.

It noted that remote learning through online classes, learning platforms, academic resource packages, and teacher-student collaborations in which students submit and receive graded assignments will continue.

cont'd on pg 5

APUA: A Victim of Fake News

The nationally-owned utility company, APUA, said it's a victim of fake news and other postings on social media intended to harm its standings with its customers and the general public.

Public Relations Officer, Sharifa George, said over the past several weeks there have been so-called competitions being organized on social media where the prizes included mobile phones from APUA.

"Winners are told call APUA to claim their prizes but when they do, we have no choice but to explain to them that they have been victims of a hoax as the utility company did not participate in any such competition," she explained.

Unfortunately, according to George, one particular post was even more offensive and she pointed a finger at Troll Antigua, a social media site that mocks institutions and individuals, as being responsible.

"There have been a series of posts circulating which

have sought to impersonate and deceive consumers about competitions hosted by APUA and most recently an offensive post alluding to the health and safety of the water produced by APUA," she said in a press statement.

She wants APUA's customers and members of the public to be aware that this posting is a falsehood created by those associated with the site.

"In an atmosphere where persons are anxious and vulnerable, these actions are insensitive towards the reality of what is happening globally. At a time when historic financial implications await our nation, pranks of this nature are unwarranted," George emphasised.

The authority appeals to the creator of this offensive material to cease and desist from contributing to falsehoods and appeals for immediate removal of the post.

In a complete rejection of the information contained in the social media post, the release said APUA stands



by the quality of the water it produces. "APUA is reassuring its customers that the water produced by the authority satisfies the requirements outlined by the World Health Organisation's standards for potable water," it stated.

Additionally, George said the authority has also temporarily suspended all pro-

motional giveaways at this time.

The PRO said the authority is grateful to persons who do not indulge or share this content and it would like to remind customers that APUA remains committed to supporting the needs of residents of Antigua and Barbuda.

cont'd from pg 4

The release praised teachers for having done a 'tremendous job' transitioning themselves and students to this new learn at home environment and who continue to explore creative avenues to reach students. It urges teachers and parents to make use of its partnerships with Digicel, Flow and Inet to access pre-approved education sites at minimal or no cost.

According to the release, the ministry is also mindful of the implications the closure of the physical classrooms

will have on the examination processes both local and regional.

It said the decisions regarding the national examinations will be communicated shortly. However, with respect to the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), the regional body stated in a press release issued last month that it intended to modify the usual structure of the regional exams and it proposed July as the new administration period.

The ministry has since informed CXC that Antigua and Barbuda is not in favour of the proposed time and

recommends that the examinations be deferred to September/October 2020.

The Ministry will continue to monitor the situation and inform the public accordingly.

"Parents and guardians, we do understand that this is a difficult time for you. We share the impact of this time with you and encourage you to support your children as they engage in learning at home through delivery of instructional material from teachers and students' independent engagement," the release concluded.

New Rules Take Effect at the Public Market

New rules are going into effect at the St. John's Public Market as the St John's Development Corporation takes step to curb the spread of the COVID-19 disease.

SJDC City Manager, Carolyn Thomas-Parker said this has become necessary as shoppers at the facility have largely ignored the health protocols mandated by law as the government seeks to stop the spread of the respiratory illness.

She noted that over the past several weeks, users of the market have continued to assemble in large groups as they crowd individual vendors at the mall.

This act violates one of the key provisions of the new guidelines that ask residents to practice social distancing, or not to stand less than six feet from the other person.

"We have been forced to implement the new measures especially as they relate to social distancing protocols at the Public Market Complex as a measure to improve the service to the



SJDC City Manager, Carolyn Thomas-Parker

general public during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are doing it to protect their health," Thomas-Parker stressed.

In this regard, she announced, the east and west gates at the market have been designated as entrance gates to the facility while the north and south gates will be used as exits.

The north and south gates will also maintain their functionality as deliv-

ery areas. Each gate will be manned by SJDC personnel who will enforce the social distancing protocol, thereby ensuring that customers keep 6 feet between themselves and others.

"The public is assured that the public market is a safe environment to shop and it should therefore be considered as the first option for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables from our farmers," she emphasized.

The St. John's Development Corporation is also encouraging food vendors and farmers to pre-package produce in bundles and to eliminate or reduce whenever possible, customer self-service of food. This, it suggested, will assist in reducing the lines and crowding which have existed over the past few weeks.

Thomas-Parker wants all patrons at the public market to wear a mask on entrance to the facility as mandated by the Ministry of Health. The Public Market Complex operates from 7:00 am to 12 noon during the period of the curfew.

Retired nurses recalled

Contingency plans to address any shortage of nurses that may threaten Antigua and Barbuda's response to the dreaded COVID-19 disease are being studied.

Information Minister Melford Nicholas made the announcement during the post-Cabinet press briefing this week.

Nicholas was responding to reports that several nurses have been reporting sick or

unable to work for various reasons, at a time when the human resource of the country's public healthcare services are under tremendous pressure due to the infection and transmission risks associated with attending to and caring for persons who are possible, suspected, or known carriers of the deadly virus.

Nicholas said there were various options being con-

sidered by the authorities, which included the redeployment of healthcare personnel to areas where needs are more pressing.

He also hinted that nurses who are approaching – or who have attained the age of retirement – could be tapped to stay on longer.

"In any situation like this, in terms of the ability to rotate persons, I think that is the particular challenge that

they have ... Our hearts go out to those caregivers who are at the front end. It probably is not a very comforting thought for them to know that at least three of the persons who have contracted COVID-19 are healthcare professionals. That must give them a pause in terms of their own risks ..." the Minister noted.

He continued: "What I do
cont'd on pg 7

No more home quarantine

Persons who may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus or suspected of possible infection – but who have not yet developed any symptom, or do not require hospitalization – will no longer be allowed to quarantine at home for the mandatory 14 days.

This is one of the decisions taken by the Cabinet of Ministers at its latest virtual meeting.

The tightening of quarantine regulations and arrangements represents one of the adjustments to the current State of Emergency which

has seen the country placed under three weeks of 24-hour curfew, schools and an extensive range of businesses closed, access to beaches prohibited, and the wearing of face masks in public made compulsory – among numerous other stringent measures.

The post-Cabinet notes declared that it ‘was informed that home quarantine does not seem to be adhered-to vigorously. Hence, all those who are to be quarantined for a minimum of 14 days will be placed in a government-controlled facility,

since the risk of community spread is too great when home quarantine is allowed’.

Chief of Staff, Lionel Hurst, linked the continued closure of the beaches with the possibly irresistible temptation they might pose for persons in home quarantine to sneak outdoors and treat themselves to some seaside relaxation.

Hurst said it was because certain persons in home quarantine had been observed “jumping into their cars and driving around”, that had spurred the authorities to clamp down on the

home quarantine arrangements.

He explained that keeping the beaches open or reopening them would be impossible to police because of the sheer number of beaches around the country and their immense popularity, which always attracts large numbers of people.

According to Hurst, the overriding goal is to minimize the possibility of virus transmission by limiting gatherings of people in areas where social distancing might be compromised or difficult to maintain.

“The idea is not to encourage people to co-mingle,” he stated. He further clarified that the beach referred to the strip of sand directly bordering the seawater and the sea itself.

However, people exercising could use nearby roads and open or park spaces.

