



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

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## GUEST EDITORIAL

# WHO statement for World AIDS Day

On December 1 the World Health Organization (WHO) is calling on global leaders and citizens to rally for “global solidarity” to maintain essential HIV services during COVID 19 and beyond - and to ensure continued provision of HIV services for children, adolescents and populations most at risk for the disease. The Organization also calls on countries to provide health workers with greater protection and support so they can continue their work safely during the pandemic.

Protecting people from HIV during the pandemic, and ensuring they can maintain treatment, is critical. Researchers are currently investigating whether people with HIV have an increased risk of poor outcomes with COVID-19. Preliminary evidence of a moderate increased vulnerability of people with HIV makes it even more urgent that people with HIV have access to antiretrovirals (ARVs) and treatments for comorbidities - such as treatment for non-communicable diseases (NCDs), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), diabetes and tuberculosis.

WHO and partners

sounded the alarm earlier this year, concerned at the impact of reported disruptions in service delivery. But now, thanks to the unstinting work of health and community workers, the number of countries reporting disruptions in HIV services has declined by almost 75% since June. Only 9 of the 152 countries surveyed are still reporting disruptions (maps: June 2020 - November 2020); and in June, 24 countries reported less than 3 months supply of ARVs, while now only 12 report a critically low stock.

This is mainly due to the implementation of existing guidelines, including providing multi-month dispensing (MMD) of ARVs for 3-6 months to patients who did not have access to health facilities; strong WHO-led global, regional, country, manufacturer and partner coordination to ensure adequate supply of drugs stocks, and sustained provision of facility-based essential health services and community delivery mechanisms.

But countries have also introduced a number of effective adaptations and innovations in service delivery during COVID-19. These include:

sub-Saharan Africa, testing for COVID-19 has heavily relied on the laboratory systems built and developed by HIV and TB programs. Devices have been shared across programs as well as infrastructure, sample transport systems, and highly skilled staff.

In Thailand, PrEP services have been delivered through key population led health services providing multi-month dispensing, telehealth, Xpress service, self-sampling, and counselling.

In Bulgaria, a demonstration project showed strong community demand for HIV self-testing which also led to expansion of testing services to reduce inequalities between rural and urban areas.

“On World AIDS Day 2020, we pay tribute to the communities and countries who have shown resilience and innovation - often spearheaded by people themselves living with HIV,” says Dr Meg Doherty, Director of WHO’s Department of Global HIV, Hepatitis and STI Programmes. “This is vital, because while we focus on fighting this new pandemic, we must not drop our guard on a twin pandemic that has been with us for 40 years and

which is far from over.”

Progress towards global targets for diagnosis and treatment has slowed down considerably this year.

New data shows that an estimated 26.0 million people were on antiretroviral treatment as of mid-2020, up only 2.4% from an estimate of 25.4 million at the end of 2019. This increase is too slow by comparison to last year where treatment coverage increased by an estimated 4.8% between January and June of 2019. Among 24 countries with monthly data reported to UNAIDS and WHO, people currently on treatment have been supported and maintained, but testing has declined in all and newly enrolled on treatment has been halved. In the last few months however, there are positive signs of rebound in testing and treatment services.

WHO hopes that some of the innovative approaches adopted during COVID-19 can help the world catch up and accelerate progress towards our new 2025 targets and the SDG goals of ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

# Public cautioned against obstructing police investigations

Law enforcement officials have reiterated warnings to the public about commenting in open forums on matters before the court and those under police investigation.

This call stems from recent comments made by scores of people on social media regarding an ongoing police investigation into an alleged sexual offence.

It is alleged that certain videos and audio recordings are being circulated on social media, in an attempt to identify the complainant and accused in the matter under investigation.

“Not only is this type of behavior unacceptable, but it is bordering on the line of hampering future police investigations and the obstruction of justice. Members of the public are therefore reminded that it is an offence against the Sexual Offences Act of Antigua and Barbuda No. 9 of 1995, for anyone to publish or broadcast the identity of an accused person or complainants in a sexual offence case”, a recent press release noted.

According to police,

after a person is accused of an offence under this Act, no matter likely to lead members of the public to identify a person as the complainant or as the accused in relation to that accusation shall either be published in Antigua and Barbuda in a written publication available to the public or be broadcast in Antigua and Barbuda except - (a) Where, on the application of the complainant or the accused, the Court directs that the effect or the restriction is to impose a substantial and unreasonable restriction on the reporting of proceedings and that it is in the public interest to remove the restriction in respect of the application; or (b) In the case of an accused, after he has been tried and convicted of the offence.

Anyone who contravenes this Act is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$25,000 and to imprisonment for two years; and upon conviction on indictment to a fine of \$25,000 and to imprisonment for five years.



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES  
FIVE ISLANDS CAMPUS, ANTIGUA & BARBUDA, WEST INDIES

## HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER

The University of the West Indies (UWI) is a dynamic, international institution serving the countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean. Its faculties and institutes offer a wide range of undergraduate, masters and doctoral programmes in Humanities and Education, Science and Technology, Engineering, Law, Medical Sciences, Sport and the Social Sciences. The institution represents the oldest of its kind within the region and has been responsible for producing outstanding leaders who have made remarkable contributions to regional development. In 2019, the UWI placed 32nd among the 150 best ranked universities across Latin America and the Caribbean, according to the Times Higher Education (THE) Latin America University Rankings. After 71 years The UWI remains the number 1 ranked university, out of more than 200 registered universities in the Caribbean. The UWI is currently within the top 3% of universities in Latin America and the Caribbean from a complement of over 2,000 registered universities.

The Five Islands Campus is inviting applications from suitably qualified individuals for the post of Human Resources Officer

The successful candidate will be required to:

- Provide Human Resource administration for staff at all staffing categories to include Senior Academic and Professional and Administrative Technical and Support staff levels at the Five Islands Campus
- Support the management of the Human Resource Cluster of the Five Islands Campus.
- Manage the recruitment, hiring and onboarding processes for the Campus.
- Servicing of selected Committees/Boards relating to HR matters on behalf of the Director of Administration.

### QUALIFICATION, TRAINING & EXPERIENCE:

- Bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management/ Development, Management Studies or Business Administration or a related discipline. Master's degree would be an asset.
- Minimum 3 years' experience managing, supporting and delivering exemplary human resource services in a medium or large organization.
- Knowledge of Enterprise HRM design, structure and implementation.
- Knowledge of procedures contained in collective agreement bargaining.
- Have a record of successful administrative innovation, change management and motivational leadership towards the transformation of Institutional culture.
- Excellent organisational and administrative skills coupled with an ability to carry a heavy work load, perform under pressure, handle multiple priorities and contribute to the innovative transformation of job processes.
- Excellent organizational, writing, editing, content creation, and verbal skills.
- Knowledge of the structure of The University of the West Indies, its rules and regulations, its systems including their enterprise software will be a distinct asset.

Applicants are required to submit a completed employment application form, Curriculum Vitae giving particulars of qualifications, experience, the names and addresses of at least three (3) references (one of whom should be from your current organization) and copies of academic qualifications. These are to be sent by electronic mail to [hr.fiveislands@uwi.edu](mailto:hr.fiveislands@uwi.edu) addressed to the Director of Administration, The University of the West Indies, Five Islands, Antigua and Barbuda, West Indies. Application forms, which must be completed can be requested by emailing [hr.fiveislands@uwi.edu](mailto:hr.fiveislands@uwi.edu). The completed application must accompany your CV and cover letter to complete the application package. The final date for receipt of applications is December 12, 2020. In order to expedite the appointment procedures, applicants are advised to ask their referees to send reports under confidential cover to the above address without waiting to be contacted.

# AIDS Secretariat: More people over 50 testing positive for HIV

An AIDS Secretariat official has expressed alarm over the increasing number of positive cases in individuals over the age of 50.

Oswald Hannys, a Counselor and Educator with the secretariat, says based on recent statistics, despite a marginal decrease over the last three years in positive cases, there is concern over the heightened increase in cases in persons above age 50.

This, he believes, is the result of a misplaced attitude that changes in the body due to age, such as menopause, eliminates the need to practice safe sex.

"In certain specific age groups, and mainly the age group 50 and above, we have seen marginal increases. So, while you have an overall decrease in the number of cases being diagnosed, we are seeing that in the case count that is diagnosed it accounts for a fair proportion of older persons.

