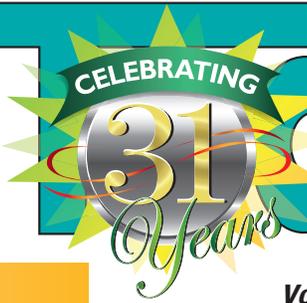


# Caribbean Today

JANUARY 2020



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Vol. 31 No. 2

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The tiny Caribbean nation of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has been given a mammoth responsibility after officially assuming a non-permanent seat on the United Nations' Security Council, page 7.



Guyana President David Granger survived political and health scares, but he wasn't the only one with

problems in the Caribbean during 2019. Check out a wrap-up of the region's fortunes last year, page 8.

## UNDER PROBE



~ United States citizenship acquired by hundreds of foreign nationals, including many from the Caribbean, is coming under ramped up scrutiny and some could lose that status if U.S. investigators find improper conduct was used to get naturalization, **page 3.**



## FEE HIKE

~ Caribbean and other foreign nationals seeking to adjust their immigration status to live in the United States can expect to pay more in fees to complete the process this year, especially if they want to become U.S. citizens, **page 2.**

## INSIDE

News .....	2	Arts/Entertainment .....	11	Tourism/Travel .....	16
FYI Local .....	6	Food .....	12	Eye On Haiti .....	17
Feature .....	7	Health .....	13	Sports .....	19
Viewpoint .....	9	Classifieds .....	15		



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# PAY TO STAY: Caribbean nationals can expect immigration fee hikes in 2020

**GORDON WILLIAMS**

Caribbean and other foreign nationals seeking to adjust their immigration status to live in the United States can expect to pay more in fees to complete the process this year.

According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the proposed hike in fees - average 21 percent across the board - is necessary to fund the agency.

The sharpest rise in fees is expected to affect Caribbean nationals applying for U.S. citizenship. According to the USCIS, citizenship application fee will jump 83 percent - from \$640 to \$1,170. That drew immediate backlash from the Caribbean American community, including lawmakers across the U.S.

"I am alarmed at the devastating effect the proposed 83 percent increase in the naturalization fee would have on our community," New York State Senator Zellnor Y. Myrie, who has family connections to Jamaica, noted in a letter sent last month to Samantha Deshommes, chief of the USCIS's Regulatory Co-ordination Division, Office of Policy and Strategy.

Other proposed increases that could likely affect Caribbean nationals are: I-90, Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card - \$455; I-102, Application for Replacement/Initial Nonimmigrant Arrival-Departure Document - \$445; I-129/129CW Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker - \$460; I-129F Petition for Alien Fiancé(e) - \$535; I-130, Petition for Alien Relative - \$535; I-131/23, Application for Travel Document - \$575; I-131A, Application for Carrier Documentation - \$575; and I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker - \$700.

The USCIS Examinations Fee Account schedule, under federal law, requires the government agency "to conduct biennial fee reviews and recommend necessary fee adjustments to ensure recovery of the full cost of administering the nation's immigration laws, adjudicating applications and petitions, and providing the necessary infrastructure to support those activities."

**DEFENSE**

The U.S. government has defended the upcoming fee hikes.



The U.S. is collecting more to cover operational expenses.

"USCIS is required to examine incoming and outgoing expenditures, just like a business, and make adjustments based on that analysis," Ken Cuccinelli, currently acting deputy secretary at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, was quoted as saying in the Federal Registry.

"This proposed adjustment in fees would ensure more applicants cover the true cost of their applications and minimizes subsidies from an already over-extended system.

"Furthermore, the adjudication of immigration applications and petitions requires in-

depth screening, incurring costs that must be covered by the agency, and this proposal accounts for our operational needs and better aligns our fee schedule with the costs of processing each request."

But criticism has continued to mount, with opponents of the fee hikes convinced the Trump administration is targeting certain immigrant groups.

"This is a blatant attack on our immigrant community and penalizes those who come from low-income household," Myrie said. "Charging ever-higher fees for naturalization means limiting our potential by preventing many hundreds of thousands of lawful permanent residents (LPRs) from applying for citizenship."

Immigration fees were adjusted in fiscal year 2017. That increase was also estimated to be about 21 percent weighted average across the board.

**REVIEW**

The USCIS allowed the public to make written comments about the proposed fee hikes up to Dec. 16, 2019.

According to the Federal Registry, "USCIS conducted a comprehensive biennial fee review and determined that current fees do not recover the full costs of providing adjudica-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

## Bermudian charged with shooting death of his mother in Florida

HAMILTON, Bermuda – A Bermudian man remained in a Florida jail up to late last month after he was charged with killing his mother as he celebrated his 28th birthday with his parents. Police said he had intended to shoot his father.

Alexander Deltoro Jr. is accused of shooting Cindy Deltoro in the face outside his parents' home in the Fort Lauderdale suburb of Margate after he got into an argument with his father, also Alexander, as the three travelled to the house by car. Deltoro has since been charged with manslaughter and illegally carrying a concealed firearm.

"The allegations in this case ... there's no word for it," said Broward County Court Judge Jackie Powell. "Mr. Deltoro was in a fight with his parents and brings a gun to the argument and we are here

today because now his mother is deceased."

**ARGUMENT**

The court heard that the two men got into an argument in the car and Deltoro hit his father in the face. The two started to hit each other and his mother tried to intervene to end the scuffle. It is alleged that Deltoro pulled a handgun from the waistband of his trousers and fired a single shot, which hit his mother. Police said Deltoro had intended to shoot his father.

The court heard that Deltoro had no previous convictions and worked as a gas station attendant. He was offered \$101,000 bail and ordered not to have any contact with his father. He is also banned from having a firearm.

- Edited from CMC.



## Ex-Grenada deputy P.M. Preudhomme dies in U.S.

ST.GEORGES, Grenada – Grenada's former Deputy Prime Minister Herbert Preudhomme is dead.

Preudhomme, who was deputy prime minister to the late Sir Eric Matthew Gairy, died in the United States on Jan. 2, six days before turning 90 and eight days after the death of his wife Joyce, who passed on Dec. 26 at age 84.

The couple lived in the U.S. and celebrated 65 years

of marriage in Oct. 2019.

Herbert John Preudhomme, affectionately called "Uncle Pre", represented the St. John constituency for the Grenada United Labour Party from 1961 to 1979. After the Mar. 13, 1979 revolution Preudhomme, like most ministers, was detained without charge until Dec. 31 1981. After his release, he went into private business.



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## Caribbean nationals may face more scrutiny as U.S. steps up probe of some naturalized citizens

United States citizenship acquired by hundreds of foreign nationals, including many from the Caribbean, is coming under added scrutiny and some could lose that status if investigators find improper conduct was used to acquire naturalization.

The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump is beefing up resources to be used to probe cases of naturalization suspected to have been obtained through fraud, including submitting incorrect information on applications or being convicted of certain crimes.

Those found guilty could have their U.S. citizenship revoked and some may be subject to possible deportation.

The Trump administration reportedly asked, in a fiscal year 2019 budget, for more than \$207 million to investigate more than 880 cases of suspected fraud in obtaining U.S. citizenship and may be subject to denaturalization. Another 700,000 cases are said to be up for review.

The government is opening at least one additional office and, according to



- File photograph

Many immigrants who were sworn in as Americans may be investigated.

Francis Cissna, USCIS director, hiring numerous experts in law and immigration matters. The aim is to review hundreds of cases where there is suspicion of cheating on applications for permanent residence and citizenship.

### CASES

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Office of the Inspector General (OIG) in 2016 reported that more than 850 persons, who had been ordered deported while using another identity, were granted citizenship by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The report noted that at the time of their naturalization process, digital fingerprint records for the applicants were unavailable to the USCIS. Those cases will be reviewed because some of those applicants may have been ineligible for U.S. citizenship.

The OIG also reported that records of fingerprints of hundreds of thousands of citizenship applicants could not be located.

According to a report by the **New York Times** the U.S. government has revoked an average of 46 naturalizations between 2004 and 2016.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

## Guyanese American charged in stabbing of five Orthodox Jews

An American man with Guyanese roots has been charged with the stabbing of five Orthodox Jews at a rabbi's Hanukkah party in New York.

Grafton Thomas, whose mother Kim Thomas is reportedly an immigrant from the Caribbean community nation, was locked up in a Westchester County jail and placed on \$5 million bail. He faces state charges of attempted murder, plus federal charges of obstructing the free exercise of religion in an attempt to kill.

Thomas, 37, who has pleaded not guilty to the charges, allegedly entered the party in Monsey, New York late last month carrying a machete. He allegedly wounded five people in the attack.

Law enforcement officials said he searched "Why did Hitler hate the Jews" on the Internet. He also reportedly searched for temples "near me" and also possessed journals with the words "Nazi Culture".

Defenders of Thomas, including his mother, said he is mentally ill. Kim Thomas reportedly said her son was

under suicide watch in jail.

"We believe the actions of which he is accused, if committed by him, tragically reflect profound mental illness for which ... Grafton has received episodic treatment before being released," a statement from Thomas's family noted.

Michael Sussman, the lawyer defending Thomas, said his client has been diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, was sexually abused as a child and was prescribed antipsychotic medication.

"How many more like him are there, and what are we going to do about it?" Sussman told reporters at a press conference. "We have to look ourselves in the mirror."

However, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo called the attack a "blatant act of domestic terrorism that sought to inflict violence, incite hate and generate fear."



Thomas

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**Advocates sue to block Trump's 'public charge' rules against Caribbean nationals seeking U.S. residence**

NEW YORK – Immigrant rights advocates in New York have filed the first United States federal lawsuit seeking to jointly block three interrelated “public charge” rules promulgated by the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump administration against Caribbean and other immigrants.

The advocates said these rules seek, “independently and together, to wholly transform the United States’ longstanding family-based immigration system, which allows all immigrants to seek a new and better life in the United States, regardless of their means.”

The lawsuit challenges the legality of the following three rules: The U.S. Department of State (DOS) Jan. 3, 2018 changes to the public charge provisions of its Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) governing consular processing, which led to a 12-fold increase in visa denials, largely against non-white immigrants; and the DOS Oct. 11, 2019 Interim Final Rule, which changes the

public charge regulations that pertain at the point of consular processing and would require DOS to apply the same enjoined the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) “public charge” criteria to Caribbean and other immigrants who must undergo consular processing before entering the U.S. to unify with their parents, children and spouses.

The other rule is the “Presidential Proclamation Suspending the Entry of Immigrants Who Will Financially Burden the Health Care System”, issued on Oct. 4, 2019, which would bar entry to any immigrant who cannot demonstrate the ability to obtain certain types of private health insurance within 30 days of arrival.

**TRANSFORMATION**

“The Trump administration aims to transform immigration in the U.S. from a system that prioritizes keeping families together to a privilege for the wealthy,” said Center for Constitutional Rights

Senior Attorney Ghita Schwarz.

“Unsurprisingly, like so many other Trump policies, these immigration rules harm people of color the most. The courts should not allow the administration to circumvent numerous court injunctions, based on determinations that the public charge criteria are likely unlawful and unconstitutional, simply by applying that criteria via different agencies,” she added.

