



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

# POINTEXPRESS

TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

MONDAY 4TH MAY 2020 | ISSUE 73 | [www.pointville.com](http://www.pointville.com)

PRICE \$3

# PM BROWNE: NO LAYOFFS

*Story on Page 3*

## Taxi drivers in crisis: The Covid-19 Impact



Page 4

Labour Day Special Edition

## Fete Organisers, distributors lose millions

The cancellation of the pre-carnival fetes coupled with the cancellation of Antigua Carnival 2020 will incur losses in the millions of dollars to organizers.

That's the assessment coming from the country's festivals minister, Daryl Matthew, as he gave an update of the economic impact of the cancellations brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

He emphasized that entertainment was not just for persons to revel and have fun but it is a major business and economic driver.

"The economic contribution of the entertainment sector has often been overlooked, under-reported and misrepresented. The industry impacts a plethora of stakeholders both the obvious and those which may not be that

obvious," said Minister Matthew.

He further explained that the cancellation of carnival was inevitable and added that plans will now be focused on ensuring that the event will be even more memorable and captivating in 2021. He also encouraged organizers of the various social events/fetes which have been cancelled or postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to use the time to re-group and deliver products that will not only entertain patrons but positively impact the nation's economy.

"Given the massive and total cancellations of all events and festivals due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all of the stakeholders will suffer catastrophic loss of income totaling millions. It is therefore important that promoters streamline events to ensure greater

efficiency and to offer the public increased value for money," Minister Matthew emphasized.

He also made mention of an extensive category of persons and businesses who derive benefits from the entertainment sector and detailed how their incomes have been severely reduced as a result of the current economic crisis associated with the effects of COVID-19.

Under the state of emergency regulations, large gatherings such as fetes have been cancelled as the government institute measures to limit the spread of the virus. The measures were imposed just as the 'fete season' was about to kick off. One promoter stated last year that he spends 'hundreds of thousands' of dollars each year on a variety of drinks for his event.

### DAY 5/4

Max UV Index: 13 Extreme  
 Wind: E at 15 km/h  
 Wind Gusts: 22 km/h  
 Probability of Precipitation: 42%  
 Probability of Thunderstorms: 20%  
 Precipitation: 0.7 mm  
 Rain: 0.7 mm  
 Snow: 0.0 cm  
 Ice: 0.0 mm  
 Hours of Precipitation: 1  
 Hours of Rain: 1

# 31 °Hi



Intervals of clouds and sun with a shower in places

### NIGHT 5/4

Wind: E at 11 km/h  
 Wind Gusts: 22 km/h  
 Probability of Precipitation: 55%  
 Probability of Thunderstorms: 20%  
 Precipitation: 1.0 mm  
 Rain: 1.0 mm  
 Snow: 0.0 cm  
 Ice: 0.0 mm  
 Hours of Precipitation: 1  
 Hours of Rain: 1

# 26 °Lo



Mainly clear

### SUNRISE/SUNSET

Sunrise AST  
 5:40AM

Sunset AST  
 6:28PM



Duration  
 12:46hr

### MOONRISE/MOONSET

Moonrise AST  
 3:50 PM

Moonset AST  
 4:15AM



Duration  
 12:25hr



## PM Browne: No layoffs

Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne has made a commitment that lay-offs of public servants will not be a priority in his government's efforts to restart the economy and keep it vibrant while it battles the effects of the COVID-19 virus on the nation's economy.

Speaking during a national broadcast on Sunday, a day before the observation of Labour Day, Prime Minister Browne outlined there are many projects, both economic and social, that the government had budgeted to deliver this year, which cannot now be done because of the comprehensive bludgeoning of our economy by COVID-19. These, he said, would have resulted in government attracting much needed revenue.

"In these circumstances, the obvious policy option is to reduce expenditure drastically. In doing so, the government would be forced to reduce employment in the public service by lay-offs and terminations, as has been done in the private sector. But, my Government will not take that action; except at last resort. We are a caring government – one that always puts the interest of the people first," Prime Minister Browne stated.

He further outlined that his government is cognizant that laying-off public servants now would bring immense hardship to families, particularly where there is only one breadwinner, or where other family members have been laid-off from the private sec-

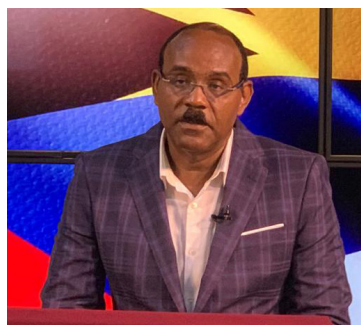


tor.

He said that his government will continue to do all in its power, to retain the staffing of the public service at its present levels, for as long as it can, including by borrowing and the issuance of bonds.

"This action will increase our debt, and push-up the level of our debt to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – something we would have wished not to do, particularly as, over the last five years, we have worked diligently to reduce the debt to GDP ratio," he said.

In January of this year,



Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne



Government reduced the debt to GDP ratio from 104% when the ABLP administration came into office to 69.1% – a 35% decrease in five years, while growing the economy by five percent per annum.

Prime Minister Browne pointed out that in seeking to maintain employment in the public service and to deliver services, the country's debts will certainly rise; and, in combination, with limited economic activity, the debt to GDP ratio will also rise.


Despite this, Prime Min-


ister Browne gave the undertaking to public servants, as part of his government's contract with them, that his government will not lay-off personnel at this time. He however called on workers to perform at the highest possible level to help get the economy up and running.

"Of course, if the adverse economic effects of COVID-19 are prolonged and government is unable both to improve its intake of revenues and to borrow enough funds, the time may come when the public service will have to be significantly reduced. But, as I said, any such action will be a last resort, and it could be avoided by increased national productivity as soon as the country's lock down is lifted, commercial activity is restored, and tourism regenerated," Prime Minister Browne concluded.


→


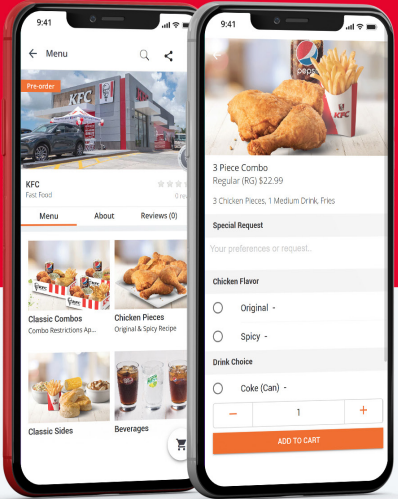
We offer delivery on  
PayMeal App


ANDROID APP ON  


Download on the  






## #TapHome

Download Now





WE ACCEPT

# Taxi drivers in crisis: The Covid-19 Impact

One of the sectors most negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic has been the men and women providing taxi services to visitors to Antigua and Barbuda.

From the airport to the cruise port and those stationed at the hotels, there are tales of woe and hardship coming from this critical segment of the tourist industry.

President of the United Taxi Association (airport), Ian Joseph, said their business went from a high to zero almost overnight when the government closed the airport to all commercial traffic at the end of March in a bid to stop the importation of the virus into the country.

“We had no warning that it would have been that drastic. There is no playbook that we refer to and see how to navigate this. We should also be grateful that none of the taxi drivers at the airport got sick. We were in the front line but we used all the precautions possible when it became completely necessary,” he told PointeXpress in exclusive interview.

Joseph reported that the association members ‘keeping the faith’, although they are now unemployed and financially vulnerable.

“We have no income for the last few weeks, although we have huge outstanding monies owed to us that we are still trying to collect. That would be able to cushion the effects on the drivers,” he disclosed referring to perhaps hundreds of thousands of dollars owed to taxi drivers by the airlines and tour operators.

Additionally, he bemoaned the fact that as a sector, taxi drivers are not covered under any of the social food benefits or any stimulus package.

“We are ready to have a conversation



*President of the United Taxi Association (airport), Ian Joseph*

with the authorities on this because over the years, we have contributed heavily to the economic growth of the country. We are the first ones who welcome the visitors and the ones who say goodbye and come again!” he emphasized.

Joseph wants the government to engage the transportation sector in ‘a serious conversation’ on the way forward before the country re-opens. This would include being part of the discussion on the new protocols to protect taxi drivers in what he terms ‘the new normal’.

Much of Joseph’s concerns were shared by the presidents of both the National Taxi Association (hotels) and the St John’s Taxi Association (cruise ships). Daniel Tittle of National said the pandemic left to a premature closure of hotels thus grinding to a halt the 2019-20 Season. “The impact on our members has been severe as basically, we are now unemployed. Our members have bank mortgages to pay along with school fees while at the same time taking care of their families,” he reported.

He noted that unlike a hurricane which members could prepare for, the

pandemic came with no advance warning. “You could not prepare for it. You had no time to plan,” he stated.

He revealed that there’s been no offer of assistance such as food packages by the hotel association as in his words, ‘we are self-employed and not considered part of the hotels’ staff, although we offer an essential service to them’.

