



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

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# BUDGET DAY IN ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

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The West Indian whistling duck, whose conservation status is listed as vulnerable, is a nocturnal bird that is widely scattered throughout the Caribbean, including Antigua and Barbuda, where it makes its home in mangroves and other wetlands. **Story on Page 5.** [Photo credit: Sergey Uryadnikov]

## Budget Day in Antigua and Barbuda

Minister of Finance, Prime Minister Gaston Browne, will this morning deliver the Budget Statement in Parliament.

The details of the budget are not revealed before the prime minister's presentation, therefore observers will be paying keen attention to the plans outlined, especially with regard to post-COVID economic recovery.

This year's presentation is themed, "Setting the Stage for Economic Rejuvenation" and Prime Minister Browne is expected to approach the podium at 9:30am to begin delivering the budget statement.

In 2021, the finance minister's delivery centered on

"Maintaining a Healthy Nation and Restoring a Vibrant Economy".

Prime Minister Browne detailed the challenges the country was facing and gave the assurance that the economic disruption will not last forever.

He emphasised last year the need for his government to boost public finances over the medium term, and highlighted five key fiscal targets, among them the projected increase of tax to GDP by at least 18% by 2023 which will be maintained at a minimum of 20% over the medium-term.

Stating then that Antigua and Barbuda's Tax to GDP is among the lowest among



Prime Minister Gaston Browne members of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union, the minister of finance said the lop-sided advantage must cease by addressing tax evasion and avoidance which have greatly affected revenue intake.

In last year's budget, \$143.1 million was allocated to the Ministry of Education.

The second largest allocation went to the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment, \$113.4 million.



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**UPDATED SCHEDULE**



## Diondre Samuel charged for death of Lashauna Bridgen

Belmont resident Diondre Samuel, 26, is to appear in Court today charged with causing the death of Jamaican national Lashauna Bridgen, 29.

The police have charged Samuel



*Police on the scene of the accident that took Lashauna Bridgen's life*

with causing death by dangerous driving.

Samuel was the driver of a grey Toyota Crown motor car that struck Bridgen on Friars Hill Road shortly before 6am on 20th January, 2022.

According to reports, Bridgen, who was a security guard, was reportedly on her way to work walking from west to east of Friars Hill Road when she was struck by a car travelling from south to north in the vicinity of Village Walk.

The woman was transported by EMS to Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre and was being treated for her injuries when she passed away at 10:23



*Lashauna Bridgen*

am.

Bridgen is the country's first road fatality for 2022.

The results of an autopsy on Tuesday revealed the woman died as a result of the injuries she sustained following the collision.

## Case against men accused of Nigel Christian's murder adjourned yet again

The three men accused of the 2020 murder of former Customs Officer Nigel Christian will next appear before the court on 27th April, 2022.

This is after committal proceedings were adjourned once again on Wednesday when LeSean Bully, Saleim Harrigan and Wayne Thomas appeared before the All Saints Magistrates' Court.

Bully, 30, of Cashew Hill, Thomas, 28, of Hatton and Harrigan, 30, of Greenbay are accused of kidnapping Christian, 44, from his McKinnons home on 10th July, 2020, shooting him multiple times, then dumping his body at Thibou.

Bully and Thomas first appeared before the court on 9th April, 2021. Harrigan was taken before the court a



*L to R: Saleim Harrigan, LeSean Bully and Wayne Thomas are charged with the murder of Nigel Christian*

week later.

It has always been believed that a fourth person was involved in the crime, however that individual has not yet been discovered.

Christian's murder came nine months after the shooting of another customs officer, Cornell Benjamin.

Benjamin was shot in the legs.

Both men were in-

involved in the investigation of a major customs fraud matter which uncovered a multi-million-dollar shortfall in revenue on imported items.

While it is unclear whether the attacks on the customs officers were connected or related to the fraud investigation, it has always been believed to have played a role.



*Former Inspector of Customs, Nigel Christian, was abducted from his home and murdered in July 2020.*

Wendel Robinson represents Thomas, Bully is represented by Andrew O'Kola and Harrigan is represented by Michael Archibald.

# Female police officer caught shoplifting asked to resign

The female police officer who was accused of shoplifting after a supermarket surveillance video went viral on Monday has been asked to resign. The video footage appeared to show the veteran officer concealing what insiders say was dental floss in her shopping bag. She was shown unpacking a number of other items from a small grocery basket just moments before the embarrassing incident.

Pointe Xpress learned on Wednesday that after countless appeals to Commissioner of Police Atlee Rodney for leniency on behalf of the 56-year-old corporal, the decision was taken to allow her to

resign instead of being fired.

Dismissal would mean the 31-year veteran of the police force would lose her pension and any other benefits she had accrued over the years.

The issue has reportedly caused friction within the force as some officers have taken the position that she ought not to have been given the opportunity to resign. Other officers made pleas for mercy arguing that she should not be made to lose the benefits of her long years of otherwise good service over a regrettable mistake.

In recent times, the police force has taken a hardline position against officers who



Surveillance footage released by the Perry Bay supermarket appeared to show the female officer placed an item in her shopping bag at the checkout counter.

have brought the organisation into disrepute. Just last week, it was revealed that officers who had incurred bad debt with civilian members of the public faced disciplinary action ranging from reprimand

to dismissal.

Even if the officer is allowed to retire and retain her pension, she will not be eligible to receive it for another nine years when she attains the age of 65.

## No word yet from ABEC on COVID-19 plans for coming elections

Political stakeholders across the region have taken careful note of the legal fracas that unfolded ahead of Barbados' January elections when thousands of eligible voters were denied the ability to cast their ballots because of their COVID-19 status.

It was determined that as many as 5000 people in Barbados who were either infected with or had been exposed to COVID-19 and were in isolation or quarantine would not be allowed to vote as it posed a threat to public safety.

With elections machinery well underway here in Antigua and Barbuda, the government and Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission are yet to indicate what measures will be taken to ensure a similar situation does not occur here.



In some circles, it has been proposed that in light of the ongoing nature of the pandemic, it might be time for governments to consider legislative changes which will allow eligible electors who find themselves affected by COVID-19 when an election is called the option of an absentee vote or other secure alternative methods of participation.

Efforts to reach ABEC chairman,

Nathaniel 'Paddy' James on Wednesday for comment on what plans are being made by the commission to address the new challenges created by COVID-19 ahead of elections were unsuccessful.

Meanwhile, the Boundaries Commission has announced that it will host a virtual consultation next Wednesday.

The 9th February meeting will be held via Zoom at 7pm and will seek to safely engage the public on matters related to the electoral process. At this time, questions, concerns and suggestions will be entertained by the members of the commission, which is led by Hilroy Humphreys.

Those interested in participating in the meeting may do so using the Zoom meeting code 72844658841 with access granted with the password sg493C.



## Sly J quits ZDK after four decades

Veteran radio personality James 'Sly J' Simon has resigned from ZDK Liberty Radio after several decades of service to the media establishment.

A source said the 'Chief Rocker', who singlehandedly controlled the national airwaves in the morning from Grenville Radio Limited's Ottos location, will begin a new job on WTP FM 93.5, the country's newest radio station.

This was confirmed by a jingle making the rounds on WhatsApp in which Simon invites the public to tune in to his new morning show.

His first day on the new job coincides with his birthday, 7th February, 2022.

In the jingle, Simon said the morning show won't ever be the same again.

Last week, 'Sly J' told listeners on his Breakfast Show/Your View programme that he would be taking va-

cation. However, his departure from the company, a closely guarded secret, leaked into the public domain, although many people remain oblivious to the news.

The resignation of ZDK Radio's principal on-air personality will likely shake the station to its core. With a dominant presence in the country exceeding fifty years, the popularity of ZDK has waned in recent years.

The radio station's decline seems set to continue as there are reports that more on-air personalities will likely leave the company which is the brainchild of Ivor G. T. Bird.

These days, it is Mr. Bird's son, Sean, who has taken control of the day-to-day operations of the radio station.

Sean Bird will contest the coming elections as the United Progressive Party's candidate in St. John's Rural East.



*James 'Sly J' Simon's departure from ZDK is believed to be the first of many resignations to come.*

It is unclear whether Bird's affiliation with the opposition party has any bearing on Sly J's departure and the resignations that are to come.

Up until Tuesday morning, Sly J hosted his morning show, however, yesterday, another personality was seated behind the console.

## Tourism Board, Frontier Airlines raise awareness about endangered A&B Whistling Duck

As 2021 ended, Frontier Airlines, an American carrier headquartered in Colorado, launched service to Antigua and Barbuda with flights on Saturday out of Orlando, Florida that began on December 6.

