

CHAMBER WELCOMES END OF SOE/CURFEW

PAGES 13-14



INSIDE:

- Michael Browne calls recent court case an attempted shakedown
- Troy Allen officially confirmed as Director of YEPP
- Air and Cruise tourism both show signs of massive recovery

TOP RECOGNITION FOR TOP PERFORMERS: *It's about making sure that those who put their best feet forward in getting educated – at all levels – are duly recognized and thus encouraged. In this photo, the top Grade 6 National Assessment students have just been handed awards sponsored by CIBC-FirstCaribbean Bank. Flanked by Education Minister Darryl Matthew (left) and Director of Education Clare Browne (right) is the bank's branch manager Mrs. Dawn Soleyn (second from right) – and, of course, the happy and proud achievers with another official.*

Letter from Canada

by **Everton Barnes**

The late British journalist and broadcaster, Alistair Cooke, presented his famed 'Letter from America' essays from the United States where he lived most of his life. They were broadcast on BBC World Service and were a study in writing and analysis at their best. I am no Alistair Cooke, but I am here in Canada for a few weeks and I felt inspired by Alistair Cooke to write an essay or two about what's happening in Canada in the fight against COVID and, in particular, the Omicron variant. I am especially concerned about the lessons Antigua and Barbuda may learn from Can-

ada's reaction to the spread of the virus.

Canada is a federation of 10 provinces and three territories. It's the second largest country in the world, based on geographical size. Ontario is the seat of government and capital, Ottawa. It is also where its largest city, Toronto, is located.

I am currently in Toronto.

On Sunday, new anti-COVID measures introduced by Premier Doug Ford went into effect all across Ontario. Other provinces have also introduced similar measures to one degree or the other.

Ontario has one of the highest rates of vaccination in the world. Roughly 90 percent of eligible

persons 12 years and older have received at least one dose of the vaccine. In fact, fully vaccinated people in this province is said to be as high as 87 percent.

Yet the rate of infection by the Omi-

cron virus doubles every two-and-a-half-days.

This means that if there are 20 people infected with the Omicron variant on Monday, by Thursday that figure increases to 40; and, two-and-a-

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half days later, this jumps to 80.

Over the past week, the number of people infected with the virus has been increasing rapidly with each passing day. There are almost daily records being established by the rate of infection

The provincial government has conceded that it is not able to stop the spread of the virus. Therefore, the mea-

sures it has introduced are designed to slow down the rate of infection and to give its agencies time to vaccinate more people.

Currently, there's a rush by many to get their booster shots. Long lines have appeared at sites where vaccinations are taking place, and a decision by the federal government to hand out free home testing devices has

seen similar lines.

In fact, many of the sites where the free testing kits were being distributed have run out of these kits within just a few hours. The demand has been much greater than the supply (at this point).

The Ford administration said it wanted to, as much as possible, avoid another devastating lockdown. Listening

to the comments of people being interviewed on television, this seems to be the prevailing view of most in the province.

Several measures have been introduced. These include 50 percent capacity for all sporting venues that house more than 1,000 people, cinemas, shopping malls, gyms and restaurants.



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The federal government has also issued a travel advisory to all Canadians, urging them to avoid all non-essential overseas travel. Even cross-border travel with the US that many Canadians enjoy is also being discouraged. Anyone reentering Canada from any country must have a negative COVID-19 PCR test done in the country from which the traveler is arriving. This test must be done less than 72 hours before arrival at the Canadian border.

Those who insist on traveling are asked to first check their travel insurance prior to departure. This is to ensure they are protected, should a problem arise in a foreign country, or to guarantee refund in the event the trip is cancelled.

What are the lessons for Antigua and Barbuda? First, it is good to note that the Omicron variant has

not yet been detected in our twin-island State. However, it is perhaps inevitable that it will arrive, given that our country is fully opened.

It is important to note that Omicron infects both vaccinated and unvaccinated. One important observation is that, here in Canada, the rate of hospitalization is said to be lower than during the third wave of the virus earlier this year. Additionally, the mortality rate is

also lower than at the height of the Delta variant's spread.

The lessons for Antiguans and Barbudans are to get vaccinated as soon as possible, and those who have been fully vaccinated to get their booster shots.

Pfizer has said that it will be 2024 before the COVID-19 virus becomes endemic in the world. That's more than two years away. We cannot lock down, reopen and lock down again. Businesses will not

survive. We, as a people, cannot take much more of it.

But fighting COVID has to be a national effort with 'all hands on deck'. It cannot be the issue upon which would-be politicians pin their political fortunes.

They may achieve some short-term political advantage, but I will wager that they will not be absolved by history.

Selah!

Until we meet again.



Tourism rebound signals road to recovery



St. John's buzzed with excitement over the weekend as citizens took advantage of the last day of the annual ABST reduction sale for early Christmas shopping. However, the Capital was a bit busier than usual with five cruise liners docked in the harbour.

On Saturday 18th December, the country celebrat-

ed images displaying five cruise ships docked at the St. John's piers, including the country's newest 5th berth.

According to the management of Antigua Cruise Port (ACP), Antigua is set to record its busiest month, with over 65 calls expected during the month of December 2021, which includes achieving the nota-

ble milestone of having five vessels in port.

"We reopened the cruise port almost 5 months ago with a very modest restart and we are pleased with our performance thus far. Saturday was very special for us, as the completion of the 5th berth earlier this year allowed us the capacity to now be able to receive more



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Monday, 20th December 2021	Tuesday, 21st December 2021
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Section of Temple and Lionel Hurst St.	Mac Pond
8:30 AM - 10:30 AM	1:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Kindly note that this schedule is subject to slight variation. Changes will be communicated on the APUA Facebook page. Any service disruptions outside of this schedule were not anticipated. For further information and updates please call 311.

vessels in port, and seeing those five ships perched so beautifully at the cruise port was definitely a captivating sight,” said Dona Regis Prosper, ACP’s general manager.

“Recognizing that we are still within an active pandemic, we continue to work closely with the Ministry of Health & Wellness in the execution of protocols to ensure the safety of our guests, service providers, and residents. While still not back at 2019 levels, we are looking forward to a continued trajectory of growth,” continued Regis Prosper.

According to Antigua Port Authority general manager, Mr. Darwin Telemaque, “Today (Saturday) was a first for the government, people, and the Port Authority of Antigua and Barbuda. We berthed five cruise ships, including one vessel on the 5th berth. Congratulations to everyone who made this historic day possible: Gov-

ernment of Antigua and Barbuda, [Tourism Minister] Max Fernandez, [Port Authority chairperson] Senator Mary Clare Hurst and the Port [Authority] Board, Antigua Cruise Port. Special recognition to the contractor, Meridian Construction. Kudos to all.”

The V.C. Bird International Airport (VCBIA) was equally quite busy over the weekend with the official welcoming of French airline Air Antilles on Friday, launching what is being described as “greater regional connectivity”.

The French airline is 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 nonstop flight from Barbados and a one-stop flight from St. Lucia, effective December 17th 2021.

Air Antilles will also launch a direct nonstop service twice per week (Wednesday and Sunday) from St. Maarten to Antigua, with a connection to Guadeloupe.

