

ILO GIVES BIG-UP TO ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA!

SEE PAGE 6



Tourism Minister Max Fernandez (left) and Tourism Authority CEO Colin James with the top 3 prize-winners in the Junior Minister of Tourism Speech Competition, held here as part of the National Tourism Youth Congress. The young high achievers clutch their valuable prizes, which include a laptop for the 1st Place finisher (who has also been designated 'Junior Minister of Tourism' for one year!) and tablets for the runners-up. FULL STORY ON PAGES 6-7

- INSIDE:**
- Sir Molwyn to spearhead audit of burial sites
 - Air Services agreement with Nigeria expected soon
 - 3 dead in Jamaica; throats slit during bizarre ritual!

Hurry and get vaccinated: Fears are growing in England over new COVID Delta variant!

A newly detected coronavirus variant is on the rise in England, with the virus believed to be an offshoot of the Delta variant.

According to a briefing from the UK Health Security Agency, released on Friday, “a Delta sub-lineage newly designated as AY.4.2 is noted to be expanding in England”, with the body adding that the variant is being monitored and assessed. The report states that in the week beginning 27 September – the last week for which complete sequencing data was available – AY.4.2 accounted for about 6% of sequenced coronavirus cases and is “on an increasing trajectory”. AY.4.2 contains two mutations in its spike protein, called A222V and Y145H. The spike protein sits on the outside of the coronavirus and helps

the virus to enter cells.

However, Prof Ravi Gupta, professor of clinical microbiology at the University of Cambridge, told the Guardian these mutations were not of particular concern. “A222V has been seen in other lineages of Delta,” he said. “It doesn’t have a really large effect on the virus.” Gupta added similar mutations to Y145H had been seen in the Alpha variant and other variants. While these appear to have an effect on the binding between antibodies and the virus, Gupta said the effect was, at most, modest.

“But in my mind, these are not really significant mutations,” he said. “We need to look further at what the non-spike mutations are.”

In the past, new COVID variants have fuelled large surges

in the number of cases – the Alpha variant played a key role in rising cases last winter, while the Delta variant took off and led to sharp increases in the spring. Daily COVID cases in England are rising once again: 39,624 new COVID cases were reported on Saturday, the highest figure since late July.

According to the Financial Times (FT), Jeffrey Barrett, the director of the COVID-19 Genomics Initiative at the Wellcome Sanger Institute in Cambridge, and Francois Balloux, the director of the University College London Genetics Institute, have suggested AY.4.2 could be 10-15% more transmissible than the

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original Delta variant.

However, they urged caution. "Britain is the only country in which it has taken off in this way, and I still would not rule out its growth being a chance demographic event," Balloux told the FT.

Balloux told the *Guardian* the new variant was unlikely to be behind the recent rise in cases.

"Its potential higher transmissibility could at this stage only explain a tiny fraction of additional cases," he said. "It's around 10%

frequency [now], and assuming it may be 10% more transmissible, that would only explain an additional 1% extra infections [every five or so days]."

Gupta said the focus on a new variant is missing the point, noting a number of other important factors including the slow rollout of jabs to older children. According to official figures, vaccination rates among 12- to 15-year-olds were about three times lower in England than Scotland.

"We shouldn't be blaming the virus for what is going on in the UK," said Gupta. "It is because we have fundamentally failed to control transmission, and that is because kids are vulnerable, they have not been vaccinated, they are back at school, they are spreading virus among themselves and they are feeding it into their families."

All this, he added, was happening with Delta dominant, which research had shown had greater

ability to evade an immune response than the Alpha variant.

"It breaks through the vaccines anyway, so vaccines protects you partially from an infection being transmitted but it is not complete protection," he said. "So the message needs to be, let's stop worrying about mutations and worry about the fact we have uncontrolled transmission in the UK."

(Reprinted from the UK Guardian newspaper)

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KEEP ANTICU CLEAN

ILO lauds A&B; Labour Minister Benjamin elated

Attorney General and Minister for Labour Relations, Hon. Steadroy “Cutie” Benjamin on Monday participated in a virtual ceremony for the ratification of ILO instruments by Antigua and Barbuda

According to AG Benjamin, “Antigua created history by being the first country in the Caribbean to ratify the greatest number of Conventions at one instance. We were honored [on Mon-

day] in the ceremony arranged by the ILO.”

He added, “Our little country is leading, as usual, in matters of law in the sub-region, in particular; and one of the leaders in CARICOM in general.”

Benjamin said, “The ILO recognizes the importance of Antigua’s contribution to promoting the rights of workers and employers alike in the world. Recently, we ratified nine



Minister for Labour Relations, Hon. Steadroy Benjamin.

Conventions, some of which had to do with the rights of domestic workers, maternity benefits, and seafarers.”

According to the Labour Minister, Antigua and Barbuda has “led the way in making sure [that its] laws comport at all times with the recommendations of the ILO, and the ILO [in turn] thought it fit that Antigua ought to be singled out for mention.”

He said the ILO recognizes that Antigua and Barbuda “has set an example for other regions around the world and, in particular, in the Caribbean; and they must always make cer-

tain that laws are passed to protect the rights of workers ...”

He recalled that Antigua first enacted a Labour Code in the 1970s—even before the country became politically independent.

“Our Labour Code has been used as a guide for universities around the world and, in particular, in the Caribbean,” said the Minister.

Benjamin said he felt “honoured and humbled” at being “able to spearhead this particular approach, and the ILO saw it fit to honour Antigua and Barbuda in this magnificent endeavor.”

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THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

FIVE ISLANDS CAMPUS, ANTIGUA & BARBUDA, WEST INDIES

RECRUITMENT OFFICER ENROLMENT MANAGEMENT UNIT

The University of the West Indies (UWI) is a dynamic, international institution serving the countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean. Its faculties and institutes offer a wide range of undergraduate, master's and doctoral programmes in Humanities and Education, Science and Technology, Engineering, Law, Medical Sciences, Sport and the Social Sciences. The institution represents the oldest of its kind within the region and has been responsible for producing outstanding leaders who have made remarkable contributions to regional development. In 2019, The UWI placed 32nd among the 150 best-ranked universities across Latin America and the Caribbean, according to the Times Higher Education (THE) Latin America University Rankings. After 71 years, The UWI remains the number 1 ranked university, out of more than 200 registered universities in the Caribbean. The UWI is currently within the top 2% of universities in Latin America and the Caribbean from a complement of over 2,000 registered universities.

