

NO DECEMBER DISCONNECTIONS!

PAGES 14-15

The global supply chain bottlenecks that we've been hearing so much about lately are causing much more than economically bludgeoning price hikes for consumers and end users – or interminably long waits for cargo vessels seeking access to ports for offloading and processing. It seems the weeks that cargo and container ships have to keep their mammoth engines running – even on idle – as they wait, is a serious source of environmental pollution and adverse to all we sought to achieve at the recent COP26 Climate Change Summit in Glasgow. READ OUR EDITORIAL ON PAGE 2

- INSIDE:**
- Only PCR test acceptable to enter A&B
 - Just two in hospital with COVID
 - Usain Bolt talks about taking up cricket!

Supply chain chaos causing sharp increase in climate-change emissions from ships

America's post-pandemic shopping spree isn't just breaking the supply chain, it's taking its toll on the environment. Ships chasing record-high container prices are speeding across the ocean to load up as often as they can, raising emissions at the fastest rate since 2008.

Container ships – like the ones carting goods from the ports of Asia to the US – are speeding up as much as 22% faster in good weather and consuming more fuel in the process, says Mike Konstantinidis, CEO of METIS Cyberspace Technology, a Greek company that analyzes data on ship movement.

Once a vessel arrives, unprecedented congestion at the overflowing ports are leaving a record number of ships

idling in the water, pumping pollution into the neighborhoods surrounding the ports.

A study published on Nov. 16 by Singapore's Nanyang Technological University estimated that emissions from ships at the port of Los Angeles doubled between July 2020 and 2021, and increased by 123% in Singapore. The most dramatic increases in emissions have come from vessels serving US demand, with container ship emissions at port up 94%; while for bulk carriers, the cargo ships used mainly for coal or grain, they're up 140%.

Port pollution has been found to increase incidences of childhood asthma and cancer, contributing to an estimated 1,300 premature

deaths [per] year in the neighborhoods around the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, as LA councilmember Nithya Raman pointed out when the city voted to adopt a resolution calling on ships at the city's ports to be zero-carbon by 2030.

After vessels unload their cargo, they speed back to the ports of China to pick up another load of goods. METIS estimates an overall increase in total annual emissions of 15%, between 2020 and 2021. "If no measures are adopted, emissions from shipping are expected to grow extremely, even up to 250% [by] 2050," Konstantinidis said.

The supply chain crisis is poised to roll back a decade of progress on reducing shipping's

carbon intensity, the measure of how much CO2 is emitted for every nautical mile a ton of cargo travels, as well as increasing overall emissions.

Before the pandemic, slow-steaming lowered emissions

In the economic doldrums after the 2008 recession, shipping companies were making less than \$2,000 per container and earning slim profits. To save on fuel costs, ships began slowing down in a practice called slow-steaming. Just by going slower with few other engine adjustments, ships can burn less marine fuel oil, lowering their greenhouse gas emissions.

Massive container vessels lumbered across the sea at 12 or 14 nautical miles per

hour (knots), rather than 24 or 26 knots. The Pacific crossing could take six weeks or more, considerably slowing deliveries, but shipping companies were happy to save the money and overall carbon intensity dropped 31% between 2008 and 2019. However, due to an increase in the number of ships and voyages, overall emissions still went up from 962 million tons in 2012, to 1.05 billion tons in 2018.

According to Nishatabbas Rehmatulla, a senior researcher at the University College London Energy Institute, slow-steaming can bring down a ship's carbon intensity between 30% and 50%.

But it's also over-ridable. Even as ships steadily emitted less carbon in the decade before the pandemic, Rehmatulla noticed that new ships' engines were being built larger than they needed to be for

slow-steaming. This meant that the ships were "going to be capable of speeding up when the conditions are right," Rehmatulla said. "And currently, those are the conditions we find ourselves in with the supply chain."

As American demand surged in the pandemic and supply chain chaos drove container prices up to record highs of more than \$10,000, shipping lines swept aside the environmental benefits of slow-steaming.

What do faster

ships mean for the environment?

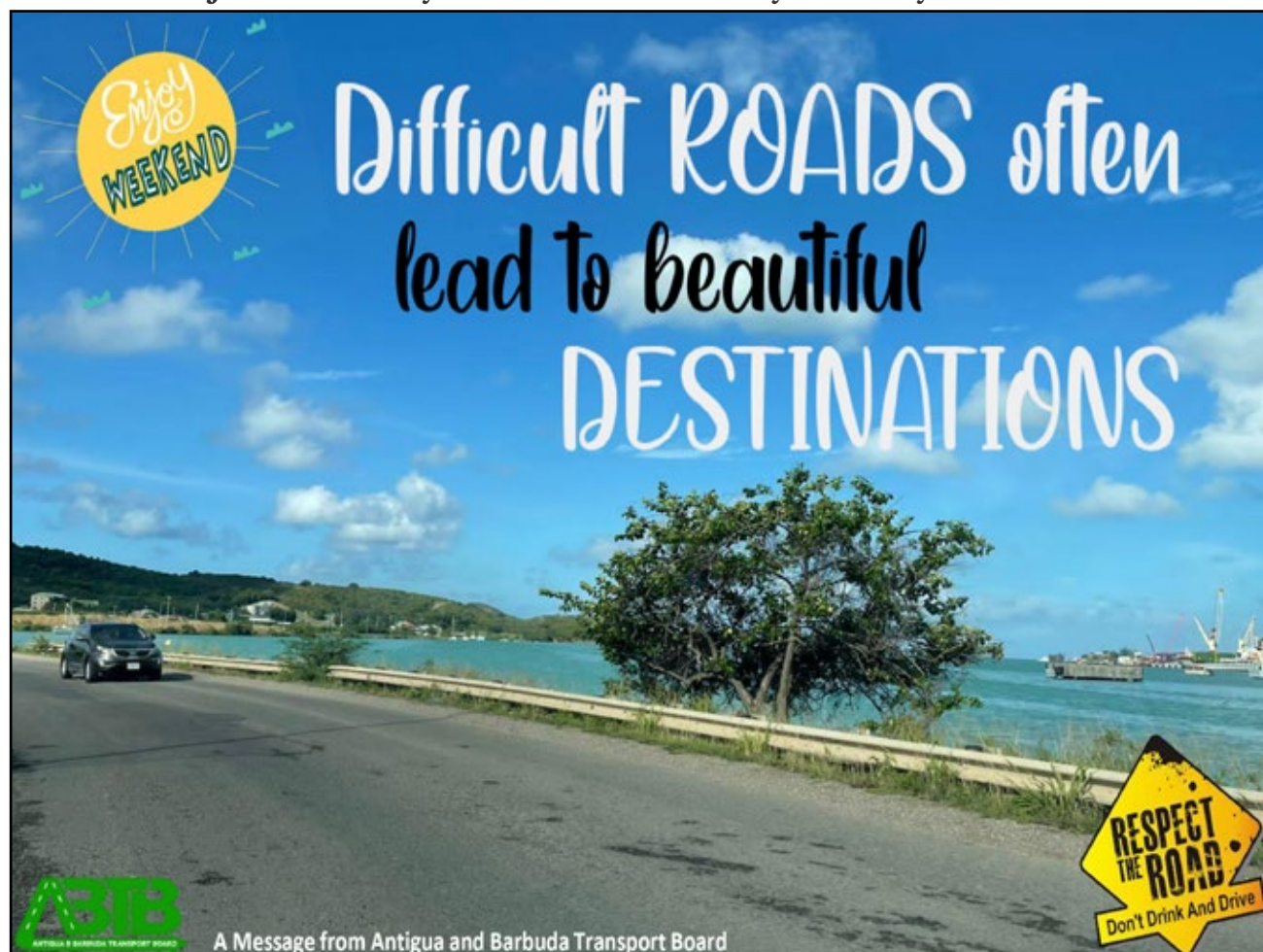
The shipping industry emits about 3% of the world's greenhouse gases, more than all but five countries. The current surge in emissions can have long-term consequences for the shipping industry's ability to stay in line with the Paris Agreement's goal of keeping global temperatures below 1.5°C.

