

MONDAY 12 JULY 2021 | ISSUE 253 | WWW.POINTVILLE.AG

RECORD TOURISM RECOVERY EXPECTED



Man charged over Creekside stabbing frenzy (story on page 10)
A&B to submit first voluntary national review to UN (pages 12 -13)

COVID-19 and crime:

Deterioration in young people's mental well-being could lead to increased violence.

by Henylel Morgan

OVER the past two decades, Jamaica has broken the 1,000 murder-per-year mark with more regularity than Asafa Powell has run the 100 metres race below 10 seconds. The murder rate of this sun-drenched pearl in the Caribbean Sea becomes even more alarming when compared to the global average. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in 2017 reported a global average intentional homicide rate of just above six per 100,000 people. In 2020 Jamaica remained one of the most violent countries in the world, with approximately 46 homicides per 100,000 people. That is almost eight times the global average.

At the start of the novel coronavirus pandemic last March, it seemed, for a while, as if the various health protocols and the joined-up approach led by the health ministry toward enforcing them would have a dampening effect on the murder rate. Writing in the January 3, 2021 edition of the Sunday Observer, respected community activist and social commentator Horace Levy called for the Government to abandon the current crime strategy for one

designed along the lines of that used to battle COVID-19. Such thought proved to be an oversimplification of the solution to both the health pandemic and crime. We have seen a spike, not a decrease in COVID-19 and in murders.

America, a much bigger and richer country than Jamaica, has experienced an alarming 20 per cent increase in homicides since the start of the pandemic. Fearing what may come in the hot summer months ahead when there is a natural spike in murders, President Joe Biden, along with his Attorney General Merrick Garland, addressed the nation on June 23, 2021, unveiling a raft of measures intended to tame the beast. Our Government and security officials, who continue to stubbornly stick with a failed strategy, if it can be called that, should examine these. There may be something to be learnt.

The American violent crime reduction strategy announced by the president, and detailed by his attorney general, is built around five principles: 1) setting important enforcement priorities in strategic areas; 2) investing in community-based prevention and intervention programmes;

3) fostering trust with and earning legitimacy in communities; 4) making enhanced resources available to help prevent and disrupt violent crime and focusing on the most dangerous, most violent offenders; 5) measuring the results of these efforts by a decrease in violent crime and not merely by the number of arrests and convictions.

The most noticeable difference between the American and Jamaican approach is that in the former, the security forces target criminals by working with communities. In Jamaica it is the opposite. The strategy is one of targeting communities instead of criminals, thereby stigmatising them as unsafe and ostracising them from society. With the security forces locked in war against communities, residents naturally become distrustful of police. Left to fend for themselves the communities become havens for criminals.

In his speech, US Department of Justice head, Merrick Garland said, "Community-led efforts are vital to preventing violence before it occurs. The Justice Department has available over US\$1 billion in funding through over a dozen grant programmes

that can be used to support evidence-based community violence intervention strategies.”

Contrast that with what occurs in Jamaica where, in many of the troubled communities, the cost of paramilitary-style policing is Government’s biggest ongoing, non-programmed expenditure. COVID-19 has served to expose the foolhardiness of this strategy and the need for a rethink to address the traditional root causes of crime as well as the effect of the fuel poured by the pandemic on the raging inferno. In his brief address following that of Garland’s, President Biden quoted his mother who would often say, “An idle mind is the devil’s workshop.” Based on that simple maxim he shared a formula that helps to explain the connection he sees between COVID-19 and

crime. Young people in tough communities + no school + no jobs = more trouble. The Global Survey on Youth and COVID-19, conducted by partners of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth between April and May 2020, painted a picture of a looming crisis in youth education and employment, with resulting anxiety and depression.

The research is not conclusive in making the link between COVID-19 and crime, but deterioration in young people’s mental well-being could lead to increased violence. Domestic crime could also be severely impacted by the fact that more people are unemployed or laid off and are at home, resulting in a greater likelihood of violence, especially where abusive relationships exist. The United Nations

is reporting close to a 20 percent rise in so-called family violence that could be attributed to the ongoing pandemic.

One possible causal relationship that should not be overlooked is the backlog of cases choking the courts. The novel coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated the situation in countries like Jamaica, where a properly functioning criminal justice system has been a long-standing need.

If the violent crime reduction strategy being employed in Jamaica was not effective in the pre-pandemic period, surely one could not expect that it would be effective now.

(Reprinted from THE JAMAICA OBSERVER, Wednesday 7 July 2021)



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Tourism expected to bounce back at new record levels

by Shelton Daniel

TOURISM arrivals for the last two weeks have been so strong, that from all indications we are going to have a strong second half [of 2021], which means if things continue along the present trajectory ... we could even

experience growth rather than the three percent decline we were anticipating earlier this year.” The above words from Prime Minister Gaston Browne during his weekly radio program, The Browne and Browne Show, this past Saturday 10 July 2021 on **Pointe FM 99.1.**

But he went on to warn that, “In order to maintain this type of heavy demand for our tourism product, we have to ensure that there is no future outbreak of COVID that would result in our destination being classified as unsafe. “It means, therefore, that it is the responsibility of all of us

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MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

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| | | | | |

Kindly note that this schedule is subject to slight variation. Changes will be communicated on the APUA Facebook page. Any service disruptions outside of this schedule were not anticipated. For further information and updates please call 311.

to get vaccinated as soon as possible so that we can achieve herd immunity."

Prime Minister Browne said vaccination would enable "some serious economic opportunities to be exploited". He referred to people who "used to work in the hotel sector" but "who are currently unemployed" because of the pandemic.

"They should be vaccinated. Every single person on the front lines should be vaccinated – all our customs officers, immigration officers, those who work at our various ports of entry, even our taxi operators, our vendors – they should all be vaccinated." He disclosed that due to the mammoth crowding that is anticipated once cruise ships load-

ed with passenger resume their visits to local ports, "Unvaccinated passengers will not be allowed to disembark unless they present a negative COVID test ... taken hours before they disembark."

But the Prime Minister noted that despite this, "There is nothing stopping unvaccinated cruise tourists from stating [falsely] that they are vaccinated. Because the law in [Florida] is that they are not required to provide any proof. So, all an unvaccinated cruise [visitor] has to say is that he or she is vaccinated. He could well not be vaccinated [but] come ashore – he or she is infected with COVID – and then we have a significant spread. So we have put additional measures in place to manage that risk."

PM Browne again reminded those who are still hesitating about getting vaccinated that they are hindering the country's recovery from the pandemic and the very promising prospects for its future economic development.

As an example, he illustrated, Antigua and Barbuda is projected next year to exceed the record-setting numbers of visitor arrivals for 2019.

"It was the strongest tourism year on record and we are likely to have arrivals probably 25 percent in excess of 2019. So, if all goes well, 2022 promises to be a very, very strong year economically ... Tourism will come back with a passion."

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Antigua PM reaffirms CARICOM solidarity with Haiti

by Shelton Daniel

Prime Minister Gaston Browne says he expects CARICOM will meet again early this week “to have further dialogue with members of the administration in Haiti to get a further update as to what is happening, and to try building a consensus team involving others ... in order to help the Haitian people to come up with an indigenous solution.”

Prime Minister Browne took up the rotating six-month chairmanship of the 14-member regional grouping at the start of this month, and chaired (virtually) the 42nd Regular Meeting of its Conference of Heads of Government that was held last week

(July 5th and 6th 2021). The Antigua and Barbuda leader is not sold on the idea of foreign intervention, despite reports of calls from within Haiti for the US to send troops to help stabilize the situation following the brazen assassination last week of controversial president Jovenel Moise at his private residence in the capital Port-au-Prince.

“We don’t think that any entity should go into Haiti and to try and impose their will on Haiti,” Browne declared, while recalling that the US-orchestrated overthrow of then Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004 involved the aircraft taking him into exile landing and refueling in Antigua.

Prime Minister Browne supports the involvement of CARICOM as “an honest broker” to engage the international community in helping the Haitian people find “an indigenous solution” to their challenges.

“Having said that, Haiti is part of the family, and we have to continue to stand in solidarity with the Haitian people. The country is a member of CARICOM and any assistance that we can render – we have already indicated to the Haitian government that we stand ready to assist,” the CARICOM chairman stated.

Honourable Gaston Browne was speaking Saturday during his weekly radio program, *The Browne and Browne Show* on **Pointe FM 99.1**.



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Government remains opposed to compulsory vaccination



by *Shelton Daniel*

Government is standing by its policy that vaccination against coronavirus disease remains voluntary, and says it is at this time not contemplating any coercive measures that would be tantamount to making vaccination compulsory.

