

MORE ASSISTANCE TO FIGHT COVID

SEE PAGE 6



EU donates container-load of medical supplies

Health Minister Molwyn Joseph and Foreign Minister Chet Greene (2nd and 3rd from right) stand with other officials before a 40-foot container of medical supplies procured with donor funding from the European Union (EU) to assist Antigua and Barbuda's continued fight against COVID-19. Also pictured at extreme left is National Authorizing Officer, Dr. Clarence Henry. (SEE FULL STORY INSIDE)

Cabinet fires back again at doctor critic (page 4)

Gold award for Boggy Peak centre (page 8)

Windies level with South Africa in T20I series (see page 34)

Qualified by performance – the COVID crucible just one example

The Chinese manufactured *SinoVac* vaccines that Antigua and Barbuda received earlier this week as a gift from the People's Republic of China (PRC) are unlikely to be rolled out immediately as part of the ongoing public vaccination program.

And it's not because our health authorities want to continue denying choice to those who step forward for inoculation that has so far been monopolized by a single vaccine brand, namely, the Oxford-AstraZeneca double-dose jab.

Rather, it represents yet another example of the very sensible and pragmatic decisions for which the Gaston Browne administration has become so reputable

and respected in its highly effective steering of this country through the tense and turbulent vagaries of this COVID-19 pandemic.

The 20,000 doses of *SinoVac* vaccine arrived at the V.C. Bird International Airport on Tuesday and, according to expiration timelines, have a shelf life that will remain good until around the end of this year into early next year.

On the other hand, the most recent shipment of another 16,800 doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine – that arrived here on June 9 via the WHO *CoVax* Facility – will expire in September.

It therefore stands to reason that the authori-

ties would want to utilize the earlier-expiring supplies sooner, before moving to stocks that can safely remain in storage a few months longer.

It is something that needs to be explained to our population, which we believe can and will understand the logic behind such timing and scheduling and release. The political mischief-makers will not be allowed to secure a violating jump on truthfulness; what with their predictable propaganda.

The UPP and its various agents, operatives and satellites have consistently shown themselves alien and unfriendly to anything supportive of the national unity and cohesion need-

ed to push us much further and faster along the path to full and decisive conquest of this enervating challenge that is the coronavirus pandemic.

But conquer it we shall, without – and despite! – these fowlers of public discourse and would-be saboteurs of the national will to triumph. The stupendous results so far obtained, and which continue to hold steady, is proof that their pathetic tactics of crafty ambivalence and opportunistic ambiguity at best – or

shameful discouragement and petty hair-splitting over trifles at its worst – are abject failures once subjected to any credible or sensible metric of resonance with the body politic. The UPP never seems to know on which side of an issue it stands – Scratch that ... the UPP never seems to know which of an issue it stands – on principle! It's always an opportunistic wait-and-see which shifty option will likely offer the most traction among their miniscule (and ever dwindling) base that they keep confusing

with the truly intelligent national public. The Antigua and Barbuda Labour shall again triumph at the ballot box whenever the bell is rung; not only in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, but perhaps also – even ironically – because of it, to a large extent. Why? This government's management of our national response to the pandemic has, without question, written Labour ever more widely and deeply into the heartfelt affection, respect and admiration of the committed and patriotic majority.

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Doctor gets another jab of Cabinet rebuke

by Shelton Daniel

For the second time in less than a month, the Cabinet of Ministers has found fit to put a respected local medical specialist 'in his place' over what the highest Executive body regards as unwelcome commentary on matters outside his purview. In early June, responding to the announcement of an agreement between the Government and fête promoters for a restart of mass crowd en-

tertainment events (subject to the observance of safety measures) pathologist Dr. Lester Simon described the decision as "madness". He was obliquely rebuffed not long after by Information Minister Melford Nicholas who, while hosting a live post-Cabinet media briefing on June 3, stated bluntly that "this is not Dr. Simon's lane", a dismissal interpreted almost universally to mean that the head of laboratory services at

the country's main hospital was being 'out of place'. Dr. Simon – who is also chairman of the National Technical Working Group on COVID19 – is not known to have responded to that first rebuke, but was again on the receiving end of another one this week. Together with Chief Medical Officer Dr. Rhonda Sealy-Thomas, Dr. Simon appeared on a special Ministry of Health COVID-19 briefing that was broadcast live via State TV

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Dr. Lester Simon

ABS on Tuesday. He expressed strong disagreement with the Government's official position that most of the imported cases of COVID-19 were brought by returning nationals during intermixing with relatives and other locals, and not by stay-over visitors accommodated at hotels and other hospitality establishments.

Said Dr. Simon then: "This idea that only locals bring back COVID is nonsense. Yes, the vast majority may come from residents here, but there are tourists who have brought COVID into this country, and it must be said, it must be understood; because we're going on as if our tourists come from Timbuktu and ... the tourist that go to Barbados and other places come from Timbuk-three or Timbuk-one or somewhere else. It's a matter that needs to be discussed, and discussed fairly and honestly." The Government

riposte was swift and contained in the post-Cabinet briefing notes circulated following the Ministers' regular weekly meeting on Wednesday 30 June – the day after Dr. Simon's outburst which was unrelated, it would appear, to the subject of Tuesday's briefing about the confirmation of COVID variants in Antigua and Barbuda.

"The evidence clearly shows that visiting tourists have been a negligible source of the virus in Antigua, and that returning residents and nationals have been the major source of imported infections in Antigua and Barbuda," said the notes, circulated by Ambassador Lionel "Max" Hurst, Prime Minister Gaston Browne's chief-of-staff. Later in the document, the rebuttal of Dr. Simon was more extensive: "The Cabinet strongly disagrees with the doctor who publicly stated that the imported infections came from visiting tourists and not from the returning nationals and residents. The evidence garnered from contact-tracing clearly shows the origin of the vast majority of imported infections came from those whose levels of intimacy are greater than the visiting tourists.

"Too many residents and returning nationals who were placed in quarantine were seen walking the streets, visiting banks and supermarkets, and otherwise mixing freely when they were ordered isolated or

quarantined.

"The vexing assertion that tourists were free to roam but returning nationals were frequently confined has already been discussed fully; the levels of intimacy between those who are resident and those tourists who are entering Antigua differ, requiring a commonsense approach that is based on logic, the Cabinet asserts.

"The test of the correctness of this policy is manifested in the end results showing no new infections or hospitalizations in the past three weeks."

Hurst singlehandedly hosted the live post-Cabinet media briefing on Thursday at which the regular substantive facilitator, Information Minister Melford Nicholas, was absent.

Asked whether there had been any instances or possibilities of tourists interacting as intimately with locals as returning nationals, Hurst said this had not manifested in the realities observed, such as when passengers arrived at the airport.

"We don't know where that doctor got his information from, but he was clearly wrong. I think Minister Melford Nicholas encouraged him to stick with his expertise. He is very good at what he does, extraordinarily good at what he does, but this is a little bit outside of his forte."

Wearing of masks will continue for some time – Health Minister



Health Minister Sir Molwyn Joseph (right) with Government's Director of Pharmaceutical Services, Mr. Alfred Athill, receive the medical supplies provided through EU funding.

Residents of Antigua and Barbuda will have to continue wearing masks in public spaces for some time into the future, despite there being, at present, no laboratory confirmed cases of COVID-19 infections in the country.

That's the word from Health Minister Sir Molwyn Joseph, speaking Thursday at a ceremony where the European Union (EU) funded the purchase of a 40-foot container filled with medical supplies and equipment to help in the fight against the coronavirus.

Sir Molwyn noted that the battle against COVID-19 will continue well into the future. "The fight against this pan-

demic has just begun. We have been at it for over a year and we are likely to be engaged in this fight well into the future. Today I received word of the concerns being raised over the COVID-variant, Delta, which has been described as easier to transmit and which makes patients much sicker," he stated.

Sir Molwyn noted that Antigua and Barbuda was the first Caribbean territory to reopen its borders in June last year, and they have remained closed since then. He added that Antigua and Barbuda was also among the first to introduce the wearing of face masks in public. However, he cautioned, any changes to this protocol should

not be expected anytime soon.

"I want to say to the people of Antigua and Barbuda, notwithstanding the progress we have made, notwithstanding the fact that people are getting their vaccination, the wearing of masks is indispensable to the success of fighting COVID. Therefore, we must understand that we will be wearing masks for quite a while," he declared.

