

90 MORE DAYS OF EMERGENCY!

SEE PAGE 4



Max, Minister of Ambassadors?

Tourism Minister Charles “Max” Fernandez (front center) flanked by Antigua Cruise Port General Manager Dona Regis-Prosper (left) and seminar trainer Claudine Pohl are backed by participants in a cruise port ambassador certificate program. ***DETAILS ON PAGE 6***

Big boost to Grays Farm Police Station from ABLP Senators (**page 12**)

Philippine President threatens to jail vaccine refusers (**page 25**)

South Africa wipe out West Indies (**See back page**)

The looming waste crisis that will follow COVID-19 vaccinations

By *Gabriella Józwiak* (08 April 2021)

By the end of 2021, the COVAX Facility hopes to deliver at least 1.8 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines to 92 low- and middle-income countries. Laid end-to-end, this amount of single-use syringes and needles could circle the world multiple times.

During the COVID-19 outbreak in Hubei Province, China, in 2020, infectious medical waste increased by 600% from 40 to 240 tons per day, according to the Asian Development Bank.

As countries race to vaccinate their populations, the amount of hazardous, clinical waste they produce will rise. In places where formal waste collection systems are generally poor, experts warn of a looming crisis.

“The dirtier side of pandemic response, which is dealing with all the waste, is just constantly delegated to governments, countries, and under-resourced health systems,” said Alice Street, senior lecturer in social anthropology at U.K.’s University of Edinburgh, who has conducted research on waste manage-

ment in low- and middle-income countries.

In June 2020, the International Finance Corporation, a member of the World Bank Group, warned the impact of COVID is likely to cause existing hazardous waste treatment capacity in developing countries to be overwhelmed, leading to stockpiling and potentially inadequate disposal. This could result in increased transmission of diseases from incorrectly-treated used syringes and air pollution from toxic fumes when clinical waste is burned in open pits.

Multilateral development banks providing finance for vaccine procurement and the COVAX facility require countries to submit waste management plans. COVAX is also providing waste handling guidelines as well as additional training and infrastructure support. But experts want funders and agencies to give waste management greater attention to ensure the entire process of delivering vaccines — from start to finish — is safe. Prerequisites for loans-Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which co-leads the COVAX

Facility with the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, WHO, and UNICEF, requires all countries eligible for donor-subsidized doses to outline their waste management capabilities. As part of the COVAX agreement, UNICEF and WHO provide guidance on practical steps for how to prepare a waste management plan, including the disposal of syringes, vials, and other COVID-19 related waste. They also provide sharps boxes with vaccine deliveries — plastic containers that can be sealed once filled with used syringes.

UNICEF’s deputy director for operations in Supply Division in Copenhagen, Gisela Henrique, said hazardous or medical waste disposal should be managed through national or local laws in each country.

“The method should be safe, respect the environment and comply with national laws and codes on health and safety. Open-air incineration is not recommended due to the environmental risks,” Henrique said. UNICEF has also been strengthening waste management systems at

country level by procuring incinerators and providing technical assistance.

Facilities should not burn waste, including syringes and needles, in open pits, releasing dangerous, toxic fumes. These pits do not reach the high temperatures required to disintegrate sharps, so sub-contracted waste handlers either buried or transported the remaining waste to public dumps.

Needle-stick injuries are the obvious outcome of mishandling of clinical waste. WHO estimates that among 35 million healthcare workers worldwide, about 3 million

receive percutaneous exposures to blood-borne pathogens each year, and more than 90% of these cases occur in low and middle-income countries.

This means about 40% of hepatitis B and C infections and 2.5% of HIV infections in health care workers are attributable to occupational sharps exposures. It is not just COVID-19 transmission that is risked if waste is badly managed. Global union federation Public Services International's health and social services officer Baba Aye describes countries' preparedness for managing the extra waste the vaccinations will

generate as "a looming crisis of its own."

Aye is also concerned that despite the best intentions of multilateral organizations, governments will flout guidelines on waste management because they lack enforcement mechanisms. "The best you have, in most instances, are recommendations and guidelines," he says of what organizations have to offer. "We would be very happy to see them doing much more than that."

About the author: Gabriella Józwiak is an award-winning journalist based in London.



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House approves SOE extension



Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

A motion to extend the State of Emergency (SOE) under which the government has introduced several measures designed to curtail the spread of the coronavirus among the population, has been approved by the House of Representatives.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne introduced the motion in the House on Tuesday, noting that COVID-19 remains 'a clear and present danger' to all nations includ-

ing Antigua and Barbuda.

"It is important that we maintain the current measures to curtail the spread of COVID-19. The fact that we have zero active cases does not mean that there [are] no COVID cases within the population. It means that there [are] no laboratory confirmed cases," PM Browne explained.

The Prime Minister noted that it is not the first time that active cases had been reduced to zero; it happened

several times last year. However, he noted that following the Christmas holidays last year, there was a sharp spike in cases and deaths and he cautioned that if measures are relaxed too much, too soon, then a relapse into the situation of February and early March is a very likely possibility. "We should not be declaring victory over COVID because we are down to zero active cases. That would be a premature and foolhardy

thing to do. The more prudent course of action is, therefore, to maintain the measures that have been put in place to control the spread of the virus in the country," he stated.

PM Browne also took time to explain why the government chose the route of extending the SOE rather than continue the protocol measures under the Public Health Act.

"The State of Emergency gives us legal protection as we abridge the fundamental rights of residents as part of the health protocols. The Constitution guarantees certain rights and freedoms to individuals. So, in order for the Government to restrict these

rights, the State of Emergency provides that authority," he further explained. According to the Prime Minister, these protections are not present under the Public Health Act. PM Browne also urged the Opposition to join with the Government in supporting the measures to reduce the spread of the virus. He said the fight against COVID-19 should not be a political issue, but instead have wide bipartisan support.

In his contribution to the debate, Opposition Leader Jamale Pringle took umbrage with what he termed the late circulation of bills. He said the lateness does not permit

sufficient time for proper research as would allow the other side to make meaningful contributions to such debates.

On the matter of the motion itself, Pringle said he strongly opposes the extension of the State of Emergency, noting that residents should not have to continue to live 'under duress' any longer. He also described the extension of the SOE as a ruse to limit people's movement.

Pringle said the Public Health Act provides the Government with the measures to fight the spread of the virus and extending the SOE is therefore unnecessary.

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Participants engage in an exercise as part of the training program.