So far, the industry has burned through half of the remaining carbon budget it can use to stay within that

goal, according to James Mason, a researcher at the University of Manchester's Tyndall Center for Climate Change Research, who specializes in low-carbon shipping. Before this year's supply chain crisis, the industry had 14 years left of emitting at its average rate before it exceeded the 1.5°C target. "If emissions increase in the short-term due to increasing speeds," Mason said, then there's even less time.

The longer the industry delays

reducing its emissions, the more drastic the action required to stay below the 1.5°C goal. It can mean scrapping fossil-fuel burning ships sooner than the standard lifespan of about 25 years, or absorbing the costs of expensive zero-carbon fuels before scale brings prices down. But, Mason said, that raises the issue of feasibility—if de-carbonization is harder, the industry may be less likely to achieve it.



Regional consultant challenges child rights and prevention abuse advocates

Regarding the awareness of child rights and the prevention of child abuse, “What are three main areas of reform that you would recommend to the Government of Antigua and Barbuda?”

This was the question – and challenge – posed by a regional independent consultant and advocate for child justice, Dr. Jacqueline Sealey-Burke, to child rights advocates and stakeholders at a recent networking/training

workshop event organized by Decides Antigua and Barbuda (Decides AB), implemented by Interarts in association with Women Against Rape (WAR).

The two-day workshop was held at Antigua and Barbuda’s Department of Environment.

Emphasizing the need to prioritize, Dr. Burke advised her audience that the government at this time would be forced to prioritize and that it was important for stakehold-

ers to reflect on their own list of priorities.

One area that urgently needs to be addressed, she said, is the regular dissemination of information to the public concerning the laws, policies, structures and services that relate to child rights awareness, child justice and the prevention of child abuse.

“This is low-hanging fruit,” she added, noting that despite the passage in recent years of social legislation by the Antigua and

Barbuda Parliament – designed to champion child rights and justice and to prevent child abuse – two main weaknesses still exist: the dissemination of information and, secondly, the tardiness in implementing the provisions of the various legislative acts; among them the Child Care and Protection, Child Justice and Status of Children Acts.

Dr. Sealey-Burke also asked her audience to identify the main gaps in



The advertisement features a yellow Suzuki Vitara SUV shown from a rear three-quarter view, parked on a surface with orange and white diagonal stripes. In the top right corner, there is a logo consisting of three interlocking hexagons. The text on the right side of the ad reads: **Suzuki Vitara**, *Fully Loaded All Grip 4WD*, *Time to Play*, and **Starting at \$76,600**. At the bottom right, there is a logo for HADEED MOTORS LTD. featuring a stylized mountain and the text **HADEED MOTORS LTD.** Below this logo, the text **Give us call 481-2500** is displayed.

implementation. Then – in obvious reference to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), an international treaty ratified by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda – she asked: “Has Antigua and Barbuda lived up to its international obligations regarding the rights of the child and child abuse prevention?”

The two-day networking and training seminar brought together child rights advocates and stakeholders, onsite and virtually. Focusing on Child Rights and the Prevention of Child Abuse, the objective of the event was to raise awareness of child rights and enhance the capacity of civil society organizations to prevent and respond to child abuse in Antigua and Barbuda.

Delivering the keynote address, Dr. Sealey-Burke spoke mainly on the ***‘Regional Assessment on Child Protection and Child Justice Systems Across the OECS Member States, With Key Country-Specific Findings for Antigua and Barbuda.’***

Although pointing out the tardiness in distributing vital information to the public, as well as the implementation gaps and the inefficient collection of raw data, Dr. Burke nevertheless applauded the governments of the region, particularly those of the OECS who, with the assistance of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), have updated

their social legislation regarding child rights and child protection policy.

She also noted that most regional countries have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), though most have not yet signed on to two additional and optional protocols, the first of which seeks to ensure that children under the age of 18 are not recruited into the armed forces of their countries. The second calls on States to prohibit child prostitution, child pornography, and the sale of children into slavery.

In facilitating one of the workshop sessions, Dr. Sealey-Burke issued a further challenge to the seminar participants. She told them while national governments are obligated to submit regular reports to a United Nations committee on the implementation of the UNCRC, the said Committee also welcomes Shadow Reports from Non-Governmental Organizations. She revealed that the Shadow Reports are useful for providing an additional perspective to that offered by the Government.

The UNCRC is the only international human rights treaty to give non-governmental organisations (NGOs) a direct role in overseeing its implementation under CRC Article 45 A.

Dr. Sealey-Burke also offered her take on corporal punishment and foster care. On the former, she



underscored the importance of abolishing corporal punishment and commented on the leadership role that the State should play in this regard by first prohibiting flogging or any form of corporal punishment through State-run institutions such as schools or the justice system.

Regarding foster care, she mentioned that many foster parents in the region do not have much money and recommended the increase of stipends and other incentives to foster parents. Asserting that foster care must have standards and foster children should not be relegated to a constant state of poverty, she however warned against the over-commercialization of the foster-care system which could result in foster parents paying more attention to incentives

than actual care.

Other notable presentations were made by social psychologist, ***Dr. Cleo Athill who spoke on the ‘Psychological Effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs),’*** adverse effects that can last well into adulthood. Dr. Nicola Bird, Executive Director of Integrated Health Outreach (IHO), implementing agency of the ***‘Pathways to Addressing Child Abuse and Child Rights in Antigua and Barbuda’*** project, also funded by Interarts, gave an overview of IHO’s communications, public awareness and education campaign, on behalf of Decides Antigua and Barbuda. The latter is an ongoing project that has so far included a virtual press conference, television and radio interviews, virtual meetings with child rights stakeholders, social

media outreach, and training workshops with the support of the Ministry of Education.

Another key intervention was made by Ms. Feona Charles-Richards, Director of Family & Social Services Division, Ministry of Social Transformation, Antigua and Barbuda, who addressed *'The Situation of Child Services and Child Rights in Antigua and Barbuda – With Special focus on Prevention of Child Abuse'*.

During her presentation, Ms. Charles-Richards alluded to her Ministry's current communications and public awareness outreach regarding child rights and prevention of child abuse, a project in association with UNICEF.

Dr. Nicola Bird and Mrs. Charles-Richards both referred to the issue of under-reporting in Antigua and Barbuda and stressed the need for residents to become familiar with the signs of child abuse. They emphasised that those who hear of or see child abuse should report it to the appropriate agencies.

Instances of child abuse in Antigua and Barbuda can be reported to the Family & Social Services Division, Ministry of Social Transformation, the main reporting agency (562-1608/9 or the 24-hour hotline at 463-3531); the Directorate of Gender Affairs, Ministry of Social Transformation (462-3990, or the 24-hour hotline at 463-5555); the Youth Intervention Unit, Royal Police Force

of Antigua and Barbuda (at 462-0125/6 or direct to 562-8417); and the Social Worker/Counsellor at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Center (484-2700).

Reports can also be made to counsellors based at the country's secondary and primary schools.

The chairperson of the networking/training workshop was Ms. Alexandrina Wong of Decides Antigua and Barbuda and the Executive Director of Women Against Rape (WAR).

