



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

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V. C. BIRD DAY MESSAGE

BY PRIME MINISTER HON. GASTON BROWNE

My political party has had only three leaders in 66 years of existence. I am doubly honoured to know that, like its second leader, I too follow in the footsteps of the very first – the National Hero whose birthday we celebrate today.

VERE CORNWALL BIRD was no ordinary man. He was born to a single parent on December 9, 1909, and lived until June 28, 1999, or for 89 years.

No other person born on Antigua and Barbuda's soil has contributed to the thankful re-ordering of this society like Vere Cornwall Bird.

When he was born, this land was known as the Presidency of Antigua in the Colony of the Leeward Islands. He would move our country to being the sovereign and independent state of Antigua and Barbuda on November 1, 1981.

More than 65% of adults were unable to read and write in 1909, through no fault of their own. The system of exploitation was designed to disable the power of the Antigua and Barbuda people to overcome their wretched state of affairs. The AT&LU, which our Hero led from 1944, proved to be the most important institution in our history. Between 1951 and 1971, Vere Bird oversaw the building of more than a

score of primary schools. "A primary school in every village," was his rallying cry. Equipping the new schools with sufficient teachers and supplies was required in order to turn buildings into learning institutions. The Leeward Islands Teacher Training College of 1958 was integral to that success.

Antigua was a patchwork of sugarcane fields, and a place from which the most able tried to escape, before 1939. Vere Cornwall Bird, through expert leadership, turned Antigua and Barbuda into a country where its workers could make a decent living, its businesses could prosper, and its citizens could achieve fulfillment.

On February 27, 1967, and on November 1, 1981, Vere Cornwall Bird addressed the Antigua and Barbuda people. These are two of our country's most important historical days: Statehood Day 1967 and Independence Day 1981. On both occasions, he made a special appeal to the youth. He was guiding his flock. The moral and ethical groundings, nurtured by the Salvation Army, pervaded his outlook.

"The future belongs particularly to the young people. You [the youth] will be enjoying the fruits of the labours of your fathers and mothers. You

have a duty to equip yourselves to carry on the work which they have started. I hope that the events of this day will inspire you to embrace every opportunity to make yourself worthy of your heritage...In a world in which people have become obsessed with the ideas of size and numbers, these West Indies have a unique opportunity to prove that true greatness is a quality of the spirit." He spoke these words on the morning of February 27, 1967.

On November 1, 1981, he was again calling on the young people to act: "I wish now to say a special word to the youth of this country. You have been given what generations of your forebears struggled and suffered to achieve. I ask you to cherish it, and to cherish it not only with words but with action. You are the future of Antigua and Barbuda. If that future is to be prosperous, if it is to be meaningful, much will depend on you. The future calls for discipline and dedication."

When Vere Cornwall Bird spoke in 1967, I was not yet born. When he spoke in 1981, I was 14 years old. Yet, those messages were evident in the institutions which he helped to create and to lead for 50 years. I regard myself as an expression of that guidance

and exhortation, and I thank our great hero for planting those seeds.

The youth of Antigua and Barbuda are its most precious resource. We have no oil, no precious metals, no vast natural resource except for our sea and our sand. We must continue to do all that we can to turn these tiny little fish and loaves into a great banquet.

Vere Cornwall Bird was the grand architect who imagined a new Antigua and Barbuda and worked towards achieving the dream.

In our 39th year of independence, let us re-dedicate ourselves to the vision and the dream which Vere Cornwall Bird, Lester Bryant Bird and the leaders of this great little country have achieved. The people of Antigua and Barbuda are counting on us.

I conclude by recalling the words of an instructive hymn, sung in many churches in Antigua and Barbuda:

*Now praise we great and famous men
The fathers named in story;
And praise the Lord who now as then,
Reveals in man his glory.*

I thank God for sending us this great man, Vere Cornwall Bird.

CARICOM reaches out to LIAT

The CARICOM Secretariat has signaled a desire to help resolve the issues that have erupted between Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines concerning the operation of LIAT into those territories.

Reports reaching PointeXpress indicate that Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to CARICOM, Dr. Clarence Henry, first raised the matter with his Barbadian counterpart, David Commissiong, asking that authorities in Bridgetown be more cooperative with LIAT as the airline makes a comeback.

Dr. Henry described LIAT as a much beloved regional institution whose return has been welcomed and celebrated by the people of the Caribbean.

Other representations were made within the communications network managed by the secretariat that is

shared by all ambassadors.

According to reports, out of these communications other ambassadors also raised concerns over Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines' actions regarding LIAT.

Ambassador Henry stated that is continuing to lobby and gather information and support from among his colleagues.

Meanwhile, LIAT's court appointed Administrator Cleveland Seaforth has confirmed that the secretariat has made contact with him through the airline's Director of Flight Operations, Captain Arthur Senhouse, to seek clarity on the standoff between the two former south Caribbean majority shareholders in the airline and LIAT.

According to the administrator, the information has been forwarded to CARICOM with the expect-

tation that the Secretary General, Erwin La Roque, will help bring about a speedy resolution of the matter.

Last Saturday, LIAT announced that it was forced to suspend flights into both Barbados and St Vincent and the Grenadines due to new conditions placed on the airline by authorities in the two countries.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has described the actions of Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines toward LIAT as 'unfortunate'. He also remarked that the actions of the two CARICOM states is creating 'artificial barriers' to the smooth operation of the airline.

LIAT resumed regular commercial flights last week, its first since countries across the region closed their borders at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Digital Nomad programme picking up steam

Five months after its launch, the Nomad Digital Residence (NDR) programme is beginning to show positive results.

A report prepared by the Immigration Department, which manages it, noted that since its launch in August, the programme has attracted people from countries in SouthEast Asia, North America, Northern Europe, The Middle East, West Africa and the Caribbean.

It noted, however, that interest in the NDR is not limited to these regions.

The NDR Unit explained that applications are required to submit all documents necessary to support their request online. If the vetting process which follows is successful and the applicant is approved then payment is made.

Initially the NDR Unit explained that prospective applicants emailed enquiries while others used the platform to ask about employment and as a means of recruiting and recruiting employees in Antigua and Barbuda.

To date, the NDR Unit

has received twenty-one applications of which fifteen have been processed and approved while six are pending. Successful applicants pay US\$1,500.00 for the special visa.

"The NDR Programme has proven thus far to be rewarding, and it continues to market the programme via its website, social media, interviews, and phone calls. The success of the NDR Programme, comes through hard work, and dedication by team members who were handpicked

based on their work ethics, capabilities and skills set, and has demonstrated accountability, and responsibility in making the NDR Programme second to none in the Caribbean," the report stated.

The NDR Unit has expressed its hope that the programme will be marketed more aggressively and that the Chief Immigration Officer will continue caucuses with ambassadors and other stakeholders to explore ways for the continued growth and expansion of the programme.

Calvin Ayre Foundation helps flood victims

Several families who suffered significant losses due to the flooding on November 9 will receive needed assistance from the Calvin Ayre Foundation, which is widely recognised as a critical benefactor for such causes.

"The Calvin Ayre Foundation (CAF) has again committed to providing financial relief in response to the urgent need of the community, to the tune of EC\$148,000. The donation will support the Ministry of Social Transformation's short term relief efforts and critical needs, to include the renovation of damaged structures," a CAF statement said.

It stated that it is dedicated to continuing its

outstanding work in the country, particularly in support of the most vulnerable.

"Many students, many disabled individuals and many persons who were made vulnerable during this COVID-19 crisis have benefited directly from contributions made by the Calvin Ayre Foundation," it revealed.

According to the CAF's Executive Director, Corinna Delowsky, the donation hardly remedies all the needs and challenges being faced by those enduring the worst effects of COVID-19 and other unforeseen circumstances.

"However," she said, "it is our hope that our assistance will empower fami-

lies and spark optimism in those most affected."

