



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

# POINTEXPRESS

TRUSTED NEWS AND RESPECTED VIEWS

MONDAY 10TH AUGUST 2020 | ISSUE 116 | [www.pointville.com](http://www.pointville.com)

PRICE \$3

## NO DISCRIMINATION AT AIRPORT: NICHOLAS



Information Minister Melford Nicholas, right, toured the airport on Saturday afternoon. *See story on Page 2*

**PM: We must open  
our schools! - Page 3**

# Nicholas: There is no discrimination at airport

Complaints that the health protocols are in place at V. C. Bird International Airport discriminated against returning nationals and residents prompted one Cabinet minister to visit the facility for a firsthand assessment.

Information Minister, Melford Nicholas, toured the airport on Saturday afternoon which is one of the busiest times for the airport since it reopened in June.

“There have been concerns raised by members of the public in relation to the protocols for re-entry that are in place at the airport. The specific concern was whether or not persons returning, as residents or citizens, were discriminated against by the two-tiered system regarding the quarantine procedures at the airport,” he remarked.

During his visit to the airport, Nich-

olas said more than 300 passengers disembarking from two international flights were processed at the airport within a two hour period.

“I did witness some queuing as well as some potential for bottlenecks, but this was in keeping with the need to ensure that persons went through the filtration system effectively,” he stated.

Both the minister and a team from state-owned media spoke with Chief Nursing Officer, Margaret Smith, who did not report any major issues with the process being employed at the port of entry.

“I am satisfied all protocols were practiced and observed and that there are no discriminations of anyone. I am satisfied there had to be filtration on the basis of whether someone was

returning to live or stay among the domestic population,” the Information Minister explained.

According to Nicholas, the process at the airport, which has the approval of the Cabinet, was designed to protect the local population from potential widespread infection with the coronavirus.

He noted that persons staying at hotels will enter a secure biosphere. Hotels which have reopened were allowed to do so on the condition that they satisfied a number of safety measures mandated by the Ministry of Health.

Those staying among the domestic population must satisfy a more detailed filtration process which includes quarantine either at home or a government facility.

## DAY 8/10

Max UV Index: 13 Extreme  
 Wind: E at 17 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

# 31°<sub>Hi</sub>



Partly sunny with a passing shower

## NIGHT 8/10

Wind: E at 15 km/h  
 Wind Gusts: 20 km/h  
 Probability of Precipitation: 25%  
 Probability of Thunderstorms: 20%  
 Precipitation: 0.0 mm  
 Rain: 0.0 mm  
 Snow: 0.0 cm  
 Ice: 0.0 mm

# 25°<sub>Lo</sub>



Clear to partly cloudy

## SUNRISE/SUNSET

Sunrise AST  
 5:49 AM

Sunset AST  
 6:35 PM



Duration  
 12:46 hr

## MOONRISE/MOONSET

Moonrise AST  
 11:18 PM

Moonset AST  
 12:13 AM



Duration  
 12:55hr

## We must open our schools!

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has vigorously defended the decision to reopen the nation's school on September 7.

"We can't leave our schools to languish; the cost for keeping our schools closed could be monumental. It could undermine our future development, particularly as it relates to students from low-income families who rely on education to lift themselves and their families out of poverty," Browne told listeners of his interactive weekly radio programme.

The country's schools were closed in the middle of March due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Noting that six months would have passed come September since the students were removed from the classroom, Browne cautioned that a prolonged absence from school could result in students losing interest in learning; a chance his government is not willing to take.

Additionally, PM Browne raised concerns over the 'uncontrolled crowding' of young people which he has observed in moving about the country. He is of the view that extending the closure of schools could exacerbate this problem.

"If students are in a controlled space such as a classroom and having homework later at home, there's less time for this uncontrolled crowding and its potential to spread the virus," he explained.

The prime minister also

empathized with the concerns of parents as they prepare to send their children back to school, especially the parents of children who suffer health conditions such as asthma.

"Our parents need to work and have their children in the education system including pre-schools. We have to learn to manage the risk of further spread," he stated.

According to PM Browne, there have been calls from some quarters to keep schools closed until a COVID-19 vaccine has been developed, however he has dismissed this idea.

"What if a vaccine takes two years to develop? What if it is ready sooner but it takes two years to get to us because of logistical and other issues. These are matters over which we have no control," he declared.

He also gave a detailed explanation of some of the numerous measures that will be implemented for the protection of students. Students will be placed in groups, not exceeding fifteen persons, with one group receiving face-to-face tutoring and the other attending classes virtually. Drastically reducing class sizes is intended to make contact tracing easier should a member of a group contract the virus.

Other measures include placing cameras in the classrooms to enable students attending classes virtually to fully interact during lessons. Schools will also receive upgraded high-speed internet

access while the three major telecommunication providers on the island have agreed to zero-rate internet services for students.

While the government will provide five thousand laptops for students as part of this initiative, the prime minister is appealing to families who already own a computer to exercise patience so that students from low income families can be prioritized.

More than twenty-two thousand face shields will be made available to students and teachers.

This will be supplemented, however, by the Ministry of Trade's National Garment Manufacturing Initiative

which will be called upon to produce additional face masks for the education system.

Temperature guns will be provided to schools to facilitate regular testing and larger schools will be assigned a nurse as part of the staff.

The government is also considering offering flu shots to students to reduce the risk of flu symptoms being mistaken for those of COVID-19.

Combined, these measures form part of the government's arsenal to prevent the spread of the virus among the school population as the country continues its efforts to 'manage the risks' posed by the coronavirus.

### 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. Please note that electricity will be suppressed during period of maintenance

Date: Tuesday 11th August 2020

Time: 08:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Affected areas: Section of Gray Hill near Tanny Rose area

Date: Wednesday 12th August 2020

Time: 08:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Affected areas: Small section of Langfords east of the new Chinese Embassy

Date: Thursday 13th August 2020

Time: 08:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Affected areas: Small section of Piggotts Call, St. Mark Drive

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.



# LIAT attracts interest of would-be investors

Several potential investors, including a number of regional governments and private sector entities, have indicated their interest in investing in a reorganised LIAT.

Word of this comes from Prime Minister Gaston Browne who provided an update on the Antigua-based regional airline in his weekly Browne and Browne show on Pointe FM radio.

"There are several proposals on the table from private sector entities.

There's one proposal for an investment of US\$25 million for fifty percent (50%) of the shares of LIAT. There's another proposal from a regional airline which wants to invest a similar amount into the purchase of a few planes for a stake of sixty percent of the airline's shares," Browne reported.

He also revealed that there are at least three regional governments which have also indicated an interest in investing in the airline. Browne did not

name these countries.

These, and other prospects, are being reviewed by LIAT's court appointed Administrator, Cleveland Seaforth. Much now rests on the administrator's success in getting LIAT's creditors to cooperate with the reorganisation process.

"We believe that on the basis that he is successful in getting their cooperation, LIAT will be back in the skies to retake its position as the number one carrier in the Eastern Caribbean," PM Browne said.

The prime minister reiterated his government's preference for efforts to focus on steering LIAT away from certain demise should it be liquidated by reorganising the airline. This is also the preferred route of

the majority shareholders.

Browne cautioned, however, that the airline's future success depends on getting all its creditors to cooperate with Administrator Seaforth.

"Some progress has been made, but the situation remains tenuous," Browne remarked.

The prime minister also presented a scenario in which LIAT could return to operation ahead of the 120 day period that the Administrator has been allocated to reorganise the airline.

As the administrator looks at reducing the airline's staff, Browne said it is conceivable that he may recommend that the airline resume offering flights on a limited basis during the reorganisation period.

## Postponed exams take place tomorrow

More than two hundred students whose Caribbean Examination Council Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE) examinations were disrupted by Tropical Storm Isaias two weeks ago will write their papers on Tuesday. Director of Education, Clare Browne, said CXC has rescheduled the three exams that were originally slated for the morning session on July 29, but were postponed due to the passage of the storm.

According to Browne, 192 students will write the CSEC English B paper while 75 will write CAPE Pure Mathematics Unit 1 exam. Three students will sit the French Unit 1 exam. This year's CSEC and CAPE exams will conclude on August 13 as examinations throughout the region were postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.



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## DCA, Environment Division say PLH within the guidelines

The two government agencies tasked with the oversight of development in the country have submitted a report which denies that the Peace, Love and Harmony (PLH) project on Barbuda is engaged in activities injurious to the island's environment.

In a letter to the Barbuda Council dated July 14, 2020 and penned by Chief Country Planner, Frederick Southwell, it was outlined that scheduled monitoring of the project conducted by both the Development Control Authority (DCA) and the Department of the Environment (DoE) conducted on January 28, February 13 and June 15 found that the project was in strict compliance with the plan approved by the DCA as well as the Environmental Impact Study approved by the DoE.