Antigua Cruise Port launches Certified Cruise Port Ambassador program

Antigua Cruise Port last week launched its Certified Cruise Port Ambassador program in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism and Investment, in preparation for the country's cruising comeback.

Fifty participants from various sectors of the tourism indus-

try – including taxi drivers, tour operators, retailers, St. John's Development Corporation and Antigua Cruise Port staff – were led through 10 hours of intensive training to complete the free course over two days.

The event was held at the Heritage Quay Hotel.

The group was previously guided through a certification program facilitated by the Ministry of Tourism on effective COVID-19 protocols.

Andre Norton – Health, Safety, and Environment Supervisor at Antigua Cruise Port – facilitated the session on International Ship

and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS) Awareness.

Claudine Pohl of Lemoneight Inc. hosted a “Building Consumer Confidence in the Cruise Industry” session to support the participants’ customer service goals.

The Museum of Antigua & Barbuda is scheduled to wrap up the event with a thorough review of the history of Antigua & Barbuda with a focus on the St. John’s ports to help reacquaint the participants with details about the country’s history that would interest visitors.

The Hon. Charles Fernandez, Minister of Tourism & Investment, expressed his ministry’s support of the event. “We were very pleased to support this initiative. This kind of training strengthens and empowers industry partners by helping us to restart in a manner that will make us, the wider community, and our guests much safer. We applaud the Antigua Cruise Port team for spearheading this initiative to manage the uncertainty of this next phase of reopening by leading with confidence.”

Minister Fernandez added that, “It was also very heart-warming to see participants from various sectors working together toward our common goal.”

Dona Regis-Prosper, General Manager of Antigua Cruise Port, described the goal of the training program. “We developed this program because we know how important it is for us to continue to distinguish Antigua & Barbuda from other ports and other countries, particularly during this very competitive period when many destinations in the hemisphere are restarting. Each of the courses in this program focused on an area that we can all learn more about to impress our visitors and improve our tourism product.”

She continued, “This is the first time that we have done anything like this, and it was truly excellent to see and feel the excitement of the participants as we went through each session of the program. It was

also especially nice to be together in one room again for the training – masks and all!”

The next Certified Cruise Port Ambassador training session will be held in October 2021. Anyone who is interested in participating in the event can register at the Antigua Cruise Port website or send an email to info@antiguacruiseport.com to reserve a place in the next session.



It’s no secret that consumers these days are more distracted. Between social media updates, smartphone notifications, and life in general, people simply have a lot more on their plates these days. And sometimes, that can get in the way of shopping.

In Antigua and Barbuda, the problem is particularly noticeable with consumers at checkout points where a large number of consumers are multitasking while shopping.

And while some interruptions are hard to avoid, it is important for consumers to exercise due care and attention especially in the following instances.

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- Watch as the price of the good shows on the cash register.
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CIBC FirstCaribbean's Walk for the Cure marks 10-year milestone

Ten years and three ways to celebrate!



Flashback to last year's Drive for the Cure.

The region's largest cancer fundraiser, CIBC FirstCaribbean's Walk for the Cure, celebrates 10 years this year and is giving the bank's businesses across the region three ways to mark the milestone – the traditional walk with friends and family, a drive for the cure, or a virtual event.

The bank's *Walk Management* teams have recently started their planning for this year's event, which takes place during the first

weekend of October. "Covid-19 has caused us to be constantly looking for creative ways in which to continue to engage in all aspects of our lives, and the celebration of our 10th anniversary hosting Walk for the Cure is no exception. We have asked our various business units to choose the type of activity which best suits the prevailing public health scenario in their territory," said executive co-chair of the walk and Man-



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aging Director, Retail and Business Banking, Mark St. Hill

He thanked the thousands across the bank's 16-member regional footprint, as well as sponsors and staff members, for "walking with us over the decade, whether you were there from that very first walk or joined us along the way. Your support has made a fundamental difference in the lives of persons directly affected by cancer and their families. Your funding and your fellowship [have] been invaluable".

His fellow executive co-chair and the bank's Managing Director, Wealth Management, Dan Wright said he looked forward to the support of the region's corporate sector for this year's walk, given the challenges which many of the cancer care and support charities that benefit from the proceeds of the walk are facing.

"Many of these char-

ities are struggling as a result of reduced donations while at the same time recording an increased demand for their services," he noted. "We are very much aware of the challenges which the Covid-19 pandemic has dealt to many businesses. Indeed, the last year has been a struggle for businesses of all sizes as they have sought to reposition and prioritize in order to remain viable. However, we are hopeful that resources, however limited, will be found to support the vital work of those charities and institutions that we support with our walk," he added.

In Antigua, efforts are being ramped up to rally support and raise awareness about cancer. This year, the branches will again host the "Drive for the Cure" as the main event, as well as other fundraisers to include Hike for the Cure, a Walk for the Cure Challenge, Sip and Paint for

the Cure and Raffle for the Cure, plus other in-branch fundraisers.

As usual all funds raised will be donated to the *Breast Friends* organisation and the Oncology Department of the Sir Lester Bird Mount St. John Medical Centre. The walk began as part of celebrations to mark the bank's 10th anniversary and takes place across its 16-member footprint. It has raised over USD\$2.9 million over the past nine years.

The funds generated from the walk are used primarily to assist with the purchase and maintenance of equipment used in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer patients.

They are also used to provide assistance, care and counselling to patients and their families, as well as to raise awareness and stress the importance of early detection, through education campaigns across the region.

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PM Browne: Border protection remains an issue for A&B



Prime Minister Gaston Brown (left) and Opposition Leader Jamale Pringle.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne says protecting the nation's borders remains one of the serious challenges that his government has to contend with because of limited resources.

PM Browne made the point in the House of Representatives on Tuesday in answer to a question posed by the Leader of the Opposition, Jamale Pringle, about whether the coast guard is adequately equipped in resources and man-

power to the effectively secure the country's

border. The Prime Minister said it is a problem that is faced by many countries in the Caribbean. "It is well known that throughout the Caribbean region we have relatively porous borders because of all the different inlets, coves and beaches. Evidently, we do not have enough resources, including manpower. That is an area with

which we struggle. We have been receiving assistance from friendly governments such as the United States to help us build capacity in this area," he revealed.

PM Browne told the House that this was an area of concern for his government as it is a weak area for many countries of the Caribbean.

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ANTIGUA & BARBUDA TRANSPORT BOARD

A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board

Overseas based Foundation donates COVID supplies to schools



A quantity of supplies to aid in the protection of students from the COVID-19 virus was donated recently to the Ministry of Education, Sports and Creative Industries by the ABAG Foundation.

