



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

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CURFEW HOURS TO BE EXTENDED

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Photo caption: Six-year old Luke Joseph enjoys the virtual classroom while schools remain closed due to COVID-19.

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More than 2700 PCR tests completed in January by MSJMC

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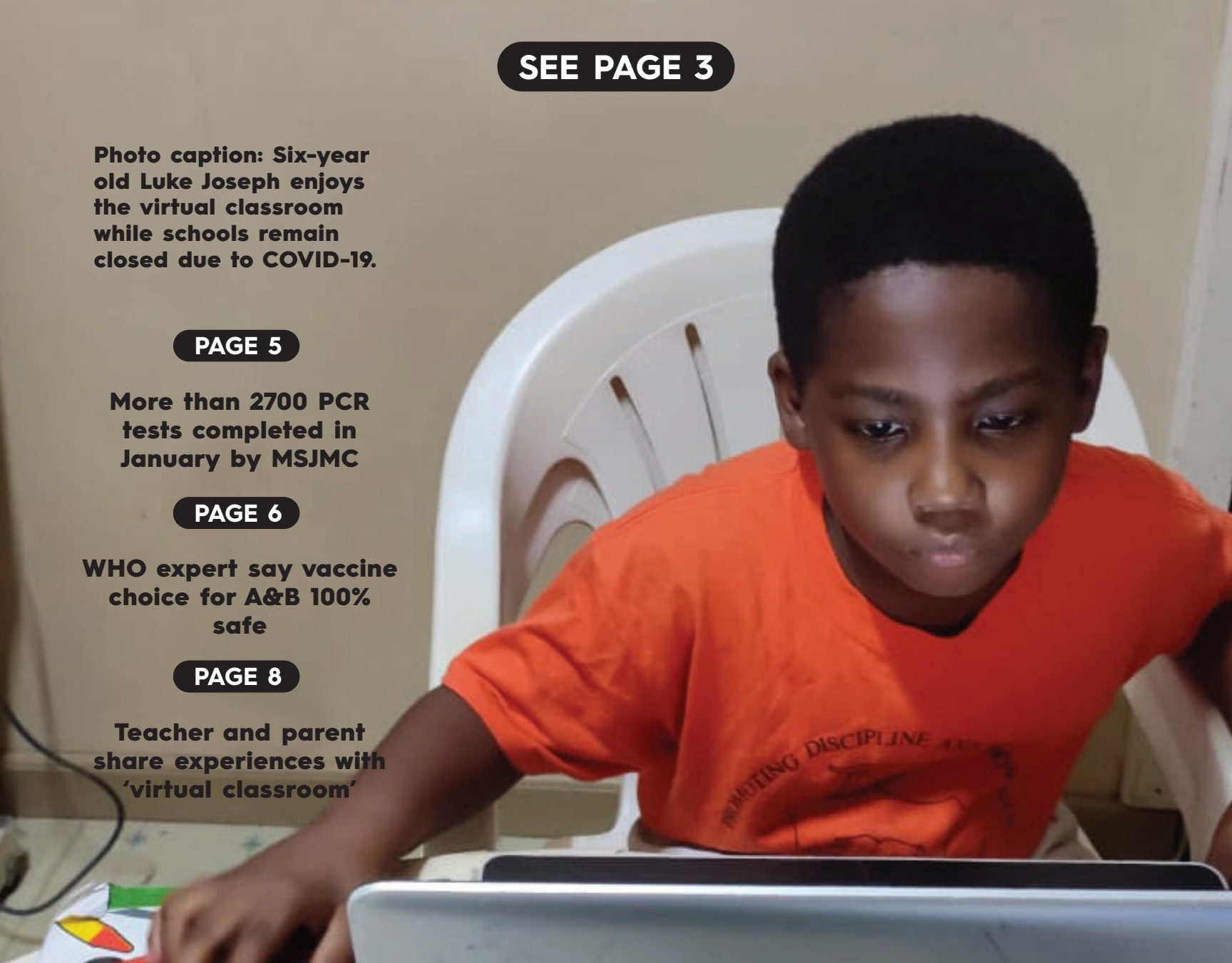
WHO expert say vaccine choice for A&B 100% safe

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GUEST EDITORIAL

POINTS ON WHICH COVID-19 VACCINE TO TAKE...



By Dr. Alfanzo Jerry Simon

‘pic sense outta nan sense’

******Disclaimer: I do not profit financially from the sale or distribution of any particular vaccine. I am a licensed healthcare worker, but I am not a member of the medical or nurses association and do not speak for either. I am only writing in hope to help you separate myth from fact and make the best decision to safeguard the health of yourself and family and our society. Any product brand I mention below does not necessarily constitute an endorsement or condemnation. ******

1. There is no ability without availability. (If you are dying of hunger right now in Antigua, a four-course meal in Buckingham Palace is not as useful to you as a piece of VJ's buntart).

2. Noise, emotion and passion is not necessarily the same as truth.

3. The best healthcare worker cannot return life to you or your loved ones once life is gone.

4. The same vaccine that some are calling second rate in this country, is the same one the Prime Minister of Canada, one of the richest and most prosperous countries in the world, is trying to source from India for his people.

5. Many medicines that we use already in this country, from MBS or private pharmacies, are made in India. The same is true in most developed countries in the world.

6. If you wait for the so-called best vaccine, it may not be the most efficacious if it arrives too late to affect the strain of virus that may be circulating at that time. (An M-16 rifle is of no use to you after you

have been eaten by a lion).

7. Have you seen the stats for the Moderna and Pfizer scientific trials in Grenada? NO, there hasn't been any there! And none has been carried out in Antigua or any other CARICOM country, neither for AstraZeneca. So are you sure that the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine will actually work better in Antigua? (Once again see No. 1 and while LIAT may land in Anguilla, American Airlines and British Airways do not).

8. Don't let partisan political concerns cloud your judgement with regards to the health of your family.

9. The coronavirus does not care if you voted RED, BLUE, GREEN, ORANGE, RED again, BLACK or WHITE.

10. LIKE, HATE, SHARE, COMMENT, CUSS or LAUGH. But please protect yourself and family. Do not get caught up in distractions. Pay attention to the physical, mental, social and spiritual health of you and your children.

BE WISE MY PEOPLE!!

Curfew hours to be extended

A special meeting of the Cabinet is slated for today to consider several COVID-19-related issues, including the possible extension of the current curfew hours.

Public Safety Minister, Steadroy Benjamin has confirmed that Cabinet will consider bringing forward the start of the curfew from 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., with the possibility of ending the curfew at 6:00 a.m. instead of the current 5:00 a.m.

The current curfew hours were initially put in place for twenty-one days as part of the government's drive to reduce the positivity rate of infection in the country. But with the recent sharp rise in the number of positive cases recorded just in the month of February alone, Benjamin said the curfew is likely

to be extended for an indefinite period.

The government has been resisting calls for a 'hard' lockdown of the country, emphasizing the need to balance the health concerns with the need to maintain some level of economic activity.

Benjamin will also recommend to the Cabinet new restrictions designed to curb the spread of the virus. "We have situations where persons knowingly visit another individual who is in quarantine thus exposing themselves and their families to the virus. I plan to recommend to my colleagues that the regulations be broadened to include this act as an offence under the State of Emergency," he told PointeXpress newspaper.

Additionally, the Cabinet will

also discuss plans for the distribution of the vaccines over the coming weeks. The government of Dominica gifted the people of Antigua and Barbuda five thousand doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, which arrived at the VC Bird International on Thursday.

However, over the next few weeks the government expects to receive a delivery of a further eighty thousand doses of the vaccine; forty thousand from the government of India, and another forty thousand from the World Health Organization through its COVAX facility.

Healthcare workers and those in critical departments of government - police, customs, immigration, the military - are already earmarked to be first in line to be vaccinated.



OUR NATIONAL LEGEND

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

Dr. Sir Prince Ramsey

Dr. Sir Prince Harold K Ramsey KGCN, GCMG, OM, OSt.J, MBBS, DSc (29th December, 1943 - 3rd May, 2019)

A medical practitioner who attained legendary status as Antigua and Barbuda's Clinical Care Coordinator for HIV/AIDS.

An HIV/AIDS activist, songwriter, producer and cultural actor (in the film "No Seed"). His Legacy as a songwriter leaves a great impact on many lives for educating the public by his passion for calypso.

He wrote and produce for so many local and regional calypsonian such as King Obsolete, King Short Shirt, King Onyan, King De Bear, King Zacari, Douglas, Redding, Calypso Jim, Dr. Solo, Zero, etc

The multitude of honors, awards and recognitions bestowed upon him include an honorary Doctor of science degree from the Open Campus of the University of the West Indies, The Order of Merit, The Order of Distinction, and The Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of the Nation.

**BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH**
FEBRUARY 2021

**SLOW
DOWN**
**OBEY
SPEED
LIMIT**

A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board

Stricter measures to curb COVID-19 spread as reports indicate social gatherings continue

A further extension of curfew hours could be on the cards – perhaps as early as this week – according to Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

He was speaking Saturday on his PointeFM radio programme, The Browne and Browne Show.

