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LIAT'S JOURNEY:

From liquidation to reorganisation!

Story on Page 3



**Virtual Party Monarch to keep
Carnival spirit alive - Page 4**

Wheelchair for Swallow

Antigua and Barbuda calypso icon, Sir Rupert Philo, whose stage name is the “Mighty Swallow”, has received a wheelchair donated by the Ministry of Health.

Sir Rupert, one of the local calypso scene’s ‘Big Three’, has been ailing for some time.

Health Minister, Molwyn Joseph, presented the gift to Sir Rupert’s daughter, Shennette Philo, on behalf of the Ministry.

Minister Joseph remarked that, “Sir Rupert has many friends and fans and has earned their respect and admiration.”

Minister Joseph continued that he “considers Sir Rupert a dear friend of many years” and was humbled to be in a position for his Ministry to offer assistance.

Minister Joseph used the occasion to invite the nation to keep Sir Rupert in



their prayers.

Sir Rupert’s family has reported that the calypsonian’s health has been ‘do-

ing much better’ since his discharge from the Mount St. John Medical Center two weeks ago. Sir Rupert, 78, has endured several hospital stays, both in New York and here at home, over the past three years.

Shennette said the wheelchair will make it much easier for the family to transport her father to and from his medical follow-up visits. She also thanked Minister Joseph for what she termed ‘this kind and timely’ gesture.

At the height of his fame, the Mighty Swallow’s calypso hits topped music charts throughout the Caribbean, North America and the rest of the world. Among his more popular tunes were “Party In Space”, ‘Subway Jam’ and ‘Dawn of A New Day’.

Sir Rupert Philo, the Mighty Swallow, was named Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of the Nation KCN in November 2011.

<p>DAY 7/22</p> <p>Max UV Index: 12 Extreme Wind: E at 20 km/h Wind Gusts: 28 km/h Probability of Precipitation: 44% Probability of Thunderstorms: 20% Precipitation: 1.1 mm Rain: 1.1 mm Snow: 0.0 cm Ice: 0.0 mm Hours of Precipitation: 1 Hours of Rain: 1</p> <p>Partly sunny with a shower in places</p>  <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">31° Hi</p>	<p>NIGHT 7/22</p> <p>Wind: E at 17 km/h Wind Gusts: 28 km/h Probability of Precipitation: 42% Probability of Thunderstorms: 20% Precipitation: 0.8 mm Rain: 0.8 mm Snow: 0.0 cm Ice: 0.0 mm Hours of Precipitation: 1 Hours of Rain: 1</p> <p>Partly cloudy with a shower in spots</p>  <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">25° Lo</p>
<p>SUNRISE/SUNSET</p> <p>Sunrise AST 5:44 AM</p> <p>Sunset AST 6:43PM</p> <p>Duration 12:59hr</p> 	<p>MOONRISE/MOONSET</p> <p>Moonrise AST 7:29 PM</p> <p>Moonset AST 8:38 AM</p> <p>Duration 13:09 hr</p> 

LIAT's journey: From liquidation to reorganisation!

The move to liquidate LIAT, the Antigua-based regional carrier, has been halted as Antigua and Barbuda has eked out an agreement with the two other major shareholders, Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, to reorganise the airline.

In the process, Antigua and Barbuda will emerge as the majority owner of the airline with shares amounting to more than ninety percent. However, as much as the arrival at this agreement may be considered a momentous achievement for Prime Minister Gaston Browne and his government, the country's leader was quick to remind that 'this was not a time to gloat'.

The decision on the future of LIAT came during a meeting on Monday evening with representatives of the major shareholders where PM Browne presented the reorganization plan for the airline.

"We agreed to sell the three planes that LIAT owns to reduce debt of the shareholding governments associated with the re-fleeting of LIAT. In addition, Barbados and St. Vincent have agreed to sell Antigua and Barbuda their shares in

LIAT for \$1.00 each. They indicated that they have no objections to the appointment of the Administrator and that upon his appointment they will suspend or cancel the proposed meeting to liquidate LIAT. This will give Antigua effective control of LIAT," Browne reported.

The prime minister explained that even after the sale of the three planes, the Caribbean Development Bank, which the planes have been charged to, will still be owed a total of US\$45 million. This debt will be shared proportionately by the shareholder governments which will be responsible for continuing payments until the loans have been repaid.

PM Browne acknowledged that LIAT is not yet out of the woods as the next step is to get other creditors to agree to slashing the monies LIAT owes, an exercise he repeatedly terms 'hair-cuts'. This process is necessary to bring the company's liabilities and assets in balance and enable it to gather sufficient working capital when it is ready to resume business.

The immediate steps ahead include the appointment of an administrator and presenting a reorganisation plan to



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

the courts under the provisions of the Companies Act 'within weeks', both of which must take place in order to move the reorganisation process ahead with relative speed.

The prime minister said that the goal is to scale down LIAT's operations to make it lean and efficient. This, he believes, will also make the airline more attractive to potential investors who the government intends to approach and offer partnership in the interest of getting LIAT back into the sky.

PM Browne identified raising the required capital as perhaps the biggest challenge confronting the reorganisation process, however, he remains confident that the capital will be raised.

According to Browne, the government will prioritize the appointment of an administrator now that it has cleared the hurdle of rescuing LIAT from liquidation.

Wilbur Harrigan of Panell Kerr Foster Chartered Accountants and Cleveland Seaforth of BDO have been shortlisted as possible administrators. The name of a third individual who was being considered has not been revealed.

Prime Minister Browne indicated the job of the administrator will be a tough one and has cautioned that the airline still faces the threat of liquidation if its creditors are unwilling to cooperate.



Virtual Party Monarch to keep Carnival spirit alive

With the forced cancellation of Carnival 2020, the Festivals Commission has come up with a creative way to keep the spirit of carnival alive; the very first, virtual Party Monarch competition.

The country's 63rd Carnival festivities have been canceled due to the safety measures and protocols in place to help curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The Festivals Office said, "After many appeals to the ABFC to host an event to keep the spirit of Carnival alive this year, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda made the decision to host a Virtual Party Monarch, merging two of our Nation's favourite elements; 'Soca Music' and a 'Festive Competition'.

"By doing this, the social conversation is kept alive

thereby allowing persons to enjoy the spirit of our culture and Carnival from the comfort of their mobile device and home."

The festivals commission further explained that soca artistes and entertainers have been affected by the pandemic as a result of canceled and postponed events.

Hosting this virtual competition, the ABFC highlighted, provides a beneficial avenue for them to expose their talents to the online world, which spans far beyond the borders of Antigua and Barbuda.

Unlike the annual party monarch competition where new songs are performed, this year, any participant over the age of 18 may enter and perform any song, including those from previous years, in either the jumpy or groovy category.



The event will have two rounds; a preliminary elimination and the final event, which is scheduled to be staged on Emancipation day, August 1st 2020.

Commenting on the innovative 2020 Party Monarch Competition, Minister with responsibility for Festivals, Daryll Matthew, stated, "Out of crisis comes opportunity and this platform gives us the chance to begin the marketing campaign for Antigua's Carnival 2021 – The Caribbean's Greatest Summer Festival".

According to the Festivals Office, "The artists who have produced good music over the years will have a financial incentive to participate as the winner

will receive \$15,000 with the runners-up receiving consolation prizes."

Registration for the competition is currently underway at the National Festivals Office (NFO) which is located upstairs the Cecil George-John Building on the corner of Redcliffe Street and Corn Alley.

Persons may also complete registration online by visiting the Antigua Carnival website, www.antiguacarnival.com. Music tracks can be hand delivered to the NFO on a flash drive or CD or submitted online by emailing abfestivals@ab.gov.ag.

The deadline for registration and track submissions is Friday 25th July.



Tian Winter

Immigration Department explores contactless technologies

The Immigration Department is looking at new technologies and methodologies that it may introduce at the nation's borders in a world severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chief Immigration Officer, Katrina Yearwood, has reported that the department's senior management team, along with Foreign Affairs and Immigration Minister, E.P Chet Greene, participated in a presentation by Canadian Bank Notes (CBN), the provider of the country's border control systems, on new product offerings designed to improve border control.

Of particular interest to the department was new software that reduces person-to-person contact at the borders and which elimi-

nates the need for completing paper forms.

