

BEACHES OPEN FOR LONG WEEKEND!

See pages 3-4



EDUCATION MINISTER/MP LINKS UWI OPEN CAMPUS TO CONSTITUENCY: Hon. Daryll Matthew (seated second from left) with participants of UWIOC courses offered in his constituency (St. John's Rural South). The 69 students comprised the first cohort to complete community-based training in professional development courses at the Rural South Community Development Center. (Pages 14-15)

You better believe it: We are already inspiring and encouraging ourselves!

We are not doing too badly in terms of the vaccination numbers, especially now that those numbers have been better clarified in terms of the target we are aiming for where the goal of herd immunity is concerned.

Information Minister Melford Nicholas did just that when asked on Thursday morning whether the desired number of fully vaccinated persons being pursued is 70 percent of the total population of 100,000 or 70 percent of those eligible for inoculation; the adult population, since minors have until now not been factored into that field.

Nicholas explained that at the start of the vaccination program, and before there arose the prospect of obtaining the American Pfizer vaccine (the only one so far approved for use in the 12-17 year age group) the operative number for herd immunity was 80 percent of the adult population.

He said this was the number that had been defined for national reference by the country's Chief Medical Officer. It was accepted by Cabinet, in Nicholas's words,

as a working number and expressed/pursued as the target for full vaccination by which herd immunity would be realized.

Elaborating further, Minister Nicholas said this would have meant that 20 percent of the twin-island state's 100,000 population would have been excluded from the category of persons eligible to be vaccinated, since there were then only sufficient vaccines to inoculate the adult population.

With this in mind, he said, 80 percent of the adult population would work out to be 64,000 persons that need to be fully vaccinated – rounded off to 65,000, which the Minister stressed is still our target.

But he noted that this equation may change should the anticipated access to the Pfizer vaccine materialize, thereby allowing vaccination of a population demographic (minors) that have hitherto been ineligible. "We may well come back with a different calibration, once that picture begins to become clearer in the coming weeks," was how he put it.

38,000-plus have so far been recorded as

having taken their first dose of inoculation and about 31,000 are now completely vaccinated. We are still some way off the target, that's for sure – even 64,000 will still take some getting at this stage and at this rate – but we're still not in an awfully bad place, if comparison is any comfort.

Another reassuring development came two weeks ago with the announcement that Cabinet has decided to remove the Dominican Republic from the list of states whose nationals were once barred from landing in Antigua and Barbuda.

We found it heartwarming because it could only mean that the DR has made tremendous progress following a period last year in which the Spanish-speaking eastern two-thirds of Hispaniola seemed on the verge of being overrun by COVID, both in terms of a suffocating overall prevalence and a frightening rapidity of expansion – more like an explosion – in new cases.

The stubbornness, recklessness, defiance, resistance and general noncompliance of Do-

minicanos both in the DR and among those living in Antigua had become very evident and was as much a headache for authorities in Santo Domingo as they were on many occasions for those here in Antigua and Barbuda. The well-known Spanish neighbourhoods of this twin-island state have often been the hotspots for police crackdowns on festive gatherings where mask-wearing and social distancing enjoy as much respect as the beer bottles and other litter that are routinely dropped at the very feet of those who enjoyed their inebriating contents.

But, according to Nicholas, based on reports provided by the Ministry of Health, Cabinet has noticed that many from "the resident Dominican Republic population have been among the most compliant in terms of taking the vaccines. A significant percentage of the Dominican Republic population which lives among us has been vaccinated."

People can learn and people can change – in positive, welcome and life-saving ways.

Beaches to be ‘freed-up’ on Carnival public holidays!

by Shelton Daniel

Beaches across Antigua and Barbuda will be open for public enjoyment on Monday and Tuesday of next week, a departure from the strict prohibition of beach access on public holidays that has been in place for over a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The announcement of beachside easing for the public

holidays falling on August 2nd and 3rd were made on Thursday as part of the weekly post-Cabinet announcements. The two days are assigned for annual carnival festivities, which have been cancelled again this year – as they were also skipped in 2020 – as a further control measure against coronavirus transmission.

But despite there being no carnival, the public holidays set

aside for them are still observed and Cabinet has decided, in lieu of that, to ease the beach restrictions that were intended to prevent clustering and other risky behaviors which may lead to further spread of the virus.

While noting that, “The regulations require the beaches to remain closed on public holidays,” the official government statements says, “The Cabinet is certain that the population

Cont'd on pg 4

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will exhibit full adherence to the rules which require that there be: a) no music, food, picnicking and cavorting on the beaches during this two-day holiday period; and that b) all adults will conform to the protocols that are well-known; they must stick to social distancing, sanitizing of hands and the wearing of face masks on beaches (except when they enter the water for swimming and recreation)."

Elaborating further on this during the live media briefing on Thursday morning, Information Minister Melford Nicholas said: "Inasmuch as the risk of COVID is still with us – and of course the enhanced risk of the Delta variant, which has already been pronounced as being present in at least a few

cases – we have made a determination that we are working with the mature population in terms of their ability to remain true to the protocols and relax the regulations governing beach attendance."

Nicholas added that this modification "has to do with the perceived maturity of the population at this stage". He said law enforcement would maintain tight surveillance to ensure that activities at beaches do not involve violations that would further imperil public health. He reminded that "the government's position and many of the decisions it has taken are always subject to review ... and create opportunities that we can learn from ... If at the end of the day we remove the [re-

striction] and we see less than mature responses to it, we may review it for the following holiday."

Nicholas also indicated that the decision to relax the holiday prohibition on beach access was born out of a sense of fairness: Government did not want to grant such access to visitors who pay for and expect enjoyment of the beaches during their stay while denying the same to residents.

"We do not want the relaxation to be abused. It is something that we are going to monitor, and we will learn from the experience. If it turns out that it has been abused then, and at successive events, we may be required to tighten again," the Minister stated.

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Deadline for applications – August 6th 2021

Statement on National Hero and former PM, Sir Lester Bird

by Donyelle Bird-Browne (daughter)

I wanted to reach out on behalf of my family to implore Antiguan and Barbudans who have been falsely led to believe that our National Hero and former Prime Minister Sir Lester Bird's care is being ignored or displaced in some way. Do not believe the disinformation currently circulating as it pertains to his status.

I know that you would all like to hear his voice, but at this time he would prefer not to make a voiced statement.

We continue to ensure that he is being given the best care by us and his medical team. His vitals and nutrition levels are stable and are

being successfully managed. The family is comfortable with the level of communication, respect and support given by our ABLP government to Sir Lester; and are certain of their continued faithful and enthusiastic support going forward. We are all on the same page, with the goal being his optimal care and longevity.

We have consulted with his care management leader, Dr. Joseph John, who at this time advises against an exhausting and potentially risky trip overseas for additional assessment of what is already being sufficiently managed here on island.