Frontier's expansion into 17 Caribbean islands was welcome news. With a commitment to growth, Frontier's message to consumers is, "the Caribbean has never been easier to get to, as we continue to be able to deliver on our promise of low fares done right".

Building on their pledge to the region, Frontier has now launched a competition



to brand the tail of their next plane with one of the native and endangered species in the destinations they serve.

In a statement to launch the initiative, Frontier announced, "By voting to select the species that will be emblazoned on our next

plane tail, you are not only entering to win a dream vacation, but you are helping bring awareness to the native, and endangered species in these destinations as well".

Antigua and Barbuda's, West Indian Whistling

Duck has been selected as one of the finalists in the competition.

In sharing that news, Dean Fenton, Director of Tourism for the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority in the USA said, "The launch  
*cont'd on pg 6*

# A&B imposes ban on Brazilian meat products

The Veterinary and Livestock Division has placed an immediate ban on the importation of meat products from Brazil.

Chief Veterinarian, Dr. Tubal Edwards, explained on Tuesday while the Division acknowledges that rising food costs will cause importers to look for cheaper markets in which to procure goods, Brazilian meat products, which were once known for both quality and value are now off the table.

According to Dr. Edwards, "Due to the constant threat of diseases such as foot and mouth, the Veterinary and Livestock Division in the Ministry of Agriculture cannot allow for the importation of meat and/or meat products (beef, pork, mutton or chevron) from Brazil."

A study is now being conducted by the Caribbean Agriculture, Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHSA) on the feasibility of importing meat and meat products from the South American nation.

The ban on products from South and Central America is only limited to Brazil however. Other major meat producing countries in the region including Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina,



*A Brazilian rancher herding his cattle as the local industry fights to prove its safety credentials.*

Chile and Belize are unaffected by the decision.

For years, Brazil has been plagued with accusations of exporting substandard quality meat and meat products.

Late last year, the country came under fire for its delayed reporting of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), or Mad Cow Disease, in its beef exports.

On September 3, 2021, Brazil announced two cases of atypical BSE that were detected in June of the same

year.

Most countries report similar cases to the World Organization of Animal Health (OIE) immediately – with both the United Kingdom and Germany in 2021 reporting cases to OIE within days of their detection — but Brazil reported its cases more than two months after the fact, breaking trust with the OIE and global trading partners.

This has been a routine occurrence, with Brazil also waiting months or even years to report similar cases in

## cont'd from pg 5

of the new service out of the Orlando airport is indicative of the confidence Frontier Airlines has in Antigua and Barbuda.

"Having the West Indian Whistling-Duck selected to brand the tail of their next plane would not only be an honor, but it will also bring the needed attention to one of the rarest ducks in the Americas".

Fenton continued, "I encourage everyone to vote for Antigua and Barbuda's West Indian

Whistling-Duck. Additionally, contestants that select the West Indian Whistling-Duck are automatically

entered into a sweepstake to win a 7-night dream vacation for two in Antigua and Barbuda".

Voting ends on Feb 14, 2022, at 11:59pm Mountain Time and takes place via the URL.

Thu 03 | Day

81°



36%  
ENE 8 mph

Partly cloudy early followed by mostly cloudy skies and a few showers later in the day. High 81F. Winds ENE at 5 to 10 mph. Chance of rain 40%.



Humidity  
74%



UV Index  
9 of 10



Sunrise  
6:38 am



Sunset  
6:04 pm

Thu 03 | Night

71°



44%  
ENE 8 mph

Considerable cloudiness with occasional rain showers. Low 71F. Winds ENE at 5 to 10 mph. Chance of rain 40%.



Humidity  
86%



UV Index  
0 of 10



Moonrise  
8:38 am



Moonset  
8:38 pm

● Waxing Crescent

## The Right Honourable Sir Vere Cornwall Bird Sr.

The Right Honourable Sir Vere Cornwall Bird Sr. began his adult career as an officer in the Salvation Army where he would serve for two years.

During this time he also continued to pursue his true passion for trade unionism and politics.

Ultimately he made the decision to leave service in the Salvation Army in order to join the national fight against landowners in defence of the dismal treatment of black Antiguan and Barbudans.

When the Antigua Trades

and Labour Union (ATLU) was formed in 1939, Sir Vere was a founding and executive member. By 1943 he had become president of the union and was leading a battle for better working conditions and increased pay against the white sugar barons.

The union entered electoral politics for the first time in 1946. Sir Vere won, in a by-election, a seat in the legislature and was appointed a member of the Executive Council.

When universal adult suffrage was introduced here in 1951, the ATLU, under the



*The Rt. Hon. Sir Vere Cornwall Bird Sr.*

banner of the Antigua Labour Party, won all seats in the legislature, a feat it repeated until 1967, making Antigua a country with a multi-party system but with freely voted one-party control.

The ministerial system was introduced in 1956 and the Governor gave Bird the trade and production portfolio, and when further constitutional advancement came in 1960, he was named Chief Minister.

In 1967, Antigua and Barbuda became the first Eastern Caribbean island to receive the associated statehood constitution from Britain that gave internal self-government but with London remaining responsible for foreign policy and defence.

Faced with a split in the ATLU in 1967 and rioting in 1968 the Antigua Workers Union was formed and later the Progressive Labour Movement (PLM). Then Premier Bird decided to resign as head of the ATLU because he felt it was not right to hold that position

while also leading the nation.

After a period of political decline which was to see him gone for only five years between 1971 and 1976 when the PLM took power, Sir Vere again took the government.

Sir Vere led Antigua and Barbuda into independence in 1981 when he became the first prime minister, a post he held until his retirement in 1994.

### **A timeline of Sir Vere's political career**

Chief Minister of Antigua from 1 January 1960 to 27 February 1967

Premier of Antigua from 27 February 1967 to 14 February 1971

Premier of Antigua from 1 February 1976 to 1 November 1981

Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda from 1 November 1981 to 9 March 1994.

In 1994, Sir Vere was made a Knight of the Order of the National Hero (KNH). He passed away five years later in St. John's on 28 June 1999.



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# Why black women in a predominantly black culture are still bleaching their skin

By **Rebekah Kebede**

*Investigating deep-rooted ideals in Jamaica.*

Outside her ground-floor apartment in Kingston, hairstylist Jody Cooper sits on the bright blue bench that serves as her makeshift salon. The 22-year-old native Jamaican is flipping through photographs of herself—there she is a few years ago in a studded monokini, with strawberry blonde hair and blue eyeshadow, her skin several shades lighter than it is now.

Cooper doesn't remember making a conscious choice to bleach her skin. Growing up, everyone around her was doing it—her school friends, her mom, her aunt. So she did it too. For nine years, she rubbed creams on her face and body, covering up with tights and long sleeves that she believed would make the bleach work better. Her goal was to transform into what Jamaicans call a "browning": a lighter-skinned black person.

As a browning, Cooper turned heads. "It's nice when the guys call after you saying, 'Browning!' and you know you born black," she says, laughing. She loved the attention; she loved fooling people into thinking she was someone a little bit different.

Payne Land—where Cooper grew up and still lives to this day—is one of the lower-income neighborhoods in the city, a collection of mid-rise cinder-block apartment buildings at Kingston's southern edge, bordered by the industrial and manufacturing district near the port. Black cultural icons Bob Marley and Marcus Garvey called this neighborhood home, too, but even still, it's light skin that's perceived by many here to be the ideal.

"When you black in Jamaica, nobody see you," Cooper explains.

A few months ago she became a born-again Christian and, as part of that conversion, gave up bleaching. Her skin is back to what she calls "black"—a deep brown.

Being fairer may have made her feel pretty for a while, but Cooper says her body has yet to recover from years of ex-

posure to the harsh chemicals found in bleaching creams. She says the habit left her with a rash and blames skin bleaching for the discoloration around her eyes, which she describes as, "black like somebody sock me in the head." She's wiser to it now: "The bleaching, I don't get nothing from it," she says, looking back, "and it damage my body."

As Cooper speaks about her time as a "bleacher," neighbors and friends gather to weigh in. "Bleaching cut nature, it kill nature," argues Sauna Boyd. Nadia Lounds pipes up to say she "loves" the bleaching creams that have made her skin "clear."

The debate happening in this Payne Land courtyard is playing out across the country among subcultures and communities of women who, on both sides of the issue, are grappling with what beauty really means—and what sacrifices are worth making for it.

The desire for a lighter complexion is not a new phenomenon in Jamaica. It's deeply rooted in a history of slavery and colonialism, says Christopher Charles, Ph.D., a senior lecturer in political psychology at University of the West Indies who has conducted extensive research on the subject. "It's about following standards that are dictated by Eurocentrism," he says. "It's a response to hundreds of years of colonial indoctrination that has been passed down through socialization since independence."

