

PM: CONSERVATION CRITICAL TO WATER SUSTAINABILITY

Story on Page 2



Antigua and Barbuda's Dwayne Fleming (far right) took CARIFTA gold as he led the pack in an upset win over race favourite, Jamaica's Gary Card, clocking a personal best time of 10.72 in the U17 boys' 100m final. *Story on page 26* [Photo credit: Track Alert]

PM clarifies position on water increase, stresses importance of conservation

During his Saturday afternoon Browne and Browne talk programme on Pointe FM, Prime Minister Gaston Browne indicated that consumers can expect an increase in the cost of water once the country's supply issue has been resolved.

The government has intimated over several weeks that it anticipates the water shortages to be rectified by late 2022; with 24 hour per day service restored once all APUA's reverse osmosis (RO) plants are fully operational by mid-2023.

A large part of the government's comprehensive plan to address the water shortage involves the replacement of old, leaking water pipes which are estimated to result in the loss of as much as 20 percent of the available water supply and which, in part, is the cause of low water pressure in some areas on days when water is available.

With the government's financial investment in improving and modernising the country's water infrastructure involving several million dollars, Prime Minister Browne said on the weekend that it is inevitable that there will be an "affordable" increase in the cost of water supplied by APUA, once the work is complete.

However, certain sectors of the media inaccurately reported that the prime minister attributed the coming increase to the cost of the utility to the public "wasting water".

This deliberate mischief surrounding PM Browne's comments, achieved its intended outcome, as many people took to social media to express anger, disappointment, and confusion over his grossly misrepresented remarks.

Never one to shy away from addressing criticism head on, PM Browne directly responded to some



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

individuals whose misplaced ire was based on the specious article, which featured an audio clip of the prime minister that lacked context.

Expressing empathy with the plight of consumers who are experiencing regrettable inconveniences because of the water shortages, the prime minister emphasised that Antigua and Barbuda's water issues must be addressed and managed with a view to long term resolution.

In part, this means a greater appreciation on the part of all citizens and residents that Antigua and Barbuda is drought prone. Therefore, the water issue must be tackled through a partnership between APUA and the public, which involves increased production on the part of APUA, and greater responsibility on the part of the public in their water usage practices.

This means that each member of the public must fully embrace water conservation practices and water harvesting as a way of life.

"Conservation is an important aspect of water sustainability in a drought prone country. Not exclusively to build more RO plants," said PM

Browne.

He continued that the rates billed for the commodity must remain affordable to protect the poor and vulnerable, however, water must be priced in such a way that "excess consumption and profligate water usage" are reduced.

Urging the public to understand the context in which his comments were made, and avoid "knee jerk reactions", Browne continued, "Both the cost of acquiring the equipment and the increased production costs of RO water would necessitate an increase in water rates after the full demand is satisfied.

"If we fail to address water profligacy, then the water demand will become a moving target, undermining the achievement of water sustainability."

"Increasing water rates, while keeping them affordable, with a threshold to protect the vulnerable, will be the most effective way to control water wastage and to control the demand.

"Keeping water rates artificially low will encourage wastage and will be self-defeating.

"We should always embrace truth, no matter the circumstances. Again, rationale and context are important."

Very importantly, he cautioned against the politicisation of the increase of water rates, as it is an inescapable reality.

"Increases in water rates in the near future will be inevitable, no matter which administration is in power.

"I should emphasise that this issue is too important not to build public awareness and education. Ventilating this issue publicly trumps the political expediency of burying the issue in partisan gain."

PM Browne alleges sabotage from within APUA

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has lashed out at APUA for “dropping the ball” in improving the country’s water woes and has instructed the company’s management to get a handle on the situation.

Despite assurances that the water challenges are being rectified, complaints are mounting from consumers who are not benefitting from the improvements being touted and are instead experiencing a worsening of the issue.

One of the main contentions is the poor management of water distribution that, in some instances, leaves consumers without the commodity for days.

This was the recent plight of residents of St. Paul’s.

This is where Mr. Browne believes there is a sinister plot to disrupt the process.

“Now we found that to be extremely strange because English Harbour has its own RO plant. So, after inquiries were made, you know what the problem was? A valve that was turned off prior was not turned back on. And this is the kind of slackness that we’re getting from APUA that is just totally unacceptable!” the prime minister asserted.

“Now we don’t have concrete evidence as yet,

but this is something that we’re watching, because we’re now being told that they’re even opposition elements within APUA, who may be sabotaging delivery of the water by turning off these valves and not turning them back on.”

According to the prime minister, a similar incident a few weeks ago caused an interruption in water service to Cooks Hill.

These actions are intended to embarrass the government and cause citizens and residents to “suffer unnecessarily,” he contended.

APUA’s management has been told to fix the problems that are further inconveniencing consumers.

“I have personally picked up the phone and have asked the general manager, Mr. [Esworth] Martin to literally micro-manage this process, and even to have a little check sheet in place, say if an area announces they have not had water for five, seven days. Check and see if the valves are off, and if it is that we are seeing persistent sabotage, then individuals have to be dealt with.”

The prime minister said no one will be allowed to sabotage the system, especially during a crisis.

Irritated by this emerging situation, the prime minister on his radio pro-

gramme on Saturday, expressed dissatisfaction with APUA’s performance.

He explained that in one instance, membranes that were in stock and critical to the functioning of the water system were allowed to dwindle, contrary to instructions issued by the Cabinet to maintain adequate stock.

When the orders were placed late last year, delivery was delayed, due to global supply chain issues.

This now means an additional two million gallons of water, produced through




reverse osmosis, will not become available until May when the membranes are expected to arrive in the country, are tested and the downed plants return to operation.

Hon Samantha N. Marshall
Invites you to a...

Farmers Consultation

FOCUS: THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR 2022 AND BEYOND
GREATER PARTNERSHIPS IN FOOD SECURITY



DATE: Tuesday 26th April 2022
TIME: 5 p.m.
PLACE: Multipurpose Cultural Centre

Local News



“Easter Miracle” baby dies

The nation breathed a collective sigh of relief when news reports emerged that a 3-year-old who fell into the cistern at his family’s home on Sunday was retrieved alive and resuscitated, although in serious condition.

But the news turned tragic on Monday, after it was revealed that the toddler did not survive, despite the valiant attempts of the staff of the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLBMC).

A search for the child had been launched after he hadn’t been seen for some time at his Cassada Gardens residence.

On Sunday at about 2pm, the child’s frantic family discovered him in the home’s cistern.

He was unresponsive.

The family reportedly began resuscitative attempts while they waited for the ambulance to arrive.

Emergency medical responders were called to the scene and the toddler was rushed to SLBMC.

Based on reports from emergency responders, it is believed that the unconscious child may also have stopped breathing for some period of time.

He was later admitted to the Inten-



sive Care Unit.

Overnight, as the medical team worked to save his life, it is understood that the baby’s condition continued to decline.

He passed away in the early afternoon hours on Easter Monday.

A&B hosts successful tourism stakeholder meeting

More than 80 local and global tourism industry partners participated in the recently concluded Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) quarterly state of the industry update.

The meeting was convened via Zoom.

Addressing the forum, Tourism Minister, Charles ‘Max’ Fernandez thanked the tourism partners for their ongoing partnership and congratulated the entire ABTA team for their sterling service throughout the pandemic.

The minister shared that fully vaccinated passengers are not required to test prior to arrival and indicated that the government agreed that unvaccinated passengers will be able to visit with a PCR or Antigen test done within four days of arrival.

He also spoke of the



many strides the destination is enjoying with increased airlift from all markets and a bigger interest in investment opportunities for the hotel, yachting, and cruise sectors.

The meeting’s overall objective was to reinforce the importance of public/private sector collaboration

and to ensure vital details were shared on the destination’s sales and marketing, human resource development, product enhancement, air service plans and upcoming activities.

It drew participants from a range of tourism-related industries, including

the Executive Director of the Antigua Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association (ABHTA), Patrice Simon. She highlighted the successes the destination is experiencing in higher occupancy levels.

