

CHANGE OF GOV'T IN CASTRIES: PM BROWNE CONGRATULATES INCOMING SLU COUNTERPART

[see LEAD STORY on pages 3 - 4 and
REGIONAL REPORT on page 21]



A FIRST FOR THE OECS, DUE FOR COMPLETION BY END OF NEXT YEAR:

Governor General Sir Rodney Williams (3rd from left) cuts ribbon for construction of a new 40-megawatt LNG power plant at Crabbes. Also taking part in the ceremony is Public Utilities Minister Sir Robin Yearwood (2nd from right), US Ambassador Linda Taglialatela (3rd from right); APCL director Aziz Hadeed (2nd from left) and others. Details in our article on **PAGES 9-10**

New round of COVID cases continues to creep upward [PAGE 11]

Gov't agency publishes another extensive list of quality job openings [OSEC on pages 27-29]

World Hepatitis Day: A serious disease on the increase in our country

The observance of World Hepatitis Day is on Wednesday 28th July 2021 -- TODAY. **"Hepatitis Can't Wait"** is the theme for this year. The day was established to raise awareness regarding the seriousness of viral hepatitis -- an inflammation of the liver which causes severe liver disease and hepatocellular cancer.

The hepatitis viruses are the primary cause of hepatitis in the world. There are five main types of hepatitis viruses: A, B, C, D and E. Other causes include toxic substances like alcohol, specific types of drugs, and autoimmune diseases.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that someone dies from hepatitis related illness every 30 seconds. This figure indicates that 1.1 million deaths are attributed to hepatitis along with 3 million new infections.

Hepatitis B is a viral infection which attacks the liver and can cause both acute and chronic disease. The virus is commonly transmitted from mother to child during birth and delivery. It can also be contracted through blood or bloody fluids.

The observance date

in July is in recognition of Dr. Baruch Blumberg, the 1976 Nobel Prize-winning physiologist. Dr. Blumberg is credited for his discovery of the Hepatitis B (Hep B) virus in 1967. Two years later he also developed the first Hep B vaccine.

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in collaboration with territories of the Americas, inclusive of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), is working to reduce and eliminate Hepatitis B -- a primary factor of which is the elimination of children being born with Hepatitis B.

As part of the Hepatitis B management of HIV cases in Antigua and Barbuda, all pregnant women are tested for Hep B and Hep C, with newly diagnosed persons with HIV investigated for Hep B. Once they test positive for Hep B, treatment is administered, utilising the anti-retroviral medicines tenofovir and lamivudine.

Treatment also includes monitoring of CD4 count, viral load, liver function and renal function, using blood tests and administering abdominal ultrasounds

and CT scans as well as referrals to specialists when necessary.

Treatment for Hepatitis B is lifelong and infected persons are advised to make lifestyle changes, wear condoms -- refrain from sharing personal items such as razors, toothbrushes, needles, and syringes -- and to acquire information about Hep B.

WHO estimated that, in the year 2015, 257 million people were living with chronic Hepatitis B infection, with Hepatitis B causing an estimated 887,000 deaths, mostly from cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma (i.e. primary liver cancer).

As of the year 2016, 27 million people or 10.5% of all people estimated to be living with Hepatitis B were aware of their infections, while 415 million -- or 16.7% of the people already diagnosed -- were on treatment.

Hepatitis B can be prevented by vaccine that is safe, available, effective, and which offers a 98-100% protection against Hepatitis B. Preventing hepatitis infection averts the development of complications, including the development of chronic disease and liver cancer.

To monitor and evaluate the global health strategy on viral hepatitis, WHO proposes a monitoring system which includes indicators and framework.

Based on information received from the Sir Lester Bird Mount Saint John Medical Centre, there has been a gradual increase in Hep B cases in Antigua and Barbuda. Many of these were maternity cases and were immediately admitted for treatment.

In 2015, there were 12 cases: 9 maternity and 3 males aged 11, 19 and 64 years. In 2016, there were 13 cases: 7 maternity and 2 males aged 19 and 70 years. In 2017, there were 9 cases: 7 maternity and 2 males aged 22 and 62 years. In 2018, there were 16 cases: 8 females and 8 males. In 2019, there were 26 cases consisting of 15 males and 11 females of which 6 were maternity cases. In 2020, there were 23 cases of 12 males and 11 females of whom 8 were maternity cases.

A hepatitis-free future is achievable with a united effort. WHO is calling on all countries to work together to eliminate viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.

PM Browne congratulates St. Lucia's Prime Minister-elect

On Tuesday 27th July, the Hon. Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and Chairman of CARICOM, wrote to Mr. Philip J. Pierre, Prime Minister-elect of Saint Lucia, congratulating him on his tremendous victory at the polls.

In a letter sent to the newly elected Prime Minister, Browne said, "On behalf of

the Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda, I extend my sincerest congratulations to you and the members of the Saint Lucia Labour Party (SLP) on your landslide victory at the polls."

PM Browne went on to state that the people of Saint Lucia have let their voices be heard and have instilled significant confidence in Pierre and his

party, the Saint Lucia Labour Party, to navigate the current challenges being faced in the country. Browne continued by stating that he looks forward to working with Pierre in his regional capacity.

"As Chairman of CARICOM, I look forward to working with you to strengthen regional development and integration. Once again,

Cont'd on pg 4

CONGRATULATIONS!



BDO Eastern Caribbean is pleased to recognize the achievement of Jonté Barnes on the successful completion of his ACCA Examinations. Jonté, who is currently a Staff Accountant, is now an ACCA Affiliate having completed the ACCA Program which is a significant step in his educational achievements and professional development. We congratulate Jonté on his achievement arising from his hard work and determination and we look forward to his continued contribution as a valuable member of our Advisory Team.

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congratulations, and please accept the assurances of my highest consideration,” Prime Minister Browne ended. Philip J. Pierre is expected to be sworn in today, Wednesday 28th July. Pierre will serve as the country’s ninth (9th) Prime Minister after his party won a landslide victory on Monday, securing 13 out of 17 parliamentary seats, defeating outgoing prime minister Allen Chastanet’s United Workers Party.



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

A KFC advertisement featuring a large box of fried chicken wings. A red banner at the top right reads "6 FOR \$20 WEEKEND WINGS!! (Fri, Sat, Sun)". In the top left is the KFC logo. Below it, text says "FOR DELIVERY QUIK SERVE 736-7845 / 562-9444 or DOWNLOAD THE APP... Apple Store / Google PlayStore". At the bottom left, it says "spicy & original whole wings" next to a small bowl of red sauce. The bottom of the box has the KFC logo and the text "#StaySafe". Social media handles for Facebook (@kfcanu) and Instagram (@kfcanu) are listed, along with the hashtag #KFCANU and the phrase #SOCIALDISTANCING #MADEFRESHEVERYDAY.

Sir Molwyn meets with US climate envoy John Kerry

At the UK July Ministerial, Minister Molwyn Joseph discussed the need for urgent global ambition for climate change ahead of COP-26 Antigua and Barbuda's Minister for the Environment, Sir Molwyn Joseph represented Prime Minister Gaston Browne – who is the chairman of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) – at the UK's July Ministerial. Minister Joseph engaged in productive discussions with US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, John Kerry, at the margins of the Ministerial.

The bilateral meeting centered on the need for major emitters, particularly within the G20, to step up their ambition and action to close the emissions gap and make strong commitments to align their 2030 targets with the 1.5°C goal. This was a call championed by AOSIS throughout the Ministerial.

