



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

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NEW ADMINISTRATION, NEW EXPECTATIONS!

The United States will, today, inaugurate its 46th president when Joseph R. Biden takes the oath of office at noon. Few administrations have started off with such challenges before them as the incoming administration.

The United States is the country most affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic recording the most cases and the most deaths, and it is seemingly unable to come to grips with this fast-spreading virus. The pandemic has had a toll on the US economy with attendant job losses in the millions. Gone too are many businesses and industries.

The US has also had to face the demon it created over centuries and which it has had a hard time in acknowledging that the demon or the problem exists. This is systemic racism. It's what accounts for the high rate of incarceration among black men in the U.S; it's why poverty among Afro-Americans is higher than for white Americans. Racism determines where a person lives, the education to which he is exposed and even affects quality of life issues and life expectancy itself.

The ugliness of rac-

ism was given free reign under the outgoing administration, but it would be naïve and incorrect to say that President Trump is the cause of the problem; he was a mere accelerant of a problem as old as the US itself.

Then there is the US retreat from such international engagements as the Paris Climate Accord and the World Health Organisation.

Most particular for us in the Caribbean will be the US's attitude to countries such as Cuba and Venezuela. As a 'thump in the nose' gesture, the outgoing administration this month declared Cuba as 'a state sponsor of terrorism', an erroneous and backward looking move, but one which spells further isolation and hardship for the Cuban people. The most serious terrorism threat to the US must be the threat from white supremacists who overran the US Capitol Building on January 6 this year.

No one thinks that Cuba had anything to do with this home-grown insurrection, but Trump and his allies really wanted to muddy the waters and to tie the hands of Biden should he wish to revert to the Obama-

era reduction in tension between the two neighbours.

The situation in Venezuela is equally challenging because the US had allowed an opposition leader to declare himself president, and it initiated several moves to oust the Nicholas Maduro government. All have failed. What will be the Biden administration's moves, regarding Venezuela? Again, we have to 'wait and see'.

For the English speaking Caribbean, the US has always served as that country one wanted to visit, to study and to live. Practically, every household in Antigua and Barbuda has at least one family member living in the States. It is the region's largest trade partner and a major source of tourists for those tourism-dependent economies.

The US has also historically been a source of development aid for the English-speaking Caribbean. However, the more recent administrations have seen a steady reduction in this aid. Most of the assistance from the US now comes in aid to the RSS to assist the Americans interdiction drugs traveling

through the region to its lucrative markets.

As the US retreated in recent times, other powers have sought to fill the void. The People's Republic of China has pumped billions of dollars throughout the Caribbean in recent times upgrading air and seaports and other major infrastructural developments much to the chagrin of the US.

Is this the end of American exceptionalism - a concept promoted by past administrations? Recent events in the US have dimmed that view in the eyes of many across the globe.

As the new administration takes office, perhaps the policy that ought to be pursued is not exceptionalism of any race or class, but the mindset of 'people exceptionalism' that all peoples are created equal and that everyone has an inalienable right to the resources of the earth.

The people of Antigua and Barbuda and the entire region would want to wish the Biden administration much success as we salute an American first - the swearing in of Kamala Harris, who has Jamaican roots, as the first female Vice President. Selah!

Foreign Minister sees vaccine hoarding as threat to country's survival



Foreign Affairs Minister E.P. Chet Greene

"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane."

This quotation from the late American civil rights leader, Dr Martin Luther King, was highlighted by Antigua and Barbuda's Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P. Chet Greene in commenting on reports that the richer countries

and large pharma companies are hoarding the COVID-19 vaccines.

Speaking with **PointeXpress**, Greene said the reports coming out of the current meeting of the World Health Organization's Executive Board concerning the issue constituted "one of the most frightening developments of our time." He noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected every nation across the world; small economies more so than large ones, have been under immense pressure.

"Here in Antigua and Barbuda, our economy is predicated on tourism which has been shut down by the pandemic. One would understand easily the value of a vaccine to the reopening, revival of this industry and to other small island economies around the world that depend on tourism. The notion that large countries, which for the most part are the developers of the vaccines, are

hoarding the vaccines to the exclusion of small nations only foretells the kinds of problems we will have going forward," he observed.

The foreign minister feels that without the vaccines Antigua and Barbuda and others will be left 'wide open' to further economic degradation as well as the health challenges that will persist.

He continued that hoarding of the vaccines places poorer nations in "existential danger" or a danger zone where the lives of people in poorer countries do not appear to matter. "This can't be the global family to which we pride ourselves of being a part," he stated.

Foreign Minister Greene is expressing hope that the incoming Biden Administration in the US will adopt messages that will redound to the benefit of the smaller more vulnerable states, such as Antigua and Barbuda.

Happy Wednesday!

SLOW
PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

PLEASE REMEMBER TO REDUCE SPEED WHEN APPROACHING A PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

'Double whammy' for local hotels

The decision by the United Kingdom and the United States authorities to introduce new restrictions for people entering their countries is having a negative impact on the hotels sector in Antigua and Barbuda, already hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic now into its tenth month.

Newly appointed chairman of the Antigua and Barbuda Hotel and Tourism Association (ABHTA), Alex De Brito, said the decision has created a 'huge challenge' for hoteliers who have to be constantly making adjustments almost on the daily basis.

"We are suffering from the restrictions introduced in our two major source markets - the UK and the US -

which now require negative COVID-19 tests for reentry into these countries. No one will be allowed to board a flight into these countries without the certificate of a negative test," he explained.

The ABHTA chairman however disclosed that there has been close cooperation between the association, the ministries of health and tourism, along with the Mount St. John's Medical Centre (MSJMC) to have these tests done for returning guests.

These efforts have resulted in the completion of tests for those travellers who are returning to the UK today to be able to complete the tests and the results returned in time for them to travel.

He said these measures will face further challenges when the restrictions for return travel to the US take effect on 26th January.

According to De Brito, hotels across the country have seen fall-off in bookings, along with cancellations, since the announcement from the major source markets. At least one hotel, Blue Waters, has announced its temporary closure, a move to cope with the impact of the new restrictions.

Flights from the UK have been affected as one of the two carriers - Virgin Atlantic - has announced that it will curtail flights until March. The airline cited falling demand and low bookings as a rea-

son for the decision.

The other airline operating the route - British Airways - has reduced its flights from four a week down to two.

The ABHTA chairman said most hotels are trying to stay open at least for the next few weeks as the hope is that the UK government will lift its restrictions on non-essential travel in mid-February. The hotels are also hoping that the new Biden Administration, which takes office in the US today, may adopt policies that will 'ease' the strain on travellers from that country.

He described the current situation as 'fluid,' stating that it is difficult to make any predictions about what to expect in the future.

Active COVID-19 cases inch up to 27

The number of active COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda continue the upward climb as the Ministry of Health is reporting increases in positive cases almost on a daily basis.

The ministry is reporting that the latest information coming from the Mount St. John's Medical Centre (MSJMC) has confirmed one new COVID-19 positive case as of Monday 18th January, 2021.

There are now twenty-seven (27) active COVID-19 cases with one hundred and ninety (190) people confirmed with the virus in the country. However, of that number recoveries have been pegged at one hundred and fifty-seven (157).