In March 2022, when
cont’d on pg 6



CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Applications are invited by the Financial Services Regulatory Commission of Antigua and Barbuda (FSRC) for two (2) Positions of Regulatory Team Support.

Pre-requisites:- As a pre-requisite the successful candidates will be required to have the following:-

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

1. A Bachelor's Degree in Banking, Finance, Economics or Accounting.
2. Supplemental Professional and Technical Training in related areas would be an asset. That includes CFE, CPA, CFA and ACCA.
3. AML/ CFT Certification.
4. Ability to speak and understand Spanish would be an asset.

Experience:

1. Such as may have been gained through public or private employment **(with a minimum of 3 years)** involving the conduct of off-site supervision and on-site examinations of the financial records of financial institutions.

Or, any combination of education and experience that shall be substantially equivalent to the above education

Regulatory Team Support provides support to Regulatory Team Leaders and Regulatory Directors/Manager on the onsite and off-site examination of a portfolio of financial institutions.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To perform tasks incidental to the conduct of off-site supervision and on-site examinations of the operations, books and records of a portfolio of financial institutions for the purpose of ascertaining their ability to meet obligations and compliance with applicable Laws, Regulations, International prudential and other requirements and to do related work as required.
2. To work under the general supervision of a Regulatory Directors/Manager.
3. To review and examine applications, and conduct preliminary work as directed by a Regulatory Team Leader or Regulatory Directors/Manager relating to applications for licensing of financial institutions.
4. To prepare high quality reports within the stipulated time frame following the onsite and offsite examination of a portfolio financial institutions.
5. To conduct research work from time to time.
6. May deputize from time to time for a Regulatory Team Leader.
7. To do related work from time to time as instructed by a Regulatory Team Leader, Regulatory Directors or Executives.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT: KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND CAPACITIES:

1. A working knowledge of auditing principles and methods applicable in performing routine tasks incidental to the examination of the financial condition and affairs of licensed financial institutions.
2. Familiarity with the Laws and Regulations, International Prudential Standards and other requirements governing institutions under the regulatory and supervisory purview of the Commission.
3. The ability to carry out written and oral instructions.
4. The ability to assist in the preparation of reports relating to financial institutions.
5. A high level of motivation, initiative and the ability to work effectively as part of a team.
6. Strong analytical and critical thinking skills.
7. Good time management skills.
8. The ability to deliver high quality work and multitask under different situations.
9. Good interpersonal and communication skills.
10. A working knowledge of computerized business applications such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel and Microsoft PowerPoint.

- The completed application along with supporting documents must be sent to The Human Resources Manager, P.O. Box 2674, St. John's, Antigua or via email to Janice.Thomas@fsrc.gov.ag no later than 29th April 2022
- Only candidates who are shortlisted for the selection process will be contacted.
- Shortlisted candidates will be required to undertake various assessments.

Local News



CDC lowers A&B COVID-19 risk level

The last few months have been turbulent for tourism in Antigua and Barbuda as highs have been interspersed with some setbacks.

The most recent was the announcement by Air Canada that it will extend its absence from the region until at least October this year.

Despite this, the country continues to thrive with preparations for the first post-pandemic Carnival well underway and fete season in full swing after a

two-year pause.

As part of the adaptation to life with COVID-19, the government also recently announced that all travellers are again welcomed to the islands, when it dropped the vaccination requirement for entry.

Unvaccinated travellers will now only have to present a negative COVID-19 test for entry into Antigua and Barbuda. Fully vaccinated travellers must present their government issued



vaccination card upon entry to the country, however, they are no longer required to produce a COVID-19 test. Last week, local tourism officials said these progressive moves are expected to further stimulate tourism throughout the rest of 2022.

Talks are also underway with several airlines to increase airlift into the country.

North America remains Antigua and Barbuda's largest source market, so the latest news that the US-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) lowered the country's COVID-19 risk level to 3 is

encouraging.

A CDC designation of "high" indicates between 100 and 500 cases reported per 100,000 people over a period of 28 days.

At the domestic height of the pandemic, the CDC had raised Antigua and Barbuda's risk level to 4.

At level 4, or "very high" risk, the body advised US citizens against all travel to affected countries.

At level 3, or high, the CDC now advises US travellers to ensure that they are "vaccinated and up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines before traveling to Antigua and Barbuda".

cont'd from pg 4

compared to the same period pre-pandemic in 2019, Antigua and Barbuda recorded 74.6% occupancy across the sector. Simon remarked that the increase in visitor arrivals augurs well and is further proof of the industry's recovery. She shared that there were important aspects of employee and customer service training carried out by the ABHTA in 2021 and 2022 and these programs will be ongoing.

The ABTA's Regional Directors made presentations on their respective regions, updating the audience on in-market activations, and sharing initiatives that will be unrolled throughout the year.

Regional Directors Dean Fenton in the United States of America, Tameka Wharton in Canada, Cherrie Osborne in the UK & Europe, and Charmain Spencer for the Caribbean/Latin America provided updates on their respective markets.

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Local CCIs to benefit from UNESCO-backed grant funding

Antiguans and Barbudans engaged in cultural pursuits across a range of disciplines will soon be able to benefit from the first-of-its-kind United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) “Creative Caribbean – An Ecosystem of ‘Play’ for Growth and Development” programme.

Under the initiative, CARICOM citizens will have access to €3 million in funding provided through the collaboration of UNESCO and the Organization of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACP), under the OACP-EU 11th EDF Culture Programme.

The aim is to provide tangible support “as creatives seek to recover from the adverse effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.”

The Creative Caribbean – An Ecosystem of ‘Play’ for Growth and Development programme will be launched officially on 21st April.

UNESCO will partner with the CARICOM Secretariat and the University of the West Indies (UWI) to implement the multi-million dollar initiative in the region.

Joining Antigua and Barbuda as beneficiaries of the programme will be the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Re-



public, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

According to UNESCO, “The three-year project that will be implemented in 15 Caribbean countries, aims to develop a robust creative economy in the region by strengthening the enabling environment and providing grant support for industry and training initiatives.”

UNESCO further explained that the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs)

that will benefit from the grant allocation include music, fashion, festivals, film, animation and new media, visual and performing arts.

Support for CCIs is of critical importance to the region’s recovery, as it is a “sector that provides millions in revenue and in which thousands of people find full-time and part-time work.”



Under the programme, grants to creative and cultural practitioners will be provided to encourage the development of globally competitive businesses and

enhance their professional development.

It will also strengthen research and data collection on CCIs “to facilitate market access opportunities, to support the development of national artists’ registries, cultural policies and creative industry development acts to incentivise the sector.”

Director and representative of the UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean, Saadia Sanchez-Vegas said, “It is an unquestionable fact that the impact of COVID-19 on the cultural and creative sectors was tremendously significant, yet CCIs play a notable role in the economy and recovery from the pandemic.

“The Creative Caribbean project seeks to shift the paradigm from ‘the struggling artist’ to creating an enabling environment where creatives are incentivised to produce and thrive and become a key driver of sustainable development in the region.”