During the brief presentation at the Ministry of Social Transformation, Delowsky stated that the foundation, which was founded by business mogul and Special Economic Envoy to Antigua and Barbuda Ambassador Calvin Ayre in 2005, saw this as an opportunity to help rebuild lives and encourage other good corporate citizens to provide assistance for the benefit of the nation.

Media Relations Specialist for the Ayre Group, Jamilla Kirwan, disclosed that the CAF's philanthropic philosophy is based on giving in the areas of Social Development, Education, Sports

and Disaster Response. To this end, it assists in supporting and rebuilding communities most affected by natural disasters and unfortunate circumstances.

According to Kirwan, "The island wide flood on November 9 falls under that category and we are happy to be able to assist in the rebuilding process."

The CAF has been actively extending financial and tangible assistance to the people of Antigua and Barbuda through the government as the nation continues to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. Earlier this year, the CAF committed US\$1 million to the construction of homes destroyed by hurricane Irma.

Sir Ronald Sanders congratulates first African American to chair US House Committee on foreign relations



Congressman Gregory W. Meeks

Dean of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Corps of Ambassadors in the United States, Sir Ronald Sanders, has congratulated Congressman Gregory W. Meeks on his

election as chair of the influential Foreign Relations Committee of the US House of Representatives.

Meeks is the first African American to be elected to the chairmanship. He

was elected on December 3 by the members of the Committee in what started out as a three-cornered race. The Congressman has been the Democratic Party representative in the House for New York's 5th congressional district since 1998.

In his letter, Sanders, who is also the ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda to the United States, "warmly congratulated" the new chairman, observing that he "brings considerable experience and knowledge to this important post".

Recalling that successive governments of the United States of America have declared the Carib-

bean to be its 'third border', the ambassador told chairman Meeks that "Antigua and Barbuda and the United States have enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship that preceded the independence of both our countries. We intend to remain a strong friend and ally of the United States, contributing to the security of both our nations in all its aspects."

Assuring Congressman Meeks of "full cooperation", ambassador Sanders said that he looks forward to early Caribbean engagement with him after he assumes the chairmanship of the Foreign Relations Committee in January.

Cobbs Cross Primary graduation set for Thursday



E. P. Chet Greene MP for St. Paul presents gifts to Cobbs Cross Primary School principal Gayle Samuel-Walter

The Cobb Cross Primary School's annual graduation ceremony will take place this Thursday.

In keeping with his commitment to support education in the St. Paul constituency, Parliamentary Representative for the area, E. P. Chet Greene, is providing a number of items to the graduating class and faculty of the school.

At a brief ceremony held Tuesday, Greene presented the principal of the school, Gayle Samuel-Walter, with gifts for the graduating class and faculty. Eleven students, six boys and five girls, are graduating this year.

Each year, Greene makes similar presentations to each school in his constituency.



V.C. BIRD DAY

OFFICIAL WREATH LAYING CEREMONY

Speeches, Tributes, Music

WITH BLINDS

WEDNESDAY 9TH DECEMBER, 2020

7:00am-5:00pm

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TRAVEL ADVISORY

REVISED DECEMBER 6, 2020

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda has updated its travel advisory effective immediately to ensure the continued safety of travelers and residents. The V. C. Bird International Airport is open for international and regional air traffic. The Antigua Port Authority is open to Cargo Vessels, Pleasure Craft and Ferry Services which are required to follow all protocols issued by Port Health.

The State continues to carry out a combination of screening, testing, monitoring and other measures to mitigate the risk of importing any new cases of COVID-19 into the country. Additionally, measures have been implemented for the quick detection of any imported cases. This strategy is intended to protect and safeguard the health of both residents and visitors to Antigua and Barbuda.

Nationals and residents of Antigua and Barbuda are strongly advised to restrict their travel to countries with significant escalations in the number of persons recently testing positive for COVID-19 to that for essential purposes only.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has provided parameters for the establishment of a regional Travel Bubble among the OECS countries of Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Montserrat, Anguilla and British Virgin Islands, together with Barbados. This is designed to facilitate intra-regional travel of nationals, movement of essential workers, and inter-regional travel of visitors to the region while ensuring that the necessary health protocols are followed.

The protocols implemented are as follows:

1. All arriving passengers by air must have a negative COVID-19 RT-PCR (real time polymerase chain reaction) test for SARS-CoV-2 using a nasopharyngeal or oropharyngeal swab taken within seven (7) days of their flight. (This includes transiting passengers).
2. Children below the age of 12 years, entering Antigua, DO NOT REQUIRE a COVID -19 RT-PCR test.
3. Persons traveling to Antigua and

Barbuda from countries within the established Travel Bubble must have resided there for no less than fourteen (14) consecutive days prior to travel. They are required to have a negative COVID 19 RT-PCR test result taken within seven (7) days of their flight. They will undergo mandatory health screening upon arrival but will not be subject to quarantine. All other arriving passengers are subject to quarantine as determined by the Quarantine Authority.

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

- a) A letter of Request for Medical Transfer from the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of the originating country to the CMO of Antigua and Barbuda who is also the Quarantine Authority.
- b) A medical report detailing patient's condition, treatment required and the urgency of the situation.
- c) A Letter of Acceptance from the receiving institution stating that the patient has been accepted for care, together with the name of the physician who will be managing the patient.
- d) The intended address in Antigua and Barbuda, together with the name and telephone number of a contact person if available.

5. Passengers arriving by sea (private yachts/Ferry Services) are subject to quarantine according to guidelines issued by Port Health except those arriving from countries within the bubble.

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

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

and Barbuda.

8. Persons travelling from countries within the travel bubble will be exempted from quarantine, however, all other arriving passengers will be monitored for periods of up to 14 days in accordance with the directions of the Quarantine Authority and the Quarantine (COVID-19) Guidelines. Visitors may be required to undergo testing for COVID-19 on arrival or at the hotel or place of lodging as determined by the Health Authorities.

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

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

11. All Marine Pleasure Craft and Ferry Services entering the waters of Antigua and Barbuda should contact the Antigua Port Authority, using VHF Channel 16, at least six (6) hours prior to arrival. Instructions will be given to guide the crafts to either the Nevis Street Pier or English Harbour Ports or to a holding area.

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

These restrictions for maritime traffic, and the consequential Antigua Port Authority guidelines, issued during the State of Emergency, shall not restrict vessels engaged in innocent passage and/or transit passage, within the territorial seas and/or archipelagic waters of Antigua and Barbuda, under the 1982 United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

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

Anthony Liverpool
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

UWI responds to Daily Observer article - it 'lacks context'

The following statement is in response to a headline and article published in the Daily Observer newspaper on Tuesday, December 8, 2020 entitled, "University Payments Delayed for Third Month."

The University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus seeks the opportunity to clarify the report—which lacks some context.

The UWI Five Islands Campus, Antigua and Barbuda. Tuesday, December 8, 2020. — The UWI, Five Islands Campus started operations in September 2019 and since then, we have been building out our administrative and operational structures to ensure that we serve the people of Antigua and Barbuda and the wider OECS region, with distinction. The Government of Antigua and Barbuda has committed to financing the bulk of the operational costs for the campus in its developmental years. This commitment has been met fully, despite the very tight fiscal situation that now faces the country. We are eternally grateful to the Government and the people of Antigua and Barbuda for their financial support and can report that all operational costs for the campus have been met to date, and that we have sufficient cash to meet

our obligations going into 2021.

As it relates to the issue of "delayed" payments to adjunct faculty as reported in the Daily Observer, the Campus would like to note the following:

Our adjunct staff are normally paid after they submit their time sheets, which are verified by their Head of School and approved by the Director of Administration, who then forwards the approved sheets to the Finance office for processing and distribution of payments.

Since January 2020, all submissions received from adjunct faculty for payments have been settled, except where there are discrepancies with bank account information.

