

NUPW MAKING STRIDES DURING PANDEMIC

PRESIDENT of the National Union of Public Workers (NUPW), Akanni McDowall says the union has accomplished a lot, even more so in the context of the pandemic.

He was delivering brief remarks at the St. George Parish church yesterday as the NUPW starts its week of activities to mark the 76th anniversary of the organisation.

McDowall told those in attendance, "We vigorously negotiated with government to ensure that the BOSS program was voluntary and not forced as originally proposed. We have been able to make some headway in improving the lives of public servants by ensuring our public officers were appointed. We are still in the process of addressing who fell outside those specific set of criteria used."

The NUPW head also revealed that there is now a policy put forward by the union that provides the framework for flexible working arrangements and working from at home.

"High on the agenda moving forward is a discussion about altering the senior public service posts and the implications for public officers. These are a snapshot of some of the achievements and some of the matters

we continue to work on for our members.

"We remain firm in our resolve to fight injustices perpetrated against our membership. Because quality representation for our workers is our goal, and delivering equality for all is our defining purpose as a union. We must also continue to be each other's keepers. As we share what little resource we can. It is only by this kind of collective

care that we will be able to push past this moment in our history... I wish to reiterate that we remain focused as an objective of representing the interests of our membership."

He gave the assurance that as the NUPW enters its 76th year, it will continue to grow and adapt to meet the changing expectations and demands of its membership base.

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Some of the individuals at the St. Philip Polyclinic on Sunday who were waiting for their number to be called to go inside to have their vaccination.

Some BARVEN members step forward for vaccine

SOME members of the Barbados Association of Retailers, Vendors, and Entrepreneurs (BARVEN) are now among persons within society who have received the COVID-19 vaccine.

On Sunday, roughly 40 mem-

bers of BARVEN had their first shot of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine at the St. Philip Polyclinic.

BARVEN President, Allister Alexander told *The Barbados Advocate* that they comprised the retailers, vendors and entre-

preneurs who operate from the Fairchild Street Market and the BARVEN Outdoor Market. He also said outside of persons present, there are other BARVEN members who have already been immunised. He further stated "there are those who will

probably be coming afterwards" on a different date to be vaccinated.

"Those who have made the decision to be immunized against this killer virus have made a decision not only to immunize themselves against this virus,

they have also made the decision to protect their fellow citizens, especially the vulnerable, sick and elderly."

He stated that within the organisation, there remain some members who are hesitant

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Mr. G.P. Ian Gooding-Edghill, M.P.

Minister of Transport,
Works and Water Resources

Every Drop Counts

BARBADOS joins the rest of the world today (Monday, March 22nd, 2021) in the observance of World Water Day.

World Water Day celebrates water and raises awareness of the global water crisis. The core focus of the observance is to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, water and sanitation for all by 2030.

The theme of World Water Day 2021 is “**Valuing Water.**” The value of water is about much more than its price. Water addresses a very basic need and is therefore of enormous and comprehensive value for our households, food, health, culture, environment, economics and the integrity of our natural environment. If we overlook the value of water to our various stakeholders in any of these areas, there will be the risk of mismanaging this finite, irreplaceable resource.

In Barbados today, we face very serious challenges with water, as we grapple with the reality of size and the complications of being a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) and, of course, climate change, which impacts almost every facet of our lives.

Given these realities, it is important to recognize and celebrate the Barbados Water Authority for their efforts to provide water to all Barbadians. The Ministry of Transport, Works and Water Resources wishes to especially note the BWA's performance as essential service providers during the COVID pandemic.

In Barbados, as is very much the case in the rest of the world, water is essential for handwashing and hygiene which, in turn, is critical to reducing the spread of the Covid-19. But what is equally interesting is that Covid-19, despite its global disruption and devastation, provides an excellent opportunity for Barbados to intensify its efforts towards becoming a “Water Smart Society”, in keeping with the theme of World Water Day 2021.

A “Water Smart Society” is one in which the true value of water is recognized and realized by all. Such a society represents a paradigm shift in both areas of water conservation and management. Key to development is the improvement of water efficiency by increasing water re-use and recycling, reducing leakages, exploring additional opportunities for saving water and the ongoing development of water infrastructure.

As part of our natural and cultural heritage, water is not only a question of resource availability but also a matter of opportunities and resilience through its links with climate, infrastructure, digitalization, biodiversity, food, tourism, transport, trade and energy. Globally, more than three of four jobs depend on the supply of sufficient water.

It is against this background that amongst several water augmentation programs in place across the island I am happy to advise householders in the parishes of St. John, St. Joseph, St. Andrew and St. Thomas, that by the end of May 2021, they should have a much improved flow of water through their taps.

This will be as result of the Barbados Water Authority's Vineyard Augmentation Project, which will see the transfer of some 1.5 to 2.0 million gallons of water per day from the Vineyard Reservoir in St. Philip to Golden Ridge Reservoir in St. George.

This project, which comes at a cost of \$BDS16.4 million to the Government of Barbados, is progressing smoothly. I can report that the construction phase, being carried out by the Barbados Water Authority, in conjunction with a number of contractors, is now due for completion by May 31st 2021.

The project included the construction of a new pumping station at Vineyard, St. Philip, and a new pumping station and reservoir at Mount Pleasant, also in the parish of St. Philip.

Work on the installation of 2.7 km of water mains from Vineyard to Mount Pleasant and 4.6 km of mains from Mount Pleasant to Eastmont, is nearing completion.

It would be remiss of me if I did not seize this opportunity to address those water supply challenges being experienced by residents of other areas of Barbados, for example, the northern districts of Boscobelle, Oxford and Date Tree Hill in the parish of St. Peter and those of Josey Hill, Maycocks Development, Crab Hill and Greenidges, in the parish of St. Lucy, where there have been persistent complaints from residents about discoloured (brown) water.

What is really at the root of these problems and what are the customized solutions being applied by the Barbados Water Authority?

As far as the chronic water shortages are concerned, this has been attributed to the reduction in supply from the Alleynedale and Hope pumping stations during the prolonged period of drought; frequent incidents of burst mains which result in wastage and loss of large amounts of water and occasional equipment failures as a result of power outages and equipment malfunction.

The problem of discoloured water, particularly prevalent in the areas of Maycocks, Crab Hill, Josey Hill, Greenidges, Boscobelle, Pie Corner, Fustic, Six Men's and Broomfield, has been a direct result of aged water mains (in many cases over 100 years) and changes in water quality, occasioned by ground water and desalinated water.

I am happy, therefore, to report initial planning progress with the nationwide implementation of a BDS\$34.5 million comprehensive Strategic Mains Replacement Programme which will not only go a long way in addressing the discoloured water problems in the north.

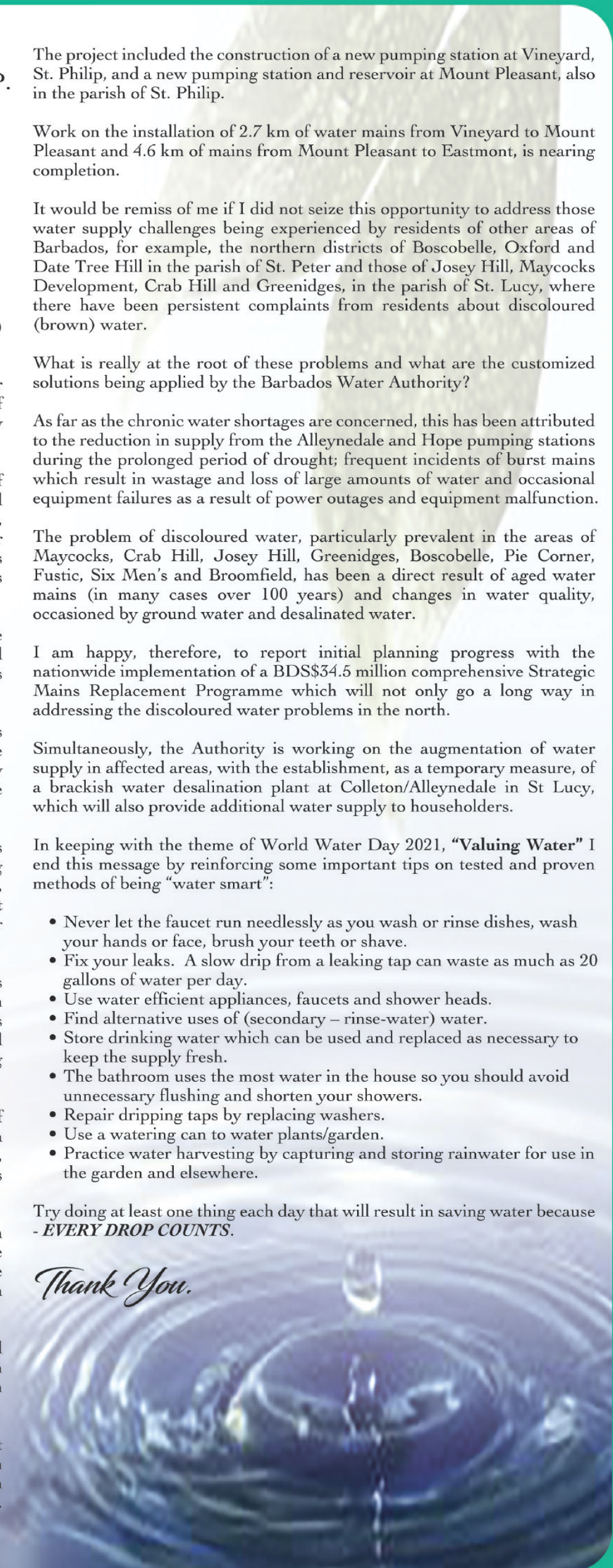
Simultaneously, the Authority is working on the augmentation of water supply in affected areas, with the establishment, as a temporary measure, of a brackish water desalination plant at Colleton/Alleynedale in St Lucy, which will also provide additional water supply to householders.

In keeping with the theme of World Water Day 2021, “**Valuing Water**” I end this message by reinforcing some important tips on tested and proven methods of being “water smart”:

- Never let the faucet run needlessly as you wash or rinse dishes, wash your hands or face, brush your teeth or shave.
- Fix your leaks. A slow drip from a leaking tap can waste as much as 20 gallons of water per day.
- Use water efficient appliances, faucets and shower heads.
- Find alternative uses of (secondary – rinse-water) water.
- Store drinking water which can be used and replaced as necessary to keep the supply fresh.
- The bathroom uses the most water in the house so you should avoid unnecessary flushing and shorten your showers.
- Repair dripping taps by replacing washers.
- Use a watering can to water plants/garden.
- Practice water harvesting by capturing and storing rainwater for use in the garden and elsewhere.

Try doing at least one thing each day that will result in saving water because - **EVERY DROP COUNTS.**

Thank You.



Private sector must lead

WITH countries across the Caribbean ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic, Executive Director of the Caribbean Export Development Agency, Deodat Maharaj, says that going forward the private sector must play a greater role in regional economies.

In a recent interview with The Barbados Advocate, Maharaj said COVID-19 has laid bare our pre-existing vulnerabilities as well as reinforced the need to diversify into new sectors, new products and new markets. As such, he said it is imperative that steps are taken to change course, sooner rather than later.

With that in mind, he maintained that the private sector has to play a central and leadership role in the economy to generate jobs, and facilitate the growth and prosperity of Caribbean people. To that end, he contended that the role of the State will be to create an enabling environment for business to flourish and thrive.

"We were primary producers of one export product, or one main sector to

earn foreign exchange before COVID-19; it is the same now. We are arguably the most highly indebted region on the planet; post COVID-19, we're in the same situation. Thirdly, and this is vital, the State was the biggest employer pre-COVID-19 and it remains the biggest employer in most countries in the region post COVID-19. But, what is clear is that once you have one primary sector that gives most jobs and provides most of the income, you will continue to be vulnerable, whether it's a hurricane, or pandemic. I think that COVID has exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities, but what it has also done is sent a sharp message that business as usual cannot continue," the executive director stated.

Additionally, Maharaj said that the pandemic has forced countries to embrace technology and digitalization, at a much faster rate than they would have ordinarily had to do, in order to compete more effectively. But, he said there is still more

work to be done in that regard. The Caribbean Export head said while it is now possible to purchase more items online, many Caribbean business people still do have websites, which could be prohibitive.

"What is going to happen I think, is that people who are pushing the new frontiers of business, those who are going into renewables, those who are embracing business outsourcing, health and wellness, those new economies and those businesses will flourish going forward and existing businesses, if they don't embrace technology, and this new way of doing business, they will be in peril," he stated.

Reflecting more on the private sector, he said while the larger businesses in the Caribbean will be able to adjust and adapt to the new normal, the micro, small and medium sized businesses, which account for about 60 percent of the employment, will need help.

"It is really important for them to get support from government, and for

other partners to pay attention to them, because they are the ones you want to make sure can have a seamless transition into this new era and ease of doing business," he added.

Maharaj said that Caribbean Export is doing their part, where financing for such businesses is concerned. He noted that just recently a direct assistance grant programme funded by the European Union was approved, where businesses, which apply, can receive up to 15,000 euros on a non-reimbursable basis to support their business.

"But I don't think that is sufficient, obviously, and therefore what is really important is that across the region in regional institutions, such as the Caribbean Development Bank, and others, they have an important role to play in ensuring that precious finance for small and micro businesses is really readily available. And of course, government has an important leadership role to play to ensure that happens," he maintained. (JRT)

Tougher anti-corruption legislation needed

SAYING that any attempt to modernise the Prevention of Corruption Act of 1929 is progressive, senior lecturer in Political Science at the UWI Cave Hill Campus Cynthia Barrow-Giles has expressed concern that what is currently being contemplated is a "little timid".

Her comments came yesterday during radio programme Brass Tacks Sunday which focused on corruption and integrity mechanisms in Barbados and the wider region.

Barrow-Giles, while sharing a wealth of information on the topic, said: "It's not as progressive as I would like it to be. And certainly we can question why the administration is not putting certain things on the book. So that I don't understand why in the context of 2021, still, there is this resistance to the idea that we need to tackle the issue of elections and political party financing a great deal. Not putting it on the table. It is absent from the Anti-Corruption Bill, which is out there in circulation."

Additionally, the senior lecturer alluded to the Integrity in Public Life Act, which was rejected in Parliament.

"The Act fails to take certain categories of persons who are in public life into consideration. I am concerned that, for instance, probably one of the most vulnerable institutions in relation to our national integrity system is in fact the judicial system. And when you look at the integrity in public life, there's a deliberate attempt to exclude judges, and I guess other legal persons from the ambit of the law.

"And I have concerns about that and the reason why I'm concerned is that we know, not just internationally, but certainly where the Caribbean is concerned, some judges have been bribed, and therefore we need to in-

stitute them, we need to protect them. We need to also let judges and others integrate and understand that if an attempt is made, that the law in some way or the other will protect."

Barrow-Giles also addressed the importance of whistleblowing legislation. "Now, one of the issues, though, is when we think about whistleblowing, for instance, we need to try to incentivise people, because we already spoke about why it is some people may not wish to probably get themselves involved in, you know, disclosing certain things they would have seen, because in the first instance, they believe that what they have seen, and what they themselves engage it is, in fact, not corruption.

"But what I find interesting about that, is that, whereas the Act very importantly provides certain assurances to people who decide that look, I have witnessed an act of corruption – of course, once they understand what corruption is – I've witnessed an act of corruption, and therefore I want to disclose that act to whichever body I want to disclose that act to, whether it be the police or particular hotline, or I want to go to a politician, which is not advisable for a number of reasons – and unfortunately, that is in the act, as well – what kind of incentives are we really giving people to blow the whistle? And that's a problem. I don't see that at all under the Act..

"And so, to me, that does not in itself translate to people actually, deciding that, look, I have seen something, I've witnessed something, and therefore I'm going to go to my employer, or I'm going to go to the police. So I'm going to go to the DPP or whoever is the disclosing body that you need to go to. So of course, we need to look at that particular Act," she said. (JH)



BARVEN President, Allister Alexander chatting with a member of that organisation while at the St. Philip Polyclinic.

Some people still hesitant

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about being vaccinated "because there are a lot of mixed messages being sent, fake news, all sorts of things and some people are not sure what to be-

lieve". However, "we tried to spread the word and ... there are about 40 who said they will be part of the vaccination programme expected today. There have been those who have made that con-

firmation, there are others who obviously are still contemplating."

As recorded on the Ministry of Health and Wellness' Barbados COVID-19 Situation Report, on Saturday

March 20th a total of 902 individuals were immunised. This brings the total number of persons vaccinated locally to 61, 108. Of this figure, 25, 465 are males and 35, 643 are females. (MG)

Access to clean water vital

(The following is a message from Ms Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, on the occasion of World Water Day 2021)

AS is the case when it comes to anything having to do with the environment, the issue of water forces us to deal with our contradictions and our inability to accept that everyday resources are both fragile and in short supply.

This is particularly the case with water, even though it is a total social fact and a total human fact. Not only because humans cannot live without drinking water, but also because water is essential to all our lives.

As coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has reminded us, water is also matter of health.

Access to clean water is vital to hygiene, yet in the middle of a pandemic, people are unable to wash their hands in two out of every five healthcare es-

tablishments.

The difficulty of water access can also be measured in time wasted and thus in educational and economic losses. The burden of fetching water is an unequal one, mostly borne by women and girls. The 200 million hours which they spend collecting water every day are vanished opportunities – for them and for society. They are 200 million hours which could have been spent learning, reading, or working.

Ensuring universal access to clean water is thus crucial, particularly since reserves are limited and needs are growing: nearly four billion people worldwide already experience severe water shortages at least one month a year.

Climate change will further aggravate global water stress. If we stand by idly, by 2030, humanity will be lacking 40% of the water it needs.

The consequences of such a situation are incalculable. As water reserves dwindle, so does society.



All of society suffers. From forced displacement to rising child mortality rates, and from malnutrition to an increase in tensions related to access to resources, the crisis is a global one.

Yet we continue to waste water, dumping some 80% of untreated sewage into the environment.

Greater awareness is necessary if we are to put a stop to this crisis.

This is the reason why, in conjunction with the UN-Water family, we pub-

lish the World Water Development Report (WWDR) every year.

The publication of the WWDR is an opportunity for the Organization to highlight the most sustainable, most innovative and most inclusive ways to manage this all-important resource. The value of water is far from being merely monetary.

As Benjamin Franklin said: "When the well's dry, we know the worth of water." We should not wait for the well to run dry.

World Water Day is



Ms Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO.

meant to be a call to action. Responsibility lies with all of us. Governments, associations, private partners: we must all recognize the

multifold value of water and take action to conserve this basic resource, the resource which gives our planet its unique colour.

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Bostic outlines several plans for health ministry

GOVERNMENT intends to advance its plans to implement the 24-hour system at another of the island's polyclinics.

That's the word from Health and Wellness Minister, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Bostic. During the Estimates Debate in the House of Assembly on Friday, Bostic said that having started with the Winston Scott Polyclinic, they intended, in the not too distant future, to extend the hours at the David Thompson Health and Social Services Complex located in St. John.

"We had some setbacks with that, obviously, because of COVID, but early in the next financial year, we will be starting the process of implementing the 24-hour service in St. John, first of all by having an extended clinic, which will run from eight to eight daily, and that will be followed, once we've been able to analyse all the information, with the complete 24-hour service

at David Thompson. So that is also included in our estimates for the next financial year," he stated.

Outlining additional plans of his ministry, Bostic indicated that they will also be putting greater focus on the fight against non-communicable diseases (NCDs), as NCDs continue to be the major threat to health care in this country.

"One of the things that COVID has clearly demonstrated to me and to any one of us in here beyond the shadow of doubt, is that we have a big problem with NCDs in this country and it's something that we will continue to tackle," he stated.

In that vein, he said that a new strategic plan for NCDs is being developed. According to Bostic, that plan will soon be going to Parliament for approval.

"That includes some other things like the national cancer plan, which we intend to implement, and the cardiac care pro-

gramme, which is being spearheaded by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. And I mentioned these three things, along too with a draft of child nutrition policy, which we've been able to put together with support from PAHO [Pan American Health Organisation] after consultations and involvement of major stakeholders locally. And I mentioned these things together, because this is a new approach that we will be adopting in the new financial year and beyond," he stated.

Minister Bostic explained that Government will be pursuing an integrated approach to healthcare. He told those gathered in the Lower House that that they recognise that there is a dire need for the Ministry to collaborate more with the private health care facilities.

"We saw it during COVID and it is going to be most appropriate in terms of cardiac care, and

the cancer plan, as well as the nutrition policy going forward. That for us is significant because the intent here is for us to be able to save lives, and in cases where it is not a matter of saving lives, we want to be able to afford people the opportunity to live a better quality of life, even if they're inflicted with any of the NCDs," he indicated.

Meanwhile, on the matter of vector control, Bostic said there is a project currently under discussion, regarding the eradication of the aedes aegypti mosquito. While not giving many details on the project, he said it will also have a revenue generating component.

