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COVID CASES DOWN TO ONE!

SEE PAGE 5



PM and Finance Minister Gaston Browne met with new president of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). Find out what they discussed. (Pages 7-8 & 12-13)

FIRST MEDICAL MARIJUANA LICENSE HANDED OUT TODAY (STORY ON PAGE 9)

BLUE ECONOMY, THE PACE QUICKENS (STORY ON PAGE 10)

What the UN Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC) says about corporal punishment

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the primary human rights instrument for children. As of November 2019, it has been ratified or acceded to by 196 states – meaning all, except for the USA! Antigua and Barbuda signed the UNCRC in 1991 (30 years ago!) and ratified it two years later in 1993. That is how long it has been since we gave our consent to the provisions of this international agreement and agreed to be bound and guided by it.

Any moves by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda to abolish corporal punishment would be totally consistent with bringing the country in line with its own internationally recognized commitments.

Relevant articles

The obligation to prohibit all corporal punishment of children falls directly under articles 19, 28(2) and 37 of the Convention.

Art. 19: “(1) States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment

or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child....”

Art. 28(2): “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child’s human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.”

Art. 37: “States Parties shall ensure that: (a) No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age....”

Article 4 of the Convention emphasises that its implementation necessitates legislative as well as non-legislative measures. Art. 4: “States Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention....”

General Comments adopted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child

The primary reference for the

Committee’s interpretation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in relation to corporal punishment of children is its General Comment No. 8 (2006) on “The right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment (arts. 19; 28, para. 2; and 37, inter alia)”. This text consolidates the Committee’s position on corporal punishment of children in the context of its work on the issue and of other international and regional human rights standards, confirms the obligation on states parties to the Convention to reform their laws to prohibit it and provides a benchmark by which to assess whether or not prohibition has been achieved. For example:

- Definition of corporal punishment (para. 11). This definition establishes that the obligation to prohibit corporal punishment applies to all forms of such punishment, “however light”. It is not necessary for states to incorporate this definition in their legislation, but their **laws must be sufficiently clear** that prohibition applies to all corporal punishment in all settings, without exception.

- The importance of repealing legal defences (paras. 31 and 39). Provisions for “reasonable chastisement”, “right of correction”, etc., of children are legal defences for punitive assault of children that would not apply to adults. Equal protection for children demands that such defences are repealed.

- Faith-based justification for corporal punishment (para. 29). The right to freedom of religious belief is fundamental, but practice of a religion or belief must be consistent with the right of all

persons to respect for human dignity and physical integrity.

- The responsibilities and rights of parents and protection for family life (paras. 27 and 28). States must respect and support families, but it must also ensure children’s human dignity and physical integrity is respected alongside that of other family members. Parents’ responsibility/right/duty to direct and guide children must be consistent with children’s rights under the Convention – there is no justification for physical punishment.

The Committee’s recommendations to states parties

Since the very beginning of its work in examining the reports of states parties on their implementation of the Convention, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has raised the issue of corporal punishment of children with governments and recommended it be prohibited, including in the home. Recommendations are consistently to prohibit corporal punishment in all settings, including the home ...

Antigua now ‘in a good place’ of COVID response – PM Browne

by *Shelton Daniel*

Antigua and Barbuda’s Prime Minister Gaston Browne has declared that the country is in “a very good position” where the progress of

its public vaccination program against COVID-19 is concerned.

He spoke on Saturday during his weekly radio program, The Browne and Browne Show, citing figures

of 35,000 people who have received their first-shot of the two-dose Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine and said a further 24,000 have completed the double-jab regimen of inoculation.

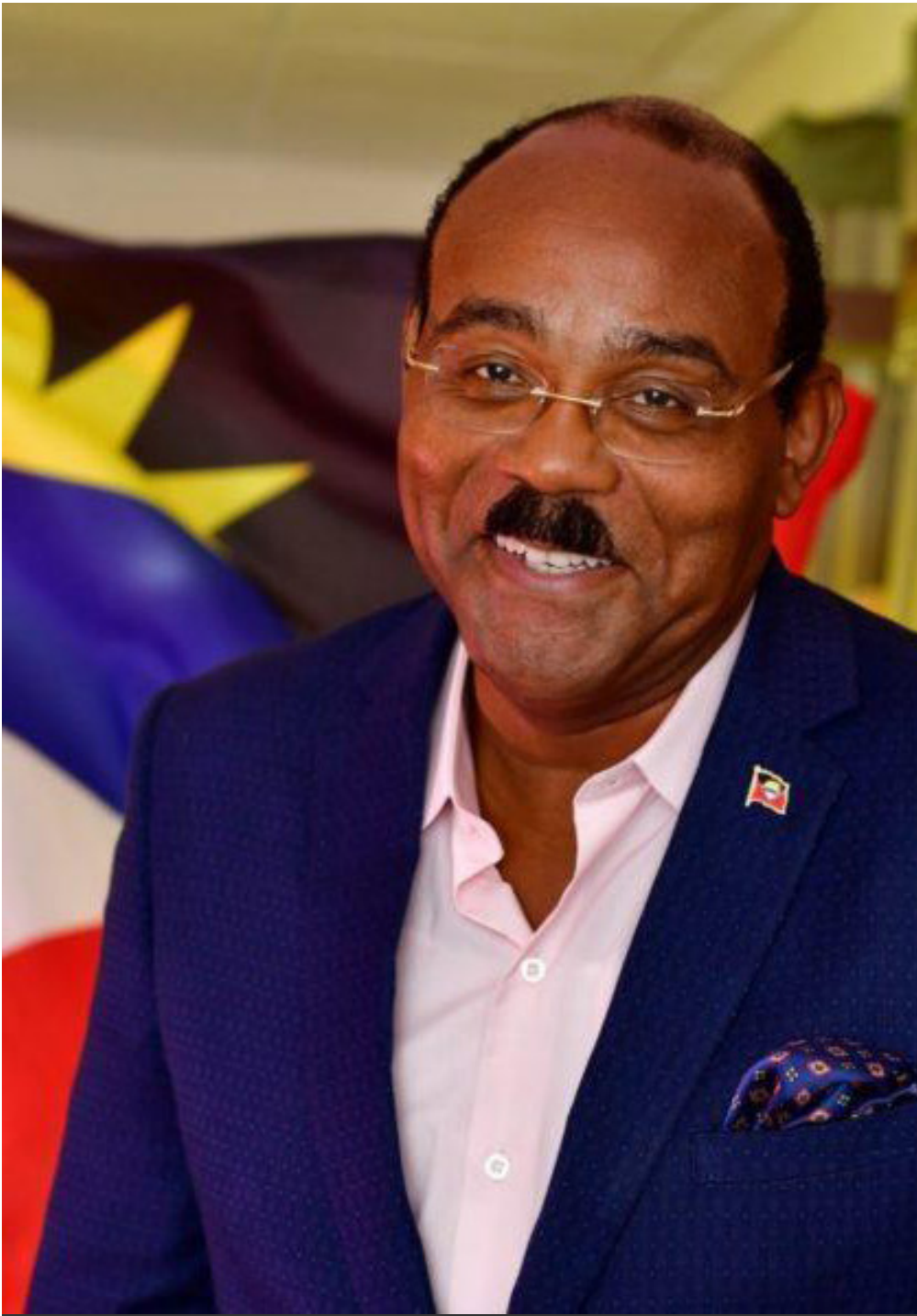


APUA ELECTRICITY MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

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Monday, 14th June 2021	Tuesday, 15th June 2021	Wednesday, 16th June 2021	Thursday, 17th June 2021
Crabbs Reverse Osmosis Plant 7:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Crabbs Reverse Osmosis Plant 7:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Crabbs Reverse Osmosis Plant 7:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Section of Weatherills near Michael’s Buff 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM
Section of Swetes near Buckleys 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Section of Joseph Lane and Kentish Road 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Eastern section of Freemans Village 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM	

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Prime Minister Gaston Browne

“It means that a quarter of our population is now fully vaccinated and that’s a very good position to be in. We had wished it would have been significantly more, but in the context of the availability of vaccines and choice of vaccines, I think it’s a very good position and significantly higher, percentage-wise, than most Caribbean coun-

tries,” he stated.