Tue 19 Day		Tue 19 Night	
83°		75°	
6% E 18 mph		9% E 13 mph	
A few clouds early, otherwise mostly sunny. High 83F. Winds E at 15 to 25 mph.		A few clouds overnight. Low near 75F. Winds E at 10 to 15 mph.	
Humidity 65%	UV Index Extreme	Humidity 72%	UV Index 0 of 10
Sunrise 5:49 am	Sunset 6:24 pm	Moonrise 9:38 pm	Moonset 8:02 am
		○ Waning Gibbous	

Local News

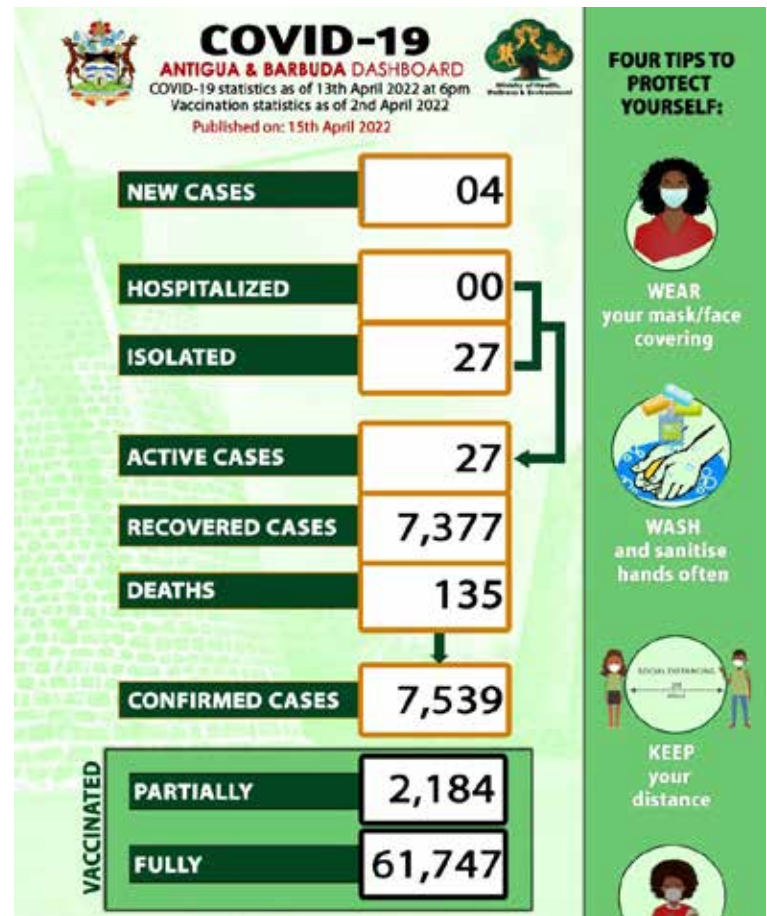
Four new COVID-19 cases; 27 active cases

The most recent report received by the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment revealed four (4) new laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda as of Wednesday 13th April, 2022, at 6pm.

Forty (40) samples were processed.

Consequently, the total number of persons with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in Antigua and Barbuda is seven thousand five hundred and thirty-nine (7,539), which is inclusive of twenty-seven (27) active cases.

There are no hospitalisations.




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Opinion



Pegasus and the horse feathers

By Tony Deyal

The Phantom had “Hero”. Roy Rogers swore by (instead of “at”) “Trigger”. Then there were the Lone Ranger’s “Silver” and my all-time favourite, “Pegasus”, the immortal winged-horse of Greek Mythology who was eventually assigned by Zeus, the father of all gods and humans, to carry his thunder and lightning during battle. Yet that “Pegasus” was famous for helping gods and heroes achieve great victories, and his name, up to recently, stood for freedom and the eternal spring of imagination and creativity.

Recently, we found out that of all the islands in the region, Trinidad is the only one that has its own “Pegasus” and it is a horse of a different colour, calorie and callousness.

The New York Times sees Pegasus, which is owned and has been developed by an Israeli company, the NSO Group, as the “World’s Most Prominent Cyberweapon”.

This Pegasus includes, among its bag of tricks, the ability to extract text messages, contact lists, calendar records, emails, instant messages and GPS locations. Using a capability called “room tap”, Pegasus can gather sound in and around the room using the phone’s own microphone.

The Times adds, “Pegasus can use the camera to take snapshots or screen

grabs. It can deny the phone access to certain websites and applications, and it can grab search histories or anything viewed with phone’s web browsers. And all of the data can be sent back to the agency’s server in real time.”

In 2016, having taken legal action against the Government Information Service (GIS) for breaching my contract, I found out that my lawyers could not contact me at all on my phone or email. I realised that only the people in charge of the national communications system had the power and technology to cause that to happen.

Fortunately, I had absolutely nothing to hide and when several people who work at the Ministry of National Security asked to be my Facebook friends, I welcomed them. Eventually they got fed-up, maybe of trying to find a reason for the Government to come after me, and gave me up in disgust (I hope).

Journalist and President of the Media Association of Trinidad and Tobago (MATT), Ms. Ira Mathur, writing in the Trinidad Guardian, quoted Attorney, Timothy Hamel-Smith, “In response to allegations of the introduction of Pegasus Spyware, the PM has not denied that spying is being conducted in T&T.

Regrettably, I have not seen any reference to the PM stating that any such



Tony Deyal

conduct is being conducted in accordance with the laws of T&T. This must be done... An allegation has been made that spying is being conducted by a constable appointed by the Minister of National Security.”

Now Pegasus is already a horse with a bad name and it is clear that the Governments of Israel and T&T are already in a seemingly very “stable” relationship. The question then is if a constable is the chosen jockey, does that show a lack of horse sense? Or is it that while you can lead the real Pegasus to water but you can’t make it drink, you can also lead a Trinidad politician or Government Minister to the same source but you can’t make him think.

Even worse, that hot-shot is sure to sink into deep manure and take the credi-

bility of the Government with him. In fact, in terms of Governments, many are called but few are as cozen as this wild bunch. So, even though King Richard the Third no longer pleads, “My kingdom for a horse”, what we might hear soon is a King-Dumb demanding and spending more of our money for a Pegasus.

Some of you might think that Pegasus is a nine-day wonder and the article has already exceeded that timeframe, but I am persevering with it because The Times makes the new Pegasus even more scary, “Its tracking software and hardware can install itself in any number of ways including ‘over the air stealth installation’, tailored text messages and emails, through public Wi-Fi hot spots rigged to secrete-

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tary install NSO Group software or the old-fashioned way, by spies in person.”

In T&T, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) found that food prices reached levels not seen in more than two decades and had risen by 20% in one year. The Government has announced “adjustments” in gas prices ranging from \$1 per litre to \$.050. However, it is believed that “Pegasus” is flying even higher than before and its costs are as astronomical as its visits to Zeus at the top of Mount Olympus.

Even though I am convinced that the cost of “Pegasus” has risen significantly over the years, The New York Times posted these already immense costs in 2016, “The NSO Group prices its surveillance tools by the number of targets, starting with a flat US\$500,000 installation fee. To spy on 10 iPhone users, NSO charges government agencies US\$650,000; US\$650,000 for 10 Android users; US\$500,000 for five BlackBerry users; or US\$300,000 for five Symbian users...One hundred additional targets will cost US\$800,000, 50 extra targets cost US\$500,000, 20 extra will cost US\$250,000 and 10 extra costs US\$150,000, according to an NSO Group commercial proposal. There is an annual system maintenance fee of 17 percent of the total price every year thereafter.”

What gets me is NSO’s

boast that the buyer gets “unlimited access to a target’s mobile devices” and can “remotely and covertly collect information about your target’s relationships, location, phone calls, plans and activities — whenever and wherever they are.”

Moreover, “It leaves no traces whatsoever.” Except, I would think, big holes in the wallets, bank-accounts, vehicle usage, and diets or food-intakes of the citizens of any country, including T&T, where Pegasus reigns.

The T&T government, having experienced a wipe-out in the Prime Minister’s home island, Tobago, and facing a local Government election in Trinidad, seems to prefer to flog a dead

horse rather than drown it in midstream. In putting a policeman to manage Pegasus, they might have put the cartoon before the horse but that obviously does not stop the Government from getting off its high-horse.

Even though the Constitution makes it clear that it is an offence to intercept communications of anyone unless it is via a warrant issued by a judge, Mr. Hamel-Smith points out, “In this context, the public has every right to be concerned about the motive for spying as it represents a diminution of their fundamental right to privacy...We want reassurance beyond the histrionic exchanges and evidence that spyware is used as a shield

and not a sword.”

