

RETURN OF THE CRUISE SHIPS BEGINS!



Global drumbeats grow louder for mandatory vaccination (*GUEST EDITORIAL pages 2-4*)

Health Ministry denies nurses severed (*STORY ON PAGE 11*)

Chinese vaccine already out and about (*PAGE 11*)

Cruise Line threatens pullout from Florida; WHO urges restraint in vaccination status queries. (*pages 9 & 10*)

COVID-19: The countries that have mandatory vaccination for health workers

The world is divided over whether doctors and other health workers should have a COVID-19 jab to do their jobs. As the UK once again considers the situation, Chris Stokel-Walker looks at the differing perspectives globally

What would you do to keep your job? It's a question that healthcare workers in Texas were confronted with in April when local hospital network Houston Methodist required its staff to be vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2.

Nearly 25 000 employees dutifully lined up to be protected against COVID-19 and to protect their patients. More than 150 didn't and have since either been sacked or resigned.

A court case brought by one of the employees, a former nurse, was dismissed by a district court judge. But the case raised questions about requiring vaccination using products that have not been fully approved by the US Food and Drug Administration.

The employee, meanwhile, has appealed the ruling.

What was once a hypothetical question is now a real one, and not just in the US. Businesses around the world are considering making coronavirus vaccinations mandatory for workers (Morgan Stanley and the publisher Bloomsbury are two major companies to have already made the move). And those on the frontlines of the pandemic are no different.

Global decisions

In Public Health England's 2019-20 report on seasonal influenza vaccines, there was one eye opening point: one in four healthcare workers did not get a flu vaccine. And there are indications that roughly the same proportion of people are wary of having covid-19 jabs.

The UK government will make COVID vaccination mandatory for care home staff from October, and is considering whether to extend the policy to NHS staff.

Elsewhere in the world, Saudi Arabia takes perhaps the hardest line: no jab, no job. In

May, its government said employees in the public, private, and non-profit sectors must be vaccinated before they can return to work. It followed Italy which, in March, introduced a requirement for health workers -- including pharmacists -- to be vaccinated before treating patients. Serbia is considering a similar stance.

"The aim of the measure is to protect as much as possible both medical and paramedical staff, and those who are in environments that may be more exposed to the risk of infection," the Italian government said in a statement. Those who refuse face suspension without pay for the rest of the year.

The Italian government moved after clusters of hospital infections were linked to unvaccinated staff, and is designed to combat an endemic anti-vaccination movement in the country.

Ireland hasn't ruled out making covid-19 vaccination mandatory for health workers, but the country's health regulator called it the "most intrusive step" that should only be con-

sidered if the risk to patients from unvaccinated health staff was high because of increased community transmission. Some hospital trusts in Ireland have already sent staff who refuse to be vaccinated home on full pay to avoid them being close to patients.

Like the UK, France is paying close attention to care homes. Health minister Olivier Veran made a “solemn appeal” to care workers to get vaccinated to help protect the patients they treat, after data showed those working in care homes had a lower rate of uptake for the job than the general population—a worry in a country

with one of the world’s highest rates of vaccine hesitancy.

Carrots and sticks

High take up of vaccines in healthcare workers is important not just for their protection and the protection of patients, but because they are an important source of information about vaccines for others.

Yet it’s not as simple as just appealing to this responsibility. Wider factors, including political and religious beliefs, come into play.

At least one study has found that pressure from bosses has a negative effect on the likeli-

hood a healthcare worker will get vaccinated. “Health and social care providers need to offer a space for their staff to have conversations where they feel safe to ask about covid-19 vaccination, and not feel judged and stigmatised for having questions or concerns,” says Sadie Bell of LSHTM, who led the study. In their survey of nearly 2,000 UK health and social care workers, every point further up a five point scale that workers felt pressured to take the jab, resulted in them being 75% more likely to turn down the offer.

Cont’d on pg 4



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Some have turned down vaccination on religious grounds. That could affect many countries. According to Melissa Leach, director of the Institute of Development Studies, Muslim majority countries and Muslims in countries with high vaccination rates have generally lower rates of uptake, which has been credited to misinformation about what ingredients the vaccine contains (such as whether ingredients are halal or not), as well as distrust of political rules in religiously polarised countries.

Indonesia has sought to tackle this by publicly declaring its approved vaccines halal, engaging social media influencers, and prominently featuring high-ranking officials getting vaccinated to show the vaccine is safe and endorsed.

But trust is a major factor for religious minorities. Leach, who has studied vaccine hesitancy around the world, points to India. "Vaccine hesitancy around COVID seems to be a particular

problem among certain Muslim communities there," she says. That's triggered by the anti-Muslim ruling party who are seen to be foisting vaccines on the population, generating unfounded fears that it's a ploy to depopulate Muslims in the country.

"It's not about a disbelief in the reality of covid," says Leach, "It's more about lack of trust in government."

Leach believes many fears stem from a feeling of exclusion from the debate and discussion around vaccines, and the political system delivering those vaccines.

"Vaccines are delivered by the state, and if people are marginalised from, excluded from, or don't trust those state authorities, then they don't trust that thing," she says.

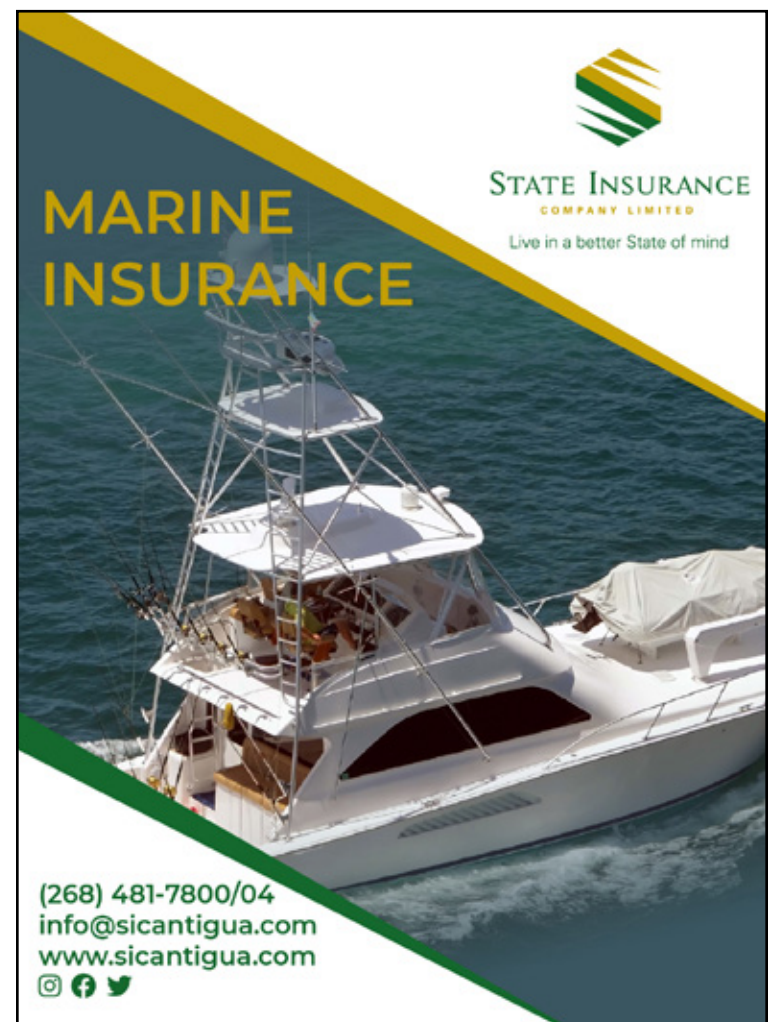
Research led by Katherine Woolf, associate professor in medical education at University College, London, adds further evidence. In one UK study, she surveyed over 11,000 health workers, finding 23% with vaccine hesitancy.

