

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

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# CHOKSI TO KNOW HIS FATE TODAY

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CABINET REJECTS PROPOSAL TO CHANGE HOW VOTES  
ARE COUNTED AT ELECTION TIME

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## COMMENTARY

# MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS: LET'S TALK ABOUT STIGMA

*By: T'Mira Looby, MS, NCC*

*Founder & Primary Therapist, Transformation Through Therapy  
&  
Will Smith*

*Founder & Executive Director, Future Wellness Foundation*

Globally, May is observed as Mental Health Awareness month. It is a time to educate the public about mental health care, fight the stigma surrounding mental illness, and provide support to individuals and families experiencing mental health issues. Most importantly, it is the time to shine a light on mental health and acknowledge that it is okay to not be okay!

Since the inception of the COVID-19 pandemic, in March 2020, there has been a global increase in the number of those who are struggling with mental health issues. Many of us

are facing challenges that can be stressful, overwhelming, and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Fear and worry are other emotional but normal responses people have been experiencing due to the pandemic. For these and other reasons, there is an immense need for mental health support services. The reality is, even more than a year later, many people are still struggling to survive.

Although we don't have the exact statistics to show the mental health effects of the pandemic on the citizens of Antigua & Barbuda,

anecdotal reports indicate that, like everywhere else, there has been an increased need for mental health support among citizens of all walks of life. Over the past year we have all heard the cries from our national healthcare workers and police officers asking for such support. There have also been reports of increased mental health needs for school children, as young as primary level. This is not surprising, as it has been proven that mental health issues increase during a crisis; and under pandemic conditions – fear, illness, death, lockdowns,

curfews, isolation, and perhaps most of all, financial distress - most people have been living in crisis conditions. As a result, we are now seeing more people trying to access mental health services, as well as local organizations raising awareness about mental health and engaging in community outreach initiatives to educate the public.

It is wonderful to see more attention being placed on mental health. However, barriers still exist that make it difficult to access the necessary care and support. One of the main barriers is



# CHOKSI TO KNOW HIS FATE IN A DOMINICA COURT TODAY

The man who has been a fugitive from the law enforcement agencies of India for over three years, and who has, until his disappearance on Sunday, been living in Antigua for most of that time, is to appear today, before the High Court in the Commonwealth of Dominica where he was intercepted by authorities. Attorneys appearing on behalf of Mehul Choksi have filed papers, in the court in Roseau, seeking to halt any attempt by that island's government to have him extradited to India. At its weekly meeting on Thursday, the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda held a discussion on the recent Mehul Choksi developments, including the international issues raised by his appearance in the Commonwealth of Dominica. According to the post-Cabinet Notes, each statement

which emanated from the friendly Government of Dominica was examined. The Cabinet concluded that the decision about Choksi's fate seemingly now resides with the High Court of Dominica, where a habeas corpus writ has been filed. The Cabinet awaits the decision of the Dominica High Court which will render a decision on Friday, May 28, 2021.

Earlier, authorities in Dominica had agreed to work with the Antigua and Barbuda government to fulfil a request by Prime Minister Gaston Browne to have fugitive businessman Choksi, repatriated to India.

Choksi, who was reported missing by his wife on Sunday, was apprehended by lawmen in Dominica in the early hours of Tuesday morning.

According to reports from Roseau, Choksi was captured on a vessel as he cruised into Toucari Beach, on the island's north coast, at around 3am. PM Browne confirmed that he advised the Dominican authorities not to repatriate him to Antigua.

The government, Browne continued, also reached out to the Indian High Commissioner's Office,

asking that they advise the Narendra Modi-led administration accordingly.

"I have advised them, so they can coordinate efforts to have Choksi repatriated directly to India so that he could be brought to justice," Browne explained, adding that the fugitive's family were free to stay in Antigua as Antigua and Barbuda citizens.

Browne said law en-

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forcement officials in Dominica are still investigating the circumstances surrounding Choksi's illegal entry into the nature isle – and who aided and abetted his travels.

It is alleged that Choksi had shown interest in a boat that was up for sale in Jolly Harbour prior to his escape.

Indian federal police have filed fraud charges against Choksi, his nephew Nirav Modi, and others in connection with their suspected involvement in fraudulent transactions that led to losses of about US\$2 billion for India's Punjab National Bank (PNB).

In 2018, PNB alleged that rogue employees had issued fake bank guarantees over several years to help jeweller groups – controlled by Modi and Choksi – raise funds in foreign credit.

Modi and Choksi left India before the fraud

came to light but have denied any wrongdoing and have said in letters and statements that they are innocent. Choksi has been living in Antigua after gaining citizenship by the Citizenship by Investment Programme in 2017.

However, after the allegations surfaced and India requested his extradition, the

Antigua and Barbuda government began steps to revoke his citizenship. Choksi has been fighting that in court and Prime Minister Browne said the government will seek to get revocation in absentia.

Meanwhile, Choksi's wife Priti told Indian media that she is happy that her spouse is safe.

Choksi's attorney Vijay Aggarwal also spoke to Indian media, saying, "I have spoken to his family. They are happy and relieved that his whereabouts are now known."

He added that efforts are being made to speak with Choksi, "so that one can know the clearer picture on how he was taken to Dominica."



### OSHA CONSTRUCTION SAFETY SUPERVISOR PROGRAM

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# Cabinet rejects proposal to change how votes are counted at election time

Top officials of the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission (ABEC) were invited to the Cabinet on Thursday to discuss several proposed amendments to the Representation of the People Act.

According to the post-Cabinet Notes one proposed amendment to the Act will be brought to Parliament shortly, or as soon as the

Notice and the Amendment are prepared and dispatched.

"The age of the Supervisor for continued appointment ends at 70 years under the existing law; the amendment will take the new age to 75 years," the Notes reported. The document said that a second proposed amendment put forward to change the manner in which

counting of ballots cast in general elections is currently conducted—at a single site in each constituency following the closure of the balloting at 6:00 pm—would seek to have the counting take place at the various sites where ballots were cast.