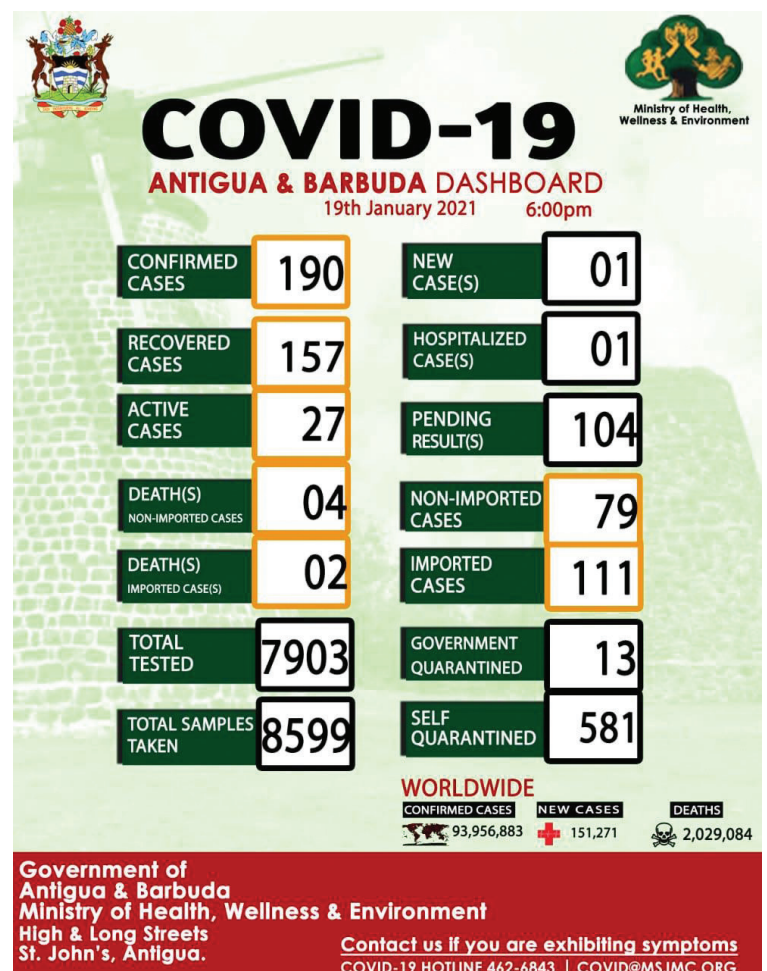
"Subsequent to the publication of the dashboard for Sunday 17th January,

2021 with the cut off time of 6:00 p.m., one hundred and twelve additional samples were processed at the Mount St. John's Medical Center which increased the pending results from fifty-four to one hundred and sixty-six," the ministry said in the latest media update.

It said of the one hundred and sixty-six samples processed by MSJMC, one hundred and sixty-five were negative and one positive. The single new case is imported. An investigation has been launched into the new case and contact tracing and testing is in progress.

One new recovery has been recorded bringing that total to one hundred and fifty-seven.

Meanwhile, one hundred and four samples are pending.



Nation's recovery tied to developments in US and UK says PM

The recent decision by the government of the United Kingdom to institute a strict lockdown of that country is already having a negative impact on the Antigua and Barbuda economy with flights from that important market already cut in half.

In assessing the impact, Prime Minister Gaston Browne said the government has to keep an eye on developments in the UK and the United States and see to what extent it may have to reduce its growth estimates as a result.

The UK has accounted for half of the visitors to the island since the re-opening of the borders and this latest lockdown, to last for six weeks, has

forced both Virgin Atlantic and British Airways to reduce their flights from four each per week, down to two each.

Chairman of the Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association (ABHTA), Alex de Brito, said he will provide a full update on the impact on the hotels sector this week, but hinted that he expects it to be 'bad.'

Speaking on the weekend, PM Browne said the COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating to the national economy with a reduction in output at approximately twenty per cent. "We may have to reduce our growth estimates further and the estimated recovery will be longer.

In fact, if we reduce the estimates lower than the current five per cent then it will take even longer—between two and three years—for us to recover the losses of COVID-19 and return to pre-pandemic economy," he stated.

According to the prime minister, it is very important that the US and the UK, the country's two main sources for tourism, get the coronavirus pandemic under control 'as soon as possible,' thus leading to life returning to some measure of normality.

Meanwhile, the prime minister said the government welcomes more national investment in the economy with generous

incentive packages as this is one way to help ease the country out of the current economic slump. He said there are several initiatives, including the Prime Minister Entrepreneurial Development Fund, through which the government has incentivized investments in the economy.

Additionally, he announced that the government intends to re-capitalize the Antigua and Barbuda Development Bank as a source of funding for small and medium size businesses, with the aim of expanding the ownership class in the country, to increase the contribution of these individuals, and to accelerate the recovery.

Man gets one year for receiving stolen items, says he was asked for a ride



Ricardo Clarke

A Grays Farm man who was accused of breaking into a woman's Ottos home and stealing several household items has admitted to receiving the items and will now spend one year in prison.

Twenty-three-year-old Joshua Smith was found in possession of one 32" flat screen television, microwave oven, washing machine, electric fan, blender, mobile phone, and several pieces of jewellery, among other valuable items which were reported stolen.

On 15th January, the victim received a call from the landlord notifying him of the break-in.

The defendant was later pulled over driving a Honda Fit with the items reported missing.

Another man, Ricardo Clarke, who was wanted by the police in connec-

tion with the same break in, was also reportedly in said vehicle but fled the scene.

He surrendered to the police Tuesday afternoon.

Smith alleges that it was Clarke who asked him for a ride to collect the items, saying that it is his aunt's home.

Smith claimed that he did not know they were being stolen and merely sat in the car while the goods were being fitted into the small rental car.

He was also charged with violating the curfew restriction, having left his home after 12 a.m. on the day of the incident.

He appeared before Chief Magistrate Joanne Walsh on Tuesday in the St. John's Magistrates' Court and was sentenced to six months for breaking the curfew and a year for receiving. The sentences will run concurrently.

Smith is also awaiting a hearing for allegedly robbing an Armstrong Road woman of an undisclosed sum of money, mobile phone, and other important pieces of documents. The alleged incident occurred on Joseph Lane on 15th January, 2021.