From a position of near despair some weeks ago, due to a drastic slowdown in public uptake, the vaccination program appears to have rebounded notably in recent days, with the twin island state now outperforming several of its regional neighbors, according to Browne.

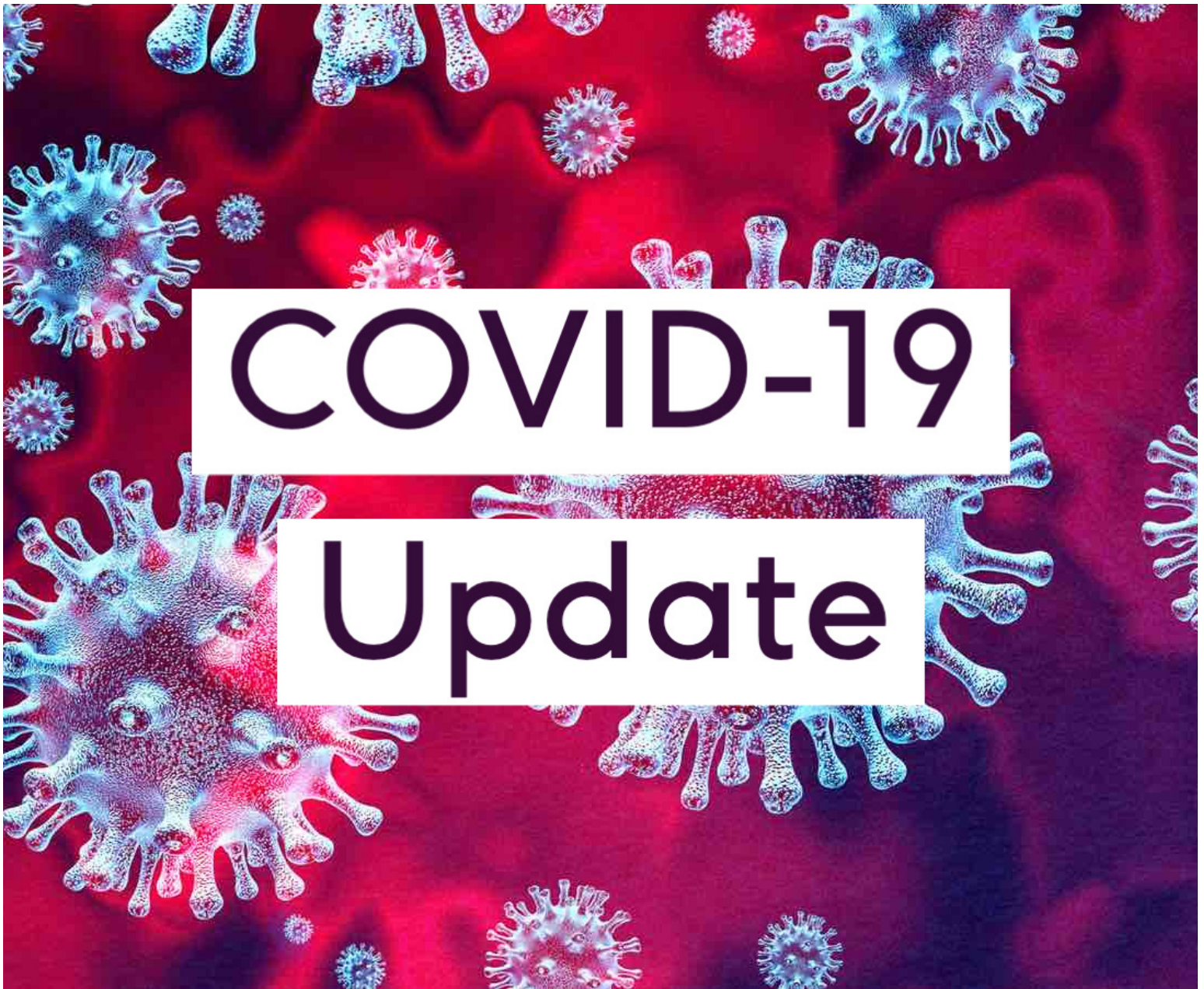
“At this time, Antigua and

Barbuda is actually leading in the delivery or administering of vaccines. So, I’m very pleased, even though we would have seen some reduction in the rate of vaccinations, at least people are coming in and the numbers are ticking upwards,” he added.

The Prime Minister noted that only about 5,000 persons remained to receive their first doses, based on the balance of current supplies to fully inoculate 40,000 people.

“As you know, we just got ... 16,800 additional COVID Astra-Zeneca vaccines. So it means now that we have sufficient vaccines in stock to fully vaccinate 40,000 individuals ... so that’s a very strong position,” he reckoned.

Prime Minister Browne reminded Antiguan and Barbudans that, “A speedy achievement of herd immunity would ... bring significant health and economic benefits to [the] nation.” He said the fact that the country presently has only three active cases of the disease – none of which are hospitalized – “is primarily because of the fact that we have a good core of our people who have had at least a first vaccination; at least 36 percent of our population is actually vaccinated; not enough to achieve herd immunity, but sufficient to reduce the prevalence of COVID.”



COVID Dashboard Update: Only 1 active case!

The most recent report received by the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment from the Sir Lester Bird Mount St. John Medical Centre has revealed no new laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda as of Friday 11th June 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

One hundred and sixty-four

(164) samples were processed at Sir Lester Bird MSJMC.

Two (2) recovered cases were recorded increasing the total to one thousand two hundred and twenty (1220).


Consequently, the total number of persons with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda remains 1,263 – which is in-

clusive of one active case.

There are no hospitalized cases.


Meanwhile 34,883 first doses of the Covid-19 vaccines have been administered, while 23,844 second doses were administered.

The dashboard has been updated to reflect these changes.



Persons who are scheduled to receive their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine in July, are to do so in June at any of the four (4) vaccinations sites.

For appointments due July 1-17, get second dose June 14-20
For appointments due July 18-31, get second dose June 21-30




Vaccination card and Government issued picture ID required

Mondays to Fridays, 9:00am-5:00pm

Vaccination sites:


- Villa Polyclinic
- Multipurpose Cultural & Exhibition Center
- Glanvilles Polyclinic
- Precision Center in Paynters, behind GiGi Furniture Gallery. (for persons who went to Sir Novell Richards Academy)

EACH VACCINATED, ALL PROTECTED. #GETTHEFACTS #GETTHEVAX




COVID-19 ANTIGUA & BARBUDA DASHBOARD


This dashboard reflects COVID-19 statistics as of 11th June at 0pm & Vaccination statistics as of 11th June 2021.
Published on: 14th June 2021




THREE TIPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF:



WEAR your mask/face covering



WASH and sanitise hands often



KEEP your distance

NEW CASES	00
HOSPITALIZED	00
ISOLATED	01
ACTIVE CASES	01
RECOVERED CASES	1,220
DEATHS	42
CONFIRMED CASES	1,263

VACCINATED

1ST DOSE	34,883
2ND DOSE	23,844

WORLDWIDE STATS

CONFIRMED CASES	NEW CASES	DEATHS
175,306,598	387,209	3,792,777

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Ministry of Health, Wellness & Environment
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PM Browne hold talks with new Caribbean Development Bank President

On Friday, June 11, 2021, recently elected President of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) Dr. Hyginus "Gene" Leon, and Vice-President Operations (VPO) Mr. Isaac Solomon, paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

According to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), "The visit by the CDB executives comes ahead of the historic meeting of CDB governors where member states are expected to learn of the new CDB president's roadmap for the region's Development."

While welcoming the new CDB executives, Prime Minister Browne said their appointment comes at a critical time as the region's leaders grapple with confronting the challenges presented by the COVID-19 Pandemic. He ex-

pressed confidence that, with the wealth of experience both individuals bring to the job, they will be an asset to the region's recovery.

Minister of Public Works and Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, Hon. Lennox Weston

was also present during the CDB officials' visit. According to a statement from OPM, "Both CDB Executives expressed their desire to work with Antigua and Barbuda and governments of the region in stabilizing their economies

coming out of the pandemic."

Dr. Hyginus 'Gene' Leon on May 1st 2021 took office as President of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), becoming the sixth chief executive of the regional multilateral institution.

