



HEALTH MINISTER DENIES SEVERING AIRPORT NURSES

SEE PAGES 4-5

AYRE FOUNDATION PULLS OFF ANOTHER LIFE SAVING HELICOPTER MEDEVAC:

Appreciation abounds on the sister isle of Barbuda for the philanthropic hand extended by billionaire investor and economic envoy, Ambassador Calvin Ayre, through the Foundation and helicopter service – both named after him – that have more than once provided emergency medical evacuation for Barbudans needing urgent medical care or surgical interventions at the Sir Lester Bird Mount St. John Medical Center miles away in Antigua. Details about the Ayre Foundation's latest Triple-H (humanitarian helicopter heroics) on **PAGE 9**

Second cruise ship since reopening gets grand welcome (pages 7-8)

Education Minister moots direct collaboration between ABIIT and UWI (story on page 12)

PM Browne headlines CARICOM engagement with UK on access to finance (see page 8)

Why you shouldn't skip the second dose of your Covid-19 vaccine

Research suggests a single dose of the AstraZeneca is only 33% protective against the Delta variant.

Rebecca Aicheler, The Conversation

Jun 29, 2021 · 07:30 pm

Vaccination is the safest way to gain immunity to the coronavirus, and with most COVID-19 vaccines, you need two doses to get the greatest possible protection.

Immunologists call this method of giving people multiple doses “prime-boosting”. Essentially, you first teach the immune system what it is looking for – you prime it with the first vaccination. Then, after the immune system has had time to respond to the priming, it is challenged again. The immune response learned the first time is boosted when put into practice on the second exposure.

Most (though not all) vaccines – COVID-19 or otherwise – use prime-boosting to maximise protection. Some even require further doses. This is because immunity can wane over time or, as is the case with the flu vaccine, the virus that causes the disease can change so that

the original vaccine no longer provides good protection.

With COVID-19, we have strong evidence that taking a second dose increases your defence against the disease. Despite this, one in 40 people in the United Kingdom who have had the first dose do not seem to be getting their second. In the United States, there have been reports of millions of people skipping their second doses. In doing so, these people are endangering their health.

Two doses beneficial

The benefits of prime-boosting with COVID-19 vaccines were initially seen in clinical trials. Early studies of the currently approved COVID-19 vaccines compared the immune responses in people who received one or two vaccine doses. Results showed that after the second dose, people

had higher amounts of antibodies to fight the virus, indicating that taking more than one dose would probably increase vaccine effectiveness.

Larger clinical trials then continued with this prime-boosting regimen. With the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, protection against symptomatic COVID-19 was found to be 52% from 12 days after the first dose (immunity takes time to build). Protection then rose to 95% after the second dose.

With the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, protection against symptomatic COVID-19 from 22 days after the first dose was estimated to be 76%. When a second dose was given 12 weeks after the first, it raised protection to 81%.

With the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines across many countries worldwide, we are now getting real-world data that confirms the benefits of prime-boosting

that were recorded in trials. A recent British preprint – a piece of research not yet reviewed by other scientists – found that from 21 days after the first vaccine dose, coronavirus infections were reduced by 66% in people receiving the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and by 61% in those taking the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. But in people who had also taken second doses, these reductions then fell further to 80% and 79% respectively.

Delta's danger

There is also now an extra reason you should get your second dose: new coronavirus variants of concern. These are forms of the coronavirus that have genetic mutations that may make them more transmissible, less susceptible to the protective effects of vaccines, harder to detect, or cause more severe disease. From late 2020, the UK struggled against the Alpha vari-

ant, a more transmissible form of the virus that became dominant over winter. This variant has since been out-competed by the Delta variant, an even more transmissible form of the virus that is now dominant instead. A new lab-based study suggests that the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine provides protection against currently circulating variants, including Alpha and Delta. However, it also found that after only one dose, the ability of the vaccine to combat different variants varies significantly. The scientists investigated the antibody responses of 250 people vaccinated with the Pfizer/BioNTech vac-

cine against five variants of the coronavirus, including the original "wild type" that spread in early 2020 as well as the Alpha and Delta variants and several other forms. After the first and second dose, the researchers looked to see whether people had antibodies able to prevent infection – called neutralising antibodies – for these different forms of the virus.

In individuals who had received only one dose of the vaccine, neutralising antibody levels for the Delta variant were significantly lower than for the Alpha variant. That is to say, the research suggested that a single dose might still afford

more protection than no vaccination, but that people who only had a single dose would be less well-protected than they were before the Delta variant had emerged. Critically, these laboratory results appear to be reflected in the real world. A preprint from Public Health England suggests that after one dose, the Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines are 50% protective against symptomatic disease caused by the Alpha variant, but only 33% protective against the Delta variant. To stress, against the newly dominant variant in the UK, a single vaccine dose is less likely to stop you

from getting ill.

Yet, after two doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, the paper suggests protection against symptomatic COVID-19 rises to 93% against the Alpha variant and 88% for the Delta variant. The Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine also sees a lift: after a second dose it is 66% protective against Alpha and 60% effective against Delta. The importance of having two doses is even more evident when looking at hospitalisation rates for COVID-19. Another recent preprint from Public Health England suggests that protection against needing hospital treatment for Covid-19 caused by the

Cont'd on pg 4

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Delta variant goes up from 94% with one dose to 96% with two doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. The difference is even more marked for the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, with protection rising from 71% to 92% with a second dose.

Although these findings are yet to be formally published, the evidence is strong that getting a second vaccine dose raises your protection against getting ill and developing a serious illness. Meanwhile, the new dominance of the Delta variant has also made the lower protection offered by a single dose even lower than it was before. Making that second trip to the vaccine clinic is therefore critically important.

(Rebecca Aicheler is a senior lecturer in immunology at Cardiff Metropolitan University. This article first appeared on The Conversation.)





Reports of nurses being severed dismissed as untrue

by *Shelton Daniel*

Health Minister Sir Molwyn Joseph has declared categorically that there is no truth to allegations that nurses deployed at the V.C. Bird International Airport (VCBIA) have been severed – and for no other reason than Government’s unwillingness to pay them.