He said tighter law enforcement and an earlier start to the nightly curfew may be necessary due to continued shortcomings in public compliance with the state of emergency regulations that are in place to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

Prime Minister Browne said flippant public gatherings are of particular concern.

“The increase in COVID cases is obviously due to the negligence and complacency of our people ... individuals not being compliant with the protocols ... We are aware that individuals continue to have private parties; to have private engagements; going to each other’s homes and having drinks.”

Prime Minister Browne lamented that in many instances people could be seen committing egregious violations in public spaces and within full view.

“You drive along some of the main roads and you see people ... socializing [on the roadsides].

We have to do something about that. We cannot have a situation where people continue to socialize in relatively large gatherings.”

Prime Minister Browne referenced a boat cruise which had been advertised for Valentine’s Day. He said while law enforcement was certain to prevent the advertised event from going ahead, the mere fact that it had been planned was further evidence of increased public defiance against the regulations.

“We therefore are left with no choice now but to step up further on the enforcement of the protocols, the laws and regulations, in order to curb these socializations and reduce the transmission of COVID,” PM Browne stated.

He continued, “This may call for introducing new measures. We may have to, for example, expand the curfew hours and reduce the public gatherings, possibly down to maybe ten individuals, with the exception of churches. We would want to maintain the maximum of twenty-five for churches.”

PM Brown disclosed that he had held “discussions with the Health Minister and others and it is very likely that early in the coming week we will make some addition-

al changes; that we will introduce new curfew measures. We will expand the curfew hours and we will also introduce the amount of individuals who can gather in public.”

He explained that “those measures are designed specifically to reduce the [number] of socializations,” thereby lowering the risk of coronavirus transmission.

The Prime Minister also disclosed his government’s intention to “put systems in place to manage the traffic

at the public market to make sure that people are adequately socially distanced. In fact, we may have to do a new layout to make sure we don’t have the crowding that would have taken place in the last several months.”

PM Browne noted that the number of active coronavirus cases in the US is already declining in the wake of increased vaccination. He held this up as proof that vaccines offer the only practical hope of a way out of the pandemic.



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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Francis Trading Agency Limited (including its Ocean freight dept, FedEx dept, & My Box US Mailbox dept) will be reducing the number of staff in the office on a daily basis for the foreseeable future as a proactive approach to the pandemic. A significant portion the staff will be working remotely however our day to day operations will remain relatively the same. Please contact the appropriate person within our organization as per usual. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

For any further questions or concerns, please contact us at +1 (268) 462-0854. We at Francis Trading Agency Ltd look forward to providing continual satisfaction to you our customers. Thank you.

February 12th, 2021

More than twenty-seven hundred PCR tests completed in January by MSJMC

More than twenty-hundred Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests were conducted by the laboratory at Mount St John's Medical Centre (MSJMC) during the month of January.

The announcement comes from Health Minister, Sir Molwyn Joseph, as he gave fellow parliamentarians an update of the operations of the hospital and in par-

ticular, the institution's laboratory.

Sir Molwyn said the laboratory was not equipped to perform the PCR tests in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic as no member of staff was trained in this area.

The minister revealed that with the help of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) several staff members were trained

to perform this test and today there are now eight lab technicians who are able to perform the PCR test, considered the gold-standard in COVID-19 tests.

"The lab has moved from a situation where it was conducting thirty PCR tests per day to currently where they now conducting between eighty and one hundred and thirty tests per day, five days a

week. We will soon be doing these tests six days a week," Sir Molwyn reported.

For January 2021, the minister said the lab performed 2,709 PCR tests.

According to the minister, the laboratory has become an example of the excellent service that MSJMC has been providing the community.

The lab is headed by Dr. Lester Simon.



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NOTICE NEW OPERATING HOURS

Dear Clients,

Effective Monday 15th February 2021 our Redcliffe Street and Ebenezer offices will operate daily to the public at the reduced hours of **8:15am to 2:30pm**.

This is a preventative measure to keep our clients and staff safe.

All established protocols of sanitizing, wearing of masks, and social distancing must be practiced when visiting our offices.

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AUCTION SALE NOTICE

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
A.D. 2021

Instructed by the **ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA DEVELOPMENT BANK** of 27 St. Mary's Street, in the City of Saint John, in the State of Antigua and Barbuda, I will sell by public auction on Tuesday 23 February 2021 at 12:00 p.m. on site, the under mentioned property owned by the late Mr. John Richards of Five Islands, St. John's, Antigua.

The property is located at Five Islands, St. John's, Antigua and consists of a parcel of land of an area of approximately 6,534 sq. ft. with a single storey two (2) bedroom, one (1) bathroom residential dwelling of wooden and masonry walls thereon of an area offering approximately 862 sq. ft. of living space.

The service lines for potable water, electricity and telephone which are provided by A.P.U.A are accessible to the property.

The land is registered under the Registered Land Act, 1975 as follows:-
REGISTRATION SECTION: Five Islands
BLOCK: 54 1292E
PARCEL: 8

Parcel No. **8** of Block No. **54 1292E** is bounded by the following:
On the North by: Parcel 167 ;
On the South by: Parcel 9 ;
On the East by: Public Road;
On the West by: Parcel 7 ;

Particulars of the sale can be obtained from:

Mr. Trevor 'Teddy' Santos
Licensed Auctioneer
Office: (268) 562-7653
Cell & WhatsApp: (268) 464-7653
Email: info@go-going-gone.com
Instagram: tfs_auction_antigua
Facebook: Auction Antigua

WHO expert says vaccine choice for A&B 100% safe

By Shelton Benjamin



Dr. Alejandro Cravioto

A global expert on vaccines and immunization has poured cold water on claims that the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine slated for Antigua and Barbuda is inferior to other leading brands such as Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna.

This is largely due to efficacy reports from trials which gave the Oxford-AstraZeneca a lower percentage than its main rivals.

However, it is the Oxford-AstraZeneca that has been approved for distribution and use in

Antigua and Barbuda under procurement arrangements facilitated by the World Health Organization (WHO) and its hemispheric agency, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO).

Dr. Alejandro Cravioto is chairman of the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on Immunization to the WHO. He was a guest via telephone this past Saturday on PointeFM's Browne and Browne Show. Cravioto explained that WHO's first criteria of success for a vaccine is

its ability to prevent severe hospitalization and death.

"What we don't know yet on all of the ones that we have seen so far is whether they can stop transmission, and how long this immunity is going to last. Those are things that we will see as the trials continue, because they are ongoing."

He remarked that hospitalizations continue to overburden health systems and health workers. "In the meantime, regardless of the vaccination programmes, we continue to insist that all the measures including the wearing of masks, social distancing and washing of hands have to be continued until we reach a level of vaccination around the world that can make us all feel safe and go back to our normal work."

Speaking specifically about the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, Dr. Cravioto said "it is safe as has been shown, it is less reactogenic than the Pfizer and Moderna. It causes less problems when you have it because it is made in a different way, and ... it gives a protection of close to seventy to eighty per cent - which is an incredibly good efficacy for any vaccine that we have decided to

use as part of the WHO group of products."

Regarding the noise that has been made locally in recent times about the higher percentage of efficacy ascribed to the Pfizer and Moderna brands, this is what Dr. Cravioto had to say: "These differences between an eighty and a ninety per cent are relative, because we don't know two things. One is how long the immunity is going to last; and two, it depends very much on which age group you're talking about."

Asked how long after vaccination does a recipient develop immunity, Dr. Cravioto said research has shown that in the case of the AstraZeneca vaccine, a person would reach "the level of immune response necessary to give you a protection around fifty per cent for the first dose, and then going up to seventy-five, eighty per cent with the second dose. So you need to have at least one week after you get vaccinated to be fully protected."

Cravioto said the AstraZeneca vaccine has so far been the only one to show promise of preventing an inoculated person from infecting others. He also said the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine was least likely to produce allergic reactions.

AG, COP issue statements on Cpl Clifton Common



Public Safety Minister Steadroy Benjamin

The untimely death of Police Corporal Clifton Common last Thursday has prompted separate statements from the Minister of Public Safety as well as the Commissioner of Police.

In his statement, Public Safety Minister Steadroy Benjamin has expressed condolences on behalf of the government and people of Antigua and Barbuda as well as the Ministry of Public Safety to the wife and family of Cpl Common, who died from injuries sustained in an incident with a detainee at the St John's Police Station on Newgate Street.

Noting that the officer's death occurred while he was carrying out his duties

as a police officer, Benjamin noted, "Cpl Common did not deserve to die this way; he did not deserve this fate at all."

The minister described the fallen officer as someone who carried out his duties without complaints, was quiet, caring and one who was well-liked. Cpl Common was also said to be very diligent in carrying out his duties. "When this incident occurred, he was in the course of giving assistance to the detainee who allegedly committed that brutal act. I'm told the detainee had made a request to go to the bathroom. The police will continue their investigations into the matter and I am confident that justice will be done," he remarked.