Patrick Burnett of St John’s also reflected on the sudden end of the cruise season that has left his approximately one hundred and sixty-five members idle. He said that he can only hope that there’s a quick return to normality ‘sooner rather than later’.

He however declared that his membership is return to work as soon as the cruise ships return. “Once the safety protocols are put in place, we are willing to go back to work. If everything, as laid out by the health authorities, is followed, we will be okay,” he remarked.

Added to the 165 members of St John’s Taxi Association, National has another 160 members and United with 100 making it approximately 415 taximen and women who have been made idle due to the pandemic.

Joseph sees the current pandemic as an eye-opener for all involved and he hopes that it leads to some long-term positive measures to help taxi drivers. “As a body self employed individuals, our next move should be to create ways by which we can come together and set up a special fund for ourselves. This is a wake-up call to which we must answer. A thrift/emergency/retirement fund is particularly important for us to look at. We have the numbers and within us we have the human resources. This is a must and will be a priority when normality returns to Antigua and Barbuda,” he concluded.



## Young child now among Covid cases

A 6-year old boy is the latest person to test positive for the COVID-19 virus, pushing the tally of total confirmed cases in Antigua and Barbuda to 25.

This additional detail was provided by Prime Minister Gaston Browne during his weekly radio program, the Browne and Browne Show.

A press release from the Ministry of Health the previous day had announced the additional COVID-19 case but without going into the specifics of age, gender and circumstances that the Prime Minister made available.

“That individual is a young child, a six-year-old who was in the care of another COVID patient. So that was not quite surprising. In fact, the entire family was actually quarantined or isolated for some time, and I believe they are close to the period for completion of the quarantine or the isolation, and I believe they would be back in the domestic community very shortly, with the exception of the youngster,” Browne revealed. According to the prime minister it would appear as though the grandmother, who was the initial person who contracted the virus, obviously had very close [contact] with her grandson, who is the youngest member of the family.

He further revealed that 15 previously infected persons have now recovered,

while the seven currently active cases include two persons who are hospitalized and on ventilators.

Referring to the recently completed new Infectious Disease Center (IDC), the Prime Minister said it was ready to receive patients but currently had none. On the subject of in-country COVID testing which has repeatedly been postponed for highly exacting technical reasons, he assured the nation that this did not mean testing had ever been suspended since the COVID menace surfaced. He said the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) based in Trinidad continues to be utilized.

“The COVID situation has stabilized and it is certainly manageable. We are told by the experts – Dr. Linroy Christian and Dr. Lester Simon, who is head of the laboratory at Mount St. John’s – that no later than the middle of this month they will be in a position to commence localized or domestic testing for COVID. We all know there have been some delays, but I am satisfied that the delays were not due to any incompetence on the part of the officials,” he stated.

According to the prime minister there have been major disruptions in the supply chain, and even the availability of experts to do the various training, as well as the validation of the equipment that was re-

quired initially, and what they call the application of the equipment – those individuals have not been able to keep to their schedules – and up to last week they had a situation in which the planned meeting for the application of the equipment had to be deferred to [this current] week.

He said he was satisfied that the country is now on the cusp of domestic testing, “and we should see an increase in the prevalence of testing so that we can get a better understanding as to how many individuals would have contracted the disease ... and certainly, how many people still have this virus.”

He expressed confidence that the protective and preventative measure adopted by authorities and practiced by residents had helped to suppress community spread of the virus, but “we have to assume it is still around and we cannot afford to become complacent.”

The Prime Minister urged Antiguan and Barbudans to boost their personal health and resilience against COVID disease by practicing healthy lifestyles that include physical exercise, sensible dieting, controlled eating, reducing or eliminating destructive habits like smoking and excessive alcohol consumption, or other substance abuse.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TRANSPORT BOARD

**Yes!**  
**WE'RE OPEN**

**As of Tuesday May 5<sup>th</sup>**  
**Regular Business Hours**  
**All Locations**

**Monday – Thursday**  
**8:00am – 4:00pm**

**Friday**  
**8:00am – 2:30pm**

Please be advised that **FACE MASK** must be worn to conduct business.  
**Social Distancing Rules remains in effect**

Thank you for your continued support

# High praises for healthcare workers



## #BEHINDTHEMASK

*Our team is a hardworking team! Through these times, we thank the community for recognizing our team and offering them encouragement.*

*Behind those masks are men and women who know that the wellbeing of our nation is dependent on their selfless acts and commitment.*

*We go to work for you! Please stay home for us!*

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has praised the nation's healthcare and essential services workers for their dedication to duty and country during the fight against the spread of the dreaded coronavirus pandemic.

"The last four months have been the most challenging months for us as a nation and more so for employees, especially those who are at the forefront of the fight against the spread of the COVID-19. Our Healthcare workers deserve our thanks and gratitude for the sacrifices they are making to ensure that our people are protected from the coronavirus," the Prime Minister said.

He outlined that while his government is playing its part in putting in place measures to ensure the protec-

tion of workers livelihoods and wellbeing, workers in general must play a part in job protection and productivity.

He pointed out that while healthcare workers, who have placed themselves at the forefront of the battlefield against COVID-19, public sector workers and all other workers must join forces to restart the economy and ensure that all sectors, including the soon to be reopened tourism sector, contribute to the growth of the economy.

"If we sit back and wait for COVID-19 to die a natural death our economy will suffer the same faith. COVID-19 has already profoundly affected our economy – together we must stop this trend. Your government wants our economy to move ahead and build upon the last few years of growth and prosperity. Workers have played their role in the successes of our nation in the past – you are called upon to rise to the occasion in this time of crisis," the Prime Minister said.

"We must continue to sing the praises of our healthcare workers and other essential workers to include our police and army. Without their efforts we would not be in the position we are where we can say that we have somewhat curtailed the spread of the virus. Happy Labour Day to them and all workers and we implore them to stay safe." Prime Minister said.

## Oops Supermarket donates groceries for care packages

In April, Oops supermarket did their part in helping to provide some relief to affected families from the COVID-19 economic fallout.

Management of the supermarket on Old Parham Road donated approximately 75 bags of groceries to the St. John's Rural East and St. John's City West Constituencies' food relief program.

The donated items are said to have been included in the delivery of food items to families who have been adversely affected, financially, by the COVID-19 pandemic.



A spokesperson from the constituency said the donation was greatly appreciated as it was a timely addition to the program.

The branch office thanked the supermarket for acting on good corporate social responsibility during these difficult times.





## Further easing of restrictions likely – barbers, hairdressers could benefit

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has explained why access to the country's abundance of beaches remains restricted despite a widespread easing of restrictions under the State of Emergency that was imposed several weeks ago in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Browne said the government decided to relax the state of emergency regulations due to what he termed 'a stabilisation' in the number of new cases of the dreaded disease. "We have allowed retail and wholesale businesses to operate; and I believe this Wednesday too we can look at the possibly of [easing] some further restrictions. I would imagine that we can allow most businesses to operate – or perhaps all businesses with the exception of

those that involve any form of social crowding; things like nightclubs and bars and fetes and so on," he stated.

The Prime Minister said he was aware that hairdressers and barbers – two of the businesses that remain shuttered for now due to their social distancing challenges – are very concerned about when they can resume the operations on which their livelihood depend. "We want to create some opportunities for them to function as well."

The Prime Minister hinted that one of the conditions under which barbers, hairdress-

ers and beauticians could be allowed to resume their close-quarters servicing of clients, might be that the both the service providers and the clients would be required to masks of a certain specification (N95) throughout the duration of their interaction.

Prime Minister Browne is of the view that Antigua and Barbuda's relative success in practically freezing the quantity and rate of infections is as a result of the social distancing and mask-wearing measures imposed together with the curfews and other aspects of the State of Emergency.

## Beaches re-open tomorrow

As the country takes the first few tentative steps towards a relaxation of the state of emergency regulations, beaches across Antigua and Barbuda will re-open effective tomorrow, Tuesday.

And as a reminder, the police have announced that they will be conducting regular patrols at beaches on both islands to ensure strict adherence to the regulations.

"The Police have increased their patrols around the beaches in Antigua and Barbuda in order to ensure strict compliance from beachgoers over the Labour Day, Holiday weekend. No will be allowed on any beach before Tuesday 5th May, 2020 as set out in the curfew restrictions," spokesman, Inspector Frankie Thomas declared. Under the new guidelines, anyone who wishes to go to the beach for the purpose of bathing or exercising must do so between the hours of 6am and 6pm, Monday to Friday. Weekends or holidays are not allowed, he explained.

Other rules under the state of emergency will apply. He said no more than two persons from the same household will be allowed to be on any beach during the allotted time. Likewise, no food, music or any form of gathering or picnicking will be allowed to take place. Boat owners, who wish to utilize their boats, may only do so for the purpose fishing, and not leisure. Any form of loitering, liming or sightseeing is strictly prohibited.

Additionally, only two persons from the same household should be seen travelling in a vehicle at any given time. "The social distancing guidelines must always be followed, and the mandatory wearing of mask in public is expected to be adhered to," Thomas added.

## APUA ELECTRICITY MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

These planned outages are necessary for our continuous upgrade and maintenance programme to provide reliable and consistent service to our customers.

