



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

POINTEXPRESS

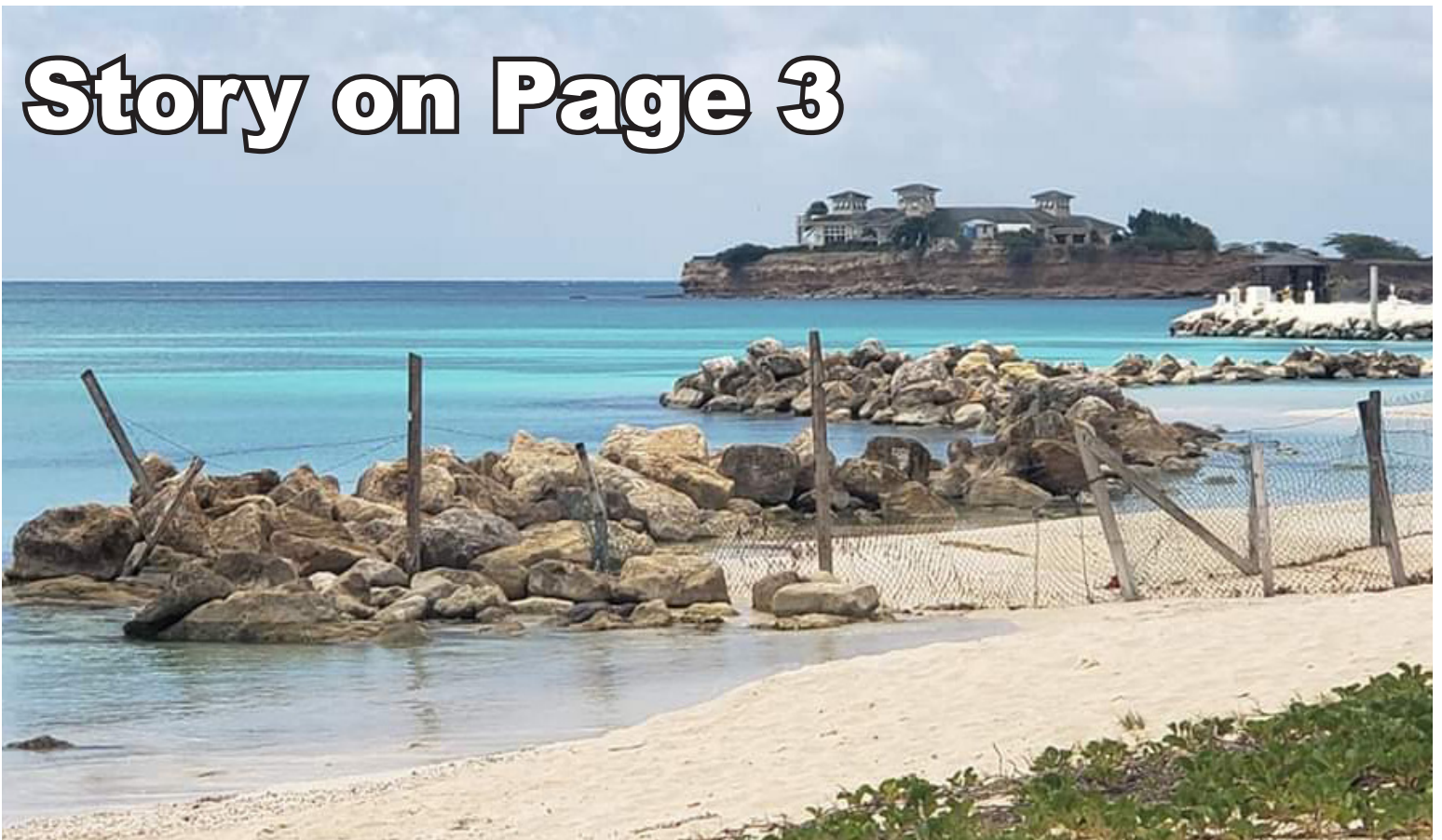
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DCA THREATENS LEGAL ACTION

Story on Page 3



**Murder-accused granted
bail but still in jail - Page 4**

Equal focus for Barbuda

The government is using an even-handed approach to development in the twin island state of Antigua and Barbuda especially with regard to the agricultural and fisheries sectors.

The commitment comes from Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs, Samantha Marshall, who is stressing that Barbuda will be given equal opportunities to maximize its agriculture and fisheries sectors.

Marshall has told technocrats whatever plans are being developed for the two sectors on Antigua, will also apply to Barbuda.

It is approximately four months since Minister Marshall was sworn in as the new minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs and she has pledged to make the sister isle a priority as she executes her duties.

She believes both islands should be on an equal footing. "We will demonstrate this approach especially where it comes to the fisher-folk in Barbuda and their ability to export their produce.

"We are also looking at agriculture in terms of crop production. For example, I know that peanut was once a main crop in Barbuda and I am also aware that the island does well with palm trees and coconuts," she stated.

The minister acknowledged that there are other areas that will come to the fore as in her words, 'I am learning as I go along'. She hinted that she is quite often approached by Barbudans who would tell her of things the island has produced in the past.

She said her aim is to ensure that whatever Barbuda is good at produc-

ing, that the ministry of agriculture, working in conjunction with the Barbudans, will maximize.

Marshall revealed that a UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) team recently visited Barbuda where the members explored the possibility of setting up a small abattoir on the island.

"We want to make sure that we continue with that programme and we will be in touch with the FAO to find out the progress of the project. There are other things for which we want to give support to Barbuda.

"The seedlings programme is once such where I know Senator Knackcinta Nedd has ensured that Barbuda gets its fair share. So whatever we are doing for Antigua, we will do the same for Barbuda," she declared.

DAY 5/22

Max UV Index: 12 Extreme
 Wind: ESE at 13 km/h
 Wind Gusts: 20 km/h
 Probability of Precipitation: 2%
 Probability of Thunderstorms: 0%
 Precipitation: 0.0 mm
 Rain: 0.0 mm
 Snow: 0.0 cm
 Ice: 0.0 mm

31° Hi



Partly sunny and pleasant

NIGHT 5/22

Wind: ESE at 7 km/h
 Wind Gusts: 18 km/h
 Probability of Precipitation: 3%
 Probability of Thunderstorms: 0%
 Precipitation: 0.0 mm
 Rain: 0.0 mm
 Snow: 0.0 cm
 Ice: 0.0 mm

25° Lo



Partly cloudy with a shower in places

SUNRISE/SUNSET

Sunrise AST
 5:34 AM

Sunset AST
 6:34 PM



Duration
 13:00 hr

MOONRISE/MOONSET

Moonrise AST
 5:29 PM

Moonset AST
 6:39 AM



Duration
 13:10 hr



DCA to take Legal action against businessman

The Development Control Agency (DCA) is planning to initiate legal action against a local businessman, with whom it has had several run-ins over the years.

The issue surrounds what the DCA deems as violations to the Physical Planning Act, 2003, being carried out by owner of the Lobster Pot restaurant at Runway Bay, Gilbert Gomes.

Pictures have emerged on social media showing where Gomes has extended a fence from his property all the way to the water's edge, blocking full access to the beach there. Additionally, he has placed dozens of boulders into the sea as a barrier.

Deputy Town and Country Planner, Clement Antonio, said the DCA will start removing the fence and the boulders from today (Friday).

"This is an ongoing problem we have been having with Gomes where the DCA has had to removing fencing from the water. However, this time, we will remove the fence and then the boulders in an operation that is likely to last for about two weeks," Antonio explained.

He said heavy duty equipment including a backhoe and an excavator will be deployed at the site to do the removal. In addition, Antonio said the DCA has sought the assistance of the police to provide security for those involved in the operation.

When the operation is completed, the DCA will take legal action against Gomes to recoup the monies it spent not only in the present operation, but similar activities in the past.

It has been alleged that Gomes is claiming that his property extends out into the water because the area has been badly affected by beach erosion.

His actions have not won him any friends as he has come in for criticism for his after the photos have appeared on social media, sparking angry reaction from some people.

Minister responsible for the Development Control Authority, Maria Bird-Browne, has confirmed that the issue has been a recurring problem with Gomes.