This service will provide a resumption in airlift to the neighboring French Caribbean islands – key regional markets for Antigua

Celebrating the new route during the ribbon-cutting are Minister of Tourism & Investment Hon. Charles Fernandez; marketing consultant for the Caribbean region, Charmaine Spencer; and Air Antilles’ commercial & marketing director, Romain Hordel – alongside Air Antilles’ captain.

It was also reported that over 11 international flights landed at the VCBIA on Saturday, the first of that magnitude since the country’s reopening.



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Press Release

Adjusted Opening Hours for Commercial Banks during the Christmas Season

The Antigua and Barbuda Bankers Association wishes to advise the public that all commercial banks will adjust their operating hours for the Christmas Season.

ACB Caribbean, Caribbean Union Bank, Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank, CIBC FirstCaribbean International Bank

Thursday, 23rd December
8:00am - 3:00pm
Friday, 24th December
8:00am - 12:00 noon

Thursday, 30th December
8:00am - 3:00pm
Friday, 31st December
8:00am - 12:00 noon

Please be on the lookout for fraud at this time, and remember the bank will never ask for your account details via email. Use Electronic banking to monitor your accounts for suspicious transactions.

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Ruling party MP speaks about recent ordeal and acquittal

by **Shelton Daniel**

Michael Browne, the MP for All Saints West and former Minister for Education – who has just been acquitted in the High Court of a serious accusation made against him by a female – says it was all a setup and an attempt to extort money from

him. In a video published on Antigua Breaking News (ABN), Browne alleges that individuals, other than the one who accused him, “thought to engage in either a shakedown or blackmail of some kind for money”.

“I have spoken to individuals – credible individuals who my

accuser has named in her statements – who have subsequently come and said, ‘We were being recruited to testify against you; just to say what we were told, with the promise that we would get a share of whatever monies would be received’”, he stated.

Browne claimed

further that, “Even in court it was revealed that my accuser’s sister – who is also a police officer – had called me, and the call was intended to make an arrangement for me to settle the matter out of court.

“From the start, I said I have never done what I am ac-

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cused of, and I am not paying any money, and I am not settling anything out of court. The promise was, if I was to make certain amounts of payments that this matter would never go to court.

"I have never been blackmailed this directly, or there's never been this attempt to shake me down for money this directly [but] I resisted, and after I resisted, charges were brought ...

"On the stand in court, my accuser's sister was not forthcoming or was not very honest in terms of a phone call that she and my accuser and her sisters made to me. What they did not realize was that I had made a recording of that conversation.

"Several other persons that I subsequently learned they had reached out to and offered that if they would come and tell a tale and tell a story based on what



Hon. Michael Browne, MP for All Saints West.

they were told, that they would get a portion of their reward. Those persons also came me as well, admitted their involvement and said that is something that some of them might have participated in before, but they are at the point of their life where they don't want to get involved in this."

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Troy Allen officially confirmed as Director of YEOP

by Shelton Daniel

Cabinet, by formal conclusion and supporting correspondence, has officially confirmed Troy Allen as 'Director of the Youth Education & Empowerment Programme (YEOP)' within the Ministry of Social Transformation.

Allen has been functioning de facto in that capacity for several years, with tacit understanding of his position and functions, but had until now been officially designated as 'Program Officer in charge of YEOP'.

Despite repeated plaudits from Cabinet and almost universal public acclaim for his performance, there appear to have been some bureaucratic frictions about him being described as 'Director' and where this placed him in the Ministry's line of rank and seniority.



YEOP Director Troy Allen (right) with Prime Minister Gaston Browne (center) and a participant pose for commemorative photo at the Office of the Prime Minister.

Some other 'Director-level' department heads who Allen encountered are said to have not infrequently bristled at suggestions of him being on the same appointment grade-level with them, and not their subordinate, as they apparently assumed or preferred.

There have been re-

ports of tensions being so rife in recent times that the achievements of YEOP have been threatened, with even administrative authorization to pay its tutorial staff in danger of being held hostage.

But after a succession of pointed Cabinet statements overwhelmingly in his favour, a decision by

the nation's highest executive body since the end of April this year has now been operationalized.

An elated Allen told Pointe Xpress, "The programme is respected by every political party in this country."

He names some of the Opposition politicians who are supportive of YEOP and

his contribution to its work. “In particular, Jacqui Quinn, Joanne Massiah, Anthony Stuart, Richard Lewis, Baldwin Spencer, and other members of the United Progressive Party, and the DNA (Democratic National Alliance).”

He said being formally appointed as Director of YEEP gives him “the handle to manage and implement certain things I could not do before”.

Cabinet has ap-

proved the refurbishment of the old Otto's Comprehensive School into a new facility to house YEEP, which is currently operating out of cramped improvised quarters. The refurbishment is to be undertaken by the Ministry of Works.

Allen is not just the head of YEEP, but its founder as well – dating back to 2015 when he pitched the idea to the one-year-old government of Prime Minister Gaston Browne

who welcomed and embraced with the enthusiastic endorsement of then Youth Affairs Minister Samantha Marshall.

The programme was officially launched in February 2016. Its first batch of students was planned to be no more than 50, but ballooned instantly to 175 due to an unexpectedly high number of applications that Allen and Cabinet felt they could not, in good conscience, turn away.

By the second year, 2017, that number had risen to 525 – and to 975 in 2018.

The increasing enrolment continued the following year to 1,260 in 2019, and to more than 1,600 in 2020.

“Presently, because of the COVID and vaccine mandates, etc, we are down to 400 students, since we don't have adequate space to accommodate the social distancing and so on,” Allen explained.



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Chamber welcomes end to State of Emergency

The Antigua and Barbuda Chamber of Industry of Commerce (ABCIC), which groups many of the traditional businesses in the country, is welcoming the decision by the government to lift the State of Emergency and the accompanying curfew effective midnight on Wednesday.

Executive Director of ABCIC, Martin Cave, said the ending of the measures introduced almost two years ago to combat the spread of the

COVID-19 virus will likely result in increased business for members of the private sector.

“The business community would welcome the lifting of the State of Emergency and the curfew, as it would bring back normality to operations in the private sector, even though it really is a new normal, as much of the health protocols introduced as part of the SOE – such as the wearing of masks, washing of



Martin Cave, executive director of the Antigua and Barbuda Chamber of Industry & Commerce.

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hands and social distancing – will remain in place,” he noted.

Much as he welcomes the ending of the SOE, Cave noted that businesses and the country generally will have to live with the anti-COVID measures as the information is that the new Omicron variant is reported to be more transmissible.

“Businesses will maintain the sanitation measures as much as they will welcome the relaxation of the curfew, as they anticipate that this would bring the private sector much relief,” he explained.

The ABCIC executive director used the opportunity to

issue a word of advice to the government and law enforcement officers. “The lifting of the SOE means that people will be moving about as normal. This now gives criminal elements the opportunity to move about freely as well. This presents a greater challenge to law officers to protect the country from the deeds of criminals,” he warned.

Cave praised the law enforcement officers for their efforts in keeping criminal activities at a relatively low level during the pandemic and he is urging them to increase their patrols and other crime fighting measures to ensure that crime does not increase

with the lifting of the curfew.

“Criminals had no choice but to lay low during the curfew hours; for they knew that if they are caught during the hours of restricted movements that they were liable to be stopped and questioned. They may be seeing the end of the curfew as licence to resume these activities,” he suggested.