Date: Tuesday, 5th May 2020

Time: 01:30 PM - 4:30 PM

Affected areas: Leeward Paints factory Reservoir.

Date: Tuesday, 5th May 2020

Time: 08:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Affected areas: Sutherlands, Holberton, Fiennes Institute and a section of Queen Elizabeth Hwy.

Date: Wednesday, 6th May 2020

Time: 08:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Affected areas: Bethesda and the northern section of Christian Hill.

Date: Thursday, 7th May 2020

Time: 08:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Affected areas: Factory, North Sound and Gunthrops areas.

Date: Friday, 8th May 2020

Time: 08:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Affected areas: Section of Paradise View, west of the Chinese Embassy.

Kindly note that this schedule is subject to slight variation. Changes will be communicated on the APUA Facebook page.

Any service disruptions outside of this schedule were not anticipated. For further information and updates please call 311.



# Young Entrepreneurs Lend Support to COVID-19 Relief

According to reports, the ravishing economic fallout from COVID-19 has hit low-income families the hardest. However, week after week the country has seen private enterprises, NGOs, political institutions, and the government distributes thousands of food relief packages to families who need it most. Having noted how important these packages are, cousins, Akeem Shaw, and Dion Shaw from the Villa community sort to play their role in lending support to their community.

Over the weekend, the young duo donated over twenty cases of chicken leg quarters to the Villa and Point communities through the St. John's City West

constituency branch. The donation is said to aid the food distribution program for families who are most at risk during these unprecedented times.

The young Shaw's said that through their personal efforts, which saw Akeem who is a Financial Analyst for the government, Deon, the owner of 108 Estate and Edward Eddie Shaw Snr., owner of Eddie's Grill pooling their resources together and donated over 20 cases of chicken leg quarters to the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party's City West food bank.

According to Akeem, "a lot of people have lost their job due to this crisis and I can't begin to imagine the



Akeem Shaw (left), Jeanmarie Baptiste (middle) Dion Shaw (right).

pain one feels to have a child or children staring at them wondering where their next meal is coming from. While the future is uncertain, I consider it a blessing to be employed at this time and wanted to share the same with the people of the

Pointe and Villa Communities."

Akeem added that he hopes the action of him and his cousin will inspire other individuals and small businesses to help in whatever way they can to assist those in need.

## Video Challenge opens to residents

The European Union (EU) is mounting a video challenge across the Caribbean in which Antigua and Barbuda residents are encouraged to participate.

Dubbed the 'Ode to joy challenge', the competition forms part of the Europe Day celebrations on May 9.

National Authorising Officer, Dr. Clarence Henry, said the challenge encourages participants of all ages to submit short videos based on the European Anthem.

"The videos must be between 30 and 45 seconds in length in landscape mode that utilizes the creative talent of the participants. Entries must be appropriate for all age groups and should carry a title. Each entry must

also carry the name, email address and the country where the entrant resides," the brochure promoting the competition noted.

The competition is open to entries from Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

"The deadline for submission is midnight on May 6, 2020. We encourage you to share this information across your social networks and to check, like, share our related posts on our FB page and Twitter," Dr Henry urged.

The Europe day activities will mark the 70th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, which is a statement

made by French foreign minister Robert Schuman on 9 May 1950. It proposed to place French and West German production of coal and steel under one common High Authority. This organization would be open to participation of other Western European countries. This cooperation was to be designed in such a way as to create common interests between European countries which would lead to gradual political integration, and the establishment of the EU.

Dr Henry is NAO for European Development Fund (EDF) projects and programmes, the interlocutor representing Antigua and Barbuda to the EU Commission and its Delegation to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean



## JCI Antigua Joins the Fight against COVID-19

On Saturday, JCI Antigua, in collaboration with LICS Limited made a donation of over 4,100 cubic feet of medical oxygen gas to the Infectious Disease Control Center (IDC) at the Margetson ward, Holberton Hospital. President of JCI Antigua, Andrea L. Smithen made the donation on behalf of the organization to the country's Medical Director, Dr. Albert Duncan.

The donation is said to be a timely one as the country has recently opened its first-ever IDC last week as part of its response to fight COVID-19. According to President Smithen, "JCI Antigua's mandate as a nonprofit organization is to assess community needs and to find sustainable and impactful solutions. With this pandemic, it is obvious that healthcare facilities are at the heart of the fight."

The nonprofit organization is known for its continuous outreach programs throughout the year. Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, certain medical supplies and equipment have quickly become scarce commodities. Some of the medical supplies needed to adequately fight the disease are said to be Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), ventilators, and oxygen. In explaining the purpose of the donation of oxygen, President Smithen commented, "we have learned that oxygen and the use of ventilators are critical in saving lives with this disease and as such, we readily jumped at the opportunity to



*JCI Antigua President, Andrea Smithen presents a donation certificate to Medical Director, Doctor Albert Duncan, confirming a donation of over 4,100 cubic feet of medical oxygen to the IDC.*

donate the medical oxygen gas to the newly opened Infectious Disease Control Centre."

In accepting the donation, Dr. Duncan stated, "On behalf of Mount St. John's, the Ministry of Health, I want to express our appreciation and thanks for this offer and we will certainly use it in the right way."

While this has been the first donation JCI Antigua has made to the IDC, it is not the first donation of medical supplies the organization has made to health institutions. Earlier this year, the service-based organization made a similar donation to the Cancer Centre Eastern Caribbean on Michael's

Mount, a donation to the oncology dept of MSJMC and a donation of medical supplies to the St. John's Hospice.

Though the country is currently under stringent measures to fight the spread of the COVID-19 disease which has affected gatherings and events, JCI Antigua is committed to continuing its mandate of giving back whenever and however it can.

"Call me optimistic, but JCI Antigua's programs have not been adversely affected since COVID-19. Instead, the pandemic has caused us to regroup and revamp our projects. It has shown that we are resilient, innovative, and creative and members have tapped into skills they perhaps didn't realize they had," the president said.

Smithen continued by stating that, "we have been compelled to think outside the box and I'm truly pleased and proud of our members for upholding our mission and vision of active citizenship notwithstanding the pandemic."

In thanking their corporate partners, President Smithen said, "we are truly appreciative of LICS Limited who quickly answered the call to partner with us in our continued service to humanity. A true example of corporate social responsibility at work."



## A Labour Day like no other!

The year 2020 will be recorded in human history for decades, even centuries, as the year of the Great COVID-19 pandemic. This coronavirus has moved insidiously from continent to continent and from nation to nation leaving death and great illness in its wake. Initially, it was proposed to be a killer of the elderly, many of whom would have had underlying commodities. But even this assertion has perplexed the medical and scientific communities because many young and otherwise very healthy individuals have succumbed to the virus. Why? No one is really sure, but it has happened and in large numbers, though, admittedly, the numbers among the elderly

are much higher.

But it is not just the human toll, as important as that is, that will make this year go down in infamy. The economic tolls resulting from the pandemic are staggering. Whole countries have shut down, commerce has grinded to a screeching halt and travel and leisure, the bedrock of many economies, have come to a standstill.

This has been particularly impactful on economies such as Antigua and Barbuda's so heavily dependent on tourism. Already, the hotels sector has idled between five and six thousand workers, another five hundred taxi drivers are scratching to get a fare and the government's revenues have nosedived precipi-

tously.

Nothing in the history of Antigua and Barbuda could adequately prepare the nation for this. The nation has endured many challenges in the past; destructive hurricanes, earthquakes, extended periods of drought and even over four hundred years of slavery and colonialism. Yet COVID-19 is an enemy like no other! It is highly contagious and an infected person can travel around infecting others without knowing it. That's what makes this virus such a threat; no one is sure, until he/she is tested or someone who is displaying symptoms, who has been infected and thus are carriers of the disease.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne quite often speaks of 'existential threats' to our fair land, our standard of living and our social and cultural wellbeing. His references in the past were mainly confined to issues of climate change that are predicted to reach irreversible levels in another ten years or so. But not even the prime minister who some may credit with the gift of perspicacity was able to predict the United States, with its highly developed medical infrastructure would record more deaths in the month of April than it did in the entire Vietnam war which last some fifteen years.

We have never been known to be a people who merely throw our hands into the air in face of any challenge, and our response to COVID-19 cannot be any different. This is not time for hand-wringing. This is a call for action! We now know the 'lay of the land'; we know just what we are up against. How we respond, how we mobilize, how we fight to secure our existence individually and collectively depends on all of us.

We have to applaud the government for the steps it has instituted thus far to chart the way forward. Already, it has established a national Economic Recovery Committee

*Cont'd on pg 11*

For the **safety** of employee drivers,  
their families and the communities in which they **live** and **work**.

**STOP**  
Coronavirus

**Wear gloves** outside of your vehicle  
to avoid contact with surfaces and  
objects.

**COVID-19: Driver Safety Tips**

**Wear gloves**

**DRIVE SAFELY**

**ATB**  
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA TRANSPORT BOARD  
A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board



## *Cont'd from pg 10*

(ERC) whose work is being buttressed with seven sub-committees drawn from a wide cross section of the populace and reflecting every political hue and viewpoint. The ERC convened its first meeting by virtual platform, the way top level government business is conducted today due to the health protocols relating to social distancing among others.

