



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

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## 'ARTIFICIAL' BARRIERS PLACED IN LIAT'S PATH

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*Photo caption: Seaview Farm resident, centenarian Salome Batt-Smith, celebrates her 101st birthday on Monday 7th December.*

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# Is it worth it?

At a time when the Caribbean has had little to celebrate since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020, the news that LIAT, the Antigua-based regional carrier, returned to a limited commercial schedule last week was indeed good news.

We had cause to celebrate!

LIAT was pulled from the jaws of certain death when Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister Gaston Browne, supported by his Cabinet, intervened to save the airline.

Rather than pursuing the course of liquidation that some other shareholder governments preferred, the Browne government used the fact that LIAT is headquartered in St. John's to approach the court and petition for an arrangement similar to the bankruptcy protection that exists in the United States.

The way was further paved when Antigua and Barbuda's Parliament, including the full support of the opposition, made amendments to the Companies Act which paved the way for LIAT's salvation.

An administrator was ultimately appointed by the court to manage the affairs of the airline and help it return to a position of solvency.

It is a tortuous journey that has involved discussions with creditors, staff, governments, air-

port authorities, union representatives and an array of others who all have interests in the airline.

Through it all the goal has been clear: LIAT is a valuable regional institution and no efforts should be spared in finding modality in returning the airline to business - not as a 'flash in the pan' or for public relations purposes - but as a sustainable and self-sufficient business.

A second goal is to find investors who can remove some of the burdens of the Antigua and Barbuda government's new position as the largest single shareholder in the airline.

Already, private interest and governments - Dominica and St. Kitts and Nevis - have warmed to this idea.

Two weeks ago, the airline posted on its website the details of its 'limited schedule' for flights to several Caribbean territories.

This news was welcomed by all!

Last Monday, the schedule went into effect with flights to countries including Barbados. Over the rest of the week, the flights went off without a hitch.

All was well, but not for long.

On Saturday, the LIAT issued a press release indicating that it had been forced to suspend flights into Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Both territo-

ries communicated their reasons for the route suspensions, explanations which some aviation insiders consider to be 'dubious'.

It is noteworthy that since the resumption of air lift to these territories, no other airline has been asked to meet the requirements imposed on LIAT. None! Neither regional or international.

Even though LIAT has approval to operate into Barbados until July 2024, that country has demanded that LIAT renew its licenses with them before it can resume flights into the Grantley Adams International Airport.

The question now is why?

Why would Barbados, the largest shareholder in LIAT (1974) Ltd. until recently when it relinquished its shares, impose road blocks in LIAT's path?

For years, Barbados fought to have LIAT's headquarters relocated to Bridgetown. It is fair to say that after Antigua and Barbuda, the government and people of Barbados gave the most to LIAT. Why then would Barbados move to take action that is clearly designed to hamper LIAT's forward movement?

From our vantage point, it appears that some influential person, or perhaps people, in Barbados are displeased by LIAT's revival.

Speculation has been rife as to the identity of these actors since the

airline announced the new obstacle in its way on Saturday, but there exists no obvious answer at this time.

One thing is very clear, the people of Antigua and Barbuda have greeted the news with anger. Many perceive Barbados' move as an attempt to stymie LIAT while others believe it is motivated by 'bad mindedness'.

Barbados is the seat of the US Embassy in the Eastern Caribbean and as such it is a critical hub for LIAT. Barbados' actions to restrict LIAT's operations will no doubt have a domino effect throughout the region.

We can only hope that reason prevails in discussions between LIAT and Barbadian authorities today.

The situation between LIAT and St. Vincent and the Grenadines appears less complicated and ought to be resolved should airport authorities there act with alacrity.

Antigua and Barbuda has been one of the strongest supporters of CARICOM, its treaties and regulations, however in the face of the latest developments involving LIAT, the questions must be asked: What is the purpose of the grouping if not to preserve regional unity, promote integration and prevent situations such as this? And if it cannot achieve these goals, is it worth it?



# St. John's angered over 'artificial barriers' against LIAT

Top government officials in Antigua and Barbuda have expressed displeasure over the moves of two CARICOM member states to erect 'artificial barriers' against LIAT just days after the airline returned to the skies on a limited commercial schedule.

The reaction from St. John's came on Saturday when LIAT announced that it was forced to suspend flights into Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines while it awaits the approval of authorities in both countries to operate there.

The airline said it had received the approval of both countries prior to announcing its new schedule.

On Saturday afternoon, Prime Minister Gaston Browne denounced what he called 'artificial barriers' and described the development as 'unfortunate'.

"Notwithstanding the fact that LIAT previously had flight approval to operate into these countries, it is very unfortunate that these impediments are being placed in LIAT's way when the airline had previous agreements to operate into those territories. LIAT is not a new carrier; it has been serving the region for decades and the irony is that there were no such requirements for other carriers," Browne observed.

"Why are they doing this to LIAT?" Browne asked of former majority LIAT shareholders Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

He said LIAT is a regional institution and ought to be treated as a 'national carrier' in the Caribbean.

"LIAT ought not to be treated as a 'step-child' but instead should be given preference throughout the region," he remarked.

PM Browne also issued a word of caution to the two countries that their action may be seen as a restriction of trade and argued that LIAT's Administrator could opt to take this development before the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) for resolution.

"This is not a position that can be sustained!" he argued.

He also openly pondered who the people may be responsible for orchestrating the demonstration of 'a level of malevolence' in some quarters against LIAT.

He appealed to the leaders of both southern Caribbean countries to act swiftly to resolve the issues "before they deteriorate further".

Disclosing the details of the actions of the two countries, LIAT's Administrator, Cleveland Seaforth, explained that the airline has approval to operate into Barbados up to July 2024. In fact, he said three weeks ago the airline operated a flight into Bridgetown and another last Monday when the new reduced schedule went into effect.

"We were to return with another flight on Saturday, but on Friday we were informed that we needed new approvals in order to fly into the Grantley Adams International airport. As can be expected, we were caught flat-footed by this development," he stated.

Seaforth revealed that discussions are to take place today, Monday, with Barbadian officials in an effort to resolve the issue.

With respect to St. Vincent, he disclosed that the airline had rehired about five people to handle its ground operations at the Argyle International Airport.

"What we have been told by the airport authorities is that we will not be allowed to do our own ground handling operations

as they will provide that service. We had no issue with that as our policy is not to let anyone put obstacles in our way. We asked them to provide us with a written contract but to date we have not received anything," Seaforth disclosed.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines was included in the reduced schedule LIAT put into effect last week.

Until recently, Barbados was the single largest shareholder of LIAT (1974) Ltd. followed by Antigua and Barbuda and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines gave up their shares in LIAT when the court appointed an Administrator to manage the affairs of the airline after their attempt to have it liquidated failed.

Meanwhile, LIAT is advising passengers whose flights have been affected by these developments to contact the LIAT Reservations Call Centre for assistance. LIAT announced that it will waive all change fees for these passengers.

The airline added that it will continue to work with the authorities in Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines to finalise new arrangements and restore connectivity in the Caribbean.

It is expected that in time LIAT will continue to add other destinations to its flight schedule. Training has been completed in the company's new operations protocol and arrangements are being made to secure route rights back into some destinations.

As part of its restructuring exercise, LIAT also indicated that it remains committed to resuming its limited flight schedule with the ongoing support of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda.

# Caribbean welcomes LIAT's return



LIAT's resumption of commercial service last week, although on a limited schedule, has been hailed throughout the region as a welcomed development.

That was the word of the court appointed Administrator, Cleveland Seaforth, who confirmed that the response of trav-

elers across the region has been 'very positive'.

In an exclusive interview with Pointville Communications, Seaforth said many people who are eager for the return of intra-regional travel have expressed that they will only do so using LIAT.

Despite its financial and other challenges over the

years, LIAT has remained one of the Caribbean's most beloved brands. The airline has an impeccable safety record that far exceeds that of other airlines of its size anywhere in the world.

Last week, the airline returned to the sky after its planes were grounded earlier in the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tempering the good news, however, Administrator Seaforth expressed concern over the failure of OECS territories to decide on a common 'travel bubble' as this will likely lead to a reduction in the demand for travel. He continued too, that the months ahead will be challenging as the airline seeks to navigate the tur-

bulent times ahead of it.

LIAT was saved from liquidation by the actions of the Antigua and Barbuda government. Several Caribbean governments have since indicated that they will forgive millions of dollars in debt owed to them by the airline.

Seaforth said he has held discussions with LIAT's employees in efforts to plan the future and ensure the survival of the airline.

He expressed appreciation to those of LIAT's staff who continued to work long after the airline was grounded and noted that they will play a key role in the success of LIAT's return to operation.