"[The fears of] healthcare workers who were more hesitant about having a covid vaccine ... were driven by a lack of trust in those making and rolling out vaccines," says Woolf. "There's always a small minority of people you're not going to reach, or whose minds you're not going to change," she says.

Even the most persuasive education campaign will never convince everyone. Focusing on those who are persuadable is vital—as is trum-

peting the scale and speed of the vaccine programme to date, within and outside the health and social care sectors.

"My guess is that, as the vaccination programme carries on rolling out," says Woolf, "people will see that their friends, their colleagues, and their loved ones have been vaccinated, and have been okay. Levels of hesitancy probably will go down." (Chris Stokel-Walker is a freelance journalist; stokel@gmail.com)



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Antigua celebrates first cruise tour return

Tourism hopes are high in Antigua and Barbuda as the country welcomes the return of cruising, signaling the rebound of the vibrant cruise tourism sector.

The mood was celebratory as Windstar Cruises' *Star Breeze* coasted into Antigua's St. John's Harbour on July 15, greeted by a symbolic water canon salute, the booming of tugboat horns, and lively steelpan performances by the respected Hell's Gate Steel Orchestra.

On hand to officially welcome Captain Ricardo Pinzon and over 200 passengers and crew onboard the luxury vessel, was Minister of Tourism, Honourable Charles Fernandez; Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism, Senator Mary-Claire Hurst; CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, Colin C. James; General Manager of the Antigua Cruise Port, Dona Regis-Prosper; Chief Health Inspector Sharon Martin; alongside other health and tourism

stakeholders. "Today is truly an exciting day for Antigua and Barbuda's cruise industry. It is one that we have been working hard towards with our health authorities and international cruise lines to ensure that we restart in a safe and sustainable manner to the benefit of all stakeholders," said Tourism Minister Fernandez. "It's also one that has been looked forward to with anticipation by the scores of businesses and hundreds of our countrymen who depend on this industry for their livelihoods."

Antigua's cruise ship sector was poised for exponential growth just prior to the pandemic. This is the first revenue cruise that the country has received in over a year. It comes at a time when Antigua and Barbuda has more than 37,000 persons in its adult population vaccinated, and covid-19 cases are at an all-time low due to successful management of the health crisis.



An aerial view of the Star Breeze berthed in St. John's Harbour, marking the return of cruise ship tourism to Antigua and Barbuda.

A third of Antigua and Barbuda's labour force is employed in the tourism industry. In preparation for safe restart of the cruise sector, Antigua and Barbuda tourism officials invested in training tourism workers, certified approximately 400 tourism businesses in covid-19 protocols, and improved port infrastructure – including completion of a fifth berth. Tourism officials have also held months of discussions with Antigua Cruise Port management and the Ministry of Health to design robust health and safety protocols.

Dona Regis-Prosper, General Manager of Antigua Cruise

Port said, “Nothing could have given me greater joy today than the sight of the Star Breeze pulling into the port! We are absolutely thrilled to welcome this fabulous yacht-style cruise ship and its passengers and crew to Antigua & Barbuda. In recent weeks, we have been in many discussions with the Windstar Cruises team and the government to determine how to make this trip, and voyages to come, as safe and successful as possible for everyone involved.”

Regis-Prosper noted that, “Given the fact that the threat of COVID-19 is still very real, the cruise line has advised that,

as a cautionary measure, only passengers taking organized tours will be allowed to disembark in the first instance. However, we continue to work with the cruise line and local health authorities as these protocols evolve. We are grateful for the confidence that the Windstar Cruises team has demonstrated in our port and our destination by choosing Antigua & Barbuda as one of the exclusive destinations for this sailing.”

All crew and passengers on Windstar Cruises' Star Breeze are fully vaccinated. Over 60 passengers disembarked the vessel to enjoy organized land-side tours.

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Antigua and Barbuda releases new adverts for *'Your Space in the Sun'* tourism campaign

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The Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) has intensified marketing efforts with the rollout of the next phase of Antigua and Barbuda's *'Your Space in the Sun'* campaign.

From July through to September, consumers in the United States and the United Kingdom will see Antigua and Barbuda advertising in-stadia, on radio – traditional, digital and streaming, in print – with advertising in major publications, through online programmatic and retargeting adverts, and via strategic influencer social media campaigns.





Building on the concept of the 'Your Space In the Sun' campaign launched in July 2020, new creatives have been designed to entice persons to book Antigua and Barbuda. The 2021 'Your Space In The Sun' 30- and 60-second campaign videos feature stunning imagery and invitations to visitors to lose track of time, broaden their horizons and enjoy all the space they need in the destination. This

latest advertising push by the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, comes immediately following the relaxing of Covid-19 travel restrictions in the United States and United Kingdom that have opened up travel to Antigua and Barbuda. "We have seen a rapid increase in demand for Antigua and Barbuda from these regions and expect to have a busy summer season. Our focus now is

to build on this momentum with enhanced marketing activity that will take us through to the Fall," said CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, Colin C. James.

As more tourism markets for Antigua and Barbuda re-open with flights available to the destination, 'Your Space in the Sun' advertising will roll out in these locations.

Norwegian Cruise Line Will Abandon Florida if State's COVID Vaccine Law Not Reversed



A docked Norwegian Gem cruise ship is seen at the Port of Miami in Miami Beach, Florida on April 14, 2021. Norwegian Cruise Line has said it may have to abandon Florida altogether if the new law that bans cruise lines from requiring proof of vaccination for all passengers is not overturned.

Norwegian Cruise Line said in a lawsuit that it may end up “abandoning Florida” if the state refuses to reverse its COVID-19 vaccine law that prevents cruise companies from requiring passengers to show proof of vaccination in order to board.

The company, officially known as Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings or NCLH, says it plans to restart cruises from Florida ports on Aug. 15, but would not be able to sail from Florida unless a judge reverses the law. Norwegian requires all passengers to be vaccinated. “The result would be a devastating, unrecoverable loss for everyone—not only for NCLH’s business but also for tens of thousands of passengers, employees, and stakeholders who all benefit from NCLH resuming safe operations as planned,” the lawsuit says.

If the law is not overturned, Norwegian said that it may have to abandon boarding from Florida in

an effort to maintain the safety of passengers and employees from the COVID-19 virus.

“The only way NCLH could maintain its protocols and operations as currently planned is by abandoning Florida altogether,” the lawsuit reads.

The lawsuit, filed Tuesday in Miami federal court, contends that the law jeopardizes safe operation of cruise ships by increasing risk of contracting the virus.

Norwegian wants a judge to lift the ban by Aug. 6. The law imposes a fine of \$5,000 each time a cruise line mandates that a passenger provide vaccination proof. Norwegian claims it violates federal law and several constitutional rights.

The lawsuit names as a defendant Florida’s surgeon general, Dr. Scott Rivkees, who is head of the state Health Department. Rivkees is an appointee of Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, whose spokeswoman said the cruise line’s policy

discriminates against children under 12 and others who are not vaccinated.

DeSantis press secretary Christina Pushaw noted in an email that Florida recently won a lawsuit challenging several cruise industry regulations imposed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention over the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Florida already fought and won its case so that Norwegian and all other cruise lines can invite and serve all Americans on its vessels,” Pushaw said. “But apparently Norwegian prefers the shackles of the CDC to the freedom offered by Florida.”

The CDC is appealing that earlier decision by a Tampa federal judge.

Other cruise lines, including Carnival and Royal Caribbean, have already begun voyages from Florida with a variety of policies regarding COVID-19 vaccination.

WHO recommends not requiring proof of vaccination for travel



OREANDA NEWS – The Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended that countries not require proof of vaccination for international travel, and also consider measures to facilitate travel, for example, by lifting quarantines and testing.