The University of the West Indies, Five Islands Campus (UWI FIC) is inviting applications from suitably qualified individuals for the post of **Recruitment Officer**. The incumbent will be responsible for organizing and implementing student recruitment and outreach activities for the University of the West Indies, Five Islands Campus.

The successful candidate will be required to:

- Assist in relevant target market identification
- Coordinate the planning, development and implementation of recruitment strategies for designated markets
- Conduct and lead physical and virtual student recruitment activities and events
- Develop and cultivate relationships with local and regional departments of education and community partners to promote The UWI FIC's academic programmes and increase student enrolment
- Participate in the evaluation of The UWI FIC's student recruitment activities
- Collaborate with The UWI FIC's Marketing Officer to provide suggestions on the content of student recruitment material
- Collaborate with The UWI FIC's faculty to develop and organize recruitment activities
- Perform other related duties as assigned by the Assistant Registrar: Enrolment Management Unit

QUALIFICATION, TRAINING & EXPERIENCE:

- Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, Education, Marketing or a related field; candidates with a Master's degree hold a distinct advantage.
- Minimum of five (5) years' professional experience in student recruitment at the University Level.
- Experience in online recruitment in higher education.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS and ABILITIES:

- Knowledge of the University's regulations with regards to student administration and marketing
- Knowledge of best practices in marketing, advertising and public relations
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office suite
- High social and emotional intelligence quotients
- Team building and management
- Events management

Applicants are required to submit a completed employment application form, a curriculum vitae (CV) giving particulars of qualifications, experience, the names and addresses of at least three (3) references (one of whom should be from your current organization) and copies of academic qualifications. These are to be sent by electronic mail to hr.fiveislands@uwi.edu addressed to the **Human Resource Manager, The University of the West Indies, Five Islands, Antigua and Barbuda, West Indies**. A full CV and an application form must be submitted. Application forms can be obtained by sending a request to hr.fiveislands@uwi.edu. The final date for receipt of applications is **October 31, 2021**. To expedite the appointment procedures, applicants are advised to ask their referees to send reports under confidential cover to the above address without waiting to be contacted.

The University thanks all applicants; however, due to the volume of applications, only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Junior Minister of Tourism Speech Competition: participants awarded

Eight contenders from secondary and tertiary level institutions across the country who participated in the Junior Minister of Tourism Speech Competition during the National Tourism Youth Congress were recently rewarded for their outstanding performances during the annual event organized by the Tourism Education, Training & Awareness Unit within the Ministry of Tourism & Investment.

Jody-Ann Parker emerged the winner and was named Junior Minister of Tourism for one year. She received a brand-new laptop, while the other contenders received tablets sponsored by

the Ministry of Tourism & Investment.

Alisha Ali, Mekesha Browne, Damari Samuel, Cedric Park, Yenique Walsh, Rebecca Campos and Kimberlee Warner were the other contenders who participated in the competition that provides a forum for students aged 14-17 to share their ideas about the future direction of Caribbean Tourism.

"We are pleased to present to you [with] a token of our appreciation for being exceptional and for participating in a well-executed national competition. You are now a part of us and, sometime in the future, we might be calling on

you to be part of one of our programs or to even mold a student," stated Ms. Tracey Browne of the Tourism Education, Training & Awareness Unit within the Ministry of Tourism & Investment.

Hon. Charles Fernandez, Minister of Tourism & Investment, during his remarks said that going through the interview process to select the finalists, he was of the opinion that each one of the participants was very exceptional and could have represented Antigua and Barbuda on their own in a great way. "We are committed to allowing everyone the opportunity to have an advantage and get to the height of every aspect of tour-

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The graphic is a celebratory banner for ACB Caribbean's 60th anniversary. It features a dark blue background with a yellow border. The text 'ACB CARIBBEAN' is at the top in yellow. Below it, 'CELEBRATES' is written in large yellow letters. The number '60' is prominently displayed in the center, with a trail of yellow sparkles behind it. At the bottom, 'YEARS OF SERVICE' is written in yellow. On the right side, there is a logo for 'ACB CARIBBEAN' with the tagline 'Simply Smarter Banking'. Below the logo are icons for 'Like' and 'Share'. Further down is a yellow button with the text 'WWW.ACBONLINE.COM'. At the bottom right, there are four social media icons: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. The bottom right corner of the graphic features a colorful geometric design with yellow, orange, and blue triangles.



Tourism Minister Charles Henry Fernandez (center) addresses participants in the speech competition.

ism and be ambassadors for their country”, the Minister continued. “Congratulations to everyone. I want you to leave here not only with a prize but with an increased appreciation for the industry that is responsible for 65% of the country’s GDP, and the knowledge that we have done everything we can to open [future] opportunities ... for young people,” the Minister said. CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, Mr. Colin James said ABTA is pleased to partner and support such initiatives by the Tourism Education Training & Awareness Unit.

“You guys are the future of Antigua and Barbuda, and – based on the level of talent I saw on display – I can see one of you being a CEO or even a Tourism Minister. I want to encourage you to always put your best foot forward, no matter what role you may play in the future,” remarked Mr. James. Every year the winner of the Junior Minister of Tourism Speech Competition represents Antigua and Barbuda at the Caribbean Tourism Youth Congress, an integral part of the Caribbean Tourism Organization’s annual tourism conference.

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Allen elated at YEEP exam results, high pass rate

by Shelton Daniel

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda's Youth Empowerment & Education Program (YEEP) is celebrating the attainment of good CXC results by its students, at both the CSEC and CAPE levels.

Apart from an overall and average pass rate in the high-60s, YEEP is also boasting two students who attained distinctions by getting A-grades "in every profile area" of the respective subjects for which they have been so recognized.