From my perspective, this particular Pegasus is a sword that should immediately be placed in a scabbard and hung in the museum. I warn my readers throughout the Caribbean that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, not by Pegasus or a policeman in a Ministry, but by all of us who value our freedom and our countries. Please ensure you keep the politicians on a short rein, don’t give them a free rein and don’t give credence to their never-ending “Horse-feathers”.

**Tony Deyal was last seen advising that you keep your eyes open. A nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse, especially Pegasus.*



UPDATED SCHEDULE

SCHEDULE UPDATE
TYPHOON EXPRESS

MONDAY
(FROM ST. JOHN'S)

AB 3:45 PM

OVERNIGHT IN BARBUDA

TUESDAY

BA 6:00AM

WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY
(CRABBS DEPARTURE)

AB 10:00AM
BA 3:00PM

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The case for testing Pfizer's Paxlovid for treating long COVID

By Julie Steenhuisen

Reports of two patients who found relief from long COVID after taking Pfizer Inc's antiviral Paxlovid, including a researcher who tested it on herself, provide intriguing evidence for clinical trials to help those suffering from the debilitating condition, experts and advocates say.

The researcher said her chronic fatigue symptoms, which "felt like a truck hit me," are gone after taking the two-drug oral therapy.

Long COVID is a looming health crisis, estimated to affect up to 30% of people infected with the coronavirus. It can last for months, leaving many unable to work. More than 200 symptoms have been associated with the condition, including pain, fatigue, brain fog, breathing difficulty and exhaustion after minimal amounts of physical activity.

Dr. Steven Deeks, a professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco (USF), and an expert in HIV cure research, said drug companies tend to discount single-patient case studies.

But such instances have helped drive HIV cure research, and Deeks thinks these Paxlovid cases could do the same for long COVID.



Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) treatment pill Paxlovid is seen in a box, at Misericordia hospital in Grosseto, Italy, February 8, 2022. REUTERS/Jennifer Lorenzini

"This provides really strong evidence that we need to be studying antiviral therapy in this context as soon as possible," said Deeks, adding that he has heard of yet another anecdotal case at UCSF in which a long COVID patient's symptoms cleared after taking Paxlovid.

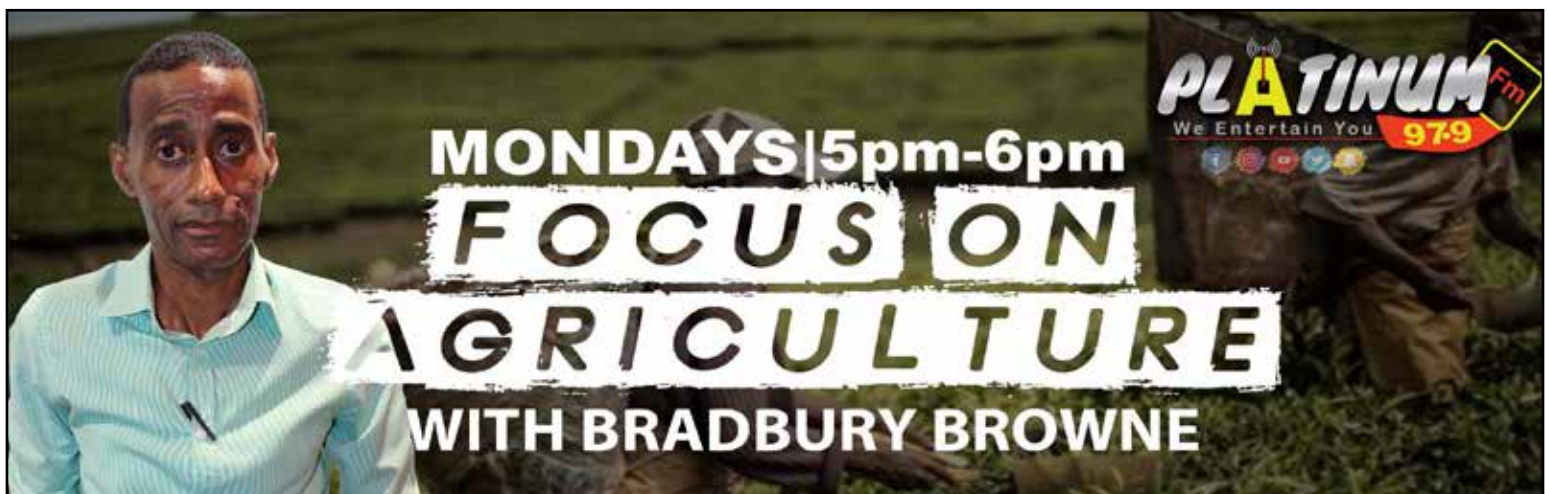
Scientists caution that these cases are "hypothesis-generating only" and not proof that the drug caused relief of lingering symptoms. But they lend support to a leading theory that long COVID may be caused by the virus persisting in parts of the body for months, affecting patients' daily lives long after acute symptoms disappear.

The best evidence so far comes

from a National Institutes of Health (NIH) study, currently under peer review, in which researchers conducted autopsies in 44 people who died of COVID-19 or another cause but were infected with COVID. They found widespread infection throughout the body, including in the brain, that can last more than seven months beyond the onset of symptoms.

Paxlovid, which combines a new Pfizer pill with the old antiviral ritonavir, is currently authorized for use in the first days of a COVID infection to prevent severe disease in high-risk patients.

Pfizer spokesman Kit Longley said
cont'd on pg 13



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the company does not have any long COVID studies underway and did not comment on whether it would consider them.

The drugmaker has two large clinical trials testing whether Paxlovid can prevent initial COVID infection. That “may provide us with relevant data to help inform future studies,” Longley said.

Patients who have been suffering for months are growing frustrated with the lack of pharmaceutical research for their condition.

There are currently fewer than 20 clinical trials led by individual researchers or small drugmakers testing treatments for long COVID, only a handful of which have moved beyond early stages, a Reuters review found. read more

Diana Berrent, founder of grassroots COVID advocacy group Survivor Corps, has been lobbying the Biden Administration to fund large long COVID clinical trials.

“We shouldn’t be doing our research based on anecdotal reports,” she said. “That’s not good enough.”

‘Back to normal’

In one of the case reports, published as a pre-print ahead of peer review, a previously healthy and vaccinated 47-year-old woman became infected with COVID in the summer of 2021. Most of her acute symptoms dissipated within 48 hours, but she continued to have severe fatigue, brain fog, exhaustion after exer-

cise, insomnia, racing heart-beat and body aches severe enough that she could no longer work.

About six months after her initial infection, she was reinfected, likely with COVID, and many of her acute symptoms also returned. Her doctor prescribed a five-day course of Paxlovid.

On day 3, she noticed a rapid improvement of long COVID symptoms. “She’s back to normal,” said Dr. Linda Geng, co-director of Stanford Health Care’s long COVID clinic and author of the case report posted on Research Square.

In the second case, La-

vanya Visvabharathy, 37, an immunologist working at Northwestern Medicine’s long COVID clinic, was infected in December 2021.

Her initial symptoms were mild, but she later experienced chronic fatigue, headaches and sleep disturbances for four months after infection. She also kept testing positive on rapid antigen tests, a sign of viral persistence

Visvabharathy was aware of the NIH study and the Stanford case, and decided to try Paxlovid to see if it could clear any lingering virus. Toward the end of the five-day course, her fatigue and insomnia had improved,

and her headaches were less frequent. Two weeks after treatment ended, her fatigue was gone. “That’s 100% fixed,” she said.

But to prove Paxlovid provides that kind of relief would require carefully controlled clinical trials, Visvabharathy said.

Dr. Igor Koralnik, who heads Northwestern Medicine’s clinic focused on the neurological effects of long COVID, noted the long list of widely-used medications that are affected by ritonavir and said Paxlovid “can’t be used willy nilly.”

“Paxlovid is not a benign medication,” he said. “There should be studies.”



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UWI Climate Studies Group warns Caribbean under threat

The University of the West Indies Climate Studies Group at Mona (CSGM) says Caribbean islands need to pay attention to the second instalment of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, known as the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6).