“At the UK's July Ministerial, the message from Small Island Developing States (SIDS) appeared to be well received. This provides a level of hope that the major emitters are beginning to understand their responsibilities and should be committed to keeping the 1.5 degree goal in reach,” stated Minister Joseph.

He continued: “Based on the forecast and trajectory from the best available science, we must achieve drastic emission reductions between now and 2030 to keep 1.5 alive. And, as AOSIS Chair, I am committed to holding all countries accountable to this target. Moreover, major emitters, especially the G20, need to redirect all fossil fuel subsidies into renewable energy investments. Realistically, this is going to require that we continue to press for declared commitments by the major



Environment Minister Sir Molwyn Joseph (left) meets with US climate envoy John Kerry.

emitters ahead of COP 26 in Glasgow.

“Coming into the Ministerial, I was unsure whether there was a recognition of the true need for addressing loss and damage. There now appears to be greater appreciation by the conference for the fact that SIDS bear the brunt of the negative effects of climate change in real terms;

and major emitters must accept responsibility to support SIDS, especially when climatic events inflict serious loss and damage to their infrastructure and economies. This has already resulted in the loss of life and disruption of livelihoods. For SIDS, this is not abstract, this is real! This is a matter of climate justice!” Sir Molwyn declared.

Police report numerous recent arrests

Over the weekend, police say, they conducted a number of operations at different parts of the island that resulted in the arrests of several people for varying offences.

On Friday 23rd July, police officers attached to the narcotics department executed a search warrant on the property of Manlight Blaze-I Simons of Bolans and

found him with 2 ½ pounds of cured cannabis in his possession. He was arrested and charged with possession of cannabis and possession with intent to transfer.

On Saturday 24th July, police say they executed a search warrant on a property in Ottos occupied by 33-year-old Dexter Carlyne and 30-year-old Sharissa Glasgow.

During the search, police say, they discovered one .38 mm pistol and one matching round of ammunition. The illegal items were seized and the two occupants were taken into custody and charged with possession of firearm and possession of ammunition.

Also on Saturday, the police arrested and charged 43-year-

old Sadique Joseph of Union with the larceny of building materials. Officers attached to the Coolidge Police Station were alerted of suspicious activities taking place on a construction site at Cedar Valley Heights, and found the accused loading several pieces of lumber and steel onto a truck. He was arrested and taken into custody, and the items were seized and

Cont'd on pg 7

CONGRATULATIONS!



BDO Eastern Caribbean is pleased to recognise the achievement of Natifah Williams on the successful completion of her CPA Examinations. Natifah is currently an Audit Senior and this represents a significant step in her educational achievements and professional development. We congratulate Natifah on her achievement arising from her hard work and determination and we look forward to her continued contribution as a valuable member of our Assurance Team.

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taken to the police station. Additionally, two men were arrested and taken into custody after separate searches of their homes in Parham on Saturday turned up an imitation firearm, cannabis, and camouflage clothing.

Finally, two men are in police custody assisting the police with their investigations, after they were found in possession of a number of household items.

Police officers

attached to the Coolidge Police Station conducted separate searches on the homes of Kareem Charles and Jamal Nelson, both of Cedar Grove, on Sunday 25th July, and found them in possession of five televisions and a Craftsman chain-saw. The police also seized a power surge pack, a Sony Play Station, four 16-inch rims, two speaker boxes, and a refrigerator. Further investigations are ongoing into the matter.



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CIBC-FirstCaribbean's Walk-For-The-Cure pre-event dubbed a success



Hikers at the Wallings Nature Reserve.

The build-up has started for the 10th anniversary edition of CIBC FirstCaribbean's Walk for the Cure. Last Saturday, 24th July, the bank hosted *Hike for the Cure* at the Wallings Nature Reserve. Approximately 75 persons participated. Natasha Charles, one of the bank's organisers, said the COVID pandemic has forced the planning committee to think outside the box. "We will be hosting a number of events which, in addition to being fundraisers, will also help to create interest for the main event, which is the Drive for the Cure to be held

on Sunday 3rd October 2021. Last year, due to COVID restrictions, we pioneered our Drive for the Cure which was very successful ... With the experiences learned last year, we anticipate that this year's event will be even bigger and better," she said.

Other events planned are a *Walk for the Cure Challenge*, *Sip and Paint for the Cure* and *Raffle for the Cure*, plus other in-branch fundraisers.

As usual, all funds raised will be donated to the Breast Friends Organisation and the Oncology

Department of the Sir Lester Bird Mount St. John Medical Centre.

Ms. Charles thanked all who participated in the hike and said that in addition to being healthy fun, it was also educational, as persons learned about the conservation efforts being undertaken to preserve and protect the area.

The region's largest cancer fundraiser, CIBC FirstCaribbean's *Walk for the Cure*, celebrates 10 years in 2021.

Walk for the Cure began as part of the celebrations to mark the bank's 10th anniversary, and takes place

across its 16-member footprint. It has raised over US\$2.9 million over the past nine years.

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

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



'Clean energy' power generation is coming to A&B

History was made in Antigua and Barbuda on Tuesday with the launch of a new Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) power

generation project at Crabbes Peninsula, the first such power plant in the Eastern Caribbean.

The project is a joint undertaking of the Antigua Power Company Limited (APCL) and an American company, Ea-

gle, which is based in Texas, USA. They are contracted to supply electricity from the 40 megawatt plant to the state-owned An-

tigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA).

The official ceremony to signify the launch of the project took place at Crabbes with Governor General Sir Rodney Williams, Utilities Minister Sir Robin Yearwood, visiting US Ambassador Linda Tagliabue, along with representatives of APCL, Eagle and APUA in attendance.

APUA General Manager Esworth Martin said the State utility company recognized that there was need for additional power generation, at which time the Authority received a mandate from Prime Minister Gaston Browne about the need to explore new, cleaner ways to produce electricity. With this in mind, APUA, through the Tenders Board, invited bids for the supply of a clean-energy electricity plant.

"This incorporated a transparent tendering process for a 40-megawatt LNG plant and an integral LNG supply agreement. APCL was declared the winner of the tendering process. This demonstrates APUA's commitment to clean energy. By October, portions of Barbuda will be supplied by green energy. This will be a first in the Caribbean," he stated.

In his turn at the podium, APCL director Aziz Hadeed gave an historical background of the family-owned APCL which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. He noted that while APUA and APCL have had a good working relationship over these many years, the tendering process was professionally conducted.

"On July 1st 2020, APUA sent out an Expression of In-

terest (EOI) for a 40 megawatts LNG power plant and LNG fuel terminal, which attracted many local and international companies. Antigua Power Company submitted their EOI and was selected among seven other companies to respond to a Request for Proposal (RFP) to supply the projects. To ensure transparency and effective selection, global consulting company HATCH was hired to review the proposals. On March 1st 2021, APCL received correspondence from the chairman of the Tenders Board of Antigua and Barbuda indicating that we had won the bid to supply the 40 megawatts DF LNG power plant along with the LNG fuel terminal" he revealed.

Hadeed, whose family has made significant investments in Antigua and Barbuda for

three generations, said this latest project is also beneficial to the country.

"This project is an historic one. Antigua and Barbuda will be the first country in the Eastern Caribbean to use the LNG fuel for power generation. For this LNG fuel terminal, we had to select an effective, reliable and creditable LNG fuel company partner, Eagle LNG. These two projects, slated to cost more than 270 million EC dollars, will add significantly to the economy and boost employment for the citizens of Antigua and Barbuda through construction jobs and eventual operation of the facility," he stated.

