



SHOULD A&B ALSO TAKE REPUBLIC ROAD?

SEE PAGES 11 - 12 & 15

Tourism & Investment Minister Charles Fernandez and Government Senator Shenella Govia are currently representing Antigua and Barbuda in Barbados on the occasion of "Little England" transitioning to a Republic with its own President replacing the British Monarch as the Caribbean nation's Head of State. And it's all happening as the fellow CARICOM country we often refer to as "Bim" celebrates 55 years of political independence from Britain. St. Vincent's Ralph Gonsalves thinks the rest of us should also hurry down Republic road. (See page 17)

- INSIDE:**
- Sandals in action and gets financial support
 - Private clinic ups the caliber of radiology
 - France sending more troops to its C'bean islands

Inequality and lack of access: are these among the drivers of HIV and COVID-19?

by **Eleanor Frederick, MSc, MPH** (Executive Director, Antigua and Barbuda HIV/AIDS Network Inc.)

The theme for World AIDS Day 2021 is “*Ending the HIV Epidemic: Equitable Access, Everyone's Voice*”.

This year we mark 40 years since the first five cases of a disease which was later identified as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) was reported.

Since 2020 we have experienced two colliding pandemics: HIV and COVID-19.

According to UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima, the AIDS pandemic remains an emergency and the world is unprepared to end AIDS and COVID-19 and be ready for other pandemics.

Keep in mind that in “AN INCREASINGLY GLOBILIZED WORLD WE ALL SWIM IN A SINGLE MICROBIAL SEA”.

According to a 2020 UNAIDS report, globally there are currently approximately 37.6 million people living with HIV, including approximately between 907-1,056 in Antigua and Barbuda. (The 2019 report stated that we had 1006 individuals living with HIV; 29 new cases were reported in 2020; and 40 new cases in 2021. The AIDS Secretariat report-

ed seven deaths in 2020 and three in 2021.)

This global figure of 37.6 million includes 35.9 million adults and 1.7 million children less than 15 years. We must also remember the more than 36 million people who have died globally from AIDS related illnesses since the beginning of the epidemic, including approximately 309 cases in Antigua

and Barbuda (299 total deaths reported in 2019 since 1985; seven deaths in 2020 and three in 2021).

Globally there were approximately 1.5 million new infections of HIV in 2020, which according to UNAIDS is a 30% decline in new HIV infections since 2010. Antigua and Barbuda has reported 40 new cases of HIV in 2021, an

WORLD AIDS DAY
DECEMBER 1

End inequalities.
End AIDS.
End pandemics.

LOOKOUT
for each other

ATB A Message from Antigua and Barbuda Transport Board

increase in the number of new infections from 2020.

UNAIDS states further that, “Treatment access is key to the global effort to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.”

There is still no cure for HIV and no vaccine is available as yet. However, there are many prevention tools available, including long-acting antiretroviral agents which would increase adherence.

People with HIV who are aware of their status, take anti-retroviral therapy (ART) daily as prescribed, and get and keep an undetectable viral load, can live long, healthy lives and effectively have no risk of sexually transmitting HIV to their HIV negative partners.

According to UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima, five elements to end AIDS and be pandemic-prepared are:

1. There needs to be community-led-and-based infrastructure delivering services, building trust, and holding leaders accountable;
2. Affordable access to cutting-edge technologies such as long-acting anti-retroviral medicine reaching everyone. In the case of COVID-19, testing and vaccines;
3. Supporting health workers on the front line – ALL workers, including community workers and volunteers;
4. Building human rights capacity as part of the pandemic response;
5. Having data systems capable of identifying inequality (where data is concerned, we need better reporting such as how

many individuals were tested for HIV to result in 40 positive cases; and timely reporting, not just once each year).

Dr. Paul Farmer – an infectious disease specialist with Partners in Health – also believes that inequality is a major driver of pandemics in general, even when they have different modes of transmission. With a respiratory disease such as tuberculosis or COVID, it is thought they would be the great leveler because everyone breathes the same air. However, that is not necessarily the case.

Other drivers of infections such as HIV and AIDS are structural racism, gender inequality, and other forms of social marginalization. Violence against women and girls increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and this would therefore correlate with an increase in HIV infections.

When there are weaknesses in the HIV response and services are disrupted, individuals are unable to receive services such as HIV testing and treatment because the facilities are closed or out of testing materials. Individuals will then decide to use natural or homemade remedies or other forms of medicine they can find.

Based on this information – using 907 persons living with HIV, and 376 in treatment and care – means we have more than 531 individuals who are not in treatment and care.

We must increase the number of individuals in treatment and care to reduce the number of people

who are able to spread HIV to their sexual partners because their viral load is not undetectable.

According to UNAIDS, fewer people with HIV started treatment in 2020. However, in Antigua and Barbuda, only 40 individuals were tested positive in 2020.

So the majority of these individuals have been aware of their status for years. It is important that people are able to access the following services at all times:

1. Getting tested
2. Have access to prevention services
3. Receive continued prevention messages in the media (radio, television and social media)
4. Receive bio-psycho-social services
5. Started in treatment and care
6. Adhere to their treatment protocol
7. Retained in treatment and care
8. Become virally suppressed
9. Remain virally suppressed (their viral load become undetectable, therefore they are no longer able to infect their sexual partners)

Before the COVID-19 pandemic; Antigua & Barbuda as well as the rest of the world were not on track to end AIDS by 2030. Globally, the pace of HIV testing has decreased; therefore the number of positive cases may not reflect the number of actual cases. It is important that inequality and lack of access does not negatively affect the HIV response.

Antigua and Barbuda increases regional connectivity as Air Antilles launches this month

Antigua and Barbuda will be ramping up its regional airlift this winter season as the destination welcomes increased service from Guadeloupe-based airline Air Antilles in December.

The French airline will be introducing new routes with twice-weekly services on Monday and Friday from Barbados

and St. Lucia. The inaugural flights are scheduled to land at Antigua's V.C. Bird International Airport, with passengers disembarking a non-stop flight from Barbados and a one-stop from St. Lucia, effective December 17th 2021.

Air Antilles will also launch a direct non-stop service twice per week, on Wednesday

and Sunday, to Antigua from St. Maarten with connection to Guadeloupe. This service will provide a resumption in airlift to the neighbouring French Caribbean islands which are key regional markets for Antigua.

Antigua and Barbuda's Minister of Tourism, Hon. Charles Fernandez, said: "As

demand for travel returns, Antigua and Barbuda is re-establishing itself as the heartbeat of the Caribbean. The connectivity afforded by the integration of another regional carrier into our network, represents an opportunity for us to augment regional travel, and enables us to continue our move towards

To: The Commissioner of police
Police Headquarters
American Road
St. Johns
Antigua.

To: Your Worship
St. Johns Magistrate Court
Gray's Farm
St. Johns
Antigua.