This was announced by the Director of YEEP, Mr. Troy Allen, who names the two distinction recipients as Ms. Anne Marie Julian and Ms. Donette Simon.

The latter was identified by Allen as YEEP's "top mathematics student".

"Donette also got a distinction in Principles of Business," he stated, "and ... our top Tourism student was Ms. Kelcie Mussington."

He said YEEP enjoyed an improvement in its pass rate for mathematics, "although the num-

ber of students significantly dropped because a lot of them deferred their sitting until January or June next year."

Despite this, Allen said, YEEP's pass rate for math was 46%, compared with the regional pass rate of 41%.

Stressing that the results were still preliminary and some of the grades for YEEP are "still missing" – and also with "a number of grades are in the process of being queried" – Allen disclosed that "just a little over 200 students of YEEP wrote the exam".

He said Physical Education & Sports registered a 100% pass rate; Principles of Business 86.4 percent; EDPM (Electronic Document Preparation & Management) 85%; and Office Administration 74.3%.

The preceding pertained to CSEC (Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate), and Allen went on to provide the results obtained by YEEP students in CAPE (Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations). He disclosed that YEEP offered three subjects at the CAPE level:



YEEP Director Troy Allen.

"Management of Business, Entrepreneurship and, for the first time, we wrote Tourism Studies."

He said YEEP produced a 96% pass rate in Tourism Studies – a subject area that Allen said was personally tutored by him. "What was significant to note was that 60% of the students who passed the Tourism got very high grades," he stated, adding that, "For CAPE, a grade 1-5 is a pass, and anything 3, 2 and 1 is what they

consider outstanding – and 60 percent of the CAPE students for Tourism Studies got grade 3 and up." Management of Business, he said, got 60% but the results for Entrepreneurship dropped from what it had been before to 46%.

"But our preliminary overall CSEC pass rate was 65.6. Our overall CAPE pass rate was 67.1 – and ... when we combine our CSEC and our CAPE, our overall pass rate is 66.2."

NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY given that **MS. QUISQUEYA AMADA MARTES MARTES. OF GAMBLE'S, ST. JOHN'S, ANTIGUA** is applying to the Minister for Naturalisation and that any person who knows any reason why Naturalisation should not be granted should send a written and signed statement of the facts to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs.

Antigua and Barbuda, Nigeria to sign air-services agreement



Mr. Brian Challenger.

An air-services agreement between Antigua and Barbuda and Nigeria has been hammered out and representatives from both parties are likely to sign on the dotted-line today.

Aviation consultant to the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, Brian Challenger, said discussions between a visiting team from Nigeria and a local team that he heads were held on Tuesday.

He described the discussions as having gone 'very well'.

Challenger explained that both parties have agreed to peruse the document overnight and to reconvene Wednesday morning to exchange notes. Once the parties agree to the wording of the document, the agreement will be signed soon after. Under the agreement, each country is expected to name a specific airline as its national carrier to operate the route. Challenger said Antigua and Barbuda has not yet decided which airline it will designate

for this purpose. He noted that Antigua and Barbuda hopes to benefit from this arrangement that will allow direct air links between the Caribbean and Africa, with VC Bird International Airport being the gateway.

A team from the Nigerian ministry of aviation arrived in here earlier this week to conclude the negotiations which have been ongoing for some time.



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FIVE ISLANDS CAMPUS, ANTIGUA & BARBUDA, WEST INDIES

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SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES

The University of the West Indies (UWI) is a dynamic, international institution serving the countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean. Its faculties and institutes offer a wide range of undergraduate, master's and doctoral programmes in Humanities and Education, Science and Technology, Engineering, Law, Medical Sciences, Sport and the Social Sciences. The institution represents the oldest of its kind within the region and has been responsible for producing outstanding leaders who have made remarkable contributions to regional development. In 2019, The UWI placed 32nd among the 150 best ranked universities across Latin America and the Caribbean, according to the Times Higher Education (THE) Latin America University Rankings. After 75 years, The UWI remains the number 1 ranked university, out of more than 200 registered universities in the Caribbean. The UWI is currently within the top 2% of universities in Latin America and the Caribbean from a complement of over 2,000 registered universities.

The University of the West Indies, Five Islands Campus (UWI FIC) is inviting applications from suitably qualified individuals to fill two (2) positions **Senior Lecturer/Lecturer** on the Five Islands Campus in Antigua & Barbuda. The **Senior Lecturer/Lecturer** will provide academic leadership for the School of Health and Behavioural Sciences.

The successful candidates will be required to:

- Teach bachelor's and master's level courses in their area of specialization
- Supervise master's research
- Develop new courses and programmes
- Modify and upgrade course material on an ongoing basis
- Be involved in interdisciplinary collaboration
- Develop innovative research
- Advise and supervise students at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels
- Coordinate internships and other student programmes
- Participate in campus-related and outreach activities
- Conduct original, high-quality scholarly research for publication in leading academic journals
- Undertake an appropriate teaching and administrative load
- Provide scholarly inputs into the School's outreach programmes
- Develop funding proposals and raise funds to support scholarly research
- Participate in relevant university committees and boards
- Perform other related duties as assigned by the Head, School of Health and Behavioural Sciences

QUALIFICATION, TRAINING & EXPERIENCE:

- PhD in Nursing Administration, Nursing Education, Public Health nursing or any other nursing discipline
- Current Registered Nurse (RN) license
- Demonstrated scholarly research and significant potential for carrying out scholarly research
- An appropriate record of teaching combined with a willingness to undertake training in teaching at the tertiary level
- At least five (5) years' experience of teaching in the related areas at the tertiary level
- Experience in the administration of internship programmes
- Recent clinical nursing experience (medical-surgical nursing, critical or long-term care experience, etc.)

