



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

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ROBINSON WINS BIG IN THE HIGH COURT

SEE PAGE 3



Congratulations to Mahalia King and Hope Lynch on their outstanding achievements

LOCAL STUDENTS PLACE IN
INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE EXAMINATION

PAGE 14

M BROWNE SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY

The following is a letter printed in Stabroeknews.com of Guyana of 24th March, 2021. The letter, written by Conrad Barrow, tagged "PM Browne seized the opportunity," offers commendations on Prime Minister Browne's response to Public Health England falsely labelling a COVID-19 variant as an Antiguan variant.

Dear Editor,
Prime Minister (PM) of Antigua and Barbuda, the honourable Gaston Browne, has set a standard of excellence that should be emulated by all the leaders in the Caribbean and further afield. News had circulated that an Antiguan variant of Covid-19 was discovered by Public Health England (PHE). Browne quickly challenged those claims by stating that officials of the Antiguan Ministry of Health had contacted representatives of the PHE – an executive

body of the Department of Health and Social Care in the United Kingdom – who admitted that they erred in referring to the twin-island nation as responsible for infecting citizens of the U.K. with the variant.

PM Browne wrote to many U.K. and Caribbean media outlets that were disseminating the story which had originated from the PHE website. The P.M. said that the story evolved from a family of five who had vacationed in Antigua but he wrote in his letters that 32 days had elapsed since they had shown negative results for infection by the pandemic. This was much longer than the incubation period of 14 days. He also stated that daily tests were conducted on material from Antigua by reliable external agencies and they found no variant arising from Antigua. He assured the media that Antigua and Barbuda employs strict Covid-19 measures and

is one of the safest places in the world with low rates of infection and a high rate of recovery.

The coup de grace by the P.M. was to pen a letter to Prime Minister of the U.K. Boris Johnson. He congratulated Johnson on his government's success in swiftly and successfully administering vaccines. He spoke of his government's similar success which was boosted by a considerable gift of vaccines from India. He highlighted the tardiness in receiving vaccines from the COVAX provision although his government had already paid for them. He highlighted his government's futile efforts to buy vaccines from major suppliers whose supplies were insufficient because of over-purchasing by rich countries. Nevertheless, he was able to boast of his country's low number of infections and high rate of recoveries.

In his letter, Browne made it clear that tour-

ism is his country's major industry and it was severely impacted by the PHE's posting of "an Antiguan variant" of the coronavirus being discovered in the U.K. He stated that this forced his government to borrow, which would plunge his country's economy into greater peril. He reminded Johnson that it was one of the U.K's major agencies which had inflicted the blow to the twin island's economy, therefore he was requesting a donation of 100,000 doses of the Astra-Zeneca vaccines for his country's citizenry. Many countries may not experience a similar situation and be able to use it as an opportunity to make something good out of it. Good work PM Browne! Let's hope that your request is heeded and that the vaccines will make your people strong and revive your economy.

Faithfully,
Conrad Barrow

ROBINSON WINS BIG IN THE HIGH COURT



Wendel Robinson

Former Commissioner of Police, Wendel Robinson, has scored a major legal victory against the government over the manner in which he was relieved of his position nearly four years ago.

A ruling handed down by High Court Justice Ann-Marie Smith found that the appointment of the current Commissioner of Police (COP) Atlee Rodney is unlawful, null and void and that the termination of the former commissioner, Wendel Robinson, was also unlawful, null and void.

Robinson explained that except for constitutional reliefs, the Court agreed and declared everything else in the reliefs sought.

The former commissioner had filed a Constitutional motion in the High Court, claiming that the manner of his termination was unlawful and had infringed on his Constitutional and other rights.

In his June 2020 declaration, Robinson told the Court that his termination as Commissioner was unlawful, null and void and infringed his constitution-

al rights; that the decision to strip him of his pension rights and gratuity was unlawful and unconstitutional; that the decision to remove him was unreasonable and motivated by bad faith or improper purposes and breached the rules of natural justice.

He also declared that it was unconstitutional for him to be deprived of having his appeal heard before the Public Service Board; and that it was unconstitutional, unlawful, ultra vires, null and void to appoint Rodney as the new commis-

sioner in light of how he was terminated.

Rodney was made Police Commissioner in February 2020, three months after Robinson was terminated, stripped of his rank, his pension, gratuity and other allowances that he would have accumulated during thirty-two years and ten months of service in the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda.

Attempts to reach Attorney General and Legal Affairs Minister Steadroy Benjamin for reaction proved futile.

PM WANTS AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF THE YACHTING SECTOR

Prime Minister Gaston Browne said he will recommend to Cabinet the setting up of a special Cabinet sub-committee to look into ways to derive more benefits from the yachting sector to boost the local economy. PM Browne made the point during a presentation ceremony Thursday when members of the Antigua Investment Group (AIG) which operates the Falmouth Harbour Marina raised certain concerns regarding the sector and its role as part of the tourism industry. AIG Chairman Sir Gerald Watt reported that his group wants to extend one of its docks by a further three hundred feet at a cost of some six million dollars. But more than a year after, the group has not received the necessary permits to undertake the expansion. "We do not think that the yachting sector is being treated the way it ought to; it is being treated like the stepchild of tourism and that has to change. The yachting sector was the only sector operating for the past year with the COVID-19 pandemic. The airlines stopped, the sea-ports closed but the yachts came and at one time there were some three hundred yachts moored around Antigua, buying provisions and keeping the economy ticking," he stated.

The businessman suggested to the prime minister that such a lengthy delay in getting the approval from government agencies was unacceptable. "The Cabinet will have to take a look on how we can streamline these processes as one of the criticisms that we have received is about the length of time it takes for the approvals," he declared. Sir Gerald said the AIG anticipates that when the pandemic is over that the yachting sector will see a big rebound and that his group wants to ensure that it is ready to welcome the yachts when that happens. PM Browne said he too sees the value of the yachting sector and he intends to recommend the establishment of the Cabinet sub-committee, headed by the tourism minister "to see how we can make the sector more viable and contribute to the GDP." He noted too that the sector has shown much resilience during the pandemic and it helped keep the economy afloat when the other sectors were closed. "I am sure there are lots of opportunities to be exploited and we have to look to position the sector to make a greater contribution towards the socio-economic situation of Antigua and Barbuda," he remarked.



FALMOUTH HARBOUR MARINA DONATES \$75,000 TOWARDS VACCINE PURCHASE



AIG Chairman Sir Gerald Watt (C)- General Manager, Robert Reis (L) and Prime Minister Gaston Browne (R)

More members of the business community are answering the call to help with the government's vaccine purchase programme launched by the prime minister earlier this month.

The latest to come forward to donate to this national cause is the Antigua Investment Group Ltd. (AIG), operators of Falmouth Harbour Marina. AIG Chairman Sir Gerald Watt, and General Manager, Robert Reis presented a cheque of \$75,000.00 towards the government's vaccine purchase programme.

Antigua Investment Group Limited it is the first locally owned company that operates a marina in Antigua and Barbuda and it has been operating for twenty-five years.

During the presentation ceremony, Chairman AIG said, "Mr. Prime Minister we are particularly pleased to present this cheque in the sum of \$75,000.00 to your vaccine drive. We do so because we are very pleased with the way in which the health people have proceeded to deal with this matter in the face of much criticism, not all of it sensible. We also are pleased with the way in which you have shouldered the responsibility and the active way in which you have proceeded to source vaccines rather than sitting back and hoping for the best. And as I have said before, you have done so amongst grave criticism." Sir Gerald continued by stating, "We would like to have made a larger contribution but we have suffered a sixty per cent drop in

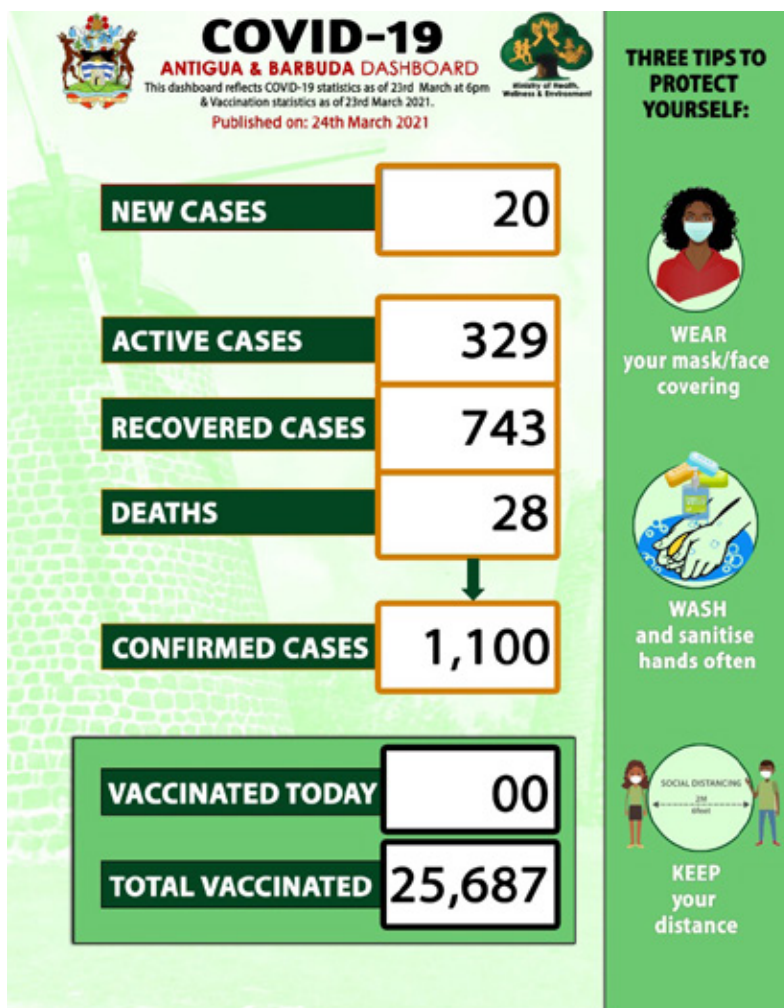
the last year so we are not going to have a profit this year or if so, very little, but we are standing ready to help in some other way as we have done in the past."

