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CARIFESTA XV POSTPONED



A call to action

The COVID-19 pandemic has sent a clear signal that there are no medium term solutions ahead. The challenge to keep our community in good stead has become acute and the urgency for all hands and minds to come together in search of ways to successfully navigate the path before us is evident.

One of the significant challenges is ensuring that together, we observe the mandated protocols for our safety.

Our children, the most precious among us, are in danger of becoming the next 'hot spot' of coronavirus infection if we do not collectively address the increasing after school gatherings which are becoming commonplace around the country.

While during morning pick-ups and throughout the school day under the supervision of attentive faculty, our children are masked and observe COVID-19 health and safety protocols, this all comes to a disturbing halt when

children depart the school yards. They congregate not so secretly to share snacks and other items with little regard for sanitizing. The protocols related to physical distancing and mask wearing are swiftly abandoned until those who rely on public transportation for example, make an equally rapid return to compliance.

Amazingly, the children without masks are often observed walking through the city alongside adults, who in the majority of cases, are themselves masked, minding their own business and seemingly unwilling to engage youngsters on the importance of being more responsible.

What if there are persons with asymptomatic COVID-19 in our community who are as yet undetected and roaming the streets? In just one day, if allowed to 'just be children' without the benefit of guidance and being held accountable, a chance encounter with an infected per-

son could put hundreds at risk.

That exposed child could pass the virus on to their parents at home who could in turn pass it on to others they come into contact with at work or in other settings. That student could pass on the virus on to teachers, cleaners and other students all because as part of their after school time, without a mask and with relaxed protocols they may have unknowingly been exposed to an infected individual.

The solution is not to lock away our children. Rather we must make a concerted effort at the community level to educate through dialogue to ensure that our youngsters understand that observing COVID-19 protocols are not suspended in the afternoon when they leave the school yard, to only resume in settings which they feel compelled to fall in line.

As parents and members of the wider community, we must also serve as examples and ensure that we too observe the protocols that we demand they submit to.

Our success is theirs and ensuring that, as a nation, we all comply with health protocols, benefits us all. If students are allowed to roam freely with no care for their role and responsibility in averting the domestic spread of the coronavirus, it is the nation that will pay. Contact tracing in a scenario such as the one described will be all but impossible. Commercial activity will again grind to a devastating halt. Why? Because as a nation we would have failed miserably at addressing the still very manageable problem of our children not so innocently commingling at school.

We urgently need to serious review how our children, our students, the nation's youth engage in afterschool activities across the City.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH TIPS

2

Keep physically active! Research suggests that increased physical activity, even when begun later in life reduces overall breast cancer risk by about 10 - 30%. All it takes is moderate exercise, 30 minutes a day, five days a week, to reduce the risk.

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Carifesta XV postponed

The 15th edition of the Caribbean Festival of Arts (CARIFESTA), scheduled this year for Antigua and Barbuda, has been postponed.

The decision was made following consultations between the Government of Antigua and Barbuda and the CARICOM Secretariat.

The postponement of CARIFESTA XV comes in the wake of the continued challenges surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and its prolonged and devastating impact on the economies of Antigua and Barbuda and its Caribbean Community neighbours.

CARIFESTA XV was scheduled for August 12th to 22nd 2021. It will now be staged August 11 – 21, 2022.

Following the decision, Minister responsible for Festivals, Daryll Matthew, said the effects of COVID-19 took their toll on the biennial event which brings together the region's best in arts, entertainment and fashion.

"There may be those persons who ask, with CARIFESTA ten to eleven months away, why are we taking the decision to postpone now when in a few months a vaccine may be found for COVID? The reason is simple: our ability to host CARIFESTA is dependent on a few things. It is dependent on the financial support we can get for our international partners and that support, for which we had great expectations, has now been diverted

to COVID relief efforts. It is dependent on the ability of the country to finance the event and again, that financing that would have been used to keep the country afloat and to keep people employed," Matthew explained.

Minister Matthew is of the view that with the virus affecting every nation economically, the ability for delegations to travel to St. John's will also likely be hampered.

"In 2019, there were approximately two thousand persons who traveled to Trinidad and Tobago for CARIFESTA. That is two thousand artists, performers et cetera who traveled to Trinidad and Tobago. We expected similar numbers for CARIFESTA in St John's, however, we are of the view that the ability of countries to send delegations will be compromised by the very fact that those countries are struggling financially and are expected to struggle for at least another year. We are all in the same boat. As a result of this, we took a very pragmatic decision in collaboration and consultation with our partners to postpone," he explained.

As far as preparations were concerned, Antigua and Barbuda was well advanced, confirmed the Minister of Festivals.

"We were well ahead of the game. A lot of the preliminary work had been done. The vast majority of the programming, the scheduling

of events had been done and the heavy part of the work, which would be the build out of the infrastructure, was to have started almost immediately. That part would have depended on the availability of funds and financing. Therefore, while we were ahead of the game compared with other CARIFESTA's, we certainly were staring down the 'barrel of a gun' where our inability to attract that international financing due to COVID and even local financing was being stymied simply because of this crisis and our ability to retrofit some of our venues such

as the Multipurpose Cultural Centre, has been severely compromised," he remarked.

Assistant Secretary General of the CARICOM Secretariat, Dr. Douglas Slater, supported the decision of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda in postponing the festival. In doing so, Dr. Slater, who is a regional public health official, spoke to the impact of the pandemic on the countries in the region. He also expressed the hope and expectation that at the end of this crisis, the region will emerge stronger and better than before.

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Andre Matthias joins the board at CARILEC

APUA's Electricity Business Manager, Andre Matthias, was elected to the Board of Directors of the Caribbean Electric Utility Services Corporation (CARILEC) during its annual general meeting (AGM).

A CARILEC press release said the newly elected Board of Directors will present

visionary leadership, extensive expertise, vital institutional knowledge and valuable experience, which are all pivotal in the implementation of the corporation's strategic direction for the period 2020 to 2023.

The virtual AGM was held on Zoom on September 23rd, 2020.



Andre Matthias

LIAT's return almost certain

It is almost certain now that the Antigua-based regional carrier, LIAT, will return to the skies, perhaps as early as next month.

This is the latest update from Cabinet spokesman, Minister of Information, Melford Nicholas, who said the positive news was passed on to the Cabinet by Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

"The conditions are that LIAT will be able to take to the skies in the new month [November]. I won't hazard a precise date as there are operational issues to be worked out, but from our information, it's a question of when, not if, that LIAT will fly again," Nicholas declared.

Nicholas made the disclosure on Thursday morning during the post-Cabinet press briefing while addressing a question related to the coming 'Travel Bubble' that is being established between Barbados and the OECS territories.

"The Travel Bubble augurs well for LIAT for it



means that people will be able to move with a degree of freedom within the region," he indicated.

Nicholas added that Antigua and Barbuda is essentially a Caribbean metropolis in the context of the number of Caribbean nationals who have made the country their home.

He suggested too that the limitations on the movement of people within the region due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has likely resulted in 'pent-up' demand for intra-regional travel.

LIAT halted all commercial flights on April 4 this year when most of the countries within its network closed their borders to guard against the coronavirus.

Already in dire financial straits prior to the lockdown, the pandemic only served to worsen LIAT's problems.

This led to most of the airline's shareholder governments agreeing to liquidate the heavily indebted airline after they were unable to agree on providing another

financial bailout for the airline. Antigua and Barbuda's prime minister, Gaston Browne, single handedly launched a campaign to save LIAT from certain death by proposing the reorganisation of the airline.

Several hundred of LIAT's staff who are based in St. John's contribute significantly to Antigua and Barbuda's economy through Medical Benefits, Social Security, Education Levy and other statutory and private spending activities.

WIOC, NAMCO and the Sunshine Car Park

By Shelton Daniel

West Indies Oil Company (WIOC) is one of Antigua and Barbuda's most resounding success stories and a landmark achievement following the major economic damage visited upon the country by an earthquake in the mid-1970s.

This was the view expressed by Ambassador Lionel Hurst, Chief of Staff to Prime Minister Gaston Browne, as he spoke on Thursday during the weekly post-Cabinet press briefing.

Hurst went on to state that Antigua and Barbuda emerged even stronger from the 1974 earthquake, with an economy that grew significantly larger in the years following the disaster.

Minister of Information, Melford Nicholas, who also addressed the post-Cabinet press briefing, stated that there is no better example than WIOC of Prime Minister Gaston Browne's economic and investment model of entrepreneurial socialism, because, while government holds the majority of WIOC's shares at 51 percent, it has allowed the two other private sector investment partners in the company to oversee the day-to-day operation and management of the company.

Nicholas said when it comes to the oil company, what the government "demands and what it draws from WIOC would be its profits and its dividends, and of course, the other items

with which it is able to tax the trade".

Elaborating on this, he went on, "For example, the government benefits tremendously from the bunker services, the bunker charges that are applied to the trade in petroleum products from West Indies Oil Company."

Nicholas said the "legal-ese" was still being worked on with respect to the National Asset Management Company (NAMCO), of which he is Deputy Chairman, to ensure that NAMCO holds the interests of the government in West Indies Oil Company."

He promised that, "In the fullness of time, once the legal framework is completed, we will hold the interest of the government in the West Indies Oil Company. So, from a standpoint of the dividends that have flowed from

West Indies Oil Company, that has gone into the coffers of NAMCO and NAMCO is then in a position to further invest that money, which we would have done in Blue Oceans [a marine dredging company] and which we are now moving to complete the St. John's car park hub, at least phase one."

Nicholas continued that he was also, "...happy to state that in another few days we would have completed the contractual arrangement for the company that is providing the elevator shaft to start that work."