His comments came as he said the Ministry has initiated an integrated mosquito management programme and have employed 40 mosquito control aids. The minister added that new equipment acquired by the Ministry, as well as some donated by PAHO, will also be utilised to assist in



Health and Wellness Minister, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Bostic.

the fight against dengue.

"This equipment includes several handheld foggers, as well as some vehicle mounted foggers that will allow us to be able to deploy four vehicle mounted foggers throughout the country two in the

northern half and two in the southern half, along with the handheld foggers, and also the personnel who will be trying to identify mosquito breeding sites so that we can really address this problem," he declared. (JRT)

Focus now on rebuilding productive sectors

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"This organisation is as strong and relevant as it is because of the continued faith of its members both old and new."

With the country coming out of its second national lockdown and appearing to be moving far away from the high spikes recorded this year, he challenged that it is now time to focus on forging ahead with 2021 and rebuilding the country's productive sectors and the civil supports that enable its functioning.

"It is as we go back out to work in full that the theme for this year's conference "Trade Union Resilience in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic"

becomes relevant. To ensure that we grow the economy and restart our livelihoods, we need to ensure that we are safe and never let our guard down about protocols and safety," he urged.

Rector of the St. George Parish Church Senator Reverend Dr. John Rogers noted the NUPW representatives in attendance that they go to the negotiating table they must do so with empathy. "You enter the negotiating table, recognizing that here is a child of God in need of reconciliation. And you put forward your point, you put forward your case in such a way that even though those around the table will know that yes, this is



President of the National Union of Public Workers (NUPW), Akanni McDowall.

wrong."

Reverend Rogers also encouraged the members of the NUPW that as they observe the Union's 76th year, to "look deep within yourselves again, revive

the passion with which the union started, to look out for the needs of the downtrodden and the oppressed, to champion the cause to be a voice for the voiceless..." (JH)

Artists in control

By Cara L. Jean-Baptiste

COVID-19 may have turned the world upside down but it has allowed for artists to have more control of their art.

Speaking during the Caribbean Fine Art Fair (CaFA) panel discussion that focused on Art in a Post-Digital COVID World, Interdisciplinary artist and anthropologist, Alexis Alleyne-Caputo highlighted that artists of colour have been exploited by world galleries in the past and one of her major concerns and fear was that these exploitative practices may increase as a result of artists transitioning to a digital world.

"By exploitative practices I am referring to galleries who are now leaning into the work of artists to keep the foundation going. They are now relying very heavily on African art and Caribbean art so that their framing could stand," she said.

Shadrach Burton, a well-known visual artist, believed that artists did not need to be so reliant on

art galleries.

"We don't need to be so reliant on the art galleries, right now we have the power. So maybe we might have needed COVID-19 for people to realise that everything could be done online and you don't have to use the art galleries," he said.

"Not that I'm saying that we no longer need the art galleries but they are on the brink of becoming obsolete and the only reason that wouldn't become obsolete is become people like the experience of going to a gallery or the fact that you can go to a place and see the art and that may be the reason that galleries remain relevant but the artists need to realise that they no longer need to be so dependent on galleries as before.

"The whole world is available to us right now. I think right now the tides are about to turn and the art galleries won't have the power to exploit Caribbean and African art, unless we allow them to do so."

Opportunities for Bajan companies in Africa

TRADE and investment opportunities await Barbadians in Africa.

Minister of International Business and Industry, Ronald Toppin, said that market research has already been undertaken in the West African country of Ghana, and findings suggest that there are opportunities for Barbadian companies in several areas – rum, condiments, processed meats, labels, solar water heaters, among others.

Toppin, who was at the time contributing to the debate on the Appropriations Bill in the House of Assembly, maintained that it is in Barbados' best interest to pursue trade relationships with Africa, and as many countries as possible.

However, he said what tends to work against Barbadian entities being able to capitalise on these trade agreements is often the logistics.

“When your goods get to Africa, how do they get distributed? So you need someone in market to be able to give you advice... You need to ensure that to get your goods to Africa, given the cost that you might have to bear, that you are involved in some sort of clustering between yourself and as many companies as possible, or maybe as many countries as possible in the region – pooling together to ensure that they can minimise cost – share cost as much as possible to make these rela-

tionships work.”

Director of Business Support Services at the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation (BIDC), Fern Lewis, told the House that BIDC has a very active engagement with government ministries, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade as they pursue new markets – the most recent being with Kenya.

“When we were thinking of doing market research in Ghana, we did some consultation with the Ministry. Now we have recently started the market research effort in Kenya, and we have also been in consultation with them to see how best they would want to advise us in that ef-

fort. So, we are actively now turning our attention to the Kenyan market to see what market opportunities may exist there as well.”

Lewis also said BIDC has been in consultation with the Ministry about efforts to connect with the diaspora.

“How do we engage the diaspora market... So they have been actively advising us how we could go about maximising the resources that we already have – the missions, overseas reps in those markets. And we have been discussing with them a more formal way of being able to engage all our missions, wherever they are, to help us position Barbados' goods and services around the globe.” (TL)



Barbadians took advantage of the relaxed restrictions.

Open businesses crucial for economy

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currently, as the Ministry of Health and Wellness are trying to ensure that the explosion of COVID-19 cases like what occurred in January, does not happen again.

Businesses right now need to remain open, as many of them have survived the lockdown last year and barely survived

the national pause so far this year. Not only the bottom line of dollars and cents becomes of import, but also the livelihoods of staff for the larger businesses and also the smaller ones which have no other forms of income. All of these put together helps to keep the Barbados economy moving as the island seeks to rebuild and establish a more stable footing. (AS)



Vendors were back out this last week in their numbers.



Shopping outdoors was still safe as this ladies made sure they were protected.

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Seek God's talent

ONE religious leader believes that society should look for the best in God's eyes.

Reverend Paul Leacock, who is the pastor at First Baptist Church, gave this message during his sermon on Sunday.

In his early remarks, he said too often society focused on those who have the best academic qualifi-

cations, those who are most attractive, the most experienced, and influential, to be in positions of leadership. But he argued that praying for God's choice is critical to finding a leader for God's people.

"There is no success without succession," said Rev. Leacock.

He said this is important as churches have

been under distress and stress due to the events caused by the pandemic globally. He added that despite the expectation to go back to the ways of the past, he said people must look to the life ahead of them.

Find a successor through prayer

To further emphasise his message of praying for a leader of God's people, the reverend used the metaphor of the relay race and how the baton must be passed to every runner at every leg if the team is expected to win. He noted that when the baton is not passed properly, it can result in disqualification and losing the race. He opined that in the Christian context when there is the discussion about leadership and succession, Rev. Leacock stressed the importance of not only carefully passing the baton but doing it "prayerfully".

Using the story of Moses, Reverend Leacock highlighted that like him, leaders of today must think about who will lead after they are gone.



Reverend Paul Leacock of the First Baptist Church preached the need for society to look for the best in God's eyes.

Art galleries need to upgrade

By Cara L. Jean-Baptiste

NOW is the time for art galleries to integrate technology into their operations.

This is the view of artists that took part in the Caribbean Fine Art Fair (CaFA) panel discussion that focused on Art in a Post-Digital COVID World.

Patricia Brintle, a visual artist who participated in CaFA for many years, highlighted that if art galleries were left as is, they would become obsolete.

"I don't think people want that because we still want to have these art shows, regardless of how extraordinary the technology will become we still basically will be human beings who will need to have the interaction with other human beings and the world

around us, however the galleries would have to step up and integrate the technology with the walls so to speak," she said.

"There would be many avenues that we would need to go into and it will be up to the galleries to really step up their offering to the public so that someone that would want to come and experience it in person would be able to do it."

Visual artist Shadrach Burton echoed Brintle's thoughts and added that it was up to the galleries to find a balance between technology and the art.

"As an artist, I really love going to art galleries and art openings, I love going to the galleries and seeing the audience interact with the work and walk up to the painting and observe everything about the art and interact with artists and ask

questions, it just feels a lot more personal but right now when you just post your work in a virtual exhibition it doesn't really have that same personal artist-audience interaction," he said.

"But you do have the advantage of having your work be more available to the audience in the sense that they could be at home viewing it or show it to a friend or spouse and they could easily access your work instead of going all the way to the gallery."

Burton noted that while art galleries may become obsolete if they did not change, persons still enjoyed attending for the experience, however, he was of the firm view that it was important for art galleries to integrate technology into their daily operations.

COVID-19 update

THERE were 18 new positive cases of COVID-19 recorded on Saturday, March 20, from the 422 tests conducted by the Best-dos Santos Public Health Laboratory. They comprise eight men and ten women. Twenty-eight people recovered and were discharged from isolation.

The number of cases in isolation is now 182.

The island has recorded 3,551 confirmed cases – 1,699 females and 1,852 males – and 3,330 people have recovered from the virus since March 2020. There have been 39 COVID-19 related deaths. The public health labo-

ratory has so far completed 136,463 tests. On Saturday, 902 persons were vaccinated as part of the National Vaccination Programme for COVID-19. To date, a total of 61,108 vaccinations have been administered – 25,465 men and 35,643 women.



VACANCY Finance Analyst

The Barbados Light & Power Company Limited (BLPC) is seeking applications from suitably qualified professionals to fill the positions of **Finance Analyst**. This is a dynamic position, where the successful candidate will be required to:

- Knowledge of the Federal Energy Regulations Commission (FERC); IFRS and GAAP, and the ability to execute all areas of financial planning at an expert level
- Excellent analytical and problem solving skills with the ability to compile and present data in multiple formats
- Knowledge of accounting and auditing standards, along with knowledge of relevant laws of Barbados i.e. Companies Act, Income tax and Public Utilities Act
- Strong practical knowledge of forecasting and tax preparation
- A good understanding of the internal logic of computerized accounting and related systems
- Ability to competently use financial software and spreadsheet program to input and extract useful data and produce high quality reports
- Ensure there is internal control and compliance
- Ability to build and execute financial models
- Strong Decision making skills
- Preparing other routine and ad hoc analysis, reports and special project responsibilities as assigned

Qualifications and Experience

- Bachelor's Degree in Accounting or a related discipline
- Completion of a professional accounting qualification recognized by ICAB
- Currently pursuing or holding CFA charter or equivalent will be an asset
- Three to five years practical on the job experience is required for acceptable proficiency
- Good Communication skills, i.e. Writing, oral and graphics to all levels of staff
- Ability to operate independently with minimal direction
- Strong proficiency and experience with data analytics will be an asset
- Ability to deal with sensitive information and maintain confidentiality

Remuneration

In return, we are offering an attractive compensation package, including Group Life & Medical Insurance, and Group Pension.

Applications

Suitably qualified candidates should submit their applications by e-mail to blpc.careers@blpc.com.bb addressed to:

Attention: Manager, Human Resources
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Garrison Hill
ST. MICHAEL

Re: Finance Analyst

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'For the cause that lacks assistance, 'Gainst the wrongs that need resistance, For the future in the distance, And the good that I can do'

Editorial

How will the US progress?

QUITE a number of positions have been put forward quite recently as to what the new Joe Biden administration in the United States will do to assist countries in this region.

What is also interesting in the scheme of things is that with the United States locked in global competition with China, then there is the belief that the US should lose no time in coming to the attention of this region which China is also targeting.

One very significant position was sounded by David Lewis, Vice President of Manchester Trade Limited.

He said during a lecture that under the new US President, there will be new opportunities that will most likely cover foreign direct investments, production and trade, and cooperation agreements. Such will be built on the historic Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) which dates back to the early 1980s when the then USA President Ronald Reagan conceptualised the arrangement. That arrangement was a response to the tensions which were threatening to embrace the Caribbean and for foreign powers to gain a further foothold in the region considered as the backyard of the USA.

For its part the CBI has offered market access for Caribbean goods and services, entering the United States, financial assistance and investments. It came at a time when political tensions were mounting in some Central American and Caribbean states, which created some worries to the US.

The small islands making up the Caribbean were hit hard by the 2009 global economic crisis which a lot of them have still not fully recovered from, and are now feeling the brunt of another crisis in the form of COVID-19.

So issues like capital inflows, trade openings for their industries, the removal of impediments to international business – as in the case of Barbados – and support for regional integration, are important considerations for stimulating our economies.

So there is certainly a case for the Joe Biden administration to do something positive for the countries on the southern border of the US. In this context expectations will be high when it comes to the US. But how will the Americans proceed.

Since the last 1990s several multilateral trade agreements have sprung up, notably Enterprise Initiative of the Americas, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas.

The latter which involved all the countries making up the western hemisphere with the exception of Cuba, was thought to be the one pact which would be the catalyst for change and building a true integration model in the Americas.

However, disputes among some of the key players – the US, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico – stalled the proceedings and it is now on hold.

But Lewis sees a big role for the private sector since governments alone cannot be at the forefront of going after opportunities, simply because they do not have the resources in sufficient quantities to do it. Many of the countries are running high fiscal deficits and huge debts which make governments more cautious in how they go about policy making.

The private sector has been dubbed the engine of growth and this is what Lewis said boldly that he expects to see. They have to seek out the opportunities that become available once the US administration provides the environment for such.

Pope decries shame of racism, like 'virus' lurking in wait

VATICAN CITY – Pope Francis yesterday denounced racism, likening it to a virus that lurks in waiting and only to emerge and show that “our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive” as people think.

Francis tweeted on racism on the date that the United Nations marks as International Day for the Elimination of Racial

Discrimination.

The pope likened racism to a “a virus that quickly mutates and, instead of disappearing, goes into hiding, and lurks in waiting.”

“Instances of racism continue to shame us, for they show that our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive as we think,” Francis tweeted, adding the hashtags #FightRacism

#FratelliTutti. “Fratelli Tutti” is the title of the encyclical, or special teaching document, which the pope issued last year in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic to press for solidarity, brotherhood and care for the environment worldwide.

In his tweet, Francis cited no particular instance of racism or place. Throughout

his papacy, he has championed the rights of people who are marginalized in societies, including migrants.

The annual UN commemoration on March 21 falls on the anniversary of the day that police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid laws in 1960.

Palestinians expand vaccination campaign after UN shipment

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip – The Palestinian Health Ministry began administering the first doses of coronavirus vaccines it received from the global COVAX initiative to health care workers and older residents in the West Bank and Gaza Strip yesterday.

The World Health Organization and its partners running the United Nations COVAX program delivered 61 400 vaccines to the Palestinian Authority on Wednesday, whereas 21 300 were shipped to the blockaded, Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.

The vaccine shipment is a boost to the West Bank, where the PA has struggled to obtain vaccines as the infection rate surged in recent weeks. Until now it had only secured 10 000 doses of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine and 2 000 shots from Israel for the roughly three million Palestinians living in the West Bank.

By contrast, Gaza, which has been under Israeli-Egyptian blockade since Hamas took control of the area in 2007, has received more than 80 000 vaccines. Most of them were of the Russian variety and have come from a

rival of President Mahmoud Abbas based in the United Arab Emirates.

Mohammed Dahlan, who has been living in Abu Dhabi since falling out with Abbas in 2011, has secured the delivery of 60 000 shots to Gaza and promised more, embarrassing Abbas ahead of Palestinian elections planned in May.

In the West Bank, Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh said the vaccines would go to medical workers and older people. “We are here to start the preventive vaccination drive for our people against the coronavirus,” he said.

Even with the arrival of the vaccines, the Palestinian areas lag far behind Israel, which has vaccinated some 80% of its adult population. The disparity has drawn attention to the inequities in the global distribution of vaccines between rich and poor countries.

UN officials and human rights groups have said Israel is an occupying power with a responsibility for vaccinating the Palestinian population. Israel says that under interim peace accords, it has no such

responsibility. But in recent weeks, it has inoculated over 100 000 Palestinian labourers in the West Bank who have permits to work inside Israel and its West Bank settlements.

The Pfizer/BioNTech and AstraZeneca vaccines are the first distributed by COVAX in the Palestinian territories.

At a Gaza City clinic, five WHO workers and five local medical workers were the first to be inoculated with COVAX-donated doses.

“We are very proud to be here today with our esteemed colleagues” to promote the first arrival of vaccines through COVAX, said Sacha Bootsma, head of WHO's Gaza office, who received the first shot of vaccine at the event.

She added that a second shipment of 57 600 AstraZeneca vaccines is expected to be delivered to Gaza by the end of April.

Some European countries have raised safety concerns about the AstraZeneca vaccine. But major countries, including France, Italy and Germany, have begun using the vaccine again, and Palestinian authorities have

approved its use.

Bootsma noted that both vaccines “have been validated by WHO globally through very lengthy and stringent process.”

Dr. Majdi Dhair, a health ministry official, said only 11 200 of Gaza's two million residents have been inoculated so far, saying the turnout “started to grow” a month after the rollout of vaccines. Bootsma said the limited number of vaccines in Gaza prevents a mass vaccination campaign.

The Gaza Strip has seen at least 58 000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 since August and 582 deaths. The West Bank has reported nearly 163 000 COVID-19 cases and 1 824 deaths.

In recent weeks, Hamas authorities governing the territory have eased almost all coronavirus restrictions, despite warnings from health officials.

Bootsma criticised the move.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is not over yet. We are all still at risk of becoming infected, especially now that the government has eased all the restrictions,” she said.

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China announces new major discoveries at Sanxingdui Ruins

CHENGDU – Chinese archaeologists announced Saturday that some new major discoveries have been made at the legendary Sanxingdui Ruins site in southwest China, helping shed light on the cultural origins of the Chinese nation.

Archaeologists have found six new sacrificial pits and unearthed more than 500 items dating back about 3,000 years at the Sanxingdui Ruins in Sichuan Province, the National Cultural Heritage Administration announced in the provincial capital Chengdu.

The new pits sit next to two sacrificial pits discovered in 1986. Together

they form an area in which people of the ancient Shu civilisation offered sacrifices to heaven, earth and their ancestors, and prayed for prosperity and peace, according to Tang Fei, head of the excavation team at Sanxingdui and chief of the Sichuan Provincial Cultural Relics and Archaeology Research Institute.

The pits are rectangular, with areas ranging between 3.5 square meters and 19 square meters. So far, archaeologists have unearthed various cultural items from four of the pits, including pieces of gold masks, gold foil, bronze masks, bronze trees, ivory and jade. The

rest of the newly discovered pits are still under excavation.

In addition, pieces of miniature ivory sculptures, residues of silk and textile products, carbonised rice, and seeds of trees were excavated.

The discoveries have shown the distinctiveness of the Shu civilisation and the diversity of the Chinese civilisation, said Ran Honglin, another researcher with the institute.

The Sanxingdui Ruins site is among China's top 10 archaeological finds of the 20th century. Covering 12 square km, the relics site, located in the city of Guanghan, about 60 km



This undated file photo shows ivory carving relics unearthed from a sacrificial pit of the Sanxingdui Ruins site in southwest China's Sichuan Province.

from Chengdu, is believed to be the remnants of the Shu Kingdom, dating back

some 4,800 years and lasting over 2,000 years.

Authorities placed the

Sanxingdui Ruins under state-level protection in 1988.

China to continue providing vaccine aid for global pandemic response

A SPOKESPERSON with China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) said on Friday that by providing vaccine aid, China will continue to work with all parties to make new contributions to the global fight against the pandemic of COVID-19.

CIDCA spokesperson Tian Lin said China is providing or will provide vaccine aid to 80 countries and three international organisations. And for some countries that really have difficulties, China also provides syringes to facilitate their use of the vaccines. "The aid is being delivered in a timely and orderly manner."

Tian said the scope of vaccine aid covers 26 Asian countries, 34 African countries, four countries in Europe, 10 in America, and six in Oceania, adding that China is also providing vaccine aid to the African Union, the Arab League and UN peacekeepers.

The vaccine aid operations have fully demonstrated the trust in the safety and effectiveness of the Chinese vaccines shown by the international community, especially other developing countries, Tian said.

According to the spokesperson, to date, over 60 countries have approved market access or



The first batch of Chinese-donated COVID-19 vaccine doses is unloaded from a plane at Robert Mugabe International Airport in Harare, Zimbabwe on Feb. 15, 2021.

issued emergency use permits for Chinese vaccines.

"The COVID-19 vaccine aid is the first big-scale vaccine aid operation since the founding of the People's Republic of China," said Tian.

With the Chinese vaccines getting conditional market approval, China is fulfilling its promise of prioritising the provision of vaccines to developing countries, Tian said.

"The following factors are our main considerations when we formulate an aid plan: first, the benefits of equitable and

timely access to vaccines for developing countries; second, the severity of the epidemic and the specific vaccine aid needs of the countries concerned; and third, the capacity of the Chinese government to provide vaccines," he said.

"China's anti-pandemic supplies and vaccine aid are totally open and honest," Tian said, adding that "our goal is to help other developing countries to save as many innocent lives as possible, without any geopolitical purpose or political conditions."

"On the issue of vaccine

aid, China is not a saviour, but we are willing to be a friend in need and a sincere partner to help our friends in times of difficulty," he said.