In accepting the timely contribution, Prime Minister Gaston Browne said, "I take this opportunity to give thanks on behalf of the government and people of Antigua and Barbuda for this very generous contribution from the Antigua Investment Group that is doing business as the Falmouth Harbour Marina. \$75,000 is a sizeable contribution and is certainly among the size of the other contribution we have received. So we are very appreciative of it and we know it comes at a very difficult time during a period of COVID where you would have seen a reduction in your revenue by about sixty per cent. So the fact that you are making such a sizeable contribution demonstrates your commitment and certainly your social responsibility to the people of Antigua and Barbuda. We hope that other companies will follow your lead."

According to Robert 'Bobby' Reis, General Manager for Falmouth Harbour Marina, this donation represents the company's culture of strong corporate social responsibility. Reis explained that during the height of the pandemic in 2020, the company prepared and delivered food packages to families in need and single-parent families for six months.



20 NEW COVID-19 CASES



WORLDWIDE STATS

CONFIRMED CASES 123,902,242
NEW CASES 461,606
DEATHS 2,727,837

Government of Antigua & Barbuda
Ministry of Health, Wellness & Environment
High & Long Streets
St. John's, Antigua.

Contact us if you are exhibiting symptoms
COVID-19 HOTLINE 462-6843 | COVID@MSJMC.ORG

The most recent report received by the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment from the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) has revealed twenty (20) new laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda as of Tuesday 23rd March 2021 at 6pm. These new cases were as a result of one hundred and sixteen (116) samples processed by CARPHA. Twenty-eight (28) recovered cases have been recorded bringing the total to seven hundred and forty-three (743). Consequently, the total number of persons with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda is eleven hundred (1100); which is inclusive of three hundred and twenty-nine (329) active cases. Meanwhile, the total number of individuals vaccinated remains at twenty five thousand six hundred and eighty-seven (25,687).

The dashboard has been updated to reflect these changes.

Two parliamentary select committees established



The House of Representatives has set up two separate select committees to look into two pieces of legislation that were brought to the Parliament for debate.

However, in one case, Attorney General Steadroy Benjamin reported to the House that he had held prior discussions with the Leader of the Opposition and the representative for Barbuda about withdrawing the legislation – the Hemp Bill – and to subject it to a select committee for

a detailed study before bringing back to the House for debate.

He explained that there are much technical aspects of the bill and it was felt that it needed more discussions and understanding before being passed into law.

Benjamin will head the committee which will also comprise the Leader of the Opposition, Jamal Pringle, Barbuda representative, Trevor Walker, St Mary's South Representative, Samantha Marshall and the

representative from St John's City East, Melford Nicholas.

In the other matter, Benjamin also moved to withdraw the Criminal Proceedings (Trial By Judge Alone) Bill after Pringle protested vehemently about the inadequate time given to peruse the bill before having to debate it in the House. He complained that bills for debate are circulated too late for the members to carry out proper research in preparation for debates.

The Attorney General accepted that the bill was a critically important matter that ought to be fully discussed beyond the walls of Parliament amongst stakeholders and members of the public.

He sought and received the approval of the House to appoint the second committee that he will also chair and which will include Pringle, Walker, Marshall and the St John's Rural South representative, Daryl Matthew.

Airport Authority foregoes revenue to help struggling businesses



By Shelton Daniel

The CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority (ABAA) says the high hopes for a return to normality in 2021 quickly

gave way to a reality check that the challenges posed by COVID-19 last year have actually become more complicated. Euletta Francis was the

guest Thursday morning on PointeFM's Starting Pointe programme. She told the host that while the ABAA was for the time being managing to sustain the public sector policy of not letting go any of its employees, she was not sure if this could be maintained past the middle of this year, should the situation not improve.

"I think everyone looked at 2021 as being the year of recovery, but I think we are now seeing that 2021

is really a lot more volatile," she opined.

Francis said with commercial flights from the UK completely suspended due to the pandemic, "We're now completely dependent on the American market, and luckily for us the American carriers are still flying in. The numbers vary from day to day, but it's certainly not enough to carry us as we would have wished throughout this year."

She is however hold-



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ing on to optimism that things will change for the better before staff redundancies become unavoidable, given that the human resource payroll accounts for the biggest chunk of ABAA's operating expenses.

"We're still not at the point where we are ready to make that decision to do any lay-offs. I think for us it may be by mid-year if there is no change in what's going on. That might be where we would look, but we're not at that point yet," the CEO explained.

Francis disclosed that, "The major expense for us here at the airport is salaries and the loan that we have. Last year we entered into negotiations or renegotiations with our lender and we got a moratorium for nine months [which] ended in February. In January we went back to the table and negotiated a further one-year moratorium where we are paying interest only. As a result of that, not having the burden of a loan, we have been able to continue paying staff both from some of the revenues we're getting and from our reserves."

She would go on to elaborate that by "reserves" she did not mean tapping into savings that the ABAA has stashed away,

but by reallocating funds previously budgeted for other purposes, mainly "capital works" that could be held in abeyance for the time being.

Illustrating how COVID-19 descended like a surprise fowler of the ABAA's fortunes, Francis recalled that in "the first quarter of 2020 we realised our highest growth revenues in ten years ... we were really excited ... 2019 was a good year and [2020] was shaping up to be an even better year, so we were very excited about the future [until] the pandemic came around."

Giving details, she said "2020 ended with our gross revenues down approximately seventy per cent [below] 2019. [During] the latter part of the year, we saw an increase ... By November, I think, we were up twenty per cent over November [2019]. December ended not too badly as well, but toward the end of December was where we really started seeing a decline again."

Francis said the decline in passengers also depleted the ABAA of a large amount of money which is classified under the heading of aeronautical revenue that accounts for eighty-five per cent the airport's revenue. Aero-

nautical fees include airport taxes and charges levied on departing passengers, as well as the landing and parking fees, service and maintenance charges applied to aircraft utilising the facility.

She said non-aeronautical fees made up the other fifteen per cent of the ABAA's revenue, but this has also been depleted because of a compassionate decision to reduce some of the rent charged to concession vendors operating various shops within the airport.

"While the majority of

those operations are still [in business], what we have had to do as an airport authority is to support the community [by] providing a number of waivers so that at the end of the day, the community as a whole does not suffer. We didn't want to see all the stores in the airport close, or some of the small annex operations having to close their doors because they have to pay us rent ... That is another of the reasons for our revenue being down," CEO Francis stated.

To: The Commissioner of Police
Police Headquarters
American Road
St. Antigua.

To: Your Worship
St Johns Magistrate Court
Gray's Farm
St. Johns
Antigua.

Dear Sir/ Madame,
Re: Notice- Application
for Tavern Licence

I, Ekaterini Kampouroglou of Old Road, with registered business situate at Jolly Harbour in St. Marys Antigua and Barbuda
DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that it is our intention to apply at the next Sitting of the liquor licensing Court to be held at the Magistrate's Court, Gray's Farm, St. John's, Antigua on Thursday 1st April, 2021 next ensuring for a Liquor Licensing Pursuant to section (11) (5) of the Licensing (intoxication Liquor) Act Cap. 249 of the laws of Antigua and Barbuda 1992 Revised Edition, in respect of premises known as **"Karnagio"** situated at Jolly Harbour in the parish of St. John, Antigua and Barbuda. Tel# 770 2731

Dated the 15th day
of March, 2021

To: The Commissioner of Police
Police Headquarters
American Road
St. Antigua.

To: Your Worship
St Johns Magistrate Court
Gray's Farm
St. Johns
Antigua.

Dear Sir/ Madame,

Re: Notice- Application
for Bottle Licence

I, Ekaterini Kampouroglou of Old Road, with registered business situate at Jolly Harbour in St. Marys Antigua and Barbuda
DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that it is our intention to apply at the next Sitting of the liquor licensing Court to be held at the Magistrate's Court, Gray's Farm, St. John's, Antigua on Thursday 1st April, 2021 next ensuring for a Liquor Licensing Pursuant to section (11) (5) of the Licensing (intoxication Liquor) Act Cap. 249 of the laws of Antigua and Barbuda 1992 Revised Edition, in respect of premises known as **"Thestia"** situated at Jolly Harbour in the parish of St. John, Antigua and Barbuda. Tel# 770 2731

Dated the 15th day
of March, 2021

RETURN OF CRUISE SHIPS SHOULD *pose no added peril – Minister Nicholas*

By **Shelton Daniel**

Cabinet this week discussed the possibility of entering into fixed contractual arrangements between visiting cruise ships and the Mount St. John's Medical Centre (MSJMC).