She has been quoted as saying, "Each and every time the DCA is-

sues notices to remove whatever new barrier he can come up with, this gentleman pays no attention - leaving the same DCA to remove them time and time again. Again, it will be removed, and stricter consequences will be faced.

The beaches belong to, and, will remain the property of the people of Antigua & Barbuda."

The minister of housing, lands and urban renewal has on numerous occasions stated her position when it comes to beach access in Antigua and Barbuda and maintains no one will be allowed to commit such acts.

The issue as detailed by Minister Bird-Browne is where he perceives his boundary to be, adding the business owner believes it to be in the sea, owing to erosion over many years. But she rejects his thinking, stating, "This can never be the case in this jurisdiction."

The minister has warned stricter regulations are being prepared that will work in tandem with the Physical Planning Act to deal with those bent on flouting the law.

Murder-accused granted bail

Murder-accused Mikhail Gomes has been granted bail in the court, three years after he was arrested and charged in connection with the disappearance of Vincia James...but remains in prison until bail conditions have been met.

High Court Judge Justice Ian Morley approved bail, despite strong objection from the prosecution.

The judge considered several factors before granting bail, including

the fact that the accused has had his trial date postponed several times and the uncertainty on when the case will go to trial, due to adjustments made in the courts as a result of COVID-19.

Bail was granted in the sum of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000:00) with a cash component of forty thousand dollars (\$40,000.00).

Gomes' bail requirements include reporting to

St. John's Police Station daily and complying with the national curfew time of 9pm to 5 am.

Additionally, he has been ordered not to interfere with prosecution witnesses.

Acting superintendent of HM Prison, Lt. Col Eugene Phillip, said Gomes remains in prison where he has been held on remand since his arrest three years ago. He will remain there until the cash component

of the bail has been paid.

Vincia James was captured on surveillance camera leaving her workplace Dixie Betting Company on 7th April, 2017. It was the last time she was seen.

Despite a massive search in parts of the island, in every instance, search parties came up empty handed.

Several weeks after her disappearance, ex-boyfriend Mikhail Gomes was arrested and charged with murdering James.

UWI Five Islands has new principal

A new principal has been named to the University of the West Indies (The UWI) Five Islands Campus, located just outside St John's in Antigua.

He is Professor Densil A. Williams who will take up the post as Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the Five Islands Campus.

His appointment was approved by the University Council at its meeting on May 13 and the Government of Antigua and Barbuda has indicated its keenness to work with Professor Williams in advancing the Five Islands Campus as a key objective within The UWI's strategic plan.

His appointment is for a period of three years, commencing the 2020/2021 academic year and he has accepted the position in addition to his current portfolio as Pro Vice-Chancellor for Academic, Industry Partnerships and Planning at The UWI.

This decision of assigning this dual role is part of The UWI's cost-cutting and containment strategy due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The regional university is reviewing the structure and cost of leadership at the campus level and the selection of



Professor Densil A. Williams will take up the post as Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the Five Islands Campus.

a new principal for Five Islands Campus is central to this review. In this instance, the merging of portfolios for Professor Williams will allow him to integrate the future of the Five Islands Campus within a broader "ONE UWI" strategy.

Prior to his appointment, Professor Williams was one of the lead authors of The UWI Five Islands Campus' feasibility study which was approved by the University Council. He has re-

mained active in the affairs of the Five Islands Campus and is Chair of its Infrastructure Committee, which negotiated with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda for a grant of over US\$-20million to build out the Campus' infrastructure.

During his tenure as Pro Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principal, Professor Williams will provide leadership on multiple strategic objectives, including project management in order to maintain compliance with the business model on which the Campus was established; maintaining effective operations; and collaborating with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda in building out a cost effective infrastructure and HR architecture.

Professor Williams succeeds Professor Stafford A. Griffith who took on the role as Interim Pro Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principal from August 15, 2019.

Professor Griffith's tenure ends on July 31, 2020. The UWI extends its gratitude to Professor Griffith for his superb contributions to the establishment and running of the Five Islands Campus over the past year.

USD\$1 Million towards Barbuda Homes through Calvin Ayre Foundation

Ambassador Calvin Ayre, through his foundation (CAF) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Prince's Foundation signalling a partnership between the two foundations for the construction of resilient homes in Barbuda.

The MoU was signed at Government House in the presence of Their Excellencies, Sir Rodney, and Lady Williams, members from the Ayre Group and Jeremy Cross, who joined the ceremony virtually from London due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions.

The signed MoU is said to have moved the Wa'omoni Cottages Barbuda housing relief initiative to the next stage. Through this collaboration, the CAF is contributing US\$1M to the initiative which is intended to provide resilient homes for families who became homeless as a result of the devastation wrought by Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

According to a statement from the Calvin Ayre



Ambassador Calvin Ayre, right, with Governor General Sir Rodney Williams and Lady Williams.

Foundation (CAF), "With this support, together with funding and planning work involving The Government of Antigua and Barbuda, The Barbuda Council, The Halo Foundation and other donors, the Wa'omoni Cottages project can now move to the next phase."

Ambassador Ayre said, "I am pleased to be here this morning to lend my signature to the formalization of this important partnership to push ahead with the construction of needed homes



Jeremy Cross of the Prince's Foundation

on the island of Barbuda for the people of Barbuda who were devastated by Hurricane Irma."

The country's economic envoy continued by saying, "While we could have taken a wait-and-see approach until the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic had passed, we feel this project is also important in supporting the recovery of the local economy, and we are keen to press forward."

Jeremy Cross of the Prince's Foundation through a video conference said, "we are excited to be working closely with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, the Barbuda Council and our key partners to help rebuild, and create much-needed homes that are resilient, sustainable and appropriate for Barbuda."

Cross was in Antigua earlier this year to help advance the plans of the project.



National Park prepares for hurricane season

With extra time on its hands following the abrupt end to the yachting season...the National Park Authority has been using the time to prepare for the upcoming hurricane season which begins in less than two weeks.

The National Parks Authority (NPA) said in a release that it is taking steps to ensure the highest possible environmental and conservation standards are maintained around the Nelson's Dockyard and beyond.

"As part of this process the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA) will be clearing blockages and cleaning drains in the Dockyard Drive Area over the next few days," the statement added.

NPA has sought the advice of experts from several key agencies including the



Fisheries Division, the Department of Environment and the Central Board of Health who are involved in the planning and execution of the program. This, ac-

cording to the release, is to ensure the entire exercise meets all the appropriate environmental standards including those established by the authority.

Collaboratively, the entities are working to improve the flow in drains under a section of the road of Dockyard Drive to alleviate the risk of flooding and to reduce the stagnant water that has now settled in the area.

Mangrove seedlings, according to the NPA, will be removed by the Department of Environment for replanting in its nursery.

The National Parks Authority is therefore requesting the understanding and patience of businesses and members of the public while these crucial exercises are carried out with the overall aim of protecting the environment and building resilience.





During the virtual graduation ceremony, Jennaecia told graduates, "As the world around us is filled with uncertainty about what the immediate future holds, I empathize with every student who is a spring 2020 graduate."

Antiguan Student named Saint Mary's University Valedictorian

Though COVID-19 has impacted the way we celebrate major accomplishments including graduation, Antiguan scholar, Jennaecia Lewis virtually addressed the 2020 graduating class of Saint Mary's University as their Valedictorian.

Jennaecia graduated top of her class this week with a Bachelor of Psychology, Honours, from the Saint Mary's University's Faculty of Arts in Halifax, Canada. Her researched-based degree took approximately four years to complete and focused on Social and Cognitive Psychology.

The young Antiguan graduate remarked that her academic journey was not one without some hurdles. In speaking with PointeXpress, Lewis said studying aboard, away from friends and family was difficult at first.

"Transitioning was a major hurdle that I had to surpass. My first few months were difficult. At times I felt out of place and alone because of the distance.

"After I came to grips with Halifax being my new home things weren't as difficult. I found that staying productive

and busy made the time fly by. I didn't just focus on school. I was President of the Psychology Society for two years and that opened up a lot of doors for me and created networks with amazing professionals who motivated me.

"I would say my last two years were the hardest. I lost a very close friend tragically last summer and I also had issues with my health.