"When we talk about inter-generational sex, which is older and younger persons having sex, when we talk about persons that are at a stage, especially females at a stage where pregnancy is no longer an issue, unprotected sex becomes something normal and natural for them and so because I cannot get pregnant

it is alright and hence you find the reason why proportionately when we look at male and female the ratio is almost even in that older population," said Hannys in a media appearance on December 1, World AIDS Day.

According to 2019 statistics, 1034 persons were infected with HIV/AIDS - 696 males and 608 females. There have been 301 deaths and 1003 people are living with the virus.

Addressing mother to child transmission, Hannys revealed that there have been no incidents in the last five years. This, he says, is a major accomplishment.

"In 2018, we achieved what is called Elimination of mother-to-child transmission (EMTCT) which is the elimination of mother to child transmission. It is a good achievement, however, it takes a lot of work in maintaining that status and it just takes one case or two to cause us to regress again. So we are continuing to encourage pregnant mothers, or once you become pregnant, you need to access HIV testing as soon as possible, as well as testing for syphilis, because the two go hand in hand," he added.

Hannys further revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic has

affected the amount of testing being done by his office. He noted, however, that measures have been put in place to address that issue.

He is continuing to encourage the public to get tested and practice safe sex.

The Aids Secretariat on Tuesday began their week of activities to commemorate World AIDS day under the theme, 'Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Resilience and Impact'.

Today, the local arm will host a street talk programme in front of their office on the corner of Temple and Long streets. Media Day on Thursday will see AIDS Secretariat representatives making presentations on the issue.

On December 4, the AIDS Secretariat will host an outreach programme at Judgement Square.

Meanwhile, the AIDS Secretariat is being proactive in taking its education campaign to the older members of the community who are showing an increased risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

AIDS Programme Manager Delcora Williams said an event is set for December 7 will specifically target persons above age 50 in response to the increase in the rate of infection within this group.

This, she said, is of concern as in the past, the disease was most prevalent among the age group 24 to 49.

"Now we notice that it is coming out of that age group and going into the 50 plus age group who are testing positive," Williams said.

Williams said Monday's session will be used to encourage older persons to get tested and become aware of their HIV status.

The AIDS programme manager said that many older people are of the opinion that HIV is a young person's disease, but she added, "Yes, you too are at risk for HIV."

She is encouraging those in the 50 plus age group to take advantage of the educational session and also to use the occasion to get tested.

"We are looking at the older persons to get tested because they too are coming down with HIV," Williams again admonished.

Williams said based on the theme of this year's World AIDS Day - Global Solidarity - Shared Responsibility - everyone must become engaged in HIV and AIDS prevention to ensure that Antigua and Barbuda, and the rest of the world, can be rid of this dreaded disease by 2030.

# MP Greene cautions: "COVID-19 will not disappear overnight"



Foreign Affairs Minister E.P. Chet Greene

Foreign Affairs Minister, E. P. Chet Greene, is cautioning the nation that the COVID-19 pandemic will not disappear overnight, even when effective vaccines become available.

Speaking on his weekly radio programme on ZDK, Greene urged Antiguan and Barbudas not to let down their guards regarding the spread of the virus.

"As I engage people on a daily basis, there is a notion that come January 2021, there will be a clean slate. I may not be Nostradamus nor Ezekiel but that will not happen. COVID is real and it will be around for a while; even with the vaccine. If you take the rate of inoculation country by country, this will not be an overnight phenomenon," he explained.

He added that getting the vaccine does not mean that everything will be solved in an instant. "This is not a Nescafe moment!" he declared.

Greene is urging residents to approach the upcoming Christmas season with caution as it will not be 'a normal' holiday season.

As Minister of Trade, Greene also said he intends to have his technicians conduct a detailed study of the use of hand sanitizers. This study will also include the mask output from the National Garment Manufacturing Initiative located at the Simon Bolivar Park.

In urging adherence to the health protocols, Greene warned if residents choose to ignore the protocols and other safety measures during the Christmas season, it could very well lead to an uptick in infections early in the new year.

Greene, who represents the St. Paul constituency, revealed that his annual holiday party at Ya So So corner has been canceled in order to reduce the spread of the disease. This large event will be replaced by seven smaller gatherings which will be spread across the constituency.

## Local resorts earn World Travel Awards

Two Antiguan resorts have received World Travel Awards.

Sandals Grande Antigua, for the seventh consecutive year, has been awarded the Caribbean's Most Romantic Resort. The local hotel first won this award in 2014.

Meanwhile Curtain Bluff, the country's oldest running resort, was

named the Caribbean's Leading Green Resort. This is the fourth occasion on which the resort has won this award having earned the title in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

The Verandah Resort and Spa also won this award in 2009.

The Inn at English Harbour, Blue Waters Resort and Spa and Jumby Bay

Island were also awarded.

The Inn at English Harbour was named Antigua and Barbuda's Leading Boutique hotel, Blue Waters, Antigua and Barbuda's Leading Hotel and Jumby Bay Island, Antigua and Barbuda's Leading Resort.

The World Travel Awards was established

in 1993 to acknowledge, reward and celebrate excellence across all sectors of the travel, tourism and hospitality industries. Today, the World Travel Awards brand is recognised globally as the ultimate hallmark of industry excellence.

This year, the World Travel Awards celebrates its 27th anniversary.

# ZDK celebrates its 50th anniversary

Grenville Radio Ltd.'s ZDK Radio is marking its 50th year of operation.

ZDK - which stands for Zest, Determination, Knowhow, the 2nd radio station to be established in Antigua and Barbuda, began broadcasting in 1974.

For decades ZDK's celebrity announcers including, Al Jackson, Kenny Nibbs, James 'Sly J' Simon, were honorary members of thousands of families across a generation of Antiguans and Barbudans.

Throughout the years the company, which has faced its fair share of financial challenges, changes of management and public displayed feuds, has managed to remain on the air.

In fact, the current manager of the company, Sean Bird, says ZDK has played "an integral part in the history and culture in the country and also to media in the region".

Bird beamed with pride



as he spoke of the resilience of the company.

He credited his father, Ivor Bird, a founding member of the company, for his "long standing effort to

keep the company afloat as an influential entity in the country and region".

He believes Grenville Radio Ltd. has remained a figurehead in Antigua

and Barbudan media because of its "open policy as the people's radio station".

Bird is adamant however, that ZDK must remain open to change and be prepared to make transitions as time goes on if it is to remain a viable business.

Already the company has distinguished itself as being the only radio station in the region to accept Bitcoin.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne joined in congratulating ZDK on its 50th anniversary.

"ZDK has served the people of Antigua and Barbuda very well. It has actually demonstrated true resilience in a very competitive space and I also want to publicly express my continued support to ZDK of myself and the members and the leadership of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party (ABLP)," Browne said.

## New COVID-19 case detected

The Ministry of Health is reporting that the Mount St. John's Medical Center (MSJMC) has revealed one new laboratory confirmed COVID-19 case in Antigua and Barbuda as of Sunday 29th November 2020 at 6:00 pm.

In a press statement,

the ministry said subsequent to the publication of the dashboard on Sunday 29th November 2020 with the cut off time of 6:00 pm, twenty-one samples were processed at the Mount St. John's Medical Center's Laboratory which increased the pending results from

zero to twenty-one.

Of the twenty-one samples processed by MSJMC, twenty were negative and one positive. The single positive case was imported.

Consequently, the total number of persons with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases

in Antigua and Barbuda is one hundred and forty-two (142) with eight (8) active cases.

Meanwhile, sixty-one samples were sent to CARPHA on Monday. These results are expected late Tuesday.

The dashboard has been updated to reflect these changes.



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## MARKETING OFFICER

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The Five Islands Campus is inviting applications from suitably qualified individuals for the post of Marketing Officer.

The successful candidate will be required to:

- Develop and implement communication and marketing strategies aimed at raising the brand profile of the UWI Five Islands Campus across a wide range of stakeholder groups.
- Support the building and maintenance of a strong identity, public image and brand, ensuring One UWI consistency in all aspects of brand communications particularly in the local and OECS space.
- Build and maintain relationships with internal and external stakeholders to advance implementation and dissemination of communication messages specific to the UWI Five Islands.
- Prepare materials for internal and external communiqués including the web and digital assets/social media.