The Health Minister reported that based on the fact that the case count is at zero, many persons have been made making contact with him about loosening up on the restrictions and protocols.

On the issue of vaccination, Sir Molwyn said the programme of inoculating the society works, as the benefits have already begun to manifest themselves. He pointed to recent developments where the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) once had Antigua and Barbuda at #4 rating, which is its lowest, but that now the country had migrated to #1.

Similarly, the UK government had the country rated among its amber light grouping, but Antigua and Barbuda is now included among the so-called 'green' countries. This means that visitors from both countries (US

and UK) can freely visit the twin-island Caribbean nation and return to their respective countries without having to quarantine. Sir Molwyn urged residents to get vaccinated, as continued failure to do so in sufficient numbers places the entire country at risk. Meanwhile, Foreign Affairs Minister E.P. Chet Greene – whose ministry negotiated the aid through the office of the National Authorizing Officer (NAO) for EU-funded projects – said the ambassadors, high commissioners and consuls-general attached to the ministry have been doing a very good job securing assistance for the country in the fight against COVID-19. Minister Greene noted that he never gave the NAO, Dr. Clarence Henry, or his staff, specific instructions to pursue assistance from the EU; except to say, broadly, to use the contacts of the ministry to negotiate assistance for the country. According to Greene, the ambassadors and other representatives have acted on his instructions and they have delivered. In

short, their work benefits the nation!

The cost of this contribution by the EU amounts to €160,000 (Euros) or approximately, EC\$500,000. EU Representative to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Luis Maia, noted that the grouping has been a key partner of the Eastern Caribbean states in their fight against the pandemic. Along with assistance to individual countries, the EU also made funds available to the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), which is the lead regional agency conducting tests for COVID-19 and its variants.

Additionally, the EU has supported the World Health Organization's (WHO) CoVax Facility which has been of great benefit to Caribbean state in procuring vaccine supplies.

The handover exercise took place Thursday at the Infectious Disease Center (IDC) on the old Holberton Hospital compound.

Woman charged for armed robbery attempt on Golden Grove gas station

Police say they have charged a 23-year-old woman of Grays Farm for the attempted armed robbery of the service station at Golden Grove last week.

Shadesha Phillip is reported to be one of two assailants who allegedly tried to rob a female pump attendant on Thursday 24th June. In a statement yesterday, police say they responded to the report and were fired upon. During the exchange of gunfire, according to the STRATCOM press release, Phillip was shot.

She was subsequently treated at the Sir Lester Bird Mount St. John Medical Center for a gunshot wound to her leg. The accused woman was expected in court on Thursday.

Police say they are meanwhile still searching for the second suspect allegedly involved in the incident. "A reward of \$25,000 is being offered to anyone who can provide the police with credible information leading to the arrest of that suspect and other persons involved in the recent incidents of robberies and shootings," the STRATCOM statement added.

Anyone with information can contact the nearest police station or the Criminal Investigations Department at 462-3913 or 462-3914. The police have further appealed to the public "to pay closer attention to their overall safety and report all suspicious activities without delay".

Boggy Peak National Park Centre strikes gold



The Department of Environment (DOE) is pleased to announce that the recently completed Boggy Peak National Park Interpretation Centre at Christian Valley was awarded the prestigious Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Certification.

A press release from the DOE says this is the first building in Antigua and Barbuda, as well as the OECS, to receive a LEED Gold Certification.

It explains that LEED certification was developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), and is the most widely used green building rating system in the world and an international symbol of excellence.

This certification, the

release adds, is awarded for implementing practical and measurable strategies and solutions in areas including sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor air quality. The Interpretation Centre is a part of the Sustainable Pathways for Protected Areas and Renewable Energy (SPPARE) Project, which is currently being implemented by the DOE.

The goal of the SPPARE project is to contribute to the demonstration of an integrated and self-sustaining approach to environmental stewardship in Antigua and Barbuda.

The project also aims to enhance financing and management of protected areas through innova-

tions in renewable energy capacity and tourism in Antigua and Barbuda. The DOE release quotes the president and CEO of the USGBC, Mahesh Ramanujam, as saying: "Achieving LEED certification is more than just implementing sustainable practices. It represents a commitment to making the world a better place and influencing others to do better ... Given the extraordinary importance of climate

protection and the central role buildings play in that effort, the SPPARE Interpretation Centre at Christian Valley is creating a path forward through their LEED certification." More information about the Boggy Peak Interpretation Centre can be obtained by contacting the SPPARE Project Coordinator, Mr. Adien Greenaway at the DOE at 462-4625 or via email at adien.greenaway@ab.gov.ag.

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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
(CIVIL)

SUIT NO. ANUHMT 2020/

Submitted Date: 08/01/2021 14:02

Filed Date: 08/01/2021 14:02

Fees Paid: 22.00



FORM I
PETITION FOR DIVORCE
CANDICE JODY-ANN ROMEO WILLIAMS

Petitioner

And

STEVE ALLINGTON LAKE

Respondent

PETITION FOR DIVORCE

TO THE RESPONDENT: STEVE ALLINGTON LAKE

A LEGAL PROCEEDING FOR A DIVORCE HAS BEEN COMMENCED AGAINST YOU by the petitioner.
The claim made against you appears on the following pages.

FORM I

IF YOU WISH TO DEFEND THIS PROCEEDING, you or an attorney acting for you must prepare an answer in Form 4 prescribed by the Rules, serve it on the petitioner's attorney or, where the petitioner does not have an attorney, serve it on the petitioner, and file it, with proof of service, in the registrar's office, WITHIN TWENTY DAYS after this petition is served on you, if you are served in Antigua and Barbuda.

If you are served in a Caribbean territory, the period for serving and filing your answer is forty days. If you are served outside Caribbean territory, the period is sixty days.

Instead of serving and filing an answer, you may serve and file a notice of intent to defend in Form 10 prescribed by the Rules. This will entitle you to ten more days within which to serve and file your answer.

If this petition for divorce contains a claim for support or a division of property, you must serve and file a financial statement in Form 11 prescribed by the Rules within the time set out above for serving and filing your answer, whether or not you wish to defend this proceeding. If you serve and file an answer, your financial statement must accompany your answer.

IF YOU FAIL TO SERVE AND FILE AN ANSWER, A DIVORCE MAY BE GRANTED IN YOUR ABSENCE AND WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE TO YOU, JUDGMENT MAY BE GRANTED AGAINST YOU ON ANY OTHER CLAIM IN THIS PETITION.

NEITHER SPOUSE IS FREE TO REMARRY until a divorce has been granted and has taken effect. Once a divorce has taken effect, you may obtain a certificate of divorce from the registrar's office.

Date: 08 January 2021

Issued by:

Registrar
The High Court of Justice
Parliament Drive
St. John's, Antigua

TO: Steve Allington Lake
Grey's Farm
St. John's, Antigua

(c) under (state law under which the claim is made),

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

FORMS

GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE - ADULTERY

The respondent spouse has committed adultery. Particulars are as follows: (State the particulars)

CLAIM

(cruelty)

The petitioner claims:

(a) a divorce;

(b) under the Divorce Act, No. 10 of 1997,

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(c) under (state law under which the claim is made),

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE - CRUELTY

The respondent has treated the petitioner with physical or mental cruelty of such kind as to render intolerable the continued cohabitation of the spouses particulars are as follows:

RECONCILIATION

There is no possibility of reconciliation of the spouses.

The following efforts to reconcile have been made: Several efforts at reconciliation have been made and all were unsuccessful.

FORMS

(Separation)

CLAIM

1. The petitioner claims:

(a) a divorce;

(b) under the Divorce Act No. 10 of 1997,

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(c) under (state law under which the claim is made),

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE - SEPARATION

2. The spouses have lived separate and apart since July, 2007. The spouses have resumed cohabitation during the following periods in an unsuccessful attempt at reconciliation:

Date(s) of Cohabitation

None

CLAIM

(adultery)

1. The petitioner claims:

(a) a divorce;

(b) under the Divorce Act No. 10 of 1997,

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

DETAILS OF MARRIAGE

(Where possible, copy the information from the marriage certificate.)