The business executive explained that the pandemic has had a devastating impact on the local business community and he is of the view that ending the SOE and curfew will bring a much needed shot-in-the-arm for the private sector

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COVID Dash-board Update for December 18, 2021

The most recent report received by the Ministry of Health, Wellness & the Environment revealed 11 new laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda as of Friday 17th December 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Three hundred and sixty-four (364) samples were processed.

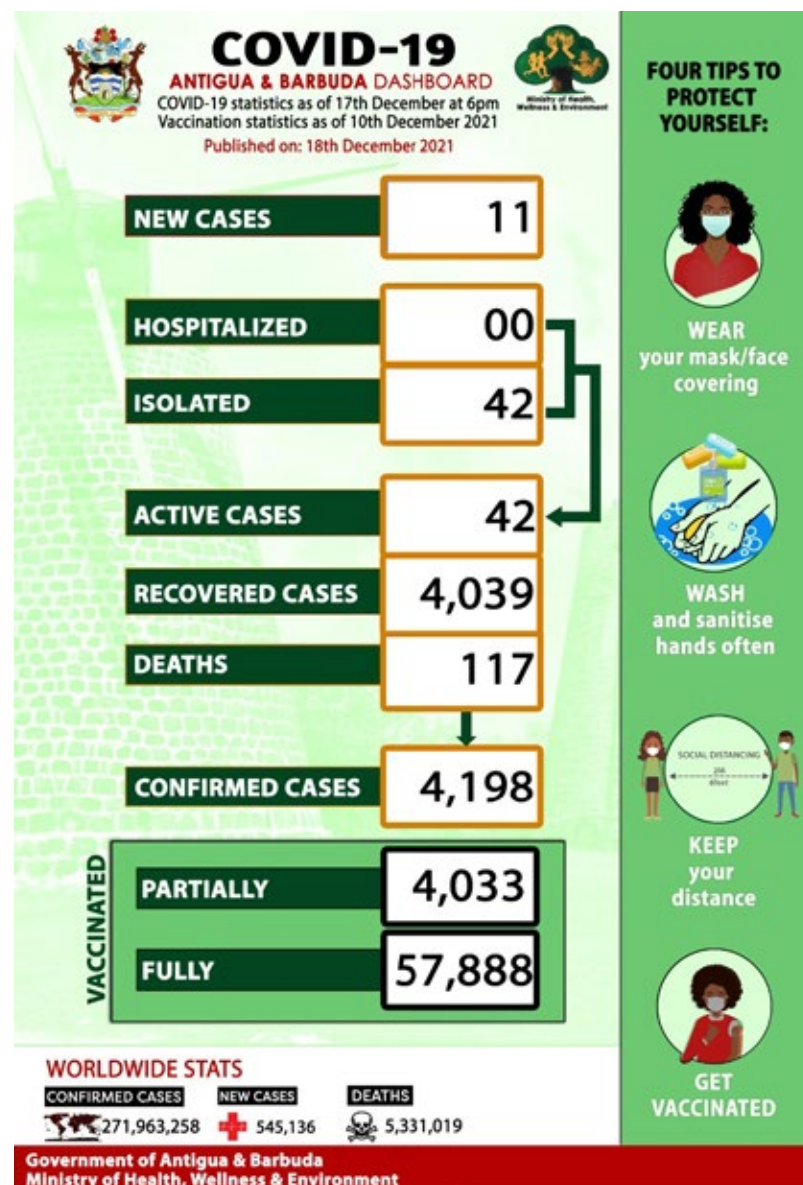
Two (2) recovered cases were recorded. Consequently, the total number of persons with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda is 4,198; which is inclusive of 42 active cases.

There are no hos-

pitalized cases.

Meanwhile, Antigua and Barbuda has fully vaccinated 57,888 individuals, while 4,033 have only received their first dose.

The Dashboard has been updated to reflect these changes.



MINISTRY OF HEALTH, WELLNESS & THE ENVIRONMENT				
Booster Schedule				
VACCINE TYPE	DATE FINAL VACCINE DOSE RECEIVED	DATE BOOSTER VACCINE DUE	RECOMMENDED BOOSTER VACCINE TYPE	ALTERNATE BOOSTER VACCINE TYPE
AstraZeneca	May - June 2021	December 2021	AstraZeneca	Pfizer
	July 2021	January 2022		
Pfizer	August 2021	February 2021	Pfizer	AstraZeneca
Johnson & Johnson	May - June 2021	December 2021	Johnson & Johnson	Pfizer
Sinopharm	July 2021	January 2022	Sinopharm	Sinopharm

Booster Vaccines available at:
Multipurpose Cultural and Exhibition Centre and Villa Polyclinic.

Vaccination sites open:
Mon-Fri, 9:00am-5:00pm

Original COVID-19 vaccine card (paper) & ID are required



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Tourism stakeholders will be heavily involved in 2031 Vision of Antigua and Barbuda tourism

Against the backdrop of the global pandemic, the Antigua and Barbuda Ministry of Tourism is focusing on strategic tourism goals to be achieved within the tourism industry during the next decade.

The Tourism Ministry is earmarking 2031 as a milestone year and is asking tourism stakeholders, including the youth, to contribute to the tourism plan.

“VISION 2031 will be guided by the input of all stakeholders throughout Antigua and Barbuda. It will be the culmination of their thoughts, our engagements, and consultations as we work towards a common goal”, says Antigua and Barbuda’s Minister of Tourism & Investment, Honourable Charles Fernandez.

Associations and representatives across various sectors within the tourism industry as well as interest groups have been asked to communicate their vision for how they would like to see Antigua and Barbu-



Minister of Tourism & Investment, Hon. Charles Henry Fernandez.

da’s tourism develop by 2031. “The intention is to communicate with as many persons as possible. We will review all proposals as we look towards developing future tourism plans and

policies in collaboration with partners,” remarks the tourism minister.

Tourism stakeholders are invited to communicate, in the first instance, their Vision 2031 to the Ministry of Tourism by

sending their response on, ‘Where they would like to see Antigua and Barbuda’s Tourism by the year 2031’, to email: vision2031@visitaandb.com on or before December 30, 2021.

Top Grade 6 students receive awards



Branch manager of CIBC-FirstCaribbean, Dawn Soleyn (right) presents award to Top Student, Aliane Challenger.

The nation's top 100 Grade Six students have been honoured.

The 9th Annual CIBC FirstCaribbean Grade Six National Assessment Awards were held virtually and aired on ABS TV on 8th December 2021.

Due to the pandemic and the need for social distancing, the Ministry of Education's Broadcast Unit coordinated and produced the programme.

All 100 of the top students received awards.

This year's top student is Ms. Aliane E. Challenger of the Grace Christian Academy.

Speaking during the ceremony, Minister of Education, Sports & Creative Industries, Hon. Darryl Matthew, congratulated the students,

their parents, schools, principals and teachers for their outstanding achievements. He noted that if the country is to develop, move forward and achieve its full potential, it must be recognized that a collective effort is required.

"So, when schools require support, let's give that support. When we see challenges in homes, let us reach out and try to assist. When we see children doing well, let us hold their hands and help them to do better," he said. In her brief remarks, CIBC-FirstCaribbean's branch manager, Mrs. Dawn Soleyn, congratulated all the awardees and said the bank is proud and delighted to sponsor these awards annually.