The only outstanding obligations are those that were submitted in November 2020. The November submissions were received by the Finance Department on November 17, 2020. Our payroll was run on November 25, 2020. So, practically, it would have been impossible to meet the November 2020 payroll for those submissions approved on November 17, 2020.

The November submissions will be processed and payments made for the December payroll, which should be run by December 21, 2020.

As a team, we do recognize that there are some delays with our adjunct faculty submitting their invoices for payment each month. Under the existing arrangements, the Campus cannot make payments to adjunct faculty unless a time sheet is submitted.

In light of these new developments, the Campus has approved a new strategy to come into effect in January 2021.

Come January, the Campus will abandon the process of adjunct faculty submitting time sheets before payments can be made. Instead, the adjunct faculty will be paid based on their contractual obligations to the institution without the need for monthly submission of invoices.

The verification of their teaching load, along with all other payment commitments, will be agreed at the beginning of each semester and signed off.

Payments will then be made monthly to their bank accounts.

The Five Islands Campus thanks all for their interest in the operations of our campus and look forward to serving our stakeholders in the most efficient and effective manner as we build a world class campus.

CIBC First Caribbean helps charities spread Christmas cheer

CIBC FirstCaribbean has made a donation of \$10,000 which will be used to assist local charities in spreading Christmas cheer to those in need.

"We are pleased to present \$5,000 to the Salvation Army, \$3,000 to the Lions Club of Antigua and \$2,000 to the Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross.

"We are all aware of the fantastic work being done by these organisations to assist the less

fortunate in our country and we consider it a privilege to be able to play a part," said Ladesa James-Williams, the bank's Country Head.

Expressing thanks to CIBC First Caribbean, each of the three recipients noted that the bank's generosity will greatly assist their social programmes which have endured additional pressure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.



PM Browne hails relations with Cuba



Prime Minister Gaston Browne and Cuban Ambassador Maria Esther Fiffe

The leaders of CARICOM and their Cuban counterpart, convened the seventh CARICOM/Cuba summit on Tuesday. The meeting was held virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Antigua and Barbuda delegation was led by Prime Minister, Gaston Browne who expressed the full commitment of the government and people of Antigua and Barbuda to maintaining strong ties with the government and people of the Republic of Cuba.

"Cuba is one of the region's most important and valuable partners. Our cooperation has spanned vital areas such as health, public infrastructure and education, resulting in significant human capital development gains throughout the region. People-to-people ties are the bedrock of CARICOM-Cuba relations," he remarked.

PM Browne noted that both countries share a common history, experience common challenges and threats as Small Island Developing States (SIDS). He also expressed gratitude to the Cuban government for its quick response to Antigua and Barbuda following the passage of Hurricane Irma in 2017.

"I recall that Cuba's response was immediate. Health professionals, electricians and construction workers were swiftly deployed to Barbuda, and other islands throughout the region. At the time, Cuba was also undergoing its own hardships and devastation due to those same storms," he reiterated.

Cuba's generosity and assistance extended to its response to Antigua and Barbuda at the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Moreover, solidarity was unequivocally demonstrated at the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, when an expert team of twenty-nine (29) Cuban doctors and nurses of the Henry Reeve Brigade, were dispatched to my country and worked shoulder-to-shoulder with our front-line workers to provide care to COVID-19 patients," Browne said.

PM Browne used his presentation to also draw attention to the challenges facing the people of Cuba resulting from the United States' decades long embargo against the small nation which were intensified under the Donald Trump administration.

"Antigua and Barbuda unequiv-

ocally condemns US unilateral coercive measures designed to asphyxiate the Cuban economy and we continue to vehemently reiterate a call for the end of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba. Moreover, we condemn the unjust intensification of the senseless and terrorizing sanctions imposed by the Trump administration, which have severely affected the flow of revenues and cash remittances to the country," he declared.

The prime minister has also called on US President-elect Joe Biden to rescind 'these scandalous restrictions', and restore former President Barack Obama's policy of détente, leading to humane and respectful ties.

Cuban ambassador Maria Esther Fiffe noted that her country has unreservedly shared its best experiences in the management of the COVID-19 and other epidemiological conditions that are common to the Caribbean. She also joined in calling for an immediate and unconditional end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba by the government of the United States of America. This includes ending US persecution of Cuban financial transactions which have been unrelenting.

Ambassador Fiffe credited Cuban medical cooperation and its contribution to the wellbeing of the Caribbean people, in particular, its valuable human resources to the fight against the COVID-19.

Additionally, the diplomat rejected attempts to discredit, distort or disrupt Cuba being able to provide medical assistance to the region, which is critical to the support of health care systems across the Caribbean.

MILESTONE EVENTS TO MARK V. C. BIRD DAY

The people of Antigua and Barbuda are today marking the V. C. Bird day in celebration of the man who carries the singular honour of being the Father of the Nation.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Vere Cornwall Bird Sr. is a towering figure in Antigua and Barbuda's history and folklore. Although he was born into squalid conditions, he rose to champion the cause of ordinary people. He would later become Antigua and Barbuda's chief minister, first premier and first prime minister.

Sir Vere was of a group of earlier political and social activists known today as the '39ers'. It was this group of leaders who founded the Antigua and Trades and Labour Union on January 16, 1939.

Across the Caribbean, workers became restive over living conditions that remained largely unchanged since the end of slavery one century earlier. It is against this backdrop of a people ready for change and leadership that V. C. Bird rose to become the second president of the AT&LU. He then used his



*Inside the ABLP's new headquarters
which opens on V. C. Bird Day, December 9, 2020*



new position as the vehicle through which he would advocate for better working and living conditions for workers in the all-important sugar industry.

Many years later in 1967, Sir Vere led Antigua and Barbuda to associated statehood and later to full independence in 1981.

The official programme of events to commemorate V. C. Bird Day, an annual public holiday, is spearheaded by the Festivals Commission. The activities include a wreath laying ceremony at the V. C. Bird Bust on Lower Market Street.

This year, as a result of the coronavirus

pandemic, the celebrations have been scaled down. Brief remarks will be made by the Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams, Chairman of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party (ABLP) E. P. Chet Greene, a representative from the AT&LU, Hezekiah Lewis and Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

Following this event, ABLP's new headquarters at Nugent Avenue will be opened. There, party faithfuls will celebrate the first purpose-built headquarters of a political party in Antigua and Barbuda.

The event will bring together delegations from the ABLP's seventeen constituency branches and its various arms including the Women's Action Group, Youth For Labour and the AT&LU.

In compliance with strict COVID-19 regulations, the number of people in attendance at the event will be limited to three representatives from each constituency.

Prime Minister Browne, who spearheaded the project, will deliver the feature address at the opening.

VERE CORNWALL BIRD: WHEN POWER FAILED TO CORRUPT

By Ambassador Lionel Hurst

Vere Cornwall Bird was elected to the legislature from whence he served as the state's first Chief Minister, then its first Premier and, finally, its first Prime Minister.

Vere Bird's tenure is a remarkable record of leadership which reflected the unyielding faith that his compatriots invested in his genius.

In him the people of Antigua and Barbuda were not disappointed for his long tenure was essentially undefiled. Contrasted with the minority regime, whose exercise of power over three hundred years of history was all in an effort to enrich themselves exclusively, at the expense of the subjugated majority, Vere Bird was seraphic. Exploitation for personal enrichment was the minority's sole aim.

The inordinately bad examples of the uses of power, dominating West Indian civilization, failed to despoil or defile V. C. Bird's mission. Char-



acter, fortified by religious principles, humility, knowledge and wisdom insulated Vere Bird from the corrupting influence of power.

Vere Bird was determined to end the oppression of workers during his tenure and to improve the lives of

poor children within poor families. He joined the political fight to release his Caribbean island-country from the grip of European colonialism on January 16, 1939, at age 29 years, when the Antigua Trades and Labour Union (AT&LU) was created. He became an Executive Member.