The supplies – which include masks, infrared body thermometers and hand sanitizers – will benefit students of the Golden Grove, Green

Bay and Jennings primary schools; those from the Clare Hall and Ottos Comprehensive secondary schools; and the Boys’ Training School.

ABAG Foundation is an affiliate of the Antigua and Barbuda Association of Georgia. One of its goals is to “assist students of Antiguan and Barbudan heritage achieve their educational goals and become pro-

ductive citizens”. Board chairman Dean Benta said: “This year, in lieu of scholarships, the Foundation is happy to contribute to several public schools in Antigua and Barbuda in their ongoing efforts to cope with the COVID-19 Pandemic.

“The Foundation is mindful of the importance of education in the development of our youth and wish to commend the Ministry of Education, principals, teachers and all who work with and in the school system of Antigua and Barbuda,” Mr. Benta concluded.

In accepting the donation, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Mrs. Rosa Greenaway thanked the ABAG Foundation for the gesture and assured that the supplies will go a long way in protecting students at a time when COVID-19 remains a major concern.

Extended vaccination hours and centers this week

The Ministry of Health, Wellness, and the Environment announces that the vaccination center at the Multipurpose Cultural & Exhibition Center, the most central location, has increased operating hours this week. The Multipurpose Cultural & Exhibition Centre at Perry Bay is currently operating from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. today Wednesday 22nd June to Friday 25th June 2021.

The vaccine center will also operate on Saturday 26th June from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The increased operating hours at this central location in St. John’s matches the public’s demand for more time to be allotted for vaccination. The Ministry of Health has also decentralized the vaccination centers for easier

access this week. Today Wednesday 23rd June, the mobile vaccination vehicle will be back in Falmouth at Bailey’s Supermarket parking lot from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The mobile vaccination vehicle will then move to the Woods Mall parking lot on Thursday 24th June 2021 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. On Friday 25th June, the mobile vaccination vehicle will be at the MBS Pharmacy on Nevis Street. MBS will also offer free screening for blood sugar and cholesterol. The mobile vaccination vehicle will then make its final stop at the Bolans Primary School on Saturday 26th June from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The additional vaccination centers

will operate simultaneously with the four main vaccination sites: the Villa Polyclinic, the Glanvilles Polyclinic, the Precision Center, and the Multipurpose Cultural & Exhibition Center. All vaccination sites will offer both first and second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Residents are reminded that persons due to receive their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine in July can now do so in June at any of the vaccination sites. Persons receiving their second dose are reminded to present their vaccine card on arrival.

The Ministry of Health is encouraging persons to avail themselves of both the first and second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Government Senators provide support to Grays Farm Police Station

by *Shelton Daniel*

Male senators of the governing Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party (ABLP) on Monday made their presence felt outside the Parliamentary chamber in a significant and commendable way. Led by Deputy President Osbert Frederick, and including Pointe FM's Station Manager, Senator Colin O'Neal Browne, the ABLP legislators of the Upper House joined with their fe-



male colleague, Senator Gail Christian, the nonprofit community group Odyssey Inc. and the Law Enforcers Foot-

ball Team to make a whopping donation valued at more than \$30,000 to the Grays Farm Police Station.

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As a result, the station has been outfitted with greatly welcomed two new desktop computers and monitors; two uninterrupted power supplies (UPS); two printers; four additional printer ink cartridges; two packs of printing paper; one water tank; one air condition split system; one water pump and pressure tank; one battery for the backup electricity generator; desks and chairs; and a supply of paint to give the station a facelift.

The Odyssey group will carry out the paint job. Also present among the ABLP men of the Senate was businessman Phillip Shoul, while the police high command was represented by Deputy Commissioner Everton Jeffers.

The ABLP Men of the Senate say they are pleased to undertake such initiatives and have vowed to continue their efforts at building strong communities.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES 2021

FRUITY Tuesday

SAPODILLA

SAPODILLA aka Naseberry is a sweet like cotton candy fruit that is commonly found in the tropics. The fruit can be sectioned and added to fruit salads or to smoothies and milk shakes.

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1/2 cup Crushed Ice

(Optional Ingredients)
1/8 tsp Vanilla Essence
1/8 tsp Nutmeg
1/8 tsp Cinnamon
1 tbsp Sugar

STEPS (SERVES 2)

1. Remove the skin of the Sapodillas.
2. Cut the Sapodillas in quarters & remove the seeds.
3. Put Sapodillas in a blender & add milk. Add sugar if the Sapodillas are not too sweet.
4. Add essence and/or any options.
5. Blitz into a smooth milkshake.
6. Open the jar & add ice cubes. Blitz again. Pour the milkshake in serving glasses and serve chilled.

Conducting Reference Checks



Based on the feedback and questions received after our last article on job search in a pandemic, we have decided to share today on the topic of reference checks and how to ensure that they are effective and useful.

Effective Human Resource Professionals (HRP's) perform background and reference checks in respect of potential new hires. When a reference check is carried out improper-

ly, it can be a waste of the HRP's time, but when effectively conducted, it can help to determine whether the short-listed candidate is a good fit for the organization. But what is the purpose of a reference check? A properly conducted reference check should provide an objective evaluation of the short-listed candidate's past job performance and validate the information provided

on their resume.

Who should provide a reference check?

The best references come from past supervisors, managers, peers, and subordinates of the shortlisted candidate. Direct workplace relationship and firsthand observation of the candidate's performance are most reliable. In the event the candidate had personal issues with their former direct report which

could potentially lead to an unfair evaluation, it is advisable that the recruiter identifies another person within the organization who can provide the employment reference.

The closer the match in type of duties and industry between the former and potential new employer, the more relevant the information will be. A savvy HRP will never solicit an employment refe-

rence from a friend, family member, religious leader, political representative, or disgruntled former employer. These references are likely to be biased and have little bearing on the candidate's actual performance record. For balance, it is wise to seek testimonials from past employers listed on a candidate's resume but who were not provided as a reference. While a former employer should be honest, he/she is not legally obligated to recommend the former employee for the new position. A former employee however who provides a false reference, may expose that business legally if the information provided can be proven as false.

What questions are permissible?