Initiatives like this are at the heart of [the] bank, she said, as it [provides an] opportunity to assist with preparing ... young people for the future.

Soleyn further noted that this recognition comes with [requires obligations] from the students, and she listed some of these:

"Your academic ability is a divine blessing to you, so you are obligated to live up to be-

ing God-fearing people, who are good, kind and helpful to others; to be thankful and respectful to those who have helped you to achieve, and to bring out your best; and you are obligated to give of your best as, if you want to accomplish more, you must keep on that path," she said.

Students received Gold, Silver and Bronze awards.

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CIBC First Caribbean – Antigua wins top regional award again!



Mrs. Ladesa James-Williams receiving the ECCB Bank-of-the-Year Customer Service Award from Mr. Whitfield Harris Jr.

A local bank has topped the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) awards for the second consecutive year.

CIBC FirstCaribbean's Antigua operation was awarded Bank-of-the-Year Customer Service by the ECCB at a ceremony held last Thursday.

Country Head and Director of OECS Retail Sales, Mrs. Ladesa James-Williams, said the bank took pride in living the vision of CIBC FirstCaribbean, which is to be a leader in client relationships

and to be personalized, responsive, and easy with every client engagement.

"I thank the ECCB for this award. My hard-working team and very loyal clients, who we know have a choice in banking, and we look forward to raising the level of our service each and every day," she said.

The award was presented to Mrs. James-Williams by Mr. Whitfield Harris Jr, who is a director of the ECCB, representing Antigua and Barbuda.

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US Coast Guard offloads nearly US\$150M of illegal narcotics seized in Caribbean Sea

Loop Caribbean

The United States Coast Guard says crew members from the Reliance-class Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless (WMEC 624) have offloaded more than US\$148 million of illegal narcotics at Base Miami Beach from three separate interdictions in the Caribbean Sea in the past two weeks.

The US Coast Guard said that following the three interdictions, nine suspected drug smugglers from the Dominican Republic and Colombia were apprehended.

The Wave-class Royal Fleet Auxiliary Wave Knight (A389) crew seized about 1,200 pounds of cocaine, the US Coast Guard said.

It also said that the Sentinel-class Coast Guard Cutter William Trump (WPC 1111) and the offshore patrol vessel His Netherlands Majesty's Ship Holland (P840) crew seized about 6,700 pounds of cocaine in two interdictions.

The US Attorney's offices for the District of Puerto Rico, Southern District of Florida, and the Eastern District of Virginia are prosecuting these cases.

"These successful interdictions are the result of professional partnerships between the US Coast Guard, RFA Wave Knight, and HNLMS Holland crews," said Hansel Pintos, US Coast Guard Seventh District spokesperson.

"The Coast Guard's strong international partnerships, counter threats in the maritime domain, protect each of our countries from transnational organized crime, and work to stabilize and promote good governance in the region."

The US Coast Guard said this effort is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) operation.

It said OCDETF "identifies, disrupts and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States, using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach."

"The fight against drug cartels in the Caribbean Sea requires unity of effort in all phases, from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions by international partners and US Attorneys'



offices in districts across the nation," the US Coast Guard said.

It said a suspect vessel is initially detected and monitored during at-sea interdictions by allied, military or law enforcement personnel coordinated by Joint Interagency Task Force-South based in Key West, Florida.

The US Coast Guard said the law enforcement phase of operations in the Caribbean Sea is conducted under the authority of the US Coast Guard Seventh District, headquartered in Miami.

The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and performed by the US Coast Guard members.

Three-quarters of Jamaicans remain unvaccinated against COVID-19



Jamaica Observer - Despite the availability of more than one million doses of vaccines, more than 74 percent of the Jamaican population remains unvaccinated against COVID-19.

This is one of the lowest vaccination rates in the entire Caribbean region and leaves the population vulnerable to periodic outbreaks of COVID-19, especially as new variants like the fast-spreading Omicron emerge.

Jamaica's precarious

position was revealed in the Parliament last week during a presentation by the Ministry of Health & Wellness to the Joint Select Committee on the COVID-19 Pandemic & Related Matters.

The PowerPoint presentation showed that only 19.9 percent of the population had received a first dose or had been fully vaccinated with one of the approved vaccines, up to December 15.

A closer look at the numbers shows that

among the 19.9 percent, some 5.7 percent had received a first dose only. This meant that a worrying 74.4 percent of the total population had not received any form of protection against the coronavirus.

Among parishes, Kingston and St. Andrew has most coverage, with 26.9 percent overall vaccinated, of which 7.9 percent had received a first dose.

Overall, 65.1 percent of the Corporate Area remains vulnerable.

The parish of St. James comes next with 22.9 percent, of which 6.8 percent are those who have received only a first dose.

Clarendon at 15.9 percent; St Catherine, 14.6; Portland, 14.1; and St Thomas (10.9) are the least vaccinated parishes.

Meanwhile, at 35.4 percent, persons in the 70-79 age group have the highest levels of vaccination. They are closely followed by the 60-69 age group at 35.1 percent; those 50-59 at 30.9 percent; 40-49 at 25.5 percent; and those 80-and-over at 24.8 percent.

The least vaccinated groups are those 20-29 at 17.7 percent; 30-39 at 20 percent; and teenagers and adolescents 12-19 at 20.2 percent.

With these low levels of vaccination, Jamaica is on course to miss its target of 65 percent vaccinated by March 2022.

No Vaccine, No Pay: T&T PM issues vaccine mandate for all public servants

Loop TT - Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley has issued a mandate for all government workers to be vaccinated by mid-January.

Speaking on Saturday during a media conference, Rowley said that while there will be exemptions for those with medical issues, unvaccinated employees will be expected to abide by certain rules and regulations.

“Outside of that, the government’s workplace will require, if you are a government employee, that you show your vaccination status, failing which you would not be encouraged in the workplace. (And) if you are not in a position to come to the workplace, you will be on leave on your own and you would be furloughed; meaning, you will still have a job at the establishment, but you choosing not to be able to come to work under the conditions laid down, you then will not be paid.”

The prime minister also announced that the public service, except those in essential services, will be shut down from December 24 to January 2. He urged employees to use the period to get vaccinated.

In addition, the Prime Minister said that, as of Monday, the beaches will reopen from 5:00 a.m. to 12 noon (local time); however, rivers will remain closed.

He added that no consumption of alcohol, loud music or partying



Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley

will be allowed and beachgoers will be required to wear their masks when not in the water.

Meanwhile, in response to the mandate, the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Commerce has commended the Rowley administration for “taking a firm stance on the issue of vaccination in the workplace”.

In a statement on Saturday, the Chamber of Commerce said the government has taken visible leadership on this next phase of dealing with COVID in the workplace.

The statement added that the country is in a very difficult situation and – as the single largest employer in the country – (the pandemic) “has left the government with no choice but to take the actions it did to deal with the low vaccination levels. They have also set the framework for other employers to follow. This approach must be a joint effort

and we are committed to assisting in whatever way we can. We see this as a key imperative to address the level of vaccination”.

The release added that the mandate is not meant to restrict personal freedoms.

“It is to preserve them and prevent lockdowns or heavier restrictions.”

Concerning the decision to open beaches, the T&T Chamber said this will help to balance mental stress.