This comes with a caveat as these individuals must observe the social distancing rule as well as wear masks at all times or have them at hand ready to don in an instant.

Asked whether people presently in a cycle of home quarantine would be required to relocate to government facilities, Hurst clarified that persons already quarantining at home would be allowed to complete their current cycle, but all new quarantine cases must be completed at government facilities.

cont'd from pg 6

know is that the Ministry of Health has actually reached out to a number of persons who have already reached the age of retirement and it has already contracted with them to return to the service in – not necessarily a frontline role – but in terms of a supportive role.”

Nicholas added that one more option which could be looked at, if necessary, was to source the additional nurses required from other countries which currently have a surplus. He said several of the retired nurses have responded positively when asked to rejoin the service in order to make up for current shortfalls.

When contacted for comment, the President of the Antigua and Barbuda Nurses Association, Soria Dupie-Winston said the organization was unaware of efforts to recruit retired nurses back into the system.

She added that the Nurses Association was not involved, nor had it been asked to assist, in any such re-enlistment as this would fall outside its remit to look after the welfare of serving nurses. Any move to lure retired nurses back into the service, she stressed, would be a matter entirely



Information Minister Melford Nicholas

between the government and those nurses, based on the attractiveness of whatever offers that can be extended to them.

But Dupie-Winston noted that once the retirees are returned to active duty, then matters such as their remuneration, terms of employment and conditions of work would then become the Association’s concern to ensure that all nurses are dealt with “in accordance with international best practice”.



P R E S S R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

APUA Adjusted Opening Hours

ST. JOHN'S Antigua, April 16th 2020 - The Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) reopened its doors on Wednesday April 15th 2020 to many of its loyal customers and dedicated employees.

APUA's operational hours has been adjusted to be in compliance with the state-sanctioned curfew and now provides a special allowance period for vulnerable citizens to access essential services. "The safety of our staff and customers is our highest priority during this crisis," were the sentiments expressed by General Manager, Mr. Esworth Martin.

Customers and staff are expected to adhere and adapt to the established safety and social distancing protocols when conducting business at any of our facilities.

Adjusted Opening Hours and Services:

- APUA Bill Payment Centers on Independence Drive, Village Walk and South Mall, APUA inet Stores on Independence Drive and Old Parham Road will open on Mondays to Fridays from 8:00AM – 12:00PM
- Dedicated bill payment day has been identified for our Seniors, Persons with Disabilities and Expectant Mothers on Tuesdays ONLY from 8:00AM – 12:00AM at the APUA Bill Payment Centers on Independence Drive, Village Walk and South Mall
- Health Care Workers, Law Enforcement Officers and First Responders are kindly asked to present their government issued identification to the APUA representative coordinating the lines for priority access to expedite payments.

APUA has invested in a direct online payment platform which will allow customers to make payments on utility bills without the use of a 3rd party entity. This platform is in the final stage of development. APUA has been working meticulously to ensure that this portal will be safe, secure and efficient. This direct online payment portal will feature direct online bill payment to APUA, view transaction history, account balances, a quick pay feature which will allow customers to make payments for friends and family, online customer support and the ability to log new appliances and monitor monthly consumption. The launch date has been confirmed for June 1st, 2020. Customers can be reassured that APUA is aware of the need for this convenient alternative avenue and is working diligently to realize this objective.

In the interim APUA would also like to encourage customers to continue to utilize alternative payment options. For utility and inet home bill payments, these can be made through our banking partners (ACB, RBC, ECAB, CIBC FC, CFCCU, BNS) or utilizing its cheque drop box service for cheque payments and PDV vouchers. For inet postpaid bills and top-ups, payments may be done via the Myinet App. Should you need to inquire about your bill balance or account information please send an email making this request at customerservice@apua.ag.



Farewell to Vaughn and Garfield

“There are special people in our lives who never leave us, even after they are gone”

The Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority wishes to express our deepest condolences to the families of two valued members of our staff who left us suddenly.

We mourn with the families of

Mr. Vaughn Carty,

who died on 28th March, 2020

&

Mr. Garfield Joseph,

who passed away on 5th April, 2020.

Both gentlemen have left a deep void at the Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority that will be difficult to fill. To their friends and loved ones, our thoughts and prayers are with you as we share in your loss.

Vaughn possessed an effervescent personality, an infectious smile and will be long remembered for a remarkable ability to motivate and inspire his colleagues.

Since joining our staff in October 2008, he has deservedly earned the Maintenance Department's Staff Choice Award on three occasions and is dubbed the undisputed champion for outstanding performance and commitment to duty.

Garfield took immense pride in his work as a plumber and was a quality, dependable and enthusiastic team player.

He was one of ABAA's long standing employees, joining the Aerodrome Airport Administration on 23rd October 1989 then transitioning to ABAA on 1st June, 2009. His expertise and efficiency in meeting the demanding role of his job were both exemplary and admirable.

May both their souls continue to Rest in Eternal Peace.



ABAA
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA AIRPORT AUTHORITY
WE DELIVER

Prepare for a long haul: The storm is not fully formed

(The writer is Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda to the United States and the Organisation of American States. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at the University of London and at Massey College in the University of Toronto. The views expressed are entirely his own)

COVID-19 is destroying the prosperity that several Caribbean countries anticipated at the beginning of 2020.

The growth projections by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) for Antigua and Barbuda of 6.5%; Dominica 4.9%, Dominican Republic, 4.7%; Grenada 4%; and St Kitts-Nevis 3.5%, evaporated overnight as COVID-19 walloped the economies of these countries. By the end of March 2020, it was clear that all these economies would shrink significantly by the end of the first quarter of the year, and that the second and third quarters would be no better.

Guyana's economy was on track to grow by a phenomenal 85.6% largely because of production and sales of newly discovered oil and gas resources. That growth is also unlikely to happen now as oil prices plummet

amid reduced demands in a world that was largely shut down for weeks in March and April in attempts to curb COVID-19's spread. The political situation in Guyana, where results of a March 2 general elections are still not final and verified as credible, and the contraction of the economy by the effects of COVID-19, make the huge projected growth very unlikely.

The Bahamas was already forecast to have negative growth of 0.6%, and Barbados, climbing out of a period of prolonged economic decline, was projected to grow by 1.3%. The blows delivered to these economies, from the sudden and complete closure of the tourism industry, have further set back their prospects.

A meeting of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on April 16, rightly looked to the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group (WBG) to access "assistance to meet the financial challenges arising from the crisis".

In the harsh reality of significantly reduced revenues and increased emergency costs to prevent and contain the coronavirus, many

of these countries will find it extremely difficult to pay pensions and wages of their public service establishments. They all need both an injection of money to help them meet budgetary costs over the next nine months at least, and a suspension of debt service payments to other governments and private lenders from whom they have borrowed.

But it is clear that the countries that control the levers of the global economy, including the decision-making bodies of the IMF, the WBG, and the Paris Club, have no intention of allowing suspension of debt owed by middle-income and high-income Caribbean countries, even though, the criteria is a false measurement of development and financial capability.

G20 Finance Ministers – the representatives of the world's richest nations – meeting on April 15, issued a communiqué that was long on words, but short on commitment to deliver on the needs of any but low-income countries. It is almost as if countries are being punished for better policies and economic performance.

