



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

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commentator  
Vere 'Fu  
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## GUEST EDITORIAL

### UNDER THE RADAR AND AT WARP SPEED CUBA LEADS LATIN AMERICA TOWARDS AFFORDABLE COVID-19 VACCINES

*Mike Rivage-Seul: Emeritus professor of Peace & Social Justice Studies. Liberation theologian. Activist. Former R.C. priest.*

#### **By Mike Rivage-Seul**

Recently Amy Goodman's "Democracy Now" explored "The Case for People's Vaccines."

While those interviewed by Ms. Goodman called for early and affordable access to inoculations in the Global South, no mention was made of perhaps the most promising source of such therapies. The neglected source was not only promising but implicitly revealed the swindle represented by Big Pharma's anticipated exorbitant prices for Covid-19 vaccines.

It may surprise readers to know that the source in question is Cuba.

In fact, Cuba is the first nation in Latin America to receive authorization from the World Health Organization (WHO) to perform officially sanctioned tests of the four vaccines it now has under development. Those trials have already completed their clinical stages. Promising results so far have Cubans looking forward to completing the (cost free) inoculation of its entire population of 12 million by

the end of March 2021.

The vaccines under trial are named Soberana 01, Soberana 02, Abdala (CIGB66) and Mambisa (CIGB669). None of them is dependent for its preservation on super-cold temperatures.

Failure to report such developments even on "Democracy Now" illustrates the complicity of our mainstream media in shunning any news from socialist nations like Cuba that might possibly illustrate the superior ability of their economies to deliver high quality, no-cost healthcare to citizens even during a worldwide pandemic. Moreover, absent the profit motive, Cuba will predictably deliver its vaccines to its neighbors at vastly cheaper prices than its capitalist counterparts.

This prediction is based on the fact that Cuba has long been a supplier of vaccines and doctors not only to the Global South, but to countries such as Italy during the height of Covid-19's first wave. Additionally, with its unequalled ratio of doctors to citizens, the island nation's response

to the pandemic has effectively limited documented coronavirus infections despite supply problems caused by the continued U.S. embargo of the island.

All four developments (the superabundance of doctors, the relative control of Covid-19, Cuba's research capacities, and the export of medical care to other countries) result from the foresight and vision of Fidel Castro, the revered father of his country. In the early 1980s he sparked initiation of a vigorous homegrown biotech sector – largely to cope with the U.S. embargo's persistent attempts to deprive the island of medical supplies.

The result was the emergence of 20 research centers and 32 companies employing 20,000 people under the umbrella of the state-run BioCubaFarma Corporation. Recently, spokespersons connected with the corporation tweeted, "The #CubanVaccine-COVID19 is dedicated to the sower of dreams: Fidel. Our tribute to the one who believed in the strength and future of #CubanScience."

BioCubaFarma produces 8 of the 12 vaccines Cuba uses to immunize its own population against diseases such as measles and polio. Cuba has also exported hundreds of millions of vaccine doses to more than 40 countries (e.g. to deal with meningitis and hepatitis B).

All of this represents just one more illustration of socialism's comparative efficiency in the face of crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Even a poor blockaded country like Cuba can respond to an unprecedented crisis such as the coronavirus without holding sick people hostage to the confiscatory demands of privatized natural monopolies like Big Pharma. The latter's claims to mammoth profits based upon (largely government-funded) costly research are simply ideological cover for overweening corporate greed that none of us should stand for.

People's vaccines can be produced at warp speed and at low cost – despite news blackouts even on "Democracy Now."



# V. C. Bird International records increase in flights

International flights into Antigua and Barbuda's V.C. Bird International Airport have increased despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Airport Chief Executive Officer Euleta Francis said over the weekend that the airport was a hive of activity with major carriers operating several incoming and outgoing flights.

On Saturday, there were twelve international flights from the major carriers Virgin Atlantic, Delta, United



Airlines, British Airways, American, Jetblue. Carriers, including American Airlines, operated several flights into the country from multiple destinations.

Overall, Francis

said a total of 1337 passengers arrived aboard those flights.

"The flights are back! That's a good thing, but our numbers are still running less than they did this time last year. However, over the period October to December we see increases in successive months," she declared.

The airport CEO is of the view that Antigua and Barbuda is experiencing increased flights for two reasons: the Tourism Authority has launched several marketing campaigns designed to drum up interest in the destination which seem to be bearing fruit and the country has been able to keep its COVID-19 active cases largely within single digits which sends the message that the country is managing the COVID-19 out-

break well.

Activity at the airport was again hectic on Sunday but with less calls than Saturday.

All major U.S. carriers, except United, operated flights on Sunday. Air Canada and Caribbean Airlines also operated flights on Sunday.

Francis explained that in October the airline only operated 15 percent of the flights it operated last October. In November it increased to 25 percent and Francis said she hopes that the number increases to 50 percent in December.

Tourism is Antigua and Barbuda's main industry representing 70 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product.

The country's economy has taken a battering as part of the fallout of the pandemic after borders were closed at the end of March for two months.

While Antigua and Barbuda was the first in the region to reopen, visitors have not returned in their usual numbers due to concerns over COVID-19.

## APUA ELECTRICITY MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

These planned outages are necessary for our continuous upgrade and maintenance programme to provide reliable and consistent service to our customers.

Date: Monday 21st December 2020

Time: 8:30AM - 11:30AM

Affected areas: Section of Piggotts

Date: Wednesday 23rd December 2020

Time: 8:30AM - 1:00PM

Affected areas: Section of Lyon Hill near the primary school

Kindly note that this schedule is subject to slight variation. Changes will be communicated on the APUA Facebook page.

Any service disruptions outside of this schedule were not anticipated. For further information and updates please call 311.



# Another COVID-19 positive case reported

The Ministry of Health is reporting that there is one new laboratory confirmed COVID-19 case in Antigua and Barbuda as of Saturday 19th December 2020 at 6pm.

According to a ministry release, the Mount St. John's Medical Center (MSJMC) and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) revealed that twelve samples were processed by CARPHA which increased the pending results from ninety-six to one hundred and eight.

All twelve samples processed by CARPHA yielded negative results and are reflected in the total tested and total samples taken columns of the dashboard.

Of the ninety-six samples processed by MSJMC, nine-

ty-five were negative and one was positive.

The single positive case was imported.