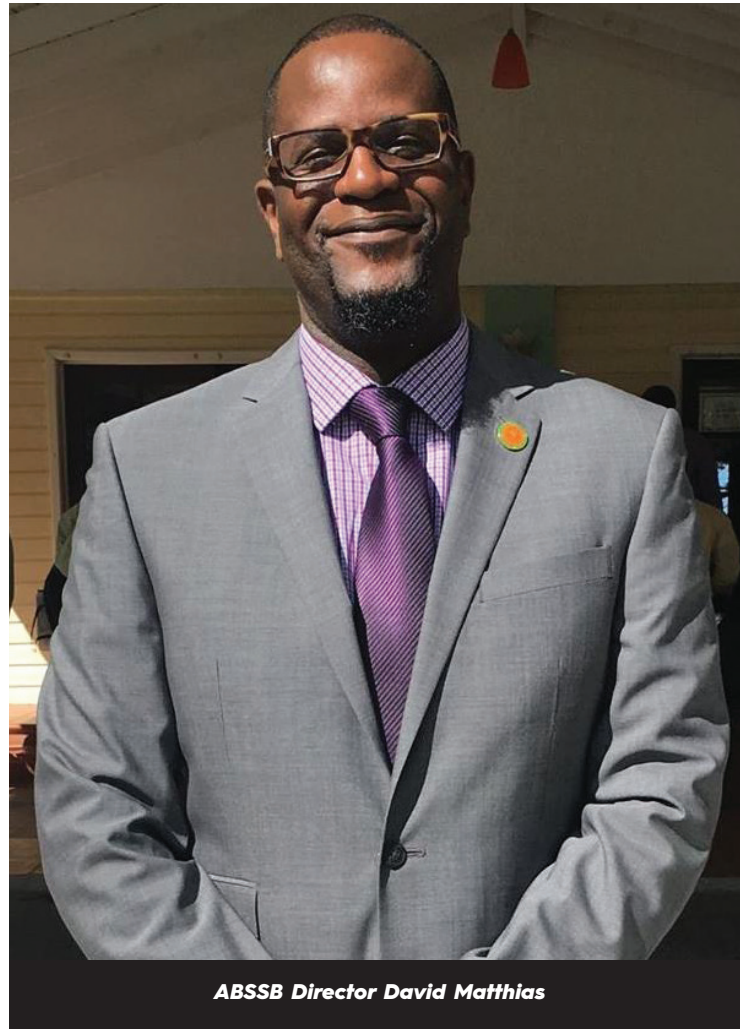
The date for that matter was set for 8th April.

Social Security introduces new pension payments plan

The Antigua and Barbuda Social Security Board (ABSSB) has announced the introduction of a new pension payment arrangement as it adopts measures to cope with falling collections.

In an official statement Tuesday, the Board said the measure takes immediate effect and will likely last for the next six months. "As we begin 2021, the Antigua & Barbuda Social Security Board will embark on a new payment system for pensioners. Understanding that the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to impact our contribution intake, the ABSSB intends to introduce a payment schedule for our major financial institutions in January 2021," the statement read.

It noted that cash flow will always impact the Pay-as-You-Go system of the ABSSB. "Therefore, this year we intend to



ABSSB Director David Matthias

make payments in keeping with our contribution receipts. Rather than

waiting to pay the banks one at a time, we will be paying multiple insti-

tutions at once. This will result in our major financial institutions receiving pension payments in installments," it explained.

According to the release, the Social Security database will be used to determine how best to achieve this. "It is anticipated that this strategy will serve to ease the burden on our customers and will be used for the next six months."

"We know that these are trying times for us all and we are truly grateful to you, our beneficiaries, for your forbearance as we continue to navigate these difficult times," the release concluded.

ABSSB Director David Matthias said all the major financial institutions have already received more than half of their payments and he expects to make the second installment for the month perhaps by this Friday.

Several curfew violators charged

Two people have been arrested and charged for violating the curfew regulations that form part of the state of emergency.

Police reports identified them as 30-year-old Glen Strann of DeSouza Road and 42-year-old Cemona James of Seaview Farm, who were stopped by police on Sir George Walter

Highway on Monday outside the curfew period.

The reports also stated that Ita M. King of Golden Grove was stopped by members of the COVID-19 Curfew Compliance Joint Task Force on Factory Road after midnight on Tuesday 19th January. She too was arrested and charged for breach of curfew.

In another incident, Franklin Williams of Nut Grove was found driving with an expired driver's licence outside the curfew period after 1:00 a.m. on Tuesday in Golden Grove. He was arrested and charged for the offences.

Meanwhile, Oscar Thomas and Kareem Nicholas, both of St. Johnson's

Village, appeared before Chief Magistrate Walsh on Monday, charged with breaching curfew regulations.

They pleaded guilty and were fined \$500.00 each, to be paid on or before 25th January, 2021. In default they will spend one month at Her Majesty's Prison.

Government signs MOU for Centre to study oceanography and blue economy

The agreement through which The University of the West Indies, Five Islands, will host the Centre for Excellence for Oceanography and the Blue Economy has been formalized.

On Tuesday, the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Gaston Browne, the Vice-Chancellor of The University of the West Indies, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, and the Chair of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, Professor Sir Ed Byrne, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize their collaboration in support of the centre at The University of the West Indies, Five Islands Campus.

"The Centre will aim to advance intellectual progress and strengthen institutional capacity in the areas of marine science and the blue economy while benefitting from the societal, economic and environmental opportunities for the Caribbean within this emerging sector," a



Prime Minister Gaston Browne and Professor Sir Ed Byrne

statement from the Office of the Prime Minister said.

It is expected that Antigua and Barbuda, as well as the wider Caribbean region, will benefit from an emerging industry worth USD\$2.5 trillion globally through the sustainable diversification of the economy into areas such as aquaculture, marine renewable energy, biotechnology and sea vegetable farming.

The statement added that as a 'large ocean state,' Antigua and Barbuda has been active in key blue economy initiatives, including co-championing the Commonwealth Blue Charter's Sustainable Blue Economy Action Group, which encourages

better stewardship of 'blue resources.'

"The UWI Five Islands Campus is an investment in the youth of Antigua and Barbuda and the Eastern Caribbean. My government's support for this Centre of Excellence for Oceanography and the Blue Economy is predicated on our vision to provide easier access to quality training and new knowledge at a tertiary level for our people. Its realization will require our collective ingenuity and commitment to identify and secure the necessary resources to advance this important ambition. I therefore invite all present today to partner with us in a tangible and efficacious

manner to establish this centre in short order," Prime Minister Browne urged.

This vision builds on The University of the West Indies' wider reputation as a leading institution leading climate action. The UWI's advocacy on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 development agenda have received global acknowledgement.

"We are an activist university, tackling all of the big challenges facing our region, and committed to serving the development needs of our people. Expectedly therefore, The UWI has been at the forefront of teaching, research and advocacy on sustainable development and climate action in the Caribbean for many decades. Our years of significant contributions have earned us recognition as the global leader in the mobilization of research and advocacy for a climate smart world. It is a designation we have proudly accepted

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with a deep sense of commitment. In furtherance of that commitment, we embrace this opportunity to mobilize our expertise as we work alongside our governments and partners in this area of critical importance to the sustainability and competitiveness of the Caribbean," Professor Sir Hilary Beckles declared.

As the oldest university network in the world, dedicated to making the world a better place through co-

operation in higher education, the Association of Commonwealth Universities is uniquely placed to leverage its international academic networks in support of this vision.

"None of the Sustainable Development Goals can be achieved without higher education. The Government of Antigua and Barbuda's vision to develop a Centre of Excellence in Oceanography and the Blue Economy at The UWI Five Islands campus is a

key example of this, and we welcome the Government putting higher education at the heart of their approach," said Professor Sir Ed Byrne AC, Chair of the Association of Commonwealth Universities.

The government of Antigua and Barbuda named the Dean Jonas as its first Minister of the Blue Economy. Minister Jonas continues to chair an International Steering Committee whose mandate is to provide the direction to unlock the re-

sources for the successful establishment of the Centre. Minister Jonas also spoke at Tuesday's ceremony. He sees Antigua and Barbuda as well positioned to move this programme forward and will be sharing key updates as the process of establishment develops. Dr. Stacy Richards-Kennedy, Director of The UWI's Office of Global Partnerships and Sustainable Futures, co-chairs this International Steering Committee.