Historically, "brown" Jamaicans were the product of relationships between black Jamaicans and white slave-owners or colonial rulers, and often received greater access to land and resources as a result of their white ancestry. Today, lighter brown skin is still read as a marker of privilege and access—class is often divided among racial lines, with wealthier and more powerful Jamaicans generally being white and brown, while poor Jamaicans are mostly black. In this context, Charles says, skin bleaching becomes a strategic choice.

"If you look at most of our advertisements, most of the things that people that would aspire towards, you see them



Jody Cooper - Jody Cooper, pictured below with her natural skin tone and above at the height of becoming a 'browning', bleached her skin regularly for nine years [Photos by Marlon James]

depicted with a lighter complexioned person," says Donna Braham, M.D., a dermatologist who sees patients in Kingston and in the coastal tourist city of Ocho Rios. "That's the reality."

As recently as 2011, local newspapers reported that Jamaica's premier hospitality training agency, the Human Employment and Resource Training Trust, was receiving requests from clients for candidates who were "brownings"—particularly when looking to fill front-of-house roles. (The Trust denied this was the case.) "It's something that's there from childhood," Dr. Braham says of the implicit connection between skin tone and success. "You see that for you to be able to be anybody in life, you need to have a certain skin tone."

Cooper insists she will make sure her two-year-old daughter doesn't bleach, but she knows she faces an uphill battle. Even when parents urge children to be comfortable in their own skin, the "lighter is better" message is hard to block out.

Jamaican novelist Nicole Dennis-Benn, whose book *Here Comes the Sun* features a teenage character who

*cont'd on pg 9*



*cont'd from pg 8*

bleaches her skin, wrote an essay on how the fair complexions of most of the winners of the Miss Jamaica pageant influenced her ideas of beauty as a child in Kingston. Photos of these Miss Jamaicas were everywhere, from the supermarket to liquor stores. "Though they were strangers, our community seemed to love them more than they loved us," Dennis-Benn writes. Meanwhile, darker-skinned Jamaican women like Grace Jones—though famous internationally—were relative unknowns at home.

In a study Charles authored in the *Caribbean Journal of Psychology*, the top three reasons given for bleaching skin were wanting a lighter or brighter complexion, getting rid of facial imperfections, and looking beautiful. Charles points out that many people who bleach their skin, like Cooper, are rewarded for it. "People tell them that they are beautiful. People validate them," he says. "There are social benefits to having light skin, even if manufactured."

Many of the women interviewed for this story said they got compliments, were told they looked "cute," or were given more attention after they bleached their skin. A number of women said lighter skin looks better in photographs, and that those images get more views when posted on social media. The payoff is significant enough that even those who don't have a lot of disposable income will spend significant amounts on their bleaching habit: Bleaching creams and gels can cost anywhere from a dollar or two for a small tube to around \$7 for



*A Jamaican street vendor mixes a batch of skin-bleaching cream.*

a bottle. Despite the minimum wage in Jamaica equalling less than \$50 per week, some women report spending \$20 to \$30 on creams every couple of weeks—and believe it to be a worthwhile investment.

"Make man see you," says Kayalla Pierce, who lives in Kingston's Jones Town neighbourhood. "Make you look pretty, like you just land from foreign." In Jamaica, having the means to get a visa and travel to "foreign" (usually the U.S., Canada, or the U.K.) connotes a higher status and privilege.

Jamaican pop culture has also perpetuated the stereotype that men find paler women more attractive. Reggae star Buju Banton created a controversy in the early '90s with his hit "Me Love Me Browning."

Petal Carr was gutted by the song. "When Buju did 'Browning' song, make me feel very bad," she says. Carr, now 52, bleached her skin for decades, starting when she was a teenager until she quit a few years ago. As a young girl, people would mock her skin colour, shouting, "Blackie! You're so black! Black as a hole!" she recalls. Banton's song tapped into deep insecurities

she had about her dark complexion. "It make people bleach."

Faced with criticism that he was wounding black pride, Banton released "Love Me Black Woman" shortly afterwards, but it wasn't as big a hit. In turn, another dancehall star Nardo Ranks mocked women who use chemical lighteners in his song "Dem ah Bleach," and blamed Banton for causing a run on bleaching creams.

But Charles argues that the decision to bleach is not necessarily a rejection of black culture, nor is it a result of poor self-esteem. While some people who bleach their skin may lack confidence, his research has shown that bleachers have the same rates of low self-esteem as people who don't bleach. With lighter-skinned Jamaicans clearly viewed as more attractive and favoured, "the self-hate narrative just doesn't make any sense," Charles says. "When you pathologise people who lighten their complexion, you ignore the racism and colourism and the system that incites them to do this. You're actually blaming the victim."

The women interviewed

for this story don't want to be seen as though they're out to radically change themselves, something that would imply self-hatred and low self-esteem. They prefer to view bleaching as a slight improvement—a superficial pick-me-up that doesn't chip away at the core of their racial identity. They seldom explicitly mention racism or colourism as a factor in choosing to bleach. Instead they use vague language, often an echo of the words the products themselves are marketed with: They want to be "brighter," "clearer," get a "different look," "tone" their skin, or "cool down" their complexion. Sometimes people who bleach are looking to get a more "matte" look, Dr. Braham says. But generally, all of these terms mean the same thing: skin that is not dark.

In Jamaica, the place to go for bleaching creams is a few-block stretch of Princess Street in downtown Kingston. Wholesale shops, many run by Chinese expats, display the products behind glass or metal grills. Outside, vendors with boxes of creams line the street.

But the market is hardly specific to this community. It's a global phenomenon worth billions of dollars, particularly in Asia.

In 2016, the market for legal "skin whitening" products was \$5.6 billion in China alone, according to global market research company Euromonitor International. Julia Wray, editor of the cosmetics industry magazine *Soap, Perfumery & Cosmetics*, says there's been a recent uptick in consumer interest in the West, too. "Brightening" and "anti-dark spot" products began to

*cont'd on pg 10*

# Health & Wellness

*cont'd from pg 9*

take off in the U.S. roughly six or seven years ago, Wray says; last year it was estimated to be a \$600 million market.

Christine Greensworth, 26, has been selling the creams out of a box for more than 10 years and feels it's been very lucrative. "It sell more than food," she says. Her most popular product is Neoprosone, but she shakes her head when asked if she uses it: "Me no want brown. Me want stay black."

Seth "Marlon" McGhie is one of the vendors who sits on Princess street, selling small baggies of Nadinola. She says she makes a more-than-50-percent profit: She buys a bucket of the cream for JMD\$3,000 and pockets JMD \$1,700, about 13 U.S. dollars.

But many of the vendors don't want to talk to reporters. Media stories have highlighted the negative impacts of bleaching—it's bad for business.

Tyeisha Bailey, 25, says her full-body bleaching routine involves squeezing a tube of Neoprosone gel into a bottle of Idole lotion. She's been doing "rubbings"—the common expression for applying bleaching creams—of this potentially dangerous mix twice a day for a year. Several of the women interviewed for this article have even poured household bleach in a bath to try to jump-start the lightening process.

This do-it-yourself approach is the reason that dermatologists in Jamaica see so many patients suffering from the side effects of misusing or overusing bleaching creams. Dr. Richard Desnoes, a dermatologist and president of the Caribbean Dermatology Association, says that without prop-

er guidance on what strength of ingredient to use and for how long, skin lightening products can backfire—hydroquinone can cause ochronosis, a condition in which the skin actually gets darker.

This may be what happened to Carr, the Buju Banton fan. "Me used to use all kind of cream. Trust me," says Carr. She tried every new product that hit the market—the harsher, the better. She recalls that people would tell her, "'That one bad, you know! The Dolly cream bad! The Janet, it bad!' But when we say 'bad,' we mean 'good.'"

Now Carr blames those "bad" creams for her dark complexion and the thick, pock-marked skin on her cheeks. "It mash me up," she says.

Under a dermatologist's care, "the treatment would not continue indefinitely," Dr. Desnoes insists. "And a doctor would not recommend its use in an attempt to lighten the skin color of a person generally."

Skin lightening creams contain another ingredient that can have the opposite of the intended effect. A number of women interviewed for this article, including Carr's 22-year-old daughter Brittany, said they used lightening creams because they believed the products would help prevent acne. Initially, the steroids in bleaching products can smooth the skin, creating an almost baby-like texture, Dr. Braham says, but that is often short-lived. Long-term use of steroids can actually cause acne.