The immigration advocates said the U.S. State Department rules closely track the changes made to “public charge” determinations under the blocked U.S. Department of Homeland Security rule, redefining a public charge from those who are predominantly reliant on government aid for subsistence to include anyone who is likely to use any amount, at any time in the future – even long after becoming a U.S. citizen – of various cash and non-cash

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)

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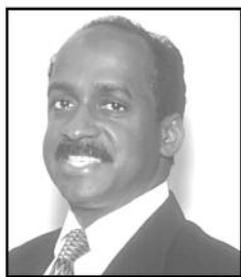
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**Caribbean nationals may face more scrutiny as U.S. steps up probe of some naturalized citizens**

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

Prosecutors have filed double that number of cases in the last two years.

There are several reasons under U.S. law to revoke citizenship. Among them are if a citizenship was obtained illegally, including submitting

incorrect information during application for permanent residence or citizenship. If a citizenship applicant is later found to be a member of a communist organization, that could be grounds for revocation. A person who has been found to commit certain

crimes, but did not disclose that during the citizenship application process, may also be denaturalized.

- *Gordon Williams. Multiple sources contributed to this story.*



**Caribbean nationals can expect immigration fee hikes in 2020**

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

tion and naturalization services. DHS proposes to adjust USCIS fees by a weighted average increase of 21 percent, add new fees for certain benefit requests, establish multiple fees for petitions for nonimmigrant workers, and limit the number of beneficiaries on certain forms to ensure that

USCIS has the resources it needs to provide adequate service to applicants and petitioners.

“Adjustments to the fee schedule are necessary to recover the full operating costs associated with administering the nation's immigration benefits system, safeguarding its integrity, and efficiently and fairly adjudicating immigration

benefit requests, while protecting Americans, securing the homeland, and honoring our country's values. USCIS also is proposing changes to certain other immigration benefit request requirement.”

However, even with a proposed 21 percent increase, the USCIS claims will be “underfunded by approximately \$1.3 billion per year”, according to

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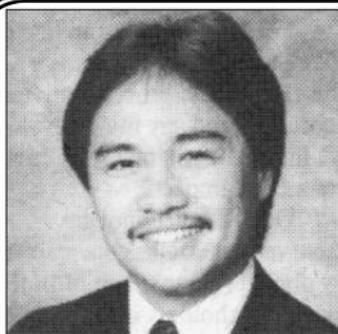
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## Caribbean American public advocate endorses Bernie Sanders for president

NEW YORK – Jumaane Williams, the Caribbean American public advocate for New York City, has announced his endorsement of Senator Bernie Sanders for president of the United States.

In an endorsement video, Williams, the son of Grenadian immigrants, lauded Sanders's inclusive grassroots movement, as well as his "consistency and commitment" on issues, such as quality housing, health care and education.

Williams previously endorsed Sanders's 2016 presidential bid and served as a New York Bernie Delegate during the Democratic Convention.

"It's critically important to have someone like Bernie Sanders as the next President, because we have to have someone who's not just going to heal and unite but who is going to change the system that's in place," Williams said.

### DECISION

"When I first got elected, I made a decision that I didn't get elected to get re-elected. I

got elected to try to cause transformational change for people who feel their voice hasn't been heard," he said, adding "Bernie's done the same thing.

"Bernie's message resonates, because everybody understands that they, too, deserve quality housing, quality healthcare and quality education. We all deserve that, and Bernie Sanders is the one who is going to lead that charge."

Sanders praised Williams as "truly an advocate for the people," adding that he was "proud" to receive his endorsement.

"Jumaane and I share a common cause – to change the systems that make it harder and harder for working families to get by," Sanders said.

Williams's endorsement of Sanders follows other high-profile endorsements he's made of New York progressives, including U.S. Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

- Edited from CMC.



## DLP wins Dominica elections, Skerrit is P.M. for fourth time

ROSEAU, Dominica – Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit was sworn into office for a fourth consecutive term after leading the ruling Dominica Labour Party (DLP) to a sweeping victory in last month's general elections.

However, Lennox Linton, leader of the main Opposition United Workers Party (UWP) has hinted at "irregularities" in the polls that saw his party's seat count in the 21-member Parliament reduced according to the preliminary results.

"We should never elevate skulduggery to a virtue by congratulating those who succeed by dishonest ways. The 2019 general election in Dominica was not free, it was not fair, it was rigged, it was stolen, plain and simple," Linton declared in a Facebook page post.

### 'EXTERNAL FORCES'

But in a speech after he was sworn into office, Skerrit, 47, extended a hand to Linton, urging him to get together for the benefit of the country even while saying that he believes the "external forces" that sought to derail the general elections did not treat Linton right.

"I have never seen so much external interest in our

campaign," Skerrit said, adding that he is hoping that now that the electorate had spoken they would now channel their interest into rebuilding Dominica.

He reminded Linton that the DLP, which according to the preliminary figures had 18 of the 21 seats, had secured both the seats and the popular votes.

"I think the external people did not deal Mr. Linton right, they used him," Skerrit said, noting that Linton, instead of focusing on his campaign, was being used "to carry out their plans."

Skerrit, who led the DLP into a fifth consecutive term, said that he had sympathy for Linton because as a legislator, he has never had to sit in Opposition.

"I do not envy him," the prime minister said. "I never had the opportunity of being in Opposition, people have told me it is not nice."

- Edited from CMC.



Skerrit

## Expunged drug conviction record in T&T is no guarantee to get visa to visit U.S.

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad – The United States has told Trinidad and Tobago nationals with expunged drug convictions they may not necessarily be granted a visa to visit the North American country.

The announcement came as Port of Spain began the process of having persons jailed for the possession of small quantities of marijuana released.

Attorney General Faris Al Rawi last month approached the High Court to begin the process to release an estimated 100 inmates who had been jailed for being in possession of small amounts of marijuana in keeping with the decision by the T&T Parliament to amend the Dangerous Drugs Act so as

to allow for the decriminalization of marijuana for recreational and medicinal purposes.

### LAW

Under the legislation, which went into effect on Dec. 23, a person could be in possession of 30 grams of marijuana without fear of being arrested and charged. However, in a statement, the U.S. Embassy here said that the adoption of the Dangerous Drugs (Amendment) Bill 2019 into T&T law "does not exempt persons with expunged convictions from disclosing such information on visa applications.

"Under U.S. immigration law, visa applicants who have ever been convicted or arrested

for any offense, including drug-related offenses, still must disclose that information to U.S. officials when they apply for a U.S. visa."

Washington said "prior arrests and convictions, even if expunged, could still indicate visa ineligibilities," adding "failure to reveal arrests or convictions could lead to visa ineligibilities."

T&T is among a number of Caribbean countries that have recently tabled legislation allowing for the decriminalization of marijuana for medicinal purposes.

- Edited from CMC.



## Advocates sue to block Trump's 'public charge' rules...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

benefits, including Medicaid, food stamps and federal housing subsidies.

The rules, challenged on Dec. 19, apply to Caribbean and other immigrants who must undergo consular processing, including immigrants

who must temporarily leave the U.S. in order to obtain lawful permanent resident status.

Although immigrants obtaining their "green card" or permanent residence from within the U.S. are not subjected to the DHS rule because it is enjoined, the

advocates said intending immigrants seeking immigrant visas through consular processing are threatened by nearly identical provisions via the U.S. State Department rule.

- Edited from CMC.



## Successful Women in Business



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## CMEx honors Jamaican for service to tourism industry

DAWN A. DAVIS

Celebrating the growth of sustainable tourism, the Caribbean Media Exchange (CMEx) recently honored those in the travel and tourism, government and media industries who advocate for economic and educational development in the Caribbean region.

Among those honored for selfless service was Jamaican journalist and businesswoman Janet Silvera. A long-standing senior writer at the Jamaica **Gleaner Company Limited**, Silvera has managed the Gleaner's "Hospitality Jamaica" publication for many years, helping to bring awareness to the importance of sustainable tourism for communities and the nation.

Based in Montego Bay, Silvera is integrally involved in the growth and vibrancy of this tourist destination and has taken on leadership roles in her efforts. She was recently appointed president of the Montego Bay Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MBCCI). In that role she has pledged to focus on the growth and development of



Silvera accepts award from CMEx Director Dr. Basil Springer.

small and medium-sized businesses within the community.

### GIVING BACK

Besides her media and business positions, Silvera has given back to the community in several ways. One such charitable pursuit is the birth of the annual event "MoBayCity Run", a 10K/5K run and walk which she founded in 2014. Since its inception, Silvera has raised millions of Jamaican dollars for students in need across western Jamaica. She also works to protect abused children and the elderly through another organization, Sarah's

Children, a non-profit charity setup to protect youngsters, the voiceless and disabled.

"I am truly honored," said Silvera, noting, "I have seen CMEx successfully influence the coverage of sustainable tourism in the region, to the point where travel and hospitality developments have moved from the lifestyle columns to the business pages."

Established in 2001, CMEx has brought together stakeholders in media, government, tourism, private enterprise to focus on sustainable development in and around the tourism industry, a sector critical to the many islands in the Caribbean. Through international and regional conferences, meetings, and press trips the organization has helped to build public awareness around sustainable tourism issues, needs and successes.

*Dawn A. Davis is a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.*



## Businessman to lead southern Global Jamaica Diaspora Council

Businessman and entrepreneur Dr. Allan Cunningham has been elected to represent the United States Southern Region of the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council.

Cunningham will represent a region which includes the states of Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas.

Cunningham was one of six candidates for the post, including Arlene Richards Barr, Michelle Fanger, Garfield Heron, Mark Jackson and David Mullings.

The council will be estab-

lished this month. The elected candidate will become a member of The Global Jamaica Diaspora Council, which serves as an advisory and consultative body geared at facilitating more effective engagement between Jamaica and the Caribbean nation's diaspora. Members of the council will serve for three years.

Meanwhile, educator Dr. Karren Dunkley will represent the North East U.S. She was among five candidates vying for the position, defeating Dr. Robert Clarke, Dr. Oliver Jones, Donald Fonseca and Wayne Seaton was only able to scrape 25 votes.



## U.S. congresswoman recognizes Caribbean Today's achievements

**Caribbean Today** has received recognition from a member of the United States House of Representatives.

Donna E. Shalala, who represents Florida's 27th District, in a letter dated Dec. 14, congratulated Publisher Peter A. Webley on Caribbean Today's 31st anniversary.

"A monthly news magazine based in Miami, Caribbean Today covers issues important to the Caribbean community, highlighting the achievements of Caribbean individuals and presenting news at it relates to the Caribbean," the letter explained. "Our South Florida community benefits enormously from the unique perspective that Caribbean Today brings to all of our lives."

"Caribbean Today focuses

on both the hyper local and the national and international. The magazine recognizes local artists and athletes of Caribbean descent and also covers national and international news relevant to the Caribbean community."

Shalala also expressed gratitude for the work done at Caribbean Today and the publication's commitment to the Caribbean community in South Florida. She said she was "proud to recognize their achievements on the 31st anniversary of Caribbean Today."



Shalala

## MDC HONOR



Dr. Davia Hudson-Holness, third from right, who once worked for the Sugar Industry Research Institute in Jamaica, was among five faculty members at Miami Dade College to receive MDC's 2019 Endowed Teaching Chairs recently. Hudson-Holness, who teaches chemistry at MDC's Wolfson Campus, received the Peter Masiko, Jr. Endowed Teaching Chair. MDC Interim President Dr. Rolando Montoya, left, is shown with the recipients from MDC's faculty, including from left, Maria del Carmen Alvarez, Dr. Alvio Dominguez, Susan G. Lichtman, and Dr. Hien Minh Nguyen.