Southwell said both departments have been carefully monitoring the developments undertaken by the Barbuda Ocean Club and, based on their findings, there is no reason to issue a Stop Order as requested by the Barbuda Council.

"We therefore cannot accede to your request as it is without merit," the correspondence declared.

The Barbuda Council has been agitating to bring work on the PLH project to a halt based on its claims that activities are being carried out which are harmful to the environment.


Attempts by the Barbuda Council to frustrate the progress of the project has led to two of its members being arrested and charged for violations of the law last month.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has urged the Barbuda Council to desist from further agitation as if their actions become a threat to national security he will not hesitate to convene


a meeting of the National Security Council to restore order.

Highlighting that his contributions to the development of Barbuda as prime minister are unmatched, Browne said he favours a harmonious relationship

with the sister island's people. The prime minister continued that the time had come to end the decades-long campaign of certain Barbuda Council members to frustrate any development earmarked for Barbuda.



 Transport Board Headquarters Building  
Herbert's Estate  
P.O. Box 895  
St. John's, ANTIGUA, West Indies

 Tel: (268) 462-2038/4534/6426  
Fax: (268) 562-2594

 Website: Dca.gov.ag  
Email: DCA@ab.gov.ag

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July 14, 2020

**Mr. Paul Nedd**  
Secretary  
Barbuda Council  
Codrington  
Barbuda

**BARBUDA OCEAN CLUB - PLH COMPLIANCE**

Dear Mr. Nedd,

I write to advise you that the **Development Control Authority (DCA)**, in collaboration with the **Department of Environment (DoE)**, performed its scheduled monitoring visits and compliance checks at the PLH, Palmetto Point Project Site on January 28, February 13 and June 15, 2020. During all of the stated scheduled visits, we observed that the works being carried out were in strict compliance with the conditions of approval for Plan Application # G18-2017, the approved Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and all other relevant scientific analyses, management plans and reports related to the project, as well as with the approval and conditions issued for approved Plan Application # A454-2019. The DCA is satisfied that there has been no breach of any planning permission given to the developers of the subject project.

The DCA wishes to assure you that we have been monitoring the works undertaken by the Barbuda Ocean Club Ltd. as it is our responsibility so to do. Notwithstanding your complaints to us, we can find no basis upon which to issue a Stop Order or Enforcement Notice. We therefore cannot accede to your request as it is without merit.

Be assured that the DCA is ever mindful of its responsibility as laid out in the Physical Planning Act No. 6 of 2003 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda but will only exercise that power within the confines of the said Act of Parliament.

May you be guided accordingly.

Sincerely,

  
 Chief Town and Country Planner

c.c: Hon. Maria Browne, Minister of Housing, Lands and Urban Renewal.  
 Hon. Steadroy Benjamin, Attorney General, Minister of Legal Affairs, Public Safety and Labour.  
 Hon. Samantha Marshall, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs.  
 Mr. Robelto Isaac, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Housing, Lands and Urban Renewal.  
 Mrs. Calsey Beazer-Joseph, Chairperson – Barbuda Council.  
 Amb. Diann Black-Layne, Chief Environment Officer – Department of Environment.  
 Mr. Maurice Merchant, Chairman – DCA Board.  
 Mr. Atlee Rodney, Commissioner of Police, ABRPF.  
 Ms. Gail Christian, Legal Counsel – DCA.

## Seventh demolition by DCA this year

After failing to adhere to warnings from the Development Control Authority (DCA), a property owner at Mamora Bay had an illegally constructed, water-based structure demolished by the infrastructural development authority.

The demolition, led by the DCA in conjunction with National Parks Antigua, removed an illegal plunge pool at Mamora Bay on the coastline last Thursday morning.

According to Deputy Town and Country Planner, Clement Antonio, "They were served an enforcement notice and final notice to take action. They refused."

Located within the Nelson's Dockyard National Park, part of the foundation of the pool was constructed in the ocean and, had its construction been



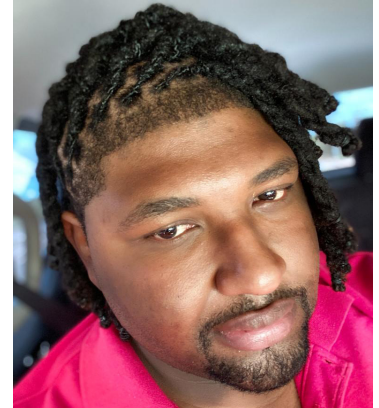
allowed to continue, would have resulted in significant changes to the coastal dynamics of the area.

The homeowner was found to have violated established statutes which left the management of the Nelson's Dockyard National Park with no choice but to seek the support and intervention of the DCA in removing the structure.

"The attention of the Na-

tional Park was drawn to construction work on an infinity plunge pool which did not benefit from the requisite approval as required by the National Parks Act of 1985, Section 5 and the NPA Regulations of 2012," a press statement from the National Parks read.

Heavy duty equipment, sourced from the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHAPA), was used



Deputy Town and Country Planner Mr. Clement Antonio

to destroy the pool.

"We must be grateful to the DCA for its speedy response and assertive action in dealing with this blatant violation," stated Parks Commissioner, Ann Marie Martin.

"The law and the NPA regulations are quite clear. Developers, landowners, and residents should not have to be reminded that permission is required prior to the commencement of any development activity in the National Park," Mrs. Martin affirmed.

Remaining vigilant and acting under the provisos of the Antigua and Barbuda Physical Planning Act is the mandate of the DCA the Deputy Town and Country Planner, however, Antonio indicated that when agencies alert the authority to offenders, it results in action being taken more swiftly.

According to Antonio, "It helps when agencies like the National Park are also watchful and keen in bringing infractions to our attention. We will at all times respond."

Antonio confirmed that this demolition is the 7th so far in 2020.

- NATIONAL SCHOOL BUS SYSTEM -

# FREE

SCHOOL BUS PASS

**FREQUENTLY  
ASKED  
QUESTIONS**

**W**ill my child be prevented from taking the School Bus if he/she is NOT wearing a face mask

?

**Yes. All Students MUST wear a Face Mask when entering, while riding and upon exiting National School Bus System, School Buses**

# India gives COVID-19 lifesaving assistance

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has accepted \$1 million USD worth of Personal Protective Equipment, PPEs, and medical grade equipment from the Government of India as a part of strong and friendly bilateral relations between both nations.

Antigua and Barbuda's proposal for assistance and collaboration titled 'Strengthening national health capacities and reducing socioeconomic and human development negative impacts of COVID-19 crisis in Antigua and Barbuda' was processed under the India - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Fund managed by United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) under the guidelines of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The grant assistance of \$1 million USD, formalized in a virtual ceremony last Friday, and donation of med-

ical grade equipment and PPEs have been allocated for use in a specially designed infectious disease and isolation center.

The donation included 115,000 surgical masks, 2000 full cover protective goggles, 200,000 examination gloves, 2000 face shields, 10,000 disposable impervious gowns and 6 ventilators. Most of these items have already arrived in the country.

Along with the medical equipment, India donated 10,000 hydroxychloroquine tablets to Antigua and Barbuda.

Participating in the virtual handover were Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister Gaston Browne and Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Anthony Liverpool and India's Guyana-based High Commissioner to Antigua and Barbuda, H.E. Dr. K.J. Srinivasa.

PM Browne expressed sincere appreciation to High Commissioner Srinivasa the Government of India for the timely and crucial assistance under this India - UNDP initiative. He noted that this assistance will greatly aid



*Prime Minister Gaston Browne*

in the nation's efforts to manage the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We sincerely thank the Government and people of India for their gracious and timely donation of \$1 million USD worth of PPE's specifically designed to help us address the negative effects of COVID-19. It was a pleasure to have accepted these items on behalf of Antigua and Barbuda," remarked Prime Minister Browne.

This is not the first time India has made a significant contribution to the twin island state. According to the Prime Minister's Office, "India also provided various ITEC webinars for healthcare professionals and training opportunities yearly. These webinars/training courses have greatly enriched the human resource of Antigua and Barbuda, the most valuable resource that the twin island state possesses."

India is the fastest growing economy in the world.



# Updated travel advisory goes into effect

The Government has updated its travel advisory effective immediately to ensure the continued safety of travelers and residents as traffic at the country's ports of entry increases.

The V.C. Bird International Airport is open for international and regional air traffic. The Antigua Port Authority is open to Cargo Vessels, Pleasure Craft and Ferry Services which are required to follow all protocols issued by Port Health.

The State continues to carry out a combination of screening, testing, monitoring and other measures to mitigate the risk of importing any new cases of COVID-19 into the country.

Additionally, measures have been implemented for the quick detection of any imported cases.

This strategy is intended to protect and safeguard the health of both residents and visitors to Antigua and Barbuda.