Bleaching creams with steroids can also weaken skin's elasticity, making it thinner and more fragile. Jamaican women refer to this as "busting



*A several-block radius around Princess Street in downtown Kingston serves as the city's skin-bleaching shopping hub.*

up." This compromised skin can create dark circles under the eyes—a phenomenon that some women call "duppy bats" or "ghost bats" after the name of a local moth. Steroids may even throw the skin's equilibrium out of sync, causing fungal infections.

But the side effects are more than aesthetic. Bleaching products can cause internal damage—creams that contain ammoniated mercury are a known possible cause of kidney problems.

MarieClaire.com interviewed 18 women who either currently use bleaching creams or used them in the past, and most of them reported having at least one side effect. A number said that they were well aware of the potential issues and would often stop using bleaching agents for a time to avoid them. But the chance of complications—even drastic ones—doesn't seem to be severe enough to convince bleachers to stop for good.

"They hear the ill effects, but as far as many of them are concerned, this is their way of being able to get a job," Dr. Braham says. "This is their

way of being able to make more money."

Cooper admits this is true. She says that bleaching her skin was something she did to get more work; she didn't believe anyone would entrust their hair to a woman who wasn't a "browning."

"When you're in the hair industry," she explains, "you have to look the part."

But there's a balancing act here, too—Carr, who is unemployed, suspects it's been difficult to find steady work due to the visible impacts of her bleaching. Once, when she responded to a job ad, she says she didn't even get past the receptionist.

"She look from head to toe and she say, 'No vacancy,'" Carr recalls. Now, she's trying to help her daughter Brittany, who's studying hospitality, avoid the same fate.

"Brittany, I warned her. I say, 'Look how it do me. You want it there that? Me old, but you young, you have everything ahead of you,'" Carr says.

Then again, she knows it's complicated. "Black is beautiful, but people make you feel a way...."



# The Poverty Mega Shock

**By Kairi Consultants Ltd**

There is no country in the world that has been immune from the impact of COVID-19. By the time that COVID-19 was declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO), many countries in the Caribbean were already recording its incidence.

No section of society has been immune either. As Governments have been forced to introduce lockdowns, many households find themselves without any source of income. This sudden pauperization has sparked discussion in social media and in the regular press across the region. Governments are being scrutinized over their responses to the poverty induced by the Pandemic.

## Poverty Measurement

But how is poverty measured in the first place? Official measurement and monitoring of poverty in developing countries came fully into vogue in the 1980s. Concern had developed over the impact of programmes implemented at the behest of the international financing institutions (IFIs) for the provision of support to countries facing fiscal and balance of payments crises.

Hard-hitting critique from the likes of UNICEF led to recoil of the IFIs and to their adoption of human face, decried irreverently, as a 'face lift' by the famous Development Economist, Hans Singer. Indeed, the World Bank was to become one of the most authoritative sources for research on poverty.

World Bank conditionalities were no longer going to be imposed without a pro-poor component. Structural adjustment programmes came with measures to protect the poor by Governments seeking IFI support in the face of crisis. The IFIs could no longer be accused of not having a human face.

## CDB Studies

The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the region's own institution, was established in the 1970s. From its very foundation under the leadership of the first President, Arthur Lewis, it configured



*Homeless man sleeping in Queens Park Savannah in Port of Spain, Trinidad [Credit: dbimages / Alamy Stock Photo]*

a strategy for poverty reduction, in a Basic Needs approach. The CDB was ahead of the international institutions in focusing on poverty issues.

By the early 1990s, the CDB sought a review on how well its programmes had been performing in addressing the poor in Caribbean states. In the mid-nineties, the Bank started sponsoring studies in member states. The methodology for measurement applied by the CDB took on board some of the techniques developed by the World Bank with adaptation to conditions in the Caribbean, and later on, it drew inspiration from other sources including Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative.

One of the more significant contributions of the CDB is the attempt to take account of vulnerability. In the approach of the CDB, there is differentiation of the indigent - that those is lacking food adequate to satisfy basic nutritional requirements, the poor - those who though having adequate food, lack other necessities of life. A poverty line is derived which, when applied to data on income and expenditure of all households, establishes who are the poor that fall below the line.

A third category, the vulnerable, on the other hand, while above the poverty line, can descend suddenly into poverty because of a shock that the economy might experience as a result of natural disaster - hurricane, earthquake, volcanic eruption.

A precipitous fall in foreign exchange earnings as a result of problems in the main export sector might result from a crash in commodity prices, e.g. oil prices.

In a tourism-based economy, potential visitors might cancel holidays in response to travel advisories, leading to a massive drop in occupancy levels in the peak season. Natural disaster or man-made disaster, political turmoil, spikes in criminal activity impact production of goods including exports, and of services - tourists cancel visits.

Such phenomena leading to decline in foreign exchange earnings are provisioned for in CDB sponsored poverty studies by raising the poverty line by say 25 percent. This might increase the prospective poor by ten percent or more. Thus, a country with a measured poverty of 25 percent could see poverty rise to over one-third of the population as a result of economic fall-out.

## Recent Data on Poverty

The CDB sponsored a compilation of poverty studies in the Caribbean in 2016. The data reflect changes in indigence, poverty, vulnerability and inequality over a ten-to-twenty-year period, in some cases between the 1990s and early in the second decade of the 2000s.

Generally, indigence or food poverty has been reduced to negligible levels over the period. Poverty while still high and exceeding 20 percent in many cases, has trended downward in most countries but by no means drastically so. Very few countries have had percentage poverty rates in single digits.

The Gini coefficient which measures the distribution of income suggests that Caribbean countries still have very high rates of inequality. Indeed, inequality has proved to be more intractable than poverty. Vulnerability estimates where they have been generated show that another ten percent or more of the population would fall into poverty in the event of an economic shock.

In recent years, there is evidence that Governments have improved the administration of programmes designed to alleviate poverty. Transfer payments have been more finely targeted at the poor or at those in need. Thus, indigence in most cases has

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# Feature

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been reduced to single digits.

In Jamaica, where there has been greatest attention given to the poverty monitoring through regular surveys, the data show that evidence-based social policymaking and interventions have been effective in arresting or reducing poverty and indigence.

**COVID-19: A Mega-Shock**

The enormity of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Caribbean economies is revealed in comparison with its impact vis-à-vis natural disasters in recent times. For example, Dominica which was devastated by a Category 5 Hurricane Maria in 2017, suffered a decline in real GDP of 6.8 percent in that year. It is still in the midst of rebuilding of its severely damaged infrastructure.

The shock effect of COVID-19 in 2020 has resulted in an estimated fall in GDP of some 16.7 percent, which is much higher than that occasioned by the natural disaster in 2017. In 2009, poverty in Dominica was estimated to be 28.8 percent and vulnerability at 11.5 percent. Assuming no change in conditions in 2017, as much as 40 percent of the population would have suffered poverty when Maria struck.

With GDP falling by as much as 16.7 percent in 2020, COVID-19 would have reduced a much larger percentage of the population into poverty than did Hurricane Maria when perhaps 40 percent of the population might have found themselves in poverty.

Another example is The Bahamas which suffered in the passing of Hurricane Irma in the same year, 2017. The island of Abaco was laid waste. GDP

Real GDP Growth %					
Member State	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020e
<b>Commodity Based</b>					
Guyana	3.8	3.7	4.4	3.1	43.5
Suriname	-5.6	1.8	2.6	0.3	-12.3
Trinidad and Tobago	-5.6	-3	0.1	-1.2	-5.6
<b>Service Based</b>					
Antigua and Barbuda	3.8	3.1	7	3.4	-16
Bahamas	0.4	0.1	1.6	1.2	-16.2
Barbados	2.6	0.6	-0.4	-0.1	-18
Belize	0	1.8	2.9	1.8	-14.1
Dominica	2.6	-6.8	2.3	3.6	-16.7
Grenada	3.7	4.4	4.1	2	-11.2
Haiti	1.5	1.2	1.5	-1.2	-4
Jamaica	1.4	1	1.9	0.9	-10.4
St. Kitts and Nevis	2.8	-2	2.9	2.8	-13.3
St. Lucia	3.9	3.3	1.1	1.7	-20.4
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1.9	1	2.2	0.5	-2.7
Minimum	-5.6	-6.8	-0.4	-1.2	-20.4
Maximum	3.9	4.4	7	3.6	43.5
CARICOM Average	1.2	0.7	2.4	1.3	-8.4
Commodity Based Average	-2.5	0.8	2.4	0.7	8.5
Service Based Average	2.2	0.7	2.5	1.5	-13.0
OECS Average	3.1	0.5	3.3	2.3	-13.4

*Real GDP Growth (%) 2016 - 2020 [Source: Caribbean Development Bank (2021). Country Economic Review 2020: Compendium.]*

growth stuttered at 0.1 percent in that year: GDP did not turn negative but grew marginally. However, COVID-19 precipitated a collapse in GDP by an estimated 16.2 percent in 2020.