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

- Knowledge of the University's regulations with regards to student administration
- Skilled in curriculum development (especially in face to face or distant delivery modes)
- Knowledge of higher education administration
- Ability to teach in online/blended environments
- Evidence of contribution to the Public Service or field of study

Applicants are required to submit a completed employment application form, a curriculum vitae (CV) giving particulars of qualifications and experience, a statement on teaching and research interests, the names and addresses of at least three (3) references (one of whom should be from your current organization) and copies of academic qualifications. These are to be sent by electronic mail to hr.fiveislands@uwi.edu addressed to the **Human Resources Manager, The University of the West Indies, Five Islands, Antigua and Barbuda, West Indies**. A full CV and an application form must be submitted. Application forms can be obtained by sending a request to hr.fiveislands@uwi.edu. The final date for receipt of applications is **October 31, 2021**. To expedite the appointment procedures, applicants are advised to ask their referees to send reports under confidential cover to the above address without waiting to be contacted.

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Health Minister to spearhead audit of burial sites

Health Minister Sir Molwyn Joseph will spearhead a national audit of the country's burial sites aimed at fostering a more equitable use of these places of final interment.

Speaking in the House of Representatives on Tuesday, Minister Joseph said it was important for him to address concerns regarding the capacity of the St. John's Public Cemetery.

The Minister said over the years it had become common practice for people – including those from distant villages of Antigua – to bury family members at the St. John's cemetery, even if there are community cemeteries in many of these areas.

"Unfortunately, interment on Antigua over the past several decades has been almost exclusively in St. John's and this has accelerated the carrying capacity of that facility while many burial sites in the rural areas were not utilised," he explained.

Sir Molwyn revealed that the Ministry of



Minister of Health & Wellness Sir Molwyn Joseph.

Health is in the process of establishing an inventory of burial sites, their use and maintenance. He added that there are 24 additional burial sites in the country, operated by churches and community groups.

"We are about to meet with these individuals and we are about to discuss with them the use of these burial sites so that we don't over utilize the St. John's Cemetery," he stated. Sir Molwyn opined that the

St. John's Cemetery has been utilized over the years because of convenience. However, he is of the view that the time has come to rationalize the use of cemeteries generally.

The Health Minister is assuring the public that 'there is no need for alarm' on the issue of over-utilisation of any particular burial site, as the plan is to encourage more usage of community-based burial sites.

"There's no reason

why a person from a particular community ought not to be buried there," he declared.

The Minister also revealed that preparatory work – including the erection of fencing – on the area designated for the new national cemetery near Tomlinson's will begin shortly.

Sir Molwyn disclosed that a morgue will also be established at the former Holberton Hospital.

ABFC unveils logo and theme for 40th Independence Anniversary

Earlier this year, the Antigua and Barbuda Festivals Commission (ABFC) launched the 40th Anniversary of Independence Logo & Theme Competition, which received an overwhelming measure of support from Antiguan and Barbudans, locally

and abroad. Competition participants were allowed to make their submissions in any of three formats: Logo & Theme; Logo Only; or Theme Only.

From a pool of over 50 entrants, the winning theme – *Resilience, Reflection and Recovery* – was

submitted by Mr. Gamal Goodwin, while the winning logo was designed by Ms. Alfonsina Olmos.

Short biographies/profiles of Ms. Olmos and Mr. Goodwin are also included in this edition of Pointe Xpress.

Meet Alfonsina Olmos

Winner of the 40th Independence Logo Competition

Alfonsina Olmos is a 25 year old Antiguan citizen, who is also bilingual in English and Spanish.

In 2007, she attended the Christian Faith Academy, and upon completion, in 2012, she received her high school diploma. Further to this, she also attained a Business Ethics Training and Development Certificate from the Macedonia Business Ethics and Language Institute.

Previously, she worked as a secretary at the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela from 2013 to 2020. However, at the age of 20, she was offered the opportunity to be an unofficial translator for the Eye Care Program, Miracle Mission, at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Center. This opportunity opened other doors for Miss Olmos as she traveled to Venezuela to further assist the Mission, and was also recommended to take part in a sub-regional news network based in Venezuela with ABS Television.

Quite recently, Miss Olmos developed a keen interest in graphic designing, mainly as a hobby, during the COVID-19 pandemic. She was further encouraged by her partner, who is a well-known professional digital artist, and he willingly shared his knowledge, creativity and expertise with her.

Motivation propelled her to demonstrate her capabilities by entering the 40th Independence Logo Competition, and winning first place for the best designed logo was tremendously rewarding.

Currently, Miss Olmos is attending the University of the West Indies Open Campus pursuing a certification in Cosmetology with the intention of becoming a successful Entrepreneur.



Meet the designer of our 40th Independence Anniversary Logo, Miss Alfonsina Olmos, who says "...winning first place for the Best Logo Design was tremendously rewarding."

Meet Gamal Goodwin

Winner of the 40th Independence Theme Competition

Gamal Goodwin is the CEO of GProductions, which is a Graphic and Website Design Agency, based in Antigua and Barbuda. He is also a "family man"- a loving husband, loyal brother, and a devoted father to two amazing girls.

Gamal is a former student of the St. Andrew's Primary School, the Antigua Grammar School, and the University of the Virgin Islands. Although Gamal graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Business and Computer Information Systems, he has always had a passion for Entrepreneurship, and he has been an entrepreneur for almost all his adult life.

Since graduating from University, he started three companies including: WarDadli SouJahs, Party Bands R Us, and GProductions. In his profession at GProductions, he specializes in the development of branding concepts, designs, production, and marketing. Part of his work includes developing branding Taglines and Slogans for many new businesses and products - this he says is a great joy to him:

"This joy has now been put on national display as my slogan has been adjudged the winner of the Antigua & Barbuda 40th Anniversary of Independence. I hope to continue developing branding strategies for Companies, local and abroad, and encourage anyone who wishes to reach me to visit my website gproductionsonline.com or find me on Google Gamal Goodwin."



Mr. Gamal Goodwin, winner of the 40th Independence Anniversary Theme Competition – "Resilience, Reflection, Recovery".




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Barbados reports increase in marijuana, cocaine interdictions

BDF – The Barbados Defence Force (BDF) in its mandate for the defence and protection of Barbados' interests, continues to augment its response and commitment to these duties and responsibilities.

In the maritime domain, and given the effects of the global pandemic, there have been particular challenges to combat the illegal narcotics trade. However, due to interagency efforts locally and regionally, disruptions and seizures in this sector have been successful.