However, the Cabinet Notes said this particular proposed amendment was not accepted

by Cabinet. This means, the practice where the ballots are transported to a central counting area will remain intact ...at least at the next general elections.

The ABEC team attending the Cabinet meeting were Supervisor of Elections, Dame Lorna Simon and the Officer responsible for Operations, Karen Manwarren.

## NODS commences preparations for hurricane season



The National Office of Disaster Services (NODS) has been moving swiftly ahead with preparations for this year's hurricane season which officially begins on June 1.

So far, several training sessions and workshops have been completed with members of staff and volunteers from the 17 disaster districts and meetings held with various agencies on their preparedness for the season.

During the workshops

with staff, individuals reviewed a number of plans and policies to include a Model National Relief Management Policy and Plan and a Logistics Policy and Plan to ensure that challenging issues can be adequately addressed like the donation and distribution of relief items.

The volunteer training focused on Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) - (pronounced sert), and covered areas such as



basic first-aid, telecommunications, basic search and rescue, basic map reading and fire safety. Training will also be done with community volunteers in damage assessment. Presently, this process is paper-based and NODS is hoping to have this done electronically following a training session with select staff members.

The national search and rescue unit was also recently certified to the standards of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) – (pronounced in-sa-rag). Efforts are also underway to provide disaster districts with community storage units called Bokomi (bucko-me) stations that are equipped with emergency supplies for use in the various districts. One of these units has since been sent to Barbuda.

With regard to public shelters, the Public Works Department has completed its inspection of the various buildings and the list will be published shortly. NODS has also been assessing

these facilities to ensure that hand-washing stations are available and will provide cleaning kits to the disaster coordinators.

On the aspect of telecommunications, NODS has acquired a number of VHF Radios, satellite phones and other internet and satellite-based equipment to enhance its ability to communicate locally, with the sister-isle Barbuda and also abroad.



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# 12 Barbuda families to receive new homes today

Today, twelve displaced families in Barbuda will receive the keys to their newly repaired, refurbished and in some cases, rebuilt homes that were destroyed during the passing of the destructive Hurricane Irma in 2017.

These homes, which

are said to be stronger and more resilient were repaired under the European Union (EU) funded 'Housing Support to Barbuda' project and the Government of Antigua and Barbuda with a strong collaboration together with the UNDP and other key government stakeholders.

The project is said to be in continuous development as they are working towards the rehabilitation and rebuilding of a total of 150 residential homes

using the "Build Back Better" approach. Using the "Build Back Better" (BBB) approach, in compliance with the 2015 OECS Building Code, as well as the Antigua and Barbuda Building Guidelines, the homes are said to be designed to better withstand future storms.

The 12 recipients were chosen using a strict vulnerability criteria by a Beneficiary Selection Committee (BSC) comprised of members from the Barbuda

Council, Development Control Authority (DCA), Office of the National Authorizing Officer (ONAO), National Office of Disaster Services (NODS), and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs. The UNDP plays an advisory role on the BSC.

The handing over and ribbon-cutting ceremony will take place in Barbuda at the Barbuda Pentecostal church from 10:00am. Mrs. Christophine Warren-Samuel from the

## NOTICE

THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

(Probate)

In the Estate of KINGSLEY ISAAC  
late of CLARE HALL, ST. JOHN, ANTIGUA, Deceased

ADVERTISEMENT OF APPLICATION  
FOR GRANT

SECOND PUBLICATION

TAKE NOTICE that an application has been filed by SAMUEL ISAAC a.k.a BEN ISAAC of Villa, St. John in Antigua for a Grant of Probate of the will of the above named deceased who died on the 11th day February of 2019 without revoking a will bearing the date of the 16th day of August 2018 wherein the applicant SAMUEL ISAAC a.k.a BEN ISAAC is named as the Sole Executor.

Any person having an objection to the application for the grant of Probate shall file an objection within 14 days of the publication of this Notice.

Dated this 28th day of May 2021

SAMUEL ISAAC a.k.a BEN ISAAC

Filed by Arnelle T. J. Michael Attorney-at-Law whose address for service is Montgomery Chambers Inc., All Saints Road, St. John, Antigua and gailchristian@lawyer.com and +1 268 562 5470.

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ANTIGUA & BARBUDA TRANSPORT BOARD

A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board





***In 2020, twenty (20) families represented the first phase of the project, when they were handed the keys to their homes.***

ONAO, Minister E.P. Chet Greene, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Trade, along with Mellissa Johnson from the UNDP, Head Office, a Barbuda Council Representative, the Hon. Trevor Walker, Parliamentary represen-

tative for Barbuda and Mr. Philmore Mullin, Director of NODS will present brief remarks. Earlier this year, speaking on the impact of the project, Ambassador Dr. Clarence Henry stated that "As National Authorising Officer for EU Development Fund projects, I am appreciative of the commitment and true collaboration shown by government stakeholders and other partners. Their efforts have resulted in the achievement of yet another major project milestone, which most

certainly could not have been realized without the generous financial endowment of the European Union. In acknowledgment of our donor's support, and to ensure maximum benefit to the people of Barbuda, my office remains focused on providing continued support to the process as it moves forward; until the last home is handed over to a Barbudan in need."

## NOTICE

To: Your Worship

St. Johns Magistrate Court

Gray's Farm

St. Johns

Antigua.

To: The Commissioner of Police

Police Headquarters

American Road

St. Johns

Antigua.

Dear Sir/Madame,

Re: Notice- Application for  
Tavern Licence

I, Natoya Nicola Carter Prince of Golden Grove Extension, with registered business situate at Golden Grove Extension St. John Antigua and Barbuda DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that it is my 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 July, 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 "RNP Enterprise" situated at Golden Grove Extension in the parish of St. John, Antigua and Barbuda.

Dated the 27th day of May, 2021

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May 28, 2021

**Media Release**

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda and PV Energy are aiming to conclude all outstanding deliverables under **10 MWP Sun to 2 Live Solar Energy Project** which began in Antigua and Barbuda in 2015.