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(l-r): Isaac Solomon, VP Operations, CDB; PM Gaston Brown; Gene Leon, President, CDB; Minister Lennox Weston

The seasoned economist will lead a team of more than 200 employees headquartered in Bridgetown, Barbados. He comes to the assignment with 35 years of experience in economics, financial policy development and executive management – more than 20 of which were spent working with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He succeeds Dr. Warren Smith who retired on April 30 after serving as President for 10 years. In May, the CDB announced its annual meeting with the Board of Governors. This meeting is scheduled to take place tomorrow Tuesday June 15th to Thursday July 1st 2021. According to the CDB, “Innova-

tion, Transformation and Sustainable Development” is the anchoring theme of this 51st Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).

The virtual event, which will include

seminars, discussions, keynote presentations, and business meetings, will showcase the scope and impact of the Bank’s investments in and other assistance to its 19 borrowing member countries (BMCs).

CDB President, Dr. Gene Leon said, “The agenda of the Annual Meeting emphasizes three elements – innovation, transformation and sustainable development - for reshaping regional economies grappling with recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and contending with numerous obstacles to sustainable growth and economic development. Our focus will be on practical solutions to move the needle beyond discussion to concrete action.”

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

First official medical cannabis licence to be handed over today



History will be made today, as the Medicinal Cannabis Authority (the “MCA” or the “Authority”) of Antigua and Barbuda will officially hand over the first licence for the production of cannabis for medicinal use in a short ceremony at Seaton.

The first licence issued will be handed over to GROW Antigua, a locally registered vertically integrated seed to sell medical cannabis company with a tri-fold format.

GROW Antigua is a joint initiative between the Rastafarian Food For Life (RFFL), NAM-

CO, and Itopia Life Antigua Ltd. The company is said to be a partnership of private, Rastafari, and public (Government) ownership; the private company being Itopia Life (Antigua).

Itopia Life (Antigua) Ltd. is a team of Antiguan and international professionals with modern growing practices, world-class medical genetics, and years of experience in the medicinal cannabis industry.

According to GROW Antigua, “The establishment of a public/private hybrid operation which includes the government,

Rastafari communities and private enterprise as central stakeholders will help centralize public health outcomes, while also fostering innovation and quality through partnerships with private entities.”

The Medicinal Cannabis Authority of Antigua and Barbuda was established in 2019 pursuant to the Antigua and Barbuda

Cannabis Act 2018 and Cannabis Regulations 2019. The Authority is a statutory body created for the purpose of regulating and issuing licenses for the cultivation, manufacture, processing, extraction, import, export, testing, research, distribution, and sale of medicinal cannabis goods. The Authority monitors all financial and other related trans-



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actions within the medicinal cannabis industry and also has oversight of the issuance of licences for sacramental cannabis use.

According to the MCA, “The mandates of the Medicinal Cannabis Authority are to: Regulate medicinal cannabis business and the sacramental use of cannabis for religious use within Antigua and Barbu-

da, and in so doing to consider the protection of the public to be the highest priority; Consider the protection of the public paramount in the exercise of all licensing, regulatory, and disciplinary powers; Ensure that the public receives the highest quality medicinal cannabis products for therapeutic use by establishing and enforcing standards for

medicinal cannabis products; Create Rules and recommend further Regulations as may be necessary to implement, administer and enforce its duties under the Cannabis Act, 2018; and, Collect requisite fees as outlined by the Cannabis Regulations 2019, in connection with licensing activities and, in so doing, create revenue opportunity for

the Government of Antigua and Barbuda.” The ceremony which will take place today at 2:00 p.m. will see both key government ministers including the Prime Minister, members of the Rastafarian communities, and the company directors, participate in a ribbon-cutting and handing over ceremony on the Grow Antigua farm site.

Major stimuli to the Blue Economy with Joint Maritime Economy Plan

Last week, Antigua and Barbuda announced a partnership with the United Kingdom for a Maritime Economy Plan.

The launch of the document, which was conducted by the Ministry of Social Transformation and the Blue Economy and the Resident British Commissioner, is said to have signaled a greater focus toward the blue economy to stimulate national development and protect one of the country’s most valuable ecosystems.

According to the lead ministry of the document, the Ministry of Social Transformation and the Blue Economy, “Since the initial request from

Foreign Minister E.P. “Chet” Greene over the last two years, the team from the UK-funded Commonwealth Marine Economies (CME) Programme has been working closely with Hon. Dean Jonas, Minister of Social Transformation and the Blue Economy; Antigua and Barbuda’s High Commissioner to the UK, H.E. Karen-Mae Hill; and Ms. Kimbalie Constant, Strategic, Operations and Project Implementation Manager in Minister Jonas’s team, to bring the programme to life.”

The Social Transformation Ministry noted that “Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, UK Minister of State for the

Commonwealth and Minister responsible for the Caribbean, gave remarks virtually at the ceremony.

He said, “I am very pleased to help launch this very first [maritime economy] plan for Antigua and Barbuda.”

He further said, “The development of this national plan, together with scientific data-gathering and technical assistance from the Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme, forms the foundation of a successful, climate-resilient, ocean-based economy. It is one of a range of resilience-building interventions that the UK supports through



Resident British Commissioner, Ms. Lindsay Thompson, presenting copies of the plan to Hon. Dean Jonas, Minister of Social Transformation and the Blue Economy

our regional development programme.”

The UK Minister took note of “the toll the pandemic has taken on all the world’s economies, but especially those that depend on tourism”. He added, “This reinforces the need for solutions like

these that underpin economic prosperity at the same time as safeguarding the health of the ocean.”

Antigua and Barbuda’s move to have such a plan fits well into its agenda of prioritizing the development of its Blue Economy. Min-

ister Jonas said, “The Maritime Economy is the step in the right direction, not just for the Ministry of Social Transformation and the Blue Economy, but also for the nation of Antigua and Barbuda as we forge forward with the development

in this emerging sector to fuel new economic activities and support industries within our communities. This plan puts us on track with our long-term sustainable development goals while creating employment and economic growth within our twin island.”

Jonas expressed gratitude to the UK Government and stated that this continues to demonstrate the strong partnership that exists between Antigua and Barbuda and the UK.

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Browne wary about more debt from CDB, IMF

by *Shelton Daniel*

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has told the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) that it “has to do some realignments” going forward, as it helps the region to emerge from the economic and financial distress wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

PM Browne, who is also Antigua and Barbuda’s Finance Minister, spoke following his interactions on Friday with the new CDB president, Mr.

Hyginus “Gene” Leon and another senior bank official.

“We think, for example, that [CDB’s] funding of private sector entities is somewhat limited and there is a role, perhaps, for the bank to play in greater private sector funding; so that private sector investments could benefit from the low interest costs of about three-and-a-half percent; because most private sector entities that borrow here, they are paying between 8-10 percent; and when you have such

a high interest rate it increases ... the possibility of business failure with such a high cost of money,” Browne said Saturday during his weekly radio program, The Browne and Browne Show, on Pointe FM 99.1.

He said further that he also told the visiting CDB officials, “These private sector loans could be guaranteed by the Central Government to provide some level of comfort for the bank, but the bank should not be focusing almost exclu-

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- Hill Descend Control
- High Beam Assist
- Around View Monitor
- Blind Spot Warning
- Lane Intervention
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sively on public sector funding.”

PM Browne, himself an ex-banker, said he had suggested to the CDB that, as a development bank, it should be “encouraged to do bonds in housing ... I’ve said to him that we would be preparing a proposal for development bank to be sent to the CDB, possibly to get a \$10 million facility – probably over 10 or 15 years at three-and-a-half percent, which the bank can then on-lend for about six or seven percent – and use it for housing.”

Browne said Leon and the CDB’s vice president for operations had confirmed in their conversation with him that “Antigua and Barbuda had a very strong performance between 2014 and 2019 prior to COVID ... Even the IMF, for example, would have extended a letter of assessment recently – and which they shared with the CDB – confirming that we did extremely well with growing the

country’s economy.”

The Prime Minister further disclosed that, “One of the reasons we are not rushing into an IMF program is that we are not absolutely sure that we need the IMF money. Because, as it stands now, we are seeking a policy-based loan from the CDB for US\$50 million, and we should be coming into another US\$27 million later in the year. We think that the US\$77 million plus some other things that we’re doing that will create revenue – such as the Tourism Accommodation Tax – we should see an increase by \$150M, maybe \$200M.