This would be in the event of passengers falling ill and requiring hospitalisation that is beyond the capacity of the ships' on-board medical facilities. During the weekly post-Cabinet media briefing on Thursday morning, Information Minister Melford Nicholas responded to a reporter's question about whether the MSJMC would be up to that challenge, given the pressures already placed on it by the COVID-19 pandemic. The reporter wanted to know whether the MSJMC would have the capacity to accommodate and sustain such an arrangement, seeing the hospital's medical director had previously described the

healthcare facility as being stretched to breaking point in having to deal with all the urgent demands placed on its resources – such as the barely-sufficient doctors and nurses available. Said Minister Nicholas in response: "One of the positive indications that the Ministry of Health would have reported yesterday is that the number of persons within the

hospital facility has in fact reduced now to a manageable level, and they are seeing [fewer] persons present themselves in the emergency room for consideration of treatment for COVID." Noting that the current situation represents a marked "improvement than it was four or five weeks ago," Nicholas said the arrangement between the MSJMC and the cruise ships

"has a lot to do with built-in contingencies ... The way that the risk is managed is that the cruise lines themselves are not only ensuring that persons are presenting themselves for travel with negative PCR tests, but they are also ensuring that these persons are effectively vaccinated." According to the minister, the likeli-



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FORM P7

**THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN
SUPREME COURT**
**IN THE HIGH COURT
OF JUSTICE**
**ANTIGUA AND
BARBUDA**

ANUHPB 2021/

In the Estate of **ROLAND PRINCE**,
late of Liberta Village,
St. Paul, Antigua, Deceased.

ADVERTISEMENT OF
APPLICATION FOR GRANT
FIRST PUBLICATION

TAKE NOTICE that an Application has been filed by **ROLANDA PRINCE**, of Bolans Village, St. Mary's Antigua, for a Grant of Letters of Administration to the Applicant who is the lawful daughter, and lawful Attorney of one of the children, of the deceased, the deceased having died intestate on the 16th day of July, 2016.

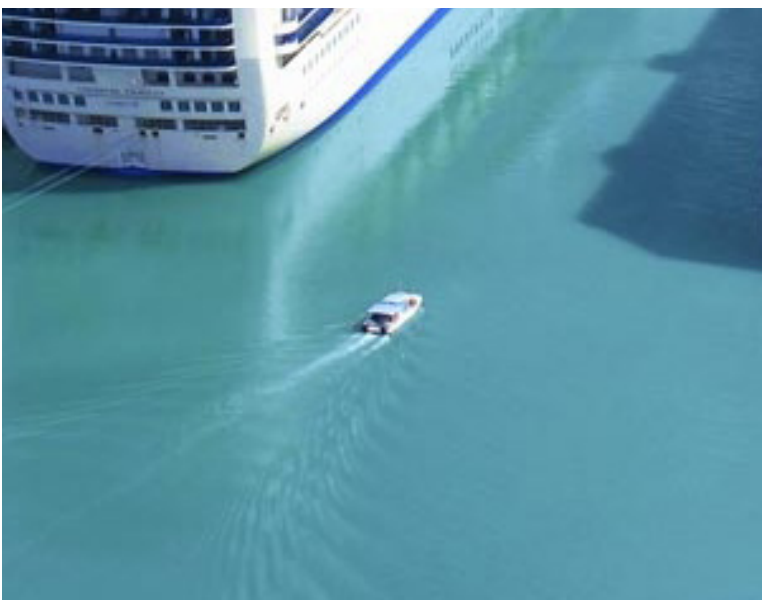
Any person having an objection to the grant of Letters of Administration to the Applicant shall file an objection within fourteen (14) days of the publication of this Notice.

Dated the 25th day
of March, 2021

TALIA N. DACOSTA
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW
STAPLETON CHAMBERS

hood of people becoming sick with COVID in such a scenario would be considerably minimised. He further pointed out that the arrangement would be a precautionary measure for travellers in the event of any health contingency and not COVID alone. "It could be for a mild heart attack where the facilities may not be on-ship to be able to do that; so this is still part of the product that we are offering here for our tourism industry." Nicholas added that the probability of the MSJMC becoming overwhelmed by situations emanating from aboard cruise ships is improbable "based

on the precautions that have been put in place." He also clarified that there will be no relaxation of the protocols for visitors who have been vaccinated and submit proof upon arrival. "Our position is still that persons who arrive here and would need to be involved with the population, would still need to present a PCR negative test. Inoculation [with] a worthy vaccine is welcomed, but we are still going to apply the quarantine protocols until more effective studies are in to give reason to change those particular protocols."





CAMPUS COUNCIL OF UWI FIVE ISLANDS CAMPUS MEETS TODAY

The University of the West Indies (The UWI) Five Islands Campus is hosting its Campus Council Meeting today. This is the second consecutive year that the Campus Council meeting is being hosted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The theme for the 2019/2020 Annual Report, to be presented at the Council Meeting by Pro Vice-Chancellor and

Campus Principal, Professor Densil A. Williams, is The Access Revolution.

The Campus Council is the highest decision-making body of the Campus and will be presided over by Chairman of The UWI Five Islands Campus Council, Mr. Aziz Ha-deed.

The virtual meeting will be attended by delegates from ministries of education particularly those

from the OECS, The University of the West Indies, UWI Alumni and Guild of Students.

The first segment of the morning session will be opened to invited guests, the public and the regional media, and streamed live on the UWItv's website www.uwivt.org and Facebook page. Chairman Ha-deed, Professor Williams, and Professor Sir Hilary Beckles,

Vice-Chancellor of The UWI will address the public session.

Professor Williams report as Principal, entitled "Going for Growth: Entrenching the Access Revolution," will review the first full academic year of The UWI's fifth campus. The report will highlight the access being offered by the Five Islands Campus to higher education in the OECS, the campus' response to the COVID-19 pandemic and growth and development over the 2019/2020 academic year. The Principal will also outline key upcoming projects for the campus.

A media conference will follow the public session presentations. In the closed segment, thereafter, the meeting will receive and discuss the campus' Financial Statements, the biennium budget and report from the Guild of Students.

COVID-19: Safety Tip on PUBLIC TRANSPORT

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- 3** After making contact with other people
- 4** Before touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- 5** When you arrive at your destination

ATB
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA TRANSPORT BOARD
A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board

YOUNG LAWYER

fulfils lifelong ambition



Arnelle Michael

An attorney who was called to the Bar this week said becoming a lawyer has been a lifelong ambition for her.

Arnelle Michael was called to the Bar of the Eastern Supreme Court of Antigua and Barbuda on Tuesday. Her application was brought by Gail A.J. Christian and seconded by C. Debra Burnette. Deputy Solicitor General Carla Brookes-Harris was also present at the bar table to support the application. "I cannot remember ever answering the question what do

you want to be when you grow up any differently than – 'a lawyer.' What first sparked my interest, I cannot say but I like to attribute it to my parents' insistence that I 'make a case' for any request," Michael told the court during the presentation.

She said she recognizes that law has its limitations but that she feels motivated by its attempts to create a more perfect society. "Whatever the real catalyst, I have wanted to be an attorney for as long as I can remember and



while my interest in the law has evolved over time, I have always appreciated the law's imperfect attempt to assign clear responsibilities, duties, rights and obligations on us all as members of society, to somehow achieve equality and better yet, equity," she offered.

Michael completed her legal studies at Kingston University, London where she attained First Class LLB (Hons) Law. She also won the Dean's Prize, Gold Kingston

Award, The John Selley Memorial Book Prize, Top Performer in Contract Law, Overall Top Performer in First and Second Year. She did her Bar Professional Training Course (VC) at the University of Law, London where she attained a Master of Laws in Bar Practice (LLM) (Distinction).

Arnelle Michael is the daughter of Lionel Michael and his wife Juliet Michael. She is now an associate at the Chambers of Gail A.J. Christian.

LOCAL STUDENTS PLACE IN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE EXAMINATION



Two students of the Sir Novell Richards Academy (SNRA) have been successful at an international language examination.

The announcement from SNRA was made in a social media post by the school's administration this week. "Two of SNRA's students sat and attained success at the HSK Level 2 Examinations. Accordingly, the Principal, Deputy Principal, and staff of our school would like to extend the warmest congratulations to Mahalia King and Hope Lynch on their outstanding achievements. We are so proud of you!"

According to the school, the significance of this accomplishment is noteworthy and went on to explain the intricacies of the exam. "HSK is an International Standardized Chinese Language Proficiency Examination. It assesses student language usage proficiency in

their professional and academic lives." SNRA officially opened on November 24th 2017, on the birthday of its name sake -Sir Novelle Richards. Sir Novelle Richards was a former parliamentarian and the composer of the lyrics of the Antigua and Barbuda National Anthem. The school was completed in three months and is the newest secondary school added to the fleet of government-funded secondary schools on the island.

According to Cabinet notes, "Construction on the annex to the Sir Novelle Richards Academy will begin at the end of the month. The building materials and other supplies have been purchased. The Italian philanthropist has provided a significant portion of the EC\$4,000,000 and will complete the gifted amount in tranches as the structure progresses. The philanthropist selected the

construction company of his choosing."

At SNRA, the modern languages programme is a core component of the school's cultural tapestry and diversity. "We firmly believe that programmes like modern languages are a "gateway" and "highway," literally introducing our students to infinite opportunities and possibilities for personal, professional, and cultural enrichment," the school's administration posted online. They continued by stating, "Mahalia and Hope's Mandarin teacher, Kurtice Thomas, is elated at their impressive performance. Indeed, given the numerous and enormous challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, their resolve and tenacity to surmount the limitations of remote learning and succeed are admirable."

No, the idea of CARICOM is not dead



By Sir Ronald Sanders

(The writer is Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the United States and the Organization of American States. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at the University of London and Massey College in the University of Toronto. The views expressed are entirely his own)

A commentary, published on March 8 by Camillo Gonsalves, a Minister of the Government of St Vincent and

the Grenadines, was headlined "Every Island for itself". The first line was unequivocal in stating that "The idea of CARICOM died on December 16, 2020".