Since the second half of last year, the international community has become increasingly concerned about the global vaccine "distribution deficit", as vaccine research and development continues to advance and vaccines gradually come into use in different countries.

"High-income countries have obtained massive vaccine supplies rapidly,

while poor countries remain empty-handed. This severely imbalanced situation has aroused deep concerns in the international community, especially in developing countries," he said.

"We need to make efforts to promote the equitable distribution of vaccines globally," he said.

He said China hopes that the international community will resolutely oppose acts of profiting at others' expense, hoarding and monopolising, and firmly stand against "vaccine nationalism."

Wuhan launches 2021's first tourist train

WUHAN (Xinhua) – This year's first tourist train from Wuhan, capital of central China's Hubei Province, was launched on Saturday, according to local transport authorities.

The train carrying nearly 900 tourists is scheduled for the city of Xiangyang in the province.

During the two-day journey, tourists can visit a popular movie location and other tourist destinations, said the operating company of the train.

"The tourist train is quite cost-effective and the travel arrangements are suitable for us middle-aged and elderly people," said a tourist surnamed Wang.

The company also plans to launch other short-distance tourist train routes, along with long-distance ones to regions outside the province.

New report analyses socioeconomic repercussions of COVID-19 in the Caribbean

SANTIAGO, Chile – A new, joint report by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) has analysed the socioeconomic repercussions of COVID-19 in the Caribbean and the urgency of moving towards a systemic approach to disaster risk.

According to ECLAC, the special report also addresses challenges, opportunities and recommendations for moving towards a “risk-informed recovery and development model in the Caribbean”.

“The large-scale and long-lasting

“That is why it is urgently necessary to move towards a systemic approach to disaster risk, primarily in the Caribbean, which is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, with economies dependent on foreign tourism and heavy debt burdens.”

effects of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), combined with the possible impact of other hazards and recent events, threaten to damage or destroy vital infrastructure and the life-support systems of large parts of societies and economies,” the report warns.

“That is why it is urgently necessary to move towards a systemic approach to

disaster risk, primarily in the Caribbean, which is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, with economies dependent on foreign tourism and heavy debt burdens,” it adds.

The report – “The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic: an opportunity for a systemic approach to disaster risk for the Caribbean,” emphasises that

disaster risk is “systemic” and that it “generates complex interactions between human, social, political and economic systems on the one hand, and natural systems on the other”.

“The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the extent to which a single hazard has the potential to trigger a series of cascading effects, impacting the life-support systems of societies and economies worldwide,” the report says.

Alicia Bárcena, ECLAC’s executive secretary, said that “this crisis underscores the need for disaster risk management to be incorporated into national planning in order to guarantee a comprehensive response to disasters”.



VACANCY Accountant

The Barbados Light & Power Company Limited (BLPC) is seeking applications from suitably qualified professionals to fill the positions of **Accountant**. This is a dynamic position, where the successful candidate will be required to:

- Manage inter-related accounting sub-systems and audit projects, including computerized systems independently
- Configure and implement new computerized systems in collaboration with Information Systems and external consultants
- Application of practical knowledge of accounting and auditing theory to practical business applications
- Application of the knowledge of International Financial Reporting Standards, Companies Act, and Value Added Tax Act
- Knowledge of internal control requirements for management, accounting and operational systems
- Ability to analyze situations using both quantitative and qualitative methods
- Variance analyses including project capital costs, operating and maintenance expenses consistent with all budget, forecast, and external reporting timelines

Qualifications and Experience

- Bachelor’s Degree in Accounting, Management or a related discipline
- Completion of a professional accounting qualification recognized by ICAB
- Three to five years practical on the job experience is required for acceptable proficiency
- Good Communication skills, i.e. Writing, oral and graphics to all levels of staff
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Re: Accountant

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Cancer on the rise in T&T Drug shortages, malfunctioning machines, overworked doctors

CANCER, this country’s second leading cause of death, is on the rise and the chairman of the T&T Cancer Society (TTSC) Dr. Asante Le Blanc is concerned.

Her organisation operates on funds received from corporate sponsors and the Government to provide screening at a reduced cost and promotes awareness to citizens. Three years ago, their “subvention was almost taken away” but they were able to show the Government the work they have been doing and “got their subvention,” she revealed.

However, the State’s funding is a drop in the bucket to the work the TTSC has been undertaking. Every month the TTCS screens between 300 to 500 patients for breast, cervical, prostate and colorectal cancers.

Commenting on recent cancer statistics, Le Blanc said based on the TTCS’s latest data “we did not see what we wanted to see which is a decrease.” She is worried because if corporate T&T pulls its funding, it would put the society on shaky ground.

“You can’t bemoan the Government has a lot on their plate,” she said.

Since the closure of T&T’s borders last March, the TTCS has seen an uptake of patients. Le Blanc said the TTCS wants to undertake studies with PSA testing and prostate cancer and are currently doing research on the prevalence of childhood cancers in a certain part of Trinidad to see if environmental factors have been contributing to the disease.

Le Blanc is of the view that T&T does not have sufficient public health care facilities to treat cancer patients.

“We have to do more when it comes to oncology in T&T,” she said.

There is a need for a centralised oncology unit that can provide co-ordination of all treatments and post-treatments, counselling, nutrition, acupuncture and institutionalisation.

In 2002, then prime minister Patrick Manning promised a National Oncology Centre as the main treatment facility for cancer. The cost of construction, initially estimated at \$144 million, was put at \$800 million in 2012. After spending \$300 million on a foundation, Health Minister Terrence Deyalsingh

announced in 2018 the termination of the centre’s contract.

Last June, Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley said at the launch of an \$84 million Linear Accelerator Wing at the St James Medical Complex that his Government could have spent more money on equipment to treat cancer had it not been for past corruption.

“There is a lot more work to be done. When you think of how much it costs to treat one cancer patient, just one, the millions of dollars for just one patient, this is why the society is promoting prevention, education and screening because if we get early detection we will spend much less money and we will save lives,” Le Blanc said.

Admitting the health system has faced shortages of drugs, machines malfunctioning while doctors are overworked and overwhelmed, Le Blanc said no system is perfect.

“But I can tell you honestly they have improved and they are trying,” she said.

Last month, Health Minister Terrence Deyalsingh said it costs the State \$500 000 to treat one lung cancer case. Between 2013-2017, there were 641 lung cancer deaths.

As to how many new cancer cases are detected annually, one of the country’s leading oncologist Dr. Kavi Capildeo puts the figure at 4 000. Capildeo, who is based at the St James Medical Complex, treats 1 500 of these patients and attends to six to seven of them every week.

A year supply of the drug Trastuzumab to treat a patient with breast cancer said can cost the State \$100 000,” he said.

“There are treatments that are difficult to get in the public service and there are some procedures that we can’t get locally at all, for example, bone marrow transplantation, stem cell transplantations, stereotactic radiotherapy.”

If someone has relapsed lymphoma and the treatment requires bone marrow transplantation, “you would have to look at whether you are able to fund that in Cuba or the US or Colombia, and then, the cost can become very much an issue”.

“In the States that can hit US\$200 000 and more. In Colombia, it is probably half that,” Capildeo said.

Tougher COVID-19 restrictions imposed in Bermuda as cases soar

HAMILTON, Bermuda – The Government of Bermuda has introduced tougher restrictions after a surge of coronavirus cases saw 40 recorded in the past three days with the spread on-island of the deadlier UK variant.

As a result, the curfew period was lengthened and the number of people allowed at gatherings will be cut from 25 to ten.

In making the announcement late Saturday, Premier David Burt said that starting Sunday, that night-time lockdown will now begin at 11:00 pm (local time) instead of midnight, but it

will still end at 5:00 am.

Burt, who said “We must act now”, added that clubs and bars will be banned from serving customers indoors and outdoor service will be at tables only – with the group size reduced to six. According to Education Minister Diallo Rabain, government schools may return to remote learning if cases continue to rise.

News of the increased restrictions, which will be in force for at least three weeks, came as 16 new COVID-19 infections were revealed by health officials. Six cases were reported on Friday following 18 on Thursday.

15 C’bean nationals nabbed in suspected human smuggling venture off Florida coast

MIAMI, United States – The United States Coast Guard law enforcement teams have interdicted several Caribbean nationals in a suspected human smuggling venture off the south coast of Florida.

According to Coast Guard officials, the suspects – two Bahamians, seven Jamaicans, two Haitians and four from the Dominican Republic, were nabbed last Wednesday in a 29-foot vessel about five miles off West Palm Beach, Florida.

“Some passengers were brought ashore for further investigation of potential criminal charges by Homeland Security Investigations and the remaining passengers were repatriated to the Bahamas Friday,” the Coast Guard said in a statement.

The US Coast Guard said a CBP AMO aircraft

notified Coast Guard Station Miami watchstanders of the suspected smuggling vessel at about 12:20 am (local time).

“Wednesday’s case spotlights the great work done every day by Air and Marine and our DHS partners,” said John Priddy, Executive Director of the AMO Southeast Region. “With our integrated operations, we get the job done and protect our homeland.”

Since October 1, 2020, the US Coast Guard said crews have interdicted 78 Bahamians, eight Jamaicans, 182 Haitians, 194 Dominican Republicans compared to fiscal year 2020, October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020, in which crews interdicted 194 Bahamians, four Jamaicans, 418 Haitians and 1 117 Dominican Republicans.

Cuba to vaccinate 150 000 front-line workers as part of final phase of clinical trial

HAVANA – Cuba announced yesterday it would vaccinate 150 000 front-line workers as part of the final phase of a clinical trial of the country’s leading COVID-19 vaccine candidate amid a surge in cases.

The shots using the Soberana 2 vaccine will start Monday and target medical and other personnel at high risk, the authorities said.

“Cuba could immunize 150 000 people immediately from

COVID-19, as the phase three trial of this vaccine is demonstrating it is very safe,” Foreign Trade and Investment Minister Rodrigo Malmierca tweeted.

Soberana 2 has been in the final phase of a clinical trial for the past three weeks involving 44 000 volunteers from the general population.

The Communist-run Caribbean island nation, which has long experience with developing and exporting vaccines, is one

of a handful in the region that have not started vaccinating against COVID, as it is counting on its own candidates.

Cuba’s drug regulatory authority on Thursday also approved a second COVID-19 vaccine candidate for late-stage clinical trials called Abdala.

Cuba is going through its worst coronavirus outbreak since the start of the pandemic after opening its borders late last year.

The island of 11 million inhabitants is registering 600 to 1 000 new cases each day, well above the scores or a handful per day for most of last year. Since the pandemic started, the country has reported 65 000 cases and 387 deaths, one of the lowest rates in the world per capita.

The government has vowed to vaccinate the entire population this year with one of its five experimental shots in development.



Cuba announced yesterday it would vaccinate 150 000 front-line workers as part of the final phase of a clinical trial of the country’s leading COVID-19 vaccine candidate amid a surge in cases.

Suriname airline to launch flights to Guyana, Barbados and Curacao

GEORGETOWN, Guyana – A carrier from neighbouring Suriname is scheduled to start flying to Guyana and other countries in the region in the near future.

This was recently announced by Public Works Minister Bishop Juan Edghill during a press briefing at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport

(CJIA).

“Fly All Ways out of Suriname will be operating the Suriname route, the Barbados route and Curacao route out of the Cheddi Jagan International Airport,” he said, while adding that the government anticipates that more airlines will come on stream.

“We are happy that traffic at CJIA, even in a Covid environment has


been building and coming along and we want to get to a stage where we are opened back up full blast for business.”

Regarding the safety of staff at CJIA, Edghill said he is advocating on behalf of the Board of Directors to have vaccines available to staff since they are frontline workers.

“So, my engagement with the minister of health and the letter that has already

been transmitted, will very well see in the very shortest possible time, all the staff, which will include immigration, customs, handlers and all the staff at the airport being vaccinated.”

Guyana signed an Open Skies Agreement with Suriname last December to broaden connectivity and tap into new and existing markets with the Dutch nation.



Today's Weather

FORECAST
Mix of clear skies and clouds with a few brief scattered light showers.

<p>International Temperature</p> <p>London Temp: 09 Cloudy Boston Temp: 16 Clear Montreal Temp: 09 Clear Toronto Temp: 14 Clear New York Temp: 09 Clear Miami Temp: 26 Cloudy</p>	<p>Tides</p> <p>High: 8:05 a.m. 11:08 p.m.</p> <p>Low: 1:39 a.m. and 4:01 p.m.</p>	<p>Rainfall</p> <p>Yesterday: 0 mm For the month: 19.6 mm For the year: 194.7 mm</p>	<p>Yesterday's Temperatures</p> <p>Max: 29.2°C Min: 23.6°C</p>
<p>SUNRISE - 6:02 a.m.</p>		<p>SUNSET - 6:09 p.m.</p>	

Prosecutors throw the book at money launderer for Venezuela

MIAMI – Federal prosecutors in Miami are seeking a stiff prison sentence against a US-based money manager they claim is hindering their efforts to seize a \$2.7 million home and other assets he agreed to forfeit when he pleaded guilty to laundering bribe payments for a corrupt Venezuelan official.

Colombian-born Gustavo Hernandez Frieri pleaded guilty in 2019 to a single count of conspiring to launder money for his role in a \$1.2 billion embezzlement scheme involving Venezuela's state-run oil giant PDVSA.

As part of his plea deal, Hernandez Frieri agreed to assist prosecutors in the forfeiture of assets and proceeds from the scheme.

However, in their sentencing memo filed Friday night, prosecutors portray Hernandez Frieri as an unrepentant, recalcitrant defendant who "has not learned from his past criminal conduct".

Despite the lack of a previous criminal record, they are seeking a "more substantial" prison sentence than the one recommended by probation officers and near the maximum ten years allowed by federal sentencing guidelines.

Prosecutors cite two instances where Hernandez Frieri allegedly failed to cooperate. In one case, without notifying the court, he allegedly manoeuvred to transfer his stake in a trust that owns a \$2.7 million home in the leafy Miami suburb of Coral Gables to his ex-wife instead of forfeiting it as required.

In a recent court hearing, Hernandez Frieri acknowledged living with his ex-wife and their children in the same house though the two divorced shortly after his 2018 arrest on a US warrant while on vacation in Italy. The two also share a joint defence agreement to pursue a common strategy aimed at protecting another property from seizure, prosecutors argue.

Then there are the 31 traffic citations accumulated by Hernandez Frieri since 2001.

"Based on his record, the defendant is not an individual who shows respect for the law and is someone who is not easily deterred from committing the same offence more than once," prosecutors wrote. "He should be made to understand that the crime of money laundering is a serious federal offence with serious consequences."

Michael Pasano, a lawyer for Hernandez Frieri, called the unusual request by prosecutors – to throw the book at someone who pledged co-operation against several co-conspirators and whose guilty plea spared a lengthy trial – "wrong minded and ill-spirited".

"Mr. Hernandez will contest these claims at his court hearing," Pasano told the Press. Hernandez Frieri is scheduled to be sentenced on Thursday.

Hernandez Frieri, a lawyer by training, pleaded guilty to helping run a false investment scheme through an investment firm he ran with his brother and brother-in-law, Global Security Advisors.

Brazil officials warn clash looms between Indigenous, miners

BRASILIA, Brazil – A potential clash is looming in northern Brazil between the Munduruku people and mining prospectors armed with rifles and handguns who have intruded into Indigenous lands in the Tapajós River basin of Para state, federal prosecutors warned Saturday.

Officials in the Federal Prosecutor's Office in Para told the Press that the Munduruku community is prepared to defend its land but is also asking for help. The prosecutors agreed to discuss the

situation only if not quoted by name, citing security concerns.

The federal Public Ministry has requested reinforcements for federal forces in the region, but says "nothing has been done so far". There was no immediate comment from Funai, the federal agency responsible for Indigenous groups.

The Public Ministry has been receiving images from the Indigenous people themselves who "are asking for help," one official in the prosecutor's office said in a phone interview. "They prefer to resolve

their conflicts by themselves, but this time they are turning to us."

Videos and photos show an attempt to negotiate by the two sides and also a helicopter flying over the site. Prosecutors believe the aircraft is helping the miners monitor for government enforcement agents. Indigenous people are also pictured trying to disembark from boats but being stopped.

According to one of the reports heard by AP, the Munduruku have about 80 fighters. The number of miners, however, is much larger, prosecutors said.



Munduruku Indigenous attend a meeting with the government at the Planalto presidential palace in Brasilia, Brazil.

Mexico probe links border governor to luxury properties

MEXICO CITY – Mexico's agency for curbing money laundering said Friday the governor of the northern border state of Tamaulipas owns a large number of luxury properties that it says don't match the income from his government jobs over the last 20 years.

The Financial Intelligence Unit said in a report to Congress that Gov. Francisco Garcia Cabeza de Vaca earned about \$2 million in wages and \$1 million in other income since 2000, but acquired properties worth many times that. It also mentioned properties owned by the governor or his relatives in Texas.

The agency also said front companies used by the Sinaloa drug cartel had passed money through the same company that assisted in purchasing one of Garcia Cabeza de Vaca's luxury apartments. However, the agency did not say it has any direct evidence of links between the governor and the cartel.

In a video, the governor said the agency used "data and speculations that are notoriously false" in drawing up its report. "None of the homes that were shown in the report belong to me," he

said.

Garcia Cabeza de Vaca also said, "I have no links to organised crime."

In February, the Attorney General's Office filed a request to Congress to remove the governor's immunity from prosecution, equivalent to a kind of impeachment proceeding. The office accuses Garcia Cabeza De Vaca of organised crime, money laundering and tax evasion.

He has denied any wrongdoing and says the accusations are politically motivated.

"All of this is a political attack," said the governor, who belongs to the conservative opposition National Action Party.

The report also mentioned presumed irregularities in government contracts during Cabeza de Vaca's administration, and possible benefits to him or his family members.

Legislators will decide whether the accusations justify putting the governor on trial.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said when the accusations surfaced in February that "we do not

persecute anyone."

But Garcia Cabeza de Vaca speculated his brushes with the federal government had angered López Obrador's administration. He is among the National Action Party governors who have staked out opposition policies on the coronavirus pandemic and other issues.

He noted that his Gulf coast state is a leading site of wind farms, an energy source that López Obrador has proposed reducing in favour of fossil fuels.

"They must be very upset over the way we publicly exposed them," the governor said, referring to an incident in December when the federal power utility – a pet agency of the president – acknowledged it had falsified a document in an effort to excuse a widespread blackout that month.

The Federal Electricity Commission denied the December 28 outage was the result of incompetence. Instead, it said, a brush fire in Tamaulipas had caused a kind of short-circuit that led to a two-hour blackout that affected one-fourth of the country's customers.

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FOCUS ON GROWTH

SOME strategic economic sectors with high prospects for growth will be identified by the Ministry of Labour and Social Relations.

That is according to Dr. Karen Best, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour and Social Partnership Relations. She was speaking in the House of Assembly last week, where debate continued on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2021/2022.

Dr. Best said that these sectors will also be identified for the provision of jobs during the post COVID-19 era. Additionally, she revealed that attention will be placed on occupational skills and those that will be demanded by employers going forward.

Provisions have been made in the Estimates for an amount of \$7.2 million for the Ministry. Dr. Best said that to pursue the goals she outlined, the Ministry will have to update the Barbados Standards Occupational

Classification. The work will be done in association with the Third Sector, she explained.

To date, the authorities have identified tourism, international business, and construction as the three most likely economic sectors to advance economic growth in Barbados and to create employment.

The economy declined last year and the interest is on the first quarter of 2021 to see whether there will be growth.

Minister Colin Jordan said that his ministry works with assisting the island's productive sectors and with Government's expanding capital works programme, training, and social partnerships.

"We also have a role in improving competitiveness in the economy and speak to removing obstacles to growth we are so aggressively pursuing," Jordan said. He told the House that these things are being done through training.

Can the economy rebound?

ONE very important issue for Barbados is whether the 2021/2022 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure will be enough to cause an economic rebound in the island.

This point has been raised by Bruce Hennis, a member of the Economic Team of the People's party for Democracy and Development (PdP).

In a commentary on the Estimates, which are being debated in the House of Assembly, he acknowledged the fall in Barbados' GDP last year.

He said that one potential hope for future growth lies in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, which has been

allocated approximately \$65 million in budget support for the island's 17 foreign missions.

Another hope, he said, will be found in the Ministries of International Business and Industry; and Tourism and International Transport, with the latter having received the relatively small increase of some \$5.8 million.

Hennis said that only time will tell if the amounts allocated in the Estimates will be enough to rebound the economy, and more importantly, whether they have been correctly allocated strategically.

(See Page 5 for Hennis' full assessment)



Dr. Karen Best, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour and Social Partnership Relations.

Remembering Sir Courtney Blackman

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A closer look at the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure

PAGE 5

Reset button needed for manufacturing

PAGE 6

Dr Worrell: Barbados has lost a giant, a master of his craft

FORMER Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados, Dr. Delisle Worrell, said that with the passing of Sir Courtney Blackman, Barbados has lost a giant, a master of his craft and an inspiration for his times.