One of the major deliverables for the project is the installation of an 11 MWh lead carbon battery storage facility, costing US\$9.6 Million. The Government has, since October 2019, through an Escrow Agent, **Global Bank of Commerce Ltd.** advanced to PV Energy approximately 50% of the cost of the battery storage facility or US\$4,750,575.02 but has experienced challenges in making the final 50% payment from funds currently held by the Escrow Agent.

Payments under the recent Disbursement Agreement between the Government and PV Energy Ltd for hardware supplies for the project, such as the battery storage facility, are as follows:

- 1) 50% of the remaining contract price upon signing the contract for the engineering, setting-up and commissioning of a photovoltaic ("EPC Contract").
- 2) 30 % of the remaining contract price on notification that goods have been shipped.
- 3) 10% of the remaining contract price upon commencement of the installation.
- 4) 10% of the remaining contract price upon commissioning of the installation.

Cont'd Page 2



In order to facilitate payment of the remaining 50% for the battery storage facility, the parties (the Government, PV Energy Ltd and Global Bank of Commerce Ltd) have agreed to restructure the existing payment arrangements under the disbursement agreement.

PV Energy Ltd has offered to source funds to effect payment of the remaining balance of US\$4, 849, 425 over a period of 4 years with interest at 13% per annum. Payment will be by way of deferred payment mechanism of approximately US\$100,000 per month over the 48 month period. The Escrow Agent has agreed to cover 10% of the cost of financing and PV Energy 3%. The Government will not be liable for any interest payments under the restructured arrangement unless there is default in any monthly payment by the Escrow Agent, in which case Government will pay 6% interest. The Escrow Agent will be liable to reimburse the Government for such payments. The Escrow Agent will also be liable to reimburse PV Energy for the 4% shortfall.

The parties have been working assiduously to finalize the documentation for the restructured arrangement.

The Government further wishes to assure PV Energy and the Escrow Agent that it remains committed to the agreed structure for the deferred payment arrangement for the battery storage facility, and that it intends to move forward with the other parties to closing this arrangement as soon as possible.

-End-





## GoFundMe set up to cover Baby Jahliyah's Medical Expenses

The friends of the family of a baby girl who was born less than a month ago with serious health challenges have set up a GoFundMe account, to help raise money to offset the cost of the surgery she urgently needs.

The child, Baby Jahliyah, was born on May 9th and has been diagnosed with esophageal atresia and im-

perforate anus. Due to her condition, she needs to go to the Bustamante Children's hospital in Jamaica to have corrective surgery.

It is the hope of the organizers of the campaign that through the GoFundMe, they will raise thirty-six thousand dollars (\$36,000.00) to help cover the medical and associat-

ed costs. So far, they have collected just under three thousand dollars.

Baby Jahliyah is the granddaughter of the domestic helper at the Venezuelan Ambassador's residence and officials and staff at the embassy are assisting by helping to publicise the campaign and by asking people to contribute.

# Celebrating Vigo Blake and the founding of the Bethesda School

The people of Bethesda and neighbouring communities will participate in a special function tomorrow, Saturday, May 29, to celebrate the life and contributions of ex-slave Vigo Blake, who was instrumental in the founding of the Bethesda Primary School over two hundred years ago. One of the organizers of the event, villager Ian Joseph said the school opened on May 29, 1813. The school was the first such institution specifically geared to the enslaved peoples and their descendants. Methodist missionaries Charles and Elizabeth Thwaites have long been credited with starting the school, with no mention of Blake's role in the enterprise.

After researching the matter, it was discovered that the original idea for the school was Blake's and that it was he who approached the Thwaites and invited their involvement and support. The Bethesda school was the first such institution in the entire British West Indies.

Blake would also feature prominently in the construc-

tion of the building to house the school as he and a team of men completed the work in six weeks. The Methodist church today, sits on the exact site of the first school room. "On May 29th this year, we will be celebrating 208 years of black education.

We will be calling it Vigo Blake Day. We consider this too im-

portant an event not to celebrate. We will be having a ceremony and we will be unveiling a sign board to remember the works of our ancestors," Joseph stated. Members of the community and other interested individuals are invited to join the unveiling exercise via ZOOM.

## VIGO BLAKE DAY

# THE BETHESDA SCHOOL STORY

ESTABLISHED: MAY 29, 1813

9:00AM	Opening Prayer
9:05AM	Opening remarks Ralph G. A. Bowen
9:15AM	Barbara A. Arrindell: History of Bethesda School - Introduction by Foster Roberts
9:40AM	Unveiling of the Billboard
9:45AM	Paddy "Griot" Simon - Our-story
10:05AM	Open Discussion and Signing the Attendance Register
10:15AM	Closing Remarks - Ian Joseph

Meeting ID: 810 8442 7174  
Passcode: 019829

TIME **8:45AM** | SAT. 29<sup>th</sup> **MAY** 2021

VENUE: BETHESDA METHODIST CHURCH YARD

# APPRECIATION FOR TEACHERS AT NEW WINTHORPES PRIMARY SCHOOL



Teachers at one of the nation's primary schools were the focus of attention during Teacher Appreciation Day activities held on Wednesday. The New Winthropes Primary School collaborated with Sandals Grande Antigua to arrange a special luncheon in honour of the teachers and ancillary staff at the educational institution. "The teachers at the New Winthropes Primary School have gone beyond the call of duty to teach and reach the students virtually, during the pandemic," Principal Chennelle Dowdye said. "During this mentally stressful time, these teachers have sacrificed their time to re-

spond to students' and parents' concerns via various social media platforms." She added, "There are some teachers who have even accommodated some parents by teaching their children in the evening, when it was convenient for them. This shows remarkable dedication and love for the job. As the principal of the school, I see it fitting to celebrate and recognise these teachers for their hard work." The educators were also gifted with tokens of appreciation from other members of corporate society. Grade Six Teacher, Jahtesha Joseph, commended the principal for the initiative and highlighted

the implications of such an event. "I'm happy teachers are being appreciated while they are still alive," Joseph said. "This lunch is a way of bringing unity among us."