Benjamin noted that the entire membership of the police force is saddened by the incident and he urges that steps be taken to ensure that a similar incident does not occur in the future.

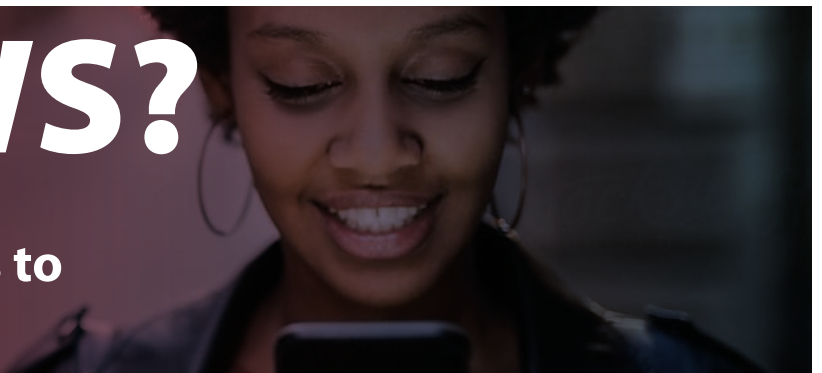
In a statement issued by STRATCOM, the Commissioner of Police, Atlee Rodney is publicly expressing sympathy to the family, relatives, and friends of Cpl Common on his sudden passing. He said he is very disturbed by the tragic loss of a veteran officer, and deeply regrets the entire incident. "As the head of the Police Force, Mr. Rodney has reached out to the immediate family of Corporal Common and will continue to be in contact with them. He continues to provide support to the staff at St. John's Police Station, as they come to grip with the loss of a colleague officer. Commissioner Rodney stated that a full investigation is currently ongoing into the circumstances which led to the untimely death of such a reliable officer, whom he described as quiet and dependable," the statement noted.

Corporal Clifton Common served for twenty-nine unbroken years in the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda, having joined the rank and file on 15th January 1992. He was attached to the St. John's Police Station. He died at the age of fifty-one years.

Meanwhile, the detainee involved in the incident remains in police custody while the investigation into the matter continues.

GOT NEWS?

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Teacher and parent share experiences with 'virtual classroom'



One primary school teacher and the parent of one of her students are offering glowing praises for the new virtual classroom that is the learning reality in this the COVID-19 era. Teacher Delina Greene, who is attached to the Villa Primary School, expressed her initial apprehension with the new Google Classroom, the teaching platform for use in classrooms in Antigua and Barbuda. "This was my first time with the Google Classroom app which also includes a 'smartboard.' At first,

I was not in favour of this new methodology of teaching but I had to be open-minded to be able to learn to operate with-in this new system. The Ministry of Education launched a workshop that I attended. I also did my own research, utilizing YouTube and so on. I am now really into it and now I have become quite proficient using the app," she explained to **PointeXpress**. According to Greene, the app has allowed her to interact 'in a meaningful' way with her students.

One parent, Drucilla Joseph, described her six-year-old son, Luke Joseph, as being 'very enthused' with the at-home learning. "He is enjoying the new teaching environment and he looks forward each day to 'attend' school with his laptop at home. I even have to dress him up in his school uniform to mirror the classroom setting of the face-to-face learning," she stated, "On a typical day, classes begin at 9:00 a.m. with praise and worship and the classroom sessions start at 9:15. He made

a smooth transition from the in-person learning to the remote classroom and his grades have not suffered at all." Luke told **PointeXpress** that he enjoys his virtual classroom and that he is working hard to attain good grades so that he can graduate from kindergarten to grade one. His mother credits Teacher Greene for her dedication and hard work, noting that without her commitment her son would not have made the progress he is currently making.

COVID-19: A catalyst for entrepreneurship Series:

National Youth Awards Take Center Stage by Award Young Entrepreneurs

By Angelica O'Donoghue



Vere Aaron

This week's entrepreneurship series will take a different spin, as we proudly join the Department of Youth Affairs in announcing their annual Youth Awards.

Since 2005, the Department of Youth Affairs has recognized and awarded outstanding young people from across the island. The ultimate aim of this recognition is to encourage our youth to continue demonstrating positive behaviour that fosters greater self-development of not only themselves but also their peers and surroundings.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, young people have displayed a level of resilience and adaptability, having been one of the major sections of society that are displaced. This displacement ranged from education to the world of work. To recognize and celebrate young people at this critical junction of development, the Department of Youth Affairs (DYA) is collaborating with the Entrepreneurial Development Programme (EDP) for the 2021 National Youth Awards.

According to Dr. Jrucilla Samuel, Acting Director of the Department of Youth Affairs, "We understand the significance of entrepreneurship to nation-building, as well as the need to recognize and support young entrepreneurs, particularly during this COVID pandemic. The Young Entrepreneur will now be called the Prime Minister's Entrepreneurial Development Programme Award."

This particular award seeks to recognize the outstanding contributions and resilience displayed by the nation's young entrepreneurs in light of the eco-

nomic challenges being faced. It also reassures the government's commitment to supporting the growth of home-owned businesses.

According to Vere Aaron, Acting Secretary and Head of the Public Relations Committee, Prime Minister's Entrepreneurial Development Programme Board, "The Prime Minister's Entrepreneurial Development Programme is quite young, having been in existence for just a little over two years. Within this time, it has seen a significant increase in the number of loan applications by local entrepreneurs - which is our main service. With this growth, the directors saw the need to expand the level of support being offered by the programme beyond that of loans and to also help build public awareness. So, the Public Relations Committee came up with the "Prime Minister's Entrepreneurial Development Programme Award." The idea was to not re-invent the wheel but to build on something that already exists. The Department of Youth Affairs and its annual National Youth Awards Programme was then identified as a good partner institution. The proposal was then put forward to the new Director of DYA for the EDP to sponsor the award for entrepreneurship. She was very excited and didn't hesitate to accept the proposal."

When asked if this particular award will become an annual award, Aaron noted that once resources are available then this will form part of their annual calendar of events. "We are also looking to partner with other institutions to offer technical support for local entrepreneurs and once the necessary arrangements are in place then the public will be notified on how they can go about accessing these support services," Aaron said.

Aaron went on to state that the EDP has seen several applications from persons within the youth category.

Aaron said, "Several applications from young entrepreneurs have been presented to the board for review and we also continue to see an increase in the number of potential entrepreneurs visiting the secretariat for consultation. We do hope that 2021 will see an even greater number of young entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs accessing funding under the EDP, especially in the priority

sectors namely agriculture, manufacturing, and information technology. If you have an idea but don't know where to start, please visit our secretariat at the Antigua and Barbuda Investment Authority's office and we will provide you with the necessary guidance."

The National Youth Awards will be held virtually this year, slated to take place in June. Several young people will be recognized for their outstanding contribution to national development and the DYA is calling for nominations.

Awardees must fall within the age category of youth, 10 - 35 years, must be a national of Antigua and Barbuda, reside in this twin-island state, be in good social standing, as well as civic-minded and patriotic.

The public is kindly asked to submit the names of nominees to the Department of Youth Affairs by 26th February 2021.

For more information, please contact Miss Sophia Zachariah at 562-9366 or email youthaffairs@ab.gov.ag.

AWARDS

Literary Arts: This award is for outstanding work in the literary arts.

Visual Arts: This award is presented for outstanding work in visual arts. Departments of Education and Culture, as well as the general public, are invited to present nominees.

Community Service: Two awards are issued in this category - Individual & Youth Group. 1. Young Pioneer Award: This award goes to a young person/group who is breaking new grounds in areas such a film; information technology, manufacturing; etc. 2. Phoenix Award: This is awarded to a youth who has overcome the odds... like the Phoenix has risen victoriously out of the ashes!

3. Young Activist: This is awarded to a young person who has mobilized community support and action around some issue they felt strongly about.

4. Young professional: This award is conferred upon a young professional, who through excellent professional practice upholds the standards of his or her profession.

5. Prime Minister's Entrepreneur Development Programme Award: This award recognizes the achievement of a young entrepreneur.

Researchers propose that humidity from masks may lessen severity of COVID-19

NIH study compares how different face masks affect humidity inside the mask.

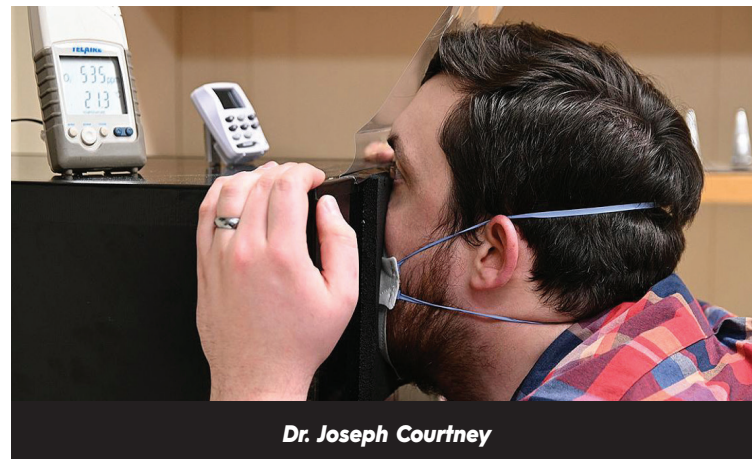
Masks help protect the people wearing them from getting or spreading SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, but now researchers from the National Institutes of Health have added evidence for yet another potential benefit for wearers: The humidity created inside the mask may help combat respiratory diseases such as COVID-19.