Nationals and residents of Antigua and Barbuda are strongly advised to restrict their travel to countries with significant escalations in the number

of persons recently testing positive for COVID-19 to that for essential purposes only.

The protocols implemented are as follows:

1. Arriving passengers by air must have a negative COVID-19 RT-PCR (real time polymerase chain reaction) taken within seven (7) days of their flight. (This includes transiting passengers).

2. Children below the age of 12 years, entering Antigua, DO NOT REQUIRE a COVID -19 RT-PCR test.

3. Passengers arriving for medical treatment/procedures must have a negative COVID-19 RT-PCR taken within seven (7) days of their flight. They also must comply with Ministry of Health Guidelines for the Transfer of Patients into Antigua and Barbuda, to include:

a) A letter of Request for Medical Transfer from the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of the originating country to the CMO of Antigua and Barbuda who is also the Quarantine Authority.  
 b) A medical report detailing patient's condition, treatment required and the

urgency of the situation. c) A Letter of Acceptance from the receiving institution stating that the patient has been accepted for care, together with the name of the physician who will be managing the patient. d) The intended address in Antigua and Barbuda, together with the name and telephone number of a contact person if available.

4. Passengers arriving by sea (private yachts/Ferry Services) are subject to quarantine according to guidelines issued by Port Health.

5. All arriving passengers must wear a face mask on disembarkation and in all public areas. Additionally, the wearing of face mask in public spaces is mandatory throughout Antigua and Barbuda and social/physical distancing protocols must be adhered to.

6. All arriving passengers must complete a Health Declaration Form and will be subjected to screening and temperature checks by Port Health Authorities upon arrival in Antigua and Barbuda.

*cont'd on pg 9*

## NOTICE!

### Rescheduled CSEC & CAPE Exams 2020

**The Caribbean Examinations Council has informed MoEST that candidates in Antigua & Barbuda, who were unable to sit the morning session of the July 29 exams due to severe weather, will be allowed to write their examinations on Tuesday, 11th August, 2020 at 9:00 AM.**

Be reminded that the papers in question are:  
 CSEC  
 English B Paper 1  
 CAPE  
 Pure Mathematics Unit 1 Papers 1 and 3  
 French Unit 1 Paper 1



**Sunday, 9 August, 2020**



### THE PUBLIC IS HEREBY ADVISED:

**THE JUNCTION OF STAPLETON LN. AND FRIARS HILL RD WILL REMAIN CLOSED FOR A FURTHER WEEK.**

The two-way movement of vehicular traffic on Stapleton Ln. with access from Old Parham Road is being extended until **FRIDAY 14TH AUGUST 2020** to facilitate the completion of road rehabilitation work now underway in the area.

Traffic management is being provided by the Royal Police Force Traffic Department.

# Bus Association boss welcomes subsidy

The government's decision to accede to a request from bus operators to develop a special subsidy for the transport sector has found favour with the leadership of the country's main bus association.

President of the Antigua and Barbuda Bus Association (ABBA), Keithroy Black, said his group had been lobbying the government to offer relief to bus operators who were negatively impacted as a result of the national lockdown in March which was compelled by the coronavirus pandemic.

"I am pleased that the government has agreed to the subsidy and I wish to thank the prime minister and his government for this assistance. It is something we have been asking for since the outbreak of COVID-19 in March," he said.

Black revealed that during a meeting with Prime Minister Gaston Browne the association was informed that the possibility existed for loan reductions if there was a local spike in the number of COVID-19 cases.

"Through all this we were given the



*President of the Antigua and Barbuda Bus Association (ABBA), Keithroy Black*

assurance from the government that there was recognition that we were operating at a loss and a commitment for assistance for bus operators," Black continued.

According to the ABBA President, the association is now awaiting a meeting with the Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board (ABTB) in which the details of the implementation of the subsidy will be discussed.

Meanwhile, ABTB General Man-

ager, Hubert Jarvis, said the subsidy will likely be implemented in a system where certified bus operators will be allowed to purchase fuel at specified service stations at a price to be announced by the government.

"We are ready to put in place the system for the subsidy. All we are waiting for is the official correspondence from the government to determine the quantum of the reduction and we will implement. It will be an easy programme to manage," Jarvis stated.

Last week, the government announced that bus operators must return to carrying a reduced load of not more than two-thirds of their capacity, as part of efforts to contain the local spread of the coronavirus.

The ABBA represents operators from both the East and West Bus stations.

Another group which split from ABBA, Eastside Bus Association, also represents operators from the East Bus station. Efforts to reach a representative from this association for comment were futile.

## *cont'd from pg 8*

7. All arriving passengers will be monitored for COVID-19 for periods of up to 14 days in accordance with the directions of the Quarantine Authority and the Quarantine (COVID19) Guidelines. Visitors may be required to undergo testing for COVID-19 on arrival or at the hotel or place of lodging as determined by the Health Authorities.

8. Arriving passengers

with symptoms of COVID 19 may be isolated as determined by the Health Authorities.

9. Transiting passengers/ Crew members who require an overnight stay will be required to proceed to a hotel or government designated facility to await departure.

10. All Marine Pleasure Craft and Ferry Services will enter ONLY at the Nev- is Street Pier.

Military Vessels/Aircraft

and other Watercraft transporting food, medical supplies, humanitarian and emergency supplies will be required to follow the Quarantine Guidelines established by the Quarantine Authority as well as issued by Port Health and must give prior notification before arrival.

These restrictions for maritime traffic, and the consequential Antigua Port Authority guidelines, issued

during the State of Emergency, shall not restrict vessels engaged in innocent passage and/or transit passage, within the territorial seas and/or archipelagic waters of Antigua and Barbuda, under the 1982 United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

This Travel Advisory replaces ALL previous Travel Advisories issued by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda.

## COVID-19: A catalyst for entrepreneurship Series:



# Yammins head high throughout COVID-19

**By Angelica O'Donoghue**

Every week, we seek to examine how small businesses in Antigua and Barbuda have managed to weather the colossal economic downfalls that COVID-19 has brought to our shores.

Week after week we are pleasantly surprised at the number of entrepreneurs of different genders, ages, socioeconomic and academic backgrounds, who are weathering the storm and are proving themselves to be the proud survivors of these unprecedented times.

Yammins, a family owned business is



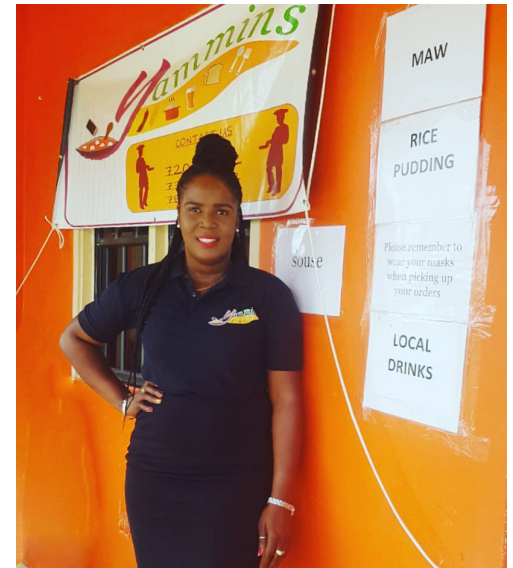
one such survivor. They have remodeled their business by offering local culinary delicacies normally reserved for the weekend through a delivery service to customers anywhere on the island.

Though this is not the success story of one individual, Yammins provides an excellent example of the importance of family support and encouragement during difficult times.

Keisha Knight, an ambitious young Antiguan who helped to start the family business, explained, "Since Rice pudding is a staple within Antigua, this sort of business has been in existence for as long as I can remember. We just decided to take it to another level."

Taking the business to that next level, however, required financial support. While most other small business owners may have had to acquire this financing through the banking system or through other mainstream financial avenues, Keisha said this is where family stepped in.

"We pooled together as a family to cover any applicable operational costs. This included a tent, tables, linen, ingre-



dients, etc," Keisha explained.

Although COVID-19 had a significant negative impact on most small businesses across the islands, Yammins has managed to weather the storm.

Keisha explained that the harsh realities of COVID-19 forced their business to make significant changes to ensure its survival.

"COVID, despite its restrictions, made a positive impact on our business. It forced us to step out of our comfort zone and adapt as necessary. Before COVID we initially operated curbside on Jonas Road, All Saints.

"Our location was chosen] mainly because of the opinion that we lived too far into the village to attract a customer base. After COVID, I was not comfortable with my mother being out and about in public due to her age and had to

*cont'd on pg 11*



*cont'd from pg 10*

make an executive decision to adjust the service delivery method to orders and pick up only from home.

"I started to utilize a Facebook page we previously created but never used and also by sending our flyer out to my WhatsApp and Facebook contacts. Friends and family members also posted on their respective social media platforms. This worked out unexpectedly. As persons made orders, we attracted new customers and old customers found us," the young entrepreneur explained.