"CBN wants to introduce us to the border control systems in this post-COVID environment. This ties in with the future of border management and what CBN is doing is in line with international standards and recommendations. With the advent of the pandemic, CBN has been working on several initiatives that will help militate against the spread of COVID while modernizing the systems at the border," Yearwood explained.

The presentation covered a range of topics on contactless travel. These included; Self Clearing Kiosks, New E-Gate Technology, Digital Embarkation Card (ED) and Declaration solutions, Passenger Name Recognition



Chief Immigration Officer, Katrina Yearwood

(PNR) technologies and Thermal Imaging technology.

Yearwood said the products presented are a direct response to the fallout of the coronavirus and clearly indicate that CBN is devising creative ways to bring Antigua and Barbuda in line with both regional and international standards.

"We also have interest in the PNR as it will give us more information on passengers before they arrive at the border. We want to not only be in step with what's trending with international bodies, but we also have to balance this with our security as well as balance it with the fact that as a tourism-oriented country contactless and paperless processing will speed up the entire ex-

perience at the borders," she stated.

The Immigration Chief indicated that she and the members of her senior management team will now review the presentation and which of the products introduced should be prioritised for implementation by the department.

"We would not need everything at the same time. We now have to decide what is most important for us at this time and then we make our recommendations to the minister," she disclosed.

Officer in charge of Headquarters and the Seaports, Nigel Emmanuel, said the plan is to introduce contactless travel to nationals first, followed by OECS nationals and finally all other travelers.



Immigration Officer Nigel Emmanuel

Sir Ron denounces situation in Guyana

Antigua and Barbuda's representative to the Organization of American States (OAS), Sir Ronald Sanders, has told a special meeting of the Permanent Council that democracy is not being served in Guyana.

Guyana, which is yet to officially declare the results of general and regional elections held in March, has been plunged into a political crisis.

For weeks now the outcome of Guyana's elections has been tied up in the courts and, unless the main political parties at the center of the stand off come to some resolution through negotiation, which is an unlikely outcome, the situation may continue for an extended period.

In a presentation on Anti-

gua and Barbuda's behalf, Sir Ronald, addressed the Guyana crisis, arguing that in addition to democracy not being served, the people of Guyana are also being deprived.

"The People's of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have a right to defend it. Yet today, it's 141 days since general and regional elections were held in Guyana on March 2. Four and a half long months have passed and still there is no election result. In the meantime, four other Caribbean countries have held elections and elected governments have assumed office peacefully; notably, the country nearest to Guyana, Suriname," he lamented.

Sir Ronald cautioned that democracy delayed is de-



Sir Ronald Sanders

mocracy denied and noted the delay in declaring a winner of the elections is testing the patience of a tolerant international community and inciting civil unrest in the South American nation.

The APNU/AFC lost its latest application before the High Court on Monday, when Chief Justice Roxanne George ruled that votes from the CARICOM supervised recount national recount must stand as the official results of the March election,

which gave the opposition People's Progressive Party/Civic the victory.

Sir Ronald Sanders says there are those determined to delay the process. He referenced the remarks made by Chief Justice George in her ruling that there must be finality to decisions.

He also insisted that 'various persons' cannot be permitted to engage the court with multiple applications regarding the same issue, which has been decided, in order to extend litigation by claiming that they held no interest in previous applications before the court.

In commending the OAS for the role it played as an observer during the elections, the Antigua and Barbuda diplomat declared those with an interest in Guyana's democracy are not partisan, instead, they are concerned that democracy must be defended.

"Every member state of the OAS cares about Guyana. None of us took a side in the elections impasse. Our only interest is the preservation of democracy and the rule of law. It is democracy that is being threatened," he declared.

Pedestrians, Bicyclists and Motorcyclists Safety

Be Seen!

- Use Sidewalks
- Obey signals
- Look right, look left, look right again!
- Pay attention to traffic!

Pedestrian Safety: It's no Accident

A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board

The Anglican Church gives to the needy

The Cathedral Parish of the Anglican Church in St. John's continues to fulfil its pastoral commitment through the distribution of just under 250 care packages to families who have suffered hardship as a result of the pandemic.

Financial support was provided by the Mill Reef Fund which pledged their continued partnership with the Parish on this important initiative.

Dean Ernest Flemming indicated that the recipients have been providing positive feedback on the value of the packages to their quality of life.

"The donations were timely, offering recipients a respite from the stress of figuring out how to stretch almost non-existing funds between food and other basic and important needs," Dean Flemming remarked.

He shared that in one instance, a recipient indicated that the donated care package allowed their family to use its limited financial resources to pay their internet bill which in turn assured that their children's education could continue uninterrupted.

"The Parish Vestry expresses sincerest appreciation to the Mill Reef Fund without whose support the care pack-



ages, which are comprised of food and personal care items, would not have been possible," he stated.

The Cathedral Parish of St. John Divine says it remains committed to supporting the spiritual and physical needs of its membership and the wider community.

"We remind all to pay keen attention to the protocols as established by government regulations and to pay attention to our brothers and sisters and offer support as we are best able to," Dean Flemming remarked.



Airport taxi drivers are back at work

Taxi drivers under the United Taxi Company are back on the job at the airport after parking their vehicles in protest on Monday although the matters that led to their action remain unresolved.

The drivers have taken issue with what they claim are illegal operators depriving them of business and they are pointing fingers at

a particular hotel which they say is the main cause for the influx of encroaching taxi drivers.

President of the United Taxi Company, Ian Joseph, said despite drawing the ongoing problem to the attention of the authorities, there has been no relief.

Following their action on Monday, a meeting was held on Tuesday involving the

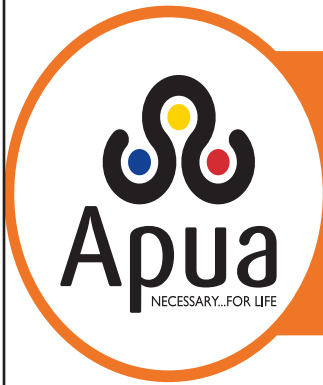
Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority, the Police and Chauffeurs' Guild.

"The meeting was cordial but the matters remain unresolved. There's a request for another meeting and I have to report on the discussion with my members who will give directions on the way forward," Joseph informed PointeXpress.

According to Joseph, the

situation remains 'alive' but the members of the company have decided to return to their task until 'suitable solutions have been reached'.

Joseph did not divulge the details of the meeting, except to say more information will be available on Wednesday when the United Taxi Company will also disclose how they plan move forward with the matter.



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

APUA ANNOUNCES PLANS TO IMPROVE WATER SERVICE

ST. JOHN'S Antigua, July 17th 2020 – In early 2020, the APUA Water Business Unit established that the nation's demand for water was 7 million Imperial Gallons per day (IGD) and was predicted to increase to 8 million by the end of the year. As a result of severe drought conditions, production levels declined from an average of 7 million gallons per day to an average of 6.4 million gallons per day.

In March, APUA observed an increase in demand that can be attributed to the introduction of COVID-19 Safety Protocols to include the requirement of regular hand washing in homes and businesses, the resurgence of food security programmes and the depletion of the supply of water in ground and surface catchments. A resulting consequence of increased demand is the rapid depletion of the daily water supply.

APUA remains committed to its obligation to provide potable water to consumers and ensure its equitable distribution. The Authority shares its plans to increase production, storage and improve distribution.

Short Terms Objectives (to be attained in four (4) weeks):

- Increase production at Ivan Rodrigues Reverse Osmosis Plant by replacing 336 membranes resulting in an increase of 150,000 Imperial Gallons per Day (IGD)
 - Increase production at Crabbs Reverse Osmosis Plant by replacing 516 membranes resulting in an increase of 600,000 IG
- Total increase in production will be approximately 750,000 IGD

Medium Term Objectives (to be attained in six (6) – eight (8) months):

- Reverse osmosis plant to be shipped from Japan in August
 - Installation of Fort James Reverse Osmosis Plant - 500,000 IGD
 - Installation of additional unit at Ffryes Reverse Osmosis Plant - 300,000 IGD
- Total increase in production will be approximately 800,000 IGD

Long Terms Objectives (to be attained in nine (9) – twelve (12) months):

- Installation of Bethesda Reverse Osmosis Plant – 3 million IGD
- Installation of three 1 million gallon storage tanks

In 12 months, APUA will have desalination capacity at nameplate 11.5 million IGD with a daily sustainable production of approximately 9.2 million IGD. This provides about 2 million IGD in reserves.