“This adds to the realization that further lockdowns will not be the course of action pursued. The T&T Chamber firmly advocates on behalf of the over 650,000 citizens of the country who have been compliant. We are pleased that the actions taken are directed at the unvaccinated to encourage vaccination and to protect those who legitimately cannot be vaccinated.”

“This is a highly charged en-

vironment with persons firmly positioned on either end of the spectrum, either pro or anti-vax. But we cannot sit idly by while our country is ravaged by COVID and our economy is decimated with thousands of people dying.”

The Chamber noted that all citizens must be responsible for doing the right thing for the country, “our families and our co-workers, by obeying the health protocols in place and getting vaccinated.

“We can overcome this challenge, but we need every citizen, every business and every politician working together with a single-minded focus on protecting our people and our economy.”

On Saturday, the twin-island republic recorded 33 deaths – the highest daily figure since the start of the pandemic.

The latest fatalities include 11 elderly males, nine elderly females, five middle-aged males, and five middle-aged females.

The Ministry of Health also announced 956 new positive cases.

Active cases have risen 15,339 while the country’s caseload stands at 84,793

St. Lucia: suspended doctor offers Monopoly money in payment of \$10,000 fine



Dr. Gilbertha St. Rose.

St. Lucia Times - Dr. Gilbertha St. Rose, suspended and fined recently by the Saint Lucia Medical & Dental Council for using and promoting Ivermectin as a treatment for COVID-19, has made light of the \$10 000 fine.

“The Medical and Dental Council of Saint Lucia are playing games with me. So hear that – \$10,000 fine. I will open this box and see how much money is in there,” she said as she held up a Monopoly game box.

St. Rose spoke on Saturday afternoon as the Saint Lucia Freedom Coalition, of which she is a member, launched a petition against mandatory vaccination. The document also supported the use of Ivermectin and other treatments

for COVID-19.

In addition, the petition calls on the authorities to establish a system to record the adverse effects of COVID-19 vaccination.

Regarding the Medical & Dental Council judgement against her, St Rose said she could still laugh at it because it was ‘so preposterous’.

“First of all, they are fining me \$10,000 for doing a clinical trial which I told them I did not and I’m not doing,” she told St. Lucia Times.

She recalled that she had applied to the Council’s Research & Ethics Committee to do the trial and needed collaboration from the Ministry of Health, which turned down the invitation.

“I still applied on my own accord for the clin-

ical trial. I got the response of acknowledgment of my application since the 18th of October and no response since then,” St Rose stated.

However, she expressed that the clinical trial was unnecessary since such tests had occurred worldwide.

“The trials do tell us that Ivermectin is safe and effective for the parasites that it has been used for, for the past 40 years, but also for COVID-19 infections,” she declared.

She asserted that the problem has nothing to do with Ivermectin, but that when the drug rolled out in certain countries, it was effective and successful, showing that the need for vaccines was unnecessary.

OIC nations pledge fund to prevent Afghanistan economic collapse

Al Jazeera - The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has pledged to set up a humanitarian trust fund for Afghanistan as millions face hunger and poverty.

The crisis is causing alarm with billions of dollars in aid and assets frozen by the international community after the Taliban takeover of the country in August this year.

“Unless action is taken immediately, Afghanistan is heading for chaos,” Prime Minister Imran Khan, of Pakistan – which is holding the summit, told a meeting of foreign ministers from the OIC.

“Any government when it can’t pay its salaries for its public servants, hospitals, doctors, nurses, any government is going to collapse but chaos suits no one, it certainly does not suit the United States.”

An OIC resolution released after the meeting said the Islamic Development Bank would lead the effort to free up assistance by the first quarter of 2022.

It also urged Afghanistan’s rulers to abide by “obligations under international human rights covenants, especially with regards to the rights of women, children, youth, elderly and people with special needs”.

The OIC meeting did not



The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has pledged to set up a humanitarian trust fund for Afghanistan where millions face hunger and poverty.

give the new Taliban government any formal international recognition and Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi was excluded from the official photograph taken during the event. Muttaqi said his government “has the right to be officially recognised”.

“The current Afghanistan government is cooperating with every foreign organisation,” he told re-

porters, adding that sanctions “must be removed”.

In a speech to delegates, he said the US freezing of assets “is a clear violation of the human rights of Afghans, and can be interpreted as enmity with an entire nation”.

While some countries and organisations have begun delivering aid, a near-collapse of the country’s banking system has

complicated their work.

United Nations’ Undersecretary-General on Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths was also present at the OIC meeting and warned that Afghanistan’s economy was “now in free fall”.

“If we don’t act decisively and with compassion, I fear this fall will pull the entire population with it,” he said in his remarks.

Philippines Super Typhoon Rai death toll surges



Super Typhoon Rai is the most powerful storm to hit the Philippines this year.

BBC - At least 169 people are now known to have died after a powerful storm struck the Philippines on Thursday, local media quote police as saying.

Super Typhoon Rai - with winds of about 195km/h (120mph) - sent some 300,000 people running for safety when it hit the country's south-eastern islands.

Rescue teams have described scenes of "complete carnage".

But establishing the scale of the losses is difficult, as communication with a number of areas has been cut off.

There are fears widespread landslides and

flooding may have claimed more lives.

"Many areas have no power, no communications, very little water," the chair of the Philippines Red Cross, Richard Gordon, told the BBC.

"There are some areas that look like it has been bombed worse than World War Two."

The International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies has launched an emergency appeal, seeking 20 million Swiss francs (£16m; \$22m) to fund long-term relief efforts.

"Red Cross emergency teams are reporting complete carnage in the coastal areas," Mr Gordon said.

"Homes, hospitals, school and community buildings have been ripped to shreds."

Volunteers are on the scene giving out urgent help "for people who have lost everything", he said.

Thousands of military, coast guard and fire personnel have been deployed in the country's worst-affected areas to assist with search and rescue efforts.

Meanwhile, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has conducted an aerial inspection of the areas ravaged by the storm.

Videos posted on social media by his aides show extensive damage to Siargao, Dinagat and Mindan-

ao islands. The governor of the Dinagat islands, Arlene Bag-ao, said on Facebook that the region had been "levelled to the ground" by the typhoon.

"The fields and boats of our farmers and fisherfolk have been decimated," she said in the message quoted by news site Rappler. "[W]e have lost our homes. Walls and roofs were torn and blown off ... We have a dwindling supply of food and water."

She said the damage "is reminiscent of, if not worse than, when Yolanda hit our province".

More than 6,000 people died when that storm - also known as Typhoon Haiyan - hit the country in 2013. It remains the country's deadliest storm on record.

On average, about 20 storms and typhoons strike the Philippines each year.

Super Typhoon Rai is the most powerful to hit the Philippines in 2021 and comes late in the region's typhoon season, with most cyclones developing between July and October.

Scientists have long warned that rising global temperatures, induced by man-made climate change, are causing typhoons to become more powerful and strengthen more rapidly.

US Troops find religious exemption for vaccines unattainable

AP — More than 12,000 military service members refusing the COVID-19 vaccine are seeking religious exemptions, and so far they are having zero success.

That total lack of approvals is creating new tensions within the military, even as the vast majority of the armed forces have gotten vaccinated.