The young business woman noted that although business has been good, there is room for improvement.

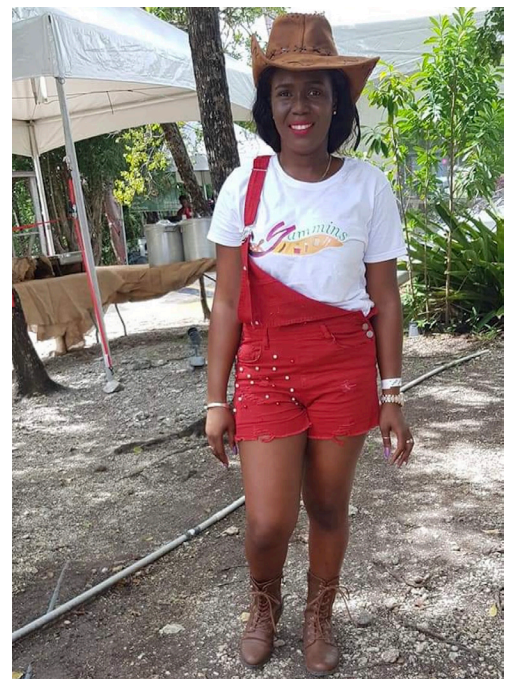
According to Keisha, "Since starting our establishment, I have always had the mentality of constant improvement. This is the mantra I apply to my personal life and other business. I am constantly thinking of ways to improve my product, its delivery and our customer service.

"We have gotten the opportunity in the



past to be associated with notable fete giants such as Farmers Only, Baba's Red and White Breakfast Fete and Sunrise Breakfast Fete. I look forward to being a part of these ventures in the future and even more ventures like these.

"Yammins is a business that keeps my mother going. As a 65-year-old retiree Yammins is literally the thing that keeps her sharp and stops her from getting bored. It gives her purpose."



As customary, our featured entrepreneur shared a word of advice to budding business owners.

"Don't let failure and naysayers stop you. Your only real obstacle is you. Everything else has a solution or an alternative," Keisha wisely advised.

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CLOSED SUNDAYS

## A promotion for Trump's man at the OAS: *What Carlos Trujillo's nomination means for U.S. - Latin American relations*



By Greg Weeks

On July 21, 2020, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations conducted a hearing on the nomination of Carlos Trujillo to be Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA). If confirmed by the Senate, here is what Trujillo's appointment will mean for U.S.-Latin American relations, as well as morale in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

Carlos Trujillo is one of the least qualified nominees in the position's history

The norm for the position of Assistant Secretary, which dates to the 1940s, is for a career Foreign Service Officer (FSO), or at least someone with many years of experience in U.S.-Latin American relations, to hold

the post. Trujillo, the son of Cuban immigrants, is a Florida lawyer who became a State Representative in 2010 at the age of 27. In 2016, he campaigned for President Donald Trump and talked of Democrats using fake news, undocumented immigrants as felons, and of Trump as an outsider who "will end the rigged system." His commitment and loyalty to the president, combined with Senator Marco Rubio's recommendation, garnered him the nomination for U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS) in 2018, where he now serves.

When he was chosen for the OAS position, a friend from the legislature approvingly referred to his credentials, highlighting that Trujillo understands

"that Argentina policy is completely different than, say, Cuba." Compare that to someone like Roberta Jacobson, who served as Assistant Secretary from 2011-2016 and started her State Department career over 20 years earlier in WHA.

The Trujillo nomination is similar in ideology to the George W. Bush selections of Otto Reich and Roger Noriega in the early 2000s, in that they were laser-focused on Cuba and Venezuela and tended to view multilateral relations from that lens. Nonetheless, even they had considerable diplomatic experience before taking the position. Trujillo has the Trump ideology without much independent experience.

He will exert little-to-no influence. The upside to no experience is that there is little indication that any nominee would have much policy clout. Nowadays, Latin America policy goes beyond simply being White House-centered—it comes from Donald Trump's own ideas and whims, often tweeted impulsively. Policy advisors routinely find their ideas ignored or their positions undermined. Bureaucratic positioning and infighting within the executive branch is eternal, but policy is now more highly centralized than ever.

For example, White House aide Stephen Miller exerts tremendous influence over immigration policy, at times to the point of veto power, which means the president even reverses his public statements to follow Miller's hardline positions. Meanwhile, former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was once not even aware when the Mexican foreign minister was in Washington, because he was meeting with

*Cont'd on pg 13*

Trump's son-in-law.

Further, John Bolton complained in his recently published memoir that the president would not follow his own hardline recommendations. Nonetheless, even if the Assistant Secretary does not carry much policy weight, Trujillo could have considerable influence over the tenor of relations. Evan Ellis's recent account for Global Americans about his time working for the U.S. State Department's Policy Planning staff, noted the importance of WHA because, among other things, they receive dignitaries and work daily with regional partners. The Assistant Secretary sets the tone for those relationships. In fact, Ellis believed that outgoing Assistant Secretary Michael Kozak's State Department experience "was apparent in the confidence and skill with which he managed WHA." Trujillo, lacking that experience, will have a much steeper learning curve in

front of him. He has not managed a bureaucracy whose hallmark is effective, quiet diplomacy. He is the perfect pick for Trump

The Trump administration's Latin America policy centers largely on immigration, trade with Mexico, and the so-called "Troika of Tyranny" of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. The State Department does not make immigration policy these days, and the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement is already in effect. That leaves the regional antagonists. When he was nominated to the OAS, Trujillo said, "It's a great platform to bring the issues facing Venezuela and Cuba to the forefront." As Mike Pence swore him in, the vice president repeated references to the troika. Everyone is most definitely on the same page.

In short, Trujillo shows all signs of being a loyal Trump appointee who will wholeheartedly embrace the

president's priorities. In that sense, he is quite similar to Secretary Mike Pompeo.

The big question is whether Trujillo will be respectful of the career diplomats working under him. In those terms, Pompeo's style has been decidedly negative for morale. It remains to be seen whether Trujillo will adopt the Trump/Pompeo disdain for those who made the State Department a career, whom they have condemned as the "deep state" enemy. That would require an independence of mind that has not yet been evident. What is certain, however, is that Carlos Trujillo's nomination represents a strong continuity of the Trump administration's overall foreign policy stance, with a clear signal that loyalty matters above all.

*Greg Weeks is Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at UNC Charlotte, where he is Professor of Political Science and Latin American Studies.*



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# Challenges facing the new Government of Guyana

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

The one upside of the challenges facing the Government of Guyana after a five-month impasse in declaring the result of general elections on March 2, is that the country's economic growth in 2020 is projected at a whopping 52.8% - surpassing all 26 Latin American and Caribbean states. This trend is likely to continue for many years to come.

Guyana has become a hotbed for new oil and gas production. Since 2015, there have been 19 oil discoveries, resulting in estimated recoverable petroleum resources of more than 8 billion barrels. Between December 2019 and June 2020, this newly found wealth in oil and gas provided the government US\$95M in royalties paid by ExxonMobil from its first two oil sales.

Money could go a very long way to alleviate the circumstances of the Guyanese people who, since the 1980s, have been the second poorest in the Ca-

ribbean; Haitians being the poorest. Per capita income in 2018 was US\$4,760, less than half the average for the Latin American and Caribbean region. A 2014 World Bank survey identified "not enough money" as the most significant factor limiting financial inclusion in Guyana. It also said that low per capita income is only part of the problem; skewed income distribution toward the wealthiest is also significant.

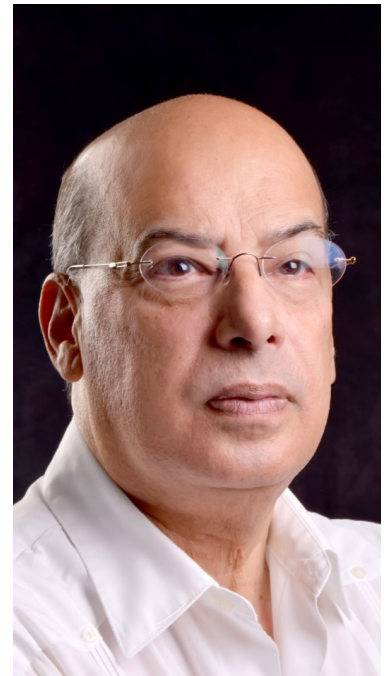
Income levels should now increase, improving living standards for all, particularly the poor. But that depends on how well the oil revenues are managed and how equitably they are distributed in Guyana's society where race has been a more defining characteristic than class. This will be the first challenge that Guyana's new President, Irfaan Ali, and his government will face. Former President Bharat Jagdeo, now a Vice President, has said that the new government would establish a petroleum commission "to ensure the sector is not subjected to undue political interference". This development would go some way to assuaging fears about the management of the oil and gas revenues.