The report, which was released in February, presents a dire warning of the significant implications of inaction for the globe and the region; noting that even temporarily exceeding global warming of 1.5°C that is anticipated in the next two decades will result in severe effects, some of which will be irreversible.

CSGM says while the report covers the global impacts, vulnerabilities, and risks of climate change, Chapter 15 was dedicated to addressing small islands in the Caribbean, Indian, and Pacific Oceans.

“It details that a sense of urgency is prevalent among small islands to combat climate change and adhere to the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels,” it said, noting that the chapter’s Executive Summary cautions that “Small islands present the most urgent need for investment in capacity building and



The increase in the frequency and intensity of hurricanes that affect the Caribbean is among the most severe threats that comes as a direct result of the impact of climate change on the region.

adaptation strategies”.

CSGM said it has compiled 10 urgent takeaways for the Caribbean following an analysis of the IPCC February report, noting for instance that as global warming continues to rise “small islands face an existential threat if global warming rises above 1.5°C.

“People, ecosystems, and economies in the Caribbean will be significantly impacted in many ways. Among these include loss of lives and livelihoods, decreased food and water security, loss of infrastruc-

ture and settlements, degradation of human health and well-being, and loss of cultural resources and heritage.”

It said urgent action is needed if 1.5°C, above pre-industrial levels is surpassed between now and 2040, noting that although the Caribbean was at the forefront of negotiations to stay below 1.5°C global warming, greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise.

“Urgent action is needed worldwide to reduce the possibility of global warming going beyond 1.5°C,” the CSMG said,

adding that Caribbean islands already face many impacts as seen annually in hurricanes, storm surges, heatwaves, droughts, and floods.

“Extreme events such as hurricanes are expected to become more intense. More up-to-date baseline data and access to climate information are needed to be prepared and adapt to extreme events,” CSGM said, noting that small islands are experiencing human-induced climate change impacts and the risks will increase as

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warming continues.

Regarding coral bleaching and declines in coral abundance that have been observed in many small islands, CSMG, said that while some damage will be irreversible, coral reefs provide beach sand and are fish nurseries.

“Climate-sensitive economic sectors such as tourism and fisheries depend on coral reefs. Coast-focused tourism is already extremely impacted by more intense hurricanes due to coral reef damage and beach erosion. Aquaculture is being viewed as a longer-term means of diversifying incomes in the Caribbean.”

CSGM is also warning that security for human survival is threatened if drought and salinization of freshwater resources occur.

“Increasing droughts in the Caribbean can affect human health and

crop production. Integrated watershed management and building reservoirs to store freshwater received in the rainy season are fundamental for water security. Improved access to climate information for crop production and new technologies for growing drought-resistant crops and crops adapted to flood conditions are important for farmers.”

In its analysis, the CSMG said that no single adaptation response is a complete solution to reducing risks to people and nature advising that the Caribbean should use a mix of adaptation responses such as protection, accommodation, advance and retreat.

It said ecosystem-based adaptation such as mangrove replanting and protection measures including seawalls are also used but can cause damage if poorly designed and built.

“Responses are more effective if

combined, planned, aligned with sociocultural values and development priorities, and underpinned by inclusive community engagement processes. Feasibility studies are needed to determine how effective adaptation measures have been in responding to sea-level rise and flooding. The scale of needed action remains limited and requires more research.”

Regarding barriers to adaptation and enabling conditions that hinder responses, the CSMG said to make progress in adaptation, the Caribbean needs enablers such as better governance; political commitment; legal reforms; improving justice; equity, and gender considerations.

It is also calling for increased access to climate information; adequately downscaled climate data, and embedding indigenous knowledge and local knowledge adaptation responses. (CMC)



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Regional News



IMF establishes fund to aid Caribbean countries with long-term COVID-19, climate challenges

CMC - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says its board of directors has established a new fund to aid the Caribbean and other developing countries with long-term COVID-19 pandemic and climate challenges.

The Washington-based financial institution said the Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST) offers low-cost loans to developing countries, with emergency currency or Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) that wealthy countries will contribute.

"I am very pleased to announce that the IMF's Executive Board today approved the creation of a new Resilience and Sustainability Trust to come into effect on May 1, 2022," said IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva in a statement. "The Trust aims to help low-income and vulnerable middle-income countries address longer-term structural challenges that pose macroeconomic risks, including climate change and pandemics.

"As the world is confronting consecutive global shocks, we must not lose sight of the critical actions needed today to ensure longer-term resilience and sustainability, and we can only succeed by working together," she added.



er," she added.

Georgieva said the RST will "amplify" the impact of the US\$650 billion SDR allocation implemented last year by channeling resources from economically stronger members to "countries where the needs are greatest."

"The aspiration is to build a Trust of at least US\$45 billion in resources," she said, adding that the RST will serve as a third pillar of the IMF's lending toolkit, in addition to the General Resources Account and the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust.

Georgieva said the RST will provide policy support and affordable longer maturity financing – with a 20-year maturity and a 10ten and a half-year grace period – to help build resilience against long-term risks to balance of payments stabil-

ity.

She said about three-quarters of the IMF's country membership will be eligible for RST financing, including low-income members, as well as most middle-income countries and all small developing states.

"We have worked extensively with our members and other stakeholders to design the RST, with the goal of balancing the needs of potential contributors and borrowers," Georgieva said.

"The reforms supported by the Trust are also intended to catalyze increased financing from the private sector, donors, and other international financial institutions (IFIs)," she added. "Close collaboration with the World Bank and other IFIs will be critical for the success of the RST.

"Our membership had

called on us to enhance our existing lending toolkit to address a growing need for building resilience and sustainability now in order to reduce economic risks in the future," the IMF chief continued.

"Today, our membership has come together and responded."

Eric LeCompte, Executive Director of religious development group Jubilee USA Network and a United Nations finance expert, said the new trust "provides an important way for wealthy countries to support developing countries struggling with the impacts of crises spurred by the pandemic and climate change."

The IMF said Jubilee USA Network is an alliance of more than 75 US organizations and 750 faith communities working with 50 Jubilee global partners.

With the growing challenges that developing countries face and new global shocks from the war in Ukraine, "we need more tools like this trust," LeCompte said.

In August, the IMF said it created US\$650 billion SDRs. Due to IMF rules, about US\$230 billion went to developing countries and more than US\$400 billion went to developed countries.

Haiti signs agreement with International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

CMC - Haiti has signed a financing agreement with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) regarding the execution of its Inclusive Blue Economy (I-BE) project that will help preserve the Three Bays Protected Area by providing economic opportunities for smallholder farmers and artisanal fishers living in the northeast of the country.

The US\$26.6 million project, which will be executed by the Ministry of Economy and Finance, is expected to benefit an estimated 40,000 people who live in the five municipalities of the protected area with particular attention being paid to women and young people.

IFAD is providing US\$14 million towards the project that will strengthen the capacities of the National Agency

for Protected Areas of Haiti (ANAP) and facilitate the adaptation of national legislation in favor of artisanal fishing and its sustainability.

IFAD Country Director for Haiti, Paolo Silveri, said the region's "poverty and malnutrition rates and poor fishing and agricultural practices, such as the use of fine-mesh seines, the anarchic slaughter of trees for charcoal production, slash-and-burn agriculture and the lack of soil preservation techniques, are depleting marine and terrestrial resources, threatening their sustainability and posing worrying risks to the country's food security in the medium term.

"The project will help regulate these practices, thereby reducing pressure on natural resources, and diversify food production by en-



IFAD Country Director for Haiti Paolo Silveri (left) and Gilbert Houngbo, IFAD managing director.

couraging good practices in small-scale animal husbandry, vegetable growing, honey and salt, and the management of mangrove forests. It will promote more sustainable use of wood as a fuel for cooking by offering training in charcoal production techniques and the improvement of domestic ovens."

"The best way to help Haiti's small-scale farmers and artisanal fishers progress and contribute to the coun-

try's food security is to provide them with the means to carry out their economic activities in a sustainable way, in a way that does not force them to deplete resources to survive," said Silveri.