The work of the ERC is serious. The road ahead is not going to be easy, as those in the tourism sector will tell.

It therefore calls for a level of seriousness than hitherto we have seen. It requires all hands on deck fully committed to the task at hand. It is certainly not a time for egos, bruised or otherwise, but a dedication to see Antigua and Barbuda safely through this crisis.

So, this is a Labour Day like no other! Absent are the rallies, the music and marching through the streets, and the display of political colours. A state of emergency declared at the end of March is still in effect although there has been some loosening of the regulations. The government instituted these drastic measures in order to limit the spread of the virus. To date, the measures seem to have had some measure of success as the rate of new cases has slowed appreciatively, at least for now.

Having achieved that goal, the next critical step that awaits the government and the nation is to repair the damage to the nation's economy. Perhaps of equal importance is the repair to the nation's collective psyche. Several weeks of lockdown, severe limits to personal freedom, loss

of jobs, deaths and not being able to grieve properly coupled with the fact that the church doors have been closed have left most people with a wounded soul. The soul needs healing!

So on this Labour Day as we start the planning for the post-COVID era, this is a call for all hands on deck in the service of Antigua and Barbuda. The nation requires it, future generations require it. Two sectors; agriculture and construction have been identified as the first major planks in the way forward.

This will require a mind-shift by many. However, the food security of the country may depend on just how serious we take on the challenge. For many, it may be advisable to start small; in one's backyard and as experience and knowledge grow then one can explore acquiring a plot of land to expand the

operation. Many of the country's taxi drivers have other skills. Some are excellent tradesmen. The renewed emphasis on construction will require that some of these individuals pick up their tools again. This may be a necessity with the cruise sector and travel generally, severely impacted by the disease.

Its perhaps quite appropriate to close with the words of an Antigua calypso classic; a song by Franklyn Reynolds, the Mighty Franco. "Let us pull together, sweat and toil together, all for the good and the glory of the state of Antigua (and Barbuda), with malice towards none, charity for all, oh come Antiguan (and Barbudans) come, rise now to duty's call, take heed to the words of wisdom from John F. Kennedy and ask, sincerely ask, what you can do for your country'.


 ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

# POINTE X PRESS

TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

**SHARE YOUR NEWS  
AND VIEWS WITH US**  
**CALL 268-562-4989**







# MESSAGES FROM THE LABOUR MOVEMENT





## Antigua and Barbuda Public Service Association message

Brothers and sisters, in these uncertain and constantly changing times workers are asked as always to adapt, to evolve and to be aware. Aware of what is required, aware of the things that will affect not only us but the people who depend on us for their survival.

In this season of COVID-19 amidst all the uncertainties and increased requirements, public workers are asked to be more aware of the protocols that have been put in place as well as what to do should you find yourself infected or in a compromising position. It is in light of bringing awareness that I speak to you today to help members and citizens alike understand the environment in which we are operating and as such, what needs to be done by the collective to assist us through these trying times.

As you are aware, social distancing protocols dictate limited interaction between individuals however, to date a number of ministries and departments have not instituted a proper plan as to how to proceed so that the work can continue.

'Work from home' is the newest jargon however, because of the nature of many of the jobs in the public service, that is not possible and alternative arrangements are seemingly not in sight. There are also conflicting views about the treatment of this time away from work as some say sick leave while others say vacation, the Holidays with Pay Convention (Revised), 1970 (No. 132)

provides that the timing of holidays is to be determined by employers after consultation with the worker. Notwithstanding the above, the Civil Service Regulations make provision for Special Leave in the interest of the service and it is the union's belief that this is the best solution as workers would not be disenfranchised through the loss of vacation days and those who do not have sufficient days will also be covered.

There is also inconsistency about the deep cleaning and sanitizing of departments and work spaces before returning to work since most of the buildings have only been given a routine clean, also the issuing of protective equipment on the job. If we are really serious about the health and safety of all workers, then corrective measures must be put in place across the board. Although some departments should be commended for the steps taken to ensure the safety and health of workers, a standard must be established and adhered to.

On the issue of job security and financial stability of public servants, the union is mindful that these are unprecedented times and the government is grappling with reduced revenues and increased demands. However, let us remind the government that public servants are some of the lowest paid members of society with the "reward" promised at the point of retirement. It is public servants who, through commerce, keep the economy afloat and it is the same public servants who are always asked to bear the brunt of whatever fiscal measures the government decides to implement.

Public servants, more often than not, live from pay cheque to pay cheque in less than ideal conditions and are still mandated to give the best service possible. Therefore, we admonish the government to think hard and explore options before reducing salaries since this will cause more persons to be on the poverty line and given the lack of sufficient so-



**Joan Peters**

cial safety programs, this will only put further strain on the government's already scarce resources.

The Antigua and Barbuda Public Services Association (ABPSA) has always advocated for excellence within the public service and as such, our members continue, by and large, to be dedicated and hard working with little or no resources with which to work. It is in this light that we seek to celebrate our public servants, both on the front lines and behind the scenes, who are the backbone of our society and without their immeasurable contributions our beloved land would not be the same. It is these public servants who, time and time again, go above and beyond the call of duty and those who are most affected in times of crisis whether economic, health or otherwise. These are the 'unsung heroes' of society and as we celebrate Labour Day 2020, let us take a moment to reflect on the contribution public servants have made to Antigua and Barbuda and in particular the civil servants of Antigua and Barbuda who are most often criticized and are very rarely recognized. Let us thank them for their unwavering service and dedication to the development of our fair nation and signal to those who do less than their fair share, that mediocrity will not be tolerated nor will inefficiency be encouraged. Thank you brothers and sisters for your unfailing support and Gods continued blessings on us all, long live the Public Service of Antigua and Barbuda.





# *ABWU calls for permanent national dialogue*

For Centuries, Labour Day has been observed over the world by masses of workers gathered to express appreciation for the contribution of labour to the wellbeing of our global community. This has been the custom in every continent, in countries of varied political and economic structures and persuasions. Governments and employers have worked in solidarity on the commemoration of this important day on the national Calendar.

This year, 2020, will be recorded as the year when the dreaded COVID-19 Virus forced the amendment of activities in the observance of Labour Day. COVID-19 is also memorable for underlining the indelible contribution of labour to the wellbeing of

mankind. No words are sufficient to celebrate the vital work at the frontline in the health services, in security, in pharmaceutical and all those areas where the focus is on reducing the suffering from the afflicted and limiting the contagion. The Antigua and Barbuda Workers' Union (ABWU) celebrates the many workers whose jobs are impacted by this virus to include, the Hotel workers, airline, airport workers, the service workers and those in the distribution and retail sectors. The Labour movement joins with the government and employers in a pledge to doing whatever is possible to limit and eradicate the threat of this dreaded disease. We follow the advice of the international health experts who



**David Massiah**

advise that it will take some time before a vaccine will become available to eradicate this disease. The movement joins in projecting the advice that we should respect the campaign of social distancing, wearing of face masks and maintaining the hygiene regimen that has been promoted internationally, and

also ..... Staying ah you yard!!!

COVID-19 has underlined the fragility of our Caribbean Island economies, characterised generally by inconsistent and low levels of growth, high indebtedness, and open and vulnerable economies. It has reinforced our call to the international architect-

## **GOT NEWS**

### **BECOME A CITIZEN JOURNALIST!**

SHARE YOUR NEWS AND VIEWS WITH US.  
 CALL: 268 562 4989 | EMAIL: [NEW@POINTVILL.AG](mailto:NEW@POINTVILL.AG)





ture of global governance that it should recognize the blessings and curses of globalisation. There is no doubt that an outbreak in Wuhan China which has now reached all continents in a matter of months has done so through the forces of globalisation, in particular we highlight the globalisation of travel and particularly travel, in relation to tourism.

It stands to reason that the response to the epidemic must have a widely articulated global response. The WHO should be complimented in all the work that it has done. Those countries which have reached out to assist others in particular Cuba and Venezuela which are also working hard to find a medical solution to the problem deserve the full commendation of the labour movement and everyone

We must express the dreaded recognition however, that while COVID- 19 is an existential threat to human society, its knock on effect on our future economic sustainability is also a matter of grave concern.

For years through the agency of our regional Integration movement CARICOM, and working in conjunction with the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and with the full support of the regional trade union umbrella body, the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL), which I once had the honour to lead, we have been asking for special regimes to help poor countries like ours, in circumstances in which we find ourselves currently, where per capita income is not a sufficient and adequate measurement, as currently constituted, to offset the level of vulnerability of our countries.

The Labour Movement in Antigua and Barbuda joins hands with the government and people of Antigua and Barbuda and calls on the international financial agencies to move to debt forgiveness as a policy to counteract the economic ravages which have befallen our island home, our region and wider afield.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in our Labour movement, this May Day is certainly the most memorable one in our



lives from the oldest to the youngest among us. We do not wish another one like this for the rest of our lifetimes. It is against this backdrop that the ABWU wishes to use the opportunity of the moment to present some responses to the current crisis.