COVID-19 has been a Mega-Shock. Thus, even without up-to-date data on the poverty situation in Caribbean countries, it can be anticipated that as much as half of the population in some countries of the region might be facing poverty conditions. Indigence - food poverty - would have risen even in countries where it was negligible or did not exist before. In Trinidad and Tobago, there are press reports of stampedes of people in the distribution of free food hampers.

The collective impact of lockdowns, travel restrictions, social distancing protocols, school closures and limitations on social gathering has caused unparalleled social and economic implications across all CARICOM member states. It was the single largest decline in the last 50 years on record.

Guyana was the most significant exception. The country experienced a year-on-year growth of 43 percent on the basis of the first shipments of commercial exports from its offshore oil reserves.

In effect, the pandemic has had economic impacts much larger than has been experienced by way of natural disasters that have afflicted Caribbean economies in recent years. And the loss of life has been greater as well.

## Lack of Fiscal Space

Most Governments in the region find themselves with limited fiscal space to increase transfer payments to the poor, let alone to the new poor afflicted by the lock-downs consequent on the COVID-19 pandemic. In attempting to address the fall-out in the form of massive increase in the section of society at risk, Governments have been forced to run huge deficits.

The double-digit decline that has been experienced in most of the countries as a result of the pandemic has to be seen against a backdrop of relatively slow rates of growth in the latter half of the decade. There are few cases of countries consistently achieving rates of growth of 3.0 percent or more regularly over the period 2015 -2019.

Over the last two decades, Caribbean countries have earned the dubious distinction of being among the most indebted across the internation-

al community. The 60 percent rule of thumb of Debt to GDP had been exceeded regularly by most countries over the period. Debt to GDP ratios of 100 percent and more are not unknown among Caribbean Small Island Developing States: this means that the accumulated debt exceeds all of the national income for the year in question.

In the more recent past, Governments have made valiant efforts to improve their fiscal operations, by keeping expenditures well within the bounds of the revenue that they can raise. Actually, public debt had been steadily declining on average among member states in the years leading up to the pandemic. The Governments were gradually bringing expenditure in line with revenue.

However, with the pandemic, Governments have been forced to spend heavily on saving lives.

The fiscal measures taken to counteract the social and economic impacts of the pandemic have resulted in considerable increases in public debt regionally. In most countries, the ratio rose in excess of ten percentage points in the one year, 2019-2020, in some cases, even as high as 20 percentage points.

The ratio exceeded 100 percent in Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Jamaica, and Suriname in 2020. The expansion in public debt necessary to treat with revenue shortfalls since the start of the pandemic has pushed public sector debt to GDP in the region up to an average of 91.8 percent which is higher than the internationally accepted limit of 60 percent. Beyond this limit, the international lending agencies

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normally impose demanding conditionalities in providing loans to countries with higher levels of indebtedness.

### IFIs - Saving Lives and/versus Livelihoods

Unlike the stance that might have been adopted in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the IFIs have been more sensitive to the need to save lives in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic which can be compared only with the Spanish flu of a century ago.

As countries around the world faced the effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic head on, many international financial institutions (IFIs) intervened not only with the objective of facilitating crisis response, but also macroeconomic recovery through initiatives aimed at saving lives, shielding the poor, buttressing the supporting pillars of the economy and bolstering institutions and policies aimed at resilience.

Through the World Bank

Group's Operational Response to COVID-19, from the onset of the pandemic through June 2021, as much as \$160 billion USD in financing was made available worldwide, tailored to the health, economic and social shocks that countries are facing.

The first recipients of financing through this initiative came through the dedicated COVID-19 Fast-Track Facility, which benefited many countries across the Caribbean Community to the amount of just under \$500 million USD.

The vast majority of financing has fallen under development policy lending, followed by investment project financing.

The data available and the recency of the measures do not allow for the unpacking of the information under the various heads to determine how effectively and efficiently Governments have performed in the saving of lives and the protection of livelihoods. It can be safely affirmed that there have

been allocations from the IFIs on both accounts and Governments have increased their expenditures in saving lives even at the risk of exceeding the accepted limits on debt to GDP ratios.

### The Existential Livelihood Crisis 2021

There is general recognition that poverty reduction is essentially about creation of sustainable livelihoods in the Caribbean economy. In the short term, the preoccupation might be on groups that have been particularly hard done by the pandemic.

There are the unemployed youth faced with no openings during COVID-19, primary and secondary school students who have lost a year of schooling and could not avail themselves of virtual educational programmes provided by Ministries of Education, women in occupations and sectors with limited or no social security. All these deserve immediate attention.

However, there are macro-economic and meso-level issues to be addressed. At one level there is the matter of industrial policy. Even if there is much more of output that can be organized internally to satisfy domestic/ regional demand with the attendant employment generation (e.g. Domestic agriculture and food requirements of the population), Caribbean countries cannot escape having to export competitive goods and services to secure vital foreign exchange for the goods and services that cannot be derived from domestic production.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has brought into sharp relief the excessive reliance of Caribbean economies on a limited

range of exports. The conflicts – China, USA, the European Union and post-Brexit UK - have created fractures in the global trading system.

In addressing the livelihood issue, Governments must be keep focused on the need for economic diversification and for nimbleness of industrial policy that would allow countries to exit out of activities that cannot survive in an international economy, which even with the protective barriers set in place, will continue to be the marketplace where Caribbean countries must hold their own.

In that regard, the institutionalization of lifelong education and training has hardly attracted the attention and official commitment that are required.

This is the sine qua non of having a workforce that can routinely adjust to changes in technology and to the demands of competition in external markets. Constant upgrading will be the platform for sustainable employment in future and therefore in averting the affliction of poverty.

There are other matters that seem remote in discussion of poverty, but no less critical. Climate change, the upgrading of the infrastructure to treat with earthquakes, sea rise and the advent of Category 5 hurricanes with greater regularity.

Poverty reduction is about sustainability in the fullest meaning of that word in the context of economic, social, environmental and technological change. The livelihood agenda has to include all of these issues, which extend much beyond the recovery of the Caribbean economy to the pre-COVID-19 mode.

Country	Year	Population Poor (%)	Population Vulnerable (%)	Population Indigent (%)	Poverty Gap Index	Gini Coefficient
Anguilla	2009	5.8	17.7	0	1.1	0.39
	2002	23	-	2	6.9	0.31
Antigua & Barbuda	2007	18.3	10	3.7	6.63	0.48
Bahamas	2013	-	-	-	-	-
	2001	9.3	-	5	2.8	0.57
Barbados	2016	25.7	-	4.9	0.087	-
	2010	19	10.4	9.1	6	0.47
	1996/97	13.9	-	-	2.3	0.30
Belize	2009	41.3	13.8	15.8	11.4	0.36
	2002	34.1	-	10.8	11.1	0.40
BVI	2002	22	-	< 1	4.3	0.23
	1997	-	-	-	-	-
Cayman Islands	2006/07	2	3.8	0	0.44	0.40
	2000	-	-	-	-	-
Dominica	2009	28.8	11.5	3	8.9	0.44
	2002/03	39	-	15	10.2	0.35
Grenada	2008	37.7	14.6	2.4	10.13	0.37
	1998/99	32	-	12.9	15.3	0.45
Guyana	2006	36.1	-	18.6	16.2	0.35
	1992	48.2	-	28.7	25.1	0.44
Haiti	2012	58.5	11.5	23.8	-	0.61
	2000/01	74.9	-	31	32.31	0.61
Jamaica	2018	12.6	-	3.5	-	0.36
	2012	20	-	-	4.5	0.38
	2001	16.9	-	-	7.2	0.38
St. Kitts	2008/09	23.7	-	1.4	6.4	0.38
	1999/00	30.5	-	11	2.5	0.40
Nevis	2008/09	15.9	-	0	2.7	0.38
	1999/00	32	-	17	2.8	0.37
Saint Lucia	2016	25	-	1.3	7.5	0.43
	2005	28.8	40.3	2	9	0.42
	1995	25.1	31.5	7.1	8.6	0.50
Suriname	2017	26.2	13.4	1.7	0.076	0.38
	2012	47.23	-	-	-	-
	2005/06	8.24	6.7	3.3	-	-
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	2007/08	30.2	48.2	2.9	7.5	0.40
	1995	37.5	-	25.7	12.6	0.56
Trinidad & Tobago	2005	15.5	9	1.2	4.6	0.39
	1989/90	18.5	-	-	-	-
Turks & Caicos	2012	21.6	11.4	0	4	0.36

*Regional Comparison of Poverty, Vulnerability and Inequality*  
Source: Caribbean Development Bank (2016). *The Changing Nature of Poverty and Inequality in the Caribbean: New Issues, New Solutions.*

# CCJ rules men can be raped

In a judgment released on Tuesday, the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) in its Appellate Jurisdiction, allowed the appeal of the Commissioner of Police, in the matter of Commissioner of Police v Stephen Alleyne [2022] CCJ 2 (AJ) BB.