IFAD said since it began its work in Haiti nearly 45 years ago, it has invested in 11 projects representing a total of approximately US\$290 million, which have benefited more than 100,000 rural families.

Guyana records economic growth during pandemic

CNW - The World Bank says Guyana's economy grew by 72.03 percent between 2019 to 2021, the largest growth rate in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region.

This was outlined in the World Bank's semiannual report for Latin America and the Caribbean which was published earlier this month.

The World Bank noted that many countries in the region, particularly the tourism-dependent nations, recorded economic declines. However, Guyana was among the 12 countries that recorded positive economic growth over the past two years and the country's cumulative economic growth was the



only one with a double-digit growth rate. Nicaragua, the country with the second-highest cumulative growth rate, grew at about 7.53 percent.

Guatemala, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Costa Rica, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Peru, and Brazil were the other countries with positive growth rates.

Though not explicitly stated in this report, Guyana's economic growth is underpinned by the development of a nascent oil and gas sector and spin-off developments.

The World Bank noted that although the country's non-oil economy has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate-related challenges (flooding), the development of the oil economy, facilitated Guyana's economic expansion.

Based on new growth projections, Guyana's real GDP is expected to expand by 47.9 percent this year. The trend of economic growth is expected

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SKN PM must resolve Team Unity dispute by Wednesday

St. Kitts and Nevis' Prime Minister Dr Timothy Harris has been given until Wednesday to resolve the issues facing the coalition Team Unity government, or dissolve parliament and pave the way for fresh general elections.

The ultimatum was delivered by Nevis Premier and leader of the Concerned Citizens Movement (CCM), Mark Brantley, amid a widening rift within the administration.

Brantley issued the call during a television broadcast on Saturday night, saying that Harris had done nothing to resolve the issues raised by two parties in the coalition's membership of three regarding the government.

The coalition government comprises Harris' People's Labour Party (PLP), the People's Action Movement (PAM) and Brantley's CCM.

In his broadcast, Brantley said that he and PAM



Leaders of the Team Unity coalition, L – R: People's Action Movement, Shawn Richards, People's Labour Party, Dr. Timothy Harris, Concerned Citizens Movement, Mark Brantley

leader and the deputy prime minister, Shawn Richards, sent a joint letter to Harris giving him the Wednesday deadline and insisting that the coalition would not be used for the personal ambition of any one individual.

"To this end and consistent with our own ongoing efforts to save our Team Unity government, the Honourable Shawn Richards and I have delivered written communication to the Honourable Prime Minister set-

ting our position for a path forward," said Brantley in the television broadcast..

"We have taken the unprecedented step of putting a deadline of Wednesday, April 20, 2022 for a response from the Prime Minister, barring which we can only conclude that he and his team has no interest or desire to save this Team Unity government.

"We shall therefore know by Wednesday whether we can achieve resolution

or whether we face dissolution," Brantley told the nation.

Last Thursday, following their latest round of discussions to save the coalition, Prime Minister Harris in a televised broadcast said he remained "fully committed" to bring to an end the rift within his coalition administration insisting that the country "must have a cabinet that is fully committed to addressing the pressing issues that confront our people".

Harris said that issues confronting the government related to governance and transparency, a reassignment of ministerial duties, the external involvement of global financial institutions, and an increase in the operating budget of Nevis, were among the matters on the agenda.

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to continue in 2023 with a 34.3 percent, and in 2024 with a 3.8 percent growth rate.

In its Global Economic Prospects report, released in January, the World Bank stated that Guyana's growth projection for 2022 was 49.7 percent.

In the semiannual report, the World Bank briefly mentioned Guyana's vulnerability to flooding. L

ike other countries in the LAC region, the Bank pointed out that climate change

poses significant challenges to the local economy.

"Coastal cities are also threatened by sea-level rise; 60 of the 77 most densely populated cities in the region are located on the coast," the World Bank said.

It also highlighted that without climate adaptation measures, agricultural production in the region may be hard hit. And altogether, the Bank warned that climate change could drive millions of people in the LAC region back into extreme poverty.

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Regional News

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"The meeting was cordial as was the one held last week," he said, noting that at Thursday's meeting he had proposed a framework "to address the issues raised.

"This framework included the introduction of a code of conduct for the better functioning of the cabinet. I further proposed that all subject to greater accountability to the cabinet through regular reporting so that members may be better apprised of the workings of the entire government," Harris said, addressing briefly talk of a cabinet reshuffle and issues related to the powers wielded by the prime minister's office within the Team Unity framework.

"I committed to undertake a review of the makeup of the cabinet in due course, with a view to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the government as a whole. I made it clear that I could not allow the constitutional prerogative of the office of the

prime minister to be diminished."

But Brantley added "the principles of Team Unity, which allowed him the privilege of being our prime minister should also not be diminished."

"We cannot and must not use the ladder of Team Unity to get to the top and kick it down as being a mere construct for personal advancement.

In his televised address Harris told the nation that the government has sought external input from the World Bank regarding the issue of the equitable distribution of the Citizenship By Investment (CBI) revenue.

Under the CBI programme, foreign investors are granted citizenship in return for making a significant contribution to the socio-economic development of the twin-island federation.

"Progress has been made with the World Bank giving its consent to undertake a study to advise equitable revenue-sharing arrangements between the federal government and the

Nevis Island Administration," Harris said, announcing also the approval of a national operating budget increase for Nevis.

But Brantley in his broadcast ridiculed the prime minister's efforts at getting the Washington-based financial institution to get involved in the issue, saying that any secondary school student could have dealt with the issue.

"It [boggles] the mind why the Honourable Prime Minister, a trained accountant and highly astute financial manager would continue peddling a notion that we need the World Bank to come in and do a study and to tell us how to calculate the monies received from CBI..."

"I am certain when I say that any student from the Nevis Sixth Form College ...could undertake that mathematical exercise and bring immediate resolution to a matter which has festered for seven long years," Brantley said.



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German bosses, unions jointly oppose boycott of Russian gas

AP — Germany's employers and unions have joined together in opposing an immediate European Union ban on natural gas imports from Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, saying such a move would lead to factory shutdowns and the loss of jobs in the bloc's largest economy.

"A rapid gas embargo would lead to loss of production, shutdowns, a further de-industrialization and the long-term loss of work positions in Germany," said Rainer Dulger, chairman of the BDA employer's group, and Reiner Hoffmann, chairman of the DGB trade union confederation, in a joint statement Monday on Germany's dpa news agency.

The statement comes as European leaders are discussing possible new energy sanctions against Russian oil, following a decision April 7 to ban Russian coal imports beginning in August. Ukraine's



A refinery is illuminated in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, Tuesday evening, April 5, 2022. (AP Photo/Martin Meissner, File)

leaders say revenues from Russia's energy exports are financing Moscow's destructive war on Ukraine and must be ended.

That won't be easy to do. The EU's 27 nations get around 40% of their natural gas from Russia and around 25% of their oil. Natural gas would be the most difficult to do without, energy analysts say, since most of it comes by pipeline from Russia and supplies of liquefied gas, which can be ordered by ship, are limited amid strong demand worldwide.

Germany, a major manufacturing hub and an importer of Russian gas, has so far resisted an immediate shutoff and said it plans to instead phase out Russian oil by the end of the year and most Russian gas imports by mid-2024. The EU's executive commission has outlined steps to cut the consumption of Russian gas by two-thirds by year's end through using more pipeline gas from Norway and Azerbaijan, importing more liquefied gas, accelerating the deployment of wind and solar projects and intensifying con-

servation efforts.

German Vice-Chancellor Robert Habeck said in an interview with the Funke media group that "an immediate gas embargo would endanger social peace in Germany."

Despite widespread economic sanctions against Russian banks and individuals, the EU continues to send around \$850 million per day to Russia for oil and gas, even as EU governments condemn the war in Ukraine. Gas-intensive companies include producers of glass, metals, ceramics and chemicals. Industry officials say natural gas would be difficult or impossible to replace in the short run.