Sandals Resort is resolute in its commitment to giving back to the men and women who are pillars of society. Earlier this month, in recognition of the work done by health care workers, the company awarded complimentary two-night stays, at any Sandals resort of their choice, to 300 members of the medical fraternity across the region. Thirty of the healthcare workers reside in Antigua and Barbuda.



Cont'd Form Page- 2

cultural stigma. In Antigua & Barbuda, and in many other parts of the world, to different degrees, the perceptions surrounding mental illness are based on incorrect ideas that are oftentimes inaccurate and misleading. This can potentially be damaging for the individual who is in need of mental health support but chooses not to get the assistance. The cultural stigma surrounding mental illness can be more destructive than the illness itself.

So, what are some of the contributing, contextual factors that feed this cultural stigma? Well, there are quite a few, but it seems that the most prominent factors include fear of breach in confidentiality, the language used around mental health, and the encouragement of emotional suppression.

Living in a small island developing state, where "everybody knows everybody", raises concern for people who are considering accessing specialized mental health intervention. Additionally, it has been presumed that people in our society have a

reputation for sharing the personal and private information of others, without their consent. This practice of "talking people business" causes distrust towards services that require people to be vulnerable and share their personal life stories. There is a fear that once disclosed, their business will end up on the "street"; even if disclosing to a mental health professional.

The kind of words used when discussing mental illness is oftentimes insensitive, discriminatory, and judgmental and includes terms such as "crazy" and "psycho". The Mental Treatment Act used to refer to persons suffering from a mental illness as "lunatics" and referred to a treatment/rehabilitation facility as an "asylum". These terms have since been discontinued and replaced with "person of unsound mind, mental patient, or insane person" and "mental hospital", respectively. Even these terms do not really help that much: would one really say today that a person suffering from a heart condition is "of unsound body"? Condescending

language can cause persons who are experiencing mental health challenges to feel belittled, misunderstood, and judged; potentially creating barriers to accessing necessary and appropriate care.

Indeed, there are people with significant mental illnesses who may at times need hospitalization. However, our focus in this article are those whose illness may have been triggered by pandemic conditions of stress, etc. They would benefit from, and likely recover well, following therapy with a professional therapist or mental health practitioner. Yet, expressing emotional distress – one of the signs that someone is struggling with their mental health – was not encouraged within many households and this is still taking place today. When in emotional distress, and a decision is made to disclose these feelings to a trusted friend or family member, often the responses include statements such as, "Give it to God", "Get over it", and "It's not that serious". Responses like these invalidate the person's feelings and puts them at risk of continued

and escalating illness that could be readily managed and remedied; but if untreated, may eventually deteriorate to the point that they may not be able, for example, to cope at school or work, or to function productively.

It is time for us to recognize that “Mental illnesses are physical brain-based conditions that affect thinking, emotions, and behaviors; and that having a mental health problem at some point during your life is common.” The brain is an organ, and just like with any other organs in our body, we can be born with congenital illness of the brain, or our brains can experience changes (injury or healing) based on life experiences like stress, trauma, lack of sleep, and nutrition—and, to belabour the point, these are the conditions most of us have all been living under for over an entire year. Positive mental health practices, such as traditional talk therapy and a regular self-care routine, are important to achieving optimal wellness during these trying times. Practices like these help to regulate and manage emotions,

cope with trauma, increase self-confidence, enhance performance and productivity, and build healthy relationships. This is why we must work to end the stigma around mental health support and mental illness. How can this be achieved? There are a few recommendations that we propose. Mental health and medical practitioners in the government and private sectors can embark on a national destigmatizing campaign, designed to normalize mental illness, and encourage Antiguans & Barbudans to seek specialized intervention such as talk therapy and, where necessary, medication. Individuals and local community organizations should continue to raise awareness and advocate for the needs of those suffering from mental health issues. Government officials can revisit and amend the Mental Treatment Act so that the language is more inclusive, less stigmatizing, and contains international best practices for the treatment and rights of persons struggling with a mental illness. Establish medical insurance policies that will cover the cost of

professional mental health services, such as counselling. Provide government and private scholarship opportunities for individuals looking to pursue higher education in psychology/counselling related fields/programs. Most importantly, show compassion and empathy for your fellow citizens. Understanding that we all go through challenges in life, treat others how you’d want to be treated. Be kind to one another.

As Mental Health Awareness month comes to a close let us remember that poor mental health is a brain-based condition that we all experience at some point in our lives. So, let’s not judge those who are having difficulty coping. Additionally, regular practice of mental health care is necessary to prevent poor mental health from escalating into a mental illness that requires specialized intervention and treatment. Lastly, in order to thrive as a nation, the mental health needs of the citizens must be prioritized; and quality support services must be readily available and accessible.



Director of CARIFESTA, Annette Aflak



## CARIFESTA 2022 - MONTH-LONG EVENTS PLANNED TO DRUM UP INTEREST.

The committee charged with responsibility for planning and managing the events of the Caribbean Festival of Arts (CARIFESTA) is staging a series of events geared at generating interest in the festival which Antigua and Barbuda will host for the first time, next year August. Director of CARIFESTA, Annette Aflak said, starting on Sunday (May 30) and continuing every Sunday during the month of June, the committee will stage a number of performances that will be streamed LIVE on its Facebook page. "Each Sunday, different disciplines will come into focus under the

theme, for these activities. This Sunday, the activities will start off with performances under the theme, 'Just Dance'. The dance performances will be followed by performances in Just Drama," Aflak explained. Over the next month, other events will focus on fashion, pan, music and art. Aflak said the event is expected to run over a four-hour period. No audiences will be invited for the events as the committee said it wants to ensure that all health protocols, as established by the Ministry of Health, are observed. "For example, when each dance group completes its performance,

the members are expected to depart and to continue viewing the performances via Facebook. CARIFESTA was originally slated for August this year, but because of the COVID-19 pandemic it had to be postponed. It is now scheduled to take place in August 2022. This will be the first time that the event is being held outside of the traditional 'More Developed Countries' of CARICOM.