The CCJ has found that in Barbados the law permits a man to be charged for the rape of another man. The CCJ heard the appeal on 9 November 2021.

Stephen Alleyne was charged with the offence of rape contrary to the Sexual Offences Act.

Before the start of the evidence in his trial, he was released by the magistrate after hearing submissions that the charge alleged that Alleyne had sexual intercourse with another man without his consent.

The magistrate decided that the crime of rape (s 3(1)) did not extend to anal intercourse between men. On appeal by the Commissioner of Police, the majority in the Court of Appeal agreed with the magistrate's decision.

The Commissioner of Police appealed to the CCJ. The CCJ, in a judgment authored by Justice Barrow, found that on a correct interpretation of s 3 (1) of the Act read with s 3 (6), a man can be charged for the rape of another man.

The Act uses gender-neutral language to identify both perpetrator and victim and extends the



definition of rape to include anal penetration.

The Court found that considering the literal meaning of the words used in the Act, their context, and comparable legislation, any person; male or female, can be the offender or victim of rape.

The retention in the legislation of the offence of buggery did not prevent males from being charged with rape, as the Interpretation Act allows offenders to be charged with either offence, once they are not punished twice for the same act.

The Court noted that it is aware that the issue of the constitutionality of the offence of buggery has been adjudicated in several courts, including some within the Caribbean. However, the issue did not arise for decision, and in the circumstances, it was the duty of the Court to exercise proper judicial restraint and not decide on an issue that was not argued.

In a separate judgment, Justice Jamadar, entirely

supported the opinion of Justice Barrow and agreed that the Act permits a man to be charged for the rape of another man. Justice Jamadar found when judges are interpreting legislation, they must also respect the fundamental rights in the Constitution and consider a state's international treaty commitments.

A gender-neutral interpretation of the Act respects the right to protection of the law regardless of sex, and the prohibition against discriminatory laws under the Constitution. It also respects Barbados' international law commitments to ensure equality before the law regardless of gender and the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms without restrictions based on sex.

In a dissenting judgment, Justice Burgess found that the Act does not create an offence of rape of a male by another male and would have dismissed the appeal. He considered that under the common law, only a man could commit rape and

only against a woman. He found that the Act does not purport to do anything as revolutionary as changing the common law to create an offence of rape by a male of another male.

For Parliament to do so, it would have had to express that intention in clear and unambiguous language. He considered the natural and ordinary meaning and legal meaning of the words used in s 3, as well as their context in the Act as a whole and the rules of natural justice.

He found that the words 'sexual intercourse' used in creating the statutory offence, means penile-vaginal penetration. He found that s 3(6) of the Act, modifies the common law by providing that, not only a man can commit the act of rape, but any of the parties to sexual intercourse, a male, or a female, can do so. That is an offender may also be female.

The appeal was therefore allowed and the case remitted to the Magistrate's Court for it to proceed with the preliminary inquiry. The Court was presided over by the Honourable Mr Justice Saunders, President, sitting with the Honourable Justices Wit, Anderson, Rajnauth-Lee, Barrow, Burgess and Jamadar.

The Appellant was represented by Ms Krystal Delaney and Mr Oliver JM Thomas and the Respondent by Mr Arthur E Holder.



## Probes ongoing into deaths of infant, 9 year-old

The Gleaner - Jamaica's Deputy Commissioner of Police Fitz Bailey says a file will be sent to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for guidance on how to proceed in the case involving the one-year-old girl who died after being left for hours in her father's vehicle last month.

That revelation was made during a Jamaica Constabulary Force press conference on Tuesday.

A change in the routine of the toddler's father, Sergeant Sheldon Dobson, is said to have resulted in her death after he reportedly forgot to drop



*Ongoing Investigation of infants' deaths.*  
her off at daycare.

The child was normally left in the care of her grandmother, but when the elderly woman fell ill, the infant was enrolled in daycare.

Meanwhile, Bailey said the investigation into the slaying of nine-year-old Gabriel King was also ongoing.

"It is delicate and I do not want to make much comment. We are using our resources to ensure that whoever is responsible for that murder is brought to justice," he said.

Gabriel was allegedly abducted from his mother along the Tucker main road in St James on January 13 and later discovered with his throat slashed in the back seat of the stolen vehicle, which was abandoned off Fairfield main road in Montego Bay.

## UNC MPs lead protest at Mosquito Creek over road collapse

Loop - The United National Congress (UNC) has continued to demand answers following the collapse of a segment of the highway extension project along Mosquito Creek.

MPs Dr Roodal Moonilal, Davendranath Tancoo and Dr Lackram Bodoie yesterday protested alongside residents under the watchful eyes of police.

The portion of the roadway collapsed on January 23, following which the National Infrastructure Development Company Limited (NIDCO) promised that an investigation would be carried out to determine the cause of the slope failure.

Dr Moonilal, however, questioned why there were

still no answers after more than a week.

"This report and findings are taking much too long. They are taking so long as if to suggest they are involved in some massive coverup.

"When things like these happen anywhere in the world, in two or three days you have what is called a preliminary report and there is absolutely no preliminary report and this is almost two weeks now," the Oropouche East MP said.

He believes that the quality of the construction materials should be tested as part of NIDCO's investigation.

Further, he repeated a call for an investigation by



*UNC MPs Dr Roodal Moonilal, Davendranath Tancoo and Dr Lackram Bodoie at a protest along Mosquito Creek on February 1, 2022.*

the Environmental Management Authority (EMA) into the certificate of environmental clearance for that segment of the project.

The Oropouche East MP said work on the project should be halted to allow for thorough investigations to be carried out.

Meanwhile, Dr Bodoie expressed concern that this would further drive up the cost of the highway project, which is already estimated at \$280 million.

The Fyzabad MP called for the findings of the NIDCO investigation to be made public.

## Canadian company finds oil after 20 years of exploration in Guyana

CMC - The Canadian-based CGX Energy Inc. (CGX) has announced the discovery of oil at the Kawa-1 well in the Corentyne Block in Guyana.

In a statement, the CCX said together with its majority shareholder, Frontera Energy Corporation, they have a petroleum prospecting license for the Corentyne block offshore Guyana.

“Initial results from the Kawa-1 well are positive and reinforce CGX and Frontera’s belief in the potentially transformational opportunity our investments and interests in Guyana present for our companies and the country,” said Gabriel de Alba, Frontera’s chairman, who is also co-chairman of CGX.

“Kawa-1 results add to the growing success story unfolding in offshore Guyana as the country emerges as a global oil and gas exploration hotspot. On behalf of the Joint Venture, I’d like to thank the Government of Guyana for its long-standing support as we worked together to deliver this successful outcome,” he added.

The Kawa-1 well encountered approximately 177 feet (54 metres) of hydrocarbon-bearing reservoirs within Maastrichtian, Campanian and Santonian horizons based on initial evaluation of Logging While Drilling (LWD) data.

The statement said these intervals are similar in age and can be correlated using regional seismic data to recent successes in Block 58 in Suriname and Stabroek Block in Guyana.

“The well also encountered hydrocarbon bearing sands in deeper strata (Coniacian or older) which will also be analyzed and could become the target of future appraisal opportunities.

“The net pay and fluid properties of the hydrocarbons across the shallow and deep reservoirs will now be confirmed with electric wireline logging and fluid sampling, with results to be disclosed as



*Oil found in Guyana after 20years. [Photo Credit: CMC]*

soon as practicable.”

The company said that the Kawa-1 well was drilled to a depth of 21,578 feet (6,578 metres) and targeted the easternmost Campanian and Santonian channel/lobe complex on the northern section of the Corentyne block.

“The Kawa-1 results support the Joint Venture’s geological and geophysical models and have helped de-risk equivalent targets in other parts of the Corentyne license area. The end of well forecast is currently projected to be the end of February 2022. Information on final well cost estimates and additional results will be announced upon completion of end of well activities,” the statement said.

It said that CGX is currently assessing several strategic opportunities to obtain additional financing to meet the costs of the longer than expected drilling programme.

“Results from the Kawa-1 well represents a positive milestone in the CGX journey as a pioneer oil and gas explorer in the Guyana Basin,” said Professor Suresh Narine, CGX’s executive chairman.