The Health Ministry late last week issued a brief statement denying the allegations being circulated in parts of the local media, and indicated that a press conference would be convened early “next

[this] week” to address them in detail.

Minister Joseph was accompanied during Tuesday’s appearance on state media by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Wellness & the Environment, Ms. Ena Dalso-Henry.

Sir Molwyn summarized the allegations – which he declared from the outset to be all “outrageously false” – as follows: that the nurses were told their services are no longer required after months of not being paid; that the nurses have been sev-

ered as an excuse for Government to avoid paying outstanding monies due to them; and that the severed nurses are owed several months’ salary, which includes two months from last year, and for three months of the current year.

The public sector nurses were deployed to the airport last year as part of heightened port-of-entry surveillance put in place to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Their assignment to the airport surveillance unit was never intended or

understood to be an arrangement separate from their established status.

They were, however, paid or eligible for additional allowances to compensate for the special circumstances of deployment to the airport and additional work it entailed.

Minister Joseph regards the allegations as “an attempt to foment discord between the Ministry of Health and the nurses.” “We have no dispute with the nurses,” he stated. “I spoke personally to the principal nursing

officer who denied ever having made those statements.”

He said, “All salaries, traveling allowances, housing allowance, risk pay, session pay, stipend, and uniform allowances, have been paid. The nurses are making claims for stipend for the period April to June 2021, but it requires a Cabinet decision ... for that payment to be made, since the initial Cabinet decision was for one year that expired on March 31st. We have already decided as a Ministry to request a continuation of payments for the three months in which the nurses believe they are entitled. However, it must be made clear that we have met the obligations of payments to the nurses in large measure.”

Pertaining to the issue of overtime, both Sir Molwyn and PS Dalso-Henry suggested that this was held up because of tardiness in submission of the claims for payment and the need for reconciliation of the quanta being claimed.

“That will be shortly corrected, and those payments will be made,” Health Minister Joseph assured.

Repeating for emphasis that there was no issue of severance with regard to the nurses, Sir Molwyn recalled that they “were reassigned from the clinics to the airport.” He said it had to be

taken into consideration that some of the nurses deployed to the airport “were also working fulltime at the clinics. Therefore, as a consequence of having to allow some of the nurses to work at the airport, some of the clinics suffered. I personally have received several complaints from many clinics in Antigua and Barbuda that the staffing at those clinics [was] inadequate ...”

Minister Joseph said this was just one of the reasons for the decision being taken to revert the nurses back to their substantive jobs at the clinics. But he said another reason was that the number of incidents at the airport requiring the presence of such fulltime professional nurses did not warrant their continued deployment. According to him, of the 97,000 travelers who traversed the VCBIA from 4 April 2020 and 20 June 2021, only eight such individuals needed medical intervention from the nurses stationed at the airport

“We, Cabinet, made the decision that we could survive with a smaller cadre of nurses, and in this case the Cabinet recommended three nurses to work with the other individuals at the front line.”

On the matter of the reverted nurses being replaced by non-nursing personnel, Sir Molwyn quoted from what he said were guidelines is-

sued by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Primary screeners do not need to have prior health or medical experience. They can be anyone who demonstrates competence in taking temperature; observing for signs and symptoms of illness; reviewing a health declaration form; and determining if a person needs to be sent for secondary screening – and secondary screening should ideally have medically trained personnel such as nurses and physicians.

“This is what has guided the Cabinet policy,” Sir Molwyn explained. “So rather than having 15 nurses pulled from the clinics of Antigua and Barbuda as part of the roster to work at the airport, what we have done is to train people from within the system to do the basic primary screening and then have two or three nurses standby if someone needs medical intervention.”

The Health Minister said not only have no nurses been severed, “This was never contemplated and would be foolish, given the overall shortage of nurses.” He added that reverting the nurses to their regular functions at the clinics was also useful for resolving “the problems of fatigue” among nurses who had to shoulder the added airport surveillance duties.



TOURISM OFFICIALS WELCOME SEABOURN ODYSSEY

Local tourism officials welcome the Seabourn Odyssey on Tuesday at Heritage Quay. Tourism Authority CEO Colin James is second from left, followed by the ship's captain (in white uniform), Tourism Minister Fernandez, Permanent Secretary Walter Christopher and Antigua Cruise Port manager Dona Regis (in blue dress) among others.

Tourism officials on Tuesday welcomed the return of the ultra-luxurious Seabourn Odyssey, an 11-deck cruise liner carrying 111 fully vaccinated passengers onboard. Seabourn Odyssey is the second passenger-carrying cruise ship to visit Antigua this year, signaling the rebound of the cruise tourism sector.

On hand to welcome

captain Krasimir Radev, his passengers and crew, was Minister of Tourism and Investment, Hon. Charles Fernandez; CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA), Colin C. James; Permanent Secretary within the Ministry of Tourism and Investment, Walter Christopher; as well as the General Manager of Antigua Cruise Ports (ACP), Dona Regis-Prosper and her

team. CEO of the ABTA in welcoming the crew stated: "Today is a special day in Antigua and Barbuda, because we are now welcoming another ship. We had an inaugural call last week with the arrival of Windstar Cruises' Star Breeze, and this week we welcome the Seabourn Odyssey. It is a great opportunity for Antigua and Barbuda, and it signifies that our cruise industry has

restarted and it has restarted strongly."

James noted that the first few passenger sailings are [on] smaller vessels, and it gives officials an opportunity to test the COVID-19 protocols. "As of next week, passengers will be able to move around in small groups on guided tours. They will be able to visit the stores and do some shopping. This will enable us to get back in the

swing of things in a safe manner.”

Tourism Minister Fernandez was also elated at the vessels' arrival and noted that, “It is indeed a great pleasure to welcome the Seabourn Odyssey which was here a month ago when they made a call for technical and refueling purposes. They promised that they will return with passengers, and so they are here today.”