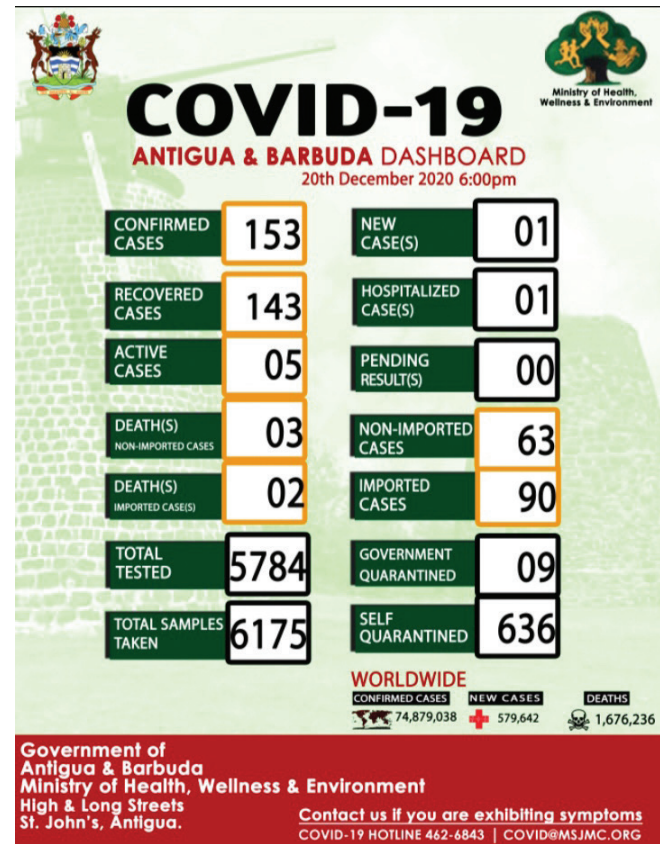
This means that the last two positive cases reported in the country were imported cases.

Last Friday, the ministry announced a new positive case. It said that case was imported.

Meanwhile, two new recoveries have been recorded bringing that total to one hundred and forty-three.

Consequently, the total number of persons with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda is one hundred and fifty-three (153) which includes five (5) active cases.

The dashboard has been updated to reflect these changes.



## St. John's sees flurry of activities in final ABST weekend

The final weekend of the annual Antigua and Barbuda Sales Tax (ABST) reductions resulted in a flurry of activity in St. John's as shoppers sought out last minute bargains for Christmas.

Each year, the government reduces the rate of the ABST from fifteen to five percent in an effort to boost sales and economic activity. Many shoppers take advantage of the tax cut period to do their holiday shopping.

Director of the Antigua and Barbuda Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Martin Cave, reported that over the weekend

'there was much [activity]' in the city.

"There are two basic reasons for this: first, you had a reduction of two-thirds of the rate of the ABST that in itself lures shoppers into two and secondly, because of social-distancing guidelines many people could be seen standing outside of many popular businesses waiting their turn to go inside," he observed.

Cave said it is difficult to give precise figures concerning the percentage of annual sales that takes place over the holiday period, however, he believes that

for non-tourism related businesses the holiday period represents about 20 percent of annual sales.

"There are two periods of increased sales - carnival and Christmas - so for many store owners this represents their final opportunity to make up for loss sales during a particularly difficult year," he remarked.

Cave announced that the Chamber will be working with the Statistics Division to begin gathering this type of information from businesses as it is essential for planning at the national and business levels.



# The Joy of giving

## Bolans Clinic gets donation of PPEs

A newly registered company that will undertake large scale commercial agricultural production on Antigua has made a donation of personal protection equipment (PPE) to the Bolans Clinic.

Antigua Agronomics Ltd., whose principals are

from the United Kingdom, made the presentation of face masks, gloves and hand sanitizers to District Nurse Joyann Fiedtkou and community health aide Vanesta Jackson on Friday.

It is the second such donation the company

has made to the clinic.

One of the principals of Antigua Agronomics, Dwight 'Tiba' Henry, who has roots in the Bolans community said the company plans to make additional donations to the clinic in the coming months.

The company intends to develop a commercial farm in Bathlodge that will produce a variety of crops and engage in hydroponic farming.

The other principals of the company are Vahid Arash, Richard O'Brien and Arthur James.





# STARTING POINTE

with

## Shelton Daniel

**MONDAY TO FRIDAY**

**8:30am-10:30am**




**99.1 FM**





# FSRC assists service clubs' outreach programmes

The Financial Services Regulatory Commission (FSRC) has made significant donations to two service clubs that will help their assistance programmes for those in need.

In a statement, the FSRC noted that at this time of year many charitable organisations reach out to those in need in an effort to ensure that no one is left behind. To this end, the FSRC has contributed \$5,000.00 each to the Antigua Lions Club and the Antigua Rotary Club.

Linda Hughes-Richards and Sydney Christian made the presentations on behalf of the FSRC to the Lions Club president, Desiree Edwards. President Edwards expressed appreciation to the FSRC for its thoughtfulness and



generosity which is timely in this most difficult year.

"This will go a long way in providing food packages for the less fortunate," she said.

The donation of \$5,000.00 to the Rotary Club will support its Meal



on Wheels programme.

"This will help us in providing food packages for the 100 less fortunate persons the Club delivers to every month," said president Kevin Silston who accepted the FSRC donation along with Paul Ryan.



## TOUCH LINE

with  
**VERON 'EPLIUS' EDWARDS Jr.**  
**VERNON A. SPRINGER**

POINTE FM




**MONDAY-FRIDAY**  
**7:00am - 8:30am**



**99.1 FM**



# Sandals Foundation donates hundreds of toys to children

The Sandals Foundation is bringing the joy of Christmas to children across the Caribbean through its annual toy drive.

According to the foundation, Antigua and Barbuda received over 700 toys which were distributed to 3 to 8-year-old students at the Parham, J. T. Ambrose, Golden Grove, New Winthorpes, Potters, Pigotts, T. N. Kirnon and Nelvie N. Gore (formerly Willikies) primary schools.

Toys were also donated to pre-schoolers at Sprout Angel Learning Centre in Gambles.

3 to 8-year-old children on the

Pediatric Ward at the Mount St. John's Medical Centre and those a part of the Ministry of Social Transformation's Board of Guardians programme also received gifts.

"The Toy Drive has been a staple calendar event for more than 10 years through the generous donation from United States toy company, Hasbro, and the kind support of Sandals and Beaches Resorts team members, guests, travel agents and partners," a statement from the foundation explained.

While Christmas parties will not

be held this year, the foundation said its approach galvanized the logistical support of the Salvation Army, police force, schools and local community groups in the distribution of more than 10,800 toys to children within their programmes and spheres of influence which observing the health and safety protocols of each country.