Firstly, and foremost, we are calling on the government for the articulation of an agreement on measures to ease the squeeze and cushion the impact on the citizenry, across the board, in the wake of the pandemic, the COVID-19 Virus;

Secondly, but equally important, for us to begin in earnest the dialogue and planning in a meaningful, assertive and committed way to arrive at a national development plan for Antigua and Barbuda going forward and in which a broad cross section of stakeholders would have played a pivotal role in its articulation and execution.

Thirdly, it is the strong view of the ABWU that coming out of the Government's Economic Recovery Committee and its current work, that a permanent national institutional mechanism be es-

tablished to review the socio-economic situation in the country on an ongoing, proactive basis. Also, the ABWU is confident that the time has come for social dialogue and social partnership mechanism to be adapted immediately in our society.

Brothers, sisters and friends in closing, the ABWU wishes not only our members, leaders at committee levels, our Executive Council, and members of staff and wider labour movement, a safe and healthy Labour Day observance.

I wish to extend personal wishes that we will make every effort to stay safe and to offer to work in the best interest of our Nation. As a Christian Nation we must use this May Day to pray for our workers, our businesses, our government, our opposition and our wider country.

We pray for God's tender mercies and blessings on all of us.

Long Live the Labour Movement!!!

Long Live the Antigua and Barbuda Workers' Union!!!

UNITY IN DIVERSITY!!!!



# Celebrations In spite of COVID-19



**Wigley George of the ATLU**

*Message from Prident of the Antigua Trades and Labour Union*

This is the 69th year of the workers' journey from 1951 to present celebrating Labour Day. For the Antigua Trades and Labour Union (AT&LU) this is a remarkable achievement especially given its early history.

In the early days, the plantocrats, were accustomed to relax with their families after the crops were reaped. They would pack their buggies with food and drink and off they go for a day's picnic at one of the island's many beaches. The workers, recognizing that each year, the colonial rulers would take a day off, while they had to toil in the hot sun, devised a plan to boycott the work thus taking a day for themselves.

The matter was discussed with the nascent AT&LU and the executive committee took a decision to support the workers' call Labour Day when workers would not go to work. It was therefore on the 10th May 1951 that the workers downed tools and

13 courageous soldiers of the union were imprisoned for the fight to win the rights of workers that we enjoy today, Labour Day. Some of those men served prison time of three months. One man, Kelso Fredrick of Bethesda served an extra month because he was seen as the ring-leader. The records show that one of those imprisoned was sixteen year old youth.

The union, from henceforth, went on a crusade for the development of the workers and the country on a whole.

As a result of agitation from the union, the administration went on to construct houses, built primary schools in each village, sought to purchase all the Syndicate lands, see to the electrification of the island along with the provision of pipe-borne water. These were some of the achievements of the union through its political committee at the time.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastation impact on our members similar to the rest of the nation. We are quite aware that COVID-19 descended upon us 'like a thief in the night'. We could not anticipate its true impact in the early days of the pandemic. We are now gravely aware that we are faced with a crisis as a result of cruise ships no longer coming to our shores, container ships are not coming in the numbers as previously and commerce has slowed down to a point that it has affected many sectors in our economy. For example, hotels, distributors of goods and

services have been severely impacted and this has resulted in a drop in the revenues that the government normally collects. We recognized that some entities have resorted to shortened work hours, layoffs and other measures put in place because of their inability to carry their staff. Workers are impacted greatly.

We in the AT&LU do recognize this fact that we are not as badly impacted as other entities as hotels and those companies that provide services to tourism and entertainment in particular. This is because a large percentage our members are employed in the public and statutory bodies and for the most parts are still employed.

We are aware however, that despite the commitment from the prime minister and his government relative to layoffs in the public sector, should the situation worsen in the coming months, it will put that commitment in jeopardy. We are also aware that this fact is foremost on the minds of our workers. So while there are no layoffs, for now, many workers in the public sector are bracing themselves for the worse, although they remain hopeful that improvements will come and come soon.

While other sectors may have been experiencing some form of disruption due to the guidelines imposed by health authorities, the AT&LU is confident that the government will explore all avenues to minimise the impact on the wellbeing of public sector workers.



The prime minister announced a week ago that the government will not take any austerity measures unless it is absolutely necessary. The AT&LU is all about job security for our members.

We continue to build on the legacies of the 39-ers in that education was one of their priorities. Today we are conducting classes at the level of CXC in a number of subjects including Mathematics and English. At the last sitting, many were successful in their examinations.

I want to send a charge to our members; take the current situation as a wake-up call for all of us. I am calling on our members to develop themselves, acquire new skills, be proficient in what they do in order to compete for more lucrative positions that may become available. Productivity will be the order of the day and workers will be measured according to their knowledge and output. I want to thank works for the manner in which they have conducted themselves in the workforce, even in this period of the pandemic. Please adhere to the health guidelines issued by the authorities and pray for our country's return to normality.





## Message From the A&BUT

Dear Teachers,

I greet you in circumstances that are unprecedented in the history of the Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers and our country. The COVID-19 pandemic has unleashed upon us a threat unlike anything most of us would have encountered and for which many of us were not quite prepared.

Conditions of our work and employment that we took for granted two months ago are now in sharp focus as we consider issues of occupational safety, virtual classrooms and our own capacities to meet the challenges posed by the COVID-19 era.

Make No mistake: "Normal" as we knew it to be a few months ago is a thing of the past. The "old" days are now just that: old. There is now a New Normal, with challenges to adjust and in so doing calls us to remain relevant by delivering the highest quality of education to those students in our care. In this regard, COVID-19 is not only a threat, but also an opportunity for us to regroup, recommit, and retool ourselves to be even more resilient than before.

May this Labour Day find us eager to rise to the challenges posed by the New Normal.

Annetta Alexander Hunt  
General Secretary  
Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers



**PRESIDENT**  
**ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**  
**FREE TRADE UNION**

## LABOUR DAY MESSAGE

Labour Day is a time of the year that should be of utmost importance to all workers around the world. It should be a time of sober reflection for those workers before us who have been subjected to the most degrading and inhumane conditions of work.

It should be a time of serious reflection for those workers who have made the ultimate sacrifice with their lives to reject and to fight for conditions of work that are humane and decent.

We, as workers, have come a long way from where we were before. We have made significant gains. Yet there is so much more that we can achieve. Chief among them, from our point of view, is the lack of unity among workers and the apparent ease among workers to undermine each other for perceived gains from employers. Far too often, employees are in a position to vindicate their fellow workers against mischievous accusations by their employers but fail to do so because they are protecting their own employment. Colleagues, if our fore fathers acted in this manner, we would not be benefitting from their hard work and sacrifices today. How could anyone live with themselves to keep their employment to the detriment of another by simply failing to or refusing to speak the truth? We must always remember that a threat to workers anywhere is a threat to workers everywhere. This time it may be our colleague's but next time it may be us.

I have a personal conviction that I will speak out against



# Labour Day Special Edition

all injustices even when it places my own employment and upward mobility at risk. It is a position I took while employed at the Labour Department and at the Stanford Development Company Limited. This position was not taken without consequences. Suffice to say, the main reason I left the civil service was due to the negative repercussions I was bombarded with. I knew that certain positions would have been caused some officials to be uncomfortable. I also knew that these officials could use their influence and power to stagnate my upward mobility but it never mattered. I rejected any injustice whether it was meted out to me or others. This is how we need to operate and perhaps someday persons who use their power and authority to abuse others will realise that the abuse of that power will not be tolerated by a vigilant and fearless work force.

Employees need to be a united force that cannot be taken lightly. We must stand together or risk falling on the wayside.

We must always be willing to reject poor and unfair treatment towards ourselves and our co-workers.

We must be fearless in defending our rights even when there is the risk of victimization. We must stand up for justice regardless to the consequences.

The celebration of Labour Day has lost its desired effect. It is not a celebration of

workers and workers' rights. We have somehow found a way to degenerate it into a show of political strength. It has nothing at all to do with workers and their development or lack thereof over the years. It is a display of the red vs. blue syndrome.

Look at where we are today. We have an Industrial Court and a Labour Department that are underfunded and neglected. They have not been given the priority they deserve and the consequences have led to a system of justice for workers that is slow and ineffective. If there is any truth to the saying "Justice delayed is Justice denied" then as a Government; the failure to ensure that justice is attainable in a timely manner is enormous.

Let us even examine the situation as we now have under the state of emergency. Obviously many workers are still allowed to work yet the trade unions are not permitted to operate. Are we under some misguided notion that workers during these times will not have any issues for which they will need representation or is this just another display of the very low priority the authorities have for justice for workers?

We also challenge our colleague unions to rise above petty grievances and to unite for the benefit of our members. We cannot continue to ask our membership to unite when we as trade unions are quite divided. We must recognise the right of employees to choose and to

change their representative unions and when this happens it cannot be proper for the losing union to take these matters personal. All trade unions have benefitted from employees changing their representative unions and we should not let this be a hindrance to unity and cooperation between us all.