Dear Sir/Madame,
Re: Notice- Application for Tavern Licence

I, Mtaneus Alkhore of Cedar Valley, with registered business situate at Bendals Main Road in St. John's Antigua and Barbuda **DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE** that it is our intention to apply at the next sitting of the liquor licensing Court to be held at the Magistrate's Court, Gray's Farm, St. John's, Antigua on Thursday 6th January, 2022 next ensuring for a Liquor Licensing Pursuant to section (11) (5) of the Licensing (intoxication Liquor) Act Cap. 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda 1992 Revised Edition, in respect of premises known as "Enzo's Restaurant & Bar" situated at Bendals Main Road in the parish of St. Johns, Antigua and Barbuda.

Dated the 16th day of November, 2021

increasing arrivals from the wider Caribbean market."

Marketing consultant for the Caribbean region, Charmaine Spencer said: "This welcome boost in airlift will benefit Antigua and Barbuda by providing increased connectivity to the region and strengthening the country's strategic positioning as a major hub in the northern English-speaking Caribbean."

"The addition of

this service has been highly anticipated, since Antigua is a vital gateway to fulfilling Air Antilles' commitment to providing key airlift across the English-speaking Caribbean. We are thrilled to be flying into the destination and look forward to servicing Antigua and Barbuda, and travellers to Antigua for the long-haul," noted Romain Hordel, Commercial & Marketing Director of Air Antilles.



The Air Antilles partnership will also extend the destination's reach into the Dutch-speaking Caribbean, with one-stop flights from Antigua via St. Maarten to Aruba and Curacao.

In addition to greater region-

al access, Air Antilles – through its CaribSky Alliance and code share flights with major airlines such as Air France, Corsair International, and WINAIR – brings improved connectivity to the French Antilles with on-

ward connections to Europe.

The airline will operate the following flight schedule to and from Antigua's V.C. Bird International Airport:

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- From Pointe-à-Pitre: Wednesday and Sunday via Sint Maarten SXM
- From Fort-de-France: Wednesday and Sunday via SXM/Pointe-à-Pitre
- From Barbados: Monday and Friday direct flight
- From Sint Maarten SXM: Wednesday and Sunday direct flight
- From Dominica: Monday and Friday via Barbados/St Lucia - Wednesday via Sint Maarten SXM
- From St Lucia: Monday and Friday via Barbados

From Antigua:

- To Pointe-à-Pitre (Guadeloupe): Monday, Wednesday and Friday via Sint Maarten SXM
- To Fort-de-France (Martinique): Monday and Friday via Pointe-à-Pitre/Sint Maarten SXM
- To Barbados: Wednesday and Sunday direct flight
- To Sint Maarten SXM: Monday, Wednesday and Friday direct flight
- To Dominica: Wednesday and Sunday via St. Lucia/Barbados
- To St. Lucia: Wednesday and Sunday via Barbados

For further information on Air Antilles scheduling and flights, travellers can visit: www.airantilles.com

Sandals Foundation gets donation from Argos Cement to support work in education, communities & the environment

In the spirit of giving and supporting the work of the Sandals Foundation, local business ARGOS CEMENT recently donated a cheque of US\$1500 to the Public Relations Manager at Sandals Grande Antigua, Leon Norville, as a goodwill gesture to support the work of the Foundation. Office Manager at Argos Cement, Ranussa Trim said: "We [recognize] the work the Sandals Foundation does and the impact the organization has been making in the community. As a local corporate entity, we wanted to play our part in making

sure the work [of] the Foundation continues, and we are happy to support them."

Norville, who functions as Project Manager of the Sandals Foundation said: "We are pleased when businesses see the work we do and are inspired to be part of our initiatives. For us

here at the Foundation, we are committed to creating change and inspiring hope in our communities, and we are appreciative when businesses get involved and play a part in helping us to do so. We are looking forward to continued work with Argos."

Also on hand for the

RLNC 5

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
REGISTERED LAND ACT, CAP. 374

Section 34
of the
Act

Registration Section Golden grove	Block 612 1691E	Parcel 163
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LAND REGISTRY
OCT 25 2021
1:20
Antigua and Barbuda

LAND REGISTRY
Antigua & Barbuda


NOTICE OF APPLICATION TO REPLACE LOST LAND CERTIFICATE

TAKE NOTICE that an application was filed in the Land Registry on 25 day of October, 2021 by JARID HEWLETT of WATT, DORSETT, HEWLETT LAW of 55A Newgate St., St. John's, Antigua the Applicants herein for the replacement of Land Certificates dated the 8.9.87 and issued to Leonaldo Benjamin, being the owner of the above-mentioned property, which has been lost or destroyed.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that anyone who objects to the issue of a Land Certificate who has knowledge of the original Land certificate must within the period of one (1) month from the Second Publication of this notice in the newspaper inform the Registrar of lands in writing.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that in the absence of any objection or information as to the existence of the original Land Certificate within the time specified the Registrar of Lands may proceed to cancel the original Land Certificate and issue a new Land Certificate in its place without further notice.

Dated the 25th day of November, 2021


REGISTRAR OF LANDS

To: Your Worship
St. Johns Magistrate Court
Gray's Farm
St. Johns
Antigua.

To: The Commissioner of Police
Police Headquarters
American Road
St. Johns
Antigua.

Dear Sir/Madame,

Re: Notice- Application for Tavern Licence

I, Widlande Pierre of Yorks, with registered business situated at Church Street St. Johns Antigua and Barbuda **DO HEREBY GIVE NOTICE** that it is my intention to apply at the next sitting of the liquor licensing Court to be held at the Magistrate's Court, Gray's Farm, St. John's, Antigua on Thursday 6th January, 2022 next ensuring for a Liquor Licensing Pursuant to section (11) (5) of the Licensing (intoxication Liquor) Act Cap. 249 of the Laws of Antigua and Barbuda 1992 Revised Edition, in respect of premises known as "Crepe It (Antigua)" situated at Church Steet in the parish of St. Johns, Antigua and Barbuda.

Dated the 25th day of November, 2021



Financial Controller at Sandals Grande Antigua, Aqualia Alexander; Office Manager at Argos Cement, Ranussa Trim; and Public Relations Manager at Sandals Grande Antigua, Leon Norville.

donation was the Financial Controller at Sandals, Aqualia Alexander, who said: "It speaks volumes because of the work the Sandals Foundation has

done throughout the island and the confidence that our local suppliers have in what ... the Sandals Foundation represents. We are very thankful

that Argos Cement has come on board to ensure that we are able to continually execute our projects and programs locally."

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Sandals treats local school to lunch and giveaways marking 40th Anniversary

Last Thursday, over 220 students and teachers at the Saint Mary's Secondary School were treated to entertainment, giveaways and lunch, compliments of Sandals Grande Antigua Resort & Spa.