The workshop meeting was the second networking event organised by Decides AB; the first one having addressed the protection of the human rights of LGBT persons in Antigua and Barbuda.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Medical Care Receives a Boost with New Digital Radiology Service

St. John's Antigua. Antigua and Barbuda's medical and healthcare services have received a major and timely boost with the recent opening of Woods Radiology, a facility that has increased the country's capacity in providing radiology services for the detection and diagnosis of conditions in the human body. Conveniently located at Woods Centre on Friar's Hill Road, Woods Radiology offers a selection of new, world-class, high-tech digital equipment. They include a Computerised Tomography Scan (CT – Scan) offering more detailed and sharper imagery of the body's organs, bones and soft tissue; an X-Ray system with a digital reader and wireless system that allows sharp images to be transmitted to a control room and computer, almost

instantly; and a digital Ultrasound system that provides clear images of the body's internal organs and tissues. The facility also now adds a much needed third mammogram machine to the country's inventory with the device rendering crisper imagery of breast tissue for easier detection of abnormalities.

Every image that is captured, regardless of the specific equipment used, is not only stored within its specific computerised system but also wirelessly transmitted to and stored in a central database. This allows information on patients to be more easily accessed by the doctors and technicians, as well as provides a backup for each system. The facility is also fully protected from any radiation with the walls and doors of the

CT- Scan and X-Ray rooms lined with lead, following the advice and guidelines of a Radiation Physicist.

For several years, Dr. Jason Belizaire, the proprietor of Woods Radiology, has offered limited radiology services providing Ultrasounds and X-Rays on a small scale, at his private practice. Speaking as to why he made this major investment in expanding his offerings, he stated: "I wanted to take things to the next level and please my patients who for many years have been asking that I do this." He further stated that his mission is to provide the highest quality of care to the country with superior and friendly service from the facility's doctors, technicians and administrative staff. Since its opening, the facility has received

rave reviews on the quality of service being offered.

The increased capacity of the island's radiology services, provided by Woods Radiology, is seen as a timely intervention as the Sir Lester Bird Medical Center has been strained by the COVID-19 pandemic, which intermittently has caused a backlog in radiology services at the country's lone hospital. Dr. Belizaire noted: "Anything done privately helps to reduce the burden on the public system."

The facility to date has a staff complement of five (5) including a Radiologist, a Radiographer, Ultra Sound Technician, Administrative Assistant and Office Manager. The environment is modern and attractive, with waiting areas that can seat up to sixteen people.

Dr. Belizaire has pointed out that he could not have done this venture without the support of several persons, stating: "I would like to thank the Prime Minister, the Honourable Gaston Browne, the Attorney General, the Honourable Steadroy 'Cutie' Benjamin and the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda for granting me duty-free concessions to build and equip this facility, that benefits not only my patients but, the people

of Antigua and Barbuda as a whole." He further expressed his thanks to his beloved wife, Patricia Belizaire and his mom and dad (the latter now deceased) for their enduring support; his brother Steven Belizaire, a building contractor, who assisted in getting the premises ready; his shipper Terrence Dornellas who ensured that the equipment and supplies arrived on a timely basis; his IT specialist, Mr. Trent Davis for connecting all the dots, ensuring an efficient computer network system and all his staff for their dedication and unwavering support.

Looking to the future, Dr. Belizaire stated that he will be keeping close tabs on developments in radiology and that he will adapt accordingly to ensure that Woods Radiology is always on the cutting-edge of providing superior services using up-to-date technologies, operated by highly trained and experienced doctors and technicians. Woods Radiology is open Mondays to Fridays, 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Contact:
Brenda Carrott-
(268)-464-9349

Partner,
CHEETAH
Communications
and Business Solutions



Technician in CT Scan control room, looking outward at the CT-Scan



Xray Unit



COVID Dashboard Update for December 2nd 2021

The most recent report received by the Ministry of Health, Wellness & the Environment revealed five (5) new laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda as of Wednesday 1st December 2021 at 6:00 p.m. One hundred and seventy-eight (178) samples were processed. Consequently, the total number of persons with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda is 4,146; which is inclusive of 10 active cases. There are two hospitalized cases – one mild and one severe. Meanwhile Antigua and Barbuda has fully vaccinated 56,989 individuals while 4,673 have only received their first dose. The dashboard has been updated to reflect these changes.

Life | Medical

Dr Courtney Lewis

*State goes
above and beyond
for me!*

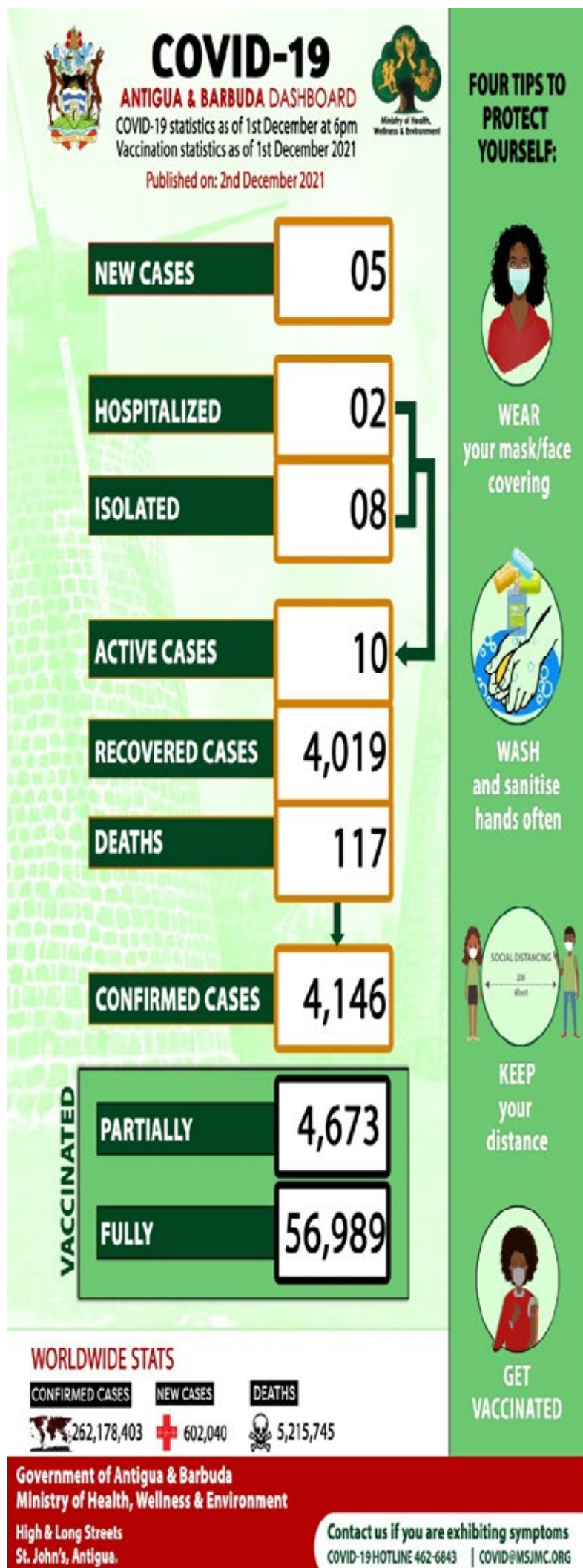
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12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS
NO 15% ABST
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12TH DEC - 24TH DEC 2021

CENTER SPREAD \$1600ec

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1/2 PAGE-V/H \$450ec

1/4 PAGE-V/H \$300ec

SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY



ON DE
STREETZ
OUTSIDE BOARDCAST

15 MINS \$100

1/2 HOUR \$150

45 MINS 200

1 HOUR \$250

8 MENTIONS

\$100

12 MENTIONS

\$140



Governor General represents Antigua and Barbuda at Barbados Republic celebrations



Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda Sir Rodney Williams (second from left) with the 1st President of Barbados, Dame Sandra Mason (3rd from left) and Lady Williams (right). The other gentleman seated with them is not identified.