“So we’ve said to them, ‘yes we’ll continue discussion with the IMF. If the situation with COVID persists and the economic wounds become deeper and we need additional funding, then sure, we’ll engage the IMF’. But as it stands now, we said to them there was no need at this point for us to engage

the IMF immediately. What we need immediately is the US\$50 million policy-based loan from CDB to provide budgetary support.”

Browne said the IMF has looked at the medium-term strategy formulated by his government and “said that it would certainly work. Where we differ is in their assessment of our funding requirement, in which they are suggesting that we should probably incur maybe up to another \$800M to

\$900M in debt. We have said to them ‘no way we are going to take on that kind of debt’. Because one of the problems we had even prior to COVID is that between salaries and wages and debt service they took up practically all of the tax revenue. So we had to rely on CIP (Citizenship by Investment Program) revenue to deal with other expenditure. It really created a strain, so we do not want to incur too much debt.”

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Dated the 18th May, 2021
Andrea Pearline Richards
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Sir Eric Burton passes... Barbuda, the nation loses a 'giant'



Sir Eric Burton (seated) paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Gaston Browne in October, 2019

The man who was a fixture of Barbuda and national politics for several decades – Sir Eric Burton has died. He passed away in the United States where he had been living for the past several years.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne expressed condolences to the Burton Family on behalf of the nation of Antigua and

Barbuda and thanking the Barbudan political 'giant' for his contributions to developments of both islands.

Sir Eric was named leader of the Opposition from 1984-1989. He was the only elected member of the opposition as the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party swept all 16 seats contested in the

elections on Antigua.

He was a member of the committee that traveled to London to negotiate political independence for Antigua and Barbuda as he led the Barbuda delegation to the talks held at Lancaster House. From those discussions came the Constitutional provision for the establishment of the Barbuda

Council through the passage of the Barbuda Local Government Act.

Much as he was perhaps the most influential politician in Barbuda for decades, Sir Eric was much more than a politician. He was also a leading businessman, farmer and fisherman. He operated a supermarket while at the same time

he was one of the leading exporters of fish, lobster and conch from the island. Former representative for Barbuda, Arthur Nibbs saw Sir Eric as a mentor. "Sir Eric epitomizes what a true Barbudan should be. He was hard working and always cared for the people, sometimes more than he cared for himself," Nibbs remarked. He added that there were times when Barbuda would run out of certain supplies and Sir Eric would make whatever arrangements possible to secure the items and have them delivered to Barbuda to ease the shortage. "He will be greatly missed! I believe that Sir Eric as a philanthropist gave more to the people of Barbuda than he got for himself," Nibbs stated.

The Burton family has a legacy of service to Barbuda. His third son, Lincoln, who died earlier this year, served as Council chairman as well as other positions on the Council while his grandson, Wade, has also served on the Council.

Current Parliamentary representative, Trevor Walker, who is related to Sir Eric by marriage, has not been available for comment.

Halo Generation Y blood donation appeal to mark World Blood Day



Halo Generation Y members at Government House, launching the blood donation campaign in 2020.

Halo Generation Y (the youth arm of the Halo Foundation) is appealing to the youth of the nation to donate one pint of blood to the Sir Lester Bird Mount St. John Medical Center. This is in recognition of World Blood Donor Day on June 14th, 2021.

One year ago, the Halo Foundation Generation Y (Gen Y) teamed up with the Mount St. John Medical Centre (MSJMC) to launch the "1 Pint, 4 Times, 12 Lives" blood donation challenge, in support of World Blood Donor Day held every year on June 14th.

The campaign yielded a significant contribution to the blood bank, as several of the nation's young people stepped up to the plate and supported the drive to save human life.

At the start of the campaign, Michael Joseph, Chief Operations Officer of Gen Y, said: "The hospital is always in need of blood, no matter what type.

We have a tendency to only want to donate blood when a family member is in critical condition — but so many things could go wrong at the last minute and we may not be in a position to assist. Each pint of blood given helps to save three lives, and this is an extremely noble act on the part of the donor."

President of Halo Generation Y, Brent Scotland thanked the youth for their participation. "The concept of saving lives is a real challenge when it comes to blood donation. For all those who took the time and mustered up the courage, your humanitarian efforts are certainly praiseworthy."

All blood donations are to be made at the Mount St. John Medical Centre. Until June 30th, Gen Y will present each donor with an attractively designed t-shirt.

COVAX is failing to halt the COVID-19 pandemic: here's why, and how to fix it



(Reprinted from theconversation.com, June 8th 2021)

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently called for an accelerated global effort to distribute vaccines to end the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a welcome step because past official statements by world leaders have fallen short of delivering specific policies to reach desperate populations, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

The IMF was also right to recognise that the cost of containing the COVID-19 pandemic is far less than the overall benefits for the global economy of full vaccine coverage. But it could have gone further by recognising that the inefficient vaccine allocation

rules currently in place must be replaced by new cooperative institutional structures and more concrete steps by the Group of Twenty (G20) countries.

The IMF is approaching the problem too narrowly. It strongly supports vaccine donations and distribution to be carried out solely through the COVAX facility. COVAX is one of three pillars of the initiative known as the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, which was launched in April 2020 at an event co-hosted by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the European Commission, French president Emmanuel Macron and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

COVAX was created to facilitate

equitable access to vaccines. The first two pillars were focused on equitable access to diagnostics and treatment. As helpful as the arrangement has been, its model of approaching the problem has become out of date.

Since its creation last year, vaccines have become more available but distribution and other problems have become more apparent.

COVAX provided a good baseline model for expected public health needs. It was also useful for setting priority targets. The key one was to vaccinate about 20% of each country's population as quickly as possible.

But the facility suffers from two major flaws: Firstly, it primarily al-

locates vaccines in proportion to population sizes, which is not the best public health metric; Secondly, it does not consider countries' capacities to roll out massive immunisation campaigns.

Flaws

Setting vaccine distribution goals on the basis of population size is flawed for a number of reasons.

Firstly, it disregards the complexity of the problem. Countries are at very different stages of the pandemic. Some are suffering horrific losses and their health systems have collapsed. Others have a lack of adequate public health measures, and inadequate social adherence to these measures.

On the other hand, others face far less daunting scenarios.

Much has been said about the lack of vaccines in many African countries. But as precarious as this problem is on the continent, African countries aren't currently experiencing the extremely aggressive outbreaks seen in India, Nepal, Brazil, and many other Latin American countries.

These cases lay bare the shortcomings of distributing vaccines on the basis of a population yardstick: the metric fails to capture the severity of the underlying public health problems facing different nations.

Criteria for allocation

Vaccine allocation, whether done through COVAX or directly, should be based on public health metrics. These include:

- The incidence rate. This measures the number of new cases of COVID-19 that occur during a

specified period of time in a population at risk for developing the disease. Usually expressed as incidence per a certain number of persons (1,000; 10,000; 100,000), the rate is a measure of events, that is, the transition from a non-diseased to a diseased state, and thereby a measure of risk.

Countries at higher risk levels calculated using the incidence rate should have priority in vaccine allocations.

- The attack rate. This measures the number of susceptible people who become ill within a set period of time as a share of the total number of susceptible persons. Increases in the attack rate may suggest that a viral variant that is more transmissible is becoming dominant in a certain country. Therefore, without widespread genomic surveillance, the attack rate may help in mapping the spread of dangerous variants of concern.

- Health system capacity. This is measured by the number of intensive care beds per 1,000 people in a given country, for example.

Abiding by these and other metrics for vaccine allocation would ensure that vaccines went to countries that had the greatest immediate need.

Vaccine allocation also needs to take into account the capacity that countries have to distribute them internally. **Recently, Malawi burned 20,000 doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine only 18 days after receiving them due to the risk of expiration. South Sudan has announced that the government will send back to COVAX 72,000 doses of the Oxford/Astra-**

Zeneca vaccine, again because of the risk of expiration.

While these events are associated with increased vaccine hesitancy following rare blood clotting events associated with the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, it is also the case that many countries in Africa, as well as in other regions, lack the resources to mount effective vaccination campaigns. Without the necessary funding for these campaigns, donation of doses is not only insufficient but also a waste of life-saving vaccine doses, as the cases of Malawi and South Sudan illustrate.

