

MARIA BROWNE IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE WITHIN DAYS OF ELECTION



Works Minister Maria Browne (R) and Parliamentary Secretary Clement Antonio yesterday ordered the construction of a concrete road at Loblolly Street, Greenbay.

Antigua and Barbuda makes case for reparatory justice at CELAC summit

Antigua and Barbuda is continuing to use every opportunity to advocate for reparatory justice in various international fora.

At Tuesday's Community of Latin America and Caribbean Countries (CELAC) summit in Argentina, Foreign Minister, E. P. Chet Greene addressed the need for reparatory justice to establish a moral, ethical and legal case for the payment of reparations by governments of former colonial powers and to the nations and people of the Caribbean Community for the crime against Humanity of Native Genocide, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the racially driven chattel slavery system.

"It is against this background that we endorsed the Regional Launch of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022-2032, designed to carry on efforts to continue work-



ing for the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean," Greene said in his remarks.

Speaking of the impact of the pandemic on regional economies, Greene added that it is important that

CELAC continues to coordinate efforts regionally and extra-regionally to manage the socioeconomic fallout of the pandemic to build a Latin American and Caribbean region that is more secure, resilient and sustainable.

PM Browne fulfills commitment to youth involvement

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has moved to demonstrate his commitment to empowering young people.

That was the view of the newly appointed parliamentary secretary in the Ministry of Education, Sports and Creative Industries, Senator Shenella Govia who shared her views following the swearing in of several young senators to the Upper House of Parliament.

"We have seen several young people being appointed to the Senate and will be appointed to board



Senator Shenella Govia, left, with Governor General Sir Rodney Williams and Lady Sandra Williams.

positions as well. This is not a record has been ever since new, this is what his track he was named prime minis-

ter back in 2014," she noted.

Roughly half of the Senate is now composed of young people. They include Senators Knacyntar Nedd, Caleb Gardner, Clement Antonio, Rawdon Turner and Shenella Govia.

"The prime minister has consistently believed in and has empowered young people and I believe that this is just the start of more things to come," Senator Govia declared.

Referring to her additional responsibilities as a parliamentary secretary, Govia said she is excited to

cont'd on pg 3

Residents of Loblolly Street to get concrete road

Roadworks have commenced in a section of the Grays/Green community as the Minister of Housing, Works, Land and Urban Renewal, Maria Browne begins delivering on her promise to extend road construction and repairs in communities.

On Tuesday, Minister Browne and Parliamentary Secretary, Clement Antonio, visited Loblolly Street in Greenbay.

There, the duo examined the state of the main access route into the area and ordered that work commence immediately.

"The residents in the area have been left languishing for quite some time in terms of their un-fixed road.

"We pretty much are seeing homes on both sides of a very small road that was created decades ago and was left earthen.

"So, now we are seeking to concrete the entire road to allow for the res-

idents to have better flow of traffic.

"Their cars will be able to pass, they'll be able to park alongside their residences and to give an overall better feel to the environment here on Loblolly Street," Minister Browne stated.

She said her ministry is pleased to enhance the aesthetics of the area, while simultaneously bringing relief to residents.

After being assigned her ministerial portfolio, Minister Browne said attention would be placed immediately on improving the road infrastructure in communities across the country.



cont'd from pg 2

take on the new role of assisting minister Daryll Matthew with any task required for the smooth operation of the ministry.

She explained that she has always been passionate about education and believes that her work with young people will assist her with her new responsibilities.

Govia has been active in the JCI for many years and the Red Cross. She has also been associated with other cultural events including as a member of a steel band.

"I am looking forward to bringing to bear these experiences with me in this new role," she declared.

More nationals to get temporary jobs in Jersey

The work programme through which nearly fifty Antiguan and Barbudans have received temporary employment in Jersey, a UK dependency located in the English Channel has been extended.

Executive Director of the Antigua

and Barbuda Hotels and Tourist Association, Patrice Christian-Simon, said her organisation will formally launch the work programme today during a state television appearance.

The programme was negotiated by the ABHTA, the Ministry of Tourism

and the Antigua and Barbuda High Commissioner to Britain, Karen-Mae Hill.

The agreement was signed on behalf of the government by Tourism Minister, Charles Fernandez.

cont'd on pg 4

Top cop pleased with conduct during elections

Commissioner of Police, Atlee Rodney, is thanking the public for the peaceful and orderly manner in which they conducted themselves during last Wednesday's general elections.

The top cop described the process as seamless with hardly any incidents affecting the opening and closing of polling stations and the counting of ballots.

"I was particularly pleased with the high level of maturity and patience exhibited by members of the public at all of the polling stations on the day of the election. The respect shown towards each other was at an all-time



Commissioner of Police, Atlee Rodney

high, and it clearly shows that we can exercise our democratic rights without being disrespectful or disruptive," said

Commissioner Rodney.

He believes the peaceful outcome would not have been possible without the general support and cooperation of everyone involved.

The CoP has also commended the Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission (ABEC) and the media for professionalism with which they carried out their responsibilities.

Rodney expressed special thanks and appreciation to all members of the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda for their exceptional service leading up to and throughout election day.

cont'd from pg 3

Simon revealed that forty-eight people travelled to Jersey for temporary employment between May and October last year.

This year, however, the aim is to have as many as one hundred persons participate in the programme. This year's participants will leave for Jersey in April until September.

"We have had very good responses from those who participated in the programme last year as well as

from the properties where they were employed.

"Twenty-five of those who attended are returning with twelve going back to the properties where they worked last year.

"Overall, we are very impressed with the first year of the programme, not just us at the ABHTA, but for the property owners in Jersey as well," she disclosed.

According to Christian-Simon, Antigua and Barbuda stands to reap many benefits by participat-

ing in the programme. These include the remittances sent home by the participants and the opportunity the participants have to broaden their work experience in an international setting.

"They were able to work in a completely different environment to the one in which they are accustomed. Last year we were filling a void caused by Brexit and the pandemic, however, our people were able to gain first-hand experience working in a country where tour-

ism is an important, but not the main industry.

"Culturally, they also gained from working alongside people from different cultures and experiences and this has been to their overall benefit," she noted.

The ABHTA's executive director noted that the skill sets required this year have been broadened to include hospitality sector workers including those who service hotels, restaurants, attractions, event planners and related businesses.

The recruitment take place among those who are presently employed by ABHTA member properties, graduands who completed training at the Antigua Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute within the last two years and people who are self-employed in the hospitality sector.

Wed 25 Day		Wed 25 Night	
81°	23% ENE 15 mph	73°	8% ENE 14 mph
A few clouds early, otherwise mostly sunny. High 81F. Winds ENE at 10 to 20 mph.		Clear skies with a few passing clouds. Low 73F. Winds ENE at 10 to 20 mph.	
Humidity 72%	UV Index 9 of 10	Humidity 76%	UV Index 0 of 10
Sunrise 6:40 am	Sunset 5:59 pm	Moonrise 9:49 am	Moonset 10:05 pm
Waxing Crescent			

Travis Weste considers re-entering Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge

Travis Weste of Team Antigua Pairs has said he would like to participate once more in the annual Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge.