His Excellency Sir Rodney Williams, Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda – accompanied by Lady Williams – took part in the Republic celebrations in Barbados over the past few days. The Governor General attended

in response to an official letter of invitation from Prime Minister Mia Mottley as well as a personal request from President-Elect Dame Sandra Mason. Official events at which Sir Rodney was present included the opening

of Golden Square Freedom Park, the National Service of Thanksgiving, the Flotilla, the Ceremony for the Installation of the President of Barbados, the National Awards Ceremony, the “Toast to the Nation” reception at State

House – and a reception on the occasion of Barbados becoming a Republic hosted by the United States Embassy, the British High Commission, the Canadian High Commission, and the European Union.

NOTICE: change of time – Plastic Waste Free Island Pilot Project

The Ministry of Health, Wellness & the Environment would like to inform the public of the change in the time for payout in relation to the *Plastic Waste Free Island Pilot Project*.

Participants who have registered for December 3rd cash collection should be aware that the

starting time will now be at **12 midday until 4:30 p.m.**

We are sorry for the inconvenience caused. Please be guided accordingly. Please note that payout will continue until December 17th 2021. We encourage those participants who have not registered for payout (or

are taking the option to redeem top-ups) to visit the Ministry of Health headquarters on lower High and Long streets on **Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays between 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.**

Additionally, an appeal is being made for individuals to keep storing

plastics bottles, as an opportunity for up-scaling is possible next year. In relation to the National Bottle Collection Scheme, that will be implemented in 2022. Therefore, don't forget to get the children involved and make recycling a family affair.

ALL BRANCHES NOW OPEN 10:30AM - 9PM!!





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#KFCANU #SOCIALDISTANCING #MADEFRESHEVERYDAY

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Almost 30 young people inducted into Junior Chamber Youth Antigua



On Monday 30th November 2021, Junior Chamber Youth (JCY) – the junior arm to JCI Antigua – inducted 27 young people into their organization.

The 27 students from the Antigua State College (ASC) were inducted into the youth-led NGO through a recruitment drive headed by Ms. Jody Ann Parker who served as the organization's secretary this year.

The students then went through a series of training and orientation. After this a selected crop was recommended

for induction, based on their passion and drive to learn more about the organization and their commitment to upholding the values.

They are given several opportunities to craft and execute skills in order to develop first-hand experience in areas such as project planning, financial management, and events management.

According to the JCY Liaison Officer, Leon Norville, JCY is vitally important to youth development because too many times he sees

young people focused on their academics but lacking in their social and community relations. "With JCY we are trying to bridge that gap to develop well-rounded young people who are not only academically sound but also in tune with social and development issues that are affecting their peers. We want to give them the opportunity to recognize and tackle these issues in the hope of effecting positive change and inspiring hope," Norville said. Though the junior youth arm is specific-

ly based at Antigua State College, their parent organization is said to play an important and supportive role in their operation. At the moment, JCY is only open to students at Antigua State College and they can join by simply reaching out to the 2022 Board members, filling out an application form, and going through the club's orientation process.

Talks are currently underway to possibly open up the scope of membership within other tertiary institutions and even high school.

Ambassador Colin Murdoch presents letter of nomination to UN Office in Geneva



Tatiana Valovaya, Director-General of the United Nations office in Geneva (left) meets with Colin Murdoch, the new Permanent Observer of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States to the United Nations Office in Geneva, Switzerland.

(Media Release courtesy United Nations Information Service, Geneva)

Colin Murdoch, the new Permanent Observer of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States to the United Nations (UN) office in Geneva, Switzerland, on Wednesday, December 1, 2021, presented his letter of nomination to Tatiana Valovaya, Director-General of the UN office in Geneva.

Prior to his appointment to Geneva, Mr.

Murdoch, a citizen of Antigua and Barbuda, had been serving as a Senior Advisor in the Office of the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda since 2016.

He was Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade & Immigration from 2014 to 2016, a post he also held from 1995 to 2009.

He was Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade, Industry & Commerce from 2009 to 2014.

Mr. Murdoch has also

served as the Commissioner for Antigua and Barbuda to the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) since 2011, and as Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 2013.

He was a Foreign Service Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1982 to 1986, and a Senior Foreign Service Officer from 1989 to 1994. He also served as non-resident Ambassa-

dor to Cuba from 1997 to 2004.

Mr. Murdoch has a master's degree from Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts, United States; a graduate diploma from the Institute of International Relations, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago; and a bachelor's degree from the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados.

Cabinet briefs: PCR test only for int'l entry; Dialysis Unit to be relocated; December relief on utility arrears ...

by *Shelton Daniel*

The new OMICRON Variant of the COVID-19 virus was a subject of some concern for the Antigua and Barbuda Cabinet of Ministers at its weekly meeting on Wednesday.

International apprehension about the variant – said to be the most mutated of the many strains that have emerged so far – could make it “necessary to reverse the Cabinet’s earlier decisions”.

Because of the need for tighter monitoring and controls where international travel is concerned – even when it involves Antigua and Barbuda nationals – “The Cabinet determined that visitors and returning nationals may not utilize Rapid Antigen tests to enter.”

Instead, “Beginning December 8th 2021, only PCR tests no more

than three days old can be utilized for entry into Antigua and Barbuda.”

Cabinet is not budging on “the requirement that all patrons [at mass crowd fetes numbering no more than 300] be fully vaccinated, show their vaccination ID card before entry, and also take the rapid antigen test before entering” – a policy that Cabinet has explained “is based on the likelihood of high transmissibility of the COVID-19 virus”.

Concerning the requirement that all unvaccinated public sector workers must be tested every 14 days, “Up to 100 government workers returning to work [on Wednesday] December 1st 2021, can be tested; hence, should the number returning exceed 100, those workers will have to undergo the COVID-19 test on another day. However, they cannot return to their

workplace until such time as they have been tested.

“The public is reminded that all un-vaccinated government workers are required to undergo COVID-19 testing every 14 days. Only 100 workers can be tested per day.

“Testing is conducted at the Villa Polyclinic.”

Explaining the perceived slowness (by some) in churning out vaccination ID cards to those who have applied for them, the post Cabinet briefing notes point out that the current fa-



DELAYED DELIVERY OF PHYSICAL BILLS

APUA would like to advise our customers that due to unavoidable circumstances, there is a delay in printing the November bills for zones B, C and D. Affected customers can access copies of their bills online via our Online Payment Portal at <https://myutilities.apua.ag/> or via our website at www.apua.ag. Alternatively, customers may request their bill balance or a copy of their bill from our Customer Service Department at email customerservice@apua.ag or call 480-7150.

We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience that this may cause.



cilities are able to produce 1,000 cards per day, with 22,000 having been completed thus far.

“Card production entails a series of due diligence checks in order to ensure the absence of fraud, before production and distribution,” the Hurst notes observe. Also announced is relief from the likelihood of disconnection for those in arrears on their utility payments – a grace period granted for the month of December. “The APUA has long adopted a policy of cut-off of water-supply

to customers after a 90-day account default. On electricity, the APUA customer is given 60 days before disconnection is ordered. The Cabinet decided that there will be a halt of all disconnections from December 1st to December 30th 2021.”

The Dialysis Unit at the Sir Lester Bird Medical Center will be relocated to the Edward Ward at the old/former Holberton Hospital after renovation by the Ministry of Works is completed.

“The Dialysis Center is in need

of more space and more machines in order to meet increasing demands for dialysis treatment. A Cardiac Unit will occupy the space at the SLBMC where the Dialysis Unit has been since its inception. An outstanding medical institution will collaborate with the Ministry of Health to provide the human resource expertise required and to identify the additional experts and equipment that will also be needed to make the new Cardiac Unit meet the highest standards possible.”