The government will also have to respond appropriately to demands by civil society groups, - which are not always well-informed - for a

better deal with the giant oil companies now engaged in exploration and production. This will include improved public information on the existing contracts and on any new arrangements that might be made. Early action on this matter could douse the flames of criticism that have been fanned, particularly over the past two years.

Managing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is also a major and urgent challenge. At the time of writing, Guyana has confirmed 497 cases of which 186 persons have recovered and 22 have died. However, the picture is not clear. The five-month impasse over declaring the result of the March 2 Guyana elections, coincided with the spread of the coronavirus. With no elected government in place, controlling the disease was less than adequate and a huge spike was recorded in July. The new Government will have to get an early handle on the situation to prevent a backlash from a populace that has tolerated it only because of their greater anxiety over the threats to their peace and security posed by the five-month uncertainty over the elections result.

The electoral machinery has repeatedly failed the Guyanese people, largely because members of the Elections Commission are appointed by leaders of po-



**By Sir Ronald Sanders**

litical parties. The Commission, therefore, is pre-set for a stand-off between the appointees of opposing sides, which played out between March 2 and August 2 this year. The way in which the Commission is appointed should be scrapped and replaced by a broad-based body, representing various sectors of the society. The involvement of political parties could lead again to the five-month tense, and almost perilous, situation that the country endured while it awaited a declaration of results of the March 2 elections.

The biggest challenge of all, however, will be the establishment of conditions that address the fundamental issue in Guyana of racial equity. Guyana's population

of approximately 750,000 people consists of East Indian descendants (39.8%), African descendants (29.3%), mixed race (19.9%), Indigenous Amerindians (10.5%) and other races (0.5%). The majority of the population of African descent who supported the previous government, formed by A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) and the Alliance For Change (AFC), will view President Ali's government of the Peoples Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) as a party of people of East Indian descent. Unless these racial suspicions, which have abounded since 1957, are allayed by positive

action, Guyana will exist in a state of persistent unease. Its governance will always be unstable, until ethnic inclusion in decision-making and economic benefits are institutionalised.

Past governments, dominated by one or other of the two major racial groups, have failed to deal effectively with this issue. The new Government of Irfaan Ali has the real opportunity to tackle it seriously. To do so will call for constitutional change and institution building, and it must start with the policies of the new government. Integral to these policies should be ethnic balance in the composition

of government ministries, statutory bodies, and the security forces, especially their decision-making positions. Authority should not be regarded as residing in the hands of any one ethnic group at the expense of others. Ways should be sought to institutionalise ethnic balance, including by enshrining it in the country's constitution.

In his brief remarks on August 3, when he was sworn in as President, Ali told the Guyanese people, "We're building a country for every Guyanese. There is no need for fear, there is no need for distinction based on political persuasion; no need for dis-

tinction based on religious belief or ethnicity. This is a Government for all of Guyana and that is the way this Government will operate".

Making a reality of this pledge will be the new Guyana government's biggest task, but one which will bring even bigger benefits to Guyana if it is accomplished.

*(This commentary in a shorter form was first written for the website of The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of Affairs on whose International Advisory Board Sir Ronald is a member)*



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## TnT heads to the polls today. Voting hours will not be extended

Come rain or hail, the Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC) will not be extending the hours for voting in tomorrow's general election.

That was made clear over the weekend by Chief Election Officer Fern Narcis-Scope during a sit-down interview with Guardian Media ahead of the election.

Thunderstorms associated with the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone affected parts of Trinidad on Friday night resulting in flooding around the country. The T&T Meteorological Service issued a Yellow Level adverse weather alert yesterday as a result. Despite the adverse weather, however, when Guardian Media visited the EBC's head office on Frederick Street, Port-of-Spain, yesterday morning it was buzzing with activity.

In the last general election, the EBC came under fire for extending the voting time by one hour, because of inclement weather. The party challenged the decision in the High Court.

"We were in court for nearly a year. The court said though well-intentioned we did not have the discretion to extend the time beyond 6 pm so that will not be happening again. Come rain or hail that will not be happening again," Narcis-Scope said.

"We will just have to pray for good weather on the day and we say God is a Trini so on the 10th we will need his help," Narcis-Scope said where feasible the EBC will ensure tents are placed at polling stations to provide shelter. This is one of several additional costs that the EBC has had to undertake in this year's general election.

Normally a general election costs upward of \$40 million, but this year it will be much more expensive, she said. "This is going to be a costly election. When we submitted our estimates for the mid-year review we contemplated of course whether we would have an election in this fiscal.

"So we asked for \$50 million, we got \$43 million so we already started not with what we had averaged and of course when we submitted the mid-year review we did not contemplate COVID," she said.

"So those figures did not contemplate COVID-19 so we have some juggling to do in terms of the finances and this election has proven to be exceedingly costly," Narcis-Scope said.

One of the additional cost for this general election is the employment of 2,210 polling day staff to dispense sanitiser at polling stations around the country.

In addition to that, the EBC paid for increased training for staff and purchased face masks, additional stamps and hand sanitiser. In some cases, larger venues for polling stations had to be acquired because of COVID-19.

Narcis-Scope could not say whether voter turnout will be affected because of the resurgence of COVID in T&T but assured that the EBC has measures in place. "Wearing a mask has not been legislated and we cannot deny a person their franchise if they are not wearing a mask. If you're coughing and sneezing, we cannot deny you your right, because you have a constitutional right to exercise your franchise, so what I would say to



anyone is to safeguard yourself because there could be a person who might be ill. You ensure that you comply with the guidelines as we have put them out and once you do that you will be safe," she said. "I really do not know how the electorate feels but what I could give them is every assurance that we are doing all that we are supposed to ensure that they are safe. Once you maintain that physical distancing in the line, you wear a mask and you sanitise you will be okay but I am hoping that the electorate is comforted by the efforts of the Elections and Boundaries Commission and that people will come out and exercise their franchise. "But I think that political parties have a role to play in terms of soothing the fears of their supporters. They are in more direct contact with the electorate in a more familiar manner walking through the communities in a way that we are not so they have that direct relationship with the communities and it is up to them as our partners as

well to send the same message that every effort is being made and they know that every effort is being made because they have met with us and any concern that they have raised we have taken into consideration in our arrangements," she said.

Narcis-Scope said returning officers are also being protected.

"The vast majority of the returning officers fall within that vulnerable group, they are all mature individuals so I said to them from the outset that they could not afford to get COVID-19 so we have been steadfast in protecting them. We've provided them from the very inception with all the requisite PPE and cleaning supplies and told them that they have to ensure that they are safe because they have to run this thing," she said.

Narcis-Scope lamented the fact that there will not be any election observers present.

"We do not have international observers which is somewhat of a disappointment," she said.

## St. Lucia: Allison Jean furious Botham's murderer seeking lesser charge



*Amber Guyger cries in court*



*Allison Jean reacts to the verdict*

Attorneys of Amber Guyger, convicted of the murder of St Lucian Botham Jean, have filed an appeal that her charge should have instead been criminally negligent homicide. According to Guyger's defense team, there was insufficient evidence to convict her of murder. They argue the court should either acquit Guyger of murder, or acquit her of murder, then convict her of criminally negligent homicide, and hold a new hearing on the punishment.

Guyger, 31, was off-duty but still in uniform the night she killed the 26-year-old accountant

in his South Side Flats apartments just blocks from police headquarters. She claimed she mistook his apartment for hers and thought he was a burglar.

The appeal argues: "her mistaken belief negated the culpability for murder because although she intentionally and knowingly caused Jean's death, she had the right to act in deadly force in self-defense since her belief that deadly force was immediately necessary was reasonable under the circumstances."

Botham's mother Allison Jean has reacted with anger saying: "The news of an appeal came as

no surprise to the family, however, what was submitted simply infuriated me and I ask what nerve Amber Guyger and her attorneys would have for someone who received a sentence of only ten years, which I consider a slap on the wrist, for her now to appeal that the evidence was not taken and that she acted in self defence is what I believe is grabbing at straws." Jean is now hoping Guyger gets a more severe sentence for the loss of her son.

"I am appealing to the judges to consider an even harsher penalty for her because the ten years she received was a slap on the

wrist but she deserves life in prison, that's what she should get, so I'm looking forward to the deliberations on that appeal. I have every confidence that the appeal lawyers in the DA's office will be able to represent my family and get justice for Botham just as they did in the trial," she said.

Guyger was first arrested on a manslaughter charge after she fatally shot Botham Jean in September 2018 while he ate ice cream in his apartment.

She was found guilty of murdering Jean in October 2019 and was sentenced to ten years in prison.