### QUALIFICATION, TRAINING & EXPERIENCE:

- Bachelor's degree in; communications, marketing, or journalism. Masters degree is an asset.
- Minimum 3 years' experience managing, supporting and delivering exemplary marketing, communications or media services in a medium or large organization.
- Knowledge of project management, brand reputation management, marketing strategy, development and implementation methodologies.
- The ideal candidate should also have a record of successful administrative innovation, change management and motivational leadership towards the transformation of Institutional culture.
- Excellent organisational and administrative skills coupled with an ability to carry a heavy work load, perform under pressure, and contribute to the innovative transformation of job processes.
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# NODS responds to flood response criticism

The Director of the National Office of Disaster Services (NODS) Philmore Mullin is clearing the air after receiving complaints about the slow process of recovery assistance following the floods three weeks ago.

NODS, which is in charge of disaster management in Antigua and Barbuda, is being accused of dragging its feet in some areas with regard to the distribution of supplies.

During the torrential rainfall, many households were flooded and residents lost furnishings and appliances as a result. NODS is seeking to assist by replacing some of these items.

Mullin says that distribution and assessment of properties is an ongoing process and his office, unfortunately, has not yet been able to respond to all the people who have sought help.

"This is an ongoing process and unfortunately we just simply

can't meet everybody at the same time," Mullin said.

He says that in the Grays/Green community alone has received significant resources including beds and other household items.

Mullin added that NODS is delivering the items. This, he said, is being undertaken by a volunteer group while NODS conducts its assessments.

"We [at NODS] try our endeavour best not to do direct delivery because it defeats the purpose. The persons who would have actually gone and done the assessments, they would know exactly what they saw and they will have conversations in some cases with the persons who are impacted, and so they bring that information in, the information is put together and the relief supplies go back through them or through someone acting on their behalf," Mullin explained.

# Antigua and Barbuda gets help from Japan to fight seaweed



**Tatsuo Hirayama Japan's ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago and the Eastern Caribbean**

Antigua and Barbuda's annual fight to control the invasive sargassum seaweed has received a shot in the arm from the government of Japan.

The Japanese government is providing financing for the purchase of equipment to tackle the seaweed.

Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister Gaston Browne and Japan's Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago and the Eastern Caribbean, Tatsuo Hirayama, have signed an agreement in which US\$2 million will become available to purchase the equipment.

During the virtual signing ceremony, Prime Minister Browne pointed to the strong bond that has existed between the governments of Japan and Antigua and Barbuda for many years. This has resulted in partnerships in the country's

fisheries infrastructure which in turn has led to the increased harvest of fish and production of fish products.

Japan has also assisted Antigua and Barbuda with the purchase of a reverse osmosis plant valued at US\$2 million which is now being installed.

The Asian nation also came to the country's aid following the passage of Hurricane Irma.

Browne noted that tackling the seaweed annually has become a costly exercise. He disclosed that one contractor billed the government approximately \$1 million to remove the seaweed from beaches.

"The sargassum invasion has led to the destruction of sea life and the undermining of some of our beaches and recently the Ministry of Health had to spend

\$2 million to tackle the problem caused by the seaweed," he disclosed.

According to the prime minister, several hotels have been forced to close in the past because of the proliferation of seaweed on their beaches making it very important to trap the algae offshore and preserve the shoreline.

Environment Minister, Sir Molwyn Joseph, also spoke at the ceremony. He noted that this year's seaweed infestation comes at a time when the country has had to deploy significant resources to the fight against COVID-19.

"This has placed tremendous burden on our budget to wrestle with the seaweed threat which I believe is due to global warming. We don't have the resources to effectively mount a response to the seaweed. Sargassum destroys marine life, which is a key source of protein for many. These equipment will go a long way to help in the fight to rid the shoreline of this threat," he declared.

Ambassador Tatsuo noted that OECS fisheries ministers discussed the problems caused by the seaweed at a meeting held in Antigua last year. Acknowledging that there is no permanent solution to the problem, Tatsuo said

his government is committed to assisting with controlling the problematic seaweed.

"The government of Japan has decided to extend its grant-aid programme to include the purchase of the equipment to remove the seaweeds from beaches," he noted.

He added that both countries share much in common including the commitment to democracy, human rights and the sustainable use of marine resources.

Government Communications Director, Maurice Merchant, told the gathering that more than sixty percent of the country's population either lives in the coastal zone area or depend on marine and coastal zone activities for their livelihoods.

"Over the past eight to ten years, the fishing, tourism and marine transportation and also some settlements are all being threatened by the emergence of significant coastal and near shore pollution and contamination as a result of invasion of the sargassum seaweed," he stated.

The equipment that will be purchased with the donated funds includes 2 beach cleaners, 1 trawl boat, 1 floating mat, 3 oil fences, 1 excavator, 1 dump truck and 2 transport barges.

# ARE WE THERE YET?

## HIV & AIDS: Four Decades and Counting



**By Eleanor Frederick, MSc, MPH**

It has been stated that in the field of medicine there are three kinds of good ideas: the obvious ones, the not-so-obvious ones and the sort that Dr. Edward Jenner came up with in 1796. He had heard from his neighbors in rural Gloucestershire, England, that people who caught cowpox did not get the more-lethal smallpox very often, and he suspected the first disease was triggering the body's defenses against the second.

The notion must have sounded preposterous to his colleagues. At the time, they did not have words for the "immune system" and "germs" because they had not figured out either concept. Nonetheless, Jenner believed in his idea. After successfully vaccinating a boy, he announced the dawn of an era. He had invented the vaccine, and the rest is history.

Vaccines have transformed the world by eradicating smallpox, and they have largely rid the developed world of polio and measles. If vaccination is one of the most important medical innovations of the past two centuries, it is also one of the most cost-effective. Vaccines do not cure diseases; they prevent them. If you immunize 100 individuals with a vaccine you not only keep them healthy, you prevent them from infecting thousands.

Currently, there are no vaccines against the big global killers — HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, which together cause millions of deaths each year — because, even with all the technological prowess of modern medicine, vaccines for those diseases do not exist. There are challenges at every

level. The science is hard, and biologists cannot always outsmart bacteria and viruses. The logistics are hard: the path a vaccine takes from the laboratory to the patient is difficult and the financing is also hard.

According to Dr. Morgane Rolland, "in the battle between HIV and the immune system; HIV has proved to be an elusive foe. HIV's ability to mutate frequently — which produces a wide variety of different viral strains even in a single individual — means that the immune system can almost never pin down a stable target to destroy. These mutations results in the failure of the immune system to clear HIV infection and is also reflected in the inability of scientists, so far, to produce a vaccine".

Four decades later we are still waiting for an effective vaccine against HIV or a cure for AIDS. According to Jonathan Mann of the World Health Organization, there are several stages in the history of AIDS: Silent Spread (1970s-1981); Recognition (1981-1982); Intense Discovery (1982-1985); Global Mobilization (1986-1988); Ending the Problem by Blood Testing (1984); Public Education (1986); Anti-viral Treatment (1986); and Development of a Vaccine (?). On December 1, we commemorated yet another World AIDS Day and as we do so we asked — how are we able to get vaccine candidates for SAR-Cov-2 (COVID-19) so quickly, while we are still waiting for one for HIV? *Kevin Kunzmann of Contagion — Infectious Disease Today posed another question, how much does the current virus crisis share in common with the early HIV outbreak scare?*

In his answer he said the term "unprecedented" may be exhausted in descriptions of the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic—but it's a natural response to how the virus has influenced the livelihood, state of mind, and priority of fear in the world's population.

For so many, never before has a disease been so little understood and so greatly feared.

For others, there is a precedent event: the HIV epidemic.

In the final segment of an interview with Contagion during International AIDS Society (IAS) AIDS 2020 Virtual Sessions in July 2020, Cathy Creticos, MD, Director of In-

fectious Disease at Howard Brown Health, discussed the similarities and disparities of the COVID-19 pandemic and the HIV epidemic of the 1980s and early '90s.

For one thing, Creticos said, the swinging-pendulum nature of public response to developing news has been nearly identical—as has been the politicization of either disease.