In 2020, Weste and his partner Joseph “JoJo” Nunes formed Team Antigua Pairs to become the fourth team and the first pair to represent Antigua and Barbuda in the competition which is a fixture on the calendar of competitive rowers.

Although his former partner Nunes has indicated that he will not re-enter the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge, Weste is not ruling out the possibility of contesting the event as a solo competitor in a future event.

“Well, JoJo said he wouldn’t be a part of that again, not because of fear, but for him, it’s a one-time thing. I am thinking of doing it again. I would love to do it again. I have thoughts of doing it solo, but of course that’s a future thing I am looking forward to.

“Sponsorship is one of the biggest things and that’s the hardest part, but as long as I can secure the funding, I would definitely do it. I spoke to JoJo already, and he is in support of that. I wouldn’t say that I have it straight up in the pipeline, but it’s definitely something that I am thinking about.”

Weste and Nunes were



Travis Weste (right) with his former Team Antigua Pairs rowing partner, Joseph “JoJo” Nunes [Photo: @TeamAntiguaPairs Instagram]

among fifty-five rowers who participated in the categories Solo, Pairs, Trio and Fours in the 2020 Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge, which starts each year in La Gomera in the Canary Islands.

Over the course of the race, athletes row 3,000 miles across the Atlantic before crossing the finish line in Antigua and Barbuda at Nelson’s Dockyard.

Team Antigua Pairs secured a 10th place finish when they crossed the finish line on 28th January, 2021, after 47 days, 6 hours and 57 minutes at sea.

Antigua and Barbuda is not represented in the 2022 Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge, which is currently in progress.

This year’s competition

has the participation of over 40 teams, comprising 120 rowers from 17 countries.

Ocean Cats, the first ever team from Spain to participate in the challenge, was the first team to finish the 2022 race.

Ocean Cats crossed the finish line in Nelson’s Dockyard in English Harbour on 12th January, 2023, to win the 2022 Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge in 31 days, 17 hours and 9 minutes.

Four more teams arrived on Monday, 23rd January, bringing to 21 the total number of teams who have so far completed the event.

Meanwhile, Weste emphasised the importance of the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge to the national economy.

He also underscored the significant boost the competition gives to sports tourism as the relatives and friends of the participants and supporters of the event often travel to Antigua and Barbuda to welcome the athletes as they arrive at Nelson’s Dockyard.

“After this 21 teams arrive, there is still 21 more teams out there that includes Fours, Trios, Solos and Pairs. It has been filled with a lot of emotions just seeing the families greeting the rowers and when they get to land and you see them step upon land, a lot of them say they didn’t expect the kind of support that they see on land, so, there is a lot of families around. It’s good for the economy,” Weste said.

“The race has been doing really good and it’s bringing a lot of people to our shores so that is really good for us. I would say it’s phenomenal having so many teams arriving in Antigua.

“So, Antigua has been on the map, well not only through the race, but it definitely does a lot for our sports tourism with the families and so forth that are coming across.

“So, every year we can look forward to a good economic boost, being that all these families and supporters are coming over to give this race some support.”

A&B to benefit from fisheries assessment scientist dispatched to CARICOM by gov't of India

Antigua and Barbuda, and other CARICOM nations, will soon benefit from the arrival in the region of a top Indian fisheries assessment scientist.

The High Commissioner of India accredited to the CARICOM Secretariat based in Guyana, Dr. K. J. Srinivasa announced last Friday that the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) welcomed Dr. Pranaya Kumar Parida to its technical team from India, under its ITEC expert scheme.

Dr. Parida, who holds a Ph.D. in Fisheries Resource Management from India has more than 18 years of experience in Fisheries Research, Teaching and Extension. India recruited him to assume a three-year tenure with the CRFM through the long-standing Cooperation Programme between the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Government of India under its ITEC programme.

While on assignment in the region, Dr. Parida will assist the CRFM and its member states with fisheries assessment studies, statistical analyses of commercially exploited marine fish stocks, as well as the formulation of fisheries manage-



Dr. Pranaya Kumar Parida

ment plans and advice for decision-making.

He will also provide training to Fisheries Biologists, Data Collectors, and Data Managers in CRFM member states and at the CRFM Secretariat.

During his tenure in the region, Dr. Parida will be based at the CRFM Office which is located in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Dr. Parida is credited with the publication of more than thirty-five international peer-reviewed research papers, ten popular articles, and two books. He has been awarded a design patent and has filed another four patents as co-inventor.

Previously, he served as Assistant Professor (Fisheries Resource Management) at College of Fisheries, GADVASU, Ludhiana. He

has also conducted over fifty training programmes for farmers, university students and government officials across India.

High Commissioner Srinivasa stated that this deployment is another addition under its flagship Development partnership programme which forms a major pillar of India-CARICOM relations.

As part of this partnership, India has contributed to various projects in the region in areas such as infrastructure, transport, healthcare, solar energy, agriculture, information technology and others under the ITEC Programme which is designed for skill development and capacity building to support the region's developmental goals which includes deputation of experts

like Dr. Parida.

Dr. Srinivasa also underlined India's willingness to work with CARICOM nations on future projects in line with their interest and priorities.

The high commissioner has urged all CARICOM member countries to make use of Dr. Parida's expertise in the fisheries sector.

According to Milton Haughton, Executive Director of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, "The recruitment of Dr. Parida to assist with stock assessment studies is expected to provide critical data and information on the state of our fisheries, enabling CRFM Member States to enhance the way they manage the region's fisheries resources.

"Through this engagement, the CRFM will continue to work towards strategically improving the sustainable development and management of the living marine resources of the CARICOM and CRFM Member States.

"The CRFM Secretariat is very grateful for the generous support being provided by the Government of India in making the services of Dr. Parida available to the CRFM member states."



JOIN OUR TEAM

CAREER OPPORTUNITY: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

The Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) is seeking a highly motivated and experienced **Human Resources Manager** to join our team. The successful candidate will play a key role in developing and implementing HR strategies and programs that support the overall mission and objectives of the organization.

Key Responsibilities:

1. *Identifying ABTA's immediate, mid-term and long-term staffing needs and guiding an organizational culture that aligns with the business and employer brands*
2. *Recruiting, selecting, and hiring talent*
Completing cost effective recruitment and selection activities and ensuring compliance with applicable labour law in Antigua and Barbuda and across the overseas offices
3. *Managing a comprehensive compensation program*
Maintaining a cost-effective and competitive compensation and benefits program in alignment with the ABTA's Compensation Philosophy
4. *Designing and executing employee engagement activities*
Maximizing individual and collective employee performance by designing and implementing engagement plans and activities that recognize and reward performance, build talent, capacity performance... Designing and delivering or coordinating learning opportunities Working collaboratively within the Employee Engagement Advisory Committee
5. *Counselling and coaching at all levels*
Guiding and advising members of the leadership team and individual employees on relevant matters, maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality. Employing progressive discipline
6. *Performing relevant and related duties, as necessary, to maintain the smooth business operations of the ABTA*

Qualifications:

- *Master's Degree in Human Resource Management or related field and 2 years experience as a Human Resource Manager*
- *Bachelor's Degree in Human Resource Management or Business Administration or related field and 4 years experience as a Human Resource Manager*
- *Sound communication skills*
- *Sound knowledge of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Code*

If you are a strategic thinker with a passion for HR and a desire to make a positive impact on our organization, we encourage you to apply for this exciting opportunity. The ABTA is committed to diversity and inclusion and encourages applications from candidates from all backgrounds.