Our father has had visits from Prime Minister Gaston

Browne, Sir Molwyn Joseph, Minister Max Fernandez and the entire Cabinet. Further, his close friends Sir Robin Yearwood, Hugh Marshall Sr, and Mr. Jimmy Fuller visit on a regular basis, along with many other friends, and family members.

We will not encourage or support any

agenda or radio segment that seems to be using our fathers' condition as a lightning rod and appears or seeks to paint our government in a negative light.

Ms. Donyelle Bird-Browne, on behalf of Sir Lester Bird and family (July 26th 2021).

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Indonesia makes donation to Community Connect computer programme



Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Anthony Liverpool.

A community-based computer training programme has received a major boost following a financial contribution by the government of the Republic of Indonesia.

During a virtual signing ceremony this week, the South-east Asian country's Director of American and European Affairs, Gusti Ngurah Swajaya, noted that, as an archipelago

country, Indonesia faces some of the same challenges as Antigua and Barbuda such as confronting the impact of climate change. Like Antigua and Barbuda, he noted, his country is

also prone to natural disasters.

Following disasters, he said, countries need help to rebuild infrastructure and properties, and to restore economic activities as a way of returning to normality.

“A friend in need is a friend indeed; therefore, we need to stand together in cooperation and unity. Indonesia is pleased to be able to make a small contribution as well as continue to share its knowledge and experience in areas such as natural disasters risk management, including rehabilitation and construction,” stated Gusti Ngurah Swajaya.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Anthony Liverpool, noted that – as the world’s third largest democracy, behind India and

the United States – Indonesia can be a good strategic developmental partner for countries such as Antigua and Barbuda, especially with the training opportunities it offers.

Liverpool announced that the assistance will go towards the Community Connect programme in the St. Paul constituency.

“The Minister of Foreign Affairs, E.P Chet Greene, is particularly delighted with the support being offered for the Community Connect programme which forms part of the government’s response to the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Community Connect programme will facilitate the provision of a community computer centre that will provide the opportunity

for residents to acquire basic computer skills,” PS Liverpool explained.

He added that the participants will also access online learning programmes.

“This will target those students without internet connections in their homes. They will also be able to access online social marketing programmes, as well as access the national disaster management information portal. It will especially cater to unemployed single mothers, as well as students in both secondary and primary schools, and socially-challenged young people,” the permanent secretary noted.

The assistance from Indonesia amounts to close to US\$90,000.

Police remind public of restrictions on gathering

Police say it has come to their attention that some members of the public continue to breach the restrictions on social gathering and social distancing, as outlined under the Public Health Act (Infectious Disease) Amendment Regulations of 2020.

A statement from the Police Strategic

Communications Unit (STRATCOM) on Wednesday stated that, “The general public is therefore reminded that no more than 50 people are allowed to gather at any place without lawful authority; while at the same time, observing the social distancing guidelines and the mandatory wearing of

face masks.”

It adds that, “With exceptions to churches and other establishments that are permitted to operate under certain stipulated health guidelines, no other illegal gathering will be allowed to continue.”



Cost of repeat COVID testing lowered for public servants and others

by *Shelton Daniel*

Cabinet has reduced the cost per COVID-19 test that public servants and other frontline stakeholders would have to bear out of their own pockets should they choose not to be vaccinated.

Government recently announced that public servants and frontline tourism industry stakeholders who prefer not to be freely vaccinated, would alternatively have to undergo testing every two weeks at their own expense.

Should they refuse both of the above options, Government had announced, these unvaccinated and untested public sector and frontline workers would be made to stay away from their workplaces – without pay!

But after vociferous public and sectoral pleas and protests that

the testing fees would be hard on the pockets of those affected, Cabinet announced this week that Government would provide the required support to make the testing regimen more affordable.

Information Minister Melford Nicholas broke the news on Thursday morning while hosting the weekly live post-Cabinet media briefing.

“We are certainly going to have to put some resources at the disposal of the laboratory, but the government has taken a decision that the cost is now going to be lowered to \$50 per instance for the rapid test. So, to the extent that the position the government would have taken last week, many have argued – and perhaps ... forcefully so – that the conditions could prove to be financially onerous and even

burdensome to many a person. Just to indicate the government’s balance in these affairs, it’s not to necessarily put anyone at the point where they have a feeling that they are being economically oppressed. But there is still going to be a consequence for having to conduct the test,” he stated.

Nicholas pointed out that, “The basic costs for these tests is US\$20 and the government has fixed this cost at EC\$50 per instance for persons who are exercising the option to be tested, given the policy decisions that we took last week.”

Nicholas added that, “The regulations pertaining to all those issues were reviewed [on Wednesday during the weekly Cabinet meeting] and during the course of [Thursday would] be published.”

COVID Dashboard Update for 29 July 2021

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 two new laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda as of Tuesday 27th July 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

The two new cases are imported.

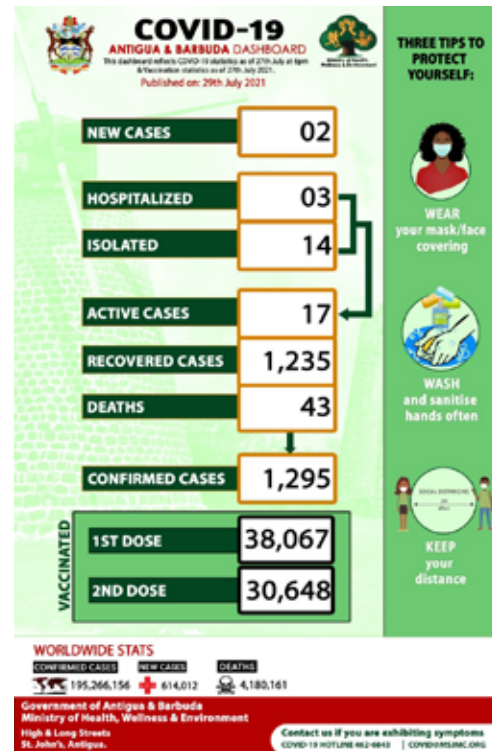
Ninety-one samples were processed at Sir Lester Bird MSJMC.

Two recovered cases were recorded, increasing the total to 1,235.

Consequently, the total number of persons with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda is 1,295 – inclusive of 17 active cases. There are three hospitalized cases, all considered mild.

Meanwhile 38,067 first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered, and 30,648 people have received their second dose.

The dashboard has been updated to reflect these changes.



Health Centers to administer COVID-19 vaccines on Saturday

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment is providing another opportunity for members of the public to access the COVID-19 vaccine on a weekend. This Saturday, 31st July, individuals can get inoculated with the AstraZeneca and SinoPharm COVID-19 vaccines at the health centers located in Gray's Farm, All Saints, Clare Hall, and Jennings. This Saturday's COVID-19 inoculation session will run from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment is pleased with last weekend's public demand for the COVID-19 vaccines, when over 200 persons took the opportunity to get inoculated.

