



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

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THE 21-DAY CHALLENGE

The absence of most sporting events over most of the past year has led us to this creative way to blend our innate love for sports and our need to strictly adhere to the health protocols as enunciated ad nauseam by health officials here and abroad.

The decision by the government to increase the curfew hours by starting it from 8:00 p.m., instead of the 11:00 p.m. where it has been for several months, came as a jolt of reality for many. So too was the news that at least one individual was fined \$10,000.00 and another fined \$5,000.00 for violating the quarantine provisions.

In addition, there was the announcement by the police that there were several sweeps the prior weekend of individuals who were socializing at bars and other such establishments in clear violation of the regulations governing these entities.

These developments brought home to many the seriousness of the situation that faces the country. In January alone there have been more than sixty people confirmed with COVID-19, with fourteen coming in a single day. At the same time, the active cases, which at one time seemed permanently stuck in single digits, have jumped to fiftyone at the

last count.

And as if the situation could not worsen, then came the news that last Friday night, a thirty-nine-year-old male died from complications related to COVID-19. There are now fears that there may already be community spread of the virus, thus making it difficult for health personnel to properly carry out contact-tracing of individuals who may have been in contact with anyone exposed to the virus.

It is a scary thought, especially as one considers how well Antigua and Barbuda has been coping with the pandemic since last March. It was always a step ahead of the other Caribbean territories in the manner of its approach towards containment. It introduced the state of emergency as well as the health protocols affecting all aspects of life in the country. Proudly, there has been a high level of compliance with these impositions. But now here comes the true test!

In response to what it sees as a worsening situation regarding the spread of COVID-19 and in its desire to prevent an uncontrollable spread of the virus, the government decided to lengthen the curfew and to close all bars for a twenty-one-day period. Restau-

rants may open, but must only serve takeout.

There have been some rumblings because of these additional measures. However, the challenge is for the nation to take on this twenty-one-day period as a time for everyone to collectively come together as a nation to bring down the rate of infection across the country. For twenty-one days, we all must endeavour to strictly adhere to the protocols regardless of how we may feel. Reducing the spread of the virus in Antigua and Barbuda is not the work of the prime minister, nor the minister of health, nor of any other government official; it depends on all of us working together with one goal in mind.

Twenty-one days to ensure that you wear your mask properly; twenty-one days to ensure that you wash your hands properly and practise social distancing. It is also a time to obey the new curfew hours, to avoid large gatherings and as much as possible only socialize with those in your immediate household. We can all take on this twenty-one-day challenge together! We can do it with commitment and steadfastness. Let's do it Antigua and Barbuda! Of course, at the end of it will be set another goal post.

51 Active COVID-19 cases

There has been another sharp jump in active COVID-19 cases as the nation records 14 new positive cases, according to data released overnight.

The Ministry of Health said data from the Mount St. John's Medical Centre (MSJMC) and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) have revealed fourteen new laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda as of Saturday 30th January 2021.

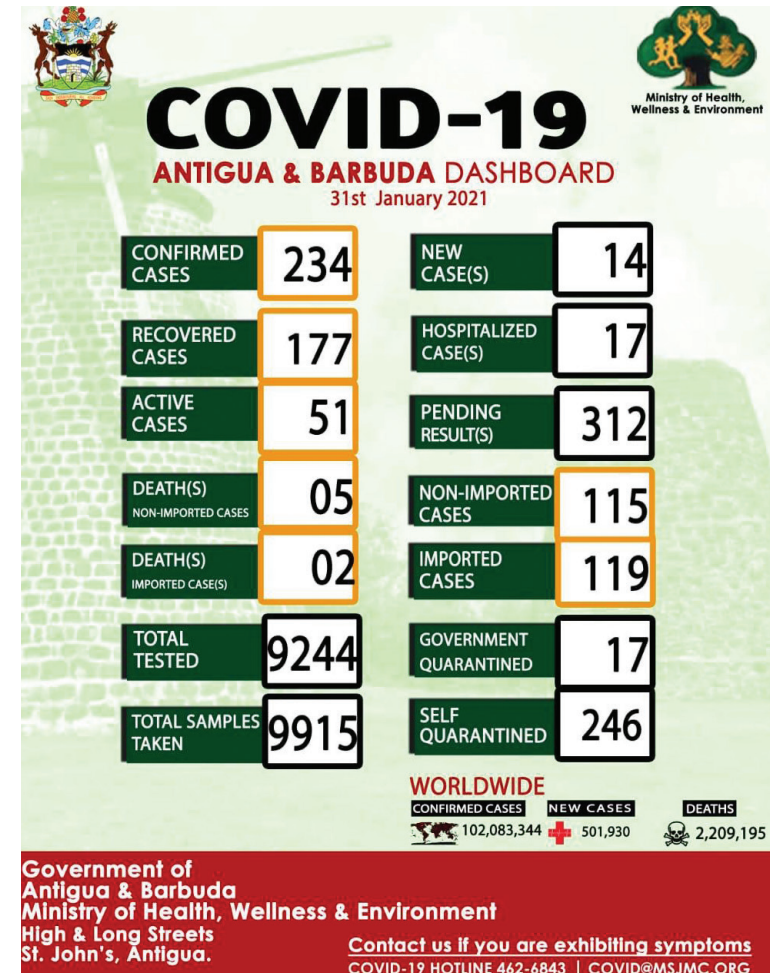
Subsequent to the publication of the dashboard for Saturday 30th January 2021 with the cut off time of 6p.m., an additional ten samples were processed by CARPHA, increasing their total from forty-four to fifty-four samples while one hundred and twenty-three samples

were processed by MSJMC which increased the overall pending results from one hundred and sixty-seven to one hundred and seventy-seven samples in total.

Of the one hundred and twenty-three samples processed by MSJMC, one hundred and nineteen were negative and four positive while of the fifty-four processed by CARPHA, forty-four were negative and ten positive.

Two of the cases are imported and twelve non-imported. Investigations have begun and contact tracing and testing are ongoing.

Meanwhile, two new recovered cases have been recorded, bringing that total to one hundred and seventy-seven. Three additional persons



have been hospitalized, bringing that total to seventeen.

There are three hundred and twelve samples pending.

Consequently, the total number of

persons with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda is two hundred and thirty-four (234), which is inclusive of fifty-one (51) active cases.

STARTING POINT
ON AIR
with Shelton Daniel
MONDAY TO FRIDAY
8:30am-10:30am
POINTE FM
POINTE FM 99.1
BROADCASTING FROM THE POINT COMMUNITY
COMMUNITY BASED... GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE
99.1 FM

PM: Many getting rich by not paying taxes

Prime Minister Gaston Browne, who is also the country's Finance Minister, has levelled a serious charge against many businesses and individuals in the country, who he said have devised multiple schemes to rob the government of taxes that are due.

Speaking on the Browne and Browne radio programme on Saturday, PM Browne said there are many who have been 'playing fast and loose' with government taxes for many years.

He said the law provides that anyone or entity importing anything into the country must pay import and other duties. However, according to the prime minister, many have engaged in a variety of schemes to

avoid paying taxes altogether or to pay much less than is really due.

"These people literally smuggle goods into the country because they under-estimate or under invoice the true value of the imported items. As an example, when they import high-end goods, they often only list the value of those items of much lower value and in the process deprive government of what is legitimately due," he explained.

According to PM Browne, the practice of tax avoidance is quite widespread as it also includes several hotels. "What they do is they remit less than what they receive from the travel agents. So, when the fifteen per cent ABST is calculated it is done on a small-

er amount," he further explained.

But the finance minister warned that this high rate of tax evasion must come to an end as it is not fair that some in the society are benefitting by not paying their fair share of taxes while the government, on the other hand, is unable to meet its obligations, including paying many of the small contractors who provide a range of services.

He noted that already Antigua and Barbuda pays the lowest tax rate as a percentage of GDP. He disclosed that Antigua and Barbuda pays at a rate of seventeen per cent, while in some islands they pay as much as twenty-seven per cent of GDP. He stated that the government aims to

raise the rate of tax collection without introducing any additional taxes.

According to the prime minister, this is the rationale behind the announcement that the government is considering applying the ABST on all online purchases to ensure that the correct taxes are paid on such purchases.

"This system will ensure full compliance of payment of fifteen per cent on online purchases. This is a situation for a fair and equitable tax system in which the government gets its fair share."