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 5. Date of marriage | 05 th February, 2007 |
| 6. Place of marriage (municipality And province, state or country) | Pares Village Saint Peter, Antigua |
| 7. Wife's surname immediately before marriage | Williams |
| 8. Wife's surname at birth | Williams |
| 9. Husband's surname immediately before marriage | Lake |
| 10. Husband's surname at birth | Lake |
| 11. Marital status of husband at time of marriage, (never married, divorced or widower) | Bachelor |
| 12. Marital status of wife at time of marriage, (never married, divorced or widow) | Spinster |
| 13. Wife's birthplace (province, state or country) | Jamaica |
| 14. Wife's birth date | 07th September, 1985 |
| 15. Husband's birthplace (province, state or country) | Antigua |
| 16. Husband's birth date | 1984 |

17. (a) [x] A certificate of [x] the marriage

[] the registration of the marriage of the spouses has been filed with the court.

(b) [] It is impossible to obtain a certificate of the marriage or its registration because:

(c) [] A certificate of the marriage or its registration will be filed before this action is set down for trial or a motion is made for judgment.

RESIDENCE

18. The petitioner has resided in (municipality and province, state or country)

Jamaica

since (date) 1985

19. The respondent has resided in (municipality and province, state or country)

Antigua

since (date) 1984

20. The respondent's current address is Grey's Farm, Saint John's, Antigua

21. The [] petitioner has habitually resided in Antigua and Barbuda for at least one year

[x] respondent

immediately preceding the commencement of this proceeding.

CHILDREN

The following are all the living children of the marriage as defined by the Divorce Act No. 10 of 1997.

Full name	Birth date	School and grade or year	Person with whom child lives and length of time child has lived there
-----------	------------	--------------------------	---

The children ordinarily reside in (municipality and province, state or country)

23. (a) The petitioner seeks an order for custody or joint custody of the following children on the following terms:

Name of child	Terms of the order
---------------	--------------------

[] agrees

The respondent [] does not agree with the above terms.

(b) The petitioner is not seeking an order for custody and

[] is content that a previous court order for custody continue in force

[] is attempting to obtain an order for custody in another proceeding full particulars of which are as follows:

(Give name of court, court file no. and particulars of the order of proceeding.)

(c) The petitioner proposes that the support arrangements for the children should be as follows:

Amount paid	Time period (weekly, monthly, etc.)	to be paid by (husband or wife)	to be paid for (name of child)
-------------	-------------------------------------	---------------------------------	--------------------------------

28. The educational needs of the children [] are being met.

[] are not being met.

(If not being met, give particulars.)

OTHER COURT PROCEEDINGS

29. The following are all other court proceedings with reference to the marriage of any child of the marriage: (Give the name of the court, the court file no., the kind of order the court was asked to make and what order, if any, the court made, if the proceeding is not yet completed, give its current status.)

DOMESTIC CONTRACTS AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

30. The spouses have entered into the following domestic contracts and other written or oral financial agreements: (Indicate whether the contract or arrangement is now in effect, and if support payments are not being paid in full, state the amount that has not been paid.)

Date	Nature of contract or arrangement	Status
------	-----------------------------------	--------

COLLUSION, CONDONATION AND CONNIVANCE

31. There has been no collusion in relation to this divorce proceeding.

32. There has been no condonation or connivance at the grounds for divorce in this proceedings. (Where there has been condonation or connivance, strike out the previous sentence. Give details and set out the facts relied on to justify a divorce in the circumstances.)

MATTERS OTHER THAN DIVORCE AND CUSTODY

33. The grounds for the relief sought in paragraph 1 other than a divorce or custody, are as follows: (Set out in separate, consecutively numbered paragraphs the material facts relied on to substantiate the claims.)

(c) The petitioner seeks an order for access (visiting arrangements) and is content that the respondent have an order for custody of the following children on the following terms:

Name of child	Terms of the order
---------------	--------------------

[] agrees

The respondent [] does not agree with the above terms.

24. (a) The following are the existing visiting arrangements (access) for the spouse who does not have the children living with him or her:

[] satisfactory

(b) The existing visiting arrangements (access) are

[] not satisfactory.

(If not satisfactory, give reasons and describe how the arrangements should be changed.)

25. The order sought in paragraph 23 is in the best interest of the children for the following reasons:

26. The following material changes in the circumstances of the spouses are expected to affect the children, their custody and the visiting arrangements (access) in the future:

27. (a) The existing arrangements between the spouses for support for the children are as follows:

Amount paid	Time period (weekly, monthly, etc.)	Paid by (husband or wife)	Paid for (name of child)
-------------	-------------------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------

[] are being honoured

(b) The existing support arrangements

[] are not being honoured.

(If not being honoured, specify how much is unpaid and for how long. If you seek an order for payment of part or all of the unpaid amount, be sure to include it in the claim made under petition and grounds for divorce.)

TRIAL

34. The petitioner proposes that if there is a trial in this action, it be held at The High Court of Justice, Parliament Drive, St John's, Antigua

(Where a claim is made for custody of a child who ordinarily resides in Antigua and Barbuda, the place of trial must be in the country where he or she ordinarily resides.)

DECLARATION OF PETITIONER

35. I have read and understand this petition for divorce. The statements in it are true, to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Date 1/12/2020

Signature of petitioner

STATEMENT OF SOLICITOR

I, TALIA N. DACOSTA, Solicitor for the Petitioner, certify to this court that I have complied with the requirements of section 8 of the Divorce Act No. 10 of 1997.

(Where in the circumstances it would clearly not be appropriate to discuss the matters in section 8 with the applicant, set out the circumstances.)

Date 16/12/2020

Signature of solicitor

TALIA N. DACOSTA
ATTORNEY FOR PETITIONER
STAPLETON CHAMBERS
STAPLETON HOUSE, SUITE #2
STAPLETON LANE, P.O. BOX 2881
ST. JOHN'S, ANTIGUA
TEL: (268) 562-7185 FAX: (268) 562-7967

(The following is to appear on the backsheet of the petition.)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SERVICE

I, am the respondent named in this petition. I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this petition. My address for service of documents in this divorce proceeding is

Date

Signature of respondent

Signature of witness

I, served this petition personally on the respondent.

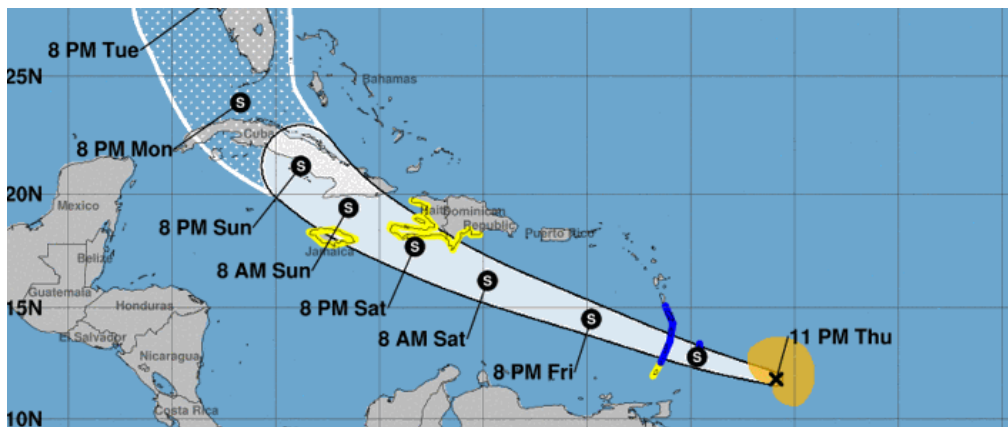
[] The respondent completed and signed the acknowledgment of service above in my presence and I signed it as witness.

or

[] The respondent declined to complete and sign the acknowledgment of service.

Signature.....

Tropical Storm Elsa expected to strengthen as it heads toward Caribbean



BY KATELYN UMHOLTZ | STAFF WRITER

PUBLISHED JUL 1, 2021
AT 6:45 PM | UPDATED JUL
1, 2021 AT 10:21 PM

As Tropical Storm Elsa makes its way quickly across the Atlantic toward the Caribbean, forecasters said Thursday night the already intensifying storm is expected to get stronger in the coming hours. Elsa is expected to reach the Gulf of Mexico next week, but it's too early to tell if the storm could be a threat to Louisiana. The latest track from the National Hurricane Center has Elsa entering the Gulf of Mexico early Tuesday on the western side of Florida. However, forecasters said there is "significant" uncertainty in the long-range track. Elsa is the fifth named storm of the 2021 hurricane season. The categories, in order of increasing strength, are tropical depression, tropical storm and hurricane (categories 1 through

5). Here's what we know from the National Hurricane Center about the tropics as of 10 p.m. Thursday.