The COVID-19 pandemic has once again highlighted not only inequality between nations but, more important-



Sir Ronald Sanders

ly, the damaging consequences of an unjust economic order. While rich nations will suffer unemployment and economic decline, they have all the resources to recover from these circumstances. Developing countries – particularly small developing states – don't.

Globally, there is now the prospect of a serious debt crisis, and the Caribbean is engulfed in it. If the problem is not addressed, there will be more than \$100 billion in capital outflows from developing economies. That figure, calculated by reputable organisations, is nearly five times the level from 2008 when a global recession was started by the failures of major US banks.

At the end of the disastrous effects of the pandemic – whatever unpredictable shape that takes – small developing countries, for the most part, will be left poorer, highly-indebted and with little fiscal space, after debt servicing, to return to their growth projections in January 2020. COVID-19 has created a storm much worse than any brutal hurricane that the Caribbean has ever suffered.

The G20 leaders said that they will do “whatever it takes” to stop companies and households in their countries from taking a heavy loss of income. But despite declaring that “global action, solidarity and international co-operation are more than ever necessary”, they have given no such undertaking to the countries outside their own nations, except to low-income countries, which, in the Caribbean is Haiti.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on March 30, called for a \$2.5 trillion coronavirus package for developing countries. UNCTAD argued that this figure matches the sum of 0.7% of their Gross Domestic Product that developed countries had pledged to deliver over the last ten years but didn’t. Only five of them – all in Europe – fulfilled their undertaking.

UNCTAD detailed the use of the funds in three ways: a \$1 trillion liquidity injection – a kind of helicopter money drop for those being left behind; a debt jubilee for distressed economies, including an immediate debt standstill on sovereign debt payments; and a Marshall Plan for health recovery, largely in the form of grants.

While every developing country should agitate for acceptance of the UNCTAD proposal, it would meet strong resistance from the most powerful nations. Already, the IMF’s board of directors was restrained by the countries with largest voting rights from lending to Ven-

ezuela and Iran. Further, the defunding of the World Health Organisation (WHO) by the United States because of its perception that China influenced the organisation over the pandemic, indicate political considerations and not humanitarian or even financial ones. What the response to the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated again is that the prevailing policies of the IMF and WBG are unhelpful to the majority

of nations of the world, including the Caribbean, that are classified as middle or high income, disregarding the many other factors of their underdevelopment and vulnerabilities. For instance, the IMF/Bank proposals did not address rescheduling or forgiveness of multilateral debt or debt owed to private banks. Caribbean countries will get loans from the IMF and WBG after going through many hoops, but the

process will not be swift, and the conditions will be rough. In these circumstances, Caribbean governments, the private sector, political parties, and trade unions need to collaborate on the actions they can jointly take to weather the gathering storm that has not yet fully formed. They also must prepare for a long haul.

Responses and previous commentaries: www.sirronaldsanders.com



Social Security Remittance Payment Notice

Due to COVID-19, the Antigua and Barbuda Social Security Board [ABSSB] advises that remittance payments for **March 2020** are due on or before 30th April 2020. As such, the usual **late payment charges will be waived**.

However, employers are asked to take due care when submitting the monthly Remittance Form [R5A] to remittance@socialsecurity.gov.ag as any incomplete or incorrect information will attract a penalty fee of **\$100 per page**.

N.B.: For 2020, contribution rates are:

Private Sector – 13 ½ %

- Employees – 5 ¾ %
- Employers – 7 ¾ %

Public Sector – 12 ½ %

- Employees – 4 ¾ %
- Employers – 7 ¾ %

Self-Employed persons remain at 10%.

Remittance payments can be made via:

- **Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)** [For details please visit: www.socialsecurity.gov.ag]
- **Antigua Commercial Bank (ACB) online**
- **Drop box at London House on Long Street**
- **Limited Cashier services at London House, Mondays – Fridays from 8:00 am to 11:00 am**

Management

CARICOM Addresses COVID-19 Related Issues



Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) agreed on a way forward in the Community's battle against the COVID-19 Pandemic at a Special Emergency Meeting on Wednesday via video conference.

The Leaders received presentations from the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), the University of the West Indies (UWI), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and Archbishop Jason Gordon.

Dr Joy St John, Executive Director of CARPHA, indicated that the Region had done fairly well in its response to the pandemic which was a direct result of the early implementation of measures which helped to contain the virus. She recommended a co-ordinated approach as the Region prepares for the next phase of the virus.

The CDB presented the economic implications for the Community of the pandemic and ideas for stimulating economic activity in going forward.

The UWI researchers included projections for the

future of the virus in the Region in their presentation while Archbishop Gordon spoke to the social impact of the COVID-19 as well as ideas to alleviate those challenges.

Heads of Government agreed on a collective approach to the International Financial Institutions in accessing assistance to meet the financial fiscal challenges arising from the crisis. They urged that the criterion of GDP per capita not be the sole consideration in assessing the needs of the Community and that an understanding of each country's vulnerability is a far better measurement to determine need especially as we face multiple challenges.

They agreed that additional technical work would be undertaken in specific areas to be presented for their consideration at another meeting within two weeks. They would be presented after the relevant ministerial councils would have reviewed the proposals.

Proposals on a Common Public Health policy would first be presented to the Ministers of Health. This would

include proposals for joint procurement, - including of pharmaceuticals and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and sourcing of additional medical personnel. The joint procurement would assist in addressing supply constraints being experienced.

There would also be consideration of a proposal for a protocol on re-opening borders which all Member States would adhere to at the same time when such a decision is taken.

Issues related to Food Security would be considered in the context of the CARICOM COVID-19 Agri-Food Risk Management Framework which has been circulated to Member States following a meeting of Ministers of Agriculture last month. This would address in particular the production and supply of food products.

The transportation of people and goods by air and sea inter-regionally would also come under scrutiny with particular reference to the operations of the regional air carriers which have been adversely affected by the measures adopted to contain the

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Coronavirus is hurting the Caribbean's tourism economies

By Jacqueline Charles
Miami Herald

Caribbean leaders say a financial bailout offered to some of the world's poorest countries this week by the International Monetary Fund to help cushion the economic blow of the coronavirus pandemic doesn't go far enough — and stressed that they, too, are in desperate need of a rescue.

On Monday, the International Monetary Fund announced that it was canceling six months of debt payments, totaling \$215 million, from 25 nations. Haiti, which gets to keep about \$4.8 million, was the only Caribbean nation to make the cut along with Afghanistan, Yemen, Sao Tome, Solomon Islands, Nepal and mostly war-torn African countries.

"Up until now, there is no rescue plan for the Caribbean and we need a rescue plan," said **Antigua and Bar-**



buda Prime Minister Gaston Browne. "This is not a situation where we are trying

to ask for assistance conveniently. It is an absolute necessity."

With the Dominican Republic leading the region with 3,167 confirmed COVID-19 infections and 107 deaths as of Monday, the Caribbean region has registered more than 5,000 cases of the deadly rapidly spreading respiratory disease. The effects have not only been devastating in the loss of lives but also jobs, as governments closed airports and cruise ports and shuttered hotels to try to stop the spread. The World Bank, in a report released on Sunday, said the pandemic could send economies across Latin America and the Caribbean plunging by 4.6% this year.

Browne believes the projection is too conservative and fundamentally flawed, and underestimates the impact of the coronavirus on the Caribbean's tourism-dependent economies.