He warned that should the tax evasion continue then the government will have much difficulty meeting its obligations such as salaries, wages and pensions in the future.

Recovered doctor pleads for COVID compliance

By Shelton Daniel

The medical practitioner who recovered from COVID-19 last year is advising Antiguan and Barbudans not to slack off on the various measures in place to prevent or reduce transmission of the virus.

Dr. Raymond Daoud spent nearly four months in intensive care at the Mount St. John's Medical Center (MSJMC), including six weeks attached to a ventilator.

Sedated for much of that time, he was reported to be at high risk of fatality, but credits the hard work and dedication of medical staff at the hospital with helping him to pull

through - in addition to the support and prayers of family and friends.

Dr. Daoud's admission to MSJMC on 27th March was followed one day later by the imposition of a state of emergency marked by strict and lengthy curfews, border closure, and the shutdown of several business and service sectors considered to be high risk.

Speaking Saturday on **PointeFM's** Browne and Browne Show, Dr. Daoud pleaded with Antiguan and Barbudans not to abandon or take any liberties with the COVID prevention protocols of mask wearing, social distancing, sanitizing and

handwashing hygiene, as well as cough and sneeze etiquette.

He stressed that the availability of vaccines to help develop so-called "herd immunity" in the local population might still be several months away. Therefore, Dr. Daoud admonished, Antiguan and Barbudans have to rely on the measures at their disposal and which have been proven to work.

Clearly impassioned by his own near death experience, Dr. Daoud reminded that "COVID is not a joke but a multi-system disease which can affect anything in your body from your brain to your lungs to your heart

to your kidneys, and is sometimes so silent you don't know; and therein lies the danger."

Dr. Daoud said no one should rely on the manifestation of symptoms, as many people infected with the virus are asymptomatic. Therefore, he stressed, everyone needs to practice the measures to protect themselves and others from transmission that may be without any outward signs of illness. Daoud said he was personally disappointed to hear that COVID-19 vaccines would not become available until August or September of this year. "I was hoping we would be able to begin receiving

cont'd on pg 5

COVID-19 cases rise among young people

Health officials in Antigua and Barbuda say they have noticed a worrying trend: the increase in the number of COVID-19 positive cases is prevalent among the younger section of the population.

The concern comes as the country recorded its seventh COVID-19 related death, that of a thirty-nine-year-old man who is said to have been in good health.

According to Prime Minister Gaston Browne, this trend may be directly related to this demographic flouting the established health protocols with the view that they are invisible to the virus.

"Most of the new cases are among people under the age of fifty years who

continue to behave in an irresponsible manner by not paying attention to the health protocols and who are taking unnecessary risks. However, the latest death demonstrates that someone as young as thirty-nine, and said to be in good health, can die from complications from the virus no matter your health status," PM Browne told the audience of his weekend radio programme.

Providing further updates on the COVID-19 situation in the country, the prime minister said there are eight individuals hospitalized with COVID, some of whom are on oxygen.

He expressed the view that the country had done a 'good job' man-

aging the crisis over the past nine months but during the month of January there was a sharp uptick in the number of positive cases with active cases now at thirty-seven up to the last dashboard. "I would hate to see that now we have the vaccine on the way and the end of the pandemic is in sight that our people would throw caution to the wind and become irresponsible, thereby eroding all the gains we have made over the past nine months," he cautioned.

PM Browne warned the nation that this is not the time to become 'COVID-fatigued' as there are several months ahead before vaccination and the virus is brought under

control. "We have to stay the course! We have no choice! We have to stay the course by protecting ourselves and our relatives. The latest situation is that we have seen a number of clusters around the country and if we don't get things under control we may end up with community spread which may lead to additional measures to protect the population," he declared.

The country's leader described COVID-19 as a 'debilitating and deadly' disease, warning that it does not matter how young or how strong a persons may be it is important that that person protects himself/herself from contracting the virus.

cont'd from pg 4

them around February or March," he declared in the three-way conversation with programme host Senator Colin O'Neal Browne and regular guest Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

He said mask-wearing is especially important because the highest con-

centrations of the virus occur in the nose, mouth and throat, even though infection can occur via the eyes. "We must warn the population to avoid reaching the state where you have to go to the hospital to get oxygen or get ventilated. Because when you reach the hos-

pital ... you don't know if you will have to be on a stretcher or, like me, on a wheelchair. Try not to go there, by protecting yourself and protecting others."

Dr. Daoud said he had no idea how or from whom he became infected as he had been

practicing all the protocols prescribed for the pandemic, and had been doing most of them well before, as is standard operating procedure for physicians. The transmission of the virus to him, he has suggested, likely came from an asymptomatic source.



Halo is the 'friend indeed'

The charitable organization established by Governor General Sir Rodney Williams and Lady Sandra Williams – Halo Foundation – is continuing to offer assistance to several groups in the country.

On Friday, Halo presented cheques to three such groups during a brief ceremony at Government House. The cheques represented funds raised by the Coalition of European Ambassadors, a group of Antigua and Barbuda's representatives in various European capitals and which is coordinated by the High Commissioner in London, Karen-Mae Hill.



In this latest installment, cheques were presented jointly by Sir Rodney as well as by Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P. Chet Greene to the St Vincent De Paul Society, the Salvation Army's Sunshine Home for Girls and the Ex-Service Men Association.

A spokesman for the Halo Foundation said the presentation is the latest donation to these groups from funds raised by the "You Can Help" campaign, which is a joint undertaking of the European ambassadors and consuls and the Halo Foundation. There have been two previous presentations under the initiative.

Island Girls help soup kitchen

The programme of activities planned by the Island Girls to mark the second anniversary of their historic voyage across the Caribbean saw the girls assisting the less fortunate at the Soup Kitchen on Lower All Saints Road last Friday.

Manager of the community outreach facility, Sgt. Veldon Ragguette said the girls not only helped to prepare the meals but they also assisted with serving the food to the scores of individuals for whom the Soup Kitchen is their only source of a hot meal every day.

"It was good to see the girls getting involved with the less fortunate who we serve daily. They told me that they thoroughly enjoyed the activity and they gave a commitment to return sometime in the future," he disclosed. Ragguette also appealed to other groups or clubs in the society to volunteer their



time to the Soup Kitchen as there are many people who are 'food-insecure' and for whom the charitable food outlet is an essential part of their lives.

On their Facebook page the Island Girls thanked Exotic Antigua for sponsoring the meal as well as Hyacinth Charles and Cpl. Frank McLean for their donation. The Island Girls are Samarra Emmanuel, Kevinia Francis, Elvira Bell and Christal Clashing.

January 28 marked two years since the Island Girls completed the first all-female cross Atlantic race, the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Crossing race. Forty-seven days, eight hours and 25 minutes. That's how long it took Team Antigua Island Girls to row 3,000 nautical miles across the Atlantic Ocean from La Gomera in the Canary Islands to Nelson's Dockyard in Antigua.

Pick Sense from Nonsense

There is a strangeness stalking the land. Some folks, including ones who know better, are talking so much nonsense that the sense they occasionally speak is lost in translation.

Here are a few examples:

1. The government is hiding the real data on COVID-19. People say so because the data presented at a press conference are truly limited and are indeed in want of better enunciation. That's is not how you hide data. What you see is what you get but what you see is not necessarily because of what you conclude. To hide data, the presentation will be flawless with all the bells and whistles and statistics, including statistical terms and graphs, pie charts and Venn diagrams. Statistical terms and confidence intervals that are way over the head of the typical layperson.

2. Someone sends a WhatsApp to a radio program claiming that they know people who have COVID-19 and can't get a test. Well now texter, I trust you kept a social distance from these suspected COVID-19 people, with your mask on, and your personal sanitizer on hand. Kindly tell these persons to leave Redonda and come over to Antigua and Barbuda.

3. Tourists are given one set of rules while our nationals are treated differently based on race and the colour of our skin. Tell me which government in this country would dare set up two different protocols on the basis of race and colour. The talkers extend this point so far beyond belief that they end up trying to come back to sense by saying that they want the government to get it right. It doesn't matter if the government gets it right if your plan is to caress sense and nonsense into one embrace.

The fact that some tourists leave their bio-secure bubble and some nationals leave their quarantine at home does not remove the difference between the two protocols. It means that more policing is needed all round. Full stop.

