

FRIDAY 24 DECEMBER 2021 | ISSUE 323 | WWW.POINTVILLE.AG

Christmas Greetings to All



To all our readers, advertisers and well-wishers

PointeXpress Newspaper will take its annual Christmas/New Year break for the next two weeks. Our next issue will be Monday January 10, 2022.

Best wishes for the holiday season until we return in the New Year.

Oh What A Year!

by Everton Barnes

Many residents of Antigua and Barbuda must be wishing for the final days of 2021 to come and go as quickly as possible with the hope that the new year, 2022, turns out to be the year that they see the end of the COVID-19 pandemic which brought so many countries around the world to their knees, and that included Antigua and Barbuda.

The pandemic has been raging since the World Health Organisation declared it an international health emergency back in March, 2020. In response, countries around the world closed their borders and instituted tough measures in an effort to restrict the spread of the virus among their respective populations.

Here in Antigua and Barbuda, similar measures were implemented. These measures were largely aimed at curtailing social gatherings. Carnival, the nation's premiere cultural and economic extravaganza was canceled. In fact, the sum-

mer festival was canceled for two successive years. As 2020 gave way to 2021 and the prospects of the availability of vaccines to blunt the spread of the deadly virus, many felt that the New Year would finally see the end of the pandemic.

It was not to be! Instead, 2021 saw the two different waves of the virus and scores of people losing their lives to this unrelenting enemy; COVID-19. In fact, between September and October this year, over sixty persons lost their lives due to the virus. Every citizen, every resident knew someone who lost his/her life to the virus.

At one point during that period, the regularity with which announcements were being made of another death, then another and another, it appears as though the nation held its collective breath as a defensive mechanism to numb itself of the pain that is associated with the loss of the life of a family member, a neighbor, a friend or an acquaintance.

COVID has tested and is testing our resolve as a na-

tion. Already there are signs that the weight of having to live with anti-COVID measures for the better part of two years are being manifested in many ways. There are reports that some whose mental state was already fragile have not been able to effectively cope under this strain.

Measures introduced to increase the number of people who are fully vaccinated and thus provide both them and the nation with a stronger buffer against the virus have led to fractures between the government and some key employees. However, by the beginning of December, the government softened its stance and allowed those who declined to take the vaccine to return to work with the understanding that they would undergo regular testing.

One of the areas where much attention was focused was the performance of the national economy. As an economy largely based on tourism and services, limiting the hours that many in the entertainment and food service sectors could

operate has negatively affected these businesses. As the year ended and these operations await the lifting of the State of Emergency and the curfew, now comes the Omicron variant, a much more contagious form of the virus that spreads five times faster than the earlier, Delta variant.

In response, fetes which have been largely on hiatus since the pandemic were again banned under new regulations even before they restarted.

Even tourism showed signs of recovery to pre-pandemic

levels. In fact, July 2021, was the best July on record in terms of tourism arrivals. The following month, August, also performed remarkably well. Several new airlines announced new services to Antigua and Barbuda, a signal that the 2021-22 winter tourist season would likely reach 2019 levels. With the positivity rate falling, active cases hovering in the single digits by late November, there was much anticipation of a bumper season. Then came Omicron!

It is unlikely that the government will re-introduce another lockdown as this could severely blunt those expected gains from tourism. The most likely scenario is for a stepped up campaign to get more people vaccinated along with getting the fully vaccinated to take the booster shots when they are eligible.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has repeatedly said that Antigua and Barbuda has to learn to live with COVID. Under the circumstances, we have no other choice.



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POSITIVITY, HAPPINESS
and LOVE



SEASON'S GREETINGS

AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

We often reflect upon all the good things we have during the holiday season.
For us, it's you, our valued customers and stakeholders.

We at ACB Caribbean take this moment to say,
Thank you for your continued trust and loyalty,
and best wishes to you and yours for the New Year!

Meeghan Smith wins Halo Christmas Art Competition



15-year old Meeghan Smith of the Antigua Girls High School received top prize in the 7th annual Halo Christmas Art Competition. She was presented with her award at Government House on Wednesday, along with 11 other students. Governor General, Sir Rodney Williams delivered brief remarks, in which he noted that there was an almost 10% increase in entries in 2021 when compared

with the previous year. "The 3-month Royal Drawing School certification course organised by Halo in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, resulted in the training of 23 teachers across the island in alternative techniques. We are hoping that this will eventually be reflected in both the quality and quantity of art pieces produced by the pupils in our schools," he stated.

Awardees 2021:

7-9 years old:- First: Annabella Mansoor

(St. Nicholas Primary)

Second: Isabella Mansoor (St. Nicholas Primary)

Third: Sophia Butler (St. Nicholas Primary)

10-12 years old:-First: Annecia Frederick (St.

John's Lutheran)

Second: Jaina Stuart-Young (St. Nicholas Primary)

Third: Amelia Watson (Cobbs Cross)

13-15 years old:-First: Meeghan Smith - Overall

Winner (Antigua Girls High School)

Second: Demarie Molina (Christ the King High

School)

Third: Joyce Murray-Watkins (Princess Margaret

Secondary)

16-18 years old:-First: Makaylah Richardson

(Antigua State College)

Second: Arian Audain (Antigua State College)

Third: Xinying Zheng (St. Anthony's Secondary)

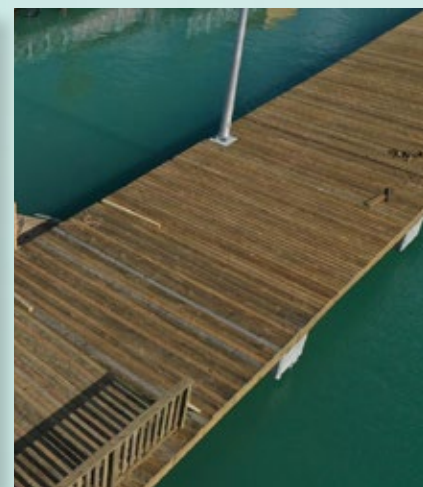
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FROM
THE CAMPUS
PRINCIPAL,
FACULTY & STAFF
OF
THE UWI
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YOUTH TO ENGAGE IN FARM PROJECT



The Halo Foundation recently received a grant of US\$10,000 from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, in sponsorship of a pilot farming project.

Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Antigua and Barbuda, H.E. Zhang Yanling, said: "The Embassy highly commends the valuable efforts by the Halo Foundation under the able leadership of Their Excellencies Sir Rodney and Lady Williams, in advocat-

ing for and supporting the underprivileged and vulnerable of Antigua and Barbuda. We also identify with the purpose and concept of this agricultural project, which aims to enhance food security and provide training opportunities to the young generation, which is particularly meaningful against the backdrop of the ongoing pandemic".

H.E. Lady Williams commented, "Some of the members of Generation Y

Photo caption: L-R

On a site visit to the farm: H.E. Lady Williams (President, The Halo Foundation); H.E. Zhang Yanling (Ambassador of the PRC to Antigua and Barbuda); and Mr. Owolabi Elabanjo (Chief Extension Officer in the Ministry of Agriculture).