Camillo Gonsalves is a Caribbean man, and an integrationist. Only deep frustration could have occasioned his decision to publish the commentary on his blogsite. In the event, his remarks prompted a series of questions to me from Johnson Johnrose, a Caribbean journalist of known repute. I reproduce below the questions he

posed and my answers.

Q. Do you agree that the idea of CARICOM - the principle of solidarity, the ethos of all for one, and one for all - has died? Why?

A. The 'idea' of CARICOM is not dead. The 'dream' of a more perfect union is not lost. The idea and the dream are too basic to our future for them to be abandoned. CARICOM as a whole is extremely rich in natural and human resources, but individual member countries are weak and vulnerable. In the international community, individual countries have little or no bargaining power; only when they act collectively do they have any strength. Fourteen votes collectively have a modicum of power; one vote, backed by no military might or economic clout, is by itself of little value.

Q. What's your greatest concern about the future of the move-

ment?

A. That only the demands of survival, resulting from disaster, will cause leaders of the individual countries to recognize that the 'sovereignty' to which they cling is only exercised against each other; it is meaningless in the global power theatre where powerful countries and regions dictate their relationships. Leaders should see the disaster looming in Climate Change and its threats to the very existence of islands and mainland territories with low lying coasts, to agriculture, to tourism, and to human habitats. Lack of individual capacity is evident in each country's inability to respond robustly to pandemics, such as COVID-19. None of them has large enough populations or enough money to compete with richer nations that have bought the available vaccines, depriving the rest of the world.

Q. CARICOM has endured a lot of internal strife but has managed to survive, could it be that the issue of Venezuela's sovereignty will be what destroys the movement?

It is not Venezuela per se that has caused division and conflicting positions in CARICOM. The real cause is dependency. Some CARICOM countries depended on Venezuela for oil and ran up a large debt in deferred payments; others depend on the US and Canada for aid, markets, and help with borrowing. When CARICOM countries recognize that they could be less dependent on external forces and less obliged if they pool their resources and their sovereignty, they will be more independent in their decisions and action. This same argument applies to the cruise ship industry and to foreign airlines which play them off against each other, resulting in less revenues to each of them and greater advantage to the airlines

and cruise operators.

Q. Why didn't Antigua and Barbuda join Trinidad and Tobago in seek boycotting the OAS until Guaido is removed? Trinidad and Tobago has not boycotted the OAS 'until Guaido's representative is removed'. Trinidad and Tobago is an active member of the OAS. Eleven of the 14 independent countries of CARICOM at the OAS do not recognize Guaido or his representative's legitimacy in the OAS. These 11 countries, including Antigua and Barbuda, do not recognize Guaido's representative or his vote or participation in any decision making in the OAS. Jamaica, the Bahamas and Haiti do deal with Guaido's representative – this latter point was what motivated Gonsalves' blog.

Q. How do you feel about CARICOM's current path?

A. It is not good for the autonomy of individual states in the international community. Such autonomy as they enjoy is being eroded. Economical-

ly, unless the leadership - at both the political and business levels - acknowledge that their markets are puny and their production minuscule in global terms, and that integrating their markets and production would strengthen each of them as integral parts of a larger, more competitive unit (in terms of raising money on better term and bargaining for better terms of trade) the current path will weaken each of them still further.

Perhaps the truth is that they all know that, ultimately, they need CARICOM which is why none have left it, and none have chosen to destroy it. It may well be that those who encourage the notion of their own vehicle, keep the engine of the CARICOM bus running because they know that they will need to board it to drive to salvation.

I understand Camillo Gonsalves frustration. I share it. But I also know that we cannot pronounce CARICOM dead. Its lifeblood continues to pump in

the veins of Caribbean people everywhere who long for a single region in which they can travel freely on one passport, move to jobs, set up businesses anywhere in the region, just like the people of the 50 states of the United States do.

The imperatives of survival rest not in separateness but in togetherness where the bounty of the region is shared by all in a truly integrated single area., and where standing together in the international community gives the Caribbean solid meaning. This does not mean giving up national identity; it means recognizing that we can also benefit from a Caribbean identity - just as people from Texas are Texans and Americans; and people from Italy are Italians and Europeans, so too we can be Jamaicans, Barbadians, Antiguan and yet be Caribbean.

Responses and previous commentaries: www.sirronald-sanders.com

Sir Denis Byron Speaks on behalf of Appointed UWI Commission

The issues surrounding the completion and publication of a report into the governance structure of the University of the West Indies by a Commission appointed by the university's Chancellor, has been the subject of much discussion throughout the region. Last week, PointeXpress newspaper published an article penned by Barbados CARICOM Ambassador, David Commissions that raised a number of issues. In the interest of fairness and balance, we publish the following penned by the Chairman of the Commission, Sir Denis Byron



Sir Dennis Byron

It is customary for the Chancellor of the University of the West Indies (UWI) to appoint every ten years to undertake a review of the governance and structure of the university to identify ways in which the university can address challenges and institute the necessary changes to maintain its viability and

standing as the premier regional tertiary educational institution in the Caribbean.

On the 14th December, Chancellor Robert Bermudez appointed a Commission headed by the Rt. Hon. Sir Denis Byron (former President of the Caribbean Court of Justice) and a permanent judge and President of the United Nations International

Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). The other members of the Commission included:

- Mr. Richard Byles – Governor of the Bank of Jamaica
- Ms. Angela Hamel-Smith – Judge of the Industrial Court of Trinidad & Tobago
- Prof. E. Nigel Harris – Vice Chancellor Emeritus, UWI
- Dr. Dida-

cus Jules – Director General OECS, former Registrar CXC and former Permanent Secretary for Education (Grenada and St. Lucia)

- Sir Elliott Mottley QC – Distinguished jurist, former Attorney General (Bermuda), former President of the Court of Appeal (Belize) and Former President of the Court of Appeal (Turks & Caicos)

- Mr. Darion Narine – then President of the InterCampus Guild Council

- Dr. Beverly Pereira – distinguished Legislative Drafter and former University Counsel, UWI

- Mrs. Jacqueline Sharp – UWI Alumni Association and former President and CEO of Scotia Group Jamaica

The Terms of Reference provided to the Commission by the Chancellor required that it “examine the performance of The UWI in relation to its Objects as stated in Clause 2(a) and 2(b) of the 1972 Charter, including its management practices and its features of transparency and accountability within the University system and make recommendations and report thereon to the Chancellor”.

As indicated, The UWI Chancellor’s Commission on Governance (2018) is not the first Chancellor’s Commission appointed to review the University’s governance structure. Periodic reviews are critical, as failure to treat with

ance and diligence in a substantial and timely fashion can place the University at risk. Such reviews were conducted in 1982, 1992, and 2004.

Sponsored

The recommendations made by the various Commissions aim to respond to the internal and external challenges and circumstances of the current times. The purpose of the 2018 governance review is to ensure that the University’s governance and structure can ably support the requirement for oversight, accountability, agility and sustainability of the university in the dynamic space and time where it resides regionally.

In the execution of its mandate, the Commission undertook broad and extensive consultations across the region with all key internal and external stakeholders. These consultations included the use of focus groups, online surveys, and town hall meetings with students, academic and administrative staff, executive management, UWI Alumni, ministerial representatives of

contributing countries and the general public. The Commission also read voluminously all the Reports of previous Commissions as well as other institution reports of The UWI.

In July 2020, the 142-page Report of the Commission was officially presented to the Chancellor together with two well detailed annex documents: one containing key reference documents integral to the conclusions of the Commission (730 pages) and the other describing how its consultations were conducted, and the analytics of the feedback received.

The UWI, Chancellor’s Commission (2018) Report including its annexes and the abbreviated Power Point version used for the Presentation to the Council were publicly released on the University’s website <https://www.uwi.edu/chancellorscommission/>, and internally disseminated.

Following the acceptance of the Report by Chancellor Bermudez, the findings and recommendations of the Commission were presented

to a Virtual Meeting of the University Council held in January 2021.

Since the meeting of Council, the Commission has noted with increasing concern what appears to be an orchestrated campaign that, in the first instance, has conflated its findings and recommendations with matters related to the tenure of the Vice Chancellor and has proceeded to impute improper motives to our work that are neither reflective of the Terms of Reference nor the conclusions of our work. It is evident that time has not been taken to carefully and objectively read the Report of the Commission itself, and it appears that some persons are selectively taking issue with conclusions that have been consequently distorted.

Some of the structural and systemic governance issues identified in the report have existed and remained unchanged for a while and did not originate with anyone in the current administrative system. The Commission has recommended changes in inefficient systems

and processes that pre-date the current administration and therefore is not seeking to target any individuals. It should be emphatically stated that the recommendations of the Commission specifically state that the central features of The UWI's academic governance are consistent with internationally accepted standards.

The recommendations are aimed at strengthening administrative governance structures and buttressing the financial sustainability of the University at a time when regional Governments and working people face deep financial constraints. A careful reading of the recommendations with respect to the financing formulas would show that the Commission explored recommendations and ratios that have emerged

from within the Academy itself. Further, using these said ratios, the report proposes mechanisms to lessen the impact of such changes on persons who might not otherwise be able to afford a university education. Further problems identified in governance included the lack of performance of Council in its own oversight of the University's operations and there are recommendations to address this and other issues that will mitigate conflict of commitment and conflict of interest across the University's operations.

At no time has the Chancellor engaged with the Commission or sought to direct its work in any manner other than by his provision of the terms of reference on the appointment of the Commission. We express the strongest dis-

pleasure at the insinuations and in some cases the overt personal attacks—some laced with racial invective—directed at the Chancellor and reject these unfounded allegations that he influenced our work and inquiry in any way.