## Inspection of the General Post Office scheduled for today

An assessment will be conducted today of the ongoing repairs that were agreed upon following a meeting last Thursday among government officials, representatives of the General Post Office (GPO), the Antigua and Barbuda Public Service Association (ABPSA) and the Antigua and Barbuda Trades and Labour Union (AT&LU).

Services at the GPO ground to a halt last month when its staff walked off the job due to what they called the unsanitary conditions of the building.

The dispute resulted in Prime Minister Gaston

Browne calling out the military to man the GPO after its staff refused to work.

PM Browne agreed to meet with the ABPSA, AT&LU and representatives of the GPO last week, however, to discuss a way forward.

In that meeting, the Ministry of Works committed to complete repairs to address the difficult working conditions identified by the workers weeks ago.

It was also agreed that proper health, safety and welfare standards would be immediately implemented to include air quality testing, the remov-

al of mould and the improvement of physical aspects of the interior of the building.

Today's assessment will review the progress of these efforts.

The Ministry of Works has also committed to long-term rehabilitation of the GPO including the complete repair of its roof which is badly damaged in some areas resulting in severe leaks in some parts of the building. The external drainage system will also be addressed.

In the meantime, the public can access some of the GPO's services, such as the sale of stamps, at

the Woods Branch and the Treasury. These services resumed last Friday.

From today, limited services will resume at the Civil Registry, Dockyard and All Saints.

The General Post Office Headquarters will accommodate the sale of stamps and will issue parcels and Registered Mail. This, however, will be subject to the review of the premises today.

Alternative office arrangements are being made so that other essential functions of the GPO such as mail-sorting and delivery, can be restored while the roof is repaired.





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

## MARKETING 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 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.
- 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.

# Police High Command: Viral video 'old footage'

Law enforcement officials say that a video showing filthy bathroom conditions at the St. John's Police Station is not based on recent footage.

On the weekend, the police hierarchy confirmed that the video being circulated was previously released three years ago.

The police added that the condition of the restrooms at the St. John's Police Station has vastly improved.

Acting Assistant Commissioner of Police Lisbon Michael said after he became aware of the video he investigated the matter and discovered that the footage had been released not long after the 2018 general elections.

Michael said the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda is acutely aware of the human rights implications of situations like this and has sought to ensure that people detained at the station are treated with dignity.

He explained that the holding cells at the St. John's Police Station are thoroughly cleaned and sanitized each morning.

On Wednesdays and on weekends they receive additional cleaning from the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA).

"When I heard about the circulation of this video - and I have seen it - I immediately called for an investigation into this matter and basically this is what we came up with," Michael said in an ABS Television interview where the present bathroom conditions were displayed.

"I am pretty much satisfied with this video. As a matter of fact, I personally have done a number of inspections in recent times, as a matter of fact, as recent as today (Saturday December 5)."

Last Friday, the Antigua and Barbuda Bar Council, the executive arm of the Antigua and Barbuda Bar Association, requested that police investigate the video and implement remedial measures to address the unsanitary bathroom facilities.

The Bar Council referred to the bathroom conditions as "absolutely disgusting and totally unacceptable."

# Antigua and Barbuda receives 'A' grade for its care of the disabled



Bernard Warner

The president of the Antigua and Barbuda Association of Persons with Disabilities, Bernard Warner, has given the government an 'A' grade for its legislative efforts to ensure that differently-abled people are treated with respect and well cared for.

His evaluation was made on Friday, following the celebration of International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3. Warner said that the high grade being given to Antigua and Barbuda is also based on its ratification of the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and passing the Disability and Equal Opportunity Act which forms part of the fulfillment of its obligations as a signatory to the UN Convention.

As a result of the legislation, Warner said his organisation has been able to ensure that the human rights of persons with disabilities remain protected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I highlight the issue of legislation because it is sig-

nificantly important for our community (the disabled) to understand the legal framework and what is out there for them to seek recourse and address the issues that they themselves would not normally be able to address legally with their situation," Warner said.

Warner, however, noted that there are still issues faced by people with disabilities in Antigua and Barbuda.

He said the government is working to ensure equal opportunities for the disabled in healthcare and education, among others, to guarantee their full inclusion in all aspects of society.

The UN General Assembly declared 1981 the first international Year of the Disabled. 2020 marked the 39th occasion of its observance.

The Gaston Browne administration moved to introduce the Disabilities and Equal Opportunities Act in 2017 which made provisions for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and other matters which affect their lives.



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

## HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER

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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.

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# Celebrating V. C. Bird Day amid the pandemic

The Festivals Commission is finalising plans to host the annual V.C. Bird Day celebrations on Wednesday in honour of the late Father of the Nation and National Hero, the Right Honourable Sir Vere Cornwall Bird Sr. KNH, OCC.

The commission has advised, however, that activities have been scaled down this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a statement, the commission which is collaborating with the Antigua Trades and Labour Union (AT&LU), noted that V. C. Bird Day activities commenced on Sunday 6th December with a Thanks-

giving Church Service at the Salvation Army Citadel in St John's.

On Wednesday, a public holiday, there will be a Commemoration and Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Sir V. C. Bird bust on Market Street starting at 3:00pm.

The National Hero, remembered affectionately as "Papa VC", is hailed as the "Father of the Nation". He was Antigua and Barbuda's first premier, and later, its first prime minister.

Sir Vere was unique among his West Indian political counterparts in that he did not pursue tertiary education. A stu-

dent of the St. John's Boys School, now known as the T.N. Kirnon Primary School, he completed formal academic tutelage at the primary level.

He went on to become an officer in the Salvation Army for two years, interspersing his interests in trade unionism and politics.

He made the decision to leave his position in the Salvation Army to champion the cause of black Antiguan and Barbudans whose treatment by non-ethnic land owners did not sit well with him. Ultimately, Sir Vere was successful in the fight he

led for the freedom of his people.

Sir Vere was a founding member of the AT&LU which he went on to serve as its second President.

He was also renowned for his fierce patriotism and dedication to ensuring fair wages and working conditions for the poor and working classes.

Sir Vere's likeness can be found outside the Post Office and the Public Market Complex, both in St. John's.

The Rt. Hon. Sir V. C. Bird Sr., who died in 1999, was the first person to be interred at the National Heroes Park.

## Nurses, midwives urged to re-register on time

All nurses and midwives practicing in Antigua and Barbuda are being urged to update their registration by the end of December in time for 2021.

The Registrar of the Nursing Council of Antigua and Barbuda and the Midwifery Board recently issued a notice advising nurses and midwives that their Registration/License expire(s) on the 31st December 2020 and reminding

them that they are required by law to re-register on or before the 1st of January 2021.

"Employers of professional nurses and nurse-midwives are hereby reminded that it is illegal to hire a nurse/nurse-midwife whose license is NOT current or for any nurse or nurse-midwife to practice without a license according to the Nurses Act Cap 296 and the Midwives Act Cap 234 of

the laws of Antigua and Barbuda," the Registrar of Nursing Council of Antigua and Barbuda and Midwifery Board's notice said.

It added that failure to comply with the requirement of this notice, pursuant to the Nurses Registration Act Cap 296 and Midwifery Act 234, and to take and use the title of Registered Nurse and or Certified Midwife after the 31st day of

December 2020, may result in the nurse or nurse-midwife being charged a fee or being imprisoned and their employer fined.

The notice continued that the name of any nurse or nurse-midwife whose registration expires on December 31st, 2020 who fails to register according to the regulations cited above may be removed from the register after the 15th day of January 2021.



# 15 graduate from St. Paul's Floral Design training course



Fifteen people successfully completed a three month long floral design training programme organised by the Member of Parliament for the St. Paul's constituency, E. P. Chet Greene.

Greene has organised several

similar courses which will give his constituents the opportunity to learn new skills, some of whom are now unemployed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"There were smiles all around and great elation as they cele-

brated the successful completion of basic training in floral designs. The displays told the story of their newly found skills while their reports recounted their paces from total novices to budding entrepreneurs. It was a proud moment," Greene observed following the graduation exercise last week.

According to Greene, he was particularly moved as he listened to the graduates share their stories of challenges and perseverance.

"As I soaked up their stories and creative designs, I could not resist giving thanks to God Almighty for the vision and for his blessings that have placed me not only in positions of leadership and authority, but more so for the spirit of caring and sharing," MP Greene said.

Also announced, that at the request of the participants, he has extended the training programme for an additional three months beginning on 15 January, 2021. He revealed that in the next iteration of the training, focus will be placed on the use of live flowers.

Greene also expressed his deep appreciation to the facilitator of the course, Ronis Spencer.

Registration for the course starting on January 15 opens today.