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had expressed interest in receiving expert training in agro techniques. Further, the one acre of land which the Ministry of Agriculture has made available, is expected to generate revenue for the charity in order that assistance may be provided to those in need, whenever possible. We are highly appreciative of the support of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Antigua and Barbuda."

In addition to this monetary donation, Halo will also benefit from technical assistance imparted

by the China-Aid Agro-Tech Project through lectures on farming. China-Aid will demonstrate key tactics such as seeding, transplanting, covering film, fertilisation and insect control.

Several weeks ago, the Halo Foundation received a generous monetary grant from the American University of Antigua towards the farm's start-up fund.

The Ministry of Agriculture, through its Chief Extension Officer Mr. Owolabi Elabanjo, continues to assist in guiding the process.

NOTICE

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

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

Dear Sir/Madame,

Re: Notice- Application for Tavern Licence

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

Dated the 15th day of December, 2021



The UWI's Global Tourism Resilience Centre earns World Travel Award 2021 for 'World's Leading Tourism Initiative'

The UWI Regional Headquarters, Jamaica. Wednesday, December 22, 2021—The University of the West Indies' (UWI) Global Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre (GTRCMC) has received special recognition as the World's Leading Tourism Initiative at the World Travel Awards (WTA) 2021. Held on December 16, in Dubai, the award scheme, which celebrated its 28th edition this year, acknowledges, rewards and celebrates excellence across all sectors of the global travel and tourism

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industry. It is recognised globally as the ultimate hallmark of quality.

Distinguished by WTA as the world's leading tourism initiative, the GTRCMC

which was established in 2019, is hosted at The UWI Mona Campus, and supported by several local, regional and international stakeholders. It currently has offices in

the Caribbean, Africa, and the Mediterranean, and affiliates in over 42 countries. It is focused on assisting travel and tourism organisations across the world in the man-

agement and recovery from disruptions that threaten economies and livelihoods linked to tourism. It fosters policies to assist efforts of communities affected by disruptions due to climate change, natural disasters, pandemics, terrorism, economic shocks, political instability and other threats.

The Centre has spearheaded a number of resilience-related projects since its inception. Among them, the Hurricane Maria and Irma Recovery Initiative, in which the Centre mobilised regional support to assist with recovery efforts in Bahamas and the Cayman Islands. Its COVID-19 Social Awareness Campaign raised awareness among tourism workers globally about the pandemic, whilst its Building Vaccine Confidence Project aims to reduce vaccine hesitancy among tourism workers globally. Other

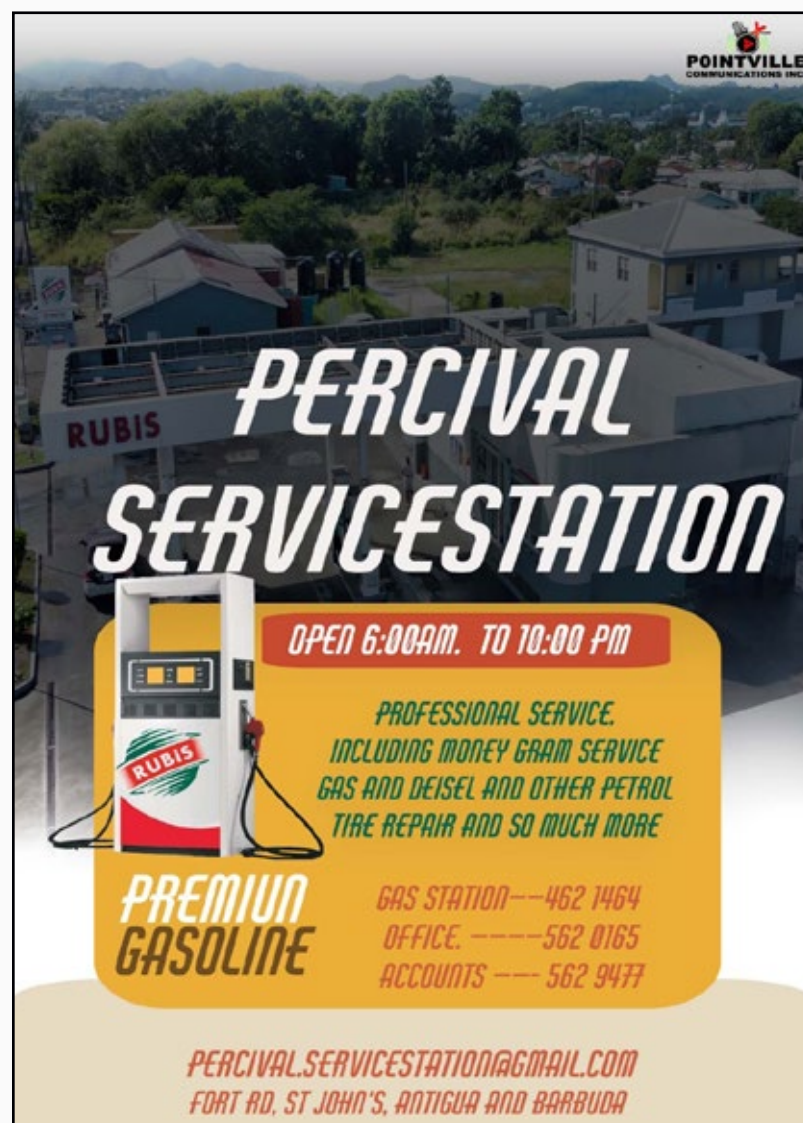
projects include the Global Tourism Resilience Sustainability Initiative; the Seismic Impact Assessment: St. Vincent and the Grenadines; and the Building Better Stronger Together Initiative – Community Tourism Capacity Building in Digital Marketing.

“Since the Centre’s inception, we have been working to raise awareness, build capacity and undertake innovative initiatives in tourism resilience in several countries around the world. To be honoured in this way means that we are doing something right and this is indeed motivating,” said Executive Director of the GTRCMC, Professor Lloyd Waller.

In extending congratulations on this global accolade, Vice-Chancellor of The UWI, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles noted, “There could be no greater tangible evidence of our University’s com-

mitment to a global outlook and actions. Here we have it, yet another international honour emerging from the activation of our Triple A Strategy, and more precisely, our Alignment pillar.” Vice-Chancellor Beckles continued, “We are clear and committed in our pledge to enable joint academic, government, and industry partnerships like these for the advancement of critical sectors here in

the Caribbean, like tourism.” According to Jamaica’s Minister of Tourism and Co-Chair and founder of the GTRCMC, Honourable Edmund Bartlett, “The recognition by the leading authority that recognises and rewards excellence in travel and tourism is heartfelt and highlights the outstanding work that this one-of-a-kind Centre for tourism resilience has been doing.”



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Pursue win-win cooperation & write a new chapter of friendship

(by Her Excellency Madame Zhang Yanling, Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to Antigua and Barbuda)

I am very honored to be newly-appointed as Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to Antigua and Barbuda.

Though it is just about a month since my arrival, I have been deeply impressed by the most splendid tropical land- and seascape of this twin-island country and its unique culture.