PDV Donated Storage Facilities:

- St. Phillips Storage Tank – 450,000 gallons (In service)
- Wallings Storage Tank – 450,000 gallons (In service)
- Collins Storage Tank – 450,000 gallons (to be commission in 8 weeks)
- Buckleys Storage Tank – 400,000 gallons (to be commission in 12 weeks)
- Ivan Rodrigues Reverse Osmosis Storage Tank – 350,000 gallons (In service)
- Patterson Storage Tank – 500,000 gallons (Plans ongoing)

Water remains a limited and precious resource. The Authority encourages its customers to recognize their role in prolonging this commodity by being responsible in their usage and employ conservation measures where possible.

-END-

Local charities receive donations

Three local charities have received cheques of \$8,000.00 each in the first quarterly distribution of funds raised under the “You Can Help!” campaign.

Governor General and Patron of the Halo Foundation, Sir Rodney Williams, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, E. P. Chet Greene, took part in the handing over ceremony.

Benefitting from the funds are the Sunshine Home for Girls, the Ex-Servicemen’s Association and the St. Vincent de Paul Society (Holy Family Conference). The funds raised will be used to assist in covering the major expenses of these charities, as they struggle to meet their operational costs.

The special project was launched by the Antigua and Barbuda High Commission in London with the purpose of engaging the diaspora and friends of Antigua and Barbuda in Europe



(L-R) H.E. Sir Rodney Williams; Mr. Pagget Messiah (Chairman) and Mr. Johnson Browne (President) of the Ex-Servicemen’s Association, and Hon. Paul Chet Greene

to aid charities likely to be heavily impacted by reduced donor contributions in light of COVID-19. The project is supported by the Halo Foundation Inc., and the Caucus of Antigua and Barbuda Ambassadors and Honorary Consuls in Europe.

The campaign commenced approximately 10 weeks ago and, to date,

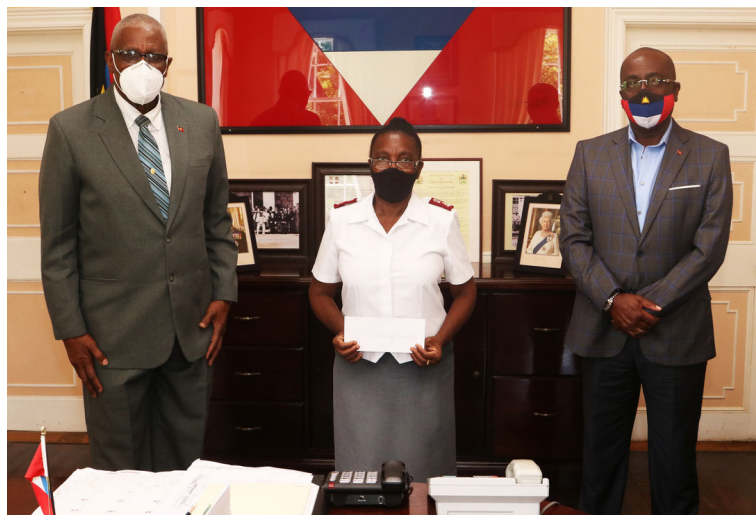
approximately £20,000 has been raised of a £145,000 target.

“We are extremely pleased that our Ambassadors in Greece and Spain and our Honorary Consuls in Bulgaria, Bavaria and Russia, have all agreed to unite around this cause as one of the projects the Caucus will support. The project also benefits from the proven experience

and generous support of Lady Williams and the Halo Foundation, Inc. in its conception and delivery,” commented Antigua and Barbuda’s High Commissioner in the UK, Karen-Mae Hill.

Public Relations Officer for the Ex-Servicemen’s Association, Paul Quinn, commented, “We would like to express our gratitude to the Antigua and Barbuda High Commission and the Halo Foundation for this effort to support the needy and vulnerable in Antigua and Barbuda, and we are happy to be chosen as one of the recipients. The donation will go towards assisting Ex-Servicemen and the widows of those who have passed.”

Administrator of the Salvation Army Sunshine Home for Girls, Major Barbara Forrester, said, “Debts of gratitude are never paid, they are merely acknowledged.”



H.E. Sir Rodney Williams (left) and Hon. Paul Chet Greene (right) with Major Barbara Forrester, Administrator of the Salvation Army Sunshine Home for Girls



H.E. Sir Rodney Williams (left) and Hon. Paul Chet Greene (right) with Lilian Hynes, President of the SSVP Holy Family Conference

HRPAB'S BEST PRACTICES FOR CONDUCTING A LAYOFF

Section C of the Labour Code defines layoff as 'Temporary Termination'. Various enterprises have laid off, or have considered layoff, for the first time in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Human Resource Professionals of Antigua and Barbuda (HRPAB) is aware that several small to medium sized enterprises that may not have had access to the services of HR Professionals, may have made missteps in managing the layoff process.

The suddenness of the pandemic on commercial activity robbed enterprises of valuable TIME to consult and plan properly. The question might be asked: Was a layoff the appropriate response to the national shutdown? The State of Emergency, national shut down and curfew were government imposed and not initiated by the employer, therefore, if an enterprise was closing its doors only because it could not legally operate, a layoff is inappropriate and unnecessary.

In general, enterprises lay off employees mainly to contain cost as the business is not operating normally or at all, or the enterprise has excess employees for current operations. Specific to the Covid-19 pandemic, many enterprises are simply not generating enough income to cover employees' costs. While many are on the brink of permanent closure due to the downturn in business, others continue to operate and to thrive due to the specific nature of their business. These companies must take every action to preserve employment where possible and not consider unnecessary layoffs.



Good industrial relations practice dictates that when considering a layoff, an employer must consult as early as possible with the affected employees and/or their representatives, discussing matters including the reason the action is being contemplated, the effective date and duration of the layoff and the numbers and categories of employees being affected. The employer should also discuss what actions it took to mitigate against the circumstances and what actions they can take to provide employee assistance where possible. One of the difficult aspects of a layoff is selecting employees for layoff. Ethical employers must act to ensure that they select employees fairly and justly. When employers do not intend to strictly adhere to the "last-in-first-out" principle, they must establish transparent selection criteria and communicate this in advance to all stakeholders. Factors to consider include: job knowledge, experience, attitude, ability, educational qualifications, attendance, cross-functional skills and performance. The next decision is for the employer to determine the length of the layoff.

The Labour Code provides for layoff for a period not exceeding

six months when a recall date is given. From the sixth month, severance is due in accordance with the provisions of C42 2(a) of the Code. Severance pay is also due and payable after the lapsing of three months as per C42 2(b), when the employer did not give a recall date to the employee. Reasonableness dictates that an employer should make every effort to keep the layoff as short as possible, however in situations such as the current pandemic, sufficient uncertainty exists that HRPAB would recommend that employers consider laying off for a period just under six months, with the assurance given to employees in writing, that should business conditions improve, the employer will recall them prior to the given recall date, with notice given to the affected employees.

Honest, empathetic communication from managers/owners can help to reduce the anger and emotional outbursts from affected employees. Employers must prepare well for these meetings to explain how the process will work, what benefits the employee will have and be able to answer any question that may arise.

The employer must present the employee with a letter outlining

all that was discussed during the layoff meeting. A standard layoff letter must include the reason for the layoff, the period of layoff including recall date, conditions that may result in an early recall and an indication of what benefits may be available to employees during the layoff.

HRPAB is aware that the Labour Code is silent on issues such as extension of layoffs therefore we recommend transparent communication with the affected employees. Employers should relay to their employees and/or their representatives clearly the reasons why they need to extend the layoff and provide assistance where possible to mitigate the extended hardship that the delay in recall will cause. Inevitably, some employers will not be able to offer employment to all their employees following a layoff period as many enterprises are on the brink of closure. In our next feature we will share best practices for severing employees. The Human Resource Professionals of Antigua and Barbuda (HRPAB) is a registered non-profit, professional association dedicated to the advancement of the HR profession for national development. We began assembling informally from 2009 and legally registered in 2011. HRPAB's growing membership represents private and public organizations as well as independent consultants specializing in one or more areas of human resource management and development. Membership is offered for three categories: professional, non-professional, and honorary.