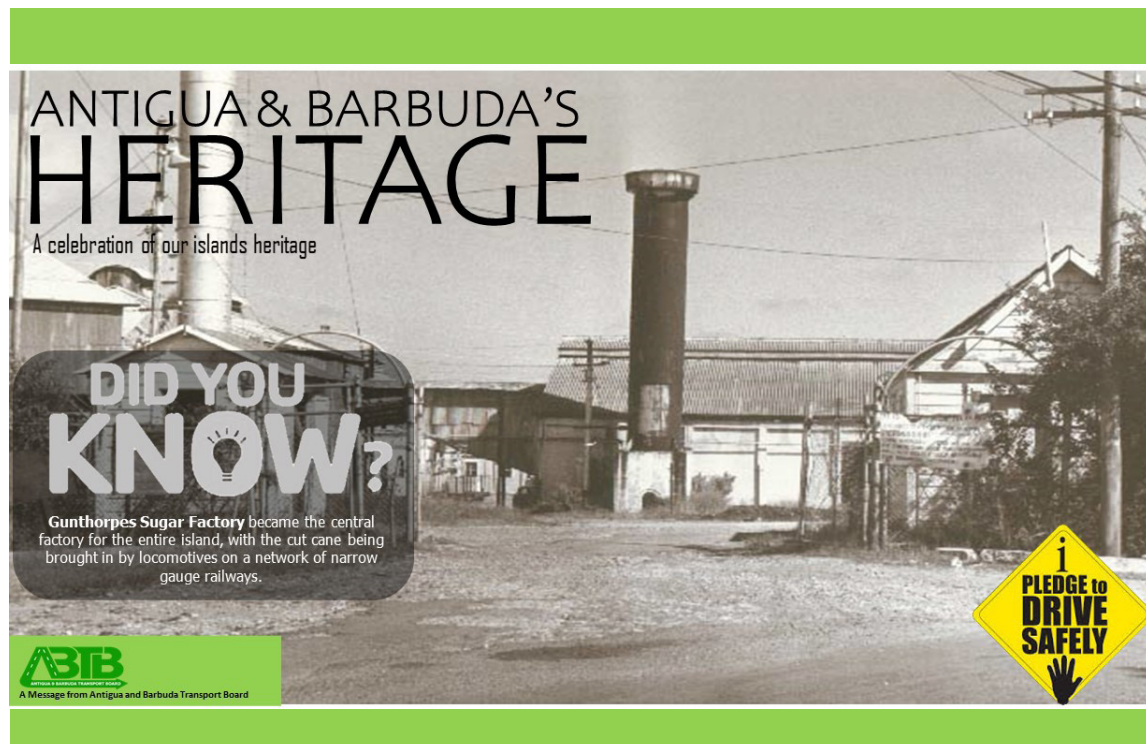
He added, "In the not too distant future, subject to the directions of the Tenders' Board, a general contractor will be selected from among a set of three qualified contractors, and that general contractor will be given the keys

to pursue the completion of the car park."

The Minister of Information further clarified that he was addressing, "...the area where there is an allocation of 250 parking slots within the car park. Parallel to that will also be the implementation of electronic parking meters in areas of St. John's to complement the revenue streams for the car park hub, because 250 parking spots are not sufficient to be able to deal with the overall development plan of that particular area."

He disclosed that estimates and projections indicated it would require about \$30 million to complete the entire car park project and other associated aspects.

Nicholas further revealed that NAMCO intends to set up its own headquarters inside the car park building.



ANTIGUA & BARBUDA'S HERITAGE
 A celebration of our islands heritage

DID YOU KNOW?
 Gunthorpes Sugar Factory became the central factory for the entire island, with the cut cane being brought in by locomotives on a network of narrow gauge railways.

ABTB
 A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board

PLEASE TO DRIVE SAFELY

Strong digital bridge to connect Antigua with Barbuda

By Shelton Daniel

Barbuda will feature very prominently in discussions concerning the country's development over the next four to six months, according to Information Minister Melford Nicholas.

Word of this came on Thursday morning as Nicholas reported to the press on Cabinet's discussions during their weekly meeting.

Although it was not reflected in the Cabinet briefing notes, Nicholas said he had indicated to his colleagues that he is: "In receipt of a quotation from the platform company that gave us the Land Registry [for Barbuda] even as we are completing the reconciliation of our own Land Registry here [in Antigua]. I am going to be in negotiations with them fairly shortly to finalize arrangements to start the Land Registry in Barbuda."

Nicholas reminded that during the

next sitting of Parliament, the government will move to repeal a limiting provision in the Barbuda Land Act Amendment of 2017, which will pave the way for all Antiguan and Barbudans to purchase land on the sister isle.

He continued that the Peace, Love and Happiness (PLH) project on Barbuda would be, "...a pretty significant part of the conversations going forward, because as we improve the infrastructure in Barbuda to make life a lot easier for persons living [there], I have already given an indication to the Hon. Trevor Walker that as the government moves to digitize its operations fully, every digital facet that is made available to citizens here in Antigua will also be given to the citizens who reside in Barbuda."

Nicholas pointed out that the current situation results in, "...a lot of friction for Barbudans who have need to ac-

quire basic services from the government."

He expressed hope that, "With the completion of the civil registry, in particular, when Barbudans need to have access to their birth or marriage records, or any other records, it is a matter that can be facilitated online."

He added, "Even the investments APUA is making in the further IT infrastructure will ensure that there is a subsea fiber connection between Antigua and Barbuda that will bring increased security, increased communication and connectivity between the two islands."

The Gaston Browne-led Antigua Barbuda Labour Party administration has repeatedly articulated and signaled its policy to, as much as possible, provide equity in the standard of living and access to services for residents of Barbuda that is on par with that which

Cabinet, gov't departments participate in Water Day

Members of the Cabinet of Ministers, and the staff of at least two government departments, have participated in the first annual edition of Water Day.

The event is organized by Member of Parliament for St. Paul, E. P. Chet Greene, as part of the constituency's annual Health Month activities.

Water Day is observed every Wednesday during the month of October.

On Wednesday this week, Greene was joined by his Cabinet colleagues in drinking water in order to set an example to the nation regarding the importance of drinking adequate amounts of water daily.

Staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and



the Immigration Department, for which Greene holds ministerial responsibility, also participated in the event.



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Three new COVID-19 cases confirmed

Three new cases of the COVID-19 virus have been confirmed by health officials in Antigua and Barbuda.

Overnight, the Ministry of Health reported that Mount St. John Medical Center (MSJMC) and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) disclosed three new laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda as of Wednesday 7th October 2020 at 6:00 pm.

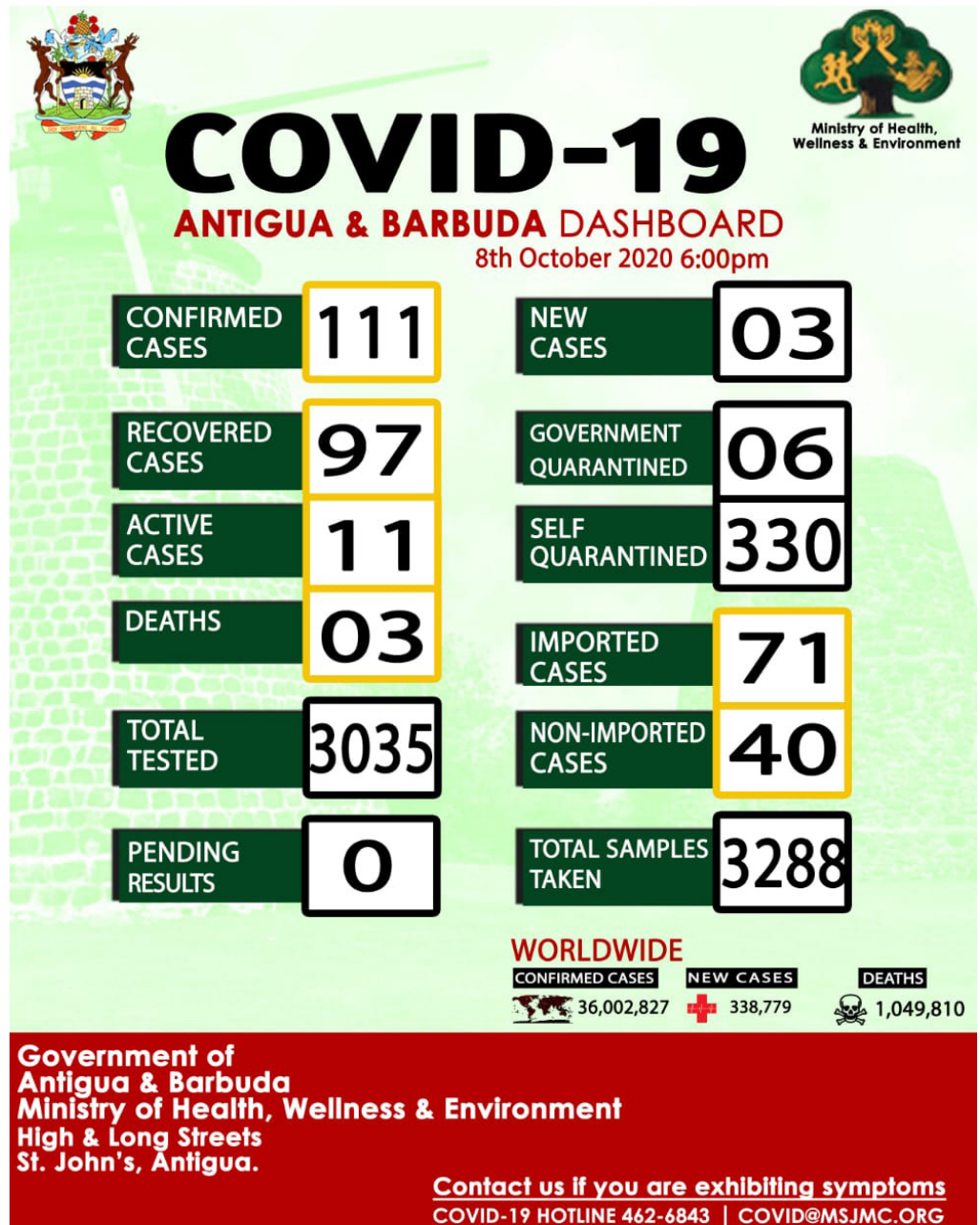
Subsequent to the publication of the dashboard on Wednesday 7, October, with the cut off time of 6:00 pm, twenty-six samples were processed at the Mount St. John's Medical Center's Laboratory which increased the pending results from ten to thirty-six.