2020 Labour Day is however a very special one for us. COVID-19 has taught us a lesson(s) we will never forget. The way we conduct business and the way we operate must by necessity change if we are to survive as a people, a world.

Perhaps most importantly for us, we want to use this occasion to reach out to all workers who are declared Essential and all other workers who are allowed to work during this perilous period. They do so as great personal risk to themselves and their families. They don't have the luxury of staying home. They have to be in the forefront caring for the sick, feeding us or providing services the populace need on a day to day basis.

The stress alone for these "good men and women" must be horrific. They have to be in the forefront of the fight against a deadly intruder that travels in the wind and cannot be seen with the naked eye. These workers are our national guards and they have done a tremendous job despite the enormous challenges and shortages.

We want to dedicate this Labour Day to all these em-

ployees and we want them to know their love of labour is recognized and eternally appreciated.

Let us all show our gratitude and appreciation to the doctors, nurses, EMS workers, orderlies, cleaners, pharmacists, laboratory workers, and all other medical personnel, supermarket employees, wholesalers and their staff, the police, defence force, customs, immigration and all other employees who have been and continue to be a part of the fight against the Covid-19 virus.

For those employees who have lost their lives because they had to be in the forefront of the fight against the Covid-19 virus, we pray that they have made their peace with God and we also pray for God's mercy upon their families.

For our many colleagues who have lost their employment, we sincerely hope that things will turn around soon so that we can all go back to work to take care of our various obligations. We pray that your struggle has not been overwhelming.

While the battle has not yet been won we are confident that with the strong spirit we have, we will succeed.

We thank you all for your Labour of love and we are eternally grateful.

Happy Labour Day and may God richly bless us all.

Samuel A. James,  
President

Salus Populi (The Welfare of the People)



# Barbados Beyond Tourism

BY PETER THOMPSON

***"The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not turbulence itself, but to act with yesterday's logic."** —Peter Drucker*

The COVID-19 pandemic is the worst economic turbulence that Barbados has encountered since forever, but we have become so economically reliant on our tourist industry that many people find it difficult to imagine something that can replace it. Yet replace it we must. The current pandemic may last for months, or it may last for years. Whatever its duration, it has had, and will have further devastating effects on our tourist industry.

The most optimistic estimates predict a fall of tourism earnings by 25%... more realistic projections envision that tourism earnings will fall by 75%. It does not matter which of these predictions turns out to be closer to the truth, the unavoidable insight is that we must start to build a Barbados beyond tourism.

The Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. (BTMI) is thinking about a "master plan" to ratchet up marketing of the island so there is a 'seamless' transition after the pandemic. Their self deception is almost comical. This is a textbook example of acting with yesterday's logic. Ratcheting up marketing will do nothing except waste money while:

- All of our key source markets will be in a deep economic depression;
- Some of our key providers of past airlift will have gone bankrupt;
- Airline ticket prices will be significantly more expensive because of reduced passenger volume;
- It is unlikely that there will be COVID-19 vaccine within 18 months;
- COVID-19 will be inevitably imported to Barbados again as soon as visitors arrive.

Please stop letting your optimism turn into such self delusion. Tourism is a dead horse. More carrots or bigger

sticks will not work. We need to think beyond tourism.

To build a successful economy in Barbados post COVID-19 we will need first to build a social consensus about what defines success. The definition that appeals to me is an economy in which everyone has adequate food, water, and shelter... but also in which we are able to conserve the natural environment and ecology of biodiversity. In order to provide adequate food for the entire population we must have local food security: the capacity to produce and distribute enough food locally to meet the nutritional needs of everyone. In order to provide adequate water we must rebuild our water distribution infrastructure and conservation culture. In order to preserve biodiversity and the environment, we must rebuild our waste management infrastructure and culture. But in order to make the required investments in water and waste management infrastructure (and for a myriad other reasons) we require an export sector which earns foreign currency.

For a small island developing state such as our own, a strategic approach to export sector development needs to exploit whatever natural competitive advantages that we have. For the sugar industry the competitive advantages were our climate and the Spanish Inquisition which drove Jews with sugar cane technology to settle here. For our tourism industry our competitive advantages were our delightful climate and our cultural history which made us hospitable and accustomed us to serving other people. You might have noticed a common element; our primary competitive advantage since 1627 has always been our climatic environment.

Our new export sectors should continue to leverage our climatic environment as a competitive advantage. This means that our investments in better waste management, environmental protection, and ecological sustainability are

the most critically important. Then in those parts of our public infrastructure which preserve and protect our main competitive advantage on the global stage: our enviable social and climatic environment. This means much improved waste management culture and infrastructure:

- a national composting program to support agriculture and reduce pressure on our landfill;
- rebuilt sewage systems that use tertiary treatment technologies so that the effluent is potable water;
- a national tree planting initiative that reforests significant areas of Barbados;
- complete conversion of the national electricity grid to solar, wind, and batteries by 2030;
- a 300% duty on ALL internal combustion engine vehicles and a 0% duty on electric vehicles (the cheapest Mercedes should cost Bd\$500,000 and a Tesla Bd\$120,000);
- a national network of bicycle paths with walking paths beside them and lots of trees alongside for shade.

Let us take a look at existing examples of leveraging our climate in more productive ways than mass market tourism. Lenstec is a high tech manufacturing company making intraocular lenses for cataract and refractive surgery that has operated in Barbados for 25 years and employs 200 Bajans in jobs that are far more meaningful than making beds or waitressing. The company is headquartered in Florida and has sales offices in Europe, but their manufacturing is located here. Why? Barbados has a reasonably educated and trainable workforce, but so do dozens of other countries. Barbados has good communications linkages with the rest of the world, but so do dozens of other countries. Lenstec chose Barbados because of our climatic environment... both the physical climate and the social climate.

Gildan is a global clothing manufacturer headquartered in Canada with

*cont'd on pg 20*

*cont't from pg 19*

revenue in the billions. The company operates manufacturing facilities in Bangladesh, Haiti, Honduras and elsewhere with more than 50,000 employees — however, the corporate structure and administrative hub for their print-wear and branded apparel business is based in Barbados and employs hundreds of Bajans. Most of us would not envy the low wage Gildan employees in Haiti or Bangladesh, but the jobs in Barbados are in high tech administration and marketing. Why did Gildan choose Barbados? Because of our climatic environment... both the physical climate and the social climate.

Barbados definitely needs to recruit more companies like Lenstec and Gildan, but we must go further.

COVID-19 is a global crisis, and Barbados must not let this crisis go to waste. One of the profound social changes that it has catalysed is the normalisation of working from home for many technical and managerial professionals in Europe and North America. So why should these recently untethered employees continue to suffer the climate of Montreal or Chicago or Manchester when they can relocate to Barbados and continue to work from home?... just that their home is now a much nicer place to live. Come to think of it, why should the Black diaspora in the USA continue to put up with the racism of Trump and the police when they can move to Barbados and continue to work from home?

Let us build a globally competitive industry around this need. Let us build an International Resident economic sector. Let us change hotel suites into condominium residences that we sell to programmers from Canada, the UK, Finland, USA, Estonia and elsewhere so that they can come live full time in Barbados and work remotely from here (we structure their residence visa so that their salary goes into a foreign currency account right here in Barbados).

The future of foreign exchange earnings in Barbados is not fly by night visitors, but a smaller number of people who come and make their homes

here, bringing their foreign exchange incomes with them. Whether it is retired people or tech professionals who work at their metropolitan jobs from their new home. What I am proposing is to institute a brain drain.. just in the opposite direction from what we have suffered in the past. We want to poach from other countries those brains most adept at the 21st centuries most pivotal technologies.

We still want to appeal to the top end of this market... those looking for a budget experience can try Thailand or Vietnam where the cost of living is much lower. We want to have 10,000 households of working tech professionals, or recently retired ones, each bringing on average their US\$150,000 incomes to Barbados. That is a 1.5 billion USD per year in foreign exchange. That is more than enough to replace our entire tourism industry.

To use our main competitive advantage — our enviable social and climatic environment — simply to host tourists, is to act with yesterday's logic. We should not be recruiting tourists, we should be recruiting neighbours. Tourists simply come and spend a portion of their disposable income. Neighbours bring the totality of their income. They become part of our communities, not just a sometime, fly by night thing. Neighbours bring more value than visitors... both in the narrow financial sense and because they do not distort the social fabric as much.

We will aim at upper middle class tech professionals who can either work from home, or who have just retired and want to LIVE in paradise, not just visit. We want in particular to appeal to relatively young people — those in their thirties or forties — simply because their domicile in Barbados will be potentially much longer. It's basic business... if it costs you \$x to recruit a customer, then you want to focus that \$x on the customer who will be your customer for longest to maximise the return on your investment.