The question was put to Information Minister Melford Nicholas on Thursday, during the weekly post-Cabinet media briefing, about whether Government would consider making vaccination a requirement for local stakeholders, such as vendors and taxi drivers, who might come into contact with unvaccinated cruise passengers who disembark from vessels and mingle with the local population in the course of landside tours for shopping, sightseeing, etc. The question was framed against the backdrop of a decision

by the US State of Florida (where most of the cruise companies which tour the Caribbean are based) to prohibit cruise lines from making vaccination a requirement for being accepted as passengers.

The court ruling in Florida also forbids passengers being asked to reveal their vaccination status as a condition for boarding, creating the possibility of unvaccinated cruise visitors posing a risk of imported cases of COVID-19 affecting destination countries like Antigua and Barbuda.

"I don't think the Government intends to go further than where it is at the moment," Nicholas responded. "We don't want to restrain people's right to be able to earn an income in the industry ... We want them to put in place the protection mechanisms, and ... we are putting up an additional veil by asking the cruise

lines to work with us to ensure that those persons who they ... know are unvaccinated would then be required to undergo a rapid test before they alight [disembark]."

Nicholas added that since Antigua and Barbuda "cannot, and [is] not willing to force persons to take vaccines, for those persons who will continue to expose themselves to this risk ... we want to be able to inspect and to check that we are ... able to capture, at the earliest possible time, any infections that come on shore."

He said putting in place "a regime of frequent testing" for unvaccinated persons was the most Antigua could do at this time to stay on top of this unavoidable and inevitable risks.

"We have to face up to them. We have to live with COVID," was how he put it.

Jolly Harbour to get major port security upgrade



Jolly Harbour

by Shelton Daniel

An important question was raised and answered during last week's live post-Cabinet media briefing on Thursday morning.

The question pertained to the security of Jolly Harbour as a border entry/exit port for the State of Antigua and Barbuda.

It was based on an item in the post-Cabinet briefing notes which stated thus: "The Cabinet decreed that Jolly Harbour is to re-open as a point of entry for yachts and other sailing vessels. It is anticipated that Heritage Quay will become very busy and fully utilized in the weeks and months ahead, necessitating an additional entry point."

Orville Williams of OB-SERVER Media referred to the "recent debacle" involving fugitive Mehul Choksi's alleged absconding or abduction from An-

tigua to Dominica via Jolly Harbour. "In light of this reopening of Jolly Harbour," he asked Information Minister Melford Nicholas, "what can you say has been done to increase marine border security since these recent incidents, and now with increased marine activity expected over the next couple of weeks and months."

After lauding Williams for a "good question", Minister Nicholas responded: "The head of the Port Authority, Mr. Darwin Telemaque, did facilitate a site visit earlier [last] week that ... included members from my staff looking at both the telecommunications and ... the IT (information technology) environment within the ... Jolly Harbour bay area. There were customs officials ... immigration officials, and ... port health officials."

"The idea behind opening up Jolly Beach as the

landing point for marine craft – you will recall, last year, that in [an effort] to protect ourselves, we had only one landing site and that was at Redcliffe Quay. A specific location was set up at Redcliffe Quay where all marine craft – even those that were plying their trade out of English Harbour – they had to first come to Redcliffe Quay to be cleared for port health and for Customs and Immigration; and then ... they would be allowed to ply their vessels within the waters around the island and ... at the other docks." Nicholas said, "That regime had subsequently changed to two; we were actually going back out into English Harbour area, and there is still a landing facility in the English Harbour-Falmouth area – and, of course, the one at Redcliffe Quay."

He said that in light of the imminent reopening of the cruise sector, "It was felt that the facility at the bottom of Redcliffe Quay would be, sort of, getting in the way; and so the preparation is underway now to allow for that alternate landing site – apart from what's taking place in the Dockyard-English Harbour area – to be in the Jolly Harbour marine area."

"Coinciding with that," Minister Nicholas added, "will be looking at the surveillance and security of that facility." He said Government had been guided

by the lessons learned so far from the Choksi matter and other border security issues.

"My ministry has already been tasked and asked by the Cabinet to work along with law enforcement officials. I forgot to mention the head of the army and his staff were also on that inspection tour earlier this week ... We are all looking at this, and the whole idea is to ensure that within the coming weeks ... as we restore the operation in the Jolly Harbour area, we will ... implement those security ... and surveillance measures."

Minister Nicholas however observed that, "The location of the facility within Jolly Harbour – recessed as it is within the harbour – is not ideal, and I think all persons who were on the visit would have noted that. But this is something we [the current ALBP administration] came and met that way. The ideal location would have for the Port Authority to have been at the front of the bay."

Nicholas disclosed that the corrective measure which has been decided upon by the authorities "is to give them a virtual presence at the front of the bay to ensure that all movement of marine craft in and out of the bay will be under surveillance of the Port Authority and the security officials."

No arrests following country's latest shooting death



Amanaki John, 19, charged for wounding with intent.

that Christian was shot multiple times by his alleged assailant. There's no word whether the alleged assailant is currently in custody.

Thomas said the police are continuing investigations into the circumstances surrounding the shooting incident. "The murder investigations are ongoing."

No further details have so far been released.

It is the country's fourth murder since the start of 2021.

Meanwhile, a Golden Grove man appeared in court on Friday to answer charges of wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm.

STRATCOM identified him as Amanaki John, 19, who was charged by police for an incident that happened last Tuesday.

He is accused of injuring 23-year-old Alexta Francis of Golden Grove New Extension during an altercation at Big Creek.

The police have so far not made any arrests following a shooting incident Friday night on Bishopgate Street that left one man dead.

Head of STRATCOM, Inspector Frankie Thomas said the alleged incident occurred around 9:30 p.m. on Friday July 9.

According to reports, the victim, 33-year old Marlon Christian of Herbert's Estates, was rushed to the Sir Lester Bird Mount St John's Medical Center after being shot.

He was later pronounced dead at the health institution.

It has been alleged



Police issue advisory to contractors and other businesses

The recent spike in armed robberies has led to police issuing an advisory to contractors and other business operators who frequently transport large sums of money for payroll and other purposes.

"The police continue to appeal to business contractors and employers who are in the habit of carrying around large amounts of cash as payroll, to discontinue this unsafe practice and find more suitable and safer ways to pay their staff," the advisory from STRATCOM stated.

STRATCOM said it was reported that on Friday July 9, a Cades Bay man was allegedly abducted in the Pot Works Dam area and had his vehicle stolen by three unknown assailants.

According to the police information unit, it is suspected that the said assailants, who were all described as wearing dark clothing, were later involved in an attempted robbery of a Gray Hill man in the Collins area.

It noted that the busi-

ness contractor was apparently transporting an undisclosed amount of money to pay workers. "The businessman managed to elude his attackers and drove to New Field, where he called the police. Reports are that gunshots were fired, however both men escaped without injuries," the advisory revealed.

It also disclosed that the vehicle belonging to the Cades Bay man was later recovered by the police in the Collins area in the vicinity of the quarry.

The police are appealing to anyone with information surrounding this incident to contact the nearest police station or the Criminal Investigations Department hotline at 462-3913 or 462-3914.

The police are further reminding the public of the reward of \$25,000 that is offered to anyone who can provide information leading to the arrests of those involved in the recent incidents.



NOTICE

LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION FORM P7

Rule 15

THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
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(Probate)

In the Estate of ALBURN URIAH SAMUEL late of English Harbour, St. Paul's, Antigua, Deceased

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TAKE NOTICE that an application has been filed by **ALDEN SAMUEL** of English Harbour for a Grant of Letters of Administration to the Applicant who is the son of the deceased, the deceased having died intestate on the 15th day of January, 2020.

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

Dated this 21st day of June, 2020.

Denise Parillon

Jonas Parillon & Co. Inc.

Attorney at Law of the Applicant

Filed by Jonas Parillon & Co. Inc., Attorneys-at-Law, whose address for service is Factory Road, St. John's, Antigua, e-mail: denisejpar@yahoo.com and telephone number: (268) 562-6530.

Antigua and Barbuda to present its first-ever **Voluntary National Review to the United Nations**

Antigua and Barbuda will present its first-ever Voluntary National Review report (VNR) under the theme “Build Forward Stronger” concerning the implementation of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals at the Ninth Session of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) on Tuesday, July 13, 2021. As part of the presentation, a report, an accompanying introductory video, and a statement, will be unveiled.