The services, urgently trying to keep the coronavirus pandemic in check by getting troops vaccinated, are now besieged with exemption requests they are unlikely to approve. Meanwhile, troops claiming religious reasons for avoiding the shots are perplexed because exemptions are theoretically available, yet seem impossible to obtain.

Caught in the middle are chaplains, who must balance the desire to offer compassionate care and guidance to personnel with the need to explain a complicated process that may well be futile. They also must assess requests from those who may be using religion as an excuse to avoid a vaccine that, while credited with preventing needless deaths, has become politically charged.



Head National Guard Chaplain Col. Larry Bazer (left) and deputy director of the chaplain office, Chaplain Maj. A'Shellarien Lang, speak at the National Guard Bureau in Arlington, Va., Friday, Dec. 17, 2021.

"So many of them come in thinking that I make the decision, and if they make this case, that it's a done deal," said Maj. A'Shellarien Lang, an Army chaplain for the National Guard. "I don't make the decision. And so when they find that out, it's a kind of game-changer in the sense that they know that the process has to continue."

According to the services, at least 30,000 service members are not yet vaccinated, but several thousand of those have gotten temporary or permanent medical or administrative exemptions approved. Of the remaining — which is likely 20,000 or more — thousands are working their way through the exemptions process, such as for

religious reasons, or have flatly refused. That's about 1.5% of the roughly 1.3 million active duty troops.

Obtaining a religious exemption is rooted in a process that predates the pandemic and has been used for decisions such as whether troops on duty can wear head coverings or beards for religious reasons.

In addition to discussions with chaplains to determine whether they have a "sincerely held belief," troops must meet with commanders and medical personnel. The final decision is made higher up the chain of command and is also based on whether the person's vaccine exemption will pose a risk to mission accomplishment, unit cohe-

sion, the health and safety of the force, and military readiness.

Even in the past, few troops have cleared those hurdles to get religious exemptions. And because the pandemic can directly affect the force's health and readiness, the bar is even higher, so military leaders aren't surprised by the lack of approved exemptions.

But for the troops and chaplains, it's been a bit overwhelming.

"It's just been a lot of interviews, a lot of memos," Lang said. "I find that my colleagues are stressed just because of the logistics of getting the memo done and having to make sure they're keeping up with the process. It's like rapid fire."

Netherlands reimposes strict lockdown; UK won't rule out new measures over Omicron

CNN - The Netherlands entered a strict new lockdown Sunday due to fears over the Omicron coronavirus variant, and the UK's health minister wouldn't rule out further restrictions, as Europe braces for a surge in COVID-19 infections over the usually busy festive period.

Indoor gatherings in the Netherlands will now be limited to a maximum of two guests per household until at least mid-January, Prime Minister Mark Rutte announced Saturday.

That number is extended slightly around Christmas and New Year's Eve to four guests.

Non-essential shops, hospitality venues and cultural institutions will also be closed, while schools will remain shut until at least January 9.

In a televised address, Rutte said the lockdown was "unavoidable because of the fifth wave that is coming at us with the Omicron variant," Reuters reported.

Failure to act now would likely lead to "an unmanageable situation in hospitals", Rutte added.

The Netherlands had already been battling a fresh wave of COVID-19 cases before the Omicron strain reached its shores

last month.

Some experts are now predicting it will become the dominant variant in the country before the end of the year.

Elsewhere in Europe, there is a looming sense of dread that, despite the vaccine rollout, this year's Christmas will look a lot like 2020 as Omicron spreads at a phenomenal rate in parts of the continent.

Elsewhere, the United Kingdom is in the grip of a surge in Omicron infections, with Health Secretary Sajid Javid telling the BBC on Sunday that he could not rule out restrictions before Christmas.

The Omicron variant now accounts for around 60% of COVID-19 cases in England, Javid also told Sky News Sunday.

Writing in the Daily Telegraph newspaper, Javid said that while a lot was still unknown about the severity of Omicron, the UK did know it was facing "a tsunami of infections in the coming days and weeks".

"Omicron spreads at a pace we have never seen before and has been doubling about every two to three days. Yesterday saw more than 90,000 new cases reported across the

UK. We are extremely confident [that] the number of infections -- people with the disease but who have not been confirmed by a test -- is significantly higher than that," Javid wrote on Sunday.

His comments come after London Mayor Sadiq Khan on Saturday declared a "major incident" in the capital due to rapidly rising case numbers. A "major incident" refers to an event requiring special arrangements between emergency services and local authorities.

Khan said Sunday on the BBC's Andrew Marr Show that new COVID-19 restrictions were "inevitable".

The UK in recent weeks reintroduced some measures -- including mask-wearing in most indoor public venues and working from home -- in an effort to curb infections.

But Khan urged the government to go further. "I think if we don't bring in new restrictions sooner rather than later, you're going to see even more positive cases and potentially public services like the NHS [the UK health service] on the verge of collapse, if not collapsing," he said.

The government's Scientific Group for Emergencies (SAGE), in a meeting on Thursday, also warned that if further coronavirus measures are not introduced very soon, COVID-19 hospital admissions could reach 3,000 a day in England.

Germany on Sunday added the UK to its list of areas with "variants of concern" -- meaning only German citizens and residents will be able to enter the country from the UK.

Across the continent, cities are already cancelling New Year festivities amid concerns over rising cases.

France on Friday announced large outdoor events and gatherings will be banned on New Year's Eve, as the country faces its fifth wave of infections, warning that Omicron will become the dominant variant by early 2022.

Denmark has also proposed closing cinemas and theaters, and limiting the numbers of people in shops the week before Christmas, as it attempts to control a spike in cases.

And Rome is among several Italian cities that have decided to cancel New Year's festivities over coronavirus concerns, authorities said on Thursday.

AVAILABLE VACANCIES AT OSEC (effective December 17-29, 2021)

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

Minimum 5 years in a similar role
Extensive experiencing of managing operational customer service teams
Strong strategic and customer focus with a clear understanding of the wider issues impacting the relevant markets
Excellent communication and negotiation skills | Able to adapt and succeed in a changing environment
Evidence of well-developed leadership skills | Multi-site and remote management experience

BARTENDER

Minimum 1-2 years' experience in a similar role | High School Diploma
Must be customer-service oriented | **MUST BE FULLY VACCINATED**

CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER

Minimum 7+ years' relevant experience in a customer focused environment with post-secondary degree or certifications with 5-7 years people management experience
University Degree or Tertiary education with experience
Strong leadership, analytical, communication and record-keeping skills | Must pay attention to detail

DENTAL ASSISTANT/HYGIENIST

5+ years' experience as a Dental Assistant/Hygienist | Good Understanding of Dental/Medical software
Ability to assist in making clinical diagnosis | Perseverance, Motivation, Confidence
Flexibility, Communication, Teamwork | Problem Solving, Leadership, Organization
General computer skills including Microsoft Suite & Google Docs

ELDERLY CAREGIVER

Minimum 2 years' experience in a similar role | Certificate in Elderly Care required

FORKLIFT OPERATOR

Minimum 1 year experience as a Forklift Operator and working within a warehouse environment
Minimum 3 CXC passes including English

HEAD CHEF (HOTEL)