"Here we are in 2020 with this disease that kills people, that we don't have any treatments for, that we really don't understand the full manifestation and presentation biology of the virus," Creticos said. "We're really dealing in the same situation as in the HIV epidemic."

But the means by which medical, legislative, and public agencies have united in their efforts to address COVID-19 was sorely missing during the height of HIV fear.

"I wonder if we had this type of effort at the beginning of the HIV epidemic, if we'd have solved this problem by now," she said. "I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that COVID affects everybody, but HIV was certainly perceived as not affecting everybody".

I must confess I have had similar thoughts. As a graduate student at New York University, I saw some early cases of Kaposi Sarcoma and Pneumocystis Carinii pneumonia. Most importantly, while continuing to work in that area and looking specifically at the inversion of the T cell ratio in individuals infected with HIV, I saw an article in the New York Native written by Larry Kramer an individual infected with HIV.

I was aware of the many questions about the disease; I saw many of those infected with HIV I investigated samples from those individuals and others collected from "Bathhouses"; I saw the number of cases increase and then decrease on a daily basis (because of death); I saw the fear in colleagues, friends and everyone involved and I was aware of my own fear. After reading the article by Larry Kramer, I was literally taken for a spin and it changed my whole world because it became real to me and I had to find out for myself what was causing AIDS and how to protect my health and the health of my family.

*cont'd on pg 10*

## cont'd from pg 9

The following is an excerpt from the 10-page article 1,112 and Counting by Larry Kramer (first published in the New York Native, Issue 59, March, 14-27, 1983). Larry Kramer died in New York at the age of eighty four on May 27, 2020

"There are now 1,112 cases of serious Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. When we first became worried, there were only 41. In only twenty-eight days, from January 13th to February 9th [1983], there were 164 new cases - and 73 more dead. The total death tally is now 418. Twenty percent of all cases were registered this January alone. There have been 195 dead in New York City from among 526 victims. Of all serious AIDS cases, 47.3 percent are in the New York metropolitan area. These are the serious cases of AIDS, which means Kaposi's sarcoma, Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, and other deadly infections. These numbers do not include the thousands of us walking around with what is also being called AIDS: var-

ious forms of swollen lymph glands and fatigues that doctors don't know what to label or what they might portend. ...

"The rise in these numbers is terrifying. Whatever is spreading is now spreading faster as more and more people come down with AIDS. And, for the first time in this epidemic, leading doctors and researchers are finally admitting they don't know what's going on. I find this terrifying too - as terrifying as the alarming rise in numbers. For the first time, doctors are saying out loud and up front, 'I don't know.' For two years they weren't talking like this. ...

"After almost two years of an epidemic, there still are no answers. After almost two years of an epidemic, the cause of AIDS remains unknown. After almost two years of an epidemic, there is NO CURE. Hospitals are now so filled with AIDS patients that there is often a waiting period of up to a month before admission, no matter how sick you are. ...

"New York University Hospital,

the largest treatment center for AIDS patients in the world, has had its grant application pending at NIH for a year and a half. ...

"My sleep is tormented by nightmares and visions of lost friends, and my days are flooded by the tears of funerals and memorial services and seeing my sick friends. How many of us must die before all of us living fight back? I know that unless I fight with every ounce of my energy I will hate myself. I hope, I pray, I implore you to feel the same. If we don't act immediately, then we face our approaching doom."

Forty years and counting, we still do not have a vaccine for HIV and there is no cure for AIDS. Globally, the UNAIDS Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic 2019 reports approximately 75.7 million people were infected since the beginning of the epidemic, there are 38.0 million people living with HIV, 1.7 million were newly infected in 2019, and 7.1 million were unaware that they were living with HIV. Deaths from

AIDS related illnesses totaled approximately 690,000, a decrease of 60% since 2004. Data from June 2020 indicates approximately 26 million people were accessing antiviral therapy.

Globally, and locally, the infections continue, the deaths continue and treatment, care, support and love continue, however, the answer is **NO. We are not there yet.**

### About Elenore Frederick

Mrs. Frederick has extensive experience in healthcare, research, administration, consultation and counseling. Her background also includes service and effectiveness in leadership roles in professional settings and community action environments.

Mrs. Frederick professional background is supported by experience in pertinent environments including teaching hospitals, research facilities, and the pharmaceutical industry.

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A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board

# Challenges in the hospitality industry due to the COVID-19 pandemic

As we continue our series highlighting the challenges faced by different industries, today we will examine the hotel sector which falls under the umbrella of the hospitality industry.

The hospitality industry encompasses many sectors including accommodation, tourism services, food and beverage, attractions, events and conferences, the travel trade and adventure and recreation.

It can be argued that the hospitality industry has been hardest hit during the pandemic as borders closed and international travel ground to a literal halt. Empty hotel rooms and limited airlift presented the greatest dilemma to the industry worldwide, and Antigua & Barbuda, which is dependent on the industry which generates the vast majority of jobs has suffered tremendously.

Tourism represents upwards of seventy percent of the country's gross domestic product, therefore Antigua and Barbuda more so than many of its neighbours in the regions, has been adversely affected by the pandemic.

To a large extent, the responsibility of managing the challenges arising out of the crisis rests on the shoulders of Human Resource (HR) practitioners.

Many employed in the industry anticipated being laid off during the slow summer period as it is customary for employees in the industry to work for six months during the busy period, November through to April, and then be laid off for the other six months during the slow period, May through to October. The anticipation of this lay off period would have cushioned the initial, abrupt loss of income in April, however, the high season has now commenced and the pandemic shows no sign of slowing. Some



borders remain closed, airlift is minimal and mandatory quarantine periods are a deterrent to pleasure travelers. The effect of this is that thousands of workers in the sector remain laid off and sadly, some employees have been severed.

HR managers find themselves having to weigh their allegiance to their skilled, trained, loyal employees with the reality of an ever shrinking bottom line with no end in sight. In some instances, employers have taken the decision to maintain a full staff complement whilst reducing salaries and wages whereas many properties have resorted to the harsh reality of severing employees as some properties have closed their doors for the unforeseeable future.

Employees in the industry who by the very nature of their jobs, come face to face with customers are anxious about contracting the virus from visitors who in most instances would arrive and depart well within the established fourteen day incubation period. Visitors to Antigua and Barbuda are allowed to enter the country with a negative PCR test taken within seven days of travel with no quarantine requirement once they land here. Working in close very proximity to guests, employees are concerned for the safety of themselves and their families. They are caught between the need to earn an income and the need to secure their health.

HR practitioners in the industry have had to manage these very

genuine fears and institute steps to minimise contact. Where contact is unavoidable, measures have been implemented to adhere to safety protocols at some expense, even though cash flow is restricted: the supply of masks, gloves, aprons, the installation of hand washing/sanitizing stations at key locations and the implementation of temperature check points, to name a few.

The very nature of the industry hinges on social and personal interaction and the biggest challenge is balancing these interactions whilst keeping employees at "safe distance".

The burden is on HR to engender a new attitude throughout the industry, to instill in employees the gravity of the virus and the part that they must play in minimizing its spread.

HR practitioners have been forced to "get up to speed" with the right way to provide "hospitable" service whilst remaining safe at all times. Employees must be trained to adapt to a new way of serving guests whilst observing strict protocols and HR is responsible for implementing these new policies and procedures. We are seeing positive signs and our efforts will continue.

The Human Resource Professionals of Antigua and Barbuda (HRPAB) is a registered non-profit, professional association dedicated to the advancement of the HR profession for national development. We began informally from 2009 and legally registered in 2011. HRPAB's growing membership represents private and public organizations as well as independent consultants specializing in one or more areas of human resource management and development. Membership is offered for three categories: professional, non-professional, and honorary.



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# Puerto Rico: Iconic Arecibo Observatory telescope collapses



*The telescope collapsed weeks after officials announced that it would be dismantled*

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (BBC) - A huge radio telescope in Puerto Rico has collapsed after decades of astronomical discoveries.

The US National Science Foundation (NSF) said the telescope's 900-ton instrument platform fell onto a reflector dish some 450ft (137m) below.

It came just weeks after

officials announced that the telescope would be dismantled amid safety fears, following damage to its support system.

The Arecibo Observatory telescope was one of the largest in the world.

It was a key scientific resource for radio astronomers for 57 years, and was also made famous as the backdrop for a scene

in the James Bond film GoldenEye and other Hollywood movies.