He continued: “We understand that these are very unprecedented times and there are some risks involved. However, we are confident that once we can manage the risks working in tandem with cruise lines as well as the Ministry of Health, we can look forward to a highly successful cruise season.”

Captain Radov, in acceptance of the pleasantries relayed, remarked: “We are pleased to be back and restart our operations and to bring business back to all of the islands we are visiting. Antigua is a beautiful place and I am sure all our guests are very appreciative and happy to be back.”

Seabourn Odyssey will return to Antigua every other week until September, something that Minister Fernandez says shows confidence in Antigua and Barbuda's tourism product and the COVID-19 protocols that are in place.

UK and CARICOM continue engagement on access to finance



Lord Ahmad, UK Minister of State responsible for the Caribbean

On 15 July 2021, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the United Kingdom (UK) co-hosted a virtual dialogue on the issue of access to finance.

The event was opened by UK Minister of State responsible for the Caribbean, Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon and Assistant Secretary General of CARICOM, Joseph Cox. Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and Chairman of CARICOM, the Hon. Gaston Browne, as well as government ministers from Belize and St. Vincent & the Grenadines, also made presentations on the issue, alongside members of the donor community from the US, Canada,

the World Bank, and the Caribbean Development Bank.

The event further amplified the challenges that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face when it comes to access to finance. Some existing mechanisms to deliver concessional and developmental financing do not take into consideration the unique challenges and vulnerabilities that communities in the Caribbean face. These challenges include the devastating impacts of extreme weather events, and the effects of economic shocks such as the impact of COVID-19 on tourism dependent economies.

CARICOM members

and representatives were clear that there is an urgent need to reform, including where eligibility does not take into account the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS.

The event also amplified frustrations on the [extent] of bureaucracy [that has to be navigated when dealing with] international organisations, [and the impact this can have on SIDS'] ability to access funding.

The UK [has signaled its commitment] to supporting the Caribbean and all Small Island Developing States in finding ... solutions to the problem. Commenting on the event, Lord Ahmad said, “We need to take a fresh look at finance for small states. Gross national income does not tell the whole story, especially when a natural disaster can wipe out a year's GDP in a single day. It does not capture the remoteness, vulnerability, or tell us about the challenge of protecting biodiversity and responding to climate change they face. We must come together to see progress that better supports our friends in the Caribbean and their access to finance.”

Barbuda medevac patient recovering after helicopter help from Calvin Ayre



Medical evacuation (medevac) in progress via Calvin Ayre Helicopters on Sunday 18 July 2021.

A 41-year-old Codrington man, who was medevac'd by CalvinAir Helicopters (CAH) after developing serious medical complications, is recovering well at the Sir Lester Bird Mount St. John's Medical Centre (SLBMSJMC). The distressed patient was airlifted on Sunday 18 July after doctors on the sister isle concluded that his condition would require emergency surgery.

"The patient was in such excruciating pain that he literally screamed throughout the entire flight," said a sympathetic Mark Fleming, CAH General Manager and Chief Pilot. "We are relieved to learn today that his surgery was successful and he is on the road to recovery." "I would like to take the opportunity to thank CalvinAir Helicopters, yet again,

for stepping in and offering their tremendous medevac service," said Dr. Jeremy Deazle, head resident doctor at the Hanna Thomas Hospital in Barbuda. "The emergency case on Sunday 18 required immediate surgical attention and CalvinAir Helicopters was able to step in and evacuate the patient successfully to Mt. St. John. That patient has undergone the surgical procedure already, and it was successful. He is recovering and doing well at MSJMC and will be discharged anytime soon." According to Dr. Deazle, the hospital normally utilizes the services of two airlines to medevac its cases. However, those airlines may be unavailable at times, as they may be providing commercial service to nearby Caribbean is-

lands. "CalvinAir Helicopters has always been a phone call away and we really appreciate the kind gesture," Dr. Deazle continued. "We are grateful that everything worked out so well." Barbuda Council Secretary Paul Nedd, who made the urgent call to CAH, also echoed Dr. Deazle's sentiment and expressed his thanks to the helicopter company for providing such a valuable and potentially life-saving service. "CalvinAir Helicopters has never turned us down," he said, "and for that, we are truly grateful." - Jamilla Kirwan, Ayre Group Media Relations Specialist said, "On behalf of the entire Ayre Group, we would like to wish a speedy recovery to the patient. Through our commercial operations and our charity arm, the Calvin Ayre Foundation, our Group intends to continue playing our role as good corporate citizens in whatever way possible." According to Kirwan, although CAH operates a commercial business, the decision to contribute flight time free-of-cost to emergency airlift was made by the chairman of the Ayre Group, Ambassador Calvin Ayre, under the mandate of giving back to the twin-island nation. "The emergency flights," she said, "which would commercially cost US\$2,000 (ECD\$5,400) are paid for by the Calvin Ayre Foundation (CAF). The Foundation also covers the cost for any search and rescue operations." - To date, this is the fifth medical emergency CalvinAir Helicopters has provided since commencing operation in November 2020.

Woman found with firearm and drugs



Aminata Joseph-Wilson of Grays Farm has been named by police as a suspect for unlawful possession of a firearm and a controlled substance (cannabis).

Aminata Joseph-Wilson of Grays Farm, who currently resides in Barbuda, is now in police custody assisting the police with their investigations after a firearm and a quantity of cannabis were found on her property.

Around 4:15 p.m. on Monday 19th July, police officers attached to Barbuda Police Station executed a warrant on the property of the 23-year-old woman and found 43 grams of Cannabis and an unlicensed firearm.

The items were seized and she was taken into custody. Further investigations into the matter are ongoing.

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Digital assets businesses must be licensed, says FSRC



FSRC

FINANCIAL SERVICES REGULATORY COMMISSION

The Financial Services Regulatory Commission (FSRC) of Antigua and Barbuda advises the general public that the Digital Assets Business Act 2020 requires all persons carrying on digital assets business – as defined by the Act – to be licensed by the Commission, which is the designated and sole licensing and regulatory body for persons carrying on digital assets business within and from within Antigua and Barbuda.