Using his own debt-ridden and still hurricane-recovering island-nation as an example, Browne said, Antigua has already lost 20,000 jobs, which is half of its national workforce. He estimates another 6,000 could also be laid off as the government struggles to make payroll for its 12,000 public servants.

Meanwhile, he said, "they are looking at our per capita income and saying we're so wealthy, we're not eligible

for assistance when, one, we have no surplus and second, about 80 percent of our revenue could be wiped out. How the hell can we survive?"

Since the coronavirus outbreak first reached the Caribbean's sun-bleached shores last month, Caribbean leaders say they have tried to get their creditors to help. They point out that many nations were already struggling to recover from a rash of devastating hurricanes over the last two years, and COVID-19 has only made life harder, forcing them to make extra investments in healthcare even as they have to keep making debt payments with no foreign revenue coming in.

"Right now, the region needs a Marshall plan," Browne said, calling for a write-off on debt payments and grants from the IMF and other Washington-based financial institutions. "I believe that after the next 60 to 90 days, [our] countries will become totally broke and would not be able to meet certain expenses, so there needs to be some level of international coordination and cooperation."

Browne hopes to get the 15-member Caribbean Community regional bloc, known as CARICOM, to speak with one voice on the matter following an emergency virtual meeting Wednesday.



We are doing whatever we can," said **St. Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves**, who shut down his nation's crystal blue waterways to yachting and recently offered citizens a stimulus plan valued at 4 percent of gross domestic product.

Even though Caribbean leaders are used to "adversity and making a little go a long way," he said, it's clear the current crisis is a threat and no Caribbean nation is immune from its potentially devastating impact.

"We're looking to international partners, including institutions like the World Bank, IMF, the Caribbean Development Bank and some bilateral links," Gonsalves said.

Caribbean economist Marla Dukharan said that in determining which countries are most deserving of debt cancellation, the IMF and the World Bank look at countries' classifications as low income, middle-income,

Cont'd on pg 14

Regional News

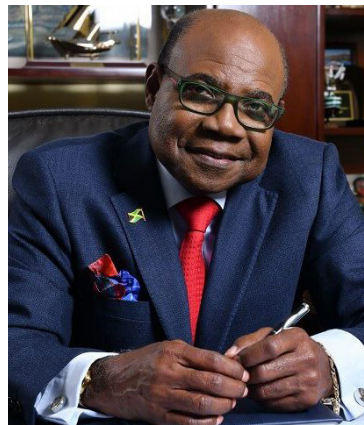
high-income. The classification, she said, is riddled with weaknesses and omissions that the Caribbean has raised with the multilateral agencies for years. More weight needs to be given to a country's vulnerability to other factors, she said.

"For example, the Cayman Islands has one of the highest GDPs per capita in the world, but based on recent reports by Moody's, it is the most vulnerable to sea level rise, and climate change more broadly, in the world. This factor, and others which drive vulnerability, cannot be ignored when you are trying to determine if a country needs help, what kind of help they need, and to what extent," Dukharan said.

Whether Caribbean nations get the help they are seeking, they should brace themselves for higher unemployment, which could double based on projections of zero cruise tourism for the

rest of the year, and a roughly 80 percent drop in tourism this year compared to 2019, she said.

"Regardless of the rate of contraction, which is really guesswork at this point, it is clear that we will need help, lots of it, and for a long time," said Dukharan, who lives in Barbados. "Regional cooperation is arguably more important now than ever before."



Jamaica Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett said that of the 20 most tourism-dependent small countries in the

world, 13 are in the Caribbean, with the British Virgin Islands leading the list. Others include the Bahamas, St. Lucia, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, Bartlett said, rattling off the names from memory.

More dependent on tourism than perhaps any other region in the world, Bartlett said, the Caribbean employs about 1 million people in tourism, which accounts for more than 30 percent of the foreign exchange coming into the region.

Closer to home, more than 50 percent of Jamaica's foreign exchange is generated by tourism. "Last year, we brought in 3.7 billion U.S. dollars; 1 in 10 of all the workers in the country are directly employed in tourism," said Bartlett.

"The linkages between tourism and other sectors are very deep," he added as he

pointed out that the Caribbean-wide lockdowns, including airport closures, have led to about 1 million people being unemployed across the region, including 300,000 in Jamaica.

"If the virus continues at the rate that it is, especially in the United States, which is our main tourism source market, the region is going to be devastated. There are no commodities that will support our exports, and oil, the little that we have, is at the lowest price in many, many decades," said Bartlett.

"The multilateral agencies like the IMF and so on have got to look at the Caribbean as a special area of interest. This is not the time for cherry-picking or deciding who is the poorest. Everybody is in the same boat. The economies of the region are grinding to a halt."

To drive home that point, he noted that he recently received the latest tourism statistics for the country. They showed "zero arrivals for Montego Bay's airport; zero arrivals for Kingston's airport and zero guests in hotels, which meant zero foreign exchange generated to the country during that period."

That comes "on top of the 300,000 people who are without jobs because all of the transportation systems that support tourism are at a halt; the farmers who support tourism have nowhere to sell their crops, the attractions that employ hundreds of thousands of people are closed," Bartlett said. "Those are the realities that we face."

A backup camera (also called a reversing camera or rear-view camera) is a special type of video camera that is produced specifically for the purpose of being attached to the rear of a vehicle to aid in backing up, and to alleviate the rear blind spot.

The first backup camera was used in the 1956 Buick Centurion concept car, presented in January 1956 at the General Motors Motorama. The vehicle had a rear-mounted television camera that sent images to a TV screen in the dashboard in place of the rear-view mirror.

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A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board

CARICOM Heads hold ninth special emergency meeting, via videoconference

Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) agreed on a way forward in the Community's battle against the COVID-19 Pandemic at a Special Emergency Meeting on Wednesday via video conference. The Leaders received presentations from the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), the University of the West Indies (UWI), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and Archbishop Jason Gordon.

Dr Joy St John, Executive Director of CARPHA, indicated that the Region had done fairly well in its response to the pandemic which was a direct result of the early implementation of measures which helped to contain the virus. She recommended a co-ordinated approach as the Region prepares for the next phase of the virus. The CDB presented the economic implications for the Community of the pandemic and ideas for stimulating economic activity in going forward.

The UWI researchers included projections for the future of the virus in the Region in their presentation while Archbishop Gordon spoke to the social impact of the COVID-19 as well as ideas to alleviate those challenges. Heads of Government agreed on a collective approach to the International Financial Institutions in ac-



cessing assistance to meet the financial fiscal challenges arising from the crisis. They urged that the criterion of GDP per capita not be the sole consideration in assessing the needs of the Community and that an understanding of each country's vulnerability is a far better measurement to determine need especially as we face multiple challenges.

They agreed that additional technical work would be undertaken in specific areas to be presented for their consideration at another meeting within two weeks. They would be presented after the relevant ministerial councils would have reviewed the proposals. Proposals on a Common Public Health policy would first be presented to the Ministers of Health. This would include proposals for joint procure-

ment, – including of pharmaceuticals and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and sourcing of additional medical personnel. The joint procurement would assist in addressing supply constraints being experienced.

There would also be consideration of a proposal for a protocol on re-opening borders which all Member States would adhere to at the same time when such a decision is taken.