Heidi Clarke, Executive Director of the Sandals Foundation, said in light of the challenges experienced this year, it was critical to maintain a semblance of normalcy especially during the holidays.



## REAL TALK

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**MONDAY & THURSDAY TUESDAY**  
**7pm-Until 9pm-Until**





# More assistance to charitable organisations



The Chinese funded agricultural farm joined in the season of sharing when it made donations to three charitable organisations in the country.

Acting in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture's Extension Division, the China AID Long Ping Agricultural High Tech project donated fresh vegetables to three important organisations that

cater to the needs of the people of Antigua and Barbuda.

The recipient organisations were the Salvation Army, the St. John's Hospice and Global Citizens Organisations Soup kitchen.

A spokesman for the group said additional donations will be made in the coming weeks.



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# ABDF participates in the season of giving

The Antigua Barbuda Defence Force (ABDF) has embarked on a season of giving to “pay it forward (PIF)” with respect to the continued success of the ABDF Farms Project and the support it has received from local and international benefactors.

Through the PIF initiative the ABDF is expressing gratitude for the success and sup-

port received from the nation and bringing the cheer of the Christmas Season. The PIF embraces the concept of giving to others in gratitude of the kindness received from others.

The ABDF Farms project continues to show growth and development with new harvests yielding increasing quantities each cycle. In the husbandry department, the

pig farm yielded great returns with the most recent slaughter yielding more than 300 pounds of meat.

In keeping with an early promise to make regular donations to charity and civil organisations to aid in the nation’s food security efforts, Chief of Defense Staff (CDS), Col Telbert Benjamin donated over 150 pounds of meat to

the Clarevue Psychiatric Hospital, Fiennes Institute, and The Soup Kitchen.

Having received substantial quantities of water from HMS ARGUS, a British Royal Navy Warship which recently visited the island, large quantities of water were distributed to the aforementioned institutes and other civic and church groups.





# Inland Revenue donates to two government institutions



The Inland Revenue Department (IRD) has extended a helping hand to the residents of two government-the IRD operated health facilities.

In a statement, noted that 2020 has been a challenging year that has taken a heavy toll on everyone, but to a greater degree health care workers, the elderly and the less fortunate.

Recognising this, the IRD as a gesture of goodwill made contributions to two of the country's oldest institutions.

Deputy Matron of the Fiennes Institute, Cynthia Byers, in accepting the IRD's donation commented that she was thankful that another government agency saw fit to give so generously, especially in financially challenging times.

Superintendent of Clarevue Psychiatric Hospital, Candine Roberts, also expressed gratitude and commended the IRD for its thoughtfulness in offering much needed assistance to the hospital at this very difficult time.

# Merry Christmas

*May the peace and blessings  
of Christmas be yours;  
And may the coming year  
be filled with happiness.*

**PLEASE DRIVE  
SAFELY**



# Tips to keep teeth healthy during holidays!



Dr. Raj K. Jammula, BDS  
Dr. Poomima Jammula, BDS  
Dr. Jammula & Associates  
Antigua Dentistry

## By Dr. Raj Jammula

Sugar and its effects on teeth.

During this holiday season there are sweets in abundance and sweets contain sugar.

Sugar and tooth decay are closely linked. Dental plaque is a thin clingy film made up of food particles, bacteria and mucous. The bacteria in plaque depend on sugars to produce acids, which break down the enamel and start tooth decay.

Carbohydrates also contribute to this process, not just sugar.

Sugars are often found together with fats in foods like chocolate, biscuits and cakes. A high fat intake is quite likely to contribute to being overweight and obesity.

Another source of sugar is soft drinks which are full of sugar. Sweetened



drinks are heavily advertised, cheap and commonly available. The consumption of soft drinks, which are sweetened with sugar, has increased by 30 per cent in 10 years. Studies of children in the United States found that drinking more sweetened soft drink was linked to increasing overweight and obesity. The standard serving size for soft

drink has also increased. Ten years ago soft drinks were available in 375ml cans. Soft drinks are now commonly sold in 600ml bottles, which provide at least 12-15 teaspoons of sugar. Sugar is a form of carbohydrate that the body converts to glucose.

Limit soft drinks as they are linked to obesity in children. Small amounts of sugar, as part of a

meal, may be okay. Limit foods and drinks with high amounts of added sugar; it is always best to choose foods with naturally occurring sugars such as fresh fruits. Sticky sugars that cling to the teeth are worse than sugars that are easily swallowed, such as fresh fruit.

Some of the ways to reduce the risk of tooth decay include:

- Cut down on sticky, sugary foods.
- Drink water instead of cordials, soft drinks and juices.
- Allow at least two hours between meals.
- Brush and floss regularly and after meals.
- During holidays try to visit your dentist to keep out the tooth decay. There are ways to prevent tooth decay and to treat tooth decay.

Make your holidays happy by preventing tooth decay!

**TALKING POINT**  
TUESDAY - FRIDAY  
10:30AM TO 1:30PM

DR. MASERATI

SENATOR COLIN BROWNE

# Foreclosures loom as loan forgiveness ends

**By Steven Jackson – Senior Business Reporter – Jamaica Gleaner**

As moratoriums on mortgage payments come to an end, real estate experts see rising risk for homeowners losing their homes to foreclosures by lenders.

That's because of the job losses under the pandemic and the slow recovery of the decimated tourism and hospitality market, which has traditionally been a top employer but has experienced a 65 per cent rout in economic activity.

Deborah Cumming, founding realtor at Century 21 Heave-Ho Properties, says properties in the lower-income brackets, including some National Housing Trust, NHT, properties, as

well as luxury apartments, especially those in the short-term rental market, will see a fallout.

"We will see more properties going up for private treaty," Cumming told the Financial Gleaner. "We are not seeing many deals right now, but we will see deals emerge next year in certain sectors – in NHT homes and US rentals. Also, hotel workers are at risk," she added.

The Multiple Listing Service, or MLS, platform utilised by the realtor community lists 218 properties as being up for sale under private treaty and nine properties under foreclosure. Private treaty is typically the next step taken by the top provider of low-in-

come housing in Jamaica, National Housing Trust, to offload confiscated properties that previously failed to secure sale at public auction.

NHT currently has no properties listed for public auction but has 65 properties up for sale by private treaty. The state-owned agency does not do foreclosures, a process under which a bank or other lender transfers the title from a debtor to themselves in a takeover of property, usually after the client has defaulted on loan payments.

Cumming said that despite the expected rise in public auctions – and by inference, property confiscations – the real estate market has proven resil-

ient, surprisingly so, potentially because there was a shortage of housing before the pandemic.