According to Dr. Worrell, “Sir Courtney’s was a life well lived, long and productive. He was my mentor and friend, and that bond of friendship embraced Monica, my wife.”

He said: “It was thanks to Sir Courtney that I became a central banker, and

I am eternally grateful for that. The day in 1972 that he recruited me to set up the Research Department for the new Central Bank of Barbados was a turning point in my life, and opened paths for advancement that I had never dreamed of.

“Sir Courtney was a true leader, thoughtful, forward thinking, and generous to a fault. He supported my adventurous spirit, and I was captivated by his vision of the Central Bank of Barbados as a world class institution.

“He taught me the art of

management, which was his great strength. The lessons I learned from him are even now being rediscovered by the world’s foremost schools of management.

“Much more could be said, but suffice it to say that we have lost a giant,

a master of his craft and an inspiration for his times.

“Monica and I join with Gloria, Courtney’s family and friends in celebrating his life, and we offer condolences to all who loved and respected him,” Dr Worrell said.

Sir Courtney – A titan of central banking

By Jewel Brathwaite

THE death of Sir Courtney Blackman has brought to an end an illustrious career in central banking not seen anywhere else in small developing countries.

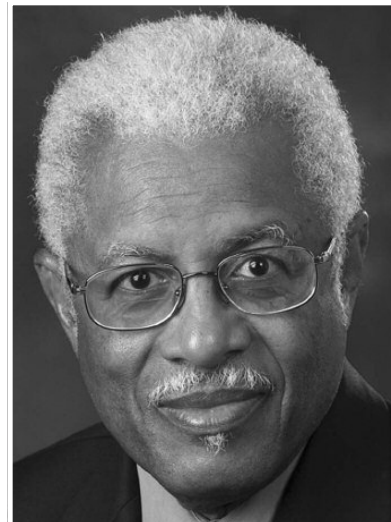
Not only was his contribution to the growth and development of the Central Bank of Barbados very phenomenal, rounding also to the economy, but it is an experience that will persist for many more years and serve as a catalyst for those who want to operate along the lines pioneered by Sir Courtney.

The Bank was established in 1972, six years after Barbados attained

its independence. At the age of 39, Sir Courtney was given the task to build an institution when he was appointed Governor.

In the next 15 years he served as Governor – 1972 to 1987 – and he achieved a lot, ably supported by the professionals he had moulded in the bank.

In his book “One Economics Many Recipes”, noted economist Dani Rodrik penned two key chapters on institutions and how they impact positively on societal development and progress. He writes that in practice every successful market economy is overseen by a panoply of regulatory institutions, regulating conduct in goods, services,



The Central Bank of Barbados. In the formative years of the Bank, Sir Courtney (inset) and the Board of Directors took the decision to bring its operations under a single roof by building a new headquarters which towers over Bridgetown.

labour, assets and financial markets. The Central Bank of Barbados under Sir Courtney fitted that space admirably, with the Bank under his watch emerging as one of the best run Government institutions in Barbados.

The functions of a central bank are outlined by Harold Codrington who authored the publication: “Both Sides of the Coin: The Story of the Central Bank of Barbados 1972-2017”.

Those functions are: to regulate the issue, supply and availability of money; promote monetary stability; promote a sound financial structure; foster the development of money and capital markets in Barbados; and foster credit and exchange conditions conducive to the orderly and sustained development of Barbados.

In the formative years of the Bank, Sir Courtney and the Board of Directors took the decision to bring its operations under a single roof by building a new headquarters which towers over Bridgetown. Prior to that, the operations were spread across the Treasury Building and in the then Barnes Building on Fairchild Street.

Sir Courtney also nur-

ECONOMIC VIEWPOINT

tured an excellent team of professionals, including economists, with some of them having risen to become Governor. In fact, the current holder of that office is Cleviston Haynes who started out as a young economist in the early years of the Bank.

Sir Courtney had recalled that the bank’s participation in national economic policymaking formally began with the establishment of the Research Department in January 1973. However, its full range of policy instruments, he wrote, did not become available until the issue of the new Barbados currency in December that year. To him that was a baptism of fire since in that year commodity prices had increased, followed in 1974 by the oil crisis which triggered a global recession.

According to him, government and the Bank officials reacted pragmatically to these disruptive and unprecedented events so that by the mid-1970s the outline of a national macroeconomic policy began to appear. By that time also, a distinctive methodology of economic

policymaking had emerged and served to deal with what subsequently took place, including global recessions that Barbados successfully overcame.

At the regional level, three of Barbados’ trading partners also encountered economic difficulties that saw currency devaluations along with other defensive measures. Sir Courtney and his team had to initiate policy responses to safeguard this country.

The late Governor also engineered a programme that informed and educated the public about the economy and economic matters. News conferences were held quarterly. They were followed by a series of publications to ensure Barbadians were kept abreast and in tune with issues in the economy, and globally.

These included the Economic Reviews, the Economic and Financial Statistics, the annual Balance of Payments Survey, and an Annual Statistical Digest. There was as well the Chronicle of Central Bank policies, and the flagship, the

Annual Report.

This latter publication provides the country with all of what the Bank has done during the year, how it helped in managing the economy, an outlook for the year ahead, and its financial performance.

Nowhere else has this been done by central banks in small developing countries and this attests to the vision Sir Courtney set for the Bank. Speeches done by the Governor and papers done by the Bank’s economists were published not only in the Bank’s publications, but also in regional and international journals.

But Sir Courtney also had his run-ins with some sections of the public. His repeated calls for wage restraint in the early 1980s did not go down well with trade unions, who took direct aim at him. His decision also to build the Bank’s new headquarters at the time and, which was very necessary, also provoked controversy. But he pressed on.

Sir Courtney will be long remembered for the work he has done in making the best ever central bank in the Caribbean and the confidence demonstrated in it by the public. May he rest in peace.

BANK RATES

Commercial bank rates to the public at the close of business on Friday by the Central Bank of Barbados.

Valid for March 22, 2021

Notes:

Currency	Buying	Selling
Belizean Dollar	1.00000	1.00000
Canadian Dollar	1.57958	1.62630
East Caribbean \$	0.73704	0.74445
Euro	2.33239	2.43061
Pound Sterling	2.71739	2.83181
United States Dollar	1.98000	2.02857

Demand/Sight:

Currency	Buying	Selling
Belizean Dollar	0.99688	1.00313
Canadian Dollar	1.58858	1.62487
East Caribbean Dollar	0.73843	0.74306
Euro	2.36662	2.41552
Guyana Dollar	0.00940	0.00946
Pound Sterling	2.75726	2.81424
United States Dollar	1.99000	2.02768

Telegraphic Transfer

Currency	Buying	Selling
Belizean Dollar	0.99688	1.00313
Canadian Dollar	1.59158	1.62487
East Caribbean Dollar	0.73843	0.74306
Euro	2.37107	2.41552
Guyana Dollar	0.00940	0.00946
Pound Sterling	2.76245	2.81424
United States Dollar	1.99375	2.02768

INDICATIVE RATES FOR SOME REGIONAL CURRENCIES AS ADVISED BY THE RESPECTIVE CENTRAL BANKS

N.B.: These rates are not meant to be used for trading.

	BD\$
Guyana Dollar	0.00943
Jamaica Dollar	0.01373
T & T Dollar	0.29660

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Tourism sector needs to be revived gradually

AS the country reopens fully following the recent pause, attention will be on just how soon and how fast tourism will rebound for Barbados' growth prospects.

It is the one industry that Barbados badly needs to have resuscitated since there appears nothing else to fast track economic growth.

The industry and the associated ancillary businesses (restaurants, tour operators, water sports etc.) were hit hard since the start of this year.

The lockdown the authorities said, was necessary to slow the growth in COVID-19 cases for which there was an explosion after Christmas 2020.

Therefore, the optimists among us have informed that with the reopening international flights especially from the key source markets like the USA and the UK will return bringing with them the vast numbers of visitors.

Those not so optimistic prefer to see a more gradual approach noting that any major influx of visitors could put the country back where none of us wants it to return, and the fear of a further spread of the virus.

At the end of the day gradualism may be better.

Remembering Sir Courtney Blackman (1933-2021)

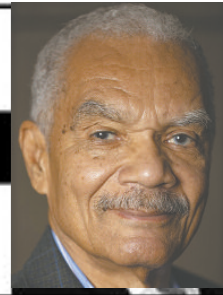
"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." - John 3:16

SIR Courtney Blackman was eight years my senior. We overlapped at Harrison College in Barbados, but never met at school. He graduated from the University of the West Indies in Jamaica before I arrived on campus.

My first encounter with him was in 1977 when he was Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados (CBB). He was recommended by a family member to be guest speaker at the launch of Systems, my management consulting firm. He readily agreed and delivered a very encouraging address as we embarked on a bold

SERIOUS BUSINESS

by
Dr. Basil Springer



pioneering initiative in the Caribbean business consulting marketplace. The company is still operating today, under younger management since 2000, as Systems Consulting Ltd.

Thus began a long and lasting mentorship and friendship during which he always reminded me to continually renew my intellectual capital.

In 1980, on another visit to his office, he was sitting in his chair with his two feet apparently comfortably perched on his desk, but in a position of unstable equilibrium.

Suddenly, but not uncharacteristically, he broke out into peals of laughter and ended up on the floor with a loud bang. The laughter continued from his new position of stable equilibrium by which time his secretary, Mrs. Lucille Simmons, rushed into the office and asked me: "What are you doing with my Governor?" I pleaded innocence and, having been satisfied that he was safe and sound, she left us to continue our conversation.

We continually shared ideas on venture capital, transportation, enterprise

development, my weekly columns, commercial banking, and the role of statutory corporations. They were all very stimulating experiences.

Systems and the CBB worked on a major technology project, starting in 1980, the computerisation of the bank. This was important because the bank recognised the expertise of indigenous consultants and we delivered. Systems continued to be the bank's preferred IT consultants for many years as it strengthened its IT department internally to what it is today.

In 1982, Dr. Blackman presented me with a book called "The Systems Approach" by C. West Churchman. He drilled into me a quote from that book: "There may be economies of scale of production, but no economies of scale of management". This has served me well in my practice as a business consultant over the years.

My interpretation of this comment is that whereas a producer's average cost per unit falls as scale is increased; the same is not true in management. In management, there is an optimal number of units for the manager to manage, as scale is increased.

Circa 1986, amidst much political ridicule and resistance, he created the vision of the Central Bank complex which now consists of the Central Bank building itself, the Grand Salle, the Frank Collymore Hall and, most recently, the Church Village Green. In December 15 2017, the Grand Salle was renamed to honour Sir Courtney.

His many visions and actions have resulted in the enhancement of the image of Barbados internationally, the creation of an example to his peers and subordinates, and the engagement of the wider community to participate in and benefit from holistic socio-economic development.

I extend sympathy on his passing to his widow Gloria Lady Blackman and the entire Blackman family.

REMEMBERING SIR COURTNEY BLACKMAN (1933-2021)



- Synchronicity – A friend and a mentor
- A Humorous Reflection – His infectious laughter
- Computerizing the Central Bank – Engaging Caribbean expertise
- Economies of Scale – In production but not in management
- Visionary – Holistic socioeconomic development



Business Monday



• **DEBATE on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure will continue today in the House of Assembly.**

• **A virtual forum on investment opportunities in Guyana will be held tomorrow.**

• **The National Insurance Scheme has advised that between March 22 and 26, its Cashier Points Customer Service will be open between 8.30 a.m. and 2 p.m.**

Rising debt

By Bruce Hennis

As a disclaimer, this article is based on the 2021-2022 Draft Estimates for Barbados, as posted on the Barbados Parliamentary website, March 9, 2021.

What has happened so far?

The difference between the projected amount of what was spent over what was received (the Fiscal Deficit) of \$1.047 billion, for the financial year April 2020 to March 2021 and what was originally budgeted for the financial year April 2020 to March 2021, a deficit of \$234 million, has left us in a hole that is \$812.8 million deeper than planned for. This has therefore resulted in the island having to further rely on external funding sources. The deficit for the financial year April 2020 to March 2021 of \$1,047 million or \$1.05 billion has therefore without a doubt further contributed to an increase in the debt load on the island.

To make up this shortfall, over \$1 billion will now come from international financial institutions such as the Inter-American Development Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank, the Peoples Republic of China, CAF (The Development Bank for Latin America) and the IMF whilst the remaining \$44.5 million will be sourced locally, specifically from Treasury Notes, Debentures and Bond issues.

Bear in mind that this is not the largest shortfall ever to be presented in the House. For example, in the Estimates for the years 2014-2015 the “Projected Overall Fiscal deficit” was – \$1.7 billion.

However, and this is a very significant “However”, please do take note that all of this is happening after the calendar year 2020, when Barbados’ economy experienced its largest ever decline since the 1960’s, which therefore begs the very serious question of how much longer will we remain on this seemingly cycle of slow growth and high debt?

What are we truly up against?

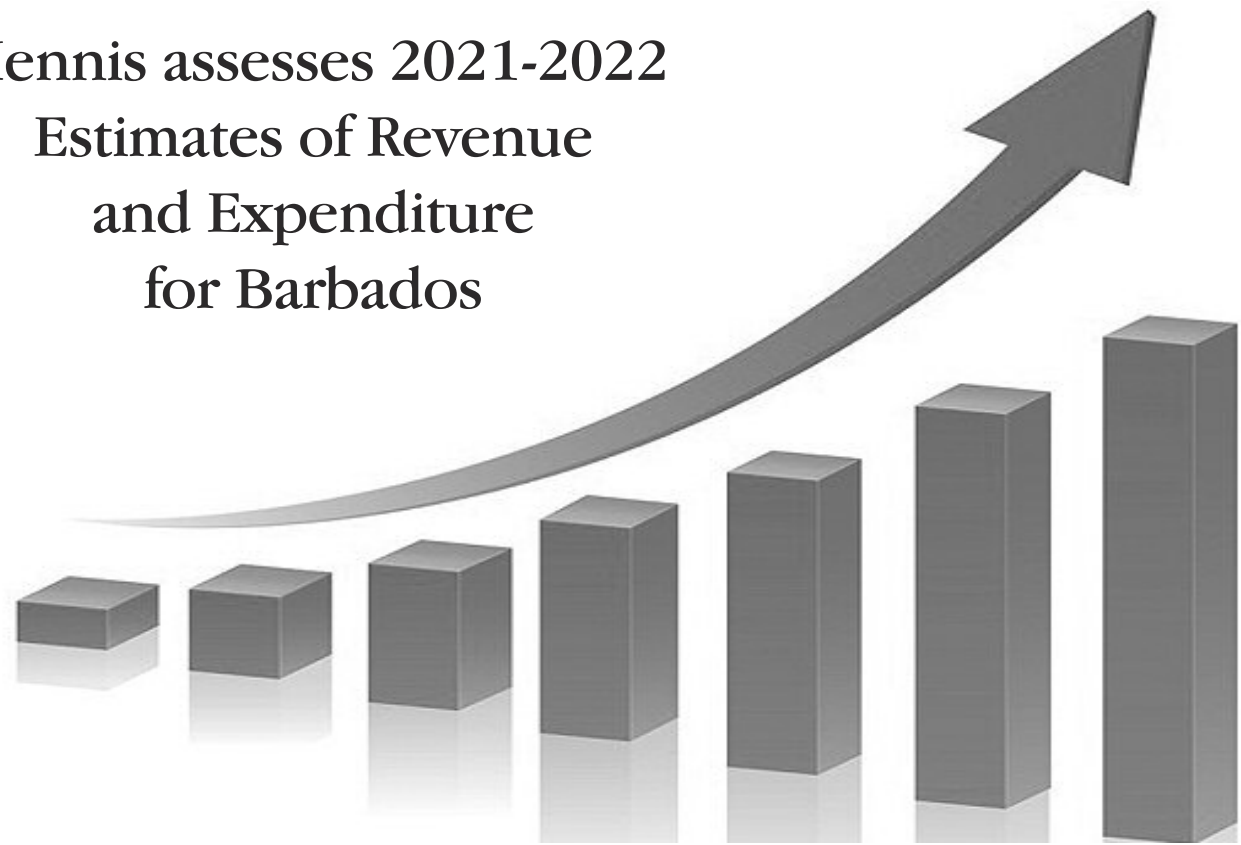
The simple reality is that Barbados is a slow growing economy. That’s it – plain and simple.

From 1975 to 2019, before the COVID-19 Crisis hit the economy, the island’s economy grew by 69%. That’s fairly impressive enough, but when that figure of 69% is compared to the results for 114 other countries over the same period of time, (using available data from the World Bank), it places the country in position number 108 out of 114. In other words, Barbados was in the 6th place from the bottom.

In the midst of all of this, particular attention also has to be paid to how previous global economic crises have in turn impacted Barbados’ economy, especially when the largest economy in the world, the United States, goes through its own domestic economic troubles. The global crisis of the 2008/2009, now called the Great Recession, saw the United States economy experience its 7th worst fall since 1929, and it is that same Great Recession that Barbados is yet to recover from.

But the world has clearly now entered an entirely different paradigm. The current economic calamity is now being called the COVID-19 recession, a recession that is perhaps the worst since the Great Depression of the 1930’s. As if

Hennis assesses 2021-2022 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for Barbados



Whilst Barbados’ economy grew by 1% between 2005 and 2015, its debt on the other hand grew by 174% during that same time period.

to confirm this fact, in 2020, the United States’ economy experienced its 5th worst fall – one that has now been surpassed only by the declines in the years of the 1930’s Great Depression, and in 1946, a year which marked the end of World War 2.

Thus it goes without saying that Barbados could probably be facing a challenging season ahead.

Slow growth, rising debt

The other concern facing Barbados has been its inability to be fully self-financing especially in the years in which more was spent than had been taken in by way of taxes. In times such as those, the difference was made up by borrowing – whether from local or from overseas sources.

Thus, whilst Barbados’ economy grew by 1% between 2005 and 2015, its debt on the other hand grew by 174% during that same period of time.

It is a fact that can be seen in the 2020 review of the island’s Economy by the Central Bank of Barbados, in which the economy declined by over 17%, yet loans from international financial institutions amounted to \$968 million. This was a particularly significant leap especially when borrowing for 2018 and 2019 were \$350 million and \$150 million respectively.

The challenge with foreign reserves

The country’s heavy reliance on imports has also directly impacted the levels of its foreign exchange reserves. The IMF’s “rule of thumb” relating to foreign exchange reserves is that “three months of reserve cover of imports has traditionally been seen as a minimum level for comfort...” (Source: The Policy Development and Review Department, International Monetary Fund, March 23, 2000). However for Barbados, for the 42 year period from 1975 to 2016, the island’s end of year reserves only met that suggested IMF criteria for 13 of those 42 years.

So what about this year’s Estimates?

Given the problems that faced by the island, combined with the serious global economic crisis that we are now in, the Estimates for 2021-2022 should therefore ideally include an element which seeks to build a sound strategic growth

path for the country – one that will be heavily export oriented.

What does it look like so far?

Of the total revenue of \$2.6 billion that the government is seeking to take in, and mainly from taxes, \$818 million or just over 30% of that total will be applied to servicing the island’s debt load. This is actually more money than will be spent by any single ministry alone and results from the earlier discussion.

After that, the remaining expenditures will be allocated among the government’s operations.

First and foremost, there has been little change in the order of the expenditures by the various ministries from 2020/2021 to 2021/2022

Secondly, the government is seeking to spend an additional \$23 million in the coming financial year 2021/2022, over and above what it had budgeted during the past financial year 2020/2021. However, for an economy that fell by \$1.4 billion in 2020, the question is, will it be enough, and even so, has it been correctly allocated strategically?

The answer to both of those questions is, that realistically speaking, only time itself will tell.

The Ministries at a glance.

As in the past year, the Ministry of Education, although it has budgeted to spend \$6 million less in 2021-2022 than in 2020-2021, still will spend the lion’s share of \$528.9 million, allocated among, but not restricted to the following:

* Tertiary Education (budgeted at \$175.6 million) and which includes the University of the West Indies (at \$95 million) and the Barbados Community College (budgeted for \$24.9 million) being allocated,

* Basic Educational Development (with \$144.7 million being budgeted including a Robotics programme for just over \$640,000);

* Secondary Education (budgeted at \$140 million)

* Special services (with a budget of \$27.8 million and which includes spending on Examinations in the amount of \$3.6 million)

* Teacher Training (budgeted at \$5.5 million)

Also of interest is the budget for the Prime Minister’s office where:

* Creative Economy Initiatives have been allocated a total of some \$260,000 - this in spite of the fact that this industry on a global level has once been measured as generating some \$4.5 trillion in revenues; and

* The “Development Of Tourism Potential”, the budget for which has been increased by \$2.1 million over the previous year.

Another potential hope for the country’s future growth, perhaps lies in the Ministry Of Foreign Affairs And Foreign Trade where just maybe the island could possibly have its commercial potential globally diversified in the budgeted amount of just over 65 million for its 17 overseas missions.