"Nevertheless, I remained focused and determined. It was always my goal to make my family and my country proud and I am happy that I was able to do that," Jennaecia recalled.

Jennaecia, who completed her studies with a thesis, used an experimental design to investigate the extent to which exposure to offensive racist stimuli could impact individuals' racist attitudes.

Her studies in Canada were supported through scholarships from the Government of Antigua and Barbuda. However, she explained that high costs associated with being an international student required her to other sources of financial support.

"I received funding from the govern-

ment in the form of scholarships. This was a great help as the tuition for international students is extremely high. Apart from my scholarships, I worked in various roles throughout my academic career.

"I was a Science Writing Tutor at SMU's Writing Center, a Lab Instructor for the Engineering Department of the University, a Teaching Assistant for the Psychology Department, and a Research Assistant for the Cognitive Neuroscience branch of the Psychology Department," she explained.

Lewis is the second Antiguan to have been given the prestigious academic award. Two years ago, Nechelle Nicholas was named Valedictorian at the same institution.

Jennaecia gave her address to the graduating class virtually on Wednesday with over 8,000 views and viewers on social media which witnessed hundreds of well-wishers remarking congratulatory messages to her.

Lewis believes that it was the combination of her grades and the determinist attitude that afforded her the prestigious award.



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The month of May seems to be a good month in which to be born as another centenarian is celebrating during the month. George Theophilus Benjamin is today celebrating his 101st birthday. He was born on May 22, 1919 to parents Henrietta David and George Benjamin in the village of Ebenezer. He is the last of (10) children. In 1950 he married the love of his life, Gwendolyn Simon. He fathered eight children – five boys and three girls – among whom is Dr Philmore Benjamin.

Benjamin is the sixth centenarian who celebrated birthdays this month. Over the years, Benjamin took delight in farming and he could be considered a small farmer, a profession which provided a means to support his family. He also worked as a laborer. He is a strong believer in the Christian faith and he regularly attended the Cedar Hall Moravian Church. He cherishes a variety of music and he recalls many stories from his childhood. As with others celebrating during these times, Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams has had to curtail visits to celebrants due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He expressed a willingness to resume these visits once the risks associated with the virus have dissipated. Sir Rodney however extended best wishes to Benjamin on behalf of Government House and the nation of Antigua and Barbuda.

Another centenarian celebrates!



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COVID-19: A catalyst for entrepreneurship Series:

The Machine Man - Ten years of the snacking business even through COVID-19

By Angelica O'Donoghue

Through the last two features, we have focused on businesses that benefited in some ways from the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this week we pause to highlight young business owner, Jason Edmund in celebrating 10 years as a successful entrepreneur!

Jason owns and operates a business called HAVASNAK Quality Vending Services which was started in May 2010, and like any other business, Havasnak has had its ups and downs.

Unfortunately, due to the nature of this 10-year-old business, COVID-19 has had some significant impact on its operations.

According to Jason, he came up with the idea of HAVASNAK in 2009 when he had an insatiable appetite for snacking one night. "I was craving this one particular snack that I used to get from the vending machine in my university library when I was working there. Then that thought came to me that 'hey, I haven't seen any vending machines around Antigua.' So I went back into the house and started doing my research. By the next day I was making calls and sending emails and the vision was brought to reality the next year," Jason reminisced.

Though Jason's enthusiasm and com-

mitment saw him bringing his idea to life in twelve months, financing such a novelty business meant sourcing financing swiftly. Jason recalled that he did need financing when he first started. "After I did the business plan, to raise funds to purchase my first three (3) machines, I had to max out all my credit cards that I received when in college and I also had to dissolve my 401K retirement plan from working for three years post-graduation," the young entrepreneur said.

Havasnak is one of the most identifiable snack vending machines on the island. Jason, commonly known as the "Machine Man" has embodied his business and it has seen it grown throughout the years.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic, though it has given rise to a number of new businesses, hasn't left Jason unscathed. The 'Machine Man' explained that the pandemic has had both good and bad effects on him and his business. He illustrated that the pandemic has allowed him to rest. "Before COVID, I was working roughly 16-hour days, often seeing the sunrise. So, the rest is amazing," Jason said. The business owner continued by stating, "another benefit from COVID for me is that because of all this downtime, I have been able to work on some goals that I have wanting to do for a very long time. One is that I was able to launch a YouTube channel just this week giving tips about the vending business and documenting some of my operations."

Nonetheless, the COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating effects on business-



es across the globe. According to the latest Global Financial Stability Report, it shows that the financial system has already felt a dramatic impact, and further intensification of the crisis could affect global financial stability.

Havasnak Vending has seen the tough reality of this. According to Jason, "the negative impact that COVID-19 has had on my business is pretty much the same it has affected any business that is dependent on the volume of people. And that is seeing your income drastically cut from all of the shutdowns, as most of my machines are at this point non-operational."

"To be honest, we haven't been able to capitalize on COVID-19. A full-line vending service which is food and refreshment services through vending machines are most successful when there is a volume of people, heavy foot traffic locations, establishments with long operating hours, and no restrictions of movement, all of which COVID-19 safety precautions took away. 90% of my locations are either totally closed or have

cont'd on pg 11



PM Browne says Government will purchase Digicel...if it's available

Word that Digicel's parent company has filed for bankruptcy protection, has led Prime Minister Gaston Browne, to indicate a willingness of the government to purchase the local branch if it comes up for sale.

Speaking on a programme from neighbouring Montserrat via ZOOM, Browne said the government would have an interest in purchasing the mobile phone and internet company and in doing so would ensure that profits made by the company are not repatriated overseas.

"Digicel is in trouble now, and even though we have our problems with COVID, if Denis O'Brien (Digicel

chairman) says he is selling tomorrow, we will buy it (the Antigua branch) provided we get a 'good price'.

By so doing, tens of millions of dollars that are repatriated to Ireland annually would stay here creating more opportunities for the people of Antigua and Barbuda," he emphasized.

Since word of the bankruptcy filing by Digicel, Chief Of Staff in the Office of the Prime Minister, Ambassador Lionel Max Hurst, said purchasing the local branch of the company and merging it with APUA INET would result in a much bigger and stronger local telecoms company.

Browne said the philosophy that

drives a desire to purchase the Antigua Digicel branch if it becomes available, is the same one that informed his decision to block the sale of the local branch of Scotiabank last year to a Trinidad and Tobago banking interest.

He maintains that it was important that local banks grow bigger and acquiring the assets of Scotiabank and Royal Bank has been a good move on the part of the Antigua Commercial bank, which acquired Royal Bank and the Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank (ECAB) which acquired Scotiabank.

In all such cases, Browne holds the view that local entities should get the right of first refusal.

cont'd from pg 10

very limited activity. Some of my best locations have now become dormant. Schools - closed, hotels and resorts - closed, call centers - closed as workers are now working from home, Airport shut-down with a skeleton staff. It has been trying times," the young business owner articulated solemnly.

Though Jason explains that he feels the effects of this financial downturn, he remains optimistic with thoughts of expansion. Jason commented that he is confident that his business will grow in the future.

He remarked, "I absolutely think my business has the potential to grow. There is definitely room for expansion as there are still many locations and accounts that we would like to obtain in the near future. Even from the stand-

point of expanding services, there are opportunities out there. With good financing and a solid plan, great things can happen. But of course, I am very patient."

Patience is something that several business owners have articulated during these unprecedented times. The Havasnak owner used the opportunity by telling his story, to give some words of advice to potential entrepreneurs during this pandemic. "I have a few things I would tell entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs. First, would be is to hold firm during these uncertain times, it is important for everyone to know that this too will pass. Do what you can to cushion the impact if you are in business at the moment. In addition, I would say if you must tweak some of your plans, or totally replace them, make the ad-

justments. Stay vigilant, take your time, and wait for the best time to strike and implement your ideas. Also, with all this downtime make sure to brainstorm new ideas especially the ones that may seem unconventional to you at the moment and out of your comfort zone because you never know what can hap-

pen. Make solid plans! Some of the biggest and strongest companies have been formed during depressions and market downturns. So don't give up! That's it!"