Vere Cornwall Bird's leadership of the struggle to end worker exploitation commenced five years later on January 30, 1944, when he was elected the second President of the AT&LU.

The trade union movement became the vehicle which dismantled the systems of minority dominance in Antigua and Barbuda—and throughout the Commonwealth Caribbean in a series of velvet revolutions.

(An excerpt from the 2012 publication of Ambassador Lionel Hurst Vere Cornwall Bird – When Power Failed To Corrupt, pp. 3-4)

VC BIRD: THE MAN AND HIS LEGACY OBSERVATIONS OF THE ABLP CHAIRMAN, E. P. CHET GREENE

The name V. C. Bird conjures up images of the tall, charismatic leader, his ever present felt hat and his immense communications skills.

V. C. Bird's contributions to building a modern Antigua and Barbuda are unmatched. Surrounded by his team of trusted lieutenants, he led a fight that brought the country out of a disease afflicted state characterised by widespread poverty to one which now holds a respectably high ranking on the human development index.

More than twenty years after his death, V. C. Bird still casts a tall shadow on current developments in Antigua and Barbuda. He is the subject of many books, articles and other publications as his heroics are preserved for posterity.

Although he did not receive much by way of formal education, Sir Vere

recognised the power of education which he considered 'the great equalizer'. Armed with this mindset, he embarked on a mission to ensure that a school was present in every community. The impact of this move was tremendous as it meant that children would no longer have to walk for miles to obtain an education.

His continued value as our foremost leader is evidenced by his foundation work in education and placing a school in every community thus making education accessible to the masses.

Sir Vere also had great vision in respect of health care and it is this vision that led to the establishment of health centres at central locations across the nation. Today, there are health centres and clinics located in many communities in Antigua and

Barbuda.

Antigua and Barbuda made the shift from that of an agriculture-based economy to one heavily dependent on tourism and services. This shift to tourism began as far back as the 1950's when neighbouring countries persisted in agriculture.

V. C. Bird, a staunch regionalist, is also distinguished in that he was among the three Caribbean leaders to sign the CARIFTA agreement which is now considered to be the forerunner of CARICOM.

On V. C. Bird Day, we pause to celebrate the contributions of this beloved leader to his country, his people and his party.

Long live the memory of V. C. Bird, Father of the Nation!

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA



By Dame Edris Bird

The following is an excerpt from an article published in the 1981 Official Independence Magazine to commemorate Antigua and Barbuda's Independence.

Very little education development occurred until the post war period of the 1940's. A British Commission, led by Lord Moyne, highlighted the serious inadequacies of the education systems in the entire Caribbean, and, as a result, Antigua, along with other islands, received substantial British aid for education. The quantitative development of educational facilities. Between 1960-1965, nine new schools in the villages of Pares and Jennings. These two were a gift from the Canadian government. The Antigua grammar school was acquired by the government in 1964.

These developments were the direct results of the desire of the new Labour Leaders, who gradually assumed power in the

early 40's to use education as an instrument for bettering the social conditions of Antiguan. The slogan was "We are out to build a new Antigua". The 'new Antigua' was envisaged as one where education would permit the masses to qualify for those jobs which had previously been denied them and so have a better position in the society.

The Antiguan Labour Party Manifesto (1965-1970) read: "Our efforts have been aimed at eradicating the low standard that obtained in the past to accommodate a sugar economy and to introduce a liberal type of education that is socially desirable for Antigua and Barbuda and which can break down forever barriers of the privilege and snobbery of the past and give each child the best education for which he is suited"

It was genuinely felt that equality of educational opportunity could be achieved by a considerable expansion of secondary education, particularly in the rural areas, at the same time as an increase of the number of scholarships to private secondary schools and eventually free secondary education. In 1939 there was only one scholarship each granted to Antigua Girls High School and the Antigua Grammar School. However, by 1978 the gov-

ernment proclaimed that free secondary education was available to all who could benefit from it.

The 1970s saw efforts made to fit education to suit the capabilities of the children. The idea of the Junior Secondary School organized on comprehensive lines was embraced, and attempts were made to lessen the reliance on the academic curriculum and to broaden it to include, at the Junior School Stage, science, art, music, woodwork, metalwork, domestic science, secretarial skills and agricultural science. Specialist teachers and supervisors were appointed in these subjects.

The opening of a technical college in 1972, with its course offering of basic hotel training, carpentry, masonry, plumbing, mechanics, basic engineering, electrical installation, refrigeration and commercial study should be regarded as one of the most significant developments in education in Antigua. Its consonant with the government's intention to create a post-secondary system more in keeping with the developmental needs of the country. But heavy financial backing is now required from the Government to change current attitudes which tend to label technical education as the "last resort of the dull".

The late 70's and 80's

are now showing efforts on the part of Government to tighten up a system that has become diffuse. The cessation of grants to small financially weak secondary schools in 1979 has forced their closure. Their children and some members of their staff have been absorbed into existing secondary schools. There are now nine government secondary schools including the holy trinity school in Barbuda. This school with a primary division has been offering candidates for the G.C.E. 'O' Levels since 1969. Private secondary schools number seven, four of them being church affiliated. A common sixth form was instituted in 1979 and merged with the Technical College and the Teachers' College into the Antigua State College under one Principal.

There has also been growing concern for the needs of special children. The Government has recently taken over the Adele School for Special Children with a role of 24 and given increased support to the Red Cross School for the Deaf.

Dr. Bird served as a distinguished educator at the highest level for several decades. She was awarded the country's highest honour for her contributions. She passed away in July 2020 at the age of 91 years old.

Are women leaders forced to be men?

By Makeda Mikael

Former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's cruelty in the Falklands was harshly criticised, even by men.

India's Indira Gandhi went straight for the testicles, literally, castrating the country's lower class men to stop reproduction.

Our very own Dame Eugenia Charles of Dominica, a great intellectual, allowed herself to become befuddled by the Hollywood actor turned president, Ronald Regan, who convinced her to siding with America against Cuba.

I raise these examples of powerful women led astray to express the fact that I am no longer happy with the recent decisions of Barbados' Prime Minister Mia Amour Mottley with respect to LIAT and her intent on pursuing a stupid aviation war with Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

The mindset of powerful women that their approach to power must be testosterone driven and rough is unacceptable. Also, it is unacceptable that women of high intellect who are placed in positions of power become so arrogantly male that it belittles them and causes even their women supporters to withdraw in shame.

This unfolding LIAT saga pro-

vides a perfect case in point as the antagonistic and uncaring attitude of the powerhouse in this aviation argument over whether LIAT should die and whether St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Barbados' 'One Caribbean' should rise.

The lack of economic appreciation by these two ultra-educated Caribbean leaders of the 60 plus year old airline, which has done yeoman service in keeping the region together in good and bad times.

Through post-federation disappointment to the Regional Development Agency, then the OECS and CARICOM era, it truly makes one wonder to what end we are educating our people!

It is difficult not to see the Plantation and Great House mentalities which come into play here as Little England seeks to barge its way into a seasoned Caribbean institution and, having failed to takeover, seek to betray the initiative and kill the airline.