# President Ali pledges to be President of all of Guyana

President Irfaan Ali over the weekend promised to be President of all of Guyana and said that ethnicity will not get in the way of this commitment.

At his inauguration ceremony at the National Cultural Centre which began promptly at 10 am and was broadcast on NCN, he pledged to always walk with the ordinary people. He pledged to fulfill his PPP/C's manifesto commitments. He announced the setting aside of \$4.5b to aid at the household level those affected by the COVID-19 scourge. He said consideration is being given to what help can be extended to the private sector. He pledged to work with all stakeholders to turn Guyana into a "centre for economic activity" and to have the economy "humming". Ali promised constitutional reform through a national consultation in which all views will contend and pledged inclusive governance.

He promised a 50% drop in the cost of energy through a mix of energy sources including solar and gas. There will be the installation of 400 megawatts of energy over his term.

He assured transparency in the spending of Guyana's oil revenues. Ali said his goal is to provide jobs for all who want one. Workers who he said were the "bedrock" of the nation were suffering. He cited sugar workers who have lost their jobs. He said "we have to fix it and fix it urgently" charging that the sugar industry had been virtually abandoned over the last five years.

Ali and the PPP/C had pledged a reopening of several shuttered estates. "We intend to raise up the industry", Ali said of sugar, charging that it is already being found that NICIL has stripped GuySuCo's assets.

Ali said Guyanese must not be second or third class citizens in their country. He praised Guyanese in the diaspora and he said his government intends to embrace them. He added that a foundation for the future must be laid which is why so many young people are in his Cabinet.

He announced that a forensic review of the events over the last five months will be undertaken and anyone found perverting the electoral process will be held accountable. He said that never again should Guyanese have to endure what occurred over the last five months. It took five months for results to be declared amid attempts to rig the elections for the incumbent, APNU+AFC and myriad court challenges.

"Every life in the nation matters", Ali said as he pledged stepped up assistance to the Guyana Police Force to ensure security for all Guyanese.

He promised urgent action to tackle the COVID-19 virus which he said has claimed too many lives. He announced a new task force and the dismantling of the "political bureaucracy" and its entrusting to policymakers and other stakeholders.

He announced that Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley has sent 15,000 PCR test kits for COVID-19.



*President Irfaan Ali*

Ali, in the presence of First Lady Arya Ali and senior government officials, pledged "no discrimination.... I offer you my hands of friendship, my hands of cooperation... as we chart the future together".

President Ali praised the diplomatic representatives of the US, UK, Canada and the European Union for aiding the fight for the upholding of democracy. He also thanked CARICOM, the Carter Center, the Organisation of American States and the Commonwealth for their role in free and fair elections.

He also paid rich tribute to the late Prime Minister of Barbados, Owen Arthur and he described him as a "warrior" for Guyana's democracy. A moment of silence was observed at the inauguration for Arthur who passed away in Barbados several weeks ago. He had headed the Commonwealth

observer mission to Guyana's March 2nd elections.

President Ali was ceremonially inaugurated after an uplifting rendering of 'O Beautiful Guyana' and 'A Hymn For Guyana's Children' by the Guyana police band and choir and prayers done by representatives of the Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Makushi communities. There was also a dance fusion featuring presentations by the African-Guyanese, Indo-Guyanese and indigenous communities.

Among those in attendance were Suriname's recently elected President Chandrikapersad Santokhi and his wife, Melissa and a representative of the Barbadian Government.

In keeping with COVID-19 regulations attendees were masked.

The chair for the proceedings was Michella Abraham Ali.

## UK Accelerating Access to COVID-19 Vaccines in Caribbean

Ensuring equitable access to vaccines, treatments and tests to all in the Caribbean and Latin America through international and regional collaboration, is the only solution to ending the COVID-19 pandemic.

UK and Mexico Foreign Secretaries, Dominic Raab and Marcelo Ebrard, expressed this view during a joint virtual seminar under the theme: 'Accelerating access to COVID-19 vaccines in Latin America and the Caribbean'. They were joined by senior policymakers and scientists from across the region.

The event was co-hosted by the UK and Mexico on 5 August; and highlighted the importance of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator to ensure global access to vaccines, treatments and tests to face COVID-19.

Caribbean and Latin American countries were represented by government officials from a variety of ministries and departments as well as representatives of development banks and health alliances, who highlighted the need for collaboration between governments, international institutions and businesses.

UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

"In order to end this terrible pandemic and kick-start our global recovery, we must make vaccines, treatments and tests accessible for all, from Britain to Brazil, Ethiopia to Ecuador, Turkey to Trinidad and Tobago, and everywhere in-between.



This crisis has challenged us like never before. But it has also shown the profound importance of international collaboration. Only by working together can we defeat this virus and build back stronger and better than ever." British High Commissioner to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean Janet Douglas said: "The wide interest in this seminar at a senior level across the countries of the Eastern Caribbean, is proof of the urgent need for all countries across the hemisphere and across the globe to have equitable access to vaccines." The coronavirus out-

break is the biggest public health emergency in a generation.

Finding a coronavirus vaccine and supporting equitable access to it, including for Latin America and the Caribbean countries, is a priority for the UK Government. The UK is collaborating with the international community to support the rapid development and manufacturing of safe, effective vaccines as well as treatments and tests to ensure widespread global access.

The UK has already committed up to £313 million of UKAID to support research and development for vaccines, treat-

ments and tests to ensure new tools are available to all, including the world's poorest countries. The UK also co-hosted June's Global Vaccine Summit, which mobilised US\$8.8bn to replenish Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. Gavi's work in the poorest countries is critical to sustaining immunisation coverage and bolstering the resilience of primary health care systems needed to tackle COVID-19. In recent days, a study revealed the promising results of the Oxford University vaccine Phase I/II trials, one of a number of projects supported by the UK Government.

## US, the world's hardest-hit country, reaches 5m coronavirus cases



*The confirmed death toll from COVID-19 in the US stands at 162,455, also the biggest globally.*

The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the United States has reached five million, by far the highest in the world, as the new coronavirus keeps spreading rapidly across the country.

The grim milestone was reached on Sunday, according to a tally compiled by Johns Hopkins University, with new infections running at about 54,000 a day.

While that figure is lower from a peak of more than 70,000 in the second half of July, cases are rising in nearly 20 states and related deaths are climbing in most.

The death toll from the coronavirus in the US stands at 162,455, also the highest in the world. Globally, more than

19.6 million COVID-19 cases have been confirmed, with some 727,000 related deaths. Behind the US, Brazil has reported more than three million confirmed infections and some 100,000 fatalities.

India has the world's third-highest confirmed case-load, at more than 2.15 million, followed by Russia and South Africa, at some 885,000 and 553,000 infections respectively. Opinion polls in the US have shown a large majority of voters being unhappy with President Donald Trump's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, just months before he seeks re-election in a November vote. The Republican president initially played down COVID-19's threat and has

drawn criticism for inconsistent messages on public health steps such as physical distancing and wearing masks during the coronavirus pandemic. Last month, after long resisting wearing a face mask in public, Trump struck a different tone saying he was in favour of the protective covering.

His Democrat opponent, Joe Biden, said the outbreak "shouldn't have gotten this bad". "It's a number that boggles the mind and breaks the heart. Each time the number goes up, it represents a life altered, a family stricken with anxiety, a community on edge," Biden wrote on Twitter on Sunday.

It came a day after Trump signed executive actions ex-

tending financial relief to US citizens hit by the pandemic after lawmakers failed to agree on a new economic stimulus package. "We've had it and we're going to save American jobs and provide relief to the American workers," Trump told reporters on Saturday at his New Jersey golf club, in a room that featured a crowd of cheering supporters.

With double-digit unemployment, disruption to businesses from physical distancing rules and the rapid coronavirus spread, many in the country have been relying on relief measures approved earlier by Congress, but which mostly expired in July.

## Main opposition candidate goes into hiding on eve of crucial presidential vote in Belarus

The main opposition candidate in Belarus' Sunday presidential election went into hiding the night before challenging longtime leader Alexander Lukashenko, who is seeking his sixth term. Svetlana Tikhonovskaya's campaign said she fled her apartment due to safety reasons after police detained several of its senior staffers, in what critics called an attempt to intimidate the opposition ahead of the crucial vote. Meanwhile, her adviser Veronika Tsepkalo fled Belarus for Moscow for safety reasons, the campaign told CNN on Sunday. Tsepkalo's husband, former Belarusian ambassador to the US, Valery Tsepkalo, was not allowed to register as a candidate and had previously gone to Russia with their children, fearing for their safety after receiving threats of arrest. The main candidate, Tikhonovskaya, has previously said in interviews she had to send her children abroad after receiving threats they will be placed in an orphanage.