## Caribbean, U.S. hold security discussions in Washington, D.C.

Jamaica's National Security Minister Dr. Horace Chang recently held discussions with United States government officials in Washington, D.C. on ways to deal with trans-national crimes affecting the Caribbean.

High on the agenda were illicit firearms, which find their way from the U.S. into the Caribbean and are linked to

thousands of deaths in the region.

Chang said he and his team held talks with the U.S. State Department, the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security and the Drug Enforcement Agency, among others.

A reception, held in Chang's honor, was attended

by Jamaica's Commissioner of Police Major General Anthony Anderson; Director of the Inter-American Defense College Major General James Taylor and Lieutenant Colonel Robert Ramsey, defense attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Jamaica.



## Jamaican elected to executive of Consular Corps of Philadelphia

Christopher Chaplin, Jamaica's honorary consul in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, has been elected treasurer and member of the Executive Committee of the Consular Corps Association of Philadelphia.

Chaplin, who was elected at a meeting last month in Philadelphia, takes over from Jerry Sorkin, honorary consul for Tunisia.

Peter Longstreth, honorary consul for Uruguay in Philadelphia, was returned as president and Susan Satkowski, honorary consul of Norway, returned as secretary. Miguel Alban, honorary consul of Peru, was elected vice president.

Chaplin is a career banker.

He has worked at financial institutions in Jamaica and the United States and was appointed Jamaica's honorary consul in Philadelphia by Jamaica's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Kamina Johnson Smith in April 2019.

The Consular Corps Association of Philadelphia is the oldest consular organization in the U.S. Its members represent 63 countries around the world.



Chaplin

## SMALL AXE: Tiny SVG begins 'historic journey' as U.N. Security Council member

UNITED NATIONS – As St. Vincent and the Grenadines officially assumed a non-permanent seat on the United Nations' Security Council on Jan. 1, the country's U.N. Ambassador I. Rhonda King said the "historic journey" begins with 'Three Stories and a Prayer: The Manifestation of the Prophetic Imagination'.

"With the audacity of David, the widow's faith, the spirit of Chatoyer, the prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi, we begin a historic journey," said King in a statement, stating that St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) has become one of only 15 members of the U.N.'s most powerful organ.

She said 40 years after achieving Independence from Great Britain, SVG has become the smallest nation ever to serve on the prestigious body, "which is tasked with maintaining international peace and security.

"On January 2, 2020, we will plant our flag outside the Security Council chamber and take up our seat at the horseshoe table within the chamber, where we will remain for the next two years," said King, noting that SVG enters the Security Council "on the cusp



King

of its 75th anniversary and at a time when the world is riddled with challenges, and the rules-based system is increasingly under threat on many fronts."

While stating that SVG is "not without its own home-grown challenges," King invoked "the spirit and audacity of hope," and reflected on "what is possible and the transformative opportunity that is before us."

The ambassador noted that, in 1763, Britain assumed control of SVG, and that, with the exception of a few years of French occupation (1779 to

1783), the country remained under British colonial rule until internal self-government in 1969 and constitutional Independence in 1979.

### RESPONSIBILITY

On Independence, she said SVG joined the international community, gaining "the right and assumed the immense responsibility to chart our own course in an increasingly complex world." King said some have even argued that small islands are not viable as independent states, but added that "we have seen, difficult though

it can be, that this micro-, multi-island state has made great strides through strategic, creative and innovative measures and faith in Almighty God."

She said the story of David and Goliath in the Bible "reminds us that the small can overcome the powerful, that the small overcomes the powerful is more often the case than it is not.

"As a young nation, we will be remiss if we believe the fight for our independence to be (is) a done deal," King said. "Small states, by definition, are vulnerable in a world, where international law is compromised and only might makes right.

"This makes us natural defenders of the international order that protects us," she added. "Indeed, it is the responsibility of a small state."

Additionally, King said the people of SVG are part of the Sixth Region of Africa, also known as the African diaspora, stating that more than 50 percent of the U.N. Security Council's agenda today comprises conflicts on the African continent.

"Today, this nation (St. Vincent and the Grenadines)

can stand up for and with the people of Africa as an elected member of the United Nations Security Council," King said.

### PROCESS

In October, the SVG's Permanent Mission to the U.N. began its three-month observation period of the U.N. Security Council. The mission declared in a statement that the Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, 2019 observation was ahead of officially taking up the country's two-year seat on the Security Council on Jan. 1, 2020.

"St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a small country that consistently punches above its weight in international affairs," the statement noted. "The state uses the tools of diplomacy and multilateralism to advance its interests in the global arena.

"... While SVG (St. Vincent and the Grenadines) is small, the combination of our history, experiences, and perspectives – which we refer to as a 'small island exceptionalism' – compels us to lift our voices and share our unique opinions on the issue of climate change and its implications for global

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

## Only Richards's genius stood ahead of Greenidge ~ Holding

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – Legendary West Indies fast bowler Michael Holding believes only the sheer genius of Sir Vivian Richards prevented Gordon Greenidge from becoming the quintessential batsman of his generation.

Greenidge was recently honored in Queen Elizabeth II's New Year list for his "services to cricket and the development of sport" and Holding, who played alongside the opening batsman, said there was never any doubt about the Barbadian's immense status.

"Gordon was a great player," Holding said in tribute to Greenidge during an interview on the cricket radio show **Mason and Guest**.

"He had one bad tour that I can remember and that was the first time he went to Australia in 1975-76 when he wasn't the only one, but since then he just blossomed and became a great player.

"If it hadn't been for Sir Isaac Vivian Alexander Richards, everyone would've been talking about Gordon Greenidge."

### TECHNICIAN

Greenidge, considered one of the finest technicians of the game, gathered 7,558 runs at an average of 44 with 19



Richards

centuries in Test cricket. He struck a century in either inning of the 1976 Old Trafford Test, lashed two double hundreds on the 1984 tour of England, and was a member of the West Indies side which won the first two World Cups in 1975 and 1979.

Sir Viv, widely considered the most dominant batsmen of his era, amassed 8,540 runs with 24 hundreds at an average of 50. His career-best 291 at the Oval in 1976 was one of two double hundreds on a tour when he thrice reached triple figures in a record aggregate of 829 runs. An imperious 138 in the 1979 World Cup final at Lord's handed West Indies an his-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

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## 2019 WRAP: Caribbean survives year of elections, political scandals, crime

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – When the American Ervin Drake wrote the lyrics for his song “It Was A Very Good Year” in 1961, Dominica’s Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit was not born as yet and Guyana’s President David Granger was 21.

But the 47-year-old Skerrit and Granger, now 74, have every reason to say 2019 was a good year for them, albeit for different reasons.

Skerrit became Dominica’s first prime minister to win four consecutive general elections, leading his ruling Dominica Labour Party (DLP) to a fifth consecutive victory and beating main Opposition United Workers Party (UWP) 18 to three in the two-way fight for control of the 21-member Parliament.

In Guyana, Granger’s coalition government, A Partnership for National Unity (APNU), was able to remain in office even though it had been defeated in an Opposition-inspired motion of no confidence in Dec. 2018. Guyana votes on Mar. 2.

The Virgin Islands Party (VIP), headed by Andrew A. Fahie, last March won the general elections in the British Virgin Islands (BVI), capturing eight of the 13 seats at stake. In Montserrat, another

British Overseas Territory, Easton Taylor-Farrell, led his Movement for Change and Prosperity (MCAP) into power in November.

### WOES

The year 2019 was not good for President Jovenel Moise in Haiti, who came to power in 2017, and Suriname’s President Desi Bouterse, leaders of the only two non-English-speaking countries in CARICOM.

Moise spent 2019 deflecting calls for his resignation by Opposition parties that staged violent and fatal demonstrations across the French-speaking country. Opposition parties have accused Moise of corruption and unsuccessfully sought to impeach him.

In November, a Military Court sentenced Bouterse to 20 years in prison for his involvement in the 1982 murders of 15 political opponents of his then military government in the Dutch-speaking country. The court did not order his detention. Bouterse was out of the country when the verdict was given, but has since filed an appeal.

He is now concentrating on the general elections, constitutionally due by mid-2020. Trinidad and Tobago, St. Kitts and Nevis, Anguilla and, pos-

sibly, St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) should may also hold general elections in 2020.

### CRIME

Crime, especially murders, remained unabated in the Caribbean in 2019.

Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Bermuda and even Barbados were among CARICOM countries where crime was a major issue.

In Jamaica, the 2018 figure of 1,287 murders was passed with at least two weeks remaining in 2019. In T&T, the murder toll also passed the 2018 figure of 517.

In Barbados, the island recorded 48 murders as the year was coming to an end, the highest ever, almost doubling the 28 murders of 2018. In Bermuda, the police said 131 murders had been committed with just a few days left in 2019, compared with 144 the previous year.

Politicians also found themselves part of the crime situation in the Caribbean. In T&T, Marlene McDonald, the public administration minister, was sacked by Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley for a third time since his administration came to power in 2015, after she and several others, including her husband Michael

Carew, appeared in court on several offenses of conspiracy to defraud the government.

In Jamaica, Education Minister Ruel Reid, his wife Sharen, their daughter Sharelle, and President of the Caribbean Maritime University Professor Fritz Pinnock appeared in court on charges resulting from a corruption probe into the Education Ministry and the CMU. Local government Councillor Kim Brown-Lawrence was also charged.

### ECONOMY

In 2019, several Caribbean countries began implementing legislation decriminalizing small amounts of marijuana as regional countries sought to cash in on the lucrative international marijuana trade for medicinal and other purposes.

In August, Barbados introduced legislation to establish the legal foundation for a local medical marijuana industry, joining Jamaica, SVG as well as Antigua and Barbuda in approving cannabis cultivation. A law is also in the works in St. Kitts and Nevis while in Bermuda legislation was tabled in the Senate to legalize medical cannabis and regulations to govern licenses for Bermudian

growers and importers. T&T amended its dangerous Drugs Act to allow citizens to be in possession of up to 30 grams of marijuana.

Meanwhile, the Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC) said the 2014-2020 period will mark the lowest growth in the region in the last seven decades. Overall, the International Monetary Fund said while economic prospects are improving in the Caribbean, they are doing so “with substantial variation across countries.”

While most of the Caribbean may have been spared the full brunt of the 2019 Atlantic Hurricane Season, it was not so in the case of The Bahamas. On Sept. 1, Hurricane Dorian, a Category 5 storm, swept through the nation, killing nearly 70 people and causing damage estimated at \$3.4 billion.

- Edited from CMC.



## SMALL AXE: Tiny SVG begins ‘historic journey’ on U.N. Security Council

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

peace and security,” the statement added.

Jubilant ripped through the Vincentian community at home and in the diaspora last June when St. Vincent and the Grenadines was elected as a non-permanent member of the U.N. Security Council. At the time, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Sir Louis Straker described his country’s election as “historic.”

According to the U.N., 185 countries voted in favor of SVG, with two abstentions. St.