Eagle LNG's Vice President for Government and Public Affairs, Linda Berndt, said her company is happy to be partnering with APCL on this proj-

ect, as it offers an opportunity for an American company to be investing in the Eastern Caribbean.

She also thanked the US Embassy in Barbados for its assistance in making the partnership with APCL possible, noting that the embassy has a programme that promotes American investments in the Caribbean and Latin America.

Ambassador Tagliatela expressed her joy that LNG power generation is coming to Antigua and Barbuda and that an American company is part of this historic development.

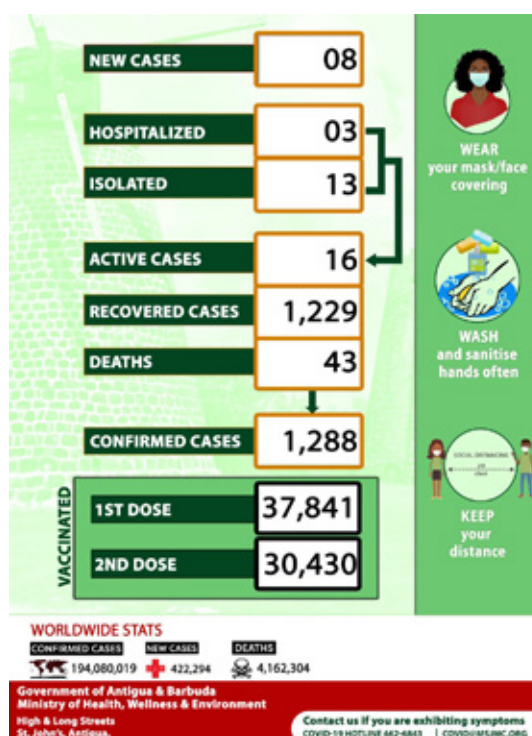
“Together with APCL and APUA, Eagle LNG will offer its expertise and experience to this project. This new plant will be seen as the beginning as a strategic step forward in using LNG as a clean fuel here in Antigua and Bar-

buda, and hopefully the rest of the Eastern Caribbean,” she noted.

In his feature address, Utilities Minister Sir Robin Yearwood explained that APUA could have pursued the traditional route – when it decided to acquire additional energy – by using diesel fuel generating plants, but the authority had a commitment to provide cleaner energy as part of the government’s policy to reduce its ‘carbon footprint’.

“We will add engines to the power grid using LNG and this will be done at an affordable price to the people,” Sir Robin declared.

Construction of the actual plant will begin at the end of October, and the completed facility is expected to be commissioned at the end of next year.



COVID Dashboard Update: Cases continue to rise again!

The most recent report received by the Ministry of Health, Wellness & the Environment from the Sir Lester Bird Mount St. John Medical Centre has revealed eight new laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda as of Sunday 25 July 2021 at 6:00 p.m. Seven of these cases were recorded on July 23 and one was recorded on 24th July 2021. No results were received for 25th July 2021. Six of the new cases are imported and two are non-imported. Two-hundred-and-nineteen samples were processed at Sir Lester Bird MSJMC.

Consequently, the total number of persons with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda is 1,288 – which is inclusive of 16 active cases. There are three mild hospitalized cases.

Meanwhile, 37,841 first doses of the COVID-19 vaccines have been administered; while 30,430 have received the second dose. The dashboard has been updated to reflect these changes. Please note that this dashboard includes information for July 23rd to 25th, 2021

New airline to touchdown in Antigua this December

Ultra-low-cost carrier, Frontier Airlines, begins flights on December 4



Cont'd on pg 15

Antigua and Barbuda will welcome the start of year-round service by Frontier Airlines for the upcoming winter season.

The US-based low-cost carrier, known for its attractive rates, will make its inaugural flight to Antigua on December 4. The service will operate once-weekly on Saturdays with flights to Antigua's V.C. Bird International Airport (VCBIA) from its base at the Orlando International Airport in Florida. "We're excited to announce service to V.C. Bird International Airport in Antigua with nonstop flights to Orlando beginning this December," said Daniel Shurz, senior vice president, commercial, Frontier Airlines. "Our mission is to deliver 'Low Fares Done Right' for our customers and we're confident that this new route will make travel to the island even more accessible and affordable for tourists, while at the same time providing an attractive option for local residents wanting to travel to the US.

"We look forward to

welcoming passengers onboard to enjoy the warm weather and stunning scenery of Antigua and Barbuda, and to serving local residents with affordable flights to Orlando and beyond through our extensive US route network."

Tuesday's announcement by Frontier Airlines was welcomed by Antigua and Barbuda tourism officials, who were engaged in talks with the airline before the pandemic. This is the airline's first entry into the Caribbean as they resume steps to expand their network.

Antigua and Barbuda's Minister of Tourism, Honourable Charles Fernandez, said: "The launch of the new service out of the busy Orlando airport opens up an important gateway to Antigua, with links to major US cities. We can now look forward to meeting the increased demand coming out of the US this winter and, from all indications, we can also expect to see more competitive pricing brought on by Frontier Airlines' affordable rates."

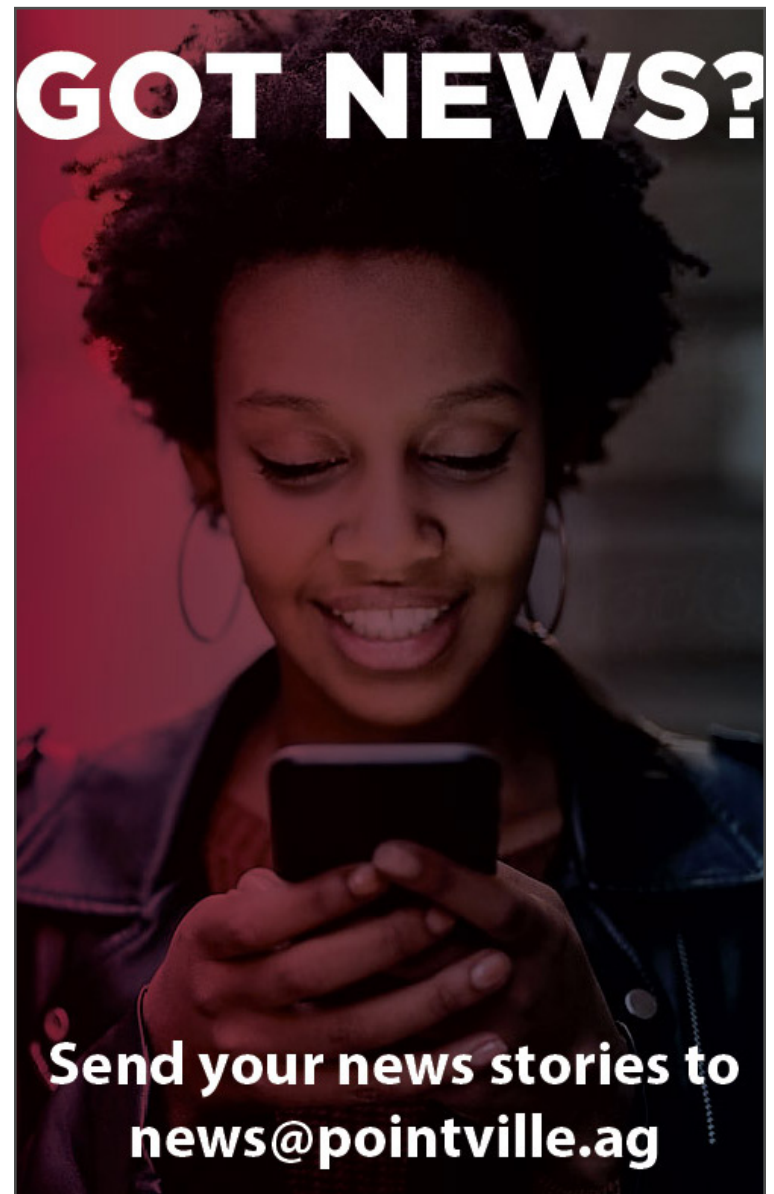
CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) Colin C. James called the airline's decision "good news for the industry, good news for Antigua and Barbuda, and a show of confidence in our rebound".