Please submit your resume and a cover letter outlining your qualifications and experience to HR@visitaandb.com by **Wednesday February 1 2023**.



JOIN OUR TEAM

CAREER OPPORTUNITY: CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

The Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA) is seeking a highly motivated, highly qualified, and experienced **Chief Marketing Officer (Consultant)** - to join our team. The successful candidate will play a key role in the support and management of the Marketing Change process.

The position of Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) is a two (2) year consultancy reporting to the CEO. The successful applicant will be required to create a supportive environment and implement sound and reasoned systems that coordinate the strategic marketing plan. This is to be done simultaneously while promoting growth and exploiting new marketing opportunities for the destination.

Key Responsibilities:

1. *Evaluating and strengthening, as necessary, the marketing service relationships (PR, Advertising, etc.) across the ABTA to maximize results with minimal waste (human, financial, etc.)*
2. *Guiding the Marketing Pillars Teams in a coordinated development and execution of the strategic marketing plan, e.g.*
 - a. *prioritizing and scheduling high return activities across the Pillars*
 - b. *translating KPIs to tangible actions*
 - c. *evaluating ROI and other KPIs, Etc.*
3. *Collaborating with the HR Manager (HRM) to review the alignment of the matrix structure to the ABTA purpose by:*
 - a. *Defining marketing service gaps*
 - b. *Identifying growth areas of individual team members*
 - c. *Delivering tailored hands-on learning opportunities, etc.*
 - d. *Conducting objective assessment of team members to identify an empowered successor while boosting team morale and engagement, etc.*
 - e. *Strengthening market research and analysis methods*

Qualifications:

- *Master's Degree in Business Management, Tourism, Marketing or related field and 5 years' experience in the capacity of Destination Marketing Management*
- *Bachelor's Degree in Marketing, Tourism or Business Administration or related field and 8 years' experience as a Destination Marketing Manager*
- *Sound communication skills*
- *Strong organisation and planning skills*
- *Sound knowledge of Destination Marketing with experience in the digital arena*

If you are a strategic, analytical thinker with a passion for Destination Marketing who is results oriented with a desire to make a positive impact on our organization, we encourage you to apply for this exciting opportunity. The ABTA is committed to diversity and inclusion and encourages suitably qualified applications from candidates from all backgrounds.

Please submit your resume and a cover letter outlining your qualifications and experience to HR@visitaandb.com by **Wednesday February 1st 2023**.

Workplace



Effective organizational learning and development

A member of HRPAB once interviewed an applicant for a vacancy. The candidate was a stellar employee, having completed his first degree and exhibited a great work ethic in a renowned organization, so his interviewers inquired as to why he wished to leave his current employment. His response: "I just want to grow".

Long gone are the days of transactional form of human resource management with an implicit expectation that employees will simply work in exchange for a salary.

This is the time for holistic and strategic human resource (HR) management, which requires employers to provide a paycheck and also to invest in their staff and thereby fulfilling the organization's goals and objectives. Today, we will consider a highly desired investment option: learning and development.

According to the Society for Human Resource Management, learning and development (L&D) refers to a variety of formal and informal activities that impart knowledge to employees, provide them with job competencies, and help to improve their job performance.

Examples of L&D initiatives include workshops, on-the-job training, executive coaching, mentorship programmes and simulation exercises among many others. L&D is a beneficial function of performance management within any progressive orga-

nization.

When done right, strategically aligned L&D initiatives ensure that all staff members are equipped with the knowledge, skills, aptitudes and competencies (KSACs) required to fulfil the organization's mission, vision, core values and strategic goals and objectives.





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Study: Puerto Rico should go solar to meet clean energy goal

By Dánica Coto

A U.S. government study has determined that with little room on the island for large-scale solar farms or wind generators, Puerto Rico should aim to reach its clean-energy goals by installing solar panels on all suitable rooftops, along with airports, brownfields and industrial areas.

The two-year study began last year after the U.S. pledged to help modernise Puerto Rico's disintegrating power grid by looking at wind and solar resources on the island, land availability and power consumption. Government officials vowed to ramp up from 3% to 40% renewable energy by 2025, and 60% by 2040.

"This is so utterly important," said Jennifer Granholm, U.S. Energy Secretary, during a webinar Monday to talk about the study's preliminary results. "We have set out to cut through bureaucracy and get federal funding moving."

Amid the threat of powerful hurricanes, Puerto Rico has suffered from chronic power outages blamed on a disintegrating power grid following decades of neglect and lack of maintenance. The island's current power generation system is 97% based on fossil fuels.

More than 600 participants joined the webinar, including solar companies eager to secure a stake in upcoming projects and disgruntled Puerto Ricans who questioned the reality of implementing solar panels on an island where more than 40% of the population lives below the poverty line.

"These systems are too costly, and truly hardly anyone can afford them because it's a debt impossible to pay over many years," wrote one participant named Wanda Trinidad in the chat.



A technician installs a solar energy system at a home July 24, 2018, in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico. A U.S. government ongoing study that released preliminary results Monday, Jan. 23, 2023, has determined that with little room on the island for large-scale solar farms or wind generators, Puerto Rico should aim to reach its clean-energy goals by installing solar panels on all suitable rooftops, along with airports, brownfields and industrial areas. (AP Photo/Dennis M. Rivera Pichardo, File)

Another, Wanda Ríos, said that while the government has helped some businesses transition to renewable energy, she hasn't been able to get a response about how communities might be able to obtain financial help.

"We want to have a solar community, but there is (no) program available for us!" she wrote.

A senior official at the U.S. Department of Energy said the \$1 billion approved by U.S. Congress in December to help restore Puerto Rico's grid is not sufficient. U.S. President Joe Biden had sought \$3 billion, and federal lawmakers had requested \$5 billion for solar rooftop panels and storage installations.

The ongoing study also found that Puerto Rico's transmission system can accommodate the anticipated growth of renewables for the next five to 15 years, but that upgrades are needed in the long term.

In addition, the study simulated hurricanes and found that smaller re-

newable resources spread out tend to recover faster than the current system of fewer and larger power plants. Hurricane Maria razed Puerto Rico's power grid in September 2017 when it struck the island as a Category 4 storm and Hurricane Fiona battered it when it hit in September last year as a Category 1 storm. Both hurricanes caused island-wide blackouts.

"The urgency has only grown after Hurricane Fiona...wreaked so much havoc," said Granholm, who is expected to visit Puerto Rico this month.

This year, scientists expect to study the possibility of using marine, hydropower and pumped storage hydropower as additional sources of renewable energy, among other things. Scientists also said that initial climate risk assessment showed a temperature increase of up to 2 degrees Celsius and a 20% drop in rainfall by 2055.