The COVID-19: A catalyst for entrepreneurship Series extends congratulations to Jason on his ten years of business operations!



The U. S. and Cuba: Caribbean chooses cooperation, not confrontation

(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).

Caribbean countries are, once again, being placed in a difficult position as they try to navigate a course between the United States (U.S.) and Cuba - two countries of great importance to them and for each of which they have great respect.

In 1972, the four then independent member states of what is now the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) - Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago - broke a U.S. embargo to establish diplomatic and economic relations with Cuba, charting the course for a foreign policy based on independence, courage and concerted action. Since then, every government of a CARICOM country, that achieved independence, has kept to that policy, with only one brief exception.

Recently efforts have been made, without success, to persuade CARICOM countries to turn away from Cuba.

The attitude of the government of the U.S. to Cuba departed from the détente in

force when President Donald Trump came into office in January 2017. Renewed efforts to isolate Cuba followed.

On May 12, the U.S. government approach to Cuba hardened still further when it certified to the U.S. Congress that Cuba did not cooperate fully with U.S. counter terrorism efforts in 2019.

An unnamed senior official in the U.S. administration reportedly told Reuters News Agency on May 14 that consideration is being given to returning Cuba to a U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism.

The governments of the Caribbean regard the region as “a zone of peace” and they were openly relieved when the former government of the U.S., under President Barack Obama, softened a 50-year hard line policy on Cuba, including a trade embargo. In December 2014, Obama declared, “We will end an outdated approach that for decades has failed to advance our interests, and instead we will begin to normalize relations between our two countries”. The new deal, he said, will “begin a new chapter among the nations of the Americas” and move beyond a “rigid policy that is rooted in events that took place before most of us were born.”

The Caribbean, and the world, including U.S. states and companies, long locked-



By Sir Ronald Sanders

out of the Cuban market because of U.S. government policies, looked forward to “the new deal” between the two neighbouring states whose relations impinge on the entire Hemisphere.

In 2015 and 2016, three historic events occurred, under Obama, that evinced further belief that the hemisphere and the world had become a safer place. First, the U.S. and Cuba reopened diplomatic Embassies in each other’s capitals, re-establishing official lines of communication and dialogue that were terminated in 1960 when the corrupt regime of military dictator, Fulgencio Batista, was overthrown. Second, the U.S. State Department removed Cuba from its list of state sponsors of terrorism –

a designation that was first imposed in 1982. And third, Obama became the first sitting U.S. president in nearly ninety years to visit Cuba, meeting its then president, Raul Castro, and opening the way for U.S. airlines and Cruise ships to ply their trade in Cuba.

However, many of these measures of cooperation have been reversed. In 2017, President Trump reinstated restrictions on Americans traveling to Cuba and U.S. business dealings. Then in 2018, former U.S. National Security Advisor, John Bolton, labelled Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela the “Troika of Tyranny”. Shortly thereafter, the U.S. government announced a raft of sanctions against Cuba including banning

cruises and curtailing direct flights. Now comes the May 12 certification that Cuba did not cooperate fully with U.S. counter terrorism efforts in 2019. Even more troubling to hemispheric peaceful cooperation is the assertion by a senior U.S. official that there is a “convincing case” to put Cuba back on the U.S. blacklist. For its part, the Cuban government has rejected the U.S. certification, saying it “disregards that there is concrete evidence, some of them very recent, of bilateral collaboration between the two governments in the fight against terrorism, and joint law enforcement efforts”. The Cuban statement also claims that “as part of this collaboration, recent actions of particular

interest to the U.S. government have been carried out, recognized by its own law enforcement agencies”. Political observers in the U.S. have attributed two reasons to the U.S government’s renewed tough stance toward Cuba.

The first is the forthcoming U.S. Presidential elections in which the State of Florida is crucial to who is elected. Florida is the home of Cuban, Venezuelan and other dissidents whose support is important to the election outcome. Pandering to their desire for regime change in their birth countries compels the attention of any Presidential candidate. The second reason is satisfying the government of Colombia which has been urging the U.S. government

to add Cuba to the list of countries “not fully co-operating with counter-terrorism efforts”. The Colombian government wants to use that designation as justification for abandoning protocols to an arrangement with the Cuban government which facilitated peace talks between the Colombian government and the dissident group, Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). Those talks broke down in January 2019. Since then, the Colombian government has been demanding the extradition of the ELN members who were left in Cuba. Consistent with international law, Cuba has declined to extradite them.

Venezuela is also tied-up in all this. Colombia’s President, Iván Duque, and Ven-

ezuelan President Nicolás Maduro are at daggers drawn and the U.S. administration disapprove of the close Cuba-Venezuela links.

In February this year, CARICOM heads of government collectively reiterated their concern over “the enhanced sanctions announced by the US Government” and they denounced as “unjustifiable” the application of laws and measures of an extra-territorial nature that are contrary to international law.

They did not choose Cuba over the U.S. They chose international law, hemispheric cooperation, and peace - principles to which the region’s people are devoted.

Responses and previous commentaries: www.sirronaldsanders.com

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eget tristique
ipsum id aliquam.
ut suscipit sit amet, facilisis
ac tincidunt nunc ultrices.



HONORING OUR TEACHERS

2020

Brief excerpts from the State of the Union address by Acting

President of the A&BUT, Tasheba Fredrick



The Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers takes this opportunity to highlight and celebrate persons in this noble profession annually. There are not enough words for me to express the gratitude for the contributions teachers have made over the years of having education and teaching in Antigua and Barbuda, and continue to make every day.

Almost a century ago, a group of visionary educators had a revolutionary idea. Ninety-four years to be exact. It was to create an organization to advocate for teachers. On behalf of A&BUT and myself,

I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge, recognize and to say thanks to those founding members for this most important institution. Moreover, this initiative grew into what is now known as the Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers. On this momentous occasion, let us reflect on the past, assess the present and look ahead to the future.

Teachers, the invaluable work that we are doing during this time of crisis has not gone unnoticed for most circles. Although the laws of our country do not classify teachers as essential front-line workers, we have not

reneged on our responsibility to nation-building and have remained resolute in our duty of engaging and molding the minds of our students. The manner in which many of you have so readily embraced the use of technology in catering to the educational needs of your students is testimony to your commitment and dedication to your work and profession. Moreover, when you were asked to teach remotely but were

not provided with a platform, you spontaneously and creatively found the tools to do it. Teachers, you are the unsung heroes of this

pandemic. I take this opportunity to specially thank you all, for once again demonstrating your selfless dedication and commitment to your profession and to providing education to our students.

(Editor's note: Each year, the ABUT honours members of the teaching profession who have completed 25 years of service to the profession as well as those who are retiring from the service. This year, PointeXpress newspaper joins with the ABUT in honouring our teachers will this special feature.)

Cont'd on pg 16

RETIREES



Hyacinth Gonsalves-Barriero
T.N. Kirnon Primary



Angella James
Cedar Grove Primary



Jocelyn Henry
Unit for the Blind - TNK



Violet Lake
Sir. McChesney George Secondary
(Barbuda)



Vernest Mack
Golden Grove Primary



Rose-Marie Lake
Ottos Comprehensive



Gwendolyn Willock
T.N. Kimon Primary



Jennifer Jarvis
Jennings Secondary



Avon Rosemarie-Browne
Ottos Comprehensive



Lucina Nathaniel
Freetown Primary

25 YEARS OF SERVICE



Andrea Richards
Adele School



Ms. Galye Samuel-Walter
Cobbs Cross Primary



Juliet Hazlewood
School for the Deaf - TNK



Wilston Charles
Antigua Grammar School



Elton Isaac
Antigua Grammar School



Anthea Thomas
Freemansville Primary



Corette Samuel
Glanvilles Secondary



Latoya Wallace
Ottos Comprehensive

Mottley: Some countries will restructure, some will fall apart



CARICOM Chair and Barbados Prime Minister, Mia Mottley

Kyron Regis

The CARICOM Chair and Barbados Prime Minister, Mia Mottley, has expressed that in the midst of COVID-19, some small island developing states will successfully re-engineer their economies, while some will collapse thereby having a ripple effect on the nation and world.