James added, "Those additional 186 passengers every Saturday will certainly go a long way in providing us with the alternative options that we need from other gateway cities in the

USA into Antigua."

News of the airline's December launch has been met with much enthusiasm by Antigua and Barbuda hoteliers and other tourism stakeholders who are excited about the additional airlift for the destination.

Frontier Airlines will operate an Airbus 320-Neo. Introductory fares to Antigua will start from as low as US\$99.



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AOSIS RESPONDS TO G20'S DISSENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITMENTS

As the G20 energy and environment ministers meeting closed [on Friday] without agreement on climate, the Alliance of Small Island States [AOSIS] is heartened by the stance of countries which have stood up for a more ambitious target

Remarks from AOSIS lead climate negotiator, Ambassador Diann Black-Layne of Antigua and Barbuda:

It is really encouraging to see that for once there has been a really conscious debate, and we applaud those G20 countries that refused to settle for a weak consensus. AOSIS is aware that in 2017 the IMF indicated that the unfunded cost of climate change is well over 4 trillion dollars. Every citizen in the planet is wondering what we are waiting for to make a dramatic move.

The value of the coal, oil, and gas industry is not worth the losses we are seeing globally. This does not make economic sense but demonstrates that the politics of the fossil fuel industry seems to be far more important than the rest of the global economy and its people. There are alternatives to coal, oil and gas and AOSIS will no longer accept further excuses from these big and powerful countries.

Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, and onset of severe weather which has yielded disastrous consequences, it is interesting to see that some G20 countries are not letting the traditional power and politics of the oil, gas, and coal industry prevail completely.

For those who supported a more ambitious target, AOSIS would like to send you the gratitude and the best wishes of all our men, women, boys, and girls of our 39 small vulnerable countries.



Ambassador Dian Black-Layne, Antigua and Barbuda's Chief Environment Officer.

Family – some surprisingly simple solutions

By Risa V

It is important to acknowledge the family as the cornerstone on which everything is built. Your first lessons came from here; your ability to love, learn, work, communicate, relate, accept and appreciate – curbed by what may or may not have been conscientious decisions.

The turbulent state of the world today is tied to the dysfunction happening in people whose family foundations have failed them. As family crumbles we lose our community, society and country.

Does the role of parenting need some sort of intervention? How much of what parents are doing actually benefits their children? Much to our disbelief, a child is the seed of perfection wrapped in innocence. Fearless and untouched by the world, they are certain. Studies today prove that children are naturally smarter than even adults who have

degrees when presented with simple scenarios. Their opinions are unbiased and they never over-think things. This would then mean that, as children get older, it is the duty of parents to provide the enabling environment that allows this spirit to flourish. By this I simply mean listening to them and valuing their opinions, supporting their dreams, embracing their uniqueness and individuality.

As a parent, it is not your duty to decide your child's fate or destiny. The Creator established this beforehand and only needs your supervision. As Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Our children know who they are. Their only need for us as adults is to teach them the basics of human life for survival and even more so to thrive. Teaching language, hygiene, responsibility, commitment – things that are to be applied

in life, no matter which path is taken. This way, we can put an end to the child prodigy and all our children are exceptional.

Forced Parenting! Parents are either protecting their children or wanting them to achieve what they never did, unintentionally crushing their spirits or crippling their capabilities in the process, never allowing them to reach their full potential. Either way, if it is not destined to be –

despite parents' efforts – it will never be fulfilled and all would have been in vain. Then all that remains of our families are children with low self-esteem; siblings that can't get along because of favoritism; those never living up to expectations, resentful, nothing more than failures; families divided by arrogance and the recycling of this dysfunctional behavior in every new home and relationship afterwards.



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How to Ensure HR's Post Pandemic Relevance



As the world slowly transitions from Pandemic mode to the New Normal, the implications and the amount of work required to adjust is not lost on many of us. Our perspectives on talent acquisition and management of priorities have now changed and strategic planning is now even more critical than before. It was obvious during the early stages of the Pandemic, that the organizations with multiskilled and flexible employees and people-centric policies were more poised to cope with the challenges.

Many of the jobs that were thought to be important did not make the list as being *essential* in the final analysis. This might have been obvious to HR but now we have executives who are also accepting this reality as companies attempt to transform and adapt.

We need to go beyond just the realization though. As we continue to build high

performance work teams that would efficiently and effectively meet organizational goals and objectives, we need theoretical and practical knowledge as well as human resource leadership. Human resource practitioners should now seize every opportunity to “level up” and sharpen our skills to

remain relevant contributors to our organization's development.

We should be looking for the opportunity to lead our companies. The days of accepting our role as just hiring and disciplining staff and planning staff functions are long gone. We should seek out the other areas of our company's opera-

tions that require our high-level contributions. We should now be preparing ourselves to take those risks and be accountable.

John Underwood, consultant and author of the *Manager's First Aid Kit* sees it this way, “To successfully navigate the remaining phases of the Pandemic and to position or-

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ganizations to survive or thrive in a post-pandemic world, individual and functional leadership is required from HR practitioners”.

Ms. Underwood believes that at the functional level, astute HR practitioners must lead the charge in preparing the organization and its people for the New Normal and suggests a four-point action plan to accomplish this.

Re-imagine the business model. Engage in critical analysis to determine what products/services/functions should be retained, improved, outsourced or terminated. Engage in strategic workforce planning. Ensure that HR and its various initiatives remain agile, financially justifiable and aligned to the new strategic business objectives. A recent PwC (Price Waterhouse Coopers) article on how the new normal is changing the future of HR stated, “It is vital that HR evolves and transforms across every element of the HR lifecycle to meet a new set of organizational needs. Simply put, HR will need to increasingly find ways to support business leaders in restructuring during and after the pandemic, take workforce rationalization measures while managing risks asso-

ciated with such interventions, and increase productivity and employee engagement”.

The observation made in this article suggests that HR must now be a strategic partner in businesses with our roles evolving from staff administration to business partners at eye level with senior management. Strategic decisions must be made with regards to developing approaches to work more efficiently, to manage staff productivity even while some work remotely and to place renewed focus on employee health, digitalizing processes and sustainable

talent management all while remaining profitable and competitive.

In conclusion, we agree with Ms. Underwood when she says that the two most essential individual leadership skills in this context are adaptability and resilience. Disruptions are inevitable. So, HR practitioners must find a way to navigate that terrain with agility rather than railing against it and yearning for simpler times.

The Human Resource Professionals of Antigua and Barbuda (HRPAB) is a registered non-profit, professional association

dedicated to the advancement of the HR profession for national development. We began informally from 2009 and legally registered in 2011. HRPAB's growing membership represents private and public organizations as well as independent consultants specializing in one or more areas of human resource management and development. Membership is offered for three categories: professional, non-professional, and honorary. You may contact us via email at hrpro.ab@gmail.com or on Facebook and Instagram @HRPro268.