According to Aflak persons who miss the LIVE events will get an opportunity to see the performances, as the event will be recorded for airing at a later date on GIS television.



# TYLAH RELEASES SECOND SINGLE 'BREATHE'

Tylah Ariel is a Trinidadian/American pop-alternative singer and songwriter whose soothing vocals have been compared to that of Sade and Jhené Aiko. Her introspective lyrics are often-times inspired by her own life's events or those closest to her. Tylah has also found inspiration in Billie Eilish, Lianne La Havas and John Mayer. Tylah continues to make strides and released her second single 'Breathe' on Friday. The young artiste debuted her first single 'Misery' in October 2020. Misery premiered on one of the Ca-

ribbean's largest music television stations, Synergy TV and Gayelle Caribbean.

Breathe, the singer said, feels like a step in the right direction for her and is almost a continuation of the story following Misery. It's like a journey from pain to breaking free or "release".

Tylah has made several TV and radio appearances since then, including WICB 91.7FM New York; WBLS 107.5FM New York with Dahved Levy, The Morning Edition on TV6; The Morning Brew on CNC3; and The Now Morning Show on TTT.



## TALKING POINT

DR. MASERATI

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

SENATOR  
COLIN BROWNE

# DICE TO HEADLINE

## CARIBBEAN CALYPSO EXPLOSION IN NEW YORK



Dominica News Online - Dominica's six-time calypso monarch, King Dice, will be the main act at an event dubbed Caribbean Calypso Explosion to be held in New York City this weekend.

The show, the first of its kind, is carded for the May 25th memorial weekend and will feature a number of calypsonians from the OECS and smaller Caribbean countries.

Two Dominican promotion enterprises, Mas-Camp Caribbean and SCIIBER Promotions, have come together to stage the event.

Other Caribbean artistes expected to feature are: one-time soca monarch and leading Grenadian calypsonian Randy Isaac; two-time calypso king of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, King Age; and past calypso king of St. Croix, King Mose-I.

The line-up also includes four-time calypso king of Dominica, Solo; and special guest appearances by Fireman Mitch of St. Lucia and The Muscle from Grenada.

Caribbean Calypso Explosion will be held from 10.00 pm at the Buzz (formerly Caribbean City) at 103 Empire Boulevard, between Bedford and Washington.

MC WASSI from Trinidad will be the master of ceremony.

*Six time calypso monarch, Dice,*



*Peter Thompson, CEO of Remote Work Barbados*

## BARBADOS URGED TO ATTRACT EXPATS WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE

Barbados Advocate - Peter Thompson, CEO of Remote Work Barbados, believes the impact of spending by digital expats is significant, and it is important to continue inviting people who understand the 21st century economy and are willing to contribute to the island as they enjoy the benefits of staying here. Thompson was speaking during a virtual panel discussion based on The Future Tourism Project, established by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to assist governments and key stakeholders, including MSMEs, to help them build back better in the context of the COVID-19 landscape. The diverse panel shared professional and personal insights

as well as key research findings and emerging trends, specifically to the idea of a new profile for visitors to the Caribbean.

The CEO of Remote Work Barbados said the 12 Month Welcome Stamp Visa, which has now had 2,500 successful applicants, should be just the first version and there should be additional upgrades to the current program with more incentives presented as each digital nomad moves on to the next level.

Those initial applicants, over a 10-month period, have contributed approximately \$6 million in fees to Barbados, with the expectation of \$120 million in accommodation alone over the next year. "The fact is that we need to develop long-term

relationships with people who come to visit us, [not only] to develop the contribution to the community, but also to develop their commitment to helping us in our journey toward becoming the best place on the globe to live. So come for a year and then we reach out and invite you for another year and do some extra perks, so that you have version one, version two, version three, version four and people coming back for work over their entire working lives and for longer than a year if they so choose," Thompson argued.

The tourism expert stated that the path should be directed towards creating new neighbours and making them feel comfortable being part of the society.



*Statesman in Residence at the P.J Patterson Centre for Africa-Caribbean Advocacy, former Prime Minister of Jamaica, P.J Patterson*

# CALL FOR UNITY BETWEEN CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES AND AFRICA

Former Prime Minister of Jamaica P.J. Patterson suggests that in order for Africa and the Caribbean to overcome the deficit and legacy of slavery, the two must work together in unity, purpose and action.

He shared this view as he addressed the webinar titled, 'Building Africa-Caribbean Solidarity in the Age of Global Pandemics'. Held in celebration of Africa Day 2021, this online event on Monday was presented by the P.J. Patterson Centre for Africa-Caribbean Advocacy, The University of the West Indies (UWI).

Patterson also said "the people of Africa, the Caribbean and the African diaspora constitute a mighty force". He further stated they "must display an invincible spirit to fight as one single arm in the struggle for peace, justice and devel-

opment. The people of Africa and its diaspora are saying to the world, black lives matter, everywhere and every time".

The Statesman in Residence at the P.J. Patterson Centre for Africa-Caribbean Advocacy also called for leaders of both Africa and the Caribbean to come together to pursue talks in short order. "We are well aware of the efforts by African and Caribbean leaders to convene a summit to settle a common agenda for the short-, medium- and long-term strategy for effective interchange of knowledge, technology, research, trade, investment, culture and sports. A physical meeting may not be feasible at this time, but if the UN can have a virtual General Assembly, we must use the available tools of modern communication. The conversation be-

tween us must be pursued. The time is now."