General manager Matthew Cornell said, "We are indeed happy to continue playing our part in showing appreciation, support and giving back to our communities and

schools. Sandals celebrates its 40th Anniversary as a company this year and Antigua holds pride of place as only the second Caribbean island to host a Sandals resort. What better way to continue our partnership with the people and communities than boost our community efforts engaging with students and showing appreciation to their teachers. At Sandals, we are family. Our founder, the

late Gordon "Butch" Stewart and now executive chairman Adam Stewart believes in the mantra of family extending to the communities where we operate. We say love is all you need, and we are happy to spread that love to the wider community."

The initiative – organized by public relations manager Leon Norville as one of the local activities to mark the company's 40 Anniversary

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KEEP ANTIGUA CLEAN



Sandals Managers prepping food stations to begin lunch service

– was also timely to show appreciation to the youth and teachers at that institution. Norville said, “It is indeed a very gratifying experience to see the impact such a gesture had on the students and teachers here this morning. The team did an amazing job interacting with the students and faculty. This is such a significant milestone for our company, and we are happy to share that with this institution.”

On arrival at the school, the managers toured the facility and spoke with the

principal and teachers about the school’s history and how they have been coping since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Norville and entertainment manager Sherlann Barro followed up with introductions of managers, music, games and giveaways from the Sandals Foundation.

Lunch was subsequently served in the school’s home economics center.

School principal Casey Phillip – who was surprised by the visit – said, “It feels good to know that somebody

is thinking of us and thinking about us. It was a welcomed gesture. Had it happened at any time during the school year it would have been appreciated ... but – particularly at this time, with what teachers and students have been going through in terms of the whole COVID-19 situation – it is a way to say thanks to teachers for their efforts, and more so their extra efforts to the students who have become disconnected from the whole learning scenario of school. It’s

a way to say to them that we are all in this together.”

Participating resort managers included the Training & Development Manager, Carlene Spencer; Health, Environment & Safety Manager Aliyah Ramdin; Gift Shop Manager Maria Jeffery; and Human Resources & Recruitment Specialist Thalia Thomas. They expressed joy and satisfaction at being part of the 40th anniversary initiative and said, “We definitely would like to do this again.”

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Claudine Benjamin

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1/8 OF A PAGE-V/H	\$150ec
1/16 PAGE- V/H	\$100ec
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ENCHANCED CLASSIFIED(S)	\$60ec
PERSONAL CLASSIFIED	\$40ec

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\$100

MONTHLY
\$400

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Prime Minister Gaston Browne congratulates Prime Minister Mia Mottley and the people of Barbados on becoming a Republic



Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and Chairman of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Hon. Gaston Browne.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has written to the Prime Minister of Barbados, Ms. Mia Mottley, congratulating the Government and people of Barbados on their 55th Anniversary of Independence, in what he has described as an historic leap forward to becoming a Republic.

In a letter to Prime Minister Mottley, Prime Minister Browne said, “The Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda

applaud your administration and the people of Barbados for taking the historic and bold step forward in choosing to move Barbados to a Republic.

“As Chairman of the CARICOM, I take this opportunity to reaffirm my commitment to strengthening regional collaboration, integration and development for which we stride in order to safeguard a more sustainable future for our people. I pledge our continued engage-

ment in this noble endeavor as Barbados remains an esteemed partner.” Prime Minister, congratulations on the historic leap forward to becoming a Republic, and please accept the assurances of my highest consideration and continued wishes for outstanding success,” PM Browne concluded.

The full text of PM Browne’s letter is reproduced in this issue of Pointe Xpress.



GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
Office of the Prime Minister

Queen Elizabeth Highway
St. John's
Antigua and Barbuda

Tel. (268) 460-5100
Fax. (268) 462-3225
pmsecretariat@ab.gov.ag

29th November, 2021

The Honourable Mia Mottley Q.C. MP
Prime Minister of Barbados
Government Headquarters
Bay Street, St. Michael
Barbados

Prime Minister,

On behalf of the Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda, I congratulate you, the Government, and people of Barbados, on the 55th Anniversary of Barbados' Independence.

More notably, the Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda applaud your administration and the people of Barbados for taking the historic and bold step forward in choosing to move Barbados to a Republic.

In 1966, fifty-five years ago, the struggle to end colonialism had recently begun. The United Nations Resolution 1514/XV of 1960 had been freeing African and Asian states from the grip of colonial rule. Two English-speaking Caribbean countries had made the decision to join the newly-independent, in 1962. Four years later, Barbados stepped forward helping further to free our minds from the castle of our skin.

During the fifty-five years of Barbados' independence, its leadership has been superb, its expression has been of excellence, its future has always been bright. I am confident that Barbados, through the commitment and tenacity of its people, will continue to make significant strides that will considerably benefit the generations to come. Although currently challenged by the Covid-19 pandemic, Barbadians have shown great faith in their current leadership.

As Chairman of the CARICOM, I take this opportunity to reaffirm my commitment to strengthening regional collaboration, integration, and development for which we stride in order to safeguard a more sustainable future for our people. I pledge our continued engagement in this noble endeavor as Barbados remains an esteemed partner.

Prime Minister, congratulations on the historic leap forward to becoming a Republic, and please accept the assurances of my highest consideration and continued wishes for outstanding success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gaston Browne'.

.....
Gaston Browne MP
Prime Minister

COVID Dashboard Update for November 30th 2021

The most recent report received by the Ministry of Health, Wellness & the Environment revealed zero (0) new laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda as of Monday 29th November 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Fifty-four (54) samples were processed.