The Minister of Health, Wellness & the Environment, Sir Molwyn Joseph, is reiterating his call for individuals to get both the first and second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The COVID-19 vaccine protects you from getting COVID-19. The vaccines also protect from severe illness and death. Identification cards must be presented at vaccination centers, as well as vaccination cards for persons seeking their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH, WELLNESS & ENVIRONMENT

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Cuban COVID vaccine highly regarded – despite unavailability



by Shelton Daniel

Had it been available, the Cuban-manufactured COVID-19 vaccine would have been welcomed into

Antigua and Barbuda, Information Minister Melford Nicholas has stated. The Minister's remarks were made on Thursday morning during his

hosting of the weekly post-Cabinet media briefing.

He was asked whether local authorities were disposed to granting the green light for use of the Cuban Soberana vaccine here, as has already been done in the case of the Russian-manufactured Sputnik-5, despite neither having received approval from the World Health Organization (WHO).

Said Minister Nicholas: "The government of Antigua has very high confidence in ... Cuban medical engineering and Cuban medical science. But for the availability, that Soberana vaccine would have been one that would have been our consideration. It's not available yet in Antigua, but given the fact

that our students have had it while they were in Cuba, and they have now returned to indicate that they have been inoculated with the Soberana. The Cabinet took the decision [on Wednesday] that notwithstanding it was not part of the travel advisory the previous week, we have asked the medical professionals to allow them to attend to their homes and receive the same passage as would be the other persons who would have been on vaccines that are WHO-approved or the Ministry of Health-approved."

Nicholas described this as "a standalone decision", but said: "Beyond that, the Ministry of Health has taken the further decision to ask these persons to remain at home for the next seven days with [tracking] bracelets, and during ... that time they will be granted another test in seven days, and should it be negative, then ... they will be allowed to mix within the population."



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Deadline for receipt of application is **August 10th, 2021**.

Public invited to review, comment on latest national environment report

The Department of Environment will be hosting a

National Virtual Consultation

on the

2021 State of the Environment Report

on

August 11, 5:30 pm

The consultation will be streamed live to the Department of Environment's Facebook page **@AandBEnviron**

To apply for one of the limited available spots on Zoom, please email doe@ab.gov.ag

The Antigua and Barbuda Department of Environment (DOE) within the Ministry of Health, Wellness & the Environment has released the State of the Environment Report 2021 for public review and comment.

The report, which is mandated by the Environmental Protection and Management Act (2019), provides information about environmental and social conditions around Antigua and Barbuda, as well as trends and pressures for the country and the surrounding seas.

This will be the first State of the Environment Report published under the new Act.

The public is invited to review and comment on

the State of the Environment Report, which can be found at <https://www.environment.gov.ag/news-events#news/article/114>.

Individuals can also come into the Department of Environment office at #1 Victoria Park, Botanical Gardens, where they can access a hard copy of the report and make comments.

The deadline for comments is August 13, 2021.

The public review and comment process forms an important step in engagement with the public on environmental issues.

The public is also invited to a national consultation on the State of Environment Report on Wednesday 11 August at 5:30 pm via the Department of Environment's Facebook page

and the Zoom platform. The national consultation is being held virtually due to COVID-19 concerns.

For more information,

please contact Daryl George at the Department of Environment on 462-4625 or [email doe@ab.gov.ag](mailto:doe@ab.gov.ag).

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UWI Open Campus celebrates first batch of community-based participants

On Friday 23 July 2021, the University of the West Indies Open Campus (UWIOC) Antigua and Barbuda held a Distinguished Achievement ceremony commemorating an historic accomplishment of the institution's operations.

The ceremony was held to celebrate 69 students who represented the first cohort to complete community-based training in professional development courses at the Rural South Community Development Center (RSCDC) and the first cohort of students to complete vocational certification in barbering, cosmetology (beauty therapy) and nail technology.

On this occasion, the Head of Site, Ms. Coleen

Letlow, indicated that the collaboration with the Member of Parliament (MP) for St. John's Rural South, Hon. Daryll Matthew, to offer courses at the commu-

nity development center, meant that UWIOC was fulfilling its strategic imperative of providing educational and training access to all.

"If people cannot get to

us because of prevailing circumstances, we are willing to go to them." Letlow said, while also thanking Minister Matthew for ensuring that the community devel-

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A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board

opment center is serving its purpose of community empowerment.

In a time when some institutions of higher learning overlook vocational training, UWIOC Antigua and Barbuda says it acknowledges the importance of vocational certification. The Site's leader and MP Matthew firmly assert that training and certification serves as a catalyst for skills development and employability. They were confident that the students received training that corresponds with industry standards.

A notable highlight of the event was the recognition of six students for their outstanding performances in their respective courses: Mr. Carl Christopher, barbering; Ms. Sherry Ann Charles, cosmetology (beauty therapy); Ms. Terecia Brown, nail technology; Mr. Idaree Roberts, computer literacy; Ms. Amanda Faria, introduction to business; Ms. Brittany Sweeney, office administration principles & practice.



Education Minister and St. John's Rural South MP, Hon. Daryll Matthew (right) with the top participant in the Computer Literacy class, Mr. Idaree Roberts.

A promotional graphic for a radio show. At the top left is the 'PLATINUM Fm' logo with the tagline 'We Entertain You 97.9'. The central image shows a man with glasses and headphones, looking towards the camera. To his right is a large, vintage-style gold microphone. Below the man, the text reads 'ON AIR' in a red box, followed by 'THE SHY GUY SHOW' in large, bold, yellow-outlined letters. Underneath that, it says 'with Mr. Shy Guy' and 'MONDAY - FRIDAY 2PM - 6PM AST'. At the bottom, there are social media and contact details: 'www.Twitch.tv/platinumfm979', 'Platinum FM 97.9 f', and two phone numbers: '268-780-9790' and '268-562-9790/9'.

USING THE OAS TO PROMOTE DISCORD OVER CUBA



By Sir Ronald Sanders

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

Much has been written about a meeting, convoked by the present Chair of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS), to discuss

“the situation in Cuba” which he was obliged to defer after objections by several member states.

The present Chair is the Ambassador of Uruguay, Mr Abdala Washington. He convoked the meeting on Monday July 26 to be held at 10 am on Wednesday 28 July. While the Chair has the authority to convene a meeting of the Permanent Council, it is unusual that he did so without consulting member states. After all, he expected member states to participate in a meeting on a sub-

ject matter on which he decided; the least he might have done was to consult with the coordinators of the regional members of the OAS to determine their views. This is normal practice on any matters that would obviously be controversial.