He also noted "there is bound to be a different configuration of global power and the global economy after the post-pandemic era. Africa and the Caribbean must ensure [that in] the new dispensation our collective voices are heard loudly and clearly." He added, "As sovereign nations our vital interest must be reflected in the new world order. We must act as one to include the voice of all Caribbean states and the Caribbean nations in the decision of a future post pandemic world in a proactive and strategic fashion to ensure that our interests are advanced by sitting at the table and not in the fringes or margins. That is the only way in which our interest will be fully respected." (MG)



## MOST ORANGE ZONE EVACUEES SHOULD LEAVE SHELTERS BY TUESDAY — PM

IWitnessNews, SVG – Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves says his government expects evacuees from the volcano Orange Zone – except those from Chateaubelair and Fitz Hughes – and people whose houses were damaged by the eruption, to leave emergency shelters by Tuesday. "... immediately, what we have to en-

sure that persons who are from the Orange Zone, right now, save and except those from Fitz Hughes and Chateaubelair — they are in the Orange Zone, but because of the extent of the ash there we are still not asking persons to go back there yet — but everywhere else in the orange zone, as I speak, persons should be leaving the shelters to go back home," the

prime minister said. He was speaking on NBC Radio from Cuba, where he has gone to accompany his wife for therapy after spinal surgery in the United States earlier this year. The prime minister's comments came even as some Orange Zone residents who have attempted to move back into their homes have complained that the ash from public spaces such as

roads, schools and playing fields, which are yet to be cleaned, are frustrating their efforts to clean their homes.

"Which means everybody from below Mount Young River on the northeast," the prime minister said, [going on] to detail the persons who should leave emergency shelters and return to their homes.





*Chief Medical Officer Dr. Hazel Laws, Chair of the COVID-19 Vaccination Commencement Launch and Ceremony.*

## SKN SAYS SEVEN CHILDREN AMONG THE 16 ACTIVE CASES

St. Kitts-Nevis Observer - Seven children in St. Kitts and Nevis are among the 16 active cases of COVID-19 in the Federation, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Hazel Laws has confirmed. On Tuesday, Dr. Laws announced 16 active cases, the highest number since the Federation started its COVID response.

She said the 16 cases include seven children between ages three and 15, and nine adults be-

tween 33 and 49.

She said the active cases are stable and are being monitored. "We are working assiduously to contain this cluster of COVID-19 cases.

William Vincent Hodge, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, said COVID-19 is making a huge impact on the schools. "Learning is disrupted just on the brink of examinations, schools are forced to abandon field trips and educational tours,

graduations may not be held except virtually, parents are forced to remain at home to provide care for their children. COVID-19 is in our schools. Teachers, students and axillary staff are contracting the virus, some are in quarantine."

Hodge called on parents and teachers to leverage resources to stop the spread of the virus. "Parents and teachers must be vaccinated. We have a moral and God-given

responsibility to protect the children God has given to us."

He said the ministry had embarked on vaccines' information sessions for parents and teachers. "I say to parents and to teachers to stop stiffening our necks and hardening our hearts. As of today, we can say the virus is rampant in our schools and has forced our schools to close for the next two weeks in the first instance."





## China hits back as US revisits Wuhan lab leak theory

*China has rejected any link between COVID-19 and a virus research lab in Wuhan*

BBC World News - China has denounced US efforts to further investigate whether Covid-19 came from a Chinese lab.

US President Joe Biden has called on intelligence officials to “redouble” their work to find out how the virus was first transmitted to humans. China’s foreign ministry accused the US of “political manipulation and blame shifting”.

It has rejected any link between Covid-19 and a virus research lab in the Chinese city of Wuhan.

Covid-19 was first detected in Wuhan in late 2019. Since then, more than 168 million cases have been confirmed worldwide and about 3.5

million deaths reported.

Authorities linked early Covid cases to a seafood market in Wuhan, leading scientists to theorise that the virus had first passed to humans from animals.

But recent US media reports have suggested growing evidence the virus could instead have emerged from a laboratory in China, perhaps through an accidental leak. In a statement on Wednesday, President Biden said he had asked for a report on the origins of Covid-19 after taking office, “including whether it emerged from human contact with an infected animal or from a laboratory accident”. On receiving it

this month, he asked for “additional follow-up”.

Mr. Biden said the majority of the intelligence community had “coalesced” around those two scenarios, but “do not believe there is sufficient information to assess one to be more likely than the other”.

He said he had now asked agencies to “redouble their efforts to collect and analyse information that could bring us closer to a definitive conclusion”.

The announcement angered Chinese officials. Foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said it showed the US “does not care about facts or truth, and has zero interest in a serious

science-based study of origins”.

“Their aim is to use the pandemic to pursue stigmatisation, political manipulation and blame shifting. They are being disrespectful to science, irresponsible to people’s lives, and counter-productive to the concerted efforts to fight the virus,” he said.

The spokesman also said US intelligence agencies had a “dark history” of spreading misinformation.

A statement from the Chinese embassy in the US, which did not directly refer to Mr. Biden’s order, said “smear campaigns and blame shifting are making a comeback”.

# GOP OFFERS \$928B ON INFRASTRUCTURE, FUNDED WITH COVID AID

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican senators outlined a \$928 billion infrastructure proposal Thursday that would tap unused coronavirus aid, a counteroffer to President Joe Biden's more sweeping plan as the two sides struggle to negotiate a bipartisan compromise and remain far apart on how to pay for the massive spending. The Republican offer would increase spending by \$91 billion on roads and bridges, \$48 billion on water resources and \$25 billion on airports, according to a one-page summary released by the GOP negotiators. It also would provide for one-time increases in broadband investments, at \$65 billion, and \$22 billion on rail. Republicans have rejected Biden's proposed corporate tax increase to pay for new investments, and instead want to shift unspent COVID-19 relief dollars to help cover the costs. "It's a serious effort to try to reach a bipartisan agreement," said Sen. Shelley Moore Capito of

West Virginia, the lead GOP negotiator.

The Republican senators said their offer delivers on "core infrastructure investments" that Biden has focused on as areas of potential bipartisan agreement. But their overall approach, up from an initial \$568 billion bid, received a cool response by Democrats and the White House.