Years ago Barbados held the second place in Caribbean Aviation where, under the good legal guidance of their rated aviation lawyer Ian Archer, they were able to penetrate the trans-Atlantic air routes with weekly charters to

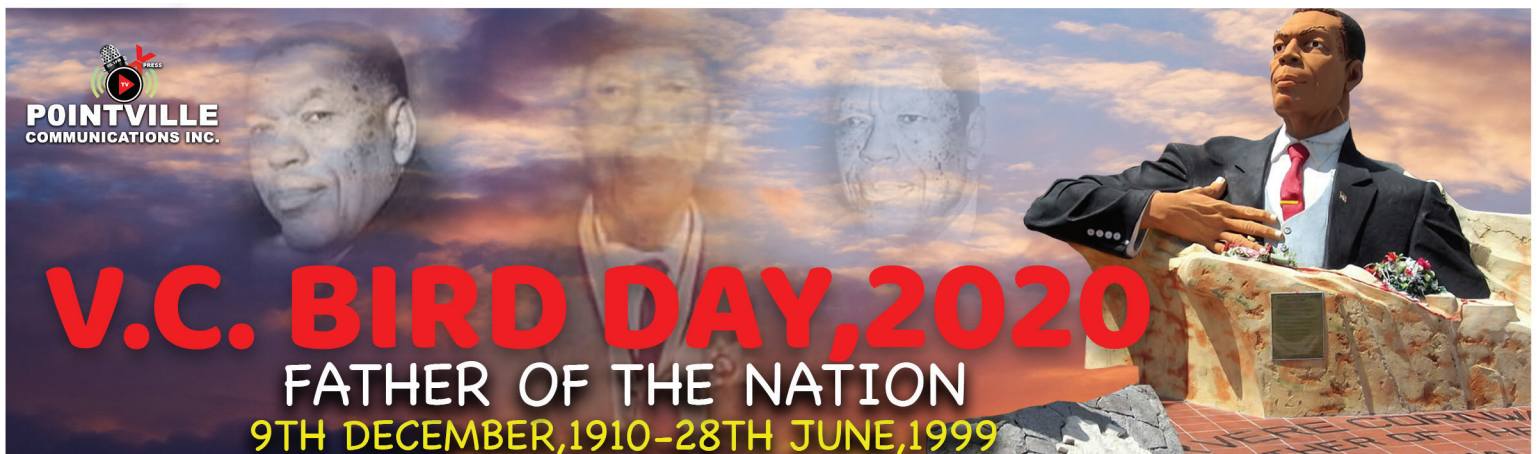
Luxembourg where budget-conscious Caribbean people, and students in particular, could reach their destinations in most of Europe via plane, train or ferry.

Over the years this aviation spark dwindled and the Civil Aviation Division in Barbados reduced its direct involvement and downsized almost to extinction. Faced with this Barbados could not qualify for Category 1 status, whereas Antigua, with LIAT, could.

The acceptable methodology for Barbados to regain its status in aviation would have required a meeting of the heads of the interested regions to seriously discuss the reorganisation of LIAT with the inclusion of One Caribbean and other interested airlines.

Instead what happened behind the closed doors of the COVID-19 shut-down was a serious bid by the LIAT majority shareholders to kill LIAT and have their own phoenix rise in time to take over LIAT's routes, passengers and international safety reputation.

Barbados and St. Vincent should be ashamed of their rebellious and greedy antics and rejoin the great effort of Antigua and Barbuda to have LIAT take to the blue once again.



HR Challenges and opportunities in the public sector

In Antigua and Barbuda, like in many other countries, a majority of persons are employed within the public sector. These employees are expected to perform their duties to the general public professionally, efficiently and effectively in an effort to support the growing service economy. Public sector employees are expected and required to deliver high quality services to the public who, in many cases, have no alternative service providers.

For the purpose of this article, "public sector" organisations will refer to all those that are government owned, government funded and where the political directorate is the primary stakeholder.

A critical measure of public sector performance is the quality and timeliness of service delivery to the citizenry. Lack of productivity due to absenteeism has been a concern for some public sector organisations even prior to the global pandemic, however the public sector is faced with issues of productivity from not only the micro level but also from a macro level within the organisation as employees of public sector organisations have been forced into quarantine or isolation due to contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus or who have themselves contracted the novel coronavirus. This has resulted in some instances significant delays in the delivery of certain critical services.

Although there are challenges associated with the pandemic the public sector has gone through its own metamorphosis as it continues to navigate these unprecedented times and has made some significant strides. Human Resource departments



have been compelled to perform a delicate balancing act when dealing with issues of staff engagement while at the same time keeping staff motivated in safe working environments. Some departments have had to resort to reduced hours, working shift systems and/or remote working while keeping employees engaged and implementing specific strategic mechanisms to monitor performance.

Traditionally, learning and development in the sector would take the form of workshops, seminars and training sessions, mostly in person, requiring overseas travel on occasions, however, as a result of the pandemic and the ensuing protocols, travelling for training came to an almost immediate halt and there is now significant reliance on more cost effective methods as training is being conducted via various social media platforms in the form of webinars, virtual conferences and master classes. There have also been opportunities through the use of learning management systems (LMS) that some public sector organisations have opted to purchase and have them tailored to cater to their particular need based on the advice of the human resource department.

Over the last few years there has been a shift with regards to the reliance on technology as a driving force for efficiency and productivity. In many instances

the public sector was not as proactive in this respect but with the need to provide continuous service to clients in this new normal, the public sector has been forced to implement processes and introduce technology into their normal course of business operations. As a result of the pandemic, the public sector forged ahead and began offering online services which have allowed the citizens and residents to access and perform a variety of transactions such as e-filing and e-payments for various government services, safely and securely through online portals or mobile apps.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a unique set of challenges and the public sector was not spared the task of having to navigate these trying times, however, we have also taken advantage of some unique opportunities that have allowed us to increase the value of the services that we offer and the conveniences in the way we operate even as we navigate these unprecedented times.

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.

No word yet from CXC on mark re-do

Amid growing impatience at its failure to provide an update on a promised re-marking of this year's exam scripts, the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) said today the "process would be completed shortly".

The examining body provided no clear timeline, only saying that it would "provide a further update next week via a media briefing".

CXC had scheduled a briefing last Friday but later postponed the event until today. That too was called off.

In a brief statement, the CXC, however, assured that it continues to "work assiduously to complete Queries and Requests for Reviews, in order to finalise

grades for the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination July/August Examinations.

It added: "We understand the psychosocial impact of the extended COVID-19 related circumstances and have heard the concerns of ministry officials, teachers, parents and students.

"These concerns are being addressed with further consideration of the hardships that students and their parents may have been experiencing.

"In addition to the Requests for Reviews which have been submitted, CXC in accordance with the Independent Review Team (IRT) Report has been reviewing borderline cases,

in particular single grade changes, as well as the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects. This approach will help to expedite the process of reviews.

"We are committed to a thorough and speedy completion of the review process as we understand that the wait has been long for many. It is expected that this process will be completed shortly and we therefore request your continued patience and support as we carefully navigate this challenging period."

The explanation is unlikely to sit well with anxious students, teachers and parents who have been waiting for more than a month.

This year, after making

changes to its exam marking scheme, the CXC faced a backlash over the results and received an unprecedented number of queries and review requests, particularly for CAPE and CSEC.

At issue were "ungraded" results or unsatisfactory grades received by students from at least 20 countries where the exams were written this year.

To remedy the situation, CXC registrar Dr. Wayne Wesley, and its chairman, UWI Vice Chancellor Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, told the media in October that CXC would be increasing its marking capacity and putting several other measures in place to handle the queries and reviews in a timely manner.



RT. HON. VERE CORNWALL BIRD

First Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda

Powerfully built and a towering 6-feet 6-inches, the one-time Salvation Army captain was the last survivor of the generation of union leaders who fought against labor conditions of near-slavery to win political control of the English-speaking Caribbean after World War II.

Under his leadership of the 1980's, the 108-square-mile island of Antigua emerged from a colonial sugar-cane economy in which field workers had earned only 24 cents a day.

Towards the end of the 1980's, the island was one of the prime Caribbean watering holes, boasting more than three dozen hotels and full employment. It had the highest growth rate--and one of the highest foreign debt burdens--in the region.

A monument near the public market honors the man who became independent Antigua and Barbuda's first prime minister in 1981 and is thus considered the 'father of the nation.'



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SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY

Belize PM returns to work after contracting COVID-19



Prime Minister John Briceño /CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Prime Minister John Briceño says he has made a full recovery from the coronavirus [COVID-19], even as other members of the ruling People's United Party (PUP) were reported to have contracted the virus that has killed 148 and infected 5, 854.