TUESDAYS



4PM-6PM

WITH KHAN KC CORDICE & PETRA WILLIAMS

# Antigua and Barbuda assumes AOSIS chairmanship in January 2021

Antigua and Barbuda will assume the chairmanship of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), an international body concerned with the effect of climate change on small islands and coastal countries.

Ahead of its acceptance of the chairmanship from Belize, Foreign Affairs Minister, E. P. Chet Greene saluted the work of its predecessor for "so ably championing our cause for the past 2 years".

"The bar has been raised," said Greene, "and a new standard set which Antigua and Barbuda commits to maintain.

"As Antigua and Barbuda takes over the chairmanship on January 1st, 2021, please accept my assurances of a redoubling of our efforts in ensuring that the cause we all so adroitly fight for throughout the years will continue."

Greene's remarks come as AOSIS celebrates thirty years of advocacy on behalf of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

AOSIS began with a handful of men and women who were frustrated by the silence of the international community, and the ignoring of the plight of Small Island and low-lying coastal countries.

The foreign affairs minister also praised the work of the men and women who pioneered the work



Foreign Affairs Minister E. P. Chet Greene

hard work is now bearing fruit.

"As they sat in that conference room and assessed the world's environment and thought of ways to raise the voices of Small Island Developing States in negotiations, one thing was clear: they needed to speak with one voice and to stand united," he remarked.

According to Greene, the pioneers were laser focused on their goal.

"For them, it was towards a common goal of decreasing atmospheric pollution and the destruction of the biophysical environment and for the

states. Thirty years ago, they started the process of changing the world for better and here we are thirty years later, renewing our commitment to this existential cause," he declared.

While he acknowledged that significant progress has been made, the minister said much work remains to be done.

"We are still facing significant environmental, social and economic challenges that threaten to radically alter the planet and all of life that calls it home. For AOSIS, the hope that we can collectively change the

destructive course the world is on, is unflinching and necessary.

Greene described climate change as arguably the most significant global issue of our time. As a result, he said that the Paris Agreement must be considered a major step toward achieving the far more ambitious international goal of preventing a global temperature increase of more than 1.5 degrees Celsius this century to preserve life and ensure a safe environment.

Greene also pointed to another area of concern for SIDS.

"Connected to climate change is ocean acidification which is already affecting marine life. AOSIS must continue the fight for more marine protected areas, less illegal fishing and stopping our oceans from becoming giant rubbish dump for plastic.

"The ocean is what connects us and is the economic engine for our countries," he observed.

While its present expanded functions were not envisioned thirty years ago, Minister Greene said the AOSIS member nations have expanded their fight for survival as SIDS and are vigorously working to stave off an economic crisis that will impact all of their people and their ability to meet the internationally agreed climate goals by 2030.



# AVIATION ENTREPRENEURS RISING AGAINST THE WIND

**By Makeda Mikael**

Handing over skills to a younger generation is the way small business endures and it was no different at V.C.Bird International Airport where my first endeavor in Ground Handling morphed into the first Full-Service Fixed-Base Operator (FBO) in the region.

As we are about to establish a local team of corporate aviation entrepreneurs, it is important to reveal that in 2002, we held the honour of being told by the President of Raytheon that I was the only woman of color to own and operate an FBO in the world.

Years later, I assisted who I believe to be the second woman of colour, a Tanzanian, to get fuel and establish a Full-Service FBO.

The time has now come

for me to pass on my knowledge of the ownership of an FBO Service to a group of young Antiguan skilled in corporate aviation.

It is only right that we should pass on the ownership rights of what I have pioneered in Antigua and St. Kitts and Nevis to young entrepreneurs. Whereas the ownership of an FBO in these COVID times would be out of reach for the group, in that premises and equipment require serious outlay, being able and willing to have the operation exist under the umbrella of our current premises and its excellent logistics, the entrepreneurs will overcome that first hurdle.

It is also important to know that the team have all been previously engaged as corporate avi-

ation personnel and will therefore require little re-training in operations and management. This will preserve a deep sense of ownership on the part of the new team as this is the most important area to be developed.

This is the sort of initiative which should be heralded by those in charge, and most importantly by those who are endeavoring to launch entrepreneurialism as Antigua and Barbuda's post-COVID survival mechanism. We have to work with what we have available and encourage our people when retired, or fired, or just fed up and wanting more - to organise into groups, seize a place in the business economy and own it.

Necessity is the mother of invention and COVID-19

will force us all to go to the marketplace with our service skills offerings much like the independent stall owners we see popping up along the streets.

Government will have to be inventive in protecting its human resource service skills during this downturn in tourism by encouraging and supporting entrepreneurs in aviation at the airport and other entrepreneurs in government controlled and protected zones.

Senior staff in companies operating at the airport and ports that have downsized, need to pull their star staff members and solicit work through outsourcing to government agencies and even their old workplaces who will no doubt have a need for independent contractors.

## FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS MUSIC COLLECTION, WE PRESENT A SAMPLE OF CHRISTMAS MUSIC FROM ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA



**How will Santa Get here by King Obstinate**

**Chinese Christmas Party by King Obstinate**

**No Ham by King Obstinate**

**No Place Like Home by Qualadli Kaiso Collaborative**

**Christmas Joy by Rachel Collis**

**Christmas by my Side by Arlen Seaton & Jenny Medina**

**Christmas in Your Eyes by Denise Edwards**

**Who would Imagine A King by Laurena Davis**

**Blue Christmas by Foster Joseph**

**Christmas Dinner by Menace**

**Caribbean (Covid) Christmas by Blade**

What is your favourite? How many are you familiar with? Drop us a line at [editor@pointville.ag](mailto:editor@pointville.ag) with your favourite five and be a part of our PointeTV Christmas in Antigua & Barbuda weekly Countdown beginning this Sunday.



# BUSINESS & ECONOMY

DECEMBER 07, 2020

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Cleaning fish is a very important economic activity. Despite the reduced economic activity linked to the decline in tourist arrivals, independent scaling vendors are still able to earn a living. /PHOTO CREDIT BENNA TOURS



# Business owners express mixed reactions over early Christmas Eve closure



There have been mixed reactions from businesses in St. John's over the announcement by the government that businesses will have to close by 7pm on Christmas Eve.

Information Minister Melford Nicholas made the revelation during the Post-Cabinet Press Briefing last Thursday.

Churches are allowed to hold services until 1:00 am on Christmas morning and New Year's Day. Restaurants and hotels have been allowed to do the same.

Shopping on Christmas Eve, however, will end early.

Additionally, with the exception of those attending church services, all other citizens and residents must comply with the 11:00pm curfew.

Some business owners have agreed with the government's stance as they accept it as a safety protocol to help control the spread of COVID-19.

"I think the government had no other choice. It makes no sense to have restrictions all throughout the year and then on this one day everything goes back to normal. Most

shopping is done by 7:00 on that evening anyway and to me, it just doesn't make sense to put my staff at risk. It is unfortunate for businesses, but we have to look at the long term benefits. It is not worth the risk," said Paul Aflak of Lolitas.

His kin, Annette Aflak, echoed Paul's sentiments. She said the atmosphere of Christmas Eve has changed over the years so the regulations this year will not likely have much of an impact. She continued that many countries in the region normally close earlier than 7pm on Christmas Eve to allow their employees to spend more time with their families.

Aflak suggested that instead of flocking into town, shoppers could purchase the items they need at an earlier date.

"We at Exotic Antigua collectively think it's a good call from the government. We think it will cause less congestion and less crowding. At Exotic we have now decided to open on Sundays and on Fridays and Saturdays until 6pm to help persons do some shopping prior to Christmas, whoever wants to avoid the crowd and congestion on Christmas Eve. We are also offering after hours shopping by appointment to anyone who wants to avoid the crowds and congestion associated with Christmas. It is the best way to keep cases down," a representative from Exotic Antigua added.

Popular department store Shoul's Toys Gift and Housewares also supports the move with the caveat that the regulation is "...across the board and not for specific businesses".

"I am 100 percent behind this move but I just want things to be fair. If you are asking businesses to close, then I cannot see how the supermarkets

who offer basically the same things we do these days can remain open. I cannot accept the point used of essential services. Fair is fair. I also hope that all the businesses across the island will comply and it is just not a thing for us in the city," David Shoul said.

While there is support in some quarters for the move, there are others who do not share the same sentiments.

One business owner who wished to not be named said that the government should have consulted with business people in order to map out regulations that would benefit everyone.

"There were no talks held ahead of this decision. A lot of thought was not put into it. What's the difference between closing at 7pm rather than 6pm? It just doesn't make sense. I do understand the safety measures that have to be considered, but what about closing at 9pm instead?"