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Barbados to become a parliamentary republic by November 30

Loop Barbados - Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley has answered the much-asked question of what type of republic will Barbados become by year-end.

In her remarks on the National Day of Significance (July 26), she disclosed that the decision has been taken to become a parliamentary republic.

Stating that she has some promises to make to Barbados and Barbadians, she said she fully intends to deliver on her first promise "that on November 30 this year our great nation which we love shall become a parliamentary republic".

This is the same type of republic as our neighbours in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

"Secondly, that the Cabinet has accepted the recommendations of the Forde Commission, with minor modification, that our parliamentary republic shall have a non-executive president [who] shall be elected by an electoral college of both Houses of Parliament and that that president shall be entitled to serve initially for a period of four years and thereafter can be reappointed for another term," she explained.

In such instance, the President is a Head of State with some civic duties and is seen as a figurehead.

But her point of focus was the fact that Bajans will have a say in who is their Head of State. "...the notion that you can have as your Head of State someone that you do not have any opportunity to participate in the selection or election of their office is as anachronistic and offensive to the modern world in which we live as the notion that women should not



Prime Minister Mottley makes a quartet of promises to pre-Republic Barbados

have the right to vote, which was exactly what it was in 1937. We only got that right in 1944."

Thirdly, Barbados' leader promised "that we will make amendments to facilitate that transition to a new president to be sworn in on that day - November 30, 2021."

"Fourthly, that in so doing that we start from December 1 the journey of the settlement of the new Constitution of Barbados, which will be the subject of extensive consultation and communication with the people of this nation." The move to a republic was penned by PM Mottley and read

by the Governor General Dame Sandra Mason in the most recent Throne Speech on September 15, and Mottley asserted again last evening that if all goes to plan over the next four months, the 2020 Throne Speech would be the last.

"My government declared to the world last year on September 15, in what will be anachronistically the last Throne Speech ever presented to a parliament of this nation, that we were ready to close the circle of independence even as we fight on the journey to close the circle of enfranchisement."

IMF forecasts stronger rebound for Caribbean, Latin American economies

(AP) — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday boosted its forecast for gross domestic product in Latin America and the Caribbean, fueled by stronger outlooks for its two largest economies.

The IMF expects the region will grow 5.8% this year, up 1.2 percentage points from a forecast released in April.

The region contracted 7% last year, marking the worst performance of any region in the world.

“The forecast upgrade ... results mostly from upward revisions in Brazil and Mexico, reflecting better-than-expected first quarter outturns, favourable spillovers to Mexico from the improved outlook for the United States, and booming terms of trade in Brazil,” the IMF wrote in its report.

The multilateral raised its forecasts for Brazil by 1.6% to 5.3%, and for Mexico by 1.3% to 6.3%.

It didn’t publish figures for other nations in the region.

The updated perspective for Brazil is in line with the median outlook from economists surveyed by the nation’s central bank, who have increased their projections for 14 straight weeks.

The IMF’s 2021 outlook for the global economy was unchanged from April.

A brighter outlook for Latin America was offset by lower forecasts for emerging and developing Asian economies.



In this 18 May 2021 file photo, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva speaks at the end of the ‘Financing of African Economies’ summit in Paris.

Jamaica: Teachers, beware!

Vaccinated tutors to get preferential treatment



Prime Minister Andrew Holness

Jamaica Gleaner - Jamaica's teachers who have not been vaccinated against COVID-19 have been put on guard that they will not receive the same treatment as their inoculated counterparts when schools reopen for face-to-face classes in September.

That might include COVID-19 testing and differentiated compensation. Prime Minister Andrew Holness issued the warning on Monday as he rolled out preliminary restrictive measures to cauterise the emergence of a third wave of the virus.

Schools have, for the most part, been shuttered to hundreds of thousands of students since March 2020 in a bid to rein in transmission, but the restriction has led to stark learning loss across the board. Internet connectivity woes and inaccessibility to computers are believed to have widened the education deficit for poor children.

Holness told journalists that contingencies would be discussed in meetings with the country's teachers.

"We are not going to

make it mandatory for them, but at the same time we would have to consider that teachers who are vaccinated who turn up to work that they are treated in some preferential way and those who don't turn up to work, we may have to ask them to be tested, and we may have to be considering what should happen regarding how they are remunerated," the prime minister said.

The Jamaica Teachers' Association has, for months, said that teachers have been wary of returning to the classroom amid infection spurts.

Tighter curfew hours have been imposed for the next two weeks, from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m. from Monday to Saturday and from 3 p.m. to 5 a.m. on Sundays. The 3 p.m. curfew also applies to Emancipation Day and Independence Day public holidays on August 2 and 6, respectively.

Signalling the implementation of even tighter measures when the current restrictions expire on August 10, Holness told the country that the Government was taking pre-emptive action to re-

duce what could be a significant spread of the virus in the next four weeks.

Holness said that the measures being introduced now and in August were being done to pave the way for the reopening of face-to-face classes in schools in September.

"What we are seeing now, in two weeks' time, it will probably be worse," the prime minister said.

At the same time, changes have also been made to the gathering limits at churches and various establishments.

Beginning today, the capacity limits in various establishments have been reduced. The 70 per cent capacity that existed under the previous Disaster Risk Management Act has been adjusted to 50 per cent for churches, gymnasiums, bars, dining establishments, among others.

The existing limits for small events are also being adjusted. Currently, the limit for small events is either 100 persons, or 60 per cent of the capacity of the venue. Starting today, the capacity limits for small events have been reduced from 60 per cent to 50 per cent. However, 100

persons are permitted to attend a small event or 50 per cent of the venue capacity, whichever is lower.

Health and Wellness Minister Dr. Christopher Tufton said that seven hospitals were in the red alert zone, meaning that the facilities were at 84 per cent or more bed capacity, while four were in the amber alert zone with greater than 74 per cent capacity.

Tufton also confirmed a Gleaner report that the United Kingdom would shortly be shipping vaccines to Jamaica.

"We expect to receive, sometime this week, some 300,000 AstraZeneca from the United Kingdom."

The Government is anticipating some 393,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine by the end of September.

The US will donate 614,000 doses of vaccines to Jamaica and the country is expected to receive 100,620 of Pfizer inoculant in early August from the COVAX Facility.

Tufton said the country should receive approximately 1.4 million doses of vaccines between now and the end of September.

St. Lucia Labour Party victorious in July 26 elections

(CMC) - The main opposition St. Lucia Labour Party (SLP) has claimed victory in the general elections on Monday, as St. Lucian voters stuffed their frustration into the ballot boxes and rejected the Allen Chastanet administration after only one five-year term in office.

In addition, voters created history in the Caribbean by electing two independent candidates to the 17-member Parliament.

Among them is former prime minister Stephenson King, who quit the incumbent United Workers Party (UWP) to contest as an independent the Castries North constituency, which he has been representing for nearly three decades.

SLP leader Phillip J. Pierre, speaking on Choice TV, said he was "elated", also thanking his supporters in Castries East who ensured that he won the seat for the sixth consecutive occasion, defeating Fortuna Belrose.

"Here we are, we have won the government and I intend to be a government for the entire country. A government of inclusion, a government that will listen to people, a government of tolerance and we are hoping to take this country all the way from ... the division and conflict it is in now".