While our Labour Code is not very specific on this, Section C 10 (2) directs that "The Employer shall, upon request of the terminated furnish a certificate specifying the dates of his engagement and termination and the type of work on which he was employed...". Best practice directs that, responses to questions during a reference

check interview be as honest and fair as possible, while retaining the employees' right to privacy and confidentiality. Ideally, the employee should provide consent to the employer in respect of disclosure of any aspect of that employees' tenure, outside of the above-mentioned dates of tenure and job title.

How to Conduct a Reference Check

The recruiter conducting the reference check should clearly identify himself, state the name of the employee on whom he is checking, provide the job position for which the candidate is being considered, and inquire whether the person whom he is calling is available to participate in the reference check. A rule of thumb is to inform the party you are calling of approximately how much time you will need to complete the reference check. Although written references are usually more reliable as the person interviewed cannot recant their evaluation at a future date, an in-person or telephone reference check usually allows for a more comprehensive interview as

the recruiter can ask follow-up questions or seek clarification. The person providing the reference may also be more honest on the phone as opposed to a cookie-cutter written reference. During the interview, the recruiter should be firm, relaxed and incisive without being pushy. The recruiter should have a list of questions handy so that the interview can proceed smoothly and uninterrupted.

Popular Reference Check Questions

The recruiter conducting the reference check should ask open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses. Ask questions that give precise insight into the candidate's work ethic, personality, and skill set. Sample questions we like include:

- What are the candidate's strengths?
- What is your overall impression of the candidate?
- What contributions has he made to the organization?
- What are three areas in which the candidate could improve?

The one question which always provides a telling response is: "If you were given the opportunity, would you rehire this candidate?" If this question is met with a pregnant pause, zero in, as the usefulness of the reference check may well rest on the answer to this question.

The Human Resource Professionals of Antigua and Barbuda (HRPAB) is a registered non-profit, professional association dedicated to the advancement of the HR profession for national development. We began informally from 2009 and legally registered in 2011. HRPAB's growing membership represents private and public organizations as well as independent consultants specializing in one or more areas of human resource management and development. Membership is offered for three categories: professional, non-professional, and honorary. You may contact us via email at hrpro.ab@gmail.com or on Facebook and Instagram @HR-Pro268.

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Perspective and Focus

by Risa V

Life is full circle. All living things consume of the earth to return to it after death. And in life every dog has its day; predator becomes prey and you are only a big fish in a little pond.

The universe, operating under the principles of balance, has presented a life where opposites not only attract but exist only by comparison.

So where there is one, there must also be the other: back and front, left and right, up and down, in and out, all enabling endless possibilities.

However, not understanding the mech-

anisms that the Lord has bestowed upon us, many are failing to live a full life and have become prisoners of their five senses. To utilize the senses is just collecting information from outside – everything we see, touch, hear, smell and taste becoming a part of us unconsciously.

In a world filled with turmoil, we have become products of our environments, unable to flip that coin and make our own luck. Out of sight, out of mind, this is the limitation.

Be optimistic. Use your imagination. Live beyond your thought

process. Move past just surviving and create the world you want to exist in.

Don't spend your life living from a memory bank that is recycling your past; in effect, creating your own nightmares. Instead, learn to see life from many angles; because once you change your angle, your perception will also be altered. Is the glass half full or half empty? The answer to that question is always a matter of focus and perspective, two great determinants of how we perceive.

Many, with the same breath used to speak

of change, condemn the thought to failure automatically, for it is not possible and there is nothing you can do to make a difference, when in fact all that is required is for one to completely devote himself.

Stop dissecting and analyzing life to make sense of everything. Just live, strive and take time to appreciate all that the Creator has so perfectly designed.

How did we manage to complicate our existence? Is our own intellect working against us? And so have we made a mess of the world.

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Menace XL warns against 'feelings'

I Told @Kaizer268 I wanted to look like a young, fresh, swagged out, hott man. Now look at this!"

by Lee Williams

Dennis 'Menace XL' Roberts has a strong message for the women of Antigua and Barbuda, and by extension the wider world.

On the backdrop of releasing his new single on Friday, the 2019 Groovy Monarch King joined *Platinum FM* for an in-studio interview where he spoke about the lyrics of his new track 'Feelings'.

"We had a special agreement. We said that we were going to keep this one strictly physical [and] restrict the emotional feelings because we had a plan. We

had a mission. So, it was kind of unfair for you to step over into that level and now you're blaming me because I don't want to go [to] that level with you," he explained in reference to the fictional storyline behind the lyrics.

"Right now, in the millennial stage, you tell people what you want. You say, me ah go through certain things in me life. Me can't tek on a certain responsibility and you must respect that. It is within your right to respect that."

According to Menace – an agronomist/agricultural engineer by profession, having pursued his

degree in Cuba – the lyrics of the catchy, groovy song does not apply exclusively to women. It was simply told from a male's perspective.

"Ladies, if you inna situation where dey man ah catch a little too much ah feelings, just change up the lyrics and say, this boy always a ketch feelings ... So, use it back to your advantage."

Moreover, the cultural ambassador – who has travelled around the region to perform and represent Antigua and Barbuda – says he hopes, more than anything else, that a female artiste would

Cont'd on pg 19



rise to the occasion and issue a response.

For him, he says, there is not enough female talent in the local music space and this is something he hopes will change.

“You know what I would like to do? And I’m putting this out there in ... radio land: Get more females who are versatile enough to actually do a response. We at Brukway Studio we have been looking for females. I have so much different songs that we could do; a different verse or something like that. But we can’t find the females interested to do that,” he explained.

“Some of them have a good voice or have talent but some shy. Some has good talent and good voicing and [are] ready for it, but them man nah ‘low them ... But the industry needs more females. I can tell

you that for sure. We have Claudette, Tizzy, Laurena, Kimmy ... But as I said, we not having

those ones coming up and bashing the fellas up there and competing with us on the level that

we need to have.”

‘Feelings’ is available on all platforms and Menace is encouraging the general public to support artists by streaming, playing and buying local music.

The track was distributed via the MnM Music Group for which Menace is a co-founder and lead singer/songwriter.

Since its YouTube launch in 2014, MnM Music Group has racked up close to one and a half million views.

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T&T Gov't estimates \$110M in severance for retrenched CAL staff

LoopTT - Finance Minister Colm Imbert said government has been given an estimate of \$110 million for the proposed retrenchments of Caribbean Airlines staff following the company's plans to reduce its fleet size.

Speaking in response to an urgent question in Tuesday's Senate sitting, Imbert said the estimated cost for the severance packages is in the vicinity of \$110 million.