Yet another area of hope for the island’s growth can be found in the Ministry Of International Business And Industry, where unfortunately, the funds specifically budgeted for the Barbados Investment & Development Corporation (the B IDC), some \$11.2 million, have not been increased over the previous year.

Last but not least, is the all important Ministry Of Tourism And International Transport with the relatively small increase in its budget of some \$5.8 million, from which once again the hope is that there will be a recovery in the sector which has in the past, contributed as much as 70% to the external part of our economy.

Final words

As stated earlier, the most important question is: For an economy that fell by \$1.4 billion in 2020, and is in the midst of a global economic calamity that is possibly the worst ever since the Great Depression of the 1930’s, will the amounts allocated in the Estimates be enough to rebuild the economy, and more importantly, have they been correctly allocated strategically?

The answer to both of those questions is, that realistically speaking, only time itself will tell.

(Bruce Hennis is a member of the Economic Team of the People’s party for Democracy and Development (PdP) and a business and financial analyst)

Reset button needed for manufacturing

ACCORDING to Minister Ronald Toppin, going forward there is a need to not just do certain things differently in the Manufacturing Sector but to earnestly press the reset button.

Toppin was offering remarks regarding the state of the Manufacturing Sector in Barbados and what the Ministry of International Business and Industry believed was

necessary. The minister explained that Barbados needed jobs as well as foreign exchange whether directly earned through exports or saved through import substitution. Also identified was a need for an increase in the existing capacity, new capacity to be created and for new products to be developed.

The minister was speaking during the second session of the House of Assembly earlier

this week, saying that the manufacturing sector in the past, had been able to benefit from significant concessions along with incentives and technical assistance but in recent years was in bad shape. He also made reference of the domestic export earnings in the sector fluctuating since 2006, hitting its lowest mark in 2010 with \$950 million.

“We have to hit the reset button on manufacturing

and realise that the old economy based on land and capital, unilateral preferences, tax incentives and the like, that era is gone. The new economy has to be based on technology, innovation and entrepreneurship. Small business also plays a very important role going forward,” contended Toppin.

However Minister Toppin acknowledged that though significant changes

were required, certain entities had to be recognised because they were performing, even if not on the cutting edge of technology.

“There is no doubt that the economy needs to quickly be ramped up, so though we recognise we have to reset and put manufacturing on a different and far more solid footing, we still need to work with existing entities,” he said.

Toppin noted that the International Trade Centre reported in 2019 that Barbados had \$162 million in untapped export potential. He stated that the B IDC was working diligently with existing entities to get a clear picture from them as to what they needed to increase capacity to ensure that the ministry could see the possible revenue levels from exports which could

take Barbados back to the productivity of prior years and even beyond.

“It is not realistic to say that we will be able to take a giant step now, but it is a matter of smaller steps with specific targets in mind. We have taken the step to set a target of an increase of at least ten per cent in exports by 2023. This is with the assumption that the necessary targeted assistance is given to the manufacturing entities across Barbados including financial assistance to operate,” he said.

The minister outlined that these small steps were aimed at scaling up capacity, expanding the number of exportable products, aiding manufacturing in lowering operating costs and looking at clusters to raise business efficiency.


(AS)

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B IDC pushing initiatives for export

THE Barbados Investment and Development Corporation (B IDC) has accelerated efforts to get local enterprises export ready.

Director of Business Support Services, Fern Lewis, revealed that the agency has “identified for the next 18 months, a very robust programme that is going to take us into capacity building for local enterprises”.

She said this will enable them to sell more products locally, and export more within the region and beyond.

Lewis, who was at the time addressing the House of Assembly during the debate on the Appropriations Bill, reported that in addition to building capacity for local businesses, B IDC has a “Start-up Programme” intended to put emphasis on “high potential businesses” that can add jobs and create opportunities for saving and earning foreign exchange.

She also pointed to an export development plan, explaining, “We built out a tactical plan that is going to allow us to be able to match product with company with market.”

She said that market

research has allowed them to identify the market opportunities.

“We want to be able to match the companies with the opportunity, and the product with the specific market.

“It allows us then to be very strategic in how we put the intervention into the specific company to see the result in exports in those specific markets. So that particular plan is going to allow us to match markets that we have researched, with the companies that can scale-up, along with the products that we are going to be enhancing. To do that, the B IDC has a product development programme that will ensure that products meet international standards,” Lewis indicated, further acknowledging that this allows B IDC to work with stakeholders to identify where there may be opportunity for new product development.

“Because that new product development is going to throw up new products that we can make here, or we could export. It also will throw up opportunities for new businesses that we can start,” she added.

(TL)


Sagicor

BARBADOS STOCK REPORT

March 19, 2021

There was no activity on the Regular Market.

Week in Review

This week, the Regular Market traded a total volume of 55,369 shares. The top two traded companies were Goddard Enterprises Limited with 51,937 and Insurance Corporation of Barbados Limited with 3,426 shares.

BARBADOS STOCK EXCHANGE

SHARE SUMMARY INFORMATION

Friday March 19, 2021

	LAST TRADE DATE	VOLUME	HIGH	LOW	LAST CLOSE	CURRENT PRICE CLOSE	BID PRICE	ASK PRICE	BID SIZE	ASK SIZE
ABV Investments Incorporated	15-Oct-20	-	-	-	\$0.05	\$0.05	\$1.10	\$0.30	1	10,498
BICO Limited	21-Sep-20	-	-	-	\$3.10	\$3.10	\$3.10	-	70	-
Banks Holdings Limited ++	09-Dec-19	-	-	-	\$4.85	\$4.85	-	-	-	-
Barbados Dairy Industries Limited ++	04-Oct-19	-	-	-	\$3.00	\$3.00	-	-	-	-
Barbados Farms Limited	18-Mar-21	-	-	-	\$0.68	\$0.68	\$0.35	\$0.68	1,000	25,341
Cave Shepherd and Company Limited	18-Mar-21	-	-	-	\$4.10	\$4.10	\$4.00	\$4.10	72	1,099
FirstCaribbean International Bank	18-Mar-21	-	-	-	\$1.80	\$1.80	-	\$1.80	-	14,250
Eppley Caribbean Property Fund SCC - Dev Fund	18-Mar-21	-	-	-	\$0.16	\$0.16	-	\$0.16	-	5,065
Eppley Caribbean Property Fund SCC -Value Fund	18-Mar-21	-	-	-	\$0.57	\$0.57	\$0.56	\$0.57	40,000	999
Goddard Enterprises Limited	18-Mar-21	-	-	-	\$2.20	\$2.20	\$2.15	\$2.20	204	3,475
Insurance Corporation of B'dos Limited	18-Mar-21	-	-	-	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$1.78	\$2.00	78	19,274
One Caribbean Media Limited	18-Mar-21	-	-	-	\$2.20	\$2.20	-	\$2.20	-	999
Sagicor Financial Corporation Pref 6.5%	23-Jun-16	-	-	-	\$2.26	\$2.26	-	-	-	-
Sagicor Financial Corporation Limited ++	29-Nov-19	-	-	-	\$2.80	\$2.80	-	-	-	-
West India Biscuit Company Limited	03-Mar-21	-	-	-	\$31.25	\$31.25	\$31.35	-	100	-
Emera Deposit Receipt	14-Aug-20	-	-	-	\$21.55	\$21.66	\$0.11	\$30.00	-	50
TOTAL SHARES BOUGHT & SOLD		-								

* = Security is Trading X-Div

*+ = Security is Suspended

** = Rights Issued

NOTICES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

West India Biscuit Company Limited – Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Shareholders of West India Biscuit Company Limited, originally scheduled on February 12th, 2021, is now set to take place on March 26th, 2021 at the Hilton Barbados Resort, Needhams Point, Bridgetown at 11:00 a.m.

BICO Limited – Notice is hereby given that the One Hundred and Thirty-sixth Annual General Meeting of the shareholders of BICO Limited is scheduled to take place on April 13th, 2021 at the Company's registered address: Harbor Industrial Park, Bridgetown, BB11145 at 5:00 p.m.

Emera Incorporated - Directors have fixed March 22nd, 2021 as the record date for the determination of shareholders entitled to receive notice of the Annual General Meeting of the Company which will be held on May 20th, 2021.

BSE NOTICES

COVID-19 PROCEDURAL UPDATE

Kindly note that effective February 26th, 2021, the offices of the Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. (BSE) and the Barbados Central Securities Depository Inc. (BCSDI) remain closed in accordance with the recommendations contained in Directive No. 5 issued by the Government of Barbados for the period **March 1st, 2021 to March 14th, 2021**.

Kindly note, however, that while our physical offices will be closed, all trading, clearing and settlement operations will remain fully operational as staff will all be working remotely during this period. While our offices are closed, we remain easily accessible via email. For Stock Exchange related queries, kindly email us at info@bse.com.bb and for Shareholder related queries contact us at bcydi@bse.com.bb.

We wish to thank you in advance for your understanding and trust that all and sundry remain safe during this time.

TRADING SUSPENSION

The Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. (BSE) wishes to advise that due to non-compliance with Section 4.01.3 and subject to Section 3.01.5.(1)(b) of the Rules of the Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. trading in the Common Shares of Banks Holdings Limited were suspended effective December 10th, 2019.

The Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. (BSE) wishes to advise that due to non-compliance with Section 4.01.3 and subject to Section 3.01.5.(1)(b) of the Rules of the Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. trading in the Common Shares of Barbados Dairy Industries Limited were suspended effective December 10th, 2019.

The Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. (BSE) wishes to advise that to facilitate the closing of the Scheme of Arrangement effected by way of Section 99 of the Companies Act 1981 of Bermuda involving the transfer of all the issued and outstanding shares in Sagicor Financial Corporation Limited to Alignvest Acquisition II, it has suspended trading in the security Sagicor Financial Corporation Limited.

Regular Market

Security	Volume	High	Low	Market Price	Advance/Decline

Deposit Receipts

Security	Previous Close	Current Close	Advance/Decline
EMERA DEPOSIT RECEIPT	\$21.55	\$21.66	\$0.11

INDICES

	TODAY'S TRADING	LAST TRADING	CHANGES
	March 19, 2021	March 18, 2021	
Local	2,454.50	2,454.38	0.12
Cross-list	1,140.86	1,140.86	-
Composite	601.16	601.13	0.03

MARKET CAPITALISATION (in millions)

	TODAY'S TRADING	LAST TRADING	CHANGES
	March 19, 2021	March 18, 2021	
Local	4,933.74	4,933.50	0.24
Cross-list	145.67	145.67	-
Composite	5,079.42	5,079.17	0.24

MUTUAL FUND

March 19, 2021

ENDED	NAME OF FUND	NAV	OFFER	BID	NAV CHANGE
12-Mar-21	REPUBLIC CAPITAL GROWTH FUND	w 1.2348			0.0206
12-Mar-21	REPUBLIC INCOME FUND	w 1.2592			0.0011
12-Mar-21	REPUBLIC PROPERTY FUND	w 0.6714			-0.0005
12-Mar-21	FORTRESS CARIBBEAN GROWTH FUND	w 6.7027	6.7027	6.7027	0.2114
12-Mar-21	FORTRESS HIGH INTEREST FUND - ACC.	w 2.0989			0.0036
12-Mar-21	FORTRESS HIGH INTEREST FUND - DIST.	w 1.0217			0.0017
28-Feb-21	ROYAL FIDELITY SELECT BALANCED FUND	m 5.6018	5.6018	5.4998	0.0320
28-Feb-21	ROYAL FIDELITY STRATEGIC GROWTH FUND	dm 1.0369	1.0369	1.0162	0.0128
28-Feb-21	ROYAL FIDELITY PREMIUM INCOME FUND	m 1.6427	1.6427	1.6098	-0.0002
12-Mar-21	SAGICOR GLOBAL BALANCED FUND	w 2.78			0.05
12-Mar-21	SAGICOR SELECT GROWTH FUND	w 1.70			0.05
12-Mar-21	SAGICOR PREFERRED INCOME FUND	w 0.98			0.00

* Indicates the Fund is currently ex-div

NOTES: QUOTATIONS AND NET ASSET VALUE PER SHARE ARE SUPPLIED BY THE FUND MANAGEMENT. THE OFFERING PRICE INCLUDES NET ASSET VALUE PLUS ENTRY COSTS.

m = monthly valuation, q = quarterly valuation, w = weekly

Fixed Income

	Last Trade Date	Last Close	Current Close	Bid Price	Ask Price	Bid Size	Ask Size
GOB Series B	18-Mar-21	\$60.00	\$60.00	\$60.00	\$80.00	14,752	34,828
GOB Series D	12-Nov-19	\$50.00	\$50.00	-	-	-	-
GOB Series F	03-Nov-20	\$89.00	\$89.00	-	-	-	-
GOB Series I	24-Mar-20	\$65.00	\$65.00	-	\$70.00	-	19,617

NEWS

Oil giant Saudi Aramco sees 2020 profits drop to \$49 billion

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates – Saudi Arabia's state-backed oil giant Aramco announced Sunday that its profits nearly halved in 2020 to \$49 billion, a big drop that came as the coronavirus pandemic roiled global energy markets.

Saudi Arabian Oil Co. released its annual financial results a year after the pandemic sent the price of oil crashing to all-time lows as people stopped moving around the world to stem the spread of the virus. In recent weeks, however, the price has edged up as movement restrictions ease, commerce increases and more people get vaccinated against COVID-19. Still, analysts caution that a peak in demand may still

be far off. Despite the 44% drop in net income, Aramco said it would stick to its promise of paying quarterly dividends of \$18.75 billion – \$75 billion a year – due to commitments the company made to shareholders in the run-up to its initial public offering. Nearly all of the dividend money goes to the Saudi government, which owns more than 98% of the company. Aramco's policy to pay dividends significantly higher than its 2020 free cash flow of \$49 billion stands in sharp contrast to other oil giants that have cut payouts. Seeking a cash infusion to pay the billions of dollars in the face of dwindling revenue, Aramco recently has issued international bonds.

PAY UP!

MORE than one million dollars in rent is owed to the National Conservation Commission (NCC), General Manager Ryan Als has told the House of Assembly.

To this end he, along with Minister of the Environment Adrian Forde, is urging the defaulting individuals to pay some of the arrears they have accumulated over the years.

However, he noted that they at the Commission are also sensitive to the situation, having acknowledged that these are trying times.

For the last year, Als pointed out, the Commission has not charged a single cent in rent to those persons who operate the kiosks located on the beach or in open spaces.

"We encourage them, however, if they

can, to pay the debt they owe which is extremely high," he advised.

The NCC official said that they are challenged in this COVID-19 environment by not being able to collect rent, as well as not being able to get business from the hotels which have not been requesting service from the Government agency.

"So we have had a significant drop in revenue because of the COVID, but despite that we still understand vendors are hurting because they don't have the luxury of tourists coming to the island and we are very sensitive to that situation," he pointed out.

It was revealed that this issue of arrears had been there long before the COVID-19 pandemic.

For his part, Forde said there is a sys-



NCC General Manager Ryan Als.

tem in place in terms of how much the vendors can afford to pay a month. "But as I said these are not normal times so we are trying to be our brothers and sisters' keeper," Forde added.

Tense working environment, says Minister

THE working environment in Barbados can be characterised as tense. So said Colin Jordan, Minister of Labour and Social Partnership Relations, while responding to a query on the matter from Opposition Leader, Bishop Joseph Atherley.

Citing several reasons for this, the Minister said that there is a fear of uncertainty by workers. "When a person is unsure if he will have a job tomorrow or next week, he will act or sometimes react in ways that he would not ordinarily do," the Minister declared.

"Those workers also have the attendant fear of illness; there are also many of them trying to be teacher's assistant; and there are also some of them who have dependants who may either be elderly or who have disabilities, and who we have additional responsibility for," the Minister told the House of Assembly.

He said that those matters work together to help to create a very uncertain and fearful situation.

As for businesses, the Minister pointed out that there is much uncertainty since there are persons who have worked years in a business, only to wonder if that business will disappear before their eyes.

Said the Minister, "They have workers [who] go to sleep at night hoping that no one turns up positive, so that the business has to close to look after that situation. So they have their perspectives and their fears."

All those things work together to create the tensions the country is seeing, the Minister noted.

However, he said that there must be some order in the industrial relations climate of Barbados if the country is to become more productive. Jordan said that part of that harmonious industrial relations climate speaks to the fact that workers must execute their tasks in a decent and safe working environment.

"So we pay a lot of attention to occupational safety and health and we can call ourselves an expert ministry in the Caribbean context," according to him.

He also pointed out that other islands in the region have turned to Barbados for advice and guidance in the area of occupational safety and health.

"All of this speaks to the creation of a fair and just society, which is the critical part of the mandate of our Ministry," added Jordan, who is also the Member of Parliament for St. Peter.



CEO of CIBC FirstCaribbean International Bank, Ms Colette Delaney.



CIBC FirstCaribbean International Bank in Broad Street.

Bank hard-hit by COVID-19 pandemic

THE COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact negatively on the operations of CIBC FirstCaribbean International Bank and the markets the bank is serving.

That's according to Ms. Colette Delaney as she reviewed the performance of the bank for the first quarter of its new financial year to January 31, 2021.

She reported that the bank's net income for the three months ended January 31, 2021 was US\$30.9 million. Ms. Delaney said this represents a 40 per cent decline from the US\$20.9 million posted at the end of January 2020.

All companies have been hit hard by the pandemic, creating a ripple effect on economies around the Caribbean.

"The impact from COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect the interest rate envi-

ronment as well as levels of business and economic activity in the region, which has contributed to overall lower revenue in the first quarter of 2021," Ms. Delaney said.

She indicated further that the bank's Tier One and Total Capital ratios are strong at 12.5 per cent and 14.7 per cent, which remain in excess of the applicable regulatory requirements.

"Although we have seen some positive signs in the first quarter, the current environment and the path to recovery remains uncertain," she stated.

"Similar to the last quarter, the Directors have decided not to declare a dividend and will continue to monitor the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on economic growth throughout the region,"

Delaney said.

The CEO also acknowledged the February 2021 announcement that the transaction which would have seen GNB Financial Limited acquiring 66 and two thirds of the shares in the Bank would now take place, as the regulatory approval has not been received.

Delaney noted that while that transaction would have supported "our long term growth prospects, it is only one way of supporting growth going forward".

The official reported that CIBC has held a majority ownership stake in FCIB for a number of years and that there exists an excellent working relationship with a shared focus on meeting the needs of the bank's own clients.

Germany considers mandatory quarantines for people returning from abroad

BERLIN – Germany is considering making all people returning from abroad face quarantine and compulsory COVID-19 tests after infection rates jumped above the level at which authorities say hospitals will be overstretched.

The latest proposal is contained in draft plans, seen by Reuters, which will be discussed by national and leaders in a meeting today when they are due to decide on the next round of measures to deal with the pandemic.

At their last meeting early this month, the leaders agreed a cautious opening,

over the objections of Chancellor Angela Merkel, who warned that more infectious variants meant the pandemic would be hard to control.

According to the Robert Koch Institute for Infectious Diseases, the number of cases per 100 000 population over a week stood at 103.9 yesterday, above the 100 threshold at which intensive care units can no longer keep up.

Public fatigue over lockdown measures, now in their fourth month, is growing but the numbers suggest state premiers may be forced to pull the “emergency brake” they agreed to on March 2,

reversing the opening of some shops.

The new proposals appear directed at people considering holidaying in places, like the Spanish island of Majorca, which are not considered virus risk areas and therefore do not currently trigger a quarantine on returning to Germany.

Holiday destinations should be targeted “since we can expect that holiday-makers from many countries will meet in popular holiday destinations, letting COVID-19 variants spread easily,” according to the draft plans.

Yesterday, Stephan Weil, premier of Lower Saxony, told the RND newspaper

group that the government’s earlier decision to lift the travel warning for Majorca had been a “serious error”.

The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Germany has increased by 13 733 to 2,659,516, the Robert Koch Institute said on Sunday. The reported death toll has risen by 99 to 74 664, the tally showed.

The draft plans would also tighten obligations on companies: those who were unable to offer their employees the option of working from home would have to provide them with two rapid COVID-19 tests each week.



Prime Minister Boris Johnson thanked ‘everyone involved’ on Twitter.

Record-breaking Saturday for UK with 873,784 Covid-19 vaccine doses given

THE number of daily Covid-19 vaccine doses administered in the UK has hit a record high for a third consecutive day.

A total of 873 784 combined first and second doses were given on Saturday, up from 711 157 on Friday.

On Twitter, Prime Minister Boris Johnson thanked “everyone involved”.

More than 27.6 million people in the UK – more than half the adult population – have now received at least one dose of a vaccine.

PM Johnson, who received his first dose on Friday, said, “A huge thank you to everyone involved and please come forward to get your jab when you are invited to do so.”

Sir Simon Stevens, chief executive of NHS England, added, “In just one day we vaccinated the equivalent of the

entire adult populations of Liverpool, Southampton and Oxford combined.”