In any event, no consultation was held, and OAS member states were surprised to be given less than 48 hours to discuss Cuba which had not participated in the OAS since 1962 when it was suspended by a general assembly of the OAS. It should be noted that, apart from Haiti, no CARICOM member state was a member of the OAS when that suspension occurred. Heading countries that voted for the 1962 suspension were such notorious figures as Alfredo Stroessner of Paraguay, Nicaragua's Anastasio Somoza and Francois “Papa Doc” Duvalier in Haiti.

Since the 1962 suspension, Cuba had been discussed by the OAS

only once. That was in June 2009 when the general assembly decided to lift the suspension at its own volition; Cuba had not requested its lifting.

The 2009 resolution itself stated that “the participation of the Republic of Cuba in the OAS will be the result of a process of dialogue initiated at the request of the Government of Cuba”. Cuba's response was that it had no interest in participation in the OAS.

The de facto position, therefore, is that Cuba has not been a participating member of the OAS for 60 years and has no wish to be a member. A sudden, unexplained decision to discuss Cuba in the Permanent Council troubled member states who could see no productive outcome from it. Indeed, if anything, such a discussion was considered to be harmful to diplomatic efforts to try to improve relations between the US and Cuba which was one of President Biden's undertakings during his

campaign to be elected President.

Further, on the same day that the Chair of the OAS Permanent Council issued his unexpected convocation of the meeting to discuss Cuba, CARICOM Heads of Government had written to President Biden saying that they were “troubled by the circumstances in Cuba”, referring to protests that had taken place on July 11. They attributed the protests to the 61-year-old US trade embargo, punitive measures imposed by the Trump administration, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. They said, “All of this, together with threats to its national security, have contributed to placing Cuba in conditions of abnormality in which normal criteria and expectation cannot be applied”. They called on President Biden to lift the embargo “so that all the rights to which the Cuban state and its people are entitled can be respected and upheld”, and they recalled that “under a previous US administration of which you were a part, significant strides were made

in this direction, and could be advanced to beneficial effect”.

Passing strange was an email sent to many OAS delegations by an Organisation called “Youth and Democracy in the Americas”, formed by Venezuelan nationals with help from the OAS Secretary-General, Luis Almagro. Curiously, this organisation, told OAS Ambassadors on 27 July that it had “presented a petition to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Dr. Luis Almagro and subsequently our President Cecilia Navas met with the President of the Permanent Council of the OAS and also Uruguayan Ambassador, Washington Abdala, to request a extraordinary session to discuss the serious humanitarian situation suffered by our Cuban brothers and sisters and the dangers facing democracy in the Republic of Cuba”. They went on to say, “in view of the fact that the Permanent Council of the OAS has accepted our request and has convened a special session for tomorrow, July 28, with the situation

in Cuba as its central theme, we therefore request your participation... “. It was evident from this email message that the Chair of the Permanent Council and the Secretary-General had accepted a consulted with an external group that has a specific political agenda, and not with member states of the OAS on the holding of a meeting to discuss Cuba. A very odd way to behave, causing more questions to be raised, concerning the motives for the meeting.

Thirteen CARICOM countries formally urged the Chair to reconsider holding the meeting. I was authorised by those delegations to send the letter in my capacity as Coordinator of the CARICOM group. A several other countries sent similar letters, and for fear of calling a meeting for which there would be no quorum, the Chair decided to defer the meeting, pending an Opinion from the Legal Department of the OAS Secretariat which is answerable to the Secretary-General and routinely produces opinions consistent with his

views.

The legal opinion has now been produced and, predictably, it concludes that the Permanent Council has “the competence to consider the situation in Cuba” because since Cuba never formally withdrew from the Organisation, it remains a member notwithstanding its publicly stated position that it has no interest in participating in it. It seems membership can be conveniently forced on the unwilling.

No possible useful purpose will be served by any meeting to discuss Cuba. The OAS can enforce nothing on it. Any discussion could only satisfy political hawks with an eye on US mid-term elections where winning South Florida with the backing of Cuban exiles would be a prize. The task of the OAS should be to promote peaceful and cooperative relations in the hemisphere, not to feed division and conflict. *(Responses and previous commentaries: www.sirronald-sanders.com)*



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CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT?

by Risa V

Elections are on the way and the wild goose chase has commenced.

I am convinced that the number one challenger, the United Progressive Party (UPP) and its 'people', are in the wrong profession.

Story writing seems to be their strong suit. Never before have I known people who say so much without actually saying anything – no facts, no details, no proof; just entertainment.

Their vocabulary is made up of nothing but words chosen to convey fictitious descriptions of the government. Let's see: phoniest, disillusionment, lying tale, fast talkers, sad sack administration, sweet sounding nothing, cynicism, high-hand bullying.

It gets even sweeter with full sentences: "Pretentious charms of our calculating PM seeking to burnish his populism credentials and score points."

They need to get into creative writing: "Those who usually skewer the discourse and muddy the water with foolish utterances and their hidden agendas"

Their stories would be best-sellers ranked #1 in comedy: "Foolish utterances of those in high places, especially the highest of the high."

Gaston, if you get any higher you are going to be an angel! Ha Ha!

In these stressful COVID times, I have much appreciation for the laughter, but let's be serious. It seems like you're campaigning to a bunch of 10-year-olds. No intelligent human being can vote for this party. Your success is literally riding on the people's ignorance, repeatedly alleging some "Infringement of people's rights by the Gaston Brown administration".

The Prime Minister knows his job and is great at it too! You thought you had some ground, but look how easily he resolves everything you all claim to be an issue.

"COVID-19 educational campaigns spearheaded by medical professionals" ... that done ages ago. Lowering the fee for COVID testing enormously? Check. The Gaston Browne administration does not play, so what do you have to say now? That he is working reverse psychology by saving the day and being a "hero"? You all sound like a bunch of jealous school children.

I don't know about the UPP being the only serious, credible opposition. This they have told themselves, but imagine this country during the pandemic under the rule of a government

supporting demonstrations against COVID-19 regulations such as having to wear face masks and other state-of-emergency laws.

And I have not yet even mentioned how you all continue to declare yourselves in support of vaccination, "But the government is taking the wrong approach and more education is needed."

My question now is: What is stopping you from putting out this said information as well? Be a part of the solution, not the problem. Always proving to be useless – it's a crying shame!

They talk about how the government is full of sweet words, but the UPP behaves as if this is some popularity contest. Only you people (UPPs) could quote Bassanio in Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice and make Biblical forecasts of the anti-Christ and end of days. But what are the real issues and where are the solutions? Tell us, please; pray, tell us.