A nation mourns the loss of Dame Edris Bird

Dame Edris Mercier-Bird, who died on Sunday, is being remembered by all as an outstanding champion for education and community development in Antigua and Barbuda.

Among those paying tribute to her life's work is Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams, who described Dame Edris as 'a pioneer in the field of education and culture'.

"Her contribution to national development was noteworthy and the impact of her service extended from the cradle to the grave through a number of initiatives which she spearheaded to include the Sir Luther Wynter Preschool, adult literacy programmes and the Extramural Department of the University of the West Indies," the Governor General stated.

Sir Rodney added that Dame Edris loved her nation deeply and was passionate about the preservation and promotion of what is uniquely Antiguan and Barbudan culture.

"She was a devoted wife and mother and a role model for all citizens. I join the nation in giving God thanks for her life and service," he declared.

The Governor General also extended, on behalf of his family and the nation, "sincerest condolences to the Bird family on the passing of their loved one and our family friend, Dame Edris Mer-



cier Bird DCN, PhD." He also penned a letter to Dame Edris' family celebrating her life's work and mission in Antigua and Barbuda.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda has also expressed condolences to the family of Dame Edris who has been described in an official statement as 'an exceptional national'.

"Dame Edris Bird was quintessentially an educator whose teaching history commenced during the colonial days. She was born in 1929, one decade before the trade

union became a lawful entity, in 1939; and, twenty-two years before adult suffrage became the law of the land, in 1951. She matured during an era when the struggle to achieve regional integration and sovereignty had begun to crystalize, and the emphasis on excellence was beginning to be pursued by the most ambitious among us," the statement added. Dame Edris Bird is above all being remembered for her intelligence and wit, her ability to learn and to teach and for the impact she had on a gen-

eration of potential leaders who would help to create the New Jerusalem. She taught and helped to shape a former prime minister, a slew of youth who fractured the past to plant new seeds and a modern future, and countless men and women who were determined to scale the hurdles which the engineers of colonial Antigua and Barbuda erected to prevent excellence.

"The nation of Antigua and Barbuda feels the pain which her children, her family and her friends experience by this loss. The Government of Antigua and Barbuda expresses the condolences of our entire grateful population," the government's statement went on. "Dame Edris Bird's impact on national growth is immeasurable, and her love of country was expressed in her unstinting gifts of time and talent to nurture an ambitious and daring people," the release further stated. The Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda has offered an Official Funeral in celebration of Dame Edris Bird's selfless and praise worthy contribution to nation building. Among those paying tribute to Dame Edris recently was Playwright and Director of the Harambee Open-Air Theatre, Dorbrene O'Mard, who thanked her for her 'mentorship of the drama group' while she was Resident Tutor at the University Centre, its home base.

Harambee pays tribute to Dame Edris Bird



By Dorbrene E. O'Marde

The members of the Harambee Open Air Theatre extend condolences to Clement, Jackie and Jillia Bird and the nation of Antigua and Barbuda on the passing of Dame Edris Bird. We have lost an icon,

one who contributed immensely to the educational and cultural development of our nation.

Harambee remembers clearly and fondly her hosting and encouragement of theatre, dance,

poetry and music at the University Centre which emerged over the years as both a centre for the cultural arts and adult education. It was a space we adored; the large stage with its high ceilings and the low

wall forty feet away in the open air on which I sat as a director for many, many nights of my life. It was a space that hosted every major theatre group in the nation and those from Montserrat, Dominica, Jamaica, and Barbados and the UK. World famous trumpeter Skake Keene performed there. Dame Edris was the protector of that space. She established protocols on its use and was relentless in raising funds for its maintenance.

She was a mentor, in a quiet and sometimes tangential way. She led and motivated through suggestion and the highlighting and discussion of alternatives. She tended not to be direct in either her praise or criticisms but one always got the message – eventually.

It sneaked up on you! A few years ago, I autographed one of my novels to her, thanking her for guidance over the years. Her response was typical Edris Bird.

‘Dorbrene,’ she intoned, ‘I didn’t know that you thought this highly of me.’

Yes Dame Edris, I do. We all do. Thanks again. Rest in peace.

*Dorbrene E. O'Marde
Playwright/Director,
Harambee Open Air Theatre*



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR GENERAL
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA**

July 19, 2020

Dr. Jillia Bird & Family of Dame Edris Bird DCN, PhD.
Milburn House
Old Parham Road
St. John's, Antigua
Antigua and Barbuda

Dear Dr. Bird,

The passing of Dame Edris Bird has left the entire nation with a profound sense of sadness, occasioned by the conclusion of her earthly service. We are however encouraged that Dame Edris experienced the appreciation of a grateful nation for her outstanding contribution in the fields of education and community development when she was officially inducted as a Dame Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of the Nation at our 2019 Independence Official Parade. While the global health challenges did not permit this distinguished citizen to participate in the celebratory activities for the national honourees in her cohort, her legacy will be forever etched in our hearts and minds - an exemplary citizen who gave above and beyond the call of duty. Many lives were transformed by the enlightening of the intellect through a range of programmes which Dame Edris spearheaded/led to include the establishment of the Sir Luther Wynter Preschool, an adult literacy training and tertiary level education offered through the UWI Extra mural Department, now the Open Campus.

Dame Edris not only believed that education was the solution to social and economic transformation but she was also a strong proponent for development of the theatrical and fine arts including drama, dance and poetry. As a result, Antigua and Barbuda experienced an awakening of cultural expressions through the dramatic events which were facilitated at the UWI Extra-mural Centre.

On behalf of Lady Williams and my entire family, we extend sincerest condolences to you and the entire family circle on the passing of our beloved daughter of the soil.

We pray that God will grant you and your family comfort in this, your time of bereavement.



Sir Rodney Williams GCMG, KGN, KSt.J, MBBS, PhD(h.c)
Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda

Why Cuba deserves this Nobel Peace Prize

Every year the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to an individual, individuals or an organisation for their sterling contribution to the maintenance of peace and goodwill among nations. According to the will of the Swedish industrialist and inventor Alfred Nobel, who established the prize, it should be awarded “to the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between the nations and the abolition or reduction of standing armies and the formation and spreading of peace congresses.”

Established in 1895, its awardees include: The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) (2017), Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) (2013), Doctors Without Borders (1999), the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (1985), and The International Committee of the Red Cross (1963, 1944 and 1917).

One may then ask the question: How does one get the Nobel Prize? A nomination may be submitted by any person who meets the nomination criteria. There is no need for a letter of invitation to submit. Neither the names of nominators nor of nominees may be di-



The Cuban brigade in Antigua.

vulged until fifty years have elapsed. The selection is made by the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

Why, therefore, would the Leonard Tim Hector Memorial Committee (LTHMC) make a case for the nomination and subsequent selection of the Cuban Medical Brigade, The Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade for the Nobel Peace Prize? To all it should be as simple and as obvious as night follows day given their outstanding track record and their history of providing service to mankind across borders and political ideologies.

Let's take a look at the background of that noble institution, the Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade.

Henry Reeve was a 19-year-old American who left his home in Brooklyn, New York to join the Cuban struggle for liberation against the Spanish in the late 1800s. As always, in the spirit of Internationalism by Cuba, the Brigade was named after him.

What a powerful lesson in internationalism and solidarity. The Brigade was launched in 2005 when the late Cuban leader, Fidel Castro, offered to send 1,500 Cuban doctors to America to provide assistance after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. This offer was rejected by the U.S. Administration, but from its very inception, it was rooted in an act of solidarity and selflessness - notwithstanding the deep political divide

between the two countries. The concern here being the common good for humanity.

So the Cuban vision and mission from the very onset were clearly stated in the famous words of Fidel Castro: “Our country does not have nuclear weapons, chemical or biological. The tens of thousands of doctors and scientists which our country has were educated to save lives. This is the pride of our doctors and our research Centres.”

With that charge, as he said, the country would be able to send thousands of doctors to the remotest parts of the world for the good of mankind and this is exactly what this amazing organisation has been doing globally.