Speaking in her address to the 73rd World Health Assembly, Mottley said: "Many countries will either

have an orderly restructuring of debt or at the very least a debt moratorium that provides certainty for both the borrower and the lender, or they will have a disorderly unravelling that will create a crisis both within their respective countries and within the global financial markets."

Mottley explained that this is the reason the region believes that there should be mature and relevant conversations for middle income, small island developing

states across the globe especially as it relates to our debt obligations in the midst of this pandemic.

The Barbados PM gave reference to the country she leads, noting: "Barbados took a major leap of faith when we restructured our debt in the last 18 months."

She indicated that the restructuring included natural disaster clauses in the nation's domestic and external debt instruments that provide for greater fiscal space to be created through a mor-

atorium on the payment of principal. It also allowed for a capitalization of the interest, should the country face a natural disaster.

Mottley argued the certainty natural disaster clauses provide is increased fiscal space. She continued: "Were this provision available in the context of this pandemic, it would bring tremendous relief to those countries and better position many of us to rebuild in a post-COVID-19 environment." She added that the Caribbean's small states have been suffering from high debt and low growth for decades. The CARICOM Chair also asserted, that because the Caribbean region's economies ranks among the most travel and tourism-dependent economies in the world, it has exposed its people and economies in a way that it has not experienced since becoming independent nations more than fifty years ago, in some instances.

Mottley contended that this current crisis calls for global leadership that will allow the region to rebuild its humanity, environment and the equity so badly needed in its societies and economies. She said that COVID-19 has not only brought people closer together, but it has equally cast a light on the inequities in societies.

Bahamas to hold ecumenical service for people who lost their lives during Hurricane Dorian

An ecumenical service and burial for loved ones who lost their lives during Hurricane Dorian will take place here on Friday.

Months after the powerful storm devastated sections of the territory, the service, to be led by religious leaders from the Abaco Christian Council and the wider Christian community will be held.

According to Archdeacon Keith Cartwright, there will be a graveside ecumenical service followed by a burial, taking into consideration the necessary COVID-19 protocols.

The service was previously postponed at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Cartwright the ceremony will be a time for all to “remember the impact Hurricane Dorian has had on our communities and as good Christian people pay our final respects”. The 55 Hurricane Dorian victims in Abaco will be individually interred, although forensic DNA profiling analysis is ongoing.

Meanwhile, despite some delays within the operations of laboratories internationally, the Royal Bahamas Police Force has indicated that collaboration with a highly recognized laboratory, very skilled in dealing with DNA sampling, is proving good results. It is anticipated that



A man salvages debris in Marsh Harbour, The Bahamas, on September 10, 2019, one week after Hurricane Dorian. The damage caused by Dorian has contributed to an increase in insurance premiums across the region

receipt of some results is expected soon. The police say that the analysis of the samples proved very difficult and challenging. Hence, more specialised DNA analysis methods were sought, which impacted the ability to provide closure to families in a timelier fashion.

“We have been advised by

Coroner Jeanine Weech-Gomez that best practices have been used in number identification of each set of remains. The remains are numbered, the sealer caskets are numbered, and the graves will be numbered with weatherproof plates. This system will assist in providing certified death

certificates. Those numbers match the DNA sampling of each decedent. When the forensic exercise is complete each family will be afforded the choice of family memorialisation.” Hurricane Dorian hit Abaco and Grand Bahama in September 2019. It was the strongest storm to hit The Bahamas.

Grenada Government welcomes Paris Club debt suspension

Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Dr the Right Honourable Keith Mitchell, has welcomed the Paris Club Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), which will grant the country suspension of debt service between May and December 2020.

A press release issued by the Paris Club this week confirmed Grenada's eligibility for the DSSI which is also endorsed by the G20 and that the "time-bound suspension of debt service" will be effective from 1 May to 31 December 2020.

In late March, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund called on bilateral creditors to provide debt relief for IDA countries like Grenada, suspending payments on loans and allowing them to use available resources to fight the pandemic. There was subsequent endorsement of this by the G20 and Paris Club, with confirmation this week that Grenada is eligible to benefit from the Paris Club initiative.

Following the Paris Club announcement, the Government of Grenada will be initiating discussions with bilateral creditors for final sign off of the debt service suspension. It is anticipated that up to EC\$14 million of Grenada's debt burden will be suspended through this



Grenada Ministry of Finance, Financial Complex, St George's

arrangement.

Dr Mitchell said, "Given the significant decline in government revenue due to the pandemic, it is important that we explore all available debt service initiatives and opportunities for concessional financing. With each measure that is

approved, government can then use those resources to further improve the healthcare system and mitigate the economic and social impact of the pandemic. I want to assure the nation that the Government remains committed to making fiscally prudent decisions that will see us through this crisis

and create a launchpad for future growth and development."

According to the Paris Club press release, government is expected to seek similar debt service agreements from other bilateral creditors and the Prime Minister has confirmed that this will be done.

Trump confirms US is withdrawing from another major arms treaty

Washington (CNN) President Donald Trump confirmed the US will be exiting the Open Skies Treaty, a pact designed to reduce the risk of military miscalculations that could lead to war, and said Russia's actions had prompted him to take the decision.

"Russia didn't adhere to the treaty, so until they adhere, we will pull out," Trump told reporters outside the White House Thursday.

The President predicted that the US withdrawal would force Moscow back to the table. "There's a chance we may make a new agreement or do something to put that agreement back together," Trump said. "I think what's going to happen is we're going to pull out and they're going to come back and want to make a deal."

Trump also denied that the withdrawal would increase tensions with Russia. "No, I think that we're going to have (a) very good relationship with Russia," the President said.

The 1992 treaty allows member countries to conduct short-notice, unarmed, reconnaissance flights over the other countries to collect data on their military forces and activities. It is the latest major arms control treaty that the US will abandon under the Trump adminis-

tration. Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said the Trump administration is "committed to our treaty obligations, but in this era of great power competition we are looking to advocate for agreements that benefit all sides and that include partners who comply responsibly with their obligations."

The Open Skies Treaty is part of a broad web of arms control agreements meant to ensure stability and predictability on the European continent and reduce the risk of misunderstandings that could spiral into conflict by ensuring transparency.

Bipartisan groups of former national security officials reacted with dismay to the news the US will withdraw, saying that will reduce US leadership in the world, hand Russia a victory and undermine US and global security.

"This is insane"

"This is insane," tweeted Gen. Michael Hayden, the retired four-star general who served as former National Security Agency director, a former principal deputy director of national intelligence and was President George W. Bush's director of the CIA.

The New York Times was first to report a final decision has been reached.

European allies, who have lobbied for the US to re-

main in the treaty, see it as a central part of their security infrastructure and the US decision to withdraw will likely add to the strain in transatlantic relations, analysts say.

The President, and many officials in his administration, are pushing to develop new nuclear weapons, even as they insist they are not starting a new arms race with Russia. At the same time, they have criticized the idea that the United States should be bound by international agreements. But analysts and former officials say discarding another agreement could deepen global instability.

Former President Ronald Reagan's secretary of state, George Shultz, former President George H.W. Bush's secretary of defense William Perry, and former Democratic Sen. Sam Nunn -- who together with Henry Kissinger formed the Nuclear Security Project -- wrote the administration in March to urge they keep the Open Skies Treaty.

In a letter to Defense Secretary Mark Esper, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Trump and National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien, they wrote that "at a time when tensions with Moscow are on the rise, the Open Skies Treaty serves as a very useful tool for the



President Trump

United States and our allies to monitor Russian military activities. Unilateral US withdrawal from Open Skies would undermine American allies and friends in Europe."

The Trump administration has already pulled out of an Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and has set out conditions to renew the last remaining nuclear arms pact with Russia -- the NEW Start Treaty -- that experts and analysts say all but guarantee it will not be extended.

The Open Skies Treaty is part of "a set of reinforcing documents which create stability and predictability in and around Europe," said Jon Wolfsthal, director of the Nuclear Crisis Group at Global Zero. "Trump and his advisers have been systematically destroying those agreements in part because of Russian noncompliance, but when you look at the Trump approach, it's 'tear it down and don't put anything in its place and at times, make it harder for people to put anything else in its place.'"