What's needed

Vaccine allocation efforts need to be guided by both equity and efficiency principles. By focusing chiefly on equity, COVAX and other initiatives are currently failing at delivering vaccine doses to address public health emergencies around the globe. Moreover, the excessive focus on equitable distribution leaves out the capacities and resources that countries have for mounting mass vaccination campaigns.

Improving the existing structure requires concrete steps in global cooperation. This includes an agreement on the public health guidelines and metrics for vaccine distribution, actual donations of doses according to these guidelines in lieu of open-ended commitments or pledges to donate surplus doses, and mechanisms to ensure that vaccine supply chains can operate smoothly.

(This article originally appeared as a blog on the PIIE website.)

Digital twins, virtual cities, & an empowered Caribbean



by Christal Clashing

On June 8th 2021 at a CoinGeek conference held in Zurich, Switzerland and streamed online, Robert Rice, a pioneer in Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) systems, spoke of digital copies of cities based on a 'Digital Twin' concept. A 'Digital Twin' is a digital replication of a per-

son's or location's identity that cannot be tampered with that uses the same blockchain technology that supports cryptocurrency and digital currency. Nine months before Robert Rice's digital city, in October 2020, a vision of a 'virtual Caribbean' using Digital Twins was articulated at a different

kind of online conference.

This vision of a 'virtual Caribbean' came as a result of a convocation of minds from across the Caribbean region at an event called The Pivot Event, hosted by the International Development Bank (IDB). Participants at this event were invited to come up with radically am-

Cont'd on pg 19

bitious ideas called ‘moonshots’ for the Caribbean in 20 years. One of those ideas was titled “Blurring reality, virtual clarity”. Under this moonshot idea, several participants of The Pivot Event visualised better disaster preparedness and response; the streamlining of food production and trade to support growing populations in the region, and even the redefining of educational and career pathways based on one’s unique abilities and the needs of the society.

All this they envisioned to be possible by 2040 through a digitally twinned Caribbean. Using the Digital Twin concept, participants envisioned a ‘virtual Caribbean’ that could be used to model scenarios in response to predictions made from historical and real-time data being fed into the Artificial Intelligence (AI) managed system. Although this moonshot is envisioned for 20 years down the line, the foundations for such a concept are already being presented to the public for engagement. In Robert Rice’s virtual world, called Omniscap, it is expected that by the end of June 2021, persons and businesses will be able to buy digital properties that are geographically linked to real-world locations, similar to buying a domain name for a personal or business

website. With digital real estate purchased, persons, for example, can create AR content that sells goods people can physically receive in the real world.

The privacy and security of transactions made in digital replicas of cities are powered by blockchain technology. In the case of Omniscap, it is run on the BitcoinSV blockchain system that Antiguan economic envoy, Calvin Ayre, is a strong proponent of. However, blockchain technology is only one factor in creating digital cities and Digital Twins. 3D animation, like that used in video games, is used to bring AR and VR content to life in such digital worlds. For digital cities to truly transform into the virtual Caribbean that The Pivot Event participants envisioned, the collection of data across the Caribbean is key.

Through the Internet of Things (IoT), sensors are collecting data about human behaviour and the natural environment. The smartwatch that counts your steps and the drones that track environmental trends are all examples of IoT. With sensor technology improving rapidly, data science applications such as Artificial Intelligence are used to make sense of all this data and transform it into predictions and models of

lifestyle and environmental trends. Through such data, the Pivot Event moonshot ideas can come to fruition.

Globally, we are still in the infancy in the application of some of these emerging technologies. Regionally, as a Caribbean, this provides an opportunity to harness developing technologies for the Caribbean context and help address many of the complex challenges like trade logistics, disaster response and sustainable energy production. We already have data scientists being educated by some of the best minds in the region; various individuals and institutions in the region are experimenting with blockchain applications, and the adoption of smart devices is on the increase.

We now need collective confidence in our Caribbean selves and our ability to take advantage of emerging technologies and solve our specific problems rather than relying on those outside the region to lead us. In the words of the Hon. Mia Mottley, the Prime Minister of Barbados, at the opening of The Pivot Event last year, we require “cultural confidence” to develop technologies of our own kind as the future of the Caribbean will be largely determined by technology.



Reggae Star calls for push in Wadadli music

by Lee Williams

Promise No Promise, one of the most recognized reggae artists in Antigua and Barbuda, is appealing to local radio stations to push national music on the airwaves.

The Guyanese-born multi-talented artist/songwriter/ producer/director, whose real name is Kobla Mentor, made the appeal last Wednesday during a live interview on *Platinum FM*.

He says while people do want to hear local music, radio stations are not providing their listenership with sufficient access to the abundance of home-grown talent that can be found in the twin-island state. "People always meet me on the street and ask me, 'You still mek music?'"

It's funny because while them asking me that, we are releasing music all over the world. The people want the music anuh" he noted. "I say to every radio station in Antigua, give the people the music."

According to the reggae star (who has been making his mark on the international music scene with hits in massive rotation throughout the Caribbean, Europe, America and Africa) while local music has been getting more air play in recent times, he was one of those who paid the price prior to this being achieved.

"I see a lot of young Antiguan artist music being played on the radio right now and it's not just a one pop. It's in rotation" he stated. "So, I give a big up to every deejay, every radio that do that. But I and I suffer the cost dey, big time."

However, when it comes specifically to local reggae achiev-

ing some level of prominence among songs being given air-time, Promise says that it has been an uphill battle that he has been fighting for years.

"I've been representing Antigua as a born Guyanese for years in the reggae/dancehall industry. Put Antigua pon the map when it comes to reggae. I'm not running from that," he proclaimed. "Reggae is my thing and I've been fighting with that [alongside these other people] to make it possible for other artists that ah go come behind me and try the same thing that we create a platform for them and a stage for them while flying the Antigua flag globally. So, me ah beg the radio station dem, play the people music."

Another point of contention for the reggae artiste was the amount of fight down he received from local event and fete promoters when it came to bookings. He says it's time for this to be openly addressed, given the contributions he has made to the promotion of Antigua and Barbuda's music.

"It's about time we stand up and talk the things anuh, cause we just been doing the things and we haven't been looking for no rewards. And them ah

come and put all kind of artistes pon stage when me number one inna Italy; when me dey number three inna UK," he explained.

"Some ah the artistes them they ah bring ah put pon stage inna Antigua and give them a US \$50,000 and first class service hotel. You know way them do to me? I don't even have a dressing room at the venue, Rasta. And I've been humbling it all these years and still quite dominant with the Antigua flag in my hand worldwide as a reggae artiste."

Promise no Promises, who has already had four major releases so far this year, is currently working with some of the best Caribbean and European-based producers to push his brand of Wadadli music throughout the Caribbean and the world.

His recent collabs includes 'Woman Name Barbuda' with Walshy Fire who is a Jamaican American DJ, MC and record producer better known as part of the dancehall reggae-influenced group Major Lazer alongside fellow DJs Diplo and Ape Drums.

For live interviews, tune in to Platinum FM 97.9 Mon-Fri, 9am-10am

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US donates 400 doses of Pfizer vaccines to T&T

Loop TT - The Trinidad and Tobago Government has received a small donation of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine from the United States.

A release from the National Security Ministry over the weekend revealed that the vaccine donation arrived in the country.

The initial release and an updated release sent afterwards didn't identify the quantity of vaccines donated or if they were part of the donation pledged by the White House.

The subsequent updated release indicated that the vaccines would be for "use by national security",

seemingly explaining why the announcement wasn't made by either the Ministries of Health or Foreign and CARICOM Affairs.

However, Loop News understands that the donation of 400 doses of the vaccine will be used to benefit an arm of services falling under the remit of the National Security Ministry.

The National Security Ministry thanked other nations for their vaccine donations thus far, which have been used to push T&T's vaccination programme.

To date, T&T has received gifts of vaccines from St Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, Barbados,

Bermuda, the Republic of India, the People's Republic of China and now the United States.

This is the first donation of Pfizer vaccines as T&T has previously received donations of AstraZeneca and SinoPharm COVID-19 vaccines.

The release expressed Government's gratitude for the latest donation. It added that Government continues to be "most appreciative for these gifts at this particular time, and it looks forward to the continued good relations with our regional and international partners".