HLPF is the main United Nations (UN) platform for the review of progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). VNRs are voluntary and country-led and are presented by the UN Member States during annual HLPF sessions. They present a snapshot of a country's SDG progress.

The SDGs and their associated targets are a “...blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.” United Nations member states, including Antigua and Barbuda, adopted the 2030 Sustainable Agenda and its seventeen (17)

interconnected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015.

The SDGs, also known as “global goals,” cover social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. They are a call to action to eradicate poverty and hunger, ensure access to quality education, tackle climate change and reduce inequalities to address the most vulnerable, and ensure that no one is left behind.

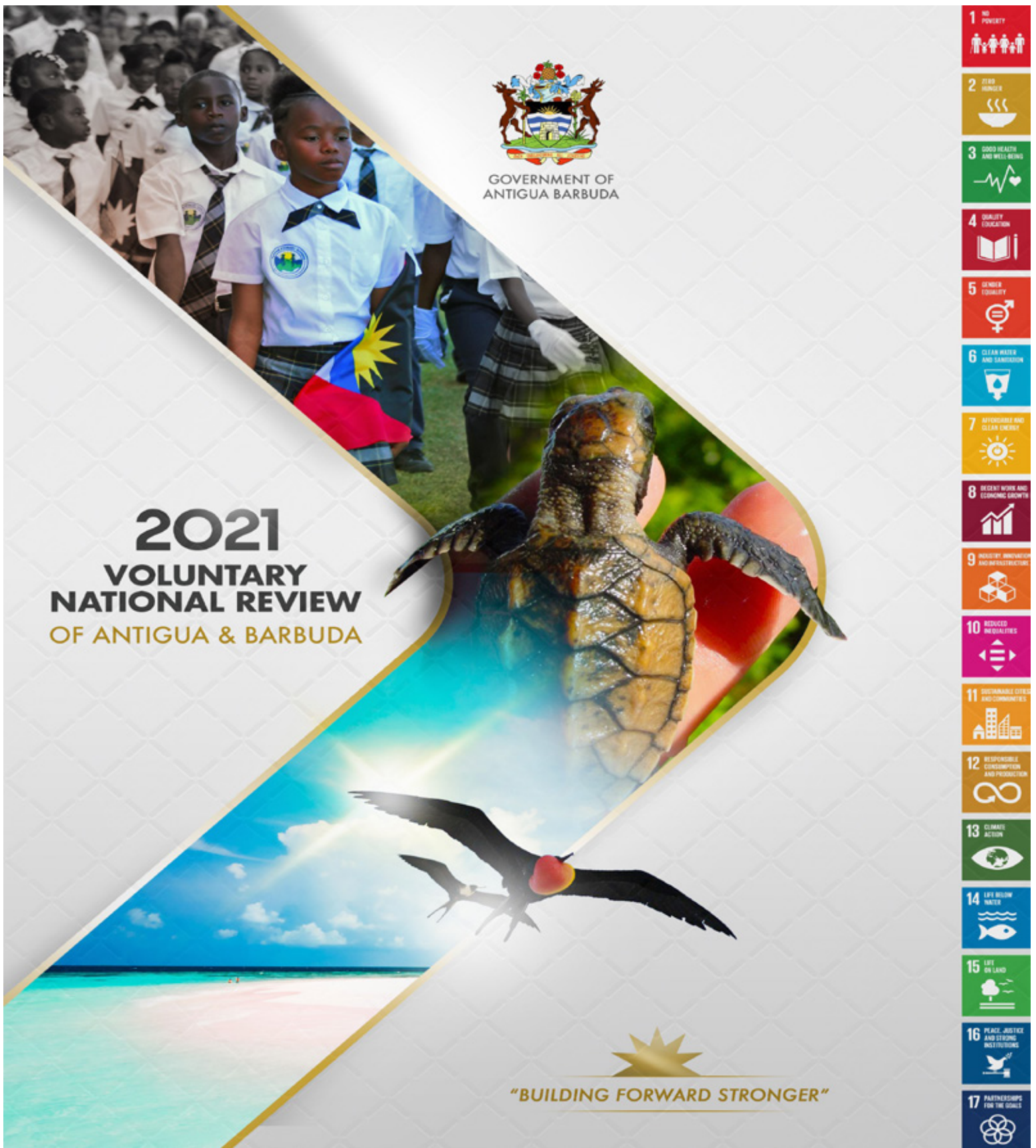
This year, the HLPF convenes from the 6th – 15th of July 2021 and will be held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Forty-three (43) countries are expected to present a VNR during this year's HLPF session.

Antigua and Barbuda's first-ever VNR presentation will share updates on the country's progress towards the achievement of the SDGs. The Hon. E.P. Chet Greene, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Trade of Antigua and Barbuda, and Ms. Joy-Marie King, Director of International Trade will be presenting the country's VNR to the HLPF. Other first-time countries include San

Marino, Marshall Islands, Angola, and Cuba.

Antigua and Barbuda's VNR Process:

Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) track a country's implementation of the SDGs. In preparation for the VNR, the International Trade Unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through assistance with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) held extensive consultations with various stakeholders, including government, civil society, private sector, youth, academia, and development partners to collect inputs. The consultations were structured along with the “5 P's” approach: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships for an integrated approach. The services of two consultants were utilized- Mrs. Elizabeth Emanuel (re-



port compilation) and Mr. Sonalli Andrews (Multimedia and Graphic Design Services including the cover of the VNR). As a result, both the VNR report and video reflect successes, challenges, as well as lessons learned, which will serve to strengthen policies and partnerships. The

collection of statistical data, which covers official SDG indicators, allows for a comprehensive assessment of SDG progress and can help mobilize support from external partners.

Antigua and Barbuda's VNR presentation to the HLPF will take place on July 13th, 2021 at 11:15 am. To

watch the presentation online, visit UNWeb TV.

Other members of the Ministry's VNR team include Ms. Zeina Hechme, Senior Foreign Service Officer, and Mr. Javier Spencer, Foreign Service Officer.



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Office Administrator

The National Student Loan Fund (NSLF), a small but growing not-for-profit organisation, is seeking an experienced, self-driven and motivated individual to fill the position of Office Administrator. The Office Administrator will be responsible for managing the NSLF Secretariat and working with the NSLF Committee to achieve the Fund's strategic objectives and financial goals. The Office Administrator will lead the small team to ensure compliance with NSLF policies and procedures, and delivery of excellent and timely service to our clients.

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1. General office management and ensuring operation of the NSLF Secretariat in accordance with the NSLF regulations and policies.
2. Developing and/or improving administrative systems, policies and procedures for more effective operation of the NSLF Secretariat.
3. Reporting to the Committee on the operations of the Secretariat and performance of the NSLF.
4. Oversight of execution of payroll, statutory, and vendor payment activities.
5. Oversight and management of the NSLF Secretariat annual budget.
6. Management of the annual loan application and disbursement process.
7. Management of all communication with internal and external clients and stakeholders and ensuring efficient response to client/customer inquiries, requests, and complaints.
8. Representing the NSLF at meetings, interviews, college fairs and other events as required by the Committee.
9. Ensuring execution of annual audit of NSLF financials in accordance with provisions of Finance Administration Act

Required Qualifications and Experience:

- Bachelor's degree in business administration, management, or a related field. *While this is preferred, it does not outweigh experience, skill, effective leadership abilities, and a history of success.*
- Minimum of 5 years' experience in a related position.
- Exceptional leadership and time, task, and resource management skills.
- Experience with development and implementation of policies and procedures a plus.
- Proficiency with computers, especially MS Office.
- Experience with accounting and financial reporting preferred.
- Familiarity with budget planning and enforcement, and customer service procedures.

Remuneration will be commensurate with qualification, experience, and proven track record of performance at a high level.

Please submit applications to applications@nslf.ag on or before **Friday 30th July 2021**. Only **shortlisted applicants will be contacted**.

In All Fairness

by Risa V

Times have changed and so has the community of public school teachers who get hit with accusations of negligence and blame for mediocre examination results.

With as many private schools as public schools in Antigua and Barbuda, a lot of pressure is put on public school teachers to deliver exceptional results, especially when private schools outperform government schools in national and regional examinations.

However, as stated by the Director of Education, Mr. Clare Browne, there is really no comparison, because the mandate and philosophy of private and public schools are different.

The expectations of a changing society toward public school teachers seem questionable. Not only are they faced with a new generation, but the communities that once raised children – communities that teachers were themselves part of – no longer exist. Even as that foundation crumbled, there expectation continues for teachers to succeed, regardless.