So, call us unprepared; say that we came to the conference too soon with the new data that should be more disaggregated. Tell us we need more workers to do more contact tracing to be absolutely sure there is or isn't community spread.

But hiding information? I won't be part of that. Hiding is a highly specialized art. I have work to do. And my hard working medical laboratory

technologists have work to do too. Doctors and nurses do not alone a hospital make. We in the lab are dealing with dangerous microorganisms within and without the workplace.

This is why I assume at all times that there is community spread; that everywhere is a hotspot; and that in my opinion and for practical purposes, everyone has COVID-19. We said the same thing for HIV.

One Saturday night we were leaving town. Driving along DeSouza road was difficult. Cars parked on both sides. Cars driving seemingly without drivers, or with discourteous drivers. Many parked cars. A popular bar. A popular shop. A populated street.

The following Saturday night I decided to try Kentish Road/Valley Road to leave the city. Well, whose dumb idea that was?

It took us at least ten times as long to traverse more cars, more bars and more people. Many were dancing. Many were without masks. Many were ignorant of common sense.

Talk about driving from the frying pan into the fire.

Some members of the opposition forces should know some basic facts about propaganda.

It's alright and essential to criticize the government and the technocrats. But when some of your criticism is based on illogic, the very same people who call and laugh and join in the melee of criticism, know sense from nonsense.

Even if they join in the nonsensical powwow for the fun and for the buzz of the melee, they will someday realize that anyone mixing truth with nonsensical comments is not worthy of their vote.

It's a simple thing as a caller says: Look down on prostitutes. Lie down with them, with your "masks" on. Pay them what you like when you catch them broken. They will not make a row. But they know better and they want better.

So when the mighty sparrows and other birds are ready to take over, your yanking with the truth mixed with the nonsense will still be there. And you may just remain where you have been. Outside.

There is a ring of truth that can be worn on any finger.

Writing a new chapter of friendship between Antigua and Barbuda and China

By Anthony Liverpool, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration and Wang Gang, Chargé d'affaires, Chinese Embassy in Antigua and Barbuda.

"Antigua and Barbuda gave me the window of opportunity, I took it and ran through the doors China opened for me... I stand ready to serve the two peoples, contributing to the friendship between the two countries." (Quotation taken from written comments by Monifa St John, an Antigua and Barbuda student who studied in China for 11 years).

Before the coronavirus pandemic, Monifa lived in the Chinese city of Wuhan, the most populous city in Central China on scholarships from the Chinese government. She loves the city and calls it "the second home." Currently she is employed by the Ministry of Health of Antigua and Barbuda, as a senior mental health coordinator. Her story is an epitome of friendship between the two countries.

As the dawn light illuminates the skyline in China, tourists in the twin island state are just about to ride a sailing boat on a sunset tour of the Caribbean. In spite of being separated by vast oceans, friendship between the two countries can never be severed.

In 1983 when the two sides established diplomatic ties, Sir Vere Cornwall Bird said, "China is an awakening lion." The past thirty-eight years has witnessed deepened bilateral exchanges, with joint efforts by the two governments and peoples, setting an example of friendly relationship based on equality and win-win cooperation. In 2020, the two countries continued to work together in combating COVID-19 and sustaining the pace of cooperation in a more resolute way.

I. Deepened mutual political trust.

China respects the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Antigua and Barbuda, and supports the development path chosen by its people. Meanwhile, Antigua and Barbuda firmly stands for the "one China" principle and gives China invaluable support on issues involving its core interests. Both countries are committed to forging a new type of relationship featuring mutual respect, equality, mutual support, and win-win cooperation towards a community of shared future for mankind. In the past year, Chinese president Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang, and State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, have reaffirmed Antigua and Barbuda as an important partner to China in the Caribbean, and have expressed China's willingness to work with the twin island state to promote cooperation for mutual development.

Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Honorable Gaston Browne, applauds the support from China as an important development partner. He would congratulate the Chinese Communist Party on its 100th anniversary and speak highly of China's achievement and successes.

The projected completion of the new purposed-built Embassy of the People's Republic of China in 2021 will further signal the importance and value placed on the long term bilateral relations between our two countries.

II. Joint efforts to combat COVID-19.

The two sides have continued to join hands in face of the challenges arising from pandemic prevention and control and economic recovery. By putting people and their lives first, China wrote the epic of fight against the pandemic with solidarity and resilience. China's V-shaped recovery has given a full demonstration of the resilience of its economy.

In Antigua and Barbuda, people have made marvellous efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 and maintained economic development and social stability with courage and wisdom. Antigua and Barbuda appreciates the donation of medical supplies and equipment by China and looks forward to continued cooperation in the fight against this deadly pandemic.

In 2020, China held high-level special meetings with Latin American and Caribbean countries, at the ministerial and vice ministerial level to deepen multilateral coordination in containing the virus. All countries involved have reaffirmed opposition to any politicization, stigmatization and name-calling associated with the virus.

III. Sustained momentum of cooperation in various fields.

In 2020, the two governments signed a new agreement of bilateral economic and technical cooperation.

The Hon. E. P. Chet Greene, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Trade, and the Hon. Charles Fernandez, Minister of Tourism and Investment of Antigua and Barbuda have recently attended the online opening ceremony of the Third China International Import Expo.

As a key project under the Belt and Road Initiative, the reconstruction and expansion of St. John's Deep Water Port recorded tangible progress in 2020, with the completion of the container terminal. The construction of two community centers were completed as scheduled. Technical cooperation in agriculture has contributed to the "backyard gardening" initiatives, boosting the local food security at the height of the pandemic. Recently,

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China has opened its market to lobsters from Antigua and Barbuda, by officially recognizing a local seafood company as a lobster supplier to China.

The Confucius Institute, as a fresh window for the people of Antigua and Barbuda to access Chinese culture, has continued to open classes to locals. In 2020, the Chinese government provided Antigua and Barbuda with another fifteen scholarships. Like Monifa, more local youth are about to start the journey to fulfilling their dreams.

IV. Closer coordination on the international stage.

As the world grapples with the challenges of the most deadly pandemic in a century, both sides firmly support the principles of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization as pillars of multilateralism and are committed to promoting the democratization of international relations, and jointly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of developing and small and medium-sized countries.

Antigua and Barbuda and China maintain productive cooperation on important issues such as the reform of the UN Security Council and the reform of the global governance system. Both sides attach importance to climate change, and support the implementation of Paris Climate Accord. China's declaration of a carbon neutral goal to advance global schedule and its contribution to

the global ecosystem are highly appreciated by Antigua and Barbuda.

Both China and Antigua and Barbuda seek to expand cooperation in oceanography and the green economy, and commit to integrating new development concepts into the Belt and Road Initiative. China firmly supports Antigua and Barbuda as the chairman of the Alliance of Small Island States (OASIS) for the period 2021 to 2022.

As a developing country, China takes an inclusive approach to cooperation, which is a significant pillar for our friendship and underpins the basis of our relations.

Given the challenges we face in an ever dynamic international political arena, we are called to be innovative in the way we approach our cooperation initiatives and programmes to ensure a shared growth and sustained development for all our citizens.

As a Chinese poem puts it, "no mountains and oceans can separate people with shared goals and vision." In 2021, China will embark on the new journey of building a socialist modern country in an all-round way, as Antigua and Barbuda will take strides towards its goal of a major economic growth pole in the region. At this new juncture, China and Antigua and Barbuda are willing to maintain close cooperation, uphold the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, and jointly write a new chapter of friendship.

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, 1st February 2021

Time: 8:30AM-1:00PM

Affected areas: Section of Horseford Hill near the cemetery and primary school

Date: Monday, 1st February 2021

Time: 8:45AM-11:30AM

Affected areas: Section of Johnsons Point north of the clinic

Date: Tuesday, 2nd February 2021

Time: 8:30AM-10:00AM

Affected areas: Sugar Ridge

Date: Tuesday, 2nd February 2021

Time: 8:45AM-11:30AM

Affected areas: Friars Hill Road, Section of McKinnons, Anchorage Road and Sandals

Date: Tuesday, 2nd February 2021

Time: 10:30AM - 1:00PM

Affected areas: Jolly Beach Hotel

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.