All twenty-six samples processed by MSJMC yielded negative results and are reflected in the total samples taken and total tested columns of the dashboard.

Of the ten samples processed by CARPHA, three returned positive while seven were negative.

Consequently, the total number of persons with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda is one hundred and eleven (111) with eleven (11) active cases.

The dashboard has been updated to reflect these changes.



Governor General keeps in touch with students

Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams, is staying in touch with young people as Antigua and Barbuda continues to deal with the effects of the pandemic.

Government House announced that Sir Rodney convened an online meeting

with children who attend the Christian Union Junior Academy during a Social Studies study period.

"The interactive experience enabled the children to learn about the constitutional, legislative, social cohesion and ceremonial roles

of the Governor General in Antigua and Barbuda. The thirty-seven students and teachers also had the opportunity to field questions to His Excellency," said a statement from Government House.

At the end of the session,

the students and teachers expressed gratitude to Governor General Williams for making their Social Studies experience more meaningful.

Sir Rodney is currently undertaking the historical restoration of Government House and a health and wellness campaign involving Government House staff and the Antiguan and Barbudan public.

PM Browne accepts Commonwealth Finance Ministers chairmanship

Commonwealth Finance Ministers (CFM) are calling on the G20, Paris Club, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to take meaningful steps to improve access to financing and debt sustainability.

A virtual meeting held on Wednesday, which included the participation of Antigua and Barbuda's Finance Minister, Prime Minister Gaston Browne, specifically called on the G20 to extend its Debt Suspension Initiative (DSSI) beyond 2020.

The joint statement also

called on the Paris Club to develop innovative debt instruments which can provide additional liquidity to vulnerable states. Multilateral development banks are also challenged to be more flexible in their approach to financing to create easier paths to access funding.

"The timing of the statement is of critical importance. G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors are preparing for a meeting on 14th October. At that meeting major decisions on the DSSI, including

an extension and expansion of the eligibility criteria to include all small and vulnerable countries, will be tabled. Under current rules, only low-income countries are eligible for the DSSI. Five member states of the Commonwealth are members of the G20," a release from the Office of the Prime Minister said.

Prime Minister Browne, and colleague ministers from the Commonwealth Caribbean, were united in their call for a revised financial architecture. The minis-

ters called for financial support to be made available to all small, vulnerable nations facing the significant and widespread economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Citing the current experiences of Antigua and Barbuda as it grapples with a decline in revenue from tourism and keeps an eye on the existential threats posed by climate change, Prime Minister Browne proposed the creation of, "bespoke instruments that respond with urgency and flexibility to the realities faced by small, vulnerable states".

The meeting also explored matters concerning fiscal sustainability and opportunities to drive resilient growth and job creation in the blue and green economy and smart agriculture.

In accepting the nomination to serve as the new Chairman of the CFM, Prime Minister Browne stated: "It is with a sense of grave responsibility I accept this nomination on behalf of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda. As diverse as the Commonwealth is, all its members, whether big and small, rich or poor, have been adversely affected by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has, however, given us new opportunities to reset our perspectives, create fresh approaches and achieve more desirable outcomes for the benefit of

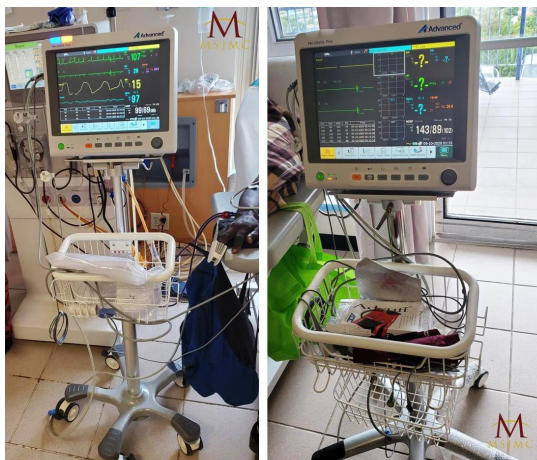
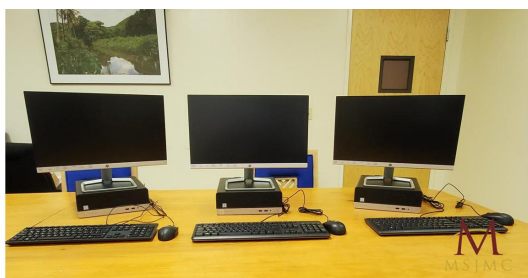
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Gillespie Foundation makes donation to MSJMC

The Gillespie Foundation recently made a financial donation to the Mount St. John's Medical Centre which was used to assist in the purchase of additional equipment to support the hospital's renal services.

A MSJMC statement said the donation of more than EC\$32,000 was used to purchase two cardiac monitors and three computers for the dialysis unit.

"It has been known that patients with end stage renal disease are at significant risk for cardiac arrhythmias and sudden death. Having these cardiac monitors gives us the ability to better monitor our patients," Nephrologist, Dr. Ian Thomas, as he expressed thanks to the Gillespie Foundation.



"The Gillespie Foundation is thrilled to make its first official donation to the Renal Ward at Mount St. John's Medical Centre," said the Gillespie Foundation's Co-Director, Robert Gillespie.

"More than any other year in living memory, all around the world we have seen the importance of hospitals and the wonderful teams that make them run. So there can be no worthier cause in the midst of a pandemic than doing our small bit to support Antigua's top medical facility."

Webinar to focus on restarting the cruise sector

Seven months after the cruise industry grounded to a screeching halt with the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, industry officials are beginning to explore how this critical sector of tourism can resume.

The Antigua Cruise Port has announced that it has partnered with Destinations Together, a grassroots tourism support organization, to share a free 90-minute 'Cruise Tourism Readiness' webinar with the public next Tuesday.

"This comprehensive presentation, entitled 'Inspiring the Restart of Cruise Tourism: Antigua & Barbuda Together' has been developed specifically for businesses and residents of Antigua and Barbuda and will provide thoughtful insights to encourage tourism and travel related businesses to prepare for the re-launch of the local cruise tourism industry," an ACP release said.

The webinar will also focus on the contributions that each member of the public makes to the guest experience during their interactions with visitors, no matter how insignificant they may initially appear.

This event has received the support of the Antigua & Barbuda Tourism Authority.

Tourism Minister, Charles Fernandez, will provide opening remarks.

General Manager of Antigua Cruise Port, Dona Regis-Prosper, meantime, is encouraging widespread public participation in the event. She also expressed optimism about the future of the cruise



industry.

"From a cruise industry perspective, the business outlook for the next few months appears much more positive than it has for most of this year. In August, the MSC Grandiosa sailed through various European ports on the first European cruise voyage undertaken since the voluntary suspension of cruise services in March."

She added that Valletta Cruise Port, which is one of the cruise ports in the Global Ports Holding family, was among the ports of call included in this trip.

"The Valletta team's participation in this voyage allowed our company to test our health and safety protocols, demonstrating that a safe return to cruising is possible for all stakeholders; passengers, crew, and the communities they visit.

U.S. cruise line counterparts are also considering restarting cruise travel very soon," she revealed.

Regis-Prosper emphasized that it is incumbent upon the country as a destination and a community to strategically prepare for the return of guests.

"While implementing COVID-19 health protocols is extremely important, we must also be mindful of how we interact with guests during this 'new normal'. The Destinations Together presentation focuses on this aspect of the customer journey. How do we set our destination apart from our competitors? How do we ensure that guests want to return and that they spread the word about how wonderful their experience in Antigua & Barbuda was despite changes implemented due to COVID-19?" she stated.

Regis-Prosper expressed the view that a huge key to the destination's future success lies in how it serves its guests. She added that the webinar will help all stakeholders to maintain this mindset in anticipation of the restart of cruise tourism.

cont'd from pg 9

all, and especially the most vulnerable. The Commonwealth must use its competitive advantage of having such a diverse membership and a relatively united platform to champion reform."

Prime Minister Browne was joined at the meeting by Financial Secretary, Whitfield Harris, Antigua and Barbuda's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, H. E. Karen-Mae Hill and Political and Trade Attaché at the High Commission, Ideka Dowe.

Stop paying lip service to customer service

By Marcella André

In a year as extraordinary as 2020, there have been many reasons to reflect and recalibrate. Businesses have found themselves returning to the drawing board on many fronts; among them their delivery of Customer Service.

The first week of October is recognised as Customer Service Week internationally. This year, the week deserves even more recognition as it comes at a time when customer experience providers have been forced to perform at their very best while managing their own personal circumstances within a global pandemic. In a short space of time, individuals have had to adjust to wildly unfamiliar processes, adjusted work conditions, unimaginable schedules, lockdowns, quarantines, the threat of potentially contracting COVID-19 and fewer options to release the accompanying stress.

What better time to reflect on our customer service practices than now?

Ours is a country that survives on tourism. Most hotels are now open for the tourist season. Too often however, businesses forget that when the tourist dollar is at risk, as it has been this year, local dollars are all you've got. As such, cultivating customer centric

businesses should be for all times, all seasons and for ALL. If you are a business owner, or leading a team of service professionals, now is the time to consider how customers experience your products, your service and your brand promise.

Customers want solutions, convenience and ease. They expect that package to be wrapped in respect, pleantry and integrity. If any of those components is missing, be assured that another business in your industry is offering the full package with the customer at the heart of each decision.

With the way news travels today, especially with digital media, finding a better option is a swipe or click away. Every business is trying to attract new customers and hoping to hold on to loyal ones.

The stores are a bit emptier, leisure and luxury spending have taken a back seat, and people are guarding their dollars ferociously. Even necessary expenditure is being reevaluated for additional cuts. How your customers feel when they support your business is the critical factor to sustaining their loyalty even in these tough times. Without a customer, your business ceases to exist.

To focus on your customer in the right way, you must



Marcella André

first turn the focus within. Whatever your employees live, breathe and experience within your business, they are likely to pass on to those outside the business.

Do you promote a culture of customer-centricity? Is there a plan to cultivate this culture within your business?

Have your employees been oriented to the culture? Is this culture practiced and modelled within the halls, corridors and c-suites of your company?