To cut things short, take the Prime Minister's advice and take a dose of hush; because, Harold Lovell, for you to even have the audacity to approach the Antigua and Barbuda public as the leader of any party (after your stint as Minister of Finance) is ludicrous.

BVI hospital staff seek counselling after high rate of COVID deaths

BVI News - Staff at the Dr. D. Orlando Smith Hospital were left traumatised after coming face to face with the unusual reality of nearly four deaths per day during the height of the BVI's COVID-19 surge in recent weeks.

CEO of the BVI Health Services Authority (BVIHSA) Pat Malone-Smith said hospital staff have since been engaged in counselling as a result of this reported trauma, and have been involved in both one-on-one and group sessions.

"We're not accustomed to having that many deaths in a day," Malone-Smith explained recently. "When you have four deaths in a day, when you're accustomed to possibly having four deaths in a week or a month, it hits hard."

Meanwhile, the CEO said it was important that support was offered at this time and noted that there is also a team in place for staff to speak with wherever the need arises.

Though acknowledging that other countries might currently be experiencing their third or fourth COVID-19 surges, Malone-Smith said she hopes this current uptick in cases will be the BVI's only surge.

According to the CEO, the hospital was also actively seeking help to relieve its overburdened staff. She said respiratory therapists, ICU-trained nurses, and ER-trained nurses are among the types of healthcare workers being sought to lend assistance.

Malone-Smith further said that the neighbouring US Virgin Islands has been assisting with finding supplemental staff, adding that three physicians from the United States — either trained for the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) or Emergency Room (ER) — are expected this week to help



Frontline COVID-19 workers at the Dr. D. Orlando Smith Hospital.

relieve doctors at the Road Town-based hospital.

At the time, Malone Smith indicated that at least 75 of the 168 staff that had tested positive for COVID-19 or were exposed to the virus have since returned to duty.

She thanked community members and businesses who reached out and offered food for the staff who had been hard-pressed for weeks by the overwhelming number of persons who tested positive for the virus. The CEO said while this support was great to have, she hopes

there would be no reason for it to be needed again in the future.

Since the start of the outbreak this month, some 25 persons have died in COVID-related circumstances at the Dr. D. Orlando Smith Hospital, while more than 1,600 persons were recorded as COVID-19 positive at one stage.

Positive cases have since reduced to a little more than 1,100 persons, according to the latest figures released by health officials.

PAHO concerned over COVID-19 surges in the Caribbean

St. Lucia Times - The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) is concerned about surges in cases of COVID-19, with PAHO Director Dr. Carissa F. Etienne citing Cuba and Martinique as examples.

In the case of Cuba, Etienne observed that deaths are spiking and many provinces are reporting dramatic increases in new infections, whereas in Martinique there has been a tripling of cases, driven by large gatherings.

The PAHO Director also said worrisome hotspots persist in Amazonian states within Colombia and Peru.

“These trends illustrate how COVID-19 remains entrenched within our region, particularly in countries with low vaccination coverage. And the spread of variants only makes matters worse. Viruses have one goal: to multiply,” she declared.

“That’s why they often adapt to become less dangerous but more contagious over time. And that’s what we’re seeing with the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19. Many of today’s ‘variants of concern’ spread more easily, so they’re driving new infections in our region and around the world.”

According to Etienne, so far 47 countries and territories in the Caribbean and Latin America region



have detected at least one “variant of concern” and 11 have detected all four of today’s most concerning variants: alpha, beta, gamma and delta.

She explained that new variants will emerge as long as the SARS-CoV-2 virus continues to spread.

“We face a pandemic of

the unvaccinated and the only way to stop it is to expand vaccination. Vaccines are critical, even if no vaccine is 100% effective. Just as important are the public health measures – like physical distancing, mask wearing, avoiding crowds – and also infection control measures like

testing, contact tracing, quarantining and isolation,” Etienne observed.

She said that, together, these measures are the fundamentals of the response and they remain effective against variants of concern.

Opposition against mandatory COVID jab as Gov't moves to change law!

IWN SVG - Opposition Leader Godwin Friday on Tuesday stated his opposition to mandatory COVID-19 vaccination in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, but encouraged people to take the jab.

His comments come as Parliament is expected to amend two pieces of legislation passed earlier this year in response to the pandemic.

The Medical Officers (Amendment) Bill 2021 and the Public Health (Amendment) Bill, both tabled by Minister of Health St. Clair Prince, are slated to have their first reading in the National Assembly on Thursday.

Photographs circulated on social media purporting to show the intended amendment, claim that it will delete "a voluntary" and, in its place, insert "an" in the following section of the law:

"(2) Where the Minister has declared a public health emergency, the Minister, on advice of the Chief Medical Officer, may implement special measures to mitigate or remedy the emergency including –

"(a) Establishing a voluntary immunization programme for St. Vincent and the Grenadines or any part of St. Vincent and the Grenadines;"



Opposition Leader Godwin Friday addressing the NDP virtual public meeting Tuesday night.

Speaking at a virtual public meeting of his New Democratic Party (NDP), Dr. Friday – who took the jab a few months ago – said the COVID-19 pandemic is the "biggest problem that we have now".

He however said that the government, "quite frankly, has made a mess of it.

"They were talking out of both sides of their mouths. Behaving, on the one hand, as if it's something to fear, and then, on the other, they want to force people to take

a vaccine," the Opposition Leader told media audiences.

"I am for vaccination but not for compulsory vaccination. As Keith Mitchell said, 'I not for that'. But we have to encourage our people to do what they must; that is, to inform themselves and to take the recommendations of these persons who have the knowledge and the information, and make the right decision – and I believe that is to be vaccinated," Friday

said. "But Ralph and the ULP, they have talked all around this issue and now they are in a situation where they want to force people; and that will only create a worse situation, as there will be a backlash. So, we have to find a way forward in this terrible situation that we have found ourselves ... and I know that our good people will look at it seriously and do what is right for themselves and for our nation," the Opposition Leader said.

Jamaica on high alert due to outbreak of African swine fever in Dominican Republic

Jamaica Gleaner - The Ministry of Agriculture is reporting that Jamaica has been placed on high alert for African swine fever, following a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) report on Wednesday confirming its presence in samples collected from pigs in the Dominican Republic.

Through its veterinary services division, the ministry said it will immediately heighten collaboration with the Jamaica Customs Agency; the Jamaica Defence Force Coast Guard; the Passport, Immigration, Citizenship Agency; pig farmers and all Jamaicans, in order to minimise the risk of entry of the disease.

The agriculture ministry said African swine fever is a devastating, economically significant and highly contagious viral disease of domestic pigs (*Sus scrofa domesticus*) and feral swine (*Sus scrofa ferus*), causing high mortality approaching 100%.

While not known to affect humans, African swine fever is almost always fatal in pigs, the agriculture ministry emphasised.