"She [Tikhonovskaya] won't spend the night at home so that she is not alone," Tikhonovskaya's campaign said. "But she is not fleeing Minsk, she will remain in the city." Tikhonovskaya, a former English tutor, became an unexpected rival and face of the opposition in the past two months after taking over from her husband, Sergey Tikhonovskiy, a popular YouTube blogger and former candidate who has been jailed since May. Tikhonovskaya joined forces with two women who ran other opposition campaigns after

their candidates were also either barred from running or jailed.

Her campaign rallies saw big turnouts even in small Belarusian towns that are not known for their protest activity. The largest event in the capital of Minsk this July gathered around 63,000 people, making it the biggest demonstration in the past decade.

On the eve of the vote, Tikhonovskaya's campaign manager Maria Kolesnikova was briefly detained and taken to a police station for questioning. A day before that, campaign manager Maria Moroz was also briefly detained. Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko with his son Nikolai (left) during the Victory Day military parade on June 24 in Moscow. The election has seen a massive turnout, according to official data, with the country's Central Elections Committee reporting 65.19% turnout as of 2 p.m. local time.

Users in central Minsk had difficulties accessing major internet services and social media networks on Sunday, according to multiple local media reports and a CNN stringer on the ground.

Most apps and websites are taking longer to load, including Whatsapp, Viber, and Facebook messenger. Telegram messenger, which serves as the main communication tool for Belarusian opposition, has been unavailable at times or only accessible via proxy servers.

NetBlocks, an NGO that tracks internet shutdowns worldwide, said in a tweet it has recorded significant disruptions in Belarus: "Real-time network



*Presidential candidate Svetlana Tikhonovskaya has gone into hiding ahead of Sunday's election.*

data show social media and other services now becoming unavailable on multiple fixed-line and cellular operator."

Lukashenko has ruled the former Soviet republic of more than 9 million people since 1994. He has long drawn international criticism for suppressing dissent, and the country's secret police — still known as the KGB — often detain and harass opposition activists and independent journalists. Independent observers in Belarus such as the "Honest people" volunteer monitoring group said they have found significant discrepancies between the officially announced turnout and the number of people entering the polling stations they were able to count. Most independent observers have been barred from monitoring this election. Several dozen independent observers have been detained on Saturday and early Sunday, according to the "Honest people" and "Right to choose" monitoring

initiatives. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) said in July it will not be sending observers to Belarus due to no invitation from the country's authorities and expressed "deep concern at reports that prospective candidates had been intimidated and opposition activists arrested."

In the run-up to the election, law enforcement seemingly stepped up its crackdown efforts as riot police made multiple arrests to break up impromptu demonstrations against Lukashenko. Local media outlets have warned of a possible internet shutdown in case protests erupt across the country.

Lukashenko is facing the toughest challenge in his 26 year-long rule: thousands of opposition supporters poured to the streets in past weeks to voice discontent with the economic situation, poor coronavirus response and lack of personal freedoms and reforms in the country.

## Beirut explosion: Donors pledge aid for Lebanon but want reform

International donors have pledged a quarter of a billion euros in aid for Lebanon five days after the explosion which devastated a swathe of Beirut.

But an online donor summit arranged by France called at the same time for reforms to be made.

The blast at a warehouse holding over 2,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate has focused local outrage on perceived government corruption and incompetence.

Clashes have broken out for a second day running in Beirut.

Young people calling for the government to quit threw projectiles at police and shops in central Beirut, and protesters attempted to storm barricades barring access to the parliament building. A fire broke out at the scene.

Police in riot gear used tear gas as darkness fell, echoing similar scenes during protests on Saturday.

Fifteen government leaders at the donor summit, spearheaded by French President Emmanuel Macron, promised “major resources”, according to a statement.

“Assistance should be timely, sufficient and consistent with the needs of the Lebanese people,” it said, adding that help must be “directly delivered to the Lebanese population, with utmost efficiency and transparency”.

The donors were prepared to help Lebanon’s longer term



*Clashes broke out for a second day running in Beirut*

recovery if the government listened to the changes demanded by the country’s citizens, the communique said.

President Macron’s office said France had received pledges worth 252.7m euros (\$297m, £227m) from the summit. Officials estimate the explosion caused up to \$15 billion (£11.5bn) of damage.

It left at least 158 people dead, 6,000 injured and 300,000 homeless. It emerged that the ammonium nitrate had been left at the port warehouse for six years despite repeated warnings it was dangerous.

Lebanon is in the midst of its worst economic crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war, with daily power cuts, a lack

of safe drinking water and limited public healthcare.

The currency collapsed and Lebanon defaulted on its debt in March. Talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on a \$10bn bailout have stalled. It is feared that the effect of the explosion on the economy could significantly worsen the prospects of recovery. Information Minister Manal Abdel Samad meanwhile became the first minister to resign in the wake of the blast. She cited the failure of the government to carry out reforms and the “Beirut catastrophe” as her reasons for leaving.

The United Nations has said more than \$100m (£76m) is needed for both emergen-

cy humanitarian aid, such as food and water, and the rebuilding of infrastructure, including hospitals and schools.

The summit took place online due to the coronavirus pandemic.

President Macron, speaking from his summer residence in southern France, called for “an impartial, credible and independent inquiry” into how the disaster was allowed to happen.

France is the former colonial power, and Mr Macron was the first world leader to visit Beirut in the days after the blast.

But Lebanese President Michel Aoun has already ruled out an international investigation.

## Brazil COVID-19 deaths reach 100,000 and barrel onward



*People are seen silhouetted among crosses and balloons placed by members of the NGO Rio de Paz in tribute to the one hundred thousand mortal victims of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the country, at Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil August 8, 2020.*

Brazil's death toll from COVID-19 reached 100,000 yesterday and continues to climb as most Brazilian cities reopen shops and dining even though the pandemic has yet to peak.

Confronting its most lethal outbreak since the Spanish flu a century ago, Brazil reported its first cases of the novel coronavirus at the end of February. The virus took three months to kill 50,000 people, and just 50 days to kill the next 50,000.

Led by President Jair Bolsonaro, who has played down the gravity of the epidemic and fought lockdowns by local officials, Brazilians who protested

nightly from their windows in the first months of the outbreak have met the grim milestone with a shrug. "We should be living in despair, because this is a tragedy like a world war. But Brazil is under collective anesthesia," said Dr. José Davi Urbacz, a senior member of the Infectious Diseases Society.

He and other public health experts have raised the alarm that Brazil still has no coordinated plan to fight the pandemic, as many officials focus on "reopening," which is likely to boost circulation and worsen the outbreak.

Two health ministers, both trained doctors, have resigned

over differences with Bolsonaro. The acting minister is an army general who has abandoned the call for social distancing, which experts say is essential but the president opposes.

Bolsonaro, who has called COVID-19 a "little flu," says he recovered from his own infection thanks to hydroxychloroquine, an anti-malarial drug that remains unproven against the coronavirus.

"We don't know where it will stop, maybe at 150,000 or 200,000 deaths. Only time will show the full impact of COVID-19 here," said Alexandre Naime, head of the Sao Paulo

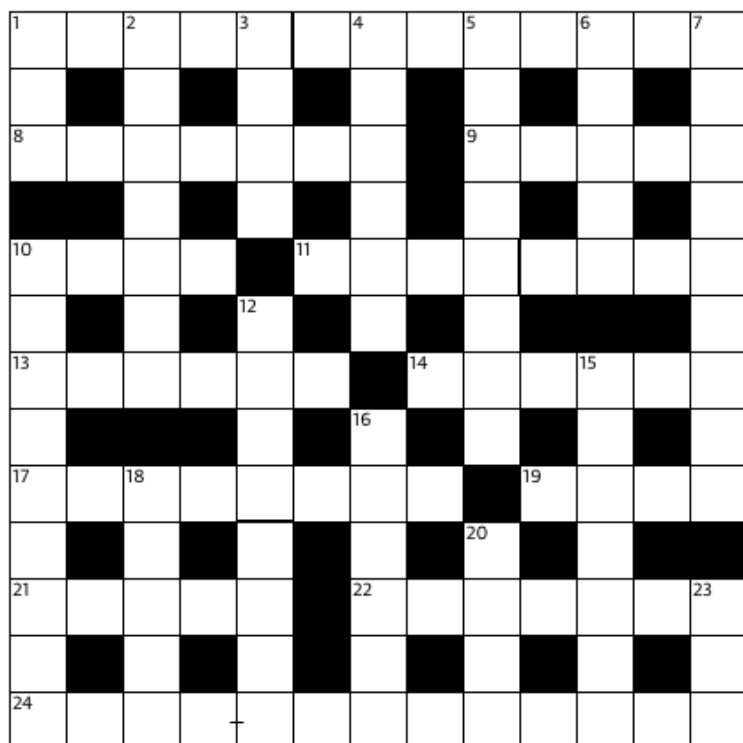
State University's department of infectious diseases.