“Together with our partner Frontera, CGX looks forward to continuing our socially and environmentally conscious approach to development of Guyana’s oil and gas industry and port infrastructure.

“We are proud of our long partner-

ship with the Government and people of Guyana and of our reputation as Guyana’s Indigenous Oil Company.”

Frontera’s chief executive officer, Orlando Cabrales, said ‘we are very pleased to have successfully drilled the Kawa-1 well with our partner CGX. I commend the significant effort of all the talented employees and contractors involved and their dedication to helping this partnership achieve this important milestone

“We now have an ability to focus our efforts on potentially transformational opportunities and to continue our positive relationship with the government and people of Guyana.”

CGX said that building on its recent offshore positive results at the Kawa-1 exploration well, the Joint Venture anticipates spudding its second commitment well, called Wei-1, in the northwestern part of the Corentyne block in the second half of 2022.

It said the Joint Venture has exercised its option to use the Maersk Discoverer semi-submersible mobile drilling rig for the Wei-1 well.

“This is an important step from a health and safety, efficiency, and operational perspective and will maintain continuity in the exploration program during a period of high demand in the region and consistency in working with a team familiar with the rig.

“The Wei-1 exploration well will target Campanian and Santonian aged stacked channels in the western fan complex in the northern section of the Corentyne block.

“The Wei-1 well is named after one of the tallest peaks in the Pakaraima mountain range, which has commanding visibility over the surrounding terrain. Wei Tepu was historically used as a sentinel post by the Patamona People to guard against attacks.”



## Vladimir Putin says the West has 'ignored' Russia's key concerns over Ukraine

CNN - Russian President Vladimir Putin said Tuesday that his government was studying the responses from the United States and NATO to his security demands related to Ukraine but that it was clear the Kremlin's main complaints «had been ignored.»

For weeks, Putin had said little publicly about the crisis sparked by Russia's buildup of tens of thousands of troops near Ukraine's borders, which has raised fears of a possible invasion.

But speaking at a Tuesday news conference following a five-hour meeting in Moscow with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, Putin said: "It is already clear -- I informed the Prime Minister about this -- that the fundamental Russian concerns were ignored. We did not see an adequate consideration of our three key requirements."

Putin added that Russia had not seen «adequate consideration of our three key demands regarding NATO expansion, the renunciation of the deployment of strike weapons systems near Russian borders, and the return of the [NATO] bloc's military infrastructure in Europe to the state of 1997, when the Russia-NATO founding act was signed.»

Putin also accused the US directly of attempting to "draw us into armed conflict" over the Ukraine crisis by using the country as a "tool" for NATO operations. He claimed that Washington's main goal is to force "allies in Europe to impose the very tough sanctions against us," or "draw Ukraine into NATO."

The US and NATO have said Putin's demands -- which include a promise to never expand eastward to countries including Ukraine -- violate NATO's open-door policy and are non-starters in negotiations.

Putin did not offer any solutions on Tuesday, but did say he was open to more talks.

"I hope that this dialogue will continue," he said, adding: "I hope that we will eventually find this solution, although it



*Russian President Vladimir Putin [Photo Credit: CNN]*

is not an easy one, and we are aware of this. But what that will be, I'm not ready to say today, of course."

Putin ended the news conference with a short lecture about what he characterized as NATO's history of deceptions, claiming that the alliance promised to expand "not an inch" eastward. "They said one thing, they did another," Putin said. "As people say, they screwed us over, well they simply deceived us."

Russian officials have repeatedly made this claim in the past; the US and NATO have denied making such promises.

Putin also reiterated his opposition to the possibility of Ukraine joining NATO, and said Kyiv was attempting to retake Crimea -- the Ukrainian territory annexed by Russia in 2014 -- by military force, potentially bringing the alliance into open conflict with Russia.

"This [Crimea] is sovereign Russian territory, the question is closed for us," he said. "Let's imagine that Ukraine is a NATO country and starts these military operations."

"Then what, we should fight against the NATO bloc? So, has anyone thought about this? Looks like no."

Diplomats from the US, Russia, Ukraine, NATO and the European Union have been engaged in a flurry of diplomatic activity in recent weeks.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov held a phone call Tuesday. Following that call, a senior State

Department official said Lavrov did not give an indication that Moscow will de-escalate from the border with Ukraine.

Blinken told Lavrov that if Putin "does not intend war or regime change," then it was time to pull back troops and heavy weaponry and engage in serious, diplomatic discussions, the official said.

Lavrov responded that the escalation that the US was claiming was not occurring, the official said, but that it was merely Russia moving troops within its own borders.

US State Department officials confirmed Monday they had «received a written followup from Russia» to a document of proposals the US sent to the Kremlin last week on how to defuse tensions and pave the way for further security talks in response to Russia's demands on security.

On Tuesday, however, the Kremlin said that Russia had not yet sent its "main reply" to the US.

"There was a mix-up," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said in a conference call. "It [the Russian correspondence] regarded a different matter. The main reply on this issue hasn't been handed over, it's still being prepared."

Meanwhile, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson held a press conference alongside Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv on Tuesday.

Johnson accused Russia of "holding a gun to Ukraine" and warned that a potential invasion of Ukraine by Russia would be a "political" and "humanitarian disaster."

"The potential invasion completely flies in the face of President Putin's claims to be acting in the interests of the Ukrainian people," Johnson said.

Zelensky said that should a war between Russia and Ukraine start it will be a "big war in Europe," adding that there "will be no occupation of any territory or city in Ukraine... but there will be a bloody tragedy if the invasion of our country starts."

## BA.2: Omicron sub-variant detected in 57 countries, says WHO

Al Jazeera - A recently discovered subvariant of the highly contagious Omicron coronavirus strain has now been detected in 57 countries, the World Health Organization (WHO) says.

In its weekly epidemiological update, the United Nations' health agency noted on Tuesday that in some countries, the sub-variant now accounts for more than half of all sequenced Omicron cases.

It said little was known yet about the differences between the sub-variants but several studies have suggested that BA.2, also known as the "stealth variant", was more infectious than the



*The highly transmissible Omicron variant now accounts for nearly all of the coronavirus infections globally. [Photo credit: EPA]*

original sub-lineage. Maria Van Kerkhove, an epidemiologist and the WHO's technical lead on the coronavirus pandemic, told reporters that initial data indicated BA.2 had "a slight increase in growth rate over

BA.1", the first version of the Omicron variant.

Van Kerkhove said there was "no indication that there is a change in severity" in the BA.2 sub-variant.

The highly transmissible Omicron is generally known

to cause less severe disease than previous variants such as Delta.

The WHO said Omicron, which accounts for more than 93 percent of all coronavirus specimens collected in the past month, has several sub-lineages: BA.1, BA.1.1, BA.2 and BA.3.

The first versions identified as BA.1 and BA.1.1 still account for more than 96 percent of all Omicron cases submitted to GISAID, it added, referring to the public virus tracking database.

However, the agency pointed out, in parts of Europe and Asia, BA.2 has started to spread faster than BA.1.

## Jeff Zucker, who helped propel Trump to power, resigns from CNN

CNN - Jeff Zucker, the United States television executive whose programming decisions helped cement Donald Trump's status as a pop culture icon and propel him to the White House, is resigning as president of CNN Worldwide over an office romance.

In a memo to staff on Wednesday, Zucker said his departure was the result of his failure to disclose what he described as a "consensual relationship with my closest colleague" that came to light during an investigation into former CNN anchor Chris Cuomo.

"I was required to disclose it when it began but I didn't. I was wrong. As a result, I am resigning today."

CNN anchor Brian Stelter reported that the subordinate with whom Zucker had the relationship is Allison Gollust, executive vice president and chief marketing officer of CNN Worldwide.

In a statement read aloud on CNN

by Stelter, Gollust was quoted as saying: "Jeff and I have been close friends and professional partners for over 20 years. Recently our relationship changed during COVID. I regret that we didn't disclose it at the right time."

Gollust formerly served as communications director for New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo, who resigned last summer amid a storm of sexual harassment allegations.

The political scandal eventually cost Andrew Cuomo's brother, Chris Cuomo, his job at CNN. The network fired the top-rated anchor over revelations that came to light during a probe into Chris's efforts to help his brother navigate the barrage of sexual misconduct claims.

That investigation into Chris Cuomo has now led to the downfall of Jeff Zucker at CNN.

Zucker's abrupt departure draws a line under his nine-year turn at the helm of



*Former CNN executive Jeff Zucker [Photo Credit :Reuters]*

CNN, where he delivered outsized ratings and profits through a relentless melding of news and entertainment – often described as "infotainment".