It added that the virus is highly stable under extreme environmental conditions and is easily spread by infected swine, contaminated pork products and fomites, and also via the soft tick (*Ornithodoros*) vector.

“Introduction of the virus into the country may occur by way of importation of infected pork products and contamination of fomites such as feed, equipment, vehicles, and clothing. It can remain viable in animal feed ingredients under extreme conditions, including those encountered during trans-Atlantic



shipping,” the ministry spokesperson said in a statement today.

“The movement of contaminated pork products and swill-feeding of domestic swine are important epidemiological factors in the spread of the fever,” the spokesperson added.

Food waste from airplanes and ships have often been implicated in outbreaks of African swine fever, classical swine fever, and other exotic diseases and pathogens, the agriculture ministry pointed out.

It said that this new detection of African swine fever in the Americas

has raised serious concerns about the continuing global spread of the disease which has devastated China’s pig population since the outbreaks within that country in 2018.

There is no treatment for African swine fever and there is no known vaccine available for its prevention and control.

Control measures consist of strict animal quarantine and culling procedures.

Infection with African swine fever produces a variety of clinical signs ranging from chronic to sub-clinical disease.

Biden orders tough new vaccination rules for federal workers

(AP) — President Joe Biden on Thursday announced sweeping new pandemic requirements aimed at boosting vaccination rates for millions of federal workers and contractors as he lamented the “American tragedy” of rising-yet-preventable deaths among the unvaccinated.

Federal workers will be required to sign forms attesting they’ve been vaccinated against the coronavirus or else comply with new rules on mandatory masking, weekly testing, distancing and more. The strict new guidelines are aimed at increasing sluggish vaccination rates among the huge number of Americans who draw federal paychecks — and to set an example for private employers around the country.

“Right now, too many people are dying or watching someone they love die and say, ‘If I’d just got the vaccine,’” Biden said in a somber address from the East Room of the White House. “This is an American tragedy. People are dying who don’t have to die.”

However, pushback is certain to Biden’s action. It puts him squarely in the center of a fierce political

debate surrounding the government’s ability to compel Americans to follow public health guidelines.

The federal government directly employs about 4 million people, but Biden’s action could affect many more when federal contractors are factored in. New York University professor of public service Paul Light estimates there are nearly 7 million more employees who could potentially be included, combining those who work for companies that contract with the government and those working under federal grants.

Biden, seemingly fed up with persistent vaccine resistance among many Americans, delivered a sharp rebuke to those who have yet to get shots, saying “they get sick and fill up our hospitals,” taking beds away from others who need them.

“If in fact you are unvaccinated, you present a problem to yourself, to your family and those with whom you work,” he said bluntly.

At the same time, he expressed sympathy for people who have received their shots and are “frustrated with the

consequences of the minority that fail to get vaccinated.” And he again emphasized that the fight against the virus is far from over, girding Americans to remain strong in the face of setbacks in the pandemic.

“I know this is hard to hear. I know it’s frustrating. I know it’s exhausting to think we’re still in this fight. I know we hoped this would be a simple straightforward line, without problems or new challenges. But that isn’t real life,” he said.

His comments came as some 60% of American adults have been fully vaccinated. He had set a July 4 goal to get at least

one shot in 70% of adults, and is still not quite there. The latest figure is 69.3%. And there remains significant resistance from many Republicans and some unions to vaccine mandates for employers.

Reflecting an awareness of the political landmines surrounding mandates, administration officials emphasize that their plan does not require workers to receive the vaccine but aims to make life more difficult for those who are unvaccinated to encourage them to comply. Biden directed his team to take steps to apply similar requirements to all federal contractors.



US President Joe Biden

Ex-cardinal McCarrick charged with sexual assault

BBC - A former US Roman Catholic cardinal has been charged with the sexual assault of a 16-year-old in the 1970s.

Theodore McCarrick, who was defrocked by Pope Francis after an abuse inquiry in 2019, now faces indecent assault and battery charges in Massachusetts.

He is the highest-ranking US Catholic official to face criminal sex abuse charges, the victim's attorney says.

The former Washington DC archbishop has previously said he had "no recollection" of any alleged abuse.

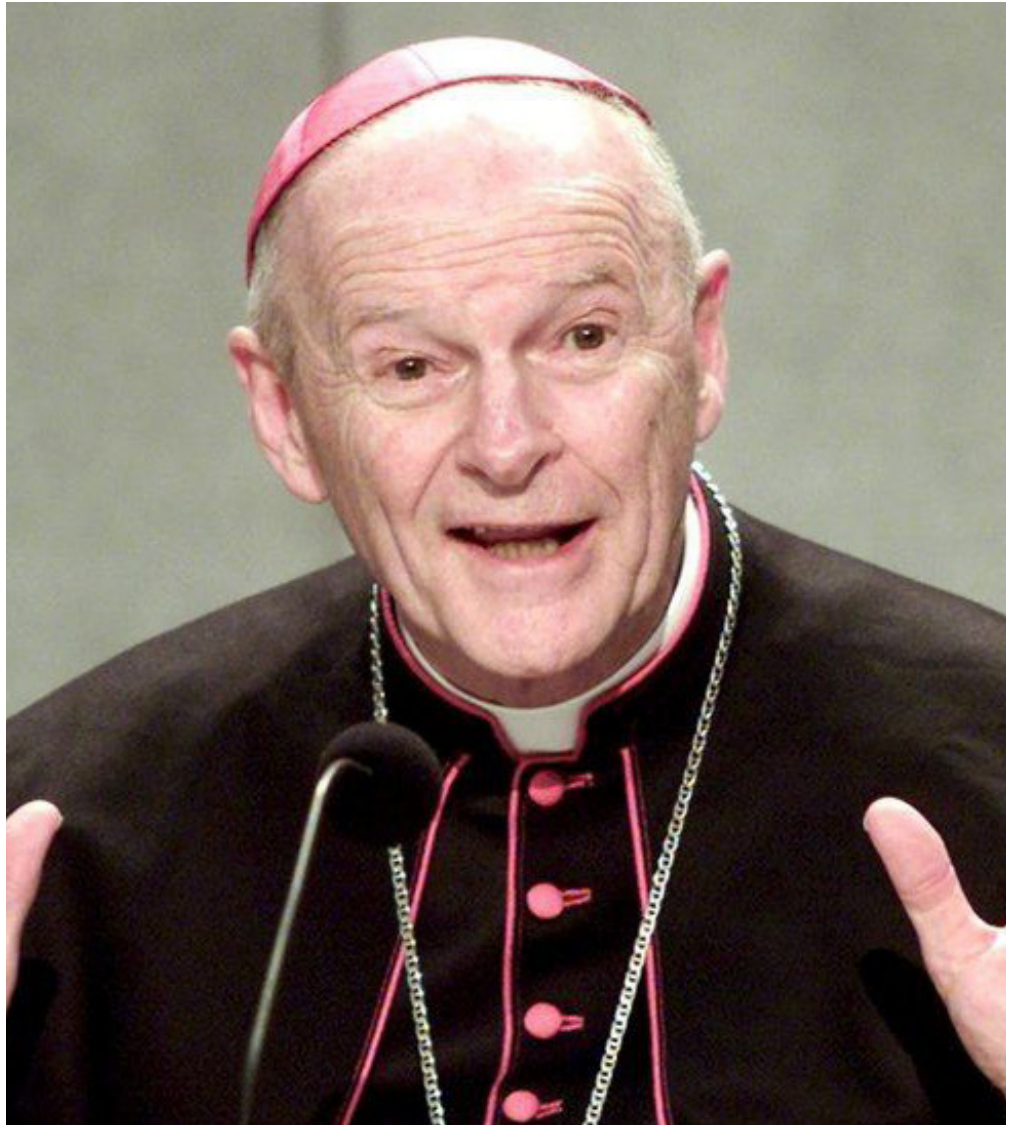
In the new lawsuit, Mr. McCarrick is accused of groping and abusing the boy, who has not been named, for years.