The NSF said there had been no reports of injuries following the collapse.

The NSF said the telescope collapsed at about 07:55 local time on Tuesday, "resulting in damage to the dish and surrounding facilities".

The telescope consist-

ed of a 1,000ft-wide radio dish with an instrument platform hanging 450ft above. The platform was suspended by cables connected to three towers.

The NSF said an investigation into the platform's fall was ongoing.

"Initial findings indicate that the top section of all three of the... telescope's support towers broke off. As the 900-ton instrument platform fell, the telescope's support cables also dropped," it said in a statement.

"Preliminary assessments indicate the observatory's learning centre sustained significant damage from falling cables," it added.

Two cables had broken since August, damaging the structure and forcing officials to close the observatory.

A review last month found that the telescope was at risk of catastrophic collapse and said the huge structure could not be repaired without posing a potentially deadly risk to construction workers.



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# PAHO Says AIDS-related deaths, HIV infections declined significantly in the Caribbean in last decade

CMC - The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) says annual deaths from AIDS-related illnesses declined by 37 per cent from 2010 through 2019 in Caribbean countries, while new yearly infections from the HIV virus dropped by 29 per cent.

PAHO said that increased testing and improvement in delivery of lifelong antiretroviral treatment led to the decline in annual deaths from about 11,000 in 2010 to 6,900 in 2019.

The decline in infections resulted from various preventive measures, including use of medications taken before and after contact with someone with HIV, which are known as PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis).

PAHO said the number of infections dropped from about 18,000 in 2010 to 13,000 in 2019.

"In the last decade, the Caribbean countries have made significant progress in controlling HIV and AIDS. However, the COVID-19 pandemic is now endangering this hard-won success," said PAHO Director, Dr. Carissa Etienne.

"We must work harder to move forward along the road to entirely eliminating AIDS, which causes untold human suffering," she urged.

Dr. Etienne said continuing stigma around HIV and AIDS, as well as un-

equal access to health services, also deter progress toward eliminating the disease.

PAHO said that it has evidence that, since the pandemic struck, the number of people being tested for HIV in both the Caribbean and Latin America has dropped.

In the first six months of 2020, PAHO said there were about 4,000 fewer diagnoses of HIV in eight Caribbean and Latin American nations - Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Peru and St. Lucia - than there were in the first six months of 2019.

PAHO said the decline in testing means that people with undiagnosed HIV are unaware of their situation and not getting lifesaving antiretroviral treatment, potentially exposing others to HIV transmission.

"COVID-19 poses a clear challenge to HIV prevention, testing, treatment and health care services," said Cesar Nuñez, regional director for UNAIDS.

"Any slowing down in provision of these services will leave many vulnerable populations at greater risk of HIV infection and AIDS-related death. Luckily, there are strategies to respond to these challenges, including self-testing and dispensing multiple months of medication at a time, which reduce the number of visits that patients must make to their

health care providers. But we must make sure these strategies are being implemented," he added.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and PAHO have recommended self-testing as a key strategy for reaching the UN goal of having 90 percent of people with HIV know their status.

PAHO said self-testing, in which individuals collect their own specimens and test them, increases patient autonomy, decentralises HIV services and creates demand for HIV testing among those who have not been reached by other services.

For World AIDS, PAHO said it is collaborating with UNAIDS in launching a widespread public information campaign to increase awareness about the availability of self-testing and, as a result, demand for it.

In another sign of long-term progress in the Caribbean, PAHO said the percentage of children born to mothers with HIV who are infected with the virus declined to 12 percent in 2019 from 22 percent in 2010.

PAHO said the finding coincides with the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis in Cuba, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, and most recently Dominica in 2020.

"These extraordinary

achievements also appear to be under threat due to COVID-19 and must be protected during this phase of intense response to the pandemic," PAHO warned.

It said the percentage of people with HIV who receive antiretroviral treatment rose to 63 percent in 2019 in the Caribbean, compared to 22 percent in 2010.

The percentage of women with HIV who are getting lifelong antiretroviral treatment, which decreases the risk of their children being infected, rose to 86 percent in 2019 in the Caribbean, compared to 42 percent in 2010, PAHO said.

It also said that the percentage of children with HIV who are receiving antiretroviral treatment rose from 42 percent in 2017 in the Caribbean to 44 percent in 2019.

Among people living with HIV in both Latin America and the Caribbean, PAHO said 53 percent have been able to control the amount of virus in their system through antiretroviral treatment.

PAHO said about 330,000 people in the Caribbean are living with HIV.

As part of the UN's sustainable development goals, PAHO said it is working with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to end HIV as a public health threat by 2030.

# Caribbean national gets top communications post in new US administration



Biden administration's new Deputy White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre

CMC – United States President-elect Joe Biden has appointed a Caribbean national to a top communications post in his incoming administration.

In an all-female senior communications team at the White House, Biden has named Karine Jean-Pierre, 43, who was born in Martinique to Haitian nationals,

as the new Deputy White House press secretary.

Jean-Pierre previously served as Vice President-elect Senator Kamala Harris' chief-of-staff during her campaign as a US vice presidential candidate.

Harris, a US Senator from California, is the daughter of an Indian mother and a Jamaican father.

Biden and Harris said the all-female communications team is aimed at bringing "diverse perspectives" to the White House.

Biden said in a statement that the team comprises "qualified, experienced communicators", who will "bring diverse perspectives to their work and a shared commitment to building this country back better."

Harris said the team will communicate "clearly, honestly and transparently" as the US grapples with the coronavirus pandemic and a series of other crises.

"I am profoundly honoured to be the Principal Deputy Press Secretary for @JoeBiden," said Jean-Pierre in a tweet.

"I am especially thrilled to work alongside @jrpsaki, whose leadership and stellar instincts will ensure we are positioned to effectively communicate the Biden-Harris agenda to all Americans."

Biden selected Jen Psaki, a top

member of his transition team, who served in the Obama-Biden administration, as White House press secretary. Kate Bedingfield, who was deputy Biden-Harris campaign manager, will be White House communications director.

Jean-Pierre, who was raised in Queens, New York, served as a senior advisor to the Joe Biden 2020 presidential campaign.

Her professional experience has ranged broadly from presidential campaigns to grassroots activism, to local politics, to working in the White House.

Jean-Pierre, who is the Chief Public Affairs Officer for the liberal MoveOn.org and an NBC and MSNBC political analyst, previously served as the deputy campaign manager for Martin O'Malley for President.

Prior to joining the O'Malley Campaign, Jean-Pierre said on her website that, in 2014, she was the campaign manager for American Civil Liberty Union's (ACLU) Reproductive Freedom Initiative (RFI).

Previously, she managed New York Attorney General Letitia James's successful campaign for New York City Public Advocate.

In 2011, Jean-Pierre said she served as Deputy Battleground States Director for former US President Barack Obama's 2012 re-election campaign, "managing the president's political engagement in key states while leading the delegate selection and ballot access process."

Before joining the re-election campaign, Jean-Pierre served as the Regional Political Director for the White House Office of Political Affairs.

# NY Attorney General defends undocumented Caribbean immigrants



New York Attorney General Letitia James

CMC – New York Attorney General, Letitia James, is leading a large coalition of states, cities and counties before the United States Supreme Court in arguing against President Donald J. Trump's attempts to once again, leave millions of undocumented Caribbean and other immigrants out of the apportionment base that establishes the number of members in the US House of Representatives.

Despite numerous losses in its efforts to politicise the 2020 Decennial Census, James told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) that Trump is again seeking to violate "basic constitutional and statutory commands".

James led the coalition in arguing before the US Supreme Court that the Trump administration must count the "whole number

of persons" residing in the country for apportionment, "as the US Constitution and the Census Act unambiguously require.

"President Trump's illegal proclamation is the latest in a long list of anti-immigrant actions and statements he has made since the beginning of his first campaign," James told CMC, adding "the US Constitution and the Census Act are crystal clear, every person residing in the US during the census, regardless of legal status, must be counted.

"And despite this lame-duck president's repeated attempts to politicize the census and strip immigrant-rich states, like New York, of representation, the simple truth is that no one ceases to be a person because they lack documentation or ceases to live here because the

president would prefer them to leave.

"That's why we filed this lawsuit and numerous others like it before. We will continue to do whatever is necessary to stop the president from putting politics above the law," James said.