Where is Elsa?


Forecasters said in the NHC's 10 p.m. update that Elsa was moving west northwest at 26 mph, a direction it is expected to continue in for the next couple of days. It was about 260 miles east southeast of Barbados and had sustained winds of 50 mph, a slight increase in just a handful of hours. Forecasters said they expect Elsa to strengthen even more in the next 12 to 24 hours. The storm is forecast to move over the Windward Islands or the southern Leeward Islands on Friday before it reaches the Caribbean later that night. By Saturday, forecasters said, Elsa will move near the Hispaniola coast and then pass near Jamaica and eastern Cuba on Sunday. No other tropical depressions or storms are expected to develop in the next

48 hours in the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean or the Atlantic.

Watches and warnings

Elsa is expected to produce rainfall totals of 3 to 6 inches with maximum totals of 10 inches on Friday across the Windward and southern Leeward Islands, including Barbados. In southern Hispaniola, it could get hit with even more rain producing totals of 4 to 8 inches with isolated amounts of 12 inches. Around 1 to 3 inches, with higher localized amounts of 5 inches, could fall on Puerto Rico. This rain may lead to flash flooding and mudslides for all three areas. A tropical storm warning is in effect for Barbados, Martinique, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. A tropical storm watch is in effect for Grenada and its dependencies; the southern and western coasts of Haiti from the southern border of the Dominican Republic to Le Mole le St. Nicholas; the southern coast of the Dominican Republic from the southern border of Haiti eastward to Punta Palenque; Jamaica. Forecasters said residents should keep monitoring conditions and be on the lookout for additional watches and warnings likely to come late Thursday or Friday.

Rotary Club installs new president, board of directors



The Rotary Club of Antigua has installed its 49th Board of Directors under the presidency of Ms. Joanna Spencer, CEO of Digi-cel Antigua & Barbuda and Monserrat.

Under the theme *We are More Impactful with More Hands*, the Club will continue the nearly five decades of service to Antigua and Barbuda; building on a formidable year of service led by Immediate Past President (IPP) Mr. Kevin Silston.

In his outgoing remarks at the Club's recent handing-over ceremony, Silston expressed heartfelt gratitude to the donor community of Antigua and Barbuda which stepped forward tremendously in support of the Club's ambitious undertakings for 2020-2021.

Because of this support, the Club was able to surpass its projected impact on the community, despite the challenges of COVID-19 and its harmful effects on global health and economics.

New president of the Rotary Club of Antigua, Ms. Joanna Spencer

Health, education, and social services took the front burner in the last Rotary year.

“Thank you very much to all Rotarians for the work that we have continued to do under challenging circumstances. Thank you, our corporate sponsors and social partners, who were able to join with us despite your own setbacks. I believe that the convenient strength of Rotary was amply demonstrated this past year and our community is better for it,” Silston said.

He cited critical projects that were added to Rotary’s list of landmark and life-altering undertakings that were successfully implemented over the past 12 months and will continue into years ahead.

“I’m happy that at the end of this Rotary year, we are going to have some critical projects moving into the new year and onwards, including those dealing with child obesity, chronic kidney disease, and the recently renovated and fully equipped School for the Deaf.

“Thank you very much, Rotarians. Thank you for your support. We now look forward to throwing our full support behind the new Board and its direction for the Club in the year ahead,” Silston said as he handed over the baton of leadership to new president Joanna Spencer. Aside from its domestic waves, the Rotary Club of

Antigua stood out significantly within the organization’s District 7030.

At the recent District Conference 2020-2021, the Club received the **‘District Governor’s 5 Star Award’** in honor and recognition of its “Outstanding Contribution to the Goals and Objectives of the District.”

Individual awards were also presented to the Club’s outgoing President “For Outstanding Service to the District” and to its returning Assistant Governor (AG) Evangeline Allen who received the “Rotary Hero” District Pin for Outstanding Service.

Armed and ready to continue with the momentum, new president Joanna Spencer said: “As we close off a successful Rotary year and begin a new one, we are proud to be moving forward on a solid foundation, reinforced annually with commitment to service and partnerships.”

Spencer thanked the outgoing president for “paving the way” for her and for putting in place long-term strategic plans that will add to the successes of the year of service ahead.

“Fellow Rotarians, thank you for endorsing me as your president for 2021-2022. I am honored to have been given this opportunity to continue to serve. I commit to the giving of my time in service to the community and doing all needed to keep

our Club and its values together,” Spencer said.

Her term in office runs from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. The new president began her Rotary journey as a 21-year-old at the Rotaract Club of Antigua where she served in several leadership roles, including that of Club President. She later transitioned into the Rotary Club of Antigua where she served as its treasurer and secretary before advancing to the role of president.

Currently holding the office of chief executive officer (CEO) of Digicel Antigua & Barbuda and Monserrat, Spencer is an accountant by vocation with a stellar career record in the arena of finance and management throughout the Caribbean.

Other members of the 2021-2022 Board of the Rotary Club of Antigua include vice president Mr. Eric Joseph; secretary Ms. Julie-Ann Laudat; treasurer Mr. Karim Edwards; director of service projects Mr. Kirk Francis; membership chair Mrs. Joanna Scotland-Gilkes; Rotary Foundation chair Dr. Susan Snaggs-Wilson; public image chair Mr. Alex Holder; youth service director Ms. Linda Watkins; Club administrator Mrs. Elisa Graham; and sergeant-at-arms Mr. Ato Kentish.

President-elect (PE) for the Rotary Club of Antigua’s 50th Golden Jubilee year, 2022-2023, is Mrs. Ilean Ramsey.

Soap-making course ends, next one starts

Sixteen women have just completed a soap-making course designed to help them acquire new skills by which they may supplement their income.

The four-week course was organized by the Member of Parliament (MP) for St. Paul, Hon. E.P. Chet Greene, and held in English Harbour at the St. Paul's branch office of the governing Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party (ABLP).

Greene said the course is the latest in a series of similar

initiatives intended to assist people in his constituency become

more self-sufficient. So far, courses have been conducted in

floral arrangements, face-mask making, small engine repairs,



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A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board



Soap-making course participants and facilitators.

and now soap making.

“As the representative, I recognized that the coronavirus pandemic has resulted in many of our people losing their jobs. Here in my constituency, which is heavily dependent on tourism, the job losses and the pain have been real. It is my view that helping some of these individuals acquire new marketable skills from which they can establish a business or supplement an in-

come, will go a long way in helping them to achieve their goals and dreams,” he stated.

The MP further revealed that the success of the soap-making class has been such that a second cohort which will start training on Monday. Each cohort has a total of 16 persons.

The programme is coordinated by Arlene Weste and the training conducted by Cheryl Samuel.



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Statement on Haiti at OAS by A&B representative, Sir Ronald Sanders

Item 1 of the OAS Permanent Council on 30 June 2021



Sir Ronald Sanders

The delegation of Antigua and Barbuda thanks the members of the Good Offices Mission to Haiti for their report. We commend their willingness to enter the situation in Haiti, which always required trust and confidence from the Haitian stakeholders. They had a difficult task.

Two documents of the Permanent Council are relevant to the Mission. They are: Resolution CP/RES. 1168 (2315/21 and terms of reference CP/doc.5705/21 rev.2

of 27 May 2021. The relevant sections of both those documents called for the Good Offices Mission to facilitate a dialogue between the President and stakeholders in Haiti.

At paragraph 14, the resolution “encouraged all parties to engage in meaningful dialogue in the interest of peace and stability”.

Then at paragraph 15, it expressed the Permanent Council’s desire to “support efforts by the President and

all stakeholders in Haiti to engage in dialogue that would lead to free and fair Presidential, legislative, local and municipal elections that benefit from independent and credible electoral observation”.

In Operative paragraph 1 of the Resolution, the Permanent Council resolved: “to encourage the President of Haiti to work with all stakeholders to engage in meaningful dialogue in the interest of addressing the country’s needs, among others, the need to

hold free and fair legislative and presidential elections this year.”

Further, the terms of reference provided to the Mission specifically states that the purpose and mandate of the offer of Good Offices is to “facilitate a dialogue that would lead to free and fair elections”.

Mr. Chairman, judging from the report, it appears that no dialogue was facilitated. There was no meeting between the parties. Instead, the Mission met the President on 8 June. Separately, the Mission met some stakeholders at the OAS National Office. Finally, the Mission met the President for a second time on June 10. But at no point was there a dialogue between the President and the stakeholders.