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The transportation of peo-

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OAS wants GECOM to bar “partisan” officials from recount



**Head of the OAS Mission,
Bruce Golding**

The Organization of American States (OAS) Observer Mission has proposed the Guyana Elections Commission exclude “partisan” elements from the National Recount of Ballots from the March 2, 2020 General and Regional Elections.

Chief of the (OAS) Observation Mission, former Prime Minister of Jamaica, Bruce Golding, in a statement yesterday conveyed his concerns that after more than six weeks, “an accurate and credible result” has not been determined to allow a duly elected government to assume office.

Golding relayed that this fact was “especially regrettable” in light of the COVID-19

pandemic “that requires every government to take decisive actions and to be able to command the confidence of its people in order to mobilize them in thwarting the spread of the virus.”

The Former Prime Minister opined that the current political crisis is not “intractable.”

“As the Mission had previously noted, the casting and counting of ballots on March 2 was conducted in a peaceful and transparent manner,” the statement highlighted.

What was needed was for the count from each polling station to be accurately tabulated and declared.

However, the OAS statement pointed out that “there is an abundance of evidence that this was not done in the case of Region 4 and this has led to the decision for the ballots in all ten regions to be recounted.”

Further, the OAS heavily criticized the proposal made by the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM)’s Chief Elections Officer, Keith Lowenfield, where he estimated that the recount would last 156 days.

According to the statement, “the proposal that would have required five months to recount less than 500,000 ballots is unheard of in any democracy and would be unacceptable under any circumstances.”

Noting that GECOM has ordered that a revised timetable is prepared, the OAS urged the elections body to ensure that the procedures for the recount are “transparent and consistent.” Further, the OAS has urged that the instructions to election officials conducting the recount are unambiguous and based on the provisions of the relevant laws, and called for the public to be “fully informed of the methodology to be used” for the recount.

Most notably, the OAS requested that GECOM ensures that the officials to be engaged in the recount are selected based on their impartiality and “those who have displayed partisan behaviour are excluded.” Along with that, the OAS called for the duly authorized representatives of political parties and accredited observers to be allowed to see (but not handle) each ballot.

The OAS Mission further wants the legal provisions for challenging the determination of ballots to be fully respected as to whether the number of ballots cast corresponds with the number of persons recorded as having voted. Also it wants the result of the recount for each polling station to be compared with the Statements of Poll signed by the Presiding Officer.

Meanwhile, acting Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Michael G. Kozak, is calling on GECOM to urgently commence the recount of ballots used in the March 2 elections.

Kozak specifically stated that, “It has been six weeks since elections were held in Guyana with no result. The U.S. stands with the Organization of American States (OAS) in urging GECOM to conduct a recount as soon as possible.”

He emphasized that Guyanese citizens need a government elected based on a credible count of their votes now more than ever.



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Warning: Lookout for COVID-19 'storm'

Director of the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) Dr Carissa Etienne is appealing to the private sector in the region to play a greater role in assisting countries in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The PAHO official said she expected COVID-19 cases to intensify "in the next few weeks" and countries should therefore move urgently to protect health workers, families and communities before the "storm" hits most of our countries.

"COVID-19 is yet to hit with full force in our region, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean," she warned.

"The cost of inaction has never been greater. We need immediate action to address both short-term and long-term needs," said Etienne.

She said there was a dire need to expand ICU capacity in the region in the short-term.

"[For] the long-term we need to plan now to guarantee that drugs and vaccines that are being developed are accessible to all in our region especially in the most vulnerable communities," she said.

Etienne said the private sector should be an integral part of the response to COVID-19, and she called on that grouping to help resolve the most immediate challenge facing the region.

"That is the access to quality, affordable COVID-19 test kits and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). I want to



Director of the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) Dr Carissa Etienne

make a special appeal for the rapid test that we can have rapid test of high quality and sufficient quantity to address the needs of this pandemic," said Etienne.

"I wish also to ask the private sector to please work with governments to make available the resources that you have at your disposal to support the response. And finally to the private sector, as the pandemic proceeds and millions are economically impacted, I would like you to work with our partners and with governments to strength-

en the safety nets for all and in particular the most vulnerable," she pleaded.

Etienne further insisted: "A person's health coverage should not depend on whether she or he has a job. Access to health services for the family and community should not depend on the economic status of the family or that community. We need the might of the private sector if we are going to effectively address COVID-19."

The PAHO official said physical distancing remained "our best bet" to reduce trans-

mission and slow the spread of the virus, adding that this prevents hospitals from being overwhelmed and keeps doctors and nurses from having to make a terrible choice about which patients receive care and which do not.

She said following the period of physical distancing any attempt to transition to more flexible measures should be taken with extreme caution.

Such decisions, said Etienne, should always be informed by disease transmission patterns, by COVID-19 testing availability and contact tracing capacity, the availability of hospital beds, among other criteria.

"Social distancing needs to be accompanied by comprehensive social support measures to ensure the most vulnerable can comply without risk to their livelihoods. This will require an adequate national and local logistical capacity to ensure the delivery of medicines, tests, food and other supplies for all populations," she said.

Etienne also warned that countries should not expect economic activity to return in full swing unless people feel safe and confident that governments were doing all they could to protect them.

"I urge the leadership in our region to earn this confidence by being rigorous, evidence-driven and transparent in the fight against this pandemic," she said.

Police find 17 bodies at New Jersey nursing home after anonymous tip



Paramedics load a patient into an ambulance.

New Jersey police found 17 bodies in one of the state's largest nursing homes after an anonymous tip said a body was being stored in a shed.

A total of 68 people associated with the Andover Subacute and Rehabilitation centres have recently died, with 26 having tested positive for Covid-19.

Police did not find a body in the shed, but said the facility's tiny morgue was "overwhelmed".

New Jersey has over 71,000 cases and 3,100 deaths due to the coronavirus.

Over the weekend, the nursing home had requested 25 body bags from authorities. On Monday, police received the anonymous tip about a body being kept in a shed.

Instead, they found 17 bodies kept in a morgue built to house four.

"They were just overwhelmed by the amount of

people who were expiring," Andover police chief Eric Danielson told the New York Times.

It is unclear whether any of the 17 deaths were due to the coronavirus.

Chaim Scheinbaum, a co-owner of the nursing home, addressed the morgue problem in an email to New Jersey Congressman Josh Gottheimer, according to the Associated Press.

"The backup and after hours holiday weekend issues, plus more than average deaths, contributed to the presence of more deceased than normal in the facility holding room," he said.

Mr Scheinbaum also said the facility is adequately staffed.

Seventy-six patients have tested positive for Covid-19 along with 41 staff members between the two buildings, according to the Times.

Thirteen bodies were moved to a refrigerated truck at a neighbouring hospital, while the remaining four were to be sent to a funeral home.

The nursing home owner has since obtained a refrigerated truck for bodies, local media reported.

The home's two buildings have nearly 700 beds in all.