At the risk of life, re-

Cont'd on pg 15

cont'd from pg 14

moved from family and friends, they serve those in need because, like Henry Reeve and others, they understand deep down what international solidarity is about. They understand the peace and goodwill that can be achieved by making health services available to the very least and to those in need generally.

Since its founding in September 2005, and in recognition of its emergency medical assistance to more than 3.5 million people in twenty-one (21) countries affected by disasters and epidemics, the Brigade was awarded the prestigious Dr. Lee Jong-Wock Memorial Prize for Public Health in 2017.

In presenting the award, John Linto, President of the Korean Foundation for International Health Care, said the Brigade has “spread a message of hope throughout the world.”

What better praise could any individual or organisation receive?

Linto continued pointing out that the Brigade’s 7,400 voluntary health care workers did this in countries ravaged by many of the world’s worst natural disasters and epidemics throughout the past decade. As a result of the Brigade’s frontline medical assistance to patients in these countries, an estimated 80,000 lives have been saved.

We are talking here about the entire population of Antigua and Barbuda. This should give an idea of the magnitude of the task and their contribution to global peace and wellbeing.

When from 2014 -2016 ebola was wreaking havoc in West Africa, the Cuban International Medical Brigade was there. Its emergency response team, composed of 250 specialists, physicians, nurses and other health workers, made up the single largest medical operation on the ground in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. With this work, the Brigade gained global attention as a result of its highly skilled and swift support to local health providers.

The same is true for its selfless mis-

sions in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly in Haiti where that country was ravaged by cholera, and farther away in China after it suffered a major earthquake many years ago. Now in 2020 with the scourge of Covid-19, the name of Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade has been on the lips of people the world over.

At the end of April 2020 ,Cuban health professionals from the Brigade were working in twenty-two (22) Latin American and Caribbean countries as well as in Africa and Europe to help fight the pandemic. To date some fifty-one (51) countries have requested medical assistance from that institution.

Let us stop for a moment to consider the significance and scale of the Cuban Medical Brigade’s work throughout the world, oftentimes in the most severe conditions.

Cuba, a small Caribbean island of just 11.5 million people, is clearly performing at a phenomenal level. A country of few resources, which before 1959 was scarred by abject poverty and illiteracy, Cuba set about to train and develop, not only its people, but to engage in international solidarity and support. All this was born out

of its Revolution and the political will of its leadership. Cuba has successfully accomplished its mission in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

This David battered unendingly by its Goliath neighbour, with its culture of struggle and immense sacrifice, has more than fifty thousand of its health professionals serving in sixty-six (66) countries. What an incredible and amazing feat! It is as a result of the values of putting human beings first, of developing that new person willing to fight against all odds, that the Cuban government and people have not only survived but continue to stretch their hands across borders to help.

Is there really any need to make a case as to why the Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade should be nominated and eventually awarded the Nobel Peace Prize? The world at large should be aware of, and have benefited from, the work of these peace makers providing the gift of health and love.

We in the Leonard Tim Hector Memorial Committee resoundingly call upon the global community to support the Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade of Cuba for the Nobel Peace Prize. It deserves it for the glorious humanitarian work it has been doing since 2005.



UK Eyes Greater Military Partnerships In Region

The newly arrived United Kingdom (UK) defence attaché, Lt Col Simon Westlake, is viewing an improved budget as a positive sign of how the Ministry of Defence in London considers its relationship with the Caribbean.

He told *The Gleaner* that while the funds at his disposal to work with regional partners have been bumped up, “it is difficult to talk about how that will look going forward because that strategic review is going on at this very moment”.

He added that the review is also a sign that the UK and its regional partners are entering a new phase of defence and security arrangements.

Westlake, who takes over the reins from Lt Col Anton Gash, will be based in Jamaica for the next few years. He will have the responsibility of working with five British overseas territories and 14 broader Caribbean nations as part of the wider UK government support for its global partners.

This particular support, according to him, comes at an interesting time, largely because the UK is reassessing its strategic engagement with the Caribbean from a military perspective.

“It is about resetting, in an appropriate way, our relationship with our Caribbean partners and we have an immediate move, which I think is worth highlighting, that there has to be some prioritisation,” said Westlake.

He said the UK’s post-



Lt Col Simon Westlake, the new United Kingdom defence attaché to Jamaica, says his country is looking at areas where it can partner more with Caribbean nations to move forward.

COVID-19 response will be driven by the outcome of the strategic review.

“If we look at the Royal Navy’s deployments to the region, the fact we have two ships here currently – the HMS Medway and the RFA Argus – that are here working with our recovery partners on counternarcotics, but are also ready to support in case there is a hurricane this season.

“We have forces in the UK that are training to be ready to be

deployed to the region, if called to do so, to provide support in response to a case of hurricane, and so there are the visual signs of our enduring commitment, but then, of course, we are also looking at areas where we can develop our relationship moving forward,” Westlake said.

He stated that areas of support must be nestled in the areas of concern to the UK’s partners and align with UK objectives.

As an example, Westlake

pointed to ongoing discussions between Jamaica and the UK in relation to Jamaica’s development of the Caribbean Military Academy (CMA).

“There were discussions with the commandant of the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. So that is a good sign that we have the commandant himself discussing ways in which the UK can support Jamaica’s aspirations for the development of CMA,” he said.

Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation clears air on One Caribbean's Grenada operations



One Caribbean Airlines

The Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation wishes to inform the public that we are tirelessly working to facilitate flights in and out of Grenada, now that our borders are reopened.

Understanding the challenges posed in recent months by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation has outlined certain requirements that airlines must go through in order to operate, according to the Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority (ECCA) standards and procedures.

In recent days, it was brought to the Ministry's attention that the OCL Barbados Ltd, operating as One Caribbean, had proceeded to advertise, schedule and book people on regional flights into and out of Grenada. The ministry has always been clear that operators need to go through the appropriate licensing process for Grenada. One Caribbean has not yet done so, and were advised repeatedly that they should, before they could operate. The Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation is, therefore, deeply concerned

about the manner in which the management of One Caribbean has conducted its business in recent days, in regard to the operation of flights into and out of Grenada.

On Monday, 20 July 2020, a meeting was convened between the CEO of the Grenada Airport Authority, the Senior Civil Aviation officer of the Ministry of Tourism and the CEO of One Caribbean to discuss the issue, and the guidelines were clearly reiterated. It was agreed that the airline should desist from operat-

ing into Grenada until the licensing process is complete.

It was very disturbing to discover that the airline had already posted schedules and had engaged in negotiations with people desiring to enter or leave the country, without the appropriate standard procedure being concluded, as advised and required.

We were informed of 3 landings in Grenada on the weekend. Each time, Civil Aviation made compassionate exemptions because we were concerned about the welfare of our citizens who had booked those flights. One Caribbean was explicitly reminded that they needed the appropriate licence to operate continuous flights. It has become obvious that One Caribbean has not heeded the requirements, and that we must insist on compliance with the requisite procedure before they are allowed to continue their operations in and out of Grenada. The Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation has established relations with Caribbean Airlines, interCaribbean Airways and SVG Air, all of which are complying with the aviation requirements for operation. Flight schedules for these airlines are already being posted on their respective websites.

We continue to hold dialogue with all stakeholders, including One Caribbean, and we expect that increased airlift, regionally and internationally, will become available, as we endeavour to bring our sons and daughters home, and welcome friends and visitors.

Big money in T&T's mangroves, says UWI professor



Professor Agard said the IMA is currently conducting research into the carbon stored in local mangroves as there are areas for investment there.

Trinidad and Tobago's mangrove forests can bring revenue into the country due to their key function in storing carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas which contributes to global warming.

Professor John Agard, director at the Office of Research Development and Knowledge Transfer at the University of the West Indies, St Augustine, was speaking at a webinar hosted by the Institute of Marine Affairs on the blue econ-

omy and possible avenues of revenue for the country.

'Carbon is bought and sold globally. In California, in Europe, in China etc. People are very worried about offsetting their carbon footprint. For example if you took an airline flight, you could decide that you want to offset the carbon emissions for the flight by purchasing carbon – that's an option in many airlines.'