Indeed, the Mission states at page 3 of its report that the President himself admitted that “there is

no official dialogue”, but he continues to speak to political and private sector actors that he did not identify.

The Mission identified three goals that it believes can contribute to a way forward: “Prompt appointment of a Prime Minister and Cabinet that will have the confidence of the Haitian people”. However, the Mission does not identify how such appointments can be achieved by mid-July without genuine dialogue and engagement of all stakeholders.

A second goal identified by the Mission is: “Urgent steps to re-establish a climate of security, in conformity with human rights obligations”. Yet violence and insecurity in Haiti has intensified over the last few days.

This has led the Chair and leading members of the US House Committee on Foreign Affairs to

write to US Secretary of State Blinken yesterday to express “deep concern over the worsening situation in Haiti” and to state categorically that “ongoing corruption, human rights violations, hunger, and an alarming rise in crime, especially kidnappings, are contributing to increasing political tension”.

The senior US Congress persons also said: “As long as the Moise government continues to insist on holding the referendum this year, the conditions for political dialogue and reconciliation cannot be met.”

There are also credible, independent reports, Chair, that 11 persons were gunned down last night, including a journalist and a political activist.

Mr. Chairman, the third goal that the Mission identified in its report is: “Appointment of new members to the

Provisional Electoral Council to ensure that the Haitian people have confidence in this critical institution and that local, legislative and Presidential elections are held this year”.

However, there is no recommended machinery to achieve this purpose which clearly will not be attainable, until and unless such machinery is fully independent, and established in a transparent manner by all the relevant stakeholders in Haiti.

Mr. Chairman, the delegation of Antigua and Barbuda was always conscious that a Good Offices Mission to Haiti by the OAS had no guarantee of success. Nonetheless, we commend the members of the Mission for their efforts, and we recommend that the Permanent Council continue to remain alert to the situation in Haiti in order to determine what future action it might take.

Big-ups nonstop at OAS for Sir Ron

by *Shelton Daniel*

Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the United States and the Organization of American States (OAS), Sir Ronald Sanders, has been the recipient of effusive plaudits from his peers for his recent stint as Interim Chair of the OAS Permanent Council (PC).

Sir Ronald is the only person to have served twice as President of the Permanent Council, having previously held the post between January and March 2016 when he successfully led an OAS mission to Haiti that ended a constitutional impasse in that country.

Sir Ronald, who is the Dean of the OAS Corps of Ambassadors, took up the position in May to complete the term of Paraguay's Ambassador to the OAS and then Chair of the Permanent Council, Elisa Ruiz Díaz, who unfortunately passed away on May 19th 2021.

Several delegations, including the United States, showered the Antigua and Barbuda diplomat with high accolades for his sterling leadership and guidance of the Permanent Council which, once again, confronted a political crisis in Haiti and also in Nicaragua.

Said US Ambassador Brad

Freden in a message to Sir Ronald:

"Ambassador Sanders, thank you for your impeccable leadership of the PC [Permanent Council] since the passing of Ambassador Ruiz. I know I speak for others when I say that your time at the helm will be remembered for being steady, firm, and fair-minded. I imagine the change of leadership in Peru is complicating the question of PC leadership for the next quarter. I think Hugo de Zela would do a fine job as Chair, but if he is unable to serve, I would just as soon see you carry on until the new Peruvian administration sorts itself out (of course this is just my personal point of view). We'll see what develops. Best Regards, Brad."

OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro also messaged Sir Ronald the following words:

"Great work. We are all very grateful how you managed every single issue during these weeks. A big hug."

Speaking from the Central American region, the Ambassador of El Salvador, Wendy Acevedo, remarked: "Congratulations, Ambassador, for your outstanding Presidency."

On the issue of Haiti, through which Sir Ronald skillfully guided the Permanent Council, we present, as

a separate piece in this issue of Pointe Xpress, the Antigua and Barbuda statement that he prepared. We end this article with the Antigua and Barbuda diplomat's closing statement at the Permanent Council on June 30th 2021 in his capacity as outgoing Chair.

"In concluding, allow me to say that I came to this second period of the Presidency of the Permanent Council in difficult circumstances and with tough issues confronting member states. It was necessary to pick up the pieces and continue our important work without fear or favour."

"From the outset, I approached this task in the interest of the Organisation and in accordance with its governing charters. I was guided always by adherence to the rules of the Permanent Council."

"I placed particular importance on fostering inclusive consultation among member states and discouraging exclusive groups and majority decisions without the opportunity for full discussion."

"Consensus cannot be built on exclusion, and the purposes of the OAS will not be effectively fulfilled without the participation of all its member states. Consensus is not unanimity. Consensus allows for disagree-

ment by some, but at least the search for consensus provides space in which account is taken of the positions of all."

"At all times, I sought balance and fairness in the dialogue of this Council, and, as you are all aware, I insisted on parliamentary language, and rejected personal abuse, and improper attacks on states. The work of this Organisation can greatly serve the people of our hemisphere, but only if there is respect and equality of treatment for all, especially when opinions differ."

As I vacate this second period of service to the Permanent Council, my single message is to remind everyone that goals that are achieved through the exercise of power and coercion do not endure for long; objectives that are accomplished by voluntary cooperation survive and prosper."

I thank the office of the Assistant Secretary-general for their invaluable help, particularly Rodrigo Cortes and Carmen de la Pava. And I thank the people and Government of my small country, Antigua and Barbuda, who supported me in this large task of guiding this Permanent Council through my second period of its Presidency."

The cop-out

by Risa V

Experiencing the loss of a loved one or members of your social community, country, and even of the outside world, makes you realize life is not guaranteed and can be cut short at any moment.

Deaths relating to murder, suicide and motor vehicular accidents can only make one think how silly it is to lose someone so carelessly. Mankind has fostered this reckless, negligent and depressing lifestyle leading to such unfortunate situations far too long. It's about time we stop dressing them up as accidents. It makes no difference in the lives lost.

Death is inevitable, and some are of the opinion that a man who is to be hung cannot drown. It still remains that we can do a better job with the life with which we have been blessed. We can be better managers of our lives and choose not to take that of others. Bring back – and bring up – the value of a life. Besides, what gives you the right to cut short another person's life? Only He who giveth should be entitled to take away.

No matter who has done what to you, neither murder nor sui-

cide should ever be the answer. Forgive, forget and move on. Easier said than done? I know, but who said life would be easy? I can imagine that, in seeking revenge, life in prison seems like a small price to pay. Or is it? Sounds more like torture, if anything; not to mention you will gain nothing from taking another person's life, and there are better ways to counteract the situation, using your life experience to help others.

As for thoughts of suicide, a more personal struggle, remember life is a blessing and some aren't fortunate to make it out of their mothers' wombs. Still, it would be wise to seek help – the kind that would once again invite any lost soul into a world of joy, peace and happiness. I cannot imagine anyone giving up on life; but when you've reached that place, my other advice is, 'Turn to the Lord in prayer'. Abuse – a common factor in such scenarios – comes in so many forms which, no matter how minor, are still traumatic. Harassment and bullying, for instance, are more psychological and emotional. The constant criticism, humiliation and downgrade can eat away

at your self-esteem and identity. So let's not make ourselves instruments of such negative outcomes. While some things may seem harmless, not everyone is strong enough to come out on top. Some are vulnerable and get crumbled in the process. When a person is suffering inside, you never want to be the one to provide the spark that sends their life up in flames.

The most vexing thing about these situations is that both parties are suffering. Behaviors stem from underlying issues. Believe it or not, bullies need help too!

Let's be kinder to one another, more loving, more caring, and more responsible. It's not an eye for an eye. Instead, doing unto others as you would like others to do unto you still applies. Remember, you never know what another person is going through. If you choose to affect their lives, do so in a positive way and it will come right back around to you.

In a single moment a life can slip away, but you will forever question and regret that moment of reckless or irrational thought and behaviour.



World Bank approves US\$6M for COVID-19 response in Guyana

Guyana Chronicle - THE World Bank has approved US\$6 million in additional financing for the Guyana COVID-19 Emergency Response Project.

The funds, according to the bank, will go towards supporting affordable and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines and ensuring that there is effective vaccine deployment in Guyana.

"The project will also support general preparedness, resilience, and overall health system strengthening," a press release from the World Bank stated.