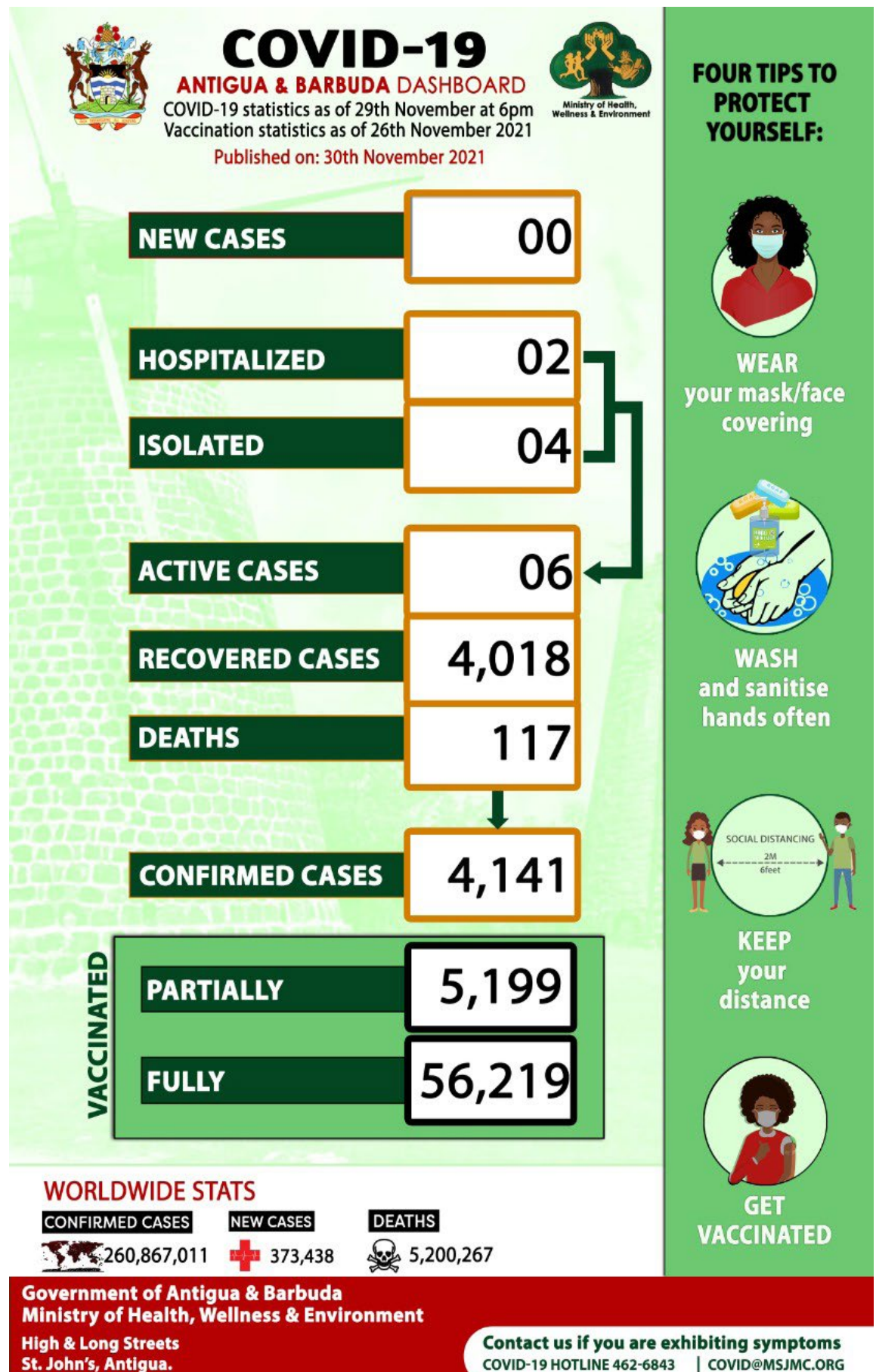
Two (2) recovered cases were recorded, increasing the total to 4,018.

Consequently, the total number of persons with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda is 4,141; which is inclusive of six (6) active cases.

There are two (2) hospitalized cases: one (1) mild and one (1) severe.

Meanwhile, Antigua and Barbuda has fully vaccinated 56,219 individuals, while 5,199 have only received their first dose.

The dashboard has been updated to reflect these changes.



French Minister holds crisis talks in Martinique; extra troops sent to Guadeloupe

RFI: - France's minister for overseas territories has arrived on the Caribbean island of Martinique in a bid to end more than a week of violent protests sparked by COVID-19 restrictions and other social grievances.

He made no headway with unions during his short visit to neighbouring Guadeloupe on Monday, and announced the deployment of extra troops to restore calm.

He also failed to end an impasse in talks that aim to end more than a week of violent protests sparked by COVID-19 restrictions.

Before departing for more talks in neighbouring Martinique, Sebastien Lecornu told reporters that the Guadeloupe negotiations had been deadlocked over the "obvious and indispensable" demand that the various unions condemn the violence.

Discussions were not possible as long as the unions "do not want to condemn assassination attempts" against security forces, he said, referring to live rounds fired during street protests.

During his press conference, Lecornu also announced that a fur-

ther 70 military police officers and 10 extra special troops would be dispatched immediately to the territory to support the local police force.

They will assist in clearing debris and dismantling barricades set up by protesters over the past week.

Mandatory vaccinations

Unrest in the former colonial outpost began with a protest over compulsory COVID-19 vaccinations for health workers, but quickly ballooned into a broader revolt over living conditions and spread to Martinique, only 120 kilometres away.

Lecornu has vowed to stand firm on the vaccine obligation for health workers by 31st of December or face suspension without pay. The vaccine mandate – which was enforced in September on the mainland – has met with greater resistance in Guadeloupe and Martinique where vaccine hesitancy is high.

Islands under curfew

In the French overseas territories – each



of which has close to 400,000 inhabitants – residents complain of greater poverty, higher costs for basic goods, and poorer public services, than on the mainland.

Lecornu said his talks with four union representatives in Guadeloupe were limited to the receipt of a list of demands.

Maite Hubert-M'Toumo, secretary general of Guadeloupe's main trade union UGTG, said the requests include a suspension of the vaccine mandate for health professionals, no convictions for protesters over the violence, and an improvement in living conditions for Guadeloupean families.

Lecornu, who laid responsibility for some of the issues at the feet of local elected officials, said he expects to make better headway in Martinique where the "re-

publican prerequisite" for negotiations has already been met.

But some elected officials in Guadeloupe chose to boycott a meeting with the minister earlier on Monday.

"We don't really see any effort to calm the situation down," said Guy Losbar, former president of the department.

Political agenda

While in Martinique, Lecornu will meet with local leaders and union members to discuss seven main themes associated with the crisis: health, youth, cost of living, fuel prices, transport, chlordecone contamination, fishing, and culture.

However, some union representatives are doubtful of what such a visit can achieve.

PM Gonsalves: more CARICOM nations should seek republican status

Loop Caribbean - Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves says he looks forward to the day when other CARICOM member states will follow Barbados, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Dominica, and adopt a republican form of government.

In a lengthy letter congratulating Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley on her island becoming the fourth CARICOM state to replace Britain's Queen Elizabeth as head of state on Tuesday, Prime Minister Gonsalves said other CARICOM countries – namely French-speaking Haiti and Dutch-speaking Suriname – have also adopted a republican form of government with both countries having executive presidents.

“Guyana and Dominica have been republics since independence respectively in 1966 and 1977 although Guyana has an executive presidency and Dominica, a non-executive president. Trinidad and Tobago which became independent in August 1962 with a constitutional monarchical system with a largely ceremonial Governor-General, al-

tered its constitution in 1976 to a republican one with a non-executive president,” he said.

Gonsalves said that prior to Prime Minister Mottley's successful leadership on this issue, only Dr. Eric Williams, “the political titan of Trinidad and Tobago”, was able to lead triumphantly on republicanism by way of an alteration to an existing post-Independence Constitution.

“So, Barbados is not doing anything novel. But what it is doing is of utmost significance, for the better, for its people and our Caribbean civilisation. It is my hope that, in my lifetime, all or most of the independent countries of CARICOM would move from a monarchical system to a republican one.

“I earnestly look forward to such a change in Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. These eight CARICOM member-states plus six other countries, are outside of the United Kingdom, with the British monarch as their Head of State: Canada, Austra-



Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. Ralph Gonsalves

lia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu. “

Gonsalves said in the Caribbean as a whole there are five British colonies or overseas territories; namely Anguilla, Cayman Islands, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, and Turks and Caicos Islands. Bermuda – located in the Atlantic, but with Caribbean connections – is also under British suzerainty.