The Commission invites persons who have been and those who are interested in

carrying on digital assets business to submit an application to the Commission.

Any person who carries on digital assets business without a license, commits an offence and is liable to imprisonment and a fine.

The Digital Assets Business Act regulations and application documents can be accessed at <https://www.fsrc.gov.ag/index.php/services/digital-asset-business>.

The Commission's opening and closing hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Interested persons may also contact the Commission at cro@fsrc.gov.ag.

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Education Minister sees need for key links between ABIIT and UWI-FI

Education Minister Daryl Matthew says Antigua and Barbuda the operation of an institution such as the International Institute

for Technology (ABIIT) forms a critical part of Government's overall objectives for technology development in the country.

NOTICE

To: Your Worship
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Gray's Farm
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To: The Commissioner of Police
Police Headquarters
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Dear Sir/Madame,
Re: Notice- Application for Tavern Licence

I, Lissette Arlene Cadot of Christian Street, with registered business situate at Christian Street St. Johns Antigua and Barbuda **DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE** that it is my intention to apply at the next sitting of the liquor licensing Court to be held at the Magistrate's Court, Gray's Farm, St. Johns, Antigua on Thursday 26th August, 2021 next ensuring for a Liquor Licensing pursuant to section (11) (5) of the Licensing (intoxication Liquor) Act Cap. 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda 1992 Revised Edition, in respect of premises known as "Buen Sabol Bar & Restaurant" situated at Christian Street in the parish of St. Johns, Antigua and Barbuda.

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Speaking at a ceremony to mark the graduation exercises for students at ABIIT, Matthew said ABIIT's role forms part of the policy objectives that include the University of the West Indies' Five Islands (UWI-FI) campus here in Antigua and Barbuda.

"It is significant that you are graduating from an institution that focuses on technology; as, over the past few months, the government – in collaboration with the UWI FI – has established the School of Computing, Science and Artificial Intelligence. This was done deliberately to explore different ways that the campus at Five Islands could be a special arm within the UWI system that ventures into the area of technology," the minister explained.

Matthew stated further that the establishment of an institution to confer higher degrees and training in

that field of endeavour was considered the way to go.

"This development is however contingent upon institutions such as ABIIT providing a feeder into its higher training programmes. That institution needs a feeder programme that trains students who may not be able to matriculate directly, but who have the will, motivation and the as-

piration to be there," he noted.

The education minister revealed that there are currently ongoing discussions between ABIIT and UWI-FI for students to begin their training at ABIIT and then matriculate into the UWI system from which they will graduate.

"These are the sort of programmes that we believe are important,

not only for our people, but for the entire OECS of which the UWI-FI is its 'home' university," he added.

Matthew assured the graduates that whatever their reasons for studying at ABIIT, the opportunities are there for them pursue their desired goals, whether to enter the job market or to pursue higher learning.

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Flow's popular **'Bag ah Money'** promotion is back!

\$30,000 in cash up for grabs as Flow once again rolls out its highly popular 'Win a Bag ah Money' promotion.

Flow customers across Antigua and Barbuda are beaming with excitement over the relaunch of a campaign which will see new and existing Customers winning a total of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) cash over the next seven weeks.

The promotion will see two customers winning grand prizes of \$10,000 in cash and another 10 customers each winning \$1,000 during the promotion.

Every Friday beginning July 23rd, two winners will be drawn live on a radio show to receive cash prizes of One Thousand Dollars each as part of the Flow 'Win A Bag 'Ah Money' promotion. Following which there will be two Grand Prize draws where two lucky customers will have the opportunity to win \$10,000 each. The grand prize draws will take place on August 13th and September 3rd, respectively.

Flow is making the promotion even more exciting this year by allowing weekly cash winners to also have a chance to be repeat winners in the two \$10,000 grand draws.

There are three easy ways to be entered into the promotion. Existing and new Flow customers can either sign-up for a New Flex Postpaid Plan; Activate a 7 or 30 Always on Prepaid Plan; or simply pay their Flow TV, Internet, or mobile bill in full and on time for a chance to win.

"We are extremely pleased to reward our customers with more value for their money" stated Flow Commercial Manager, Denise Dixon. "On the heels of the launch of our New Flex Postpaid plans, we are adding even more heat to Summer with our newly relaunched "Bag Ah Money" Summer Campaign. This promotion was so successful last year that we have decided to do it again. When it's nice, you do it twice!" remarked Dixon.

BOARD OF EDUCATION – 1994 2021 NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

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Browne, Nequoyah O.	George, Kacy R. J.	Lynch, Ken-Nyse N.	Simon, Natajah E. J.
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De Bellotte, Raynécia L.	Grant, Dorian S	Nanton, Anil I.	Waldron, Wendy S.
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Edwards, Damani N	James, Tinacee S.	Phillips, Paulette A.	
Elliott, Vibert J.	James, Zachary K. R.	Pigott, Chamere A.	
Ellis, Shivawn C.	Jarvis, Carissa S.	Pond, Alicia M. C	

The Board of Education extends congratulations to all. All scholarship awardees will be contacted by a representative of the Scholarship Department to set an appointment date for bond processing. All recipients are asked to pay \$50.00 for processing fee. Also, please note that all awardees are required to provide proof of acceptance and enrollment for the 2021/2022 academic year before bonds are processed.

Cuba: The Caribbean role model that we must support



by the Leonard Tim Hector Memorial Committee (LTHMC)

July 18, 2021 – On Sunday 11th July there were reports of people protesting about the economic conditions and the difficulties being experienced with the pandemic in Cuba.

This should not come as a shock, particularly when one examines what has been taking place globally with various economies.

For over 60 years, the American empire, a mere 90 miles from this sovereign Caribbean country, has done everything to overthrow the government of Cuba by invasion, attempted assassination of its leaders, and the illegal economic blockade that has brought untold damage to the people of Cuba. This blockade, along with hundreds of other

measures, has been reinforced within the last five years, threatening the lives and security of the Cuban people.