The document also quoted Ozan Sevimli, World Bank Representative for Jamaica and Guyana, as saying: "An efficient and equitable rollout of COVID-19 vaccines will be critical to save lives and restore economic activities in Guyana."

She added: "The World Bank is closely coordinating with development partners and Government of Guyana counterparts to support the vaccination campaign, and long-term improvements to the country's healthcare system."

The World Bank said it has recognised the socio-economic impact that the pandemic has had on countries such as Guyana, including job losses which disproportionately affect women.

The institution said the funds provided are intended to help the Government of Guyana strengthen health system functions that are necessary for immunisation. These include vaccine awareness communication, human resources, information systems, and waste management.

"The additional financing to this project also aims to increase overall health system preparedness to tackle future emergencies," the World Bank said.

The bank explained that the original project was approved in November 2020 to support Guyana's pandemic response and strengthen the country's health system.

The statement specified, too, that at least US\$5 million of the additional financing approved this month, comes from the International Development Association (IDA). Guyana receives interest-free financing from the IDA, with a maturity of 40 years, including a grace period of 10 years.

The additional US\$1 million is part of a grant from the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Multi-Donor Trust Fund.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Bank Group has committed over US\$125 billion to fight the health, economic, and social impacts of the pandemic, the

fastest and largest crisis response in its history. The financing is helping more than 100 countries strengthen pandemic preparedness, protect the poor and their jobs, and jump-start a climate-friendly recovery. The bank is also providing US\$12 billion to help low- and middle-income countries purchase and distribute COVID-19 vaccines, tests, and treatments.

So far, Guyana is one of the very few countries that have enough vaccines to immunise their entire adult populations.

With opposition claims that the Sputnik V vaccines being administered in Guyana are possibly fake, it is likely that the government will have to intensify its public awareness campaign to provide accurate information and promote the need for vaccination. Fortunately, this recent World Bank provision caters for such efforts.

Already, more than 460 persons have died as a result of the novel coronavirus which has been sweeping through the entire world for more than a year now. Guyana was first hit by the virus in March 2020 and authorities have since been battling to ensure adherence to the COVID-19 guidelines and to promote the vaccines as a means to an end.

PM Skerrit urges Dominicans to get health insurance



Dominica's Prime Minister, Roosevelt Skerrit

Dominica News Online - Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit has told Dominicans that they should secure their livelihood by applying for health insurance.

He was speaking during the presentation of the Hospital Authority Bill tabled before Parliament this week.

"One of the things I want to encourage Dominicans [to do] is to get health insurance," he said.

Skerrit continued, "We cannot go

and buy a motor car that will cost \$100,000 and not have health insurance."

He called on the public to make the sacrifice because, according to him, healthcare across the world is becoming increasingly expensive.

"We have had the pilot programme, the government working in collaboration with the Dominica Social Security, but we need to ensure that Dominicans access healthcare insurance, so that we

can have health coverage for all," the Prime Minister stated

He went on to say that, at the end of this debate, healthcare in Dominica will be in a much better place than it was yesterday.

"I believe fundamentally that healthcare must remain at the hands of the state ...," Skerrit opined. "We must ensure that every one of our citizens and residents have access to healthcare."

CDB challenged to double lending to meet poverty reduction goal



Caribbean Development Bank president Dr. Gene Leon

Jamaica OBSERVER - THE latest Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) annual report showed that the bank disbursed US\$306 million to borrowing member countries (BMCs) in 2019, but the regional financial institution has been urged to double that disbursement if it intends to reach its poverty reduction target.

Poverty rates in the Caribbean are already high – largely clustered between 20 and 40 per cent.

Newly elected president of the CDB Dr. Gene Leon believes the prevalence of poverty in the region will no doubt worsen as a result of the novel coronavirus pandemic, which has pushed the region further away from achieving the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of slashing regional poverty in half by 2030.

"Our preliminary estimates

suggest that, to reach our goal of halving poverty by 2030, would require more than a doubling of average CDB lending," said Leon. Leon was making his inaugural presentation at the opening ceremony of the 51st Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the CDB, streamed live on Wednesday.

The CDB president said this underlines the magnitude of the task at hand, the need for multiple sources of funding and financial instruments, as well as a clear identification of the role that CDB is expected to play in marshalling this development finance. He noted that such considerations require further discussion on the fit-for-purpose size of the bank.

In the same vein, he argued that completing the full establishment of the Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME) is a crucial component in achiev-

ing the SDGs. "It is not only about creating a larger market to facilitate scale; it is also about partnering with the private and other non-public sectors to co-create markets and institutions aimed at achieving a common purpose," Leon added.

But first, he argued, the region must resolve its data and implementation deficit. "We need to measure better to target better. That includes building data architectures and databases to better inform our evidence-based decision-making," stated Leon.

With that in mind, the CDB president made a proposal to create a data hub at the bank that would be the go-to portal on regional data.

"Could we not design and build a distance-to-SDG tracker that updates not only implementation but associated measures of distances to benchmarks, quantum of financing needs, and estimates of concessionary terms that could facilitate more rapid reductions in these distance metrics? Could we not extend this to a resilience tracker that informs on various dimensions of resilience and therefore our ability to recover or sustain a growth momentum?" he asked.

At the same time, he noted that eliminating poverty, advancing standards of living, delivering equitable prosperity, and ensuring that no one is left behind, will depend critically on the region's ability to innovate.

LGBTI+ exclusion can cost region up to US\$4 billion



Eva and Nicole Chavez of PrideTT launch Pride month opposite the Red House, Abercromby Street, Port of Spain

NewsdayTT - The exclusion of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) community in the English-speaking Caribbean can cost up to US\$4.2 billion or up to 5.7 percent of its collective GDP. This was the major conclusion of a study called The Economic Case for LGBT+ Inclusion in the Caribbean, done by Open for Business, a coalition of global companies.

The report, launched on Wednesday, is the first of its kind in the Caribbean and the largest LGBT+ data set in the region.

The data was collected via survey from 2,167 LGBT+ people in Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The report also encompasses data from interviews with 21 business leaders and employees,

and surveys of 1,430 prospective tourists. Principal author Phil Crehan said the study quantified the cost of LGBT+ exclusion through measuring challenges in family, education, health, employment, housing, financial services, violence and justice, LGBT+ brain drain, occupational segregation, tourism and economic recovery. The report said tourism in the entire Caribbean is diminished by anti-LGBT+ stigma at a cost of between US\$423 million and up to US\$689 million, or 0.57percent to 0.93 percent of its regional GDP.

“The challenges that LGBT+ people in the Caribbean confront daily can be stark: state-sponsored homophobia and transphobia are prevalent, as is social stigma. As just two examples, nine of the 12 focus countries criminalise same-sex intimate acts and none of them allows a change of sex or gender marker on State identification.” It stated that 18 percent of travellers, both straight and LGBT+, would not visit the region, predominantly because of anti-LGBT+ laws and stigma. Crehan said tourists wanted to be able to go out into the community but were afraid to, due to fear of being exposed to humiliation and stigma during ID checks, as well as being concerned about travelling as same-sex couples. Inversely, data also showed a significantly stronger likelihood of tourists visiting a country after it adopts pro-LGBT+ policies. It said the LGBT+ skilled workers migrate and stay in more open societies, leading to lost human capital, productivity and output, as well as reduced competitiveness. “By also focusing on the LGBT+ Caribbean diaspora, Open For Business has found that those who leave are more likely to be economically productive than those who stay. For this diaspora,

migration is driven by discriminatory laws and negative attitudes which also act as dis-incentives to return. This depletes the productivity and competitiveness of the Caribbean, showing an LGBT+ brain drain.” The report said analysis showed that there was a strong relationship between the rights of LGBT+ people, GDP, and gross national income (GNI) per capita. “Globally, there is a strong correlation between the rights of LGBT+ people and economic growth. Open For Business has found a similar correlation specific to the Caribbean, in addition to measures of LGBT+ acceptance and economic growth. This aligns with global findings that suggest the legal and social inclusion of LGBT+ people likely influences and helps overall economic growth, and is bolstered by our new quantitative data showing that LGBT+ inclusion likely leads to stronger human capital outcomes and stronger economic output. It said countries that decriminalise same-sex acts likely benefit from increased labour productivity because of decreased labour market discrimination. “LGBT+ people in non-criminalised environments are more likely to avoid occupational segregation, avoid workplace harassment and stay in their workplaces longer, all with associated higher productivity.”