Cyclone Amphan kills more than 85 in India and Bangladesh

NEW DELHI — A powerful cyclone killed more than 85 people in India and Bangladesh, flattening tens of thousands of homes and battering the metropolis of Kolkata after it roared ashore on Wednesday.

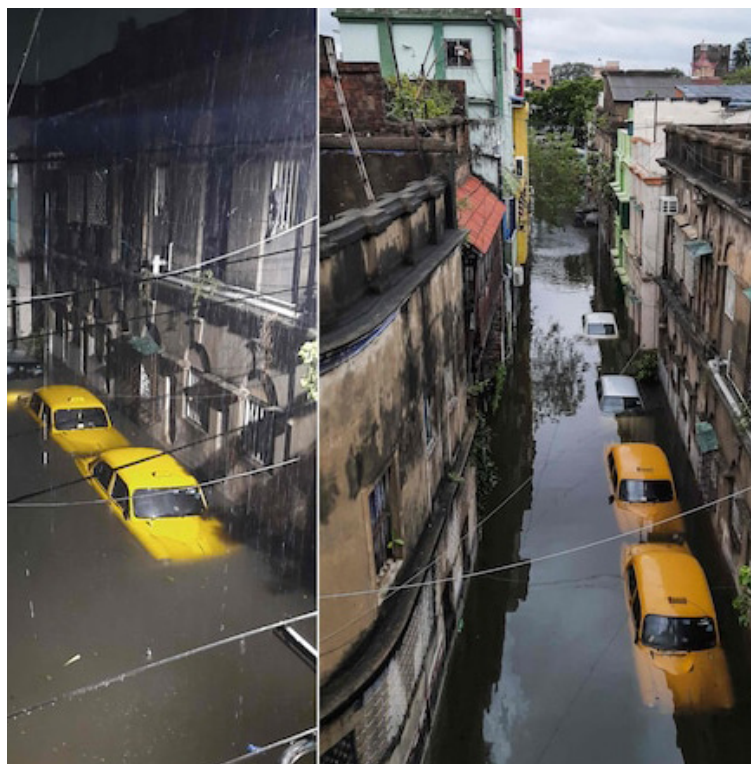
The Indian state of West Bengal bore the brunt of the storm's fury. Two low-lying districts in the state suffered widespread destruction of homes, crops and infrastructure, while its capital, Kolkata, witnessed torrential rains and winds of up to 100 miles an hour.

At least 72 people died in West Bengal, 15 of them in Kolkata. Many were crushed by falling trees or electrocuted by downed power lines.

Cyclone Amphan left a "trail of devastation," said Mamata Banerjee, the chief minister of West Bengal. She said she had never seen a similar disaster in the state.

A metropolis of 15 million people known for its crumbling charm, Kolkata awoke Thursday to waterlogged streets filled with debris, power outages and the sight of huge trees toppled over onto cars and buses, crumpling them like tin cans.

Goutam Pradhan spent a sleepless night on the third floor of his 35-year-old family home in Kolkata after water began flooding in from the street and the electricity went out. The



A combination of photos taken on Wednesday and Thursday shows vehicles in a flooded alleyway after the landfall of Cyclone Amphan in Kolkata, India.

howling wind shattered the upstairs windows, scattering shards of glass on his 9-year-old daughter.

"I have never seen such scenes in my entire life," said the 47-year-old lab technician. "I was scared for my life and for my family's life."

The storm began over the Bay of Bengal as one of the strongest tropical cyclones ever recorded in the northern Indian Ocean. Although Amphan weakened as it approached land, it brought powerful winds, driving rain and a huge tidal surge.

About 3 million people were evacuated from their

homes in India and Bangladesh ahead of the storm's arrival. Both countries are battling rising numbers of novel coronavirus cases, and some evacuees feared they might contract the virus during hours stuck inside emergency shelters.

In Bangladesh, at least 16 people were killed and more than 55,000 homes collapsed, authorities said. The storm's path did not bring it directly over one of the world's most vulnerable refugee populations: Instead, it passed northwest of Cox's Bazar, which meant that about a million Rohingya living in crowded

camps were spared its worst effects.

Indian authorities said that it would take time to reach a full assessment of the storm's impact. About 500,000 people in West Bengal were still in emergency shelters, said S.N. Pradhan of the National Disaster Response Force, because roads were impassable or their homes were damaged.

The loss of dwellings and crops, coming after two months of a nationwide lockdown that has left millions of Indians without an income, risks pushing those impacted by the storm into destitution.

On Thursday, Amphan had dissipated as it moved north but was still unloading torrential rainfall that could exceed a foot in some areas. Flash flooding and mudslides are expected to threaten parts of northeast India, northern Bangladesh, Bhutan, and northern Myanmar into the weekend.

Deepanjana Dey, a journalist from Kolkata, witnessed the impact of the cyclone in one of the worst-hit districts, South 24 Parganas. It sits directly on the Bay of Bengal and is home to a vast mangrove forest.

"The mud houses have been flattened, there are cable wires and fallen trees everywhere," said Dey, 33. "It is a devastating sight."

Guatemala on deportees with COVID-19: US not acting 'like allies'

Guatemala's president questions alliance with the US as immigration authorities continue to deport those with COVID-19.

Guatemala's president on Thursday questioned his country's relationship with the United States, revealing frustration over the US continuing to send deportees infected with COVID-19 to a country struggling to manage the crisis.

"This of allies with the United States isn't true," President Alejandro Giammattei said. "Guatemala is an ally of the United States, but the United States is not Guatemala's ally. They don't treat us like an ally."

Giammattei said the infected deportees were creating "serious problems" in his country's already overloaded health system.

"The United States has helped other countries including with ventilators and to us nothing has come, not even chopped corn," he said during an online appearance with the Atlantic Council's Adrienne Arsht Latin America Center. "We don't feel very grateful for the way we have been treated."

Giammattei appeared to be referring to medical aid sent to Mexico, El Salvador and Honduras, all governments receiving deportees without complaint. Last month,



Guatemala's President Alejandro Giammattei looks on during a news conference with United States officials

Giammattei was notably absent from a list of phone calls US President Donald Trump made to the presidents of El Salvador and Honduras offering aid and encouragement.

"We understand the United

States wants to deport people, but what we don't understand is that they send the flights all contaminated," he said.

Political analyst Renzo Rosal told the Associated Press news agency that the issue

was raising tensions between the two countries "because the United States has shamelessly continued sending infected migrants and has not complied with what it offered".

China accuses US of 'blackmailing' Hong Kong government



The US says Hong Kong's treatment of pro-democracy activists raises questions about its level of autonomy

China has accused US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo of "blackmailing" the Hong Kong government with the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, saying on Thursday the US administration's recent actions amounted to blatant interference in China's internal affairs.

Pompeo said on Wednesday the recent treatment of pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong made it harder to assess whether the territory remains highly autonomous from China, a requirement for the special treatment afforded to the city under American law.

A spokesman for the Chinese foreign ministry's of-

fice of the commissioner to Hong Kong said in a statement that Pompeo's actions could not scare the Chinese people and that Beijing would safeguard its sovereignty, security and development interests.

Hong Kong has been governed under "one country, two systems" since it was returned to China in 1997. The framework affords the territory freedoms that are not allowed anywhere else on the mainland, but concerns that those freedoms are being curtailed has helped fuel a growing movement for democracy.

Mass protests that began last year over a now-abandoned extradition bill -

which would have allowed suspects to be sent to mainland China for trial - have begun to re-emerge in recent weeks as physical distancing measures imposed as a result of the coronavirus have been relaxed.

But pro-democracy groups remain under pressure, with 15 people, including veteran politicians, a publishing tycoon and senior lawyers, arrested in April in a move that drew condemnation from the United States, Europe and international rights groups. They were formally charged under colonial-era laws on Monday with organising and attending the protests, with five people facing more serious charges

that carry a penalty of as many as five years in prison.

Pompeo said a congressionally-mandated State Department assessment of the territory's autonomy was still pending.

"We are closely watching what's going on there," he told a news conference.