THE
WEEKLY
SAVAGE

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CHRISTOPHER

Coming Soon

POINTE TV

WHO Director General rebukes countries for vaccine hoarding

By Elaine Ruth Fletcher

The world is “on the brink of a catastrophe and moral failure – and the price of this failure will be paid with the lives and livelihoods in the world’s poorest countries,” declared WHO Director General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, in his harshest rebuke to date of both countries and the pharma industry for failing to roll out life-saving COVID-19 vaccines more equitably across the world.

Speaking on the opening day of what is set to be a marathon session of WHO’s Executive Board, the WHO Director General noted that “more than 79 million doses of the vaccine have now been administered in at least 49 higher income countries, while just 25 doses have been given in one low income country.”

While some WHO member states, including India’s Minister of Health Harsh Vardhan, EB Board Chair, framed the vaccine roll-outs now underway as the glass “half full” in his opening remarks – which coincided with the launch of India’s own vaccine’s campaign set to become the largest in the world, the WHO DG was not so upbeat.

Rather Dr Tedros expressed the deep rumbles of dissatisfaction echoing among senior WHO officials over the way in which the WHO co-sponsored COVAX facility is being sidelined in the rush by countries – and even blocs



WHO Director General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

of countries – to arrange their own vaccine deals. In fact that rush, which began with the United States, the European Union and other rich countries, now includes South Africa, Brazil, India, and most recently the African Union – which announced last week that it had secured pre-orders of some 270 million vaccine doses from manufacturers for its member states, outside of the COVAX framework. Earlier this month, South Africa also announced that it had arranged for its own vaccine purchases, following on from India and Brazil.

Countries and Companies Continue to Prioritize Bilateral Deals

“Some countries and companies continue to prioritize bilateral deals, going around COVAX, driving up prices and attempting to jump to the front of the queue,” said Dr Tedros, noting that some 44 such deals were signed last year.

“The situation is compounded by the fact that

most manufacturers have prioritized regulatory approval in rich countries where the profits are highest rather than submitting full dossiers to the WHO,” he added.

The lack of communication from pharma producers, he warned, could also delay WHO approval of vaccines to be rolled out through COVAX: “This could delay COVAX deliveries and create exactly the scenario COVAX was designed to avoid with hoarding a chaotic market, an uncoordinated response and continued social and economic disruption.”

The WHO Director General called on countries and pharma producers to “change the rules of the game in three ways,” including by countries transparently reporting to COVAX the nature of their bilateral deals – “including on volumes, pricing and delivery dates.”

He also called on countries with large vaccine orders to “share their own doses with COVAX, espe-

cially once they have vaccinated their own health workers and at risk populations, so that other countries can do the same.”

And, he called on pharma vaccine producers to “provide WHO full data for regulatory review in real time to accelerate approval... to prioritize supplying COVAX rather than new bilateral deals” as well as to allow countries to share any extra doses with COVAX.

“My challenge to all member states is to ensure that by the time World Health Day arrives on the seventh of April, COVID-19 vaccines are being administered in every country, as a symbol of hope for overcoming, both the pandemic and the inequalities that lie at the root of so many global health challenges,” said Tedros.

India’s Health Minister More Upbeat

While the WHO Director General’s comments certainly reflect the frustrations being experienced by people in many countries who are watching vaccine distribution campaigns get underway among wealthier neighboring states, India’s Vardhan cast a more positive light on the progress seen so far in his opening remarks at the EB:

“Scientific capabilities raced against time and delivered on the promise of a vaccine in the shortest possible time in history,” declared Vardhan, who is the EB chair. “While 2020 was the year of science,

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2021 shall be the year of global solidarity and survival," he forecast optimistically.

"COVID-19 vaccines are being successfully produced across many countries, a tech investment boom is being witnessed, and digital technologies are being adopted. All of this is combining to raise the hope of a new era of progress. I want to express utmost optimism that this year the crisis caused by the COVID19 pandemic shall be mitigated and successfully reversed through committed political leadership and sustainable global cooperation and solidarity," said Vardhan, adding that the "COVID-19 vaccines offer a real hope - but that hope needs to reach everyone... therefore we must ensure fair and equitable distribution of the COVID vaccine."

IFPMA - Concerns Over Speed of Access "Potentially Misleading"

Meanwhile, concerns over the lack of speedy access to coronavirus vaccines to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) "are potentially misleading and might hinder rather than help this unprecedented effort of global collaboration and solidarity," said the head of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA), Thomas Cueni, in a lengthy response to the WHO DG's remarks.

"Governments around the world - in industrialized as well as developing countries - have moved overnight from concern about vaccine hesitancy to high anxiety at rolling out the distribution. The political urgency is understandable; it is important to recall that the roll-out of approved COVID-19 vaccines is just weeks old. In that time, events have unfolded swiftly, with a couple of other vaccines gaining approval and more to follow.

"While there is no room for complacency, it is important to note that this is the first global-health emergency in which new vaccines are being rolled out to LMICs at about the same time as in richer ones," said Cueni - drawing a sharp contrast with other pandemics, where it took years for vital health products to reach poor countries.

Executive Board Packed Agenda Addresses COVID Directly and Indirectly

Much of the ten-day governing board meeting will focus on debates and a flurry of initiatives that are a product of the COVID-19 pandemic's shockwaves. Beyond the optics and the politics, the quality of debate may be a test case for whether the 34-member EB, in its current alignment representing all six WHO member state regions equally, can regain

its past lustre as a technically-focused board - or also requires more serious reform in the wake of shortcomings highlighted by the pandemic - as some critics have suggested.

Items on the table will include, an exhaustive review of WHO's emergency response operations in general, and its COVID-19 response more specifically.

There is also an initiative by some 46 member states for more far-reaching reforms in WHO's emergency powers and response capacity - looking toward a formal resolution to be submitted for approval at the May World Health Assembly.

The EB will also consider a WHO request for a nearly 20% increase in its operating budget to fill out the many performance gaps that have been uncovered in the course of the pandemic; a new framework to examine how to put WHO's shaky finances on a more sustainable footing; and foster a more efficient Organization through a series of WHO administrative reforms.

Along with that, there are a host of other core WHO activities, initiatives and issues, now being re-examined through a COVID "lens." These range from topics like patient safety and medicines access - to non-communicable diseases and mental health.



DR. MASERATI

SENATOR COLIN BROWNE

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

Governor orders Commission of Inquiry to investigate BVI government



BVI Governor Augustus Jaspert

Amid recent reports that his office has received a litany of complaints regarding lack of transparency in government, outgoing governor, Augustus Jaspert on Tuesday announced he has decided to issue a Commission of Inquiry (COI), in accordance with BVI's Commissions of Inquiry Act.

The Governor's announcement was made via Facebook and doesn't appear on the BVI Government website.

A Commission of Inquiry is a body that can look impartially into matters of public concern.

"The Commission will look into whether corruption, abuse of office or other serious dishonesty in relation to officials – elected, statutory or public – may have taken place in recent years. If so, it will consider the conditions which allowed this to take place and make independent recommendations for improvement," Governor Jas-

pert said.