“The wider Caribbean is also awash with colonial territories or departments of colonial powers of the United States of America, France, and Holland,” he wrote, adding “Hopefully, too, all

these colonial territories will push for independence within the comity of nations globally.

“It would be good to see the end of colonialism in our Caribbean. But that initiative belongs not to me but to the people of these 20 or so colonies or territories and their national leaders,” Gonsalves wrote in his congratulatory letter to Prime Minister Mottley.

Barbadian Dame Sandra Mason was sworn in as Barbados' first head of state during a glittering ceremony at National Heroes Square in the heart of the capital, Bridgetown, in the early hours of Tuesday.

Dr. Terrance Drew elected as new leader of St. Kitts and Nevis Labour Party



PM Holness: 'That's how strongly I feel about it'

WIC – Dr. Terrance Drew has been elected as the new leader of the St. Kitts and Nevis Labour Party (SKNLP), following elections held during the party's national conference at the St. Kitts Marriott on Sunday.

Dr. Drew was formerly chairman of the party.

Dr. Geoffrey Hanley and Konaris Maynard have been elected as the SKNLP's two deputy leaders.

Three candidates – including Dr. Drew, Dr. Hanley, and Maynard – were in the race

to become leader of the 89-year-old party.

Drew expressed his gratitude to all voters, saying, "Just a quick message at this time following the announcement of National Leader of the St. Kitts and Nevis Labour Party to say thank you comrades. We are all in this together as one 'For The Good We Can Do'. As our great party's motto says, stay focused."

The leader was elected democratically and all delegates associated with the St. Kitts and Nevis Labour

Party voted.

Each of the eight branches on St. Kitts sent 50 delegates to participate and vote in the conference. National Executive, Young Labour, Labour Women, and the St. Kitts-Nevis Trades & Labour Union also voted to elect a new leader for the St. Kitts and Nevis Labour Party. Sunday's conference is regarded as the one of the most historic events in the St. Kitts and Nevis Labour Party. The all-day private session of the conference started at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday. The first polling cycle with the National Political Leader and Vice-chairs was held at 10:30 am.

SKNLP's parliamentary representative from East Basseterre and now the Deputy Leader of the Party, Dr. Geoffrey Hanley, also congratulated Dr. Terrance Drew. He said, "The delegates of our great St. Kitts and Nevis

Labour Party have spoken and they have demonstrated their confidence in our newly-minted Party Leader, Dr. Terrance Drew."

Konaris Maynard, who was also one of the competitors for the leadership race, congratulated Dr. Terrance Drew on his election, saying, "Congratulations to the new SKNLP Leader, comrade Dr. Terrance Drew. I also extend congratulations to Dr. Geoffrey Hanley who will serve with me as the two new deputy leaders of the Labour Party."

Maynard also commended Dr. Denzil Douglas for his decades-long leadership and smooth leadership transition.

Maynard further stated that the St. Kitts and Nevis Labour Party's mission is to return to government to attend to the dire needs of people.

Barbados, formally casting off the Queen, becomes a republic

New York Times - In the early hours of Tuesday – at a ceremony attended by hundreds of masked officials, a prince and at least one pop star – the Caribbean island of Barbados became a republic, cutting ties with Queen Elizabeth II and casting off the last major vestige of its colonial past.

The nation swore in its first president, Sandra Mason, a former governor general who had been appointed by the queen. A 21-gun salute rang out as the national anthem played. The red, yellow and navy blue royal flag was lowered — exactly 55 years after the country gained independence from Britain.

“Today, debate and discourse have become action,” Ms. Mason, 72, told the onlookers gathered in the capital, Bridgetown. “Today, we set our compass to a new direction.”

Ms. Mason received a majority vote in Parliament in October to take on the role. In a speech afterward, Prime Minister Mia Mottley said: “We believe that the time has come for us to claim our full destiny. It is a woman of the soil to whom this honor is being given.”

The island nation, a democracy of about 300,000 people, announced in September that it would remove Queen Elizabeth as head of state, the latest Caribbean nation to do so. It joined Guyana, which gained independence in 1966 and became a republic in 1970; Trinidad and Tobago, which became independent in 1962 and a republic in 1976; and Dominica, which gained full independence as a republic in 1978.



Rihanna (center) was declared a “national hero” during the ceremony.

Australia, Canada, Jamaica, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea are among the nations that still call the queen their head of state. Barbados will remain part of the Commonwealth, a voluntary association of 54 countries with roots in the British Empire.

On Tuesday, thousands celebrated across Barbados as nearly 400 years of British rule ended.

In the audience to witness the uncoupling in Bridgetown was a representative of Britain: Prince Charles, Elizabeth’s eldest son and heir. He received the Order of Freedom of Barbados.

In a speech, Charles delivered a message from his mother, conveying the “warmest good wishes.” He also congratulated Barbadians and said, “From the darkest days of our past and the appalling atrocity of slavery which forever

stains our history, the people of this island forged their path with extraordinary fortitude.

“Tonight you write the next chapter of your nation’s story,” he added. “You are the guardians of your heritage.”

Also among the crowd was the global pop star Rihanna. During the ceremony, the singer – who was born Robyn Rihanna Fenty in Barbados – was declared a national hero.

She received the honor, Prime Minister Mottley said, for commanding “the imagination of the world” with her excellence, creativity, discipline and, “above all else, her extraordinary commitment to the land of her birth.”

“May you continue to shine like a diamond,” Ms. Mottley added.

Multi-billion EU bid to challenge Chinese influence

BBC - The EU is to reveal details of a global investment plan that's widely seen as a rival to China's Belt & Road initiative.

Insiders say it will set out "concrete" ideas on digital, transport, climate and energy schemes.

It is regarded as part of the West's efforts to counter Chinese influence in Africa and elsewhere.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will present the "Global Gateway" initiative on Wednesday.

The EU is looking at how it can leverage billions of euros drawn from member states, financial institutions and the private sector.

Mrs. von der Leyen said in her State of the Union speech in September: "We want investments in quality infrastructure, connecting goods, people and services around the world."

Wednesday's 14-page document isn't likely to explicitly pitch itself as a rival to China's strategy. The Commission also studiously avoided mentioning China when pressed about the plans on Tuesday. But Andrew Small, a Senior Transatlantic Fellow at the German Marshall Fund, says the backdrop is inescapable: "Global Gateway wouldn't exist if you didn't have Belt & Road."

For him, it marks "the first serious effort from the European side to put packages together and figure out financing mechanisms, so countries considering taking loans from China have an alternative option".

Belt & Road has been a centerpiece of Chinese foreign policy; developing trade links by ploughing money into new roads, ports, railways and bridges.

The strategy has reached into Asia, the Indo-Pacific, Africa – and even into the EU's nearer



China's Belt & Road strategy has extended into the Western Balkans, including here in Montenegro.

neighbours in the Western Balkans.

It has been criticised as a means of providing "predatory loans" in what is labelled "debt-trap diplomacy".