"It's just tough because we already lost a lot of revenue due to no Carnival during the summer and now on one of the best days when we as businesses make money we have to close at 7pm. It kills our spirit."

Another frustrated businessman had this to say: "I believe it could have been a bit longer - not 7pm but maybe even 9:30pm or 10pm. Churches are given permission to gather until 1am so then we can be given a little more time. I think persons need to just be wise enough in the streets. Our business really looks forward to Christmas Eve as it is one of our busiest days. We just need more hours.

"What is the difference with someone in the church and on the streets? Can they not get sick too?"

# New initiative to benefit landowners



The owners of vacant land in Antigua will soon be able to benefit from a new initiative announced by Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

The initiative is designed to help resolve the need for the temporary housing of Booby Alley residents during the time it will take to complete a housing project in the Point area.

"Public Works has materials for another thirty homes and they are willing to use the material to build them on individuals' lands. Those who have lands within the community will be given priority. They make the land available, Public Works constructs the home and they will get an automatic mortgage at a low interest rate and they can re-

pay over a period of time.

"We will pay them rent for the period of time that they house the Booby Alley residents and after sometime they will pay the balance of the mortgage. That in itself is a great investment opportunity as it helps those persons who may not get the go ahead from banks regarding loans to build their homes," Browne explained on his Browne and Browne Pointe FM show on Saturday.

The investment programme, Browne revealed, was initially geared toward members of the public who have vacant plots of land in the Villa and Point communities, however with the low response from landowners in the prioritised areas,

the initiative has been extended to other villages.

PM Browne is encouraging the public to come on board.

The ninety cement bases which have already been laid as foundations for the temporary homes on Crown land at Bay Street and on Reginald Stevens Street, Browne hinted, could also be converted into rental homes following the permanent relocation of Booby Alley residents to their new homes once completed.

It is estimated that it will take two years for the Booby Alley Housing Project to be completed.

The latest Cabinet notes indicated the twenty-four month timeline for the highly controversial project which is underway.

The chattel houses in Booby Alley are to be replaced by ninety modern homes that are being constructed by the People's Republic of China as a gift to the government and people of Antigua and Barbuda.

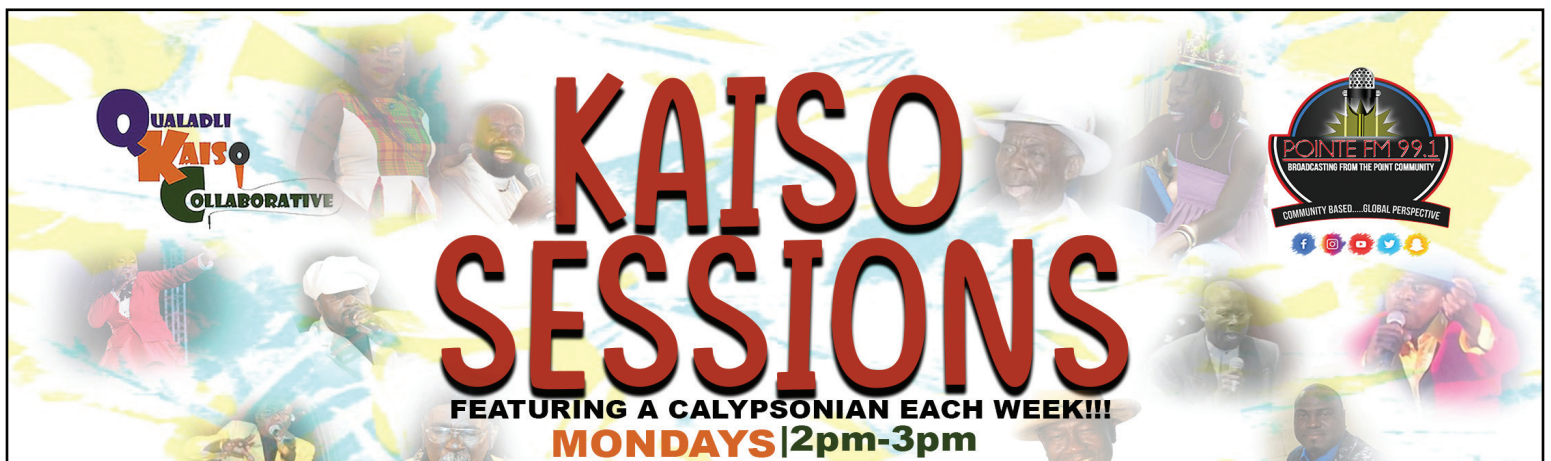
The houses will be offered to the area's current residents when completed.

When everyone currently residing in Booby Alley has been placed in temporary housing, or has been relocated to vacant plots, the unsalvageable chattel houses will be demolished.

It is expected that the two-acre site will be leveled by January 31st, 2021. Only the buildings which house Papasita Destin's Supermarket and the Bethel Anglican church will remain of the old community.

Last year, residents of Booby Alley protested the coming housing project as they believed they would be displaced from their homes. After a number of meetings with their Parliamentary Representative Gaston Browne, the conflict was resolved.

Since then, a number of residents from the area spans North Street to St. John's Street on Wilkinson's Cross; west on St. John's Street to Mariner's Lane; south on Mariner's Lane to North Street; and east on North Street to Wilkinson's Cross, have been removed from their homes and placed in temporary homes.



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# INVESTMENT OPTIONS DIVIDENDS PER SHARE

***Dividend per share (DPS) is the sum of declared dividends issued by a company for every ordinary share outstanding. The figure is calculated by dividing the total dividends paid out by a business, including interim dividends, over a period by the number of outstanding ordinary shares issued.***

***DPS is an important to investors because the amount a firm pays out in dividends directly translates to income for the shareholder. DPS is the most straightforward figure an investor can use to calculate his or her dividend payments from owning shares of a stock over time. A growing DPS over time can also be a sign that a company's management believes that its earnings growth can be sustained.***

## **Regional Stock Market Summary Trading Reports as at Friday 4, December, 2020**

### **Eastern Caribbean Securities Exchange (ECSE)**

On the Eastern Caribbean Securities Market this week, the following securities traded: 223 East Caribbean Financial Holding Co Ltd. shares traded at \$4.49 per share, and 11,000 units of the Government of Saint Lucia's 7-year bond, traded at 6.5%.

Regional Government Securities Market - The Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica's 91-day Treasury bill auctioned on the ECSE's primary market platform raised \$20.0 million. The competitive uniform price methodology used, resulted in a discount rate of 1.49441%.

The next auctions scheduled to be held on the Regional Government

Securities Market are the Government of Grenada's 365-day Treasury bill, offered at a maximum rate of 5.0%, and the Government of Saint Lucia's 5-year Treasury note offered at a maximum rate of 6.8% which will take place on 7 December 2020, using the primary market platform of the Eastern Caribbean Securities Exchange.

Bidding for this auction will commence at 9:00 am and end at 12:00 pm.

More information on the securities available for sale and other issues can be obtained at the ECSE's website at [www.ecseonline.com](http://www.ecseonline.com), or by contacting a broker dealer.

### **Barbados Stock Exchange**

This week, the Regular Market traded a total volume of 39,297 shares. The top three companies traded were Eppley Caribbean Property Fund SCC - Value Fund with 31,866 (81.09%), Barbados Farms Limited with 4,124 (10.49%) and Goddard Enterprises Limited with 2,655 shares (6.76%).

### **Jamaica Stock Exchange**

Overall Market activity resulted from trading in 103 stocks of which 46 advanced, 45 declined and 12 traded firm. Market volume amounted to 97,133,987 units valued at over J\$1,601,602,641.52.

The market volume leaders are Sagicor Select Fund Limited -Financial security with 252,443,412 units (71.15%), followed by TransJamaica Highway Limited with 32,789,586 units (9.24%) and Wigton Windfarm Limited with 12,288,854 units (3.46%).

The JSE Combined Index declined by 1,155.18 points (0.29%) to close at

391,611.75. The JSE Index declined by 1,050.69 points (0.26%) to close at 396,423.72. The JSE All Jamaican Composite Index declined by 1,374.45 points (0.32%) to close at 434,348.23. The JSE Select Index declined by 98.87 points (1.01%) to close at 9,732.97. The Junior Market Index declined by 17.61 points (0.70%) to close at 2,496.22. The JSE USD Equities Index advanced by 0.83 points (0.44%) to close at 188.75. The JSE Financial Index declined by 0.12 points (0.12%) to close at 104.13. The JSE Manufacturing & Distribution Index declined by 1.16 points (1.44%) to close at 79.65.