The final study, funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, will be published by year's end.

cont'd from pg 10

couldn't repair, however, was the hole in his patient's stomach. This persistent fistula would remain a grim and lasting legacy of the accident, but Beaumont wasn't one to pass up a good opportunity – however unpleasant. Realising that the hole provided a unique window into the human gut, he spent years investigating the intricacies of St Martin's digestion. Exactly how willing a volunteer St Martin was is open to debate as Beaumont employed him as a servant while conducting research on him – the murky arrangement almost certainly wouldn't be considered ethical today. Among the findings Beaumont uncovered during his studies of St Martin's guts, however, included how they were affected by its owner's emotions, such as anger.

Through this finding, Beaumont, who would go on to be lauded as the “father of gastric physiology”, had hit upon the idea of a “gut-brain axis” – that the gut and the brain aren't entirely independent of one another but instead interact, with one influencing the other and vice versa. And now we know that the microorganisms within our gut make this process even more complex and remarkable.

“More and more research is revealing that the gut microbiome can influence the brain and behaviour across a variety of different animals,” says Elaine Hsiao, associate professor in integrative biology and physiology, at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

It's important to remember that the microbes were here before humans existed, so we have evolved with these ‘friends with benefits’ – John Cryan

How exactly our microbiota might be influencing our mind is a growing, pioneering and still relatively novel field. But there have been advances over the last 20 years or so, particularly in animals. And, slowly, a case is being built to suggest that these micro-

organisms aren't just a vital part of our physical selves, but also our mental and emotional selves, too.

“In medicine, we tend to compartmentalise the body,” says Cryan. “So, when we talk about issues with the brain, we tend to think about the neck upwards. But we need to frame things evolutionarily. It's important to remember that the microbes were here before humans existed, so we have evolved with these ‘friends with benefits’. There has never been a time when the brain existed without the signals coming from the microbes.

“What if these signals are actually really important in determining how we feel, how we behave and how we act? And could we modulate these microbes therapeutically to improve thinking, behaviour and brain health?”

Hsiao is one of the researchers leading the way in this field and her lab at UCLA has explored the part these microorganisms might play in everything from foetal brain development to cognition and neurological conditions such as epilepsy and depression. She has also investigated how these microbes might be influencing our brains and thinking.

“Specific gut microbes can modulate the immune system in ways that impact the brain and also produce molecules that signal directly to neurons to regulate their activity,” she says. “We find that gut microbes can regulate the early development of neurons in ways that lead to lasting impacts on brain circuits and behaviours. We also find that under shorter timescales, gut microbes can regulate the production of biochemicals, like serotonin, that actively stimulate neuronal activity.”

Indeed, research suggests our microbes may be communicating with our brains through numerous pathways, from immunity to biochemicals. Another candidate is the vagus nerve, which acts as the superfast “internet connection” between our brain and

internal organs, including the gut. The bacteria *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* JB1, for example, appears to improve the mood of anxious and depressed mice. This beneficial effect is removed, however, when the signals travelling along the vagus nerve are blocked, suggesting it could be being used as a communication pathway by the bacteria.

Much of the research in this field is conducted in mice (and other small animals). And mice, of course, aren't humans. But given the mind boggling complexities of establishing causality between microbial signals and changes in human thought and behaviour, animal studies have provided some intriguing insights into the strange interactions between bacteria and brain. Research, for example, shows that “germ-free” rats and mice (those without any microbiota after being reared in sterile conditions) are more prone to anxiousness, and less sociable than those with an intact microbiota. Germ-free mice, and those given antibiotics have also been found to be more hyperactive, prone to risky behaviour and less able to learn or remember. Antibiotics, which can reduce the microbiota in an animal, also reduce shoaling behaviour in zebrafish, while probiotics boost it.

Again, the human brain is vastly more complex than that of a rodent or fish, but they do share some similarities and can offer clues. It makes sense that bacteria, wherever they live, might benefit from helping their hosts to be more sociable and less anxious. By interacting with other people, for example, we help our bacteria spread. And whether or not they're really pulling our strings, it's in our microbes' evolutionary interests to make their environment as conducive to survival as possible.

But do communicative microbes, congregating zebrafish or friendly mice really matter? Hopefully, yes,
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cont'd from pg 11

say the researchers. Ultimately, a better understanding of these processes could lead us towards ground-breaking new treatments for a range of mental health conditions.

Psychobiotics might one day be used to nurture populations of “good” bacteria and treat a variety of mental health conditions

“We’ve coined the term ‘psychobiotics’ for [microbiota-based] interventions that have a beneficial effect on the human brain,” says Cryan. “And there are more and more of these psychobiotic approaches coming.”

There are caveats, of course. While some strains of bacteria appear to have a positive effect on the human mind, many others don’t and researchers have yet definitively to establish why – and how. Humans are also unfathomably complex, and when it comes to thinking and mental health, there are countless other factors at play, from genetics and personality to the environment around us.

“We need many more large-scale human studies to take into account these individual differences,” says Cryan. “And maybe not everyone will respond to a single bacteria in the same way because everyone will have a slightly different baseline microbiota anyway.”

Disclaimers aside, however, more research could bring fresh hope. “The good news is that you can change your microbiota, while there’s not a whole lot you can do to change your genetics – except blame your parents and your grandparents,” Cryan adds. “The fact that you can modify your microbiota potentially gives you agency over your own health outcomes.” Indeed, pro- and prebiotic supplements, simple dietary changes, such as eating more fermented foods and fibre – and even, perhaps, meditation – can help alter our microbiota in ways that benefit our minds.

Philip Burnet, an associate professor in the University of Oxford’s department of psychiatry, notes that many mental health conditions have been associated with changes in the microbiota. Often, this imbalance or “dysbiosis” is characterised by a reduced amount of certain bacteria, particularly those that produce short-chain fatty acids (such as butyrate, which is widely believed to improve brain function) when they break down fibre in the gut.

Indeed, a 2019 study by Mireia Valles-Colomer, a microbiologist at KU Leuven University of Leuven in Belgium at the time, and her colleagues found a correlation between the amount of these butyrate-producing bacteria and wellbeing. Specifically, the researchers noted in the study that: “Butyrate-producing *Faecalibacterium* and *Coprococcus* bacteria were consistently associated with higher quality of life indicators. Together with *Dialister*, *Coprococcus* spp. were also depleted in depression, even after correcting for the confounding effects of antidepressants.”

Human studies on the communication between the gut, the brain and the microbiota are still relatively few and far between. And Burnet urges caution: “It is not known whether these altered levels in gut bacteria cause low mood or whether microbial numbers change because people who are depressed might modify their eating habits or eat less.”

Nevertheless, he has been exploring how prebiotics (which encourage bacteria to grow) and probiotics (live bacteria) might one day be used as psychobiotics to nurture populations of “good” bacteria – and treat a variety of mental health conditions.

For example, one 2019 study by Burnet, Rita Baião, a psychologist also at the University of Oxford, and their colleagues uncovered some particularly interesting findings. Although

the study was funded by a company that manufactures probiotic bacteria, it used a randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial – considered to be a gold standard study design during which neither participants nor researchers are aware whether they are receiving the treatment or not. The researchers investigated the effect a multispecies probiotic might have on emotional processing and cognition in people with mild to moderate depression. But the study also monitored their mood before and after the experiment using the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9), which measures depression severity.