To date, there has been a significant increase in the illegal trafficking trade. In particular, during the period 1 January–13 October, 2021, the BDF's maritime unit, the Barbados Coast Guard (BCG), successfully seized the following drugs, weapons and vessels listed below.

These statistics, compared to the year 2020, reflect an 11% and 50% increase in marijuana and cocaine interdictions, respectively. Additionally, they highlight a 467% increase in the number of non-nationals arrested in connection to these related crimes.

Analytics suggest that one factor contributing to this increase is the current socioeconomic environ-

ment faced regionally, and the local demand.

Statistics: 1 January–13 October, 2021 – 5,895 lbs marijuana; 183 lbs cocaine; one firearm (AR-15 rifle); nine vessels; 28 non-nationals; seven nationals.

In 2020, the BCG conducted several counter-narcotic operations which led to the interdictions of 5,277 lbs of marijuana and 162 lbs of cocaine, as well as 5 small arms -- one Draco AR-47 and a quantity of ammunition. Seven vessels were intercepted with six non-nationals and seven nationals being arrested and charged in connection with maritime drug-related offenses.

The Barbados Coast Guard has, however, remained dedicated, not only to its primary role, but has also implemented measures to assist the Government of Barbados in its fight against COVID-19. All persons taken into custody undergo mandatory COVID-19 screening.

As a result of these measures, no positive cases of COVID were detected in 2020. So far for 2021, one positive case, a non-national, was detected and that individual was isolated in accordance with the national policy.

The Barbados Coast



Guard remains committed to the territorial defence of Barbados and the maintenance of a safe and secure maritime environment.

In keeping with its mission, the Barbados Defence Force will con-

tinue to cooperate with its local and regional law enforcement partners in combating transnational organised crime, enhancing maritime security, and promoting peace, stability and prosperity in Barbados.

Grenada: Five Trinidadians held as suspects in Carriacou bank robbery



The St. Kitts-Nevis Observer - The Royal Grenada Police Force has made a breakthrough in the daring daylight robbery on Carriacou with the capture of five suspects.

Minister for Carriacou & Petite Martinique, Kindra Maturine-Stewart, said she applauded law enforcement and security forces on the island, whose swift action ensured that five foreign nationals implicated in the robbing of a bank in their

peaceful community were captured.

She said, "My office has been informed that men identified as all Trinidadian nationals were captured at sea during their attempted getaway from the island after robbing the Carriacou branch of the Grenada Co-operative Bank located at Hillsborough, Carriacou."

The minister said the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique are heartened by the swift

and efficient action of the local police and coast guard, which reflects the improved local security capacity on the island.

She noted that, in recent years, the government invested great resources in personnel and equipment as part of ongoing efforts to improve security.

"Despite that fact, we are determined to review even further some of the local security operations since this is the second

time within two years that our very peaceful community has been jolted by what is effectively a cross-border raid by regional criminal elements."

The minister added: "We are thankful that none of our citizens were hurt during today's dramatic development, though witnesses would have had some trauma, since it is unusual in one of the most serene and peaceful jurisdictions in this hemisphere."

Haiti gang seeks US\$17m for kidnapped US missionaries

AP – A gang that kidnapped 17 members of a US-based missionary group has demanded a US\$17 million ransom for them, according to Haiti's justice minister, as quoted by the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ).

Justice Minister Liszt Quitel said the gang was demanding US\$1 million per person. Quitel did not immediately return messages for comment, but he also confirmed the figure to the *New York Times* (NYT).

WSJ said he identified the ages of the abducted children as eight months, and three, six, 14 and 15 years.

A wave of kidnappings prompted a protest strike that shuttered businesses, schools and public transportation in a new blow to Haiti's anaemic economy. Unions and other groups vowed to continue the shutdown Tuesday.

FBI agents and other US officials are helping Haitian authorities hunt for the 12 adults and five children linked to the Christian Aid Ministries in Ohio who were kidnapped Saturday during a trip to visit an orphanage.

It is the largest reported kidnapping of its kind in recent years, with Haitian gangs growing more brazen and abductions spiking as the country tries



to recover from the July 7 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse and a magnitude 7.2 earthquake that struck southern Haiti on August 14, killing more than 2,200 people.

"We are calling on authorities to take action," said Jean-Louis Abaki, a moto taxi driver who joined the strike Monday to decry killings and kidnappings in the hemi-

sphere's poorest nation.

With the usually chaotic streets of Haiti's capital quiet and largely empty on Monday, Abaki said that if Prime Minister Ariel Henry and National Police Chief Léon Charles want to stay in power, "They have to give the population a chance at security."

Haitian police told The Associated Press (AP) that the abduction of the 16

Americans and one Canadian was carried out by the 400 Mawozo gang, a group with a long record of killings, kidnappings and extortion. In April, a man who claimed to be the gang's leader told a radio station that it was responsible for abducting five priests, two nuns and three relatives of one of the priests that month. They were later released.

At least 328 kidnappings were reported to Haiti's National Police in the first eight months of 2021, compared with a total of 234 for all of 2020, said a report last month by the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti.

Gangs have been accused of kidnapping schoolchildren, doctors, police officers, bus passengers and others as they grow more powerful and demand ransoms ranging from a couple hundred dollars to millions of dollars.

Ned Price, the US State Department's spokesman, said US officials have been in constant contact with Haiti's National Police, the missionary group, and the victims' relatives.

"This is something that we have treated with the utmost priority since Saturday," he said, adding that officials are doing "all we can to seek a quick resolution to this".

Jamaica: Three dead after throats slit during ark-boarding ritual

Jamaica Gleaner - The bloodstained concrete where Tanicka Gordon, the woman who was reportedly sacrificed in a bizarre ritual in St. James on Sunday, was testament to the horror that unfolded at the Pathways International Kingdom Restoration Ministries in Paradise.

The rainbow-themed ritual, which included two days of fasting, came to a nightmarish end on Sunday night as members dressed in white at the Dr. Kevin O. Smith-led cult-like operation, where those considered unclean were reportedly told that their blood had to be shed.