### **Trinidad & Tobago Stock Exchange**

Overall Market activity resulted from trading in 26 securities of which 11 advanced, 6 declined and 9 traded firm. Trading activity amounted to 1,565,858 shares crossing the floor of the Exchange valued at TT\$36.640 million. The volume leaders are JMMB GROUP Limited with 336,753 shares (21.51%) followed by Ansa McAl Limited with 227,540 shares (14.53%) and CLICO INVESTMENTS Fund with 123,894 shares (7.91%).

The All T&T Index declined by 0.96 points to close at 1,715.35. The Composite Index declined by 2.51 points to close at 1,289.23 and the Cross Listed Index declined by 0.55 points to close at 116.71. The SME Index traded firm to close at 64.33.

### **Guyana Stock Exchange**

1 stock advanced and 2 traded firm as 28,700 units crossed the floor. Banks DIH was the volume leader with 28,681 shares traded. The LSI closed at 161.2.

# Trinidad's Republic Financial profits chopped as group expands in Eastern Caribbean

(Jamaica Observer) Although Republic Financial Holdings Limited (RFHL) gained seven new territorial operations across the region and grew its balance sheet to TT \$104.28 billion (\$2.26 trillion) during the 2020 financial year (FY), the group's net profit attributable to shareholders fell by 43 per cent to TT \$904.06 million (\$19.61 billion) as expenses and credit loss provisions rose due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The Trinidadian-based conglomerate, which specialises in banking and investment services, acquired seven Eastern Caribbean operations of Scotiabank in November and June for US \$123 million (TT \$809.97 million) as the Canadian-based company reposi-

tioned itself in the Central America and Caribbean region, however, the Guyana acquisition was denied by the Bank of Guyana over fears that the move would stymie competition with Republic Bank already having a presence in the South American country.

This left RFHL as the only English-speaking Caribbean-based financial group with a presence in the majority of Caricom's member states plus their Ghanaian operation.

This, however, resulted in RFHL's general operating expenses rising by 23 per cent to TT \$3.62 billion which was partially influenced by the adoption of IFRS 16 and a goodwill impairment which if removed would have seen expenses rise by only 15 per cent.

The overall revenue for RFHL declined by TT\$132 million (\$2.84 billion) to TT \$5.7 billion which was attributed to decreased economic activity, narrow margins on lending interest rates and waivers extended on some fees and commissions. Credit loss provisions rose by 175 per cent to TT \$621.2 million as increased provisions were required for loans and financial assets heavily exposed to the disruption from COVID-19. As a result of these events, net profit before taxation fell by 50 per cent to TT \$1.46 billion (\$31.38 billion). The retail and commercial banking segment fell by 58 per cent to TT \$553 million while the other financial services grew by 2 per cent to TT \$450 million.

Suriname and Guyana

remained the only countries to register an increase in net profit with the other countries experiencing varying declines in profits.

In spite of COVID-19 impacting the global economy, equity attributable to shareholders increased to TT \$10.31 billion although total liabilities grew by 22 per cent to TT \$92.93 billion. RFHL remained committed to their dividend payouts to shareholders as the group's overall dividend for the year was down by 13 per cent to TT \$3.85 per share (TT \$626.4 million). The most recent dividend for the financial year was down by 35 per cent to \$2.10 (TT \$342.7 million) as the group focuses on capital retention and liquidity due to the remaining uncertainty.



## Road Safety Advice & Tips

*for the  
Festive Season*

**PLEASE DRIVE SAFELY**

**Be courteous towards fellow road users -**

**keep your temper and resist the**

**temptation to retaliate**



A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board

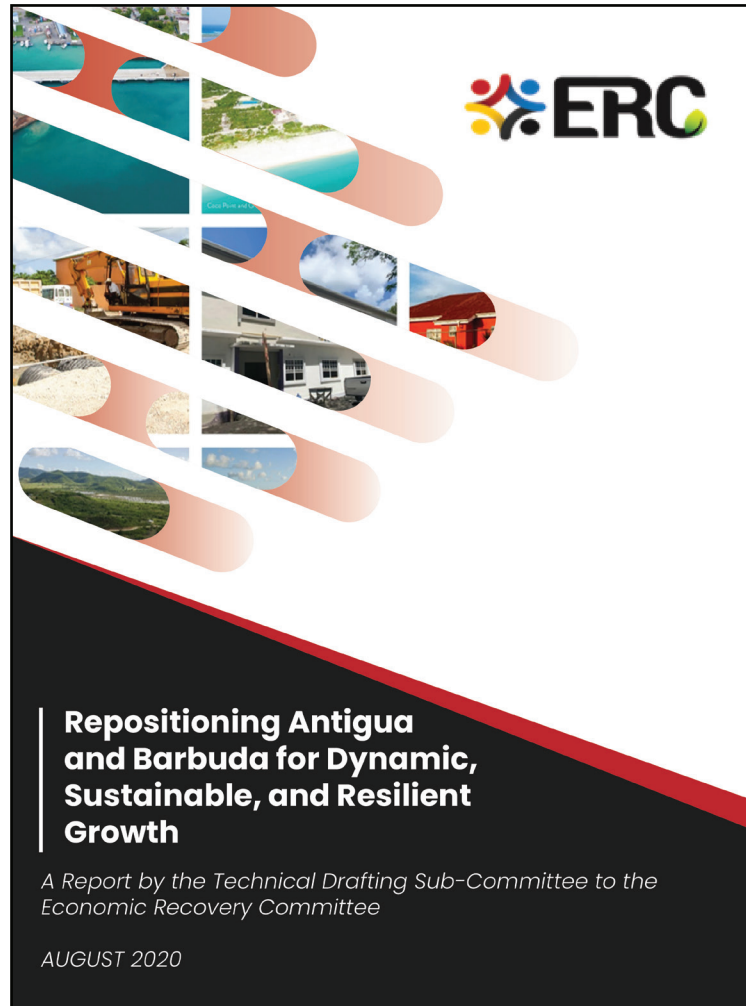


# ECONOMIC RECOVERY

## PHASE ONE: STABILIZATION

Mitigating the economic fallout resulting from the pandemic is the first stage of economic recovery. At this stage, Antigua and Barbuda, like many countries around the world quickly responded with a series of control measures designed to both contain the importation and spread of the virus, as well as contain the economic damage.

During the initial phase of the response, the government instituted several initiatives aimed at arresting the rapid consequential economic decline, due to the severe worldwide shock to the sea and air transportation industries. Both maritime and air transportation were drastically impacted due to global action to fight the spread of the coronavirus. Beginning in March 2020 many of our source market countries began instituting partial or complete border closures which resulted in the high cancellation of bookings both within the cruise and



land-based tourism. This move resulted in constructive closure, which forced hotels to close abruptly and inevitably the ancillary services providers were to be significantly affected.

It was widely accepted that to avoid a worsening of the economic misfortunes, consumption needed to remain stable for as long as possible to avert a looming crisis.

The government de-

cided that employment and income in the public sector must be maintained at pre-Covid-19 level except for natural attrition to ensure that employees had sufficient disposable income and that consumer confidence remained positive.

Several key capital investments were undertaken as a part of the government's overall plan of management for the pandemic. While the Min-

istry of Health led the efforts on the front-line and developed the relevant protocols in collaboration with the other government agencies, two major medical facilities were constructed, the Infectious Disease Centre and the Respiratory Illness Treatment Facility. Both are not the only key in the fight against Covid-19 but also represent a source of employment during the initial phase.

Developing regulations, health protocols and oversight mechanisms are not only important requirements in the fight against COVID-19 also involves significant investments in equipping government facilities with adequate sanitizing stations and personal protective equipment (PPE). Significant investments are also being made during the second phase of the economic recovery plan to outfit school plants nationally with adequate equipment, gear, and classrooms designed to accommodate social distancing.





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# New York Attorney General scores another major court victory for Caribbean 'dreamers'



**New York Attorney General, Letitia James**

— New York Attorney General Letitia James has scored another major court victory for hundreds of thousands of Caribbean and other "Dreamers" across the United States who are eligible for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and who were at risk of deportation by the Trump administration.

programme that protected about 700,000 young Caribbean and other immigrants, known as "Dreamers", from deportation.

Judge Nicholas G. Garaufis of the US District Court in Brooklyn, on Friday issued a remedial order granting James' request for partial summary judgment.

He ordered the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to reopen the DACA programme to first-time applicants; restore protections to a two-year period, instead of one year; and make Advanced Parole available to DACA recipients again without restrictions.

In response, James told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) "justice prevailed, not just for 'Dreamers' but for all Americans.

"Every time the outgoing administration tried to use young immigrants as political scapegoats, they defiled the values of our nation. The court's order makes clear that fairness, inclusion and compassion matter.