“Do not require proof of COVID-19 vaccination for international travel as the only route or condition to allow international travel, given the limited global access and unfair distribution of COVID-19 vaccines,” said the WHO country guidelines issued following

the Committee meeting from July 14, 2021.

The organization’s committee also recommended that States consider a risk-based approach to facilitate international travel by removing measures such as testing or quarantine requirements, where appropriate.

Earlier, the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that, given the increase in the number of new infections with coronavirus in the world, we can say that the planet is at the beginning of the third wave of COVID-19 in-

cidence. According to him, the situation is aggravated by the active spread of the COVID-19 delta strain, which is “fueled by the increased movement of people”.

Gebreyesus noted that some time ago, as a result of vaccinations in Europe and North America, there was a decrease in infections and deaths from coronavirus, but now the situation has changed for the worse again.

WHO intends, as of July 15, to offer updated guidelines to counter the spread of coronavirus infection.

SinoPharm Vaccine Rollout

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment has announced the rollout of the SinoPharm COVID-19 vaccine. In a press release on Thursday, the Ministry said the first dose of the vaccine will be administered on Thursday 15th July 2021 to Chinese Nationals residing in Antigua and Barbuda.

Public Vaccination using the SinoPharm vaccine

will commence on Monday 19th July 2021 exclusively at the Multipurpose Cultural and Exhibition Center from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment has thanked the Government and citizens of the People's Republic of China for their generous donation of 20,000 doses of the SinoPharm vaccine which

is approved by the World Health Organization (WHO). The AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine will continue to be administered to walk-ins for public vaccination at the Villa Polyclinic, Mondays to Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The general public is reminded that the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccination will also be offered on an appointment basis

at two health centers that are open. To receive an appointment date for the COVID-19 vaccine, call the All Saints Health Centre (268) 460-1003, and the Browne's Avenue Health Center (268) 562-3076.

Identification cards must be presented at vaccination centers, as well as vaccination cards for persons seeking their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Ministry denies claims of nurses being severed

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment says it has become aware of claims that nurses were severed from the surveillance unit at the V.C. Bird International Airport and the reason for the severance is because the Ministry does not want to pay them.

The Ministry, in a statement issued on Thursday, said it categorically refutes these false allegations and intends to address them in a press conference which will be

held early next week.

It added that the senior management of the Ministry continues to assign and redeploy staff when necessary, in response to the pandemic, in order to provide the public with the highest level of professionalism and customer service.

"We look forward to addressing these allegations in the spirit of transparency and accountability," Thursday's statement concluded.



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PM Browne convenes meeting of CARICOM Heads' Bureau



***Chairman of CARICOM and Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda,
Hon. Gaston Browne.***

PM Gaston Browne on Wednesday afternoon convened a meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of CARICOM Heads of Government for a two-hour meeting with a single item on the agenda: Haiti.

The Bureau consists of the CARICOM chairman, the incoming and immediate past chairs, as well as the CARICOM Secretary-General, and serves as an executive committee of the larger grouping. The Bureau is also seen as a quick-consult mechanism to facilitate speedy decision-making and to stay on top of events. It allows for the Bureau to move ahead with decisive action while canvassing the views of their colleagues to achieve consensus.

At present, the CARICOM Bureau comprises PM Gaston Browne as incumbent chair; PM Keith Rowley of Trinidad and Tobago as immediate past chair; PM John Briceno of Belize as incoming chair; and Ambassador Irwin LaRocque, Secretary-General. The Bureau is also an

open-ended institution, so that any Head of Government who wishes to join may do so. PM Gonsalves of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also chose to join the meeting.

The full membership of the CARICOM Heads of Government Conference met for their traditional July Summit over 5-6 July, only hours before President Jovenel Moise of Haiti was assassinated in a stunning geo-political development.

Since then, the question of Haiti has dominated CARICOM's agenda, as CARICOM engages in diplomatic outreach to major international powers, as well as to the different political forces in Haiti.

The meeting was briefed by Haiti's interim Prime Minister, Dr. Claude Joseph, on the current situation on the ground in Haiti. He briefed the meeting on the political and security dimensions of the challenges now faced by Haiti.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines, currently a non-permanent mem-

ber of the UN Security Council, was able to brief the meeting on the deliberations in that body, which held a special meeting on Haiti on 8th July.

Heads examined the conditions necessary for free and fair elections in Haiti, as well as a possible timetable for preparing the conditions that would ensure the election's success. Heads were of the view that successful elections are a critical factor in attempting to achieve a resolution of the political impasse, and that CARICOM needed to position itself to support an emerging Haitian political consensus on the way forward.

Towards the end of the meeting, the Heads turned their attention to the situation in Cuba and agreed on a two-track approach to what they saw as a potentially dangerous escalation of events with serious implications.

School uniform programme releases collection schedule

The School Uniform Grant Programme (SUGP) has released a collection schedule for parents who have applied for uniforms for their children.

Head of the programme Tenesha McKenzie-James is reporting that there has been an overwhelming response to the programme with most of the six thousand vouchers printed this year already collected by parents. This has happened in less than two weeks since the programme was launched in July 5.

However, she noted that more than 1,000 vouchers remain uncollected by those parents who applied for uniforms under the programme. Now, the SUGP has established a schedule to facilitate the orderly collection of vouchers.

One difficulty McKenzie James explained that agents are experiencing is some parents are separating their children, instead of including all of their names on a single application form.

"Do not submit separate vouchers if you have more than one eligible child. All the names should be placed in a single application form. The submission of separate vouchers is creating a problem for us at the SUGP," she explained.

The SUGP, now in its 16th year, is one of several social programmes maintained by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda. Students receive one pair of regular uniforms through vouchers that are redeemed at select vendors in time for the commencement of the new school year.

Distribution of vouchers continues at the Multi-Purpose Cultural Centre, Mondays through Fridays until 27th August. Organizers have adopted an alphabetical process that will see voucher distribution taking place using the first letter in the surnames of parents and guardians who are on the programme.

The days and letters are:

Mondays – Surnames A-F

Tuesdays – Surnames G-K

Wednesdays – Surnames L-P

Thursdays – Surnames Q-T

Fridays – Surnames U-Z

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Things to know about Hepatitis – Part I

Hepatitis-A is an extremely contagious liver infection caused by the Hepatitis-A Virus. This virus is among one of the five hepatitis viruses that cause inflammation and affect the function of one's liver.

Hepatitis-A is a common cause of food-borne infection and is closely linked with unsafe food, poor hygiene and sanitation. However, it does not cause any chronic liver disease and is not usually fatal. Based on the information provided by health experts, this virus occurs mainly in poor countries that are densely populated and with poor sanitation. The most common instances of disease are found in countries in Asia, Africa, and South America, which have had sporadic outbreaks.

In 1988, there was an outbreak of Hepatitis-A in Shanghai, China, when over 30,000 cases were reported, 47 of which were fatal. Other outbreaks took place in Taiwan, Seine-Maritime in France, and Tokyo, Japan, September 2017, December 2016, and December 2017, 2018-2020, respectively.

Outbreaks of hepatitis have also taken place in the United States of America. In 2016 there was an outbreak linked to frozen strawberries. Then, in 2019 another was linked to fresh

black berries. Hawaii, too, had an outbreak in 2016. The virus can be contracted through contaminated food, water, or by close contact with an object or an infected person. A mild form of the virus does not require treatment as most persons recover completely without serious liver damage.

Good hygiene practices such as regular handwashing are a prerequisite in preventing the Hepatitis-A virus. For at-risk populations, there are vaccines available to aid in disease prevention and protection. The signs and symptoms of

Hepatitis-A take around 2-4 weeks to manifest, although not everyone will develop them. Symptoms include fatigue, sudden nausea, vomiting, abdominal pains, or discomfort mainly on the upper right side beneath the rib (by the liver).