Vincent and the Grenadines only needed 128 votes to hold the seat. U.N. General Assembly rules state that candidates running for a seat on the Security Council must win a two-thirds majority of votes to succeed, even if they are running uncontested.

### SMALLEST

With the historic vote, SVG became the smallest country ever to hold a U.N. Security Council seat. SVG is 150 square miles in size and has a population of about 110,000.

Other countries elected in the June vote in the U.N. General Assembly were Estonia, Niger, Tunisia and Viet Nam. The four states, along with SVG, took up their seats as non-permanent members of the Security Council, replacing Cote d’Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait, Peru and Poland, the U.N. said.

There are five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council are: China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and the United States.

The non-permanent seats are allocated according to a rotation pattern set by the Assembly in 1963, according to the UN, “to ensure a proportionate representation over time from the different parts of the world: five from African and Asian States; one from Eastern European States; two from Latin American States; and two from Western European and Other States.”

- Edited from CMC.



## Only Richards’s genius stood ahead of Greenidge ~ Holding

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

toric second straight title.

Holding said of all the great innings by Greenidge, the one performance which had remained with him was the 226 at Kensington Oval in Barbados in 1991, when on the cusp of his 40th birthday, he carved out a defiant double hundred against Australia.

“I can remember one (inning) when he really applied himself greatly in Barbados when people were saying he had gone past his prime and he made a (double century) in that Test match,”

Holding recalled.

“Gordon has played so many great innings and of course with his opening partner Dessie Haynes, they built so many foundations for West Indies in the past.”

### PRAISE

Holding, now a well-respected international television cricket broadcaster, also praised legendary former captain Clive Lloyd who also received a knighthood for his “services to cricket”.

“He was captain for almost all of my Test matches,” Holding explained. “I

played perhaps one or two series after Lloyd retired so he was my captain for most of my career and I looked upon him pretty much as a father figure and I think most people thought of him as my cricketing father.

“I remember once when I was still a youngster, he called my house in Jamaica ... and my father answered the phone and shouted to me ‘Mikey, your father’s on the line.’”

The Jamaican added: “Clive Lloyd was a great leader. When you look at the team that Clive Lloyd had, everybody would say ‘oh, he

had so much talent’. He’s not the only one that has had talented cricketers under him, but he knew exactly how to get the best out of his players.

“He was a father figure to most of the players, people looked up to him, he respected the players, the players respected him and so that’s why we had so much of a great team.”

- Edited from CMC. *Queen Elizabeth II honors Greenidge and Lloyd, sports, page 19.*



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## Trump delivers bad news for immigrants at Holidays

Another lump of coal! That's all immigrants got again this Christmas from Trump & Co., aka The President and his personal attorney, also known as the Attorney General of the USA Bill Barr.

In an early "Christmas gift" (NOT!), the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced on Dec. 10 an expanded policy guidance regarding the good moral character (GMC) requirement for immigrants wishing to become U.S. citizens. A statement said it was based on

"Two Decisions from the Attorney General".

GMC is one of the factors that must be established under the Immigration and

Nationality Act (INA), for an immigrant applicant to qualify for U.S. citizenship. The updated USCIS Policy Manual now makes it clear that two or more convictions for driving under the influence or post-sentencing changes to criminal sentencing might affect GMC determinations on immigrant citizenship applications.

Applicants with two or more DUI convictions may, however, be able to overcome this presumption by presenting evidence that they had good moral character even during the period within which they committed the DUI offenses.

The term DUI includes all state and federal impaired-driving offenses, including driving while intoxicated, operating under the influence and other offenses

that make it unlawful for an individual to operate a motor vehicle while impaired.

### GUIDANCE

The AG has also determined that the definition of the "term of imprisonment or a sentence" generally refers to an immigrant's original criminal sentence, without regard to post-sentencing changes.

"Post-sentencing orders that change a criminal alien's original sentence will only be relevant for immigration purposes if they are based on a procedural or substantive defect in the underlying criminal proceeding," the USCIS



Trump

statement noted.

"As the attorney general directed, this guidance enhances public safety by ensuring that USCIS adjudicators consider driving under the influence convictions with the appropriate standard of scrutiny," claimed USCIS Deputy Director Mark Koumans.

The USCIS says the GMC also applies to the following crimes:

- bail jumping;
- bank fraud;
- conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance;
- failure to file or pay taxes;
- false claim to U.S. citizenship;
- falsification of records;
- forgery uttering;
- insurance fraud;
- obstruction of justice;
- sexual assault;
- Social Security fraud;
- unlawful harassment;
- unlawful registration to vote;
- unlawful voting; and
- violation of a U.S. embargo.

### GMC

In general, applicants must show they have been, and continue to be, people of good moral character during the statutory period before filing for naturalization and up until they take the Oath of

Allegiance.

The statutory period is generally five years for permanent residents of the U.S., three years for applicants married

to a U.S. citizen, and one year for certain applicants applying on the basis of qualifying U.S. military service.

Obviously, this is another tactic being used by Trump & Co. to lower naturalization rates and hence lower the rolls of immigrants eligible to register to vote annually. In other words, yet another way to "whiten" America and gerrymander the voters list to their favor.

- Edited from News Americas. Felicia J. Persaud is publisher of NewsAmericasNow.



## TIME TO ACT: Flames of inequality still rage

MAGDY MARTINEZ SOLIMAN

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – For all our progress, our science and our technology – for all the advancement made in combating diseases and poverty, hunger and conflict – something is not working. And people are taking it to the streets.

One of the common sources of discontent is a deep frustration with gross inequalities. Of course it is about income, the money some have and some don't. But it's more than that: a new suite of inequalities linked to climate change, gender and violence among other factors, and the old sources of inequality (ethnicity and parents' wealth) determine a person's place in society no matter how hard they work and how smart they are.

We are riding the crest of the inequality wave. And yet we have choices and tools to ride the wave and combat its pernicious effects. Before the market, in the market and after the market, policy decisions matter and define a better or not so good society to live in.

All too often, inequality is oversimplified, as if it were a

legacy we are born with. It is true that mobility has decreased – the American dream turned the social stagnation nightmare. But inequalities are not static: they accumulate through life. They get worse.

### TRANSFORMATIONS

Two major transformations have impacted our lives at an unprecedented speed: climate change and technology change. The climate crisis is hitting the poorest hardest. We need bold climate action. Technology progress can become a luxury for two tiers of society, leaving a good third behind the digital divide. We need bold technology access and transparency.

If we don't muster both, climate inaction will deteriorate our habitat at levels we can't even start fearing. And technology manipulation will turn us into mindless consumers and our democracy into a meaningless farce.

The 21st Century has witnessed the greatest progress in human history's living standards. The unprecedented great escape from hunger, poverty and disease, epitomized by the surge of China and India, contrasts with the

discrimination and neglect that still remains.

### LEFT BEHIND

Six hundred million people living in extreme poverty remain the furthest behind – 1.3 billion if one counts them with the multi-dimensional poverty index, which goes beyond dollars and income to measure human deprivations. Three million of these poor families' children are still expected to die from preventable causes every year, next year. The poorest children in the poorest countries.

Nothing is inevitable about this. Every society has choices before it about the levels of inequality it is ready to tolerate. These are not easy choices: the choice of generosity requires selflessness and partial renunciation of privilege. Tax transfers and higher minimum wages, unemployment subsidies, public health-care of quality or access to education by merit demand solidarity and contribution of those who have more to those who have less.

The Eastern Caribbean societies have a proud recent history of human development

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

## Caribbean legislators welcome impeachment of U.S. president

NEW YORK – Several Caribbean American legislators welcomed last month's impeachment of United States President Donald J. Trump.

Trump became the third president to be impeached in history by the U.S. House of Representatives and is expected to face trial in the U.S. Senate early in the New Year.

Haitian American Farah Louis, who represents the predominantly Caribbean 45th Council District in Brooklyn,

said the "historic impeachment vote sends a resounding message that anyone who undermines our democracy or betrays the public's trust by abusing their power will be held accountable – even the president of the United States.

"His (Trump's) reckless behavior and complete disregard for our constitution, which he swore to uphold, has done irreparable harm to our nation," Louis told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC), adding that the "American people need a true leader in the White House that (who) will implement policies that are inclusive and benefits the majority, not just the one

percent.

"Instead of utilizing his administration to unify us, this 'Tweeter-in-Chief' has consistently demoralized his opponents," added Louis, a member of multiple New York City Council committees.

"It is my hope that the U.S. Senate will not place politics before people and take the necessary measures to restore what has been tarnished over the past two years," she said.

### 'HISTORIC'

Immediately after Trump was impeached on Dec. 17 for committing high crimes and misdemeanors, Caribbean American Democratic Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke, who joined her colleagues in the House of Representatives in impeaching Trump, told CMC that it was an "historic and somber time for America." The daughter of

Jamaican immigrants, who represents the 9th Congressional District in Brooklyn, Clarke said it was "a necessary day of reckoning, and a test of our resilience and ability to uphold our democracy.

"I voted to impeach Donald J. Trump based on two articles of impeachment, abuse of power and obstruction of Congress, presented by the House Judiciary committee. This impeachment was necessary. Our nation's national security is on the line, compromised by Donald Trump.

"I am proud to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with my colleagues on the right side of history in doing our duty to hold Donald J. Trump accountable for his law-breaking, unconstitutional actions," continued Clarke, stating that, from the onset of assuming the Presidency, Trump engaged in

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)



Clarke

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## VIEWPOINT



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## ANGER MANAGEMENT: Better to let off steam than bottling it up, succumbing to pressure

Anger is a part of the human psyche and whether it's good or bad is the subject of research.

Some may say that it's better to express rage and let it all out rather than keep it all bottled up and suffer a stroke or heart attack.

There are some people who are angry all the time. When you look at their faces, all that you see is misery, contention, discord and damnation. Never will you see them crack a smile, as their anger keeps them in a constant state of flux.

For lovers of comics and movies you may be familiar with The Incredible Hulk, the large green superhero who is blessed with awesome strength, but only when he gets angry and is transformed from an ordinary man into the powerful beast. But at least the Hulk has his time of

peacefulness, and it's only when he gets riled up and mad that the raging beast in him rises to the surface and turns him into a monster, The Incredible Hulk.

### TRIGGER

Some people are like the Hulk, all it takes is a trigger to tick them off. Maybe this perennial anger stems from persons being unloved when they were children or from unrequited love, and they just can't get over it.

Some people actually go to bed angry and wake up angry the next morning, without even giving thanks for a new day. For some reason, this



TONY ROBINSON



anger is a constant in their lives and they carry it around like a millstone around their necks. It weighs them down and keeps them rooted to one emotional spot permanently.

Even toddlers will exhibit anger, which is termed a tantrum. But should adults

exhibit this type of immature behavior?

Displaying anger is a sign of immaturity and lack of self control. Even so, for some persons it's a way of life, a natural characteristic as their bouts of anger will come and go,

rise and fall. They care not of the consequences.

But anger can be dangerous and unforgiving, for it lets people do things that they wouldn't normally do. With anger, the words can be the cause of much hurt and regret. Someone who is drunk will say

and do things that they wouldn't normally do. A person who is angry falls into the same category.