Barbados laundry list for COVID-free Crop Over



Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners (BAMP) president, Dr. Lynda Williams

Barbados Today - In the midst of a raging national debate about the future of entertainment events, the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners (BAMP) has suggested a list of conditions under which the country's most popular festival ought to occur.

In a statement on Friday, BAMP's president Dr. Lynda Williams conveyed the Association's full support for online Crop Over events, while warning that in-person events could jeopardize the health of citizens.

However, the epidemiologist noted that a significant increase in vaccinations, sustained 'low' positivity rates and increased testing for variants of concern ought to be adequately achieved prior to any resumption of mass gather-

ings, including the highly anticipated festival. The suggestions were made, even as the nation's doctors express continued concern about an overall lapse in COVID-19 surveillance, particularly among the country's unvaccinated population.

"There are many calls for return of our Crop Over festival in July-August 2021 and we understand the economic and social importance of this cultural festival. While BAMP fully supports virtual (online) events, we propose that in-person events are likely to pose health risks," Williams told Barbados TODAY.

"Any discussion about the return of in-person events at festivals should centre around the risks of mass gathering and we must decide whether the health metrics indicate that we are also able to relax protocols for numbers in attendance at places of worship, celebrations, weddings, and funerals.

"Ideally, Barbados would need to have a significant increase in full vaccination of the population, a sustained low positivity rate for a minimum of two weeks, significantly increased national surveillance testing for COVID-19 and routine monitoring for variants of concern before relaxation of protocols regarding mass gathering and before our Crop Over festival restarts," the extensive BAMP statement added.

Once those core objectives are achieved, the organization is appealing for the banning of

indoor events, vaccination or risk-based surveillance testing of persons working at events, and rapid testing for all patrons and staff.

"Preference for attendance should be given to fully vaccinated patrons who provide proof of full vaccination completed at least two weeks prior to the event," Dr. Williams told Barbados TODAY.

"Mass gathering should occur in outdoor venues only and face masks be worn correctly with provision for frequent hand sanitization. No market-type mass gathering or curated exhibitions that encourage movement between stalls/exhibits and potential handling of various products."

Further suggestions include online pre-registration of events based on negative test results, the provision of health screening questionnaires, a personal limit of one event per day, and close monitoring of each event in collaboration with the COVID-19 Monitoring Unit.

BAMP's advice comes in the midst of outrage from local promoters over the deafening silence from authorities on the likelihood of the annual festival taking place. Their frustrations have been further increased as overseas promoters like the organizers of Haywire Weekend advertise party trips for visitors to the island.

St. Vincent Gov't minister won't see unvaccinated people

IWN SVG - A government minister on Thursday announced that he will not be seeing unvaccinated persons at his office, constituency office, or home.

Minister of Public Service, Consumer Affairs and Sports, Frederick Stephenson, made the announcement on his Facebook page.

In a Facebook post, Stephenson, who is into his third 5-year term as MP for South Windward, said, "Important Notice: As Of Today June 10 I Will Not See Anyone At My Place Of Residence, Or The Constituency Office In Biabou Or The Office Of The Ministry Of The Public Service Until You Have Your Certificate Of Full Vaccination."

Some commenters pushed back against the announcement, with Shakeila A. Charles describing it as "utter rubbish". Charles said Stephenson can make such an imposition for his [private] residence. "But the Government office that the people voted to put you to represent them? Oh please."

Lioness Samuel accused the minister of wanting to give the impression that people actually visit him. Samuel said Stephenson was the "worst thing ever [to] grace South Windward" and told him to "go hold a corner".

"Finding every means to force this on people, eh? Well you won't be seeing me," said Ron Clarke, a former president



Minister of Public Service, Consumer Affairs and Sports, Frederick Stephenson.

of the SVG Teachers' Union.

Lioness Samuel commented that those who want to take the vaccine should do so and leave other people in peace. "U cant be serious telling ppl who put ur tail there that ur not going to [see] them because of them not being vaccinated u dumb or u hit ur head now u going say that's ur rights?" Samuel said.

"Well its ppl rights if they wanna take it or not and btw what's it u doing for ppl for u to say that...because am still waiting on a job that I never got because both parents are NDP so remember that....so I wouldn't care because they will be wasting their time," Samuel further stated.

But the minister's post also received some support, with Terrance Bynoe saying, "Stephenson is better you lose the next election than to be dead by COVID."

Rozzie Bannister did not see why people were making an issue of the post. "The same way u all have a right to choose not to get vaccinated, the same way the man has a right to protect himself. If u need him then call, it's as simple as that. When y'all want the radio stations to talk about things u don't show up there, u call, so do that. Stupes."

Audrey Gittens, a former permanent secretary in the Ministry of Housing, welcomed the minister's announcement, saying: "Good. The people voted for representation; that does not mean that you should encourage them to infect you with COVID-19 which could possibly kill you. No vote is worth your life."

Meanwhile, responding to a commenter, Stephenson said: "People don't read and understand anything."

WTO Boss Tells OECS Leaders: 'Vaccine Policy is Economic Policy!'



**Director General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO),
Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala**

St. Lucia Times - Director General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, has told OECS leaders and other officials that on the issue of access to COVID-19 vaccines, 'vaccine

policy is economic policy', according to the Communiqué of the 7th Special Meeting of the OECS Authority.

The Communiqué quoted the WTO Director General as tell-

ing the virtual session that it was important for the OECS to work quickly to make vaccine accessibility one of the cardinal points of the region's recovery, because of the dependence on tourism. She also commended efforts being made by OECS member states to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

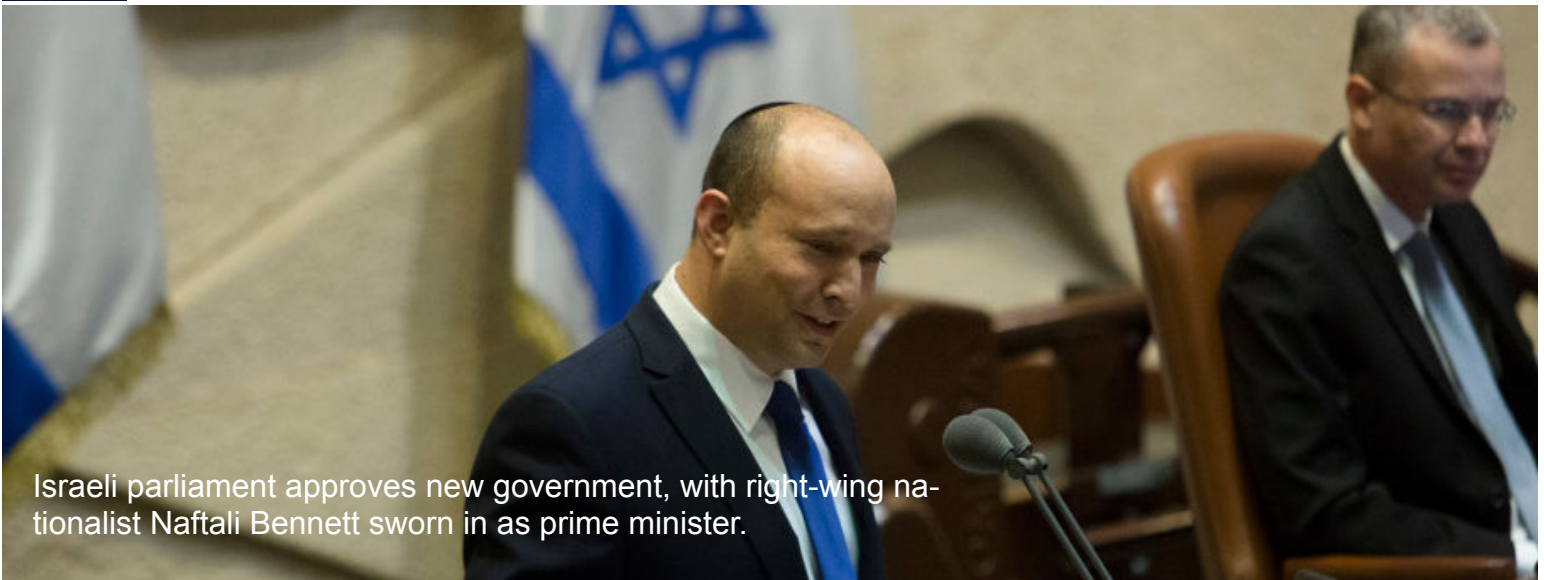
However, Dr. Okonjo-Iweala acknowledged what she described as 'the mammoth task' ahead in reestablishing the fiscal footing of the sub-region. The Communiqué said she confirmed that the WTO, IMF, World Bank and the WHO had joined hands in calling on governments to invest \$50 billion in accelerating vaccine production and deployment.