Additional symptoms include clay-coloured bowel movements, loss of appetite, and low-grade fever. Some persons acquire mild symptoms that disappear in a short time, while others become severely ill with symptoms that may persist for several months. According to health experts, receiving the Hepatitis vaccine

within two weeks after being exposed to the virus can prevent infection. The virus cannot be spread through coughing or sneezing, but by ingesting food handled by someone with the virus who failed to wash their hands thoroughly after using the toilet.

Other ways a person can be infected include drinking contaminated water and eating raw shellfish from water polluted with sewage. Having sexual intercourse with someone infected with the virus can also put one at risk for contracting the virus.

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CUBA COULD HELP US NORMALIZE RELATIONS



By Sir Ronald Sanders

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

All may not be lost in the efforts to improve relations between the government of Cuba and the Biden Administration in the US, despite the rhetoric – most

of it emanating from the Cuban government in the wake of protests by thousands across the island.

The protests were occasioned by grievances over high prices, food shortages and power outages – due in part to the US trade embargo, whose impact has been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic that crippled Cuba's tourism industry, its biggest foreign exchange earner.

Unlike the former Trump administration, President Biden has

not taken a hard line on Cuba. If anything, his administration has been seeking ways to revitalize the eased relationship that the Barack Obama administration promoted in 2015 and 2016.

Finding those ways has not been easy due to internal politics in the US and to insufficient movement by the Cuban government to manage dissent peacefully, rather than clamp down on it by military force. The Cuban government's harsh response to protestors on 11 and 12 July, fed the desire by influential members from both parties in the US Congress to continue Donald Trump's tough measures against Cuba – including its designation as a sponsor of terrorism – that triggered additional financial and other sanctions.

The Biden administration has been navigating a thin line between wanting to improve relations with Cuba, and not dismissing political

and human rights concerns.

The most notable advocate of maintaining the Trump administration's hardline policy on Cuba is the Republican Senator from Florida, Marco Rubio, who wrote to Biden on July 12, saying: "The current protests in Cuba are not just about current economic shortages. They are about the long-standing and deliberate actions taken by the dictatorship to stymie the economic prosperity and political freedom of the Cuban people."

The Biden administration could be better helped by the Cuban government to resist Rubio and others, and to return to the easing of strained relations between the US and Cuba – which Mr. Biden was part of, as then vice-president in the Obama administration.

It has always been well-known, including by the Cubans, that Biden is deeply committed to political and human rights, includ-

ing the right to protest and dissent. Had the Cuban government responded in a spirit of tolerance and willingness to listen to the protesting voices of 11 and 12 July, it would have aided Biden in being stronger in his efforts to combat hardliners such as Rubio.

The US government regards freedom of expression of artists and freedom of speech by media to be fundamental rights everywhere, including in Cuba. US support for these freedoms are not efforts to subvert Cuba.

Most Caribbean governments also uphold these rights in their own countries. In the almost 60 years of experience of the 13 English-speaking Caribbean countries as sovereign states, governments have learned to manage dissent and protests and to encourage media freedom as part of their democracies. Had they not done so, the economic progress of these countries, with considerable foreign investment, would not have been accomplished.

The experience in Cuba has been different. Over the last 61 years – trapped by a trade embargo which causes economic hardship and deprivation, and threatened by repeated attempts to overthrow the government – the Cuban authorities have employed harsh measures to stop dissent and protests. They have not had the room to nurture a culture of tolerance and persuasion.

Ending the trade embargo against Cuba has always been the right thing to do. As Barack Obama famously said in December 2014, “An outdated approach has failed for over 50 years to advance our interests.” In announcing efforts to normalize relations between the two countries, he stated: “Today, America chooses to cut loose the shackles of the past so as to reach for a better future – for the Cuban people, for the American people, for our entire hemisphere, and for the world”. Those shackles were quickly fastened again by Trump. Yet, a Cuba

that is released from the chains of the trade embargo and the threats to its security, could quickly become an economic powerhouse; attracting foreign investment, unleashing the creativity and entrepreneurship of its people that come from greater freedoms.

There is clearly a need for the US and Cuban administrations to return to sensible negotiations about their future that started under the Obama-Biden administration. The Cuban government can help that process by changing from a culture of repression to one of tolerance and constructive management of dissent. Such a change would help empower Biden to continue what he helped to start with Obama.

Eyes are already on the US midterm Senate elections to be held in November 2022. Marco Rubio won his Senate seat in 2016 by less than 10 percent of the vote. He relies heavily on the Cuban-exile vote to return to the Senate. Both he and the Republican Party will be heighten-

ing the anti-Cuba rhetoric to maintain that seat in a Senate now equally divided between the Republicans and Democrats.

Cuba should be mindful of that reality and ease up on the rhetoric that blames America for all Cuban discontent. The Cuban President, Miguel Díaz-Canel, may have started that process. On July 14, in a televised address, he offered some self-criticism for the first time by saying that the government’s shortcomings in handling shortages and other problems played a role in the recent protests.

That’s an important step. It should be followed by a more open dialogue with those who have ideas about how the country should be governed. Thus, Biden would be emboldened to normalise relations, including ending the repressive trade embargo.

Responses and previous commentaries: www.sirronaldsanders.com

Barbados: Professor suggests more lockdowns coming



Professor Don Marshall, Director of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) at the University of the West Indies (UWI), Cave Hill Campus.

Barbados Today - Barbadians are being cautioned to brace for more periodic lockdowns and COVID-19 restrictions.

The warning has come from Professor Don Marshall, Director of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) at the University of the West Indies (UWI), Cave Hill Campus, who said it would be difficult for the Government to find everyone who has been exposed to the virus.

He added that while local authorities are doing their best to manage the spread of COVID-19, they simply cannot control natural human social behaviour.

"The best case scenario [is that] we should be bracing for two-week lockdowns that are followed by openings again. Through that practice, people can begin to act a little bit more responsibly.

But human beings are social beings and we could only act responsibly up to a particular point," the social scientist said in an interview with Barbados TODAY.

"The urge to scratch your nose if it itches is something that is natural. You will remove your mask to do so and your hand might have, prior to that, been on a bannister where someone who unknowingly has the virus touched." The newly promoted Professor of International Political, Economics and Development Studies said while there is merit in pushing for behavioural change and urging people to exercise the greatest caution, that would not go far enough to prevent the ongoing periodic lockdowns.

"Understand that, beyond that message, we will have these cases...we will have some spikes. We will have to embrace a new norm of

what I think will be best practice, which is sharp lockdown periods that don't extend beyond two weeks followed by cautious reopenings and so on. That is the way it is going to be," contended the university scholar. He noted that neither Barbados nor other world governments would be shutting down their ports of entry.

"We are truly a world economy and even if we don't travel, the DHL packages are coming. There must be some business and investment travel...our leaders must interact and exchange with others around the world. In the best of circumstances, if you do go into physical spaces...you could still wind up with the virus," the SALISES director said.

Professor Marshall is of the view that the solution to preventing future spikes of the virus may be found in an early warning software app

that goes beyond temperature taking and tests.

"What is really costly to the public purse is the reliance on testing purely by taking samples from human beings, as opposed to some kind of early detection systems that can be applied to one's mobile phone app or can be applied in public places where the presence of peculiar viruses in the body may show up in a colour-coded way – an orange alert, a yellow alert to a red alert," he suggested. Professor Marshall contended that such alerts would also allow individuals to take control of their own health. However, the UWI scholar told Barbados TODAY that the Government has control over bargaining for more public policy autonomy in a COVID-19 environment to match the appeals for fiscal space with international financial institutions.

"International financial institutions pre-COVID would have suggested to Barbados, through the BERT [Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation] plan, for example, that they had to produce a surplus of six percent and also they had to curtail social expenditure and avoid things like providing subsidies to businesses and so on," he said.