If the answer to any of these questions is no, then seize this moment. The opportunity to redesign your culture with the focus on your customer's needs should be explored and embraced.

As this 2020 observation of Customer Service Week

comes to an end, make it a point to celebrate your internal customers - your team. They are the body, heart and soul of your business. Celebration can take many forms: a paid for experience, a surprise event, team lunches. Be creative as you continue to cultivate a culture that attracts your next customer, remember to show gratitude to your loyal customers who have supported you through thick and thin.

Marcella André is CEO and Principal Consultant of Nia Comms. Among her Consultancy's flagship offerings is the delivery of tailored Customer Service Training. Find her on Facebook, Instagram or at marcellaandre@niacomms.com www.niacomms.com

Dodging the China question

(The writer is Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the U.S. and the OAS. 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 view expressed are entirely his own)

Of all the questions that both Kamala Harris and Mike Pence dodged during the U.S. Vice Presidential debate on October 7, the most revealing concerned China.

Susan Page, the moderator, from the publication, "USA Today", put a clear question to Pence and Harris in turn: "We have no more complicated or consequential foreign relationship than the one with China. It is a huge market for American agricultural goods.

It's a potential partner in dealing with climate change and with North Korea; and, in a video tonight, President Trump again, blamed it for the Coronavirus saying China will pay... how would you describe our fundamental relationship with China: Competitors? Adversaries? Enemies?"

Apart from being very categorical, in keeping with President Trump's position, that "China is to blame for the coronavirus", and "China had been taking advantage of America for decades", Vice President Pence did not say whether China was a competitor, adversary or enemy of the U.S.

Senator Harris was no clearer in her response. She said President Trump's trade war with China "resulted in the loss of over 300,000 manufacturing jobs and a manufacturing recession, and the American consumer paid thousands of dollars more for goods because of that failed war".

She added that, "Pew, a reputable research firm has done an analysis that shows that leaders of all of our formerly allied countries have now decided that they hold in greater esteem and respect Xi Jinping, the head of the Chinese communist party, than they do Donald Trump".

From these answers, it is little wonder that people in the U.S. have no clear picture of their country's relationship with China. The real situation is far more complex, and both Pence and Harris know it.

The U.S. and China are the two largest economies in the world. They have an inter-dependent relationship not only in bilateral trade and investment, but in the maintenance of a stable global economy that serves both their interests for markets and supply of raw materials that neither of them has.

Both Pence and Harris know that it is not in the interest of the U.S. to encourage hostility with China. They both dodged the question because they each weighed their answers on a narrow, 'po-



By Sir Ronald Sanders

litical opportunity' basis.

Pence's response fed prejudice against Chinese, and Harris' answer nurtured a sentiment of horror that an American leader could be less respected than a Chinese 'communist'. Neither of them set-out a clear and constructive strategy for relations with China.

The absence of a China strategy is also obvious in the 15-nation Caribbean Community (CARICOM) whose membership is divided between recognition of China and Taiwan. Nine of the 14 independent CARICOM states have diplomatic relations with China, and five others with Taiwan.

Once this division remains, there can be no "CARICOM Strategy" on China.

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Although, as I have argued in other writings, CARICOM, by now, should have negotiated a formal collective partnership with China that covers the terms of trade, investment, labour practices (including the use of imported Chinese workers for projects); competition; and dispute settlement through independent machinery.

Instead, the nine CARICOM countries have an ad-hoc relationship with China that is characterised by Chinese investment and loans, as well as a trade surplus in China's favour.

The increased presence of Chinese companies in the 9 CARICOM countries as well as their importation of Chinese labour for their projects have caused resentment in local populations. These concerns have not been adequately addressed.

The ground for growing anti-Chinese sentiment has been fertilized recently by statements from high representatives of the U.S. government. These include questioning the value of Chinese money if it

"feeds corruption and undermines your rule of law", and calling for investments to be examined "if in fact they ruin your environment, and don't create jobs for your people". Ahead of the March 22 meeting between President Trump and leaders of five Caribbean countries - Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica and St. Lucia - a White House spokesperson said one of its aims was to "counter China's predatory economic practices."

Within CARICOM countries, these unsubstantiated statements appeal to prejudiced-thinking in certain sections of the societies. This thinking could be tempered by better information.

Misapprehension lingers because governments have failed to inform their people fully. For example, the amount of money borrowed from China to finance much-needed infrastructural projects, is considerably reduced by using Chinese labour.

It is also little known that China, as a donor state, contributes to regional econo-

mies through its membership of the Caribbean Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, and as a Permanent Observer to the Organization of American States. Its investment outreach to the Caribbean is not only bilateral; it is also multilateral.

Many – if not all – of these matters could be addressed in a transparent and balanced manner if CARICOM countries could jointly negotiate a partnership agreement with China as they have done with the European Union. Further, joint CARICOM negotiations, using the leverage available to the entire region would be more advantageous than national bargaining where China would be in a much stronger position.

This observation equally applies to the CARICOM relationship with the U.S. which is no less ad-hoc and lacking in regional strategy.

The U.S. enjoys a perennial trade surplus with Caribbean countries that topped \$4 billion in 2019, notwithstanding preferences for a narrow range of goods exported by

some CARICOM countries.

While the U.S. has withdrawn from offering loans and investments to the majority of Caribbean nations, and International Financial Institutions have disqualified many of them from concessional financing, China filled the gap with soft loans and, in some instances, grants particularly in the struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic.

From 2006 to 2015, under the George W. Bush and Barack Obama Administrations, while expressing concern about China's influence in the region, the U.S. generally viewed China's engagement with the region positively, regarding it as a contributor to economic growth. Such collaboration with Caribbean participation would be beneficial to all.

CARICOM countries need joint strategies toward the U.S. and China. They should be based on being partners not pawns in any game of competition, rivalry, or enmity.

Response and previous commentaries: www.sirronaldsanders.com



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Creativity amidst COVID-19

The paucity of entertainment and the absence of major summer festivals including Carnival in Antigua and Caribana in Barbuda, has significantly impacted the volume of music being produced.

It is therefore a delight to see the varied productions that have emerged to make their mark in the creative industry locally and in the diaspora.

Recently, musician, Andrew Dorsett, shared his thoughts on the need for artists to move to releasing new material all year round.

“Music isn’t seasonal. Creative endeavours aren’t seasonal. Musicians are making a massive mistake if they wait for some sort of normalcy to return before releasing music. What if normalcy

doesn’t happen again?” were the thoughts which followed that resonating question.

Song writer and artist, MJ, shared Dorsett’s view adding that it is important to continue to produce material in these challenging times to stay relevant. He continued that it is now, more than ever, important to ensure that fans know that he remains committed to producing hits to follow his wildly successful song, *Mating Season*.

Ricardo Drue emphasized the importance of bringing new music to the fore. He released ‘Homesick’ about three months ago. The song, he said, is relevant to the pandemic and to keeping him forefront in the mins of his fans. While touring may now be out the question, he



said producing new music has also helped him to generate income earning opportunities, even though on a much smaller scale.

During a recent discussion with PointeXpress’ On The Spot, Drew said he is currently in the studio producing new music and forging partnerships to ensure that his platform stays active and keeps fans entertained.

NEW RELEASES - Dorsett, under his Smilus Global Media label, recently produced, mixed and mastered four songs on his *Young Blood Riddim* featuring local artists. Just Because by Lauren, Vybing by Jukey Dan, SOS by Set On and

Summertime by Lyrical Red. Visit <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZ6j4kmX-PJsvfGBOV9rgoAg> to get the latest releases from Smilus Global Media.

Murphy Charles, or MJ is set to release *Thought That Counts* following on his hit *Mating Season* which was released on October 13, 2020.

Ricardo Drue continues to make an international name for himself. He is six days away from the October 15 release of *Jumbie Walk* featuring Grenadian artists Lil Natty, Thunda and Dash.

The countdown is also on to the release of Ras Juba’s first single *Rastafari Souljahs* on October 16, 2020.



St. Lucia moves to legislate local music airtime

Radio stations in St. Lucia could soon be legally required to play mostly regional music.

Prime Minister Allan Chastenet made the announcement during a media appearance on October 6.

Chastenet said, “I have asked the Minister of Creative Industries to start dialogue with the entertainers as well as the different radio stations because we would like to pass an Act or a law here which would make and compel that

50% of the music played by the local radio stations to come from the OECS.”

He indicated that the OECS has more than sufficient quality music to make such a mandate easy to meet and added that his government is committed to moving this agenda forward in the shortest possible time.

Prime Minister Chastenet’s proposal was favorably received by St. Lucian producers and entertainers amidst the call for more consultation.

Nigel Nicholas, Manager of St. Lucia’s Real FM, in expression support for the proposal indicated, “We need to understand that the arts industry, the music industry, we need more. We can contribute more to the economy, but we don’t have much focus on us.”

He sees the move to mandate more local content as opening the door for local artists to increase their earnings through more opportunities to earn royalties and

cont’d on pg 15



Kaiso Sessions on Pointe FM

Pointville Communications Inc. has partnered with the Qualadli Kaiso Collaborative to provide a dedicated platform for airing local calypso.

The partnership is in keeping with our collective mission to contribute to taking the calypso art form in Antigua and Barbuda to the next level.

The origins of calypso go back to the tradition of storytelling by African griots. The griots had a depth of knowledge and were trained to excel as orators, lyricists, and musicians.

They played a key role in West African society and their stories of family lineages and the rise and fall of great African empires, for example, were passed down through generations.

This tradition was first brought to the Caribbean by the enslaved Africans and adapted by their experiences. Calypso was a means of encoded communication for

the enslaved which was used to voice discontent, ridicule the slave masters and organise attempts to dismantle the imbalanced social construct of the time.

Calypso is multifaceted. In Inward Stretch Outward Reach, the late Rex Nettleford pointed out that this Caribbean art form influenced world music in the post-war era.

It is a genre of complaint, protest, recrimination, ridicule, humor and yes, even praise. It has challenged, for example, plantation slavery, colonialism, and political corruption in the era of independence.