British High Commissioner to Trinidad and Tobago, Harriet Cross, said it was not a surprise that discrimination affects economies. “If governments want to progress they should look at making more progress with inclusion of the queer community. If decision-makers cannot be convinced by human rights arguments, maybe showing them the economics will help.”



Canada heatwave record: village burned in wildfire

BBC - A wildfire has burned 90% of the village that recorded Canada's highest ever temperature, the local MP says. Brad Vis said the fire had caused extensive damage to Lytton, in British Columbia, and to surrounding critical infrastructure.

Jan Polderman, mayor of Lytton, told the BBC he had been "lucky to get out with my own life".

"There won't be very much left of Lytton," he said. "There was fire everywhere."

Mr. Polderman told the BBC's News Hour programme that his town was engulfed by a "wall of fire".

He had earlier ordered people to evacuate, saying flames had spread through the village in just 15 minutes.

The village this week recorded the country's highest ever temperature of 49.6C (121.3F).

Abnormally high temperatures have been recorded in swathes of North America. British Columbia, in western Canada, recorded 486 deaths over five days compared with an average of 165 in normal times.

Chief coroner Lisa Lapointe blamed the extreme weather. The western province had seen only three heat-related deaths over the past three to five years.

Many of those who died, Ms. Lapointe said, had been living alone in unventilated homes.

Temperatures have been easing in coastal areas of Canada but there is not much respite for inland regions.

The weather system is now moving eastwards over the Prairie Provinces. Alberta, Saskatchewan and parts of Manitoba have been placed under Environment Canada heat warnings.

Residents fled on Wednesday, many without their belongings, as smoke and flames engulfed the village which is home to about 250 people and located about 260km (162 miles) north-east of Vancouver.

"Within about 15 minutes, the whole town was engulfed in flames," Mayor Polderman told the BBC.

"People basically just grabbed their pets, grabbed their keys and got into their cars and fled."

In a social media post on Thursday, MP Brad

Vis said he would not be attending Canada Day activities because he was devoting all his time to the emergency situation.

"There are reports of several injuries. The situation is ongoing," he wrote.

Residents were being directed to nearby communities where reception centres were being set up, while the British Columbia Wildfire Service was diverting crews and equipment from other areas to respond to the fire.

Jean McKay, who left the First Nations community of Kanaka Bar, about 15km from Lytton, with her 22-year-old daughter Deirdre, told CBC how hard emotionally it had been to leave their home.

US calls build-up of China's nuclear arsenal 'concerning'

(Reuters) – The United States said on Thursday that China's rapid build-up of its nuclear forces was concerning and called on Beijing to engage with it "on practical measures to reduce the risks of destabilizing arms races". The buildup has become more difficult for China to hide and it appeared [to be] deviating from decades of nuclear strategy based around minimal deterrence, State Department spokesperson Ned Price told a regular news briefing. Price was responding to a question about a report in the Washington Post that said China had begun constructing more than 100 new missile silos in a desert area in the western part of the country.

"These reports and other developments suggest that the PRC's nuclear arsenal will grow more quickly and to a higher level than perhaps previously anticipated," Price said, using the acronym for the People's Republic of China.

"This buildup is concerning. It raises questions about the PRC's intent. And for us, it reinforces the importance of pursuing practical measures to reduce nuclear risks," he said. "We encourage Beijing to engage with us on practical measures to reduce the risks of destabilizing arms races - potentially destabilizing

tensions." Price added that this was why President Joe Biden had prioritized strategic stability in his engagement with Russian President Vladimir Putin, and added: "The same rationale would apply to engagement with another nuclear power, the PRC."

Price also said Washington had "taken note" of remarks by Chinese leader Xi Jinping at a ceremony marking the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party on Thursday, but was "not going to comment on the specifics". In his address, Xi warned that foreign forces attempting to bully China would "get their heads bashed" and pledged to build up its military. He also committed to the "reunification" of Taiwan and said social stability would be en-

sured in Hong Kong while protecting China's security and sovereignty.

The Washington Post report cited commercial satellite images and analysis from the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, California.

It said the 119 nearly identical construction sites contained features that mirrored existing launch facilities for China's existing arsenal of nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles.

In a 2020 report to Congress, the Pentagon estimated China's nuclear warhead stockpile in "the low 200s" and said it was projected to at least double in size as Beijing expands and modernizes its forces. Analysts say the United States has around 3,800 warheads and, according to a State De-

partment factsheet, 1,357 of those were deployed as of March 1. Washington has repeatedly called on China to join it and Russia in a new arms control treaty. The U.S. disarmament ambassador said in May that Beijing was resisting this despite a "dramatic" build-up in its arsenal.

Beijing says its arsenal is dwarfed by those of the United States and Russia and it is ready to conduct bilateral dialogues on strategic security "on the basis of equality and mutual respect".

Non-proliferation experts said this year that China's push to develop fuel for a new generation of nuclear power reactors will produce large amounts of materials that could be diverted to making nuclear weapons.



Israeli military's TikTok attempt to make propaganda cool



Al Jazeera - One month before engaging in the 11-day attacks of May that resulted in the death of more than 250 Palestinians and 13 Israelis, the Israeli army posted a TikTok video where plane pilots celebrate Israel's independence to the sound of "Pretty Boy Swag".

With more than 100,000 followers and almost 100 videos, the Israeli army's TikTok mirrors typical influencer content. On the official profile, one can find fitness tutorials, food recipes, hide-and-seek games and "soldier-training hacks" such as scuba diving techniques and Krav Maga workouts.

The first video was posted in September 2020 to celebrate Rosh

Hashanah, the Jewish new year. Since then, the army's page has built a substantive audience with its most popular video – promoting the Iron Dome air defence system – being watched almost one million times.

TikTok, a youth dominated platform, has a delicate relationship with political content. Although some political influencers have sparked debates, users normally handle politics with great precaution or nuance – in part because of the platform's moderation guidelines and censorship.

Nevertheless, when it comes to serious international crises and national security affairs, it is possible to find essentially any and all

viewpoints. At least in the virtual field, the dispute is not disproportionate – many posts are pro-Palestine, but there are also a lot of pro-Israel ones.

When you search "Israel" on TikTok, dozens of related hashtags appear, including "loveisrael" and "boycottisrael". The posts in the "israel" tag have, collectively, more than seven billion views. The videos under "loveisrael" have more than 30 million.

The people featured in the content are doing a range of things: they share knowledge, messages of support, and sometimes joke about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

And the jokes do not come solely from personal profiles. Co-opt-

ing in the popular hashtag #HotGuyShit, the Israeli army shared "Just a bunch of empowered women defending their country". In the post, women Israeli combatants mimic the behaviours of macho soldiers.

In another video captioned "No makeup, only camouflage", female recruits carry on training activities to the sound of pop music. And these two examples are not isolated. On the forces' TikTok, there seems to be an active effort to highlight the female presence in the Israeli army.

The Israeli army was contacted by Al Jazeera, but there was no response to an interview request.

Prosecutors charge Trump Organization with a 15-year tax scheme

(CNN) - New York prosecutors on Thursday charged the Trump Organization and its chief financial officer, Allen Weisselberg, with a 15-year alleged tax scheme that marked the first criminal case against the former President's namesake company.

An indictment unsealed Thursday by the Manhattan district attorney's office charged the company and an entity called Trump Payroll Corporation with 10 counts, and Weisselberg with 15 felony counts, in connection with an alleged scheme stretching back to 2005 "to compensate Weisselberg and other Trump Organization executives in a manner that was 'off the books'".

They were charged with a scheme to defraud, conspiracy, criminal tax fraud, and falsifying business records. Weisselberg was also charged with grand larceny and offering a false instrument for filing.

Prosecutors said Thursday their investigation is ongoing. The probe has delved into whether the Trump Organization misled lenders, insurers and tax authorities about the value of certain properties, the treatment of tax deductions, as well as hush money payments to silence an alleged affair with Trump.

Thursday's indictment, which focused largely on Weisselberg, described an array of luxury perks he received from

the company, allegedly in lieu of compensation, including a Upper West Side apartment, a pair of Mercedes-Benz cars for him and his wife, and private school tuition for two family members who CNN has reported are his grandchildren.