Human rights organizations have vigorously condemned the blockade and deemed it genocidal. Contin-

uously, for years, the global community at the United Nations has voted in support of repeated Cuban resolu-

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tions calling for an end to the blockade, but to no avail.

Clearly, the illegal anti-trading measures against Cuba are designed to create instability in the society because of the extreme economic hardship compounded by the pandemic. Cuba, from the very inception of its Revolution in 1959, has been a beacon for all countries that have felt the yoke of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Cuba and the Cuban people demonstrated their solidarity with the people of Algeria when they struggled for their Independence against the French. South Africa, Namibia and others would not be politically independent countries today, were it not for the Cuban freedom fighters.

Against all odds, because of the political and economic system since its Revolution, Cuba has been able to train its people in every discipline and eliminate the abject poverty and illiteracy that existed among the vast majority of its working people. But it did not stop there. In the spirit of internationalism, it provided the same training for hundreds of thousands of persons in the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa and Asia.

This small Caribbean country of 11 million people has demonstrated what is possible if allowed to define one's own independent political and economic path. It is for that demonstration of a different political and economic direction that Cuba suffers today from the forces of capitalism and, in particular, America.

We in the Caribbean have a duty and responsibility to come together to support the Cuban people and Government in their hour of need.

Cuba is not experiencing extreme difficulty because of the mismanagement of the economy. It is not because of a corrupt leadership exploiting the masses of people. It is because everything conceivable is being done by the United States of America to prevent them from engaging in normal international trade, making it impossible to provide the population with basic necessities.

Those who overthrew the democratically elected government of Allende in Chile and murdered thousands; who, within recent times, overthrew the government of Evo Morales in Bolivia; who overthrew the government in Honduras, are

economic hit men. They, along with others, are instigating elements within Cuba, using dire economic circumstances due to the blockade.

We must not allow those who are intent on reversing the gains of self-determination to do so. Those who want to reinstate the exploitative production relations that existed prior to the Revolution must be stopped.

Socialism in Cuba has been successful, when the indices of human development are examined. For example, in education, health, life expectancy, social development, arts, music, culture, and sports. In fact, no other country could lay claim to the advances they have made since the Revolution, considering the uninterrupted brutal and wicked steps taken – in particular by the USA – to devastate the country.

The governments and people of the Caribbean and the Americas must recognize that if the monopolist Capitalist powers succeed in overthrowing the legitimate government of Cuba, the right of self-determination and the development of an independent political and economic path will be destroyed.

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Barbados to slash taxes by 50% for regional travellers



Barbados Today - Barbados will be going the same route as its Caribbean neighbor, Antigua and Barbuda, in slashing airport taxes for regional travellers by as much as 50 percent.

Minister of Tourism and International Transport Lisa Cummins made the disclosure Tuesday morning as she responded to a question from Barbados TODAY during the state-of-the-tourism-industry update at the Barbados Hilton.

"Cabinet has agreed that there is to be a 50 percent reduction in airport service

charge to regional travellers. That brings us pretty much in line with what you have been hearing coming out of other markets and, in particular, Antigua . . . that is meant to reduce the taxes on intra-regional travel," said Cummins.

She was outlining several measures aimed at breathing new life into the tourism industry and getting more visitors to the island.

The move to reduce the taxes came a year after Prime Minister Mia Motley announced that it was a step her administration was examining.

Barbados's Minister of Tourism and International Transport, Lisa Cummins.

Four-year-old boy in Jamaica dies after severe beating



Jamaica Gleaner – A four-year-old boy died at hospital on Sunday, hours after he was allegedly beaten with a piece of stick by his stepfather for “eating slowly”, law enforcement sources have revealed.

The deceased has been

identified as Nashawn Brown who resided with his mother and step-father at Willowdene in Spanish Town, St. Catherine.

Both adults were later questioned by detectives, after which the stepfather was taken into custody, the

police confirmed through its Corporate Communication Unit (CCU).

“We are awaiting the results of the post mortem to see if there is enough to lay charges,” a CCU spokesperson told The Gleaner.

It’s alleged that the moth-

er of the four-year-old was also physically assaulted with the piece of stick after she tried to calm her enraged spouse.

The CCU did not disclose details of the circumstances that led to the child’s death, but said an investigation is underway.

But, according to sources and a police report seen by The Gleaner, the four-year-old complained of not feeling well and was “eating slowly” about 7:00 p.m. while the family was having dinner.

His step-father “became angry and broke a piece of stick which he used to beat the deceased severely, causing bruising and swelling to his upper and lower limbs”, according to the police report.

It’s alleged that when the child’s mother tried to speak to her spouse, he used the stick to hit her over the head and then took a piece of metal to beat her all over her body, causing bruising, swelling and a wound to her left arm that caused bleeding.

The child reportedly went to the bathroom where, minutes later, he was found by his step-father breathing slowly and before he became unresponsive.

According to CCU, Nashawn was pronounced dead on arrival at the Spanish Town Hospital about 9:00 p.m.

St. Lucia politician Stephenson King: 'They Must Go To Jail!'



Stephenson King
Independent Candidate
Castries North

Former prime minister of St. Lucia, Stephenson King.

St. Lucia Times - Former United Workers Party (UWP) leader Stephenson King has criticised the party over its performance in relation to health care during its time in government, while indicating that people must be incarcerated over the St. Jude Hospital project.

"They must go to jail for that project," the Castries North MP told a meeting on Sunday night in his constituency.

"If there's one thing the UWP should be ashamed about, it's their performance in health in this country," declared King, who will be participating

in the July 26 general elections as an independent candidate.

"When you tell me a UWP government started the reconstruction of St. Jude Hospital. We lost after two years of commencement of the work. The Labour Party came in and, without delay, con-

tinued the work of the hospital," the Castries North MP recalled.

"We came back and we stopped the project, demolished buildings, found reasons why it must not continue until it lands in the lap of Fresh Start and we spend millions and millions of dollars on this facility and to date it cannot open," King told his audience.

"They must be jailed for that project, because to date they cannot finish it and they cannot tell you how much they have been spending on that project with Fresh Start being the main contractor," he said.