According to court documents, first reported by the Boston Globe newspaper, the man alleging the abuse told investigators that Mr. McCarrick had been a family friend.

He claimed one alleged incident took place during his brother's wedding reception at Wellesley College in Massachusetts in 1974.

The victim said Mr. McCarrick led him into a room and fondled him. Following the incident, the priest allegedly told the man to recite prayers to be redeemed of his "sins".

In 2019, Mr. McCarrick was defrocked after an investigation into decades of sexual abuse allegations against him. He became the most senior Catholic figure to be dismissed from the priesthood in modern times.



Mr. McCarrick was defrocked by the Vatican in 2019

The Vatican's 450-page report included testimonies and dozens of letters and transcripts from Vatican and US church archives.

The report found that the late Pope John Paul II was told of Mr. McCarrick's abuses, but chose to believe American bishops who instead concealed the information.

It also found that Pope Benedict XVI, who resigned in 2013, likely rejected the idea of an investigation because there were "no credible allegations" of abuse.

Mr. McCarrick was also accused of assaulting a teenager in New York in the early 1970s, and forcing men to sleep with him at a beach house in New Jersey while they studied for the priesthood.

He is among hundreds of members of the clergy accused of sexually abusing children over several decades.

Mr. McCarrick is expected to appear in court in Massachusetts next month.

Pakistan demands proof of vaccine for school, restaurant, and transport staff

(Reuters) - Pakistan is to ban staff from entering public offices, schools, restaurants, transport and shopping malls without vaccination certificates, officials said on Thursday, despite only 2.7% of the population having had the full two COVID-19 vaccine shots.

The certificate will also be required for all air passengers and crew, said Asad Umar, who heads National Command and Operations Centre (NCOC), a military-run body that oversees the pandemic response.

Out of a population of 220 million, more than 27.8 million have received one vaccine shot, but only 5.9 million have been fully vaccinated, according to the NCOC.

It said Pakistan registered 4,497 new cases and 76 deaths in the last 24 hours, with more than 3,000 people in critical condition. So far 23,209 people have died of COVID-19 in Pakistan.

Umar said the certificate would be required for air travel and school staff from Aug. 1 and from the end of August for employees of malls, restaurants, public transport and public sector offices.

Students aged above 18 will also be required to be vaccinated.



“If you’re not vaccinated you can’t go to teach at schools and colleges from August 1,” Umar said.

“We can’t put our children’s lives at risk just because that you’re not ready to get the vaccine.”

Pakistan has seen coronavirus infections soar, dominated by Delta variant, and its poor health infrastructure is under extreme pressure.

The national positive test rate for COVID stands at 7.53%, according to

the NCOC. The rate in the southern port city of Karachi touched 23% in recent weeks. [nL3N2OL-3NF]

After a sluggish start, the government ramped up its national vaccination drive, especially in the heartland Punjab province, with 850,000 doses administered on Wednesday across the country.

Umar said the target is to touch one million doses a day.

Pakistan has largely relied on Chinese vaccines. Other vaccines, including AstraZeneca, Pfizer and Moderna, have arrived in donations through WHO’s COVAX sharing programme for poor countries.

As part of that, the United States on Thursday donated three million Moderna doses, on top of 2.5 million given earlier, a US embassy statement said.

Some people in Missouri are getting vaccinated in secret to avoid backlash from loved ones, doctor says

(CNN) - The COVID-19 vaccine has become so polarizing that some people in Missouri are getting inoculated in secret for fear of backlash from their friends and family who oppose vaccination, a doctor told CNN on Wednesday.

“They’ve had some experience that’s sort of changed their mind from the viewpoint of those in their family, those in their friendship circles or their work circles. And they came to their own decision that they wanted to get a vaccine,” said Dr. Priscilla Frase, a hospitalist and chief medical information officer at Ozarks Healthcare in West Plains, Missouri.

“They did their own research on it, and they talked to people and made the decisions themselves,” Frase told CNN’s Anderson Cooper. “But even though they were able to make that decision themselves, they didn’t want to have to deal with the peer pressure or the outbursts from other people about them ... ‘giving in to everything.’”

In a hospital produced video, Frase said one pharmacist at her hospital told her “they’ve had several people come in to get vaccinated who have tried to sort of disguise their appearance and even went so far as to say, ‘please, please, please don’t let anybody know that I got this vaccine.’”

Frase told CNN if a patient asks for privacy to get vaccinated, the hospital tries to accommodate the request -- whether at the

drive-thru window or at their cars.

“Anything we can do to get people in a place that they’re comfortable receiving the vaccine,” Frase said. “It’s not a large number, but every single person that we can reach who wants to get vaccinated and we can provide that for them, that’s a win. And we take every win

theless provide strong protection against infection and severe illness. The vast majority of people hospitalized and dying of Covid-19 are unvaccinated, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said.

Still, a Kaiser Family Foundation poll released earlier this month found that most people who’d

ranks 13th-lowest among all US states, according to the CDC. The state has had some of the highest rates of new cases per capita in recent weeks as the coronavirus has preyed upon the unvaccinated.

Frase said her hospital had 33 patients admitted with Covid-19 as of Wednesday and she’s expecting that



that we can get.”

The doctor’s assertion reflects the dramatic polarization of the Covid-19 vaccines and the extent to which vaccine skepticism has hardened into vaccine refusal.

Studies of the three authorized vaccines have shown that they are not 100% effective but never-

made firm decisions one way or the other about their vaccination plans back in January hadn’t budged since. Of those who were unvaccinated at the start of the year, only about 8% had changed their minds, the poll found.