"America is where these young people have gone to school, where they have worked, where they have paid taxes, where they have raised families, and where they have continued to be vital members of our communities. We are proud to fight for them and grateful to deliver them the justice they are due," James added.

She noted that "Dreamers" are foreign-born young people who came to the United States at a young age and now identify as Americans.

# 'Havana syndrome' likely caused by directed microwaves - US report

(BBC) - Mystery illness suffered by US diplomats in Cuba was most likely caused by directed microwave radiation, a US government report has found.

The report by the National Academies of Sciences does not attribute blame for the directed energy waves, but it said research into the effects of pulsed radio frequency

energy was carried out by the Soviet Union more than 50 years ago.

The illnesses first affected people at the US embassy in Havana in 2016-17.

Staff and some of their relatives complained of symptoms ranging from dizziness, loss of balance, hearing loss, anxiety and something they described as "cognitive fog". It be-

came known as "Havana syndrome".

The US accused Cuba of carrying out "sonic attacks", which it strongly denied, and the incident led to increased tension between the two nations.

A 2019 US academic study found "brain abnormalities" in the diplomats who had fallen ill, but Cuba dismissed the report.

Canada also cut its embassy staff in Cuba after at least 14 of its citizens reported similar symptoms.

The latest study was carried out by a team of medical and scientific experts who examined the symptoms of about 40 government employees.

Many have suffered long standing and debilitating effects, the report said.

# Gene-editing treatment shows promise for sickle Cell disease



*This July 2019 image provided by the Sarah Cannon Research Institute shows Victoria Gray on her infusion day during a gene editing trial for sickle cell disease at the Sarah Cannon Research Institute and The Children's Hospital At TriStar Centennial in Nashville. Since her treatment, Gray has weaned herself from pain medications she depended on to manage her symptoms. (Anthem Pictures/Sarah Cannon Research Institute via AP)*

Scientists are seeing promising early results from the first studies testing gene editing for painful, inherited blood disorders that plague millions worldwide, especially Black people.

Doctors hope the one-time treatment, which involves permanently altering DNA in blood cells with a tool called CRISPR, may treat and possibly cure sickle cell disease and beta thalassemia.

Partial results were presented Saturday at an American Society of Hematology conference and some were published by the New England Journal of Medicine.

Doctors described 10 patients who are at least several months removed

from their treatment. All no longer need regular blood transfusions and are free from pain crises that plagued their lives before.

Victoria Gray, the first patient in the sickle cell study, had long suffered severe pain bouts that often sent her to the hospital.

Since her treatment a year ago, Gray has weaned herself from pain medications she depended on to manage her symptoms.

Sickle cell affects millions, mostly Black people. Beta thalassemia strikes about one in 100,000 people. The only cure now is a bone marrow transplant from a closely matched donor without the disease like a sibling, which most people don't have.

Both diseases involve

mutations in a gene for hemoglobin, the substance in red blood cells that carries oxygen throughout the body.

In sickle cell, defective hemoglobin leads to deformed, crescent-shaped blood cells that don't carry oxygen well. They can stick together and clog small vessels, causing pain, organ damage and strokes.

Those with beta thalassemia don't have enough normal hemoglobin, and suffer anemia, fatigue, shortness of breath and other symptoms. Severe cases require transfusions every two to five weeks.

The treatment studied attacks the problem at its genetic roots.

In the womb, fetuses make a special type of hemoglobin. After birth, when

babies breathe on their own, a gene is activated that instructs cells to switch and make an adult form of hemoglobin instead. The adult hemoglobin is what's defective in people with one of these diseases. The CRISPR editing aims to cut out the switching gene.

The treatment involves removing stem cells from the patient's blood, then using CRISPR in a lab to knock out the switching gene. Patients are given strong medicines to kill off their other, flawed blood-producing cells. Then they are given back their own lab-altered stem cells.

Tests so far suggest the gene editing is working as desired with no unintended effects, Frangoul said.



## Jamaica flight: Prisoner tests positive for COVID-19

(BBC) - One of the 13 prisoners deported from the UK to Jamaica on Wednesday has tested positive for COVID-19, the Jamaican government has told the BBC.

The man is being held in isolation at a hospital in the capital, Kingston.

The Home Office said he was on the flight, but has not made a statement in relation to the test.

The flight has already attracted controversy, with critics warning that people might be wrongly removed, as in the Windrush scandal.

The plane, containing 13 convicted criminals, took off on Wednesday. Twenty-three other prisoners were left off it following legal challenges.

The man, who did not want to be named on safety grounds, told the BBC he was tested for COVID-19 three days ago on arrival to Jamaica and on Friday received confirmation that he had coronavirus.

He was taken under police escort to the St. Joseph's medical facility in the Jamaican capital,

Kingston, where he will be held under quarantine for 14 days.

The Home Office said all 13 men were offered tests on arrival, but could not confirm if the men had been tested before being deported from the UK last Wednesday.

Ninety public figures, including model Naomi Campbell and actress Thandie Newton, signed an open letter last month calling on airlines not to carry out Wednesday's flight.

Warning that issues linked to Windrush have "not been

resolved," they argued the planned deportation flight brought "credible risks of unlawful and wrongful deportations" and urged airlines to boycott it.

The campaigners warned the UK "frequently" seeks to deport people whose crimes are linked to forced labour, and processes for identifying victims of trafficking were in "disarray".

A separate letter last month signed by over 60 mostly Labour MPs and peers also called for the flight to be cancelled.

## Iran sends biggest ever fleet of oil tankers to Venezuela ahead of elections



**Iranian-flagged fuel tanker Fortune after it was docked at El Palito refinery in Puerto Cabello, state of Carabobo, Venezuela, on May 26, 2020 /PHOTO ANADOLU/GETTY IMAGES**

(Bloomberg/AlJazeera) - Iran is sending its biggest fleet yet of tankers to Venezuela in defiance of U.S. sanctions to help the isolated nation weather a crippling fuel shortage, according to people with knowledge of the matter.

This news came ahead of

polls in the South American country which incumbent president, Nicolas Maduro, is expected to win.

Some of the flotillas of about 10 Iranian vessels will also help export Venezuelan crude after discharging fuel, the people said, asking not to be named

because the transaction is not public.

The Maduro regime is widening its reliance on Iran as an ally of last resort after even Russia and China have avoided challenging the U.S. ban on trade with Venezuela.

The country's fuel crunch

follows decades of mismanagement, corruption and under-investment at state-owned Petroleos de Venezuela since the time of Maduro's late mentor and predecessor, Hugo Chavez.

The country that was once a top supplier of crude to the U.S. and boasted one of the lowest domestic gasoline prices in the world, now can barely produce any fuel.

Meanwhile, at press time Sunday, Maduro was poised to win back control of the National Assembly in elections, adding to the litany of woes facing his chief rival, Juan Guaidó.

U.S.-backed Guaidó and the mainstream opposition parties boycotted the poll, calling it a "fraud" and argued that conditions for holding "free and fair" elections did not exist in Venezuela.

# Brexit: 'Deal to be done' as UK-EU trade talks resume

There is "still a deal to be done" between the UK and EU on post-Brexit trade, a minister has told the BBC ahead of talks resuming later, but Environment Secretary George Eustice said "sticking points" on fishing and business rules remained.

UK chief negotiator Lord Frost is in Brussels for the talks, with the deadline for a deal approaching.

Ireland's foreign minister has said it is "in everybody's interest" to reach an agreement.

One of the disagreements is over access to UK waters by the EU's fishing fleets - an issue which erupted last week, with the UK accusing the EU of making extra "last-minute" demands.

Another is what measures there should be to ensure a "level playing

field" for businesses on both sides.

If a deal is not reached, border checks and taxes will be introduced for goods travelling between the UK and the EU at the end of the year.

The EU wants this deal. A no-deal scenario would be costly for EU businesses - a nightmare for European fishing communities, largely dependent on access to UK waters, however, during this last-minute negotiating push, EU governments say they're mindful not to sign up to a deal in a panicked rush.

If push comes to shove, they say, they prefer the short-term pain of no deal, in order to protect their longer-term interests: not exposing their businesses to what they view as unfair competition in their own single market.



UK chief negotiator Lord Frost

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# Pakistan: Several COVID patients die after oxygen supply runs out

(AP) - Seven patients being treated for the coronavirus have died after one of the largest hospitals in the northwestern Pakistani city of Peshawar ran out of oxygen supplies.

Farhad Khan, spokesman at Khyber Teaching Hospital, said on Sunday that the patients died on Saturday night when the vendor who supplies the hospital with medical oxygen failed to arrive in time.

The hospital, the second-largest in the northwestern city of Peshawar,

receives its oxygen cylinders from a vendor in Rawalpindi, a city about 190km (118 miles) away, Khan said.