Bachelor's degree in culinary science or relevant field is advantageous
Minimum 3-4 years' experience as a Head Chef | HACCP Training
Strong knowledge of cooking methods, kitchen equipment, and best practices
Must have strong knowledge in International Cuisine
Must be able to effectively and efficiently manage the kitchen
Teamwork-oriented with outstanding leadership abilities
Excellent knowledge of BOH systems, ordering and inventory | Must be flexible
Must be able to develop and cost menus and recipes | Excellent communication skills
Good understanding of MS Office and restaurant software programs

HEAD CHEF (RESTAURANT)

Minimum 5 years' experience in a similar role

LABOURER

Minimum 3 years' experience in a similar role | Secondary School Completion | Must be physically fit

LINE CHEF (FINE DINING RESTAURANT)

Minimum 3 years' experience in a similar role | Able to work unsupervised
Certificate from a Reputable Culinary School OR 5 years in Reputable restaurant
Food Handlers Certificate required | Must be punctual, motivated, passionate & disciplined

MULTILINGUAL BARTENDER

Minimum 3 years' experience | Fluency in English & Additional Language required

MULTILINGUAL CLERK

Minimum 3 years' experience | Fluency in English & Additional Language required

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Minimum 5 years' experience in operations management
Strong communication, analytical, interpersonal and negotiation skills
Strong attention to detail | Must be a critical thinker and a good listener
Casino focus is a bonus | Highly numerate with organizational and project implementation skills

OPERATIONS MANAGER (PHYSIOTHERAPY)

Minimum 2 years' experience dealing with Physiotherapy & Pain Management

PRODUCT MANAGER

Minimum 5 years' experience

Experience in presenting and communicating to senior management at all levels

Experience in customer operations systems, tools and process

Strong Communications skills, Analytical Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Negotiation Skills, Attention to details, Meeting deadlines, Critical thinking, Good listener, top notch presentation skills

SALES ASSOCIATE

Minimum 5 years' experience in International Sales

Computer literacy including proficiency in MS Office Suite

Must possess a working knowledge of Insurance Products and Commercial Container Shipping services

Must be able to speak Russian, Arabic and/or Eastern European Languages

Must possess excellent interpersonal skills | Must be able to work in a team environment

Strong organizational skills | Strong integrity and work ethic

SECURITY OFFICER

Minimum 2 years' experience as a Security Officer | Secondary School Completion

SENIOR PROJECT DIRECTOR, DEVELOPMENT

Minimum of 15 years hands-on experience in the development, management or overseeing of (multiple) major mixed-use real estate projects in the hospitality or leisure industry in the Caribbean

Bachelor's degree required; Master's degree in the related fields of real estate, urban planning, architecture, construction management or civil engineering, business or finance preferred

Experience negotiating, engaging, managing and directing third party consultants and contractors

Strong analytical skills including financial analysis

Working knowledge of land use and zoning processes

Strong computer efficiency, written, oral communication and presentation skills

SKILLED CARPENTER

Minimum 10 years' experience as a Carpenter | Secondary/Vocational School Completion

SOUS CHEF

3+ years of formal culinary education/ training | HACCP Training

High School Diploma | Must have strong knowledge in International Cuisine

Strong knowledge of cooking methods, kitchen equipment, and best practices

Assist with the preparation and planning of meal designs

Good understanding of MS Office and restaurant software programs

Teamwork-oriented with great leadership abilities

Excellent communication and interpersonal skills

SPA THERAPIST

Minimum 2 years' working experience as a Spa Therapist

Certifications in Therapy & First Aid required | Knowledge and Diplomas of Beauty Culture Techniques

Several Diplomas of actualization courses | Basic Proficiency in Microsoft Office

TILE SPECIALIST

Minimum 3 years' proven experience as a Tiler

**PLEASE NOTE THAT IN ORDER TO REGISTER YOU MUST BRING WITH
YOU THE FOLLOWING:**

VALID PASSPORT

SOCIAL SECURITY & MEDICAL BENEFITS CARDS

RESUME

CERTIFICATES/DIPLOMAS

OSEC IS LOCATED ON REDCLIFFE STREET

For more information please call 562-8533/34

NATIONAL SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

BANNED ITEMS

The public is being reminded that in accordance with the *Litter Control and Prevention Act No. 3 of 2019 section 26 #1*, it is **illegal** to import any type of banned/ prohibited items. Any individual or Body Corporate found with any banned item/s in their possession will be fined and the item/s confiscated. This fine is inclusive of anyone who imports, buys or sells any of the items listed below.

BANNED ITEMS

- Single use shopping plastic bags
- Plastic forks, knives, straws and spoons and lids
- Expanded polystyrene (styrofoam) including bowls, plates and cups



NON-COMPLIANT INDIVIDUALS/BODY CORPORATE WILL BE FINED

Individual - \$1000

Body Corporate - \$5000

For further updates please visit our Facebook page @ The National Solid Waste Management Authority or scan the QR code provided. For additional information please call the Litter Control and Prevention Hotline at 727-2467 or the NSWMA hotline 562-1347



**MERCURY
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Organizations with Storage Bins for Fluorescent Light Bulbs

Establishment	Location
Epicurean	Epicurean Drive Jolly Harbor Perry Bay
Crab Hole Liquors	Cobbs Cross
Welch Supermarket	Pares Main Road
Christian Union Church	Wireless Road
Gloria's Supermarket	Whenner Road
Board of Education	Popeshead Street
Public Works	St. John's Street
APUA	Cassada Gardens
North Coast Hardware	Blue Waters Main road
Lingies Lights & Windows	Utility Drive
V.E.G. International	Herberts Main Road
Kennedy's Enterprises	All Saints Road
Quality electrical sales & services	Hawkins Drive
Nunes Hardware	Church Street
Townhouse Mega Store	All Saints Road
Lighting Expo	Sir Georges Walter High Way
ACT- Online	Cassada Gardens
Electrail Sales and Services	Upr Newgate & Goodwin St,



MINISTRY OF HEALTH, WELLNESS & THE ENVIRONMENT

Vaccination Sites Operation

MULTIPURPOSE CULTURAL & EXHIBITION CENTRE AND VILLA POLYCLINIC

Holiday Schedule

OPEN

Friday December 24 2021

9am - 12noon

Friday December 31 2021

9am - 12noon

CLOSED

Saturday December 18 2021

Saturday December 25 2021

Monday December 27 2021

Tuesday December 28 2021

Saturday January 1 2022

Monday January 3 2022

We do apologize for any inconvenience caused.
Regular service will resume on Tuesday 4th January, 2022.

Normal operating hours continue on other days
Mondays - Fridays 9:00am - 5:00pm.



Get your COVID-19 BOOSTER vaccine

Starting 16th Dec 2021

Booster Vaccines available at Multipurpose
Cultural and Exhibition Centre and Villa Polyclinic.

Mon-Fri | 9:00am-5:00pm



Vaccines Available

AstraZeneca, Pfizer
Villa Polyclinic & Multipurpose Cultural & Exhibition Centre

Johnson & Johnson
Villa Polyclinic

Sinopharm
Multipurpose Cultural & Exhibition Centre

Original COVID-19
vaccine card (paper)
& ID is required

Eligible persons should have received the last dose of their Covid-19 vaccine 6 months ago.

ELIGIBLE PERSONS:

- All persons 18 years and over are eligible, but priority will be given to persons 60 years and over.

An elite runner pooped down her leg 7 miles into a marathon but kept going until the end — maintaining a personal record pace almost the whole way

Addi Zerrenner's first marathon in 2019 went so well she worried she'd cursed herself.