Preliminary results indicate that the SLP, which was trounced 11-6 by Chastanet's UWP in the 2016 general election, could win as many as 13 seats, with Chastanet being among the successful candidates.

Among the casualties are Gale T.C. Rigobert, the minister for education, innovation, gender relations and sustainable development; Sarah Flood-Beaubrun, the minister with responsibility for external affairs; Guy Joseph, the minister for economic development, housing,



Prime Minister-elect, Phillip J. Pierre

urban renewal, transport and civil aviation; Herod Stanislas, the minister for physical planning; Lenard Montoute, the minister for equity, social justice, local government and empowerment; Hermangild Francis, the minister for home affairs, justice and national security; and Dominic Fedee, the minister for tourism, information & broadcasting, culture and creative industries.

Pierre told viewers that the priority of his administration will be health, education and "particularly, the young people.

"The youth economy was the flagship of our party and I can assure you ... we have to get our young people back on stream to feel included.

"So, it is exciting times. We know there are challenges. The country has over \$4 billion worth of debts," Pierre said, adding, "Most of all, the country is divided; it is unsettled.

"The country is bitter. There is a bitter taste in the mouths of the people of the country, so we have to sort that out. So tonight I will go celebrate with my constituents. They mean everything to me. They stuck by me; they have been maligned, but they stuck by me.

"This time is my sixth victory. I haven't known what I won by, but it is a very huge margin," Pierre said, "thanking my opponents ... the better man won".

Ivory Coast president and rival in first meeting since civil war



Former president Laurent Gbagbo (left) and President Alassane Ouattara (right) have been pushing for reconciliation.

BBC - Ivory Coast President Alassane Ouattara and bitter rival Laurent Gbagbo have embraced in their first meetings since the civil war 10 years ago.

The conflict was sparked by Mr. Gbagbo's refusal to admit defeat in an election, resulting in the deaths of 3,000 people.

Mr. Gbagbo returned to Ivory Coast last month after the International Criminal Court (ICC) acquitted him of charges of crimes against humanity.

Both men have been

pushing for peace and reconciliation.

Mr. Ouattara welcomed Mr. Gbagbo into the presidential palace in the capital Abidjan on Tuesday.

"I am happy to see you," the president told Mr. Gbagbo.

Images from the meeting show the pair smiling and holding hands while posing for photographs.

Speaking at a news conference after their meeting, Mr. Ouattara said the turmoil was behind them.

"What is important for Ivory Coast is peace in our country," he added.

Mr. Gbagbo called for the release of prisoners held since the civil war.

Some see the meeting as a sign of the nation healing, but Mr. Gbagbo's spokesman Justin Katinan Kone told people "not to make too much" of the encounter.

Mr. Gbagbo was captured at the presidential palace in April 2011 and transferred to the ICC at The Hague. After his acquittal, he lived in the

Belgian capital Brussels before being invited to return to Ivory Coast by Mr. Ouattara.

Mr. Gbagbo returned last month and was welcomed by supporters.

He still faces a 20-year prison sentence after he was convicted in absentia of looting a regional bank during the civil war.

Mr. Gbagbo recently announced that he and another former president - Henri Konan Bédié - were strengthening a political alliance to oppose President Ouattara.

UK spares key workers quarantine as staff shortages bite

Al Jazeera - The United Kingdom's government has announced it will ease coronavirus quarantine rules for thousands more essential workers in an attempt to end staff shortages that are hobbling parts of the economy.

About 26 million Britons have downloaded a health service phone app that "pings" people to tell them to self-isolate for 10 days if they come into close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19.

With the UK recently recording tens of thousands of new virus cases a day, the system has led to a so-called "pingdemic" during which rates of employee absence for restaurants and a swathe of other businesses have soared and gaps on some supermarket shelves have appeared.

Starting August 16, anyone who has been fully vaccinated will be able to take daily coronavirus tests rather than self-isolating.

But many businesses are pushing for the change to happen sooner.

Last week, the government said food and transport workers, border staff, police and firefighters could opt for the daily tests.

Late on Monday, it expanded that system to include more jobs including, rubbish collectors and prison staff as well as people working in the armed forces.

The government said 2,000 sites would be set up to meet the increased demand for tests.

One person who has been "pinged" by the app is Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who had



to self-isolate after Health Secretary Sajid Javid tested positive this month.

Johnson's 10-day spell in isolation ended at midnight on Monday.

Johnson said he understood people's frustration, but urged them to "stick with the programme."

"We do need to use the tools that we have. Self-isolation is the one that we've got. I urge people to do it," he said.

Those notified by the app are not legally required to self-isolate. And there have been reports that people have deleted the app from their phones.

The app's contact tracing function can also be turned off.

Johnson removed most remaining pandemic restrictions in England, including mandatory mask rules and capacity limits, on July 19, despite several weeks of rising infections driven by the

highly contagious Delta variant of the virus.

Despite that easing, cases have fallen for six straight days, with Monday's figure of 24,950 confirmed infections down more than a third from the figure a week earlier.

Scientists said the decline could reflect the end of the Euro 2020 football tournament, which drew crowds to games, pubs and parties, and the recent end of the school year for most pupils.

The UK has also given 70 per cent of adults both doses of a coronavirus vaccine.

But authorities cautioned that the effect of the end of restrictions on July 19 has not yet been felt in the figures.

Johnson said that "it is very, very important that we don't allow ourselves to run away with premature conclusions" about the infection rate.

In Utah, hospitals swell with unvaccinated COVID-19 patients

(Reuters) – The COVID-19 intensive care unit where nurse Janine Roberts works in a Salt Lake City suburb is once again full, with patients who are mostly young, mostly unvaccinated and very ill. They arrive in the unit at Intermountain Medical Center in Murray, Utah, already intubated and unconscious, in many cases stricken by the Delta variant of the coronavirus blazing through unvaccinated communities across the United States.

“We have people in their 20s, 30s, even 40s who are so desperately sick, and we’re seeing all patients who are unvaccinated,” Roberts said. “It’s this new terrain.”

Healthcare providers like Roberts had expected the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines to curb hospitalizations. But just 45% of Utah residents are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and their vulnerability is fueling a surge in the virus, state data shows.

Utah’s intensive care units were 84% full on July 22, and COVID patients made up about a quarter of the population. By comparison, the units were 59% full on April 19, and only 11% of those pa-



tients had COVID, state data shows.

The quick rise in coronavirus transmission and hospitalization in Utah and many other states serves as a reminder that the country is still in the throes of a deadly disease, even as signs of pre-pandemic life have returned with people flocking back to restaurants, concerts and summer camps.

The Delta variant is far more contagious than earlier versions of the coronavirus, enabling it to pass quickly among unvaccinated people, many of whom are young adults. Its fast spread has quickly overwhelmed health systems in the United States, which in previous surges led to less effective care and more deaths.

To make room for COVID-19 patients, the University of Utah Hospital in Salt Lake City has begun postponing non-essential surgeries, said Dr. Kencee Graves, its associate chief medical officer.

The hospital’s total COVID case load is lower than last winter, she said, but tight staffing and an influx of non-COVID cases have left it just as strained.

The unwillingness of so many people to get vaccinated adds to the frustration, she said.

“Caring for someone during the first surge, when this was not a wholly preventable illness was one thing,” Graves said. “Now this is totally preventable. It’s demoralizing.”

STATE LIMITS RESTRICTIONS

Of 247 deaths in Salt Lake County from the beginning of this year through July 9, 99% were among unvaccinated people, said Ilene Risk, the county’s top epidemiologist. Transmission in the county is particularly high in zip codes where fewer people are vaccinated.