"With COVID-19, we expected the market to collapse with job cuts and salary reductions, but the opposite has happened," she said. "We still have a housing shortage and money continues to just move around."

Still, for some in the market, news of a COVID-19 vaccine has changed some of the calculations regarding the fate awaiting homeowners whose finances remain vulnerable due to job losses or salary cuts, and failed or failing businesses.

steven.jackson@gleaner-jm.com

## Local wine producer wants gov't to use his expertise



**By Kinsley Emanuel**  
(Loop News St. Lucia): A local wine producer wants to share his expertise with government for something in return.

Charles Louis, who has been producing local wine for 42 years, says he has a wealth of knowledge in the production of local wine and feels his expertise in the business could help improve the local wine in-

dustry.

"I want government officials to come to me for us to discuss how they can use my knowledge to improve the industry. I want to have an agreement with them so at least I can get something in return," Louis told Loop News in an interview.

"I can make tamarind wine, watermelon wine, cashew wine, banana wine,

just name it, I can make it," he said, adding that he also makes sugar cane syrup.

He said government officials have visited his business at Canelles, Vieux-Fort over the years, but have not shown any interest in using his expertise.

According to Louis, sometime in the 70s, a Canadian with knowledge in the manufacturing of wine told him that his knowledge in the business was worth millions of dollars.

"If you have something that worth millions of dollars will you give it away for free? he asked.

When asked whether he is prepared to teach any particular individual how to produce local wine, he said maybe not.

He said it seems when

he dies, his knowledge will die with him.

Louis said his children, who were part of the business no longer show interest in it and as a result, he does everything himself.

He said the quality of his wine is so good, that over the years, his sales have increased.

Louis said at the moment, he has five drums of mango wine and five drums of tamarind wine available for sale, among a number of other varieties, which also includes two bottles of banana wine which he produced in 1988.

He said the wines that sell the most are the tamarind wine and the watermelon wine, adding that some people call the watermelon wine the "local Viagra"



# Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana running up millions in repair costs for damaged police vehicles

**By Stabroek News**

It would appear that Guyana is not the only CARICOM country where the costs associated with repairing police vehicles damaged and disabled on account of accidents – many of which result from reckless driving or mechanical defects due to drivers' road-handling skills – continue to impose a considerable strain on the public purse.

A report by the Trinidad Guardian last week provided details of the extent of the state's indebtedness to various garages and repair shops across the country arising out of the costs associated with effecting repairs to vehicles used by the T&T Police Force. According to the report the amounts owing to various privately-run repair shops for repairing damaged or defective police vehicles amounts to TT\$40 million. The indebtedness, the T&T media report says, is spread across more than twenty garages and repair shops, compelling them to close their doors over the past six weeks and pushing more than 100 persons onto the breadline.

Recognising that information pertaining to what it costs taxpayers to keep police vehicles in service is unlikely to emanate from functionaries who may have such data at their disposal, the Stabroek Business sought the assistance of two serving members of the Force



who drive police vehicles, to speak 'off the record' about the local situation.

During separate conversations the two confirmed that, as is the case in Trinidad and Tobago, the Guyana Police Force uses workshops across the country to render and repair its vehicles, a logistical consideration that has to do with the dispersed nature of the institution.

While neither of our two informants could provide even a remote estimate of the costs associated with repairing and rendering vehicles belonging to the GPF, both agreed that it would be fair to say that those costs run into the "millions." What they also both agreed on, however, was that there are cases in which privately operated service facilities would be required to wait for unspecified periods for payment.

Interestingly enough, the

most important concern of the report emanating from Trinidad and Tobago has to do with the impact of those substantial and as yet unpaid debts on the well-being of the owners of the privately-run mechanical and body restoration shops pressed into service to render the damaged and defective vehicles and who, presumably, must 'grin and bear it' until the police pay up.

The GPF is usually not inclined to wash what might be described as its dirty linen in public, but a few mechanics and bodywork men here, who have worked for the police rendering or repairing defective or damaged vehicles were willing to share their experiences with us. Their responses, in summary were, "Yes, we have worked on police vehicles, yes, there are times when payments took a while but these jobs bring in good money."





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# Special waivers for locals, residents returning without test results



**Scenes at the TB Lettsome International Airport on Day 2 of the reopening of local borders to visitors.** /Photo Kamal Haynes/BVI News

(BVI news): Residents and belongers experiencing difficulties in attaining pre-arrival COVID-19 PCR test results can now apply to have a special waiver that will allow entry into the territory without a test.

This is according to Health Minister Carvin Malone who made the announcement during Thursday night's COVID-19 media update.

He said: "Recognising that a number of persons continue to be challenged with obtaining COVID-19 rt-PCR results for entry within the stipulated time due to the high demand in various countries, Cabinet

decided to allow for the processing of waivers of the pre-arrival test in exceptional and verifiable circumstances to belongers and residents only."

"Such request will be considered and approved by the Minister for Health & Social Development in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer," he added.

Will have to quarantine up to 14 days

Minister Malone also said these individuals who are granted the special waivers will be mandated to quarantine much longer than the

recently adjusted four-day period.

"Under these exceptional circumstances, such persons will be required to remain in quarantine for an extended period of seven to 14 days with an additional rt-PCR test administered at the end of the on-island quarantine. A negative test result must be attained before release," Malone stated.

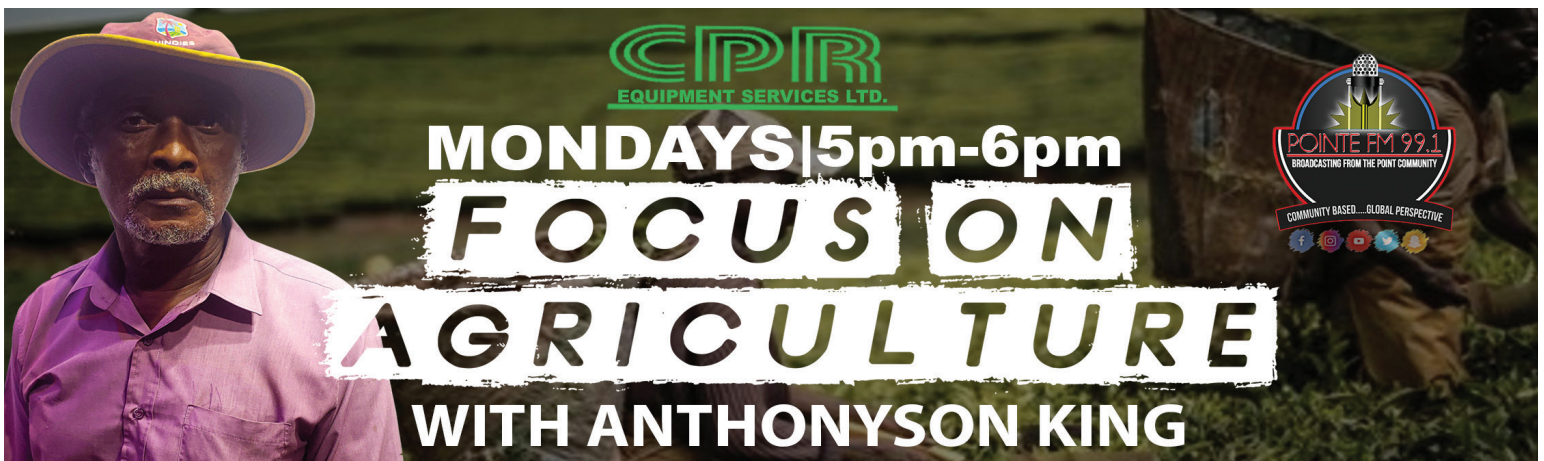
"The purpose of the visit is for BVI health officials and PHE to jointly assess the territory's tracing system, laboratory testing capability and emergency preparedness with regard to COVID-19," he further said.