A further 33 deaths within 28 days of a positive test were also recorded on Saturday, taking the UK’s total by that measure to 126,155.

There have also been another 5 312 confirmed cases of coronavirus in the UK.

The new vaccine record comes after Defence Secretary Ben Wallace warned the EU not to “build walls” around the distribution of vaccines.

Speaking to the BBC’s Andrew Marr Show after a threat by the European Commission to block vaccine exports to countries including the UK, Wallace said, “The European Union stands for the rule of law... and that means we should all abide by our contracts.”

“We are legally all obliged, both the buyer and the purchaser.”

EU Commissioner Mairead McGuinness said all sides needed to “calm down”.

“I think all of us should put our hands up and say we were not prepared for this global pandemic,” she said. “We did not do our best at the beginning but we are doing our best now to protect our citizens.”

“I think we all need to, if you like, calm down, look very... dispassionately at the situation around the raw materials for vaccines, around where they are produced and how we might ramp up that production.”

Despite the success of the vaccine rollout, Wallace did not rule out extending England’s ban on overseas holidays amid rising cases in other countries.

Wallace said booking a trip abroad would be “premature”.

It comes after a scientist on a government advisory body said summer holidays overseas are “extremely unlikely” because of the risk that travellers will bring coronavirus variants to the UK.

The earliest date people in England could holiday abroad is May 17.

The Scottish and Welsh governments also said international travel will not be possible before May 17, while Northern Ireland has not set a date.

Mairead McGuinness told the BBC that all sides needed to “calm down” over Covid-19 vaccine row.

Meanwhile, a leading epidemiologist has predicted that people may need to wear face coverings and socially distance for several years before a return to normality.

Mary Ramsay, the head of immunisation at Public Health England, said basic measures could be in place until other countries successfully roll-out jabs.

She said people “have got used to those lower-level restrictions now, and people can live with them, and the economy can still go on with those less severe restrictions in place”.

“So I think certainly for a few years, at least until other parts of the world are as well vaccinated as we are, and the numbers have come down everywhere, that is when we may be able to go very gradually back to a more normal situation.”

Diversity review underway at Buckingham Palace

BUCKINGHAM PALACE is reviewing diversity policies across all royal households.

The work is looking at improving diversity at Buckingham Palace, Clarence House and Kensington Palace.

Royal sources have stressed that the Palace already has policies, procedures and programmes in place but has not seen the progress it would like.

The work began before the Duke and Duchess of Sussex made allegations of racism within the Royal Family.

Prince Harry and Meghan’s interview with Oprah Winfrey included claims they had been asked how dark their son’s skin would be before his birth.

The duchess said there had been “concerns and conversations about how dark [Archie’s] skin might be when he was born”.

Both Prince Harry and Meghan refused to say who made the comment – but Harry later clarified to Oprah that it was not the Queen or the Duke of Edinburgh.

The issue of race was the one of the most difficult aspects of the interview for the Royal Family.

In response, Buckingham Palace described those issues as particularly “con-

cerning”, saying they would be “taken very seriously and will be addressed by the family privately”.

The Duke of Cambridge later said the royals were “very much not a racist family” in response to questions about the interview.

Comments made by the Sussexes will now form part of the diversity review, which was first reported by the Mail on Sunday.

The Mail on Sunday described the work as a “major drive”. It will take place in collaboration with people from minority backgrounds, disabled people, and gay and transgender communities.

Buckingham Palace is seeking independent views and is looking at new ways of approaching all issues of diversity within the royal households.

Possible changes being considered include the appointment of a “diversity chief”, but sources said they accept more can be done and improvements made.

Royal sources stress that the Royal Family has a strong track record on diversity through their charity projects and engagements, but add the whole family has given this project their full support.

A source said they were listening and “wanted to get this right”.



HER MAJESTY: Queen Elizabeth II.

Malta's former chief of staff charged with money laundering

VALLETTA –Keith Schembri, the former chief of staff of ex-Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, was arraigned in court late on Saturday charged with money laundering, fraud and corruption, police said. He entered a plea of not guilty, court officials said.

Schembri resigned in November 2019, shortly after Yorgen Fenech, a close friend of his, was charged with masterminding the murder of anti-corruption journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia in October 2017. Fenech pleaded not guilty and is awaiting trial.

Prime Minister Muscat resigned two months later.

Court officials said charges against Schembri on Saturday are not connected to the Caruana Galizia murder case.

Schembri, Muscat and Fenech have all denied involvement in the murder and no charges related to it have been made against Schembri or Muscat.

The charges against Schembri stem from a magistrates' investigation after Schembri's company won a multimillion-euro contract in 2010 to sell a printing press to Allied Newspapers, publishers of Times of Malta, the country's biggest-selling newspaper.

Caruana Galizia had written about alleged money laundering in a 2016 blog post about the contract. Her family, who were present in the courtroom on Saturday, welcomed the arraignment but said it was overdue.

"Prosecuting Schembri today brings us a step closer to a Malta where no one is above the law," they said in a statement.

In a lengthy Facebook post on Thursday, Schembri said the accusations against him, which were already circulating in the media, were an "establishment plot" and he looked forward to clearing his name.

His lawyers were unavailable for further comment.



Keith Schembri, Chief of Staff in the office of Malta's Prime Minister Joseph Muscat.



Lloyd Austin is the first member of President Joe Biden's cabinet to visit Afghanistan.

Afghanistan: US Defence Secretary on unannounced Kabul visit

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin has made an unannounced visit to Afghanistan, weeks before a planned withdrawal of all remaining US troops.

After meeting President Ashraf Ghani in Kabul, he called for a responsible end to the war but would not say whether the deadline would be met.

Austin said the focus should be on reducing high levels of violence to allow a negotiated end to the conflict.

The pullout was agreed with the Taliban by the Trump administration last year.

But there are questions over whether the insurgents have kept their pledge to negotiate with the Afghan government.

New US President Joe Biden has said the May 1 deadline would be tough to meet, prompting warnings of "consequences" from the Taliban.

Austin is the first member of Biden's cabinet to visit Afghanistan. He flew into Kabul on Sunday at the end of a brief tour of Asia.

Speaking to journalists, Austin would not say whether the Taliban had met their obligations under the recent deal.

"It's obvious that the level of violence remains pretty high in the country," he said, quoted by the New York Times.

"We'd really like to see that violence come down, and I think if it does come down it can begin to set the conditions for some really fruitful diplomatic work."

There are fears that if foreign militaries withdraw before a lasting agreement is reached, the Taliban might return to power.

The US says it has some 2 500 troops still in Afghanistan.

Miami imposes emergency curfew over spring break 'chaos'

A STATE OF EMERGENCY has been declared in the US city of Miami over concerns large crowds gathering for spring break pose a coronavirus risk.

A 20:00-06:00 curfew has been announced in Miami Beach and will remain in effect for at least 72 hours.

Traffic restrictions are in place during the curfew, while businesses in the busy South Beach area must close.

Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber said thousands of tourists had brought "chaos and disorder" to the city.

"It feels like a rock concert, wall-to-wall people over blocks and blocks," Gelber told CNN. "If you're coming here to go crazy, go somewhere else."

Spring break is a holiday period for schools and universities in the US that usually takes place in March or April. It attracts thousands of students to Florida and other warm weather destinations around the country.

Officials warned tourists to "vacation responsibly or be arrested" prior to the holiday period, and a county-wide midnight coronavirus curfew was already in place due to the pandemic.

But the Miami Beach area was

thronged with revellers over the weekend, and many did not appear to be wearing masks or socially distancing.

One city official described South Beach, which includes the world famous Ocean Drive, as being "overwhelmed" by crowds on Saturday.

"You couldn't see pavement and you couldn't see grass," city manager Raul Aguila said.

He added that the emergency measures were "necessary not only to protect our residents but our visitors, including

our spring breakers who we want to keep safe".

On Sunday, Miami Beach police told CNN they had arrested at least a dozen people after the curfew had come into force.

Until the measures are lifted, police will prevent pedestrians or vehicles entering the South Beach area's main party strips.

Aguila told the Miami Herald newspaper that he has recommended keeping the emergency measures

in place until April 12.

But the emergency orders will expire on Tuesday evening unless they are extended by local authorities.

Florida continues to be a coronavirus hotspot in the US. The state has recorded nearly two million of the country's 29 million infections since the pandemic began.

The latest data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows Florida has recorded about 4 300 new infections a day on average over the past week.

Police: Man stabs 8 during fight at Detroit hookah bar

DETROIT – A man stabbed eight people during fight at a Detroit hookah lounge early yesterday, leaving three people in critical condition, authorities said.

The fight started at around 4:40 am inside the Tiaga Hookah Lounge before spilling out into the parking lot, police Officer Dan Donakowski said

in a news release. A preliminary investigation showed that gunshots were fired, but that no one was struck by them, he said.

A 34-year-old man who allegedly stabbed the eight people was taken into custody, police said. The suspect, who had not been charged as of early yesterday afternoon, was also injured during the

melee

The eight people who were stabbed were taken to hospitals, where three were in critical condition and the other five were treated for wounds that weren't considered life-threatening, Donakowski said.

Authorities said it was unclear what led to the stabbings.

Saudi Arabia, UAE expand COVID-19 vaccination drive

DUBAI – Saudi Arabia and neighbouring United Arab Emirates yesterday said health authorities have expanded COVID-19 vaccinations to all citizens and residents aged 16 and above as Gulf states race to bring the virus under control.

Riyadh said the health ministry will start inoculating its population aged 16 and above with Pfizer vaccines, while its citizens and residents aged 18 and above will have Astrazeneca shots.

It did not provide further details.

The government said on Saturday around three million vaccines had been distributed across 500 vaccination centres.

The UAE, the region's commercial and tourism hub and a global travel centre, has set a blistering pace for its vaccine rollout to keep its economy open for business. It ranks second globally behind Israel for doses per 100 people.

The Emirati health ministry urged its citizens and residents aged 16 and over to register for

COVID-19 vaccinations, a statement published on state media late on Saturday said. The move, it said, comes after nearly 73% of elderly Emiratis, residents and those with chronic diseases have been vaccinated.

The country is providing four types of vaccine free of charge.

The UAE's daily COVID-19 cases surged to nearly 4 000 in late January from about 600 in September after Dubai opened its doors to visitors during the peak winter tourism season.

The rate has fallen after authorities tightened restrictions at public venues but stopped short of imposing new lockdowns. Some restrictions have since been eased but mask-wearing in public and social distancing are still required.

The UAE, which does not give a breakdown for each of its seven emirates, registered 2 013 new infections on Saturday to take its total tally to 438 638 with 1 433 deaths.

Sassou expected to extend 36-year rule as CR votes

BRAZZAVILLE – Congo Republic voted for the next president yesterday, with the incumbent Denis Sassou Nguesso widely expected to extend his 36-year rule despite an economic crisis in the Central African oil producer.

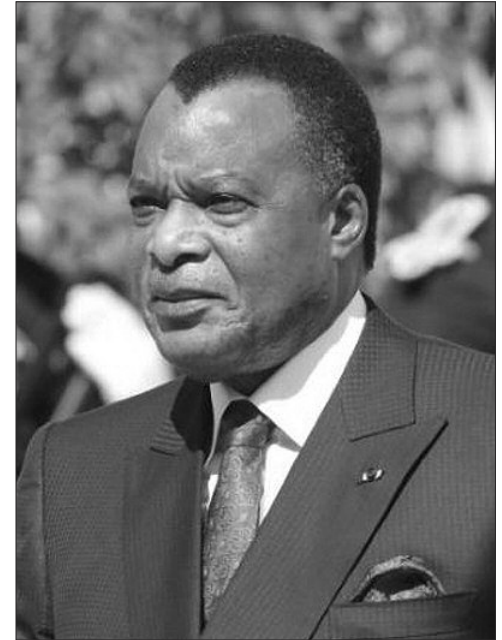
The president's main rival, former government minister Guy-Brice Parfait Kolelas, was in hospital with COVID-19 and was possibly being evacuated to France yesterday, Kolelas' campaign director told Radio France Internationale.

Even so, the government appeared to be leaving nothing to chance. There was an internet blackout across the country yesterday, according to internet monitor NetBlocks.

Sassou, a 77-year old former para-trooper, rose to power in 1979. He lost Congo's first multi-party elections in 1992 but reclaimed the presidency in 1997 after a civil war. He later changed the constitution to extend term limits.

"I am very satisfied because across the country, I have seen people mobilised and ready to participate in the electoral process," Sassou said after voting, adding that he wished Kolelas a swift recovery.

United Nations and European Union



Denis Sassou Nguesso.

observers were not invited to monitor the election, and the interior ministry refused to allow the Catholic Church's 1 100 observers to take part.

Observers are optimistic, however, that the vote will be peaceful – in contrast to the last election in 2016 that was marred by sporadic violence.

Results are expected to be published within four days of voting. If none of the seven candidates secures more than 50% of votes, a second round will take place 15 days later.

Philippines says 220 Chinese boats have encroached in South China Sea

MANILA – The Philippines urged China yesterday to recall more than 200 Chinese boats it said had been spotted at a reef in the South China Sea, saying the presence of the vessels violated its maritime rights as it claims ownership of the area.

Authorities said the Philippines coast guard had reported that about 220 vessels, believed to be manned by Chinese maritime militia personnel, were seen moored at the Whitsun Reef, which Manila calls the Julian Felipe Reef, on March 7.

"We call on the Chinese to stop this incursion and immediately recall these

boats violating our maritime rights and encroaching into our sovereign territory," Defence Minister Delfin Lorenzana said.

The Philippine military had conducted air and maritime patrols in the South China Sea to further validate the report, spokesman Marine Major General Edgard Arevalo said, but did not say when.

The military had submitted its findings to other government agencies, and they would be used as basis for taking "appropriate actions not limited to filing diplomatic protests", he said in a statement, without elaborating.

"The (Armed Forces of the Philippines) will not renege from our commitment to protect and defend our maritime interest within the bounds of the law," Arevalo said.

Foreign minister Teodoro Locsin, asked whether he would file a diplomatic protest over the boats, told a journalist on Twitter: "Only if the generals tell me. In my watch, foreign policy is the fist in the iron glove of the armed forces."

The vessels are fishing boats believed to be manned by Chinese military-trained personnel, according to Philippines security officials.

The vessels' presence in the area raises concern about overfishing and the destruction of the marine environment, as well as risks to safe navigation, a Philippine cross-government task force said late on Saturday.

An international tribunal invalidated China's claim to 90% of the South China Sea in 2016, but Beijing does not recognise the ruling. China has built islands in the disputed waters in recent years, putting air strips on some of them.

Taiwan, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines and Brunei all claim parts of the sea.

Strong earthquake hits part of Japan devastated by tsunami 10 years ago

A STRONG earthquake has hit areas of Japan devastated by the tsunami ten years ago, that saw thousands lose their lives.

The quake hit the coast about 250 miles (400km) north of Tokyo on Saturday some time after 6pm local time (9am UK) and had a magnitude of 7, the USGS said. Japan's Meteorological Agency said the quake was 7.2 in magnitude.

There were warnings it had generated a one metre-high tsunami and people have been told not to go near the shore.

Officials there said there were no immediate reports of major damage.

It came as Japan announced it was banning foreign visitors from the Olympics due to the risks of COVID-19.

The Onagawa nuclear plant, just eight miles (12km) from the epicentre, was halted but the country's nuclear regulator said it has not found any irregularities.

Tokyo Electric Power said the company also checked the Fukushima Dai-Ichi power station that was wrecked by the massive March 2011 quake, which led to nuclear meltdowns and the subsequent evacuation of the surrounding area. It

also found no irregularities.

A spokesman said there were also no irregularities at the company's nearby Daini facility.

Several of the towns in Miyagi prefecture, including Onagawa and Ishinomaki, were hit badly by the 2011 tsunami and magnitude 9.0 quake and have taken years to recover.

Miyagi Prefecture is said to have been suffering power outages in some areas, and at least one of the country's high-speed bullet trains has been halted.

Shizue Onodera told NHK from the shop where she works in the city of Ishinomaki: "It was a really bad, long shaking from side-to-side. It was even longer than the quake last month, but at least the building here is alright."

"Lots of bottles smashed on the floor," she said.

Footage from inside the bureau of NHK in Sendai – about 40miles (65km) from the epicentre – showed a plaque suspended from the ceiling shaking for about 30 seconds.

The quake could be felt in Tokyo.

An estimated 18 000 people lost their



Minamisanriku, which is about 15 miles from the latest quake, was cleaned up and is recovering from 2011 disaster.

lives in the 2011 disaster.

Just a week ago, on the day of the ten-year anniversary of the quake, it was reported that a hotel in Minamisanriku, one of the worst affected towns in 2011 and just 15 miles (25km) from the latest

tremor, was offering tours of the former disaster zone.

A Japanese Meteorological Agency spokesperson said that Saturday's quake was considered an aftershock of the 2011 quake.

Facebook building a version of Instagram for children under 13

FACEBOOK is considering launching a version of its popular photo social media platform, Instagram, for children under the age of 13.

BuzzFeed News first reported Facebook announced in an internal company post that the company would begin building a version of Instagram for people under the age of 13 years to allow them to “safely” use Instagram for the first time. Currently the company does not allow people who are under this age to create an account on the platform.

A spokesperson for Facebook told the Guardian the company was exploring a parent-controlled version of Instagram, similar to the Messenger Kids app that is for kids between six and 12.

“Increasingly kids are asking their parents if they can join apps that help them keep up with their friends. Right now there aren’t many options for parents, so we’re working on building additional products ... that are suitable for kids, managed by parents,” the spokesperson said.

“We’re exploring bringing a parent-controlled experience to Instagram to help kids keep up with their friends, discover new hobbies and interests, and more.”

In a blog post earlier this week, which did not mention the proposed new Instagram service, the company noted that although people were asked to enter their age when signing up for Instagram, there was nothing to prevent people from lying about it at registration.

Facebook said it would overcome



Facebook currently doesn’t allow users under the age of 13 to create an Instagram account.

that by using machine learning in combination with the registration age to determine people’s ages on the platform.

The company also announced plans to roll out new safety features, including preventing adults from messaging people under the age of 18 who do not follow them, safety notices for teens when messaged by an adult sending a large amount of friend requests or messages to people under 18, and make it more difficult for adults to find and follow teens using the search function in Instagram.

Teens will also be encouraged to put their profiles on private at the point of registration.

Twitter to establish legal entity in Turkey, comply with law

ISTANBUL – Twitter has announced it will establish a legal entity in Turkey in order to continue operating in the country, which passed a controversial social media law last year.

In a statement Friday, the social media company said it had reviewed the amended internet law and made the decision to comply with, it but promised to continue “defending open, public conversation and ensuring our service is available to people everywhere.”

Turkey slapped advertising bans on Twitter, Periscope and Pinterest in January. Those bans were the next step in a series of measures to force social media companies to maintain legal representatives in Turkey to manage content complaints.

Companies with more than 1 million users that refuse to designate an official representative are subjected to fines, followed by advertising bans. The next penalty would be bandwidth reductions that would make their platforms too slow to use.

Human rights and media freedom groups say the law amounts to censorship and violates the rights to privacy and access to information.

Under the law, local representatives of social media companies are responsible for answering individual requests to take down content violating privacy and personal rights within 48 hours or to provide grounds for rejection. The company would be held liable for damages if the content is not removed or blocked within 24 hours.

The law also requires social media data to be stored in Turkey, raising concerns in a country where the government has a

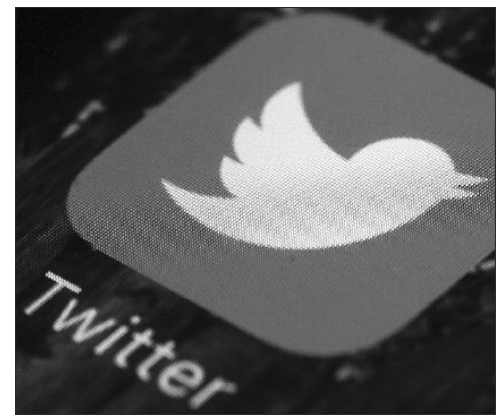
track record of clamping down on free speech.

“We remain committed to protecting the voices and data of people in Turkey who use Twitter. We will continue to be transparent about how we handle requests from government and law enforcement,” Twitter said.

Turkey’s legal demands for content removal make up 31 percent of all requests globally, according to Twitter. The country has made some 45 800 demands and Twitter says it complied with about a third.

The government insists the legislation is needed to combat cybercrime and to protect the rights of Turkish social media users.

According to the Freedom of Expression Association, as of October 2020, more than 450 000 domains, 120 000 links and 42 000 tweets were blocked in Turkey.



Twitter announced on Friday it will establish a legal entity in Turkey in order to continue operating in the country, which passed a controversial social media law last year.