Analysts say Russian crude oil would be easier to replace than gas but that a boycott would still lead to higher energy prices that would hit consumers who are already facing record EU inflation of 7.5%.

US, South Korea urge North's return to talks after missile tests

AP — The U.S. special envoy for North Korea said Monday that Washington and Seoul agreed on the need for a strong response to North Korea's recent spate of missile tests, though they remain open to dialogue with the country.

Sung Kim flew to South Korea on Monday for talks two days after North Korea conducted a new type of missile test in its 13th round of weapons firing this year. Experts say North Korea wants to advance its weapons arsenal

and wrest concessions such as sanctions relief from its rivals.

Weapons tested include nuclear-capable missiles able to target both the U.S. mainland and its allies such as South Korea and Japan. There are concerns that North Korea may conduct a nuclear test soon to intensify its pressure campaign.

"We agreed on the need for a strong response to the destabilizing behavior we have seen" from North Korea, Kim

told reporters after meeting with his South Korean counterpart. "(We) also agreed on the need to maintain the strongest possible joint deterrent capability on the peninsula."

South Korean nuclear envoy Noh Kyu-duk said he and Kim shared concerns that North Korea will likely continue to engage in acts that raise regional tensions. He urged North Korea to return to talks.

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Faced with criticism, Le Pen allies tone down rhetoric on proposed hijab ban

Reuters - A planned hijab ban if French presidential candidate Marine Le Pen is elected would come “little by little” and would be determined by lawmakers, her allies said on Monday of a move critics and allies alike said would be hard to implement.

The remarks, on one of the main issues of dispute in French politics in recent years, marked a shift in tone as the far-right core of Le Pen’s programme comes under closer scrutiny less than a week ahead of the final presidential vote.

Louis Aliot, the far-right mayor of Perpignan and former life companion of Le Pen, said in an interview with France Inter radio that the hijab ban was one of several political tools to fight “Islamism”, but that its implementation needed to come “progressively”.

The ban should target state-run services first, he said, before being widened “little by little”. “There will be a debate in parliament and then, the



Marine Le Pen, French far-right National Rally (Rassemblement National) party candidate for the 2022 French presidential election, speaks during a campaign meeting in Avignon, France, April 14, 2022. REUTERS/Christian Hartmann/File Photo

choice will be made,” he said.

Le Pen has previously said that the hijab could not be viewed as the sign of a person’s religious belief, but was an “Islamist uniform” that needed to be banned from French public space.

She has in recent years moved to soften her image, shifting her focus away from identity issues towards purchasing power, the number one priority

for French voters, but she has not shed far-right policies from her election programme.

Issues linked to France’s Muslim population, one of the largest in Europe, have become a hot-button issue in a country that has seen a series of deadly extremist attacks in recent years.

Lawyers in France have said banning the hijab would be targeted discrimination against Muslim women and violate the French constitution.

Le Pen’s rival President Emmanuel Macron last week met a woman on the campaign trail who told him she wore the headscarf by her own choice and viewed herself as a “feminist”, to which Macron replied: “This is the best answer to all the nonsense.”

In contrast, Le Pen on Friday looked sheepish when she was approached by a woman wearing a hijab before cameras, who told her to “leave the Muslims alone”, adding: “We are French, we love this country”.

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Kim said the allies “have not closed the door on diplomacy” with North Korea and have “no hostile intent” toward the country. He repeated his earlier statement that the United States is ready to meet North Korea “anywhere, without any conditions.”

North Korea has so far rejected Kim’s outreach, saying the United States must first drop its hostile policy before talks can resume. Some experts say North Korea wants the U.S. to relax sanctions or suspend its regular military drills with South Korea, which it views as an invasion rehearsal.

Earlier Monday, the U.S. and South Korean militaries kicked off their springtime computer-simulated command post exercise. North Korea has previously responded to such drills with missile tests and warlike rhetoric.

North Korea said Sunday it tested a new tactical guided weapon a day earlier which would boost its nuclear fighting capability. Some analysts said the weapon is likely a short-range ballistic missile to be mounted with a tactical nuclear warhead capable of targeting South Korea.

Last month, North Korea test-fired an intercontinental



U.S. Special Representative for North Korea, Sung Kim, left, shakes hands with South Korea’s Special Representative for the Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs Noh Kyu-duk as they pose for a photo during a meeting at the Foreign Ministry in Seoul, South Korea, Monday, April 18, 2022. (AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon, Pool)

ballistic missile potentially capable of reaching the U.S. homeland in its first long-range weapons test since November 2017.

U.S.-led diplomacy

meant to convince North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions in return for economic and political rewards remain largely stalemated since 2019.

Sports News



Manchester United's Fernandes involved in car crash but unhurt

Reuters – Manchester United midfielder Bruno Fernandes was involved in a car crash on Monday on his way to the club's training ground.

No parties involved were understood to have sustained serious injuries and the Portugal international is expected to train today, a club source

said.

United manager Ralf Rangnick will address the media later on Monday.

United, who are fifth in the Premier League standings with 54 points from 32 games, face second-placed Liverpool on Tuesday.



Manchester United midfielder Bruno Fernandes

Cuban boxers can go professional under deal with Mexican promoter

AP - Cuban boxers will be allowed to fight professionally for the first time since the 1960s under a deal with a Mexican promoter, officials said.

The scope of the deal announced Monday wasn't immediately clear. The Mexican promoter, Golden Ring, appears to operate primarily in Aguascalien-

tes, a city of nearly 900,000 people in north-central Mexico.

It held an event last year with Cubans participating on an amateur basis. The first bouts under the new agreement are scheduled for May, according to Cuban officials.

Cuba has been a global power in boxing on the am-



Cuban boxers overjoyed as professional fights resume after 60-year hiatus

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MY TREAT!

By Kenneth Holt



ateur level, focusing heavily on Olympic success. It won four gold medals at the past Tokyo Olympics.

But for decades, Cuban sporting officials shunned the professional sport and lauded champions such as Teófilo Stevenson and Félix Savón never went pro.

"The moment has come. We have spent years studying this possibility," said Ariel Sainz, vice president of the official Institute of Sport, appearing on state television Monday night.

"In professional boxing now there are opportunities for our athletes that we can perfectly well utilize."

He also noted it would

allow athletes to improve their incomes. Many Cuban athletes from other sports have left the island in recent decades to seek a lucrative professional career not available at home under Cuba's socialist system.

Under the deal, Cuban officials said the boxers would get 80 percent of the earnings while trainers, doctors and the federation would split the remaining 20 percent.

Alberto Puig, president of the Cuban Federation of Boxing, said that professional boxing had "humanized" itself in recent years and argued there are now few differences in the rules.

Knight: Skills challenge achieves objectives

Coordinator Carl “Bolie” Knight said the skills challenge competition introduced in late February as part of the Inter-schools’ Basketball Programme, has achieved its objectives.

Following the two year break due to the pandemic, the skills challenge was implemented to help players gradually work their way back into basketball and develop the fundamentals of the sport in a fun and competitive way.

Knight said the decision to utilise the skills challenge has been vindicated its success between its introduction in late February the Easter school break that began on 8th April.

“We were fortunate to kick off basketball at the end of February with little practice time, and so we thought about it in terms of what format we were going to use,” Knight said.

“Then we came up with the skills challenge, which deals with the fundamentals of the game, and we thought that would be very vital for us, because not only would it be a competition, but it would also be like a practice session for the children to continue to work on their craft, whether it is dribbling, shooting or passing.”

The former senior national team point guard and captain said the skills challenge competitions proved to be a resounding success.

“It was very exciting, and I think everything went



Coordinator of the inter-schools’ basketball programme Carl ‘Boli’ Knight. (Photo courtesy ABBA)

well, as a matter of fact, even better than we thought it would have been because it had that competitive edge.

“You know Antiguans are competitive people, so the games, whether it was in mini, primary, boys or girls, it was pretty competitive,” Knight said.