Antigua and Barbuda turned 40 this year. Just like its national motto goes, "Each endeavoring, All achieving", since its independence, the sons and daughters of Antigua and Barbuda have spared nothing and given their all for national development.

With the joint efforts of the people of Antigua and Barbuda, the past 40 years saw significant economic and social development of the country, improved people's livelihood, as well as increased regional and international influence.

Now, Antigua and Barbuda is play-



Her Excellency Madame Zhang Yanling

ing an even more important role in promoting regional integration and leading Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the collective response to climate change.

The people of China will never forget that Antigua and Barbuda was the first Eastern Caribbean country to establish diplomatic ties with China. The building of the Big Creek

Bridge – which is the first cooperation project between the two countries since the establishment of diplomatic ties – has not only facilitated the travel of local residents across a major waterway, but has since become a symbol of friendship between the two countries.

For the past several decades, China and Antigua and Barbuda have al-

ways respected each other, pursued win-win cooperation, and worked together to address common challenges.

On the special occasion of the 40th Anniversary of Independence of Antigua and Barbuda, President Xi Jinping of China extended warm congratulations and best wishes to the leader, government, and people of Antigua and Barbuda, reiterating that China highly values its relations with Antigua and Barbuda, and stands ready to work with the latter to further bring the friendly relationship between the two countries to a new level.

The Year 2021 is also of special significance for the Chinese people, as it marks the centenary of the Communist Party of China (CPC). Since its founding in 1921, the Party has made seeking happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation its mission. With the relentless efforts of generations of the Chinese people under the leadership of the CPC, China has achieved national independence and the people's liberation, made the historic leap to the world's second largest economy, and has built a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

At this important juncture, the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China convened its Sixth Plenary Session in Beijing in early November.

This was a meeting that was in-

tended to build on past successes to strive for new progress. It summed up the major achievements and historical experience of the CPC over the past century, and also provided an important impetus for China to move towards the second centenary goal of building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects.

China has successfully embarked on its own path of modernization, created a new form of human civilization, and opened up new avenues for developing countries to pursue modernization.

Along this journey – despite being faced with various difficulties and challenges – the CPC has remained firmly committed to doing the right thing and led the Chinese people to follow the path of our own choice.

The CPC and the Chinese people have strong confidence in the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. At the same time, we fully respect the independent choices of others for their own development paths.

When President Xi addressed the third Ministerial Meeting of the Forum of China and the Community of Latin American & Caribbean States via video link on December 3, 2021, he pointed out that both China and CELAC are facing new epoch tasks to promote post-pandemic recovery and strive for people's happiness. China stands ready to work with LAC countries to overcome

difficulties, create opportunities, and jointly build a community with a shared future for global development.

The first day of the year 2022 marks the 39th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Antigua and Barbuda. Let us hold the golden key of development and speed-up the implementation of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

In this regard, the Global Development Initiative proposed by President Xi provides a new opportunity for the international community to tap the potential for cooperation in the eight priority areas including poverty alleviation, food security, COVID-19 and vaccines, financing for development, climate change and green development, industrialization, digital economy, and connectivity.

Poised for a new start, China will continue to work with Antigua and Barbuda to write a new chapter of friendship by further consolidating strategic mutual trust, deepening practical cooperation, overcoming challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, promoting economic recovery, and jointly safeguarding the UN-centered international system. We at the Chinese Embassy in Antigua and Barbuda will work tirelessly towards this goal.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all the friends in Antigua and Barbuda a very happy new year!

Deeper integration of CARICOM countries cannot wait

(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)

The destruction by tornadoes of Kentucky, a south-eastern State of the United States of America (US), on December 12, has lessons for the countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), as 2022 dawns amid the continuing COVID-19 pandemic and weakened economies.

One of the lessons is that those member states of CARICOM that continue to insist on CARICOM remaining "a community of sovereign states", each pursuing separate policies – sometimes to the detriment of each other – are marching down the road to perdition, as the facts of their situation substantiate.

Many of the sovereign states of CARICOM would not be solvent if it weren't for the official development assistance they receive. Their sovereignty is constrained by the extent of their financial and economic dependence for which they pay a price. Curiously, some of them prefer to pay a price to external powers, than to pool their individual sovereignty into a common autonomous authority with their CARICOM partners in order to build greater strength and resilience.

Why should people in other US States, such as Texas or New York, care about the devastation of Kentucky? After all, Kentucky's representatives in the US Senate, Mitch McConnell and Rand Paul, fiercely resist the US federal government. They want to maintain power in Kentucky's governor and legislature, just like some governments of CARICOM countries insist on their "sovereignty".

Kentucky is a state



By Sir Ronald Sanders

within the Union of 50 states that comprise the US. If the US federal government does not use national resources to aid Kentucky to rebuild, the State will fall into unemployment, poverty and crime. It would eventually become a failed state. People would flee to find livelihoods elsewhere and investors would shift their money to functioning economies. The Federal Government could not

allow Kentucky to fail, not even with the likes of Mitch McConnell and Rand Paul favouring state power over federal authority. If Kentucky were left to fend for itself, it would become a weak link in the US chain, making the country vulnerable and exposing it to security threats.

The Federal Government rallied to provide immediate relief to Kentucky, and to committing huge sums of

money to its rebuilding and recovery, because the United States is one nation. It is not a group of sovereign states. If the US were just a community of independent states, as are the members of CARICOM, it would not be the world's greatest economic and military power. Instead, 50 states would exist – some stronger and better resourced than others, but each of them much weaker individually than they are as a single nation, and certainly none of them a force in the world.

In fashioning their independence, the original 13 countries (then British colonies) debated a union with a strong federal government or a collection of independent and disparate States. They settled on a strong Federal government precisely because they recognised that only by joining their collective resources would they be sufficiently strong to resist England, France, Spain and other European powers that would have kept them dependent and in thrall.

From the beginnings of CARICOM, governments, haunted by the collapse of the West Indies Federation caused by ambitious and manipulative local politi-

cians determined to be big fish in small bowls resisted the Union that would have reduced their vulnerabilities, enhanced their resilience, and made them economically stronger. What is striking about the years 2020 and 2021 is that the greatest success of the 'sovereign' states of the Caribbean Community came from joint institutions and collective action. No country in CARICOM would have battled COVID-19 without the Caribbean Public Health Agency; none would have responded quickly enough to natural disasters without the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency; and none would have mobilized insurance relief without the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility or the emergency resources of the Caribbean Development Bank. As it is, despite the help of regional agencies, almost all of them now have large debt burdens and recovery will be long and hard, except for Guyana with the addition of considerable oil and gas wealth to its traditional resources of agriculture and precious metals.

Recently, Guyana's President Irfaan Ali,

talking to the private sector in his country, declared that "Regional integration and other 'fancy talk' cannot be taken seriously unless the current (trade) barriers are removed". He is right about that. CARICOM claims to be a Common Market, yet the countries have erected trade barriers against themselves, while opening their markets to the European Union and the United Kingdom with little trade benefits in return. After almost 50 years of existence, CARICOM is still not a Common Market and is far away from a Customs Union. The much vaunted 'single market and economy' has become a fading aspiration.