The participants, who weren’t taking any other medication, were either given a placebo or a commercially available probiotic – which contained 14 species of bacteria, including *Bacillus subtilis*, *Bifidobacterium bifidum*, *Bifidobacterium breve* and *Bifidobacterium infantis* for four weeks.

The results were fascinating, not least that the participants on the probiotic experienced a significant subjective improvement in mood compared with the group on placebo, essentially becoming less depressed according to the PHQ-9. Changes in the participants’ levels of anxiety, which were also measured, were not observed.

This was a small (71 participants), brief study and more research is needed to prove causality. But it’s an early indication that “psychobiotics” may one day be a helpful treatment for those with depression – particularly those who are reluctant to seek medical help or take traditional antidepressants, says Burnet. Indeed, psychobiotics won’t replace existing medications – but may eventually provide a helpful adjunct.

“They won’t make everyone happier,” says Burnet, but probiotics could one day complement more established mental health treatments. “Only time

cont'd on pg 13

cont'd from pg 12

will tell whether we will have psychobiotics," he adds. "But the field is really moving forward... This area of research is dominated by animal studies, however, so we do need more human studies using larger numbers of participants."

But the potential of psychobiotics has captured imaginations.

Those who had used antibiotics for long periods of time scored lower on cognitive tests such as learning, working memory and attention tasks

"We also attracted a lot of interest from the public," adds Burnet. "People are extremely interested in maintaining their health and wellbeing with natural supplements and encouraging the growth of good bacteria to support mental health has captured the imagination of the general public. Especially now, when people are more anxious and depressed as a result of the pandemic."

With Amy Chia-Ching Kao and others, Burnet has also explored the role these microorganisms might play in psychosis – and whether prebiotics (which help to promote the growth of bacteria in the gut) might help people with the condition think more clearly.

Many people are aware that psychosis can cause hallucinations, delusions and a detachment from reality. But people with psychosis also often encounter difficulties with cognitive functions such as attention, memory and problem-solving, which can impact their ability to hold down jobs and relationships. While medication can be used to treat the hallucinations and delusions, improving sufferers' cognitive impairments has proved more difficult.

A double-blind, placebo-controlled crossover study by Burnet and Chia-Ching Kao, however, suggests a possible way forward. "We found that giving a prebiotic to people with psychosis did improve cognitive function

according to the clinical scales," says Burnet.

At the start of the study, the participants were on medication and free of psychotic symptoms – but were still experiencing the cognitive impairment typical of psychosis. Over 12 weeks, they were given a prebiotic or a placebo while their metabolism, immunity and level of cognitive impairment was measured over time. At the end of the 12 weeks, they were then switched, so both groups had an equal amount of time on the prebiotic and the placebo.

And the effect was small but significant. The prebiotic improved overall cognitive function, particularly attention and problem solving, leading the researchers to conclude that the improvement was sufficient to boost social and mental wellbeing. There was no evidence of the participants' immunity or metabolism changing so it wasn't clear how the prebiotic may have triggered this effect.

But it's another small step towards understanding the relationship between our microbiota and our mental health and the potential development of new treatments for disorders that affect our thinking.

There are hints that the gut microbiota may affect cognitive skills more broadly, too. It is well known that antibiotics disrupt the gut microbiota, but do they affect our cognition? One recent study, which monitored the health and wellbeing of 14,542 female nurses for several years while they worked for the NHS in the UK, found that those who had used antibiotics for long periods of time (more than two months) scored lower on cognitive tests such as learning, working memory and attention tasks than those who hadn't taken such medication. Importantly, the cognition of the women who had taken antibiotics was slightly poorer when they were followed up seven years later. Although this is only a correlation, the researchers think it could be due to

antibiotics-induced changes in the gut.

There's still a very long way to go, though, to understand this properly. This is a fascinating but highly complex field, and research requires funding. The rewards, however, could be profound. "There are only a handful of specific microbes that have been studied so far," says Hsiao. "Not necessarily because they are the most significant, but because we as scientists have much more to do to really understand the enormous diversity of microbes in the gut and how they function individually and as communities.

"I'm most excited about the opportunity to uncover new mechanistic understanding of how we and our microbial symbionts can work together to promote health and thwart disease."

In the meantime, perhaps we should all pay a bit more attention to our microbiota. A Mediterranean diet that's high in fibre, particularly from vegetables, is likely a good place to start. And fermented foods, such as kimchi and kefir (a fermented milk drink) may also be beneficial. In a small study with 45 participants, for example, Cryan and colleagues showed that those who were put on a diet that included a lot of fibre, prebiotics and fermented food (such as onions, yoghurt, kefir and sauerkraut), reported feeling less stressed than a control group which was on a different diet.

"What I like about fermented foods is that they democratise the science," says Cryan. "They don't really cost much and you don't have to get them from some fancy store. You can do it yourself. In this field, we want to provide mental health solutions to people from all socioeconomic areas."

The relationship we have with our microbiota is "a bit like a federation", adds Cryan. "These microbes are our fellow travellers." We'd do well to remember that – for the sake of both our physical and, quite possibly, mental health.

Guyana Revenue Authority sends staff home after uncovering licensing racket

CMC - The Guyana Revenue Authority, (GRA) Monday confirmed it has dismissed an undisclosed number of employees and had also taken disciplinary action against others after uncovering a licence sales racket.

IN a statement, the GRA said it recently uncovered a number of fraudulent practices involving persons applying for various categories of licenses and collusion with some staff members.

GRA said stern actions will also be taken against members of the public who colluded with the officers to provide services outside of the normal procedures of the GRA.



“In an effort to prevent such practices, the authority is cautioning members of the general public against colluding with individuals including GRA officers, to perpetuate fraud in the course of conducting a transaction. Persons found guilty of such unlawful actions are liable on summary conviction to fines and imprisonment,” the GRA warned.

The GRA has over the years been dogged by accusations of fraud involving its staff members. Last

year, several staff members who were involved in a fake cheque racket were dismissed and the GRA said it continues to make alternative payment options available for persons who cannot come to its office.

“The Authority also wishes to remind the public that GRA staff are not authorised to collect monies from taxpayers for any transaction or offer to complete transactions in exchange for gifts. Taxpayers must make all payments at the cashier sections where they will receive,” the GRA said, urging people to come forward with information if they have had to pay its staffers to conduct businesses.

Probe launched into sham marriages in St. Kitts-Nevis

CMC - The St. Kitts-Nevis government says a committee has been set up to investigate cases of sham marriages in the twin island federation.

“A committee has been put together to evaluate this and the attorney general is part of that committee along with the permanent secretary (in the Ministry of National Security) and persons from the police force and immigration to look at these types of marriages,” Prime Minister Dr. Terrance Drew told a news conference.

“We’ve always had an

open immigration policy, but we want people to follow the rules and regulations. We are extremely disappointed that this took place under the former administration. It was facilitated,” said Prime Minister Drew, who is also the Minister of National Security.

Last December, Prime Minister Drew said the authorities had uncovered a ring facilitating illegal marriages taking place and raised the possibility that the twin island federation is being used for human trafficking.



Drew told parliament the illegal marriages involved individuals from the Spanish-speaking countries that allow them to be granted citizenship and voting rights.