We want Daniel, a 33 year old computer programmer earning US\$150k per

year who is spending US\$4k per month on a high rise apartment in Brooklyn and cannot even afford a decent condo because that costs US\$1 million and it will take forever to save up the down-payment (when you are a millennial 5 years is the working definition of forever). He lives with his girlfriend Emily, 29, who is a freelance graphic artist making US\$60k in a good year, less when the economy tanks. Since COVID-19 Daniel works from home completely and his employer loves it that way because they stand to be able to downsize their overpriced commercial office space overhead. So they even pay a small premium to those employees who agree to work from home. The weather sucks for almost all of the year, the bars and concerts and nightlife have all petered out with the pandemic restrictions which by this time are a year old with no clear date for a return of the city life that New York used to be famous for.

We want Daniel and Emily to come to Barbados as permanent residents and bring their US\$200,000k annual income with them. They can get one of those nice condos that Tony Hoyos is building near St. Lawrence Gap for only US\$500k, half the price it would cost in Brooklyn and the one here is nicer. They join a credit union and have no problem getting a mortgage because they have the proof of income. Tony introduces them to a young lawyer who helps them incorporate a Barbadian company that benefits from the double taxation agreement that the USA has with Barbados so they now pay taxes in Barbados on their US income. And those taxes amount to only 5.5% of their income, because that income is under US\$500,000. They buy health insurance from Sagacor who have configured new types of packages to cater to this market, and it costs less than what they paid for health insurance back in the USA. They are walking distance from the beach. So their standard of living goes up in every conceivable way.

Can't you imagine the advertisements in Toronto and New York?





## DAILY HOROSCOPE

**ARIES (Mar 21-Apr. 19):** Now may be a good time to take any amorous relationship slowly and gently. You should be flexible with any romantic miscommunications that occur in the beginning of the week. Hold off on making major purchases.

**TAURUS (Apr. 20-May 20):** Keep an eye on your savings account. As the week begins, your spending may increase quickly. You're a quick learner so you should be able to sort out misunderstandings before they become a problem.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** You believe you're being open and fair, but someone may only see the negative side. Your straightforward actions could overwhelm a reticent or sensitive person. Wait until the end of the week to make a proposal.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** During the week ahead, you may be concerned by challenges involving your family or partner. Your ability to be understanding and sympathetic may be of good use now. Wait for better timing to start a project.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** Keep your leadership skills sharp this week. You might have ample energy to put a partner's great ideas into motion. Even with your sound judgment and good planning, you may have to work hard to get others to cooperate with your plans.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** Enlightenment may light your way. Think about the big issues and attempt something new. If you try to move forward with an important purchase or investment in the first part of the week, you could end up spinning your wheels.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** Having a long line of admirers might be a nice thing, but that only means you should continue to be your best. Pay little attention to casual flirtations and focus on serious responsibilities in the first half of the week.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** Being thoughtful is the best strategy. If others keep their end of the bargain, it's only fair that you should keep yours. In the week to come, you and a partner or loved one might not see eye to eye on key issues.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** Consider not being too specific. Your ideas may be worth listening to, especially since you can cover a lot of ground with a unique idea. Wait until the end of the week to meet with new contacts or attend crucial interviews.

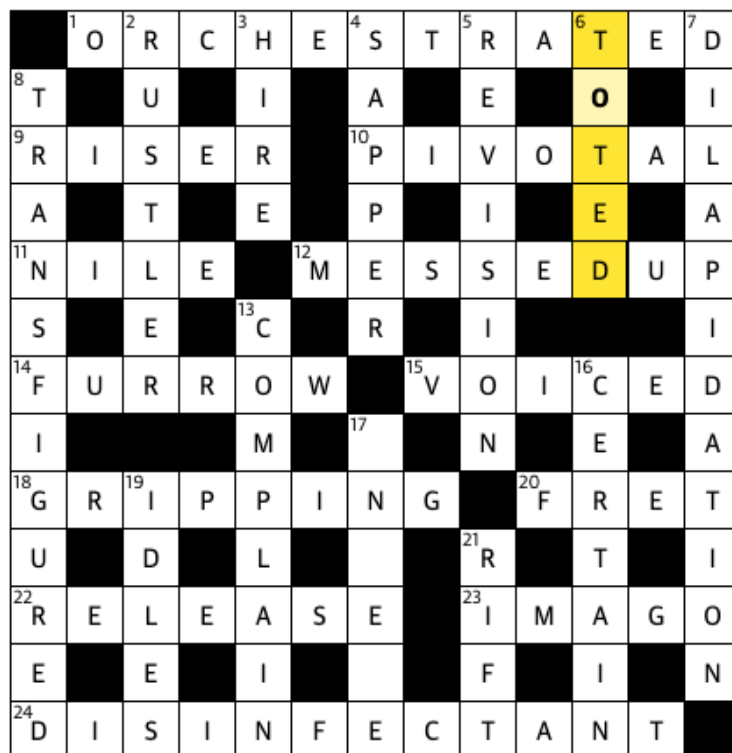
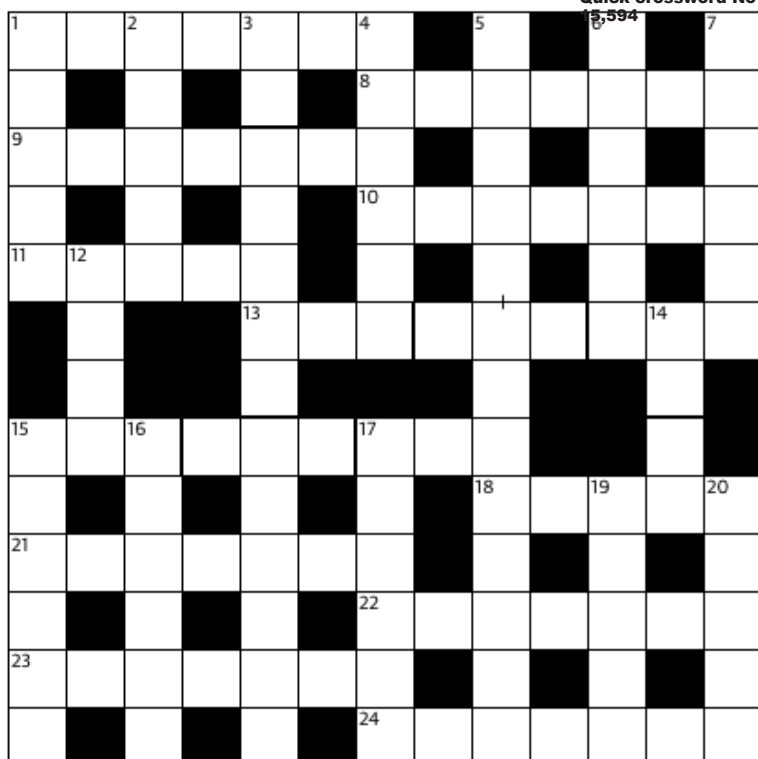
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Take time off and dream up fun things to do if you can in the week ahead. Don't fault those who show a lack of interest in something close to your heart. Think up new ways to get in a workout and enjoy your hobbies.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** Even if you are able to outthink someone, you won't outfox them. You may have flashes of brilliance as this week unfolds, but don't try to use a stroke of genius to gain an unfair advantage in a business deal.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-Mar. 20):** Don't rush into a new business project. Clarify agreements, promises and contracts before you finalize them. It is better to wait until you have all the details cleared up than to endure misunderstandings in the week ahead.

# QUICK CROSSWORD

Quick crossword No



## Across

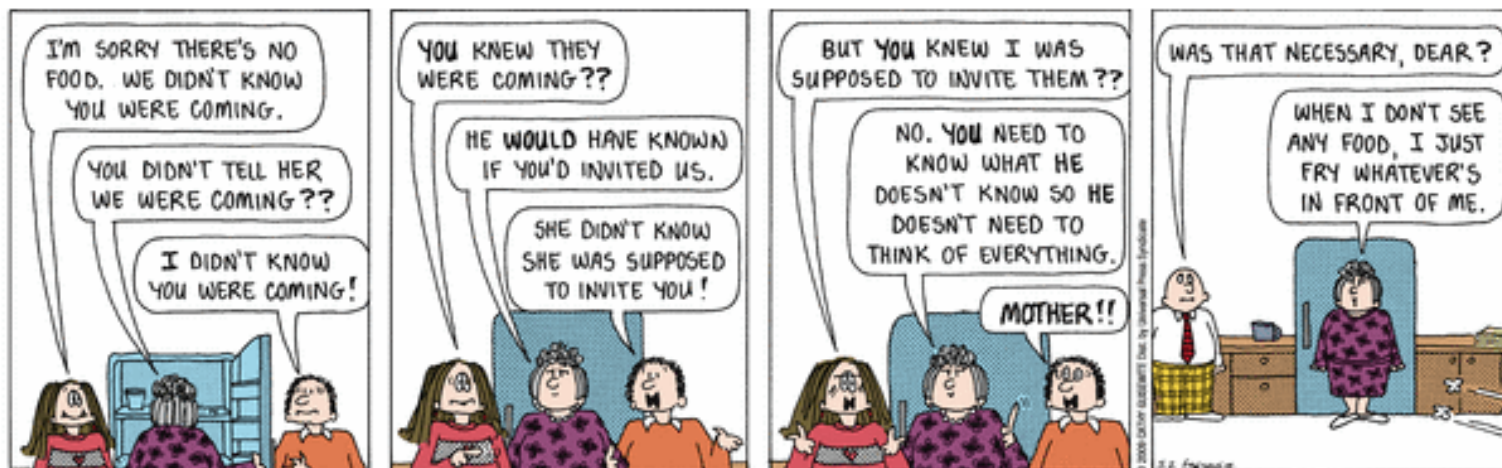
- 1 Oratorio on a sacred theme (7)  
 8 Pull out (of a race) (7)  
 9 Action to inflate one's sense of self-importance (7)  
 10 Made certain (7)  
 11 Ceasing to function (5)  
 13 Retire to bed (informal) (3,3,3)  
 15 Nonconformist (3,3,3)  
 18 Clips around the ear (5)  
 21 Italian dish (7)  
 22 Prince of Monaco, married to Grace Kelly, d. 2005 (7)  
 23 Liquorice flavouring — ie Danes (anag) (7)  
 24 Silk fabric (7)