With about \$250 billion in new spending, the GOP plan falls short of the more ambitious proposal outlined in the president's American Jobs Plan. In earlier negotiations, Biden reduced his \$2.3 trillion opening bid to \$1.7 trillion. Biden, in an economic address later Thursday in Cleveland, planned to present "head-on" the choice before Congress and the country, according to a White House official, and will frame the argument as whether Americans want to keep giving breaks to corporations or invest in modernizing infrastructure. The official was not authorized to



***Republican senators announce their counter-offer to the Biden Infrastructure plan***

publicly discuss Biden's remarks before the president's speech and spoke on condition of anonymity. Investing in infrastructure is a top legislative priority for Biden. Talks are at a crossroads before a Memorial Day deadline to make progress toward a bipartisan deal. The White House is assessing whether the president can strike the contours of an agreement with Republicans or whether he will try to go it alone with Democrats if no progress is made in the coming

days. Core differences remain over the definition of infrastructure: Republicans stick to traditional investments in roads, bridges, ports and water drinking systems, while Biden takes a more expansive view.

Under Biden's initial proposal, there is more than \$300 billion for substantial upgrades to public schools, Veterans Administration hospitals and affordable housing, along with \$25 billion for new and renovated child care centers.





# Macron asks Rwanda to forgive France over 1994 genocide role

*French President Macron laid a wreath in Kigali*

BBC World News - French President Emmanuel Macron has asked Rwandans to forgive France for its role in the 1994 Rwandan genocide in which about 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus died.

Speaking at the genocide memorial in Rwanda's capital Kigali, he said France had not heeded warnings of impending carnage and had for too long "valued silence over examination of the truth". But France had not been an accomplice in the killings, Mr. Macron added.

Rwanda's leader praised his speech. President Paul Kagame said, "His words were something more valuable than an apology. They were the truth." He called it "an act of tremendous courage".

In March, a French expert commission found that France under the late President François Mitterrand had borne "heavy and overwhelming responsibility" for the genocide but had not been complicit. The report said France had been "blind" to genocide preparations.

"Only those who went through that night can perhaps forgive, and in doing so give the gift of forgiveness," Mr. Macron said at the memorial where more than 250,000 victims are buried.

"I hereby humbly and with respect stand by your side today. I come to recognise the extent of our responsibilities."

A Hutu elite ruled Rwanda when the genocide took place in April-June 1994, but they were later ousted by the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front

(RPF) under Paul Kagame. Mitterrand had close ties to former Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana, a Hutu.

"The killers who stalked the swamps, the hills, the churches, did not have the face of France. France was not an accomplice," Mr. Macron said.

But he said that in 1994 "France did not understand that by wanting to block a regional conflict or a civil war, it stood de facto by a genocidal regime".





## US JOBLESS CLAIMS FALL TO 406,000 – A NEW PANDEMIC LOW

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits dropped last week to 406,000, a new pandemic low and more evidence that the job market is strengthening as the virus wanes and the economy further reopens.

Thursday's report from the Labor Department showed that applications declined by 38,000 from 444,000 a week earlier. The number of weekly applications for jobless aid — a rough measure of the pace of layoffs — has fallen by more than half since January.

The decline in applications reflects a swift rebound in economic growth.

The government on Thursday separately esti-

mated that the economy expanded at a strong annual pace of 6.4% in the first three months of this year, unchanged from its initial estimate.

More Americans are venturing out to shop, travel, dine out and congregate at entertainment venues. All that renewed spending has led companies to seek new workers, which helps explain why a record number of jobs is now being advertised.

Yet, many businesses complain that they can't find enough applicants for all those open jobs, even though the unemployment rate remains 6.1%, well above the 3.5% rate that prevailed before the pandemic struck in March of last year. Job growth slowed sharply last month com-

pared with March, a surprise pullback that was largely ascribed to a labor shortage in some industries.

Economists blame a range of factors for the shortfall of workers, including an extra \$300-a-week payment that people receiving jobless aid have been able to get, on top of their state unemployment check, since March.

The federal benefit was included in President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion rescue package. With many people able to earn more from their combined federal and state jobless aid than from their former jobs, the extra income has likely discouraged some of the unemployed from seeking work, some analysts say.

Complaints from busi-

nesses that they can't find enough workers have led most Republican governors to curtail unemployment aid. Twenty-four states, including such populous ones as Texas, Florida, Georgia and Arizona, have said they will stop paying out the supplemental \$300-a-week federal jobless payment beginning in June.

Other people remain reluctant to take jobs in restaurants, hotels and other service industries for fear of contracting COVID-19. And some women can't return to work without adequate child care, though recent research by two economists found the impact of this factor to be relatively small.



# READY TO CONQUER THE WILD



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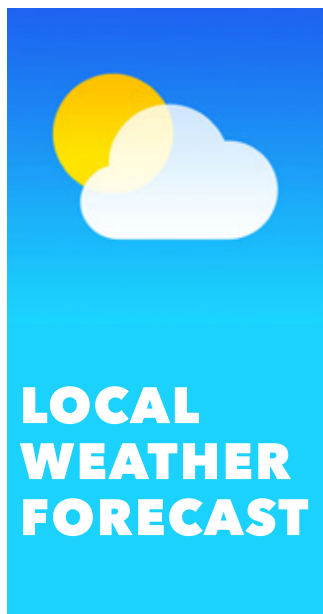
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Humidity <b>65%</b>	UV Index <b>Extreme</b>
Sunrise <b>05:33</b>	Sunset <b>18:36</b>
<b>Fri 28   Night</b> <b>25°</b> 11% E 14 km/h Generally clear. Low 25°C. Winds E at 10 to 15 km/h.	
Humidity <b>74%</b>	UV Index <b>0 of 10</b>
Moonrise <b>21:17</b>	Moonset <b>07:33</b>
Waning Gibbous	
<b>Sat 29   Day</b> <b>29°</b> 15% E 18 km/h Generally clear. High 29°C. Winds E at 15 to 25 km/h.	
Humidity <b>67%</b>	UV Index <b>Extreme</b>
Sunrise <b>05:33</b>	Sunset <b>18:36</b>
<b>Sat 29   Night</b> <b>25°</b> 24% E 19 km/h Generally clear. Low 25°C. Winds E at 15 to 25 km/h.	
Humidity <b>74%</b>	UV Index <b>0 of 10</b>
Moonrise <b>22:16</b>	Moonset <b>08:36</b>
Waning Gibbous	