But there are also those who argue the picture is more complicated, and that borrowing large sums of money is hardly risk-free. Moreover, China met a need others did not.

Either way, China's economic and geopolitical footprint has grown as tensions rise with the West.

Now the EU will attempt to marshal its own clout and resources in what Andrew Small says will be a big test.

The question is whether the EU can really act in this geo-political space.

"Or is it too rigid, too bogged down by internal bureaucratic fighting? If they fail at this, it's a big miss," he argues.

One diplomat told me, "It's a good sign that finally Europe is asserting its influence in this area."

"That's a common interest we share with our transatlantic friends in the US and UK."

But a common interest could also create more competition, according to Scott Morris, a Senior Fellow at the Center for Global Development.

After all, the US has its own "Build Back Better World" initiative launched at the G7 last June. "This is a noisy space with a lot of brands bumping into each other," says Mr. Morris.

However, he's "hopeful" of success for the Global Gateway initiative. He says, "more importantly" than rivalling China, it's a chance for Europe to "achieve a scale of financing that can do some good in developing countries that need some capital".

Once the EU plan is approved by the College of Commissioners on Wednesday, it will be presented by Ursula von der Leyen.

The EU has pointedly emphasised its "values-based" and "transparent" approach, arguing it wants to create links not dependencies.

But this is also about influence, as the Commission continues to look for ways to flex its muscles on the geopolitical stage and, in turn, find out how strong those muscles are.

CNN suspends Chris Cuomo indefinitely

(CNN Business) - CNN is suspending prime time anchor Chris Cuomo “indefinitely, pending further evaluation”, after new documents revealed the cozy and improper nature of his relationship with aides to his brother, former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo.

The benched anchorman is declining to comment.

A second hour of “Anderson Cooper 360” will air in Cuomo’s place on Tuesday night.

Tuesday’s announcement about the suspension was the equivalent of a cable news shockwave.

Cuomo’s 9:00 p.m. program is frequently CNN’s most-watched hour of the day. He is a larger-than-life presence at the network. And he was determined to stay on TV this year despite a flurry of sexual misconduct allegations against his brother, which culminated in the governor’s resignation three months ago.

But new documents released on Monday showed that the veteran journalist was more intimately involved than previously known in shaping his brother’s defense.

“The New York Attorney General’s office released transcripts and exhibits Monday that shed new light on Chris Cuomo’s involvement in his brother’s defense,” a CNN spokesperson said Tuesday evening. “The documents, which we were not privy to before their public release, raise serious questions.

“When Chris admitted to us that he had offered advice to his brother’s staff, he broke our rules and we acknowledged that publicly,” the spokesperson continued. “But we also appreciated the unique position he was in and understood his need to put family first and job second.

“However, these documents point to a greater level of involvement in his brother’s efforts than we previously knew,” the spokesperson added. “As a result, we have suspended Chris indefinitely, pending further evaluation.”

The suspension came after significant criticism from people who noted that Chris Cuomo had violated widely accepted journalistic norms. Inside CNN, staffers expressed dismay about the anchor’s conduct.

Charlotte Bennett, a former aide to Andrew Cuomo who came forward in February to accuse him of sexual harassment, called for CNN to “immediately take action”.

“Anything short of firing Chris Cuomo reflects a network lacking both morals and a backbone,” Bennett said in a tweet Tuesday.

The “Cuomo Prime Time” team had been planning for Tuesday’s broadcast up until the announcement of Chris Cuomo’s suspension, a person familiar with the matter said. Cooper’s team was also blindsided by the news and left scrambling to fill the extra hour.

After the news was made public, an emotional Chris Cuomo met with the show’s staff.

The documents released by New York Attorney General Letitia James included text messages and transcripts of interviews with investigators who led the probe into allegations against the governor.

The cache of documents included text messages between Chris Cuomo and Melissa DeRosa – a then-top aide to Gov. Andrew Cuomo – that suggested he was instrumental in working

to craft a defense against a flood of sexual misconduct allegations.

The text messages also revealed that Chris Cuomo sought to use his connections in the press to help prepare the then-governor’s team, as accusers started to make their stories public.

Chris Cuomo also acknowledged to investigators that he did attempt to learn more about a story by journalist Ronan Farrow. The anchor defended the practice as conventional.

“The idea of one reporter calling another to find out about what’s coming down the pipe is completely business-as-usual,” he said.

When Andrew Cuomo resigned as governor in August, Chris Cuomo told CNN viewers that he was “not an advisor”, but “a brother.” He acknowledged that he talked with his brother’s aides and gave his “take” until CNN told him to stop doing so in May.

The “Cuomo Prime Time” anchor also said on the air in August, “I never attacked nor encouraged anyone to attack any woman who came forward. I never made calls to the press about my brother’s situation.”

Student kills 3, wounds 8 at Michigan school

AP - A 15-year-old sophomore opened fire at his Michigan high school on Tuesday, killing three students and wounding eight other people including at least one teacher, authorities said.

Oakland County Under-sheriff Mike McCabe said at a news conference that investigators were still trying to determine a motive for the shooting at Oxford High School in Oxford Township, a community of about 22,000 people roughly 30 miles (48 kilometers) north of Detroit.

McCabe said he was aware of allegations circulating on social media that there had been threats of a shooting at the roughly 1,700-student school before Tuesday's attack, but he cautioned against believing that narrative until investigators can look into it.

He also downplayed the significance of an incident in early November when a deer head was thrown off the school roof, which he said was "absolutely unrelated" to the shooting. The vandalism prompted school administrators to post two letters to parents on the school's website this month, saying they were responding to ru-

mors of a threat against the school but had found none.

Authorities didn't immediately release the suspect's name, but McCabe said deputies arrested him within minutes of arriving at the school in response to a flood of 911 calls about the attack, which happened shortly before 1:00 p.m. He said the deputies also recovered the semi-automatic handgun and several magazines used to store ammunition that the suspect used in the attack.

"He fired multiple shots," McCabe said. "Somewhere in the area of 15 to 20."

The three students who were killed were a 16-year-old boy and two

girls, ages 14 and 17, McCabe said. Two of the wounded were undergoing surgery as of 5 p.m. and the six others who were wounded were in stable condition, he said.

McCabe said the suspect's parents visited their son where he's being held and advised him not to talk to investigators, as is his right. Police must seek permission from a juvenile suspect's parents or guardian to speak with them, he added.

Oakland County Prosecutor Karen McDonald issued a statement Tuesday evening saying her office expects to issue charges quickly and that an update would be given Wednesday.

McCabe said he wasn't aware of any prior run-ins the suspect had with

law enforcement or if he had any disciplinary history at school.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer also spoke at the news conference, saying, "I think this is every parent's worst nightmare," while choking up.

President Joe Biden, before delivering remarks at a community college in Rosemount, Minnesota, said: "As we learn the full details, my heart goes out to the families enduring the unimaginable grief of losing a loved one."