Public Health England officials in the BVI

Meanwhile, Malone also revealed that experts from Public Health England (PHE) are in the territory for one week to provide technical assistance in a number of areas.

These include, "vector control, food and water safety, communicable disease surveillance, and laboratory accreditation". He said these will be in addition to any specific assistance required with pandemic management.

The team consists of PHE Consultant for communicable disease control, Dr. Autillia Newton, and Public Health Consultant, Helen Green.



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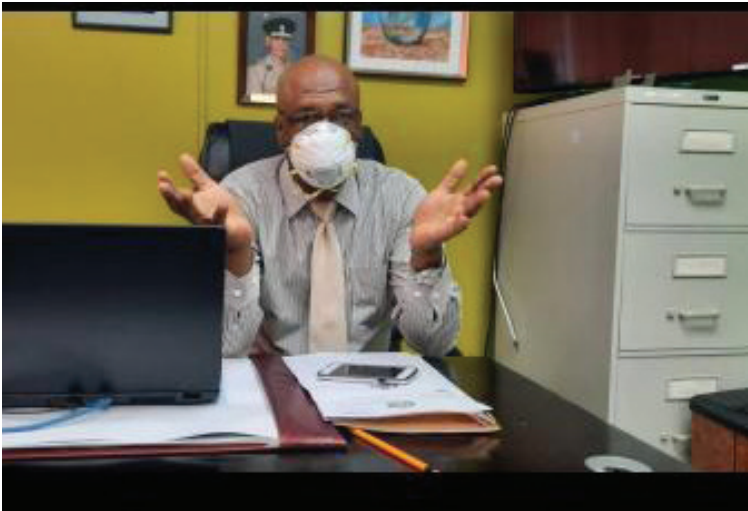
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**POINTE FM 99.1**  
BROADCASTING FROM THE POINT COMMUNITY  
COMMUNITY BASED... GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

# 'Big Fish' among us - Foreign drug cartels handling business on Jamaican soil



**Senior Superintendent Jervis Moore**  
head of the Police Narcotics Division

(Jamaica Gleaner): Top-tier drug smugglers from Central and South America are reportedly living in Jamaica with the sole purpose of easing multi-billion-dollar cocaine shipments into North America, Europe and Canada. They provide "added insurance", recruit couriers and use loads of cash to infiltrate local security systems.

Some of these smugglers are so comfortable they have made lives in Jamai-

ca; and have become integral players in scouting routes for major shipments such as the recent 611lb cocaine run destined for the United States that was ultimately busted by cops at the Norman Manley International Airport (NMIA).

That contraband - the second-largest quantity detected by local forces in recent years and dwarfed by a 2600lb cocaine seizure at a premises in Manchester in July 2019 - has

a street value of \$2 billion - 'chicken feed' for the mediators who only ferret alternative routes to ensure drug lords back home connect the goods with hungry markets up north.

Of least concern to them are the many Jamaican 'middlemen' nabbed by local authorities who have had their families destroyed. These are pawns in an unrelenting trade that lures new pieces - even members of the security forces - by the boatloads.

"There are Colombians and even Trinidadians I know of who have been living here in Jamaica for years and their only purpose is to ensure the smooth trafficking of the product from Central America to Jamaica," one convicted drug courier told The Sunday Gleaner last week.

"One of the easiest places to take drugs is Jamaica. Traffickers are not concerned with the authorities.

There is always a corrupt politician, coast guard, police or some other big link. They always want money, and money is never a problem for these people (foreigners)," the source disclosed, adding that Jamaicans are respected in the drug trade locally and abroad as they "always find a way to move the drugs".

"This is bigger than Jamaica. Most of the people that police arrest are just the middle people; the 'put on' man who put the drugs on the plane before take-off or one or two of the facilitators at the airport," The Sunday Gleaner was informed.

"Any operation of \$2 billion must involve several people at the airport and they (foreigners) make and pay for those links. Jamaican criminals alone can't push through those kinds of drugs," said the insider, who admittedly maintains his drug connections even after conviction.

## Saint Lucia prison population decreases

(St. Lucia Times): The Saint Lucia prison population has decreased, according to the Bordelais Correctional Facility (BCF) Report for July 29, 2020 to December 10, 2020.

According to the report presented last week to the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, the prison population fell by 21 in-

mates.

It represents a four percent reduction from the previous BCF facility report, dated July 29, 2020.

At that time the prison population was at 539.

As of December 11, 2020, the total number of inmates at the BCF stood at 518 inmates.

According to the breakdown,

this consisted of 502 male inmates, 352 of whom were on remand, plus 16 female inmates, three of whom were on remand.

Ninety-seven individuals were admitted to the BCF during the period under review.

The age group 26-35 comprised the largest segment of the prison population.



# France and Germany among nations banning flights from UK



*Trains to Belgium have been halted, with France considering similar measures.*

BBC): European nations have begun to apply travel bans with the UK after it said that a more infectious coronavirus variant was "out of control" there.

Ireland, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Belgium are all suspending flights and travel, although the measures vary.

An EU meeting will be held on Monday morning to discuss a more co-ordinated response.

The new variant has spread quickly in London and south-east England.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Saturday introduced a new tier four level of restrictions for those areas, scrapping a planned relaxation of rules over the Christmas period for millions of people.

Top health officials said that there was no evidence the new variant was more deadly, or would react differently

to vaccines, but it was proving to be up to 70% more transmissible.