The future of The UWI is a matter of the utmost urgent public importance and we encourage everyone to go online and carefully read the Report of the Commission for themselves to make their own determination of the rectitude of its recommendations and not rely on third party interpretations, or anecdotal information of what was actually written.

The Commission welcomes the public scrutiny and debate that its conclusions and recommendations have generated but urges that this

discussion be conducted in a sober de-personalized manner that focuses on the institution, its sustainability, and what is required not simply to assure its survival but its resilience in a world that has become extraordinarily volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. The UWI is faced with deep structural and governance challenges that threaten its viability, its capacity to maintain and further improve its standards and its continuing ability to facilitate Caribbean development. In such a context, only the most rigorous, unsentimental analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of The UWI can ensure that the "Light Rising from the West" is not extinguished. Reprinted from The Voice of St Lucia



TALKING POINT

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

DR. MASERATI

SENATOR COLIN BROWNE



MACHEL MONTANO drops The Wedding Album

By Nelson A. King

Caribbean Life - Let the love party begin! As many of us approach the one-year anniversary of the life-changing COVID-19 pandemic, Trinidadian soca superstar, Machel Montano reminds us of the power of love.

Celebrating his one-year anniversary with the love of his life, in February 2021, Montano is gifting the world an inside view of his joy through this union, according to this Jamaican-born publicist Ronnie Tomlinson, of the Brooklyn-based entertainment company, Destiny Media.

Tomlinson told Caribbean Life on Monday that "The Wedding Album," which was released on Friday, on all streaming platforms, is "a dedication to Montano's wife, celebrating their partnership."

"This album is a dedication to my wife and the wonderful partnership we share and which we celebrate physically, spiritually and culturally," Montano said. "These songs translate the feelings we experience when we meet, the love when we dance and share space, as well as the joy we find when we are together."

Known for his fete starter singles and road march rompers, Tomlinson said Montano has "stepped outside his mind

and into his heart trusting every direction unknown with this album."

She said the album is a collection of "slow grooves for easy listening and dancing, with a message of love running straight through.

"Just like a marriage, the theme is about union on multiple levels," Tomlinson said.

Executive-produced by Montano and Che Kothari, "The Wedding Album" features artists such as Teddy Riley, Afro B, Vybz Kartel, Stacy Barthe, Voice, and DJ Tunez, among others.

"The star-studded album is a masterpiece packaged with love and unity," Tomlinson said.

Montano said these songs "venture from dancehall to R&B to Afrobeat, all infused with that sweet soca.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to work with the artists I've collaborated with, and it's an honor to sing side by side with such highly-rated creatives whom I look up to and I'm a big fan of," he said.

Album streaming link: <https://monkmusic.fm.to/weddingalbum>



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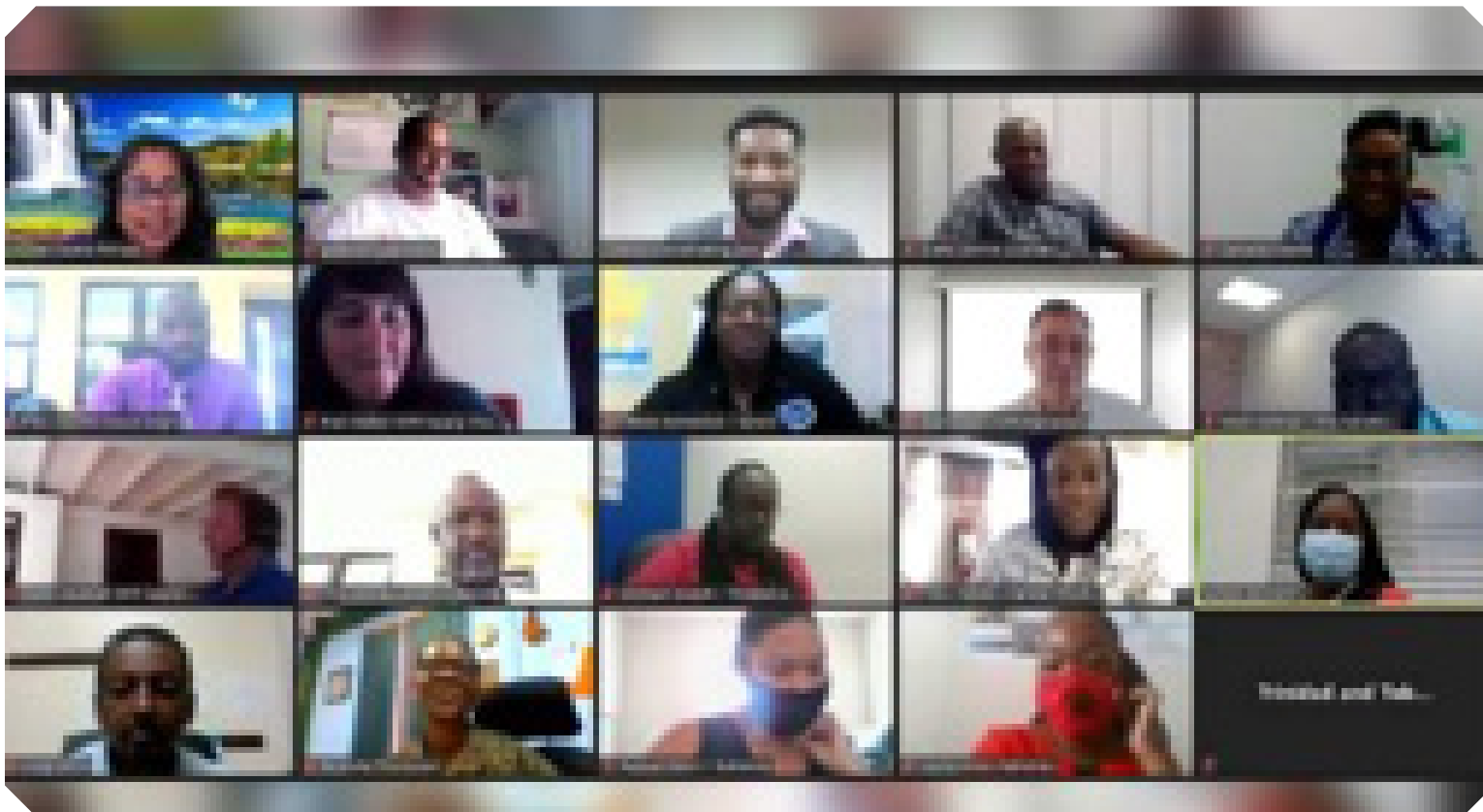


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CDEMA CONCLUDES REGIONAL LOGISTICS AND RELIEF WORKSHOP WITH PLANS FOR NATIONAL POLICY



BRIDGETOWN, Barbados (CMC) — The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) Coordinating Unit is moving forward with plans for a national relief and logistics management plan and policy following a two-week workshop facilitating the planning process. Programme Manager for Preparedness and Response at CDEMA, Joanne Persad, shared that the workshop was a significant milestone in pushing the agenda

of the three-year regional logistics and relief management programme.

“The main objective of the workshop, beyond having the documentation, was the facilitation of a collective national think through on the intricacies of relief and logistics. We hope we were successful...and that you see your role in the relief and logistics supply chain and have a better understanding, as well as commitment to the process,” Persad said. The agency said

the workshop virtually brought together key disaster relief personnel from the four sub-region focal points of Barbados, Trinidad, Jamaica and Antigua and Barbuda, alongside The Bahamas.

The CDEMA said it will provide support to the national disaster offices and organisations to ensure the policies are approved at Cabinet level. Participants from Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago were also intro-

duced to the CDEMA logistics system, which is currently being developed with the World Food Programme to support the national policy, the agency said. It noted that plans from the workshop will be presented to the technical advisory committee and CDEMA council as samples of the adoption process. Nineteen participating states will benefit from similar workshops starting at the end of the year.

GUYANA WORKING TOWARDS IMPROVING TRADE WITHIN CARICOM



GEORGETOWN, Guyana (CMC)—The Guyana government says in collaboration with the private sector, it is making strides towards removing barriers that affect trade within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Single Market Economy (CSME).

The CSME allows for the free movement of goods, services, labour, services, people, capital,

and technology across the fifteen-member regional integration movement.

Last December, President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali expressed concern at the impediments to free trade within the region and since then a committee has been formed to help address the issue. Foreign Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International

Cooperation, Robert Persaud said during the meetings of the committee, barriers are pinpointed product by product and country by country, to suggest remedies and approaches taken at the bilateral and multilateral level.

“That work has been making some progress in the sense that we were able to engage a number of countries bilaterally and we will

continue to do that. Take for instance we have had responses from Barbados already, we continue to engage Trinidad.

“There is some sloth on the part of Trinidad and Tobago in terms of being much more responsive to concerns and efforts to have those addressed, but we have seen some significant interest in having these issues addressed by other states and we hope that Trinidad and Tobago would itself address and correct that very soon, all in the spirit of regional integration,” he said.

Persaud said some of the areas being looked at include the exportation of poultry with a focus on Trinidad and Tobago. He explained that there has been a ban on poultry from Guyana due to a virus detected in ducks from Suriname, which Georgetown is working to have removed. Additionally, the committee is looking at enhancing sanitary protocols for export and tapping into the pharmaceutical market.

PM OUTLINES AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN FOR YOUNG BAHAMIAN PROFESSIONALS

Eye Witness News, NAS-SAU, BAHAMAS—Prime Minister Dr Hubert Minnis Wednesday tabled a resolution in Parliament that would give “young Bahamian professionals” access to affordable land in an upscale community in western New Providence.