"We must start investing in health in a meaningful way," King asserted, while speaking to the need for transparency in the business of this country.

The former prime minister told his audience that people must know how the government is spending their money.

He observed that St. Jude Hospital is not complete and, from all indications, it will not be until 2022 or 2023 if what currently obtains continues.

King described the situation as an indictment on the United Workers Party and a travesty in the health sector.

Closed for 16 months, Trinidad and Tobago reopens border



CMC - Trinidad and Tobago on Saturday reopened its borders after a 16-month closure due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley, speaking at the weekly news conference, said he had received reports that on the very first flight to have arrived, some passengers were seeking to beat the system.

"This is a huge step we are taking ... we are taking it knowing that we are still under threat, but we are also operating with significant cautions, and you were told before what are the conditions for entry.

"Unfortunately I can tell you that in the first shipment of people into the country, the very first one, we had an instance of people not wanting to cooperate with restriction. I want to make it clear again that we are not giving any passes to people who believe that they are smarter than the rest of us," Prime Minister Rowley said.

The authorities, prior to the re-opening of the airport, had outlined a series of measures, including the need for a PCR test prior to arrival.

They also warned that unvaccinated non-nationals would not be allowed into the country. In addition, the Parliament approved fines in excess of TT\$300,000 for persons who contravene the measures on arrival.

Rowley said, notwithstanding the situation on Saturday at the airport, "I expect that it will go smoothly and that would include law enforcement as well." Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Stuart Young, told reporters that so far only the State-owned Caribbean Airlines (CAL) has regular scheduled flights operating from the Piarco International Airport and that the other airlines would soon be making their schedules available when they are ready.

Prime Minister Rowley also announced that, as of Monday, another aspect of the re-opening of the economy will take place with food establishments being allowed to conduct businesses, but only on a takeout and drive-through basis.

But he warned the population to ensure that they have to adhere to the protocols, including wearing masks, social distancing and wash-

ing hands frequently, and that there is to be no in-house dining or consumption on the premises.

He said based on the success of the reopening, the government would be looking at further openings to take effect by the end of the month.

The government is also hoping that with its ramped-up national vaccination program, by mid-August the economy should be well on the way to being fully re-opened and with the authorities being able to announce plans for the reopening of schools.

Rowley said he also hopes that discussions with the United States would bear fruit soon and that Port of Spain anticipates Washington would be providing the Pfizer vaccine, which has been approved by the World Health Organisation (WHO) for children 12 years and over.

He said if those vaccines become available, they will be used only for children of high school age so as to ensure that segment of the population is also vaccinated against the virus.

Belarus opposition leader asks US to impose more sanctions

(Reuters) – Belarus opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya said on Tuesday that she asked U.S. officials to impose sanctions on companies in her country's potash, oil, wood and steel sectors, as she visited Washington seeking stronger action against President Alexander Lukashenko's government.

Such measures would go beyond existing sanctions on Lukashenko's political allies and government bodies and "will be a real hit on him, to make him change his behavior and to release political prisoners," Tsikha-

nouskaya told reporters.

She said she delivered the list of enterprises, among them state-owned Belaruskali producer of potash fertilizer, at a meeting on Monday with State Department officials including Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

On Tuesday during a webinar sponsored by the Atlantic Council think tank, Tsikhanouskaya called for much tougher action by the world's democracies against Lukashenko, who has kept a tight grip on Belarus since 1994 and cracked down on peaceful street protests that began over a disputed presi-

dential election last August.

"I think it's high time for democratic countries to unite and show their teeth," said Tsikhanouskaya, who will also visit the White House and Capitol Hill.

Tsikhanouskaya, 38, was a candidate in the election instead of her husband Sergei Tsikhanouskiy, a video blogger who has been jailed since May 2020 on charges such as violating public order, which he denies. Tsikhanouskaya fled to neighboring Lithuania after Lukashenko's crackdown.

Lukashenko's opponents say the election was

rigged so that he could retain power. He denies the allegation. Meanwhile, the government has detained thousands of people amid allegations of torture, and shuttered independent media and rights groups.

Tsikhanouskaya called for Russian President Vladimir Putin to stop supporting Lukashenko.

"The relationship of Russia and Belarus at the moment is so close that the next step is loss of independence," she told reporters. "We understand that Lukashenko has to pay for the support of the Kremlin."



Belarus opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya

China floods: Thousands evacuated as rail stations and roads submerged

BBC - Torrential rain has caused severe flooding in parts of central China, forcing people from their homes and leaving stations and roads submerged. More than 10,000 people in Henan province have been evacuated to shelters following the record rainfall.

At least 12 people have died in the city of Zhengzhou since the flooding began, authorities there confirmed. More than a dozen cities have been affected with main roads forced to close and flights cancelled. Henan province, which is home to some 94 million people, has issued its highest level of weather warning following an unusually active rainy season.

Many factors contribute to flooding, but a warming atmosphere caused by climate change makes extreme rainfall more likely. Images on social media showed entire streets submerged, with cars and debris left drifting in the fast-moving floodwaters. There are also fears that a dam in Henan province could collapse after it was damaged by the recent storms.

A 20-metre (65ft) breach has emerged in the dam in Luoyang city, officials said. Soldiers have been deployed to the area and a statement

from the army warned it could “collapse at any time”. In Zhengzhou, unverified video footage showed passengers in a flooded subway train with water reaching their shoulders.

Rescuers were seen pulling people to safety using rope, while others stood on train seats to try to keep above the water.

It is not yet known how many people - if any - remain trapped, but hundreds are reported to have been rescued so far.

One person who went by the name Xiaopei wrote a post on social media site Weibo begging for help.

“The water in the carriage has reached my chest. I can’t speak anymore,” they said. The fire department later confirmed Xiaopei had been rescued.

“I have lived in Zhengzhou all my life and have never seen such a heavy rainstorm as today,” Wang Guirong, a 56-year-old restaurant manager, told the Associated Press.

The amount of rain over the last three days in Zhengzhou is reported to be the same as what it would usually receive in an entire year.