Within hours of the UK announcement on Saturday, the Netherlands said it would ban all passenger flights from the UK from 06:00 (05:00 GMT) on Sunday until 1 January.

Pending "greater clarity" on the situation in the UK, the Dutch government said that further "risk of the new virus strain being introduced to the Netherlands should be minimised as much as possible".

The country on Sunday reported a daily increase of more than 13,000 cases - a new record, despite tough lockdown measures being applied on 14 December.

Belgium is suspending flights and train arrivals from the UK from midnight on Sunday. Prime Minister Alexander De Croo told Belgian television channel VRT the

ban would be in place for at least 24 hours as a "precautionary measure", adding "we will see later if we need additional measures".

Italy's Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio said on his Facebook page that the government was about to sign a measure to suspend flights from the UK.

In Ireland, urgent talks were held on Sunday. In a statement afterwards, the government announced that flights arriving from the UK would be banned for 48 hours at least from midnight, and "in the interests of public health, people in Britain, regardless of nationality, should not travel to Ireland, by air or sea".

Ferry crossings for freight would continue.

In Germany, an order from the ministry of transport said planes from the UK would not be allowed to land after midnight on Sunday, although cargo would be an excep-

tion. Health Minister Jens Spahn said the UK variant had not yet been detected in Germany.

France has suspended all travel links with the UK for 48 hours from midnight. It said the period should be used to provide a co-ordinated European response.

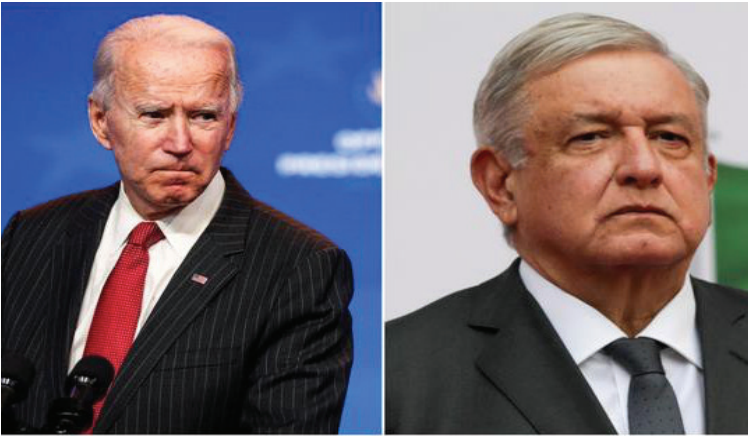
Austria is also planning a ban on flights from the UK, with details currently being worked out, local media reported. Bulgaria has suspended flights to and from the UK from midnight.

A European Council meeting will be held at 10:00 GMT on Monday on co-ordinating EU actions.

In the UK, it was first identified in the middle of October from a sample taken in September.

The World Health Organization (WHO) says the same mutation of the virus has also been detected in the Netherlands, Denmark and Australia.

# U.S. President-elect Biden, Mexico's president vow to cooperate on immigration



US President-elect Joe Biden and Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador /PHOTO REUTERS

(Reuters): U.S. President-elect Joe Biden and Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador on Saturday committed to work on a humane strategy to regional migration by addressing its root causes in Central America and southern Mexico.

The two leaders in a phone call "discussed working together on a new approach to regional migration that offers alternatives to undertaking the dangerous journey to the United States," a summary of the call pro-

vided by Biden's team said.

The two leaders said they shared a desire to address the reasons for migration in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and southern Mexico.

Biden pledged to build "the regional and border infrastructure and capacity needed to facilitate a new orderly and humane approach to migration that will respect international norms regarding the treatment of asylum claims," the statement from Biden's team

said.

Earlier this week Lopez Obrador suggested the two neighbors under Biden's new Democratic administration work together on the thorny issue of immigration.

Republican President Donald Trump's unprecedented demands that the Mexican government do more to reduce the flow of U.S.-bound migrants, including harboring migrants in Mexico while they wait for their U.S. court dates and paying for a border wall, caused friction in the relationship.

Biden emphasized the need to reinvigorate U.S.-Mexico cooperation on migration as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy and border security.

"We reaffirmed our commitment to working together for the well-being of our

peoples and nations," Lopez Obrador said on Twitter.

Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard tweeted: "There will be extensive bilateral cooperation and a very good relationship between the presidents of Mexico and the United States."

A Mexican government source told Reuters that Biden and Lopez Obrador also spoke about investment for development and respect for the Mexican community in the United States.

The leaders of Latin America's two biggest economies, Brazil and Mexico, congratulated Biden on Tuesday, the day after the U.S. Electoral College confirmed Biden's Nov. 3 election win. The long delay ignited criticism they were running the risk of alienating Biden and his fellow Democrats.

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# The nations that never needed to lock down



President Emmanuel Macron of France

(CNN): COVID-19 vaccines are coming, but in most of Europe, winter is coming faster. In several countries, cases are surging again — after many countries seemed to be turning the tide.

Politicians are desperate to find a balance of restrictions that flatten the curve without flattening the economy or upsetting residents who are eager to reunite for the holidays.

"The key question now is to determine what

are the best policies to get the most health benefits at least cost," said Thomas Hale, an associate professor of public policy at the University of Oxford. "However, this 'magic formula' will likely differ across different countries and populations, and of course over time as the virus surges or recedes."

It's a complicated and ever-changing calculus, and every country is different.

But the approaches of

three nations — Finland, Norway and Denmark — in recent months stand out, a CNN analysis shows. The analysis, which looked at data from the University of Oxford and Johns Hopkins University, found that while all three countries implemented some of the continent's most relaxed combinations of restrictions, they still managed to keep average daily deaths low — below one per million — for the three-month period between September 1 and November 30.

Denmark success may be ending. In late November, Danish death rates exceeded one per million for the first time since May, Johns Hopkins data shows. On Friday, the number of newly reported cases topped 4,000. Earlier in the week, officials expanded restrictions and announced a nationwide lockdown aimed at tamping down rising infections.

Denmark, Finland and Norway responded quickly to the slightest increase in infections, which allowed them to almost eradicate the virus during the summer and face the autumn from a stronger place, according to interviews with six scholars. Clear guidance and residents' willingness to follow it was also key, the experts said. And ramping up testing and contact-tracing capacities and providing paid sick leave helped to keep any outbreaks localized.

Finland had Europe's lowest average of infections and deaths per capita in recent months, Johns Hopkins data shows. It managed to contain local outbreaks while sticking to some of the most relaxed restrictions on the continent. Internal movement was not restricted, those who needed to could attend school and workplaces in person, and mask-wearing was not mandatory.