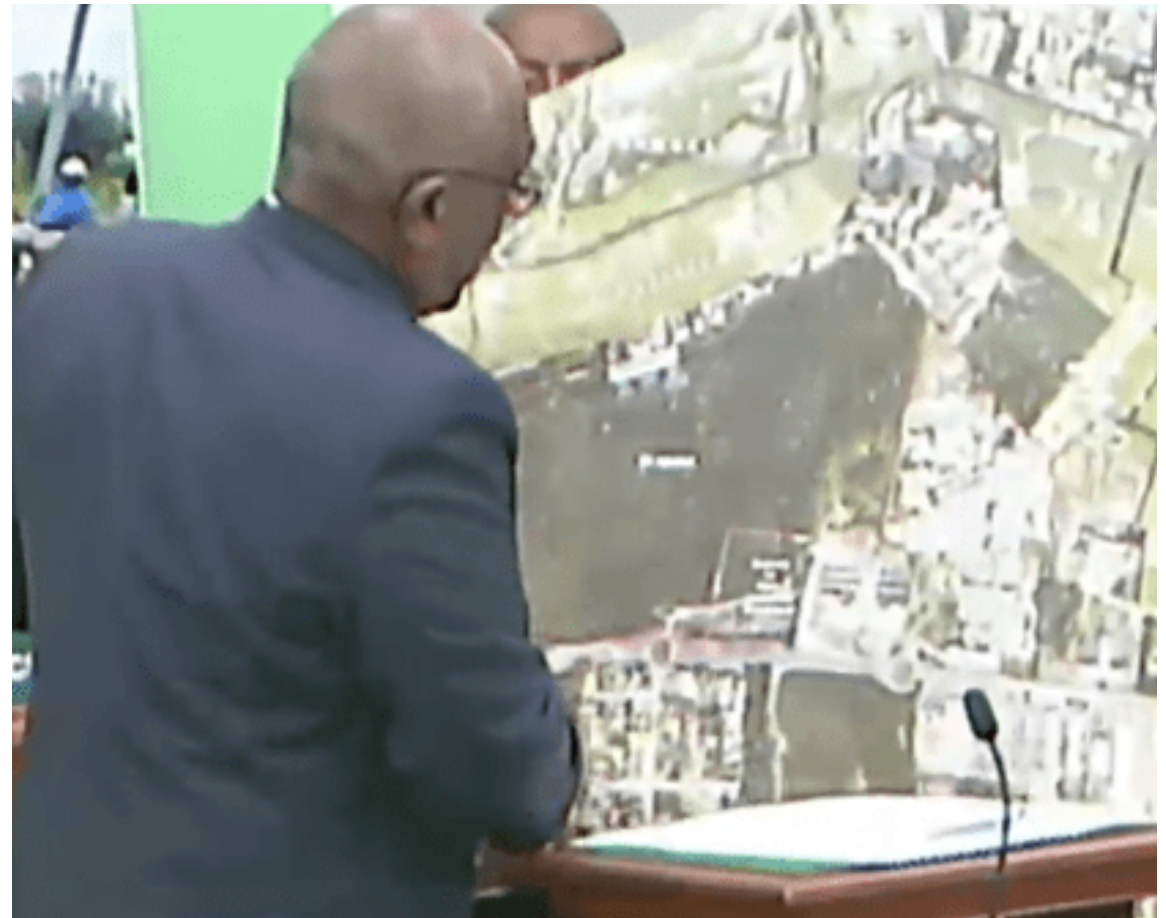
Minnis gave notice that he would move the resolution at the next sitting of the House shortly after 8:00 p.m.

The resolution indicates that several tracts of land in the west have been identified for purchase for young Bahamians between the ages of eighteen and forty-five.

The prime minister said forty per cent of the lots will be multi-family lots at \$50,000, and sixty per cent will be single-family lots at \$40,000.

The government will bear the cost to put in place all of the necessary infrastructure for the 95×100 lots, which will be valued at \$150,000.

The programme will also offer several concessions, including the waiver of customs duties on all the building materials and appliances, real property tax exemption for two years after construction, and one year without



stamp tax.

Additionally, the government will make available ten approved Ministry of Works architectural designs for homeowners to choose from for a cost of \$1,000, eliminating significant architectural fees.

However, to ensure that the development is completed in a timely manner, the homes will have to be completed within two years of purchase.

The prime minister said in order to ensure fair play, a committee will be established that will set the rules and policies in

the selection process.

One of the areas identified is eighty-three acres of land in the area of Baha Mar, which will be an “upscale community” that incorporates walking paths, two parks, a community centre, a swimming pool and will also be eco-friendly with minimal change to the existing topography. Minnis further announced that two additional plots of land in western New Providence have also been identified and will also be used for subdivisions for young professionals.

He said: “We’ve already had discussions with a number of banks and they have agreed provisions that they will do their evaluations, and once they themselves are happy that yes the land is worth \$150,000 or more, the equity is such a vast amount that individuals would not have to come up with any down payment to construct their homes.”

The prime minister explained that if homeowners want to sell after construction, the government will be given the right of first refusal in

'THIRSTY' UNLICENSED DRIVER PANICS, CRASHES AT ACCIDENT SCENE



iWitness News - A Lay-out man who does not have a driving permit and was driving an uninsured vehicle panicked when he came upon police officers at the scene of an accident in Rillan Hill around 6:15 p.m. last Thursday. On seeing the officers who were responding to the accident, Colin Butcher stopped and reversed the car he was driving, crashing into another vehicle in the process.

But, instead of stopping, Butcher drove to Buccament Bay, with police in hot pursuit, where he abandoned the vehicle and continued to flee on foot. He was, however, apprehended

and brought before the Kingstown Magistrate's Court last Friday on four charges. Butcher, twenty-seven, pleaded guilty to a charge that on 18th March, at the Rillan Hill Public Road, being the driver of motor vehicle RQ-456, he did drive the same vehicle in a manner dangerous to the public. He also pleaded guilty to a charge that being the driver of the same vehicle, having been involved in an accident owing to the presence of the vehicle on the road, he did fail to stop the said vehicle. Butcher also pleaded guilty to charges that he drove the said vehicle without being the holder of a driving permit, and

also without there being in force a policy of insurance in respect of third party risk in respect of the said vehicle.

The court heard that Butcher drove for over a mile in his attempt to escape from the police.

The defendant said that he had purchased the vehicle and a mechanic friend was going to fix it for him and told him to take his time and drive it to Kingstown.

"And I decided to run a risk with the vehicle," Butcher said, adding that when he was driving he saw some police officers in the road so he pulled aside.

"But in no time, a vehicle come up hard behind me

and slam on me."

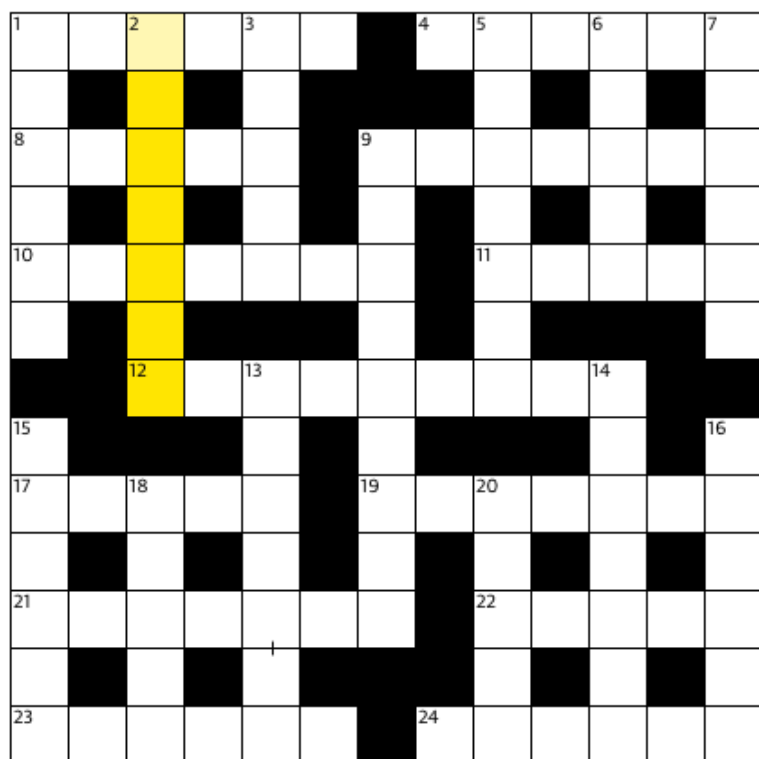
The defendant told the court that he "swear to God" that it was the other vehicle that crashed into the rear of the vehicle he was driving.

The magistrate noted to Butcher that he had no authority to have been driving the vehicle in the first place.

The prosecutor, Police Sergeant Renrick Cato, noted that after the accident, Butcher did not stop.

The magistrate said he always asks people who want to drive although they do not hold a permit what would happen if they knock down and kill someone.

QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Stock (6)
 4 Zany (6)
 8 Delight in (5)
 9 Aha, a pro! (anag) — a Native American (7)
 10 Bone of the upper arm (7)
 11 Professional representative (5)
 12 Extremely famous player (9)
 17 Paved garden area (5)
 19 Large edible marine gastropod (7)
 21 Subdue (7)
 22 Conceited — majestic (5)
 23 Making an effort (6)
 24 Population count (6)

Down

- 1 Fume (6)
 2 Bed clothes (7)
 3 Covering — a hen? (5)
 5 Impervious to persuasion (7)
 6 Fad (5)
 7 Right away (informal) (6)
 9 Those coming from Salzburg or Innsbruck, perhaps (9)
 13 Radio show where listeners have their say (5-2)
 14 Exuberant (7)
 15 Phantom (6)
 16 Rocks containing cavities lined with crystals (6)
 18 Slightly drunk (5)
 20 Plenty (5)

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



♈ ARIES | Mar. 21-Apr. 19

A live-and-let-live attitude helps keep people out of trouble. Most big efforts require teamwork, and supporting each other makes every day proceed more happily. It isn't necessary to rush through the day.