CBH FUN FACTS 411

WORD SCRAMBLE

Some equipment needed in a Restaurant



Word Scramble created by Kenya Smith; EHA

Venezuela exercises its sovereignty under the precepts of defence of peace and respect for international law

By Carmen Velásquez Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Antigua and Barbuda

Fidelity to international law and peace diplomacy set the principles of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in its bilateral and multilateral relations. There is also a historical bond with the peoples of the Caribbean, marked by brotherhood and solidarity. This reality, and even more the principles that sustain it, have been denied in a publication of the Guyanese newspaper Kaieteur News reproduced in Antigua and Barbuda by **PointeXpress**.

The note released on January 27 in **PointeXpress**, tendentiously titled "Venezuela threatens further actions if more Guyanese found in Essequibo waters," seeks to misrepresent Venezuela's position on the act of sovereignty exercised during the interception by the Bolivarian National Navy of Venezuela of two Guyanese boats, which were engaged in illegal fishing, red-handed in waters of full jurisdiction of Venezuela.

This article, that deliberately referred to a "threat" that never took place in the statements by the Minister of People's Power for Foreign Relations, joins an information operation against my country, which is intended to generate a conflict in the region; a region that has been proclaimed as a Zone of Peace, by all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, as established in the CELAC Declaration in Havana, Cuba, on January 29, 2014.

Venezuela, a great defender of the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, which precludes respect for the territorial integrity and political sovereignty of

the countries, has done nothing more than demand respect for international law, stating that it is not admissible to accept illegal incursions of any kind into its territory, in full exercise of its sovereignty, as the main requirements for peaceful coexistence and friendly relations between nations.

For this reason, the smear campaign conducted by the Cooperative Republic of Guyana after the illegal incursion of these ships, called "Nady Nayera" and "Sea Wolf," is of great concern. We presume it is due more to the interest of the US oil transnationals that seek to appropriate the marine resources found in this area, rather than the Guyanese, Venezuelan, Caribbean and Latin American people.

Our peoples have a peaceful vocation that is why we cannot allow it to be manipulated in such a cruel way to generate a conflict between our countries, only to respond to the interests of extra-regional colonial powers such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom. For this reason, the people and the Government of President Nicolás Maduro Moros will continue to promote a fraternal relationship of peace, cooperation and solidarity with the peoples and governments of the Caribbean, as has been our historical position.

In the conversation held by video-conference on January 25, 2021, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, Jorge Arreaza, showed the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Guyana,

Hugh Todd, photographs and videos that prove both the location and the blazing offence, which show that the Bolivarian National Navy carried out an action of legitimate custody of the national and international legal order. Similarly, Minister Arreaza conveyed to the Guyanese Minister the concerns of Venezuela regarding the handling by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Guyana in this case.

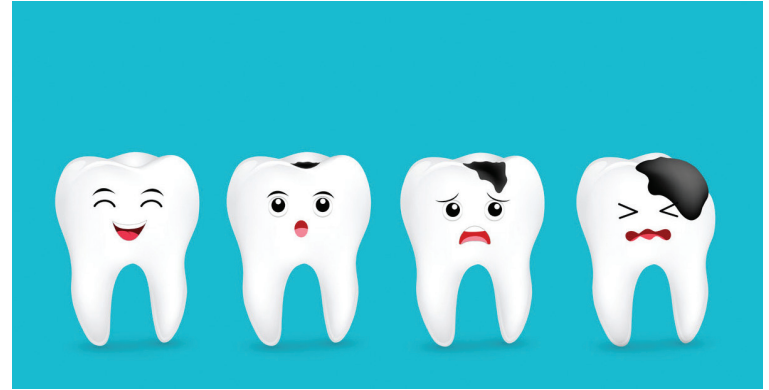
The publication of Kaieteur News, reproduced by **PointeXpress**, is also untrue when it refers to the "Decree establishing the Territory for the Development of the Atlantic Façade" of Venezuela, promulgated in January 2021 by the Venezuelan Head of State, Nicolás Maduro. In this regard, the latter is a decree of internal territorial ordering, which instructs the formulation of public policies for maritime development in the exclusive and uncontroversial territory of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Undoubtedly, each time that the media misrepresents actions taken, or statements made, by Venezuelan authorities, the fair right of our Caribbean peoples to be correctly informed will be hampered, and this will threaten peace. To conclude, Venezuela wishes to recall that it defends the principles of sovereignty and independence, while at the same time stating its willingness to engage in sincere dialogue to address any matter likely to affect peace and stability in the region, especially with the Cooperative Republic of Guyana.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it



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



After diagnosing decay on a tooth, occasionally patients ask "Why should I fix that tooth? It doesn't hurt yet." I suspect the people who ask that question are going on the assumption that "if it ain't broke, don't fix it, and if it isn't hurting, it ain't broke." Well, if you have decay, "It's broke." If left untreated, the decay and bacteria will reach the nerve and infection occurs. This is accompanied by inflammation, pain, and the destruction of bone around the tooth root. An infected nerve requires a root canal and a crown to save the tooth, or the extraction of the tooth.

Dear All

The Inland Revenue Department is pleased to announce its new online payment option with the Antigua Commercial Bank.

Tax Payers can now pay Antigua and Barbuda Sales Tax (ABST), Unincorporated Business Tax (UBT) and Property Tax online.

All you need to do is simply log on to the ACB Mobile app or ACB online banking and register the tax type from the list provided on the app which will include:

- IRD property Tax
- IRD ABST
- IRD Unincorporated Bus Tax

Please be guided accordingly

Ralph Warner
 Commissioner Inland Revenue

Let's talk about your health first. When dentists recommend placing a filling, the goal is to remove the decay BEFORE it gets deeper and more serious, and to place a conservative filling. The smaller the filling, the more tooth structure that remains. This is a stronger situation because natural tooth structure is stronger than any man-made filling material. Smaller fillings are also less sensitive after placement, and they last longer than large fillings.

Now, let's talk cost. If a tooth needs a root canal and crown, the cost can be ten times the cost of a medium sized filling.

If a tooth is extracted, a replacement can cost twenty times that of the filling. And what is your time worth? More extensive dental work requires more appointments.

"Why should I fix this tooth? It doesn't hurt yet." It is NOT in your best interest to get to the point where you are in pain. It's the same with heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and even termites in your house. Wouldn't you agree it is always better to find and

fix small problems before they become large, more serious problems?

The current preventive advice is almost guaranteed to keep dental healthcare costs down, eliminate the need for future re-treatment, reduce risks of pain, prevent loss of sleep, days of work, disruption on vacation, an inconvenient emergency visit, and provide you with more pleasant dental office experiences. It also reduces the need for dental insurance.

"If it ain't broke don't fix it"?? A better adage to choose is, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Broke = increased costs and inconvenience. Prevent = save money and preserve comfort. Flossing and brushing costs very little time and effort. And only pennies a day. Preventive dental visits save a lot of future expense and promote good health. A \$ sealant or a \$\$ small filling, can save you \$\$\$\$+ in repairs, multiple visits, discomfort, and future re-treatment.

Wishing everyone happy smiles in 2021!

For the love of dialect – Tiguaan Teez brands Antigua the right way

by Angelica O'Donoghue

The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly had devastating impacts on almost every sector of small and large economies. However, history has taught us that with every known worldwide crisis, whether it be war, or a pandemic, people are propelled to do more to shape their societies. Every health crisis has shown that it has propelled the advancement of our healthcare system, every economic crisis has propelled us to think differently on how we approach business. The same can be said about our current fight with this pandemic; for the stories we share, week after week, will someday be a testimony of the innovative, durability and adaptability of our local entrepreneurs.

This week, Nadia Brown, an educator and creator by profession, reveals how she has managed to fuse the love of the Antiguan language and culture into a vibrant branded clothing business.

The company, Tiguaan Teez, was launched amidst the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in a June 2020. Tiguaan Teez has managed to take every day parables, sayings, words and phrases that are authentically Antiguan and Barbudan, and brand them on beautifully designed T-shirts and garments.

According to the young entrepreneur, the T-shirt business was started out of an appreciation for the local culture. "Quite simply, a love for the Antiguan people and our dialect. I've always been concerned about us passing on culture more deliberately to the younger generations. Tiguaan Teez uses the language that makes us unique and allows us to proudly wear who we are across our chests."

Though the business is relatively young, Nadia admitted that she did require financing; however, she decided to first start out of pocket with about fifteen shirts to launch and get a sense of feedback from the public,



before she ventured bigger.