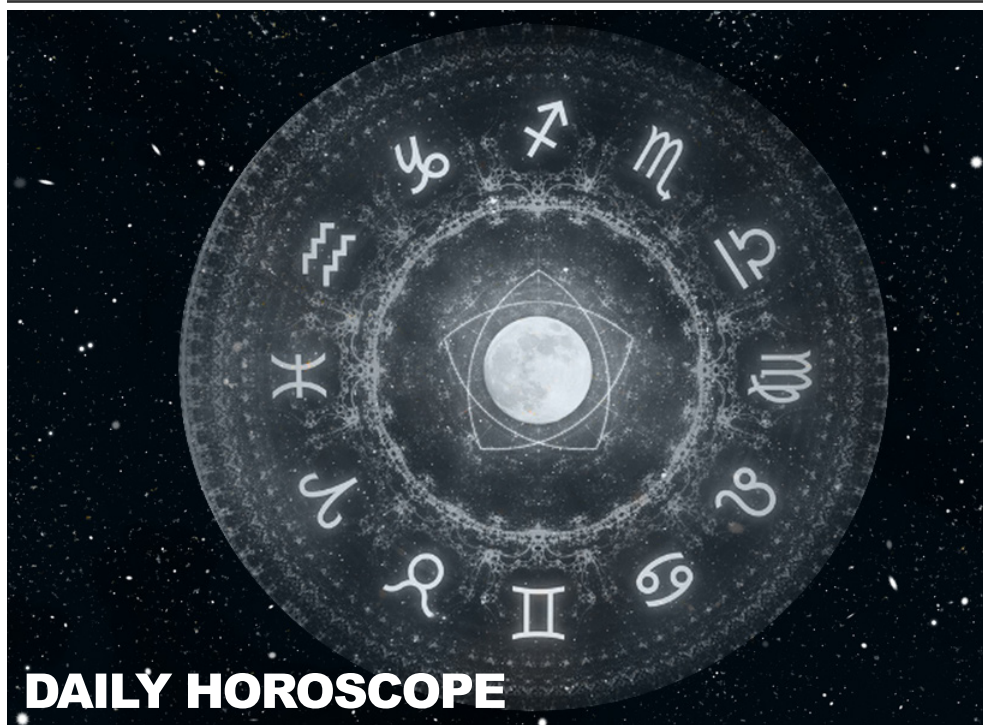
An Andover employee told the New Jersey Herald, which first reported the story, that in the second building, 65 residents had died since 31 March. Family members have expressed concerns to the Herald, saying they received little information before their loved ones died.

The state governor, Phil Murphy, said he was "outraged that the bodies of the dead were allowed to pile up in a makeshift morgue at the facility".

"New Jerseyans living in our long-term care facilities deserve to be cared for with respect, compassion, and dignity," he said, adding that he had asked the attorney general to review all long-term care facilities that had experienced a disproportionate number of deaths. According to New Jersey's health commissioner, 10% of 60,000 people in care facilities across the state have Covid-19.

The state's health department has sent thousands of additional supplies to the nursing homes to help combat the virus.

On 4 April, the department also ordered nursing homes to inform staff, other patients and families within 24 hours if anyone in the facility tested positive for Covid-19.



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ARIES (Mar 21-Apr. 19): Don't dwell in the past, but do learn from it. Look ahead to the future; what you've learned from previous mistakes can speed your progress. You may find a way to turn recent financial changes to your benefit.

TAURUS (Apr. 20-May 20): Where there's a will there's a way. A seemingly insurmountable obstacle can be overcome if you're determined enough. Others have come to count on your reliability and tactfulness, so they should have your back.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Look for pearls of wisdom. Inspirations for great ideas can be all around you, so you just need to work out the details. You'll never be lacking in confidence if you hang on to your gift of gab and persuasive powers.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Be your own boss. You'll likely be much more productive when you are calling your own shots and can work at your own pace. Any criticism of your performance may just be misplaced rather than a valid evaluation.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Bend but don't break. It may be necessary for you to swallow your pride and temporarily go along with a solution that you don't agree with. It may be better to remain quiet rather than debate with others now.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Put a little spring in your step. A good attitude can make it easier to knock out the most difficult or mundane tasks. You can present a boring subject with flair and make it seem interesting.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Less work equals more play. Finding ways to streamline your productivity will free up time to do what you'd rather be doing. Pay careful attention to new rules, policies or regulations.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it. Find a new approach to things if you notice you're making the same errors again and again. You can earn money with little effort, but don't gamble with it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): It's all in how you look at things. The difficulty with a problem may not lie with the problem itself but in how you approach it. Seek advice from someone who can provide a fresh perspective.

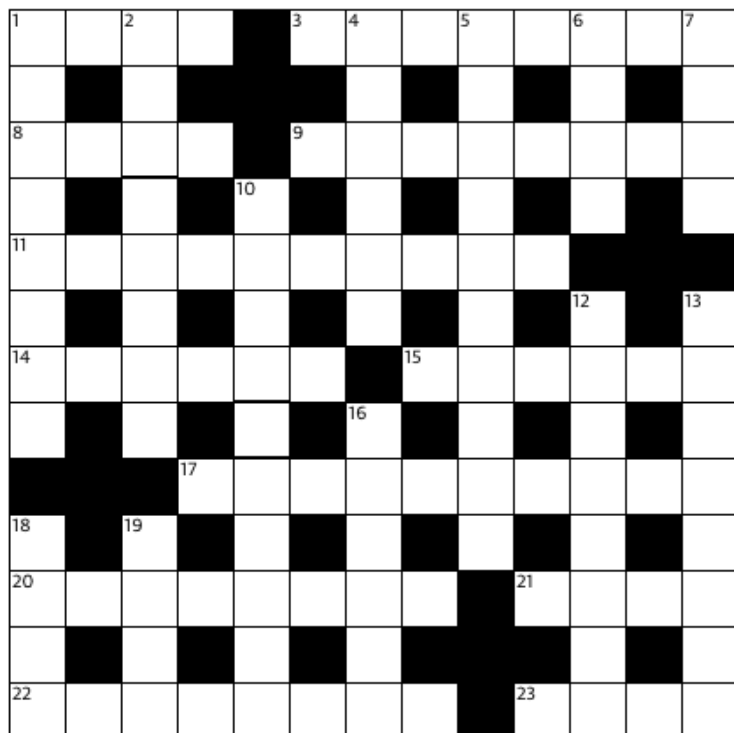
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Don't expect things to always work out as planned. A kind gesture loses some of its luster if you do it for selfish reasons or to earn undue influence. Don't gamble away financial security on a longshot.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): A little grease makes the wheels spin smoothly. You probably know just what to say to get those in charge to give you a bit of breathing room. Good fortune smiles on you, but don't press your luck.

PISCES (Feb. 19-Mar. 20): Accept your dreams for what they are. You may not find a pot of gold or a unicorn, but you can still enjoy the fantasy. Growing up doesn't mean you should abandon your sense of wonder.