"At present, Caribbean Airlines does not have the required finances for the severance payments and therefore the severance payments will be financed by the Ministry of Finance."

"The estimate given to the Ministry of Finance at this time, which is subject to finalization, is in the vicinity of \$110 million."

He assured that the routes that will be operated "will be done at the highest levels of safety and service".

Imbert said the proposed reduced fleet size will consist of eight jet aircraft and five ATR turboprop aircraft.

"It's been advised that [this fleet size] will be perfectly adequate to meet demand ... however there

will be fewer flights and fewer routes.

"CAL has been advised that this fleet configuration will be adequate to meet future demand and provide the required level of service to passengers."

Imbert added that the company's consultants have advised that travel may not return to its pre-COVID-19 figures until 2023.

"Caribbean Airlines has advised the Ministry of Finance that passenger demand on its routes as projected by IATA ... and its external consultants, Amadeus, to decrease in the short and medium term, so that it is expected that passenger demand will decrease in the near future and for the next year or so. I am advised that traffic is expected to return to pre-covid levels in or around 2023."

"As a result, CAL plans to reduce its network and fleet size to match passenger predictions given by its consultants." He said staff will be able to access support via the company's employee assistance programmes.

"Caribbean Airlines is currently at the beginning of the consultation process in relation to the

proposed reduction in staff and is finalising the exact number of personnel.

"In preparation for this, the company is currently putting in place a number of support systems for any potentially affected employees.

"These will include counselling services for employees and their families through the Employee Assistance Programme. Outplacement services to be coordinated with external recruiting agencies and the Ministry of Labour; transition training with respect to career guidance and support, and financial management, in addition to the compensation packages that employees will be entitled to upon separation."

CAL announced in a statement yesterday that it has been forced to restructure operations and review 450 positions within the company following news of a TT\$172 million loss in its unaudited financial results for the first quarter of 2021.

The proposed retrenchments would result in a cut to approximately 25 percent of its workforce.

Venezuela exodus reaches record levels



St. Kitts Observer - The continuing exodus of millions of Venezuelans is reaching “a tipping point” as the response to the crisis remains critically underfunded.

More than 5.6 million have left the country since 2015 when it had a population of 30 million, escaping political, economic and social hardships. It has become the largest external displacement crisis in the region’s history and the most underfunded.

“Never in our history in Latin America have we faced such movement of people out of a country that was one of the richest in the region and a coun-

try that is not at war,” said Eduardo Stein, special representative of the UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

“Whatever fails in one of the largest and richest countries in the subcontinent is going to affect the rest of the region. Latin America will never be the same.”

He claimed “donor fatigue” threatened funding, saying: “This pandemic has hit very hard those developed countries who have been traditional donors.”

Stein hoped that a conference hosted by Canada last week would bring

renewed attention, “because we do not think that Latin American countries by themselves will be capable of dealing with this”.

Governments and agencies at the videoconference in Canada pledged \$1.5bn (£1.1bn) in funding to respond to the crisis, including \$954m in grants and \$600m in loans. At least 30 countries were reported to have committed money.

Dany Bahar, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington DC, told the Guardian there remained “a big gap” in help for Venezuelan refugees compared with other modern crises such as Syria.

He said the total funding per capita for Syrian refugees was more than 10 times that for Venezuelans – at \$3,150 compared with \$265, based on figures for 2020. Venezuela is second in the world only to Syria in terms of external displacement.

“Most of the host countries in the Venezuelan refugee crisis are in the region and are developing countries,” Bahar said, “whereas Europe had much skin in the game in the case of the Syrians. Maybe that triggered much more generous funding.”

Last year’s UN response

plan received less than half the \$1.41bn requested. The Red Cross has said it needs to raise \$264m to support Venezuelans and 17 host countries over the next three years.

Border closures due to the pandemic stalled migration. But by the end of 2020, 3.9 million Venezuelans were designated as being displaced abroad without formal refugee status – but still judged in need of international protection – up from 3.6 million in 2019, according to the latest UN figures.

Stein said 1,800 to 2,000 people had been leaving Venezuela daily in the past three months, many taking dangerous paths out, including using people traffickers.

Roger Alonso Morgui, at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies (IFRC), said the crisis was “not news any more”, adding: “When the big population movement happened a few years ago, there was still some attention. That now has become more silent in a way.”

Morgui said the work of aid workers was complicated by the fact that the Venezuelan refugees and migrants move through several countries before reaching a final destination.

Riley confirmed as head of CDEMA



Elizabeth Riley, Executive Director of CDEMA

The Chairman of the Council of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), Hon. Vincent Byron Jr, Attorney General and Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs, St. Kitts-Nevis, has announced the appointment of Ms. Elizabeth Riley as Executive Director of the regional agency with effect from July 1, 2021.

Ms. Riley, a Barbadian national, joined the team at the CDEMA Coordinating Unit in 2001 and has been acting as Executive Director since May 1, 2020. Prior to this, she held the post of Deputy Executive Director since April 2012. She also acted in the Deputy position between 2009 and 2012.

As Executive Director, Riley will be responsible for providing overall direction and leadership to CDEMA. This will include implementing the organization's mandate through programme management, which encompasses strategic planning, monitoring

and evaluation, resource mobilization, financial management, partnerships and stakeholder relationships, and corporate communications. Ms. Riley has over 20 years' experience in disaster management at the regional and international levels in various capacities. At CDEMA, she has, inter alia, provided leadership for the agency's technical programming and strategic guidance in the areas of preparedness and response, mitigation, recovery, education and training, and information management.

At the operational level, Ms. Riley has played a leadership role in the coordination of regional responses to every major regional emergency event since 2004. Her field experience includes the leadership of CDEMA deployment teams in the aftermath of hurricanes Irma (2017) and Dorian (2019). Ms. Riley is currently playing a leadership role in the coor-

dination of the region's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, response to the eruption of the La Soufriere Volcano in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and the ongoing floods in Guyana and Suriname. She has written, presented and published technical papers in disaster management and environmental management while attached to CDEMA and, prior to that, during her tenures at the University of the West Indies and at the Ministry of Physical Development and Environment in Barbados.

Ms. Riley has lectured in Disaster Management at the University of the West Indies, Mona.

At the international level, Ms. Riley has contributed to a range of technical advisory committees and is currently Vice-Chair of the *ICG/Caribe Early Warning Systems Group of Experts on Coastal Hazards*. She also sits on the *Regional Advisory Group leading the implementation of the Regional Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean on Disaster Risk Management in the Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Sectors*.