"All that combined to reduce the scope of the state being able to have both the fiscal space and the public policy space to positively transform their economies," Professor Marshall added.

Crew members from missing Rainforest vessel found alive



Jamaica Observer - Crew members from the missing Rainforest Seafoods' Falling Star lobster fishing vessel have been found alive after more than a week lost at sea.

Observer Online understands that the crew members were found Thursday.

It is unclear how many of the 15 Honduran members who were onboard the vessel when it disappeared have been found.

The lobster fishing vessel was reportedly returning from

dry-docking/routine maintenance overseas when it ceased sending tracking signals on the afternoon of July 6.

The last location of the vessel up to the point of its disappearance was 30 miles west of the Pedro Banks.

The Jamaica Coast Guard collaborated with counterparts from the United States, Honduras, Nicaragua, Colombia, Cuba and the Cayman Islands in the search for the vessel.

BVI: “Gov’t was over-ambitious in stimulus distribution” — FS



Financial Secretary Jeremiah Frett

BVI News - Financial Secretary Jeremiah Frett has characterised as madness, the situation within the government when it sought to distribute COVID-19 stimulus packages during a territory-wide lockdown last year. Speaking at a hearing before the Commission of Inquiry (COI) on Tuesday, Frett said it may have been an error for Government to initially request as many criteria as it did in order for per-

sons to qualify for stimulus assistance grants.

Initially, the government had a range of eligibility criteria for applicants seeking business stimulus grants. However, government later adjusted this to only requesting that applicants confirm they had a valid trade license and fewer than 20 employees. The grants were distributed through the Premier's Office and faced much criticism by auditors and the wider public for their

perceived lack of transparency.

Recent evidence from the government's internal auditor, Dorea Corea, detailed that, even in its reduced state, the stimulus distribution system failed, having encountered numerous breaches because of poor oversight.

But according to Frett, officials in the BVI faced a steep learning curve and were learning as they progressed. “When we do our post-mortem on these

different programmes — and looking at the different auditor reports — I do believe that we as a territory were in uncharted waters,” Frett explained. “We never had to provide a stimulus package like this [before] and we were learning as we go in many instances,” he added.

Frett told the commission that the government's technical personnel tried their best to come up with feasible programmes within a policy document that fit within the government's current structure and laws as far as they were aware.

He suggested that the government's approach to the issue may have been overly ambitious and suggested that it should have been guided by legislative action, as was done in the United States.

“We were trying to introduce stimulus — immediate stimulus packages as if using our current legislation and our current structures to do so. In hindsight, maybe that was an error,” Frett said.

He suggested that while persons were able to get as much as \$1,200 in the US through their stimulus programme, the criteria for giving those funds were not as stringent as those used in the BVI.

Human Services working with girl found shackled in St. Lucia



Human Services Director, Beverly-Ann Poyotte.

Loop News - A girl who was found in Monchy on July 9 with shackles on her hands and feet is receiving the necessary care and support to help her cope with the emotional and physiological trauma she suffered at the hands of her father.

"We are working alongside the police in this matter," Human Services Director Beverly-Ann Poyotte told Loop News on Thursday.

Following the horrific ordeal, the girl has been placed in the protective

care of a family member.

"What we are in the process of doing is helping her come out of the ordeal she went through, so we are providing the social support and intervention she requires to assist her in that regard."

Hector Deterville, a 48-year-old male of Monchy, has been charged with false imprisonment and is remanded in police custody.

Officers from Gros islet responded to a report of a young female being seen along a road at Monchy

with shackles on her feet.

Deterville has been remanded until tomorrow when a decision will be made as to his bail conditions or a psychiatric evaluation pursuant to section 593(1)(d).

Poyotte says she is more disappointed than surprised that this type of act can occur in Saint Lucia.

"It just brings to mind what our thought process as parents, as individuals, if something is not going right, what is our first reaction? How do we deal with it? So for it to get to that

point where the child was found in the manner that she was found, I think it is sad and I think we need to start looking at things like conflict resolution, coping skills, how do we deal with issues, how do we solve problems, and it goes to show just how much work we have ahead of us," Poyotte said.

The Division of Human Services, she noted, is currently part of a parenting program underway at the Castries Town Hall which caters to parents who need that type of help.

Biden says Cuba is a 'failed state' and calls communism 'a universally failed system'



(CNN) - President Joe Biden said on Thursday that Cuba is a "failed state" and called communism a "failed system" as protests play out against the Caribbean nation's repressive regime.

During a news conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Biden said the US is looking into ways to possibly reinstate access to the internet in Cuba, but indicated that the US is not considering reestablishing US to Cuba remittances over concerns that the regime would confiscate the funds. "Cuba is, unfortunately, a failed state

and repressing their citizens. There are a number of things that we would consider doing to help the people of Cuba, but it would require a different circumstance or a guarantee that they would not be taken advantage of by the government. For example, the ability to send remittances back to Cuba. We would not do that now because, the fact is, it's highly likely the regime would confiscate those remittances or big chunks of it," Biden said.

When asked about his views on communism, the President added: "Communism is a failed

system – a universally failed system. And I don't see socialism as a very useful substitute. But that's another story."

Thousands took to the streets across the island nation last weekend to protest chronic shortages of basic goods, curbs on civil liberties, and the government's handling of a worsening coronavirus outbreak, marking the most significant unrest in decades.

Biden said he was ready to send COVID-19 vaccines to Cuba, but the nation has not joined the international vaccine coalition, COVAX, with

whom the US is working closely.

"I'd be prepared to give significant amounts of vaccine if in fact I was assured an international organization would administer those vaccines and would do it in a way that average citizens would have access to those vaccines," he continued.

The President volunteered information about reinstating internet access in Cuba, telling reporters, "We're considering whether we have the technological ability to reinstate that access."

Charges could be brought in US over Haitian assassination



A woman walks past graffiti that reads "Team Jovenel" near the house where President Jovenel Moise was assassinated, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti July 11, 2021.

(Reuters) – Charges could be brought in the United States related to the killing of Haitian President Jovenel Moise, a US senior administration official said on Thursday.

Moise was fatally shot on July 7 at his Port-au-Prince home by what Haitian authorities describe as a unit of assassins, including 26 Colombians and two Haitian Americans.

"If charges can be

brought in the United States, they will be brought," the administration official said.

The assassination has pitched the already troubled Caribbean nation into chaos, coming amid a surge in gang violence that has displaced thousands, and hampered economic activity in the poorest country in the Americas. US officials traveled to Haiti on Sunday to assess the situa-

tion and met three politicians who have all staked competing claims to take charge. The administration official said the United States was not endorsing any political figure in Haiti.

"We have to tread carefully in Haiti, because what the US does carries a lot of impact. And so we have been very careful to ... make sure that we are supporting Haitian solutions to Haitian challeng-

es," the official said.

President Joe Biden's administration is focused on specific requests for assistance from Haitian authorities, the official added, saying the government had not requested a specific troop number.

Acting Prime Minister Claude Joseph has asked for troops from both the United States and the United Nations, which are reviewing the requests.

Lebanon: PM-designate Saad Hariri resigns as crisis escalates

Aljazeera - Lebanon Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri stepped down on Thursday after failing to form a government for over the past eight months.

Hariri resigned following a brief meeting with President Michel Aoun at Baabda Palace.

"I withdrew from forming the government," he told reporters. "Aoun demanded some amendments, which he considered essential, and said we will not be able to reach an understanding with each other... And may God save this country."

Aoun accused Hariri of already deciding to step down prior to their meeting.

"Hariri rejected any amendments related to changes in ministries, their sectarian distribution, and the names associated with them," the president's office said in a statement. In an interview with Lebanon's Al Jadeed TV, Hariri said he selected his candidates based on their expertise and their ability to reform the economy, but Aoun did not.