The downpours are forecasted to continue in the region for at least the next 24 hours.



Mali's interim president targeted in stabbing attempt during prayers

(CNN) - Mali's interim President Assimi Goita was targeted in an attempted stabbing on Tuesday, the Mali presidency said in a statement.

The incident happened during prayers at the Grand Mosque in the capital Bamako to mark the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha.

"Attempted stabbing attack against the President of the Transition, Colonel Assimi Goita, at the Grande Mosque of Bamako. The attacker was immediately subdued by close security. Investigations are ongoing," the presidency said in a statement posted on its official Twitter account.

Colonel Assimi Goita – the leader of two coups in nine months in Mali – was sworn in as transitional president on June 7.

Goita was initially interim vice president after leading the coup last August that overthrew President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita.

In May, he ordered the arrests of President Bah Ndaw and Prime Minister Moctar Ouane who shortly resigned while in detention. The duo were later released.

In the same month, Mali's constitutional



Colonel Assimi Goita (center) addresses the press during the ceremony of the 60th anniversary of Mali's independence in Bamako, on September 22, 2020.

court declared Goita to be the new interim president.

The court said in its ruling that Goita should fill the vacancy left by Ndaw's resignation "to lead the transition process to its conclusion" and carry the title of "President of the Transition, Head of State".

The ruling set Mali on a collision course with the 15-member Economic Community of West Af-

rican States (ECOWAS), which insisted that the transition, which is due to end with elections in February, remain civilian-led.

The African Union (AU) also suspended the West African country in response to the military coup.

The AU called for "an unimpeded, transparent and swift return to the civilian-led transition ... failing which, the Coun-

cil will not hesitate to impose targeted sanctions", the AU's Peace and Security Council said.

Mali's neighbors and international powers fear the revolt will jeopardize a commitment to hold a presidential election in February, and undermine a regional fight against Islamist militants, some of which are based in Mali's desert north.

Tunisia health minister sacked as COVID-19 cases surge



The just-fired health minister of Tunisia, Faouzi Mehdi

Al Jazeera - Tunisia's Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi has sacked Health Minister Faouzi Mehdi amid spiralling coronavirus cases in the North African country.

The ministry said earlier this month that Tunisia's health system had "collapsed" under the weight of the pandemic, which has caused more than 17,000 deaths in a population of about 12 million.

Mechichi's office an-

nounced Mehdi's sacking in a brief statement Tuesday, without giving a reason for the move. It said Social Affairs Minister Mohamed Trabelsi would head the ministry in a caretaker capacity.

Mehdi had initiated a temporary opening of vaccination stations to all Tunisians over 18 for Tuesday and Wednesday, leading to stampedes.

The ministry restricted access to vaccination to those aged over 40 on

Wednesday to avoid a new rush.

Mehdi's sacking is another instance of instability in a government that has seen several ministers resign over tensions with parliament and the presidency.

On Sunday, Tunisia reported 117 new coronavirus deaths and 2,520 new cases, bringing total recorded cases to more than half a million.

Health ministry spokeswoman Nissaf Ben

Alya said on July 8 the health situation was "catastrophic", telling a local radio station that "unfortunately, the health system has collapsed."

Some bodies of COVID-19 victims have been left lying in rooms next to other patients for up to 24 hours because there was not enough staff to organise their transfer to overstretched mortuaries.

The health ministry's Facebook page said special field hospitals set up in recent months are no longer enough.

Following Ben Alya's announcement, the government of war-torn neighbouring Libya said it had decided to close their shared border and suspend air links with Tunisia for a week.

Several countries, from Gulf states to former colonial power France and Mauritania have sent medical aid.

Since June 20, authorities have imposed a total lockdown on six regions and a partial lockdown in the capital.

Tunisians have lived through a decade of political instability and economic crisis since their 2011 revolution which overthrew dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, leaving vital public services crumbling.



How To Calculate a Discount

Businesses offer discounts to consumers for a variety of reasons. A store may be trying to attract new consumers or increase consumer demand for a particular product or service. Whatever the reason for offering a discount, consumers should be able to calculate the discount to know how much they are saving, and the discounted price.

There are two main ways to offer a discount: The first is a percentage off the original price, and the second is a specific dollar amount off of the original price.

How to calculate a percentage off the original price

1. Convert the percentage to a decimal

Represent the discount percentage in decimal form. Calculators have a function for this, or you can simply move the decimal point two places to the left.

Example: Shoe World wants to offer a 15% discount off school shoes. 15% in decimal form is 0.15.

2. Multiply the original price by the decimal

Take the original price of the item and multiply it by the decimal determined in step one.

Example: School shoes originally sold for \$95.

Multiply \$95 by 0.15 to find the amount of the discount. $\$95 \times 0.15 = \14.25 , so the shoes are discounted by \$14.25.



3. Subtract the discount from the original price

Take the discounted dollar amount from step two and subtract it from the original price.

Example: $\$95 - \$14.25 = \$80.75$. The discounted price of the shoes is \$80.75.

How to calculate a specific dollar amount off the original price

Example: Best Deals wants to offer a \$10 discount off one dozen exercise books.

Subtract the specific dollar amount from the original price.

One dozen exercise books originally sold for \$46.87.

Subtract \$10 from \$46.87 to find the amount of the discount. $\$46.87 - \$10 = \$36.87$. The discounted price of the exercise books is \$36.87.



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WED. 28th JULY

EVENING OF FASHION AND POETRY

The nation's poets, fashion houses and designers celebrate Emancipation.
 (ABS-TV and Facebook - 8pm)

FRI. 30th JULY

AFRICA DRESS DAY

Be at your glamorous best - all day, all night. Participate in our social media 'Best dressed' campaign. Post your picture for the world to see your expression of pride.
 PRIZES TO BE WON!