He told parliament then that there is somebody in Santo Domingo who’s charging a lot of money for a visa.

“You pay them for a visa
cont’d on pg 15

Investigation launched into death of Bahamian woman who posted video of her treatment at hospital

CMC - Bahamas Health and Wellness Minister, Dr Michael Darville, has confirmed that an investigation has been launched into the death of Kenise Darville, who died days after posting on social media, a video depicting the alleged negligence and poor healthcare she experienced at Princess Margaret Hospital.

“I was familiar with the case. I’ve seen the posting on social media and instructed the Princess Margaret Hospital and the Public Hospitals Authority (PHA) to do an immediate investigation into the allegations.

“I’m certain that is already being done. And in short order, the PHA and Princess Margaret Hospital will be issuing a statement once all the factual information has been obtained,” Darville told reporters.

The video has been viewed more than 200,000 times, and the family of the mother of three is demanding answers surrounding the circumstances of her death.

In the video posted on January 11, a tearful Mrs. Darville detailed what she said was her experience at the hospital, telling viewers “PMH (is) doing a whole lot of foolishness and I feel like this story just needs to get out”.



She said the doctors waited several days after she was admitted to inform her that she needed to make an urgent plea to friends and family for blood donations.

Mrs. Darville, who died on January 19, was admitted to PMH on January 2, due to unbearable pain she suffered in her lower back. She also grappled with the emotional toll of burying her mother a few days prior.

She said during her admission, she was placed in an isolation room and doctors did blood work on her and that her blood platelets were at 20,000 which is considered very low,

since platelets are needed for blood to clot and to prevent bleeding. The average blood platelets count should be 150,000 to 450,000.

In the video, Mrs. Darville said she was told that blood platelets would be ordered to aid in her treatment. But she claimed one week later, she was told that healthcare staff never ordered the blood platelets.

Speaking at a news conference last Friday, her husband, Jerad Darville called for changes to be made in the healthcare system.

“You should never have to be dying and trying to find blood.

cont'd from pg 14

there, they have a connection here. So you buy a plane ticket and you come in with your very expensive visa of which this government is only making ten percent. When they come in, Madam Speaker, a husband or wife is waiting for them.”

Prime Minister Drew

told legislators that they then get married, resulting in the payment of more money.

He said while it is possible that some of the marriages are genuine, some of the individuals involved in the marriage ring have been abusing the system, by marrying and divorcing several

times to gain money.

Speaking at a news conference, Prime Minister Drew said “people’s citizenship will be taken back and their names will be taken off the registration of voters because if the marriage is illegal, the citizenship is illegal so it means your registration is illegal.

“But at the same time we are going to put an amnesty in place because we understand that there are good actors within the immigrant community to give them an opportunity to register properly and to say to them that we are not an inhumane government,” he told reporters.

Half Moon Bay: Seven dead in another California mass shooting

BBC - The US state of California is reeling from its third mass shooting in eight days after a man shot dead seven former co-workers south of San Francisco.

The attacks took place in the coastal city of Half Moon Bay. The victims were all Chinese-American farm workers.

Suspect Zhao Chunli, 67, was arrested after driving to a police station.

It comes as the state mourns the death of 11 at Monterey Park - about six hours south east of Half Moon Bay - during Lunar New Year celebrations.

And just over a week ago, six people including a teenage mother and baby were killed at a property in Goshen, central California.

California Governor Gavin Newsom tweeted that he was at a hospital meeting with victims of the earlier mass shooting when he was pulled away to be briefed about the second attack, describing it as “tragedy upon tragedy”.

The latest bloodshed to hit the state took place at two farms around the Half Moon Bay community.

Four victims of the shooting attack were discovered at a mushroom farm while the other three



Zhao Chunli being pinned to the ground and arrested by police.

were later found at a nearby trucking business. An eighth victim is being treated in hospital and is in a critical condition.

A number of children who had recently been let out of school and lived on the rural property saw the attack take place, San Mateo County Sheriff Christina Corpus said.

“This kind of shooting is horrific. It’s a tragedy we hear about far too often, but today it’s hit home here in San Mateo County,” the office said.

“For children to witness this is unspeakable.”

After carrying out the killings, the suspect drove to a local police station where his arrest was caught

on camera.

US news channels showed Zhao Chunli being pinned to the ground and arrested by police.

He was found with a semi-automatic pistol that may have been used in the attack, and was cooperating with police, Sheriff Corpus said.

San Mateo County Board of Supervisors President Dave Pine told the Associated Press news agency that the attacks were committed by a “disgruntled worker”.

“We are sickened by today’s tragedy in Half Moon Bay,” Mr Pine said in a statement. “There are simply too many guns in this country and there has to be

a change.”

Just hours after the attack, seven were injured and one person was killed in a shooting in Oakland - about 40 miles (64 km) northeast of Half Moon Bay.

The Half Moon Bay attack is the 37th mass shooting in just 24 days, according to Gun Violence Archive.

Even as details of the deadly attack in Half Moon Bay were coming in, detectives in the south of the state were still hunting for a motive for the killings in Monterey Park.

There, an elderly Asian immigrant murdered 11 people in a suburban dance hall, before killing himself as police closed in.

Journalist deaths jumped 50% in 2022, led by Ukraine, Mexico

AP - Killings of journalists around the world jumped by 50% in 2022 compared to the previous year, driven largely by attacks in Ukraine, Mexico and Haiti.

According to a report Tuesday by the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists, at least 67 news media workers were killed worldwide in 2022, the highest number since 2018. Journalists in the three countries say the increased danger has forced them to work under extreme stress.

The effect is particularly notable in Haiti, where seven journalists were killed in 2022, a huge number for a small island country of about 12 million people. Some were killed by violent street gangs that have basically taken over the capital, Port au Prince, but at least two were shot by police.

Radio Caribes reporter Mackenson Remy, who still covers news on the street, said journalists no longer know whom to trust.

“Reporting in Haiti nowadays is extremely difficult for journalists, specifically in the capital,” Remy said. “Corruption is all over the place; there is no one you are able to count on.”

Remy compared his work driving around the city’s streets, carved up into gang territories, to the 1998 movie “The Truman Show,” in which the protagonist always feels like he’s being watched.

The CPJ noted that more than half - 35 of the 67 killings - took place in just three countries: Ukraine, Mexico and Haiti. Mexico saw 13 news workers killed, according to the committee. Other media groups have put the number at 15, which would



The widow cries at the coffin of volunteer soldier Oleksandr Makhov, 36 a well-known Ukrainian journalist, killed by the Russian troops, at St. Michael cathedral in Kyiv, Ukraine, Monday, May 9, 2022. According to a report released Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2023, by the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists, killings of journalists around the world jumped by 50% in 2022 compared to the previous year, driven largely by murders of reporters in the three deadliest countries: Ukraine, Mexico and Haiti. (AP Photo/Efrem Lukatsky, File)

make 2022 the deadliest year in at least three decades for Mexican journalists. In war-battered Ukraine, 15 news workers were killed last year, CPJ said.

The CPJ said it had confirmed that 41 of the 67 journalists were killed “in direct connection with their work,” and that it is investigating the motives for the 26 other slayings.