'However British Airways has said they will offset their

carbon emissions by putting money into areas where carbon is sequestered.'

According to the US Geological Survey, carbon sequestration is the process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide. It is one method of reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere with the goal of reducing global climate change.

It's estimated that the world's mangrove forests sequester approximately 24 million metric

tons of carbon in soil per year - three to five times more than tropical forests.

He said the IMA is working on a project which involves measuring the amount of carbon stored in Trinidad and Tobago's mangroves, which have the highest rate of carbon sequestration.

He said this is a viable opportunity for investment.

'(It's an) amazing opportunity, carbon is bought and sold on a daily basis globally. You can go online and see what (price) carbon is being sold for. In the European Union sequestered carbon is being sold, per tonne of carbon, for 29 euros per tonne (currently).'

'These are all opportunities for Trinidad and Tobago... we should try to measure how much carbon is sequestered and determine how much of it can contribute to the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of Trinidad and Tobago under the Paris Agreement.'

'Trinidad and Tobago promised that it would reduce its carbon emissions...(mangroves) take carbon out of the atmosphere and people are prepared to buy that.'

According to a UN report, the Vanga Blue Forests Project in Kenya is a groundbreaking initiative to trade carbon credits from mangrove conservation and restoration.

The management plan includes the sale of carbon credits on the voluntary carbon market, verified by the Plan Vivo carbon trading standard.

Grand Bahama declared COVID-19 hotspot, borders close at 6pm

Grand Bahama will be closed to all domestic flights today at 6pm and all international flights starting Wednesday, Prime Minister Dr Hubert Minnis announced this morning.

The measures were announced in addition to a two-week lockdown to curb the recent surge of COVID-19 cases on the island.

The lockdown will take effect Thursday, July 23, at 7pm until August 7 at 7am.

A complete lockdown will be in effect on Saturdays and Sundays, Minnis announced.

Health officials have classified the island as a COVID-19 hotspot.

Grand Bahama now has the second largest number of confirmed cases in The Bahamas.

“Grand Bahama’s domestic borders will close tonight, and its international borders will be closed to all incoming and outgoing flights and sea vessels to and from Grand Bahama, except for emergencies and to transport, essential services and goods, effective Wednesday the 22nd of July 2020,” Minnis said during a broadcasted national address in front of the Churchill Building.

The prime minister also announced law enforcement will provide additional support, and security to enforce the lockdown.

He said the Royal Bahamas Defence Force will also



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis gives statement on Grand Bahama, July 21, 2020 at Churchill Building.

set up a perimeter around the island to ensure no ships enter or leave.

The prime minister noted the decision to increase restrictive measures on the island was based on the advice of health officials and the confirmation of 20 new cases of the virus on Grand Bahama on Monday.

“Residents are urged to make the necessary preparations for the lockdown,” Minnis said.

He advised that a seven-member team from the Ministry of Health was mobilized on Grand Bahama last week to assist with identification, testing and mapping of contacts for characterization of the epidemiological situation following the significant increase in cases.

The prime minister insist-

ed the government will provide assistance to all those in need during the two-week period.

He advised that The National Food Distribution Task Force and the Department of Social Services will distribute food vouchers to 14,000 residents.

Minnis also assured residents of Grand Bahama that there is adequate food supplies on the island at all of the food stores.

“It is important that residents do not overcrowd the food stores as this may contribute to the spread of COVID-19,” he said. Food stores will be allowed to operate Monday to Friday, from 7am to 5pm, during the lockdown.

Pharmacies, water depots and gas stations will be al-

lowed to operate Monday through Friday, from 7am to 1pm for the general public.

Essential workers will be allowed to go to food stores on Saturdays from 7am to 1pm.

Essential workers include: employees at The Rand Memorial Hospital and other public health and medical facilities; Quarantine Centre; Royal Bahamas Police Force; Royal Bahamas Defence Force; NEMA; OPBAT; Department of Correctional Services; Department of Immigration; Customs Department; Ministry of Environment and Housing; members of the National Food Distribution Task Force, Grand Bahama Food Distribution Centres; and NGOs for the purpose of food distribution.

Trump orders voting districts to exclude people in U.S. illegally



U.S. President Donald Trump stands between Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and Attorney General Bill Barr to announce his administration's effort to gain citizenship data during the 2020 census at an event in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington, U.S., July 11, 2019

President Donald Trump signed a memorandum on Tuesday that would prevent migrants who are in the United States illegally from being counted when U.S. congressional voting districts are next redrawn, triggering swift rebukes from Democrats and at least one promise of litigation.

U.S. census experts and lawyers say the action is legally dubious, and not easily executed in practice. In theory, it could benefit Trump's Republican Party by eliminating the largely non-white population of migrants in the United States illegally, creating voting districts that skew more Cau-

casian. It could also cause populous states with large immigrant contingents to lose seats in the 435-member U.S. House of Representatives, including big left-leaning states like California - currently with 53 seats - and New York, with 27.

The process of drawing voting maps for federal congressional districts is known as apportionment.

"Including these illegal aliens in the population of the state for the purpose of apportionment could result in the allocation of two or three more congressional seats than would otherwise be allocated," the memo said.

Redistricting, in which voting districts are redrawn to reflect changes in the population, is next slated for 2021, after the results of the 2020 U.S. census are in. Each state will be given a share of the 435 congressional seats based on population. Historically, the distribution of seats has been based on total population, regardless of immigration status. Trump's memo would exclude those not in the U.S. legally.

U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat, said in a statement the measure was "unlawful" and was "designed to again inject fear and distrust into vulnerable and traditionally undercounted communities, while sowing chaos with the Census."

From a legal standpoint, the move is far from a slam-dunk.

Proponents of citizens-only voting districts argue each vote should carry the same weight. If one district has far fewer eligible voters than another, they say, each vote there has more influence on election outcomes.

But, while the U.S. Supreme Court has left the door open for citizen-based voting maps for state legislatures, experts see it as a long shot at the federal congressional level.

That is because the U.S. Constitution explicitly says congressional districts must be based on "the whole number of persons" in each district, as counted in each decennial U.S. census. Dale Ho, an attorney

with the American Civil Liberties Union, vowed litigation, saying in a statement, "We'll see him in court, and win," referring to the president.

Vanita Gupta, president of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, said Trump was "trying to scare" undocumented people from participating in the ongoing 2020 census.

In the memo, Trump said the word "persons" "has never been understood to include ... every individual physically present within a state's boundaries." In fact it has, census experts say: Multiple federal laws have reinforced that apportionment must include everyone, and U.S. Supreme Court precedent has endorsed that view, said Joshua Geltzer, a constitutional law expert and professor at Georgetown Law.

Some see the order as mainly theater - especially because it is unclear how Trump would gather the data necessary to identify - and exclude - people in the United States illegally.

In 2019, the president signed an executive order calling on states to provide his administration with government records, such as driver's license databases, that could be used to determine the non-citizen population. Other surveys conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau provide estimates of the non-citizen population.

But those data are incomplete and unreliable, demographers have argue.

US charges Chinese Covid-19 research 'cyber-spies'

The US justice department has accused China of sponsoring hackers who are targeting labs developing Covid-19 vaccines.

Officials have charged two Chinese men who allegedly spied on US companies doing coronavirus research and got help from state agents for other thefts. The indictment comes amid a US crackdown on Chinese cyber espionage.

The UK, US and Canada last week accused Russia of seeking to steal research related to Covid-19. The accusations against former electrical engineering students Li Xiaoyu and Dong Jiazhi released on Tuesday include charges of trade secret theft and wire fraud conspiracy.

Prosecutors said the two men spied on a Massachusetts biotech firm in January which was known to be researching possible cures for Covid-19. They also hacked a Maryland company less than a week after it said it was researching Covid-19.

Officials called the men private hackers who occasionally received support from Chinese intelligence agents, including an officer from the Chinese Ministry of State Security (MSS).

They previously stole "hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of trade secrets, intellectual property, and other valuable business information" beginning in 2009, prosecutors alleged.

The indictment unsealed in

Washington state said the two men - who reside in China - recently "researched vulnerabilities in the networks of biotech and other firms publicly known for work on Covid-19 vaccines, treatments, and testing technology".