He said the only comparison may be diseases brought by colonizers, such as smallpox, that decimated indigenous populations when Europeans first arrived in the Americas.

While that history is long past, Urbacz said Brazil today seems equally resigned to the COVID-19 deaths to come.

"The government's message today is: 'Catch your coronavirus and if it's serious, there is intensive care.' That sums up our policy today," Urbacz said.

## QUICK CROSSWORD



## Across

- 1 Grit sweeper on? (anag) — it makes driving easier (5,8)  
 8 Sincere — humourless (7)  
 9 Tree with orange-red berry-like fruits (5)  
 10 Peak (4)  
 11 Savaged (4,4)  
 13 Hergé's adventurous young Belgian reporter (6)  
 14 Put the ball in the net (6)  
 17 Branch of mathematics (8)  
 19 Substance taker (4)  
 21 Excuse (5)  
 22 Treating badly (7)  
 24 In a lackadaisical fashion (4-9)

## Down

- 1 Fruit or meat dish (3)  
 2 Labourer (7)  
 3 Regrets (4)  
 4 Italian painter of the Venetian school, patronised by Philip II of Spain (6)  
 5 Wife of Orpheus (8)  
 6 From Des Moines? (5)  
 7 Explosive invented in 9th-century China (9)  
 10 Signature (9)  
 12 Accompaniment at mealtime (4,4)  
 15 Quash (7)  
 16 Misprints in a book (6)  
 18 Type of bay window (5)  
 20 Sculpture — ruined (4)  
 23 Writer of The Beggar's Opera (3)

## CARTOON CORNER

## Non Sequitur





**ARIES (Mar 21-Apr. 19):** You might rush to get something done on time and only end up slowing yourself down. This is one of those weeks when you should be extra polite and avoid letting anyone get under your skin. Hold off on making major changes.

**TAURUS (Apr. 20-May 20):** Let sleeping dogs lie. You might feel that it's best to be forthright when discussing a financial matter. Unfortunately, all you may do is stir up resentment and controversy. Remain discreet in the week ahead.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** Dialogues about the past can needlessly complicate the present. Put personal meetings and serious discussions on the back burner during the first half of the week. There may be obstacles to handling your budget.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** The New Moon arrives in your sign early tomorrow. The next few days could be difficult to navigate because there may be a pileup of duties and realities to face. Wait until the second half of the week to make weighty decisions.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** The shift in focus during tomorrow's New Moon might be all it takes to reveal hidden problems and mistakes. Be glad to have a chance to fix them as the week unfolds and learn from them for the future.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** You can solve crossword puzzles easily but may not easily handle cross words. There could be a competition or struggle over money, policies or ethics, so it's best to let a sense of fair play prevail in the week ahead.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22.):** You may feel your achievements are unsatisfactory if you compare yourself to others. This is not a good week to negotiate better terms because other people may be focused on their own agenda and could be less empathetic than usual.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** You may briefly feel you're out of your depth in the upcoming week. You could be dismayed by family dramas or feel uncertain when faced with a dilemma. Make a deliberate effort to fill in the gaps

in your knowledge.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** In the week ahead, you may be discouraged when people don't react to your ideas with the level of enthusiasm you expect. Remain budget-conscious and be sure to pay your bills on time.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Don't let a spat turn into a grudge. When people are stressed out, a few harsh words can quickly turn into hard feelings. In the week ahead, be aware that unmindful criticism of others might build an unscalable wall.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** Performing the dullest duties may show others that you are diligent but may not earn you any credit. Do not expect to receive glowing praise for just being there. Avoid disputes and dissension during the upcoming week.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-Mar. 20):** Put creative energies to work on your own behalf as this week unfolds rather than being distracted by lingering problems. Wait until a project is perfected and polished before presenting it to the world.

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### PLEASE BE A RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNER:

(1) Contact the DRCA's Registration Agent Antigua & Barbuda Humane Society (461-4957) to have your dog microchipped and licensed, as is required by law.

(2) Have your dog spayed or neutered to prevent unwanted puppies. The Humane Society operates a low-cost spay/neuter clinic - call 461-4957 for more information.

(3) Keep your dog on your own property or under your direct control at all times, as is required by law.

# **TENDER NOTICE**

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

**Construction and Assembling of 150 Vending Booths**

**CARIFESTA XV – August 2021**

**Ministry of Sports, Culture, National Festivals and the Arts**

The Tenders Board of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, on behalf of the Ministry of Sports, Culture, National Festivals and the Arts, invites interested vendors to submit bid/proposal, for the supply of works and or services related to the construction and assembling of 150 vending booths, to host CARIFESTA XV, Grand Market, in August of 2021, at the Multipurpose Cultural Center and Exhibition Hall – Perry Bay.

The Scope of Works related to this tender, can be accessed through our e-Procurement Platform, accessible via the following link:

<https://ra.easibuy.com/advertisements/1199?token=7923781c08da5a9188bc62b1>

The e-Procurement Platform for this tender is hosted by EASiBUY. Should you require any assistance in accessing the platform, please feel free to contact Mr. Daniel Knight, email: Daniel.Knight@ab.gov.ag or Mr. Jamal Barnes, email: Jamal.Barnes@ab.gov.ag

Please be advised that it is imperative that you submit the following documents when uploading your Proposal to the site:-

1. Business Registration
2. Company Profile and
3. References

*Bids/Proposals for this tender must be uploaded to the e-Procurement Platform no later than **Friday 12:00 noon on 21 August 2020**. Queries regarding the specified requirements of this tender must be directed and delivered to **Chairman, Tenders Board (tenders.board@ab.gov.ag)** via the platform. Please note that the *final day for considering queries* related to this tender is **2:00 PM on Friday 14 August 2020**.*

## Report: Reduce the Board

The latest report on corporate governance reform for Cricket West Indies (CWI) has recommended an immediate reduction in the size of the board to twelve members from the original eighteen, with a gradual decrease to nine members.

The comprehensive and detailed report requested by CWI, which was prepared by the Independent Task Force for Corporate Governance reform headed by Jamaican Senator Don Wehby, was submitted to the CWI recently.

Another recommendation is that the membership of the Board of Directors reflect a wide cross section of skills and competencies. With the eventual reduction of directors to nine, the recommendation is that at least two members should be women.

It also advised there the roles of President and Vice President be redefined to make their duties more specific to the work of the board with less involvement in the executive function of the body.

The report also suggested the establishment of a nominations committee whose responsibility it would be to identify and evaluate potential directors and nominate future directors and committee members.

Additionally, the Wehby Independent Task Force report called for a reduction

in CWI's committee structure from twelve to five.

The other objectives of the Independent Task Force focused primarily on understanding a review of the corporate governance framework, standards and

practices of CWI and to recommend changes "to enhance stakeholder trust and ensure more transparency and accountability in line with modern best practices for corporate governance."

It also noted that reform

was needed to ensure the sustainability of CWI, highlighting the "need to foster the rebuilding of trust and a common purpose between CWI and the other stakeholders, especially with regional governments".



## Serena plans to play French Open

Serena Williams says she is still planning to play this month's US Open and the French Open in September.

World number one Ashleigh Barty and fellow top 10 players, Elina Svitolina and Kiki Bertens, have all withdrawn from the US Open which is set to begin on 31 August in New York.

The rescheduled French Open starts September 27 at Roland-Garros in Paris.

Twenty-three time Grand Slam Champion Williams said she sees herself participating in each of the major tournaments.

Williams is set to play the WTA Top Seed

Open in Lexington, Kentucky next week as preparations for the US Open, which she has won six times.

Williams, 38, said she had become "a little bit of a recluse" during the pandemic.

"I don't have full lung capacity so I'm not sure what would happen to me. I'm sure I would be ok but I don't want to find out," Williams added.

Serena says she travels with about fifty masks, is incredibly careful with whatever she is doing and added that everyone in her circle takes all precautions to remain fully protected against the coronavirus.



## England bounce back to win first Test against Pakistan

England captain, Joe Root, says his team's habit of pulling off unlikely victories gives them belief they can win matches from almost any situation.

# DEWS

England chased 277 to win the first test against Pakistan after being 117-5 on a very difficult pitch at Old Trafford.

England were carried to the three wicket win by Chris Woakes who ended on 84 not out and shared a sixth wicket partnership with Jos Butler whose contribution was 75.

Scores in the match Pakistan 326 & 169, England 219 & 277/7.

Meanwhile, England

all-rounder, Ben Stokes, will miss the remainder of the Test series against Pakistan for family reasons it has been announced by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

Stokes, who has played four Tests so far this summer, captaining his country in the first tests against the West Indies in Joe Root's absence, will fly out to New Zealand later this week.

The 2-year-old's parents, Ged and Deb, still live in New Zealand where Stokes was born.