Nettleford described it as social surgery on a lopsided society, offering commentary on socio-political and economic issues from multiple perspectives.

Calypso, which might even be improvised or extemporized as time and place dictate, might not necessarily be

prescriptive. Nevertheless, it raises the national consciousness and provides an opportunity for reflection, discourse, and action.

It therefore has the capacity to facilitate conflict management and even resolution. Calypso bears witness to a country's history and socio-cultural evolution, ensuring that the events of the past are documented for posterity.

In recent years, we have seen the threat of time and generational change affect the art form. Some have described calypso as an endangered musical species.

For example, there was a time, not too long ago, when the Calypso Monarch Competition was a cornerstone of Antigua's Carnival.

Underlying challenges which have contributed to declining interest in calypso include the influence of other music genres - hip hop, R&B, rap, and dance hall - the rising popularity of

calypso offshoots including jam band, jumpy and groovy soca, 'unofficial' censorship of calypsos by influential stakeholders, self-censorship by calypsonians who fear repercussion and the pervasive culture of distraction that modern technology has brought.

Calypso as a cultural art form is a commonality we share with several other Caribbean nations and it continues to serve as a unifying force in the region.

It also has a role as a cultural vehicle in our youth's education. Consider the powerful impact of history lessons like *Slave by Sparrow*, Haiti by David Rudder, or Vivian Richards by King Short Shirt.

Indeed, Dr. Knolly Clarke, the former Dean of Holy Trinity Cathedral, Port of Spain, warned against the commercialisation of soca at the expense of calypso and the risk of throwing "the baby out with the bath water" if the latter is allowed to die.

It is envisioned that the Monday feature, 'Kaiso Sessions' on Pointe FM 99.1 from 2pm to 3pm daily will serve to entertain and educate our community, while strengthening our cultural foundations.

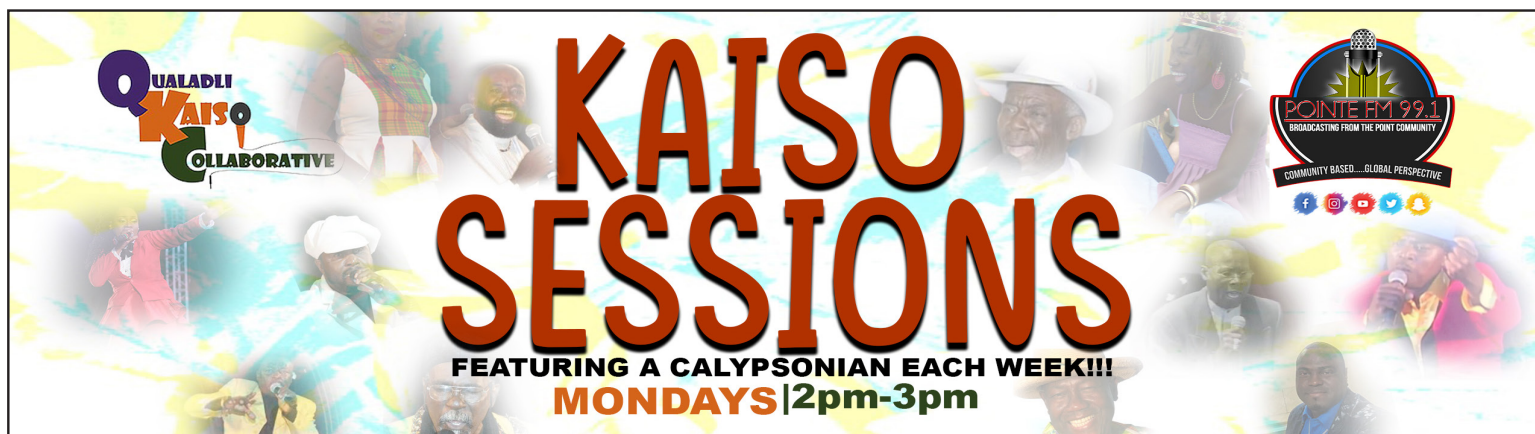
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more exposure, leading to the retention and circulation of money in the domestic economy.

Artists are being encouraged to learn how to copyright music and how to use technology platforms to maximise music sales. This will go a long way to complement the efforts at the

policy and legislative level to prioritise local content.

The overall objective of the initiative is to deliberately cultivate efforts to prioritise the artists and music of the OECS region in order to ensure that the industry contributes more to the wealth creation of the region and empowerment of artists.



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November 5 election date set for St. Vincent & the Grenadines

(Caribbean Nation- al Weely) The people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will go to the polls on November 5 in a general election.

Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves who is seeking his fifth consecutive term, made the announcement during a meeting of his ruling Unity Labour Party (ULP).

The Prime Min-

ister, 74, will go up against opponents from the main opposition New Democratic Party (NDP) led by Opposition Leader Dr. Godwin Friday for control of the 15 seat Parliament.

In the December 2015 general election, the ruling ULP won by an 8-7 margin, enjoying the same slender one-seat majority in the previous election



Guyana earns over \$30B in rice exports

(Guyana Chronicle) GUYANA has earned over \$30 billion (US \$144,178,325) from 343,068 tonnes of rice exported during the period January to August 2020.

The exports increased by six per cent in volume and seven per cent in value when compared to the 325,052 tonnes sold for the same period last year.

General Manager of the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB), Nizam Hassan, explained that there have been increases in several blocks where produce was delivered.

For those CARICOM countries including Dominica, St. Vincent and Jamaica, over 50,000 tonnes of rice was shipped at a cost of over US \$25 million, compared to the 44,355 tonnes sold during January to August 2019.

Guyana has earned more than US\$66 million from January to August 2020 for shipments to the European Union. In 2019, sales to the same



General Manager of the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB), Nizam Hassan

location earned US \$56 million, after 158,751 tonnes of rice was exported.

When 2019 and 2020 exports to Latin America are compared, statistics shows an eight and nine per cent decrease in volume and value respectively. Hassan said this is because Cuba did not receive any exports this year, while exports to countries such as Panama and Honduras decreased.

“But notwithstanding, there are oth-

er countries in which we did well. For example, we have sent 11,754 tonnes of rice to Colombia, compared to 2,204 tonnes in 2019. Exports to Venezuela was 90,328 this year, and last year for the same period, we sold 74,912 tonnes,” he said.

Additionally, last year, the United States of America received 256 tonnes of rice, but the shipping amount increased to 3,006 tonnes this year.

St Kitts PM Harris: Don't get complacent like T&T, Barbados

(LoopTT) St. Kitts and Nevis' Prime Minister, Dr Timothy Harris is warning his citizens not to 'get complacent like T&T and Barbados' in their fight against COVID-19.

With the date for the full reopening of St Kitts and Nevis' borders to visitors and returning nationals drawing closer, he said residents should prepare for a dramatic increase in returning nationals and visitors in November and December.

During Tuesday's edition of Leadership Matters, Prime Minister Harris said: "I say significant because with our borders closed the arrival and departure numbers are very small. These numbers will definitely climb as the number of flights in and out increases."

The borders were ordered closed on March 25 to minimise the risk of increased cases of COVID-19.

Prime Minister Harris



said it is likely that new infections of COVID-19 will come with the opening of the country's borders but stated that the protocols and guidelines implemented by the Government are intended to minimise that risk and to keep people safe.

"The lesson from Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Trinidad and Tobago and

indeed everywhere, particularly Europe, is that we should never become complacent in our efforts to contain the COVID-19 disease. The best way to do so is to comply with the health protocols."

The Government of St Kitts and Nevis, through the Ministries of Health and Tourism, has been putting a number of additional

measures and protocols in place ahead of the borders being reopened, particularly at the Robert L Bradshaw International Airport.

These include making upgrades to the Welcome Centre on the ramp in front of the arrivals area, converting the VIP Lounge into the medical screening area and constructing sneeze guards on the counters.



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Greater focus on regional agriculture

(CARICOM Today) The CARICOM Development Fund (CDF) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), signed a General Agreement for Technical Cooperation, which will establish a broad framework for collaboration on initiatives geared towards the advancement of agriculture development in the Caribbean region.

While the vital importance of the agricultural sector as a pillar of growth and stability for Caribbean economies has been emphasised by the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on food and nutrition security, most countries in the Caribbean face several systemic constraints on their capacity for sustainable food production.

Many farmers, agro-processors, and other small and medium-sized enterprises in the sector continue to be confronted with challenges to their attempts to scale up production including access to financing, vulnerability to the effects of natural hazards and climate change, limited land space, the satisfaction of international market standards, competition from imports and limited capacity to innovate and adopt best practices.

In addition, the region's high food import bill puts additional strain on foreign exchange reserves.

Solutions call for greater



Chief Executive Officer of the CDF, Rodinald Soomer

efforts at not only increasing levels of production and enhancing productivity among farmers and processors, but also ensuring improved linkages between producers, processors, and buyers of food, including in the tourism sector.

Over the past decade, the CDF has provided in excess of US\$23M indirect financing and technical assistance to the less developed and disadvantaged countries of CARICOM to enhance agricultural production capability, infrastructure, and competitiveness, while IICA has, for almost 78 years, focused on providing technical cooperation of excellence with a view to strengthening institutional capacities of public, private and civil society and supporting the inte-

gration mechanism required to achieve sustainable and equitable agriculture development.

The two agencies have agreed on some strategic areas of cooperation including:

- a) Productivity and competitiveness of the agri-food and agro-tourism sectors;
- b) Territorial development and rural well-being;
- c) Agriculture, climate change and natural resource management;
- d) Food and nutrition security;
- e) Youth and Women's use and control of agricultural assets; and
- f) Technological innovation in agriculture.

"This agreement strengthens our initiatives in the Caribbean countries to increase productivity, add value and

link between producers and local markets, in order

to reduce imports and guarantee the food security of their inhabitants, together with a partner, such as CDF, who knows the region very well", stated the Director-General of IICA, Manuel Otero.

The Chief Executive Officer of the CDF, Rodinald Soomer, highlighted the importance of the partnership with IICA "to the consolidation of CDF's efforts at strengthening the productive base of agriculture in the Caribbean region, as the foundation for increasing the contribution of agriculture to intra-regional trade and economic growth, especially in the disadvantaged countries and regions in the Community."