Zucker programmed CNN's flagship domestic channel to concentrate on one or two big stories, jettisoning the network's long-standing approach of keeping viewers well informed on a broad selection of domestic and international affairs, and running with breaking news only when events warranted.



## CWI pays tribute to Easton McMorris – Former West Indies batsman and outstanding Jamaica captain

Cricket West Indies (CWI) yesterday paid tribute to Easton McMorris, who passed away on Tuesday.

The former Jamaica captain and West Indies batsman was 86. McMorris made his Test debut for West Indies against Pakistan at Queen's Park Oval in 1958 in a team alongside Sir Everton Weekes, Sir Garry Sobers and Sir Conrad Hunte. He played 13 Test matches and scored one century – 125 against India at Sabina Park



in 1962.

CWI President Ricky Skerrett said: "I had the privilege to engage with Mr McMorris on a few occasions over the years. I found him to be an encouraging and selfless gentleman. On behalf of CWI, I want to send condolences to his family and the entire cricket fraternity in Jamaica. Easton was a true stalwart of the game and contributed significantly at all levels, on and off the field. He was a leader at the Lucas Cricket Club, carrying on the legacy established by the great George Headley. After retirement from playing, he gave yeoman service as a board member of the Jamaica Cricket Association and manager of the Jamaica cricket team."

McMorris was an outstanding captain for Jamaica, including winning the much



Easton McMorris

coveted Shell Shield, and he was a steady performer for West Indies in Test cricket. As a captain McMorris led from the front. He was an astute thinker of the game, a shrewd tactician and was respected by his teammates and opponents. He was a very determined batsman, who valued his wicket. The region has lost a true and life-long servant of the game.

## No legal action by UEFA

UEFA has decided not to take legal action against a German restaurant and its Champignons League pizza.

European football governing body says its prestigious Champions League competition can "happily live alongside the inventively-named pizza."

Champignons translate to mushrooms in English.

Earlier this week, the owners of pizza Wolke, in Giessen, near Frankfurt, posted an im-

age on their Instagram account showing a letter they had received from UEFA which threatened legal action over the name of the frozen pizza.

But European football's governing body had a change of heart and blamed the decision to threaten action on an overzealous local trademark agent.

The restaurant later posted: "Breaking news at the late hour, The Champignons League stays where it is."



UEFA is no longer pursuing legal action against a German pizza maker



## Mason Greenwood released on bail



Mason Greenwood

Manchester United footballer Mason Greenwood has been released on bail after being arrested on suspicion of raping a woman.

The 20-year-old was also arrested on suspicion of assault on Sunday following allegations on social media. Manchester United previously said the forward would not return to training or matches until further notice.

"Greater Manchester Police

said Greenwood was arrested after the force "became aware of online social media images and videos posted by a woman reporting incidents of physical violence."

It said the magistrate had granted a second extension to keep him in custody until Wednesday but he has now been bailed pending further investigation.

# West Indies vs India to be played behind closed doors

The West Indies and India will contest the upcoming One-day-international behind closed doors when the Caribbean side battles the host in the silence of an empty stadium.

The team's tour of India will begin with three One-Day Internationals at the Narendra Modi Stadium, scheduled between February 6 to 11.

The Gujarat Cricket Association confirmed that due to the rising Covid-19 pandemic in the area the match will be played behind closed doors.

"Considering the current situation, all the matches will be played behind closed doors," the state cricket board said in a tweet. Following the ODI series, the teams will play three T20



International series in Kolkata, for which the Bengal government has allowed 75 percent crowd attendance.

*cont'd from pg 21*

they need to and lead and fight and battle."

Speaking exclusively with CWI Media, Vice Captain Nicholas Pooran shared: "This definitely means a lot to me, because I put a lot of work into my craft. I work day in and day out, so moving up the rankings is important. The ultimate goal is to be the best. I do pay attention to it (the rankings) because it is a good way to track your growth."

Left-arm spinner, Akeal Hosein who's now ranked in the Top 20 T20 bowlers in the world, said: "It's not something I pay close attention to. However, when I play or train, it's always about aiming to become the best. It's about having that mindset of wanting to improve and wanting to be at the top, so definitely it is an aspiration of mine to be the number one bowler in the world someday. Therefore, this move means a lot to me. It shown that my hard work is paying off and that I will be rewarded if I perform well. It's definitely a good feeling."

The West Indies players will have more opportunities to improve on their rankings when they face India in the upcoming three-match series. The team arrived on Tuesday and matches will be on February 16, 18 and 20 at Eden Gardens in Kolkata.

## Full Match Schedule

February 6: 1st ODI at Ahmedabad  
February 9: 2nd ODI at Ahmedabad  
February 11: 3rd ODI at Ahmedabad  
February 16: 1st T20I at Kolkata  
February 18: 2nd T20I at Kolkata  
February 20: 3rd T20I at Kolkata

## JFF president very disappointed

Jamaican Football Federation president (JFF) Michael Ricketts feel let down by the team position in World Cup qualifying campaign and is now looking to the future.

The Reggae Boyz are just a loss of two points away from certain elimination for the Fifa World Cup finals in Qatar. Ricketts and his administration are looking to the future expecting the inevitable.

The JFF boss said, "We are indeed disappointed with the team both the Gold Cup and World Cup qualifying performance, but his team will continue to work with their sponsors, technical team and players to see what the remaining games has to offer."

Ricketts articulated that some off the performances were unsatisfactory while in other cases the ball did not bounce their way in terms off breaks.

"VAR for example was a little



JFF President Michael Ricketts.

unkind to us," he said pointing to the controversial goal against the USA.

From 10 games the Reggae Boyz have mustered only one win away to Honduras accompanied by four drawn results and five loses. They have seven points in seventh place.

Canada lead with 22, US 18, Mexico 18, Panama 17, Costa Rica 13, El Salvador 9, Honduras 3 completing the eight nation points standings.

Ricketts said the task to qualify is not impossible but improbable at this stage.



## West Indians move upwards on the ICC Men's T20I player rankings

Left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein and allrounder Jason Holder have achieved career-best rankings in the MRF Tyres ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings after helping the West Indies to a series-deciding 17-run victory in the fifth Betway T20 International against England at Kensington Oval, last Sunday.

In the latest weekly update to the men's rankings, which considers performances in the last three matches of the series, Hosein moved up 15 places to 18th position after a haul of 4-30 that helped him finish with six wickets in three matches.

Holder was the star performer with the unique feat

of grabbing four wickets in four balls in front of his home crowd. He finished with figures of 5-27 – the best in a T20I at the historic venue. This took his tally to nine wickets in those three matches, as he advanced three places to 23rd with a massive gain of 20 rating points. Overall, he took 15 wickets in the five matches, a new record for the most in a bilateral series, and was named the Player-of-the-Series.

Left-arm pacer Sheldon Cottrell (up 10 places to 31st) is another West Indies bowler to move up in Wednesday's update while England spinner Moeen Ali (up three places to 32nd) and Liam Livingston (up 33 places to 68th) have



also advanced.

In the ranking for batters, Nicholas Pooran is up eight places to 18th after scoring 113 runs in the three matches including a knock of 70, while opener Brandon King (up 25 places to 58th) and West Indies captain Kieron Pollard (up 15 places to 60th) have also advanced. King made a stylish 52 not out in the first match as West Indies won easily, while Pollard had a crucial 41 not out off 25 balls in the final match.

Rovman Powell made the most of his return to the team with a brilliant 107 in the third match – making him the third West Indian to record a century in this format. He followed up with 35 not out off 17 balls in the last game.

Speaking at the end of the enthralling series, West Indies assistant coach Roddy Estwick said the improvement shown was extremely pleasing.

"After the last couple of months that we've had, it's really pleasing that we've won a series. Improvement for me is actually more important than winning the series because you've got to focus on getting to the ICC T20 World Cup 2022 and doing a lot better than we did in the last one."

He added: "The crowds coming back to the stadium is very important, The players were a lot freer this time around. The bubble was still there but a lot more relaxed and you could see the players responding to it so credit to the medical staff of the Cricket West Indies. Akeal Hosein was really brilliant for us when the chips were down along with Fabian Allen. They turned the tide, put England under pressure, continued to get wickets and that's all we can ask, that people put their hands up when

*cont'd on pg 20*

ICC T20 RANKINGS - WI					
					
NICHOLAS POORAN	AKEAL HOSEIN	JASON HOLDER			
POINTS  +8	POINTS  +15	POINTS  +3	ICC RANKING	ICC RANKING	ICC RANKING
18	18	23			
					
SHELDON COTTRELL	BRANDON KING	KIERON POLLARD			
POINTS  +10	POINTS  +25	POINTS  +15	ICC RANKING	ICC RANKING	ICC RANKING
31	58	60			