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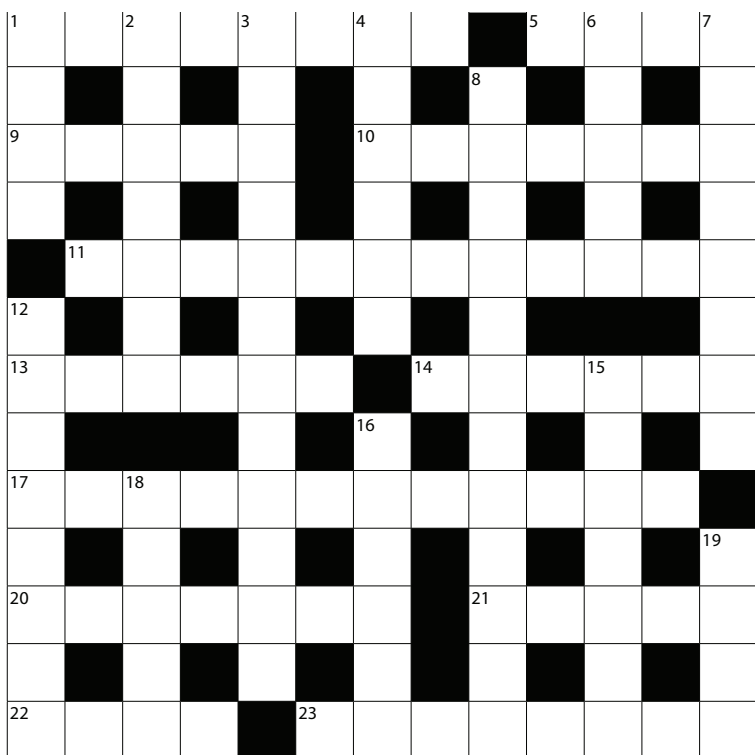
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## QUICK CROSSWORD



### Across

- 1 Facial hair (8)
- 5 Develop (4)
- 9 Stolen (5)
- 10 Hinged window blind (7)
- 11 24 June (9,3)
- 13 Valuable little piece (6)
- 14 Ten a penny (6)
- 17 Arousing violent feelings (12)
- 20 Warm and friendly (7)
- 21 Parent's brother (5)
- 22 Objectives (4)
- 23 Obstinate (8)

### Down

- 1 Unit of electric power (4)
- 2 Glimmer of understanding (7)
- 3 Lucky Jim author (8,4)
- 4 Start again after a break (6)
- 6 Assessed (5)
- 7 Causing anxiety (8)
- 8 Practical guidelines (5,2,5)
- 12 Surround (8)
- 15 African country — leather (7)
- 16 Charm worn to ward off evil (6)
- 18 Sacked (5)
- 19 Spotted (4)

## DAILY COMICS

### Dilbert



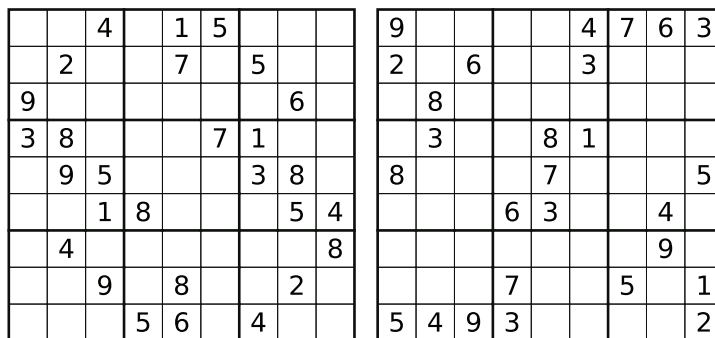
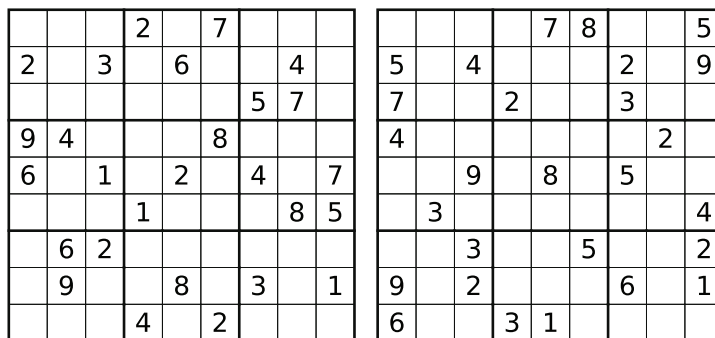
### Garfield



### Cathy



## SUDOKU



### How to play

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



## LOCAL WEATHER FORECAST

**MON 12/21**  **83° Hi** DAY Partly sunny with scattered showers  
**77° Lo** NIGHT Mostly clear

Sunrise 6:32 AM Sunset 5:39 PM Moonrise 12:09 PM Moonset 12:16 AM

**TUE 12/22**  **84° Hi** DAY Mostly sunny with a passing shower  
**75° Lo** NIGHT Partly cloudy with a passing shower

Sunrise 6:33 AM Sunset 5:39 PM Moonrise 12:43 PM Moonset 1:03 AM

## YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

### ♈ ARIES | Mar. 21-Apr. 19

It's perfectly acceptable to rely on the support of friends and family to see you through the tough times. After all, they love doing it. But at a certain point, you have to get back to normal life and start dealing with your emotions on your own.

### ♉ TAURUS | Apr. 20-May 20

Be ready to make a compromise with a friend today, because it will be the only way to get anything close to what you want without ticking them off. Why create tension when you can think of a way for everyone to get what they want?

### ♊ GEMINI | May 21-June 20

Unless it's the big boss dictating a firm rule, you don't have to obey anyone except yourself today. If people are trying to put restrictions on what you can do, work your way around them! You are the one in control of your life.

### ♋ CANCER | June 21-July 22

Becoming more involved in the life of another person can be a tricky thing. You don't want to share too much too soon, but you don't want to hold back when there's a magical opportunity to really connect.

### ♌ LEO | July 23-Aug. 22

There is far too much up in the air right now for you to barrel ahead with your plans, excited about them as you may be. Instead, you'll have to figure out a way to curb your enthusiasm.

### ♍ VIRGO | Aug. 23-Sept. 22

You're one step closer to a goal you've been working very hard toward, and miles away from the bad habits in your past. It is a good day to reward yourself with a nice pat on the back and maybe even a little splurge.

### ♎ LIBRA Sept. | 23-Oct. 22

It looks like you'll finally be able to close the door on past issues at work or school. That water is finally going to be under the bridge and part of your memories. Try not to dwell on things that have gone before.