The study, led by researchers in the NIH's National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), found that face masks substantially increase the humidity in the air that the mask-wearer breathes in. This higher level of humidity in inhaled air, the researchers suggest, could help explain why wearing masks has been linked to lower disease severity in people infected with SARS-CoV-2, because hydration of the respiratory tract is known to benefit the immune system. The study published in the *Biophysical Journal* (link is external).

"We found that face masks strongly increase the humidity in inhaled air and propose that the resulting hydration of the respiratory tract could be responsible for the documented finding that links lower COVID-19



Dr. Adrian Bax



Dr. Joseph Courtney

disease severity to wearing a mask," said the study's lead author, Adriaan Bax, Ph.D., NIH Distinguished Investigator. "High levels of humidity have been shown to mitigate severity of the flu, and it may be applicable to severity of COVID-19 through a similar mechanism."

High levels of humidity can limit the spread of a virus to the lungs by promoting mucociliary clearance (MCC), a defense mechanism that removes mucus - and potentially harmful particles within the mucus - from the lungs. High

levels of humidity can also bolster the immune system by producing special proteins, called interferons, that fight against viruses - a process known as the interferon response. Low levels of humidity have been shown to impair both MCC and the interferon response, which may be one reason why people are likelier to get respiratory infections in cold weather.

The study tested four common types of masks: an N95 mask, a three-ply disposable surgical mask, a two-ply cotton-polyester mask, and a

heavy cotton mask. The researchers measured the level of humidity by having a volunteer breathe into a sealed steel box. When the person wore no mask, the water vapor of the exhaled breath filled the box, leading to a rapid increase in humidity inside the box.

When the person wore a mask, the buildup of humidity inside the box greatly decreased, due to most of the water vapor remaining in the mask, becoming condensed, and being re-inhaled. To ensure no leakage, the masks were tightly fitted against the volunteer's face using high-density foam rubber. Measurements were taken at three different air temperatures, ranging from about 46 to 98 degrees Fahrenheit.

The results showed that all four masks increased the level of humidity of inhaled air, but to varying degrees. At lower temperatures, the humidifying effects of all masks greatly increased. At all temperatures, the thick cotton mask led to the most increased level of humidity.

"The increased level of humidity is something most mask-wearers probably felt without being able to recognize, and without realizing that this humidity might actually be good for

cont'd on pg 11

cont'd from pg 10

them," Bax said.

The researchers did not look at which masks are most effective against inhalation or transmission of the virus and defer to the CDC for guidance on choosing a mask(link is external). Earlier studies from Bax and his colleagues showed that any cloth mask can help block the thousands of saliva droplets that people release through simple speech(link is external) - droplets that, if released, can remain in the air for many minutes(link is external). While the current study did not examine respiratory droplets, it does offer more evidence as to why masks are essential

to battling COVID-19.

"Even as more people nationwide begin to get vaccinated, we must remain vigilant about doing our part to prevent the spread of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19," said NIDDK Director Dr. Griffin P. Rodgers. "This research supports the importance of mask-wearing as a simple, yet effective, way to protect the people around us and to protect ourselves from respiratory infection, especially during these winter months when susceptibility to these viruses increases.

The research was supported by the NIDDK Intramural Research Program and the NIH

Intramural Antiviral Target Program.

About the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK): The NIDDK, a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), conducts and supports research on diabetes and other endocrine and metabolic diseases; digestive diseases, nutrition and obesity; and kidney, urologic and hematologic diseases. Spanning the full spectrum of medicine and afflicting people of all ages and ethnic groups, these diseases encompass some of the most common, severe, and disabling conditions affecting Americans.

For more information about the NIDDK and its programs, see <http://www.niddk.nih.gov>.

About the National Institutes of Health (NIH): NIH, the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.

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, 15th February 2021
Time: 8:30AM-12:00PM
Affected areas: Western section of Potters

Date: Monday, 15th February 2021
Time: 8:45AM-10:00AM
Affected areas: Section of Ottos near the old Ottos' school

Date: Tuesday, 16th February 2021
Time: 8:30AM- 12:00PM
Affected areas: Section of Bethesda east of the playing field

Date: Tuesday, 16th February 2021
Time: 8:45AM- 12:00PM
Affected areas: Section of Swetes south of St. Ann Road

Date: Wednesday, 17th February 2021
Time: 8:45AM - 12:00PM
Affected areas: Section of Skerritt Pasture

Date: Wednesday, 17th February 2021
Time: 8:45AM - 12:00PM
Affected areas: Section of Bolans

Date: Thursday, 18th February 2021
Time: 8:45AM- 1:00PM
Affected areas: Section of Bendals near the clinic Body Pond, AMP and Green Castle

Date: Friday, 19th February 2021
Time: 8:30 AM- 12:00PM
Affected areas: Section of Creek Side near Saggifo Farm

Date: Friday, 19th February 2021
Time: 8:45AM - 12:00PM
Affected areas: Section of Powells west of the football field

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.



PDV CAB announces that regrettably, due to restrictions put in place by the Health Department, we are not able to distribute our utility subsidy voucher booklets as customary. Therefore, **there will be no booklet distribution this month** at the Multipurpose Cultural Centre or at our offices at Long Street until further notice.

Instead, our partner, APUA, will credit beneficiaries \$100 monthly on their registered electricity accounts for the months of March, April and May 2021.

Beneficiaries who have received their new booklets for the period March to August 2021, are asked to utilize the vouchers with APUA as per usual.

Regular updates will be provided in the media and for further information you may contact the PDV CAB office at 562-6185 or 562-6189.

Do continue to stay safe and observe all established health and safety protocols.



CARICOM Business

A Weekly Business News Aggregation Service

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

Barbados offers rebates up to US\$350 per night for visitors

The Government of Barbados is offering rebates ranging from US\$100 to US\$350 per night to visitors who stayed in approved accommodations between last 24th December and 31st January whose second PCR COVID-19 test took longer than three days to be processed. The plan involves US\$350 per night to luxury hotel guests; US\$250 to those in A Class hotel; US\$150 to those in B Class hotels and US\$100 per night to those staying in other approved accommodation, excluding villas. The Barbados Tourism Investment Inc (BTMI) however has advised that only one applicant rebate per hotel room would be allowed.

CIBC FirstCaribbean sale off, regulators say no

CIBC says the sale of a large portion of its majority stake in CIBC FirstCaribbean to GNB Financial Group Ltd. will not go ahead after it did not receive approval from regulators. The Canadian bank had announced in November 2019 that it would sell a controlling stake in the bank for US\$797 million. GNB Financial is wholly owned by Starmites Corp., the financial holding company of the Gilinski Group, which has about US\$15 billion in combined assets. Under the proposed deal, GNB would have owned 66.7% of FirstCaribbean's equity, while CIBC would have retained 24.9%. FirstCaribbean operates in 16 countries in the region with 2,900 employees in sixty-four branches and offices.

Jamaica's remittance flows jump 25.7%

Jamaica's net remittance flows totaled \$220.9 million as at November 2020 reflecting an increase of 25.7% or US\$45.2 million over November 2019. This increase resulted from a rise in gross remittance inflows of 18.7% or US\$37.5 million aided by a decrease of thirty-two per cent or US\$7.7 million in outflows. Based on the Bank of Jamaica's November 2020 Remittance Bulletin, the increase in gross remittance inflows came from an improvement of 23.5% in inflows through remittance companies. For the period April to November 2020, net remittance inflows of US\$1.89 billion were recorded, representing an increase of 30.8% or US\$446.2 million relative to the corresponding period in 2019. Overall, the January to November 2020 period saw Jamaica recording remittance inflows totaling US\$2.60 billion reflecting an increase of 19.3% over the corresponding period of 2019.

Barbados lauded for structural reforms by IMF

The government of Barbados has been lauded by the IMF for the "strong steps" made in implementing structural reforms. In its closing statement at the conclusion of a virtual staff visit the funded noted that "a new central bank law,

aimed at strengthening the autonomy of the bank while limiting the provision of credit to the government, was adopted by parliament in December 2020." Special note was also made of an actuarial review of the civil service pension system which was completed in November 2020, providing the basis for upcoming public pension reform. The IMF also highlighted that "a new procurement law to strengthen the fairness, integrity and transparency of the procurement process is expected to be submitted to parliament in February." The Fund also noted the deep recession in Barbados occasioned by COVID-19 while acknowledging, "program targets under the Fund supported program for end-December 2020 were met, and international reserves reached more than US\$1.3 billion at the end of December."