Anger can be equated to drunkenness, and just like in the state of inebriation, an angry person can get violent. And yet, there are some persons who are slow to anger, slow burners who have long fuses and will take a long time to blow their top. Contrast them to those who are quick to anger.

*"I'm mad as hell and not taking it anymore."*

Maybe getting mad is the right thing to do, instead of holding it in and then exploding inside. Perhaps it's better to vent and let off steam rather than bottling it up and succumbing to the pressure.

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## Caribbean legislators welcome impeachment of U.S. president

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

a number of the activities that she characterized were "impeachable offenses."

"When our commander-in-chief goes against his sacred oath of office, and brazenly and repeatedly violates upholding the Constitution, this is a betrayal of his oath of office to the American people," she said.

### 'REPREHENSIBLE'

Clarke also said that Trump is "morally reprehensible" and that voters will address his actions in next year's U.S. presidential elections.

"He has unabashedly and



Williams

brazenly broken the law right in front of the American people," she said. "His current behavior and actions are dangerous, with severe implications for the upcoming 2020 election; his actions mirroring that of the corrupted 2016 election, where he brazenly welcomed foreign interference.

"With his self-dealing tendencies, Donald Trump has proven to be an existential threat to our national security; and, his conduct, if left unchecked, will leave us vulnerable to future election interference, and, ultimately usher in the demise of our democratic republic," Clarke affirmed.

The Democratic-controlled House voted strictly along party lines to impeach Trump for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. A simple majority was required in the House to impeach the

president. He now faces removal from office by the Republican-controlled U.S. Senate.

Two-third of votes cast in the Senate is required for Trump to be removed. Pundits say that is highly unlikely, given that Republicans are "lock-step" with Trump.

### NECESSITY

New York City Public Advocate and the son of Grenadian immigrants, Jumaane Williams, said the gravity of Trump's impeachment is "matched only by its clear necessity.

"This president, who has abused his privilege, his office and his people since he first took office, is now finally facing constitutional consequence for one of his egregious acts," said Williams, a frequent Trump critic.

"He deserved it, and his conduct demanded it," added the Brooklyn resident. "There has, perhaps, never been a more clear, public case for action. I thank those in the House of Representatives who voted to impeach, and the activists across the country who brought us to this point of accountability.

"While it is widely believed that the Republican Senate will not ultimately vote to remove the president, that does not mean a potential acquittal is right, nor does it mean that we can allow tolerance of the president's conduct as normal, or the Republican Senate's cowardice, as an acceptable inevitability," Williams said.

"The world and history are watching as partisan thought allows legislators to put the politics of incumbency

protection over the realities of Donald Trump's tyrannical conduct.

"I implore senators to do what is just, to hold a full trial and render justice through removal," he said. "I'm not holding my breath, but, along with people across our city and nation, I will work to hold them accountable."

With Republicans united in opposition, just two Democrats opposed the article on abuse of power, which accused the president of corruptly using the power of government to seek election aid from Ukraine in investigating and discrediting the Democratic frontrunner, former U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden, and his son Hunter.

- Edited from CMC.



## TIME TO ACT: Flames of inequality still rage

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

to show – ascending since independence the ladders that have placed them in the high human development category. It didn't come for free.

Barbados is 56th of 189 surveyed countries of the world, in steady progress since the 1990s, thanks in great measure to the gender equality bonus (55th rank) that makes it a less unequal society for Bajon women than other islands in the region.

The Bahamas is second, in 60th place, a country that loses 16 positions to gender inequality. Trinidad and Tobago comes in third in 63rd place. St. Kitts and Nevis has taken over Antigua and Barbuda, being 73rd and 74th of the world, respectively.

Grenada is 78th, St. Lucia

89th and St. Vincent and the Grenadines 94th. The last of the Eastern Caribbean states analyzed, still in the top 100 and high human development group, is Dominica, whose vitals have suffered from the accumulation of loss and damage over a series of natural disasters since year 2000.

### RECOMMENDATION

One of the recommendations UNDP makes, that could seem relevant in the region even if with varying intensity, is to accelerate convergence in basic capabilities while eliminating gender and other group-based inequalities.

Not all has to be done by the state or the government. The most effective tool is to increase productivity and turn it into shared growth.

What remains to be seen is if the greed and Hobbesian unrestrained, selfish, and uncivilized competition, which has allowed many more than ever to enjoy superlative privileges, will be tempered by a new social contract that would reduce tensions and distribute opportunity with fairness.

There have been times in human history when the arch of history has bent towards justice. The clock is ticking and time is right for such a bend.

- Edited from CMC. Magdy Martinez Soliman is the United Nations Development Program's resident representative for Barbados and the OECS.



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## Britons with Caribbean roots get queen's 2020 honors

Several Caribbean roots Britons have been knighted by Queen Elizabeth II as part of her 2020 New Year's honors.

Among them are film directors Sam Mendes and Steve McQueen, as well as singer and songwriter Billy Ocean, chef Ainsley Harriott, composer Errollyn Wallen, actor Rudolph Malcolm Walker and Dame Floella Benjamin.



McQueen

Mendes, whose roots run to Trinidad and Tobago and who directed the James Bond films "Skyfall" and "Spectre", as well as "American Beauty" and "Road To Perdition", said he was "amazed, delighted and extremely proud" to be knighted.

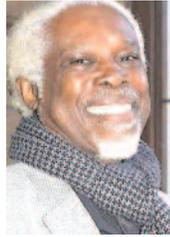


Benjamin

McQueen, who directed the Oscar-winning movie "12 Years A Slave", as well as

"Hunger", "Shame" and "Widows", and whose roots run to Grenada and Trinidad, was also knighted.

Also knighted were Harriott, 62, who was born in Paddington, London and is of Jamaican heritage; Trinidadian singer Ocean, 69, for services to cookery and music, respectively, and Trinidadian-born actor Rudolph Malcolm Walker for services to drama and diversity.



Ocean

Trinidadian-British actress, author, television presenter, singer, businesswoman and politician Floella Karen Yunies Benjamin, Baroness Benjamin, was made a dame for services to charity while Belizean composer Errollyn Wallen, who was the first black woman to have her work performed at the Proms, had her MBE upgraded to a CBE for services to music.

- Edited from News Americas Now.



## Monty Alexander to play in South Florida Jan. 18

Jamaican jazz great Monty Alexander is scheduled to perform this month in South Florida.

Alexander will play at

South Florida Jazz at Bailey Hall, 8 p.m. Jan. 18.

Bailey Hall is located at 3501 S.W. Davie Rd., Davie.



## JUST JAMMIN'



It was a party mood at the Reggae Jam Festival late last month in South Florida. The show featured several legendary performers, including the Inner Circle and Steel Pulse bands, and singer Mykal Rose. There were also appearances by up-and-coming artistes such as Skip Marley. The venue was Ronald L Book Athletic Stadium in North Miami.

## BEST OF THE BEST: Jamaican crowned 'Miss World'



Singh

LONDON, England – A 23-year-old Jamaican medical student won the "Miss World" competition here last month.

Toni-Ann Singh finished atop the field of 111 contestants in the event, which included second placed Ophely Mezino of France and third placed Suman Ratansingh Rao from India.

Miss World Jamaica took her final walk in a stunning silver dress after being crowned by Miss World 2018 Vanessa Ponce De Leon.

Singh also won the talent competition after her performance at the "Beauty with a Purpose" Gala Dinner, advanced to the final round of the competition along with Miss Nigeria, Miss Brazil, Miss India and Miss France. In addition to dancing to Jamaican singer Koffee's "Toast", she also sang Whitney Houston's "I Have Nothing" live.

Singh said her parents were her role models and she will now have the opportunity to travel the world, making a difference through a number of philanthropic projects.

As a result of her win, Singh was late last month appointed an ambassador by the Jamaica government. Prime Minister Andrew Holness, in a message posted on his Twitter account, said Singh had also been issued with a diplomatic passport.

"Toni-Ann will be able to travel the world with the blessing of her country as well as adding value to both the Miss World Organization and brand Jamaica," said Holness, who noted that the ceremony took place "during a courtesy call which (Singh) paid" to his office.



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## Why a personalized diet can help you achieve better results

From custom-designed sneakers to tailor-made sunglasses, the trend of personalization is going head-to-toe, and for good reason, making its way to the world of weight loss and wellness.

Specifically, researchers have been studying two converging topics in recent years. One is the importance of body type in determining the combination of fats, carbohydrates and protein that will provide the best results for a given individual. The other is the variability of results associated with a single diet - the idea that if two people start the same diet at the same time, their results could be drastically different.

On top of that, consumer research shows that people overwhelmingly prefer personalized experiences. Sixty percent of consumers agree that personalization is essential to weight loss and overall wellness.

Here's what to know about why personalized diets are becoming so popular and how to find the right diet for you:

### The importance of body



- Photograph © Rawpixel / iStock via Getty Images Plus  
A combination of good foods can improve health.

**type** - The places your body stores excess fat may be the single greatest predictor of health outcomes. This is the concept behind Nutrisystem's assessment of the four most common body types: "Apple", "Pear", "Hourglass" and "Rectangle".

"We're going a bit old school here, because these categories have stood the test of time for a reason," says Courtney McCormick, corporate dietitian at Nutrisystem. "They provide crucial information on how you respond to food intake and can help you to adjust what you eat

based on your goals."

Body type can also influence how macronutrients like fat, protein, and carbs are processed. To fulfill your individual needs, first determine your body type, food preferences and goals, then look for a weight loss plan that takes these important factors into con-

sideration.

**One size does not fit all** - DIETFITS, a large, randomized research study comparing low-fat versus low-carb dietary patterns, found no difference in weight loss between them. But drilling down into the data, one can see variability. Some dieters gained weight while others lost a lot.

But it's not always about weight outcomes, as recent research has shown that factors such as body shape may play a bigger role in the deter-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)

## Baked custard is great dessert

Caribbean baked custard is a great dessert and can even compliment pies. Here's how you too can make it:

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups evaporated milk
- 3/4 cup sweetened condensed milk
- 4 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/2 tablespoon nutmeg, grated

### METHOD

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Crack and add eggs individually to a bowl. Beat together.

Open the cans of evaporated milk and condensed milk and add to frothy egg mixture. Stir in vanilla.

Grate in about quarter a tablespoon of nutmeg. Strain mixture through a



Caribbean baked custard

strainer into individual greased ramekins. Place the filled ramekins in a larger pan filled with water and bake for an hour.

Carefully remove from the oven and remove from the pan of water and cool. Serve individually at room temperature or cold with fruit or a slice of pie.

- Edited from News Americas.



## Thanksgiving's gone, but turkey Caribbean-style is still delicious

Thanksgiving Day in the United States has come and gone, but Caribbean immigrants can still add their own special spice to the traditional American dish.

That includes adding a twist on the main culinary attraction by doing a jerk turkey, or jerk turkey breast for those watching their health. Here's the recipe:



Jerk turkey breast

### INGREDIENTS

#### Brine:

- 1/2 cup kosher salt
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 8 cups chicken stock
- 1 1/2 tsp. black peppercorns
- 1 tsp. allspice berries
- 1/2 tsp. ginger, grated
- 1/2 onion, sliced
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1/2 tsp. ground sage
- 4 cups iced water

#### Marinade:

- 3 tblsp. jerk seasoning
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 7 lb. turkey breast

### METHOD

Boil brine ingredients, except iced water, in a large pot and cool.