“What impressed me most, and what warmed my heart, was to see the children grow. I could have seen them grow in front of me. After they would have finished their first stint and when they came back by the third time, you could see a difference in the ball handling.

“There are some who

thought we should have gone with the 5x5 route, but when I looked at our athletes, I said there is no way that we could have taken that route.

“Yes, we have solid basketballers, but we also have a large number of young beginners and looking at them, I knew that they weren’t ready for that type of competition, so the unit is pleased,” he said.

Knight continued that the winners in the various divisions will be recognised when school reopens after Easter vacation.

“We also decided that we were going to recognise only first place winners in

the various categories and give them some reward, because this skills competition was just a teaser. And so hopefully next year when we kicked off again, we will return to our original games because we would have seen an improvement in the product and we will just go from strength to strength,” he said.

“In the Mini Boys’ Primary, Villa School came out on top with a total of 29 points. In the Mini Girls’ Primary, Villa School was the winner with 35 points. In those two categories, Liberta was right on Villa’s tail.

“In the Mini Secondary, Antigua Grammar School were the winners with 38 points, and they were pretty outstanding.

“In the Junior Boys’, we had a number of teams, so we had to divide them into two sections. In Zone A, we had Clare Hall Secondary coming out on top with 50 points, and Zone B was won by Princess Margaret Secondary School with 46 points.

“The Senior Girls’ Division was won by the All Saints Secondary School with 38 points and they were pretty outstanding.

“We are going to give them a token of our appreciation and we are planning to do that when schools reopen after the Easter vacations. We are going to make each presentation right at the var-

cont’d on pg 24

Sports News



Police win opening matches in Richie Richardson competition

Police have continued their impressive unbeaten run in this season's Antigua Commercial Bank (ACB) Caribbean Parish League.

After capturing the Dave Joseph One Day title on 9th April, Police maintained their 100 percent win record by scoring victories in their two opening round matches in the Richie Richardson Limited Overs Competition last weekend.

Police opened their campaign in the 35 overs aside contest, with a seven-wicket win over Mahi-

co at the Police Recreation Grounds on Saturday.

Former Leeward Islands middle-order batsman, Ian Tittle, struck an unbeaten 47, Omalee Hilinger cracked 43 and 13-year-old Tanez Francis contributed 20 in Mahico's total of 163 all out.

Right-arm off-spinner James Cornelius grabbed 3 for 21 and Damon Valentine captured 2 for 13.

Police then secured victory by scoring the required 164 run target for the loss of just three wickets.



Jeron Jones hit an unbeaten 69, Valentine made 36 and captain Derek Mourillon was not out on 20.

Police then overcame PIC Insurance Liberta by four wickets in their second encounter at Ball Beef in Liberta on Sunday.

Liberta were dismissed for 125 in 32.5 overs with Michael Greaves scoring 48 while Javid Richardson made 29.

Cornelius snapped up

3 for 14, Lashorn Barnarde captured 3 for 40, Vincent Shadrach Jr. claimed 2 wickets for 7 runs, Orandel Boston claimed 2 for 17.

Police achieved victory by scoring 127 for 6 in 30.5 overs.

Jones top scored with 29, Valentine got 21 and Shadrach was not out on 14.

Uri Smith took 2 for 18 and Greaves picked up 2 for 19.

cont'd from pg 23

ious schools...when they are having their general assembly... just to say thank you and to let them feel appreciated.

"You know that is a big thing in the schools, because the players will be called on stage in front of the entire school and so that is a proud moment for them. They will be able to push their chest out and wear a big smile and so that is exactly what we are going to be doing."

Knight also expressed his gratitude to Cool & Smooth for their continued support of the Inter-schools' Basketball Programme.

"All of this would not be possible without the support of our sponsor Cool & Smooth [who has] been with us for nearly 20 years now," Knight said.

"That business has been just outstanding...so I cannot stop giving them praise because they have done so much for schools' basketball.

"So, from the Ministry of Sports, especially the Basketball Unit, we are saying thank you to the Hourani brothers (George and Amir) for continuing to step forward and support schools' basketball."

VOLUNTEERS WANTED!!

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Sports News

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tosh, also of Paramount Performance Track Club and Princess Margaret Secondary School, barely missed out on a medal.

McIntosh, the sole Antigua and Barbuda competitor in the Under-20 Girls' Heptathlon, won the 800-meter leg of the event, in 2 minutes 38.28 seconds, but finished the event fourth overall.

The heptathlon involves competition across the 100-meter hurdles, high jump, shot-put, 200-meter, long jump, javelin, and 800-meter events.

McIntosh recorded a total of 4,035 points from her seven events at CARIFTA 2022.

The heptathlon was ultimately won by Jamaica's Shania Myers who amassed a total of 5,006 points.

A'Keela McMaster of the

British Virgin Islands narrowly claimed silver with 4,246 points, just one point ahead of Gianna Paul of Trinidad and Tobago.

Antigua and Barbuda's Osei Gardener of CPTSA Wings Sports Club and Princess Margaret Secondary School made it to the semi-finals of the Under-17 Boys' 400-meter event.

Geolyna Dowdy of Phoenix Athletics Club also reached the Under-17 Girls 200-meter semi-finals event.

Antigua and Barbuda also claimed a gold medal at the CARIFTA Games swimming championships in Barbados.

Ethan Stubbs-Green swam to gold in the boys 13-14 category of the 100-metre butterfly. Stubbs-Green clocked a personal best time of 58.22 seconds to win the event.



Ethan Stubbs-Green secured the gold medal in the CARIFTA Boys' 13-14 100 metre butterfly event.



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Fleming wins 100 metres gold at CARIFTA Games

Dwayne Fleming of Antigua and Barbuda is the new CARIFTA Games Boys' Under-17 100-meter champion.

Fleming was an underdog in the Saturday final at the national stadium in Kingston, Jamaica, as he entered the event as a non-automatic qualifier.

But the determined 15-year-old sprinter of the Power Speed Endurance Track Club and the Princess Margaret Secondary School became a stunning example of why it's unwise to judge a track and field race on paper.

Fleming blasted out of the blocks to earn an early lead over race favourite Gary Card of Jamaica.

Card stormed down the track to narrow Fleming's lead in the middle and closing stages of the race. But the distance opened by Fleming proved to be too wide for the Jamaican.

Fleming sped across the finish line in 10.72 seconds, his personal best time, to win Antigua and Barbuda's first 100-meter gold at the CARIFTA Games since sprinter Daniel "Bakka" Bailey won both 100 and



Antigua and Barbuda sprinter Dwayne Fleming celebrates after surging to victory in the Boys' Under-17 100-meter Final at the 49th CARIFTA Games at the National Stadium in Kingston, Jamaica, on Saturday, 16th April, 2022. (Photo: Marion Reid)

200-meter events during the game's 33rd edition in Hamilton, Bermuda in 2004.

Card finished second in 10.75 seconds while Keo Davis of St. Vincent and the Grenadines claimed third place in 10.77 seconds.

Meanwhile, Team Antigua and Barbuda claimed medals in other events as Craig Pendergast secured a bronze medal in the Boys' Under 20 400 metre Hurdles.

Pendergast, who attends

the Calabar High School in Jamaica, ran a time of 55.08 seconds to claim third place in the final.

Jamaica's Roshawn Clarke took home the gold convincingly, clocking 50.68 seconds, with Bahamian Shamiar Bain securing second place in a time of 52.83 seconds.

Triple jumper Alysia Dyett won Antigua and Barbuda's first medal at the 49th CARIFTA Games when she finished third in the final of the Under-20

Girls' Triple Jump.

Dyette, a member of Paramount Performance Track Club, leapt 12.04 meters to claim the bronze medal.

Kayssia Hudson of French Guiana produced the winning jump of 12.34 meters to capture gold ahead of Jamaica's Jo-Anna Pinnock, who claimed silver with a jump of 12.13 meters.

Another Team Antigua Barbuda athlete, Mia McIn-

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