Understanding the difficult position many persons face because of the pandemic, Nadia stated that COVID-19 has affected her business in a negative way. She explained, "Many people have reached out to us and expressed that they would love to get a few but they're out of work currently."

Nadia is still pressing on nonetheless. The entrepreneur highlighted that the T-shirt business is not anything new for the island, however, and there are none that are quite like hers. "I observed that many people popped up selling masks and a few people suggested that Tiguaan Teez should sell masks but I don't think that it was necessary. There are more than enough people selling masks," Browne said. "The closet business I've seen to ours," Nadia continued, "is perhaps Agwassa Beach Culture which actually launched before us. We're different because Tiguaan Teez is the only local graphics clothing line

that features OUR language and pop culture."

So how exactly has Tiguaan Teez been able to capitalize on the COVID-19 pandemic? Through babies, that's how.

Nadia shared that her company was able to sit back and properly examine the current business climate and the trajectory of our society. "We have been able to approach the business creatively by launching our Tiguaan Totz line. After a people suffer mass deaths, history has generally recorded a marked rise in the birth rate in the years immediately after. People have been bored on lock down, starting in March 2020. I just believed that they would find things to do at home to 'entertain' themselves and we would be recording a rise in births soon so I decided to capitalize on COVID by launching cultural onesies and baby clothes!"

With the spring of life in Tiguaan Teez, the entrepreneur stated that they do have plans of expanding one day. Nadia said, "We're working towards having a retail outlet location where our customers can actually come in and shop physically. We also have a vision of expanding into the international markets. We've begun making moves towards that but viable shipping options out of Antigua are proving to be problematic, a problem which Tiguaan Teez hopes to be able to address."

In speaking about Tiguaan Teez aims as a business, Nadia has shared a bit of advice to other budding entrepreneurs. "Do it. There will never be a perfect time. The difficulty of times such as these are good soil for growth. Do it."

Tiguaan Teez operates solely online at the moment and customers can shop and communicate with them via 1(268)775-3052 (also on WhatsApp) on Instagram at Tiguaan Teez and on Facebook at Tiguaan Teez.

CARICOM Business

A Weekly Business News Aggregation Service

CARICOM Business is a weekly newsletter produced by the Directorate of Trade & Economic Integration.

CARICOM destinations hard-hit by US travel requirements

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has directed that all travel be avoided to nine CARICOM countries which are deemed to be Level 4 - COVID-19 Very High - destinations. The countries named are Barbados, The Bahamas, Belize, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago. This has been further compounded by an Executive Order signed by US President Joe Biden which requires everyone travelling to the USA to quarantine upon arrival for a period ranging between seven - ten days. Further, effective 26th January, all international air passengers arriving in the USA are required to get tested for COVID-19 within seventy-two hours of travel. In reacting to the new US requirements, Bahamian Tourism Minister Dionisio D'Aguilar says "the fact that they now have to fulfil our requirements to come here and these requirements by the CDC to return home, inclusive of quarantine, is significantly impactful, almost devastating." Travellers from the USA constitute more than ninety per cent of visitors to the Bahamas.

Cayman fiscal performance better than expected for 2020

The fiscal situation in the Cayman Islands is not as serious as initially feared with government revenues higher and expenditures lower than forecast six months ago. Through the first eleven months of 2020, revenues stood at \$693.4 million with expenditure recorded to be \$719.2 million, resulting in an operating deficit of \$25.8 million. Surpluses of \$3.1 million generated by statutory authorities and government companies brought the entire public sector deficit down to \$22.7 million through November. According to Finance Minister Roy McTaggart, "the country's finances have performed remarkably better than any of us could have anticipated." Although the full-year results are not complete, December is typically a solid month in terms of government revenues because of the Christmas season. The results for the year should therefore not be worse than a deficit of \$50 - \$75 million, McTaggart said.

Jamaica records infiltration rate of 6.4% for 2020

The infiltration rate for December 2020 as measured by the All Jamaica Consumer Price Index was 1.3%. For the calendar year 2020, the infiltration rate was 6.4% according to the Statistically Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) Bulletin - December 2020. The infiltration rate for December was mainly due to increases in the index for the divisions 'Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages', 'Housing, Water, Electricity,

Gas and Other Fuels' and 'Transport'. In a on rate for the fiscal-year-to-date (April 2020 - December 2020) was 5.1% and the point-to-point (December 2019 - December 2020) was 5.2%.

CDB elects Gene Leon as new President

The Board of Governors of the CDB has elected Hyginus "Gene" Leon to serve as the next President of the multilateral institution. Leon's appointment will become effective on 1st May 2021. He will succeed W. Warren Smith. Leon has over thirty years of experience in economic development and has directed macroeconomic and financial policy support to government authorities in Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and the Caribbean. He has worked with the IMF for more than twenty-four years, serving as Mission Chief for the Gulf States of Oman, Qatar, and UAE as well as The Bahamas, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe. He also served as the IMF's Senior Resident Representative in Jamaica.

Jamaica's unemployment rate jumps to 10.7%

Jamaica's unemployment rate has increased by 3.5 percentage points between October 2019 and October 2020 to 10.7%. According to the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN), the labour force declined by 51,500 or 3.8% over the year. As at October 2019, the unemployment rate stood at 7.2%. STATIN, in its report, indicated that the unemployment rate for males increased by 2.7 percentage points from 6.0 to 8.6% and for females, it increased by 4.4 percentage points, from 8.6 to 13.0%. Director General of STATIN Carol Coy, in reporting on the findings of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) held last October, said that up to the review period there were 137,800 people unemployed within the country. The October LFS marked the third such survey to be conducted last year.

OECD unemployment rate further declines to 6.9%

The OECD area unemployment rate continued to decline in November 2020, to 6.9%, from 7.1% in October, but remained 1.7 percentage points above the level observed in February 2020, before the COVID-19 pandemic hit the labour market. It continued to decline faster among women (to 7.0% in November, from 7.2% in October) than among men (to 6.8%, from 6.9%). Similar declines were observed for the youth (aged 15 to 24) (to 14.3%, from 14.4% in October) and for people aged twenty-five and above (to 6.0%, from 6.1%). 45.5 million persons were unemployed in the OECD area, 10.7 million more than in February. Some care is needed in interpreting the fall in the OECD area unemployment rate compared to the April peak, as this largely reflects the return of temporary laid-off workers in the United States and Canada, where they are recorded as unemployed.

Haiti monitoring emergence of a 'very infectious' skin disease

(CMC): Health officials have been monitoring the emergence of a very infectious skin disease, similar to scabies, in Haiti.

The country's Ministry of Health says the disease has been affecting residents of several communities in the west of the country for several days.

Earlier last week, the ministry deployed mobile clinics to areas such as La Gonave, Petit-Goâve and Arcahaie.

The government has sought to assure citizens that all is being done to eradicate the disease.



An infectious skin disease, similar to scabies, has emerged in Haiti. Government says it is doing all it can to ensure its eradication /PHOTO CMC

"An awareness and information campaign for the general public and the affected areas is already

underway. It covers personal hygiene, the use of drinking water, laundry and the treatment of infected clothes. Note that unsanitary conditions are fertile ground for skin disease such as scabies," said a government statement.

Scabies has been described as an itchy skin condition caused by a tiny burrowing mite called *Sarcoptes scabiei*.

Intense itching occurs in the area where the mite burrows. Scabies is contagious and can spread quickly through close physical contact.

Dominica opens first university in the region to offer only veterinary studies

(Dominica News Online): On Friday, 29th January 2021, Dominica became the only Caribbean country with a university that focuses solely on veterinary studies.

This, according to the president of the St Nicholas University School of Veterinary Studies, Golnaz Naderkhani, MD Ph.D, who spoke during the official opening ceremony at the school's current location on the corner of Hillsborough Street and Kings Lane in Roseau.

Dr. Naderkhani made known that unlike the other medical schools in the region that also provide veterinary medicine education as a side branch, her university is one hundred per cent focused and dedicated to providing training in that discipline.

"St Nicholas university is the first and only academic institution of its kind in the Caribbean," she stated. "We are an academic institution committed to providing quality education

training."

She said the pillars of her university are quality education, student-centered training, accessibility and affordability, sustainability, being at the heart of the community, personal learning experience, heritage and tradition, and character and morality.