Briceño said that his last PCR test results were positive but doctors have declared him clinically recovered.

"Two weeks ago, as you all

itive with COVID-19. It is just like almost an impulse, I decided to go and check because I had no symptoms. It was found that I was positive and then I was in self-quarantine for two weeks.

"I stayed in my bedroom and followed all the strict protocols. I must tell you that my family and I had to follow the protocols. On Friday last, a doctor from the Ministry of Health went to do two things,

give me the PCR test and also to clinically examine me. As I said, I had no symptoms. I had no fever, no headache, no pains, no diarrhoea, nothing. No loss of smell or taste."

But he said after the test was administered "she then declared me clinically recovered, that I could have moved around...but my wife insisted that you are going to do your 14 days.

Briceño said that while he is "free to move around, I will not get anybody sick.

The PUP, which won the general elections last month, also reported that some legislators including the Toledo East Area Representative Mike Espat and the Cayo West Area Representative Jorge "Milin" Espat have recovered from the virus, while Dolores Balderamos Garcia, the Area Representative for Belize Rural Central, is in self-isolation.

Briceño said that his Chief of Staff and Cabinet Secretary, Stuart Leslie, has also been declared clinically recovered, so too has the chief executive officer in the Prime Minister's Office, Narda Garcia.

Jamaica records 87 new COVID-19 cases

Jamaica on Monday recorded 87 new COVID-19 cases, with ages ranging from two to 89 years, pushing the tally to 11,271 with 3,561 being active.

Of the new cases, 38 are males, 48 are females and one case is under investigation.

No additional death was re-

corded, keeping the total at 265.

One more case was recorded as a coincidental death, increasing the total to 38. The health ministry said that the case was formerly under investigation and one other fatality is being probed, pushing that figure to 31.

In the meantime, there were 146 more recoveries, increasing the total to 7,292.

86 persons are in hospital with nine being moderately ill and 11 critically ill.

Two persons are in government quarantine, while 27,512 are at home.

Opposition Leader chains himself to Parliament table



Grenada's Opposition Leader Tobias Clement chained himself in the Parliament on Monday

Grenada's Opposition Leader Tobias Clement chained himself to his table on Monday moments after beginning his response to the 2021 budget which was delivered by Finance Minister Gregory Bowen last week Wednesday.

The Budget sitting resumed last Friday but Clement was not

present.

"That will mean, therefore, that we have gone back to making presentations. The Leader of the Opposition, when he comes, if he comes, would be allowed to make a presentation just as any other member of the House, the timing of which is one hour. It's unfortunate we cannot hold

up the entire nation and this house to the fancy of the Leader of the Opposition," said House Speaker Michael Pierre.

Clement anticipated that he would be removed if he continued to speak beyond one hour.

"I am here to deliver what I have to deliver to the people," Clement said, after standing to commence his presentation after the Minister for Social Development made her presentation on the budget.

"And I believe, Mr. Speaker, in order to get me out before my time is up you will have to nuke this place," said Clement as he proceeded to chain himself to the table.

"When I leave this House, one thing I know I will leave with my self-respect. This might be the most famous piece of chain in Grenada today. Let the whole world see that in chains I will deliver what I have to deliver today. If you have to get me out today, I do not know if the orderlies can afford it," said Clement as he bolted the chain to his hand.

House Speaker

Pierre interrupted the opposition leader by explaining to him that the Parliament is a place of freedom.

"I do understand a lot of drama and grandstanding... I don't know why you came so prepared. You see you were given the opportunity to do your do, that is your privilege as Leader of the Opposition.

"I don't understand the drama and the chain. This Parliament is not a slave pen; the Parliament is a place of freedom and you stand to speak, you stand to debate the budget and I think as you say the world is watching, but the world doesn't want to see a comedian or something like that in this country. The Parliament is bigger than that," he said.

The Parliament Standing Orders do not provide the order in which members must respond to the budget, but recommends that the Leader of the Opposition be provided with the same time as used by the Minister presenting the budget, or 2 hours, or whichever is more.

Pierre allowed Clement to speak for 2 hours.

India: Unidentified disease kills one, hundreds hospitalised



Authorities are trying to determine the cause of the illness /PHOTO AP

(AlJazeera) - One person has died and more than 400 have been taken to hospital in southern India due to an unidentified infection that caused many to fall unconscious following seizures and nausea, according to a senior health department official.

The illness was detect-

ed on Saturday evening in Eluru, an ancient city in Andhra Pradesh state famous for its hand-woven products.

Since then, patients have experienced symptoms ranging from nausea and anxiety to loss of consciousness, doctors said.

Government and med-

ical authorities in Andhra Pradesh said more than 200 people were discharged at the weekend and that tests had ruled out COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus.

Further serological tests are underway.

Separately, India's fed-

eral health ministry said on Monday it would send a team of three medical experts to investigate the outbreak, which it said has infected more than 300 children.

"The children reportedly suffered from dizziness, fainting spells, headache and vomiting," the ministry said, adding that a door-to-door survey was also under way.

Meanwhile, Indian authorities on Tuesday said they are investigating if organochlorines used as pesticides or in mosquito control caused the outbreak.

Federal lawmaker GVL Narasimha Rao, who is from the state, said on Twitter that he had spoken with government medical experts and that the "most likely cause is poisonous organochlorine substances".

Charlie Hebdo attack: France seeks long jail terms in Paris trial

(BBC) - France's anti-terror prosecutors have called for defendants on trial for a series of militant Islamist attacks in Paris to be given long jail terms.

The January 2015 attacks on Charlie Hebdo magazine, a policewoman and a Jewish supermarket left 17 people dead.

Fourteen people are appearing in court and three are being tried in absentia.

One of those being tried in absentia is Hayat Boumeddiene, the fugitive

partner of Amedy Coulibaly who was killed after attacking the supermarket.

Two brothers are also being sought.

Prosecutors are seeking a life sentence for Ali Riza Polat, the main defendant, who is in court.

All three actual participants in the 7-9 January 2015 attacks were killed and the defendants, who went on trial in early September, are accused of obtaining weapons or providing logistical support. All 14 in the dock deny the

charges and verdicts are expected on 16 December.

Prosecutor Julie Holveck told the court that all the defendants had "their share of responsibility" for the deadly process that led up to the attacks and she called for a "firm and balanced" response. It was not a question of making the living pay for the crimes of the dead, she insisted.

"They are the kingpin and backbone of this plot."

Ali Riza Polat, described

as Coulibaly's right-hand man, had a pivotal role in preparing the attacks and had a "precise knowledge of the terrorist plan", even if he disputed that, prosecutors allege. He has admitted taking part in "scams" but denies any knowledge of the plot.

It is unknown whether the three being tried in absentia are even alive, but prosecutors say Hayat Boumeddiene should be given a 30-year sentence with a minimum of 20 behind bars.

US FDA researchers back Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine data



A nurse preparing to administer the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at Guy's Hospital in London, UK /PHOTO Frank Augstein/Pool via Reuters

(AlJazeera) - Pfizer cleared the next hurdle in the race to get its COVID-19 vaccine approved for emergency use in the United States on Tuesday after the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released documents that raised no new issues about its safety or efficacy.

Pfizer and German partner BioNTech submitted data to the FDA last month about their coronavirus vaccine based on data showing the two-dose regimen was 95 percent effective against COVID-19 and had no major safety issues.

The vaccine's efficacy data met its expect-

tations for emergency use authorisation, FDA staff said in a report released ahead of a Thursday meeting of experts who will discuss whether to recommend the Pfizer shot for people aged 16 and older.

In the 53-page report, researchers found that results "showed similar efficacy point estimates across age groups, genders, racial and ethnic groups, and participants with medical comorbidities associated with high risk of severe COVID-19."

The report also found there was currently insufficient data to make conclusions about the safety of the vaccine in

those less than 16 years of age, pregnant women and those whose immune systems were compromised.