Single parenting is more prevalent; extended family households

are no longer common; community aid and assistance is now practically nonexistent; and the churches are having less of an influence on the lives of the young generation – all major shifts in what were once considered normal and expected.

So why have we set apart the nature of a teacher and teaching as unchangeable? Today, the world is more stressful and raising a child has proven to be harder. Yet so many of us find it hard to understand and accept that teachers face similar challenges – regardless of their passion for the profession? After all, equally passionate professionals in other fields – doctors, nurses, pilots – face daunting challenges as well.

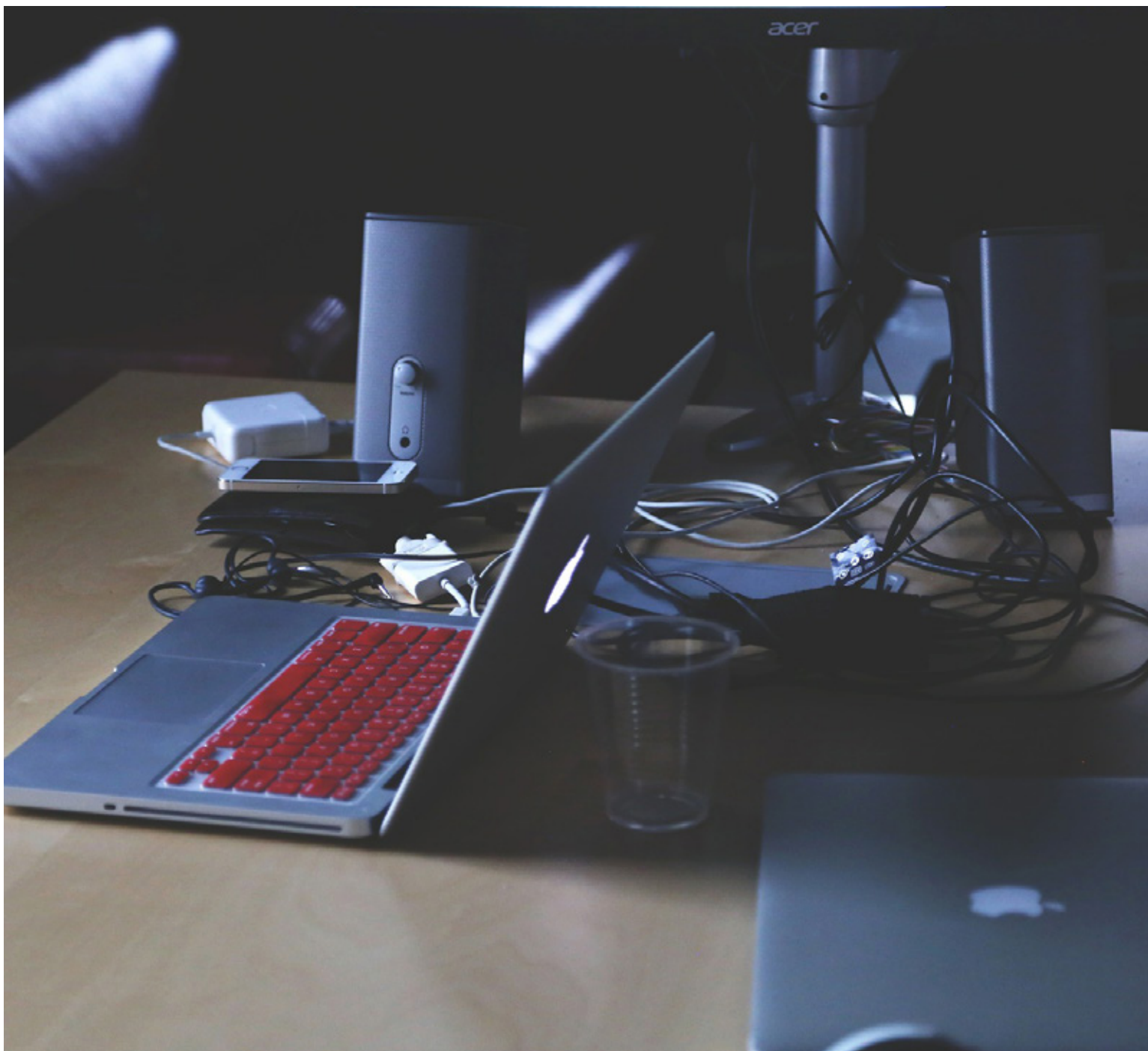
The closing of schools during covid-19 appeared to have provided some insight into the difficult life of public school teachers, as parents learned to appreciate the commitment and sacrifices of teachers, and the indispensable roles they play. However, this now seems long forgotten with the recent publication of Grade Six National Assessment Results (G6NA). It appears to have triggered a revival of castigation against public schools and scapegoated teachers.

Easy is not always the best option.

Instead of blaming teachers, parents get on board and pick up the slack. With so many options in free educational resources and finding information made easy on the internet, having a hands-on approach to assist your children is more than doable.

Maybe the performance could be even greater if the Government evened the playing field. Too long has the education system failed the rural folk; prioritizing ‘town’ schools over ‘country’ schools; ready and willing to take whatever good teachers the out-of-town schools have and transferring them to more prestigious ones such as the Antigua Girls High School, Antigua Grammar School and the Princess Margaret Secondary School – you get the point?

Teachers give yourselves a tap on the shoulder for your efforts, and I would like to congratulate all the students who wrote this year’s Grade Six National Assessment. Once you gave it your best, you should be proud of yourselves for the hard work and dedication you had towards your studies; for it is not the destination that truly matters, but the journey.



Can the OECS learn from Silicon Valley's interest in Miami?

by Christal Clashing

It started with a tweet on December 4th 2020. San Francisco-based venture capitalist Delian Asparouhov tweeted, "ok guys hear me

out, what if we move Silicon Valley to Miami"? Miami's mayor, Francis Suarez, responded, "How can I help?"

This would be the ad campaign that made its way onto the billboards of Silicon Valley in the City

of Palo Alto, San Francisco, home of Apple, Google and Facebook. Since then, Silicon Valley start-ups have been scoping out Miami as the next place to move their businesses.

Silicon Valley, so named because

Cont'd on pg 17

it was in the City of Palo Alto that it was discovered that a silicon transistor – and later all parts within an electrical circuit – could be made of silicon, leading to the boom in computer microprocessors that we still use today.

Silicon Valley, with major financial investors, has fuelled the tech industry and has been the breeding ground for the world's largest and most influential technology companies. Supported by universities such as Stanford University and its associated Stanford Research Park, it is the stomping ground for the young, hungry and innovative.

Unfortunately, with big money being pumped into businesses over the years, the cost of living has skyrocketed. This was a bearable reality due to the networking that would happen by simply living in the area. This all changed when the Covid-19 pandemic hit.

No longer were persons able to congregate and share their thoughts and innovative thinking. Everything moved online and suddenly the drawbacks of Palo Alto became impossible to ignore. A high crime rate and high taxes became incentives to leave Silicon Valley. Among the first to move their business was Elon Musk as he relocated to Texas. Then, seemingly out of nowhere, investor Delian Asparouhov publicly considers Miami – and Miami answered the call.

Miami presents an even more attractive proposition than Texas with its year-round sunny weather, low crime rates and attractive tax structure.

So, why wasn't Miami on anyone's radar for tech businesses before this point? Because Miami's tech start-up environment was obscured by the city's high tourism and health-

care profile. Mayor Suarez's response to Asparouhov wasn't as out-of-the-blue as it would seem. Mayor Suarez's track record shows that he has been pushing tech business for the last decade. The University of Miami, since 2008, has been pumping out entrepreneurs in the thousands through 'The Launch Pad' innovation programme.

The challenge was that many of these graduates had to seek business opportunities elsewhere, but it looks like that is about to change. With tech companies bringing their business to Miami, emerging start-ups will bring internships and new job opportunities. The director of 'The Launch Pad' at the University of Miami estimates that with every tech job created, four additional jobs are created in the local economy.

With all the buzz about Miami, the question is whether it will become the next Silicon Valley. Many around the world have tried to replicate the success of Silicon Valley with investments in universities, research, and innovation parks, but none have touched the uniqueness of Silicon Valley's edge. A study published in a Scientific American article, identified that the edge missed by many of these attempts is the needs-driven approach that Silicon Valley companies successfully execute. They are not led by technological advancements or market trends. Instead, they seek to understand the populations they want to target, and innovate based on the needs they observe. Coupling that insight with governmental support and fresh, hungry talent helps makes Silicon Valley what it is.