Utah’s Republican-controlled legislature has banned local jurisdictions from imposing COVID-19-related restrictions, leaving public health officials no way to slow the spread of infection, said Dr. Todd Vento, an infectious disease specialist with Intermountain Healthcare, a large healthcare provider.

Wildfires scorch Spain and cause 'disaster without precedence' in Sardinia



(CNN) - Devastating wildfires have spread across parts of southern Europe, tearing through the Spanish and Greek countryside and forcing around 1,000 people from their homes on the Italian island of Sardinia.

Sardinia's local government declared a state of emergency on Sunday, due to what it described as a "disaster without precedence."

"It is still not possible to estimate the damages caused by the fires that are still ongoing in the Oristano area," the president of the Sardinia region, Christian Solinas, said in a statement Monday. "Vegetation destroyed, businesses and homes burnt and animals

killed," he added.

In an update on Tuesday, regional spokesman Ignazio Artissu told CNN the current estimate of burned area is around 20,000 hectares, but officials are still assessing the damage. Artissu said most of the fires have been put out and they are now focusing on taking the necessary steps so they don't start again.

Over recent days, the region deployed 7,500 people and over 20 aircraft to fight the fires. Italy has also received support from neighboring countries, with France and Greece deploying four planes to provide assistance in putting out the flames.

Solinas urged Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi to send economic help to the affected areas. Draghi said that his government was monitoring the situation closely and expressed "full solidarity with the population that is working non-stop in the rescue interventions."

Greece and Spain are also struggling with wildfires due to a continuous heatwave.

In Greece, scores of forest fires burned between Sunday and Monday with more than 700 firefighters being deployed to take control of the situation.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said at a Monday

cabinet meeting that firefighters had battled around 50 fires during the last 24 hours across the country, while stressing that more could follow after meteorologists warned the heatwave was likely to continue.

"I want to emphasize that August remains a difficult month. Meteorologists are already warning us that from the end of next week we may face another big prolonged heatwave. That is why it is important for all of us, all the state services, to be on absolute alert, until the firefighting period is formally over," Mitsotakis concluded.

Droughts are becoming more frequent and more severe in southern Europe, and environmental authorities have warned that the region is at the greatest risk from the impacts of climate change on the continent.

Last week Frans Timmermans, the vice president of the European Commission, told CNN's Becky Anderson that "erratic weather patterns are going to be the new normal." "If we don't do something urgently -- and urgently, I mean now -- then the climate crisis is going to get completely out of control and our citizens do understand that we need to act now," he said.

The increase in wildfires has delivered yet another environmental concern after parts of northern Europe were affected by severe floods recently.

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At least 1 year experience in a child care position

First Aid training is a plus

High School & College completion necessary

Strong understanding of stages of childhood development

Must be decisive, patient, engaging, responsible with good working ethics

Strong attention to detail

CLEANER

Minimum 1 year experience

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Minimum 3-5 years in a comparable role

Knowledge of hospitality and executive level administrative standards and protocol

Demonstrated ability to interact and support a diverse group including management, home-owners and staff

Must be proficient in relevant computer applications including Microsoft Office (PowerPoint, PDF, Excel and Word)

Secondary School Degree required

Technical training certificates in secretarial, communications, administrative or related fields beneficial

COOK

Minimum 2 years' experience

COOK & FOOD SERVER

Minimum 5 years' experience in a similar role

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT MANAGER (ROOMS DIVISION)

Degree in hospitality management

Previous experience managing within the Caribbean is required and the ability to speak a second language will be a plus

Strong and professional leadership and analytical skills

Administrative and interpersonal skills

Demonstrated proficiency in Hotel Property Management Systems, Reservations and third-party distribution systems

EXECUTIVE CHEF

Minimum 5 years' experience as an Executive Chef in a luxury boutique environment

Previous extensive experience and certification at a resort operation level

Exceptional leadership & culinary skills

A strong attention to detail in general & in relation to food service (quality, portion size & consistency)

Ability to demonstrate a sound understanding of budgeting systems, stock control, meeting budgets for food & labour costs and a thorough understanding of Health & Safety, Food & Hygiene & employment law | Demonstrated computer literacy required

FULL-TIME INSTRUCTOR (BIOLOGY)

Master's Degree in Biology with teaching experience

GROUP FINANCIAL CONTROLLER

Minimum 12 years' experience

A Bachelor's degree in Accounting or Finance

CPA (Canadian), ACCA, or ACA Certification | Strong financial, accounting and managerial skills

International experience/ experience working in foreign markets

Strong ability to implement and monitor internal controls

Knowledgeable in QuickBooks, Pastel and other ERP accounting tools and systems

Must be proficient in MS Office Suite

HANDYMAN OR WELDER

Minimum 2 years' experience with appropriate electrical tools and welding equipment

Must be trained in Welding

Strong general repairing skills with a strong attention to detail | Must be fit and customer service-oriented

HEAD GARDENER OR HANDYMAN

At least 5-8 years in a similar position

Knowledge of Caribbean and Antiguan horticulture and plant species
Knowledge of small Caribbean and Antiguan wildlife, insects and ecosystems
Knowledge of the use, benefits and risks of fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and fungicides
Ability to recognize common plant disease, plant insects and unusual or poor plant growth
Must have a valid Driver's License

INDIAN COOK

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

INTERIOR DESIGNER ARCHITECT

Minimum 2 plus years' work experience | Qualifications for Interior Design or Architect is a must

Experience with AutoCAD, 3D modelling software and Photoshop is mandatory

Must be self-motivated with a positive attitude

Must maintain a high level of accuracy and attention to detail

Good time management skills and communication skills, written and verbal

Must be proficient in Microsoft Office | Must be fluent in English

OFFICE ATTENDANT

At least 1 year experience

Minimum 3 CXC's including English | Good Oral & Written Communication Skills

Must be flexible | Must be able to lift heavy equipment

OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR

Minimum of 4 years supervisory/managerial experience

Experience in small business lending would be preferred

Degree in Business Management or related discipline

Entrepreneurial business management orientation, sales planning, strong team-building skills

Strong probing, communication, analytical, problem solving and decision-making skills required

PASTRY & ROTI MAKER

Minimum 1 year experience

Must have experience making pastries and roti

PASTRY CHEF

Minimum 1 year 'a la carte' experience

Have experience in all aspects of cake & pastry making; baking etc.

Have high standards in food presentation | Must be flexible

PRODUCE CLERK

Minimum 2 years' experience as a Produce Clerk

Secondary School Completion

Must have experience using a bandsaw

ROTI MAKER

Cooking experience is a plus with knowledge of Roti Preparation

Good verbal and written skills | Must be able to work shifts

Must have a valid Food Handlers' Certificate | Must be willing and able to learn

RESTAURANT MANAGER

Minimum 4 years' management experience in a 4 or 5-star environment

Must be knowledgeable of 5-star restaurant service standards and sequence of service

Must be proficient in computerized Point of Sale Systems

SALESPERSON

Minimum 2 years' experience

Must be honest, dependable, reliable and responsible

SHOP ASSISTANT

Minimum 2 years' experience

Secondary School Completion

WATER TREATMENT INSTALLATION ASSISTANT

Minimum 5 years' experience | Must know how to swim

Must have knowledge dealing with pool electrical and plumbing installations

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Dream comes true for gold medal winner Duffy of Bermuda

TOKYO – At the age of eight, Bermudian triathlete Flora Duffy dreamed of becoming an Olympic champion.