CHRISTMAS RATES

AD SIZES



CENTER SPREAD	\$1600ec
FULL PAGE	\$800ec
MINI PAGE	\$500ec
1/2 PAGE-V/H	\$450ec
1/4 PAGE-V/H	\$300ec
PROBATE 1/8 OF PAGE-V/H	\$300ec
1/8 OF A PAGE-V/H	\$150ec
1/16 PAGE- V/H	\$100ec
ENCHANCED CLASSIFIED(L)	\$100ec
ENCHANCED CLASSIFIED(S)	\$60ec
PERSONAL CLASSIFIED	\$40ec

WEBSITE

WEEKLY
\$100

MONTHLY
\$400

3 MONTHS
1000

ABST 15% IS NOT INCLUDED
SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY

Health Ministry endorses Ten Days of Wellness

The Ministry of Health, Wellness & the Environment continues to recognize that the issue of ensuring good health and wellness among citizens and residents in Antigua and Barbuda cannot be done alone.

We at the Ministry are therefore always pleased when good corporate citizens and organizations come on board to assist in educating the population on the importance of having a holistic approach to their health and well-being.

The South Leeward Adventist Church (SLAC) is one such organization that the Ministry is pleased to be partnering with as we set out to address Health & Wellness in Antigua and Barbuda with a week of activities.

The "TEN DAYS OF WELLNESS" take place from Decem-


ber 1st to December 10th under the theme "*I want to live healthy*" with a **Walk to Wellness** being held each day. Other activities include *Ten Prayers of Wellness* on Wednesday 1st December; the *Joy of Eating Cooking Demonstration* on Thursday 2nd December; Caring for Frontline Workers on Friday 3rd December; and Nature Healing-Balm Movie Night on Saturday 4th December.

Two sessions will be held on Sunday 5th December on *Children's Mental Health – Coping with Emotions as well as Management and Prevention Strategies for People with Diabetes and Hypertension, while Personal Reflections* will be held on Monday 6th December and Thursday 9th December. On Tuesday 7th December,

there will be a seminar on Cancers: An Increasing Threat to *Quality of Life and a Virtual Spa*. On Thursday 9th December there will be a session on Emotional Well-

ness and Wellbeing. The week of activities will conclude on Friday 10th December with a *Spiritual Wellness and Worship Commitment Service*. Interested persons



can register for this free event by going to www.designed2live.com/10daystowellness or contact 722-0597 or 775-4522.



South Leeward Conference and Ministry of Health
present
10 Ten Days of Wellness

- Virtual Spa
- Movie Night
- Walking to wellness
- Mental Health Discussion
- Outreach (frontline workers)
- Virtual Vegetarian meal Preparation
- Virtual Health and Wellness Conferences

Contact : 268-772-0597

Ministry of Health, Wellness & Environment

Wake up and smell the Chow Mein



By Sir Ronald Sanders

(The writer is Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the United States and the Organization of American States. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at the University

of London and Massey College in the University of Toronto. The views expressed are entirely his own)

A television interviewer asked me if I thought Caribbean countries,

and other developing territories, would benefit from the 'war for influence' that the European Union (EU) has launched against the People's Republic of China.

He was referring to the announcement by the EU Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, that the EU will launch "Global Gateway", a scheme to compete with China's "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) that has been in place since the end of 2013.

The EU Commission President did not try to hide that the EU's Global Gateway is aimed at trying to stop China's spread around the world, and its growing influence as the major creditor to more than 60 developing countries on every continent.

"We want to create links and not dependence," she said – an allusion to the claim by the G7 countries (the rich nations of

the West) that China is indebting developing countries so as to control them.

What is striking about this new rivalry to lend money to developing countries is that it has arisen, not in response to the needs of these countries for economic advancement and social improvement, but from big power rivalry for influence in their own interest.

Nonetheless, should this contest between richer countries result in the availability of more money to fund growth and prosperity in developing nations, it should be welcomed. Not only would it produce a larger global pot of money, but it will allow developing nations to accept loans from the rival providers that offer the best terms.

The EU has started late in this race, and the sums it is suggesting are less than half of the \$1.2 trillion that China has already put on the

table for 13,000 projects in 63 countries. The EU Commission said it will “seek” to mobilize \$340 billion by 2027 (six years from now), and from a combination of public investment and – as yet unsecured – private investment. What the EU appears to be sure of is \$40 billion in export guarantees to European private investors and around \$18 billion in grants.

The EU has pointed out that it has been providing “grants” while China has been providing “loans”. But in truth the repayment terms of the Chinese loans are concessionary and affordable. Further, they are used mostly for infrastructure projects that developing countries need, whereas EU grants are highly conditional and take very long to disburse. Added to all this, while the EU’s “Global Gateway” was launched with much fanfare, its draft plan does not contain a list of projects it will undertake immediately – or in which countries. Significantly absent, also, is any indica-

tion whether the EU will drop its criterion of low per capita income as a qualifier for access to the “Global Gateway”. So-called middle-income and high-income countries have long been disqualified for access to grants and concessionary loans from the EU, except in disastrous situations. The development of many Caribbean countries is measured by this flawed criterion.

Perhaps, at some point, the EU will actually have a serious discussion with regional groups of developing countries about their real needs and how best the EU can help – particularly as several of its members have a sad legacy of under-development across every continent. Among the EU members are France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium and Germany. The UK is omitted from this list since “Global Gateway” is a EU project and the UK is no longer an EU member.

The bottom line is: If this EU-China rivalry – coupled with the

G7’s “Build Back Better World” (also an effort to compete with China and halt what is seen as its global influence) – produces more money for developing nations, including the Caribbean, it would signal the start of a new world.

That would be especially so if developing countries can choose the options best suited to them, and not to the lenders. In this way, they could retain their autonomy from all lenders, spread their exposure, and seek the

best terms possible. However, right now – especially as the global financial institutions such as the IMF and World Bank still reflect the policies of G7 countries – China remains the lender of choice.

The G7 and leading members of the EU – who built their economies on the backs of developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean – should wake up and smell the Chow Mein. It is everywhere.



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St. Kitts-Nevis says no travel bans on African countries

CMC-The St. Kitts-Nevis government says it will not follow its other Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries and impose a travel ban on several African countries following the discovery of a new variant of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in South Africa over the past few days.

Prime Minister Dr. Timothy Harris told Parliament on Wednesday that his administration would follow the advice given by the World Health Organization (WHO) to not impose any travel restrictions on South Africa where the new variant of the COVID-19 virus, now called Omicron, was first reported.

Prime Minister Harris said while some countries have imposed travel bans on South Africa and other southern African countries to keep the Omicron variant out, the new strain has already been confirmed in other countries.

"The WHO does not support travel bans at this particular time and it has advised that the travel bans that are in

place are unlikely to stop the spread of the variant. Of course, we see that although it was reported in South Africa, it has now found itself elsewhere and it has been reported in at least 22 other countries, including Canada and the United Kingdom." With Omicron being designated a variant of concern, the WHO has issued a number of recommendations to the global community, which includes enhancing surveillance.

Several CARICOM countries – including Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and The Bahamas – have joined the United Kingdom, the United States and others in imposing a travel ban on passengers coming from several African countries including South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

But Prime Minister Harris told legislators, "Our health team has advised that it is not necessary at this time to impose a travel ban on South Africa or on the [southern] African countries.



Prime Minister Dr. Timothy Harris

"We will follow what the WHO prescribed in place of travel bans. The WHO has recommended that countries continue to implement the effective public health measures to reduce COVID-19 circulation overall, using a risk analysis and science-based approach. Further, countries should increase their public health and medical capacities to manage an increase in the cases," Harris told Parliament.

He said local authorities would continue the necessary public health measures that have kept citizens and residents safe, and will continue to promote the country's

vaccination programme.

"We want to encourage everyone who is able to, to get himself or herself vaccinated. We want to repeat our appeal to those who are on the frontline – our nurses, our doctors, our police officers, those in the Defence Force; in fact, anyone whether in public or private sector engaged in frontline activity, however defined – they are at the [most] risk, being in the frontline, and therefore we advise that they protect themselves as much as possible. And the best tool in this fight against a virus that killed millions of people is the vaccine," said Prime Minister Harris.