Provincial Health Minister Taimur Jhagra tweeted about the incident, saying the hospital's board of governors had been ordered to complete an investigation into the incident and take action "within 48 hours" against those responsible.

He promised that "all facts of the case will be made public".

Pakistan, a country of approximately 220 million people, has re-

corded 58 COVID-19 deaths over the past 24 hours, bringing the total number of confirmed deaths from the virus to 8,361.

The total tally confirmed cases in Pakistan stands at nearly 416,500 to date. That official number, like other places around the world, is likely somewhat higher in reality due to limited testing.

Pakistan has tested about 5.8 million people for the virus, or some 2.6 percent of the population.

# Old rivals square up again in Ghana's tight presidential election



**Nana Akufo-Addo (left) and John Mahama (right)**  
/PHOTO Kola Sulaimon and Stephane de Sakutin/AFP

(AlJazeera) - Voters in Ghana will head to the polls today to pick the country's next president, in what is expected to be a tight race between incumbent Nana Akufo-Addo and his predecessor, John Mahama.

The two longtime rivals, who are squaring off for the third straight time as they seek a second and final term, are widely seen as the two frontrunners in a crowded field of 12 candi-

dates.

Campaigning has largely focused on the economy, infrastructure development and the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. The fight against corruption has also featured prominently in the lead-up to the election during which the political rivalry that has for the last decade defined the campaigns of both Akufo-Addo, of the centrist New Patriotic Party (NPP),

and Mahama, of the left-leaning National Democratic Congress (NDC), was largely on display.

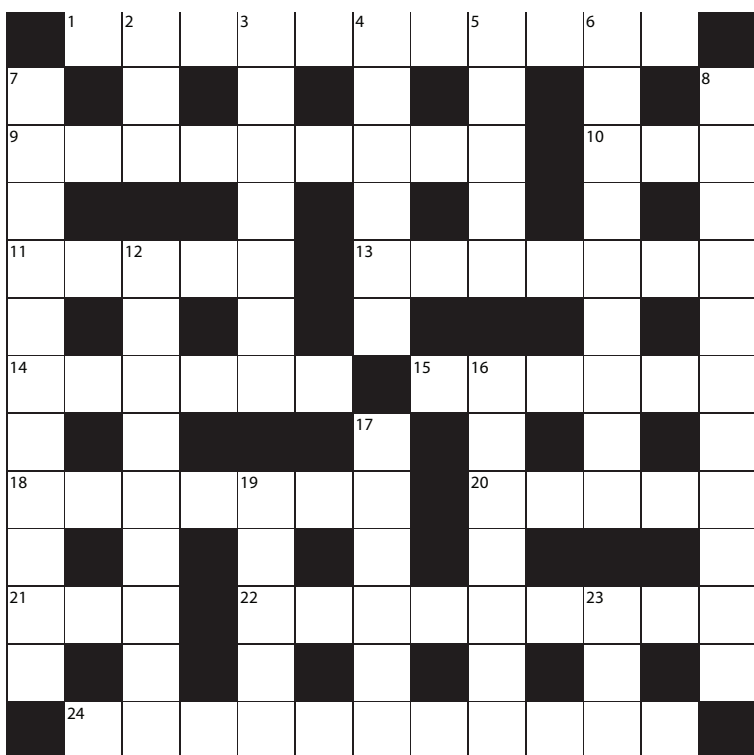
Despite the heightened political tensions, the two leading candidates on Friday signed a pact for good conduct and peaceful elections at a ceremony in the capital, Accra, that was attended by traditional and religious leaders, as well as international observers.

Monday's vote will be the eighth since Ghana's first step towards multi-party democracy in 1992. The country has a strong record of smooth transitions of power and Ghanaians are hoping it will build on its reputation as one of West Africa's most stable democracies.

The NPP and the NDC have peacefully exchanged power several times during the past decades but friction is high this year amid opposition allegations over the independence of the electoral commission. Last month, Mahama alleged that the body set out to organise "a flawed election" and threatened to reject the results.

Electoral officials have dismissed the opposition's accusations of attempting to rig the elections.

## QUICK CROSSWORD



### Across

- 1 Prime minister, 1937–40 (11)
- 9 Holiest fast day of the Jewish calendar (3,6)
- 10 Buddy (3)
- 11 Italian leader of the 1497 English expedition to the east coast of today's Canada (11)
- 13 Neat and tidy (7)
- 14 Moderate (6)
- 15 Freud's sex drive (6)
- 18 Atomic (7)
- 20 Fame — style (5)
- 21 Trumpland? (3)
- 22 Indirect expression used in place of an offensive one (9)
- 24 Aircraft's undercarriage (7,4)

## Down

- 2 Finished edge of a piece of cloth (3)
- 3 Make damp (7)
- 4 Use (6)
- 5 Horrifying — sensational (5)
- 6 Unbiased (9)
- 7 With the same time period — shuns coy Ron (anag) (11)
- 8 Delay having to make a decision (4,3,4)
- 12 Close-fitting woollen head cover (9)
- 16 RMS Titanic's nemesis (7)
- 17 Come by (4,2)
- 19 Correct (5)
- 23 Princess in a Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera (3)

## DAILY COMICS

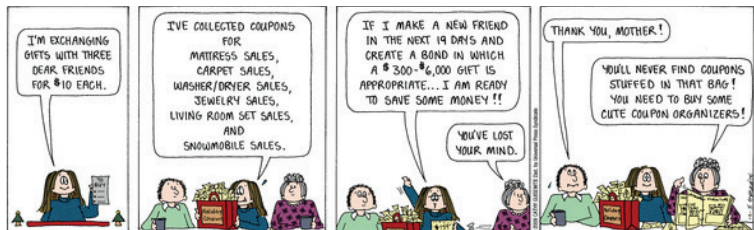
# Dilbert



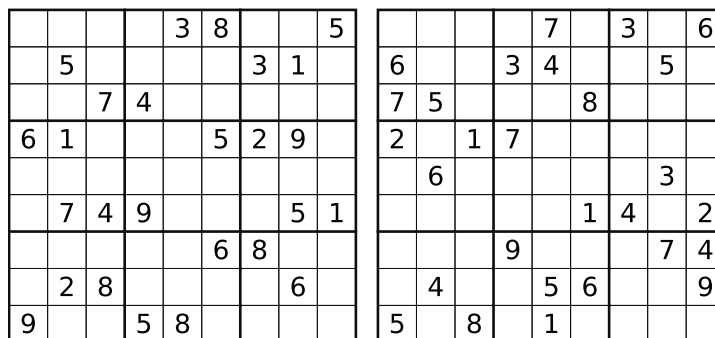
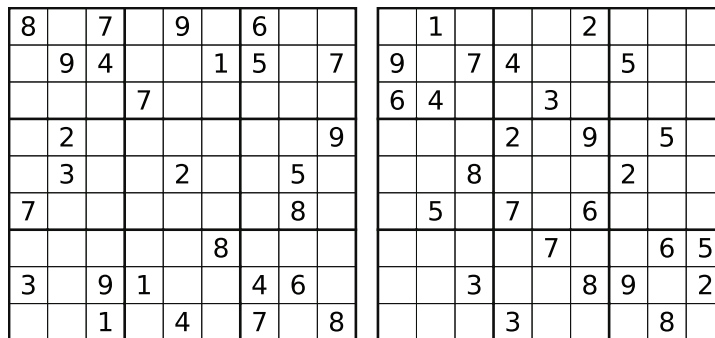
# Garfield



## 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

**FRI 12/04**  **28° Hi** DAY Sunny to partly cloudy  
**24° Lo** NIGHT Partly cloudy

Sunrise 6:23 AM	Sunset 5:32 PM	Moonrise 9:22 PM	Moonset 10:45 AM
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**SAT 12/05**  **28° Hi** DAY Fair to partly cloudy  
**24° Lo** NIGHT Partly cloudy with a passing shower

Sunrise 6:24 AM	Sunset 5:33 PM	Moonrise 10:19 PM	Moonset 11:31 AM
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## YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

### ♈ ARIES | Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Trying to be perfect takes too much energy, so stop trying! You need to understand that just being yourself makes you much more desirable than you would be if you were trying to be someone else's idea of a perfect person.

### ♉ TAURUS | Apr. 20-May 20

No one can intimidate or manipulate you today. You will be content to stay on your own path and stick to your own plan. The folks who seem to be trying so hard to get you to do things their way don't seem to be very happy.

### ♊ GEMINI | May 21-June 20

Your mind is much more focused around the details of time, place, and budget today, but not everyone else is as detail oriented as you are right now, and they just want to have fun! Their priorities are not in the right place, but yours are.