The WTO official was addressing OECS heads of governments, Ministers and officials of trade, agriculture and fisheries who met in a virtual session on Friday.

According to the Communiqué from the session, the Chairman of the OECS Authority, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica, Roosevelt Skerrit, chaired the gathering.

Among other things, the meeting focused on the upcoming WTO negotiations and the current WTO engagements with the OECS.

Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala made history when, on March 1 this year, she became the first African and woman to lead the WTO.



Israeli parliament approves new government, with right-wing nationalist Naftali Bennett sworn in as prime minister.

Israel swears in new government, ending Netanyahu's 12-year rule

Al Jazeera - Israel's parliament has voted to end Benjamin Netanyahu's 12-year tenure as prime minister, approving in his stead a coalition government that has pledged to heal a nation bitterly divided over the departure of the country's longest-serving leader.

Naftali Bennett, the head of an ultranationalist party that controls six seats in the 120-seat Knesset, was sworn in as prime minister after the parliament backed the new coalition government by a razor-thin margin of 60 votes to 59.

Bennett takes office leading an unlikely alliance of left wing, centrist and right-wing parties, as well as a party that represents the 21-percent minority comprising Palestinian citizens of Israel. They have little in common except for a desire to unseat Netanyahu. Under a rotational agreement, Bennett will serve as prime minister for two years, when the centrist leader

Yair Lapid will replace him, the chief architect of the new government.

They plan largely to avoid sweeping moves on issues such as policy towards the Palestinians in the occupied territories while they focus on domestic reforms. But with little to no prospect of resuming any sort of fair peace negotiations, many Palestinians are unmoved by the change of administration, saying Bennett will likely pursue the same right-wing agenda as Netanyahu.

Al Jazeera's senior political analyst, Marwan Bishara, described the event as a "family feud", saying there are no ideological differences between the old and new prime minister.

"They are basically all belonging to the same right-wing Zionist family," Bishara said, referring to Netanyahu and Bennett. "The differences between them have been personal, vindictive," he said. Netanyahu sat

silently during the vote. After the government was approved, he stood up to leave the chamber, before turning around and shaking Bennett's hand. A dejected Netanyahu, wearing a black medical mask, briefly sat in the opposition leader's chair before walking out.

Netanyahu, the most dominant Israeli politician of his generation, failed to form a government after Israel's March 23 election, its fourth in two years. The 71-year-old is loved by his hard-core supporters and loathed by critics. His ongoing corruption trial, on charges he denies, has only deepened the chasm.

He remains the head of the largest party in parliament and is expected to vigorously oppose the new government.

If just one faction bolts, it could lose its majority and would be at risk of collapse, giving him an opening to return to power.

G-7 leaders agree on vaccines, China and taxing corporations



Leaders of the G7 pose for a group photo on overlooking the beach at the Carbis Bay Hotel in Carbis Bay, St. Ives, Cornwall, England, Friday, June 11, 2021. Leaders from left, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, European Council President Charles Michel, U.S. President Joe Biden, Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Italy's Prime Minister Mario Draghi, French President Emmanuel Macron, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

(AP) — Leaders of the Group of Seven wealthy nations staked their claim Sunday to leading the world out of the coronavirus pandemic and crisis, pledging more than 1 billion coronavirus vaccine doses to poorer nations, vowing to help developing countries grow while fighting climate change and backing a minimum tax on multinational firms. At the group's first face-to-face meeting in two years, the leaders dangled promises of support for global health, green energy, infrastructure and education — all to demonstrate that international cooperation is back after the upheavals caused by the pandemic and the unpredictability of former U.S. President Donald Trump.

During their three-day summit in southwest En-

gland, the G-7 leaders wanted to convey that the club of wealthy democracies — Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States — is a better friend to poorer nations than authoritarian rivals such as China.

"This isn't about imposing our values on the rest of the world," British Prime Minister Boris Johnson told reporters at the end of the seaside summit on the rugged Cornwall coast. "What we as the G-7 need to do is demonstrate the benefits of democracy and freedom and human rights to the rest of the world."

U.S. President Joe Biden, who was making his first foreign trip as leader, said it was an "extraordinary, collaborative and productive meeting" that showed "America's

back in the business of leading the world alongside nations who share our most deeply held values." But health and environmental campaigners were distinctly unimpressed by the details in the leaders' final communique.

"This G-7 summit will live on in infamy," said Max Lawson, the head of inequality policy at the international aid group Oxfam. "Faced with the biggest health emergency in a century and a climate catastrophe that is destroying our planet, they have completely failed to meet the challenges of our times."

Despite Johnson's call to "vaccinate the world" by the end of 2022, the promise of 1 billion doses for vaccine-hungry countries — coming both directly and through do-

nations to the international COVAX program — falls far short of the 11 billion doses the World Health Organization said is needed to vaccinate at least 70% of the world's population and truly end the pandemic.

Half of the billion-dose pledge is coming from the United States and 100 million from Britain. Canada said it also would give 100 million doses, and France pledged 60 million. Altogether, the leaders said they pledged 870 million doses "directly over the next year," with further contributions taking the total to the "equivalent of over 1 billion doses."

Former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said the lack of a more ambitious vaccination plan was "an unforgivable moral failure."

Final decision on 21 June easing not taken yet, Boris Johnson says

BBC - A final decision on whether to lift Covid restrictions in England on 21 June has not yet been taken, Boris Johnson has said ahead of an announcement on Monday.

It comes after Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said, "We don't want to yo-yo in and out of measures".

One scientist advising the government said easing more rules would "fan the flames" of rising infections.

The BBC has been told a delay of up to four weeks is being considered.

Asked at a G7 press conference about plans to ease lockdown measures, the prime minister said: "We are continuing to look at the data, no final decision has been taken, and the right time to fill everybody in on what we are going to do with step four with June 21 is tomorrow, as I have said."

"That's when we will be putting out the whole package of information so that everyone can see it together." Mr. Raab said the decision would depend

on whether the link between infections and hospital admissions had been severed. The foreign secretary told the BBC's Andrew Marr Show: "The crucial thing that we set out in the four tests that we set at the outset of the road map is the link between transmission of the virus, and then the variants, and hospitalisations."

He said the country had made "great progress in weakening the link".

But he added: "The question is whether we have severed and broken it. We are looking at the data in real time."

"The race we're in is to get everyone as quickly as we can up to two doses," he said, adding that this maximises the effectiveness in preventing serious illness and stopping transmission of the virus.

He stressed that the roadmap out of lockdown said that stage four - when all legal restrictions on social contact are due to be lifted - was due no earlier than 21 June.

If stage four went



UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson

ahead, nightclubs would also be allowed to reopen and there would be no limits on numbers for theatres, sports events and wedding guests. With 90% of infections in the UK now due to the Delta variant, first identified in India, Dr. Jeffrey Barrett at the Wellcome Sanger Institute said a "major part" of why the UK is facing a growing wave of cases is because hundreds of infections were brought

in from abroad in April.

But Mr. Raab denied the government had acted too slowly to prevent the variant being introduced to the UK, saying: "We've got a system where we get flagged variants of concern and we take action when we get that advice."

On Sunday, the UK recorded 7,490 new cases of Covid-19 and eight deaths within 28 days of a positive test.

UN official accuses Eritrean forces of deliberately starving Tigray

Reuters - The northern highlands of Ethiopia became a global byword for famine in the mid-1980s when drought and conflict combined to create a disaster that killed as many as one million people. Now hunger is stalking the Tigray region again, and a senior UN official alleges that starvation is being used as a weapon of war.

More than 350,000 of Tigray's nearly 6 million people are living in famine conditions, according to an analysis by United Nations agencies and global aid groups first reported by Reuters on Thursday. Nearly 2 million others are one step away from such dire deprivation, they said. Ethiopia has disputed these estimates.