Countries where firms were targeted include Australia, Belgium, Germany, Japan, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

According to the indictment, the hackers were able to infiltrate a British artificial intelligence firm, a Spanish defence contractor, and a Australian solar energy company.

Prosecutors said the men at times acted in their own self-interest - including one occasion when they demanded a ransom from a company in exchange for not releasing its private information - but at other times "were stealing information of obvious interest" to the Chinese government.

According to the indictment, the hackers "worked with, were assisted by, and operated with the acquiescence of" the MSS.

They allegedly stole military data and provided the Chinese government with the passwords of a democracy activist in Hong Kong and a former Tiananmen Square protester.

"China has now taken its place, alongside Russia, Iran and North Korea, in that shameful club of nations that provide a safe haven for cybercriminals in exchange for those criminals being 'on-call



Li Xiaoyu (left) and Dong Jiazhi

to work for the benefit of the state, here to feed the Chinese Communist party's insatiable hunger for American and other non-Chinese companies' hard-earned intellectual property, including Covid-19 research," John Demers, assistant attorney general for national security, said on Tuesday.

Chinese officials have yet to comment on the latest allegation, but have previously denied accusations of intellectual property theft.

Earlier this month, FBI Director Christopher Wray accused China of a "whole-of-state effort to become the world's only superpower by any means necessary".

"We've now reached a point where the FBI is now opening a new China-related counterintelligence case every 10 hours," Mr Wray said. "Of the nearly 5,000 active counterintelligence cases currently under way across the country, almost half are related to China."

EU leaders agree on \$860bn joint-debt economic relief package

European Union leaders reached a deal on a massive stimulus plan for their coronavirus-blighted economies at a pre-dawn meeting on Tuesday after a fractious summit that went through the night and into its fifth day.

The deal will see the EU issue 750 billion euros (\$860bn) of joint debt to help member states mitigate the economic downturn.

The agreement required the unanimous approval of all 27 member states and represents a victory for German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron, who drafted an early outline for the proposal in May. The emergency fund will give out 390 billion euros (\$446bn) of grants and 360 billion euros (\$412bn) of low-interest loans.

Summit chairman Charles Michel tweeted “Deal” shortly after the bloc’s leaders reached agreement at a 5:15am (03:15 GMT) plenary session. Another official present at the summit said: “Conclusions adopted!”.

Italy, the original European epicentre of the pandemic, will likely be the biggest beneficiary from the plan. Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said his country expects to receive 28 percent of the 750 billion euro emergency fund (\$860bn), comprising 81 billion euros (\$93bn) in grants and 127 billion euros (\$146bn) in loans.



The agreement for a joint EU economic recovery fund is a victory for German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron who drafted an early outline for the proposal in May

French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said France would get 40 billion euros (\$46bn) in subsidies as part of the EU package

Officials said the deal, which came after Michel presented compromises on the recovery fund, is critical to dispel doubts about the bloc’s very future.

The EU was slow to coordinate its initial response to the COVID-19 pandemic and, already weakened by the United Kingdom’s departure from the bloc, a united front on

economic aid was important in demonstrating that it can jointly step up to a crisis.

“It has been a long summit and a challenging summit, but the prize is worth negotiating for,” Irish Prime Minister Micheal Martin said as the Brussels summit approached the record length set at a 2000 meeting in the French city of Nice of almost five full days.

European nations have done a better job of containing the coronavirus than the United States after a devastating early few months that hit Italy and

Spain particularly hard, collaborating on medical, travel and economic fronts.

The European Central Bank has pumped unparalleled amounts of money into economies to keep them going, while capitals hammer out their recovery funds.

Diplomats said the leaders appeared to put aside the rancour that stood in the way of a compromise after hours of haggling through the weekend.

Joe Biden says he is considering four Black women to be his running mate



Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden said Monday he was considering four Black women to be his running mate, and has been receiving extensive vetting briefings about each potential candidate.

“I am not committed to naming any (of the potential candidates), but the people I’ve named, and among them there are four Black women,” Biden told MSNBC’s Joy Reid on “The ReidOut.” He said he is getting a “two-hour vet-

ting report” on each of his potential picks, and that he and his team have gone through “about four candidates” so far. “Then, when I get all the vetting done of all the candidates, then I’m going to narrow the list, and then we’ll see. And then I’m going to have personal discussions with each of the candidates who are left and make a decision,” Biden said.

Biden is considering a broad tier of candidates to be his running mate, after pledging earlier this year to

pick a woman for the job. CNN previously reported that Sen. Kamala Harris of California, Rep. Val Demings of Florida, Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, former Obama administration national security adviser Susan Rice and Rep. Karen Bass of California are among the Black women being considered. The debate within the Democratic Party over representation on the presidential ticket has sharpened over the past few months, and after more than a month of

anti-racist protests around the country, some outside groups have urged Biden to pick a Black woman. The death of George Floyd in Minnesota, Breonna Taylor in Kentucky and others have sparked protests and discussion about systemic racism in the US and police brutality.

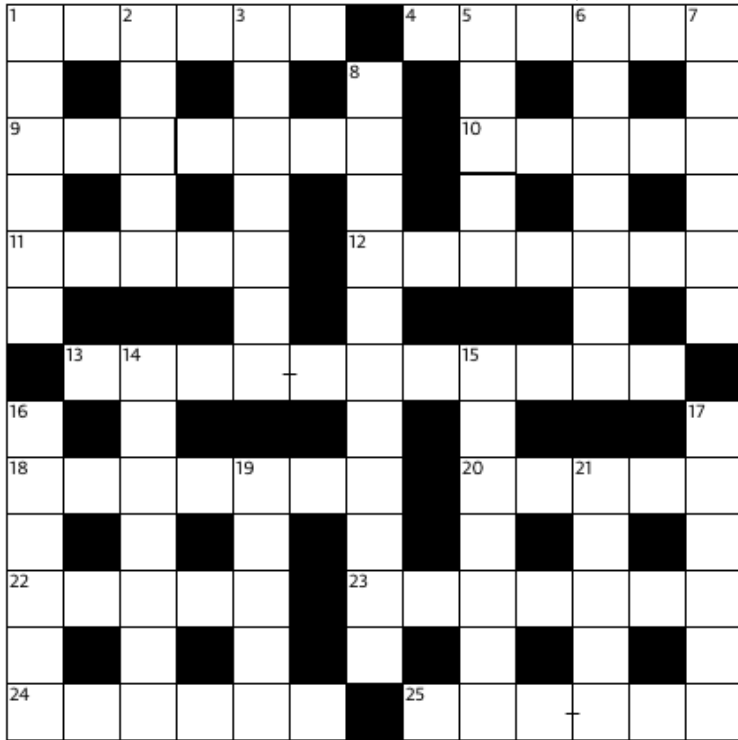
Biden has said he will name his vice presidential pick in early August, before the Democratic National Convention, which is set to take place August 17-20.

Countless factors will go into Biden’s pick, but he has said he is looking for someone who is ready to be president at a “moment’s notice” and someone with whom he is “simpatico” -- suggesting his personal relationship with his future partner will be key. He has also said that his vice president does not need to have foreign policy experience because that is his strength, but that almost all the women he is considering for the position have had “some exposure to foreign policy and national defense issues.”

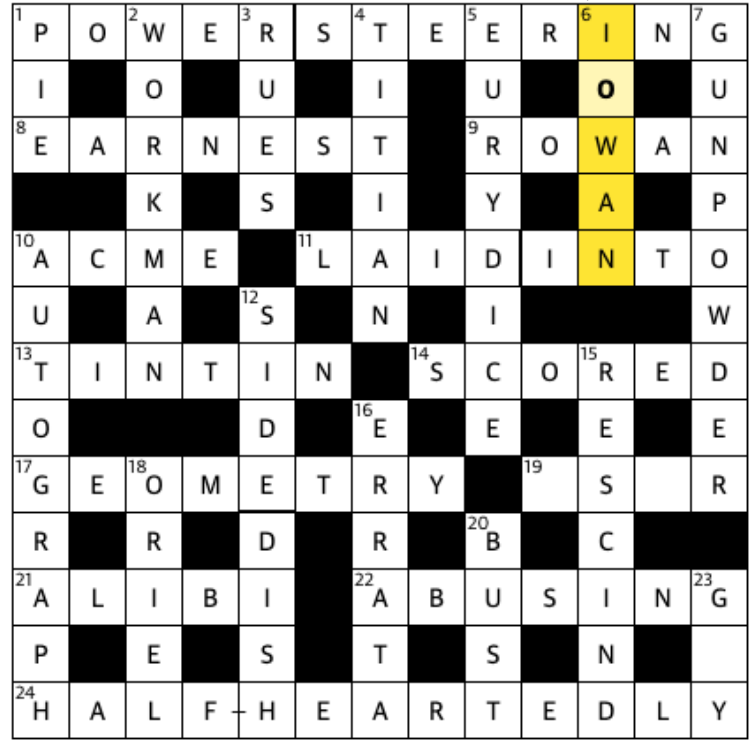
Biden, who went through extensive vetting when he was chosen to be Barack Obama’s vice president, described the process to MSNBC: “It takes about six weeks and you go into everything. It’s like having a public physical examination.”