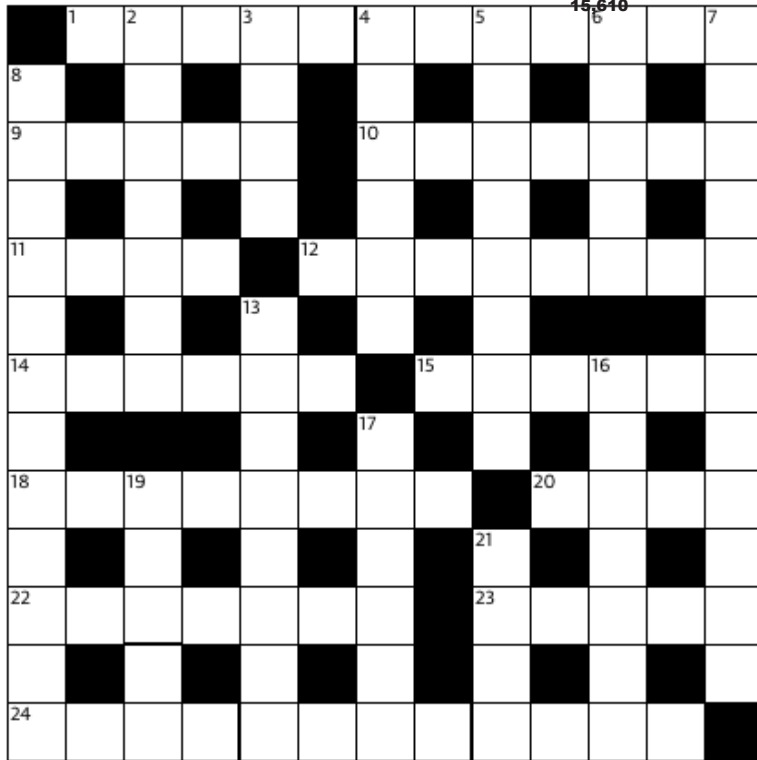
"Leading Hong Kong activists like Martin Lee and Jimmy Lai were hauled into court. Actions like these make it more difficult to assess that Hong Kong remains highly autonomous from mainland China."

China has regularly dismissed popular discontent in Hong Kong claiming instead that foreigners are behind the rallies

QUICK CROSSWORD

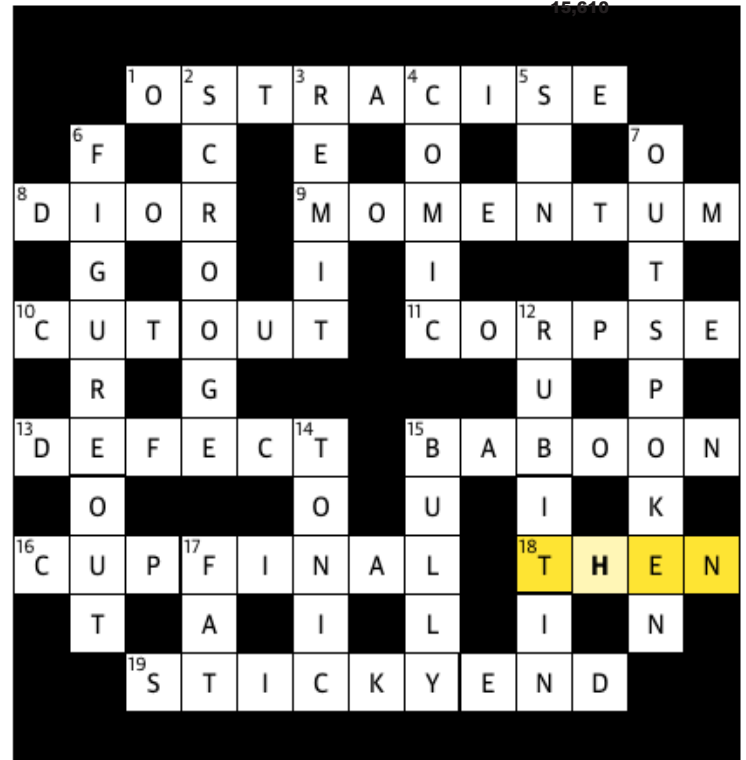
Quick crossword No

15,640



Quick crossword No

15,640



Across

- 1 Specious financial saving (5,7)
 9 Intoxicating (5)
 10 Excellent (7)
 11 Ninth letter of the Greek alphabet (4)
 12 Italian bubbly (8)
 14 Listlessness (6)
 15 Dreadful pong (6)
 18 Intellectual (8)
 20 Percussion instrument (4)
 22 Withdrawal (7)
 23 Atmospheric gas shielding us from ultraviolet radiation (5)
 24 With steady and rapid gain (4,4,4)

Down

- 2 Kind of electric plug (7)
 3 River of Hades (4)
 4 Accompany (6)
 5 Antithesis (8)
 6 Spirit measure (5)
 7 Species of European bunting (12)
 8 New Zealand's second largest city (12)
 13 Broad-brimmed Mexican hat (8)
 16 Jittery (7)
 17 Container for liquid (6)
 19 Make progress (3,2)
 21 Eat hastily (4)

CARTOON CORNER

Dilbert





ARIES (Mar 21-Apr. 19): It may be best to just relax and let life and work responsibilities run their course. You could be caught up in a situation that has no simple solution. It might be best to put any problem aside and focus on something else.

TAURUS (Apr. 20-May 20): Scrupulous attention to detail will help you get through the day without a failure or a flaw. Getting your work and home organized can make you more efficient and give you more time for creative pursuits.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): It may appear that your social life is at a standstill. Since there may be time on your hands, you can make an effort to get your life more orderly. Set up new systems to help you access what you need quickly and efficiently.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): There may be a picture in your mind that reflects how you want your home to look and your family to fill it. Some of your dreams might not be realistic, but you can aspire to them anyway. Fill up extra time by returning to a hobby.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): When ambitions and the desire to attain a higher position kick in, you can become a powerhouse of careful calculation. Someone who has performed a job well for many years might be the best source of advice.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Focus on business as usual. Avoid disputes with loved ones and misunderstandings with co-workers. Entertaining new ideas or making changes at this stage of the game could create challenging obstacles.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22.): Put your social skills to good use by breaking the ice with a tough prospect. A friendly demeanor and calm acceptance of someone's ideas can level the playing field. Avoid making promises you can't keep.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Hasty reactions can cripple the outcome. It is better to adopt a wait-and-see attitude than to make a snap decision. You could have some useful revelations and make discoveries if you spend more time reading books.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Resistance isn't futile; it may be rather useful. You might be tempted to change your schedule or overreact to a family mini-crisis. Resist the desire to shake up a situation that will work itself out on its own.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Don't waste time or money on anything that won't provide concrete benefits. Become more observant of ways to cut expenses and trim waste. Some type of networking on the job can pay hefty dividends.

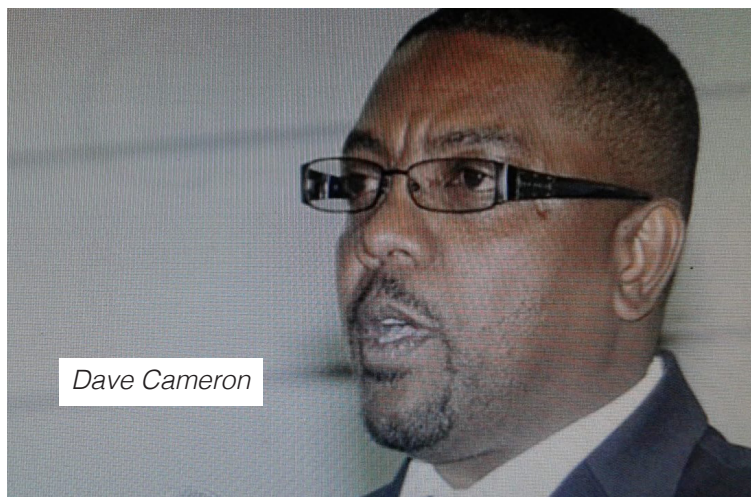
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't kick anyone when they're down. Even when you're focused on making your own way in the world, you can still show compassion for those in need. Earn respect by completing your assignments.