♉ TAURUS | Apr. 20-May 20

Your smiles and friendliness might not be able to ward off a dispute over money or property. You might not see eye to eye with someone who's in a hurry and unlikely to be satisfied with how things are proceeding.

♊ GEMINI | May 21-June 20

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Stay calm, cool and collected. Don't let minor aggravations get under your skin, as they could cause you to lose your temper and diminish the harmony. Misunderstandings can be avoided if you remain patient and wise.

♋ CANCER | June 21-July 22

Sharp words can cut like knives. Someone may be too intense or aggressive for your tastes and put you on the defensive. Focus on maintaining the peace as well as your peace of mind by not taking someone's words personally.

♌ LEO | July 23-Aug. 22

You may prefer things relaxed, but it may be time to be realistic and concentrate on achieving ambitions. You might have better luck if you focus on business and financial matters rather than social affairs and entertainment.

♍ VIRGO | Aug. 23-Sept. 22

Misunderstandings are nothing to laugh about when you or someone else misreads the signals and feelings get hurt. Wait a few days to circle back and try to clear things up. You will likely meet with a warmer reception the next time.

♎ LIBRA | Sept. 23-Oct. 22

You may sometimes enjoy trading friendly insults or jokes, but today someone's cutting remarks might rub you the wrong way or create hard feelings. Let it go and find satisfaction by exploring the least expected options.

♏ SCORPIO | Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Your attention may turn to your job and getting ahead in the workplace. It's possible your health habits are too sporadic. A small step taken now, such as starting a daily planner, can help you progress.

♐ SAGITTARIUS | Nov. 22-Dec. 21

Something you buy in haste without doing your homework might not live up to your expectations. There could be a disagreement over money, but don't let a few cross words get under your skin.

♑ CAPRICORN | Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Arguments and heated debates are seldom constructive, so do everything in your power to avoid them. It's possible you're being too clever and calculating for your own good. Try to be kinder and more mindful.

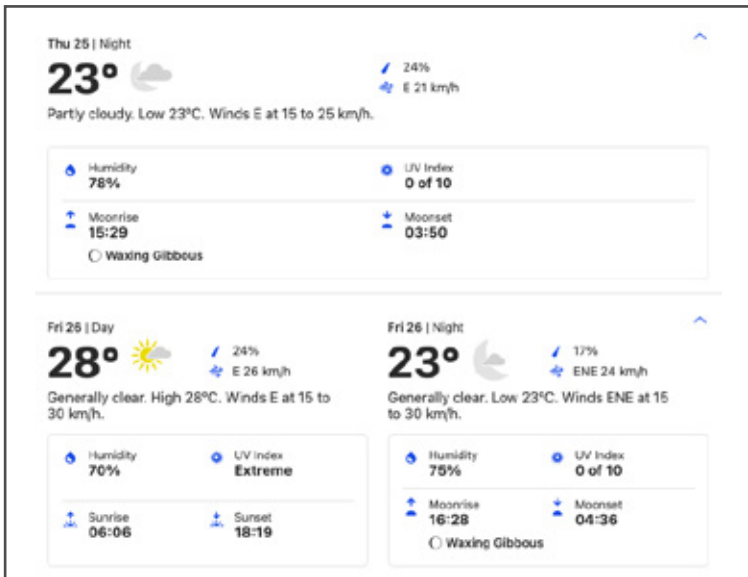
♒ AQUARIUS | Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Nothing is ever perfect, but now you're more likely than usual to find fault with something or someone. Lucky for you, a loved one or partner is probably cheerful and may gently remind you to look on the bright side.

♓ PISCES | Feb. 19-Mar. 20

Remember that people's actions are almost always based on their issues and not on you. If people become quarrelsome or negative, don't take it personally. You can be tough-skinned and persistent about reaching practical goals.

LOCAL WEATHER FORECAST



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Garfield

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Luann

March 25, 2021



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Biden leaves door open for Senate change to pass agenda

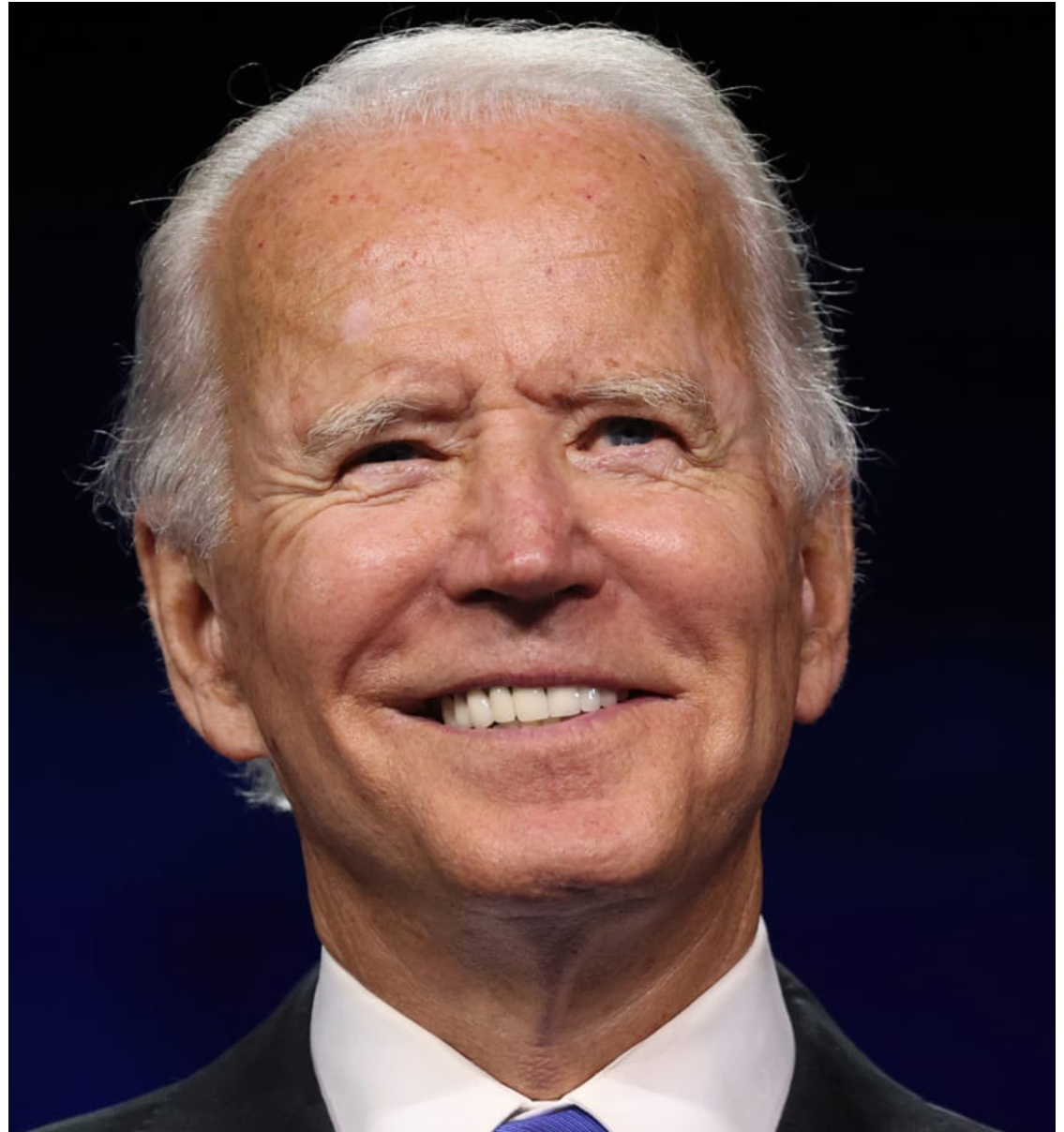
WASHINGTON (AP)

— President Joe Biden at his first news conference Thursday left the door open to pushing for fundamental changes in Senate procedures to muscle key elements of his agenda such as immigration and voting rights past firm Republican opposition “if there’s complete lockdown and chaos.”

The seventy-eight-year-old president also, for the first time, said his “plan is to run for re-election, that is my expectation.”

Biden at first backed a modification — but not elimination — of the filibuster. But he then suggested, at least on certain issues, he would go further. “If there’s complete lockdown and chaos, as a consequence of the filibuster, then we’re going to have to go beyond what I’m talking about,” he said.

“I want to get things done. I want to get them done consistent with what we promised the American people,” said Biden, who spent decades in the Senate. “I am going to say something outrageous: I have never been particularly poor at calculating getting things done in the United States



President Joe Biden

Senate.”

A pair of mass shootings, rising international tensions, early signs of intra-party divisions and increasing numbers of migrants crossing the southern border are all confronting the young Biden administration, which is also navigating the COVID-19 pandemic and its resulting econom-

ic devastation.

“I am going to deal with all of those problems,” Biden pledged.

Biden opened his first formal news conference by doubling his original goal on COVID-19 vaccines by pledging that the nation will administer two hundred million doses by the end of his first one hundred days in

office. The administration had met Biden’s initial goal of one hundred million doses earlier this month — before even his sixtieth day in office — as the president pushes to defeat a pandemic that has killed more than five hundred and forty-five thousand Americans and devastated the nation’s economy.