"I resigned in 2019 because I wanted a government of experts, and if we formed Michel Aoun's government then the country won't be saved," he said. "The main problem of this country is Michel Aoun, who is allied



Hariri announces he abandoned cabinet formation after meeting with President Michel Aoun at the presidential palace on Thursday.

with Hezbollah, who in turn protects him. This is the equation in the country and if someone can't see it then they're blind."

Hariri's office declined to comment to Al Jazeera.

Later Thursday, supporters of Hariri and his Future Movement party took to the streets, blocking roads with burning tyres and rubbish bins in several areas around Beirut. Several dozen protesters at Beirut's Sports City scuffled with Lebanese soldiers in riot gear who fired rubber-coated steel bullets.

Major highways south of the capital were also

targeted by demonstrators. Roads in the northern city of Tripoli and in the southern city of Sour were also blocked.

Following Hariri's step down, the Lebanese pound hit a new all-time low, exceeding 21,000 to the US dollar.

The lira has now lost 90 percent of its value, effectively evaporating the savings of hundreds of thousands of families. At least half of the population has slipped into poverty, while food inflation is at more than 400 percent.

Political deadlock has persisted since Hariri's

reappointment last October, despite diplomatic pressure from France, Saudi Arabia, and the United States. The European Union has threatened to implement sanctions on Lebanese officials preventing a new government to take power.

"Lebanon is witnessing its self-destruction and the political class is to blame. Lebanon's rulers appear unable to find a solution to the crisis they created," French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian was quoted as saying.

US Senate passes bill to ban Xinjiang imports

BBC - The US Senate has passed a bill to ban imports from China's Xinjiang region, in response to alleged abuses of the mostly Muslim Uyghur minority group.

The legislation would create an assumption that goods manufactured in Xinjiang are made with forced labour, unless proven otherwise.

The Uyghur Forced Labour Prevention Act must pass the House of Representatives before it can be signed into law.

The US has already banned imports of Xinjiang cotton and tomatoes.

The Chinese state has been widely accused of human rights abuses in Xinjiang against the Uyghurs and other Muslim minority groups.

Experts estimate at least a million people in the region have been detained in camps or imprisoned as part of a crackdown that began in 2017.

Many thousands more who are not detained are subject to extensive surveillance and state control.

China denies all allegations of human rights abuses, saying its net-

work of detention camps in Xinjiang are for "re-education" of the Uyghurs and other Muslims.

The US bill, which passed by unanimous consent on Wednesday, means that importers of products from the region will have to prove the goods were not made with forced labour.

Under the legislation, the US Department of Homeland Security will also be required to create a list of entities that work with the Chinese government in the repression of Uyghurs and other ethnic minority groups, the Bloomberg news agency reported.

"We will not turn a blind eye to [the Chinese government's] ongoing crimes against humanity, and we will not allow corporations a free pass to profit from these horrific abuses," Republican Senator Marco Rubio said in a statement.

It is not clear when the bill will be discussed in the House of Representatives. Its passage follows a warning to US firms that still have supply chain and investment ties in Xinjiang that they "could run a high risk of violating US law".



Members of the Uyghur minority group have been detained at camps in Xinjiang.

Western governments have in recent months hardened their stance on companies operating in Xinjiang. Last week, the Biden administration added 14 Chinese firms and other entities to its economic blacklist over the alleged abuses in the region.

Earlier this month, French authorities opened a "crimes against

humanity" probe into four fashion brands over claims from the European Uyghur Institute and others that the retailers were profiting from the use of forced labour.

Xinjiang produces 85% of China's cotton and accounts for a fifth of global supplies.

AVAILABLE VACANCIES AT OSEC (Effective July 14, 2021)

BARTENDER

Minimum 3 years' experience as a Bartender
Knowledge of mixology for traditional and creative cocktails
Understanding of unique and complementary flavor pairings
Impeccable customer service and social perceptiveness
Ability to evaluate customer satisfaction and responsiveness
Ability to enforce company policies regarding the consumption of alcohol
Physical ability to stand and walk for long periods of time

BASE MANAGER (CHARTER INDUSTRY)

Minimum 10 years in the Bareboat charter industry with 5 years managerial experience
Management degree would be an asset | Strong communication and interpersonal skills
Strong organizational skills | Must be fluent in French (verbal and written)

CASHIER

Minimum 2 years' experience as Cashier | Secondary School Completion

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Minimum 3-5 years in a comparable role
Knowledge of hospitality and executive level administrative standards and protocol
Demonstrated ability to interact and support a diverse group including management, homeowners and staff
Must be proficient in relevant computer applications including Microsoft Office (PowerPoint, PDF, Excel and Word)
Secondary School Degree required
Technical training certificates in secretarial, communications, administrative or related fields beneficial

COOK

Minimum 2-3 years' experience as a Cook
A proven track of food preparation and preservation knowledge is essential
Attention to cleanliness and safety | Must be responsible and trustworthy
Ability to communicate well in English

DOMESTIC

Minimum 2 years' experience as a Domestic DRIVER
Minimum 3 years' experience as a Driver
Fluent in Italian & Spanish | Must have a valid Drivers' License
Good Communication skills | Must be Flexible | Must be able to lift heavy weights

ELDERLY CAREGIVER

Minimum 2 years' experience
Must be a Certified Elderly Provider
MUST have experience in looking after the Elderly
Must be honest, kind and caring
FARM HAND/VENDOR
No experience required
Must be able to lift | Must be a team-player

FOOD & BEVERAGE SERVER

Minimum 2-3 years' experience
Must have a valid Food Handler's Certificate
Knowledge of basic restaurant hospitality with a fully engaged, service-oriented attitude
Must have a very dynamic personality with a strong passion for the hospitality industry
Must be able to stand for up to long hours and lift a minimum of 30 lbs.
A team player who is alert to Guest and Team Member needs

FOOD SERVER

No experience required
Must have good communication skills | Must be customer-service oriented
Food Handlers' Certificate required

FULL-TIME INSTRUCTOR (BIOLOGY)

Master's Degree in Biology with teaching experience

GROUP FINANCIAL CONTROLLER

Minimum 12 years' experience
A Bachelor's degree in Accounting or Finance
CPA (Canadian), ACCA, or ACA Certification
Strong financial, accounting and managerial skills

International experience/ experience working in foreign markets
Strong ability to implement and monitor internal controls
Knowledgeable in QuickBooks, Pastel and other ERP accounting tools and systems
Must be proficient in MS Office Suite

HAIRDRESSER

Minimum 2-3 years' experience as a Hairdresser
HAIR STYLIST
Minimum 2-3 years' experience as a Hair Stylist
Must be customer-service oriented
Basic knowledge of hair care services; Must be able to style, braid, weave, relax and color hair

HANDYMAN/WELDER

Minimum 2 years' experience with appropriate electrical tools and welding equipment
Must be trained in Welding
Strong general repairing skills with a strong attention to detail
Must be fit and customer service-oriented
HEAD BUTLER
At least 3-5 years in a similar position
Bartending Skills
High School Diploma | Certification in Butler Service is beneficial
MUST have a Valid Driver's License & a Valid Food Handlers Badge

HEAD GARDENER/HANDYMAN

At least 5-8 years in a similar position
Knowledge of Caribbean and Antiguan horticulture and plant species
Knowledge of small Caribbean and Antiguan wildlife, insects and ecosystems
Knowledge of the use, benefits and risks of fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and fungicides
Ability to recognize common plant disease, plant insects and unusual or poor plant growth
Must have a valid Driver's License
HEAD MECHANIC (CHARTER INDUSTRY)
Minimum 10 years in the bareboat charter industry
Excellent knowledge of mechanical & electrical systems, water makers, air-conditioning & refrigeration
RYA/MCA Yacht Master offshore license with sailing endorsement
Valid STCW certificates or a Capitaine 200 French license
Mandatory proficiency with Carl Source CMMS/TAM software
Thorough knowledge of marine engineering
Strong organizational skills | Fluent in French (verbal and written)
HELPER (FAST FOOD)
Minimum 2 years' experience