Before the ritual could end, the police stormed the Norwood Avenue facility with 144 congregants including children in attendance, preparing, as they were told, for an ark (His Excellency Kevin Smith's Ark).

Goats, cows and rabbits were all part of the script and, by 7:40 on Sunday night, three people were dead – two as a part of the sacrifice – and three taken to hospital for treatment.

Police Commissioner Antony Anderson yesterday told the media that the police were alerted by a congregant who had been injured when she chose to disobey the instructions given to her by the leaders.

"She gave other information which led us to believe



Members of Pathways International Restoration Ministries being taken away in a Jamaica Defence Force vehicle from the Norwood Avenue location in Paradise, Montego Bay, on Sunday night.

that persons were at risk. On responding to that report by the person who was injured, the first team of police that arrived were shot at," he said, adding that they had to get back-up.

"We were concerned that some form of ritualised killing was going to take place and so we did an entry," explained the police commissioner.

When the police stormed the facility, they found a number of people who had been injured by other members of the church and decided to secure the premises. "There were about 14 children and 31 women, and so we see that as a rescue of these children based on what we saw when we came in," added Anderson.

Photos secured by The Gleaner showed men

bound with cord, some naked and others with their torsos skimpily covered with a piece of cloth. Food could also be seen strewn on the ground.

In the midst of the ritual was a policewoman attached to a station in Kingston.

Teachers, tax collectors, soldiers and sales agents also numbered among hundreds of believers following the man trained in psychology.

Smith, reportedly from Glengoffe in St Catherine, lived in Canada for 10 years before returning to Jamaica with a doctorate in psychology.

"He used to heal people, but he has deviated and became radicalised and, as a result, some members left him," a former member of the congregation told The Gleaner.

With no proof that other such cultist organisations had sprung up across the island, Anderson said if that were so, it would be a matter of concern.

"Hopefully, this isn't the start of a wave of it. I don't see any sign of that. But, of course, it's a cause of concern," he stated.

Anderson admitted that the group had been on the police intelligence radar before, but not in relation to the gorish hell which unfolded on Sunday.

He lauded Senior Superintendent Vernon Ellis, head of the St. James Police Division, and his team for taking the information seriously when they received the call and for moving quickly to cauterise the matter.

"Otherwise, we could have perhaps had more persons killed," he added.

German Nazi war crimes suspect, 96, who went on the run goes on trial



Irmgard Furchner, a 96-year-old former secretary to the SS commander of the Stutthof concentration camp, is pictured at the beginning of her trial in a courtroom in Itzehoe, Germany, October 19, 2021

(Reuters) – A 96-year-old German woman who was caught shortly after going on the run ahead of a court hearing last month, on charges of committing war crimes during World War Two, appeared before a judge on Tuesday

in the northern town of Itzehoe.

Irmgard Furchner, accused of having contributed as an 18-year-old to the murder of 11,412 people when she was a typist at the Stutthof concentration camp between 1943

and 1945, was taken into the sparse courtroom in a wheelchair.

Her face was barely visible behind a white mask and scarf pulled low over her eyes. Security was heavy as the judge and legal staff made their way into the

court. Between 1939 and 1945, some 65,000 people died of starvation and disease or in the gas chamber at the concentration camp near Gdansk in today's Poland. They included prisoners of war and Jews caught up in the Nazis' extermination campaign.

The trial was postponed after Furchner left her home early on Sept. 30 and went on the run for several hours before being detained later that day.

Charges could not be read until Furchner, who faces trial in an adolescent court because of her young age at the time of the alleged crimes, was present in court.

She is the latest non-nagenarian to have been charged with Holocaust crimes in what is seen as a rush by prosecutors to seize the final opportunity to enact justice for the victims of some of the worst mass killings in history.

Although prosecutors convicted major perpetrators - those who issued orders or pulled triggers - in the 1960s "Frankfurt Auschwitz Trials", the practice until the 2000s was to leave lower-level suspects alone.

Polish PM accuses EU of blackmail as row over rule of law escalates



part of the EU, opinion polls suggest, but Poland's right-wing nationalist government has increasingly been at odds with the union on issues ranging from LGBT rights to judicial independence.

The latest row has come to a head over an unprecedented and controversial ruling by Poland's Constitutional Tribunal that in effect rejects the core principle that EU law has primacy over national legislation.

The case, brought by the Polish prime minister, was the first time that an EU member state's leader had questioned EU treaties in a national constitutional court.

On Tuesday, Mrs. von der Leyen told the European Parliament that the European Commission - the EU's executive - was "carefully assessing this judgement".

She said the situation had to be resolved, but she was adamant: "This ruling calls into question the foundations of the Eu-

ropean Union. It is a direct challenge to the unity of the European legal order."

Vowing to take action, Mrs. von der Leyen set out three ways the European Commission could respond to the Polish court judgement.

The options, she said, were legally challenging the court ruling, withholding EU funds, and suspending some of Poland's rights as a member state.

The European Commission is yet to approve €57bn (£48bn; \$66bn) of COVID-19 recovery funds earmarked for Poland, and may not do so until the dispute is settled.

In a speech that ran over his allotted time, Mr. Morawiecki said Poland was "being attacked" by EU leaders and it was "unacceptable to talk about financial penalties".

"Blackmail must not be a method of policy," said Mr. Morawiecki of Poland's ruling conservative-nationalist Law and Justice Party.

BBC - Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki has accused the EU of blackmail in a heated debate with European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen over the rule of law.

The clash in the European Parliament follows a top Polish court ruling that rejected key

parts of EU law.

Mrs. von der Leyen said she would act to prevent Poland undermining EU values.

In response, Mr. Morawiecki rejected "the language of threats" and accused the EU of overstepping its powers.

Poles overwhelmingly support being

Water crisis plagues tens of thousands in northeast Syria

Al Jazeera - Ongoing water shortages in northeastern Syria are compounding an already devastating humanitarian crisis for tens of thousands of people, according to aid organizations.

"Children's lives in Iraq and North East Syria are hanging in the balance as drought, low levels of water in key rivers, and lack of access to maintain damaged water station infrastructure have put water out of reach for millions," *Save the Children* said in a statement on Tuesday.