Brine thawed, turkey breast (breast side down) with iced water overnight in refrigerator. Discard brine and marinate turkey breast in jerk seasoning, soy sauce and garlic.

Preheat oven to 450°F. Roast turkey breast, breast side up, for 30 minutes, then set oven to 350°F. Cover with foil.

Roast for another hour and 30 minutes or until internal temperature is 165°F.

- Edited from News Americas.



## Tasty, healthy sorrel drink

Sorrel is a must have at Christmas in Jamaica, but it can be enjoyed everywhere, during and after the festive season as well.

Sorrel tastes great and has some awesome antioxidants. Here's how you too can make this easily and simply:

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 1/2 cups dried sorrel
- 3 oz. fresh ginger, grated
- 5 pimento berries
- 6 cups water
- 2 cups brown sugar
- 2 tbsp. lemon juice
- 3/4 cup white rum
- Peel of an orange
- 2 cinnamon sticks

### METHOD

Add sorrel, ginger, orange

peel, pimento berries and cinnamon stick to a pot. Add water.

Cover and bring to a gentle simmer for about 10 minutes. Then simmer for another 30 minutes.

Strain the liquid into another container to remove solid ingredients.

Add sugar, lemon juice and rum to sorrel and stir until sugar has dissolved.

Refrigerate overnight for strongest flavor.

Pour over ice and enjoy. Store the rest in a bottle in the fridge and share.

- Edited from News Americas.



## SPRING HEALTH



The April issue of Caribbean Today will feature a comprehensive examination of how the healthcare industry serves the Caribbean community.

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## Tobacco smoking declines among Caribbean men

GENEVA, Switzerland – The United Nations health agency has signaled that tobacco might be reaching burn-out among Caribbean men, predicting that two decades of increasing tobacco use around the world are set to go into reverse.



Smoking is on the wane.

“For the first time, the number of tobacco users is declining worldwide,” Dr Ruediger Krech, director of the Department of Health Promotion at the World Health Organization (WHO), told journalists in Geneva last month.

In 2018, there were slightly more than a billion males using tobacco around the world, “over 40 million more than in the year 2000,” he said. “But now, for the first time, we are seeing declines in use, with WHO projecting that there will be at least two million fewer men using tobacco in 2020, and five million less by 2025,” he added.

### ‘SHIFT’

Describing the development as a “powerful shift in the global tobacco epidemic” in view of the fact that more than four in five smokers are male, Dr. Krech said that it

mirrors “consistent reductions” by 100 million women since the turn of the century.

Showing that tobacco use can be reversed should also give Caribbean and other governments confidence that they can meet the global target of a 30 percent reduction in tobacco use by 2025, the WHO official maintained.

Despite the positive trend, however, he warned that the world is not on track to meet this target, noting also that more than eight million people die from tobacco use every year – about half of its users. In addition, WHO said most tobacco-related deaths occur in low and middle-income countries, such as those in the Caribbean – areas that are targets of intensive tobacco industry interference and marketing.

- Edited from CMC.



## Miami-Dade under dengue alert

The Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County (DOH-Miami-Dade) is under a mosquito-borne illness alert.

Two cases of dengue fever of local transmission were recently confirmed in Miami-Dade residents. These cases are geographically linked to a travel-related case. Miami-Dade County had recorded 14 local cases up to press time in 2019.

Dengue is a virus spread through bites from the Aedes mosquitoes, which also spread chikungunya and Zika virus. Most people infected with dengue have mild or no symptoms. Those that do develop symptoms recover after about one week.

The common symptoms of dengue are fever and one or more of the following:

headache; eye pain (typically behind the eyes); muscle, joint, or bone pain; rash; nausea and vomiting; or unusual bleeding (nose or gum bleed, small red spots under the skin, or unusual bruising). Severe dengue can occur resulting in shock, internal bleeding, and death.

If you or a family member develop the mentioned symptoms, visit your health care provider or local clinic.

### PREVENTION

Meanwhile, DOH-Miami-Dade continues to advise the public to remain diligent in their personal mosquito protection efforts by remembering to “Drain and Cover”.

### DRAIN

• Drain standing water to stop mosquitoes from multiplying.

## HEAT CHECK: PAHO warns Caribbean of coming waves

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) is warning Caribbean countries to be prepared to deal with the heat waves that have so far affected several nations, including the United States.

It is predicting that this phenomenon will hit various parts of South America, and as a result countries in the Americas should be prepared due to the impact that this could have on peoples’ health, including the risk of death.

PAHO noted that over the past 12 months, at least 24 countries in the Americas have been affected by heat-waves, including The Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic.

“Weather forecasts for South America predict heat waves ... could increase heat-induced stress, reduce the availability of water, increase the risk of forest fires and the loss of crops,” PAHO reported. “Heatwaves can also cause power cuts, reducing access to cool air, refrigeration and air-conditioning.”

### PLAN

As a result, PAHO said it has developed communication materials to enable members of the public to be prepared, as well as a guide to help countries in the Americas formulate contingency plans to address heat waves.

PAHO warned that exposure to heat may cause severe symptoms such as heat stroke due to the body’s inability to regulate temperature.

“People experiencing this may present with hot, dry and red skin, rapid pulse, nausea,

cramps and loss of consciousness, which may lead to coma and death,” PAHO explained.

“The majority of deaths due to heat waves are caused by the worsening of infectious or chronic conditions. Other symptoms include edema in the lower limbs, heat rash on the neck, cramps, headache, irritability, lethargy and weakness.”

PAHO said people with a higher risk of experiencing complications or death during a heat wave are children, older adults and those with chronic conditions that



Temperatures are rising in the region.

require daily medication and that reactions to heat depends on each person’s ability to adapt and serious effects can appear suddenly.

- Edited from CMC.



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Dengue is mosquito-borne disease.

- Drain water from garbage cans, house gutters, buckets, pool covers, coolers, toys, flower pots or any other containers where sprinkler or rain water has collected.
- Discard old tires, drums, bottles, cans, pots and pans, broken appliances and other items that aren't being used.
- Empty and clean birdbaths and pet's water bowls at least once or twice a week

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)

## HEALTH



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## WORKING OUT: Tips for relieving joint pain in 2020

The health benefits of regular exercise are undeniable, and the United States Department of Health and Human Services recommends 30 minutes of exercise at least five times per week.

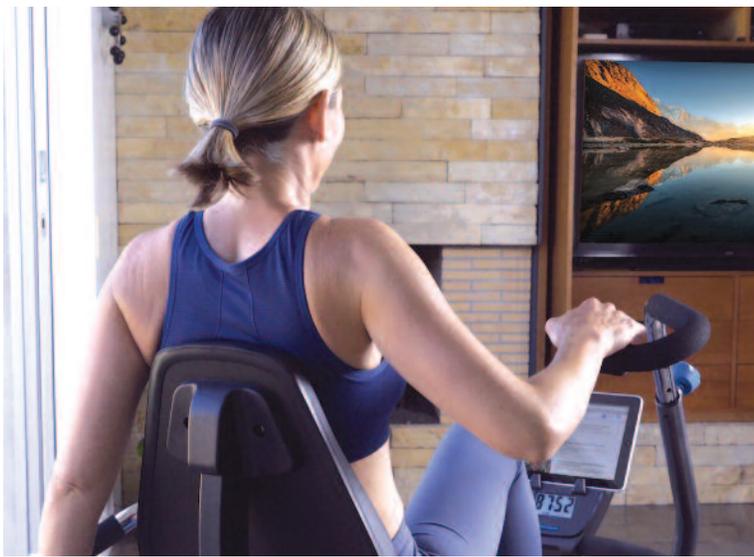
However, high-impact exercises like running and weight training can lead to joint pain, especially if you have a joint condition. The good news is that smart exercises with low impact can alleviate joint pain and deliver the same health benefits.

Here are a few tips to consider for a healthy start to 2020:

**Keep moving** - Trying to protect your joints by not moving actually does more harm than good. Regular exercise can actually help joint pain and ease symptoms of chronic joint conditions, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Just be sure to talk to your doctor about your exercise plan before you get started.

**Go low impact** - You don't need to put tremendous weight on your joints or jump up and down in order to break a sweat or elevate your heart rate. When you're already in pain, this type of exercise can actually make things worse. Instead, opt for high-quality, low-impact workouts.

There are now exercise machines available for home use that provide the same quality low-impact workout you'd get in physical therapy. Consider the Teeter FreeStep Recumbent Cross Trainer, a seated exercise machine that



Regular exercise is important.

takes the weight off the joints while torching calories.

### STEPPING

Unlike other recumbent machines which can be bad for the knees, the FreeStep mimics a natural stepping motion that prevents knees from traveling over the toes, as well as stabilizes the back and hips. And you don't have to sacrifice workout quality – in fact, research shows that FreeStep users burn 17.4 percent more calories than when using a recumbent bike at the same level of effort. Beyond calorie burn, it also offers full-body resistance training, which is especially important, as weak muscles can be a root cause of pain.

**Hydrate** - It may seem obvious, but ensuring that you drink the recommended daily intake of water is vital to reducing pain in your joints. Proper hydration helps

your body eliminate wastes and toxins that can lead to painful joint conditions. Plus, it helps to keep the joints lubricated and flexible, reducing friction and inflammation and helping to maintain healthy tissue.

**Stretch daily** - Stretching increases flexibility and range of motion, improves movement and function, reduces pain and stiffness and prevents further injury. Just remember to move slowly and keep it gentle.

At the very least, spend a good five to 10 minutes in the morning stretching your hamstrings, quadriceps, calf muscles and hip flexors. With the right exercises and maintenance program, you can improve your health and get a stronger body, without pain.

- Edited from *StatePoint*.



## Why a personalized diet can help you achieve better results

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12)

minants of health risks than body weight alone.

For instance, a woman who is apple-shaped tends to carry her extra weight in the mid-section. She would see best results on a lower-glycemic nutrition plan that is

lower in refined carbs and higher in healthy fats and protein.

“Research shows that one size does not fit all when it comes to weight loss and disease prevention,” says McCormick.

While it's no secret that

achieving one's weight loss goals is challenging, personalizing your plan can help make things easier, ultimately providing you a greater chance of success.

- Edited from *StatePoint*.



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## T&T cautions as Man-O-War jellyfish spotted on beaches

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad – The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) is urging people to take precautionary measures after confirming that there had been sightings of the Portuguese Man-O-War on Manzanilla, one of the most popular areas on the east coast of Trinidad and Tobago known for its beaches and virtually unspoiled natural environment.

The Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) said that the Portuguese Man-O-War is a species of the siphonophore, which are a group of animals related to the jellyfish.

“The tentacles of the Man-O-War contains venomous stinging cells that, while not poisonous to humans, can cause extremely painful blistering, stinging and

burning sensations to the skin, vomiting and paralysis,” the OPDM said.

“Symptoms of severe stings and allergic reactions may include difficulty in breathing and unconsciousness. Dead Portuguese Man-O-War coming into contact with the skin can result in stinging sensations for days after its death,” it warned.

The OPDM has listed a number of measures including “avoid stepping on the colorful float as this leaves the stinging tentacles behind and exposed to others who may be negatively affected by the sting” and that if you are stung by the Portuguese Man-O-War, you should visit the nearest district health facility for treatment.