The governor said he'll be hosting a press conference later this week to set out more details about the COI. He will host the conference with the judge appointed to lead the inquiry.

Who will lead the commission?

According to Governor Jaspert, the COI will be an entirely independent process led by a senior impartial judge coming from outside of the territory, Sir Gary Hickenbottom.

"This will help the Commission reach fair unbiased conclusions under local law. Furthermore, the judge will have powers under the Commission of Inquiry Ordinance to collect evidence and summon witnesses in a way that our local institutions cannot," the Governor said.

In his statement, he also specified the complaints that his office has received that have led to the Commission of Inquiry.

"First, there are wide concerns over the lack of transparency when it comes to spending public funds, particularly those relating to COVID-19 economic stimulus support," Jaspert explained.

"Second, there are wide concerns over the possible mismanagement of some public projects. Successive audit reports have set out practices of political interference, inflated pricing and conflicts of interest. These may have cost the public purse millions of dollars in recent years, with no sign of improvement," the governor added.

He continued: "Third, and linked to the previous points, there are concerns over the lack of transparency relating to Government contracts. Key concerns include a lack of fair and open competition, conflicts of interest and a lack of value for money. We need to know how individuals are getting work so we can ensure equal opportunities for all."

It added that "law enforcement should expect a series of gang shootings and people's homes getting burned down."

According to a statement from the TTPS, immediately upon receipt of this information, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Ag), 'Operations' Joanne Archie held a coordinating meeting with various specialized and intelligence units, including GEB, SIU, MOB and IATF, POS CID, all First Division officers of POSD, the Traffic and Highway Patrol

Branch and the POS Taskforce.

Following this meeting, several persons of interest were brought into the Besson Street and St Joseph Police Stations.

Commissioner Griffith visited both police stations, where he issued a stern warning to persons of interest that were being held there, making it clear to them that the "TTPS will not tolerate any plans among groups to cause any mayhem and destruction."

The commissioner said he received hundreds of messages from concerned members of the public about the veracity of the messages.

Griffith made it clear that if the messages circulating had any truth, the TTPS will move swiftly to take down any attempts to escalate any gang-related criminal activity that brings inconvenience to the public.

He also reminded the "persons of interest" of the attempts made at the end of June 2020, which were met with immediate resistance by the TTPS.

As a result of the messages which were circulating yesterday, the commissioner said the TTPS has put certain measures in place should any attempts be made to escalate gang-related criminal activity.

Griffith further advised the public to be wary of misinformation that is being circulated on social media.

He said there is no intelligence to verify these alleged threats.

Adam Stewart named executive chairman of Sandals Resorts Int'l

(Jamaicaobserver):

Sandals Resorts International (SRI) has announced Adam Stewart's appointment as executive chairman of the company built by his father, Gordon "Butch" Stewart, the tourism industry icon who passed away on January 4, 2021.

The younger Stewart is now the second chairman in the company's 40-year history and takes up the position after working alongside his father for more than two decades, serving as chief executive officer and most recently deputy chairman.

"Some people are dreamers, and some are doers; my dad was the magical combination of both. He was fiercely passionate about offering a product that would exceed expectations, and we are incredibly honoured to continue his pursuit of innovation, raising the bar, and creating landmark moments for our valued guests," a company release quotes Stewart.

The company noted that the executive chairman has helped oversee the continued rapid expansion of SRI throughout the Caribbean, including the recent announcement of two new resorts – the future Sandals Curacao, and Beaches Resort in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Both resorts will bring to 20 the combined number of properties run by



Sandals Resorts International Executive Chairman Adam Stewart

the luxury-included chain across nine Caribbean territories.

Sandals Resorts International is the parent company of Sandals Resorts, Beaches Resorts and Grand Pineapple Beach Resorts. Founded by Butch Stewart in 1981, SRI is based in Montego Bay, Jamaica, and is responsible for resort development, service standards, training and day-to-day operations.

In its release, SRI not-

ed that countless organisations have recognised Adam Stewart for his leadership in the travel industry and his substantial contributions to the destinations where Sandals Resorts operates.

As part of this commitment, in 2009 he launched Sandals Foundation with a mission to lift communities through education, health care, and environmental protection.

The foundation, which he will continue to serve

as president, and its activities have helped millions across the region through various impact-focused programmes.

"Stewart is also a strong proponent of the direct investment and development of team members. His work through the Sandals Corporate University brings continued learning, mentorship and invaluable skills training to thousands of employees throughout the Caribbean," the company noted.

In 2016, he was invested with the national honour, the Order of Distinction, Commander Class by the Government of Jamaica for outstanding contribution to tourism.

Reflecting on the outpouring of support from Sandals team members, guests and industry partners around the world after the passing of Butch Stewart, Adam Stewart said his father's shoes are impossible to fill. "But we will follow in his groundbreaking footsteps to continue the important work we all set out to do together. As a company and as a team, we are poised for the future. We are already leading the industry in recovering from the greatest setback in the history of travel. We will continue to lead not just by saying, but by doing. And at the heart of it all, we are solely focused on what we do best: delighting our guests," Stewart said.

Dominicans urged to get vaccinated



Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Dr. Carissa Etienne

(Dominicanewsline): Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Dr. Carissa Etienne, has made a strong appeal to the Dominican public to get vaccinated in order to slow down or stop any transmission of Covid-19. Speaking during the first edition of Prime Minister Skerrit's Sunday talk show for 2021, Dr. Etienne revealed that COVID-19 vaccines will soon be available in the

region. However, she said there is a level of reluctance and concern among citizens about taking the vaccine. "Take the vaccine by all means. I am waiting for mine...there are several reasons for taking the vaccine, with the emergence of mutations, because that is one of the things that happens to viruses if there's a magnitude and level of transmission, it is easy for the viruses to mutate," she

explained.

The PAH Director pointed out that with the mutations as has been seen with the United Kingdom variant, the virus "may well acquire the ability to be transmitted much easier or to cause more serious disease" and urged people to take the vaccine to "prevent ourselves from being infected and possible death."

Dr. Etienne cautioned people who think that they are fine because they are not old or they do not have underlying conditions that "more and more young people are becoming infected."

She encouraged governments and other community organizations to continue to educate community members to fight vaccine hesitancy and the wrong impressions that people have about the vaccine.

According to the PAHO official, although PAHO said some vaccine will be available in March

2021, "we probably can see that advance and receive some vaccines earlier...but a note of caution, you are not going to receive the full number or quantity of vaccines."

Meantime, Dominica-born, United States-based medical doctor, Dale Dangleben who spoke recently on Q-95 is also encouraging the general public to be vaccinated.

Dr. Dangleben has already received his Covid-19 vaccine.

He believes that vaccination is one of the greatest inventions in medicine.

"I think at this stage the risk of not getting vaccinated is greater than getting vaccinated," he stated. "There are a lot of conspiracy theories..."

Dr. Dangleben encouraged people to understand the science and stop saying, "people want to destroy us."

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PM declares holidays; rejects lockdown measures – again



(Iwnsvg): Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves, on Monday, again rejected the imposition of curfews, states of emergencies, and outright lockdown measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

He, however, announced public holidays this coming Friday and Monday, saying the strain of the pandemic and of the ongoing effusive eruption of the La Soufriere volcano is beginning to show on the faces of citizens.