Needs-driven innovation isn't geographically bound, it's mindset based. The ecosystem to support that mindset, however, is loca-

tion-influenced based on the high educational resources, tax incentives and governmental support that innovative businesses can receive. That is part of what makes Miami attractive.

With Miami having such close proximity to the Caribbean, and with so many from the Caribbean diaspora living in Miami, one can ask how could this tech boom influence the Caribbean region? This is yet to be seen and depends on how receptive Caribbean countries are to supporting their diaspora abroad.

Here in Antigua, the Director of Academic Affairs of UWI Five Islands, Dr. Curtis Charles, hopes that the OECS becomes the Silicon Valley of the Caribbean. Learning from what makes innovation ecosystems successful, it appears that Antigua along with the OECS still has quite a distance to cover before reaching that goal. However, as Miami has shown, it is not an overnight endeavour. The work for building the conditions that attract major investments begins at least a decade prior to responding to an opportunity for major growth.

As small island states, the OECS has collectively begun to take those steps. UWI is supported by Antigua and Barbuda's Ministry of Education, Science & Technology. There exists an Antigua and Barbuda Science and Innovation Park in Coolidge. We have talented graduates coming out of universities abroad. However, do our businesses registration and taxation system support emerging tech businesses? Are we ready to welcome the ideas and change that fresh, hungry minds bring? Do we have the cultural confidence to not be market followers but innovators, based on our regionally specific needs? These are some thoughts to chew on.



A Weekly Business News Aggregation Service

Compiled and Edited by the Directorate of Trade and Economic Integration at the CARICOM Secretariat

BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

CAL to slash its workforce by 25%

Caribbean Airlines Limited, (CAL) has reported a first-quarter loss of TT\$172.7 million (US\$25.7 million) and will be terminating 450 jobs or 25% of its workforce. The airline said the action was a necessary response to a 90% falloff in business, 75% decline in revenue, and as part of a continued reining in of costs, which it said had been contained to 52% of first-quarter 2020 levels. The reported loss is just below its average TT\$184.5-million (US\$27.3 million) quarterly loss last year that ended with a year-end fallout of TT\$738 million (US\$109.2 million).

MSMEs to benefit from new 4.75% loan facility

St Lucia's new tax law for IBC's effective July 1 Members of the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Jamaica are set to benefit from increased access to finance following the recent launch of a programme by Government, which will see the sector benefiting from loans at a concessionary interest rate of 4.75% per annum. The \$675-million loan programme, managed by the National Export-Import Bank of Jamaica (EXIM Bank) is geared

towards MSMEs operating businesses in manufacturing and agro-processing, tourism and agriculture, among other selected sectors. Eligible enterprises may borrow up to \$25 million with a repayment period of up to 5 years. The local MSME sector, comprises approximately 500,000 operators contributes close to 60 % of GDP.

Jamaica tourism sector rebounds

Suriname and its creditors have reached Jamaica's tourism sector continues to lead the recovery efforts for the island's economy, earning US\$1.31 billion, of which US\$97.58 million has been accrued directly by the Government. According to Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett, "Based on our run rate forecast of visitor arrivals for June 2021, Jamaica would have received an estimated total of 816,632 visitors since reopening in June 2020. Of the total visitor arrivals, 510,359 or 62%, came to Jamaica since January 2021." Ninety per cent of the business is being generated by the US market. The estimated earnings see the Tourism Enhancement Fund bringing in US\$16.3 million for the period; departure taxes, US\$28.5 million; and visitor expenditure a whopping US\$1.2 billion. Airport improvement fee, airline passenger levy, passenger fees and charges, all combined, reflect a total of over US\$51 million.

St Lucia's new tax law for IBC's effective July 1

Effective July 1, St Lucia will be introducing a new territorial tax system under which non-resident companies are taxed on Saint Lucia-source income only, representing a substantial change for international business companies (IBCs) registered there. This includes but is not limited to income derived from royalties, management charges, commissions and fees. The new tax system. The gross amount of such income is liable to 25% withholding tax (WHT), while WHT of 15% applies to interest. Associations of underwriters are taxed at 30% on 10% of the gross premium arising in Saint Lucia, and life insurance companies are taxed at 30% on 10% of the gross investment income arising in St Lucia. Any dividend paid by an IBC, which does no business in Saint Lucia, to another IBC, or to persons, trusts or other entities which are not residents, shall be exempt from any tax. Double tax agreements will apply. IBCs themselves are exempt from withholding tax. Benefits under the Eastern Caribbean country's IBC law previously included tax-free status, including no payment of corporate, income, or capital gains taxes. IBC's electing to be tax free were not required to file accounting records or financial statements. No audits were also required.

Bahamas: \$30m needed to bridge digital connectivity gap

The Bahamas needs to spend about \$30 million to close the digital connectivity gap relative to the digital penetration in OECD

countries, a new IDB report reveals. Specifically, the report suggested that the Bahamas has to invest more than \$13.6 million in the mobile space and more than \$17 million in the fixed space in order to close the connectivity gap with OECD countries. According to the Bank, this investment in mobile and fixed infrastructure could create almost 10,000 new jobs. The report found that the Latin America and Caribbean region has "major broadband penetration and 4G technology coverage gaps compared with OECD countries" and that the average citizens in those countries "spend more than 20% of their income to access broadband services", a level far above the International Telecommunication Union's recommended 3% mark.

IMF increases access limits to large natural disaster funding

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), on June 21, approved temporary modifications to access limits under the large natural disaster (LND) windows of the Rapid Credit Facility (RCF) and of the Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI). The LND windows were introduced in 2017 to increase available emergency financing for member countries experiencing urgent balance of payments needs arising from large natural disasters where economic damage is equivalent to or exceeds 20% of a country's GDP. The temporary modifications increased the annual and cumulative access limits under the LND windows of the RCF and RFI by 50% of quota. The modifications to access limits under the LND windows of the RCF and RFI will be in effect through end-2021.

Trinidad: Argument between neighbours ends in fatal chopping

Loop TT - A 43-year-old man was chopped to death in St. Augustine on Saturday night. The deceased has been identified as 43-year-old Ganesh Ramkissoon of Dhania Street, Streatham Lodge Road. He was reportedly killed in a confrontation with his 39-year-old neighbour

who is currently in custody aiding police with their inquiries. The incident happened around 8:00 p.m. Saturday. Ramkissoon was said to be at his apartment when he got into an argument with his neighbour. The confrontation, police were told, stemmed from a broken plate. The 38-year-old

told police he went to his apartment and locked the door. A few minutes later he heard a loud banging followed by someone shouting 'police!' The 38-year-old armed himself with a cutlass and opened the door, and was rushed by Ramkissoon who began cuffing him. He said he swung the cut-

lass in defence, striking Ramkissoon to the upper body.

The injured man fled the scene and notified the police and emergency health services. Ramkissoon was rushed to the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex, but died while undergoing treatment.

15 fishermen heading to Jamaica presumed dead at sea

Jamaica Gleaner - Up to press time-

Fifteen Honduran fishermen who were on their way to Jamaica for the lobster fishing season are presumed dead after their boat went missing at sea.

The boat, linked to Rainforest Seafoods, has been missing since Friday, law enforcement officials have revealed.

According to reports, Rainforest lost contact with the vessel which was returning from Honduras.

A massive search operation was launched after the company reported

the incident to the Jamaica Defence Force Coast Guard and the Marine Police.

Rainforest did not immediately comment on the development.

Meanwhile, Shawn Taylor, chairman of the Jamaica Fishermen Cooperative Union, believes the aggressive weather condition in the deep beyond Pedro Cay would have made sailing difficult.

The Pedro Cay is located south of Jamaica and is administratively a part of Kingston.



A massive search operation was launched after Rainforest reported the incident to the Jamaica Defence Force Coast Guard and the Marine Police.

Seventh oil lift could earn Guyana US\$75M

Guyana Chronicle - WITH oil prices on the rise globally, Guyana could see the returns from its burgeoning petroleum sector growing, starting with earnings from the sale of its seventh oil lift, which could rake in around US\$75 million.

The country's seventh oil lift was safely and successfully completed by operator ExxonMobil aboard the Liza Destiny Floating Production Storage and Offloading (FPSO) vessel offshore Guyana last weekend. This is according to the Minister of Natural Resources, Vickram Bharrat, in his response to questions from the Sunday Chronicle.