Imports decline 20.2%, Exports decline 11.1% in Belize

Belize's Merchandise imports for the year 2020 amounted to \$1.6 billion, representing a considerable 20.2% or \$397.6 million decrease from the total imports of almost \$2 billion recorded for 2019. The year was marked by notable decreases across most commodity categories, where 'Mineral Fuels and Lubricants' (-46%) and goods destined for the 'Commercial Free Zones' (-34%) stood out as the categories recording the greatest declines. Merchandise exports for the year 2020 totalled \$367.8 million, down 11.1% or \$46.1 million from the total exports of 2019, which amounted to almost \$414 million. Four of the five major commodities suffered significant losses in export earnings during the year 2020. Notably, revenues from sugar declined by \$24.9 million or eighteen per cent, from \$136.4 million in 2019 to \$111.5 million in 2020, owing to a significant drop in exported quantities of sugar.

Oil prices rise one per cent on hopes of OPEC cuts and recovery

Oil prices rose about one per cent on Friday, after hitting their highest in a year and closing in on \$60 a barrel, supported by economic revival hopes and supply curbs by producer group OPEC and its allies. Oil was also supported as U.S. stock markets hit record highs on signs of progress toward more economic stimulus, while a U.S. jobs report confirmed the labor market was stabilizing. Brent crude ended the session up fifty-one cents, or 0.9%, at \$59.62 after hitting its highest since 20th February at \$59.79. U.S. crude settled up sixty-one cents, or 1.1%, at \$57.07, after reaching \$57.29, its highest since 22nd January last year. U.S. crude futures gained about none per cent this week, the biggest percentage gain since October, in part due to U.S. inventories last week dropping to levels last seen in March.

The Antigua Public Utilities Authority's Telecommunications Business Unit is now seeking applications from suitably qualified persons for the following positions:

SALES CONTROLLER

The Sales Controller is responsible for leading the Corporate and Retail sales teams and functions. This includes setting sales quotas, creating sales plans, analyzing data, managing the relationships with key corporate customers, monitoring sales zones and building the sales teams through training, mentoring and implementing performance interventions to maximize their potential for success.

KEY TASKS INCLUDE:

- Meeting marketing and sales financial objectives by forecasting requirements, preparing budgets & scheduling expenditures, analyzing variances and initiating corrective actions;
- Developing sales plans by forecasting and developing sales quotas, projecting sales volumes and profit for existing and new products, analyzing trends, establishing pricing strategies while monitoring costs, competition, supply and demand;
- Completing sales audits, identifying trends, determining improvements and recommending changes;
- Achieving marketing and sales objectives by planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating advertising, merchandising, and trade promotion programs including developing field sales action plans;
- Developing and sustaining rapport with key accounts by creating and maintaining a portfolio of corporate customers; exploring their specific usage patterns to recommend service plans that best fit their needs while anticipating new opportunities for business;
- Managing the relationships with outside vendors and re-sellers of our products and services;
- Managing the remuneration schemes and performance of sales teams including setting & monitoring of targets, issuing assignments & sales calls, formally assessing performance of teams and individuals routinely;
- Preparing comprehensive monthly reports to include growth trends, customer churn & receivables by product line.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- People Management, Telecom and/or Marketing Industry experience;
- University Degree in Marketing, Business Management (or related field).

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & ABILITIES

- Experience in planning and implementing sales strategies and customer relationship management;
- Proven leadership experience managing and directing a sales team with the ability to inspire and motivate them to achieve targets;
- Dedication to providing outstanding customer experiences.

CORPORATE SALES REPRESENTATIVES

The Corporate Sales Representatives utilize various sales strategies to attract new business clients to meet our customer acquisition & revenue growth objectives. This includes generating sales leads, qualifying prospective customers, working with our channel partners and ultimately selling APUA Telecommunications products and services.

KEY TASKS INCLUDE:

- "Getting the sale" using various customer sales methods (Referrals, cold calling, presentations etc.);
- Developing a trusted advisor relationship with key accounts, customer stakeholders and executive sponsors;
- Meeting personal and team sales targets; forecasting sales, sales strategies/models and evaluating effectiveness;
- Evaluating customer's needs and building long lasting relationships;
- Ensuring the timely and successful delivery of our solutions according to customer needs and objectives;
- Identifying opportunities within assigned territory and collaborating with sales teams to ensure growth attainment;
- Reporting and providing feedback to management using financial statistical data.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE SHOULD HAVE/BE:

- Proven sales experience and knowledge of APUA Telecoms products and services;
- Knowledge of sales techniques, pipeline management and sales software;
- Excellent communication and negotiation skills;
- Self-motivated & driven - ability to deliver results without supervision;
- A valid driver's license and vehicle to perform duties.

INTERESTED CANDIDATES ARE ASKED TO APPLY IN WRITING TO:

The Human Resources Manager
Antigua Public Utilities Authority
Crn. High Street & Independence Drive
PO BOX 416
St. John's, Antigua
OR email - hr@apua.ag

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION IS WEDNESDAY 17TH FEBRUARY, 2021

** Only suitable applicants will be acknowledged **

Bulk-buy vaccines, economists urge CARICOM



Economic consultant Dr. Justin Ram

(Barbados Today):

Two Caribbean economists believe that the region must join forces now to buy twenty million vaccine doses or the pandemic "will continue to devastate our lives and economies for another two years."

Economic consultant Dr Justin Ram and economist and social entrepreneur Kiran Mathur Mohammed, who in a joint article explained that with some 18.5 million people in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), to achieve herd immunity would require the region buying enough vaccine for ninety per cent of the population, factoring in spillage, usage, and holding some for future use.

"That means ordering at least one hundred and fifty per cent of what we need - at least 19.4 million vaccines," they said.

Pointing out that the

measures implemented by countries over the past several months to protect residents have resulted in job losses, school closures, and triggered domestic violence, abuse and mental health crises, the duo said it is time the region "escapes from this constant, crippling cycle of lockdowns and fear and get people back to work so we can start adjusting to our new post COVID-19 lives."

"The vaccine is the only way," they added.

Barbados and other developing countries are hoping to receive vaccines from the global vaccine programme for developing countries called the COVAX Facility. The amounts to be received should be enough for about twenty per cent of the population and will be spread out over the year.

In addition, Barbados has already sourced 100,000 vaccine doses,

enough for 50, 000 people, with two doses required. Government has also indicated that efforts were being made to source vaccines through other means.

Stating that the efforts that countries were making was "good," the economists pointed out that there was still stiff competition to obtain the vaccines "and the simple market reality is that smaller players have less clout."

"Counter-intuitively, it is actually easier to produce a larger order than a smaller one," they added.

"We will only land vaccines and achieve herd immunity in the next few months if CARICOM pre-orders vaccines now from candidates who World Health Organization approval is expected in the next month or two. Larger numbers or other countries are already taking this approach. We must do so or we will end up living like this until 2023," they warned.

Ram, a former director of economics at the Caribbean Development Bank, and Mohammed, a co-founder of medl, an Inter-American Development Bank-backed social impact health tech company, pointed out that the region was in a position to pool financial resources to access the vaccine need-

ed for the region.

They calculated that with a cumulative annual gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$91.5 billion, and with vaccines ranging between US\$4 and US\$37 per dose, the region would only have to spend about US\$1 billion or 1.2 per cent of the region's total GDP. "If we assume that COVAX will provide enough vaccines for twenty per cent of our population in 2021, and that we need to vaccinate ninety per cent of our population, that means thirteen million people still need to be vaccinated. Multiplied by one hundred and fifty per cent, that makes 19.4 million vaccines."

"With vaccines ranging between US\$4 and US\$37 per dose and with most vaccines requiring two doses, if we take the medium price of US\$21 per dose multiplied by two doses and we add thirty per cent for transport, storage and the cost of procurement, the total cost to inoculate one person is about US\$55. US\$55 multiplied by 19.4 million people is just over US\$1 billion 1.2 per cent of total Caribbean GDP," the economists explained in the document that was shared with Barbados Today.

Suggesting that the allocation of the cost would best be done by

cont'd on pg 15

Guyana: Salary increases for public servants



Vice-President, Bharrat Jagdeo

(Guyana Chronicle): In responding to claims that the proposed 2021 budget does not include any monetary incentive for public servants, Vice-President Bharrat Jagdeo has affirmed that salary increases are catered for in this budget.

The allegations that the government did not cater for public servants followed the presentation of the \$383.1 billion budget by Senior Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Finance, Dr. Ashni Singh, in the National Assembly on

Friday.

Budget 2021, the country's largest budget, is the first full-year budget presented by the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) administration since being elected to office in August 2020. It is \$53.5 billion larger than Budget 2020 and \$46 billion higher than the central government's total expenditure for 2020.

The aim of this budget, as outlined by Dr. Singh, is to keep the population safe from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, containing further spread,

treating those who are infected, providing vaccines as soon as they become available, and reopening the economy progressively, and then fully when it is safe to do so.