But, it is not only trade barriers that should be torn down. CARICOM and its purposes need to be reconsidered, reworked and redirected. No one should be satisfied with its current condition; all should be ready to revamp it.

It is most likely the case that CARICOM governments are still not ready for the more perfect union that could help to insulate each CARICOM country from the severe challenges that lie ahead in 2022 and beyond. However, if the

last two decades have proven anything, it is that individual sovereignty is not the answer to the economic progress or resilience of the member states of CARICOM. Like Kentucky, they lack the financial and resource capacity for effective resilience. In this connection, the CARICOM Treaty needs revision now. The mistakes of its last revision should not be repeated. Implementation machinery must be established to oversee the completion of a Common Market, including freedom of movement of all people just as there is freedom of movement of capital. There should also be clear compensatory mechanisms for those states that dismantle protectionist policies. Countries that cannot sign up to these necessary actions should not delay the integration of others; they should step aside and consider joining later.

IF CARICOM is to be meaningful to the lives of its member countries, deeper integration cannot wait.

Responses and previous commentaries: www.sirronald-sanders.com

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS HEALTHY EATING AT CHRISTMAS?

It is the season of merry making, a season when excesses and over indulgences whether in alcohol drinking or eating, are permitted and excused. In this season the colloquial term “you are digging your grave with your teeth” is quite applicable, as so many individuals are quick to disregard moderation and consume too much of the wrong things.

Even those who habitually maintain a discipline lifestyle

throughout the year are caught in the festivities as well. They no longer count calories or restrict their food intake, when question, out comes the excuse “I only eat these things once a year so, leave me and let me enjoy it”

The consumption of large quantities of pork is the norm at Christmas. All those tasty baked ham many of us enjoy contain lots of sodium and saturated fats. Saturated fats are unhealthy fats which increases your cholesterol

levels and are contributing factors of stroke and heart disease. The onus is on you to safeguard your health, if foods cannot be healthy then practice moderation.

For many there is no Christmas dinner without lasagne, scallop potatoes, or shepherd's pie. There are a dozen different types of cookies, designed to send one's sugar level to the roof. As if those were not enough we also have black fruit cakes and



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Christmas puddings with high volumes of alcohol.

Maintaining a healthy eating habit maybe a difficult task but one has to use wisdom since non-communicable diseases do not go on brake for Christmas. The high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes all have the propensity of sending you to an early grave.

The onus is on you to safeguard your health especially if you are at that critical age of maturity when hypertension or diabetes is lurking nearby. For those with pre-existing conditions be extra careful and follow these health tips.

Limit the intake of alcohol beverages by staying close to the daily amount recommended, 2 drinks for males and 1 for females.

Keep serving dishes of food and desserts out of sight so you would not be tempted to eat or pick too much.

While attending Christmas parties or dinners pay careful attention to the types of food before sampling. As much as it is humanly possible stick with the protein and vegetables selections then choose your favourite dessert.

For those with a tendency to pick at foods and eating more than they should you, cannot take what you cannot see, therefore keeping the serving dishes out of sight is wise. Always avoid standing next to the food that is too much temptation for those with limited will power.

One way to compensate for the intake of extra calories is by staying active during this season. Walking or swimming will lessen



the effect of the excessive eating. Remember, do not get caught up in the season and forget to take your medication, follow your doctor's instruction at all times, do

enjoy the season of fellowship and good will but do not be care-free, be prudent. ***Submitted by the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment***



Caribbean Union Bank

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FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
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Caribbean artist focuses on the music during pandemic.

Alwin Nurse AKA. NEGUS is a dancehall reggae artist known for his lyrical versatility, and innovative style of music; one who fuses his renowned reggae styles with dynamic productions. Born in Guyana, resident in Canada, NEGUS whose versatility sees him performing the roles of singer, producer, and songwriter says he has been focusing on his music over the past two years most of which have been under COVID-19 pandemic conditions.

"I own and operate a tattoo parlor in Toronto, Canada,

but due to the restrictions imposed because of the pandemic and their impact on LIVE performances, I have been spending a lot of time developing music," NEGUS said in an interview with PointeXpress newspaper. During this period, the entertainer has been collaborating with other producers and artists primarily out of Jamaica including artist, Black Spider, as well as TJ Records and Marcus Records of Jamaica.

NEGUS said he has been in the music business from an early age as his



father was a well-known musician who fronted a band Mingles Sound Machine out of Guyana. It was that band that backed up many of the leading Caribbean artists whenever they traveled to Guyana to perform. Quite often the aspiring artist would be asked by his father to perform a song prior to the introduction of the headline artists such as Beenie Man and Buju Banton.


By 2012, he decided to take the next logical step; that is to become a professional entertainer/producer. He has had successes as a producer. He produced a song 'Holding On' for the artist, Tommy Lee, which went to #4 on the Reggae Chart last year. Coming from humble beginnings NEGUS hails from the volatile community of Middle Road/Alboustown. Overcoming hardships

as a ghetto youth and its concomitant challenges, he knew from an early age that music was his way out. NEGUS was educated at the St. Pius Primary School in Georgetown, and went on to enhance his proficiencies in Graphic Designs, Video Editing and Tattoo Artistry in Canada. Acutely conscious of and self-assured in his talent and with the drive and natural ability he possesses, NEGUS has continued to make the best of his opportunities and sees himself in the very near future as one of the most successful recording artists/producer in the industry. As with all harvests, cream rises to the top, and where natural talent thrives, the connected people will come knocking. NEGUS'S musical accomplishments have caught the right ears.



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Dominican Republic: Human Smuggling Ring Smashed After Migrant Deaths

The StKittsNevis Observer- Five members of a human smuggling network that charged \$20,000 per person are arrested in the Dominican Republic after being linked to the deaths of three of the 56 migrants killed in Mexico truck crash

The arrests took place Tuesday in the cities of Baní and Santo Domingo

The network reportedly helped smuggled three of the 56 Central American and Dominican migrants who were killed in a crash in Mexico on December 9

The group charged migrants up to \$22,000 to smuggle them from the Dominican Republic to the United States

A total of six Dominican nationals have been confirmed dead by Mexican and Dominican authorities

At least three were injured, but 11 who were in the tractor trailer at the time of the accident have been reported missing

The truck was hauling over 160 migrants when it crashed into the side

of a pedestrian bridge in the southern Mexico state of Chiapas

At least 107 people were also injured in the accident

Dominican Republic authorities have dismantled a criminal network that tried to smuggle three Dominican nationals who were among the 56 migrants killed in a US-bound truck when it crashed in Mexico, officials said.

Security forces launched simultaneous raids across the cities of Baní and Santo Domingo, the capital, on Tuesday, and arrested Guillermo Guzmán Marcano; Leonel Antonio Méndez Arias; Román Alberto Casalinovo Trinidad; Santo Francisco Vizcaíno Guerrero; and Jesús Antonio Martínez Díaz.