QUICK CROSSWORD

Quick crossword No
15,665



Quick crossword No
15,663



Across

- 1 Change of government by force (6)
- 4 Flummox (6)
- 9 In proportion (Latin) (3,4)
- 10 Flavour (5)
- 11 Parcel out (5)
- 12 Bursting open (7)
- 13 Extremely alarming (4-7)
- 18 Sweet course (7)
- 20 Vertical pipe in a building (5)
- 22 Financial institutions (5)
- 23 Showed fear (7)
- 24 Hole for a lace or cord (6)
- 25 Au revoir (3-3)

Down

- 1 Tree with catkins as flowers (6)
- 2 Fish by pulling a hook, line and sinker (5)
- 3 Book section (7)
- 5 Behave badly (3,2)
- 6 Style (7)
- 7 Vigour (6)
- 8 Professional wrongdoing (11)
- 14 WikiLeaks founder (7)
- 15 Thin — underfed (7)
- 16 (Of food) harmless (6)
- 17 Active resentment (6)
- 19 Follow as a result (5)
- 21 Woody plant (5)

CARTOON CORNER

Non Sequitur



"If he tries to steal second, eat him."



PE

ARIES (Mar 21-Apr. 19): You might mistakenly assume someone is chatting you up because they want to be your friend when it is purely a business matter. Do not expect to derive emotional satisfaction from someone who's focused on practical considerations.

TAURUS (Apr. 20-May 20): You may prefer to deviate from the norm by making original choices, but you might find greater satisfaction by sticking with the traditional. It's not the end of the world if you must disclose a mistake or problem.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Employ the best tactics. Be sure to keep your ambitions and your care for others in balance. You can charm people when you engage in business discussions and display your smart and practical side with loved ones.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Don't pout just because you're stressed out. Any recent discord with a partner could be resolved quickly if you're willing to be a friend first and put your needs second. Focus on being down to earth, reasonable and honest.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Pick yourself up, dust yourself off and start all over again. Sweep away any hard feelings by showing other people your soft side. You can offer a charming apology to loved ones or make amends with co-workers.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Broach the subject. You realize that you must be above reproach to earn respect from customers or co-workers. On the other hand, you must remain approachable if someone has a problem and comes to you for help.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22.): Stick to the facts and the truth even when you'd prefer it to be different. Your imagination and creative energies are at a high point, but you may be sidetracked by someone's risky proposition.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): It's difficult to apply a cookie-cutter solution to all of life's problems. Forget words and instead observe behavior over time to decide which people have your best interests at heart and which people are all talk.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): People on social media may show off their newest acquisitions or brag about their monetary success. Be happy for them but don't let this tempt you to be extravagant with your cash.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Admit an error and learn from it rather than creating a sketchy situation by trying to hide it. A casual acquaintance or group members might show you the myriad benefits of being willing to compromise.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You might use your imagination better when you have someone along to cheer you on. This person may help you break out of your comfort zone and try something you have always been too cautious to attempt.

PISCES (Feb. 19-Mar. 20): There is a proper time and place to express sentimental ideals. You can focus on business as usual when necessary. Your spirits will be lifted, however, when a special someone or a friend answers your

CLASSIFIEDS

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Stokes overtakes Holder as world top all-rounder

England Ben Stokes has overtaken West Indies captain, Jason Holder, to become the world's number one ranked all-rounder in the

world. Stokes scored 254 runs and took three wickets as England beat West Indies at Old Trafford on Monday to

level the three Test series at 1-1.

The 29-year-old is the first English all-rounder to top the rankings since Andrew Flintoff in May 2006.

He also climbed to a career best third position in the batting rankings.

The left hander tied third with Australia's Marnus Labuschagne and behind only Australia's Steve Smith and India captain, Virat Kohli.

Stokes compilation 497 points is the highest by any test all-rounder since Jacques Kallis 517 in April 2008.



Archer available for third Test

England fast bowler, Jofra Archer, has returned a second negative coronavirus test and will be available for selection for the final Test against the West Indies.

The fast bowler missed the second Test and was later fined after breaching bio-secure protocols while travelling between venues.

Archer, 25, went through a five day period of isolation and will now rejoin his teammates before Friday's match.

England leveled the three match series with a 113 run victory on Monday.

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ABFA have started dialogue with its members



President of the ABFA, Everton "Batow" Gonsalves

The Antigua and Barbuda Football Association met with the twelve first division clubs yesterday (Monday) at the Antigua Recreation Conference Room to discuss the COVID-19 break and options moving forward.

The meeting was chaired by President of the ABFA, Everton "Batow" Gonsalves, who highlighted some of the difficulties the association has encountered during the long break before presenting the clubs with four options being examined as possible ways forward.

Resumption of the leagues, cancellation, declaration of winners and the extension of divisions are the four options that have been presented to the



teams for a vote.

President of the Empire Football Club, Veron "Epilus" Edwards Jr., who was present at the meeting, said from the discussion held with First Division members it was obvious that resumption is at the bottom of the list with most clubs leaning towards the extension of leagues.

"Many teams believe COVID-19 has

presented the ABFA with an opportunity of extending the number of teams in the premier and first division," Edwards noted.

"It's a general feeling among the First Division representatives that the top clubs should be playing more football if our local talent are to be developed," he continued.

One idea suggested by the First Division clubs is promoting four teams, no demotions, and the promotion of eight teams from the Second Division leading to an extension of both the Premier and First Division.

The ABFA, who met with Premier league teams last Thursday, will engage the Second Division teams before the end of this week.

Immediately after, a survey will be done, on the recommendation of CONCACAF, to determine the consensus of the ABFA member clubs on the four proposed recommendations.

A final decision on the way forward for domestic football is expected by the end of August 2020.



Sports

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Ahmani Browne



Eric Joseph Jr.

Antigua and Barbuda's basketball future looks bright

Ahmani Browne has just completed his freshman year at Mitchell College in Connecticut.

The 6ft 6in tall, 190 pound 20-year-old from All Saints Village said adjusting to his new school and living abroad was initially difficult, but continued that he has now adapted well to his new environment and is focused on working hard in the classroom and on the court.

"They try to intimidate me

by calling me a freshman all the time. Because I am from a small country they don't believe we can ball, but I just use that as motivation to improve and show them my skills and passion to be successful," Browne stated.

Ahmani said moving from his old routine in Antigua of playing once or twice a week to a new demanding schedule in the USA of having to wake up early in the morning for gym, followed by school all day and prac-

tice in the afternoon five days a week was a real eye opener.

While his main focus is on his education followed by basketball, the youngster shared that he is hoping to participate in some D-league trials as time progresses.

Also building a reputation in the United States is national junior basketball player, Eric Joseph Jr., who is on his way to Florida Atlantic University.

Raised in Bolans, Eric was introduced to the sport at an early age. At 6ft 6in tall and 180 pounds, he has just completed prep school

and a year in an academy polishing his skills.

Joseph, who also has shown academic prowess topping the CXC Examinations in 2018, says basketball is not all as his goal is to become a business professional so that he can return home to assist his father with the family business.

Until then, Eric is focused on his education.

"I am going to give my all in University on the court and take it as far as I can," Joseph said.

As far as his game is concerned, Eric says he intends to develop his overall game to prepare for life in Florida and balling with the big guys.

DEWS

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