The aid group said that since April 2021 there have been more than 56,000 recorded cases of acute diarrhea in northeast Syria and more than 17,000 cases of leishmaniasis, a parasitic disease.

"While these diseases are more common in Syria's hot summer months, the outbreaks in 2021 have been much higher because clean water for drinking and washing has been so limited," *Save the Children* said.

Mercy Corps Syria told *Al Jazeera* that it had recorded similar numbers of the diseases compiled by *Save the Children* since April.

"The water scarcity adds another layer to the people's suffering in the region," Mohammad* from *Mercy Corps' Syria* office told *Al Jazeera*. "It's making life harder for families to survive."

Jihane*, a 37-year-old who lives with her husband and three children in Al Hol refugee camp, told *Save the Children* that her six-year-old daughter



Zaina* fell ill and her doctor said it was due to the quality of drinking water.

"When I took her to the hospital, there were more than 10 to 12 cases suffering from the same symptoms," she told the organization. "There was a boy there whose situation was critical."

Jihane and her family have been displaced due to the devastating conflict for half a decade, but said she does not have enough water to bathe her children and wash the dishes.

Kurdish-led authorities and some Syrian civil society organizations have accused Turkish-backed forces of intermittently cutting off the water supply from Alouk water station after taking control of it in late 2019 as part of a military operation in northern Syria.

In 2020, *Human Rights Watch* criticized Turkish authorities for supply cuts it said have hampered the ability of humanitarian agencies to help hundreds of thousands of people respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Turkey has denied deliberately cutting the supply and has said outages were due to tech-

nical issues of maintenance and a lack of electricity from a dam not under Turkish control.

According to *Save the Children*, the Alouk station has rarely pumped water at full capacity in 2021. It did not pump any water for 89 days and pumped below half its capacity for 142 days.

Other water pumping stations in the northeast are struggling with low water levels in the Euphrates River due to lack of rain, as well as lack of frequent maintenance due to the conflict.

"There are 91 pumping stations impacted due to water levels, and 24 of them are severely affected or shut down completely," Mohammad from *Mercy Corps Syria* told *Al Jazeera*.

"And there are at least 90 communities and over 50 IDP (internally displaced persons) settlements that rely on these water stations that are pumping below their capacity."

Due to the continuing conflict, it has been difficult to access many of these pumping stations to properly maintain them.

Boris Johnson's Brexit choices are making Britain's fuel and food shortages worse

(CNN Business) - Rising energy bills, higher prices and a critical shortage of workers, leading to food and fuel supply constraints, are threatening to stall Britain's recovery from the pandemic.

The crises afflicting the UK economy have sparked talk in newspapers and among politicians of a looming "winter of discontent", a reference to the wave of strike action in 1978-79 that brought the British economy to its knees. There's even talk of stagflation, the nightmare combination of stagnant growth and high inflation.

Although shortages, supply chain delays, and rising food and energy costs are affecting several major economies – including the United States, China and Germany – Britain is suffering more than most because of Brexit.

Specifically, the form of Brexit pursued by the UK government — which introduced stringent immigration policies and took Britain out the EU market for goods and energy, making it much harder for British companies to hire European workers and much more costly for them to do business with the country's single biggest trading partner.

It didn't have to be this way — there were other options for a future EU-UK relationship. Worker shortages, for example, were not an inevitable outcome of Brexit, nor was going it alone on energy. But, in Prime Minister Boris Johnson's ideological rush to "get Brexit done" amid fraught negotiations with the European Union, agreements in several crucial areas – in-



cluding energy – were sidelined.

The UK government's post-Brexit immigration system, meanwhile, was designed to reduce the numbers of unskilled workers coming to Britain and end what the government described as the country's "reliance on cheap, low-skilled labor", despite a domestic unemployment rate in the region of just 5%.

"Ultimately, the government made a political decision to make low-skilled immigration more difficult," said Joe Marshall, a senior researcher at the Institute for Government, an independent think tank. "Labor shortages may have been less severe if the UK had retained free movement of people post-Brexit," he added.

Britain had a record 1 million job vacancies between June and August, according to the Office for

National Statistics. Restaurants, pubs and supermarkets, including Nando's, had to temporarily close some locations last month due to staff shortages or because certain ingredients weren't delivered as a result of fewer truck drivers.

The adult social care sector also faces a "workforce crisis" and will need to recruit overseas workers to fill tens of thousands of vacancies, according to Care England which represents independent providers.

Supply chain constraints exacerbated by Brexit means UK consumers are facing surging food and energy bills at the same time that pandemic support measures are being unwound, including government support for wages and a £20 (\$27) weekly uplift to social security payments.

TAKE ME HOME



During these difficult times, consider adopting a pet to help make life less stressful. This sweet kitten is one of several available for adoption at the Humane Society's Animal Shelter in Bethesda. He loves being cuddled. All cats and kittens are treated for fleas, wormed and litter box trained. The adoption fee is just EC\$80. For more information and opening times, call us at 461-4957. Please Note: All staff and volunteers at the Humane Society have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

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A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board

Norrie wins 2021 BNP Paribas Open Indian Wells; first British champion in tournament history



Cameron Norrie is the 2021 BNP Paribas *Open Indian Wells* champion after seeing off Nikoloz Basilashvili in a superb fightback for the Brit.

Norrie was 3-6, 1-2 (a set and a break down) against Basilashvili, but found a way to come straight back into proceedings and take the game to the Georgian ace.

He immediately regained his serve to make it 2-2 before emphatically breaking serve again one more time in the second set to level up at 1-1.

This seemed to be the turning point in the tie for the Brit who swept the third set with ease

6-1 to claim the title, with Norrie only needing one match point for his first ATP Masters 1000 title. All summer, Norrie has toiled away in tournaments all over America instead of playing events such as the Olympics, and he has another reward to show for it.

He is also the first British player ever to win the tournament, a feat never accomplished by the likes of Andy Murray.

Also, he becomes only the fourth player ranked out the top 25 to win Indian Wells joining elite company in Jim Courier, Alex Corretja and Ivan Ljubicic.