On Tuesday morning at a wind-swept course in the Japanese capital, the dream came true as Duffy put an earlier serious foot injury behind her to storm to gold medal glory, after demolishing a top-class field of more than 50 triathletes from around the world to win by more than a minute.

With 64 000 residents, Bermuda became the smallest country in the world to win gold at the Summer Olympics. For 33-year-old Duffy, the pre-race favorite, it was fourth time lucky after she failed to finish in Beijing in 2008 and almost giving up the sport, before falling from her bike in the 2012 renewal in London. She finished only eighth in Rio de Janeiro in 2016 – the year she won the first of two consecutive world titles before she claimed gold at the Commonwealth Games in Australia in 2018.

“This has been my dream since I was eight years old,” said an elated Duffy, who secured Bermuda’s first medal since heavyweight boxer Clarence Hill won bronze at the Montreal Games in 1976.

“I grew up in Bermuda doing triathlon and always wanted to be an Olympic champion.

“It was worth it. There’s been many tears, many heartbreaks. Many times I was like, ‘Am I ever going to be healthy again, can I ever race at the top?’

“I just kept believing and I have a really great support system around me. My coach is incredible and so I just had to trust the process that I would be ready just in time.”

Duffy, who trains in Boulder, Colorado, led the field shortly after the final transition to the 10-kilometre run and never looked back as she stretched her lead over the chasing pack before breaking the tape in a winning time of one hour, 55 minutes: 36 minutes. Britain’s Georgia Taylor-Brown took the silver, one minute, 14 seconds behind Duffy, after puncturing a tyre during the bike leg – which she said cost her 22 seconds – with American Katie Zaferes 12 seconds further adrift earning the bronze.

In winning, Duffy smashed the previous largest victory margin of 1:06.97 held by Australian Emma Snowsill at the 2008 Games.

Added Duffy, whose parents Charlie and Maria watched the race at a bar in Bermuda: “This is Bermuda’s first gold medal and the first woman to do it. It’s an incredibly special moment and I feel like I crossed the line today, but I did for everyone in Bermuda.

“It’s just an incredible moment and I could not have done it without every single person back home cheering me on.” She added: “My family are like going crazy. I think the whole of Bermuda is and I think that’s what makes it so much special for me. “Yes, this is my dream. But I also knew that it was bigger than me and I think when you’re in that sort of space it just makes everything that much more special and incredible. “I’m just so proud I could do this and be Bermuda’s first gold medal winner, first female medal winner and just hopefully inspire everyone back home that this is possible.” Duffy quickly established herself among the lead group after exiting the 1,500-metre

swim in sixth after a storm delayed the start of the race by 15 minutes.

“I knew the swim would be crucial and I could pretty much tell from the first lap that I was in a very good position,” she said.

“Establishing a good position in the swim just set the race up so much that everything went so much more smoothly after that.”

Duffy was part of a group of seven who broke clear at the start of the 40-kilometre bike on slick roads from rain with no margin for error. “On the bike in these conditions, and it’s a very technical course, really the main thing was trying to stay safe and not have anything silly happen,” Duffy added. Duffy trailed Zaferes at the start of the run only for a few seconds before storming clear. “My running has also come a long way that I knew I was very confident in my run,” she said.

“I felt pretty good and of course I’ve raced them before, so I sort of know their strengths and weaknesses.”





Biles withdraws from gymnastics final to protect team

TOKYO (AP) — Simone Biles arrived in Tokyo as the star of the US Olympic movement and perhaps the Games themselves. She convinced herself she was prepared for the pressure; that she was ready to carry the burden of outsized expectations.

Only, as the women's gymnastics team final approached on Tuesday night, something felt off. And the athlete widely considered the Greatest of All Time in her sport knew it.

So rather than push through the doubts that crept into her head as she's done so many times in the past, Biles decided enough was enough. She was done — for now.

The American star withdrew from the competition following one rotation, opening the door for the team of Russian athletes to win gold for the first time in nearly three decades.

Jordan Chiles, Sunisa Lee

and Grace McCallum guided the US to silver while Biles cheered from the sideline in a white sweatsuit, at peace with a decision that revealed a shift not only in Biles but perhaps the sport she's redefined.

"We also have to focus on ourselves, because at the end of the day we're human, too," Biles said. "So, we have to protect our mind and our body, rather than just go out there and do what the world wants us to do."

The Americans — fueled by an uneven bars routine by Lee that not even Biles could match — drew within eight-tenths of a point through three rotations. ROC, however, never wavered on floor. And they erupted when 21-year-old Angelina Melnikova's score assured them of the top spot on the podium for the first time since the Unified Team won in Barcelona in 1992.

Mitchell out of Olympic swimming

Antigua and Barbuda swimmer Stefano Mitchell has been eliminated from the ongoing 2020 Tokyo Olympics being held in Japan.

Competing in heat three of the Men's 100m Freestyle held at the Tokyo Aquatic Center, Mitchell finished fourth with a time of 51.64, which kept him out of the semifinal stage of the competition.

The race was captured by Yemen's Mokhtar Al-Yamani in 50.52 seconds, while Andrew Chetcuti was second in 51.47 seconds. Yousuf Almatrooshi of United Arab Emirates was third in a time of 51.50.

Meanwhile, there was slight

improvement for sailor Jalese Gordon on day three in the Women's One Person Dinghy Laser competition.

The Antiguan finished 41 out of 43 competitors in race number five held in Fujisawa, Japan. The 19-year-old Olympic first-timer however struggled somewhat in race number six, with reports that her boat tipped over at least twice on what was described as a windy day. Gordon finished 42nd in a fleet of 43 sailors.

National Women's swimmer Samantha Roberts is slated to swim in Heat 5 of the Women's 50m Freestyle on Friday.

Athletics Association head eyes OECS Championships



President of the Antigua and Barbuda Athletics Association (ABAA) Everton Cornelius says news that the YASCO Sports Complex has been internationally certified as a **Class 2 Athletics Facility** will now allow the body to spread its wings beyond the country's shores.

This, Cornelius hinted, could start as early as next year, as the country is in line to host the OECS Track & Field Championships "This really hinges on the fact of once we have seating inside of YASCO, because it is my understanding that we are the ones who should be hosting the OECS Championships next season. So how we would really go through with that, from my perspective, really hinges on the fact that seating must be in place for us to do that; because I don't think you could bring most of our top athletes here for the OECS meet, and we do not have any seating to hold our patrons who come to support us at such an event," he said.

Cornelius, who spoke with Observer media from Tokyo, Japan where he is representing the Athletics Association, said it would however take some time and work before the venue is allowed to host international meets. "I don't think I had any doubts in my mind that we would have gotten

the certification. I think we did everything that we should have done to make sure this would go through smoothly and, as I said before, I think it was just a matter of how speedily they could actually deal with all of the different entities that they had to deal with before the track could be certified; and we were forewarned, anyway, that it would have taken some time for it to be done," he said. Despite the quantum of work needed to bring the venue to international standards, Cornelius said he never doubted that the facility would have been given the nod by World Athletics. "It would take a while before we get international meets, but for now we can plan our regional meets and national meets with no fear that times ran at the track would not be recognized by the world body. So just for that alone, I think it creates enough excitement among the athletics fraternity in Antigua," the athletics head said.

The second phase in the redevelopment of YASCO would involve the erection of stands, a perimeter fence around the track, and bathroom and changing facilities. Reports also indicate that the body is currently looking at the installation of a warm-up track.

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