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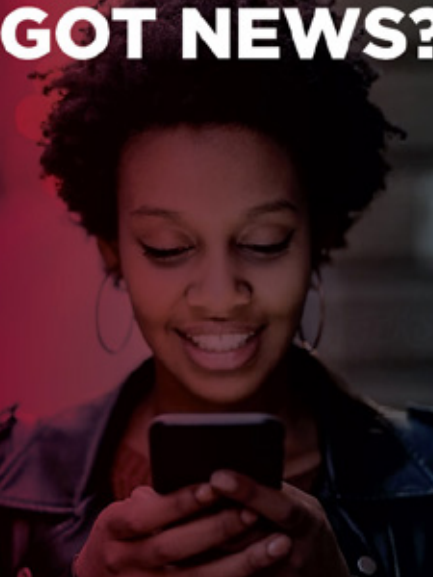
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WILL BE OBSERVED)**






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A photograph of Coach Courtney Walsh and a player on a cricket field. Coach Walsh, on the left, is wearing a red cap, sunglasses, and a blue polo shirt with 'Sandals' written on it. The player, on the right, is wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt and blue trousers, also with 'Sandals' written on it. They are both looking towards the right. The background is a blurred cricket field with spectators in the stands.

# COACH WALSH PLEASED WITH PROGRESS

## AS WOMEN'S CAMP HITS HIGH GEAR

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua – Coach Courtney Walsh is pleased with the new players added to the West Indies Women's training squad for the month-long high-performance camp currently taking place in Antigua. Despite a few areas that need more attention, the West Indies bowling legend is not overly concerned, as he knows the women can switch gears as the camp progresses. The only concern he has so far is the level of fitness of some of the players. The coaching staff has ramped up preparation in achieving improvements and balance between fitness and skills. Walsh has identified an improvement in the batting, both in the nets and during the practice matches played so far, and he is confident the bowling will start showing that improvement in the coming weeks before the camp ends.

"The batting has been a lot more consistent, which is good. The bowling has been getting there, but the batting has been the big thing so far. The theme of this camp is awareness and consistency and it's getting better game by game and practice by practice." Walsh is also impressed with the adaptability of the youngsters who are in the setup for the first time and also praised the senior players for taking the younger ones under their wings. The players have been training at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, and have also played a number of highly-competitive intra-squad matches. They are preparing for the ICC Women's World Cup to be played in New Zealand early next year.

# GRENADA STRONGMAN CAPTURES FIRST POWERLIFTING TITLE

Grenada News Online - Grenadian strongman Marcus "Grizzly" Alexander has shown great physical strength after participating in numerous strongman competitions, and has also proven that his mental strength is equally matched. Residing in Wuhan China last year, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak, Alexander has emerged stronger than ever. Achieving moderate success in the Strongman category, he proved that he can compete in a new sporting discipline and dominate, winning a gold medal at the World Powerlifting Competition in Shanghai on 22 May 2021. "Since I started lifting, I knew that I found my sport (strongman). But for the past two years I have been living in China and powerlifting is the sport that is featured here. I decided to switch ... my training and give it a go. It seemed a bit easier at first, but over time the heavy-lift just gets to you physically. Nevertheless, I set a goal to at least win one major title in a field that is new to me (and that I did)," he said. Alexander, who is on the verge of completing his master's law degree at the Wuhan University of Technology (WHUT) recounts the tolls of life under quarantine in Wuhan, and not being able to train, a requirement to maintain fitness. "I don't know where to start to tell you the challenges that myself and other Grenadian students faced out here during Covid-19. As one of the students who were in the epicentre of the pandemic here in Wuhan, I can say ... the initial stages were one of the scariest

times of my life. The thought of dying without getting to see everyone I love flooded my mind daily." He recounted his experience of self-isolation and the mental focus needed to cope. "Then comes the total lockdown, no training, and total self-isolation. I was forced to harness the mental strength I thought I never had and find a coping mechanism to survive that phase. All in all, I learned how mentally strong I am. I learned to adjust to being an online learner and, most importantly, I found inspiration

to write a book that I planned to write during my studies," he said. Despite the ordeal, Alexander has set his eyes on achieving new feats of strength by stepping out of his comfort zone and venturing into powerlifting, a prominent sport featured in China. During the World Powerlifting Competition in Shanghai, Alexander competed in powerlifting categories comprised of Squat 265 kg, Bench Press 150 kg, and Deadlift 275 kg. He logged a total of 690 kg in the 3 events combined.



Marcus 'Grizzly' Alexander

## ZAIDA JAMES: THE FEARLESS AND FIERY FUTURE OF WEST INDIES WOMEN

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua – “Pure me” is how left-arm medium-pacer Zaida James describes her style of play. The 16-year-old from Gros Islet, Saint Lucia, is a member of the 30-member West Indies Women training squad currently in a camp in Antigua, and she's enjoying every moment of it. James was introduced to the sport by her father, after she used to watch him play it on his PlayStation video games. At the age of eight, her dad joined her in the grassroots cricket programme, but left after a while to pursue tennis and football. Then came a time where she had to choose which one she wanted to

permanently pursue, so she chose the willow and leather over the racket and fur-ball. “I used to watch him and I like the game. I went into grassroots cricket. I played tennis and football, and then I moved back into cricket, and from there I just continued my game.” She has been at this high-performance camp for just over three weeks and, despite rubbing shoulders with the best women cricketers in the region, Zaida has managed to remain focused and not star-struck. She speaks with raw emotions on finding out she was selected for this camp and what she hopes to achieve from it. No doubt,

Zaida James is destined to be a household name in West Indies Women's cricket in the future. She attends the Entrepot Secondary School in Castries, where she enjoys studying English, as she aims to pursue a career as a Diplomat in addition to being an international cricketer. Her hobbies include watersports, namely scuba diving, riding jet skis and snorkelling. On the cricket field she admires Hayley Matthews, and her favourite sporting moment was when she made 125 not out batting in the Acynta Auguste 50-over tournament in her native St. Lucia.

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