### ♋ CANCER | June 21-July 22

It might start to feel like there are two of you today. Your public self and your private self have been doing different jobs and it's starting to feel weird. But every once in a while you have to play a role for the public's sake.

### ♌ LEO | July 23-Aug. 22

You can't let yourself feel guilty if you have to put your long-term relationships on the back burner for now. After all, the people who care about you understand that sometimes you've got important things going on in your life.

### ♍ VIRGO | Aug. 23-Sept. 22

Keeping in touch with your friends is extremely important in life, but so is getting back in touch with yourself! If you're feeling the urge to knock off the social stuff for a while and just hang by yourself, do it! You will be able to come to some important conclusions.

### ♎ LIBRA Sept. 23-Oct. 22

The flexibility you're so famous for is taking a back seat today. You are all about having a plan and sticking to it no matter what anyone else says. This will turn out to be a very good thing in terms of your progress.

### ♏ SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21

There is an exciting energy and lots of possibility around you right now. Today is a day when you can really show some influential people how you differ from everybody else. Let your freak flag fly. Be proud of your idiosyncrasies!

### ♐ SAGITTARIUS | Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You need to make some more room in your life to just goof off! Give yourself permission to follow your mood every once in a while. Daydreaming never hurt anyone, and it certainly won't slow you down.

### ♑ CAPRICORN | Dec. 22-Jan. 19

A friend or loved one has been acting out of character, and today is a good day to try to get to the bottom of it. But be very careful not to push them too hard about it. Just casually ask about what is new in their life.

### ♒ AQUARIUS | Jan. 20-Feb. 18

If you can get a little bit more analytical about your emotional life today, you should make great progress in solving one particular problem that's been haunting you. When you get some free time later in the day, take a long walk and just think.

### ♓ PISCES | Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Motion and travel are highly favored for you right now, so get moving! Even if you just take a walk around the block, you'll find plenty of fascinating sights and sounds to entertain you during your brief journey.

## 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.

### STATE INSURANCE EARLY CLOSURE

State Insurance Company Ltd advises that our offices will be closed at 2:00 pm on Friday 4th December for a staff meeting. Regular business resumes Monday 7th December at 8:15 am. We apologize for any inconvenience caused.

### CHSS DARE to D.E.A.R. Book Drive 2020

Clare Hall Secondary School is inviting past Clarehalites, entertainers, radio personalities and the general public to participate in its DARE to D.E.A.R (Drop Everything and Read) Book Drive 2020. Send us a video recording about your favourite book and donate a copy or multiple copies of that book to our school library. Give us a call at 462-3487 or mail us at admin@chss.edu.ag. The book drive culminates in December 2020. We DARE you to D.E.A.R with us and help us promote literacy amongst our students.

### 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, Ministry of Tourism will be suspending operations from December 15, 2020 to January 15, 2021. All property owners are asked to take note as no inspections and covid-19 certifications will be executed during this period. For more information contact the department t 468-4061/4003.

### CHSS TAKE-AWAY BREAKFAST

The staff and students of the Clare Hall Secondary School will host a grand Take-Away Breakfast on Friday 11, December from 7am to 9am, at the school. Tickets – \$15.00. All Covid-19 protocols will be observed. Past students are invited to call the school at 462-3487 or Ianthe Carr-Jenkins at 774-2881 to make donations of prepared or unprepared breakfast items.

### BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION AGM

All members of the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association are asked to note that the 2020 Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 15 December, 2020 at 7:15pm, virtually via ZOOM. Relevant documents and ZOOM link will be sent subsequently. Each team/club should have two representatives at this meeting.

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## Towns: "I have lost seven family members to coronavirus"



Minnesota Timberwolves Karl-Anthony Towns

Minnesota Timberwolves star Karl-Anthony Towns revealed he has lost seven family members to coronavirus.

Towns 25, lost his mother, Jacqueline Cruz-Towns, due to complications from COVID-19 in April.

The two-time NBA All-Star said his mom was one of seven family members he had seen die due to coronavirus.

"Recently I got a call that I lost my uncle. I feel like I've been hardened a little bit by life and humbled," Towns said.

The power forward added: "I've seen a lot

of coffins in the last seven months. I have a lot of people who have, in my family and mom's family, gotten COVID."

Towns said he is still looking for answers and trying to find how to keep his family healthy.

"I have assumed the responsibility to educate my family and make all the moves necessary to keep them alive," Towns noted.

The star forward averaged a career high 26.5 points last season to go with 10.8 rebounds and 4.4 assists, but was limited to 35 games because of injury.

## Millwall FC players booed by fans for taking a knee



Millwall FC players were booed by fans for taking a knee before Saturday's match

Shame is being called on Millwall Football Club supporters for booing players taking a knee to oppose racism before a championship match on Saturday.

Millwall has since said in a statement they were saddened and dismayed and promised to work on the matter with Kick it Out and others.

Millwall's second tier clash with Derby County at the stadium was among the first to see fans back at matches amid the COVID-19 pandemic, but the occasion was marred by loud

booing from among the 2,000 spectators at the venue.

England's Football Association (FA) and anti-racism body Kick it Out both condemned the behavior of the London side's supporters.

Players in English Football have been taking a knee since July initially in support of the Black Lives Matter Movement before the Premier League and Football League said the gesture is now linked to their own anti-racism campaign.

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# New Zealand too good for the West Indies



West Indies vs New Zealand

New Zealand was too good for West Indies in the first test brushing them aside by an innings and 134 runs in four days at Seddon Park, Hamilton.

West Indies won the toss and elected to field leading to the Black Caps posting a massive total of 517 for 7 declared.

Captain Kane Williamson cracked 251 off 412 deliveries with 34 fours and two sixes. Latham added 86 and Jamieson 51.

The Caribbean bowlers struggled with Kemar Roach, who recently lost his dad, picking up 3 for 114 off 30 overs, Shannon Gabriel 3 for 89 off 25 overs and Antiguan Alzarri Joseph 1 for 99 off 31 overs.

Responding to the host first innings figures West Indies were dismissed cheaply for 138 with no batsman reaching 30 runs. Campbell led the way with 26, captain Jason Holder 25 and

Jemaine Blackwood 23.

Batting a second time with very little improvement the visitors were bundled out for 247 with Jamaican Blackwood improving on his first innings performance scoring 104 while Alzarri Joseph secured his highest test score of 86 batting at number eight.

Both Blackwood and Joseph saved the Caribbean team from embarrassment with a useful 107 partnership.

In what turned out to be a thrashing, West Indies captain Jason Holder is appealing to his batsmen to start delivering from the second test and has requested that they look in the mirror.

"We have talked a lot, we've promised a lot and I think it's a matter for us to all look ourselves in the mirror and understand that we've got to fight a little harder," the Barbadian told ESPNcricinfo.

With victory, the Black Caps take a 1-0 lead in the two-match series. The second and final Test between the two sides begins on December 11 at Wellington.

# Kenyan sets new half marathon record in Valencia



Kenyan marathon runner, Kibiwott Kandie

A Kenyan runner has set a new half marathon world record in Valencia.

Kibiwott Kandie inked his name in the history books as he became the first person in history to break the 58-minute barrier in a half-marathon.

The 24-year-old stunned Uganda's Jacob Kiplino on his way to victory as he

clocked 57.32.

The previous record was held by his fellow countryman, Geoffrey Kamworor, which he set in 2019.

Kandie went into Sunday's race in fine form having won a silver medal during the 2020 World Athletics Half-Marathon Championships held in Poland mid-October.



## Alzarri continues to improve with the bat



*Jermaine Blackwood and Alzarri Joseph in New Zealand*

West Indies middle order batsman Jermaine Blackwood has expressed delight over his 107 run partnership with Alzarri Joseph.

The partnership led Blackwood to a score of 104 in their second innings resistance to give the Caribbean side a respectable score of 247 against New Zealand.

With just two batsmen Darren

Bravo, 12 runs, and Kraigg Brathwaite, 10, of the top five West Indies batters, the men in maroon struggled at 89 for 6 before Joseph's entry in the middle.

Blackwood was high in praise for Joseph's perfor-

mance with the Antiguan posting his highest test score batting at number eight of 86 off 125 balls. Blackwood also credited Joseph for inspiring him to play on leading to his second century in 32 matches.

"When Alzarri came to the crease I just told him play his natural game and that I would try to bat as long as possible," Blackwood said.

"We agreed to stay in the middle with each other," the Jamaican noted.

The 29-year-old said Alzarri takes pride in his batting and fielding and remarked that it was good to see him bat the way he did.

Joseph recently invested in a bowling machine to aid in the development of his batting.

**DEWS**



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