Ms. Riley holds an M.A. (Econ) in Environment and Development from the University of Manchester in the UK; a BSc. (Hons) in Geography from the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica; and a Masters Certificate in Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation and Information Systems from the University of Laval in Quebec, Canada.

St. Lucia public servants get professional help to deal with COVID-19 anxiety



View of Government Buildings from across the Castries Harbour

Loopslu - Public sector employees will learn coping mechanisms for dealing with COVID-19-associated anxiety and depression.

The Department of the Public Service, through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), will be conducting a repeat of presentations to public sector employees.

These presentations will serve as a tool in helping officers to become more aware of their emotional state and better able to manage the natural fallouts of anxiety and depression, etc, associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The current round of presentations will focus on two topics, namely: “How to cope with anxiety” and “How to cope with

depression and associated factors such as loneliness, isolation etc.”, and will be held on Wednesday, June 23 and Thursday, June 24, 2021, respectively.

Both presentations are scheduled to begin at 2 pm via the Zoom platform.

Public sector employees who wish to attend the said presentations are asked to contact their respective human resource officers as soon as possible so that the necessary arrangements can be made with the Training Division of the Department of the Public Service.

Recognizing that Zoom has a 300 capacity limit, priority will be given to the first 300 applicants.

The EAP was established in 2016 as a work-based interven-

tion programme that provides assistance to government employees whose professional and personal challenges are adversely affecting their quality of life and job performance.

This Programme provides six free counselling sessions to government employees and their immediate family members in several areas such as career counselling, abuse, alcohol or chemical dependency, financial issues, domestic violence, marital conflict, grief, anxiety and depression.

Counselling sessions are facilitated by highly trained professionals who are guided by the Code of Conduct and Standards for Counsellors/Practitioners, and the Staff Orders for the Public Service of Saint Lucia.



WHO concerned about easing COVID restrictions around Euro 2020

Aljazeera - The World Health Organization (WHO) has said it is concerned about the easing of COVID-19 restrictions by nations hosting Euro 2020 matches, noting that some were already seeing rising cases.

"WHO is concerned about easing of restrictions in some of the host countries," Robb Butler, an executive director at WHO's Regional Office for Europe, said in an emailed statement to the AFP news agency.

"A few of the stadiums hosting the tournament are now increasing the number of spectators allowed," Butler said.

The UN health agency did not single out any cities, but the United Kingdom announced on Tuesday that more than 60,000 spectators will be allowed at the Wembley Stadium in London for the semi-finals and final of the tournament. Originally, it was intended to limit the crowd to 40,000, some 50 percent capacity.

The new levels mean the stadium will be at 75 percent capacity for the final three games which conclude with the final on July 11. All ticket holders will need to

have either a negative COVID-19 test or proof of full vaccination – two doses received 14 days before the fixture.

The announcement came after Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi called for the final to be moved from England due to rising COVID-19 cases in the country. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has urged UEFA to act responsibly regarding plans to hold the final in London due to safety concerns over the spread of the virus there.

The European Union's top lawmaker on health issues echoed the Chancellor's comments.

"Our health is priority. The spread of the Delta variant makes it impossible for 40,000 spectators to view the final match in London's stadium," Peter Liese said. UEFA said it had "no plans" to change the venues for the semi-finals and finals.

"UEFA, the English FA and the English authorities are working closely together successfully to stage the semi-finals and final of EURO in Wembley and there are no plans to change the venue for those games," a UEFA spokesperson said in a statement to Re-

uters news agency on Tuesday. UEFA has also been in talks with the UK government to ease virus-related travel restrictions to allow up to 2,500 VIPs to attend the final. In some "host cities, COVID-19 cases are already on the rise in the area where matches will be held", said WHO's Butler.

In areas where infection rates are on the rise, WHO Europe called on the cities concerned to act quickly.

"Learning from experience, we must act fast on signals showing increasing cases. Expanding testing and sequencing; stepping up contact tracing; and building very high vaccine uptake fast among those vulnerable and most at risk," he added.

In Denmark, 29 cases have been detected in connection with the Euro 2020 games taking place in Copenhagen.

The reported infections involved people who were either already ill during the match or were infected during the game, Anette Lykke Petri, a health official, said.

"In theory, there could be more people infected," she added.



Rodrigo Duterte meets members of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases at the Malacanang Presidential Palace in Manila on May 26.

Philippine President threatens to jail those who refuse Covid-19 vaccine

CNN - Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has threatened to jail people who refuse to be vaccinated against the coronavirus as his country battles one of Asia's worst outbreaks, with more than 1.3 million cases and 23,000 deaths.

"You choose, vaccine or I will have you jailed," Duterte said in a televised address on Monday following reports of low turnouts at several vaccination sites in the capital, Manila.

Duterte's remarks contradict those of his

health officials who have said that while people are urged to receive the Covid-19 vaccine, it is voluntary.

"Don't get me wrong. There is a crisis in this country," Duterte said. "I'm just exasperated by Filipinos not heeding the Government."

As of June 20, Philippine authorities had fully vaccinated 2.1 million people, making slow progress toward the Government's target to immunize up to 70 million people in the country of 110 million this year.

Duterte, who has

been criticized for his tough approach to containing the virus, also stood by his decision not to let schools reopen.

In the same address, Duterte took a swipe at the International Criminal Court after an ICC prosecutor had sought permission from the Court for a full inquiry into the drug-war killings in the Philippines.

Duterte, who, in March 2018, canceled the Philippines' membership of the ICC's founding treaty, repeated he will not cooperate with the probe,

describing the ICC as "bulls**t".

"Why would I defend or face an accusation before White people. You must be crazy," said Duterte, who, after winning the presidency in 2016, unleashed an anti-narcotics campaign in which thousands have died.

Human rights groups say authorities have summarily executed drug suspects, but Duterte maintained those killed had violently resisted arrest.

US opens \$500 million fund for relatives of Boeing 737 MAX victims

Reuters - A \$500 million US fund to compensate relatives of 346 people killed in two fatal Boeing 737 MAX crashes has opened, the claim administrators told Reuters on Tuesday.

The fund, which opened on Monday, is part of a settlement with the US Justice Department. Boeing Co in January agreed to pay \$500 million to compensate the heirs, relatives and beneficiaries of the passengers who died in Lion Air Flight 610 and Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 in 2018 and 2019 respectively.