The school was placed on lockdown after the attack, with some children sheltering in locked classrooms while officers searched the premises. They were later taken to a nearby Meijer grocery store to be picked up by their parents.



One in 3 Australian parliamentarians have experienced sexual harassment, a government-backed report finds

Al Jazeera - A high-profile inquiry into sexual harassment and bullying in Australia's parliament has found "sexist culture" to be widespread.

The government-backed report – released on Tuesday following a seven-month investigation – said one in three people currently working at the parliament "have experienced some form of sexual harassment while working there", including 63 percent of the country's female parliamentarians.

"Aspiring male politicians who thought nothing of, in one case, picking you up, kissing you on the lips, lifting you up, touching you, pats on the bottom, comments about appearance, you know, the usual... the culture allowed it," said one of the report's 1,700 interviewees.

The report made 28 recommendations, including a formal statement of acknowledgement by political leaders, targets to increase gender diversity and "a proactive focus on safety and wellbeing".

The inquiry was launched amid widespread outrage at the alleged rape of Brittany Higgins, a parliamentary staffer, inside a minister's office after a night out



A seven-month investigation has found a widespread sexist culture in in Australia's parliament

with conservative Liberal Party colleagues in 2019.

Her allegations, which are still before the court, were followed by a string of allegations of rape and sexual harassment against politicians and their staffers that sparked nationwide demonstrations and demands for reform.

Higgins on Tuesday welcomed the report and thanked "the many brave people who shared their stories which contribut-

ed to this review".

"I hope all sides of politics not only commit to but implement these recommendations in full," she said in a statement sent via the Australian National University where she is now a visiting fellow.

Green Party Senator Sarah Hanson-Young described the report as a "damning expose of the sexist culture and harassment in politics".

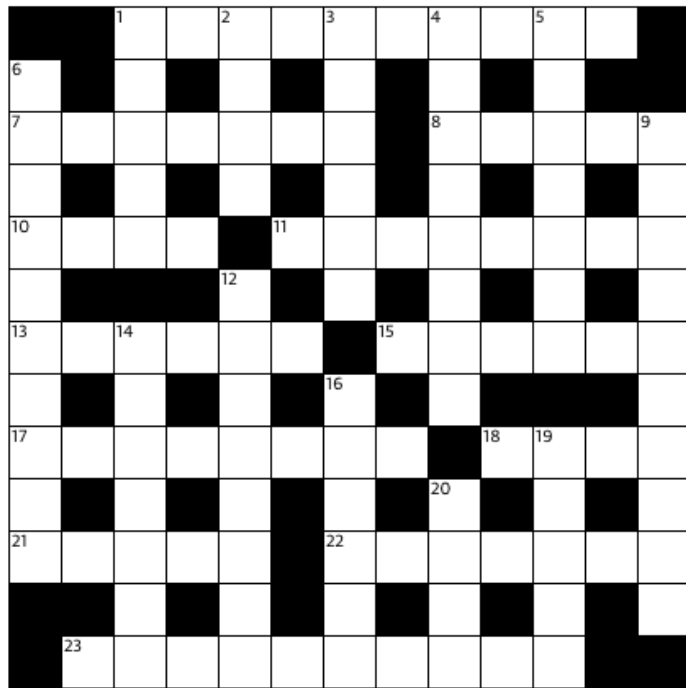
"The statistics and

comments are shocking, but for many women here they are not surprising and ring true to our own experiences," she said.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has sought to defend his government's actions in working to improve gender equality but accepted there was broad dissatisfaction with his handling of the allegations of mistreatment of women in politics.

QUICK CROSSWORD

Speedy crossword No 1,336



Across

- 1 Literary assistant (10)
 7 Miser (7)
 8 Blade on car windscreen (5)
 10 Temporary respite (4)
 11 Scottish broadsword (8)
 13 Free from an obligation (6)
 15 Up to now (6)
 17 Contradicted (8)
 18 East Asian desert (4)
 21 Spanish wine (5)
 22 Staying power (7)
 23 Patron, supporter (10)

Down

- 1 Be of use (5)
 2 Right-hand man (4)
 3 Disorderly, uncontrollable (6)
 4 Bride or groom (8)
 5 Collapse inwards (7)
 6 Contender (10)
 9 Oratorical (10)
 12 Renouncer of a belief (8)
 14 Perfect example (7)
 16 Post-prandial rest (6)
 19 Willow used in basketwork (5)
 20 Agreement, treaty (4)

COMMUNITY NOTICES



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YOU THINK IT WE PRINT IT

Adam Peaty tells DCMS that UK athletes deserve improved government funding

Olympic champion Adam Peaty has called on the government to bolster its support of elite athletes who “can’t pay their bills with patriotism”.

Peaty, 26, gave his views on athlete support to MPs along with Paralympians Lauren Rowles and Ellie Robinson.

UK Sport currently distributes funding raised through the National Lottery.

“When you go to the Olympics and we’re third, second on the medal table, the government will get all the credit,” said Peaty.

He told the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) committee: “The government and the country reap those benefits.

“We represent that, we fly that flag very proudly, but we can’t pay our bills with patriotism. I’m very well supported by other companies and sponsors, but more needs to be done from the government, definitely.”

The government announced in August it was providing £77.4m a year to elite Olympic and Paralympic programmes in the three-year period up to the Paris Games in 2024, in addition to lottery funding.

Great Britain returned 65 medals at the summer’s Tokyo Olympics compared with 15 at the 1996 Atlanta Games - one year before Lottery funding was introduced.

Peaty – a three-time Olympic gold medallist – also urged the government to improve its funding of grassroots sport to prevent the closure of leisure centres and called for investment in coaches, adding: “The lottery can only do so much.”

“I’m not a politician,” he said. “I



Peaty has three Olympic gold medals after winning two at the Tokyo Games

don’t know where the money’s going to come from, but I know if you’ve got a healthier nation, a fitter nation, a happier nation and a valued nation, that return on investment is going to be great.”

The government and the Lottery, combined, provided £220m to support community clubs and exercise centres through the coronavirus pandemic, distributed in the country by grassroots funding body Sport England.

But DCMS member Kevin Brennan told Peaty that National Lottery operator Camelot had only increased its funding to good causes - which includes funding for sport - by 2% between 2009-10 and 2016-17 when its profits had increased by 122 percent.

Asked by Brennan if that was a “massive moral failure” on the part

of Camelot, Peaty said: “If I looked at my company and I knew what I was doing, getting 120 percent profits and only giving 2% back to a good cause, I would feel morally depleted.”

In response, Camelot said: “It’s disappointing to see people once again referring to an outdated, flawed report - which gives an inaccurate picture of the current health of the National Lottery.

“We retain around 1% in profit. Last year we achieved record National Lottery sales of over £8.3bn and over £7.9bn of that went back to winners and society, compared with £78.1m retained in profit.

“Returns for good causes are now £500m more per year than they were at the start of the third licence back in 2009, while profit is up £33.6m.”