Fighting since November between Ethiopia's government and the region's ousted ruling party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), has displaced more than 2 million people. The conflict broke out just before the main harvest, with each side blaming the other. The neighbouring country of Eritrea and the next-door Ethiopian region of Amhara sent forces in support of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government.

In some of his strongest public comments to date on the crisis, the UN's top humanitarian official, Mark Lowcock, accused Eritrean forces of "trying to deal with the Tigrayan population by starving them."

In an interview with Reuters



on Thursday, Lowcock said Eritrean soldiers and local fighters are deliberately blocking supplies to the more than 1 million people in areas outside government control. "Food is definitely being used as a weapon of war."

Ethiopia's government, the United Nations and aid agencies have delivered food and other help to some 3.3 million Tigray residents since March, according to the UN humanitarian agency OCHA. But most of that aid is going to government-controlled areas, Lowcock said.

Eritrea - which fought a brutal border war against Ethiopia in 1998-2000 when the TPLF dominated the central government - didn't respond to questions for this article. Minister of Information Yemane Gebremeskel has previously said accusations that Eritrean soldiers are blocking or looting aid are "fabricated."

The Ethiopian military, the prime minister's office and the head of a national taskforce on Tigray did not respond to requests for comment on Lowcock's remarks. At a June 3 news conference, Abiy's spokesperson, Billene Seyoum, dismissed accusations that the country's defence forces are using food as a weapon as baseless and politically motivated.

Mitiku Kassa, head of Ethiopia's National Disaster Risk Management Commission, which manages the government's crisis response, accused the TPLF, the former ruling party, of attacking food trucks and aid personnel, but didn't respond to a request for examples. He told reporters on Wednesday that more than 90% of people in Tigray had been provided aid. "We don't have any food shortage," he said.

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NBA Playoffs Round Up

Los Angeles Clippers blow out Utah Jazz

Order was restored on Saturday when the Los Angeles Clippers convincingly defeated the Utah Jazz, at the STAPLES Center.

The Clippers' coach, Tyronn Lue, must have been looking for a prime time performance from both Paul George and Kawhi Leonard. They both delivered Grade A games to get Los Angeles back into its second-round series against Utah.

Leonard scored 34 points and George added 31 points in the Clippers' 132-106 victory. Leonard scored 24 in the second half in what was his fourth career post-season game with at least 30 points,

10 rebounds and five assists.

For the Jazz, Donovan Mitchell was the top scorer with 30 points. Joe Ingles had 19 points for Utah and Jordan Clarke added 14. The Jazz were 19 of 44 on 3-pointers, and 17 of 40 inside the arc as the Clippers' zone defense caused problems. Guard Mike Conley missed his third straight game because of a mild right hamstring strain.

Utah now leads that series 2-1. Game 4 is tonight.

Philadelphia 76ers beat Atlanta Hawks, takes lead

The Philadelphia 76ers enjoyed a convincing win on Friday over the Atlanta Hawks. Joel Embiid scored 27 points and the 76ers rode a dominant third quarter to a 127-111 vic-

tory over the Atlanta Hawks.

Embiid, playing with a cartilage tear in his right knee, added nine rebounds, eight assists and three block shots.

The 76ers now lead the series 2-1. Game 4 is tonight, also in Atlanta.

Brooklyn Nets firmly in command against the Milwaukee Bucks

The Brooklyn Nets displayed plenty of offense and started the Eastern Conference semifinals with two home wins. Then, in Game 3, they found themselves in a defensive struggle straight out of the late-1990s and still nearly won.

The Bucks clawed their way back into their series with a nerve-racking 86-83 win and followed up with another solid win on Sunday. Playing at home, the Bucks evened the series with a 107-96 win, ensuring that they return to New York on even keel.

Kevin Durant's 28 points and 13 rebounds were not enough, as his supporting cast hardly showed up. Meanwhile, Giannis Antetokounmpo was unstoppable for the Bucks.

He had 34 points and 12 rebounds. Khris Middleton had 19 points and 8 assists.

The series is now tied 2-2 and shifts back to the Barclays Center for Game 5 tomorrow night.

Phoenix Suns on the verge against Denver Nuggets

The Phoenix Suns took the wind out of the Denver Nuggets on Friday night when they won convincingly 126-104. The Suns' guards led the way,

with Devin Booker 28 points, and Chris Paul 27 points.

Regular season MVP Nikola Jokic had a game high 32 points along with 20 rebounds and 10 assists for a triple double. This, however, was not enough to fend off the Suns. Phoenix are now one win away from a trip to the Western Conference final, their first since 2009/10.

Game 4 is tomorrow night.



Cricket: SA trounce WI by innings-plus

*Man of the Match:
Quinton de Kock*

GROS ISLET, St. Lucia – South Africa sealed an emphatic innings and 63 runs victory on the third day of the first Betway Test against West Indies.

Resuming Day 3 on 82 for 4, West Indies were easily bundled out for 162 from 64 overs. Overnight batsmen Roston Chase (21*), and Jermaine Blackwood (10*), added 10

runs before they were separated. Chase led the resistance for West Indies with 60. No other West Indian batsman had any score of note. Kagiso Rabada ended with 5 for 34.

South Africa were dismissed on Day 2 for 322, with **Quinton de Kock** top scoring with a patient and match winning 141 not out. He held the innings together with the lower order as they built a sizeable lead. Speaking during the presentation ceremony, Captain Kraigg Brathwaite said: "We didn't bat well in the first innings, so under pressure from the start". Commenting

on debutant Jayden Seales, Brathwaite said: "He's a special talent and has a natural length. He has a bright future."

The defeat was West Indies' 200th in Test. South Africa leads the

series 1-0. The teams are playing for the Sir Vivian Richards Trophy. The second **Betway** Test will be played at the same venue from 18-22 June, 2021.

French Open: Round Up



Women's Champion: Barbora Krejčíková

ROLAND GARROS, France – The 125th edition of the French Open culminated with the women's final between 31st seed Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova and 33rd seed Barbora Krejčíková on Saturday.

It was both players' first ever Grand Slam final.

The venue was Court Phillipe-Chatrier where Krejčíková pulled off a remarkable maiden Grand Slam singles triumph. She accomplished the feat by beating Pavlyuchenkova 6-1, 2-6, 6-4 in three very different sets.

Speaking after the epic final, Krejčíková said: "I'm extremely happy. It's a dream come true, for sure." She continued, "I'm really happy that I was able to handle it as I did ... mentally, I think, that was the biggest key."

Krejčíková dedicated the win to her former coach and mentor, Jana Novatna, who succumbed to ovarian cancer in 2017.



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ST. JOHN'S, Antigua – West Indies cricket legends Sir Learie Constantine and Desmond Haynes were today (Sunday) inducted into the International Cricket Council's (ICC) Hall of Fame.

They now join the list of fellow cricketing icons who have received this prestigious honour.

The late Learie Constantine was an early pioneer of West Indies cricket and an outstanding all-rounder. He was a member of the celebrated team which played in the first Test match in West Indies history in England, in June 1928. He played 18 Test matches and made an indelible contribution to the sport and the West Indian community at home and abroad. Haynes was a member of the West Indies World Cup champion team in 1979. He played 116 Test matches and scored 7,487 runs, including 18 centuries, at an average of 42.3. He also made 8,648 runs in 238 One Day Internationals, which included 17 centuries. Cricket

West Indies president Ricky Skerritt paid tribute to Desmond Haynes and Sir Learie Constantine, saying, "This is another special day in West Indies cricket history as these two exemplars of the wonderful game of cricket have been honoured globally through the ICC Hall of Fame – true indicators of their performance and their impact."

"Sir Learie Constantine was the quintessential West Indian cricketer — a lively fast bowler, attacking batsman and superb fielder; a man who took to the field on that famous day at Lord's 93 years ago when the West Indies started the challenging but exciting journey as a Test nation. He embodied what we as West Indians value most in our players — dedication, commitment and strength of character. After his playing days were over, he also made his name as a popular lawyer and politician with a dedication to serving and improving the lives of others," Skerritt continued.

ICC Hall of Fame Inductees

Hall of Fame inductee:
Desmond Haynes



DEWS