"... We perhaps need as a people to pause, to reflect, to act more assuredly in ways which are inclusive, in solidarity with each other, and to be engaged fully for the

long haul ahead. "These words, 'pause', 'reflect', 'act', 'inclusive', 'solidarity' and 'engagement', incidentally constitute an uplifting acronym 'praise'. That is a golden watch word," the prime minister said in a national address.

Since Dec. 28, the number of COVID-19 cases recorded in St. Vincent and the Grenadines has increased about five-fold, reaching 494 on Monday.

Of those, 359 cases were detected among residents with no recent travel history, two of whom - 49-year-old Justina Pompey, and an 80-year-old man, whose name has not

been released, have died after contracting COVID-19.

Both persons are said to have had pre-existing conditions.

On Friday, the World Health Organization changed SVG's COVID-19 status, saying the country was having community transmission of the illness.

However, the government said on Monday that it had objected to this classification, triggering a reversal by the world health governing body.

In his national address, Gonsalves said that experiences in other CARICOM nations and globally suggest that states

of emergencies, curfews and total lockdowns have not been nearly as effective in stemming the rise or spread of the coronavirus.

"At the same time, real damage has been caused to lives and livelihoods by draconian measures, tight-as-a-drum lockdowns, or night time curfews," he said.

The prime minister said that other experiences elsewhere, including SVG, have shown that "nuanced and targeted restrictions and regulations are no less effective". "But these nuanced and targeted restrictions and regulations must be properly policed," said Gonsalves, who is also Minister of National Security.

"So our government will not, at this time, even with a spike, order any state of emergency, lockdown or curfew," he said.

The prime minister, however, said that current restrictions and regulations will be tightened and managed more closely and, where necessary and desirable, his government will ramp up the restrictions and controls.

China and WHO acted too slowly to contain Covid-19, says independent panel

(CNN): China and the World Health Organization (WHO) could have acted quicker and more forcefully to contain the start of the Covid-19 outbreak, an independent review panel said on Monday.

In its second interim report, the Switzerland-based Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response determined that Beijing could have been more vigorous in applying public health measures when cases were first detected in the city of Wuhan, in Hubei province.

"What is clear to the panel is that public health measures could have been applied more forcefully by local and national health authorities in China in January (2020)," the report said.

The first cases in Wuhan occurred between December 12 and December 29, 2019 according to city authorities. The cases weren't reported to WHO until December 31. By the time Wuhan went under lockdown on January 23, 2020 the virus had already



spread to Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and the United States.

Several countries, most vocally the US and Australia, have accused Beijing of downplaying the outbreak's severity during its early stages, and preventing an effective response until it was too late.

In response, China said it agrees there is always room for improvement but shut down the notion that it means the country is doing poorly regarding the pandemic.

"About this I want to say that we should certainly try to do better. I think any country, including China, the US, the UK, Japan, and any other country, should try to do better, because I think there is always

no best, only better, when it comes to public health issues," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Hua Chunying said.

"But I think there is another point that needs attention here," Hua said. She added that the idea that China should aim to work better is not the same as saying it is not doing well, adding that Western media has portrayed it that way.

"The former means that we need to constantly reform ourselves, improve ourselves, and constantly improve our ability to govern, aiming at the absolute perfection. I think this is precisely why China can continue to develop and make progress. The latter may be somewhat biased and carping," Hua said.

The independent

panel, co-chaired by former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark and former Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, also criticized WHO for its delays in sounding the alarm, and called for reforms to the UN agency.

Despite being alerted to the cases by the end of December, 2019 WHO did not convene its emergency committee until January 22, 2020 -- and then waited until January 30 before declaring an international emergency.

"It is not clear why the committee did not meet until the third week of January, nor is it clear why it was unable to agree on the declaration of a public health emergency of international concern when it was first convened," the report said.

The report also highlighted that WHO did not declare the outbreak a pandemic until March 11, 2020 after some health experts and media outlets had already begun adopting the term. By that time, there were already 118,000 cases and more than 4,000 deaths worldwide.

Trump, in farewell address, says movement 'only just beginning'

(Aljazeera): US President Donald Trump has released a farewell video, touting what he described as the success of his "America First" platform and telling his supporters that "the movement we started is only just beginning".

Trump, who will leave office on today but will not attend the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden, acknowledged in the nearly 20-minute video that a new administration would be sworn in this week.

"We extend our best wishes," he said. "And we also want them to have luck. A very important word.

"Now, as we prepare to hand power over to a new administration at noon on Wednesday, I want you to

know that the movement we started is only just beginning," he said.

Trump, who has maintained his false claims that November's presidential election was "stolen" from him amid widespread voter fraud, described himself on Tuesday as "the only true outsider ever to win the presidency".

He only acknowledged he would not serve a second term as president on January 7, a day after his supporters stormed the US Capitol as Congress met to certify Biden's victory. The incident left five dead.

Trump has still not explicitly acknowledged that he lost to Biden.

In the video released on Tuesday, Trump con-

demned the violence on Capitol Hill, saying "all Americans were horrified by the assault on our Capitol"

"Political violence is an attack on everything we cherish as Americans. It can never be tolerated."

Trump has been accused of egging on his supporters in a rally shortly before the Capitol breach. In a video message amid the chaos, Trump told supporters to go home, while saying "We love you" and again repeating his baseless allegation that the election had been "stolen".

Last week, the US House of Representatives voted to impeach Trump for "incitement to insurrection" in relation to the riot.

Shortly before the release of Trump's farewell message, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said the rioters were "fed lies" and "provoked by the president and other powerful people".

Trump will face a trial in the Senate on the article of impeachment, which will require a two-thirds majority for conviction in the chamber, which is split 50-50 between Democrats and Republicans.

A guilty vote could also lead to Trump being barred from holding future federal office. As a single-term president, Trump is currently eligible to run again in 2024 and is expected to be an influential force leading up to that race.

Eyeing a recovery, American Airlines' regional carrier to resume pilot hiring

(Reuters): American Airlines' wholly-owned regional subsidiary PSA Airlines plans to resume new pilot hiring this year, a positive sign for an industry that was ravaged last year by the coronavirus pandemic but is now preparing to ramp up flying.

As COVID-19 vaccines continue to roll out, airlines are hoping for a significant improvement in domestic air travel by the summer, even if demand does not fully yet recoup pre-pandemic levels.

"As we continue to work with American Airlines to identify our flying needs

this year, and in combination with recent attrition numbers for our Pilot group, we will be initiating hiring efforts for First Officer team members," Keith Stamper, vice president of PSA's air operations, said in a memo reviewed by Reuters.

A PSA spokeswoman confirmed the plans, which also include new flight attendant hiring, but said: "We are declining disclosing specific hiring numbers at this time."

For years, airlines including PSA were aggressively recruiting to address projected pilot shortages

during an era of industry growth, but hiring and training programs were halted last year as the pandemic forced thousands of furloughs.

Dayton, Ohio-based PSA, which operates domestic routes for American, furloughed 723 pilots and 323 flight attendants last October when an initial COVID-19 relief plan for U.S. airlines expired. Employees were recalled last month following a fresh \$15 billion in government aid for the struggling industry.