Missouri has 41% of its population fully vaccinated against Covid-19, which

number to rise.

“The patients that are coming in are generally younger than what we saw before. It’s more people requiring a lot more oxygen, a lot quicker,” Frase said.

“The majority of people we’ve admitted have not been vaccinated,” she added.

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Strong attention to detail

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Minimum 1 year experience

COOK & FOOD SERVER

Minimum 5 years' experience in a similar role

DECKHAND/SNORKEL GUIDE

Basic Boating experience required; Must not be prone to motion sickness

High School Completion

Must be a competent swimmer

Boatmaster 3 license desirable but not required

EXAM PROCTOR (INVIGILATOR)

High School Diploma required

Excellent written, oral and listening skills

Must pay keen attention to detail, timeliness and accuracy

Able to work independently as well as with a team

Computer skills and knowledge of use of a web browser such as Edge, Firefox, or Chrome would be an asset

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 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

GARDENER

Minimum 1 year experience as a Gardener

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/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

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

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

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Minimum 1 year working experience as a PADI Open Water Scuba Instructor

Must have issued at least 50 certifications & logged at least 1000 dives

Boatmaster 3 License required

Higher Level Boating & TEC Diving Qualifications is an asset

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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

REAL ESTATE SALES MANAGER

10 years or more relevant experience

An undergraduate or higher degree in business studies or a related area preferred

Strong and demonstrable track record in luxury real estate sales, preferably in London or the Caribbean

Past resort destination development experience is helpful

Exceptional understand of and network with high-net-worth UK real estate market

Excellent sale skills with a clear sales process

Strong communication skills; Excellent enumerative skills

Strong skills with MS Office products; Team-player with a positive personality

Valid Driver's License required

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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

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Minimum 1 year experience as a member of reception or reservation team in a luxury environment

High School diploma minimum or equivalent

Must be able to perform job functions with attention to detail, speed and accuracy

Must be a clear thinker, remaining calm and resolving problems using good judgment

Must work cohesively with co-workers as part of a team and work with minimal supervision

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SCAN ME

Jamaican boxer Brown fails in bid to claim Olympic medal

Jamaican super-heavyweight Ricardo Brown came up short in his bid for a medal as he lost in a first-round bout to India's Satish Kumar by split decision.

Four judges scored the fight in favour of Kumar and one scored it for the Jamaican. Brown, popularly known as 'Big 12,' had a slow start, losing

the first round on all the judges' scorecards and never really recovered from there.

He showed more intent and tried to pick up the pace in rounds 2 and 3 but ultimately didn't do any significant damage as Kumar, who fought a more technical fight, was able to come away with the win. Kumar, a two-

time Asian Championships bronze medalist, was cut on the forehead after an accidental clash of heads in the 3rd round but kept his composure and avoided some potentially devastating right hands from Brown to seal victory and advance to the quarterfinals, one step closer to an opportunity at a medal.

He will next face reigning world and Asian Champion Bakhodir Jalovov of Uzbekistan on Saturday. Brown, 31, was a bronze medalist at the 2019 Pan Am Games in Lima, Peru, and was seeking to become Jamaica's first boxing medallist at the Olympics.





Man Utd name ex-Orlando Pride boss as new head coach to replace Stoney

Manchester United have appointed former Orlando Pride and Birmingham City boss Marc Skinner as head coach on a two-year contract.

The 38-year-old, who left the National Women's Soccer League side last week, replaces Casey Stoney.

Stoney, 39, resigned at the end of last season after three years with the Women's Super League club. "I'm looking forward to working closely with the staff and this talented group of players," said Skinner.

"Our focus is to build on everything they have already achieved in the women's game. It's an exciting opportunity to lead the team into what will be another competitive WSL season. "I want us to achieve success together and our aim is to

give the fans a team they can continue to be proud of."

Skinner spent three years as Birmingham boss between 2016 and 2019 and led them to the 2017 Women's FA Cup final.

He also guided them to a fourth-place finish in the WSL in his final season with the club before joining Orlando in 2019.

Former England defender Stoney was appointed as United manager in July 2018 after the club re-formed. She got them promoted to the WSL in her first campaign.

They finished fourth last season and narrowly missed out on a place in the Champions League by one point.

United host Reading in their first game of the new campaign on Sunday 5 September.



Novak Djokovic thrashes Kei Nishikori to reach men's semi-finals


Novak Djokovic remains on course for a 'Golden Slam' after ruthlessly ending the dreams of home hope Kei Nishikori to cruise into the Olympic semi-finals. The world number one, bidding to become the first man to win all four Grand Slam titles and an Olympic gold in the same year, breezed through 6-2, 6-0. He will face Germany's Alexander Zverev in the semi-finals on Friday. Switzerland's Belinda Bencic and the Czech Republic's Marketa Vondrousova will meet in Saturday's women's final. Bencic outlasted Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina 7-6 (7-2) 4-6, 6-3 in a match lasting almost three hours in the sear-

ing Tokyo heat, saving five set-points in a 73-minute opening set that she won on a tie-break.

The Swiss later returned to the court to become the fifth player to reach finals in both singles and doubles at a Games since tennis was reintroduced to the Olympics in 1988, as she and Viktorija Golubic beat Brazilian pair Laura Pigossi and Luisa Stefani 7-5, 6-3.

Vondrousova, ranked 42nd in the world, enjoyed a far more serene passage as she followed up on her upset of Naomi Osaka by shocking world number six Elina Svitolina 6-3, 6-1 in little over an hour.

GUYANA'S EDGHILL BURSTING WITH PRIDE AFTER HISTORIC OLYMPIC TABLE TENNIS ACHIEVEMENT



Guyana's Chelsea Edghill has confessed to bursting with pride after becoming the first female table tennis player from the English-speaking Caribbean to play at the Olympic Games.

The former Caribbean women's under-21 champion made her Olympic Games debut last Saturday, defeating her opponent Sally Yee of Fiji in the preliminary round. Edghill won that battle, emphatically beating Yee 11-5, 4-11, 11-3, 11-6, 11-8.

However, the 24-year-old then suffered a straight-sets defeat at the hands of 17-year-old Yubin Shin of South Korea, in Round One of the Women's Singles on Saturday.

Overwhelmed by the feat, the Guyanese international shared her experience with SportsMax.tv.

"It was a very happy and emotional feeling to be the first Guyanese to play in the Olympics for table tennis. It's a huge honour and a huge feat," Edghill said.

"I am really happy and elated to be able to accomplish such a feat. It's indescribable how it feels. I am full with pride. I am very proud to represent Guyana and touch the stage, and very proud of the history I made for Guyana," she added. Edghill and swimmer Andrew Fowler were Guyana's flag bearers at the opening ceremony in Tokyo, Japan, last Friday.

DEWS