While protecting the nation is the primary objective, the budget is also aimed at ensuring that there's a diversified and resilient productive sector by facilitating large-scale private investment in both traditional and new and emerging sectors, creating 50,000 jobs in the next five years, and promoting entrepreneurship at the medium and small-business level.

Investments in critical infrastructural projects and other major initiatives are expected to stimulate growth in the local economy. And, while Dr. Singh has said that the measures outlined in the budget will put \$50 billion back into the pockets of the average Guyanese, there have been calls for salary increases for public servants,

something which has been catered for in the budget.

Vice President Jagdeo said that over \$10B has been budgeted in the estimates under the head, "revision of wages and salaries."

"A huge part of that sum will go towards salary increase for public sector workers," he said. The Guyana Chronicle understands that previous PPP/C Governments are known for setting aside a "lump sum" of money, which is later used to provide salary increases and other monetary incentives.

Specific provisions aside, the PPP/C's plan, according to Dr. Singh, is to make Guyana an economic powerhouse, where every single Guyanese person can live, learn, work, and retire in dignity and comfort; where national prosperity is a reality, and where individual prosperity is a realistic prospect for all who are prepared to invest the required effort.

cont'd from pg 14

population size, they said however, this would leave Haiti, the poorest of the CARICOM nations, with the largest bill of about US\$652 million given its population size.

"A better allocation formula would be by share of GDP, to spread the burden," they proposed. They added, "Trinidad and Tobago's bill under this would be US\$251 million, just 3.4

per cent of its national budget. Jamaica's would be less – US\$182 million, while Barbados and Guyana would pay US\$464 million each."

"This is a vast return, considering COVID-19 cost Trinidad and Tobago alone a conservative US\$1.3 billion last year alone," they pointed out.

In the document, Ram and Mohammed proposed that to fund this, CARICOM states could

collectively raise a bond for US\$1 billion and split the repayment bond between countries, based on their share of GDP. "Bond repayments can also be funded by, for example, an increase in common external tariff rates on certain products, incentivizing local industries," they explained.

Adding that the region must come to terms that "the countries that have

done well with COVID-19 are most aware that the world is a competitive place," the economists said the Caribbean's most competitive asset, whether for nation building, commerce or sports, is its human capital.

They added: "Our people's welfare must come before every other priority. CARICOM must come together and act now."

Independent UN rights expert calls for unilateral sanctions to be dropped against Venezuela



Alena Douhan

(CMC): Amid the mass migration of Venezuelans to the Caribbean, particularly Trinidad and Tobago and neighbouring South and Central American countries, an independent UN human rights expert has called for unilateral sanctions to be dropped against Venezuela.

"The devastating effect of sanctions imposed is multiplied by extra-territoriality and over-compliance adversely affecting public and private sectors, Venezuela citizens, non-governmental organizations, third country national and companies," said Alena Douhan, Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures and human rights.

Imposed by the United States, European Union,

as well as other countries, Douhan said the sanctions have sparked "economic, humanitarian and development crises, devastating the entire population, especially those living in extreme poverty, women, medical workers, individuals with life-threatening diseases and indigenous peoples."

Douhan stressed that unilateral measures are only legal if they are authorized by the UN Security Council, used as countermeasures, or do not breach any obligation of states and do not violate fundamental human rights.

She also said that "humanitarian exemptions are lengthy, costly, ineffective and inefficient."

The independent UN

human rights expert said lack of electricity, water, fuel, food and medicine, along with the departure of qualified workers – many of whom have left the country for better economic opportunities – are having "enormous impact over all categories of human rights, including the rights to life, to food, to health and to development."

Citing "the complexity of the situation," during her visit, which ended on Friday, Douhan said she sought to meet "the widest range of people" to listen to their experience and insights, from government officials to opposition leaders and non-governmental organizations to victims of human rights violations "as well as ordi-

nary people."

She called on the sanction-imposing countries to observe the principles and norms of international law and reminded them that humanitarian concerns should always be taken into account with due respect to mutual respect, solidarity, cooperation and multilateralism.

Special Rapporteurs are appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not paid for their work.

In early January, the Organization of American States (OAS) warned in a new report prepared by its General Secretariat that the number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants could rise to seven million in 2021 if regional countries reopen their borders and the government in Venezuela remains in place.

The Washington-based OAS said "The Situation Report" – the second since its first in November 2020, prepared for this crisis, headed by David Smolansky – presents "a balance of the year 2020" for Venezuelan refugees and migrants.

The report stated that the COVID-19 pandemic worsened the Venezuelan migration crisis in 2020.

Jamaica: Police dismiss fake news that American was kidnapped

(Jamaica Gleaner):

The Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) is advising members of the public to dismiss as rumour information that has been circulated via social and other media that Kalina Collier, an American, was kidnapped in Jamaica.

Collier, a Jetblue Airways stewardess, reported that she was being held hostage in Jamaica. She was expected to depart the island on Sunday 14th February, after being quarantined for fourteen days owing to a positive COVID-19 test result.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the JCF said on arrival in Jamaica, Collier, who tested positive for the COVID-19 virus, was placed in isolation. This is in keeping with Jamaica's COVID-19 prevention protocols as

stipulated by the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

The police say Collier remains in isolation and awaits medical clearance to be able to travel back home. According to the JCF, representatives from the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the Jamaica Tourist Board and the local police have been in contact with Collier's mother, who subsequently arrived in Jamaica.

The police say they visited Collier on Saturday, 13th February and that she is not, nor was she at any time, in any danger.

The police are therefore warning people to desist from sharing social media posts claiming Collier has been kidnapped, as sharing false information can constitute an offence under the law



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After acquittal, Trump says 'our movement has only just begun'



Trump slams 'witch hunt' impeachment trial, pledges to continue journey to achieve 'American greatness'

(Aljazeera): Donald Trump, the former president of the United States, has welcomed his acquittal in a second impeachment trial, saying his political movement "to make America great again has only just begun."

The US Senate voted 57-43 in favour of convicting the former president on Saturday, falling short of the two-thirds majority needed to convict him on a charge of inciting the mob that attacked the US Capitol on 6th January, during the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's election win.

In a statement short-

ly after the acquittal, Trump called the trial "yet another phase of the greatest witch hunt in the history of our nation."

"Our historic, patriotic and beautiful movement to make America great again has only just begun," he said.

"In the months ahead, I have much to share with you, and I look forward to continuing our incredible journey together to achieve American greatness for all of our people," he added.

Trump left office on 20th January, so impeachment could not be used to remove him from power.

But Democrats had hoped to secure a conviction to hold the seventy-four-year-old responsible for the Capitol siege and set the stage for a vote to bar him from serving in public office again.

Though Trump was acquitted of the sole charge of incitement of insurrection, seven Republicans joined all Democrats in voting to convict the former president. The figure marked the largest number of Senators to ever vote to find a president of their own party guilty of an impeachment count of high crimes and misdemeanours.

They were Richard Burr of North Carolina, Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Mitt Romney of Utah, Ben Sasse of Nebraska and Patrick Toomey of Pennsylvania.

In a statement late on Saturday, Biden said "while the final vote did not lead to a conviction, the substance of the charge is not in dispute."

He pointed out that even those who voted against the conviction "believe Donald Trump was guilty of a 'disgraceful dereliction of duty' and 'practically and morally responsible for provoking' the violence unleashed on the Capitol."

Al Jazeera's Andy Gallacher, reporting from West Palm Beach in Florida, said, "The one message from Trump's statement is that he is going nowhere."

"There is no question now that Donald Trump has political plans going forward. But what are they? Is he going to run in 2024 as many people believe? Or is he going to seek revenge on those seven Republicans who voted against him?"

Trump is only the third president ever to be impeached by the House of Representatives - a step akin to a criminal indictment - as well as the first to be impeached twice and the first to face an impeachment trial after leaving office.

UK hits target: Gives at least one vaccine shot to fifteen million



Rabbi Bieberfeld receives a dose coronavirus vaccine at the John Scott Vaccination Centre in London, Saturday, 13th February 2021

(AP): The U.K. announced Sunday that it had reached its goal of giving at least one COVID-19 vaccine shot to the most vulnerable people in the country, increasing pressure on ministers to clarify when they will ease a lockdown imposed in early January.

More than fifteen million people, or twenty-two % of the U.K. population, have received their first shot. The figure includes most people in the government's top four priority groups, including everyone over seventy-five, frontline healthcare workers and nursing home staff and residents. Over 537,000 of them have also received their second dose.

"15,000,000! Amazing team," Nadhim Zahawi, the vaccines minister, said in a tweet that featured a red heart and three syringes. "We will not rest till we offer the vaccine to the whole of phase one, the one to nine categories of the most vulnerable and all over 50s by end April and then all adults."

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson plans to unveil his roadmap for easing restrictions on 22nd February amid signs that infection rates, hos-

pitalizations and deaths have fallen sharply since England's third national lockdown began on 4th January. "This country has achieved an extraordinary feat — administering a total of fifteen million jabs into the arms of some of the most vulnerable people in the country," Johnson said in a tweet.

Johnson said in England, everyone in the four top priority groups had been offered the vaccine. He plans to release further details on the vaccination effort on Monday.