HOUSEKEEPER

Minimum 5 years' experience
Good Communication & Organization Skills | Must be flexible
Must be fluent in Italian & Spanish

HOUSEKEEPING ATTENDANT

Minimum 3 years' experience within the hotel industry; previous hotel experience will be an asset
Must possess excellent people skills and ability to comfortably interact with guests & team

INDIAN COOK

Minimum 5 years' experience | Must know how to cook Indian cuisines

INTERIOR DESIGNER/ARCHITECT

Minimum 2 plus years' work experience | Qualifications for Interior Design or Architect is a must
Experience with AutoCAD, 3D modelling software and Photoshop is mandatory
Must be self-motivated with a positive attitude
Must maintain a high level of accuracy and attention to detail
Good time management skills and communication skills, written and verbal
Must be proficient in Microsoft Office | Must be fluent in English

KITCHEN ASSISTANT/ASSISTANT COOK

Minimum 4 years' experience

KITCHEN STEWARD

Minimum 2-3 years' experience as a Kitchen Steward

LINE CHEF

Minimum 1 year 'a la carte' experience
Have experience in all aspects of kitchen prep and on the hot line
Have high standards in food presentation
Are imaginative and flexible

MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN

Minimum three years' experience in a similar position
Solid knowledge and specialized experience in electrics; air conditioning and refrigeration
Demonstrated knowledge in plumbing; laundry equipment; carpentry and other maintenance related skills
Possess a friendly and approachable personality
Previous experience in hotel operations will be an asset

NAIL TECHNICIAN

Minimum 2-3 years' experience as a Nail Technician
Knowledge of Nail Care Services (Manicures, Pedicures, Eyelashes, Acrylic & Gel Nails)
Must be customer-service oriented

OFFICE ATTENDANT

At least 1 year experience
Minimum 3 CXCs including English
Good Oral & Written Communication Skills

PASTRY CHEF

Minimum 1 year 'a la carte' experience
Have experience in all aspects of cake & pastry making; baking etc.
Have high standards in food presentation | Must be flexible

PRODUCE CLERK

Minimum 2 years' experience as a Produce Clerk
Secondary School Completion
Must have experience using a bandsaw

REVENUE MANAGER

Minimum five years' experience working at an International 5 Star Luxury Hotel
Bachelors or Master's Degree in Hotel Management, Accounting, Tourism or Economic Studies preferred, or long-term track record of success in role within industry
Qualifications in Hotel Management/Accounting
University Degree preferred; Second Language would be an asset
Must have strong communication and interpersonal skills and commitment to a high level of guest satisfaction | A strong command of both written and spoken English required
Well-developed interpersonal influence and leadership skills
Highly computer literate with a high-level command of Excel
Sound ability and knowledge to develop standards of operations and strategic processes
Good analytical and numeric skills; Self-directed and motivated

ROTI MAKER

Cooking experience is a plus with knowledge of Roti Preparation
Good verbal and written skills | Must be able to work shifts
Must have a valid Food Handlers' Certificate | Must be willing and able to learn

SUPERINTENDENT (CONSTRUCTION)

Minimum 12 years' previous experience as Assistant Superintendent on a construction site
Extensive experience/knowledge of construction, design and project management required
Must have successfully delivered similar complex projects in remote or challenging locations as an Assistant Superintendent
Previous residential construction and development experience required
SUSHI CHEF
Minimum 3 years' experience
High School Diploma | Must be highly skilled in Sushi Making

TEACHER/INSTRUCTOR (MARITIME)

Minimum 10 years' experience in a similar role
RYA Yachtmaster Instructor qualifications required | Previous RYA Instruction experience

WAITRESS

Minimum 3 years' experience
High School Diploma
Ability to communicate well | Must be flexible
Attention to cleanliness and safety | Patience and customer-oriented approach
Excellent people skills with a friendly attitude Responsible and trustworthy

WATER TREATMENT/INSTALLATION ASSISTANT

Minimum 5 years' experience | Must know how to swim
Must have knowledge dealing with pool electrical and plumbing installations

WATER PROJECT ENGINEER

Minimum five years' experience in a similar role
B.S. degree in Engineering (industrial engineering / mechanical / chemical processing) preferably with specialization/experience in Water Treatment (desalination, irrigation, reverse osmosis, wastewater treatment, pumps, chemicals).
Solid engineering, planning, priority setting, and project management skills with experience managing multiple projects and resources concurrently
Must be a team player able to work across teams and uplifting junior technicians
Must possess accurateness and an eye for detail both in project delivery and administration
Ability to communicate effectively in English; other languages are a plus.
Must have a valid Driver's License

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DEADLINE IS THURSDAY 22ND JULY, 2021

Gayle: “ICC doesn’t want me to use ‘Universe Boss’”



GROS ISLET, St. Lucia – Many questions were raised over Chris Gayle’s place in the West Indies team, as the veteran was enduring a rough patch lately. However, the left-handed batsman switched on his A-game during the third T20I against Australia and mustered a match-winning half-century.

While none of the Aussie batters could bat freely in St. Lucia, Gayle put up an exhibition of big-hitting and scored runs all over the park. The self-proclaimed Universe Boss, in total, scored 67 off 38 deliveries as West In-

dies chased down 142 in a mere 14.5 overs, winning the contest by six wickets. With this triumph, the Men in Maroon also took an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series. Gayle was enthralled with his performance, and it was evident in his animated interaction after the game.

While the 41-year-old calls himself the ‘Universe Boss’, his bat during the third T20I sported the sticker of only ‘The Boss.’ Speaking of the same, Gayle revealed that the International Cricket Council (ICC) doesn’t want him to sport ‘Universe Boss’ on the bat.

“ICC doesn’t want me to use the Universe Boss. So I have shortened it and just put ‘The Boss.’ I am the boss (laughs),” Gayle said.

On being asked whether ICC has the copyright over the term ‘Universe Boss,’ an animated Gayle said, “Well, I have to copyright it, not ICC. I am technically The Boss.”

These statements speak volumes of Gayle’s confidence and he certainly has no plans of slowing down.

Notably, Gayle, during the third T20I, was up against the likes of Mitchell Starc and Riley Meredith, who were clocking good speeds. The reflexes

of a human body tend to slow down with time and, hence, facing high-quality fast bowling gets difficult.

However, that wasn’t the case with Gayle. On being asked if tackling Aussie pacers was challenging for him, Gayle said he used his experience to score runs. With West Indies sealing the series 3-0, the remaining fixtures are mere dead rubbers.

However, West Indies would like to continue their winning run. On the other hand, Aussies would not want to lose any more games in this series.

The OECS at Tokyo 2020



The territories which make up the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) will be well represented when the 2020 Summer Olympics – the Games of the XXXII Olympiad – get underway from 23 July to 8 August in Tokyo, Japan.

Seven territories will field a total of 28 athletes in four disciplines: athletics, boxing, sailing, and swimming. Pandemic notwithstanding, a number of those sporting ambassadors have been preparing assiduously, some on the global professional circuit. Whereas (all things being equal) all will share the tremendous honour of becoming Olympians, a handful will carry genuine expectations of challenging for medals.

Grenada leads the way with four participants in track and field and the only Olympic champion from the sub-region, quarter-miler Kirani James. After a couple of relatively lean years as he struggled with Grave's disease, the 28-year-old is approaching something like his best at the right time. The gold medalist in his event at London 2012 and the silver medalist five years ago at Rio 2016, James is one of the top eight runners by performance in the field for Tokyo 2020.