Major airlines like American rely on regional carriers,

which have a cheaper workforce, to operate a large share of their domestic networks.

Over time, regional pilots work their way up to the majors, which are preparing for a wave of retirements in coming years even after many pilots took early departure deals during the pandemic.

American, for example, expects over 11,149 pilots to reach the mandatory retirement age of 65 between 2021 and 2041, with 455 expected to retire this year alone, according to internal company projections updated on Jan. 18.

Joe Biden & Kamala Harris' Inauguration Today

(Billboard): Joe Biden and Kamala Harris will be sworn in as president and vice president of the United States today, during the 59th Inaugural Swearing-In Ceremony.

The ceremony will be downsized and restructured due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The traditional in-person parade along Pennsylvania Avenue will be replaced by an official escort with representatives of every branch of the military for one block. The FBI and Secret Service have increased security efforts for Wednesday following the deadly U.S. Capitol riot on Jan. 6, heeding warnings that far-right extremist groups are planning a similar attack.

Lady Gaga will sing the national anthem and Jennifer Lopez will also deliv-



Joe Biden and Kamala Harris take the stage

er a musical performance.

After being sworn in by Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., Biden will deliver his inaugural address that lays out "his vision to defeat the pandemic, build back better, and unify and heal the nation," according to the Presidential Inaugural Committee's schedule. He will also conduct a traditional

review of military troops after taking his oath of office.

"This inauguration presents a unique opportunity to spotlight the resilience and spirit of an America united," said Presidential Inaugural Committee CEO Tony Allen in a statement. "We have witnessed countless heroes this past year step up to

the frontlines and serve their fellow Americans, so we are telling their stories, spreading their collective light, and celebrating the best of our country and its people with this prime-time program. Our first priority is safety -- so while many of us will be watching safely from our homes, we are creating real moments of connection that highlight a new inclusive American era of leadership that works for and represents all Americans."

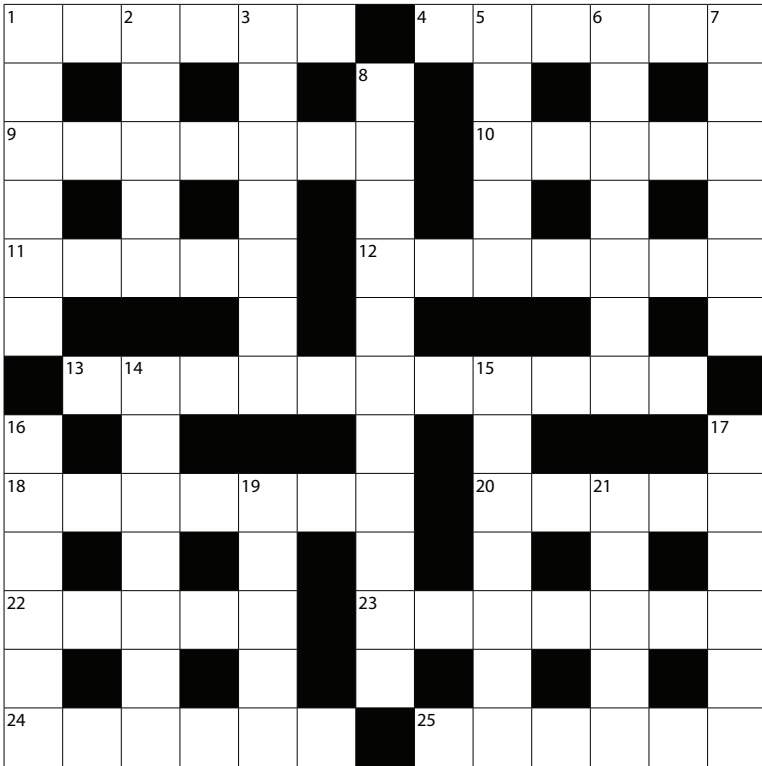
The 59th Inaugural Swearing-In Ceremony will be held at noon ET on Wednesday, Jan. 20 on the west front of the Capitol building. The Presidential Inaugural Committee will livestream the event on its website as well as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Twitch.

POINTE TV

The Soul
of
Arts
in
Culture

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Reproach (6)
- 4 Bath powder (6)
- 9 Fix (7)
- 10 Metrical units with an unstressed and a stressed syllable (5)
- 11 Dagger symbols (†) used as reference marks in printed matter (5)
- 12 White crystalline sugar that comes in many forms (7)
- 13 Passed-along missive (5,6)
- 18 River running over the Victoria Falls (7)
- 20 Off-white colour (5)
- 22 Car race run over public roads (5)
- 23 Student with the same background as David Cameron and Boris Johnson (7)
- 24 Small fairy (6)
- 25 Wing added to a building (6)

Down

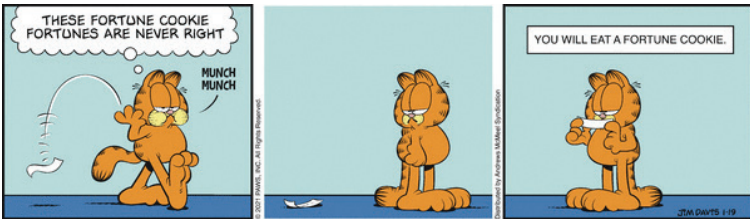
- 1 Think logically (6)
- 2 Push into (5)
- 3 Raft built by Thor Heyerdahl for his 1947 crossing of the Pacific (3-4)
- 5 Au revoir (5)
- 6 Fruit cooked or preserved in syrup (7)
- 7 Badly wounded (6)
- 8 Wild cat from the Indian subcontinent (6,5)
- 14 More modest (7)
- 15 Tropical cyclone in the Indian and Pacific Oceans (7)
- 16 Portuguese mid-Atlantic archipelago (6)
- 17 Flat rim on a wheel to keep it on a rail (6)
- 19 Land of the Pharaohs (5)
- 21 Get up (5)

DAILY COMICS

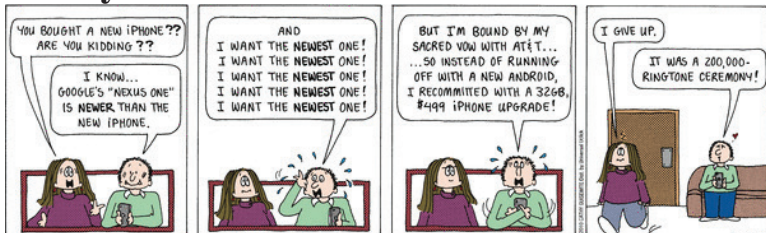
Dilbert



Garfield



Cathy



SUDOKU

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4				8					1
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	5								3
8	6		1				7		
			3		1				

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
01/20




82° Hi DAY
Sunny to partly cloudy and nice

73° Lo NIGHT
Partly cloudy

Sunrise 6:40 AM Sunset 5:56 PM Moonrise 11:50 AM Moonset 12:30 AM

THU
01/21



81° Hi DAY
Partly sunny

73° Lo NIGHT
Mainly clear

Sunrise 6:40 AM Sunset 5:57 PM Moonrise 12:24 PM Moonset 1:19 AM

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

♈ ARIES | Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Ever been on the verge of finishing a jigsaw puzzle only to discover the last piece is missing? And remember how frustrating it feels to not find it after hours of searching, only to discover it a day later hiding under the sofa?