Britain got a head start on its vaccination effort in December, when it became the first country to authorize widespread use of a COVID-19 shot. It ranks behind only Israel, seventy-three per cent, the Seychelles, fifty-three per cent, and the United Arab Emirates, fifty-one per cent in the percentage of people who have received one dose, according to Oxford University. The U.S. is fifth at fifteen per cent.

At the same time, coronavirus lockdown rules that have closed schools, restaurants and nonessential shops in the U.K. are starting to pay off. The number of new infections, hos-

pital admissions and deaths recorded over the past seven days have all dropped by more than twenty per cent from the previous week.

When Johnson announced the lockdown, he said the government would review the measures in mid-February based on their success in controlling the pandemic and progress in the vaccination effort. Johnson's first priority is to reopen schools, and he has promised to give schools two weeks' notice to give teachers time to prepare.

Britain has reported over 117,000 virus-related deaths, the highest pandemic toll in Europe.

While the vaccines currently authorized for use in the U.K. require two doses to ensure full protection against COVID-19, British authorities say one dose provides a significant level of protection.

Because of this, they have made it their priority to give the first dose to as many people as possible as quickly as possible. To do this, Britain is planning to give second doses after three months, instead of one month as recommended by the manufacturers.

Guinea declares Ebola epidemic: First deaths since 2016



(BBC): Guinea has officially declared that it is dealing with an Ebola epidemic after the deaths of at least three people from the virus.

They - and four others - fell ill with diarrhoea, vomiting and bleeding after attending the burial of a nurse.

Newly developed vaccines will be acquired through the World Health Organization (WHO), officials said.

Between 2013 and 2016 more than 11,000 people died in the West Africa Ebola epidemic, which began in Guinea.

In response to that epidemic, which mainly affected Guinea and its neighbours Liberia and Sierra Leone, several vaccines were trialled, which have since been successfully used to fight outbreaks in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"The WHO is on full alert and is in contact

with the manufacturer [of a vaccine] to ensure the necessary doses are made available as quickly as possible to help fight back," the AFP news agency quotes Alfred George Ki-Zerbo, the WHO representative in Guinea, as saying.

An Ebola vaccine was first trialled over four months in 2015 in Guinea - and drugs that can increase the survival rate of patients have also been developed in recent years.

How did this outbreak start?

A nurse who worked at a health centre in Goueké, near the south-eastern city of Nzérékoré, died on 28th January and her funeral was held four days later.

Community funerals, where people help wash the body of the person who has died, can be a key way of spreading Ebola in the earlier stages of

an outbreak.

The bodies of victims are particularly toxic. The incubation period can last from two days to three weeks.

Ebola jumps to humans from infected animals, such as chimpanzees, fruit bats and forest antelope. Bushmeat - non-domesticated forest animals hunted for human consumption - is thought to be the natural reservoir of the Ebola virus.

It then spreads between humans by direct contact with infected blood, bodily fluids or organs, or indirectly through contact with contaminated environments.

All those infected at the funeral of the nurse were over the age of twenty-five, health officials say.

Following a crisis meeting on Sunday, the health ministry said all cases had been isolated, contact tracing was ongoing and a treatment centre was to

be set up in Goueké.

This new outbreak is in roughly the same area where the epidemic began in December 2013.

Given the cross border trade between Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and their relatively weak healthcare systems, there is concern the outbreak could spread.

Liberia's President George Weah has put the health authorities on heightened alert.

The BBC's Umaru Fofana in Sierra Leone says there is far more fear of Ebola in the country than COVID-19.

He says the existence of new vaccines does provide some sense of relief - there is a global emergency stockpile of 500,000, made available through Gavi, the international vaccine alliance.

The three countries have a joint population of 22.5 million, prompting concerns that manufacturers would have little time to produce more if needed at a time when COVID vaccines are their pre-occupation, our reporter says.

Experts say containment is key to fighting the disease. During the 2015 trial in Guinea - one hundred patients were identified and then close contacts were either vaccinated immediately, or three weeks later. In the 2014 close contacts who were vaccinated immediately there were no subsequent cases of Ebola.

Prince Harry and Meghan 'overjoyed' to be expecting second child

By Caroline Davies of The Guardian

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have confirmed they are expecting a younger brother or sister for their one-year-old son, Archie. A spokesperson for Prince Harry and Meghan said: "We can confirm that Archie is going to be a big brother. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex are overjoyed to be expecting their second child." The couple shared a black and white picture of themselves, under a tree with Harry resting his hand on Meghan's head as she lies cradling her bump.

Misan Harriman, a friend of the couple and the photographer who took the photo that accompanied their pregnancy announcement, tweeted: "Meg, I was there

at your wedding to witness this love story begin, and my friend, I am honoured to capture it grow. Congratulations to The Duke and Duchess of Sussex on this joyous news!" Responding to the news, Buckingham Palace said: "Her Majesty, Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales and the entire family are delighted and wish them well."

The Sussexes' baby will be the Prince of Wales' fifth grandchild and the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh's tenth or eleventh great-grandchild, depending on whether he or she arrives before or after Zara Tindall's baby, which is also due in 2021. He or

she will be eighth in line to the throne and entitled to be a Lord or Lady, but the duke and duchess are expected to again opt for Master, like Archie, or Miss, with the surname Mountbatten-Windsor.

Harry retained his place in the line of succession despite him and Meghan stepping back as senior royals in January last year, and dropping their HRH style. The Duke of York who was second in line when he was born in 1960, will move down to ninth place.

In November, Meghan disclosed the devastation the couple experienced after she had a miscarriage last summer. Writing in the New York Times, she

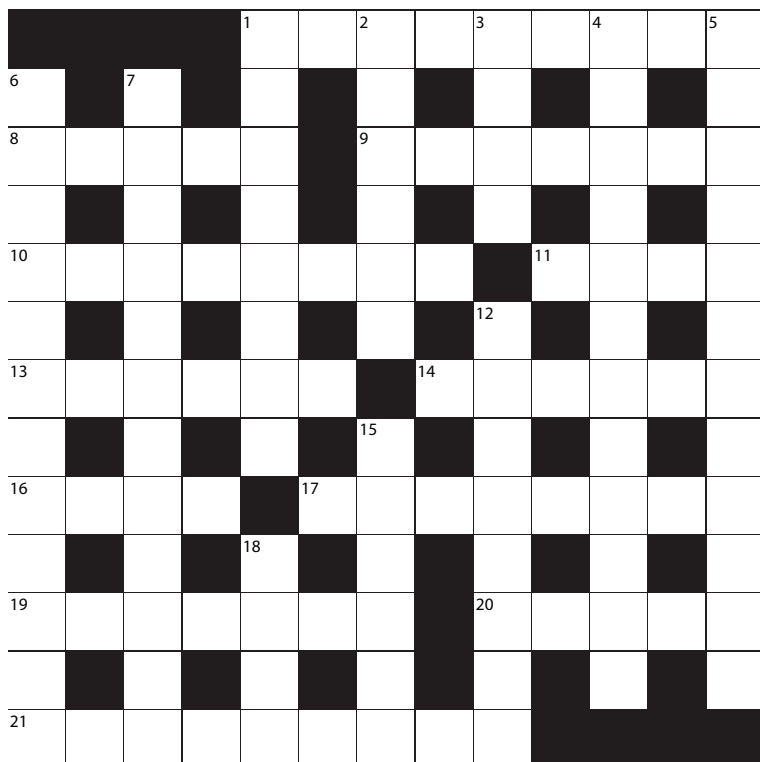
described how, as she was changing Archie's nappy at their home, that she "dropped to the floor" in pain. She wrote: "I knew, as I clutched my firstborn child, that I was losing my second."

Addressing the stigma surrounding miscarriage, Meghan continued: "Losing a child means carrying an almost unbearable grief, experienced by many but talked about by few."

Speculation that the duchess might be expecting a second child arose after she applied for and was granted a postponement of her privacy trial against the Mail on Sunday until the autumn for a "confidential" reason.



QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

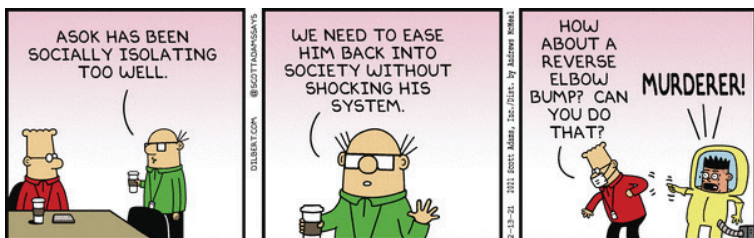
- 1 Properties of a space that determine how sound is transmitted (9)
- 8 Pull up (5)
- 9 Hot wind blowing from North Africa to southern Europe (7)
- 10 Like Janus? (3-5)
- 11 Having knowledge of (2,2)
- 13 Lamb or veal chop from behind the neck (6)
- 14 Work (6)
- 16 German car manufacturer, founded 1862 (4)
- 17 German motorway (8)
- 19 Slippery surface for recreation (3,4)
- 20 Fine net used in veils (5)
- 21 Make someone understand (3,6)

Down

- 1 Animal with long tongue that collects insects (8)
- 2 Thrown out (6)
- 3 Agricultural worker bound by the feudal system (4)
- 4 Miserable and beyond cheering up (12)
- 5 Fashionable upper-class young woman (6,6)
- 6 Anything happening? — hawking coots (anag) (5,7)
- 7 Old time corporal punishment (3,2,3,4)
- 12 Old time French dances (8)
- 15 Bird — bananas (6)
- 18 Thin plate (4)

DAILY COMICS

Dilbert



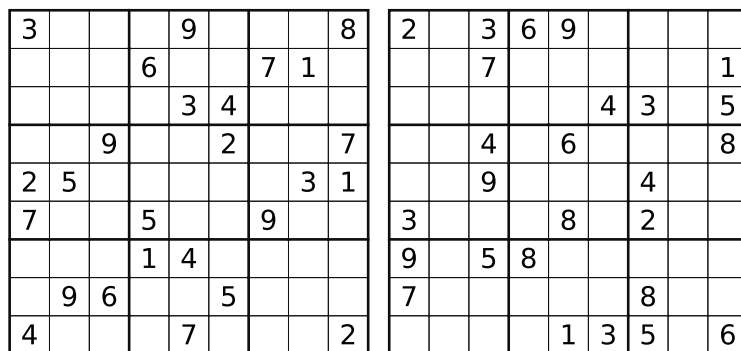
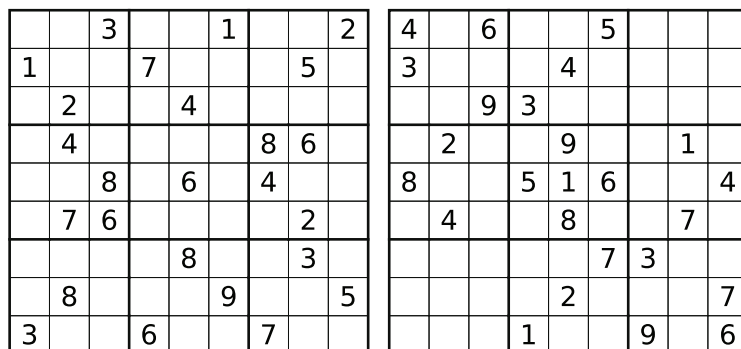
Garfield



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
02/15

83° Hi
74° Lo

DAY
Sun and some clouds with a stray shower
NIGHT
Partly cloudy with a shower in the area

Sunrise
6:34 AM

Sunset
6:09 PM

Moonrise
9:12 AM

Moonset
9:35 PM

TUE
02/16

82° Hi
75° Lo

DAY
Partly sunny with spotty showers
NIGHT
Patchy clouds with a shower in the area late

Sunrise
6:33 AM

Sunset
6:10 PM

Moonrise
9:47 AM

Moonset
10:22 PM

COMMUNITY NOTICES

THE CATHEDRAL AND PARISH OF ST. JOHN

Considering the current restrictions there will be no in-person worship at any of our parish churches for the next two weeks. We do apologise for any inconvenience.

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.

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

♈ ARIES | Mar. 21-Apr. 19

You are feeling super-sassy and full of great energy -- so get out there and mix it up in the real world. It's one of those days when adventure seems boring, and you need something even more exciting.

♉ TAURUS | Apr. 20-May 20

Reasserting yourself at work doesn't come naturally, but the cosmic energy today is pushing you to do just that. This could come across as abrupt to others, but this has been rumbling beneath the surface for you.

♊ GEMINI | May 21-June 20

Miscommunications can erupt but the universe is smoothing out this energy. You may be involved in a conversation online or social media, that ends up feeling challenging. You must share your values and beliefs in a public way.

♋ CANCER | June 21-July 22

Today's sweet trine between charming Venus in your erotic eighth house of intimacy, and the North Node in your secretive twelfth house of closure, feels undeniably fitting to your mysterious nature, and love for privacy.

♌ LEO | July 23-Aug. 22

A metaphysical spotlight is shining on your business relationships. It's time to revise which business relationships are worth keeping and which are no longer in alignment with where you envision your career to go.

♍ VIRGO | Aug. 23-Sept. 22

It's important to understand your limits in terms of your workload today. It can feel tempting to pile everything onto yourself, but it's important to remember to pace in order to take care of your wellbeing.

♎ LIBRA Sept. 23-Oct. 22

The energy of today can prompt you to make a positive tweak to a major creative project you've been involved in for some time. You may be asking yourself if you are in your authenticity.

♏ SCORPIO Oct. 23-Nov. 21

This is an important day for you. A recurring tense conversation can erupt in your place of work with a colleague. The good news is that the universe is on your side if you approach the situation with tact and authenticity.

♐ SAGITTARIUS | Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Hubba hubba. You know what you want and you're not afraid to go after it. Single or already attached, today's moon will ignite your love, passion, pleasure, and self-expression, bringing emotional emphasis to your themes.

♑ CAPRICORN | Dec. 22-Jan. 19

As a Saturn-ruled sign, let it be known that, if tested, you can react in a fiery way with Aries ruling over your emotional nature. Today, the Aries moon is forming a demanding aspect with Pluto in Capricorn in your first house of identity.

♒ AQUARIUS | Jan. 20-Feb. 18

The truth may set you free but it can also cause tension with others. This is completely okay, because you are meant to be in your authenticity when it comes to your life path and sharing your professional gifts with the world.

♓ PISCES | Feb. 19-Mar. 20

You can feel creatively motivated today. Taking a new approach to your work can give you a renewed sense of motivation. Your ruling planet, Neptune, is in your first house of self, encouraging you to dive deep.

CBH FUN FACTS 411

WORD SCRAMBLE

Focus areas of the Central Board of Health

aiesdsrlcon _____

pdlsoasi fo aedd _____

hlahte _____

inastontai _____

gudnblii Inpa _____

oof tyfeas _____

niefyheg _____

lsdio tewsa _____

iqiuld etwsa _____

rtwae laquiy _____

Central Board of Health
Upper Church Street
Tel: 562-9300 (Complaints Line)

Word Scramble created by Kenya Smith; EHA

Tell us what's happening in your community.

Submit community notices to news@pointville.ag



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LeBron warned for flopping

Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James and Kyle Kuzma received warnings from the NBA for violating the league's anti-flopping policy during their win against the Memphis Grizzlies Friday night.

The NBA confirmed the warnings in a series of tweets on Saturday afternoon. Implemented in 2012, the anti-flopping policy is meant to curb the unsportsmanlike practice known as flopping, according to the NBA.

The first offence results in a warning from the league, such as in the case of James and Kuzma. Further violation results in fines, as outlined by the league. Second fine \$5,000, third violation \$10,000, fourth violation \$15,000 and fifth \$50,000 fine.

The violation after the fifth is subject to NBA's discretion, which could result in more fines and/or suspensions. This is James first violation of the rule.



Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James and Kyle Kuzma

Nkrumah Bonner man of the series



Nkrumah Bonner

Nkrumah Bonner, named man of the series in the West Indies 2-0 win over Bangladesh, said players need to put a price on their wicket. The Jamaican's outstanding debut against Bangladesh saw him being awarded the best player in the series at the conclusion of the second and

final Test in Dhaka on Sunday.

Bonner's score of thirty-eight was the top score in the West Indies second innings of 117. Those runs proved to be crucial in helping the Caribbean men set a target of 231 that was good enough for the West Indies to pull off

a 17-run win.

Bonner accumulated 231 runs at an average of 57.75 during the series where he scored Test best of 86 and 90. He was also involved in match-changing partnerships for a West Indies team that was without their best players on tour.

Bonner said it was diffi-

cult adjusting to the conditions in Bangladesh. The Jamaican said it is quite similar to the Caribbean conditions, just that the wickets spin little bit more. Bonner said he spoke to seniors, who advised him that he had to patient and he decided to put a price on his wicket.

Cornwall man of the match



Rakeem 'Jimbo' Cornwall celebrates with teammates

The West Indies beat Bangladesh by seventeen runs in a trilling second Test in Mirpur, to complete a 2-0 series victory. Chasing 231 to draw the series,

Bangladesh slipped from 101-3 to 231 all out on the fourth evening.

Rakeem 'Jimbo' Cornwall took 4-174 in the match, and caught Mehedi Hasan at slip for the final wicket to end a promising stand of twenty-five. All

Bangladesh wickets fell to spin, with Kraig Brathwaite claiming 3-25 and Jomel Warrican 3-47.

Brathwaite was leading an understrength West Indies side, missing ten players—including captain Jason Holder—who opted out of the tour because of

coronavirus concerns.

Scores in the match:

West Indies: 409 (Da Silva 92, Bonner 90, Alzarri 82) and 117)

Bangladesh: 296 (Liton 71, Cornwall 5-74) and 213 (Tamim 50, Cornwall 4-105)

West Indies win by 17 runs.

DEWS



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