Each eligible family will receive nearly \$1.45 million and money will be paid on a rolling basis as claim forms are submitted and completed, said administrators Ken Feinberg and Camille Biros in a joint statement. Families have until October 15 to complete claim forms.

The Justice Department and Boeing declined to comment.

The fund is part of a \$2.5 billion Justice Department settlement reached in January with Boeing after prosecu-

tors charged the company with fraud over the certification of the 737 MAX following a Lion Air crash on Oct. 29, 2018 and an Ethiopian Airlines disaster on March 10, 2019.

The settlement allowed Boeing to avoid criminal prosecution but did not impact civil litigation by victims' relatives that continues.

In July 2019, Boeing named Feinberg and Biros to oversee the distribution of a separate \$50 million to the families of those killed in the crashes and the new fund's distribution follows a similar formula.

While Boeing has mostly settled Lion Air lawsuits, it still face numerous lawsuits in Chicago federal court by families of the Ethiopian crash asking why the MAX continued flying after the first disaster.

The DOJ settlement includes a fine of \$243.6 million and compensation to airlines of \$1.77 billion over fraud conspiracy charges related to the plane's flawed design. The Justice Department said in January, "Boeing's employ-



Family members in Washington, U.S., October 29, 2019, hold photographs of Boeing 737 MAX crash victims lost in two deadly 737 MAX crashes that killed 346 people.

ees chose the path of profit over candor by concealing material information from the FAA concerning the operation of its 737 Max airplane and engaging in an effort to cover up their deception."

Some lawmakers say the Government did not go far enough, while Boeing says it has taken numerous steps to overhaul its safety culture.

Congress ordered a major overhaul of how the FAA certifies new airplanes in December and directed an independent review of Boeing's safety culture.

The 737 MAX was grounded for 20 months after the two fatal crashes. The FAA lifted the order after Boeing made software upgrades and training changes.

Last month, Boeing agreed to pay a \$17 million FAA fine after it installed equipment on more than 700 Boeing 737 MAX and NG aircraft that contained sensors that were not approved. "The FAA will hold Boeing and the aviation industry accountable to keep our skies safe," FAA Administrator Steve Dickson said.

Catholic Churches burn down on Canadian indigenous land



Canadian firefighters

BBC - Police in Canada say they are treating fires that destroyed two Catholic churches on indigenous community land in British Columbia as suspicious.

Sacred Heart Church and Saint Gregory's Church burnt down at about the same time early on Monday as Canada marked National Indigenous People's Day.

The two churches - built more than 100 years ago - are located about 40km (25 miles)

apart in the western province.

Liquid accelerants are believed to have been used, one fire official said.

The two churches on the Penticton Indian Band reserve and the Osoyoos Indian Band reserve are about 200km (125 miles) south of Kamloops where the remains of 215 children were found at a former boarding school in May.

Thousands of indigenous children were sent to such

schools in the 19th and 20th Centuries to be forcibly assimilated. The institutions were often run by the Roman Catholic Church.

Police in Penticton said an officer spotted the blaze at Sacred Heart Church at about 01:00 local time on Monday (08:00 GMT) but the building was engulfed when the officer arrived at the scene.

At about 03:10 local time, police in Oliver received reports that Saint Gregory's Church was also on fire.

Both historic buildings burnt to the ground.

"We believe by looking at the scene and the surroundings that there was a liquid accelerant used," Bob Graham, chief of the Oliver fire department, was quoted as saying by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

"Early indications are that it was set," he said.

In a statement, Royal Canadian Mounted Police spokesman Sgt Jason Bayda said: "Should our investigations deem these fires as arson, the RCMP will be looking at all possible motives and allow the facts and evidence to direct our investigative action.

"We are sensitive to the recent events, but won't speculate on a motive," he added.



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Devin Booker

NBA Roundup

Phoenix Suns draw first blood against the Los Angeles Clippers

The Phoenix Suns drew first blood on Sunday when they defeated the Los Angeles Clippers 120-114 in Game 1 of their Western Conference final. The Suns got a jump on the Clippers backed by Devin Booker's first career triple-double. Booker had 40 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists in yet more evidence of his superstar status.

The Suns won despite playing without veteran point guard Chris Paul who is in COVID-19 protocols after reportedly testing positive for the virus.

"We want to protect home court, so that was big for us to come out and secure that one," Booker said. The Clippers were also short-handed without Kawhi Leonard who

is out with a knee sprain.

Paul George stepped up for the Clippers with 34 points while Reggie Jackson had 24 points. The Clippers led by as many as six points late in the third quarter but were undone by a Suns 12-2 run in the fourth quarter.

Bucks battle the Hawks for supremacy in the East

Two teams that were supposed to be home watching the NBA playoffs will begin a duel of their own for supremacy in the Eastern Conference final. The Milwaukee Bucks and the Atlanta Hawks had similar routes to reach the Eastern Conference final. They each needed to win a Game 7 on the road.

The Bucks were the first to punch their ticket, riding Giannis Antetokounmpo's 40 points night to a 115-111 over-

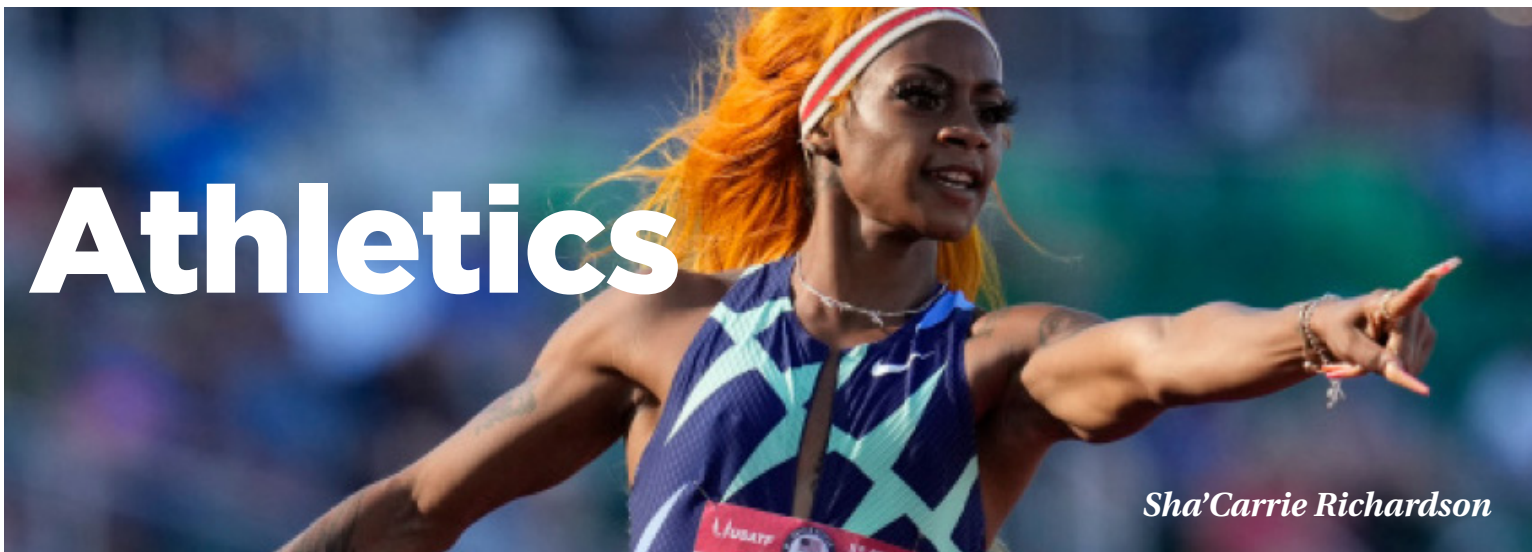
time in Brooklyn over the second-seeded Nets on Saturday. One night later, the Hawks rode the surprising 27-point contribution of Kevin Huerter to a 103-96 road win over the Philadelphia 76ers.