US imposes new Iran sanctions that may spook European banks

(Reuters) The United States on Thursday slapped fresh sanctions on Iran's financial sector, targeting 18 banks in an effort to further choke off Iranian revenues as Washington ramps up pressure on Tehran weeks ahead of the U.S. election.

The move freezes any U.S. assets of those blacklisted and generally bars Americans from dealing with them, while extending secondary sanctions to those who do business with them. This means foreign banks risk losing access to the U.S. market and financial system.

The Treasury Department said in a statement the prohibitions did not apply to transactions to sell agricultural commodities, food, medicine or medical devices to Iran, saying it understood the need for humanitarian goods.

However, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif accused the United States of targeting Iran's ability to pay for basic necessities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"U.S. regime wants to blow up our remaining channels to pay for food & medicine," Zarif said on Twitter. "Conspiring to starve a population is a crime against humanity."

Iranian Central Bank governor Abdolnaser Hemmati dismissed the sanctions as political propaganda and played down their practical impact.

"Rather than having any economic effect, the American move is for U.S. domestic propaganda and political purposes, and shows the falsity of the human rights and humanitarian claims of U.S. leaders," Hemmati said in a statement.

Analysts said the secondary sanctions may further deter European and other foreign banks from working with Iran, even for permitted humanitarian transactions.



A staff member removes the Iranian flag from the stage after a group picture with foreign ministers and representatives of the U.S., Iran, China, Russia, Britain, Germany, France and the European Union during the Iran nuclear talks at the Vienna International Center in Vienna, Austria July 14, 2015

"It's like a punch in the face to the Europeans, who have gone out of their way to indicate to the Americans that they view it as being extremely threatening to humanitarian assistance or humanitarian trade going to Iran," said Elizabeth Rosenberg of the Center for a New American Security think tank.

"They also want ... to make it very difficult for any future president to be able to unwind these measures and engage in nuclear diplomacy," Rosenberg added, alluding to the possibility that Democratic candidate Joe Biden could defeat Republican President Donald Trump in the Nov. 3 U.S. election.

Biden, who was vice president when the Obama administration negotiated the nuclear accord, has said he would rejoin the deal if Iran first resumed compliance with it.

Tensions between Washington and Tehran have soared since Trump unilaterally withdrew in 2018 from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal struck by his predecessor and began re-imposing U.S. sanctions that had been eased under the

accord.

The sanctions Trump has reinstated target everything from oil sales to shipping and financial activities. While they exempt food, medicine and other humanitarian supplies, many foreign banks are already deterred from doing business with the Islamic Republic - including for humanitarian deals.

Washington's latest move targeted what the Treasury described as 18 major Iranian banks, which were designated under authorities including U.S. Executive Order 13902, which allows the Treasury Department to target entire sectors of the Iranian economy.

It named them as Amin Investment Bank, Bank Keshavarzi Iran, Bank Maskan, Bank Refah Kargaran, Bank-e Shahr, Eghtesad Novin Bank, Gharzolasaneh Resalat Bank, Hekmat Iranian Bank, Iran Zamin Bank, Karafarin Bank, Khavarmianeh Bank, Mehr Iran Credit Union Bank, Pasargad Bank, Samaan Bank, Sarmayeh Bank, Tosee Tavon Bank, Tourism Bank and Islamic Regional Cooperation Bank.

Mexico's water crisis heats up as transfer to US looms

(Aljazeera) Carrying sticks and stones, thousands of farmers descended on La Boquilla dam in Mexico's northern state of Chihuahua in early September to voice their anger over a looming transfer of millions of cubic metres of water to the United States.

Waiting for them at the site on the Rio Conchos river on September 8 was a group of several hundred National Guard troops, who quickly abandoned their posts. Farmers turned off the valves, and weeks later, they remain at La Boquilla – demanding the transfer be cancelled.

The scene highlights a long-brewing conflict between Mexico's federal government and local farmers over the water transfer, which is mandated under a 1944 treaty between Mexico and its northern neighbour.

The farmers, hard hit by drought, say the transfer would leave them unable to sustain their livelihoods, and the conflict has worsened tensions between the state and federal government in Mexico over the source of dwindling water resources.

"The root of the problem is the misuse, mismanagement and distribution of water by Conagua," said Salvador Alcantar, president of the Association of Irrigation Users of the State of Chihuahua (Aurech), referring to Mexico's federal water regulator.

There has been a lack of transparency, Alcantar told Al Jazeera, and round-table discussions between the various stakeholders have floundered. Aurech members were among the protesters who occupied La Boquilla ("The Nozzle") last month.

"Not being able to demonstrate technically or legally what they were doing, they [Conagua] decided to use force," Alcantar said about the crackdown on



Members of the Mexican National Guard patrol as farmers take part in a protest against the decision to divert water from La Boquilla dam to the US

protesters.

The water transfers between Mexico and the US are governed by a 1944 treaty to ensure the mutually beneficial use of water in agricultural areas on both sides of the border. Under the agreement, Mexico receives from the US four times the amount of water it sends north.

More specifically, the US sends approximately 1,185 million cubic metres (MCM) to Mexico each year, according to Mexican government figures, while Mexico is required to send 431 million cubic metres to the US annually.

Most of that water comes from the state of Chihuahua's Rio Conchos, the main tributary of the Rio Bravo, which starts in the Sierra de Chihuahua. Known as the Rio Grande in the US, the Rio Bravo begins in Colorado and flows into the Gulf of Mexico, for long stretches forming a natural border between Mexico and the US.

But the treaty allows Mexico to make its transfers over five years – a safeguard against unpredictable rainfall, or other conditions – meaning that it can

deliver its total of 2,155 MCM at any point over that period.

Mexico now owes the US 426 MCM of water, and it must transfer that total amount by October 24.

"Chihuahua has to [provide] 54 per cent [of that amount], because the principal river which contributes to the Rio Bravo is the Rio Conchos," explained Víctor Quintana, a social activist, writer and sociologist, and member of the Morena party of President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador.

"It's an agreement which is advantageous for Mexico, but disadvantageous for Chihuahua," he said.

The 1944 treaty is overseen by the International Boundary and Water Commission, jointly comprised of the US Department of State and the Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Relations.

As the federal government body responsible for water throughout the country, the National Water Commission, Conagua, has been the focus of consistent criticism and the target of farmers' anger. Several times over the

cont'd on pg 21

Trump refuses to take part in virtual TV event

(BBC) US President Donald Trump has refused to take part in a virtual TV debate with his Democratic rival Joe Biden.

The commission organising the debate in Miami on 15 October said it would have to take place remotely after Mr Trump tested positive for coronavirus.

Mr Trump's refusal sparked a day of wrangling about how and when any further debates would take place.

At the moment it appears a debate could take place on 22 October, although in what form remains to be seen.

The first presidential debate on 29 September had descended into insults and interruptions.

The vice-presidential debate, held on Wednesday night between Mike Pence and Kamala Harris, was a far more measured affair.

The US election will be held on 3 November. Latest opinion polls suggest Mr Biden has a high single digit lead nationally, but the outcome is often decided in battleground states where the races can be much closer.

It began with the Commission on Presidential Debates announcing candidates would take part in the Miami debate "from separate remote locations... to protect the health and safety of all involved".

This infuriated the president who, in a phone-in interview with Fox Business Channel, said he was "not gonna waste my time" on a virtual debate and "sit behind a computer, ridiculous".

Joe Biden said the president "changed his mind every second" and his campaign team added that Mr Trump "clearly does not want to face questions from the voters".

The Trump campaign answered back, with manager Bill Stepien calling the commission's decision to "rush to Joe Biden's defence... pathetic" and saying Mr Trump would hold a rally instead on 15 October.

The Biden team then proposed the town-hall style debate, set for Miami, should go ahead on 22 October instead.

This brought a brief moment of agreement, on the date at least.



The first debate descended into insults and interruptions

However, the Trump team said there should be a third face-to-face debate - on 29 October, just five days before polling.

No, said the Biden team. Three dates had been set for debates - 29 September, 15 October and 22 October. That would be it.

On 15 October, Mr Biden will now take part in his own primetime event on ABC answering questions from voters.

Quite what format any Biden-Trump debate takes now is hard to pin down.

He touched on a number of key matters, including his health and the possibility of movement towards a stimulus package for the economy.

On his health, Mr Trump

said: "I'm back because I'm a perfect physical specimen."

He said he had stopped taking most "therapeutics" but was still taking steroids and would be tested for Covid again "soon".

But although his doctor has said he now has no symptoms, questions still remain about when the president first became infected and whether he could still be contagious.

And although the names of many people who have interacted with the president and tested positive are now known, it remains unclear just how many were exposed at the White House. New Covid safety measures are in place there.

One of the top Republicans, Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell, said on Thursday that he had not been to the White House since 6 August because its approach to handling Covid with social distancing and masks was "different from mine and what I suggested we do in the Senate".

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last months Conagua vehicles have been set alight.

The agency has repeatedly rejected claims it has acted inappropriately. The group's general coordinator of communications, Jose Luis Juarez, told Mexican investigative journalism outlet Contralinea last

month that Conagua "categorically rejects" the allegation "that corruption practices are tolerated". Still, tensions between farmers and the federal government are exacerbated by a severe drought in Chihuahua, where the state government called on federal authorities to declare a natural disaster due to drought in 52 of the state's municipalities.

13 charged in plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer

(CNN) Thirteen people were charged Thursday in an alleged domestic terrorism plot to kidnap Michigan Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, federal and state officials announced.

The alleged scheme included plans to overthrow several state governments that the suspects “believe are violating the US Constitution,” including the government of Michigan and Whitmer, according to a federal criminal complaint.

Six people were charged federally with conspiracy to kidnap, and seven other people, associated with the militia group “Wolverine Watchmen,” were charged by the state, Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel announced.

“The individuals in (state) custody are suspected to have attempted to identify the home addresses of law enforcement officers in order to target them, made threats of violence intended to instigate a civil war, and engaged in planning and training for an operation to attack the capitol building of Michigan and to kidnap government officials, including the governor of Michigan,” Nessel said at a press conference.