The now-25-year-old running coach and personal trainer in Santa Barbara felt great and qualified for the Olympic trials with a time of 2:37:47.

So when Zerrenner pooped in her shorts three times — the first at mile 7 — during the California International Marathon on December 5, she was relieved in more than one way.

"I'm finally having the true marathon experience," she thought.

Zerrenner went on to finish the 26.2-mile race with soiled legs and shoes in just 2 hours, 42 minutes, and 49 seconds — coming in 30th of 3,133 women.

"This was probably my proudest finish ever," Zerrenner — who posted a graphic photo of her race on Instagram — told *Insider*.

Zerrenner felt great until mile 21

Everyone who ordered the mushroom pasta at their pre-race dinner got sick. But Zerrenner, who'd also ordered the dish, wasn't one of them — at first. She felt so healthy and energized that when the urge to go struck at

mile 7, she didn't want to spoil her pace by stopping at a Porta Potty.

"I was like, 'OK, just let it come,'" Zerrenner, who'd never had digestive issues on race day, told *Insider*. "I didn't know it was going to be so much."

Zerrenner kept running a sub-6-minute-mile pace — on pace for a personal record — for about 21 miles with dirtied shorts and legs, and "let it come" two more times.

She's not sure if other runners noticed, but afterwards learned that some people thought it was brown athletic tape, while others thought it was blood or dirt from a fall.

At mile 21, Zerrenner's legs felt like they "gained 50 pounds each", she said, forcing her to slow down. But she was too close to quit.

"I'm not going to drop out with shit all over me," Zerrenner thought. "I'm going to finish with shit all over me."

The aftermath was brutal

When Zerrenner crossed the finish line, a teammate's wife, Melissa Guillen, came to the rescue. Guillen is an ultra-runner who was unfazed by the mess.

Guillen wrapped Zerrenner up in post-marathon foil blankets and guided



her to a restaurant bathroom, and then the hotel, to clean up. Along the way, the pair stuffed toilet paper up their nostrils to block the stench, and tossed Zerrenner's shoes and shorts.

"I'm walking in the streets of Sacramento pants-less, shoe-less, and with crap all over my legs," Zerrenner said. She suspects the hotel concierge thought she was homeless.

But as an eating disorder survivor, she's worked to not care about what people think of her appearance. "I'm finally at a point in my life where the only thing I care about what people think of me is the internal," she said.

"The outreach of support and respect I've gotten from people has been overwhelming," she said. "I was brought to tears." One man even messaged her to say he's inspired to

start running despite the GI issues that had long been holding him back.

Race day digestive distress is common

Studies have shown 30% to 65% of runners have an abdominal complaint.

It makes sense since pounding the pavement for hours jostles your organs and shuttles blood away from the digestive tract and toward your legs. That can leave some runners incontinent and others constipated.

Then there's early start times that can prevent some racers from fully relieving themselves before the gun goes off. Race day jitters don't help either.

There are strategies to help prevent and deal with runner's trots, but Zerrenner has her own: "If you have a goal," she said, "just go for it at all costs."

Isaiah Thomas sends heartfelt message after Lakers debut: "That sh*t keeps me going..."

2x All-Star Isaiah Thomas had been working to get back into the league for a while before finally being given another chance by the Lakers. And when he inked a 10-day contract on Friday, nobody was sure what to expect.

But by the end of his first game, fans were convinced he was a major asset to the team and it didn't take long for Lakers Nation to fall in love with I.T. and all that he brought to the organization.

On Saturday, by the time people had a chance to react to his 19-point debut, Thomas made sure to show how thankful he was for all the love.

The LOVE you guys show me doesn't go unnoticed, I'm thankful and appreciative of it all! That shit keeps me going fr fr At one point, I.T. was right up there as one of the best scoring guards in the league. During his prime, he averaged 25.5



points, 6.1 assists, and 2.8 rebounds per game on 44% shooting.

After getting hip surgery in 2017, Thomas never lived up to those standards again, and he was pretty much out of the league by 2020. His return to pro-action has been full of amazing moments, like the time he dropped 81 points during a weekend game in Seattle.

I wasn't showing y'all a snippet of me being emotional so y'all can feel sorry 4 me. Hell no!!!

My life is GREAT!! I was showing y'all that to see what it feels like to give everything you have to something you love and to see it slowly coming back where it's suppose to be TMC. That emotion was tied up from the last 4yrs battling every single day!!! I ain't talking about the "league" giving up on me lol. THE WORLD GAVE UP ON ME & WAS SHITTING ON ME WHILE I WAS DOWN AND OUT!! When you love something you'll do whatever it takes to get

that!!! I'm back. Thomas got cut several times over the past few years, essentially cutting his comeback bid short before he was really able to make any noise.

But, with the Lakers, he has one more chance to prove he can be a valuable asset in the league. After a solid showing in his first game, his future is looking pretty good.

In the end, however, there is no guarantee the Lakers will keep him once his 10-day contract expires.

Roger Harper-led CWI selection panel fired; new members to be recruited in January

Cricket West Indies (CWI) has announced that it will commence a new recruitment process for the new Men's Selection Panel in January.

The recruitment will replace lead selector Roger Harper and fellow selector Miles Bascombe whose contracts will not be renewed when they come to an end on December 31.

An interim selection panel has been established with head coach Phil Simmons at the helm along with the captains in the respective men's formats.

Jimmy Adams, CWI's Director of Cricket, will oversee the process.

"We want to thank Roger and Miles for their work and dedicated services to West Indies cricket in the last two years, as members of the Men's Senior Selection Panel. Selecting West Indies teams for international competition is a very challenging and thankless assignment, and both gentlemen performed their roles with unprecedented trans-



The Roger Harper-led West Indies selection panel has been relieved of its duties.

parency and dignity," said Adams.

Harper said he was thankful for the opportunity to be the lead selector of the selection panel.

"I would like to thank CWI for the opportunity to serve West Indies cricket in the role

of Lead Selector and I wish the organization the very best for the future. I would also like to thank all those whose efforts and cooperation helped me to perform my role efficiently. Special thanks to Miles for his professionalism and teamwork. God bless,"

he said.

The West Indies Men's next series is against Ireland at Sabina Park, Jamaica where they will play the three-match CG Insurance One-Day International Series on January 8, 11 and 14, and the one-off T20 International on January 16.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO BOBSLED TEAM EYE WINTER OLYMPICS SPOT



T&T bobsled team stand behind their sled. (L-R): Axel Brown, Andre Marciano, Shomari John, Tom Harris (coach), Shakeel John.

THE two-man Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) bobsled team are in with a chance of qualifying for the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, China.

T&T have been competing in the North American Cup tour in an effort to seal a place at the Olympics which

will be held from February 04-20.

On January 16, T&T will know if they have earned a place at the Winter Olympics.

A post by ttbobsled on Instagram said, "It all depends on how the other nations finish in Europe, but the chances

are looking good."

It has been 20 years since T&T had a bobsled team at the Olympics.

The T&T bobsled team includes a two-man team and a four-man team. The team is com-

prised of T&T Olympian hurdler Mikel Thomas, track & field sprinter Andre Marciano, Axel Brown and the John brothers Shomari and Shakeel. Tom Harris is the coach of the team.

DEWS