On Thursday, a panel of independent scientists will pick apart the FDA's first-pass review before recommending whether the vaccine appears safe and effective enough for millions of Americans. The FDA, which typically follows the committee's advice, is expected to issue a decision in the days following the review. If given the green light, the first recipients would be healthcare workers and nursing home residents according to plans laid out by each state.

"The good news is that this very important part of the process is playing out just like it should and just like it does with every other FDA regulatory review process," said Dr Helen Boucher, chief of infectious diseases at Tufts Medical Center, in an interview with the Reuters news agency.

The UK on December 2 became the first country in the world to approve the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

The first person to be vaccinated under that authorisation was 90-year-old Margaret Keenan, in Coventry, England on Tuesday.

Warnings intensify as badly needed aid still not reaching Tigray



An Ethiopian refugee family who fled the conflict in Tigray sits next to their belongings at Um Rakuba refugee camp in Sudan /PHOTO YASUYOSHI CHIBA/AFP

(AlJazeera) - Humanitarian agencies have reiterated urgent calls for immediate access to Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region, warning of an "increasingly critical" situation more than a week after the United Nations announced a deal with the Ethiopian government to allow in desperately needed food and other aid.

Following months of rising tensions, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on November 4 ordered a ground and air offensive into the northern region in response to alleged attacks

by Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) forces on federal military camps there.

Since then, aid-laden lorries have waited at the borders of Tigray, a region of six million people, even as warnings have become increasingly dire about the lack of food, fuel, clean water, cash and other necessities.

Abiy declared victory in Tigray on November 28 after the army seized the regional capital, Mekele. On Monday, however, he said efforts were continuing to restore order, amid continued fighting and lawlessness that is

hampering relief efforts.

In Geneva, UNHCR spokesman Babar Baloch told reporters it was "very hard" to establish what is happening inside Tigray, where communications have been shut and access restricted since the start of the fighting.

Some 96,000 Eritrean refugees, many of whom have fled neighbouring Eritrea's authoritarian government, were living in four camps in Tigray. Eritreans often leave to escape mandatory, indefinite military service and repression, or search for better opportunities out of what has long been one of the world's most isolated countries.

The UNHCR has had no humanitarian access to the camps since the start of the unrest and it is thought that stocks delivered beforehand would now have run out.

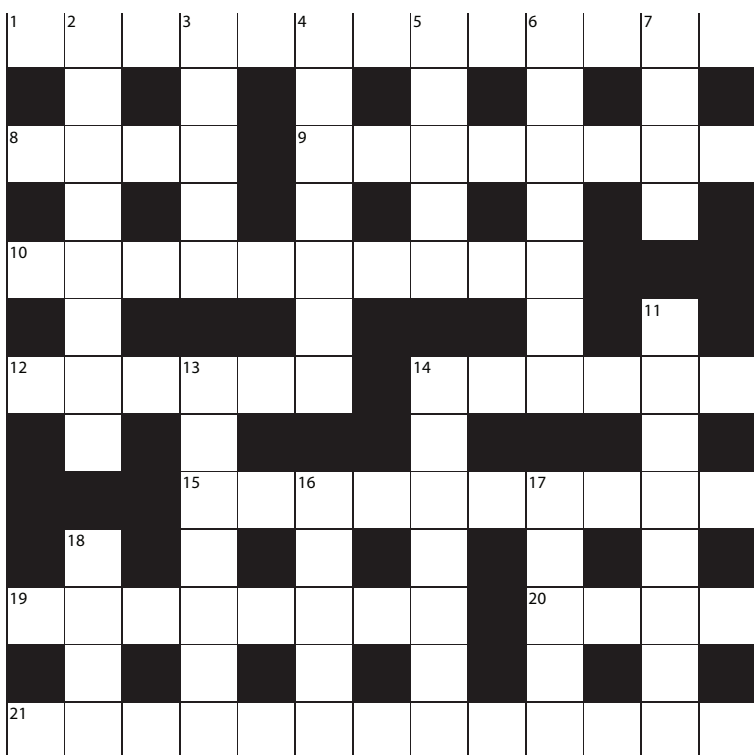
Last week, Baloch had said there "worrying reports of attacks, of abductions and also of recruitments in and around these refugee camps". On Tuesday, he said there were reports that some of those Eritrean refugees may now be on the move inside Tigray.

GOT NEWS?

Send your news stories to
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QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

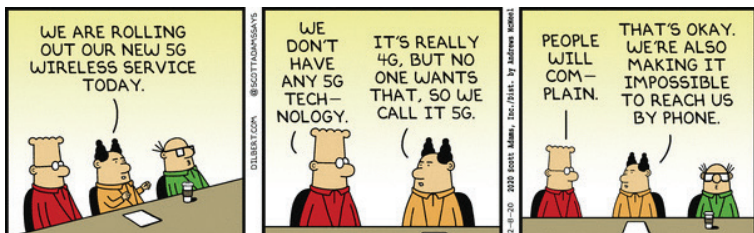
- 1 Forethought (13)
8 Wide smile (4)
9 Shared (8)
10 Eradicated (7,3)
12 Failing in one's duty (6)
14 Tasting like vinegar (6)
15 One who dispenses medicines (10)
19 Continuous (8)
20 Fat and flour mixture, cooked and used to make sauces (4)
21 Go a well-lit way (anag) — species of bird (6,7)

Down

- 2 Things seldom encountered (8)
- 3 Musical note (5)
- 4 Titled lady (7)
- 5 Musical speed (5)
- 6 Person with legal ownership of property to be used solely for specified purposes (7)
- 7 Kind of exam (4)
- 11 24th American state to join the Union, 1821 (8)
- 13 Endanger (7)
- 14 Former Soviet republic of south-east Europe, capital Yerevan (7)
- 16 Wonky (5)
- 17 Unit of weight for gems (5)
- 18 Formerly (4)

DAILY COMICS

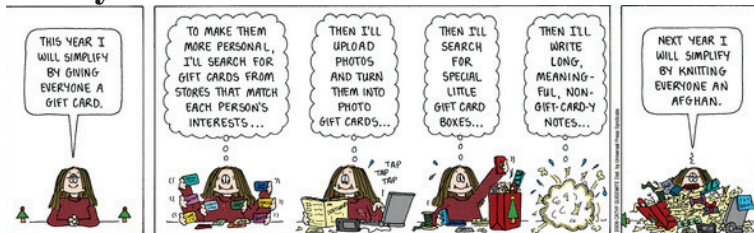
Dilbert



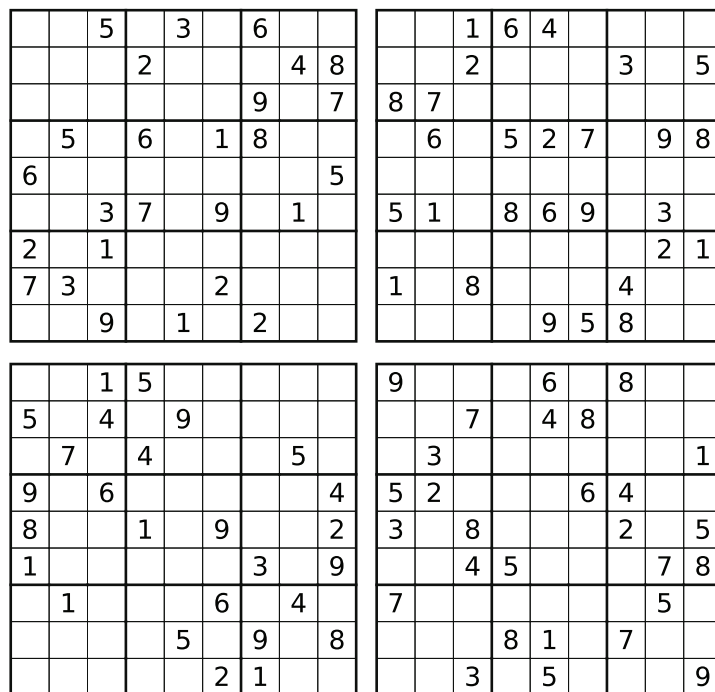
Garfield



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

WED
12/09



29° Hi
24° Lo

DAY
Sunny to partly cloudy with a shower

NIGHT
Partly cloudy

Sunrise 6:26 AM
Sunset 5:34 PM
Moonrise 1:09 AM
Moonset 1:38 PM

THU
12/10



28° Hi
24° Lo

DAY
Sunny to partly cloudy and nice

NIGHT
Mostly clear with a late shower

Sunrise 6:26 AM
Sunset 5:34 PM
Moonrise 2:06 AM
Moonset 2:20 PM

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

♈ ARIES | Mar. 21-Apr. 19

You might get annoyed today by someone who just can't get to the point! They will be hemming and hawing, flattering and fawning, then cracking jokes. Why? Because they are too afraid to spit it out!