The network charged at least \$20,000 per person and used the profits to splurge on real estate and luxury vehicles.

Each of the individuals was charged with 'promoting, inducing and financing the illicit trafficking of persons,' the Attorney General's Office said in a statement.



Prosecutors have requested 18 months of pretrial detention for each of the five defendants. They are expected to make their first court appearance before a judge Wednesday or Thursday.

Scene of the December 9 tractor trailer accident in Chiapas, Mexico, that claimed the lives of 56 migrants and injured 107 from Guatemala, the Dominican Republic and Ecuador. On Tuesday, authorities in the Dominican Republic apprehended five members of a criminal group who reportedly arranged the smuggling of three Dominican nationals who died in the accident

Bodies in bodybags are placed on the side of the road after an accident outside the Chiapas City of Tuxtla Gutiérrez left 56 migrants dead on December 9.

A Red Cross paramedic tends to a migrant who was injured in the truck accident that left 56 people dead and 107 injured in Mexico on December 9

The smuggling ring, investigators found, trafficked Dominican residents from Santo Domingo to the United States.

The group set up migrants on flights from Santo Domingo to Guatemala, Panama and Mexico, among other countries, and then crammed them inside freight containers that were hauled across the Mexico-United States border.

A spokeswoman with the Ministry of the Interior confirmed to Daily-Mail.com that Mexican authorities have so far identified only six Dominican nationals who were killed.

However, media out-

lets have reported that as many as seven Dominicans died in the December 9 crash.

At least three were injured and seven others who were traveling in the cargo box have been reported missing.

The speeding tractor trailer crashed into the side of a pedestrian bridge on a highway in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas and overturned, ejecting many of the migrants across the pavement while trapping others inside.

The tragic wreck left a total of 107 migrants with injuries.

The National Institute of Migration since October has offered migrants humanitarian visas in order to stop them from exposing themselves to the dangers of traveling in caravans. It awarded 17 visas last Tuesday.

A total of 15 Guatemalans, including three unaccompanied minors, one Colombian and one Dominican, were granted permanent resident cards to remain in Mexico instead of returning to their home countries.

A spokesperson with the National Institute of Migration told Daily-Mail.com that the three children are currently in custody of the National System for Integral Family Development.

One-Month Tax-Free Salary For Guyana Police, Soldiers, Firefighters & Prison Workers



President Irfaan Ali

(CMC) – President Irfaan Ali Wednesday announced a one-month tax-free salary for all members of the Joint Services, less than 24 hours after he had announced a two week tax free bonus for all health care workers as it praised them for their service to the country during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

President Ali, who made the announcement during the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) annual Christmas Lunch, said that the tax-free salary is in addition to the seven per cent salary increase announced earlier this month and paid along with the December salaries.

The Joint Services comprise the GDF, the Guyana Police Force, the Guyana Prison Service and the Guyana Fire Service.

Last year the Joint Services received a two-week tax-free bonus from the government. President Ali gave no other details, including the total sum of this latest payout or the number of military personnel who will benefit from the tax-free salary.

On Tuesday, Ali said the two-week tax free bonus to health care workers, would result in approximately GUY\$612 million (One Guyana dollar=US\$0.004 cents) being dished out to an estimated 9,200 health care workers and complements the seven per cent retroactive bonus they had already received this month.

The seven per cent salary increase to 50,000 public servants will cost the country an estimated GUY\$10.5 billion.

Gov't unwavering: Vaccine mandate for public sector stays

Loop TT - The Trinidad and Tobago Government will not withdraw its vaccination policy for public sector employees.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Faris Al-Rawi made the declaration while speaking at a media conference on Thursday.

It followed two separate meetings on Wednesday with the Joint Trade Union Movement (JTUM) and representatives of the Protective Service.

At yesterday's meeting, JTUM Leader Ancel Roget called on the government to immediately withdraw the vaccine mandate and to provide empirical evidence to show that a vaccinated person cannot contract and/or spread the COVID-19 virus and its variants.

Additionally, representatives of the Protective Services requested medical insurance, priority for COVID-19 treatment and incentives to take the job.

However, the attorney general stated that the government will not withdraw the policy.

He said: "I returned to the government team, and I can say today that the government is not in a position to withdraw its policy statement."

Al-Rawi lamented that Roget "stoutly refused" to discuss the issue of furloughing of workers should they not take the COVID-19 vaccine.

He pleaded with the trade union movement to provide alternate recommendations.

Previously, resident of the Joint



Attorney General Faris Al-Rawi

Trade Union Movement (JTUM) Ancel Roget has called on the Government to pull back the COVID-19 vaccine mandate for public servants.

He said that unless the policy is withdrawn, the JTUM will not have any further consultations with authorities.

"For us to engage meaningfully going forward, we call for immediate rejection or removal of that position that was announced by the Prime Minister which is tantamount to mandatory vaccination," Roget said.

Last weekend, Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley announced that all government workers, except those with exemptions for medical issues, will have to be vaccinated against COVID-19 by January 15, 2022. Those who do not comply with the mandate

will not lose their jobs; however, they will not be paid.

Accusing Rowley of taking a "unilateral, high-handed, dictatorial" approach to getting members of the public to get immunized, Roget contended that "if the outcome is to encourage more people to be vaccinated, you are going about it the wrong way".

"Indeed, if you are to engage us in those discussions going forward, you ought to withdraw that unilateral position that was announced by the Prime Minister.

"We believe that the outcome of more people being vaccinated can be achieved through public education and a different type of approach — a collaborative approach — not the badgering. The badgering will only produce

a counter-type of effect, where there will be stout resistance,” the JTUM leader said.

Roget, who acknowledged that he was vaccinated, said union leaders were not anti-vaccine but were adamant that people should be allowed to choose whether or not they want to get the jab.

He said they were encouraging members to be vaccinated “but we are pro-choice”.

“I myself took the vaccine, I myself believe in the science. But I believe it is the right of any individual to accept or reject and that belief is shared across the board by all members of JTUM,” he said.

“Until there’s empirical evidence to show that a vaccinated person cannot contract and/or spread COVID-19 and all its variants, then taking the vaccine must be a matter of a personal choice,” Roget insisted.

The Protective Services Associations, comprising the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service Social & Welfare Association, the Prison Officers’ Association of Trinidad and Tobago, Second Division, and the Fire Service Association of Trinidad and Tobago, Second Division, previously rejected the vaccine mandate as well.

Caribbean people being urged to spread joy, not COVID this Christmas

Caribbean loop- The Caribbean Tourism COVID-19 Task Force is urging Caribbean people to continue to protect themselves and the health and lives of those around them by practicing sound health safety measures, while celebrating the spirit of the season.

The Task Force said that while it commended the overwhelming majority of Caribbean visitors and residents for their role in contributing to the region’s successful efforts to date to contain the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, it is cautioning that “the coming weeks will be critical to the region’s ability to control the virus’ spread and its highly contagious variants which are spiking around the world.