St. Vincent: La Soufriere goes back to sleep; scientists go home



Loop - Scientists attached to The UWI Seismic Research Centre (UWI-SRC) have ended their tour of duty in St. Vincent and the Grenadines at the La Soufriere volcano.

Activity at the volcano has declined steadily since the last explosive event on April 22, 2021, and all currently available monitoring data points to an end in eruptive activity.

However, residual steaming at the

summit and lahars (mudslides) in the valleys surrounding the volcano will continue to be observed for some time.

The Soufriere Monitoring Unit (SMU) at the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) will now assume responsibility for the operations of the Belmont Observatory.

Day to day monitoring of the volcano will be supported by the UWI-SRC

remotely from its base in Trinidad.

The on-island scientific staff rotation ends an almost year-long occupation of the Belmont Observatory.

After the detection of the new lava dome at La Soufriere in late December 2020, UWI-SRC scientists based at the observatory oversaw the upgrade of the local seismic and ground deformation monitoring networks, conducted other fieldwork

and ground-based measurements, and advised the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the run-up to the onset of explosive activity on April 9, 2021.

Senior Research Fellow (Geologist) at the UWI-SRC, Professor Richard Robertson believes that the volcano will now go through a period of adjustment saying: "The mountain went through a traumatic experience and will take some time

to reshape itself."

UWI-SRC Director, Dr. Erouscilla Joseph reaffirms the Centre's commitment to St. Vincent and its residents, indicating that, "We continue to monitor La Soufriere in this new phase of activity and provide support to NEMO and the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines."

The volcanic alert level at La Soufriere remains at YELLOW.

Argentina donates COVID-19 vaccines to the Eastern Caribbean

St. Lucia Times - On Wednesday December 1st, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) received 42,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccines donated by the government of Argentina.

According to Argentine Foreign Minister Santiago Cafiero, "This collaboration is just a token of the historical friendship and positive relations between the Argentine Republic and the Caribbean region. We share the same democratic values, and my government truly appreciates the support we permanently receive from our partners."

Argentina and the OECS signed a Bilateral Cooperation Agreement in 2013 and, since then, numerous technical

cooperation projects in agriculture, public health and environment have been implemented in St. Kitts & Nevis, Antigua & Barbuda, and other member countries.

Argentine MFA Director of Caribbean Affairs and former ambassador to the OECS, Gustavo M. Pandiani, informed to the press that, within this first vaccine donation, "Saint Lucia will receive 18,000 doses, Dominica 2,000, Grenada 11,000 and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines 11,000."

Finally, Ambassador Pandiani added, "We want to recognise the coordination efforts made by OECS Director General Didacus Jules and director Carlene Radix."



Argentine Ambassador Gustavo Pandiani (left) and OECS Director General Dr. Didacus Jules

Jamaica: Mourning dad backs PM's death wish for gunmen

Jamaica Gleaner - Nineteen days after the gun murder of his son, a distraught father claims investigators have not acted on useful information and he agrees with Prime Minister Andrew Holness' hyperbolic advocacy for the death penalty for persons convicted of illegal possession of firearm.

"Yuh just want a gun fi see anybody and go kill somebody. I agree with that law immediately. I would be somebody weh sign to that immediately!" Roger Simpson told The Gleaner on Monday.

Simpson, a 50-year-old construction worker, said his [spirit has] been crushed since the loss of his son on November 13. He is still seeking closure.

His son, 24-year-old Shavon Simpson – otherwise called 'Titty Man' of Waltham Park Road, Kingston 11

– was killed while at a bike show in Ferry district.

Reports are that, about 7:50 p.m., residents at an illegal bike show heard gunshots and summoned the police.

Shavon was seen on the ground suffering from gunshot wounds with a motorcycle on top of him.

He was taken to the hospital where he was pronounced dead.

His father acknowledged that Shavon was attending an illegal event, as Jamaica's Disaster Risk Management Act outlaws the hosting of in-person entertainment events because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The elder Simpson wants his son's killer brought to justice.

"He wasn't supposed to be there, but no matter what the circumstances why he was there, get the investigation, find out why it happen. The bal-

listics too full up? Find some way out ... We ah lose too much of our kids dem far too long," Simpson said.

Sentiments like those are likely to have influenced Holness' rhetoric at the Jamaica Labour Party's 78th annual conference at the National Indoor Sports Centre in Kingston on Sunday. Holness said, were it up to him, the illegal gun possession would merit the death penalty.

With more than 1,300 people killed this year, Holness promised a vigorous legislative push to tackle the country's galloping murder rate.

The investigative process has been slow, said Simpson, who has reportedly turned up to give information when required. But that impatience is not dissimilar to the experience of hundreds of families who lose relatives annually. "My son is not a criminal,"



Roger Simpson speaks to journalists about the killing of his son, Shavon Simpson, at an illegal bike show on Monday.

said the father of eight, who warned that he did not want to do his own investigation that might end in vigilante justice.

"Mi need the justice system fi work in such a way that it quick and brisk. Because that's why people haffi react, you know, because when yuh find out say yuh put it in the hand of the law and it nah work out, you haffi have a different way out," he said.

Attempts to reach the investigating officer have been unsuccessful.

The Duhaney

Park police have possession of his son's motorcycle, which they have asked him to retrieve. However, Simpson is adamant they can do more to help him and his family get through this turbulent time.

He said he has had to be a tower of strength counselling his partner and Shavon's siblings.

Simpson had dreams of his son becoming a college graduate and leading a successful life. Now he is fine-tuning plans for his funeral.

UN: global food prices at their highest in a decade

Al Jazeera - The price of food staples continued to grow in November amid a global environment of strong demand and tight supply, according to the United Nations' Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The FAO's Food Price Index – which measures the monthly change in the international price of cereal, dairy, meat, vegetable oils, and sugar – jumped 1.6 points in November from the previous month to 134.4.

That is the highest level in a decade and the fourth consecutive month the index has risen.

Prices of cereals and dairy saw the sharpest gains, followed by sugar, while prices of meat and vegetable oils fell slightly in November from the previous month.

Inflation for es-

entials – including food and energy – has skyrocketed this year, thanks to supply-chain snarls and shortages as countries cast off COVID-19 restrictions.

Soaring food prices are hitting low-income households especially hard because higher prices for essentials like bread, meat, milk and rice eat up a larger share of their incomes.

The pain inflicted on consumers has placed central banks the world over in a tough position because higher interest rates help cool inflation, but they also risk denting fragile economic recoveries.

In the United States, the Federal Reserve has prioritized getting Americans back to work over reining in inflation.

But with consumer price infla-



Soaring food prices are hitting low-income households especially hard.

tion accelerating at its fastest pace in 30 years in October, Fed chief Jerome Powell said this week it was time to “retire” the word “transitory” when describing inflation, as he signaled that the Fed could speed up the taper of its bond purchases. That in turn could pave the way for an interest rate hike sooner than expected.

According to the UN, cereal prices jumped 3.1 percent in November on a monthly basis, and 23.2 percent compared to the same period a year ago.

Wheat prices

have grown for five consecutive months and are now at their highest level since May 2011 due to harvest troubles in Australia, linked to untimely rains and potential changes to export policy in Russia.

Maize export prices also climbed in November, propped up by strong sales in Argentina, Brazil and Ukraine.

The dairy index rose 3.4 percent on a monthly basis and was 19.1 percent in November compared to a year ago, due to growing demand for milk

and butter and depleted stock.

The FAO's sugar price index averaged 120.7 points in November – 1.4 percent higher than a month ago and a whopping 40 percent higher than a year ago.

The meat index fell 0.9 percent from October, dipping for a fourth consecutive month but still 17.6 percent above what it was in November of last year. The reason for the slight decline is reduced purchases of pig meat by China, especially from the European Union.