## Significant drop in Haiti's cholera cases ~ WHO

GENEVA, Switzerland – The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported a significant drop in cholera cases in Haiti, saying that international action to drive down cholera led to a 60 percent decrease in cases worldwide in 2018, compared with the previous year.

This points to what the U.N. agency described as “an encouraging trend” in prevention and control in major cholera hotspots, such as Haiti.

“The decrease we are seeing in several major cholera-endemic countries demonstrates the increased engagement of countries in global efforts to slow and prevent

cholera outbreaks and shows the vital role of mass cholera vaccination campaigns,” said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

### INFECTION

Cholera is an acute diarrhoeal infection, which is caused by ingesting contaminated food or water.

It can kill within hours if left untreated, said WHO, stating that data from 34 countries shows there were nearly 500,000 cases in 2018, while nearly 3,000 people died from the disease.

- Edited from *CMC*.



## Miami-Dade under dengue alert

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

- Protect boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that don't accumulate water.
- Maintain swimming pools in good condition and appropriately chlorinated. Empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.

### COVER

- Cover skin with clothing or repellent.
- Clothing - Wear shoes, socks, and long pants and long-sleeves. This type of protection may be necessary for people who must work in areas where mosquitoes are present.
- Repellent - Apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing.
- Always use repellents according to the label.

- Repellents with DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol, and IR3535 are effective.
- Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than two months old.
- Cover doors and windows with screens to keep mosquitoes out of your house.
- Repair broken screening on windows, doors, porches and patios.

For more information, visit DOH's website at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/%5C/diseases-and-conditions/mosquito-borne-diseases/index.html> or contact DOH-Miami-Dade County.

- Edited from an article contributed by the Florida Department of Health.



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Peter A. Webley, Publisher

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## World Bank funds to restore St. Maarten airport

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The World Bank has signed a \$72 million grant agreement with St. Maarten to restore the Princess Juliana Airport on the Dutch Caribbean island.

“Tourism is the backbone of Sint Maarten’s economy, so restoring the full capacity of the airport is of vital importance to the economic recovery and development of our country,” said Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs.

A World Bank statement issued last month noted that the project, which is intended to restore full service at the



Princess Juliana Airport

airport, is a tripartite initiative that includes a \$72 million grant from the Sint Maarten Recovery and Reconstruction Trust Fund financed by the Netherlands Government and managed by the World Bank,

\$50 million from the European Investment Bank and \$7 million from the Princess Juliana International Airport Operating Company (PIJAE).

“The project aims to restore the airport terminal to its pre-hurricane capacity of 2.5 million passengers per year,” said Tahseen Sayed, World Bank country director for the Caribbean.

“It also uses ‘building back better principles’ to strengthen resilience to future extreme weather events, thereby supporting continuity of services for an airport that is a critical link for regional transportation.”

- Edited from CMC.



## BVI ports install feedback touch terminals

TORTOLA, British Virgin Islands – Touch terminals that will allow visitors to provide real-time feedback about their experience in the territory, have been installed at two local ports of entry.

The Customer Service Touch Terminals have been placed at the Waterfront Jetty in Road Town and at the Terrance B Lettsome International Airport on Beef Island.

In a recent statement, the territory’s Deputy Governor David Archer, Jr. said he was pleased with the advancement made so far, since the announcement of the initiative in early Oct. 2019.

“After meeting with stakeholders from key agencies across the public service and statutory agencies, my team and I made plans to pave a path towards the enhancement of customer service within our ministries, departments, and ports of entry,” Archer, Jr. explained.

“I am pleased that we have arrived at this point in our transformation and I am looking forward to the progress that we will continue to make.”



- File photograph

Machines will help visitors give real-time responses.

### FIRST STEP

Meanwhile, Kedimone Rubaine, business change manager for improved customer service and private secretary to the deputy governor, said the placement of terminals in the two selected ports is the first step towards having touch terminals in all ports of entry in the BVI.

The terminals are expected to provide a source of transparency and consistency in customer service as part of the government’s goal to transform the public service into an inter-

nationally acclaimed one. All feedback provided by the terminals is uploaded in real-time to a central online dashboard for analysis, which allows the various government agencies to understand how various factors affect their service levels. This information will be accessible by all government departments to enable them to generate reports and find ways of improving their customer service.

- Edited from CMC.



## Guyana’s report on prices concerns Caribbean Airlines

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad – Regional carrier Caribbean Airlines (CAL) has expressed concern about a recent report published by the Competition and Consumer Affairs commission in Guyana, which stated that passengers from Guyana were being slapped with higher prices to sustain less performing routes.

Over the years, Guyanese passengers have complained about the high prices for various CAL destinations from Guyana, including Trinidad

and Tobago. The complaints triggered the study that was recently completed by the Competition and Consumer Affairs Commission. The study found that, while Caribbean Airlines enjoyed a monopoly type situation on the Georgetown-New York route, its pricing remained high, even while being in control of 59 percent of the market overall.

In response, Caribbean Airlines denied overpricing Guyanese travelers to sustain

any other market. The airline said it has been loyal to Guyana and has remained in the country while other airlines packed up and left. The company said it has been expanding its service to Guyana and will continue to do so this year.

CAL said it closely manages ticket prices in the Guyana market to be competitive and appealing to its customers.



## St. Lucia adds tax for hotel accommodations April 1

CASTRIES, St. Lucia – An accommodation head tax will go into effect from April 1, according to the St. Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association (SLHTA).

The SLHTA said the tax will be charged to guests at check-in and is “designed to ease the impact of the tax on existing contract arrangements, ensure implementation ... and supplement financial resources for the Tourism Authority for the next financial year.”

Government approved the tax that is two-tiered and not applicable to guests under age 16 years.

The SLHTA said \$3 tax per night per guest will be applied to guests staying at a hotel with an average ADR below \$120, while the \$6 tax per night will be for guests at a hotel with an average ADR above \$120.

The SLHTA said the fee is to be applied to all non-sharing platform accommodation providers and that the rate of value-added tax (VAT) on hotel accommodation providers will be lowered from 10 percent to seven percent.

- Edited from CMC.



## 2019 was ‘a varied year’ for Caribbean tourism ~ CTO

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – The Barbados-based Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) has described 2019 as “a varied year, which both highlighted the strengths in Caribbean tourism and its inherent weaknesses”.

In a New Year’s message, CTO acting Secretary General Neil Walters said the sector’s strengths were evident in the significant growth rates experienced by most Caribbean countries.

Walters said despite contraction in some larger destinations, such as Cuba and the Dominican Republic, the Caribbean experienced an overall 6.1 percent level of growth in visitor arrivals during the first nine months of the year.

“It is noteworthy that the growth rates of those countries affected by the 2017 hurricanes were substantial, in some cases up to triple-digit levels,” he explained. “This level of recovery speaks volumes about the commitment of the Caribbean to this industry which has become the lifeblood of several countries.”

### WAKE-UP CALL

Walters said that when Hurricane Dorian, a Category 5 hurricane, swept through The Bahamas, the destruction “was a further wake-up call to us in the region that the climatic changes are here and likely irreversible.”

He said the cruise sector also had a strong showing in 2019 with a 5.8 percent growth rate for the first three quarters.

Walters said that towards the end of 2019, the organization announced restructuring plans. However, he lauded the recent improvements.

“The Caribbean tourism sector is ending 2019 in a position of which all of us can be proud, having seen an overall reversal of the position at the end of 2018,” said Walters. “As we look to 2020, we should not rest on our laurels, but continue to work to sustain the growth which was realized this year.”

### NEW YEAR

Walters said that in 2020 the CTO will continue with the theme of the “Year of Festivals” as it recognized that it was all but impossible for it to fully embrace the rich culture of the Caribbean in one 12-month period.

“This year we hope to move even further along the path of integrating our festivals and other cultural events into the tourism product in all our countries,” he said. “We recognize that not only do these aspects of our individual countries distinguish us from each other, but they also hold significant potential in the quest to attract even more visitors to our shores.”

“What is also becoming clearer to us is that we have not begun to fully and responsibly harness the power of our culture and heritage in defining who we are, and this is critical as we seek to offer authentic experiences which benefit both the visitor and the communities in which these experiences exist.”

Walters said that given the results recorded so far in 2019, “it is our expectation that 2020 will be, all things being equal, another year of growth, likely at a rate slightly lower for both stay-over arrivals and cruise visits.”

- Edited from CMC.



~ A CARIBBEAN TODAY SPECIAL FEATURE

## American-Haiti relationship much stronger ~ U.S.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The United States said its relationship with Haiti had grown much stronger in recent times as the French-speaking Caribbean community (CARICOM) country celebrated its 216th anniversary of Independence from France on Jan. 1.

“The ties between the United States and Haiti have grown stronger, because of our shared aspirations and the deep connections between the American and Haitian people,” said U.S. Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo.

“I wish the people of Haiti a happy Independence Day, as well as a New Year filled with peace, unity and progress in solving national challenges,” he added.

Pompeo said “the story of Haiti’s founding – from a rebellion of the enslaved to the creation of a republic based on democratic principles – is testament to what can be accom-



Pompeo

plished when people are determined to work together for the greater good.”

### ‘GREATNESS’

“Haiti’s Independence Day reminds us that greatness is within our reach when citizens and political leaders put their community and their country first,” Pompeo said, hoping that the New Year “will bring all

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 18)

## TPS recipients head to D.C., lobby for permanent residence

Haitian recipients of temporary protected status (TPS) in the United States are scheduled to be among a coalition of immigrants in Washington, D.C. this month to lobby lawmakers for permanent residence.

The group will be part of “Standing United for Permanent Residency for TPS on Capitol Hill” Jan. 6-8.

Nationals from Haiti, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua will meet lawmak-

ers to rally support for family reunification, permanent residence and protection for 300,000 TPS recipients and 275,000 U.S.-born children.

TPS provides protection to immigrants who are unable to return home due to potentially dangerous situations in their native countries, including armed conflicts, natural/political disasters, gang violence, and other extraordinary circumstances.



## U.S. offers \$1M in food aid

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti – The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), in response to growing needs in Haiti, is providing \$1 million to the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) to support ongoing humanitarian operations.

This funding will pay for the WFP to provide air, sea, and road transport to help move emergency assistance to vulnerable Haitians amidst considerable insecurity and difficult access. It will also finance the storage of humanitarian supplies, as well as information-management and coordination support to keep the WFP’s operations efficient and effective.

USAID is also working with the WFP to distribute an additional 2,200 metric tonnes

of food, which is earmarked to reach approximately 100,000 people and arrive in the coming weeks.

### RESPONSE

The food is in response to the emergency food needs in the country, as announced last month. To date, the WFP, has distributed approximately 749 metric tons to highly food insecure Haitian households. USAID, has also invested \$20 million in outgoing emergency food assistance programs throughout Haiti to support the most-vulnerable households with cash transfers and food vouchers, along with activities to strengthen livelihoods and promote key health nutrition practices.

- Edited from CMC.



## Haiti marks Independence on Jan. 1, but president absent from celebration

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti – Haiti commemorated the 216th anniversary of its Independence on Jan. 1.

However, the French-speaking Caribbean nation remained in political turmoil leading up to the commemoration, with President Jovenel Moïse under pressure to step down after facing accusations of corruption.