“COVID-19 and the newest variant, omicron, can easily spread at large indoor gatherings and wherever people come in close contact when they are not protected. Face coverings, physical distancing, frequent hand washing, and avoiding large gatherings, particularly with unprotected individuals, should guide behaviours during the festive season,” the Task Force said.

It said that while those who are fully vaccinated have far greater protection against severe illness and death than those who are unvaccinated, the public is reminded that everyone, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, can still catch and transmit the virus and should diligently adhere to health safety measures.

The Task Force reminded that the pandemic has forced residents to adapt and adjust the ways they gather and socialize, advising that the holiday season might be the biggest challenge yet. By remaining mindful of the highly infectious nature of

coronavirus, residents are advised that they can still enjoy the holidays while protecting themselves and those they love.

“As we celebrate and reflect upon the meaning of the season, we must continue to be mindful that life is one of our most precious gifts and this holiday season, in particular, affords visitors and residents the opportunity to share that gift,” said the Caribbean Tourism COVID-19 Task Force, which was formed in March last year to coordinate efforts aimed at protecting tourism-related employees and visitors from COVID-19 and by extension helping to protect all residents.

Member organizations include the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, the Caribbean Public Health Agency, the Caribbean Tourism Organization, the Global Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre, and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States.



Italy bans New Year events as COVID infections surge

(Reuters) – Italy has tightened restrictions to curb surging COVID-19 infections, including banning all public New Year's Eve celebrations, as daily infections hit a record high, the government said on Thursday.

Health Minister Roberto Speranza said mask wearing would be compulsory outdoors again and ordered people to use the more protective Ffp2 face masks on public transport and in public places, such as theatres, cinemas and at sports events.

In addition, concerts and open-air events will be banned until Jan. 31, and discos and dance clubs will have to shut their doors until that date, in an effort to prevent mass socializing during the holiday period.

The announcement came on the day Italy registered a record 44,595 new coronavirus cases - an increase of more than 70% in just a week, with the infectious Omicron variant starting to flare across the country.

Deaths are also starting to creep up, rising to 168 on Thursday, the largest number since May, but they remain well below rates seen during previous infection surges thanks mainly to the large number of people vaccinated in Italy.

Speranza said almost 89% of Italians had been vaccinated, but the government wanted to speed up delivery of third booster shots, seen as the most effective shield against the

In addition, ministers agreed to reduce the validity of COVID-19 health certificates, which are needed to access an array of places and services, in recognition of the fact that

Italy was the first Western country to be hit by the pandemic last year and has so far registered 136,245 deaths - the second highest tally in Europe



Omicron variant which is sweeping Europe and the United States.

The government will cut the waiting time for a booster following second vaccinations to four months from five.

vaccine effectiveness fades over time. As a result, from Feb. 1, the certificates, which register if someone has been vaccinated or has recently recovered from coronavirus, will only be valid for six months rather than nine at present.

after Britain. However its vaccination campaign has proved one of the most effective in the world and the government has said it is determined to avoid a return to generalized lockdowns.

This Chinese city found a Covid cluster. All 13 million residents are now under lockdown

(CNN) - On Tuesday, the central Chinese city of Xi'an recorded 52 new Covid-19 cases. By Wednesday, authorities had imposed strict lockdown measures on its estimated 13 million residents.

The sweeping restrictions, which prevent people from leaving their homes, come as the country braces for the Lunar New Year travel rush, followed by the 2022 Winter Olympics, due to begin in the capital Beijing on February 4.

Xi'an, an ancient city known internationally as the home of the 2,000-year-old Terracotta warriors sculptures, detected its first case connected to the latest outbreak at a quarantine hotel on December 9. The virus is believed to have then spread into the community via an infected hotel worker.

Officials believe the cluster is linked to an inbound flight from Pakistan on December 4, where at least six passengers were found to have the Delta variant. So far, there have been no reported cases of the Omicron variant in Xi'an.

Authorities moved swiftly, suspending schools and conducting mass testing for the entire city. Cases have continued to climb,



Residents queue up for Covid tests at a testing site in Xi'an, China, on December 21.

however. Since December 9, the city has recorded a total of 206 cases. On Wednesday, authorities recorded 63 new locally transmitted cases, Xi'an's highest daily figure this month.

By noon on Wednesday, more than 30,000 people who were believed to have come into contact with a confirmed case were placed in government quarantine, according to state-run newspaper China Daily. That same day, the city imposed a strict lockdown until further notice for all residents.

Xi'an is now designated a "controlled area," China's second-highest category of lockdown -- meaning residents are banned from leaving their homes except for urgent cases like medical emergencies. Each household is only allowed to send one des-

ignated person out of the house to buy groceries every two days.

After the new restrictions were announced, families rushed to supermarkets to stock up on supplies before the lockdown went into effect at midnight, according to state-run tabloid the Global Times.

Schools, public facilities and transport systems are also closed except for essential service providers like hospitals and supermarkets, according to the local government's announcement.

Xi'an is one level away from the highest lockdown category of "sealed area," in which residents are completely banned from leaving their homes, and groceries are delivered to their door.

This is only the fourth time a major Chinese city has been placed under

the "controlled area" lockdown. Though previous outbreaks have seen similar restrictions, they are typically only applied to specific areas where infections are most prevalent -- not an entire city.

The emergence of yet another outbreak has raised questions over the long-term viability of China's ambitious "zero-Covid" policy, which aims to eliminate the virus completely within the country's borders.

Despite administering more than 2.7 billion doses of its homegrown vaccines, authorities have struggled with a number of fast-spreading outbreaks.

The outbreak in Xi'an follows a Delta-driven outbreak in the summer; a September outbreak in Fujian province; an October outbreak that spread to more than half the country; then several clusters in Inner Mongolia in November, which have spread to Zhejiang province in recent weeks.

In the past week alone, in addition to Xi'an, cases have also been recorded in Henan province, Zhejiang province, Guangdong province, Guangxi autonomous region, and the cities of Beijing and Tianjin.

Daunte Wright death: US 'Taser mix-up' ex-officer guilty of manslaughter

BBC - A veteran former Minnesota police officer has been found guilty of manslaughter for the fatal shooting of a black motorist in April.

Kim Potter, 49, has claimed she mistakenly drew her gun instead of a Taser and killed 20-year old Daunte Wright during a traffic stop.

His death occurred at a time of high tensions, with the trial over George Floyd's murder taking place nearby.

Ms Potter's sentencing has been scheduled for 18 February.

Over the course of four days, the 12 jurors deliberated for approximately 27 hours before reaching a decision.

The first charge against Ms Potter - first-degree manslaughter - is applied to cases in which the defendant causes someone's death while attempting to commit a lesser crime.

In Ms Potter's case, prosecutors accused her of killing Mr Wright as a result of her "reckless" handling of a firearm.

The second charge - second-degree manslaughter - is used in cases in which

a death is caused by negligence and the taking of unreasonable risk.

The first charge carries a maximum penalty of 15 years and a fine of up to \$30,000 (£22,000). The second charge is punishable by up to 10 years imprisonment and a \$20,000 fine.

What was the reaction?

As the verdict was read, Ms Potter kept her head down, looking at the jury only briefly, as her two lawyers placed their hands on her shoulders.