In July, the New York Attorney General led a coalition of states, cities and counties in filing a lawsuit against President Trump, US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, and others after they announced that they would leave millions of undocumented Caribbean and other immigrants out of the apportionment base that follows the decennial census count.

The lawsuit sought to stop the Trump administration from violating the longstanding constitutional and statutory require-

ments to count the "whole number of persons" residing in each state for apportionment, without regard to immigration status.

In August, James filed a motion for summary judgment in the case, which was granted in September by a three-judge court that stated that the president's plan to exclude undocumented Caribbean and other immigrants from the apportionment base was unlawful.

In Monday's argument, James said that excluding undocumented Caribbean and other immigrants from the apportionment base will lead to the loss of congressional seats and presidential electors in the electoral college, especially for states like New York, as well as degrade the quality of census data that states and local jurisdictions rely on to perform critical governmental functions.

Additionally, James said excluding immigrants can reduce resources to state and local jurisdictions.

The New York Attorney General James and the coalition specifically argued that the exclusion of undocumented Caribbean and other immigrants from the apportionment base violates Article I Section 2 of the US Constitution, the Fourteenth Amendment and the Census Act.

Additionally, they said that this exclusion conflicts with long-recognized US Supreme Court precedent.

# European regulator could OK 1st COVID-19 vaccine on December 29

BERLIN (AP) — European regulators may approve a coronavirus vaccine developed by drugmakers Pfizer and BioNTech within four weeks, the EU's drug agency said Tuesday, a time frame that could mean the shot is rolled out first in the United States and Britain.

The European Medicines Agency plans to convene a meeting by December 29 to decide if there is enough safety and efficacy data about the vaccine for it to be approved, the regulator said. The agency also said it could decide as early as January 12 whether to approve a rival vaccine shot by Moderna Inc.

German pharmaceutical company BioNTech and its U.S. partner Pfizer said earlier Tuesday that they had asked the European regulator for expedited approval of their vaccine. The companies have said that clinical trials showed the vaccine is 95% effective.

Multiple successful vaccines will be needed to end the pandemic, which has been on the upswing in Europe and the U.S. and so far left more than 1.4 million people worldwide dead. Pfizer and BioNTech have already sought approval to begin vaccinations in the U.S. in December. Rival Moderna said Monday it was asking U.S. and European regulators to allow the use of its vaccine.

British regulators also are assessing the Pfizer shot and another from AstraZeneca. There are several other vaccines in development, including in Russia and China.

Even after vaccines are approved, manufacturers and regulators will be monitoring how well they are received by patients to determine the frequency of rarer side effects that may only appear when millions are immunized. While the vaccines so far submitted for approval seem to prevent people from getting sick, it is still unclear whether they prevent people from picking up the virus entirely — and crucially — passing it to others.

Officials caution while some people may receive a vaccine in the coming weeks, it will take many months to give billions of people around the world the shot, or two if a booster is necessary, meaning that people will be living with virus control measures well into next year.

If its vaccine is approved, BioNTech said its use in Europe could begin before the end of 2020 — tough but not impossible if approval comes December 29. The regulator has also left open the possibility that the date of that meeting will be moved up if data comes in faster.

The December 29 date would be later than some European countries

had hoped for. Germany, which has given BioNTech 375 million euros (\$450,000) in funding to develop the vaccine, has been preparing to start immunizing people from mid-December onward.

Since requests have already been made to U.S. and U.K. regulators, approval might come from them first — and authorities the world over are promising to work with drugmakers to roll out the first shots within days, if not hours, of approval.

"We have known since the beginning of this journey that patients are waiting, and we stand ready to ship COVID-19 vaccine doses as soon as potential authorizations will allow us," Pfizer's chief executive Albert Bourla said in a statement.

BioNTech said it stands ready to ship stockpiles of vaccines where they are needed when the Amsterdam-based European agency or the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approve the vaccine.

"Depending on how the authorities decide we can start delivering within a few hours," said BioNTech's chief operating officer, Sierk Poetting.

The European Union's top official said Tuesday around 2 billion doses of potential COVID-19 vaccines have been secured for the bloc's 27 nations, with the first deliveries likely to start before the end of the year.

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# U.S. attorney general confirms election fraud claims baseless



US Attorney General William Barr

WASHINGTON, DC (VOA) - US Attorney General William Barr said Tuesday the Justice Department has not uncovered evidence of widespread voter fraud that would change the outcome of the 2020 presidential election.

His comments come despite President Donald Trump's repeated claims that the election was stolen, and his refusal to concede his loss to President-elect Joe Biden.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Barr said U.S. attorneys and FBI agents have been working to follow up specific complaints and information they have received, but uncovered no evidence that would change the outcome of the election.

"To date, we have not seen fraud on a scale that could have affected a different outcome in the election," Barr told the AP.

The comments are

especially direct coming from Barr, who has been one of the president's most ardent allies. Before the election, he repeatedly raised the notion that mail-in voting could be especially vulnerable to fraud during the coronavirus pandemic, as Americans feared going to polls and instead chose to vote by mail.

Last month, Barr issued a directive to U.S. attorneys across the country allowing them to pursue any "substantial allegations" of voting irregularities, if they existed, before the 2020 presidential election was certified, despite no evidence at that time of widespread fraud.

That memorandum gave prosecutors the ability to go around long-standing Justice Department policy that normally would prohibit such overt actions before the election was certified. Soon after it was issued, the de-

partment's top elections crime official announced he would step aside from that position because of the memo.

The Trump campaign team led by Rudy Giuliani has been alleging a widespread conspiracy by Democrats to dump millions of illegal votes into the system with no evidence. They have filed multiple lawsuits in battleground states alleging that partisan poll watchers did not have a clear enough view at polling sites in some locations and therefore something illegal must have happened. The claims have been repeatedly dismissed, including by Republican judges who have ruled the suits lacked evidence. Local Republicans in some battleground states have followed Trump in making similar unsupported claims.

Trump has railed against the election in tweets and in interviews, though his own administration has said the 2020 election was the most secure ever. Trump recently allowed his administration to begin the transition over to Biden but has still refused to admit he lost.

The issues Trump's campaign and its allies have pointed to are typical in every election - problems with signatures, secrecy envelopes and postal marks on

mail-in ballots, as well as the potential for a small number of ballots miscast or lost, but they have also requested federal probes into the claims. Attorney Sidney Powell has spun fictional tales of election systems flipping votes, German servers storing U.S. voting information and election software created in Venezuela "at the direction of Hugo Chavez" - the late Venezuelan president who died in 2013. Powell has since been removed from the legal team after an interview in which she threatened to "blow up" Georgia with a "biblical" court filing.

Barr did not name Powell specifically, but said, "There's been one assertion that would be systemic fraud, and that would be the claim that machines were programmed essentially to skew the election results. And the DHS and DOJ have looked into that, and so far, we haven't seen anything to substantiate that," Barr said.

He said people were confusing the use of the federal criminal justice system with allegations that should be made in civil lawsuits. He said such a remedy for those complaints would be a top-down audit conducted by state or local officials, not the U.S. Justice Department.

# Food has run out for Eritrean refugees in Tigray camps, UN warns

AlJazeera - The United Nations has sounded the alarm over the severe effect of food shortages on the thousands of Eritrean refugees sheltering in camps in Ethiopia's restive Tigray region, requesting "urgent access" to be able to deliver badly needed aid.

Wednesday marks a month since Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announced a military operation against forces loyal to the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which ruled the northern region of six million people neighbouring Eritrea.

Communications and transport links to Tigray have since been severed, and the UN and humanitarian agencies have pleaded for access to provide food, medicines and other supplies in the camps that sheltered nearly 100,000 Eritreans before the hostilities began.

"We, as humanitarians, have lost access and contact with the refugees since the last month that this

fighting has been ongoing,

and now there are worrying reports of attacks, of abductions and also of recruitments in and around these refugee camps," UN refugee agency spokesman Babar Baloch told Al Jazeera on Tuesday.

"We are asking for urgent access to these refugee camps," he said. "There are also worrying reports that many refugees may have left the camp looking for safety and assistance including food in other areas of the Tigray region."

Addressing reporters in Geneva earlier on Tuesday, Baloch said "concerns are growing by the hour."