♉ TAURUS | Apr. 20-May 20

Ouch! Someone is working their way under your skin and trying to provoke you. Instead of being irritated by what you see as their needless rebellion, take a step back and a deep breath and view things objectively.

♊ GEMINI | May 21-June 20

You're the hub of a big social wheel. You have some marvelous social gifts, one of them being the ability to connect with people from all walks of life. Another is the ability to make new acquaintances feel like old friends.

♋ CANCER | June 21-July 22

One reason willow trees always survive storms is that they bend. Instead of breaking, once the wind has stopped, they simply bounce right back. Let the willow be your example today, especially when it comes to dealing with emotions.

♌ LEO | July 23-Aug. 22

What's gotten into your friends and family? It seems like they're being contrary simply for the sake of needing each other (and you). Whatever the reason, try and let it roll off your back.

♍ VIRGO | Aug. 23-Sept. 22

Go ahead and listen to your naughty, adventurous side. After all, it has some very good ideas about what you should be up to right now, especially if you're feeling like you need a change of pace.

♎ LIBRA Sept. | 23-Oct. 22

You have energy and imagination to spare, and when it comes to the social scene, you're the tops. No one need fear an awkward silence as long as you're around spreading your special brand of goodwill and charm.

♏ SCORPIO Oct. | 23-Nov. 21

Crowds have never been high on your list of things you love, and that's especially true right now. You need solitude to contemplate some changes that need to be made. Take some time on your own to think things over.

♐ SAGITTARIUS | Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Be brave, be bold, and be first. Your pioneering spirit is exactly what's needed to get things moving, and that's more than fine with you. Is there anything you love more than the chance to be the first to explore brand-new territory?

♑ CAPRICORN | Dec. 22-Jan. 19

It's tempting to tinker with something, but your efforts to do so might raise a whole chorus of dissention. Reassure folks you won't be changing the substance of who you are or what you do.

♒ AQUARIUS | Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Well, look at you! Actually, the real question right now is who isn't looking at you? All eyes can't help but be drawn in your general direction. You have a light and a spark about you that just won't quit.

♓ PISCES | Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Lately you might feel like your brain is on steroids, recording and remembering all sorts of junk that crosses your path. Sit down and toss out anything that isn't absolutely necessary to finishing the tasks at hand.

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

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.

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.



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Win, lose or draw, former West Indies fast bowler, Curtley Ambrose, wants the West Indies players in Bangladesh to play well and compete making it difficult for the selectors when they return to the Caribbean to select the squad for the next series.

Over ten senior players, including test and one-day-international captains, Jason Holder and Kieron Pollard, opted out of the tour leaving a

huge hole to be filled by young players. Ambrose encouraged the players not to look at themselves as second-string options, but to focus, work hard and perform.

The Antiguan who only played two ODI's against Bangladesh said while he is surprised that so many players opted out of the tour, he is not upset with guys who are concerned about the coronavirus and their health.

"I am kind of disappointed that so many are not going at the same time," Ambrose noted, "but everyone has the right if they want to go or not."

Ambrose said while the Caribbean side is not favored to win in both series, it could work in its favour. "No one expects them to win, so they should just go out there and play fearless cricket," Ambrose explained.

Ambrose, who played 239 first-class matches for the Leeward islands between 1985 and 2000, said the players should not worry about anything—just play the kind of cricket they know they are capable of, and the results will take care of itself. The former right-handed fast bowler recently applied to England and Wales Cricket Board for the role of elite pace-bowling coach.

India clinches victory over Australia at the Gabba

India's series-clinching victory over Australia at the Gabba is one of their greatest wins ever.

Injury-hit India chased 328, a Brisbane record, to hand Australia a first-test defeat at the Gabba since 1988 and win one of the all-time great series 2-1.

This came after they were bowled out for 36 in losing the first test.

India's captain and talisman, Virat Kohli, left the series after the first test to be at the birth of his first child. In addition, their injury list steadily grew to include a host of fast bowlers and

first-choice spinners, Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja.

Young batsmen, Shubman Gill and Rishabh Pant, starred on the final day of the series decider, making 91 and 89 not-out, respectively, to pull off an astonishing run, chase and win the fourth test by three

wickets to retain the Border-Gavaskar trophy they won two years ago.

Australia, 369 (Labuschagne 108, Paine 50 and 294 (Smith 55, Siraj 5-73)

India, 336 (Thakur 67, Sundar 62, Hazlewood 5-57) and 329-7 (Gill 91, Pant 89).

Australian tennis star criticizes Djokovic over quarantine comments

Tennis star Novak Djokovic has been criticized by Australian player Nick Kyrgios, after the world number one lobbied authorities to relax quarantine rules for the Australian Open players.

More than 12,000 players and staff flew into Australia last week for the Grand Slam which begins on 8 February. But coronavirus cases on three flights have forced 72 players to isolate full-time in their hotel rooms for 14-

days.

Highlighting some players' frustration, Djokovic called for different rules. But his suggestions—such as shorter quarantine periods—were rebuffed by Victoria state authorities who want to keep infections at very low levels.

State Premier Daniel Andrews said the measures were necessary to protect the public and tennis stars would get no special treatment.

Following that, Kyrgios tweeted a news clip of the saga on Monday night and wrote "Djokovic is a tool." The outspoken Australian, ranked 47th in men's singles, has previously criticized Djokovic over coronavirus after the Serb organized an exhibition event last year in which he and others contracted the virus.

Many connected to the Australian Open have expressed frustration over their forced isolation, mostly com-

monly for the disruption to player preparation.

Residents of Melbourne, home city of the Australian Open, endured one of the world's longest lockdown last year and had expressed concerns about the risk posed by the sporting event.

Event organizers say the majority of the about 500 players attending the Open have accepted the conditions, including those who are confined to their hotel rooms.

Keeping Women's Football on the Forefront

National women's head coach, Lecia Cole, is on a mission to keep women's football on the forefront of the sporting landscape on the island as the programme moves towards a return to training.

Appearing as a guest on the Pointe FM Touchline programme, Cole said the players and coaches are extremely happy to be returning to football even though it is only training. "We are looking forward to a more forgiving and productive 2021 after the women's league and program were halted March 13, 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic," Cole noted.

According to the coach, the return is being done

under the necessary protocols and guidelines of the Ministry of Health and only 25 people, which include players and coaches, are allowed on the field at one time.

"We will be using 2021 as a development and identification year," the American explained.

The women's program recently started conducting trials for players who have flown under the radar, and Cole said a lot of talent has been unearthed. The former college and professional coach stated that much time and emphasis will be allocated to the development of players technically and tactically during 2021.

Cole said she is very impressed with the young talent on the island, and it has been



National women's head coach Lecia Cole

strange returning to football without the presence of a friend and former technical director, the late Rolston Debu Williams, who passed away late last year.

Cole explained that before Williams passed, they were working on a holistic development plan

along with Lenny Hewlett and Sowerby Gomes to present a road map to the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association to develop players across the island. The plan is expected to be presented to the ABFA in the not-too-distant future for approval.

DEWS



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