All told, the indictment alleges that Weisselberg evaded taxes on \$1.76 million in income over a period beginning in 2005 and concealed for years that he was a resident of New York City, thereby avoiding paying city income taxes. Prosecutors alleged he evaded a total of more than \$900,000 in federal, state and city taxes during this period, and received a total of \$133,124 in state tax refunds "to which he was not entitled".

"The scheme was intended to allow certain employees to substantially understate their compensation from the Trump Organization, so that they could and did pay federal, state and local taxes in amounts that were significantly less than the amounts that should have been paid," the indictment said.

After entering a courtroom in New York Supreme Court Thursday afternoon in handcuffs, Weisselberg pleaded not guilty and Justice Juan Merchan released him on his own recognizance, ordering him to turn in his passport.

Former President Donald Trump himself was not charged. Following the unsealing of the indictment, he

blasted the charges in a statement, criticizing the investigation as led by two Democrats: Cyrus Vance Jr., the Manhattan district attorney, and Letitia James, the New York state attorney general.

"The political Witch Hunt by the Radical Left Democrats, with New York now taking over the assignment, continues. It is dividing our Country like never before!" Trump said.

In statements, the Trump Organization also characterized the prosecution as a political act and said Weisselberg was being used as a "pawn in a scorched-earth attempt to harm the former president".

The indictment of the Trump Organization is the product of more than two years of investigation by Vance, a probe that began with questions about accounting practices tied to hush-money payments made by former Trump lawyer Michael Cohen and eventually led to a Supreme Court fight over a subpoena for Trump's tax documents.





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Press Release

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- 392 BGI SVD
- 393 SVD SLU
- 393 SLU ANU

In anticipation of the situation, passengers are asked to monitor their e-mails and LIAT's website for updates. Passengers wishing to reschedule are asked to contact our Reservations Call Centre for assistance.

LIAT will issue further updates and advisories via its website (www.liat.com) and social media platforms.

The management and staff of LIAT apologize for any inconvenience caused.

-END-

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Tearful Serena Williams retires hurt



Serena Williams

LONDON, England (BBC) – Serena Williams says she is “heartbroken” after her latest attempt for a record-equaling 24th Grand Slam was cruelly ended by injury.

Williams started against Aliaksandra Sasnovich with heavy strapping on her thigh and slipped in the first game. The 39-year-old went down again in the seventh game and was overcome by emotion before having to retire. Center Court gave a standing ovation as she left, with Williams later saying: “The court meant the world to me.”

What is making Center Court so slippery?

Williams, seeded

sixth, seemed to do damage when she rocked backwards on the baseline before unleashing a forehand back to her opponent.

After going off court for treatment, the seven-time SW19 champion returned with a heavy limp and tried to continue before it soon became apparent she would be unable to. Tears filled her eyes as Williams thanked the crowd, who had been trying to encourage her, for their support.

At 15-15 on her service game at 3-3, Williams buckled as she prepared to receive a return and spent a few moments knelt on the court. The umpire came down off her chair as Williams slowly

managed to climb to her feet. Fans on Center Court rose in unison to give a heartfelt standing ovation as Wimbledon waved goodbye, with the crowd no doubt wondering if this will be the final time at SW19 for a player who turns 40 in September.

“I was heartbroken to have to withdraw today (Tuesday) after injuring my right leg,” Williams said in an Instagram post later on Tuesday.

“My love and gratitude are with the fans and the team who make being on Center Court so meaningful. Feeling the extraordinary warmth and support of the crowd when I walked on –

and off – the court meant the world to me.” The retirement came within an hour of Center Court watching France’s Adrian Panarino also have to retire from his match against Roger Federer.

The 33-year old slipped on the same baseline, leading to Britain’s Andy Murray – who had played there on Monday – tweeting about the surface.

It was a cruel blow for Williams who had broken for a 3-1 lead.

“I’m so sad for Serena. She is a great champion,” said Belarusian world number 100 Sasnovich. “It happens sometimes in tennis, but all the best to her.”

West Indies Women v. Pakistan Women



West Indies Women's fast bowler Shamilia Connell bowled her team to a fantastic victory over Pakistan Women in the opening match of their CG Insurance Twenty20 International (T20I) series on Wednesday. She took three wickets in a superb opening burst which gave the home team the ideal start in the field after they made 136-6 off their 20 overs. Pakistan never fully recovered and finished on 126-6 off their 20 overs.

It was the ideal start to the three-match series for the home team, winning by 10 runs to kick-start their campaign, as women's international cricket returned to the Caribbean. Connell ended

with 3 for 24, all three batters bowled. In the first over, Jerveira Rauf dragged on a sharp delivery and in the next over she also sent back Javeria Khan and Nida Dar to leave Pakistan in deep trouble at 23 for 3.

They managed to recover, thanks to some good power-hitting from Ayesha Naseem (45 not out) and Fatima Khan (24 not out) which sparked a late-innings revival after seam bowler Aliyah Alleyne took 2 for 23.

Earlier in the day, West Indies Women "A" lost to Pakistan "A" by seven wickets at the same venue. Sent in, the hosts made 96 for 8 off their 20 overs. Rashada Williams top-

scored with 33 off 41 deliveries and Shabika Gajrab chipped in with an unbeaten 20 off 24 balls. Off-spinner Rameen Shamin (2 for 10) and fast bowler Aiman Anwar (2 for 22) finished two wickets apiece.

In reply, Pakistan "A" reached their target with seven balls to spare, thanks to opener Ayesha Zafar who saw her team home with an unbeaten 40 off 45 deliveries. The 26-year old right hander counted four fours and put on 40 off 44 balls for the first wicket with 23-year old Omaira Sohail who made 21 from 33 balls with two boundaries.

West Indies won by 10 runs.



T20 World Cup moved to United Arab Emirates and Oman

NEW DEHLI, India (AFP) – This year's T20 World Cup will be moved to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman due to the coronavirus situation in India, cricket's world body confirmed on Tuesday.

The tournament was originally meant to be in India, but the country is emerging from a COVID-19 surge in April and May, and experts fear a new wave of cases later this year.

"Our priority is to deliver the ICC [International Cricket Council] Men's T20 World Cup 2021 safely, in full, and in its current window," said Geoff Allardice, acting chief executive of the ICC.

"While we are incredibly disappointed not to be hosting the event in India, the decision gives us the certainty we need

to stage the event in a country that is a proven international host of multi-team events in a bio-secure environment."

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had already said on Monday that the tournament would be shifted.

The event will take place from 17th October to 14th November. It will be held across four venues – Dubai International Stadium, Sheik Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi, Sharjah Cricket Stadium and Oman Cricket Academy.

The ICC had given the BCCI a deadline of the end of June to decide the host country for T20's showpiece event due to the high number of COVID-19 cases in India.

The BCCI had already moved the suspended Indian Premier

League (IPL) to the UAE in September-October, after the T20 tournament was halted on 4th May due to a number of players and team officials becoming infected with COVID-19.

At the time, India was experiencing a massive surge in COVID-19 cases that overwhelmed health system in many places, and much of the country was under lockdown.

India, home to 1.3 billion people, has eased many lockdown restrictions in recent weeks following a sharp fall in the number of new infections.

The ICC postponed the T20 World Cup, originally scheduled to be held in Australia in 2020. India was handed the hosting rights in 2021 and Australia was chosen as host for the 2022 edition.

CG Insurance T20 International Series



SOURCE: WINDIES TWITTER

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada – South Africa won the toss for the first time in the series and inserted the West Indies during the 4th CG Insurance T20 International (T20I). As in the previous matches, the West Indies' batting in the middle order was again cause for concern.

Only four West Indian batsmen – Lendl Simmons, 47; Kieron Pollard, 51 not out; Nicholas Pooran, 16; and Fabian Allen, 19 not out – managed to get double figures.

However, West Indies finished strong after stuttering in the middle. Fabian Allen, 19 not out, provided the skipper with good support toward the end of the innings. They ended on 167 for 6.

South Africa's response mirrored the West Indies innings. However, apart from Quinton de Kock, 60; Aiden Markram, 20; and Kagiso Rabada, 16, no other batsman contributed significantly with the bat. Extras (13) were the next highest in the

South African innings. Dwayne Bravo had career best figures of 4 for 19 to end as the main destroyer. West Indies earlier welcomed back Chris Gayle and Shimron Hetmyer, while both Jason Holder and Kevin Sinclair were rested.

West Indies won by 21 runs. The series is now tied at 2-2 and sets up nicely the decider which will be played tomorrow.

DEWS