Germany locks down unvaccinated people as leaders plan to make shots compulsory



Acting Chancellor Angela Merkel and Olaf Scholz hold a press conference Thursday on tightened COVID-19 restrictions.

(CNN) - Germany on Thursday announced a nationwide lockdown for the unvaccinated, as its leaders backed plans for mandatory vaccinations in the coming months.

Unvaccinated people will be banned from accessing all but the most essential businesses – such as supermarkets and pharmacies – to curb the spread of coronavirus, outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel and her successor, Olaf Scholz, announced Thursday following crisis talks with regional leaders.

Those who have recently recovered from COVID-19 are not covered by the ban.

The pair also backed proposals for mandatory vaccinations which, if voted through the parliament, could take effect from February at the earliest.

Under the tightened restrictions, unvaccinated people can only meet two people from another household. Bars and nightclubs must shut down in areas with an incidence rate above 350 cases per 100,000 people over one week. And the country would limit the number of people at large events like soccer matches.

The announcement comes as Germany battles a surge in cases that has pushed

Europe back to the epicenter of the pandemic, heightening fears over the newly discovered Omicron variant.

The press briefing is also Merkel's last before she leaves office; a grim note to end her 16 years as German chancellor.

"We have understood that the situation is very serious and that we want to take further measures in addition to those already taken," Merkel told reporters at Thursday's news conference. "The fourth wave must be broken and this has not yet been achieved," she added.

A nationwide vaccination mandate could come into effect from February 2022 after it is debated in parliament and following guidance from Germany's Ethics Council, Merkel said.

She added that vaccinated people will lose their vaccination status nine months after getting their last shot, apparently in an effort to encourage booster

uptake. If approved, Germany's vaccine mandate would follow in the footsteps of neighboring Austria which also plans to make inoculations for eligible adults compulsory from February.

Elsewhere, Greece announced that vaccines would be mandatory for people aged over 60 from mid-January. Those refusing to do so would face 100 euro (US \$113) fines for each passing month, the government said Tuesday.

European Union Commission president Ursula von der Leyen said it was time to "potentially think about mandatory vaccination" within the bloc as it faces the double onslaught of a fourth coronavirus wave and concerns over the Omicron variant discovered by South African health officials last week.

"Two or three years ago, I would never have thought to witness what we see right now; that we have this horrible pandemic,

we have the vaccines, the life-saving vaccines, but they are not being used adequately everywhere,” von der Leyen told a press briefing Wednesday.

“How we can encourage and potentially think about mandatory vaccination within the European Union, this needs discussion. This needs a common approach, but it is a discussion that I

think has to be led,” she added.

Germany, much like Austria, has one of the lowest vaccination rates in western Europe, with 68.4% and 65.6% of eligible adults vaccinated respectively, according to the ECDC.

Germany continues to see a record-breaking number of cases, particularly in its eastern states. On Wednesday,

the country recorded 446 COVID-19 related deaths -- its highest number of daily deaths in nine months.

Many hospitals are struggling to cope with the increasing number of intensive care patients. There could be around 6,000 COVID-19 patients in intensive care by Christmas – regardless of any measures implemented by

Germany’s leaders – the country’s Interdisciplinary Association for Intensive Care and Emergency warned on Wednesday.

Already, more than 102,000 people in Germany have died as a result of coronavirus, according to the Robert Koch Institute (RKI), the national disease and control center.

US House to consider bill to clamp down on products from China's Xinjiang

Reuters – The US House of Representatives is set to consider a bill as soon as next week that would ban imports from China’s Xinjiang region over concerns about forced labor, Representative Jim McGovern, the bill’s sponsor, told reporters on Thursday.

“Next week is an important week for human rights,” McGovern said. “... We think it’s important to move some China legislation, hopefully much of it focused on human rights. The Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, we want to see that get over the fin-

ish line in some form.”

President Joe Biden is hosting a summit of democracies next week, seen as an effort to push back against China’s growing influence.

Republicans and Democrats have been arguing over the Uyghur legislation for months. Most recently, Republican Senator Marco Rubio has been demanding that the measure be included as an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA, delaying the Senate’s consideration of the massive annual bill setting policy for the Pentagon.

Rubio’s office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on whether House passage of McGovern’s bill would change his stance on the defense bill.

If the Uyghur measure becomes law, it would create a “rebuttable presumption” that all goods from Xinjiang – where the Chinese government has set up a vast network of detention camps for Uyghurs and other Muslim groups – were made with forced labor.

China denies abuses in Xinjiang which supplies much of the world’s materials for solar panels.

But the US government and many rights groups say Beijing is carrying out genocide there.

Republicans have accused Biden’s Democrats of slow-walking the legislation because it would complicate the president’s renewable energy agenda. Democrats deny that.

“I just want to see a strong, a much stronger, approach when it comes to forced labor in Xinjiang,” Democratic Representative Dan Kildee told Reuters in a telephone interview, arguing that domestic production of solar panels could be ramped up.

Russia warns of military confrontation nightmare

BBC - Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has warned that Europe could be returning to what he called the "nightmare of military confrontation".

At a European security conference in Sweden, Mr. Lavrov floated the idea of a new European security pact to try to stop NATO from expanding further east.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned of "serious consequences" if Russia sought conflict with Ukraine.

The meeting comes as Russia boosts its military near Ukraine's border.

Ukraine says Russia has amassed more than 90,000 troops there.

Moscow denies it is preparing an attack on Ukraine and accuses Kyiv of its own military build-up.

As tensions rise, Russia said on Thursday it had arrested three suspected Ukrainian security service agents.

One of the three was accused of planning a terrorist attack, while the other two had been seeking to gather intelligence, Russia's Federal Security Service said.

Mr. Lavrov and Mr. Blinken met at a conference of the Organisation for Security and

Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

US officials said the two sides had agreed to further dialogue on Ukraine.

Mr. Blinken hinted at the possibility of direct talks between US President Joe Biden and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in the near future.

Russia's foreign ministry hoped a Putin-Biden summit would take place in the coming days but no date had been set, Interfax news agency reported.

The build-up of Russian troops near Ukraine's border was among the topics discussed at an in-person summit between the two leaders in Geneva in June.

Earlier this week, President Putin said Russia would seek US guarantees that NATO will limit its presence in Ukraine, which is not a member of the security alliance.

But on Thursday, Mr. Lavrov said in a speech that NATO was refusing to constructively consider proposals to de-escalate tensions and prevent dangerous incidents.

"The alliance's military infrastructure is being irresponsibly brought



Antony Blinken and Sergei Lavrov met at a European security conference in Sweden.

closer to Russia's borders in Romania and Poland, deploying an anti-missile defence system that can be used as a strike complex," he said.

"American medium-range missiles are about to appear in Europe, bringing back the nightmare scenario of a military confrontation."

He warned NATO against turning countries neighbouring Russia, i.e. Ukraine, into "bridgeheads of confrontation", and said he hoped Russian proposals for a new security pact would be carefully considered.

At a joint news conference with the Russian foreign minister, Mr. Blinken said the best way to avoid a crisis was through diplomacy and urged Russia to pull back its forces.

"The United States is willing to facilitate that but ... if Russia decides to pursue confrontation there will be serious consequences," he added.

On Wednesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called for direct talks with Russia over the more than seven-year conflict with Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine.

He also said that Kyiv's goal was to "liberate" Crimea, annexed by Russia in 2014, but made no mention of using force.

A large part of the recent Russian military build-up is in Crimea.

Troops are also massing near Ukraine's eastern Donbas region, the name for parts of Luhansk and Donetsk regions under the control of separatists.

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WTA suspends tennis tournaments in China over Peng Shuai case

Chinese star tennis player Peng Shuai

China says it is “firmly opposed to acts that politicise sports” after the Women’s Tennis Association (WTA) suspended all tournaments in the country amid concern for Chinese player Peng Shuai.