The Canadian doctor, who moved to Dominica following the passage of Hurricane Maria, informed the audience that very soon, Dominica will be the first to boast of having a specialized veterinary hospital capable of providing world-class care, equipped with a radiologist, pathologist, internist, orthopedic surgeon, oncologist, as well as an agro medicine and critical care specialist.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, she explained that students from high-risk countries such as the United States, Canada, and other Caribbean islands were not allowed to begin this semester, but will

join in September of this year. Therefore, only ten students—all females—will be part of the very first class of students on 1st February.

Dr. Naderkhani emphasized that once the international students are allowed into the university, this will result in new opportunities for many Dominicans.

Minister of Education and Human Resource Development, Hon. Octavia Alfred, who also spoke at the opening ceremony, stated that the opening of the medical school is an important milestone for all stakeholders and this must be celebrated.

"For the government and people of Dominica, this presents an avenue to assist our young people who may be seeking advancement in this field to acquire a degree at home while opening up new opportunities for economic activities due to the presence of the university here," she stated.

Alfred stressed that the suc-

cess or failure of the school will hold important implications for the Government, and pledged their commitment to providing support to growing the institution's reputation so that it may attract a cadre of young professionals eager to increase their skills and knowledge through the acquisition of a sound education in Dominica.

According to her, "We need more veterinarians here who can play an essential role in promoting animal welfare."

Adding his voice to the commendations, Former Chief Veterinary Officer Dr. Reginald Thomas noted that there will no longer be a need to import veterinarians into the country from other parts of the world.

He said that the journey to realizing the establishment of the university in Dominica, has not been an easy one and he thanked the President for her "steadfastness" in achieving this dream and for choosing Dominica.

Guyana president says 3,800 doses of COVID vaccines due, China to donate 20,000



Guyana President Irfaan Ali

cines expected from next month.

Ali however stated that the government will be looking at different avenues to get a larger percentage of the population protected and will be aggressively going after vaccines.

He said that at the bilateral level, the government of Guyana has had productive discussions with the governments of India, China and Russia, while they are also working with CARICOM, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the European Union for a quota of vaccines.

"The government of China has confirmed that it will be donating 20,000 doses of vaccines to Guyana. Discussions are on-

going and arrangements to acquire vaccines from these countries will be finalized shortly," the release said.

The president stated that the Government is also negotiating with major manufacturers, including Pfizer, BioNTec, Moderna and AstraZeneca and is hoping to finalize a supply of vaccines from them.

"In short, your government is wholly committed to obtaining vaccines in the shortest possible time, utilizing every means at our disposal for our people. We will spare no efforts; we are pursuing all avenues to get as many vaccines as possible to cover as much of the population as possible."

(Stabroek News): President Irfaan Ali announced on Saturday that some 3,800 COVID-19 vaccines will be available to Guyanese by February and March and will be immediately allocated to frontline health workers, people with comorbidities and the elderly, a release from the Office of the President said.

The president

during an address to the nation said that his government has been working behind the scenes to pursue all possible means to bring the virus under control.

The president said that last year, Guyana joined COVAX and is now eligible to receive vaccines for twenty per cent of the population, which will be free of cost.

Those are the vac-

CONGRATULATIONS!



BDO Eastern Caribbean is pleased to recognize the achievement of Theoni Roach on the successful completion of her ACCA Examinations. Theoni, who is currently an Assistant Audit Senior, is now an ACCA Affiliate having completed the ACCA Program which is a significant step in her educational achievements and professional development. We congratulate Theoni on her achievement arising from her hard work and determination and we look forward to her continued contribution as a valuable member of our Assurance Team.

Assurance | Advisory | Tax

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US offloads US\$8.5M of drugs seized in Caribbean Sea

St Lucia Times): The United States Coast Guard earlier this week transferred custody of two suspected smugglers and US\$8.5 million in seized cocaine to US federal agents at Coast Guard Base in Puerto Rico following the interdiction of a drug smuggling go-fast vessel in the Caribbean Sea.

In a statement on Friday, the Coast Guard said the interdiction was the result of multi-agency efforts in support of the Miami, Florida-based US Southern Command's enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDEF) and High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) programmes, and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force (CCSF).

The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico is leading the prosecution.

"This successful interdiction is a reflection of the seamless team work and the unwavering resolve

between the Coast Guard, our federal law enforcement and Department of Defence partners to protect the nation's southern-most maritime border against narcotrafficking threats," said Commander James L Jarnac, US Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk commanding officer.

"The strength of our joint collaboration and partnerships is key to a safer Caribbean Region and disrupting transnational criminal organization activities through the interdiction of drug smuggling vessels in the maritime domain," he added.

The drug bust occurred during the afternoon of 24th January, after the aircrew of a maritime patrol aircraft detected a suspicious twenty-five-foot go-fast vessel, about two hundred nautical miles south of the Dominican Republic.

The Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk diverted in response to the sighting and interdicted the go-fast vessel with the assistance of the cutter's small boat, the US Coast Guard said.

**WE'RE PROTECTING
OUR CUSTOMERS
FROM COVID-19**



In response to Public Health direction, we:

- ✓ Make hand washing and hand sanitizer available.



- ✓ Ensure sick employees stay home.



- ✓ Clean and sanitize surfaces frequently.



- ✓ Stay home if you are feeling sick, including:

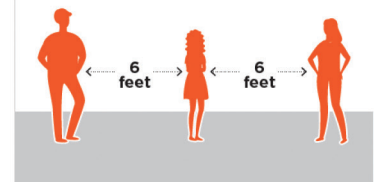
fever OR shortness of breath OR cough OR any other sign of illness



- ✓ Please wear a face covering.



- ✓ Keep at least 6 feet apart from others.



- ✓ Thank you for helping prevent the spread of COVID-19.



A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board

Donald Trump 'parts with lawyers' before impeachment trial



Donald Trump is the first president in history to be impeached twice

(BBC): Former US President Donald Trump has parted ways with lawyers representing him in his impeachment trial in the Senate, US media report. The departure of Butch Bowers and Deborah Barbier was reportedly a mutual decision.

Mr. Trump's trial for incitement to insurrection starts on 8th February.

Senators will be asked whether to convict him on a charge he incited insurrection at the US Capitol on 6th January, when five people died.

Greg Harris and Johnny Gasser, two former federal prosecutors from South Carolina, have also left the team, the Associated Press reports. They were reportedly unwilling to defend Mr. Trump on the basis of alleged election fraud.

Josh Howard, a North Carolina attorney who was recently added to the team, has also left, CNN reports.

It is now unclear who will represent Mr. Trump during the trial.

"We have done much

work, but have not made a final decision on our legal team, which will be made shortly," tweeted Trump advisor Jason Miller in response to the reports.

Mr. Trump is the first president in history to be impeached twice. He was impeached by the House in 2019 over his dealings with Ukraine, but acquitted by the Senate.

Now he is accused of inciting a mob that stormed Congress after he repeated false claims of election fraud. But it is likely he will

be acquitted again.

A total of forty-five out of fifty Senate Republicans voted this week to consider stopping the trial before it even started on the grounds that presidents cannot face impeachment trials once they have left office.

It would take seventeen Republican senators breaking ranks and voting alongside the fifty Democrats to convict the former president, potentially leading to his prevention from running for federal office ever again.

FC Barcelona to sue newspaper for publishing Messi's \$674m contract



Messi is Barcelona's all-time scorer with 650 goals

(Aljazeera): FC Barcelona will take legal action against the Spanish newspaper El Mundo after it published details of Lionel Messi's current contract, which it says is worth up to €555 million (\$674m) over four years.

The club also insisted on Sunday they were not responsible for the leak, which it defined as a "private document governed by the principle of confidentiality between the parties." The club, however, did not deny the details of the report.

El Mundo says the deal signed by football star Messi in 2017 is the "largest in the history of sport" and that it had contributed to the club's recent financial troubles, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

calling it the "colossal contract that ruins Barcelona."

The thirty-three-year-old could end up collecting a maximum of €555,237,619 (\$673,919,104) before it expires on 30th June this year, if all conditions were met.

Messi would have to pay about half of that amount in taxes in Spain.

With six months left of the deal to run, "the player has already earned €511,290,052 (\$621m), almost ninety-two per cent of the possible total," the report claimed.

"In view of the information published today in the newspaper El Mundo, in relation to the professional contract signed between FC Barcelona and the player Lionel Messi, the club regrets its publication

given that it is a private document governed by the principle of confidentiality between the parties," said Barcelona in a statement.