CROSSWORD

Quick crossword No



Across

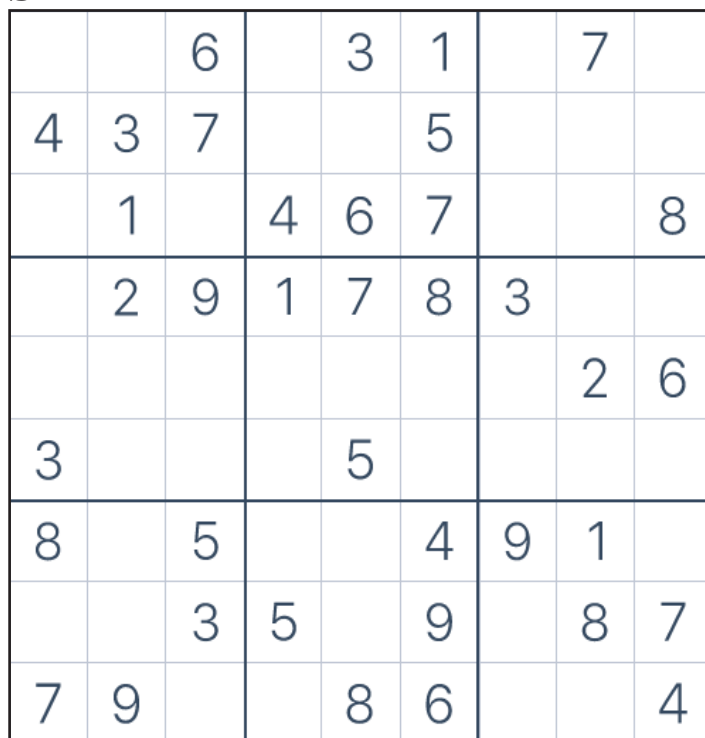
- 1 Thin strip of wood (4)
 3 Small amount of something liquid (8)
 8 Last shot at golf? (4)
 9 Trumpeting animal (8)
 11 Gathering where folk music gets played (10)
 14 Steal cattle (6)
 15 Like this? (6)
 17 Clandestine (10)
 20 Turn on (8)
 21 Lie next to (4)
 22 English county known for its cider and Cheddar cheese (8)
 23 Central point of a rotation (4)

Down

- 1 Bright blue (8)
 2 Cinema that shows less popular films (3,5)
 4 Column (6)
 5 Stick with a metal point, used by hillwalkers (10)
 6 Become liquid (4)
 7 The Diamond as Big as the ____ (F. Scott Fitzgerald) (4)
 10 Good gracious me! (4,1,5)
 12 Compartment under the dashboard (8)
 13 Grows by accumulation — races etc (anag) (8)
 16 Comfy seating (6)
 18 Where Beagle 2 was landed on 25 December 2003 (4)
 19 Particle (4)



Sudoku Puzzles



DAILY CARTOON



Clancy Mack: Always underrated

He is a former Princess Margaret School right back, Empire player, national player, former national coach, former national, regional and international umpire, and for some reason when sports is discussed, the name Clancy Mack doesn't seem to surface enough.

Clancy Mack, born in Gray's Farm to the well-known Mack family, attended the Greenbay School before moving to PMS where his career in sports took off.

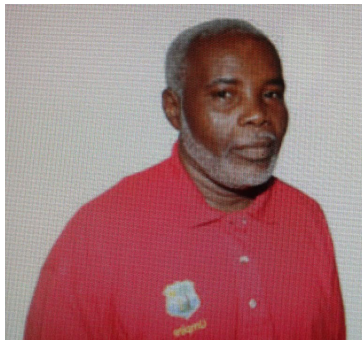
"I was always very quick and played right wing but when I got to secondary school my teacher and coach Sudi Whyte, the father of Conrad 'Boast' Whyte, turned me into a right back, which I was not happy with, but it turned out to be a career changer," Mack said.

"I went straight into the national youth team followed by the senior team."

Mack was the head coach of the Benna Boys on the only occasion they beat Jamaica at the senior level 1-nil at the ARG via an Everton "Batow" Gonsalves goal.

"I knew the coaches from our stint at the Brazil Football Academy coaching course," Mack remarked "and I knew their style, so our game plan was set since they had better ball skills and we executed exactly to plan."

Eventually Mack, who also coached Hoppers and Empire, moved into um-



piring where he performed admirably for many years at the regional level from 1984 to 2012 and had a stint on the international scene.

"I believe that umpires in the smaller islands have received the wrong end of the stick, in particular Pat Whyte," he noted. "It's not easy standing out there for six hours," Mack noted, but he is not happy with the amount of technology added to the game and believes it has made umpires lazy and removes them from the game.

"A study was done, and it showed umpires get it right 77% of the time, so I don't know why the need for so much technology."

Mack is presently still involved in the game, assisting the local umpire association.

His contribution to sports has gone unnoticed but Mack remains humble and happy with his body of work.

The man from Grays Farm says he has been following all the protocols from the Government with the coronavirus pandemic and appealed to Antiguan to cooperate with the officials.



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Seth Burton: Passionate about commentating

“Growing up in Liberta Village with six brothers and three sisters was not easy especially being the youngest” Sports Broadcaster Seth Burton said.

“My brothers were involved in sports and I would follow them around watching their games, and it was difficult trying to survive between them and emulating them as expectations were high.”

“I played football and did very well in the village league, scoring the second most goals, so my hopes were high for the village team Liberta. I received encouragement from coach Porridge Benjamin, who

selected me since a number of players had left the team for English Harbour who was promoted to the premier league,” Burton said.

“When I arrived at the first league game, well uniformed, the great Nato Hurst appeared and I was left out and sent to the stands.”

Colin James was carrying the game by himself in 1990, and he invited me to come point out the Liberta players since I knew them, which I did,” Burton added.

“No one turned up to assist Colin, who eventually asked me in the second half to take the microphone and give comments, and the rest

was history. My life started in sports journalism.”

“I stuck with it and under the guidance of individuals like, King Frank-I, Jack Matthew, Colin James, and Trevor Parker, I evolved as a freelance broadcaster.”

“Cricket came calling with the late Fizroy Brann and Taddy Arindale, who encouraged me to tackle cricket, which I did, and that took off also with me participating on many regional panels commentating matches,” he said.

“I never one hundred percent committed to sports broadcasting, since I have four children and my lovely wife and it could not cover



Seth Burton.

my bills,” he continued.

“My life focus now is my Consultant Company, family and my spiritual life as a Seventh Day Adventist. But I have formed a group of broadcasters who are available to work on local sporting events if contacted.”

Seth Burton has been a distinct voice in Sports Broadcasting in Antigua and around the Region.

Former CFU Secretary says FIFA is a dictator

Former CFU secretary and manager of Aston Villa Neil Cochrane has described the move taken recently by FIFA to oust the duly elected Trinidad and Tobago president William Wallace and his three vice presidents as heavy-handed.

Cochrane says the new administration was only elected last November and had played no role in the over US\$5 Million debt the T&T administration had acquired.

Cochrane said the debt was developed over years and most recently under John Williams the former T&T president who lost to Wallace.

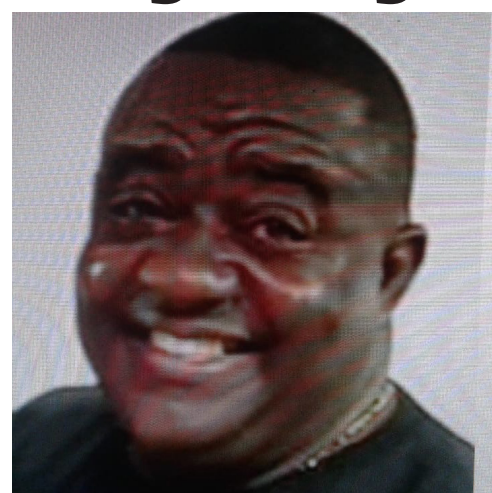
“They are dictators and if you don’t toe their line they get rid of you. Wal-

lace was not part of their old boys club so they don’t want him,” Cochrane suggested.

“I wish football was like boxing where you had different federations and you choose which one you wanted to function under,” the former national youth player said.