♉ TAURUS | Apr. 20-May 20

Keep an eye on your temper today, and don't let it get the best of you if someone is rude or inconsiderate. It isn't going to help things if you chew someone out, and you will only end up looking self-righteous.

♊ GEMINI | May 21-June 20

Try to be a lot more opinionated today. You have so much to gain by speaking out and saying the right thing at the right time! If you have a question during the middle of a long meeting, go ahead and ask it.

♊ CANCER | June 21-July 22

Your recent victory might make you feel like showing off a little bit today, and that's okay. Just try to avoid doing it in front of people it might rub the wrong way. It's important to be sensitive about people who haven't had as much success as you have.

♌ LEO | July 23-Aug. 22

A confidence boost will not only do wonders for your reputation, it will also help you in the health department because when you feel good about yourself, you start feeling better in your body.

♍ VIRGO | Aug. 23-Sept. 22

It's good that you want to be organized, but you also need to let some things in your life fall to chance. If you have too much control over every aspect of your life, there will be no unpredictability and no fun!

♎ LIBRA Sept. | 23-Oct. 22

You can't help but get more in touch with your inner artist today. Unusual colors and interesting images will catch your eye and get your creative juices flowing! Do whatever you can to get your artistry out into the world.

♏ SCORPIO Oct. | 23-Nov. 21

The flattery you receive today is going to be completely genuine, so why doubt it? Sometimes you have to hang up your skepticism and just accept what people say as being what they mean, especially when they're telling you how fabulous you are!

♐ SAGITTARIUS | Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Risk is not something that you should be afraid of, especially right now when there's an exciting opportunity just beyond your grasp. You have to go climbing out on that limb to get it! It might be scary at first, but it will also be exhilarating.

♑ CAPRICORN | Dec. 22-Jan. 19

On days like today, when you may have to fight for some attention, you just have to approach the people you want to talk to and make them hear you. It is time for you to get more aggressive if you want to get anywhere.

♒ AQUARIUS | Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Your independence is important, but going your own way isn't always the best way to get somewhere in life. Sometimes it's much wiser to let yourself be led along by others as long as they're going in the right direction.

♓ PISCES | Feb. 19-Mar. 20

You are in total control today. Your practical side is out in full force, helping you avoid temptation and stick to your diet! You're making real progress on a few goals, and you should be feeling a lot more spry than usual.

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.

NOTICE FROM THE ABHS THE ANTIGUA & BARBUDA HUMANE SOCIETY WISHES TO REMIND ALL DOG OWNERS OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. In accordance with the Dogs Registration & Control Act, 2006 all dogs must be kept under proper control by their owners at all times.
2. Where it is considered necessary for safety and control purposes to tether a dog for a period of time, the dog must have unrestricted movement within the range of the tether.
3. Where a dog is tethered on a chain, rope or similar restraining device, the device must be at least 3 metres (10 feet) in length. A flat collar must be used to fasten the dog to the tether. A choke collar, chain, rope, or cord must not be used directly around the neck of the dog.
4. The restraining device must be of sufficient strength that the dog cannot escape the tether but must wait to be released by the owner under controlled supervision.

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.

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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Argentine senator moves bill to put Maradona on banknotes



Diego Maradona's infamous 'Hand of God' goal in 1986

An Argentine senator has proposed putting an image of the late football star Diego Maradona on new banknotes.

Maradona, who led Argentina to the 1986 World Cup title, died two weeks ago at the age of 60.

Senator Norma Durango presented a bill to Congress on Monday which lobbies to place the late player's image on the 1,000 peso note, the country's highest denomination. It would feature

Maradona's face on one side and a picture of his most famous goals on the other, she said.

The senator also suggested putting his image on commemorative stamps.

Maradona's two most famous goals came in the 1986 World Cup quarter-final against England.

Durango said the final decision will be made by lawmakers who are expected to hear her proposal early next week.

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Jason Holder loses number one ranking



Ben Stokes and Jason Holder

Englishman Ben Stokes has moved ahead of West Indies captain Jason Holder as the world number one all-rounder after poor performances with bat and ball by the Barbadian in the first test in New Zealand.

Holder scored 25 not out and eight in the match and failed to capture any wickets.

Stokes, who now leads Holder by 12 points in the International Cricket Council (ICC) rankings, was trailing him only by a point heading to the first Test in New Zealand which the Caribbean side lost.

West Indies batsman Jermaine Blackwood moved up the rankings after scoring 104 against New Zealand. The Jamaican right-hander moved up 17 places to 41st.

Jason Holder: "Alzarri Joseph can become a genuine all-rounder"

Windies captain Jason Holder believes Alzarri Joseph's maiden Test half-century at Seddon Park last week has instilled confidence in the Antiguan whom he believes can become a genuine all-rounder.

The 24-year-old struck a superb 86 in his 12th Test in West Indies second innings in a 155 run partnership seventh wicket stand despite being selected as one of the Caribbean team's

four fast bowlers.

Batting at number eight, Joseph smashed nine fours and three sixes in an accomplished effort. Holder said this performance backs up Joseph's keen attention to his batting and insistence that he is an all-rounder.

The Barbadian said Joseph's performance adds to his belief that the Antiguan can excel in the sport and expressed disappointment that he missed his maiden century by 14 runs.

Before last week's performance, Joseph secured three-half centuries in 37 first class matches.

Meanwhile first choice wicketkeeper Shane Dor-

wich and Kemar Roach will miss the second Test in Wellington in New Zealand which starts on Friday.

On Monday, Cricket West Indies said Dorwich will return home for personal reasons and not due to the finger injury he sustained while fielding on the day one of the opening test which ruled him out of both West Indies innings.

Roach was already expected to return to Barbados following the death of his father in the buildup to the first Test.

The Caribbean side lost the first match by an innings and 134 runs before lunch on Sunday's fourth day.



Alzarri Joseph and Jason Holder

A&B dominant at the CAC Championship in Dominican Republic

President of the Antigua and Barbuda Bodybuilding and Weightlifting Federation, Dave George, is elated with the performance of the athletes who participated in the 47th Central American and Caribbean Championship (CAC) in the Dominican Republic last weekend.

Melissa Seaforth was dominant in the Bikini competition winning her class of 160cm, before moving on to secure victory in the overall Bikini class earning her Elite PRO card.

Seaforth's performance earned her the right to participate in the professional Bikini competition leading to more success with the beautiful, well-built Antiguan winning the professional Bikini competition completing a clean sweep.

George, who was a recent guest on Pointe FM's Touchline, could not mask his excitement as he congratulated the three athletes who journeyed to Santo Domingo for the event. President George said the athletes did the country, federation and themselves proud. The two male participants finished sixth and seventh in their weight class. Seaforth joins a line of Antiguan athletes who have achieved the Elite PRO card which clears them to participate in professional events around the world.



Melissa Seaforth bags gold in the 160cm class of the Bikini competition at the 2020 CAC in the Dominican Republic

DEWS