"FC Barcelona categorically denies any responsibility for the publication of this document and will take appropriate legal action against the newspaper El Mundo, for any damage that may be caused as a result of this publication.

"FC Barcelona expresses its absolute support for Lionel Messi, especially in the face of any attempt to discredit his image, and to damage his relationship with the club where he has worked to become the best player in the world and in football history."

According to the report, Messi earned €115 million (\$140m) just for signing

the contract in 2017 and among his potential bonuses is a €3,548,644 (\$4.3m) reward for winning the Champions League and €2,365,766 (\$2.9m) for winning Spain's La Liga, El Mundo claimed.

Messi, who joined Barca in 2000 aged thirteen and made his debut in 2004, is the club's all-time scorer with six hundred and fifty goals and has also provided two hundred and eighty assists in seven hundred and fifty-five appearances for the Catalan club. Messi helped Barcelona win more than thirty trophies.

Frustrated with Barca's decline in recent years, Messi is set to decide in the coming months whether he wants to stay at Barcelona or leave the club.

The Argentine tried to leave Barca last August via a release clause in his contract but eventually decided to stay in order to avoid a court case with the club.

Messi's club contract dwarfs those of the other top earners in global sport.

Patrick Mahomes, the Kansas City Chiefs quarterback, last year signed the biggest contract in North American sport, worth a minimum of \$450m, but it is ten years long.

Cristiano Ronaldo's contract with Juventus is worth a reported thirty million euros (\$36.4m) a year, but bonuses may have taken it up to seventy million euros (\$85m) last season. Ronaldo also earns more from endorsements than Messi.

Facebook suspends Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu-linked chatbot

(CNN): Facebook has deleted a post by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and suspended a chatbot linked to his account for violating the company's privacy policy.

Visitors to the prime minister's Facebook page, who clicked on a link about the coronavirus, received an automatic message, purporting to come from Netanyahu.

"If you have friends or family members aged sixty or over who have not yet been vaccinated, you can write a response here with their name and phone number, and I may call to convince them!" the message read.

Taking action and removing the items, Face-

book said, via a spokesperson, that "under our privacy policy we do not allow content that shares or asks for people's medical information."

The spokesperson added that Facebook had "removed the offending post and temporarily suspended the Messenger bot, which shared this content, for breaking these rules."

Netanyahu's Likud party issued a statement in response, saying the aim "was to encourage Israelis over the age of sixty to get vaccinated to save their lives, after Prime Minister Netanyahu brought vaccines to every Israeli citizen."

The party said they are calling "on everyone to get vaccinated so that



Netanyahu has made Israel's world-leading vaccination program the central message of his re-election campaign

we can open up the economy and be the first in the world to emerge from the coronavirus."

Netanyahu, who faces a fourth election in two

years in March, has made Israel's world-leading vaccination programme the central message of his re-election campaign.

Billionaire Steve Cohen quits Twitter, citing threats in GameStop uproar



Billionaire investor Steve Cohen

(Reuters): Billionaire investor Steve Cohen, seen by small investors as an enemy in the GameStop stock drama this week, deleted his Twitter account because of what he said were threats against him and his family, a spokeswoman said on Saturday.

"I'm going to take a break for now,"

Cohen said on Twitter late on Friday, citing "personal threats." His account no longer appeared on Saturday, and a spokeswoman for Cohen's Point72 Asset Management confirmed it was closed.

The small investors, connected on social media, mobilized to take on institutional short sellers of GameStop and other shares, sparking a short squeeze that sent those stock prices surging. The details of Cohen's holdings were not disclosed, so it was unclear if he was a short seller.

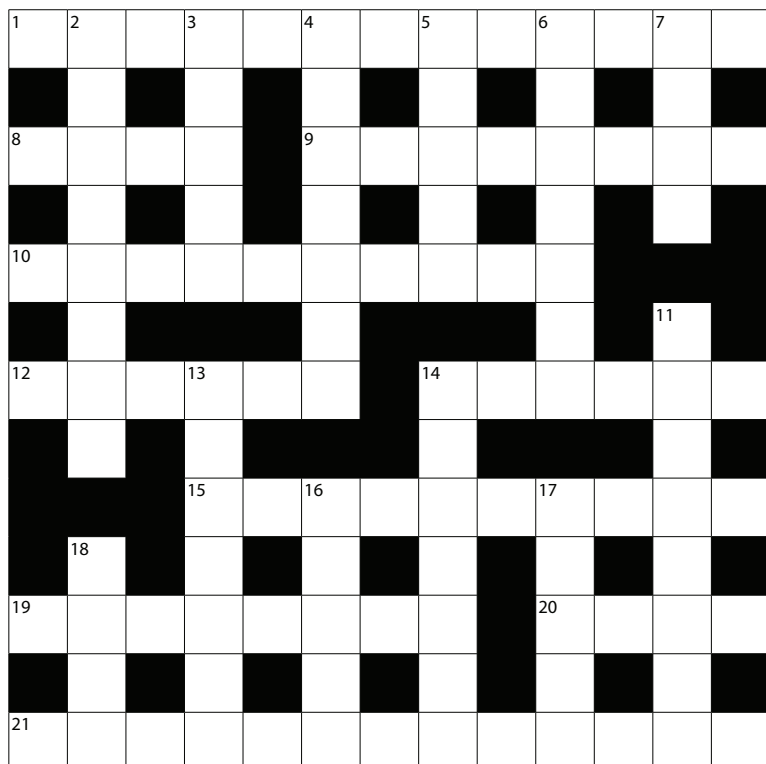
However, Cohen's Point72 and Citadel LLC gave a capital infusion to Melvin Capital, a fund that held a large short position in GameStop, enabling it to close out that position with a large loss and survive.

Cohen, who previously used Twitter largely to engage with fans of the New York Mets baseball team after he bought a majority stake last year, was among fund managers who received threats as the GameStop saga unfolded.

On Thursday, Cohen got into a heated debate with blogger Dave Portnoy, who founded the sports and pop culture blog Barstool Sports. Cohen, worth roughly \$14 billion, tweeted, "Hey Dave, What's your beef with me. I'm just trying to make a living just like you."

Point72 lost between ten and fifteen per cent in value since the start of the year to the middle of the week, people familiar with the numbers said.

QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 English group activity involving bells, sticks and handkerchiefs (6,7)
- 8 Zest — energy (4)
- 9 Commonness (8)
- 10 Secondary consequence of medical treatment (4,6)
- 12 Ripe (6)
- 14 Turmoil (6)
- 15 Wire-haired dog (3,7)
- 19 Easily frightened (8)
- 20 Female domestic (of all work?) (4)
- 21 Way to gamble on results of the weekly soccer fixtures (8,5)

Down

- 2 First (8)
- 3 Mischief-maker (5)
- 4 Tussle (7)
- 5 Quick (5)
- 6 State of disorder (7)
- 7 Brazils and pecans (4)
- 11 Military equipment and supplies (8)
- 13 In advance (2,5)
- 14 Tool (7)
- 16 Bantu language related to Zulu (5)
- 17 Shakespearean lover (5)
- 18 Ballpoint pen (4)

DAILY COMICS

Dilbert



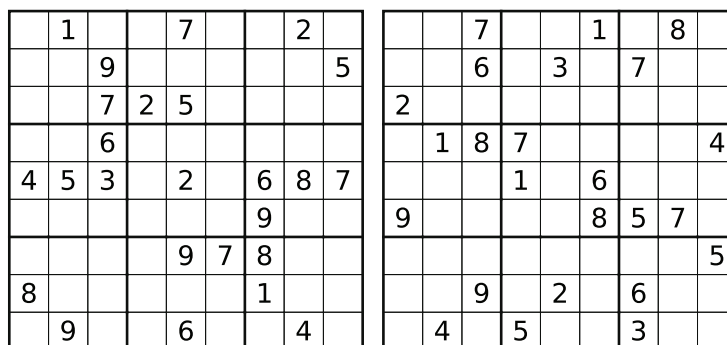
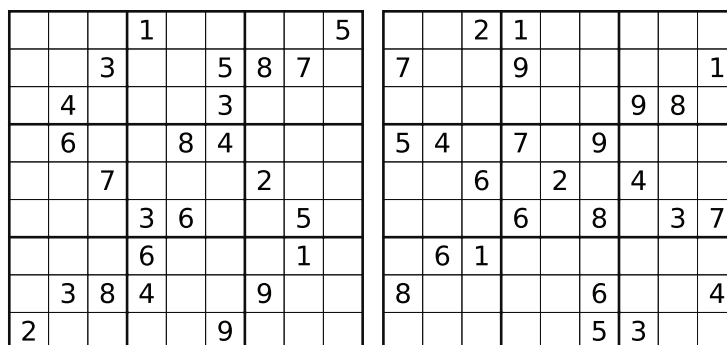
Garfield