"The camps will have now run out of food supplies - making hunger and malnutrition a real danger, a warning we have been issuing since the conflict began nearly a month ago."

Abiy, last year's Nobel Peace Prize winner, has rejected the idea of dialogue with the TPLF leaders,

who are on the run but say they continue to fight even after the government over the weekend declared victory in the deadly conflict after announcing the seizure of the regional capital, Mekelle.

Ethiopia's government has said it will create and manage a "humanitarian corridor" for the delivery of aid, but the UN wants access that is neutral and unhindered.

The UN has said some two million people in Tigray now need assistance - a doubling from the number before the fighting - and some one million people are displaced, including more than 45,000 Ethiopians who have fled into Sudan as refugees.

On Sunday, a rare report by the International Committee of the Red Cross from inside Mekelle said hospitals and health facilities in the city are struggling to care for people wounded in the conflict as medical supplies run dangerously low.

## India farmers vow to continue protests



Indian farmers' nationwide protest is causing concern for the Modi administration

Thousands of Indian farmers, who've blocked highways into New Delhi for days, vow to continue their protests.

For days, thousands of Indian

farmers have been blocking highways leading into New Delhi, defying police tear gas, water cannon and baton charges. They have travelled hundreds of kilometres by bus, tractor or on foot to protest against new agricultural laws they say will ruin them.

The laws remove minimum pricing for farm produce and open up India's agriculture sector to private corporations.

The government says the laws will bring new investment after decades of stagnation.

"We've always suspected the government's intentions because the government has become a slave of the corporates," Sukhwinder Singh Sabhra, a farmer, said. "They want to

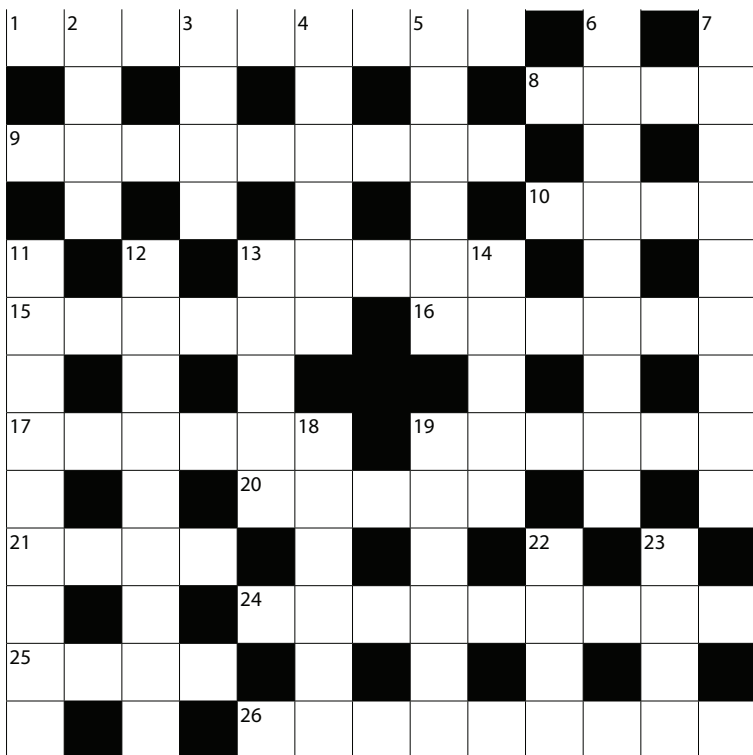
turn us into slaves as well."

The farmers rejected a government offer of talks on Saturday that came with the condition that protests be moved to a designated area.

"Given that around half of India's 1.3bn people work in the agriculture sector, there is a lot of support and a lot of sympathy for these farmers," said Al Jazeera's Elizabeth Puranam, reporting from New Delhi.

"Meanwhile, we have heard from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and he has defended these farm laws, saying that they are in the interest of farmers ... But farmers don't see it that way, they think that these laws will see the removal, the end, of guaranteed minimum prices for their produce."

## QUICK CROSSWORD



### Across

- 1 Tall garden flower (9)
- 8 Greek equivalent of Juno (4)
- 9 Iowa's largest city (3,6)
- 10 Objectives (4)
- 13 Affray (5)
- 15 Parrot (anag) — bird of prey (6)
- 16 Chemical element, Ra (6)
- 17 What mums and dads do (6)
- 19 Continuation (6)
- 20 Nocturnal mammal with a short flexible proboscis (5)
- 21 Central London entertainment area (4)
- 24 Possessing qualities of a man (9)
- 25 Porcine sound (4)
- 26 Author of The Wealth of Nations (4,5)

### Down

- 2 Unlocked (4)
- 3 Source of illumination (4)
- 4 Young cow (6)
- 5 Smart (6)
- 6 Yummy (9)
- 7 Exact copy (9)
- 11 Small iron balls fired from a cannon (9)
- 12 Catch (9)
- 13 Increase (5)
- 14 Keen (5)
- 18 Herald's tunic (6)
- 19 Humorous TV programme (6)
- 22 In low spirits (4)
- 23 Link closely together (4)

## DAILY COMICS

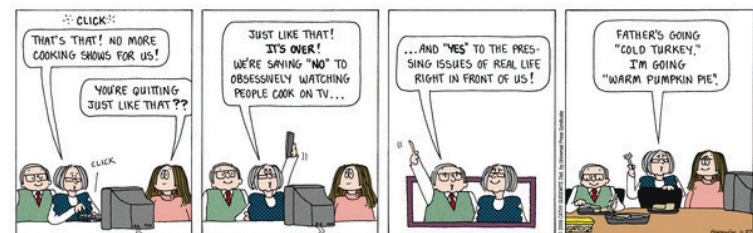
### Dilbert



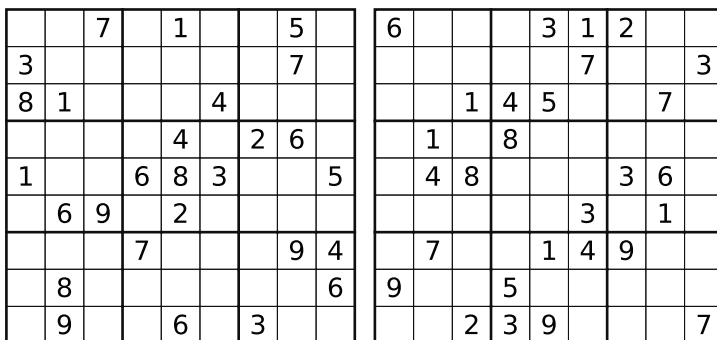
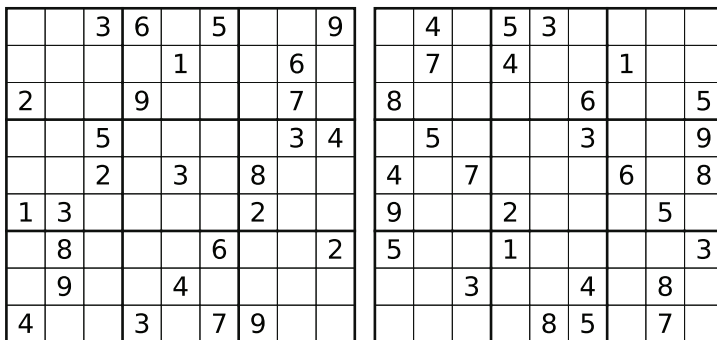
### Garfield



### Cathy



## SUDOKU



### How to play


Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

## LOCAL WEATHER FORECAST

**MON**  
12/02
 

28 °Hi  
 DAY  
Mostly sunny and nice  
 24 °Lo  
 NIGHT  
Partly cloudy

Sunrise  
6:22 AM
 Sunset  
5:32 PM
 Moonrise  
7:32 PM
 Moonset  
9:05 AM

**TUE**  
12/03
 

28 °Hi  
 DAY  
Mostly sunny and nice  
 24 °Lo  
 NIGHT  
Partly cloudy

Sunrise  
6:22 AM
 Sunset  
5:32 PM
 Moonrise  
8:25 PM
 Moonset  
9:56 AM

## YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

 **ARIES** | Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Talking you into parting with your hard-earned cash won't be an easy task at the moment. Of course, if you do see the perfect item, heaven help anyone who tries to come between you and your purchase.