Judge Regina Chu then ordered that Ms Potter be taken into custody and held without bail until the sentencing.

One of her relatives could be heard shouting "love you Kim" as she was handcuffed, to which she replied "love you", according to court reporters.

Outside the courthouse, a crowd of demonstrators cheered, with some chanting Mr Wright's name and "the people can never be defeated".

Speaking to reporters, Mr Wright's mother Katie said she felt "every single emotion you can imagine" as the verdict was



read, adding that it had been a "long fight for accountability".

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison said that the guilty verdict "shows the whole world" that those who enforce the law "are also willing to live by it".

"My thoughts are also

with Ms Potter today," Mr Ellison added, noting she was "remorseful" and wishing "the best for her and her family".

"But the truth is she will be able to correspond with them no matter what happens. The Wrights won't be able to talk to Daunte."

Chile's tattooed president-elect honors homeland in ink

(AP) — When Gabriel Boric is sworn in as Chile's president he'll not only be the youngest to lead the South American country but also the first in Latin America to sport several tattoos.

The question is whether he'll openly display them.

One person hoping he does is Yumbel Góngora, the self-proclaimed “tattoo dissident” who inked the three elaborate designs that fill Boric's arms and back with sweeping imagery from his native Patagonia region.

“It's important that a person never forgets their roots. That always keeps you focused on where you are and what's important ... not get lost in the fame,” Góngora told The Associated Press while taking a break at her parlor in downtown Santiago decorated with artwork containing feminist slogans.

Boric, 35, scored a historic victory in Sunday's runoff over a one-time admirer of Donald Trump after campaigning on a promise to attack the nagging poverty and inequality that he and leftist supporters argue is the unacceptable underbelly of a free market model imposed decades ago by the dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

Since his days as a student protest leader, Boric has made a career of

flouting conventions. He shunned the traditional suit and tie when he was elected to congress in 2014 and instead wore rock band T-shirts, jeans and once even a Mohawk, all the while drawing the ire of traditionalists.

“I couldn't care less,” he said at the time, dismissing the conventions as “a tool of the elites to distinguish themselves from the low people.”

But he adopted a decidedly more conformist look in the run up to Sunday's runoff election — still no tie, but a dark sport coat, dress shirts and well-groomed beard — to court more conservative Chileans on edge about voting for an untested millennial who counts among his supporters Chile's Communist Party.

Góngora said she studied old maps of Chile for months in coming up with the first tattoo she designed for Boric nearly a decade ago: a map of the ice-capped islands and labyrinthine fjords near where both grew up in Punta Arenas, at the tip of the South American continent. Later, she designed two more: a lenga tree twisted into knots by the strong southern winds and an end-of-world lighthouse shining into emptiness that Boric had carved into his left arm during a

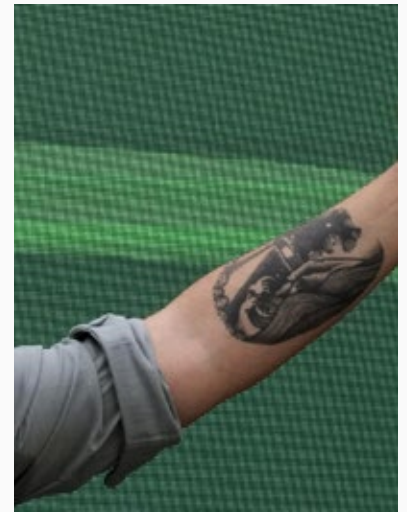
battle with depression.

“A lonely Magellan lighthouse among the stormy and mysterious seas of southern Patagonia,” Boric said in a 2018 social media post showcasing Góngora's body art. “I'm going to live there one day but in the meantime it lives with me.”

Góngora, whose dyed green hair, piercings and tattoos are something of a walking advertisement for her university-trained artistry, said Boric always stood out among her urban hipster clientele because of his humility — something she attributes to his upbringing far from the capital.

But she felt betrayed by her fellow activist when in November 2019 he negotiated a deal with allies of President Sebastian Pinera to put an end to nationwide protests in exchange for a commitment to hold a plebiscite on rewriting the Pinochet-era constitution. It was a risky political decision that at the time cost Boric the support of hardliners like Góngora, who identifies as a “anarchist-feminist.”

Like huge numbers of often apathetic Chilean youth, she nonetheless voted for Boric in the runoff, fearing his conservative opponent — José Antonio Kast — would be a major setback for wom-



A tattoo of a lighthouse set on the Strait of Magellan decorates the arm of then presidential candidate Gabriel Boric during a rally in Santiago, Chile, Monday, Nov. 1, 2021. The tattoo on the now President-elect's arm is by Chilean tattoo artist Yumbel Gongora and it shows the famed sea rout in southern Chile where Boric hails from

en, indigenous rights and Chile's LGBTQ community.

In her binder sits the sketch for yet another tattoo for Boric — its design a secret — that the two discussed a while ago. With the demands of his new job and the future of Chile riding on his shoulders, she doesn't know if she gets to ink it, though.

“I'd hope he doesn't stop being a rocker,” Góngora said. “But I don't know if that will fly in politics. Then again, nobody ever expected such a young president.”

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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

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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

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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

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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

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Minimum 2 years' experience dealing with Physiotherapy & Pain Management

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Minimum 5 years' experience

Experience in presenting and communicating to senior management at all levels

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Computer literacy including proficiency in MS Office Suite

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

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

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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

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NATIONAL SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

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BANNED ITEMS

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- Plastic forks, knives, straws and spoons and lids
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Body Corporate - \$5000

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APUA	Cassada Gardens
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Lingies Lights & Windows	Utility Drive
V.E.G. International	Herberts Main Road
Kennedy's Enterprises	All Saints Road
Quality electrical sales & services	Hawkins Drive
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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

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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.

Nets plan to play Christmas; NBA, union evaluating protocols



NEW YORK (AP) — The Brooklyn Nets have enough players to fly to Los Angeles and play their Christmas showdown against the Lakers, though Kevin Durant might not be among them. Coach Steve Nash said Thursday that James Harden has cleared the NBA's health and safety protocols, but he said the Nets don't expect any of their players still in the protocols to come out in time for the game. That would include Durant, the NBA's leading scorer.

Brooklyn planning to play on Saturday is an obvious positive sign, as was Chicago coach Billy Donovan announcing after practice Thursday that the Bulls no longer have any players on the protocols list. The Bulls had as many as 10 on that list last week, when the league postponed two of their games as a result. The Nets have had their last three scheduled games postponed — among the NBA's nine postponements thus far — when a corona

virus outbreak left them with a league-high 10 players in protocols. Nash said Harden, Paul Millsap and Jevon Carter had also cleared protocols, though rookies Cam Thomas, Kessler Edwards and David Duke Jr. had since entered. Teams need a minimum of eight players to start a game. Nash said the Nets have more than enough to do that.

But it's unclear if they will have another practice before the game Saturday. Nash said it's only in the last day that healthy players have been able to return to the practice facility for individual workouts.