Lifts of about one million barrels of oil are done every eight to nine days. And, with Brent crude oil, the index Guyana uses to sell its crude, at more than US\$75 a barrel, Guyana could easily clear US\$75 million, the highest amount garnered since the nation started trading this commodity.

Having earned over US\$60 million from the sale of its sixth oil lift, and received US\$13.9 million in royalties in the first quarter of this year, Guyana has in its Natural Resource Fund (NRF) over US\$344 million. Specifically, according to the Bank of Guyana, the nation ended June with US\$344,161,633 in its NRF at the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank. Revenue garnered from the sale of the seventh oil lift could push Guyana's total earnings to close to US\$420 million. It was in early March that Guyana also benefitted directly from its petroleum sector, receiving US\$61,090,968 (approximately G\$13 billion) from the sale of the nation's fifth oil lift.

The fifth lift was sold to New York-based Hess Corp, which, in turn,

vended the local crude to HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd (HMEL), a joint venture between State-run Hindustan Petroleum Corp. and Indian steel tycoon LN Mittal. HMEL reportedly operates the 226,000 barrels per day 'Bathinda' refinery in the northern state of Punjab.

Prior sales of local crude, particularly the first three, went to a trading arm of Shell on a dated 'Brent' basis. Guyana sold its first one million barrels of crude on February 19, 2020, raking in nearly US\$55 million. In its second million-barrel sale, the country received US\$35 million, and another US\$46 million as proceeds from the sale of its third million-barrel of crude, and US\$49.3 million from its fourth oil lift. It was reported in May that the country's total revenue is expected to increase by 17 percent, with earnings in the petroleum sector alone reaching well over US\$500 million by the end of this year.

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), in its Caribbean Quarterly Bulletin, which was released in May, stated that with Brent crude oil at more than US\$60 a barrel and the expectation of oil production increasing by 46.7 percent in 2021, the government's oil revenues could significantly increase this year.

Over the medium-term, according to the IDB, oil production is expected to continue driving GDP growth, with oil exports growing by an annual average of 48.5 percent over 2020-2023, contributing to average annual GDP, and Government revenue growth rates of 17.1 and 6.7 percent, respectively, from 2021 to 2026. The prospects are even brighter, giv-

en that ExxonMobil, on June 10, announced their 20th oil discovery in Guyana, and increased the estimate of recoverable petroleum resources. Additionally, ExxonMobil updated its development plans of having five oil- production projects by 2026 to six projects by 2027, which they feel could potentially grow to 10 production projects in the future.

ExxonMobil's first offshore Guyana project at the Stabroek Block, Liza Phase One, began producing in late 2019, well ahead of the industry's average for development time. Liza Phase Two remains on track to begin producing oil by early 2022.

Liza Phase Two will produce up to 220,000 barrels of oil per day at peak rates, using the Liza Unity FPSO. Late last year, the oil giant, following an agreement with the Government of Guyana, decided to proceed with the Payara field development offshore Guyana.

Payara is ExxonMobil's third project in the Stabroek Block, and is expected to produce up to 220,000 barrels of oil per day, after start-up in 2024, using the FPSO vessel. The US\$9 billion development will target an estimated resource base of about 600 million oil-equivalent barrels.



Guyana's Minister of Natural Resources, Vickram Bharrat.

St. Lucia Medical Association concerned over mass crowd election campaign events



St. Lucia Times - The Saint Lucia Medical and Dental Association (SLMDA), warning that 'COVID-19 is still here', has expressed grave concern over mass crowd election campaign events, as both major political parties here prepare for general elections on July 26.

In a statement issued Saturday night on behalf of the association, President Dr. Merle Clarke noted the 'horrible consequences' of indiscriminate election campaigning in other jurisdictions

The full text of the SLMDA President's statement is reproduced below:

We the members of the Saint Lucia Medical and Dental Association observe with grave concern and trepidation the sig-

nificant increase in mass crowd campaign events around the island. Even more frightening is the fact that the large majority of attendees are generally not wearing masks or are wearing them inappropriately.

We would like to remind you, our fellow citizens, that we are living through a pandemic. COVID-19 IS STILL HERE. As of July 10, there are 120 active cases here in Saint Lucia. The highly contagious and potentially deadly Delta variant has been identified in several neighbouring territories and is the predominant strain in our main tourism source markets.

Only 12% of our population is fully vaccinated. This means

that, as a country, we are still very vulnerable to COVID-19 and another surge in the number of cases could be catastrophic, in that our healthcare system will be overwhelmed and many more precious lives could be lost.

We have seen in other jurisdictions the horrifying consequences of indiscriminate, imprudent election campaigning.

We continue to urge you brothers and sisters to GET VACCINATED! Vaccines are our most effective weapon in this war on COVID-19. The best vaccine is whichever one is available to you. We implore you, our political leaders, to encourage supporters to get vaccinated. Lead by the power of your example. Remember that a large number of infected supporters would inadvertently affect voter turnout. Citizens, your voice is heard best at the ballot box, not at a campaign rally.

In closing we would like to remind everyone, no matter your party colour – red, yellow, blue or green, that we are all Saint Lucians first. There is more that unites us than divides us. Please be kind to one another.

After July 26, 2021 we will still be sons and daughters of this beloved 238 square mile paradise. We are therefore duty bound to do our part to protect her. Stay safe and may God continue to bless each and every one of us.

St. Vincent gov't has 'zero tolerance for police brutality' — PM Gonsalves



Protesters and police officers in Kingstown.

IWN SVG - The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has zero tolerance for police brutality, Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves told Parliament last Tuesday in response to a question by opposition senator Shevern John.

John asked Gonsalves, who is also Minister of National Security and Legal Affairs, to say how the government has been tackling police brutality and whether any studies have been undertaken as to how to increase public confidence in the protective services of the police department. "First of all, I want to say that the policy of this government and it is in this police force also to have zero tolerance for police brutality," Gonsalves said. He said that wherever there are instances or allegations of police brutality, they are accommodated either through an internal investigation — in cases where the complainant

does not want to pursue legal remedy — or the law courts. "More often than not, the people who are subject to quote-unquote police brutality or at least allegations of it, the files are usually sent, the matter having been investigated, sent to the Director of Public Prosecution, and in most cases, I have been advised, that there is some form of prosecution — the overwhelming number of cases, we have had prosecution."

The prime minister said that in some cases, as a result of those prosecutions, police officers have been found guilty.

"In any event, there are several cases that have come before ... the civil court for compensation. Some of those cases were dismissed, some others ... the police officers have been found guilty and because, invariably, you sue the police officer and the state — the attorney general — and compensation has been paid in cases."

Gonsalves said that there are some cases where there is no sense in defending the civil suit and, therefore, the attorney general seeks to negotiate a settlement.

"But I want to assure the honourable senator that this government has a zero tolerance toward police brutality. Police can do their work without beating up people," Gonsalves said. "Of course, the point is this, we must give the police officer, however, the right to self-defence, that if somebody is coming to them and beating them or resisting arrest, they will have to subject them and they will have to subject them with reasonable force within the four walls of the law and not to go out on an excursion of their own. So I am glad I have the opportunity to restate what is the position of the government. We don't support any issue of police brutality."

He said that in the overwhelming number of cases, if a police officer is found guilty of a criminal offence, the Commissioner of Police would make the representation to the Police Service Commission for the officer to be dismissed.

"In other cases, the police commissioner exercises his discretion not to do that. And that is in the purview of the commissioner of police, because cases differ and you can

understand that in some cases, the commissioner may go one way and in other cases, another way." Gonsalves said that the government is always seeking to enhance public confidence in the protective services of the police force. We have done so at a broad policy level of having far more police officers than before who are far better trained and equipped. He said that larger sums of monies have been budgeted for the police force.

"You can see the difference in salaries over the last 20 years, the growth in salaries, working conditions and the like, so there is a general improvement in the quality of policing. He said there are other initiatives in building confidence in the police, including investigating reports made by the public and providing timely feedback and updates; ensuring that in the overwhelming number of cases that the perpetrators are brought to justice; information programmes, like those on public radio, and police social media page; crime prevention exhibitions; developing and participating in neighbourhood watch groups; including the police band to participate on community activities in the pre-COVID period; and youth summer programme, including programmes at the Coast Guard and DARE.

Virgin Galactic founder Richard Branson successfully rockets to outer space



(*CNN Business*) - Richard Branson became the first person to ride into space aboard a rocket he helped fund. The supersonic space plane developed by his company, Virgin Galactic, roared into the sky over New Mexico early Sunday, carrying Branson and three fellow crewmembers.