“The new system they have set up, the Nations League, is designed to marginalize the upward movement of small countries who have been closing the gap on nations like Canada and the USA,” the former Villa goal keeper said.

Most of the youth tournaments now are hosted in the USA which creates economic hardship for small countries



Former CFU secretary and manager of Aston Villa Neil Cochrane

who have to send players to the US embassy for visas.

The president of the local horseracing association hinted at his aspiration to enter politics in the next general elections as a candidate for the ABLP.

Richie Francis: The greatest scorer in local basketball history

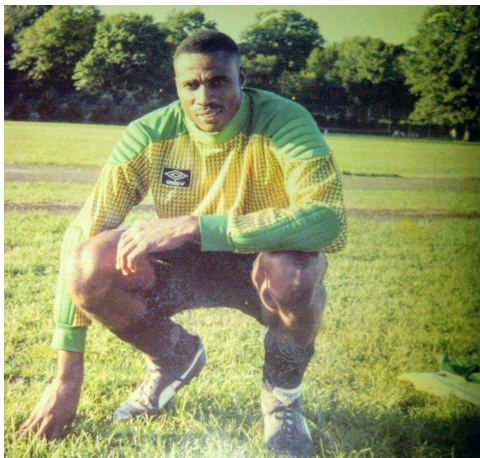
It all started with cricket, despite his dominance in basketball locally and regionally, Richie Francis noted, appearing as a guest on the TIMEOUT Program on Point FM yesterday.

“Every youngster played cricket back then, we use to play one-tip hit and run which I notice these modern cricketers don’t have in their arsenal,” Francis said.

“I used to go play basketball with Boli and his brother ‘Pro-Star’, and we would walk past the cricket field only to hear voices saying ‘look on them all they can play is basketball’”, Francis said. He took up the challenge and said to himself “tomorrow I am going to go down early and show them cricketers what I can do.”

“The following day I followed through on my plan, put down a good bowling spell and by the weekend I was in the team with greats like Gene Gould, Hugh Gore, Jarvis, Blinds and Flo.”

“The first week I performed well, taking a couple of wickets. The following week was not bad, but I could not handle the heat and when I got home I had sunburn and I said to myself ‘I don’t know how they stay in the field so long but I am finished’ and that was my cricketering career”, Francis continued.



“Then I ventured to pan, playing with Hellsgate in 1976 competition. But heading to pan practice, I would pass through Villa basketball court and stop and watch for a while.”

“I was eventually invited to join a team formed by Basil Peters called Destroyers. The following season Pinico started a team called Thrillers, then I moved on to Niggers where things took off.”

“I automatically became dominant with Niggers, where I was called Fish, because they say I was selfish”, Francis articulated.

“Then Niggers formed bigger Niggers and took me from the smaller team which eventually folded. In my first season, I won MVP in 1979 in Division One and my dominance continued for many years, continuing with Skillville where I eventually landed.”

“I won every scoring championship over a ten year period,” the left hander said, “and my strong point was I had a quick release, and as my floor general Boli indicated, I took high percentage shots.”

Francis, like his teammate Carl “Boli” Knight, has fond memories of the LIBA tournament, which he dominated. He spoke about being approached by a lady in St. Kitts, telling him she



is looking for number 11, which happened to be him, to kill him because he don’t miss. She did not realize it was him, because he had on his warm up suit. “My reply was I will certainly deliver your message.”

When asked about the new breed of player, the former small forward stated, “I think that they need to train harder, listen, and take the game seriously, they don’t like to listen I observed,” Francis noted.

Francis also played football for Villa and the national team but it was never his first love and he said the football training affected his game as a basketball player and he eventually quit.

“Calypso I love with a passion, especially King Short Shirt,” Francis said. “Social Commentary is my favorite type of music.” Francis has been a calypso finalist on a number of occasions in our local competition.

“They need to bring back the Leeward Islands basketball competition,” ‘Fish’ as he was called said, “because it played a big role in my generation’s development and would give this generation something to look forward to and motivate them.”

“Stop a you yard” Francis ended by saying to the people of Antigua and Barbuda during this time of COVID-19.

Carl Knight: Smooth and deadly

He was smooth and deadly; that is the best way to describe former national basketball player and captain Carl “Boli” “Duncan” Knight.

Knight grew up in Villa close to the basketball court, but as a youngster he dabbled with all sports; cricket, football, basketball. However, it was that latter that captured his attention, while watching players like his brothers Pinico, Gilliard, and their friend Famancho displaying their skills at Villa school basketball court.

Looking back, Knight remembered Famancho making plays that he saw one of his favorite players, Magic Johnson, displaying in the NBA years later.

Duncan, as he is also called, said basketball back in the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s was fantastic, especially in the 70’s watching the top guys play in Villa School.

Knight started his career playing for Villa school. He was then introduced to a team called Central in the Third Division, who went on to win the league losing only one game that year.

Central then took the Second Division by storm securing the championship moving on to the top flight.

Eventually, Skillville emerged with Boli as the floor general alongside his brother “Pro-Star”, Richie Francis, Andy Job, and Christian to name a few.

Skillville dominated local and regional basketball throughout the 80’s with Francis winning every scoring honor available.

Knight, talking to Point Xpress, spoke about the days when the team would run to games, reaching minutes before and heading straight onto the court to do battle.

He also highlighted battles against his close friend Bobby Joseph of Express who, despite working together, would make him an enemy the day of a game avoiding him and not engaging in any conversation at all with him.

“Express was our toughest battle”, Knight added with a smile, “but we had the better of them most of the times.”

The Leeward Islands tournament was next discussed,

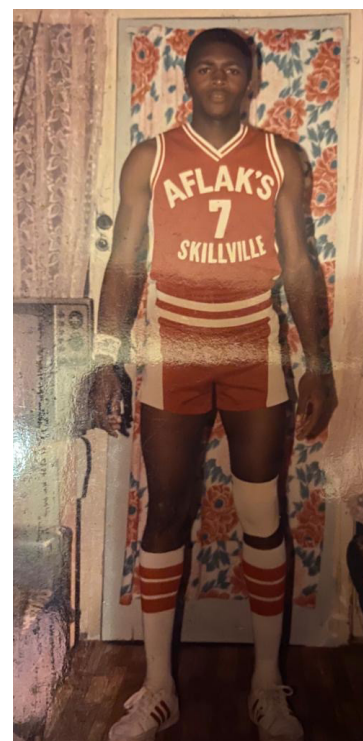


as Knight talked about the Bulldogs dominance over their rivals, in particular St. Kitts and Nevis.

“I loved playing in St. Kitts”, Knight noted. “They know their sports and love a good game. Despite they (were) supporting their team, they fancied a good battle and after booing and cussing us out they would eventually big us up after we won.”

The former national captain remembered his first Leeward Islands tournament in 1984 and says the tournament needs to return if the level of basketball is to improve in the region.

Knight has high praise for his wife Olena Knight, former national netballer and



basketballer, who he said has been at his side from the start and played an important role in his success.

The legendary point guard says present players need to train harder, spend more time learning their craft, and have more passion for the game.

“My favorite players are Michael Jordan, the greatest, and Larry Bird,” Knight noted.

Duncan is presently employed at the Ministry of Sports assisting in developing future stars.

Carl “Boli” “Duncan” Knight is a living legend in the sports culture of Antigua and Barbuda.

DEWS