Final results confirm political deadlock after Israeli vote

JERUSALEM (AP) —

Final election results show Israel in political deadlock once again, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his opponents falling short of a governing majority.

Israel's election commission says that with one hundred per cent of votes counted, Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party and his natural allies have won fifty-two seats in the one hundred and twenty-seat Knesset, Israel's parliament. An ideologically diverse array of parties committed to ousting him won fifty-seven seats.

A right-wing party won seven seats and an Arab Islamist party won four. Both are uncommitted, but given the many rivalries in parliament, it is not clear whether either one of them could deliver a required majority.

Party leaders have already begun negotiations that are expected to drag on for weeks. If no one is able to assemble a majority of at least sixty-one seats, then Israel will go to elections for an unprecedented fifth time in a little over two years.

Tuesday's vote, Israel's fourth parliamentary



elections in two years, was widely seen as a referendum on Netanyahu's fitness to rule while under indictment.

Deep divisions between the various parties will make it difficult for either side to gain a majority.

Arab parties have never joined a governing coalition, and for nationalist parties, such an alliance is anathema. Bezalet Smotrich, a Netanyahu ally and head of the far-right Religious Zionist party, said Thursday that "a right-wing govern-

ment will not be established with support from Abbas. Period. Not on my watch."

He was referring to Mansour Abbas, the head of the United Arab List, which won four seats.

Gideon Saar, a defector from Netanyahu's Likud who now heads a six-seat party committed to ousting him, said "it is clear that Netanyahu does not have a majority to form a government under his leadership. Action must now be taken to realize the possibility of form-

ing a government for change."

The Likud, which won the most seats of any party, fired back, saying such a bloc would be "anti-democratic." It compared Netanyahu's opponents to the clerical leadership in Israel's arch-enemy Iran, which vets candidates for high office.

Yohanan Plesner, president of the Israel Democracy Institute, said that the stalemate is Israel's "worst political crisis in decades."

Jailed Kremlin critic Navalny alleges sleep deprivation 'torture,' lack of medical care



MOSCOW (Reuters) - Jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny said on Thursday that being woken up by a guard every hour during the night amounted to torture and that his appeal for treatment for acute back and leg pain had been refused in a deliberate attempt to run him down.

Navalny, one of President Vladimir Putin's most prominent critics, made the allegations in two official appeals to the authorities which he passed to his lawyers

who visited him at the IK-2 corrective penal colony one hundred kilometres (sixty miles) east of Moscow.

The Federal Penitentiary Service had said earlier on Thursday that Navalny's health was stable and satisfactory. His lawyers, who were denied access to him the previous day, disputed that after visiting him, saying he was in bad shape and needed urgently to see an outside doctor to receive treatment.

The forty-four-year-

old opposition politician said in his appeals that prison authorities had refused his request last month for a civilian doctor to visit him despite excruciating back pain and numbness in his leg.

"I consider the deterioration of my health to be the direct consequence of the actions and inaction of employees of the Federal Penitentiary Service deliberately aimed at denying me proper medical care and undermining my health," he wrote.

He said he was being deprived of sleep by guards who woke him every hour during the night, a practice he likened to torture.

Prison authorities do not deny he is woken every hour, but say the practice is necessary because he is designated a flight risk.

Yulia Navalnaya, Navalny's wife, said his predicament in jail was revenge for his opposition activities.

"I demand that Alexei be given the possibility to seek treatment with doctors that he trusts," she wrote on Instagram.

Navalny said he had only been given ibuprofen tablets and cream, which he said was not enough.

The Federal Penitentiary Service said earlier on Thursday that Navalny had been examined on Wednesday.

"His health is deemed stable and satisfactory, according to the results of the examination," the penitentiary service said, according to the Interfax news agency.

Shipping losses mount from cargo vessel stuck in Suez Canal

ISMAILIA, Egypt (AP) — Dredgers, tugboats and even a backhoe failed to free a giant cargo ship wedged in Egypt's Suez Canal on Thursday. More than one hundred and fifty vessels are now backed up, with hundreds more headed to the vital waterway, and losses to global shipping are mounting.

The skyscraper-sized Ever Given, carrying cargo between Asia and Europe, ran aground Tuesday in the narrow, man-made canal dividing continental Africa from the Sinai Peninsula. Even helped by high tides, authorities have been unable to push the Panama-flagged container vessel aside, and they are looking for new ideas to free it.

In a sign of the turmoil the blockage has caused, the ship's Japanese owner even offered a written apology.

"We are determined to keep on working hard to resolve this situation as soon as possible," Shoei Kisen Kaisha Ltd. said. "We would like to apologize to all parties affected by this incident, includ-



ing the ships travelling and planning to travel through Suez Canal."

As efforts to free it resumed at daylight Thursday, an Egyptian canal authority official said workers hoped to avoid offloading containers from the vessel as it would take days to do so and extend the closure. The official spoke on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to talk to journalists.

So far, dredgers have tried to clear silt around the massive ship. Tug boats nudged the vessel alongside it, trying to gain momentum. From the shore, at least one backhoe dug into

the canal's sandy banks, suggesting the bow of the ship had plowed into it. However, satellite photos taken Thursday and analysed by The Associated Press showed the vessel still stuck in the same location.

Lt. Gen. Osama Rabei, the head of the canal authority, said navigation through the waterway would remain halted until the Ever Given is re-floated. A team from Boskalis, a Dutch firm specialised in salvaging, arrived at the canal Thursday, although one of its top officials warned removing the vessel could take "days to weeks."

A team from the Boskalis subsidiary SMIT "spent the day doing inspections and doing calculations to assess the state of the vessel and a plan on how to re-float the vessel," spokesman Martijn Schuttevaer told the AP. He did not offer a time frame.

The Suez Canal Authority said one idea the team discussed was scraping the bottom of the canal around the ship.

Boskalis chairman Peter Berdowski on Wednesday described the ship as "a very heavy whale on the beach."

ENGLAND COMING IN 2022



2022 ENGLAND IS COMING TO THE INDIES

5-T20Is
JAN 28 - FEB 5

3-TESTS
MAR 1 - MAR 28



The West Indies are scheduled to host England in a lucrative series of Twenty20 Internationals and Tests early next year, Cricket West Indies (CWI) announced Wednesday, that will be extremely beneficial financially.

While no venues have been announced, the tour could reap the regional board earning of over US\$100 million. The Caribbean

side are slated to play five T20 Internationals from 28th January to 5th February, followed by three Tests from 8th to 28th March when the two teams will meet for the first-ever Richards-Botham Trophy, formerly the Wisden Trophy. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Johnny Grave said the tour was expected to be two Tests and three T20 Internationals, but

the CWI had managed to successfully negotiate an expanded tour. Grave noted an England tour to the region is an exciting event, and adding the third Test and two T20s to the original schedule will provide an opportunity for fans to view more games and an economic boost to the regional tourism industry.

President Ricky Skerriott said the expanded

tour has come about because of the special relationship being developed between the respective boards and CWI looked forward to working with the ECB Chair Ian Watmore, and CEO Tom Harrison, to expand the partnership ever further into new areas of cooperation and support. Harrison said the ECB was excited by the prospects of the expanded tour.

RICKY SKERRITT AND DR KISHORE SHALLOW DESERVE A SECOND TERM



Ricky Skerritt



Dr Kishore

Cricket West Indies will host its elections on Sunday 29th March, with Ricky Skerritt and Dr Kishore Shallow seeking a second term to complete and add to their ten-point plus plan.

Under the leadership of Skerritt, CWI have been able to withstand the COVID-19 pandemic which has rocked the world, keeping all employees employed at fifty per cent pay until January 2021, while keeping the organization described as the pride of

the Caribbean financially afloat. Under the innovative, creative and proactive leadership of Skerritt and Shallow, the region has seen administrators becoming empowered empowered. In addition, players become more professional in their approach to the game, and the combination of these two has led to a cricket first mentality, leading to Caribbean fans feeling a part of the pride and joy of the region the West Indies team. Most cricket lov-

ers therefore agree that team Skerritt and Shallow deserve a second term. The Trinidad and Tobago and the Leeward Islands Cricket Boards have shown their trust in the duo by endorsing them early in the game, with the Windward Islands Cricket Board expected to follow.

Most believe Jamaica will also shortly join the line to support the duo. Dr Shallow, appearing on the Touchline Programme on Wednesday, said they are expecting

victory by a 9-3 margin on Sunday.

Most Caribbean fans are unhappy with the distasteful and bitter campaign being orchestrated by Anand Sarnasie and Calvin Hope, who adopted a divisive and acrimonious tone when they appeared on PointeFM two weeks ago. It was clear they were not happy with Skerritt getting rid of the "old boys club" under David Cameron and deploying a cricket first mentality.

ANTIGUA AND MONTSERRAT DRAW IN CURAÇAO

Antigua and Barbuda



2-2



Montserrat



Antigua and Barbuda and neighbour Montserrat played to a 2-all draw in Curaçao on Monday.

Playing in front of an empty stadium due to COVID-19 restrictions, Montserrat drew first blood via a Lyle Taylor seventh minute penalty, after a defensive blunder by the Wadadli team.

On resumption, Hoppers FC Eugene Kirwan wasted no time in finding the back of the

net in the 23rd minute to bring the game level. But Montserrat, a much improved unit featuring a number of players based in the United Kingdom, took the lead in the 27th minute through star player Lyle Taylor brace.

But D'Andre Bishop ensured Antigua went into the half on even terms with a 45-minute strike. Both teams failed to take the lead in the second half in an evenly contested game.

DEWS



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