Branson — along with Virgin Galactic employees Beth Moses, Colin Bennett, and Sirisha Bandla and pilots Dave Mackay and Michael Masucci — boarded the SpaceShipTwo, a winged plane with a single rocket motor that the company has spent nearly two decades developing, before the crack of dawn.

Attached beneath its massive, twin-fuselaged mothership, dubbed WhiteKnightTwo, the vehicle took to the skies at 8:30 am MT and climbed to about 50,000 feet in the air.

Just after 9:15 in the morning, the SpaceShipTwo detached from its mothership and dropped momentarily before its engine screamed to life and the vehicle swooped upward. On board, the passengers experienced up to three Gs of force from the burst of extreme acceleration and watched the blue sky fade into the star-speckled darkness of outer space. At the top of the flight path, more

than 50 miles high, the vehicle was suspended in weightlessness for a few minutes, allowing the passengers to enjoy panoramic views of the Earth and space as SpaceShipTwo flipped onto its belly. It then deployed its feathering system, which curls the plane's wings upward, mimicking the shape of a badminton shuttlecock, to turn the spaceship rightward as it flew back into the Earth's thick atmosphere and glided back down to a runway landing.

As Branson floated around in microgravity, he taped a message using cameras onboard the space plane: "To all you kids out there — I

was once a child with a dream, looking up to the stars. Now I'm an adult in a spaceship...If we can do this, just imagine what you can do," he said.

This flight marked only the fourth test flight of the vehicle that reached the edge of space.

Surrounding SpaceShipTwo's takeoff was — in typical Branson fashion — a high-production party with friends, family, employees and a few VIPs in attendance. Earlier on Sunday, Branson tweeted a picture of himself and a barefoot Elon Musk hanging out. Grammy-nominated artist Khalid is also expected to perform an as-yet-unreleased song on an outdoor stage.

Leaked testimony from Haiti suspects says plan was to arrest, not kill president



Suspects in the assassination of Haiti's president, Jovenel Moise, who was shot dead early Wednesday at his home, are shown to the media in Port-au-Prince, Haiti July 8, 2021

(Reuters) – A group of which has appealed for international help. But when they sent calls to an answering machine that made a reference to the fictional TV character Jack Bauer, who fought terrorism in the series “24”.
Americans suspected of assassinating Haiti’s president, Jovenel Moise, told investigators they were official said on Sunday that there to arrest him, not kill him, the Miami Herald and a person familiar with the situation. the matter said on Sunday. Citing people who had spoken to some of the 19 suspects detained so far, Port-au-Prince home by the Miami Herald reported what Haitian authorities said that they said their mission was a unit of assassins made up of 26 Colombians and two Haitian Americans, plunging the troubled Caribbean nation into deeper turmoil. Haitian-American, James Solages and Joseph Vincent, told investigators the plot is the latest in a succession of blows to the hit the struggling country

Washington has so far dead. Haitian police did not reply to a request for troops, though a senior US comment. The news follows reports that some of the Colombians had said they had gone to work as security personnel on Haiti, including for Moise himself. The Miami Herald reported that the detained Colombians said they were hired to work in Haiti by Miami-based Company CTU Security, run by Venezuelan emigre Antonio Enmanuel Intriago Valera. Neither CTU nor Intriago could be reached for comment. One phone number associated with the company in public records

arrived, they found him machine that made a reference to the fictional TV character Jack Bauer, who fought terrorism in the series “24”.
“Thank you for calling CTU security. For Tony Intriago, please leave a message or send a text. For Jack Bauer wait for the next season. Thank you for calling and have a great dy.”
Social media profiles that appeared to belong to Intriago included a Facebook photo showing a man in tactical gear pointing a high-powered rifle. Other photos on Instagram showed ammunition, guns, and people engaged in tactical training.

California wildfire advances as heatwave hits west US

Aljazeera - Firefighters struggled to contain an exploding Northern California wildfire under blazing temperatures as another heat wave blanketed the western United States, prompting an excessive heat warning for inland and desert areas.

Death Valley in southeastern California's Mojave Desert reached 53 degrees Celsius (127F) on Saturday, according to the National Weather Service's reading at Furnace Creek. The shockingly high temperature was actually lower than the previous high of 54C (129F).

If confirmed as accurate, the 54C reading would be the highest recorded there since July 1913, when Furnace Creek desert hit 57C (135F), considered the highest measured temperature on Earth.

About 483km (300 miles) northwest of the sizzling desert, the largest wildfire of the year in California was raging along the border with Nevada. The Beckwourth Complex Fire – a combination of two lightning-caused fires burning 72km (45 miles) north of Lake Tahoe – showed no sign of slowing its rush northeast from the Sierra Nevada forest region after doubling in size between Friday and Saturday.

Pushed by strong winds, a wildfire in southern Oregon doubled in size to 311 square km (120sq miles) on Saturday as it raced through heavy timber in the Fremont-Winema National Forest near the Klamath County town of Sprague River.

The California Independent System Operator warned of potential power shortage, not only because of mounting heat, but because a wildfire in southern Oregon was threatening transmission lines that carry imported power to

California. In Southern California, a brush fire sparked by a burning big rig in eastern San Diego County forced evacuations of two Native American reservations on Saturday.

In north-central Arizona, Yavapai County on Saturday lifted an evacuation warning for Black Canyon City, an unincorporated town 66km (43 miles) north of Phoenix, after a fire in nearby mountains no longer posed a threat.

In Mohave County, Arizona, on the same day two firefighters died

after an aircraft they were in to respond to a small wildfire crashed, local media reported.

A wildfire in southeast Washington grew to almost 155sq km (60sq miles) as it blackened grass and timber while it moved into the Umatilla National Forest.

In Idaho, Governor Brad Little declared a wildfire emergency on Friday and mobilised the state's National Guard to help fight fires sparked after lightning storms swept across the drought-stricken region.



Flames consume a vehicle as the Sugar Fire, part of the Beckwourth Complex Fire, tears through Doyle, California.

Arrests as protests spread in South Africa



Burned out cars in downtown Johannesburg.

BBC - Dozens of people have been arrested in South Africa as violence spreads following the jailing of former president Jacob Zuma.

Pro-Zuma protesters first took to the streets after the 79-year-old handed himself to authorities on Wednesday to begin a 15-month sentence.

But police now say criminals are taking advantage of the chaos, which spread from his home province of KwaZulu-Natal to Johannesburg, in Gauteng.

More than 60 people have been arrested.

On Sunday, protesters armed with sticks, golf clubs and branches were seen marching through Johannesburg's central business district.

The night before, some 300 people had barricaded a major highway in

Johannesburg, according to Nat-JOINTS, the national intelligence body; Images showed buildings and cars on fire.

About 800 people were also involved in an incident in which one police officer was shot in Alexandra, a township in Johannesburg - South Africa's economic hub. Two other officers were hurt.

Police also responded to reports of looting in both Johannesburg and KwaZulu-Natal.

It is unclear if they are linked to the pro-Zuma protests, with KwaZulu-Natal police spokesman Jay Naicker telling news agency Reuters officers had seen "criminals or opportunistic individuals trying to enrich themselves during this period".

South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa appealed for calm on

Sunday evening, acknowledging that "there are those who may be hurt and angry", but adding "there can never be any justification for such violent, destructive and disruptive actions".

The jailing of a former president is unprecedented in South Africa, which has been gripped by Zuma's legal turmoil. He was sentenced for contempt of court, after failing to attend an inquiry into corruption during his presidency.

Zuma denies corruption and has not co-operated with the legal process.

The case is due back in the Constitutional Court on Monday, with Zuma's team hoping to get his sentence rescinded or reduced. On Friday, South Africa's High Court dismissed an attempt to stay his arrest.



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PUBLIC VACCINATION CENTERS effective Monday 12th July 2021

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Vaccination card and
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Phoenix Suns take 2-0 lead over Milwaukee Bucks

In front of a loud and boisterous home crowd, the Phoenix Suns defeated the Milwaukee Bucks 118-108 on Thursday night to take a 2-0 lead in their NBA Finals series.

Devin Booker, 31 points, led scoring for the Suns. Mikael Bridges, 27 points, and Chris Paul who finished with 23 points and eight assists, were the other top performers on the night.

The Suns surged ahead late in the first half, withstood Giannis Antetokounmpo's all-round effort to bring the Bucks back, and walked off winners again as fans swung orange rally towels all around them.

Antetokounmpo had 42 points and 12 rebounds in his second game

back after missing two games because of a hyperextended left knee.