The CPJ said journalists covering the war in Ukraine “face enormous risk.”

“Members of the press are frequently injured by shelling while covering the conflict, and some report that they have been targeted by Russian forces,” the committee said in its report.

In Mexico, the slayings appeared to be due to a toxic mix of drug gang violence, local political corruption

and a lack of punishment for killers.

Sonia de Anda reports for the Esquina32 news website in the northern border city of Tijuana, where two journalists were killed in the space of a week in January 2022. She said reporters there have changed their work habits or requested police protection since the killings.

“This changed our entire work dynamic,” De Anda said. “If reporters go to a high-risk area that’s further away, they’ll tell their colleagues where they are going.” She also noted that requests for official protection “increased exponentially” after the killings.

On Jan. 17, 2022, crime photographer Margarito Martínez was gunned down outside his home. Five days later on Jan. 23, reporter Lourdes

cont’d on pg 18

Police fire tear gas as protests continue in Peru

Aljazeera - Riot police have used tear gas to disperse anti-government protesters in the Peruvian capital as demonstrations that have been gripping the country since early December show no sign of abating.

Several hundred protesters marched late on Monday in central Lima to demand the removal of President Dina Boluarte.

“Dina murderer”, some were heard shouting before police moved in with tear gas volleys.

At least 46 people have died since violent protests started early last month following the removal of left-wing, Indigenous President Pedro Castillo.

“The social protests will continue. We are working intensively with the defence ministry to resolve them,” Interior Minister Vicente Romero told state TV.

After a mass rally last week in Lima, another is planned for Tuesday by protesters demanding the resignation of Boluarte, despite authorities calling a state of

emergency.

“We urgently need Dina to resign,” Edmunda Canaguira, 60, told AFP news agency.

“She doesn’t listen to the people. It’s her fault that we are in the streets this week, without food, without being able to sleep,” added Canaguira who came to the capital from Sicuani in the southeastern Andes of Peru to take part in the protests.

Protesters, many from poor Andean regions, are also demanding a new constitution, snap elections and the dissolution of Congress.

Civil groups have denounced the repression by security forces, but the minister defended the police and praised their “spectacular” abilities.

“Right now we’re experiencing one of the highest levels of violence in recent times, since the 1980s” when authorities were battling left-wing Shining Path fighters, said Romero.

He again blamed a “faceless” group for financing protests in which he said



A demonstrator affected by tear gas shot by riot police lies in the street during a protest demanding the resignation of Peru's President Dina Boluarte [Ernesto Benavides/AFP]

540 police officers have been injured.

Authorities have long claimed drug traffickers and illegal miners were “manipulating” protesters.

Trouble first broke out on December 7 after then-President Castillo was arrested and charged with rebellion after attempting to dissolve Congress and rule by decree.

His supporters have kept up regular protests and roadblocks throughout the country, even at times attempting to storm airports.

On Monday, there were still more than 80 blocked roads in eight of Peru’s 25 regions.

The famed historical site Machu Picchu was closed on Saturday. Prior to its closing, rail services to the site had already been suspended due to damage to the track.

More than 400 stranded tourists had to be evacuated from Machu Picchu over the weekend.

The airports in the southern cities of Arequipa and Juliaca remain closed.

cont’d from pg 17

Maldonado López was found shot to death inside her car.

Investigators said a local drug gang boss paid gunmen about \$1,000 to kill the news photographer because he thought Martínez had taken a picture of either him or his family. The photo in question was not Martínez’s.

Authorities have arrested and

put on trial a few low-ranking gunmen, but not those who ordered the killings. “The message that the authorities are leaving is that anyone can come around and kill you for \$1,000,” the CPJ said.

The 2022 killings also included four journalists in the Philippines, and two each in Colombia, Brazil and Honduras. Two journalists each

were also killed in Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Somalia and Chad.

One journalist was killed in the United States last year, on Sept. 2: Jeff German, a reporter for the Las Vegas Review-Journal.

A Las Vegas-area elected official about whom German had written articles has pleaded not guilty to the slaying.

Jamaica: FBI to help probe massive fraud case targeting Bolt

By **Dánica Coto**

AP - Jamaica's government has turned to the FBI for help as it investigates a massive fraud case involving a private investment firm where \$12.7 million belonging to renowned sprinter Usain Bolt has gone missing. The fraud lasted 13 years and also ensnared elderly clients and government agencies. Authorities don't yet know how much was stolen.

Attorneys for Bolt, who said the star athlete's account has dwindled to just \$12,000, have given the investment firm until Friday to return the money before going to court.

The government also asked other international partners it did not identify for help in investigating one of the island's largest fraud cases, Finance Minister Nigel Clarke said Monday.

"The anger and unease



Retired Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt speaks during an interview in Tokyo, Thursday, Dec. 1, 2022. Jamaica's government has turned to the FBI for help as it investigates a massive fraud case involving a private investment firm where \$12.7 million belonging to renown sprinter Usain Bolt has gone missing. (AP Photo/Hiro Komae, File)

we all feel have been magnified by the long duration - 13 years - over which the fraud was allegedly perpetrated, and the fact that the (suspects) seemed to have deliberately and heartlessly targeted elderly persons, as well as our much loved and respected national icon ... Usain Bolt," Clarke said.

The investigation into Kingston-based Stocks and

Securities Limited is just starting, so it's not immediately clear exactly how much money was allegedly stolen or how many people were affected. Clarke said clients were given false statements regarding their balances as part of the alleged fraud.

Government agencies including the National Health Fund, Jamaica's

Agricultural Society and the National Housing Trust also invested millions of dollars in Stocks and Securities Limited, Clarke said.

Jamaica's Financial Services Commission began investigating after the company alerted authorities this month that a manager had apparently committed fraud.

Since then, the commission's director has resigned, and Clarke has placed the Bank of Jamaica in charge of regulating the island's financial system.

"There is no need to panic," he said. "Despite this most unfortunate development, Jamaica's financial sector remains strong."

The company has not returned emailed requests from The Associated Press seeking comment.

Clarke said authorities are working to uncover every detail of the alleged fraud.

Sadio Mané runs in training at Bayern Munich after operation

AP - Sadio Mané showed Tuesday he can run again in training with Bayern Munich after the Senegal forward missed the World Cup because of surgery on his right leg.

In a brief video posted by Bayern, the 30-year-old forward is shown jogging around a training field in Munich and he says it's a "good feeling" to be back.

Bayern said Mané was running laps

as part of "the next important step in soon re-joining his teammates" on the field. The German champions didn't give an estimate for when he might be able to play again. Mané has scored 11 goals in 23 games for Bayern after joining from Liverpool in June.

Mané needed surgery in Austria in November to reattach a tendon to the head of his right fibula bone. He picked up the injury on Nov. 8 in Bay-

ern's second-to-last game before the World Cup. In his absence, African champion Senegal reached the round of 16 at the World Cup before losing to England.

Bayern added that Senegal right back Bouna Sarr, who hasn't played at all this season following knee surgery in September, is now training individually with the ball as his recovery continues.

New domino season opens with march past

The 2023 domestic season of the Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Association (ABNDA) got underway with a march past and opening ceremony on Saturday, 21st January.

Eleven teams were involved in Saturday's event.