 **TAURUS** | Apr. 20-May 20

Regardless of what the universe tosses your way or how suddenly it's tossed, you've always been much more liable to wait, think, and consider what to do next than react immediately. That trait won't do the job now.

 **GEMINI** | May 21-June 20

You've done your best to keep a delicate issue under wraps for some time, but it's become a lot more difficult lately, mostly because of one particular person who's managed to burrow quite deeply into your situation.

 **CANCER** | June 21-July 22

A while back, someone happened to mention to you that keeping things peaceful between friends and family members was something you were pretty darned good at. You've done your best to foster that reputation.

 **LEO** | July 23-Aug. 22

Ready to be the boss? To assign tasks, delegate authority, and make sure everyone under you is towing the line? Of course you are. You've been studying for the part your entire life. Well, it's show time.

 **VIRGO** | Aug. 23-Sept. 22

You're ordinarily quite merciful when it comes to verbal debates with those who obviously aren't in your intellectual league. You'll do that now for as long as you possibly can, as long as they don't push the envelope.

 **LIBRA** Sept. | 23-Oct. 22

Some secrets just won't stay hidden no matter how hard you try, and apparently you've run into one of them. When this issue just refuses to stay put, your mission will be to put on a happy face.

 **SCORPIO** Oct. | 23-Nov. 21

If you haven't yet had the chance to walk on fire—physically, that is—that doesn't mean you haven't done it in a hundred other ways, symbolically speaking. So when the person you adore asks for something

 **SAGITTARIUS** | Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Fevers aren't just physical in nature, as you already know. They can also be emotional, spiritual, and intellectual. At the moment, you're feeling warm to the touch, and it's not just your forehead that will tell the tale.

 **CAPRICORN** | Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Regardless of the time spent together, there are ups and downs in every relationship. You, of course, know that. You understand the importance of togetherness, so you're less likely than most to call it quits when times are tough.

 **AQUARIUS** | Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Change is necessary for several reasons, and you completely understand that. After all, change is second nature to you, and the more sudden the better. Still, even you occasionally have a problem adapting.

 **PISCES** | Feb. 19-Mar. 20

You've never been especially fond of idle chatter. It's not that you don't like chatting with friends. You just don't like wasting your time on conversation that means nothing at all. You don't like participating in anything that doesn't have a meaningful ending.

## COMMUNITY NOTICES

**CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION**

The Halo Foundation Inc is again hosting its annual Christmas card competition which is open to youngsters aged seven (7) to eighteen (18). All entries should be 'Caribbean Christmas' themed. Deadline for submission is December 11, 2020. Call 562-5193 for more details. Prizes to be won.

**FREE MATHS 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 registrations are encouraged to facilitate scheduling. All COVID-19 health protocols will be strictly enforced.

**RENEWAL OF WORK PERMITS**

The Labour Department wishes to inform the 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 the work permit application. Please be guided accordingly.

**SATELLITE OFFICE REOPENED**

The English Harbour Satellite Office has reopened. Employers can now make all statutory payments (Medical Benefits, Social Security, Education Levy and Inland Revenue) from Monday to Thursday, 9:00am to 2:00pm and on Friday, 9:00am to 1:00pm. Drop Box service is also available. Other services offered include acceptance of claims by the Medical Benefits Scheme and Social Security. Member and employer registration are also offered by the Medical Benefits Scheme.

**CLOSURE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE UNIT**

The Quality Assurance Unit within the Ministry of Tourism will be suspending operations from December 15th, 2020 to January 15th, 2021. All small and large property owners/operators are asked to take note as no hotel inspections and Covid-19 certifications will be executed during this period. For more information contact the department at 468-4061/4003. We we look forward to serving you with increased commitment and fervor in 2021.

**GEMONITES MOODS OF PAN CANCELLED**

The West Indies Oil Company Gemonites Steel Orchestra wishes to inform all its patrons that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Gemonites Moods of Pan festival 2020 has been cancelled. We wish to thank all our loyal patrons and sponsors for your steadfast support over the past 20 years and we look forward to the future when we can, once again, bring you to the place where the best in pan play. The Gemonites Moods of Pan is Antigua and Barbuda's premier music festival and we look forward to delivering to you our audience the finest quality music when we return in 2021.

**Tell us what's happening in your community.**

Submit community notices to [news@pointville.ag](mailto:news@pointville.ag)



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# English FA investigating offensive social media post



Manchester United's Edinson Cavani could face a three match ban for a deleted social media post containing offensive language.

The English FA is looking into a deleted social media post by Manchester United's Edinson Cavani which contained a Spanish phrase that is offensive in some contexts.

The 33-year-old Uruguay international inspired United to a 3-2 comeback win at Southampton on Sunday with two goals and an assist after coming off the bench at half-time.

Replying to a message of congratulations on Instagram, Cavani wrote a

phrase that is offensive in Spanish shortly after the match which has since been deleted.

Cavani could face a minimum three match ban if the FA deems that his post used discriminatory or racist language under its Rule E3.

Former Liverpool player, Luis Suarez, Cavani's Uruguay teammate, got an eight match ban for using the same word in an on-field altercation with former Manchester United player Patrice Evra.

## Lewis Hamilton tests positive for coronavirus

Lewis Hamilton says he is devastated to miss this weekend's Sakhir Grand Prix in Bahrain after testing positive for coronavirus.

Hamilton, 35, reported "mild symptoms" in the morning following Sunday's Bahrain Grand Prix where he claimed his 11th

win of the season.

The Briton, who secured his 7th, Formula One world championship in Turkey last month, is now in isolation after his positive result was announced on Tuesday morning. He will have to isolate in his hotel room for 10 days putting in doubt his participation

at the season finale in Abu Dhabi a week on Sunday.

Hamilton released a statement saying: "Hi guys. I'm devastated that I won't be racing this weekend. Unfortunately, even though I returned three negative results this past week, I woke up Monday morning with mild symptoms and

requested another test which came back positive."

By missing Sakhir, the penultimate race on the calendar, Hamilton will not be able to match the record for the most wins in a single season. Michael Schumacher and Sebastian Vettel share the mark with 13.

### cont'd from pg 24

Williams estimates that the minimum cost to ensure that an athlete can reach and remain in the professional tennis circuit is US\$5000 monthly which most players can't afford. This means that once they complete university, they move on to find employment which brings their

tennis career to a halt.

Antigua and Barbuda is listed in class B of the ITF membership which comes with an accompanying annual membership fee of EC\$16,000.

All is not lost however, as President Williams shared some of the ABTA's accomplishments which are

closest to his heart. Among these are the notable performances of Antiguan and Barbudan tennis players at the Fed Cup in 2001 and 2007 in the Under-13 Championship which involved 14 countries; the Davis Cup in 2016 and the completion of the National Tennis Center in 2015.

Williams is hopeful that in 2021 the ABTA can revive a development programme in Barbuda with an eye on honing new talent.

The association's elections are due soon and Williams says he is hoping to attract individuals who are willing to work to improve the sport.

## Tennis Association President: Coaches are better served in the communities

President of the Antigua and Barbuda Tennis Association (ABTA), Cordell Williams, believes coaches employed by the Ministry of Sports would be more productive working in communities.

According to Williams, there is not enough contact time in schools to develop strong tennis players. He continued, however, that if the ministry deployed coaches in communities and collaborated more extensively with the ABTA more talented players can be produced.

Talking to PointeXpress Williams, articulated that work continues with the

development of youth players at the National Tennis Center where athletes are being kept match ready in anticipation of the return of competitive tennis.

"Presently I have the players competing in competitive matches among themselves in groups of eight," Williams noted.

In April 2021 the association will host an ITF Under-18 tournament called Wadadli Gold if clearance is given by local authorities for the return of competitive tennis.

The ABTA is following the protocols indicated by the International Tennis Federation. These international standards have been shared



**President of the Antigua and Barbuda Tennis Association (ABTA)  
Cordell Williams**

with the Ministry of Sports by the ABTA which is now awaiting the ministry's approval.

At present Antigua and Barbuda only has one tennis player operating in the professional circuit, Jody Maginley. Williams, a former pro-tennis player, says

however, if the country is to produce more professional players, athletes will need financial assistance from the government, the National Olympic Committee and sponsors because of the cost involved in pursuing tennis professionally.

*cont'd on pg 23*

**DEWS**



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