PISCES (Feb. 19-Mar. 20): Snap decisions can snap back at you like a rubber band. When you are under a great deal of tension, your patience may be stretched to the breaking point. Take a breather and relax until things return to normal.

Skerrit: I am not concealing Cameron's financial wrongdoing

In carrying out an assessment, the accounting and management firm Pannell Kerr Foster (PKF) uncovered some illustrations of questionable executive standards and practices with former CWI management under former president Dave Cameron.

It verified and highlighted the need for drastic operational reorganization and realignment, with an urgent need for improved risk assessment and cash flow



Dave Cameron

management.

"I can confidently assure you that at no time were

there any decision taken by the Board or anyone associated with CWI to hide, conceal, withhold or hold back the PKF report," president of Cricket West Indies, Ricky Skerritt said.

The president added that PKF was engaged for a six months period to conduct a business situation assessment and review of the organisation's financial management systems, and to provide recommendations for addressing any shortcomings.

The PKF consultants presented their report in person to CWI board of directors in December, and their twenty-eight recommendations which the board adopted.

But Skerritt said that the board never considered publishing the report, as the report is an internal report.

Former West Indies fast bowler Michael Holding who was able to get a copy of the over sixty page report was very critical of the board failure to release the audited



Ricky Skerritt

report into the alleged financial mismanagement of his predecessor Dave Cameron.

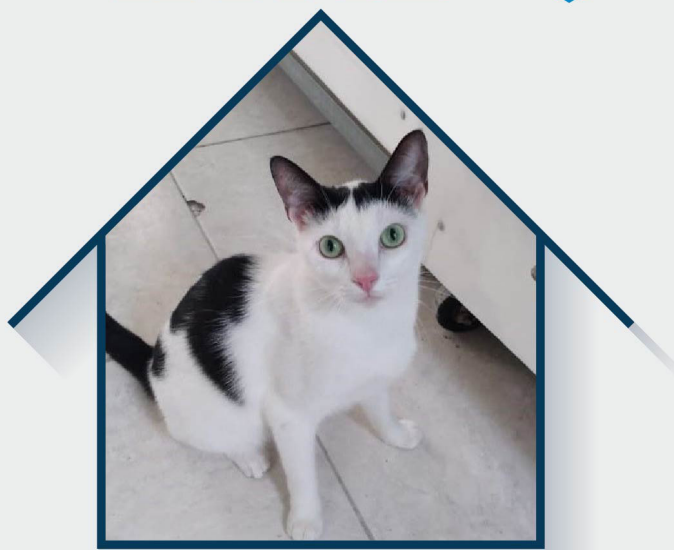
The Jamaican also highlighted five hundred thousand dollars contribution from the BCCI Board of control for cricket India for former West Indies cricketers which Holding said he has no idea of any former cricketer who has received monies from the fund.

Ricky Skerritt said whether the PKF report is made public or not, CWI will not be distracted from correcting, and learning from, any identifiable missteps or shortcomings of the past.

Former president Dave Cameron legal representatives have since written to the board requesting a copy of the report and have made it clear they will take legal actions if a copy is not forthcoming.

They have also sounded a warning to West Indies legend Michael Holding to be careful with his choice of words.

TAKE ME HOME



Oreo, a gentle, somewhat independent cat is available for adoption from the Humane Society in Bethesda. He has been neutered and is litter box trained.

If you would like to offer her a home, please call the
HUMANE SOCIETY AT 461-4957 FOR DETAILS.
IF NECESSARY, WE CAN BRING HER TO YOU.

The voice of the athletes has spoken

The Antigua and Barbuda Bodybuilding and Weightlifting Federation has cancelled its 2020 national bodybuilding competition because of the coronavirus pandemic.

President of the Federation, Dave George, said that the executive made many attempts to adapt and adjust with the banning of sports by the government but eventually had to make a decision.

“We had moved the competition date from June 6 to August 29 but bodybuilding is a fickle sport where athletes need a minimum of twelve weeks to prepare and with gyms still closed to the public, the executive reached the point where the twelve weeks needed be-

came unrealistic,” George explained.

He said the executive discussed with its members two options before making a decision. Total cancellation or a virtual show with all the COVID protocols in place but the athletes whose performance are geared towards crowd participation decided let’s plan towards 2021.

George, speaking with PointeXpress, said his executive and national coach Joseph Meade will stay engaged with their members over the dormant period and continue to prepare for the 2021 season.

“My three-year term comes to an end in December and I feel like I have not accomplished anything for



Dave George

2020 because of the pandemic but as the air clears and the time gets closer, I will make a decision on my future in the sport in respect to contesting the next election,” George added.

The Sports-broadcaster noted that last year the association had a record sixty participants registered for nationals and this year we had fifty-five individuals

registered which demonstrate that the sport is growing under the stewardship of the present executive.

“The Federation also had plans to engage the schools with our youth development plans with emphasis on creating interest from the youths,” George said.

The Federation has produced eight professionals in recent years with Bernard Percival Jr., shining at a number of international professional events.

The president ended by thanking his executive, members and supporters for their support and patience. He also requested that they stay focused and ready to move forward with the ongoing development of the sport.

He opened a can of worms

President of the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association, Kuma Rodney, has responded to criticism leveled against him by qualified cricket match referee Vanroy Burns who was a guest on Point FM TIME-OUT program Tuesday.

Burns was critical of Kuma’s role in having him removed as a match referee on the local cricketing scene. Burns also noted that Rodney attempted to affect his role with Cricket West Indies where he works as a match referee.

Rodney called into the program on Wednesday and accused Burns of being un-

fair with his accusations. He explained that Antigua and Barbuda had six match referees at one point and five had signed and delivered a letter to him expressing their disgust with Burns and refusing to work with him moving forward.

Rodney said he sat with all the individuals involved and pleaded with them to work it out but the other five affected match referees refused to move from their stance at the time and he had no choice because Vanroy was wrong and he refused to compromise.

Kuma did not divulge on air the root of the situation



Kuma Rodney

but he did inform host Veron Epilus Edwards Jr. of the facts off the record.

“I don’t want to damage his character but he opened a door that he better close,” Rodney warned.

The former national cricket coach says he will not rest

the situation until Vanroy Burns comes out and tell the public the truth of what really happened. “If he fails to clear the air, some of the things I mentioned off record will be put on record,” Kuma expressed to PointeXpress.

Ajarni Frederick Jr: Talented and focused

Ajarni Frederick Jr. grew up between Liberta and Sea View Farm, two villages known from producing outstanding cricket talent. His father Keith Fredrick Sr. is from Sea View Farm and his mother who lived in Liberta, is from Old Road.

Fredrick, or Jr. Fredo as he is called, represented Antigua and Barbuda and was prominent in one of the most talented Under-19 Leeward Islands cricket teams, featuring as an aggressive middle order batsman who took a liking to spin bowling.

He represented Antigua and Barbuda at all levels Under-15, 19 and senior.

Fredrick learned his craft facing some of the fastest bowlers the island has produced as a youngster.

“Batting against bowlers like Vaughn Hungry Walsh and Anthony Merrick, was no easy task, but it made me tough and a better player,” Frederick Jr. explained.

He played locally for Bethesda, Combined Schools, All Saints, Liberta,



and Pigotts where he is now the coach for Pigotts Crushers Parish league and first class teams.

“It’s not easy coaching both teams and balancing my work. It requires serious time management,” the right handed batsman said.

Frederick Jr. also worked with the Leeward Islands Under-17 during their 2019 training camp as assistant to Steve Liburd.

“My goal is to become a professional coach and I am presently working on my license in an effort to achieve my ultimate goal,” Fredrick noted.



Fredo Jr. believes that there are a lot of young talented cricketers on the island but the sport faces stiff competition from other sports like football, basketball that are cheaper to compete in. He believes that in order to combat the competition, more coaching need to be concentrated in the communities to encourage young people to stay committed to the sport.

Frederick is presently employed at LIAT, 1974 Ltd in the engineering department since 2007 as an aircraft technician.

Ajarni goal is to become



an engineer and continue to assist in developing young cricketers on the island.

Fredo Jr. talking to PointeXpress encouraged young athletes to remain focused and to stay safe during the nation fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

DEWS