The Hawks and the Bucks will continue their pursuit of their second ever NBA title in franchise history, in a rivalry that has been tilted big-time in Milwaukee's favour over the past four seasons.

The Bucks have not made the NBA finals since losing to the Celtics in 1974. Meanwhile, the Hawks have never advanced past the Eastern Conference final since moving from St. Louis to Atlanta in 1968, three years after their only title by beating the Baltimore Bullets.

That series begins tonight in Milwaukee.

Athletics



Sha'Carrie Richardson

EUGENE, Oregon – She has been described as America's next golden girl. She has also been compared to Gail Devers and the late Florence Griffith-Joyner, even though she was not yet born to see either of them run. Her long nails, colorful hair, bold fashion sense and scary fast times are just some of the comparisons. Her name is Sha'Carrie Richardson, presently the fastest woman in the United States. Sha'Carrie dominated the US Olympics track and field trials over the weekend. She blew away the competi-

tion by winning the 100 meter final in a time of 10.86 on Saturday night. It was slightly slower than her 10.64 seconds performance in the semifinal heat. In response to the constant comparisons, Richardson said: "I don't want to be the next Flojo. I want to be the next Sha'Carrie."

Richardson dedicated her win to her grandmother, who she said was her "heart" as well as her "superwoman". She ended by saying: "Honestly, that was one of my biggest goals in life – to have her see me compete in one of the

highest levels and be successful." Jumping out to a fast start, Richardson appeared to purposely slow down towards the end of the race and point to the clock which registered her dramatic timing.

Sha'Carrie will definitely be one to provide competition for Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, Elaine Thompson-Herah and others who harbor thoughts of Olympics glory in Tokyo. Speaking of his fellow American's chances, Justin Gatlin said: "She's capable of running 10.6. She's capable of running 10.5 actually."

Fans to be allowed at Tokyo Olympics

TOKYO, Japan – The Tokyo Olympics will allow up to 10,000 fans at venues. Organizers announced Monday that a limited number of Japanese fans will be allowed at the Tokyo Olympic Games, which begin on 23rd July.

The number will be capped at 50 percent of venue ca-

capacity, with a maximum of 10,000 spectators, and there will be additional restrictions upon them. While fans will not be required to show a negative COVID-19 test, they will be required to wear masks. Shouting, cheering and even speaking in loud voices will be prohibited. Fans will leave

venues at staggered times and are being urged to travel directly home, not stopping anywhere to celebrate. The decision contradicts the country's top medical adviser, Dr. Shigeru Omi, who recommended last week that the safest way to hold the Olympics would be without fans. He had pre-



viously called it “abnormal” to hold the Olympics during the pandemic. Fans from abroad were banned several months ago. Organizers say between 3.6 to 3.7 million tickets are in the hands of Japanese res-

idents. Tokyo and other areas are under “quasi-emergency” status until 11th July. This replaced a tougher full state of emergency that was in effect until last weekend. The new rules will allow restaurants to

serve alcohol during limited hours.

It’s still being discussed whether alcohol will be sold during events.

Notice: CPTSA Wings Sports Club

All parents/guardians are kindly reminded to register early this week for the Wings Sports Club Summer Camp.

The camp starts on **Saturday 26th June 2021 at 9:00am.**

The camp will cater for basketball, football and volleyball.

Registration can be done at YMCA today 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. or no later than 8:30 a.m. on Saturday morning.

Persons can call 788-8783 or 727-8617 for further details about registration or any other information.

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Cricket: 2nd Test (West Indies v. South Africa)

GROS ISLET, St. Lucia – South Africa won the second *Betway* Test by an innings and 158 runs after the West Indies meekly surrendered 33 minutes before Tea on Day 4. Set a total of 324 for victory and a chance to level the series, the West Indies were bowled out for 165. With all of two days to get the remaining 309 runs and with 10 wickets in hand, the West Indies' batting crumbled under the disciplined South Africa bowling attack.

Fast bowler Kagiso Rabada grabbed the first three wickets to fall. No West Indian batsman looked settled and the prospect of getting the required runs was always in doubt. The West In-

dies were short-handed as Roston Chase was unable to bat because of a quad injury.

The opening partnership continues to be a bother for the selectors. The spotlight is now on Captain Kraigg Brathwaite who has managed 28 runs in the last four Test matches with a top score of 15. He has had three different opening partners – John Campbell, Shai Hope and Kieran Powell – in that time as well.

Keshav Maharaj snared a hat-trick which helped South Africa complete their first series win away from home in more than four years.

Maharaj became the second

South African bowler to take a hat-trick, the other being Geoff Griffin in 1960. The defeat handed South Africa a 2-nil series win and the Sir Vivian Richards trophy.

Scores: South Africa 298 (de Kock 96, Elgar 77; K. Mayers 4-28, K. Roach 3-45) & 174 (van der Dussen 75*; Roach 4-52)

West Indies 149 (Blackwood 49; Mulder 3-1) & 165 (Kieran Powell 51; Maharaj 5-36, Rabada 3-44)

The teams now travel to Grenada where they will contest a five match T20 International series.