SAT. 31st JULY

WATCHNIGHT GATHERING

Join us as we usher in Emancipation Day with speeches and cultural performances in honour and respect of our ancestors who won freedom on August 1st 1834. This year's Gathering is dedicated to the Republic of Iran and its citizens.
 (ABS-TV and Facebook - 10pm)

SUN. 1st AUGUST

PARTICIPATION IN THE GREENBAY MORAVIAN CHURCH EMANCIPATION DAY SERVICE AND BREAKFAST

(6.30am on Zoom)

SUN. 1st AUGUST

EMANCIPATION DAY TREASURE HUNT

(In collaboration with Nolan Hus Foundation)
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Specialist players to bolster confident Windies ahead of Australia ODIs - Pollard

West Indies white-ball captain Kieron Pollard sees more specialist players coming in as replacements for some of the all-rounders who played in the just-concluded T20 series, when the team takes on Australia in the first of three ODIs starting today at the Kensington Oval in Barbados.

The West Indies are coming off a high after winning the five-match T20 series 4-1 and are hoping to carry that momentum into the ODI series. Pollard, who missed the T20 series with

a hamstring injury, expects several specialist players to come in for the longer format.

"I think, for us, one of the things we try to harp on is specialists and specialty positions. We have found ourselves in positions over the years where you have a lot of all-rounders, a lot of guys can bat, can bowl, but you want a guy specializing in one aspect or the other with a couple of utility guys who can bring three facets of the game," he said.

"So, in terms of our one-day set-up, if you look at the balance we have used for the last couple of years, and even in the last series, I can't see that changing much."

What he doesn't expect to change is the confidence exuded by his team in their comprehensive series victory over an admittedly under-strength Australian side.

"I hope that 100 percent of the body language that would have been shown throughout the T20 series, the guys will take it on board and we can continue that in the ODI's," he said.

"Obviously, it will be different personnel and personalities, but having said that, fielding and movement in the field in an attitude, and it's how bad you want it and how much you enjoy it.

"So far, from a white ball perspective, we have been very good in terms of our body language and in terms of our intent in the field, despite the different situations and scenarios that present themselves. So, hopefully, long may that continue and we are going to be impressing on the guys to go the extra mile."

Allyson Felix Could Make Track and Field History in Tokyo - See Her Full Schedule



RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL - AUGUST 20: Allyson Felix of the United States reacts after winning gold during the Women's 4 x 400 meter Relay on Day 15 of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games at the Olympic Stadium on August 20, 2016 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. (Photo by Ian Walton/Getty Images)

It's the Olympic storyline the country can't stop talking about: Allyson Felix is headed to her fifth Olympic Games. This Olympics is special not only because it's Felix's first as a mom, but also because she could leave Tokyo as the most decorated Olympian in women's track-and-field history. The nine-time Olympic medalist needs just one podium finish to make history, and she could have up to three chances to do it. So, when can you cheer on one of track and field's brightest stars? Take a look at her competition schedule below.

When to Watch Allyson Felix at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics

There's a lot up for grabs for Felix at the 2021 Tokyo Games - but first she, as well as Team USA's track relay teams, will have to advance to the finals. Individually, Felix will be looking to secure a spot in the 400-meter final, where she could win her first gold medal in the event. Should she make it to the finals in

all of her events (the 400-meter, the women's 4x400-meter relay, and the mixed 4x400-meter relay), this will be her full schedule.

Olympic sports will be available for streaming on various NBC platforms (with a paid subscription to a partner cable, satellite, or streaming service), and many of the track-and-field events will be taped and repackaged to air that evening in prime time.

- **Mixed 4x400-meter relay round 1:** Friday, July 30, at 7 a.m. ET.
- **Mixed 4x400-meter relay final:** Saturday, July 31, at 8:35 a.m. ET. Felix is predicted to have a spot on the US mixed-gender relay team.
- **Women's 400-meter round 1:** Monday, August 2, at 8:45 p.m. ET.
- **Women's 400-meter semifinals:** Wednesday, August 4, at 6:30 a.m. ET.
- **Women's 4x400-meter relay round 1:** Thursday, August 5, at 6:25 a.m. ET. Felix will most

likely be one of four runners representing the US in the women's 4x400-meter relay.

- **Women's 400-meter finals:** Friday, August 6, at 8:35 a.m. ET. Felix is a near shoo-in for the 400-meter final. In the 2016 Rio Games, she took home silver.

- **Women's 4x400-meter relay final:** Saturday, August 7, at 8:30 a.m. ET. Should they advance as predicted, Team USA will be looking to clinch their fourth straight Olympic gold.

The current Olympic competition format states that track events with the highest number of entries - like the 100-meter dash, for example - will have a preliminary round prior to the first round. From there, runners must advance to the semifinals, then to the finals, in which up to eight athletes race for a medal. Will Felix become the most decorated Olympian in women's track-and-field history? There's only one way to find out!



Pelé (right) with Cristiano Ronaldo

Ronaldo, Messi, Maradona: Pelé 'named' 12 best footballers in history

The Brazilian spent most of his career with Santos. He won 25 major honours with the club, including six Campeonato Brasileiro Série A titles.

A forward with an eye for goal, Pelé is credited with a ridiculous 775 goals in his career. He also excelled for Brazil, scoring 77 for Selecao and leading them to three World Cup titles. There is no doubt that Pelé is

among the greatest ever footballers in history. But who does he think are the best players to play the game? Pelé was asked to name the 10 best players in the history of football by MadridistaReal last year. The football legend responded: "Diego [Maradona], Alfredo [Di Stéfano], [Giovanni] Trapattoni, Garrincha, [Johan] Cruyff, [Franz] Beckenbauer, [Carlos] Alberto...

[Zinedine] Zidane... Ronaldo [Nazario]... [Andres] Iniesta."

He had particular praise for Ronaldo, who he called 'the best 9 of all time'. Pelé then added two modern day legends to that list before speaking highly of one of the sport's greatest prospects.

"Today we are lucky. Cristiano [Ronaldo] is great. [Lionel] Messi is incredible. The future

looks bright for Mbappé," he added.

Big names that weren't included in Pelé's list include Eusebio, Paolo Maldini, George Best, Lothar Matthäus and Gerd Müller.

Pelé also didn't include himself among the best players the game has ever seen.

DEWS