### ♏ SCORPIO Oct. | 23-Nov. 21

Resisting temptation isn't going to be difficult for you today. Your self-control is at an all-time high, mostly because you're finally starting to see the benefits of all your efforts. You like this feeling.

### ♐ SAGITTARIUS | Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Your way with finances is a little bit messy right now, so stay out of any situation in which you could succumb to the charms of an impulse buy. Your biggest problem is that you're losing focus.

### ♑ CAPRICORN | Dec. 22-Jan. 19

There is no reason for you to be afraid to step into a new world today. Your energy won't let you down, and your desire to experience strange and challenging events is only going to get stronger, so you have to satisfy it!

### ♒ AQUARIUS | Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You might think that by giving yourself boundaries you'll give yourself more self-discipline. This is definitely not the case, though, especially today when you'd be better off just letting yourself go. Enough with the self-imposed restrictions.

### ♓ PISCES | Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Your high energy level is a mixed blessing today. It will help you get an awful lot off your plate, but it could trigger some tension between you and the folks who are moving a lot more slowly than you are.

## COMMUNITY NOTICES

### COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIP NOMINATIONS

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom is inviting nominations from Antigua and Barbuda for Commonwealth Master's Scholarships tenable from 2021.

Closing date for nominations is 1st March, 2021.

Deadline for submission of applications to the Ministry of Education, Sports and Creative Industries is 19th February, 2021.

Full details of the scholarships are included in the 2021 terms and conditions, available at: [cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/about-us/scholarships](http://cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/about-us/scholarships)

### 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](mailto: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.

### 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.

### EXHIBITION & FAIR

The CAPE Entrepreneurship class of the YEEP learning Centre will be hosting a "Show arf yuh skill set" Exhibition & Fair on Friday, December 18 from 12 pm - 5 pm at the Rising Sun Cricket Grounds. Come see future entrepreneurs display their work - food and drinks, arts & craft, games and much more will be on sale and on display. Bring yuh puss, wear yuh mask and distance yuh self while you traverse. Come and support our future entrepreneurs.

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# Outstanding former athlete and radio social commentator Vere 'Fu Manchu' Christian-Jarvis passes

The nation of Antigua and Barbuda, and in particular the Point and Villa communities, is mourning the loss of an outstanding former sportsman and who later in life was a constant caller of several radio programmes offering his comments on the issues of the day.

Vere 'Fu Manchu' Jardine-Christian died early Sunday morning at his Bay Street, Villa home. He had been ailing for some time.

Fu Manchu was an excellent basketball player

who was part of the Villa Yolanda-sponsored basketball team. His dribbling and ball-handling skills were legendary. One member of the community disclosed that he was also skilled at football and cricket.

Fu Manchu was well known for his outstanding skills as a netball coach. In this arena he traveled with the national netball team to Singapore as their head coach.

Outside of sports, he

worked aboard a cruise ship and was an employee of the Halcyon Cove hotel, however it was his work at the Antigua Port Authority as a shop steward that again distinguished him.

He became a prominent advocate for workers and was a regular caller on the nation's major talk shows discussing this issue and those of a political nature as well.

Pointe FM radio personality, Dale 'Blinds' Richards, recalled that he

last spoke with Fu Manchu two Fridays ago when he requested the song 'Three Blind Mice' by Chalkdust.

On Sunday, Blinds dedicated a significant part of his programme to his fallen friend.

Fu Manchu was the son of the late Arthur 'Bum' Jardine, one of the pioneers of steelband in Antigua and Barbuda. Jardine was a part of the Brute Force steelband, one of the earliest steelbands founded in the country.

## Messi equals Pele's goal record



Lionel Messi has equaled Pele's all-time club scoring tally with a 2-2 draw with Valencia.

His 643rd career goal for Barcelona since his 2004 debut matched Pele's 1957-74 tally for Santos.

Messi is Barcelona and the Spanish league's all-

time leading scorer.

In January 2018, he became the most prolific scorer among Europe's top leagues when he reached 366 league goals surpassing Gerd Muller's Bundesliga mark of 365.

Pele congratulated the Argentine forward on social media

## Cricket West Indies to announce squad for Bangladesh this week

Cricket West Indies (CWI) selectors are scheduled to announce the squad for the tour of Bangladesh this week Chief Executive Officer Johnny Grave has confirmed.

Grave said CWI and Bangladesh Cricket Board were in the final stages of discussions and, once that is completed, he expects chief of selectors Roger Harper to announce the 25-member squad.

West Indies will play two Tests and three One Day Internationals.

There will be no reserves included in the contin-

gent.

Grave noted that it will be a short tour and the ODI players will be available if there is an injury among the Test squad.

The fact that West Indies lost all their matches recently in New Zealand, and with most players underperforming, has led to speculation that there might be some changes for the upcoming tour.

For the Bangladesh tour, the Windies' support staff will again include a psychologist and medical doctor.

## Is captaincy West Indies Cricket's problem?

If a captain fails to perform consistently between the ears, he and his team are destined ultimately to fail. The leader's performance between the two sets of stumps may well contribute to the eventual outcome of any given match.

Sir Andy Roberts and Sir Curtley Ambrose are not happy with Jason Holder's leadership on the recent tour of New Zealand where West Indies were easily brushed aside without a fight in the two Test series.

Holder, who turned 29 in November, is into his eighth year as captain of the West Indies senior team. In 16 series he has won only four and in 37 Tests his teams have secured only 11 victories with 21 defeats and 5 draws.

Six of the victories have come at home.

The Barbadian is currently ranked second on the ICC list of all-rounders and eleventh among bowlers meaning personally he has acquitted himself



*West Indies cricket team captain Jason Holder, currently ranked second on the ICC list of all-rounders and eleventh among bowlers.*

with distinction, but not as captain.

Despite Holder's dismal return as captain, the question has been asked by former players such as Sir Clive Lloyd, who was responsible for appointing Holder as captain, and Jeffery Dujon, if not Holder then who?

In cricket circles the name of Shimron Hetmyer, who captained West Indies under-19 to the Youth

World Cup championship in 2016 in Bangladesh, is bandied about as many believe he should be next in line to lead the team.

If Holder is not successful in the upcoming tour of Bangladesh, Cricket West Indies and the selectors will have to start doing some soul searching on the direction of the team and its leadership.

**DEWS**

PointeXpress wishes to thank our loyal readers and advertisers for their support in 2020. We look forward to bringing you the latest news in 2021. We will publish our last issue for the year on Wednesday, December 23rd, 2020. We will close for the holiday season and reopen on January 4th, 2021.