Bolans Revellers, Dominatrixx, Double Six, Parham Strikers, Ramplers, Triple Dynamite, Unstoppables, Willikies Superstars, Bravo, Legacy and Rising Stars all participated in the opening ceremony at the ABNDA's headquarters in Ottos.

The opening coincided with a Pullarama competition in which 42 players participated. The Pullarama was won by Dale Henry of Double Six.

Seymone Parkes of Parham Strikers finished second and Joshua Michael of Legacy placed third.

The 2022 season came



Bolans Revellers participate in the march past during the opening of the 2023 domestic season of the Antigua and Barbuda National Domino Association on Saturday, 21st January, 2023. (Photo courtesy ABNDA)

to an end with a four-hand competition which was won by Dominatrixx.

Willikies Superstars captured the runner-up position while Double Six finished in third place.

The battle for supremacy in the new 2023 season

will begin with the start of a Three-Hand League at the ABNDA headquarters tomorrow.

The league will be conducted utilising a format of three points for match winners, two points for runners-up and one point for

the third place finishers.

The Three-Hand League will run for ten weeks and is expected to conclude in July, just before team Antigua and Barbuda departs for Guyana to contest the 2023 World Domino Tournament in August.

Campbelle hits career-best but West Indies go down to India

A spirited career-best batting performance from Shemaine Campbelle lifted West Indies Women during their second Tri-nation Series T20I against India on Wednesday. The stylish right-hander continues to play with confidence and topscored after West Indies had a bad start to the run chase. In the end she made 47 as West Indies reached 111-4 off their 20 overs, chasing India's imposing 167-2 off their 20 overs.

West Indies Women stumbled early on in their run chase on 25-3 in the

seventh over. Then, captain Hayley Matthews (34 not out) helped Campbelle in a 71-run fourth wicket stand. Campbelle struck five fours and a six, Matthews counted five fours. Campbelle fell in the 18th over of the innings when she clipped a low full toss from left-arm spinner Radha Yadav for Amanjot Kaur to take a brilliant diving catch in the deep.

Assistant Coach Robert Samuels assessed the West Indies overall performance after the match. He said:

“We have to put bigger scores on

the board, not just batting out the 20 overs. Our focus is to get the batting consistent and to do the basic stuff better, which will bring more confidence. Hayley is getting into some form, Shemaine has had scores in the warm-up and now this match, so little by little we are trying to get things going by the time we get to the World Cup. Hayley couldn't open as she was dealing with an injury, so she had to bat lower down.”

Earlier, Player-of-the-Match Smriti Mandhana struck 74
cont'd on pg 21

Wins for Willikies and Fort Road in domestic football leagues

Willikies and Fort Road recorded wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) domestic programme on Monday, 23rd January.

Willikies came from behind to claim a 4 - 2 victory over PIC Insurance Liberta Black Hawks in their Premier Division affair in the second game of a double header at the ABFA Technical Center.

Goals by Geeique George in the 9th minute and Lennox "Fox" Julian in the 22nd minute gave Liberta Black Hawks a 2 - 0 lead.

D'Jarie Sheppard scored for Willikies in the 33rd minute to reduce the deficit at halftime.

Akeem Weekes scored Willikies' equaliser with a 53rd minute conversion. Two minutes later, a goal by Phil Nicholas gave Willikies a 3 - 2 lead.

Kwami Byers sealed Willikies' victory by scoring his team's fourth and final goal in the 63rd minute.

Their fourth win in seven outings lifted Willikies to seventh place



Fort Road defeated West Ham to claim their third win in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's First Division at the ABFA's Technical Center on Monday, 23rd January, 2023. (File photo)

in the standings with 13 points, while Liberta Black Hawks, who are yet to win in five matches, remain in the cellar position.

Fort Road pulled off a 3 - 1 win against West Ham in a First Division affair in the opening game of the double header.

Alren Lewis gave Fort Road a 1 - 0 lead with a 13th minute conversion, but Jahmarley Barzey scored in the 42nd minute to equalise for West Ham as both teams finished the

first half level at 1 - 1.

Fort Road scored two quick goals in the second half to win the encounter.

Brandon Coates scored in the 48th minute to give Fort Road a 2 - 1 lead and Shaquille Perry wrapped up the win with a 52nd minute conversion.

Their third win in eight appearances lifted Fort Road to 10 points, while West Ham slumped to their fifth loss in nine matches to remain on 8 points.

The Antigua and Bar-

buda Football Association domestic programme will continue with matches in the Second Division at 4:30 pm today, Wednesday, 25th January.

CPTSA Wings will face Young Warriors at the Clare Hall Secondary School playing field, Master Ballerz will meet Real Blizzard at the Ottos Rangers playing field and Blackburn Palace will take on Jennings United at the Princess Margaret School playing field.

cont'd from pg 20

from 51 balls and Harmanpreet Kaur, 56 off 35 balls – the pair featured in a 115-run, unbroken third wicket stand – as India Women set west indies a challenging target.

West Indies bowled well in the

powerplay overs, but India motored on from the 11th over, when Kaur and Mandhana added 107 runs in the last nine overs 20. Shanika Bruce on her West Indies debut, was the pick of the bowlers with the new ball, finishing with figures of 4-0-25-1 while

off-spinner Karishma Ramharack took the other wicket to fall.

The West Indies Women will take on South Africa Women on Wednesday January 25. First ball is at 3:00pm local time (9:00am Eastern Caribbean/8:00am Jamaica time).

Schools' basketball competition to tip-off early next month



Teams on parade during the march past at the opening of the 2020 Inter-Schools Basketball Programme at the YMCA Sports Complex on 24th January, 2020. (Photo: Schools' Basketball Unit)

The 2023 Cool and Smooth Inter-Schools Basketball League is set to tip-off next month.

Coordinator Carl "Bolie" Knight said this year's basketball competition, which will involve both primary and secondary schools, will commence at the JSC Sports Complex on Thursday, 2nd February.

Although he was unable to give a specific number, Knight said he expects the trend in previous years to remain with more than forty teams participating in this year's basketball programme.

This week, Knight will meet with the Ministry of Sports's basketball coaches to determine how many teams will enter the event so that game

schedules can be created and distributed to the participating schools.

Knight said competitions will be held in the Mini Boys and Mini Girls Under-13, Junior Boys, Senior Boys and Open Girls divisions.

This year will see the return of competition in all divisions after the abrupt end of the 2020 season on 12th March, 2020 due to the pandemic.

The programme returned in a curtailed format last year with the implementation of a skills challenge that was conducted from February to June.

The Skills Challenge, which involved several schools, also allowed the coaches to teach the fundamentals of the sport to the players while engaging them in competitive basketball

drills.

Villa Primary captured both the Mini boys and Mini Girls titles in the Primary Division.

The Villa Primary Mini Boys attained a total of 29 points while the Villa Primary Mini Girls gained 35 points.

The Antigua Grammar School won the Mini Boys crown in the Secondary Division with 38 points.

Princess Margaret School claimed the Junior Boys title in Zone A with 46 points, while Clare Hall Secondary School won the Junior Boys crown in Zone B with 50 points

All Saints Secondary School took home the Senior Girls title with a total of 38 points.