The whereabouts of Peng, a former doubles world No 1, became a matter of international concern almost a month ago when she disappeared after alleging former China vice-premier Zhang Gaoli had sexually assaulted her.

Her social media post on Chinese site Weibo detailing the allegation was deleted. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) says it held a video call with Peng on Wednesday and will

meet with her in person in January.

The IOC president Thomas Bach previously spoke to Peng during a half-hour video conference call on November 21. However, the WTA said at the time the video was “insufficient evidence” of her safety.

An IOC statement on Thursday added: “There are different ways to achieve her well-being and safety. We have taken a very human and person-centred approach to her situation. “Since she is a three-time Olympian, the IOC is addressing these concerns directly with Chinese sports organisations.

“We are using ‘quiet diplomacy’ which – given the circumstances and

based on the experience of governments and other organisations – is indicated to be the most promising way to proceed effectively in such humanitarian matters.”

WTA chairman and CEO Steve Simon said he held “serious doubts” that Peng “is free, safe and not subject to censorship, coercion and intimidation”. “Unfortunately, the leadership in China has not addressed this very serious issue in any credible way,” said Simon in a statement distributed by the tour. “While we now know where Peng is, I have serious doubts that she is free, safe and not subject to censorship, coercion and intimidation.” When asked about the

matter at a regular briefing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said: “We have made clear our position. We are always firmly opposed to acts that politicise sports.

China was due to be the site of several tennis tournaments next year, including the prestigious season-ending WTA Finals.

“In good conscience, I don’t see how I can ask our athletes to compete there when Peng Shuai is not allowed to communicate freely and has seemingly been pressured to contradict her allegation of sexual assault,” Simon said.

In a lengthy statement, Simon added he was “greatly concerned”

about the risks players and staff could face if events were held in China in 2022. "If powerful people can suppress the voices of women and sweep allegations of sexual assault under the rug, then the basis on which the WTA was founded - equality for women - would suffer an immense setback," he said. "I will not and cannot let that happen to the WTA and its players." The suspension also includes tournaments in Hong Kong. Simon added: "I remain hopeful that our pleas will be heard and the Chinese authorities will take steps to legitimately address this issue."

In an interview with NBC News, Simon said he did not believe the two emails the organisation has received so far from Peng regarding her wellbeing and safety were authentic. "My opinion is that they were orchestrated," he said. The editor of China's Global Times newspaper accused the WTA of "coercing" Shuai to "support the West's attack" on China by suspending tournaments in the country.

Hu Xijin has been outspoken on the scandal involving Peng and her accusation of sexual assault, even as Beijing has been largely silent and authorities have

blocked discussions of the topic on China's internet.

"WTA is coercing Peng Shuai to support the West's attack on the Chinese system. They are depriving Peng Shuai's freedom of expression, demanding that her description of her current situation must meet their expectation," Hu said on his official Twitter account in a post which cited the WTA's announcement.

The WTA did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Hu's post on Twitter, which is blocked in China.

Elaine Thompson-Herah named World Athletics Female Athlete of the Year



Jamaica's Elaine Thompson-Herah was on Thursday named the World Athletics Female Athlete of the Year at a virtual awards ceremony.

The Olympic Games triple gold medallist is the third Jamaican to win the award after Merlene Ottey and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce.

This was the third time the sprinter had been nominated for the prestigious award.

Thompson-Herah earned the women's award among finalists that included Sifan Hassan (Netherlands,

5000m/10,000m), Faith Kipyegon (Kenya, 1500m), Sydney McLaughlin (USA, 400m hurdles) and Yulimar Rojas (Venezuela, triple jump).

She became the first woman to win 100m, 200m and 4x100m golds at one Olympics since Florence Griffith-Joyner in 1988.

Thompson-Herah also clocked the second-fastest 100m and 200m times in history (10.54, 21.53), trailing only Griffith Joyner's world records.

King and Devers to conduct bowling clinics in Berbice on Sunday



Former West Indies fast bowler Reon King (left) and journalist Sean Devers

The efforts of the Hilbert Foster-led Berbice Cricket Board (BCB) to develop the game and ensure all players have equal opportunities to fulfill their talent would be taken a step further on Sunday (December 5, 2021) when the board hosts two separate clinics – one for fast bowlers and another for off-spinners. The two clinics will be conducted by former West Indies fast bowler Reon King and former national Under-19 player Sean Devers at the Albion Community Centre Ground from 11:00h to 15:00h. The clinics would

be held under the BCB's highly successful countywide Dr. Tulsi Dyal Singh coaching programme. Hundreds of Under-19 players have benefitted from the programme which is sponsored by Dr. Singh, an overseas-based Guyanese. The board has since expanded the programme to include former national and international players who are highly respected in the county and viewed as positive role models. "Foster – who has spearheaded a transformation of Berbice cricket over the last four years – last Sunday

announced a plan to produce at least 10 players for the West Indies at the different levels over the next 2-3 years," the BCB said in a release. "This includes the Under-15, Under-19, Female Under-19, senior females and senior team in T20Is, ODIs, and Tests. The county's coaching staff, led by Winston Smith, has been visiting clubs and hosting mini academies across the county." Foster disclosed that as a follow-up to these programmes, the board would be hosting a series of special clinics for fast bowl-

ers, off-spinners, leg-spinners, left-arm orthodox spinners, wicketkeepers, and batsmen. "The BCB is in discussion with several former and current players to assist with their knowledge, and Foster stated that all the response has been positive. As part of the programme, the Board would also be publishing more copies of its historic coaching manual and youth information booklet and, in 2022, would be producing its own coaching video for youths," the BCB added. King played 19 Test matches and 50 ODIs for the West

Indies between 1990 and 2005. He took 53 Test wickets at an average of 32.7, while his 76 ODI wickets came at an average of 23.80. He currently works as an International Cricket Council (ICC) Match Referee and is highly respected for his knowledge of the game. Devers is widely known across the country for his work as a sports journalist and is also an international cricket commentator. He represented Guyana at the youth level and also played for Berbice at the senior inter-county level.



Usain Bolt of Jamaica reacts as he wins the Olympic mens 200m final with a new world record time at the Birds Nest stadium on August 20th 2008 in Beijing, China.

"I'LL GET FIT": USAIN BOLT CONSIDERING A CRICKET CAREER; HINTS AT IPL DEBUT

If there is one person who thrives to be successful in all aspects of life, it is Usain Bolt. In a decorative athletic career, one for the ages, Bolt won eight gold medals at the Olympic Games. However, surprisingly, athletics was not his first love. An avid cricket lover, Bolt now wishes to play in the IPL someday.

During an interview with Hindustan Times, Bolt opened on getting back in shape and try his luck out in the Indian

Premier League.

The legendary sprinter opened up on his decade-old love for the game. Growing up, Bolt was a huge fan of cricket and football. Having retired from the track and field back in 2017, Bolt now aims to get back in shape, in a hope of pursuing cricket professionally.

Addressing the same, the reporter asked Usain if he'd like to feature in the forthcoming edition of the Indian Premier League, starting

next year. With no kind of hesitance, Bolt said, "Definitely. I will get my training on. I'll get fit and get ready. The two main sports in Jamaica at the time was actually was football and cricket. I was a massive fan of cricket because my dad was a fan of it. He watched it every day, every chance you get, you would watch all the teams play so I grew up watching cricket."

Notably, back in the day, Bolt's cricket coach pushed him towards the

track, given his insane sprinting ability. Being a fast bowler, his coach saw potential in him and suggested he try out athletics instead of cricket. Having drawn the curtain on an extensively decorated athletic career, an appearance in the IPL would only further build his legacy in the sporting world. And, of course, it would be a treat to watch for cricket fans all around the globe.

DEWS