California desert to get America’s first 3D-printed neighbourhood

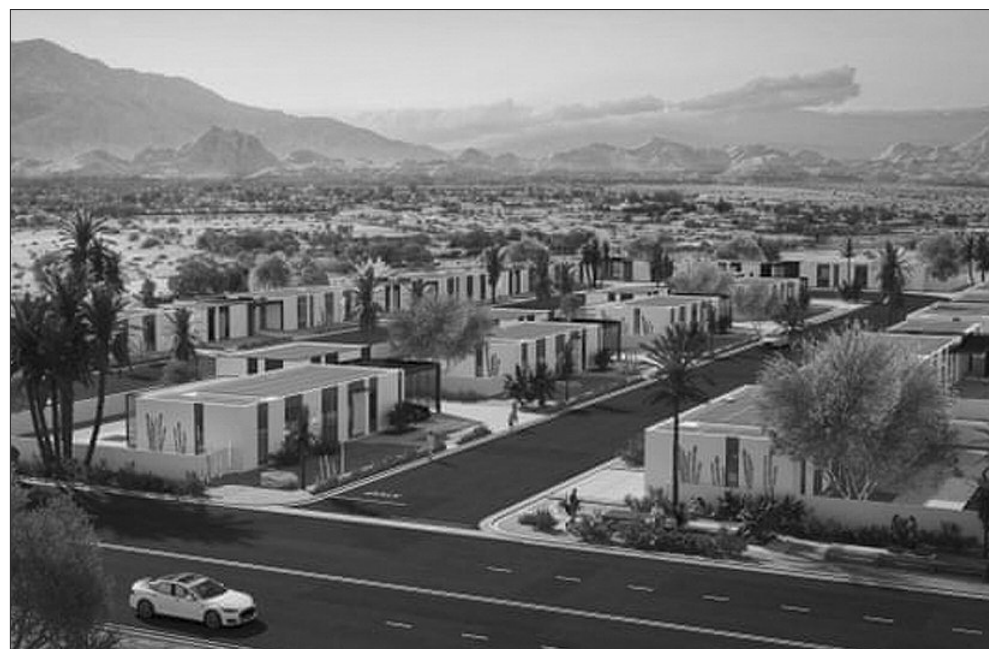
THE desert landscape of California’s Coachella Valley will soon be home to the first US neighborhood comprised entirely of 3D-printed houses.

Through a partnership between two California companies – Palari, a sustainable real estate development group, and Mighty Buildings, a construction technology company – a five acre parcel of land in Rancho Mirage will be transformed into a planned community of 15 3D-printed, eco-friendly homes claiming to be the first of its kind.

“This will be the first on-the-ground actualisation of our vision for the future of housing,” said Alexey Dubov, the co-founder and chief operating officer of Mighty Buildings.

In the large warehouse of its Oakland headquarters, Mighty Buildings creates homes using massive 3D printers the size of small garages. The material used by Mighty Buildings hardens almost immediately, allowing a roof, layers of insulation, and exterior features such as an overhang to be added all in one process. Up to 80% of the construction can be automated, Mighty Buildings claims, with 95% fewer labour hours and 10 times less waste than conventional construction.

The company’s printers have the capacity to make a 350-sq-ft home in less than 24 hours, said Sam Ruben, the



Plans for the five-acre 3D printed neighbourhood in Rancho Mirage, California. The homes will consist of multiple bedrooms, bathrooms and a pool, designed in a mid-century modern style.

co-founder and chief sustainability officer of Mighty, during a recent tour of the headquarters. Often the printers are set to build a house overnight, while the employees are asleep.

“We are actually limited more by road transport of the buildings than the actual ability to print,” Ruben said.

The Rancho Mirage homes will each feature mid-century modern architecture and consist of a three-bedroom, two-bath primary residence of 1,450 square feet, along with a secondary residence on the property of two bedrooms and one bath.

Each home’s 10 000-sq-ft lot will have a swimming pool in the back yard and the

option to pay extra for amenities such as cabanas, hot tubs, fire pits and outdoor showers. Prices will start at \$595,000 for a base 3BR/2BA model and go up to \$950 000 for a two-home configuration with upgrades.

Rancho Mirage is not the first place to see 3D-printed homes in recent years. In 2019 a non-profit in Mexico announced the production of 3D-printed homes for low-income families. Meanwhile, 3D-printed homes are scheduled to be installed in Austin, Texas, later this year.

The rise of 3D-printed homes comes as California’s housing crisis continues to rage. The state needs between 1.8 million and 3.5 million new housing units by 2025 to address the shortage and accommodate projected population growth. In February, Mighty Buildings secured \$40 million in series B funding.

Ruben said that while Mighty Buildings had spoken with local governments about the potential to 3D print homes for vulnerable populations, the company was largely focused on targeting what he calls “the missing middle”.

“The missing middle is too often left out of the conversation,” he said. “These are your teachers, your firefighters, people who serve a community, but because of how insane the housing market is in California, they have never had the opportunity to buy a home.”

Millions sign up to anti-food-waste apps

THERE is such a thing as a free lunch, it turns out, as long as you don't mind too much what it is. Tamara Wilson (name changed) found hers a few streets away from her west London home – and as well as picking up some unwanted bread and fruit that would otherwise be thrown away, she made a new friend.

Wilson is one of 3.4 million people around the world using an app designed to encourage people to give away rather than throw away surplus food. “It’s such a small thing, but it makes me feel good and my neighbour feel good. And a lot of small acts can end up making a big difference,” she said.

The last few years have seen an explosion in creative ways to tackle food waste by linking supermarkets, cafes, restaurants and individual households to local communities.

Olio, the app used by Wilson, saw a fivefold increase in listings during 2020, and the signs are that this “stratospheric growth” is continuing into 2021, said Tessa Clarke, its CEO and co-founder.

Too Good To Go, where consumers pay a heavily discounted price for food and meals that would otherwise be discarded, has seen 4.5 million downloads of its app in the UK, and 34 million globally since it launched in 2016 – “and the numbers are growing”, said Paschalis Loucaides, UK managing director.

Other apps tackling food waste include



About a third of all food produced globally is wasted, according to the UN. Photograph: Paul Weston/Alamy

Karma, which has 1.4 million users, and Hubbub, which has created a network of more than 100 “community fridges” in the UK in the past five years – a figure it hopes to double by the end of this year.

About a third of all food produced globally is wasted, according to the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Apart from the potential to eliminate hunger around the world, such waste makes a devastating contribution to the global climate crisis.

Almost 1.4 billion hectares of land – close to 30% of the world’s agricultural land – is dedicated to producing food that is never eaten; and the carbon footprint of food wastage makes it the third emitter of CO2 after the US and China, according to the FAO. Reducing food waste is one of the most effective ways of tackling the global climate crisis, says Project Drawdown, which ranks the impact of

measures on reducing heat-trapping gases.

In the UK, also, about a third of all food is thrown away – half of it in people’s homes. “Each family throws away an average of £730 of food each year,” said Clarke.

Olio, she said, was an attempt to rectify this on a small, local scale. “The app connects people with others who have surplus food but don’t have anyone to give it to because so many people are disconnected from their communities.”

Users of Olio post images of surplus food that others in the neighbourhood might want. Olio also has a network of 24 000 volunteers who collect surplus food from local supermarkets and stores for app users to claim. “It feels good to share. It’s an example of positivity in a pretty grim world,” said Clarke.

Too Good To Go partners with cafes,

restaurants, supermarkets, hotels and independent food retailers to create “magic bags” priced at about a third of the retail price, said Loucaides. “The customer picks up whatever is left over at the end of the day. We don’t pick and choose.”

Despite the success of the app, it was hard to make a dent in the huge scale of food waste, he added. “Even though we’re doing well, we’ve hardly scratched the surface. It’s very challenging.”

The UK’s first food waste action week took place earlier this month. Television chef Nadiya Hussain, who fronted the campaign, said: “Wasting food is a major contributor to climate change. And it isn’t just the leftovers on our plate to consider but the many resources that go into producing our food, like water and land. If we each make small changes, we’d dramatically reduce the amount of food that ends up in the bin.”

Summers could last half the year by 2100

Our summers are already about 20% longer than they used to be, and if the climate crisis continues unabated then northern hemisphere summers could cover nearly half of the year by 2100, making them more than twice as long as they were in the 1950s. And unlike their counterparts of the 1950s, future summers will be more extreme, with heatwaves and wildfires more likely.

Researchers used historical climate data to measure how much the seasons have changed already. They defined summer as the onset of temperatures in the hottest 25% for that time period and winter as the onset of the coldest 25% of temperatures. Their results, published in *Geophysical Research Letters*, show that the average northern hemisphere summer has grown from 78 to 95 days between 1952 and 2011, while winter has shrunk from 76 to 73 days. Spring and autumn have contracted too.

Using climate change models, they were able to show that even bigger changes are to come, with northern



A man walks in the dried-out lake of Jato near the Sicilian village of Partinico.

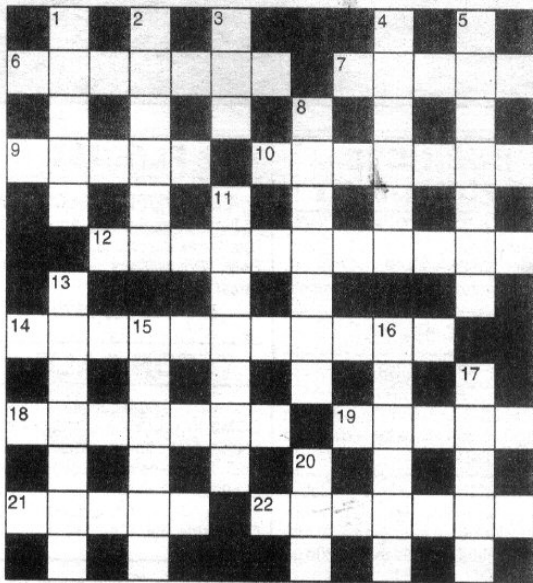
hemisphere summers lasting an average of 166 days by 2100, squeezing out all the other seasons and shrinking winter to

just 31 days. The Mediterranean region and the Tibetan plateau are projected to experience the greatest changes, but

far-reaching impacts on agriculture, human health and the environment will be felt everywhere.

Quick Crossword

No 15,115



- ACROSS**
- 6. Suggest (7)
 - 7. Wash (5)
 - 9. Droll (5)
 - 10. Graceful (7)
 - 12. Mix (11)
 - 14. News (11)
 - 18. Flagrant (7)
 - 19. Proverb (5)
 - 21. White heron (5)
 - 22. Completely (7)
- DOWN**
- 1. Evidence (5)
 - 2. Choice (6)
 - 3. Inquire (3)
 - 4. Slang (6)
 - 5. Loose pebbles (7)
 - 8. Weather (7)
 - 11. Abundant (7)
 - 13. Resemblance (7)
 - 15. Beginning (6)
 - 16. Severe trial (6)
 - 17. Lithe (5)
 - 20. Intimidate (3)

SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLE No 15,114

Across: 1 Accountant; 7 Reign; 8 Wagered; 10 Demolish; 11 Rasp; 13 Greedy; 15 Tureen; 17 Oral; 18 Dialogue; 21 Stilton; 22 Cynic; 23 Insistence.
Down: 1 Axiom; 2 Conclude; 3 Unwise; 4 Toga; 5 Narrate; 6 Prodigious; 9 Dependence; 12 Publican; 14 Elation; 16 Linnet; 19 Genie; 20 Etui.

Bridge

Famous Hand

West dealer.
Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH
 ♠ Q 7 5 4
 ♥ 4
 ♦ A 10 2
 ♣ Q 8 5 3 2

WEST
 ♠ 9 8 6
 ♥ Q 10 6 3
 ♦ Q 7 6 5 4
 ♣ 4

EAST
 ♠ J 3
 ♥ A 9 8 5 2
 ♦ K 9 8
 ♣ 9 7 6

SOUTH
 ♠ A K 10 2
 ♥ K J 7
 ♦ J 3
 ♣ A K J 10

The bidding:
 West North East South
 Pass Pass Pass 1 ♣
 Pass 1 ♥ Pass 1 N 1
 Pass 2 ♣ Pass 2 ♠
 Pass 4 ♥ Pass 4 ♠

Opening lead four of clubs.
 The United States played Japan for the very first time in the 1972 World Bridge Olympiad and had much the best of the confrontation. This deal contributed greatly to the outcome.

At the first table, with Bob Hamman and Paul Soloway North-South for the U.S., the bidding went as shown. The one-club bid was artificial, showing at least 17 points, and the heart response was also artificial,

showing at least six points.
 One notrump indicated a balanced hand with 18 to 20 points, and two clubs was Stayman. Four hearts was a "splinter bid," showing support for spades with a singleton heart. The K-J-7 of hearts lost much of their value when they were known to be facing a singleton, so South signed off at four spades. Soloway made six with an assist from the defense, and the U.S. scored 480 points.

When a Japanese pair were North-South, they reached six spades on this sequence:
 West North East South
 Pass Pass Pass 2 NT
 Pass 3 ♣ Pass 3 ♠
 Pass 4 ♣ Pass 5 ♠
 Pass 6 ♠

Had West (Bobby Wolff) led a heart, the slam undoubtedly would have been made, but he was sufficiently inspired to lead a diamond. Declarer won with the ace, cashed three spades and five clubs, discarding his diamond loser, and then led dummy's singleton heart toward his K-J-7.

East (Jim Jacoby) smoothly followed low, bringing South to the moment of truth. Unfortunately, he played the jack rather than the king, hoping this would force the ace, but when West produced the queen, declarer still had to lose another trick for down one.

Tomorrow: A stitch in time saves nine.
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Lana Del Rey shifts gaze in 'Chemtrails' release

DECAY and decadence coexist in the world created by Lana Del Rey in "Chemtrails Over The Country Club".

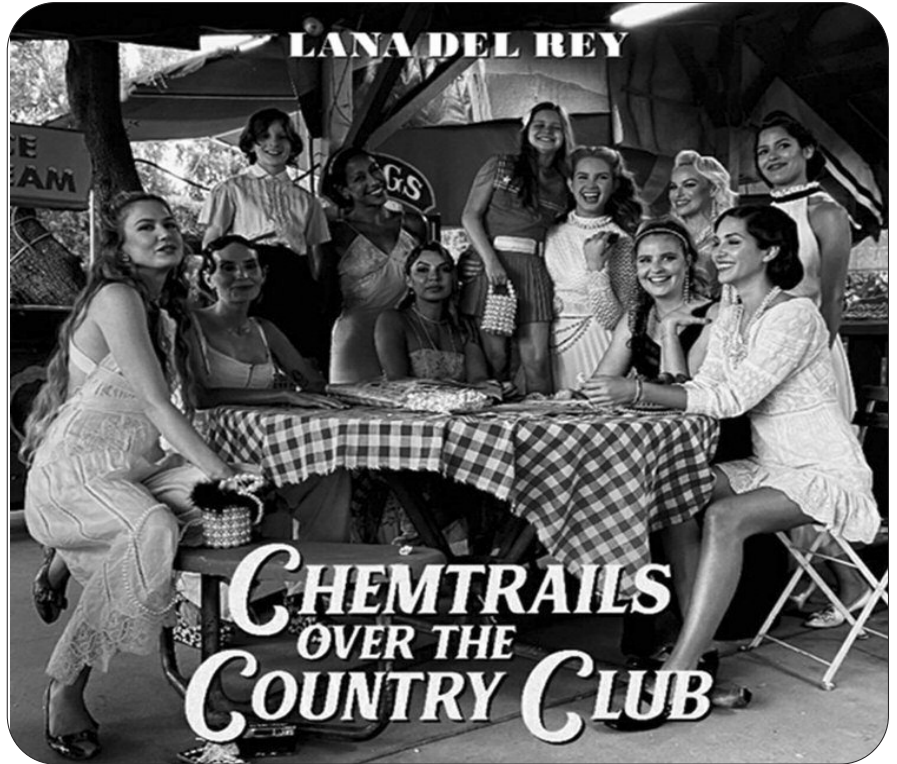
At first listen, her intimate follow-up to critically-acclaimed "Norman (Expletive) Rockwell" may seem less urgent. Rather than deconstructing the American myth, Del Rey shifts her gaze inward. But in the quiet, she disassembles a different pain, one felt in the unforgiving glow of the limelight.

Whispering opener "White Dress" immediately sets "Chemtrails Over The Country Club" apart from "Norman (Expletive) Rockwell," her breathiness almost jarring.

She works with the same producer, Jack Antonoff, whose credits are also seen on Taylor Swift's 2020 albums "evermore" and "folklore." There are echoes of Swift's production on Del Rey's new album with songs like the gentle "Yosemite" leaning in the folk direction.

Del Rey has perfected the art of creating album capsules. Each record emanates its own aesthetic with songs cross-referencing one another within the album. Del Rey gives cohesion to albums in a way that is unmatched by most other artists.

In "Dance Till We Die," she



This cover image released by Interscope Records and Polydor Records shows 'Chemtrails Over the Country Club' by Lana Del Rey.

sings of Joni Mitchell covers before launching into her own cover of Mitchell's "For Free." "Yosemite," too, seems to call to her closing cover. "We did it for fun/ We did it for free," she croons. "We did it for the right reasons."

Paralleling the juxtaposition in

the title, Del Rey's seventh album explores the yin and yang of fame, fortune and creativity. On the surface are glittering images: jewels in a country club pool and bars that stay open "just for us." Ringing underneath is a melancholy emptiness performed by isolation and desire.

SUDOKU

NO.5531
 RATING: MEDIUM

			2		9			1
5			3					
	3	4		8		2		
	8		4					
7		5		1		8		2
	1			9			5	
2				5	4		1	9
		9			8	7	2	

Yesterday's Solution

3	1	2	4	7	9	8	6	5
4	8	9	3	6	5	7	2	1
7	5	6	1	2	8	9	4	3
5	6	1	9	3	2	4	8	7
8	3	4	7	1	6	2	5	9
2	9	7	8	5	4	1	3	6
1	7	8	6	4	3	5	9	2
9	2	3	5	8	7	6	1	4
6	4	5	2	9	1	3	7	8

Fill the grid so that every column, every row, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9

There's no maths involved- you solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic

Solution tomorrow

Tips at www.sudoku.com

Comments or queries?

Direct them to sudoku@barbadosadvocate.com

SPORTS

Jason Holder captures five wickets to lead West Indies on first day

JASON HOLDER may have been relieved of the captaincy, but he is still very much an asset to the team as he finished off Sri Lanka with a five-wicket haul to hand the West Indies the advantage after the first day of the Test match in Antigua yesterday.

Holder, the current leading all-rounder in the Test format, was hitting good areas all day, which earned him 5/27 from 17.4 overs as the West Indies bowled out Sri Lanka for 169 runs.

It took an extra over for him to capture his eighth fifth wicket as in the over before he thought he had trapped the batsman lbw and the umpire had given out the Ari Lanka batsman, but a review showed the ball going over leg stump.

In his very next over he once again struck the batsman on his pad. Once again the batsman, who was Sri Lanka's final wicket, called for a review and this time the ball was clipping leg stump.

The West Indies bowling unit was outstanding all day despite some wayward bowling by Shannon Gabriel, who struggled to find his rhythm.

Newly appointed West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite was brilliant with his field placement and rotation of bowlers.

Recognizing Gabriel was

struggling, Brathwaite turned to Kyle Mayers as an extra bowler.

Holder's skill and patience after tea was the key as he picked up the prize wicket of Lahiru Thirimanne.

Roach was also impressive on the day and should have picked up the day's first wicket, but the ball burst through Jermaine Blackwood's hands at point. Despite this, Roach finished with 3/47 as he had the ball moving in both directions.

The amazing spell from Holder came after Tea as he bowled an unbroken spell until the end. It was here that he took four wickets to break the Sri Lanka defense as he captured Niroshan Dickwella, Lahiru Thirimanne, Suranga Lakmal and Lasith Embuldeniya.

Thirimanne topscored for Sri Lanka with 70 runs before Holder bowled by thanks to an inside edge.

Rahkeem Cornwall took the first wicket of the day and Brathwaite effected a brilliant run out with a direct hit as the West Indies kept taking wickets in every session.

This left West Indies with 18 overs to negotiate on the day, which John Campbell and Brathwaite safely saw out.

The second day begins at 10 a.m. today with the West Indies on 13 without loss. (CG)

Williams withdraws from Miami Open

SERENA WILLIAMS has pulled out of this week's Miami Open after having oral surgery.

The 23-time Grand Slam singles champion was knocked out of the Australian Open semi-finals by Naomi Osaka in January.

"I am disappointed to withdraw," said 39-year-old Williams, who has won the Miami Open eight times.

"Miami is a special tournament for me because it's my home and I am sad I won't be able to see the incredible fans this year."

The men's draw has already been depleted by the withdrawals of world number one Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and world number four Dominic Thiem.

It gets under way on Monday.



West Indies Jason Holder (right) picked up his 8th five-wicket haul to lead the bowling attack for the home side.



Kemar Roach and Kraigg Brathwaite celebrating the fall of yet another Sri Lankan wicket.