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Fred Goodall, umpire in stormy West Indies series, dead at 83

New Zealand cricket umpire Fred Goodall, who was at the center of a famously ill-tempered test series between New Zealand and the West Indies in 1980, has died. He was 83. His death was announced Tuesday by New Zealand Cricket, which did not specify a cause.

Goodall stood in 24 test matches and 15 one-day internationals between 1965 and 1988.

He is best remembered in cricket for his part in the contentious second test at Lancaster Park, Christchurch in February 1980, when he was barged by West Indies fast bowler Colin Croft. While the incident appeared deliberate, Croft has always maintained it was accidental. The West Indies, under captain Clive Lloyd, were superstars of world cricket and arrived in New Zealand for three tests and a one-day international after achieving their first-ever test series win in Australia.

New Zealand won the ODI and the first test, both by one wicket. Goodall stood in both matches and the West Indies players believed they received a number of unfair decisions.

During the second innings of the first test, West Indies fast bowler Michael Holding kicked down the stumps after his appeal for New Zealand batsman John Parker's dismissal was refused.

The West Indies' anger grew



Goodall stood in 24 test matches and 15 one-day internationals between 1965 and 1988.

during the second test when they felt more strongly that too many umpiring decisions had gone against them. After tea on the third day, the touring team refused to leave its dressing room, saying it would only do so if Goodall was replaced. New Zealand captain Geoff Howarth eventually convinced the tourists to return. But at the end of the day's play, the West Indies players began packing their bags, apparently intending to return home. Only the intervention of the West Indies Cricket Board prevented them from doing so.

On the fourth day, Goodall called several no-balls against Croft and rejected his appeal for a caught behind against New Zealand all-rounder Richard Hadlee. During the run-up for his next delivery, Croft ran into Goodall before re-

leasing the ball.

Goodall said in a 2006 interview the impact was painful.

"I was shocked," he said, adding that he 'felt totally let down' when the West Indies captain didn't intervene.

Goodall said Croft told him to stick to teaching school 'because you don't know anything about cricket.'

"I said to (Clive Lloyd) I had already taken verbal rubbish and for the first time had been physically struck so do something about it," Goodall said.

"Lloyd did not even talk to Croft at the time.

"It was one of the lowest points of my umpiring career and my credibility was exposed to the whole world watching on television."

Ansu Fati sets new Barcelona record



Ansu Fati is already setting records for Barcelona following his return from injury.

The young striker missed the best part of a year through a serious knee injury, but he returned before the international break, and he is already impressing.

On Sunday, he scored with a superb long range strike to make it two goals from four games in a comeback win over Valencia at Camp Nou.

And that goal was a significant one as far as setting records is concerned.

As pointed out by Marca, Fati has now become the player with the most goals for Barcelona before his 19th birthday.

The goal was Fati's 13th for Barca, and that took him ahead of Bojan Krkic for the most goals before 19, the now Vissel Kobe star scoring 12 for Barca before his 19th birthday.

Lionel Messi, meanwhile, only managed seven. But he wasted no time kicking on afterwards, scoring 42 before his 21st birthday.

WEST INDIES v ENGLAND
T20I SERIES 2022

1 ST T20I	SAT, JAN 22
2 ND T20I	SUN, JAN 23
3 RD T20I	WED, JAN 26
4 TH T20I	SAT, JAN 29
5 TH T20I	SUN, JAN 30

IT'S OUR GAME. BARBADOS

(CONTINUED FROM BACK PAGE)

Initially, official West Indies Tour Operator and Licensed Ticket Partner packages will go on sale, with details to come shortly. Online ticket sales will commence in mid-November through CWI's new ticket platform.

Johnny Grave, CEO of CWI said:

"The history and rival-

ry between the two teams creates great anticipation for fans here in the Caribbean and around the world. These fixtures are part of a bumper year of international home cricket running from January to August in the Caribbean.

"A West Indies vs England home Test Series is the biggest sporting and

sports tourism event in the Caribbean. Dating back to 1930 when the first England team visited, these fixtures are steeped in history and a new chapter in this great rivalry will be written, this time with the prize of the new Richards/Botham Trophy. Celebrating these two heroes of cricket and lifelong friends with the

new trophy, staging world class cricket and hosting thousands of England fans will be a welcome boost for cricket and for the whole region.

"We are all really looking forward to welcoming fully vaccinated England fans who can not only enjoy some winter sun and Caribbean hospitality but also some world class cricket with both these England tours, as well as the ICC U19 Cricket World Cup that will also take place in the West Indies in January next year."

Ahead of the 3-match Test series, there will also be a 4-day warm-up game between the two sides at the Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua from March 1-4.

HOST VENUES CONFIRMED FOR ENGLAND'S T20I AND TEST SERIES TOURS TO THE WEST INDIES IN 2022



Cricket West Indies (CWI) has announced the match schedule and venues for the much anticipated England T20 International (T20I) and Test tours of the West Indies in January and March 2022.

The England Men's series in the Caribbean forms a focal point for one of the West Indies Men's busiest ever

years of international home series cricket.

England will arrive in the Caribbean to play the first ever five-match T20I series between the two teams. All five matches in Barbados will be played across a nine-day period from January 22-30, 2022, including two consecutive weekends of back-to-back T20I cricket.

Following West Indies' white-ball tour of India in February 2022, the West Indies will welcome England back to the Caribbean for a three-match Test Series to compete for the newly created Richards-Botham Trophy. This new trophy honours two legends of cricket, Sir Vivian Richards and Lord Ian Botham, whose friendship and on-field heroics became synonymous with some of their respective teams' greatest Test match moments.

The much-anticipated Test series will start appropriately at the Sir

Vivian Richards Stadium (SVRS) in Antigua on March 8, 2022, before moving to the Kensington Oval in Barbados for the 2nd Test starting March 16.

The 3rd Test match will bowl off March 24 on the "Spice Isle" of Grenada at the National Cricket Stadium.

The Test Series is a key fixture in both teams' schedule for the International Cricket Council (ICC) World Test Championship, which will determine the best Test match cricket team in the world by 2023.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 27)

DEWS