James won't be the only global champion suiting up for the Spice Isle, however. World champion in the 2019 men's javelin throw, Anderson Peters, will try to recapture his best form in what has been a very strong year for his event.

Men's decathlon will see Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games champion Lindon Victor in action in

10 events over the course of two days, although his brother Kurt Felix was unable to qualify. In the pool, Kimberly Ince will contest the women's 100m backstroke and Delron Felix the men's 100m freestyle, both having been awarded Universality places by the world governing body.

Another Gold Coast 2018 champion, Kyron McMaster, is considered a dark horse to win the men's 400m hurdles for the British Virgin Islands. Just 24-years-old, he will have the daunting task of facing off against three of the four fastest intermediate hurdlers of all time, including the world record holder. McMaster has produced career-best efforts this season and will be eying a first-ever Olympic medal for the BVI.

Like McMaster, long jumper Chantel Malone is the fourth-best in her event so far this year. She's also been the most consistent over the seven-metre mark. With both events taking place in the same session, it could be a glorious day for the BVI swimmer Elinah Phillip will go in the women's 50m freestyle, while Eldred Henry has unfortunately been ruled out of the men's shot putt with an elbow injury.

Levern Spencer heads Saint Lucia's team of five to Tokyo 2020. Another reigning Commonwealth Games champion, the 37-year-old veteran finished sixth in Rio 2016, the best effort ever by an athlete from Saint Lucia. She will be at her fourth Olympiad. The other four members of the team gained entry on universality places. They include sailors Steph-

anie Devaux-Lovell, a 2016 Olympian in women's laser radial, and Luc Chevrier in the men's laser. Jean Luc Zephir will compete in the men's 100m freestyle, and Mikaili Charlemagne in the women's 50m freestyle.

The Commonwealth of Dominica will have two athletes in track and field. Thea LaFond will go in the women's triple jump and she will be eager to create some positive Olympic memories. Just days before Rio 2016, she sustained a hamstring injury and was 37th (last) in qualifying. Two years later, though, she rebounded with the Commonwealth's first-ever Commonwealth Games medal, a bronze. Now 27, she has been in superlative form these past two years. No athlete from Dominica has ever competed in an Olympic final and LaFond will be keen to change that. Dennick Luke is the other athlete representing Dominica and he was awarded a Universality place in the men's 800m.

Jason Rogers qualified to run the men's 100m for Saint Kitts and Nevis. The 30-year-old has tasted team success at the highest level, winning World Championship bronze back in 2011 in the men's 4x100m relay. He is in the form of his life at the moment, matching his personal-best mark from 2013 – which puts him, along with Antigua and Barbuda's *Cejhae Greene*, among the 20 fastest men in the field. (Greene has been a hundredth of a second faster than Rogers this year.) Rogers will be joined in Tokyo by Amya Clarke for the women's 100m and by swimmer Jennifer

Harding-Marlin who is entered for the women's 100m backstroke.

Greene, meanwhile, will be joined by **Joella Lloyd** for the women's 100m and **Jalese Gordon** in women's laser radial. When Gordon hits the water, it will mark Antigua and Barbuda's return to the sport for the first time in two decades. **Alston Ryan** will also be the only boxer from the OECS and he will be the first entered by Antigua and Barbuda since 1988. Ryan, a featherweight, secured a place based on the IOC's Boxing Task Force Rankings for the Americas. Antigua and Barbuda will also have two swimmers – **Noah** Mascoll-Gomes in men's 400m freestyle, and **Samantha Roberts** in women's 50m freestyle.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will benefit from three universality places. Shafiqua Maloney will be on track in the women's 800m. Alex Joachim will attempt the men's 100m freestyle and Mya de Freitas the women's 200m freestyle.

Aside from the national teams competing in Tokyo, there will be a few other athletes with OECS ties. Going up against McMaster in the men's 400m hurdles will be Rai Benjamin of the USA. Rai represented Antigua and Barbuda at the junior level internationally and his father is former West Indies fast bowler Winston Benjamin. The only Frenchman qualified by standard, Ludvy Vaillant, was born in Martinique. Two other French athletes hail from Guadeloupe – former CARIFTA Games stand-outs Wilhem Belocian in the men's 110m hurdles and women's long jumper Yanis David.

In this most difficult of seasons, some of the smallest nations in world sport are set to make their mark at Tokyo 2020. They have had to overcome more than their fair share of difficulties and just to make it on the world's greatest stage is a massive achievement. They carry our hopes and dreams with them. May they all compete with pride.



Giannis Antetokounmpo's legendary rejection during the 4th quarter.

Milwaukee Bucks level series against with Phoenix Suns

The Milwaukee Bucks are now level with the Phoenix Suns after some inspirational play during Game 4 of the NBA Finals. The Bucks defeated the Suns 109-103 to tie the series 2-2.

Game 4 was one of alternating quarters. The Suns won the first and third quarters, while the Bucks won the second and, crucially, the fourth quarter. Both teams went into half-time tied at 52 points apiece. To underscore the point, there were 11 ties and nine lead changes, with the Bucks outscoring the Suns 48-40 in the paint. It wasn't just points in the paint. Milwaukee outscored the Suns 15-0 from fast breaks.

Khris Middleton finished big for the Bucks. His 40 points, including 10 straight down the stretch, means these NBA Finals are just getting started. Middleton's hot hand and a big block from Giannis Antetokounmpo gave the Bucks their second straight victory in the first close game of the series. "Khris has no fear and he never has," Milwaukee guard Jrue Holiday said.

Antetokounmpo had 26 points, 14 rebounds and eight assists. His streak of 40-point games ended at two but the only number that matters for the Bucks is on the series scoreboard. "We wanted this bad and the team showed it tonight," Antetokounmpo said.

Devin Booker scored 42 points for the Suns, but his foul trouble cost them a chance to build a big lead in the second half. Chris Paul struggled through a 5-for-13 night, finishing with 10 points and five turnovers. "This is a tough one, but we've got to bounce back," Paul said. "That's why we fought all season to get home court."

The series shifts back to Phoenix. With series now level and the Bucks playing exceptional basketball, they will certainly test the Suns' mental toughness. The Bucks are in search of their second NBA Championship, while the Suns are yet to win an NBA Championship.

Game 5 will be played in Phoenix tomorrow night.



Australia pull one back against West Indies

4th CG Insurance T20

GROS ISLET, St. Lucia – Mitchell Marsh delivered career best performances with both bat and ball, to help Australia pull off a four run win over the West Indies. After winning the toss, Australia elected to bat first. Marsh led Australia's batting with 75 from 44 balls to propel them to 189 for 6. Marsh brought up his third half-century of the series off just 24 balls.

Skipper Aaron Finch, too, had a half-century of his own. He took 34 to reach

the milestone. Together they anchored Australia's batting with a 114 run partnership. Finch ended on 53 after playing over a delivery from Hayden Walsh that was pitched on off stump. It was Hayden Walsh again who brought the West Indies back into the game. He grabbed three wickets for 27 and maintains the title of the leading wicket taker.

West Indies reply got off to a good start with both Lendl Simmons and Evin Lewis scoring freely. They put on 62 for the first wicket. After

Simmons departed for 72, the West Indies struggled to keep up with the required run rate. Batting during the middle overs was again an issue. West Indies needed 11 from the final over. In the end, a vintage yorker sealed victory for Australia, as Andre Russell could not get the ball away for boundaries and consistently refused the single.

Marsh grabbed 3 for 24 when the West Indies batted – including the prized wickets of Chris Gayle, Lendl Simmons and stand-in cap-

tain Nicholas Pooran – to stunt momentum in the West Indies chase. Adam Zampa was the other nemesis during the West Indies innings. He ended with figures of 2 for 20 from his four overs.

West Indies currently lead the CG Insurance series 3-1 and will be looking to end on a strong note. The fifth and final T20 International will be played tonight.

DEWS