European Union asks China for 'verifiable proof' of tennis star Peng Shuai's whereabouts

The European Union on Tuesday said it wants China to release "verifiable proof" that tennis player Peng Shuai is safe and to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into her sexual assault allegations.

Peng – a three-time Olympian and former top-ranked doubles player – dropped out of public view after accusing a former Communist Party official of sexual assault.

Peng has had only a few direct contacts with officials outside China since she disappeared from public view earlier this month. She told Olympic officials in a Nov. 21 video call from Beijing that she was safe and well.

"Her recent public reap-

pearance does not ease concerns about her safety and freedom," an EU spokesperson said.

Peng made the sexual assault allegation online against a former member of the Communist Party's ruling Standing Committee, Zhang Gaoli. The tennis player's post was removed within minutes and she stopped appearing in public.

"The EU joins growing international demands, including by sport professionals, for assurances that she is free and not under threat," the EU said in a statement. "In this spirit, the EU requests the Chinese government to provide verifiable proof of Peng Shuai's safe-

ty, well-being and whereabouts.

"The EU urges the Chinese authorities to conduct a full, fair and transparent investigation into her allegations of sexual assault."

Peng adds to a growing number of Chinese businesspeople, activists and ordinary people who have disappeared from public view in recent years after criticizing party figures or in crackdowns on corruption or pro-democracy and labor rights campaigns.

"The EU strongly opposes the use of the practice of enforced disappearance and arbitrary detention ... and calls upon China to comply with its human rights obligations under national and

international law," the EU said.



The European Union wants China to show proof tennis star Peng Shuai is safe. Peng dropped out of public view earlier this month after accusing a former Communist Party official of sexual assault.

Isaiah Thomas leads USA to win over Cuba in World Cup qualifying

CHIHUAHUA, Mexico — Isaiah Thomas made sure USA Basketball's road to the 2023 World Cup didn't begin with a major upset.

Thomas scored 21 points, including a sealing 3-pointer with 13.3 seconds left, and the Americans erased a seven-point deficit in the fourth quarter to beat Cuba 95-90 on Sunday in their World Cup qualifying opener.

"It's an honor and a privilege to put USA on your chest," the 32-year-old Thomas said. "So, anytime USA Basketball comes calling, I'm always going to be for it. We have a great group of guys, a great coaching staff and it was

fun to be out there. It was a great game. It was a tough game for us."

The lead was just two after a Cuba basket by Jasiel Rivero with 34 seconds remaining. The U.S. didn't call a timeout, and Thomas kept the ball in his hands for the entirety of what became the biggest possession of the game for the Americans.

The two-time NBA All-Star – who averaged 29 points for the Boston Celtics in 2016-17 and spent a considerable amount of time battling injuries since – waited for a screen, used it and connected from near the top of

the key for a 93-88 lead.

"We have prepared for those moments," U.S. coach Jim Boylen said. "We were organized. And he made a huge play."

Thomas – an NBA free agent with hopes of getting back into the league – last appeared on the national team in February, starting two games during qualifying for the AmeriCup. He led the team with 14 points per game in those contests, with the U.S. defeating the Bahamas and Mexico.

He was in the NBA briefly last season, averaging 7.7 points in three games with New Orleans.

"For me, personally, the ultimate



goal is to get back in the NBA," Thomas said. "But I just love playing the game of basketball. So, obviously, at some point, if the NBA isn't an option I've got to look at options overseas. But I'm in love with the game. No matter where I'm playing, I have no pride whatsoever. I love competing and I love playing against the best players in the world."

Brian Bowen II and B.J. Johnson each scored 16 points for the U.S., while Justin Anderson added 10 for the Americans.

Rivero, who plays professionally in the top Spanish league, led all scorers with 34 points for Cuba. Karel Guzman scored 18 and Yoanki Mensia finished with 12 for Cuba.

"We give all the respect to Cuba," Thomas said. "They were a hell of a team. They made everything tough for us. They were talented."

Marcos Chacon's 3-pointer with 8:45 left gave Cuba an 80-73 lead.

The Americans answered with a quick 9-0 run – Bowen and Thomas made 3-pointers to get the U.S. within one, then Thomas added a three-point play to cap the flurry and put his team back on top 82-80.

It was tied twice more from there. Johnson's 3-pointer pushed the U.S. edge to 88-84 with 2:46 left, and Thomas sealed it in the final moments.

"We stuck to the game plan and we got a win," Thomas said.

USA Basketball is using a roster composed primarily of G League players for qualifying, then added Thomas a few days before training camp began earlier this month in Houston. The U.S. is ranked No. 1 in the world by FIBA and is coming off the Olympic gold medal at the Tokyo Games, but still needs to qualify all over again for the World Cup – which is one of the paths teams can use toward qualifying for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

The U.S. concludes its trip to Mexico by playing the host nation in another qualifying game on Monday night. The two games in Mexico are the first of six first-round games for the U.S. in World Cup qualifying. The Americans are also scheduled to play Puerto Rico on Feb. 24, Mexico on Feb. 27, Puerto Rico on July 1 and Cuba again on July 4 in the opening qualifying round.

There are four teams in each of four qualifying groups out of the FIBA Americas region. The top three teams in each group move onto the second round of qualifying, which starts in August and runs through February 2023.

The World Cup runs from Aug. 25-Sept. 10, 2023, with the final in the Philippines and other games taking place in Japan and Indonesia.

Team USA faces Mexico on Monday.



In this November 23 file photo, West Indies Women celebrate a wicket during their first World Cup qualifying match against Ireland, in Harare, Zimbabwe.

WINDIES WOMEN LEAVE ZIMBABWE AFTER OMICRON ENDS TOURNEY

THE West Indies women's cricket team have left Zimbabwe and are on their way back to the Caribbean.

The detection of a new variant of COVID-19 called Omicron in southern Africa last week brought an abrupt end to the International Cricket Council's (ICC) Women's World Cup qualifiers on Saturday.

As a result, West Indies qualified for the 2022 Women's Cricket World

Cup in New Zealand which will be played from March 4 to April 3.

The qualifiers would have decided the final three spots for the World Cup.

Bangladesh and Pakistan will join West Indies as the other teams to qualify for the World Cup.

A Cricket West Indies (CWI) media release on Saturday said, "The ICC indicated that with the emergence of the latest COVID-19 variant in

South Africa and the introduction of travel restrictions from a number of African countries, including the host country Zimbabwe, it has reluctantly decided to call off the event."

CWI CEO Johnny Grave told Newsday via WhatsApp at 1.14 pm TT time on Monday that the West Indies players have left Zimbabwe.

"They have just landed on Oman," Grave said.

Asked when they are ex-

pected to arrive in the Caribbean, Grave said, "Not sure yet ... first priority was to (get) them safely out of Africa."

West Indies were scheduled to play Sri Lanka on Saturday, but the latter had a member of their support staff test positive for COVID-19 and the match was abandoned.

Prior to that, six Sri Lankan players tested positive for COVID-19.

IDEWS