Jrue Holiday played more aggressively but didn't shoot a whole lot better than in Game 1, scoring 17 points, but hitting only 7 for 21. Khris Middleton was 5 for 16, forcing Antetokounmpo to carry an even heavier load on his sore left leg.

It adds up to the Bucks having to overcome a 2-0 deficit for the second time this postseason. They did it against the Brooklyn Nets in the Eastern Conference semifinals, but had some help when, first, James Harden and then Kyrie Irving were injured.

Now they are facing a Suns team loaded with weapons all over the lineup, showing off the entirety in their highlight play.

"Nothing Giannis does surprises

me anymore. He's got the nickname Freak for a reason," Bucks guard Pat Connaughton said. "I will say it's incredible what he's been able to do, and it hasn't happened without the time he's put in to get himself ready, get his body better, and continue to do the things that he does to be a two-time MVP."

Milwaukee got it all the way down to six in the fourth, but Paul nailed a 3-pointer and Bridges had a basket to quickly push the lead back to double digits.

The series now shifts to Milwaukee. The Bucks will be happy for two reasons: for the rest in between games, and to be back home. They will be hoping to turn things around and keep their second NBA title dream alive.

*Ashleigh Barty*

Djokovic Wins 6th Wimbledon title after overcoming Berrettinni

LONDON - Novak Djokovic is officially a 20-time Grand Slam champion, having captured his sixth Wimbledon crown after defeating Matteo Berrettini in the men's final. Centre Court has never tasted so good. He had to battle back after dropping the first set. The match finally ended after three hours and twenty-four minutes: 6-7 (4-7), 6-4, 6-4, 6-3. The Serbian superstar had already claimed the first two Grand Slam titles of the year, and is now just a trip to the US Open away from

completing a clean sweep.

This was the first single's Grand Slam final for Berrettini, who had previously never gotten past the fourth round of the competition.

It looked as though the Serb would walk all over the Italian when he held a 5-2 advantage after the opening seven games. The 25-year-old actually battled back to win the first set despite Djokovic's tidy play, but the favourite then came back to storm through the second set. While his opponent gave him plenty to worry about

throughout, Djokovic kept the momentum throughout the third and fourth sets to seal the match.

His tally of 20 Grand Slam titles now puts him level on the all-time list with his arch rivals Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer.

Should he win the US Open later this year, Djokovic would not only surpass his rivals but also complete a full Grand Slam of titles — he would be the first men's singles player to do so since Rod Laver in 1969.

Euro 2020: Fans' despair as England lose to Italy in final



Italian fans were joyous at the Fori Imperiali fanzone in Rome after their team won the penalty shootout

Fans have reacted with disappointment as England lost to Italy on penalties in the Euro 2020 final.

Around 60,000 fans at Wembley witnessed the Three Lions' defeat, while millions watched in pubs, fan zones and homes across the country.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge - who

were at Wembley with Prince George - congratulated the Italian side.

London's Metropolitan Police said 49 arrests were made as of 02:00 BST, amid pre-match unrest at the stadium.

It added that 19 officers "were injured while they confronted volatile crowds".

"Heartbreaking. Congratulations Azzurri on

a great victory," the royal couple wrote on Twitter. "England, you've all come so far, but sadly this time it wasn't our day. You can all hold your heads high, and be so proud of yourselves - I know there's more to come."

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said England "played like heroes", adding: "They

have done the nation proud and deserve great credit."

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan said: "Well, what a Euro 2020 you gave us England. You made history this tournament. Few have seen an England performance - or team - like the one you gave us this summer."

Copa America: Argentina beats Brazil 1-0; Messi wins his 1st major title



Lionel Messi celebrates with his teammates after winning Copa America 2021 final.

Lionel Messi's Argentina beat Brazil 1-0 in Sunday's Copa America final to secure the national team's first title in 28 years and the superstar's first major international trophy.

When the match ended, a tearful Messi was thrown into the air by some of his joyous teammates.

Argentina's winning goal at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro came in the 22nd minute after Rodrigo de Paul made a long pass to Ángel di María. The 33-year-old veteran striker counted on some sloppy defending from left-back Renan Lodi to take control and lob it past goalkeeper Ederson.

It was only the third goal Brazil conceded in the tournament. Neymar tried hard with dribbles and passes, but the Selecao barely threatened Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez. The team of coach Tite had won its previous five matches in the Copa America and scored goals in all of them.

Messi's performance in the final was not as impressive as in previous matches of the tournament, during which he scored four goals and had five assists. He had a clear opportunity in the 88th minute, tried to dribble Ederson, but the Brazilian goalkeeper stopped him.

Wimbledon: Barty Wins Maiden Championship



Ashleigh Barty

LONDON – Ashleigh Barty won her first Wimbledon Women's Championship on Saturday by disposing of Karolina Pliskova in three sets.

Barty had to battle for one hour and 56 minutes as she was made to work for every point on Centre Court. She eventually prevailed, winning 6-3, 6-7 (4-7), 6-3.

Speaking about her team concealing the full extent of her month long injury, Barty said: "Being able to play here at Wimbledon was nothing short of a miracle."

"They kept a lot of

cards close to their chest. It just proved how much we were against the odds."

On this of all days it was surely appropriate, never more so than when she recalled the moment her knees gave away beneath her as she realised she had fulfilled her childhood dream of winning Wimbledon.

"It was the most incredible feeling I've ever experienced on a tennis court," she said. "There was certainly disbelief. I've worked so hard my whole career with my team and with people

that mean the most to me to try and achieve my goals. "For tennis players all over the globe, Wimbledon is where tennis was born. This is where it all started. I understood that as I played here as a junior and was able to experience that incredible week.

Then she grinned again as she reflected on what victory will mean to her nation, 41 years after Evonne Goolagong Cawley captured the title here for the second time.

"To achieve my biggest dream has been absolutely incredible.

The stars aligned for me over the past fortnight – incredible. That it happened to fall on the 50th anniversary of Evonne's first title here, too, is absolutely –"

Pliskova didn't win a point for nine minutes of the contest. Speaking afterwards, Pliskova said: "I mean, not ideal start of the final, of course. But I have to say, like, a lot of credit to her. One thing is that maybe I didn't start well, but I think she really made it super difficult for me to just feel well [comfortable].

"Of course, horrible start. That's why I'm more like proud about the way how I find a way back in that match. I mean, not really close to winning, but it was one set all after. I lost first 15 points in a row or 14, yeah. Definitely horrible start.

The more she fought, the more the crowd cheered her on. And once it was all over, they gave her a mighty ovation – Pliskova had made a court-full of new fans. That meant the world to her as did the whole experience of the past couple of weeks.

West Indies v. Australia



Hayden Walsh Jr. (left) celebrates with West Indian teammates

1st CG Insurance T20

GROS ISLET, St. Lucia – West Indies defeated Australia by 18 runs in the opening CG Insurance T20 International on Friday. West Indies batted first and scored 145 for 6 from their allotment of 20 overs. Andre Russell led the West Indies batting with 51, while Lendl Simmons, 27, gave support from the front. Earlier, West Indies rested Kieron Pollard, which meant that Nicholas Pooran led the regional team for the first time.

Australia, in response to a moderate total, were bowled out for 127 in 16

overs. Obed McCoy was the pick of the West Indian bowlers with 4 for 24. Hayden Walsh provided excellent support from the other end with figures of 3 for 23.

Bating for Australia, Mitchell Marsh, 51, and Matthew Wade, 33, were the only batsmen to give meaningful contributions. Australia had themselves to blame as nine batsmen were dismissed through injudicious stroke play.

2nd CG Insurance T20

West Indies were inserted after Australia won the toss. They got a good start from Lendl Simmons and Andre Fletcher on their

way to the highest total of the T20 International series, 196 for 4.

Shimron Hetmyer anchored the West Indies' innings with a commanding 61 from 36 balls before he was run out trying to push along the score. He, along with Dwayne Bravo who ended on 47 not out, featured in a 103-run partnership. The innings got a tremendous boost at the end from Andre Russell who ended on 24 not out from eight deliveries.

Australia's response began disastrously, losing their first wicket with just the second delivery of the innings. Mitchell Marsh

led the charge with a second half century in as many matches. He topped scored with 54 but was unable to get any other support. In the end, they fell short by 56 runs as the West Indian bowling and fielding were again disciplined.

Hayden Walsh grabbed three wickets for the second night in a row. He ended with 3 for 29. Fidel Edwards was unable to complete his second over after sustaining a shoulder injury. He went off the field and the over was completed by Lendl Simmons.

DEWS