## Down

- 1 System of beliefs (5)  
 2 Girl's name — I moan (anag) (5)  
 3 Vertically (2,5,6)  
 4 Visual effect (6)  
 5 Sets of parallel lines providing shading in drawing (5-8)  
 6 Charts (anag) — formality (6)  
 7 Cheap and nasty (6)  
 12 Three feet (4)  
 14 Expression of incredulity (2,2)  
 15 Person involved with crude (6)  
 16 Condense (6)  
 17 Cook too much (6)  
 19 Pretend (5)  
 20 Middle Eastern country (5)

# CARTOON CORNER

Cathy



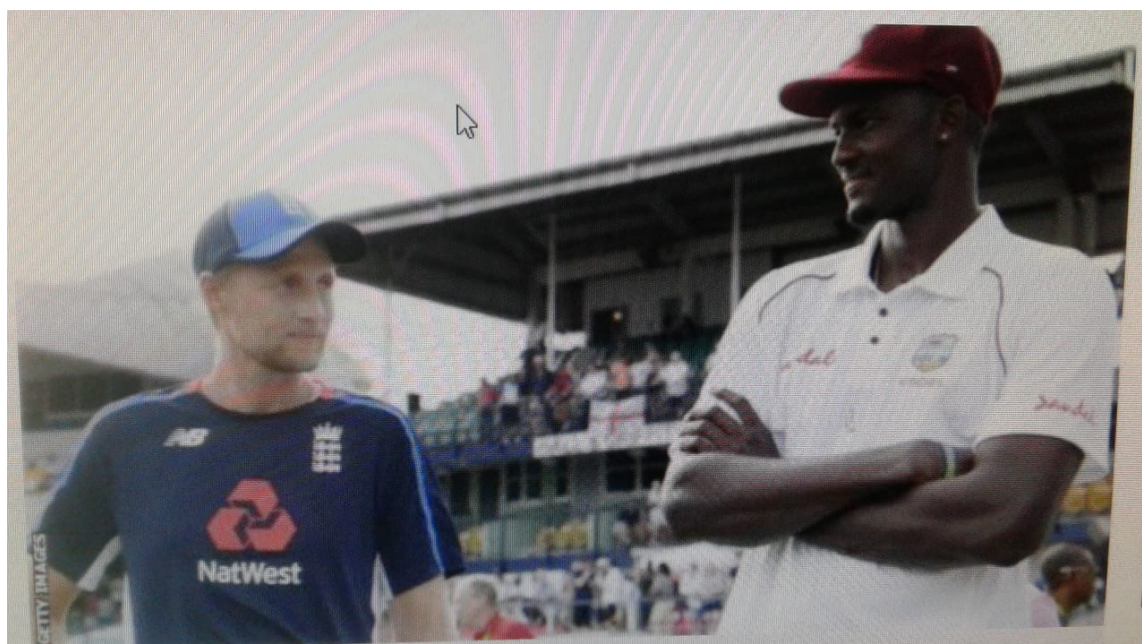


## West Indies may opt out of Summer Test series in England

The West Indies will give players the option to miss this summer's tour of England as the two boards work towards staging a re-arranged Test series under bio-secure conditions.

They were due to defend the Wisden Trophy in June, but the coronavirus pandemic means the teams are awaiting details of a revised schedule with a possible start on 8 July behind closed doors, subject to government's approval.

The England and Wales Cricket Board and Cricket West Indies held initial talks on the subject on Friday evening, with a conference call that featured the two captains, Joe Root and Jason Holder, the head coaches, Chris Silverwood and



Phil Simmons, as well as, medical officers and administrators from both sides of the Atlantic.

An ECB spokesperson described the discussion as wide ranging, including dialogue around a revised

schedules and COVID-19 medical and bio-security planning, but it was essentially the opening exchanges for what will be a lengthy process.

Ensuring both sets of players and their unions are

comfortable with the provisions, and protocols will be key once Dr. Nick Peirce, the ECB's chief medical officer and Dr. Akshai Mansingh, his West Indies counterpart, have given their consent.

## More Premier Clubs open to using neutral venues if relegation removed

A growing number of Premier League clubs are open to playing the remaining fixtures at neutral venues but with the threat of relegation removed.

Top-flight clubs have been told that using up to 10 neutral stadiums will be the only way to complete the season.

Clubs near the bottom of the table feel it is unfair to play in such different conditions when at risk of relegation.

The premier league has been suspended since 13 March because of the coronavirus pandemic but all clubs are committed to playing the 92 remain-

ing fixtures of the 2019/20 season if and when it is safe to do so.

Clubs accept matches may need to be played behind closed doors for an extended period and that it may well not be financially viable to wait until normal playing conditions, such as having fans attending, can resume.

However, those near the bottom are concerned playing matches at neutral stadiums, behind closed doors and with the ongoing uncertainty over the availability of players whose contracts expire on 30 June makes for a vastly different situation to that in which their first 28 or 29 fixtures this season

were played.

Clubs risk losing large amounts of money if relegated are also worried their finances could take a further hit if they still have to play matches behind closed door as in next year's Championship.

If there is no relegation from the Premier League, two or three teams could still be promoted from this year's Championship and a 22-or 23 team top flight run next season.

Premier League clubs will discuss these issues again after the government's review of the lockdown restrictions on 7th May.



## Cornwall defends against Gibbs

Former West Indian spin bowler extraordinaire, Lance Gibbs, has become the target of criticism following comments he made about Antigua/West Indies bowler, Rakeem 'Jimbo' Cornwall.

Coming to Cornwall's defense is fellow countryman and family member, Wilden 'Polo' Cornwall.

"That's why some young players refused to go to past players for advice because some of them are living in the past and have nothing good to say about the present crop of players," the words of former Leeward Islands all-rounder Wilden 'Polo' Cornwall.

Recently former West Indies spinner Lance Gibbs was very critical of West Indies off-spinner Rakeem 'Jimbo' Cornwall's bowling style on the Mason and Friends sports program criticizing his approach to the wicket.

The older Cornwall, a guest on the Point FM TIMEOUT program, said Gibbs is living in the past. "I went back and watched footage of him and his run

up was not smooth, but back then he had no video's to watch to correct it. However, times have changed and instead of offering advice to Jimbo he just went after the young man who has bagged 13 wickets at an average of 22.61 with an economy rate of 2.73 per over and best bowling figures of 7 for 75 in his first two internationals outing.

"A number of years ago, a businessman here in Antigua arranged for Gibbs to come in and assist Rakeem with his bowling, for some reasons things did not work out, but he need to realize times and things have changed and he needed to stop living in the past," said the former Leeward Islands player.

Polo as he is called in sporting circles believed that for cricket to improve in the Leeward Islands, a five year plan needs to be drafted with an eye on developing new talent to take over from some of the present crop of players.

The present Leeward Hurricanes assistant coach and manager says the ter-



Wilden 'Polo' Cornwall.

ritorial development officers need to be more proactive and he would like to see batting, bowling and fielding camps in all the territories with information being past on about prospective talent.

Cornwall played 53 first class matches scoring 1959 runs at an average of 23.89 while grabbing 106 wickets at an average of 30.66.

## Windies isolation period under discussion

Discussions around re-scheduling West Indies tour of England have included the possibility of the visitors going into isolation for as long as 14 days.

The three test series was due to begin in June, but the

shutdown of cricket in England and Wales has been extended until at least July 1.

The earliest date the first test could begin is thought to be 8 July.

If the West Indies are in isolation, they are likely to have

access to practice facilities at a locked-down venue.

PointXpress understands the visitor's planning involves leaving the Caribbean in mid-June, allowing enough time for any period of isolation, followed by practice matches.

As it stands, there are no restrictions placed on overseas travellers arriving in the UK.

Any cricket that does take place this summer is likely to be behind closed doors, perhaps in a bio-secure environment. Even then, the staging of matches and the ability of overseas teams to play in the UK will be determined by Government guidelines.

The ECB has previously stated it is looking at rescheduling the international calendar for a period between July and the end of September.

# DEWS