"It's tricky," Nash said. "We haven't been able to do a lot, but we do what we can and we'll continue to just adapt as the rules and mandates come in."

By late Thursday afternoon, based on team injury reports or similar disclosures, there were more than 90 NBA players dealing with a virus-related issue — often a positive test, though not always.

The list included stars such as Giannis Antetokounmpo, Luka Doncic and Trae Young. All three are scheduled to be part of the NBA's five-game holiday schedule.

Later Thursday, the Washington Wizards announced star Bradley Beal would miss that night's game at the New York Knicks because of health and safety protocols. Beal, who missed out on the chance to play in the Olympics last year after testing positive, said before this season he was unvaccinated.

The Detroit Pistons said on Thursday evening they had added four players to the protocols, where they joined rookie Cade Cunningham, the team's leading scorer.

It is important to note that players can enter and exit the health and safety protocols list quickly in some cases, some teams do not release updated numbers except when mandated by league rule, and not everyone on the list has tested positive for COVID-19.

The Ashes Series **Starc expected to be fit for Boxing Day but Hazlewood remains unlikely**

Michael Sparc is expected to be fit for Boxing Day despite suffering a twinge in his ribs while batting in the second Ashes Test in Adelaide but Josh Hazlewood's fitness is an unknown as he was due to arrive in Melbourne on Thursday afternoon.

Starc was in obvious discomfort while batting in the second innings after an attempted slog-sweep caused a sharp jab of pain in his ribs. But he bowled without issue or complaint in the fourth innings delivering 27 overs and taking the key wickets of Joe Root and Ollie Pope to help Australia claim victory.

Hazlewood missed the second Test due to a side strain he suffered during the first Test in Brisbane. He flew home to Sydney for a week but is rejoining the squad in Melbourne after they had three days off post the win in Adelaide.

Pat Cummins is a lock to return after missing the Adelaide Test due to being a close contact of a Covid case, while Victoria fast bowler Scott Boland has been formally added to Australia's squad having been flown in as cover in Adelaide.

Australia coach Justin Langer was confident Starc would be fine for Boxing Day but was unsure about Hazlewood's



Australia's Mitchell Starc is attended by physio

prospects. "It's just [Starc's] rib actually," Langer said. "A lot of the bowlers talk about when they come back to Test cricket, bowl more overs, they jam down on that rib area so he should be fine. He's tough."

"If he's not right, then we'll look at it. But at this stage, there's no indication suggesting he won't be playing the next Test. We will wait and see how Josh Hazlewood pulls up, he arrives this afternoon (Thursday)."

Langer was delighted with Starc's performance in Adelaide as the leader of Australia's attack in the absence of Cummins and Hazlewood echoing the thoughts of Australia's stand-in captain Steven Smith.

"I honestly thought Mitch Starc was almost the man of

the match last game," he said. "There's been a lot of talk about Mitch Starc for the last few years but he just keeps turning up. He's an unbelievable athlete. He's incredibly fit."

"His resilience to just keep coming up over and over and over again is remarkable really, and his consistency of length and the way he controlled the tempo of the game last game was a great credit to him, particularly with Patty and Josh Hazlewood not playing."

"He became the leader of the group. He did a fantastic job. I'd be very surprised if he doesn't get up for Boxing Day."

Australia leads the series 2-0.

WEST INDIES VS ENGLAND 2022

TICKETS go on sale

ST JOHN'S, Antigua – Cricket West Indies (CWI) Wednesday announced that tickets are now on general sale for the West Indies vs England five-match T20I Series and three-match Test Series in 2022. Fans can register for their new ticket accounts at www.windiescricket.com/tickets and purchase their selected seats in advance for any individual match day or special 5-day Test season tickets.

Tickets are available in four price categories providing a range of viewing positions for every budget from US\$80 for premium seats with the best views behind the bowlers' arms to US\$20 for mounds and grounds entry in Antigua. 5-Day Test Match "season tickets" provide access to all five days of cricket at a discounted price to buying each match day.

West Indies fans residing in the Caribbean will receive special promotions for the England tour when they register for a ticket account, as well as access to preferred seats in advance

of each match. The new CWI Ticket service will offer advance ticketing access for every West Indies home fixture, delivering tickets direct to fans' mobile devices for presentation on mobile screens for entry into the stadium. Alternatively, fans can print out their tickets at home to bring to the game. Every fan will also have the opportunity to receive special match day incentives and promotions through their ticket accounts.

All fans should be aware that only fully vaccinated spectators against COVID-19 will be allowed into the venues and will be required to bring their vaccination documentation with them to be assured of entry. Fans will need to make sure they are fully vaccinated at least two weeks ahead of the West Indies vs England matches they plan to attend.

CWI Commercial Director, Dominic Warne said, "We know that West Indies and England fans alike are excited at the prospect of the upcoming T20I and Test Series.



The new CWI ticket service gives any fan the chance to secure their tickets in advance in their preferred location in each venue. We are delighted to introduce this new service using leading technology which will deliver tickets straight to fans inboxes and devices, provide smarter promotional offers and removes the need to queue for tickets."

The famous West Indies Party Stand will be introduced on sale in early 2022 and box office times and locations will be announced shortly with tickets available for purchase approximately one week in advance of each match.

England arrive in Barbados in January to play the blockbuster five-match T20I Series in a nine-day

period from January 22 to 30, 2022, including two consecutive weekends of back-to-back action. The highly-anticipated Test Series for the newly-minted Richards-Botham trophy, will start appropriately at the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Ground in Antigua on March 8-12. The action then moves to Kensington Oval in Barbados for the second Test starting on March 16-20, with the third Test match on the "Spice Isle" of Grenada at the National Stadium on March 24-28.

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

ENGLAND NAMES COACH FOR WEST INDIES SERIES

*Former England Captain,
Paul Collingwood*



(Reuters) - Former England captain Paul Collingwood will stand in as head coach for England's five-match Twenty20 International series against West Indies next month, the country's cricket board (ECB) said on Thursday.

Regular head coach Chris Silverwood will take a break following the ongoing Ashes series against Australia, with Marcus Trescothick joining Collingwood as

an assistant coach. Eoin Morgan will captain the squad.

Collingwood was at the T20 World Cup earlier this year with England before going to the Ashes, but flew back to Britain last week.

Of the 16 players named in the squad, 11 travelled to the World Cup, with uncapped left-arm seamer David Payne earning a maiden call-up to the England T20I team.

"We have selected a strong squad with some serious batting power and a balanced attack as we begin preparations ahead of the T20 World Cup in Australia," Collingwood said.

"The World Cup is less than a year away and there will be increased opportunities for the squad in the absence of those players who are with the Ashes squad."

The series will begin on Jan. 22 and will conclude on Jan. 30.

Squad: Eoin Morgan (captain), Moeen Ali, Tom Banton, Sam Billings, Liam Dawson, George Garton, Chris Jordan, Liam Livingstone, Saqib Mahmood, Tymal Mills, David Payne, Adil Rashid, Jason Roy, Phil Salt, Reece Topley, James Vince.

DEWS