Zverev beats Tsitsipas to win Mexican Open in Acapulco thriller

MEXICO CITY – World number seven Alexander Zverev recovered from an uncertain start to beat Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4 7-6 (3) in a thrilling Mexican Open final in Acapulco on Saturday and land his 14th ATP title.

The 23-year-old German lost the final of the hard-court tournament to Nick Kyrgios in 2019 and quickly went 4-1 down to the Greek top seed on Sunday, at one point completely missing the ball when attempting an overhead smash.

Tsitsipas was unable to maintain the level of tennis he displayed in the first five games, however, and second seed Zverev worked his way back into the contest, reeling off the

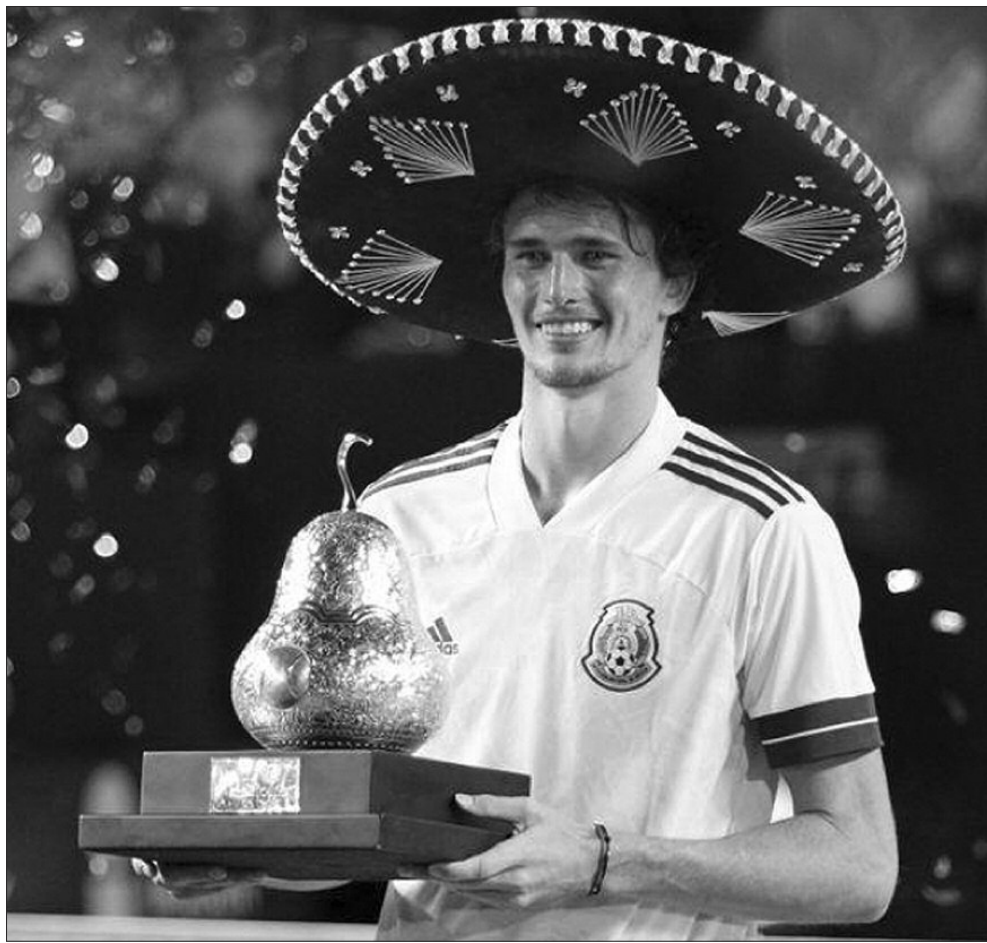
last five games to seal the set.

Zverev broke for 5-4 in an equally tight second set and served for the title but Tsitsipas saved a championship point and put the contest back on serve when his German opponent double-faulted.

The set tiebreak was again studded with lengthy rallies and Zverev prevailed 7-3 on his third championship point when he pounced on a Tsitsipas drop shot and pounded the ball past the Greek into the back of the court.

“This week has been one of the most fun I have had in recent months, the tournament showed that the public can attend sporting events,” Zverev said to the cheers of the crowd after receiving the trophy.

“When I have my



Germany's Alexander Zverev celebrates with the trophy after winning the Mexican Open on Saturday.

chances, I need to close it out against these top players because normally they won't give you a second chance. I thought I played extremely well in the

tiebreak, I'm happy with how it went.”

Tsitsipas, who has reached semi-finals at the Australian Open and Rotterdam this year, con-

ceded that the better player had won in the end.

“I did everything I could, but Alex was superior,” the 22-year-old world number five said.

Raptors' head coach fined \$50K by NBA

TORONTO Raptors head coach Nick Nurse has been fined \$50,000 for throwing his face-mask behind the scorer's table and toward the fans, as well as directing profanity toward game officials, the NBA announced yesterday.

Nurse's actions took place after the conclusion of the Raptors' 115-112 loss to the Utah Jazz on Friday.

Toronto was whistled for 12 more fouls than Utah, and that disparity resulted in a 41-14 edge in free throws for the Jazz.

“(We) outplayed them all over the place. It's a hard one to win,” Nurse said after the game.

“It just didn't seem like they were going to let us win tonight.”

The reeling Raptors (17-24) have lost seven in a row.

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Archer misses ODI series, start of IPL with elbow injury

JOFRA Archer will miss England's one-day series against India and the start of next month's Indian Premier League because of his ongoing elbow problem.

The fast bowler will return home for further investigation of the issue, which the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) says "deteriorated" during the five-match T20 series.

Lancashire spinner Matt Parkinson is in the squad having been a T20 reserve.

World champions England face India in a three-match series, all held in Pune.

The first match starts at 08:00 GMT on Tuesday.

Archer, 25, is due to play for the Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League, which runs from 9 April to 30 May.

"Jofra's elbow issue has deteriorated over the course of the Twenty20 International series and made it increasingly challenging for him to maintain performance levels," the ECB said in a statement.

England head coach Chris Silverwood said: "It's obviously disappointing for Jofra and for us. He will have every resource we can give him so we can get to the bottom of what is going on."

"The important thing here is



Jofra Archer (right) missed two of England's recent Tests in India, but played a full part in the five-match Twenty20 series.

with an elbow injury since making his international debut in 2019, missing three Tests of England's tour of South Africa in early 2020 and the T20 series that followed.

Last month he played in the first and third Tests against India, but was ruled out of the second and fourth.

He played a full part in the subsequent T20 series, but speaking after Saturday's defeat in the fifth T20 in Ahmedabad captain Eoin Morgan said Archer's injury had "got worse" and "needs attention".

In response to questions over his desire to play for England, Archer said earlier this month he will "do everything" in his power to play a full part in the T20 World Cup and Ashes.

Silverwood said it was a "joint decision" for Archer to have treatment now and "both parties have put England first".

He added: "Jofra needs to get this right, he needs some time to do that, so we've made space to make sure that we give him the best chance of being successful for England."

"He wants to be at the World Cup and the Ashes, it wasn't a difficult decision by either side. It was a sensible decision."

we get it cleared up, see the specialist and make sure we put everything in place for Jofra to have a long, successful international career for England in all formats."

England Test captain Joe Root, who was not part of the T20 squad and returned home after the Test series, has been

rested.

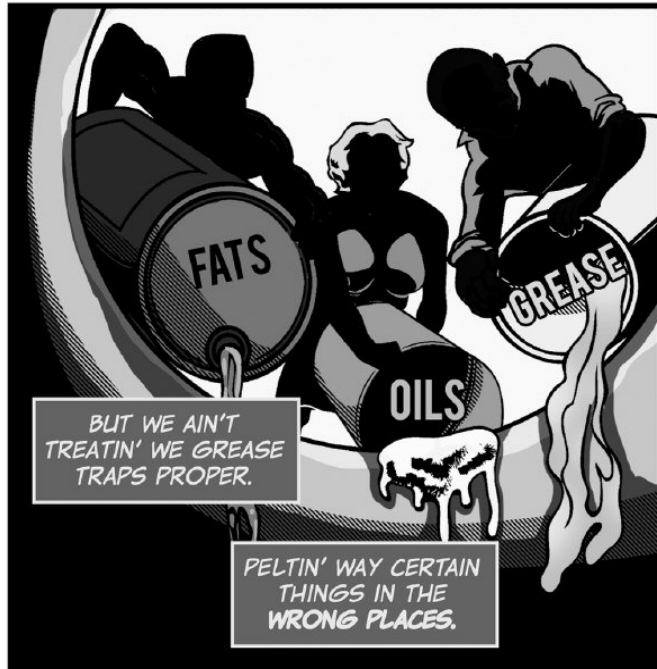
All-rounder Chris Woakes, who left the India tour before the fourth Test as part of England's rest and rotation policy, has also been rested.

Batsman Dawid Malan and fast bowlers Jake Ball and Chris Jordan have been named as reserves.

Archer's ongoing elbow struggles

Archer is expected to play a key role across all formats for England in 2021 – a year which includes five home Tests against India, a T20 World Cup and the Ashes in Australia.

He has regularly struggled



HOROSCOPES



ARIES: It will be tempting to have another go in your attempts to get an older relative to agree to plans and ideas you have for later in the year. They aren't ready yet to consider change and it would be better to let sleeping dogs lie. It won't make sense to complicate matters when life is running smoothly.



TAURUS: You are starting to really like someone you've recently met. They are making a big impression on you and you will admit to your friends that you are just a little bit interested in getting to know them better. In all honesty you're desperate to have this person in your life.



GEMINI: You aren't likely to pass on an exciting opportunity. If you are offered a chance to do something new and exciting you won't hesitate about your answer. This may mean having to postpone other arrangements but you know your priorities and currently your aim is to add variety to your days.



CANCER: Someone is about to make you an offer you won't want to refuse. Dark clouds that have been hovering over your world for a few days are starting to roll back. News that cheers you will be the first sign your life is going to get easier. Financial trends are starting to look brighter.



LEO: Follow your heart and you will find true happiness. A casual relationship could deepen into something more serious. This is what you have both been hoping for. Trust your instincts. You are making good choices and your judgement is spot on. Best success will come through acting on your own decisions.



VIRGO: You should not feel guilty about regretting some changes you recently made. If it hasn't worked out, it isn't your fault. You took a chance and you knew it would be 50:50 whether or not this would be successful. Now you know things aren't working you can move on and put this episode behind you. **Psychic Readings Instantly** Do you have a problem, a question or an issue that is troubling you? Why not speak to a live psychic now, confidentially and in the comfort of your own home? **Psychic Readings Now!**



LIBRA: Even people who know you well are finding it hard to understand you. When normally you are the one who keeps group activities harmonious, you can't seem to keep your thoughts to yourself today. Since some of these are critical and negative, tension will be the inevitable result.



SCORPIO: High levels of sensitivity make it possible for you to put yourself in someone else's shoes. You understand what a friend or loved one is going through and your support will make a difference to how they are able to cope. You instinctively sense what your other half is thinking and feeling. Relationships are improving.



SAGITTARIUS: You can't live in regret. When someone tells you that you can't turn the clocks back they aren't trying to upset or annoy you. They are stating a fact. What you can do is move forward with a more positive attitude. You're dwelling too much on what you can't have instead of looking around for new possibilities.



CAPRICORN: You feel cheerful and as if you have something good to look forward to. The source is beside the point. What's important is you have found something that makes you happy and gives your spirits a tremendous boost. The smile on your face will in turn enhance your social and romantic relationships.

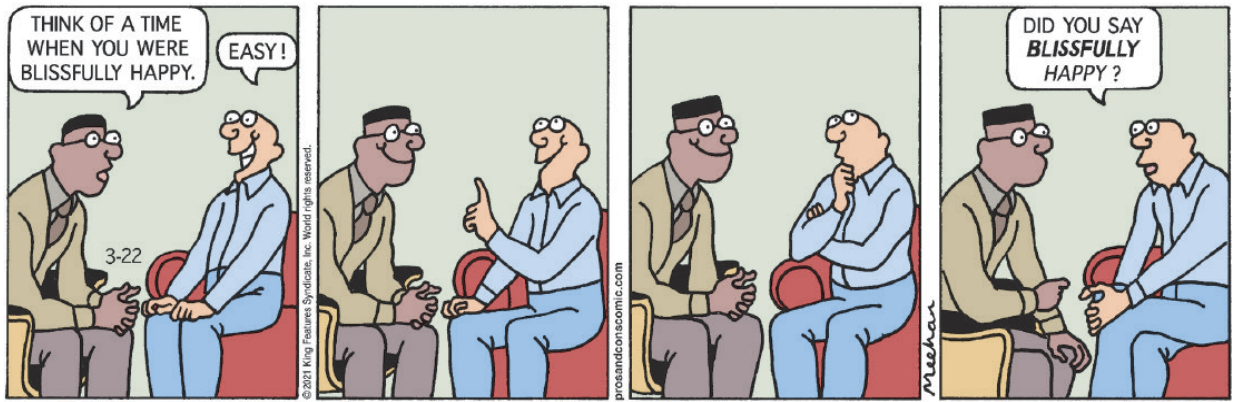


AQUARIUS: You will be left in no doubt about a loved one's intentions. They have made a decision and you know from old that they aren't likely to change their mind. You aren't keen on what they are planning. There's nothing much you can do about it other than either be happy they're doing something they want to do or you could always withdraw your support.



PISCES: You don't mind going out of your way to help a friend get over some difficulties. You aren't expecting gratitude or rewards yet your helpfulness will be repaid threefold. It takes courage to let someone know your feelings and you are ready now to reveal yours.

PROS AND CONS



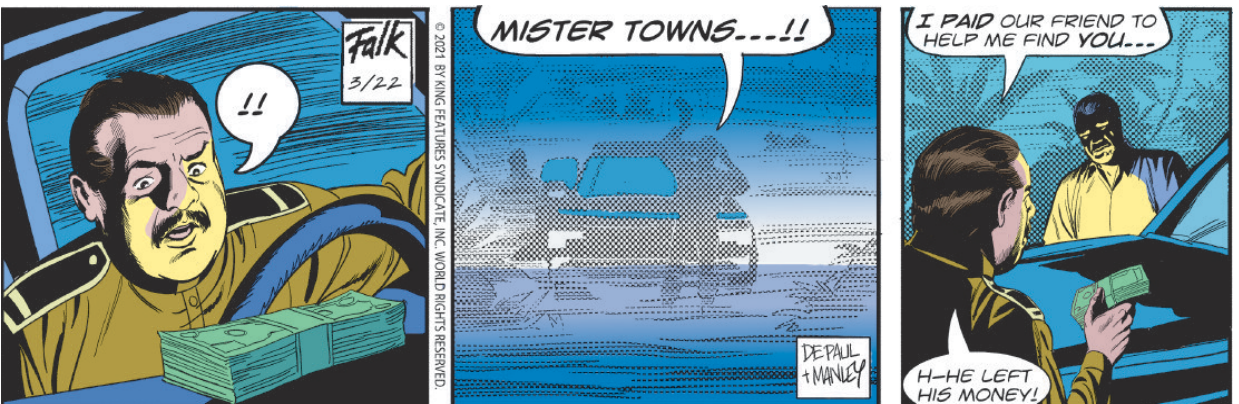
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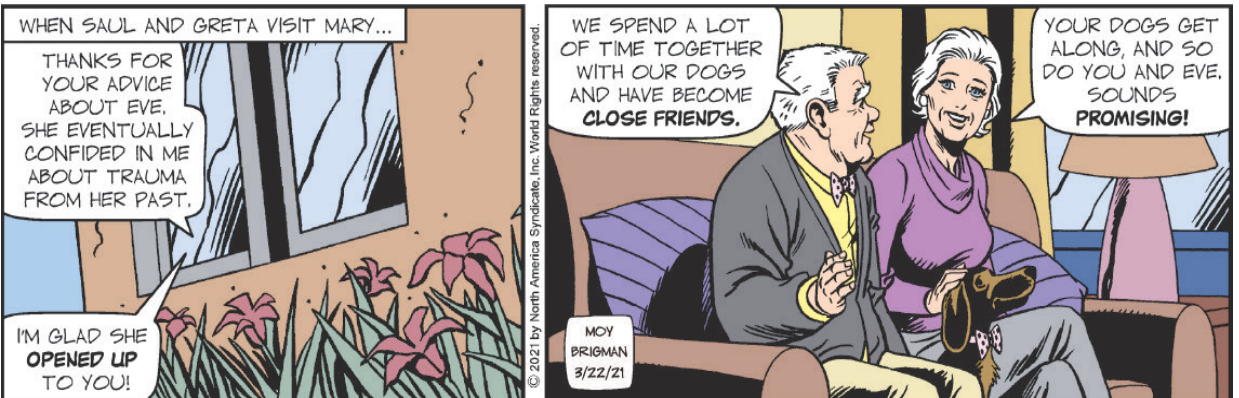
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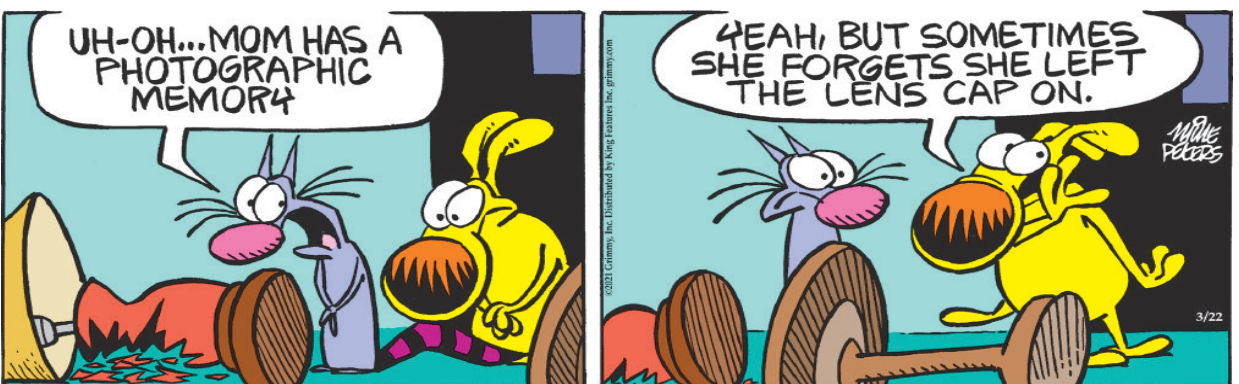
PHANTOM



MARY WORTH



MOTHER GOOSE



Monday March 22, 2021

HOPE IS NOT LOST

PRESIDENT of the Diabetes and Hypertension Association of Barbados (DHAB), Trudy Griffith is reminding the members of the organisation that despite the current situation, hope is not lost.

In a recent email to DHAB members, Griffith gave some updates on the charity. She explained that as the year unfolds the DHAB will be introducing new programmes and projects to meet members' additional needs during the pandemic.

In her missive, Griffith said that, at present, members must pay greater attention to their personal health habits

President of the Diabetes and Hypertension Association gives advice to members

such as consuming healthy foods and drinks, engaging in regular physical activity, taking prescribed medications, and consulting with medical personnel if the need arises.

Business interrupted

The DHAB President remarked on how the pandemic has affected the organisation as it relates to service hours and

care. She also acknowledged the mental effect the pandemic has had and reassured the members that eventually this crisis will end and mentioned the positive developments during COVID-19.

"Like all of us, you have watched Barbados and the world battling the coronavirus pandemic. You look back at the past year and can recognise the many ways in which the changes in many set-

tings have affected you. Some of these changes have been negative but perhaps some have been positive. It has highlighted areas of excellence and areas which require some work. In many respects, it has caused disruption to how errands are completed and business is conducted," said Griffith.

She ended by announcing the postponement of the Biennial General Meeting on 20 March 2021, noting that with the current environment, the meeting will be held when the country is more settled and the risks of COVID-19 are reduced.

Breath of life for businesses

IT will be another busy week in Barbados as the third ease in restrictions commences this week in the phased reopening of the island and businesses breathe another sigh of relief.

The roads of Barbados and stores in Bridgetown have been packed with cars and pedestrians as retail businesses reopened their doors last week. It has been a tough road travelled, not only by the bigger business owners but also vendors across the island as the need for the business sectors to be allowed to conduct business again was indeed necessary.

Pharmacies, supermarkets, hardware stores, salons and barber shops, restaurants, computer stores and others have all been granted permission by the government to reopen. Unfortunately, gyms, cinemas, bars, night clubs, dojos, and pleasure craft operations are still not among those allowed, with the risk of COVID-19 being spread through the close contact being deemed too high at this time. The health protocols however, remain the same and it is imperative that businesses adhere to the stipulated safety guidelines not just for staff but also patrons.

There is also the fact that the protocols by the government says that people are not to be on the road unless conducting essential business or going to and from any of the businesses which have been allowed to reopen. Liming, social gatherings and picnics are also not allowed



SHOPPING on Page 6 This customer made sure that she was well protected as she shopped..