The arrests are likely to draw additional attention to the political tensions roiling the nation in the closing weeks of the 2020 election



Michigan Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer

season, and underline warnings from law enforcement officials, members of Congress and groups that track extremism about the increasing threat of militia and far-right groups. Whitmer at times has been the focus of extreme vitriol from far-right groups over her handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

In televised remarks Thursday afternoon, Whitmer said she “knew this job would be hard, but I’ll be honest, I never could’ve imagined anything like this.” She specifically blamed President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly declined to condemn far-right groups.

“Just last week, the President of the United States stood before the American people and refused to condemn white supremacists and hate groups like these two Michigan militia groups,” she said. “‘Stand back and stand by,’ he told them. ‘Stand back and stand by.’ Hate groups heard the

President’s words not as a rebuke, but as a rallying cry, as a call to action. When our leaders speak, their words matter. They carry weight.”

In response, White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said Whitmer is “sowing division.”

“President Trump has continually condemned white supremacists and all forms of hate,” McEnany said in a statement to CNN. “Governor Whitmer is sowing division by making these outlandish allegations. America stands united against hate and in support of our federal law enforcement who stopped this plot.”

The six charged by the federal government are Michigan residents Adam Fox, 37, Ty Garbin, 24, Kaleb Franks, 26, Daniel Harris, 23, Brandon Caserta, 32, and Delaware resident Barry Croft, 44.

The seven people charged by the state are Paul Bellar, 21, Shawn Fix, 38, Eric Mollitor, 36, Michael Null, 38,

William Null, 38, Pete Musico, 42, Joseph Morrison, 42. They face a variety of firearm and terror charges.

The FBI became aware of the scheme, first reported by The Detroit News, in early 2020 through a social media group of individuals, according to the federal criminal complaint.

Court documents say the FBI planted a confidential informant to travel to Dublin, Ohio, on June 6 for a meeting with Croft, Fox and about 13 others.

“They discussed different ways of achieving this goal from peaceful endeavors to violent actions ... Several members talked about murdering ‘tyrants’ or ‘taking’ a sitting governor,” according to the complaint.

At one point during the meeting, the group discussed increasing their members and Fox reached out to a “Michigan-based militia group,” according to the complaint.

By June 14, a second confidential informant confirmed that Fox was introduced to the leader of the militia group and they met in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The informant audio-recorded conversations with Fox in which he allegedly said he needed “200 men” to storm the Capitol building in Lansing and take hostages, including Whitmer, according to the criminal complaint.

COMMUNITY NOTICES

FREE MATH CLASSES IN ST. PAUL'S

Another learning opportunity is being offered in the St. Paul's community. CXC Math classes facilitated by veteran mathematician, Anthonyson King. These classes are geared toward 4th and 5th form students and those desirous of retaking CXC Mathematics. You must be a resident of St. Paul. Classes commence on Wednesday 14th October and will continue every Wednesday at 4:00PM. Early registration is encouraged to facilitate scheduling. All COVID-19 health protocols will be strictly enforced.

DAY 10/9



Partly sunny with a brief shower or two

NIGHT 10/9



Mostly cloudy with a couple of showers

SUNRISE/SUNSET

Sunrise AST
5:59 AM

Sunset AST
5:49 PM



Duration
11:50 hr

MOONRISE/MOONSET

Moonrise AST
11:45 PM

Moonset AST
1:13 AM



Duration
13: 31 hr

COMMUNITY NOTICES

RENEWAL OF WORK PERMITS

The Labour Department wishes to inform the general public that the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda has decided that until further notice, work permit renewal applications are not required to be advertised by employers.

ALL new work permit applications, including change of employers, MUST be accompanied by proper proof of advertisement, copies of applications received in response to job advertisement and a proper justification for work permit application. Please be guided accordingly.

EAG TRASH CHALLENGE CLEANUP

Register your crew, collect your curated COVID-19 cleanup kit, download the Cleanswell App, clean up while social distancing and take photos and tag us on social media @eagantigua for the Environment Awareness Group's Trash Challenge Antigua & Barbuda #COVIDCLEANUP on Saturday, October 10. Register at <http://bit.ly/covidcleanup268> or call 462 6236 for more information.

CADET CORPS REGISTRATION

Registration to the Antigua and Barbuda National Cadet Corps for children aged 13-18 will take place each Saturday in October from 9am - 12:30pm at the Ex-Servicemen Association Building, Camp Site (opposite Sagacor Insurance, close to the Prime Minister's Office).

Each child should be accompanied by a parent or guardian and should have a copy of their birth certificate, a passport picture, proof that the child is enrolled in an educational institution, including the Antigua State College, ABICE, ABITT. This proof can be the acceptance letter or school bus pass and a registration fee of EC\$25. Please wear masks and bring your own pen.

WOMEN LEADERS

Young women aged 18 to 25 who are interested in leadership and living in Antigua and Barbuda, are being sought ahead of an upcoming conference. The Antigua and Barbuda Parliament in partnership with ParlAmericas will be hosting a "Young Women in Leadership" conference through October and November 2020. Visit www.civil.org or call 462-4822 or 464-2705 for more information. Submit your community notices to news@pointville.ag

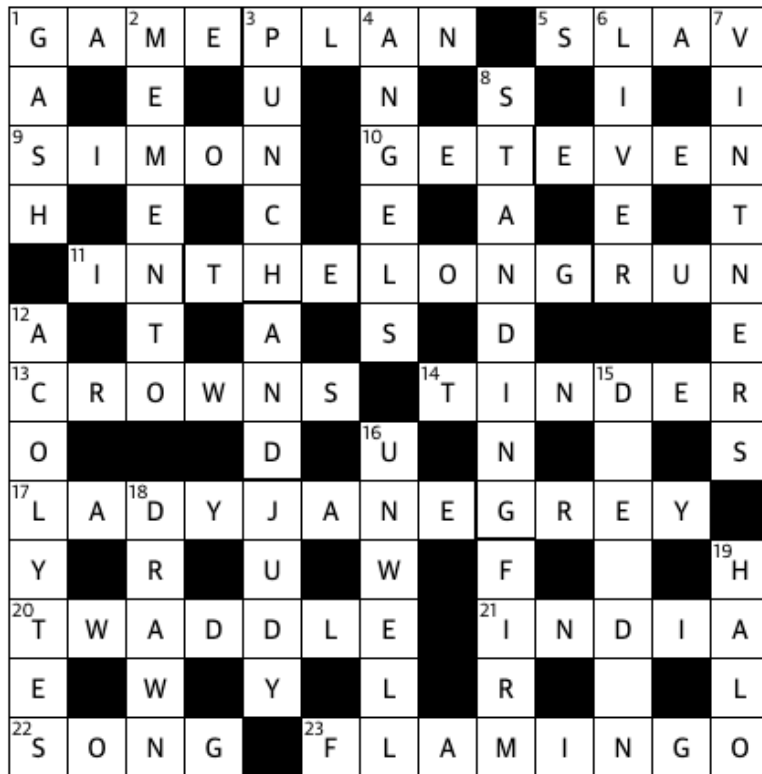
ROAD WORK ON SIR GEORGE WALTER HIGHWAY:

Road work continues in Phase 2B between Mi Casa Imports Ltd to Sir Sidney Walling Hwy (Factory Rd) junction from. Local access will be maintained for the duration of this closure and there will be business as usual. Business owners, customers and residents trying to gain access are asked to enter from the northern end of closure from Dees Service Station (Rubis) junction.

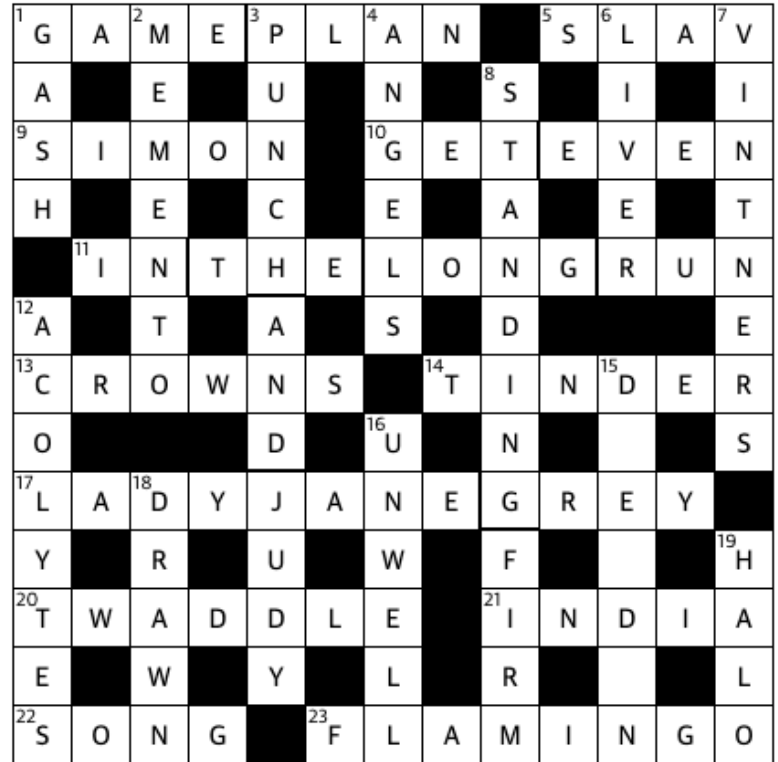
Submit your community notices to news@pointville.ag

LEISURE

Quick crossword No 15,733



Quick crossword No 15,729



Across

- 5 Tactic intended to confuse or obscure (11)
 7 King of Mercia with a dyke to his name (4)
 8 Breakfast food (in prison?) (8)
 9 Rudeness (7)
 11 Parent's siblings (5)
 13 Web-footed bird (5)
 14 Wind storm (7)
 16 Anticipated (8)
 17 Summit (4)
 18 Interruption of a peaceful state (11)

Down

- 1 Concluding passage, event or section (4)
 2 Let-up (7)
 3 Match result (5)
 4 What remains after the rest has been removed (8)
 5 Progress has been satisfactory up to now (2,3,2,4)
 6 Songbird (11)
 10 Spread out (8)
 12 Anon (2,3,2)
 15 Roman counterpart of Aphrodite (5)
 17 Small horse (4)

CARTOON CORNER

In the Bleachers



Psychoanalytic hecklers.



DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES (Mar 21-Apr. 19): What you hear may not be what you get. Pledges you counted on might not be honored and could put you in a quandary. Dig beneath surface appearances, as it could be a case of mixed-up communications and not a broken promise.

TAURUS (Apr. 20-May 20): Adopting a self-reliant and independent attitude might seem the perfect answer to any problems, but that might be challenging for others to handle. An abrupt shift of perspective or plans could be perceived as an act of disloyalty.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Once you are out of the woods, everything looks brighter and the path ahead is clearer. Your doubts are likely behind you, and it's easier to forge ahead with your plans. A romantic partner might be on your mind.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Your friends support your high ideals. However, you may get more than you bargained for if you participate in a group activity. An individual may surprise you with ill-considered advice or by dominating the proceedings.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): At times, a loved one may be difficult to understand, but this person will likely go to bat for you when necessary. Just because someone close develops a passion for a new subject does not mean they love you any less.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Words can't always convey all the feelings you want to express. Prove that your heart is in the right place by showing that you're willing to forgive and forget. A romantic partner might be your best friend, too.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Enjoy the encouragement of others but know that achieving serenity is an inside job. Though you may feel resistant to change and want to stick with the tried and true, change might be what you need to realize your full potential.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Some key issues are clear now, so it might be time for a heart-to-heart discussion. Use your common sense when there are excessive demands on your wallet. Apply initiative when adaptation to change is needed.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You might hesitate to exceed your budget, but there are no limits on how much you can love. You can discuss major purchases and reach a conclusion if you and a partner spend quality time planning together.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Stick to business. Focus on your work and on pleasing your loved ones. Avoid spreading potentially hurtful gossip. Remember that whatever you put out there will return to you in kind.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): They say that rolling stones gather no moss, but if they roll down a hill, they can cause an avalanche. You certainly enjoy having your freedom, but you could inadvertently initiate something that creates consequences.

PISCES (Feb. 19-Mar. 20): Open your mind; seek information from new and different sources. The key to a better future might lie in chance meetings and a wider array of friendships that spark thoughts and empower you to develop new goals.

Women in Football report finds gender discrimination

A report by Women in Football has found that 66% of women have experienced gender discrimination in football. Women in Football represents more than 4,000 women who work in the industry.

In their largest survey to date, they also found that 34% of respondents had witnessed gender discrimination, while 82% of respondents felt that they have faced obstacles in their football career.



66% of respondents, however, did say that they felt supported by their employer. "One story of bias, outdated

perceptions and outright bullying is one too many," said Chairperson of Women in Football, Ebru Koksall.

"There is still a lot of work to do to ensure that women are encouraged to forge careers in the industry and this is where Women in Football will continue to play a big part."

The survey also highlighted the problem of reporting gender discrimination in the workplace with issues frequently "brushed under the carpet" often justified under via the misused term "banter" becoming the most common form of discrimination.

Paul Pogba dreams of playing at Real Madrid

Manchester United midfielder, Paul Pogba, has admitted that it was always a dream of his to play for Real Madrid one day.

The 27-year-old added that he will "do everything" to put United "where the club deserves" to be.

The France player has regularly been linked with a move away from the team he

re-joined for £89m in 2016.

The World Cup winner's contract expires in the summer, although United can activate the option of a further year until 2022 but Pogba said he has not had any discussions with the club over an extension.

"No one has told me anything," he said at a press conference with the France na-

tional team on Thursday.

"I have not spoken to United Executive Vice Chairman, Ed Woodward. We haven't spoken about a new deal. At the moment, I am in Manchester and I am concentrating about getting back to my best form. I think there will be a moment when the club will come and talk to me and maybe offer me something,



or not."

Asked about the prospect of a move to Madrid, with whom he has been linked on a number of occasions, he replied: "All football players would love to play for Real Madrid. It is a dream for me. Why not one day?"

"I am in Manchester and I love my club. I am playing in Manchester, I'm having fun and I want to do everything to put the club where it deserves. I will give everything to the max, like my teammates."

Bravo reaches another landmark

Veteran West Indies all-rounder, Dwayne Bravo celebrated his 37th birthday after he snatched a three-wicket haul to reach 150 wickets in the Indian Premier League but, Chennai Super Kings came up short with the bat to slump to a 10-run defeat to Kolkata Knight Riders on Wednesday.

With both Andre Russell and Sunil Narine misfiring with the bat, KKR were dismissed for 167 off their 20 overs, after choosing to

bat first at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium.

Opener, Rahul Tripathi, top scored with 81 off 51 deliveries in only his second appearance of the season and was the only batsman to pass 20 as KKR tailed off badly following a strong start.

Bravo picked up two of his wickets and conceded just five runs in the final over to be the best bowler with three for 37 from his four overs of medium pace.

'Pretty Boy' walking away from senior football

Former national player and coach, Derrick 'Pretty Boy' Edwards, is walking away from any participation in senior football.

Edwards, who is the head coach of the Grenades in the Antigua and Barbuda Premier Division, is angered by the decision of the ABFA not to declare winners for the 2019/20 domestic season while promoting teams from the second and first division with no demotions from the Premier Division.

According to 'Pretty Boy' if the ABFA is going to reward teams with promotion, then they should declare a winner.

Grenades was leading the Premier Division by two points with two rounds of matches remaining when the coronavirus pandemic brought sports to a standstill on 13th March.

Grenades F. C. had 31 points followed by Greenbay Hoppers F. C. on 29



Former national player and coach, Derrick 'Pretty Boy' Edwards

with those teams being the only candidates in position to win the league.

Edwards expressed his disappointment with the decision and noted that Covid-19 has given him a lot of time to reflect and consider his future in the sport.

"I am fed up with the administration of the sport and the unfair approach by some executive members," Edwards declared.

He went on to identify two incidents in which ABFA executive members

comments which suggested an obvious bias against his team.

"During one game an executive member told me my team was going to lose and hoped the other team won, while another executive member rejoiced on Facebook [concerning] a result we had against Parham F. C. I have informed the manager of my club that I will be moving on and won't participate in any senior football activities on the island."

When asked by PointeX-

press if he would consider applying for the vacant role as coach of the Antigua Barbuda National Football team, Pretty Boy made it clear that he has no interest at all in working with the current ABFA executive.

He added however, that he is working with his daughter to start a youth academy which will focus on youth development.

Edwards also noted that he hopes that the ABFA and fairness in the sport on the island will improve in the coming years.

ABFA elections are due next year and incumbent president, Everton 'Batow' Gonsalves has declared that he will seek a fourth term at the helm.

No one has as yet publicly declared the intention of challenging Gonsalves for the ABFA's top spot in 2021, despite rumors that three persons have indicated early interest.

Police raid DFB offices across Germany in tax fraud probe

German prosecutors have searched several offices of the German Football Association (DFB) in the latest investigation into corruption, this time over the conduct of six former and current DFB bosses suspected of tax evasion.

The prosecutor's office in Frankfurt said the six, who have been named, were suspected of having intentionally falsely declared income from adver-

tising inside stadiums during matches in the 2014 and 2015 as income from asset management, leading to an evasion of \$4.7 million in taxes.

Two hundred officials were deployed in the searches that took place across several locations in five federal states. Based on the investigation, until now, there is the suspicion that those accused knew the taxes had been

incorrectly declared but consciously proceeded in order to give the DFB a major advantage, a statement said.

The latest accusations come as the DFB is trying to clean up its act. Current German FA boss, Fritz Keller, said he wanted to "cooperate fully".

The DFB will support everything comprehensively," he said, "I am in favour of transparency."

FRIDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2020

ABFA cancels 2019-2020 season

The Executive Committee of the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association (ABFA), resolved to cancel the 2019-2020 Football Season and to restructure the Premier and First Divisions.

The cancellation of the season was due to the Covid-19 Pandemic which was certainly an unforeseen contingency. Consequently, and in keeping with Article 82 of the ABFA Constitution Unforeseen Contingencies and Force Majeure, which gives the Executive

Committee the final decision on matters not provided for in the Statutes or in cases of force majeure. The Executive Committee of the ABFA Convened a meeting and arrived at a majority decision.

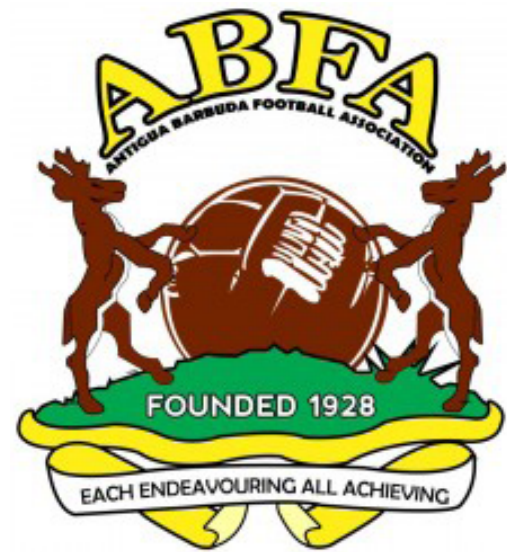
This decision comes after wide consultation with the clubs and the relevant authorities managing the Covid-19 protocols. It takes into account recommendations and feedback from all the stakeholders.

Concerning restructuring of the top two divisions, six

teams will be promoted from the First Division to the Premier Division. Likewise, six teams will be promoted from zones one and two of the Second Division to the First Division. The promotions are based on the point-standings as at March 12, 2020 when the season was halted due to Covid - 19.

The teams promoted to the top flight/ Premier Division are as follows:

1. Empire FC
2. Sap FC
3. FC Aston Villa
4. Tryum FC
5. Blue Jays FC
6. Willikies FC



The teams promoted to the First Division are as follows:

1. Garden Stars FC
2. Bendals FC
3. Lion Hill FC
4. JSC Progressors
5. Young Lions FC
6. Green City FC

DEWS

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