Moïse announced he would not travel to d’Armes of Gonaïves to join Independence celebrations, according to a senior aide. Opposition parties have been staging demonstrations throughout the year calling on Moïse to step down from office and had been planning similar action for Gonaïves to celebrate Independence Day with a “patriotic vigil” and a ceremony in memory of activists who died during the anti-government protests.

Jean-Osner Amisial, the departmental delegate of



Moïse was a no-show.

Artibonite, said in order to avoid confrontation, Moïse “would have” decided not to go to Gonaïves on Jan. 1 and that he would make his address to the nation from the National Palace.

### CONFRONTATION

Speaking on a radio program here on Dec. 30, Jules Charles Faustin, a political advisor to Moïse, told listeners that “Jan. 1 is a national holiday that deserves to be celebrated throughout ...

(and) this is not the time to enter into confrontations.”

Faustin said there was no law in the Constitution that would force Haiti’s head of state to celebrate the country’s Independence at

historical sites, recalling that during his second term in office former President René Prévail did not, for example, go to Vertières on Nov. 18, in celebration of the decisive victory over the French in the Battle of Vertières in 1803.

Faustin insisted that Moïse’s decision not to visit Gonaïves on Jan. 1 was not out of fear or weakness, noting that the president had visited the area on Dec. 14 and 28.



## Spring Cargo & Shipping

March is the start of the Spring shipping season. More than 500,000 Floridians identify their primary ancestry as West Indians, that is over 117% increase from 1990. Florida’s black household income for 2000 was a whopping \$32 Billion, that has continued to increase healthily over the subsequent 16 years. C.T will spotlight the various shipping services available to them, via Land Air and Sea to get their goods safely home in time for the season.

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~ A CARIBBEAN TODAY SPECIAL FEATURE

## URGENT NEED: Haitians facing 'dramatic' food crisis ~ U.N.

UNITED NATIONS – The United Nations' World Food Program (WFP) said Haitians are facing a "dramatic" food crisis, with an estimated one in three people in the French-speaking Caribbean country in urgent need of food.

WFP said that it is, therefore, scaling up operations in the country to provide emergency food assistance to

700,000, an attempt to reach a growing number of vulnerable people.

In order to be able to deliver humanitarian services, the agency is appealing for \$62 million, indicating that millions of Haitians have been hit hard by rising prices, weakening local currency and a drop in agricultural production.

The U.N. food agency said

it is also providing cash and vouchers to thousands of affected people in order to help local markets to recover and allow households to buy local food.

### RESTRICTIONS

Up to press time, WFP said it had met the emergency food needs of around 138,000 people.

Since September, road blocks caused by social and civic unrest further restricted access to food for vulnerable people, as they prevented both food and customers from reaching markets.

"We do not live well, we do not eat well, and we cannot even move around normally because of the chaos in the country," said Osenia Previlon,

who grows fruit and vegetables outside Gonaives, the largest city in Haiti's Artibonite department.

WFP said its school feeding program normally provides meals to 300,000 children annually in 1,200 schools nationwide.

- Edited from CMC.



## France warns citizens against travel to Haiti

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti – The government of France has issued an advisory to persons planning to travel to Haiti, asking them to postpone their trip to the French speaking Caribbean nation.

French nationals already in Haiti were also warned late last month to be careful.

The advisory also features a map outlining the areas not recommended for travelers.



## Bahamas intercepts 185 Haitians at sea in joint operation

NASSAU, The Bahamas – Bahamian authorities said they detained 185 Haitian nationals following a joint operation involving Bahamian and Turks and Caicos Islands officials last month.

The Royal Bahamas Defense Force (RBDF) said the southern borders of The Bahamas continue to be an

area of concern and has stepped up its enforcement initiatives in that area. It said as a result, and based on shared intelligence, a total of 185 Haitian migrants were apprehended during a joint operation by the RBDF and Operations Bahamas Turks and Caicos (OPBAT), which is a tripartite agreement between

the United States, Turks and Caicos and The Bahamas.

According to the RBDF, an OPBAT helicopter spotted a 30-foot low profile, wooden vessel approximately 24 nautical miles off Little Inagua with an unknown number of persons on board.



## HOPE FOR CHANGE: President calls for peace, unity in new year

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti – President Jovenel Moise, who withstood calls for his resignation throughout last year, is promising to work harder to improve the lives of Haitians in 2020.

In a message for the Christmas season, Moise, who came to power in 2017, noted that the new year must bring with it "hope for things to

improve.

"Yes, they must improve, because we will continue to fight without giving up. We will fight for what is due to you will reach you. Every day we work hard in the midst of all difficulties, to unite for and put an end to the ying yang that divides us.

"We need good unity, unity between rich and poor.

Unity between those from below and from above.

"Unity between black and fair skinned people. Unity between people from the outside and those from the city. Unity between the diaspora and the people living in Haiti," Moise said.

### HUGS

The president is urging

Haitians to "stand shoulder to shoulder, to refuse the abuses and violence that are done to our brothers and sisters.

"Let's learn to hug the other to take the road of progress and true development," he added.

Moise has been under pressure from Opposition political parties that have accused him of corruption and

have been staging violent street protests in a bid to force him out of power.

He has denied any wrongdoing and has instead called on the Opposition to be part of the efforts to establish a government of national unity.

- Edited from CMC.



## American-Haiti relationship much stronger ~ U.S.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17)

parties together in an inclusive dialogue that ends the political gridlock and results in a government that responds to the pressing needs of the Haitian people."

In November, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Mark Green said Washington remained "deeply concerned" about the current crisis in Haiti,

where demonstrations, sporadic violence and political gridlock are causing further instability.

"The Haitian people are bearing the brunt of these actions," said Green in a statement. "Local small businesses have been destroyed, which jeopardizes livelihoods. Families lack access to food and medicine, which puts them and their children's lives at risk."

Green said the U.S., therefore, is calling on Haiti's political, economic, and civil-society leaders to "form a government that is responsive to the needs of all Haitian citizens."

### DEMONSTRATIONS

Opposition parties have been staging street demonstrations in support of their demands for President Jovenel Moise to step down, accusing

him of corruption. But Moise, who came to power in 2017, has denied the allegations and instead is spearheading efforts to establish a government of national unity.

Amid the political stalemate in Haiti, the United Nations humanitarian affairs office, OCHA, warned on Friday of rising food insecurity in the French-speaking Caribbean country this year.

OCHA said the number of Haitians who do not have sufficient food to eat is expected to surpass four million.

The Haitian Declaration of Independence was proclaimed on Jan. 1, 1804 in the port city of Gonaives by Jean-Jacques Dessalines, as Haiti became the first Independent black nation in the Western Hemisphere.



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## Bolt finishes third in AP's male athlete of the decade

Jamaica's retired sprinter Usain Bolt has finished third in **The Associated Press's** best male athlete for the past decade.

Two athletes from the United States, basketball player LeBron James and American football player Tom Brady, finished first and second, respectively.

Argentine soccer star Lionel Messi was fourth. American swimmer Michael Phelps rounded out the top

five.

The selection covered the period 2010 to 2019. American tennis player Serena Williams was named AP's female athlete of the decade.

Bolt dominated world sprinting for much of the decade, especially the 2012 and 2016 Olympic Games. He retired from track following the 2017 IAAF World Championships in Athletics.



## Queen Elizabeth II honors ex-West Indies cricket greats

LONDON, England - Legendary former West Indies cricket captain Clive Lloyd, along with the team's former batting star Gordon Greenidge, have been recognized in the New Year Honors list by Britain's Queen Elizabeth II.

Lloyd, the 75-year-old Guyanese who captained West Indies to World Cup triumphs in 1975 and 1979, was late last month honored for his "services to cricket" surrounding an illustrious career which saw him become one of the game's true greats.

Greenidge, meanwhile, a 68-year-old former opening batsman, has been conferred with the Order of St. Michael and St. George Knight Commander for "services to cricket and to the development of sport" on the overseas list.

### 'SIR CLIVE'

Lloyd, who will now be known as Sir Clive, was credited for moulding the West Indies side of the late 1970s and early 1980s into a dominant force in world cricket. Following his playing career, Lloyd served as West Indies team manager and also held prominent roles with the International Cricket Council as match referee and as a member of their cricket committee. More recently, Lloyd served as chairman of West Indies selectors up until three years ago.

"This is a tremendous honor," said Lloyd, who was also a major force for English County club Lancashire between 1968 and 1986. "I'm delighted and humbled to receive this honor bestowed upon me by Her Majesty.

"I gave over 50 years of my life to this great game and to be recognized in this way, I know my contribution is well respected. To be honored for

playing a sport I enjoyed and which brought great pleasure to many is a pleasant surprise.

"This is dedicated to my family and all the people who were part on this journey with me - the West Indies and Guyana and Lancashire players, all the West Indian people, and all those who supported us."

He added: "Also, great to hear the news that Gordon has been honored as well. He has been a great servant of the game as well and his is richly deserved."

### LEGENDARY

Greenidge made his debut in 1974 in a side captained by Lloyd and went on to become one of the game's finest openers in a legendary partnership with fellow Barbadian Desmond Haynes.

All told, Greenidge made 7,558 runs at an average of 44 with 19 centuries, to seal his place in the pantheon of great Test batsmen.

"It's something I appreciate very much and it's nice to be recognized while I'm here to receive and appreciate it," said Greenidge, who served a spell as Bangladesh head coach and as a West Indies selector.

"... I also want to say thanks to my many teammates over the years. I've played alongside some amazing players and formed many great partnerships and relationships. This is an honor I will cherish."

Conde Riley, the Barbados Cricket Association president and Cricket West Indies director, was also honored with the title of Order of the British Empire (OBE) for "services in the field of sport and in particular cricket administration."

- Edited from CMC.



## Bermudian soccer team to play in U.S. professional league

HAMILTON, Bermuda - A team headed by a former Bermuda national coach will compete in the United Soccer League during the forthcoming season, the **Royal Gazette** reported late last month.

Sources told the newspaper that Bascome FC have joined the USL League Two and will compete in the Mid-Atlantic Division, which includes seven teams.

The local franchise is headed up by Andrew Bascome, a former Bermuda coach who turned 57 on New Year's Day. He was not immediately available for comment.

Bascome FC is among a group of league expansion teams listed that also includes AFC Ann Arbor, Asheville City SC, Philadelphia Lone Star FC and Southern Soccer Academy. Evergreen FC, Lehigh Valley United, Ocean City Nor'easters, Philadelphia Lone Stars FC, Reading United AC and West Chester United SC are the remaining teams in the USL League Two Mid-Atlantic Division.

### DEVELOPMENT

The USL League Two,



Bascome will lead the new entrants.

formerly the Premier Development League (PDL), provides a pathway for players to progress to the professional ranks and boasts member clubs that are owned and operated by a professional club or in partnership with a professional club.

The Bermuda Hogges were the last local team to compete in the USL. The Hogges pulled out of the PDL a week before the start of the

2013 season due to financial difficulties, bringing the shutters down on their six years as a USL franchise.

The Hogges was owned by businessman Paul Scope, who formed the franchise with the help of former professional players Shaun Goater and Kyle Lightbourne in 2006.

- Edited from CMC.



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