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
02/01

83° Hi
75° Lo

DAY
Partly sunny with a shower in places

NIGHT
Partly cloudy with a shower in places

Sunrise
6:39 AM

Sunset
6:03 PM

Moonrise
9:56 PM

Moonset
10:17 AM

TUE
02/02

82° Hi
74° Lo

DAY
Partly sunny and nice

NIGHT
Partly cloudy with a passing shower or two

Sunrise
6:39 AM

Sunset
6:03 PM

Moonrise
10:52 PM

Moonset
10:59 AM

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES | Mar. 21-Apr. 19

Your opinions are valid, but you had better not expect everyone to agree with them right now! Give up trying to change anyone's mind before you even get started today. Everyone is feeling like sticking to their guns instead of opening their minds.

TAURUS | Apr. 20-May 20

When it comes to starting a new romance, you should err on the side of modesty right now. Instead of focusing exclusively on having a sizzling affair with someone right off the bat, just be happy with the warm connection you have.

GEMINI | May 21-June 20

Someone close to you has been having some money issues, and it's naturally going to start affecting their social life. Your job is to be sensitive to the fact that they might not be able to do the things you used to do together.

CANCER | June 21-July 22

Your intuitive feelings, while usually helpful in your decision-making, are going to be quite distracting today. Weird hunches or troublesome feelings could keep you from focusing on an important project that really needs your full attention.

LEO | July 23-Aug. 22

The pressure of a deadline could be bearing down on you today, but once again you're going to meet it without any problems. Other people will be amazed by how you skilled you are at finishing work that needs to be done in record time.

VIRGO | Aug. 23-Sept. 22

When you're around others today, keep your curiosity under control. It's not wise to ask too many probing questions. While there's tons of interesting stuff you could uncover, you are more likely to ask the wrong thing of the wrong person.

LIBRA Sept. 23-Oct. 22

This is not a good time to indulge in any expensive purchases. Not only could it drain your wallet way too much, but it will probably fall short of your hopes. The energy just isn't quite right for a big extravagance now.

SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Travel is at the top of your mind right now, especially travel to overseas destinations. But if this type of travel isn't in your immediate future, simply use your creativity to feed your wanderlust.

SAGITTARIUS | Nov. 22-Dec. 21

It's going to be fun and easy to stay in sync with other people today. All the people you're working with are right on the same page as you, feeling the same things, and reaching for the same goals.

CAPRICORN | Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Hobbies and pastimes can become a way of channeling emotions. This could be very therapeutic and quite healing in many ways. You may also find certain relationships equally uplifting.

AQUARIUS | Jan. 20-Feb. 18

If you're in need of some energy today, look no further than one of your closest friends. Get it touch and see what's going on with them. If the news is less than rosy, volunteer to pitch right in and help them sort things out.

PISCES | Feb. 19-Mar. 20

You should know by now that relationships can go through phases. If one of yours feels like it's entering an off time, don't panic. Either things between the two of you will get better again eventually, or it's time for you to part ways.

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.

INVITATION TO CONSTITUENCY TOWNHALL MEETING

Member of Parliament for St. Mary's North, the honourable Sir Molwyn Joseph cordially extends an invitation to his constituents for a Town hall meeting in his constituency on Thursday 28th January 2021. The meeting will be held at the Bendals Primary School starting at 7:30pm. The Parliamentary representative will be updating the constituency on matters of national importance as well as issues specific to the community. The Member of Parliament also holds the Health portfolio and will use this opportunity to discuss issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic and the Government's response including vaccinations. Matters related to the infrastructural developments will also be discussed with particular focus on the Bendals community. The constituents are encouraged to attend and raise any other issue they would bring to bring to my attention.

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Manchester Police investigating abuse

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) have launched an investigation after receiving reports of social media abuse directed at Manchester United players in the past week.

Marcus Rashford was the latest player subjected to racial abuse, following similar treatment of teammates Axel Tuanzebe and Anthony Martial. Rashford described the abuse as "humanity

and social media at its worst."

The twenty-two-year-old, who was awarded the MBE for his work fighting child food poverty, received multiple racist messages on Instagram on Saturday. They were sent to the England striker after United's 0-0 draw at Arsenal.

Rashford posted on Twitter: "I'm a black man that live every day proud that I am." The Manchester United star

continued, "No-one, or no one comment, is going to make me feel any different. So sorry if you were looking for a strong reaction, you're just simply not going to get it here."

Rashford explained, "I have children of all colours following me and they don't need to read it. Beautiful colours that should only be celebrated."

The GMP said they were aware that a number

of Manchester United players had suffered abuse on social media between Wednesday and Saturday, and nobody should be subject to such abuse and its deeply upsetting.

Facebook, which owns Instagram, also released a statement after Rashford's abuse. It said: "We have taken action in this case by removing accounts and comments and are continuing to investigate."

'Wouldn't wish COVID-19 on anyone' - Moeen

England all-rounder Moeen Ali says he would not wish anyone his positive coronavirus diagnosis and two weeks of isolation. Moeen was confined to his hotel room for much of England's recent tour of Sri Lanka, missing both Tests.

The thirty-three-year-old is back in contention to play in the first Test against India in Chennai starting on Friday. "I actually don't know how I got through those fourteen days, it was tough," said Moeen.

The off-spinner is the only England player to have returned a confirmed positive test for coronavirus while on international duty. Moeen said he had lost taste for a day or so and splitting headaches for three days.

"My body was very sore and I've never experienced that sort of tiredness before in my life," the all-rounder added. Moeen noted the fourteen days felt like they were dragging, "The last four days in particular were very

tough because I felt fine but was just stuck in the room."

Moeen, a devoted Muslim, says he will have the coronavirus vaccine when it is available to him. There have been concerns that a spread of disinformation might discourage some members of the UK's south Asian community from being vaccinated.

But Moeen explained, "It's like any other vaccine—there's a lot of conspiracy theories out there but it's just medicine evolving."

Australian Open to allow up to 30,000 fans to attend per day

Up to 30,000 fans a day will be allowed to attend the Australian Open, Victoria's minister for sports has announced.

A daily crowd capacity of 30,000 will be permitted for the first eight days of the tournament, split equally between day and night sessions. It will then be reduced to 25,000 from the quarterfinals—half the

average attendance of previous years.

The Australian Open runs from 8th - 21st February in Melbourne. "Over fourteen days, it means there will be up to 390,000 people at Melbourne Park, about fifty per cent of the average over the past few years.

Players have started to leave hotel quarantine after completing their

mandatory fourteen-day isolation period upon arrival in Australia. In early January more than seven-hundred players, staff and others tied to the first Grand Slam of the year were flown into the country on chartered flights.

Most players were allowed out of their rooms for five hours a day to practise on court and ex-

ercise, but a smaller group of seventy-two players were fully confined to their rooms after coronavirus cases were discovered on their flights.

Melbourne endured one of the world's longest lockdowns last year and many locals have concerns about the potential COVID-19 risk posed by the tournament.

Hail Mmes President Went and Vice President Percival!

Hail Mesdames President Hazel Went and vice president Kimberly Percival, the new leaders at the helm of the Antigua and Barbuda Amateur Bodybuilding Federation!

On Saturday afternoon at the ABI Financial Centre, Went brushed aside former president Dave George in a vote tally of forty-three to nineteen, to take control of the Federation.

Speaking to PointeXpress, Went, a former competitor, said she was not surprised by the victory

but was stunned by its margin. She indicated that the support and enthusiasm shown toward her participation by the members was simply overwhelming.

Went said she was grateful for the support and will be hosting the new executive's first meeting later this week. Youth development is high on the agenda as they look to provide continuity in the sport.

Went noted that unity and teamwork will be one of the focal points of the new executive as they look to move bodybuilding and weightlifting to the next level.



President of the ABABF Hazel Went

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