MARCH 2020

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Vol. 31 No. 4

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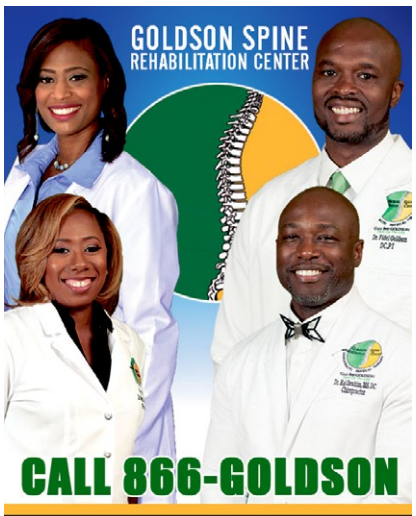

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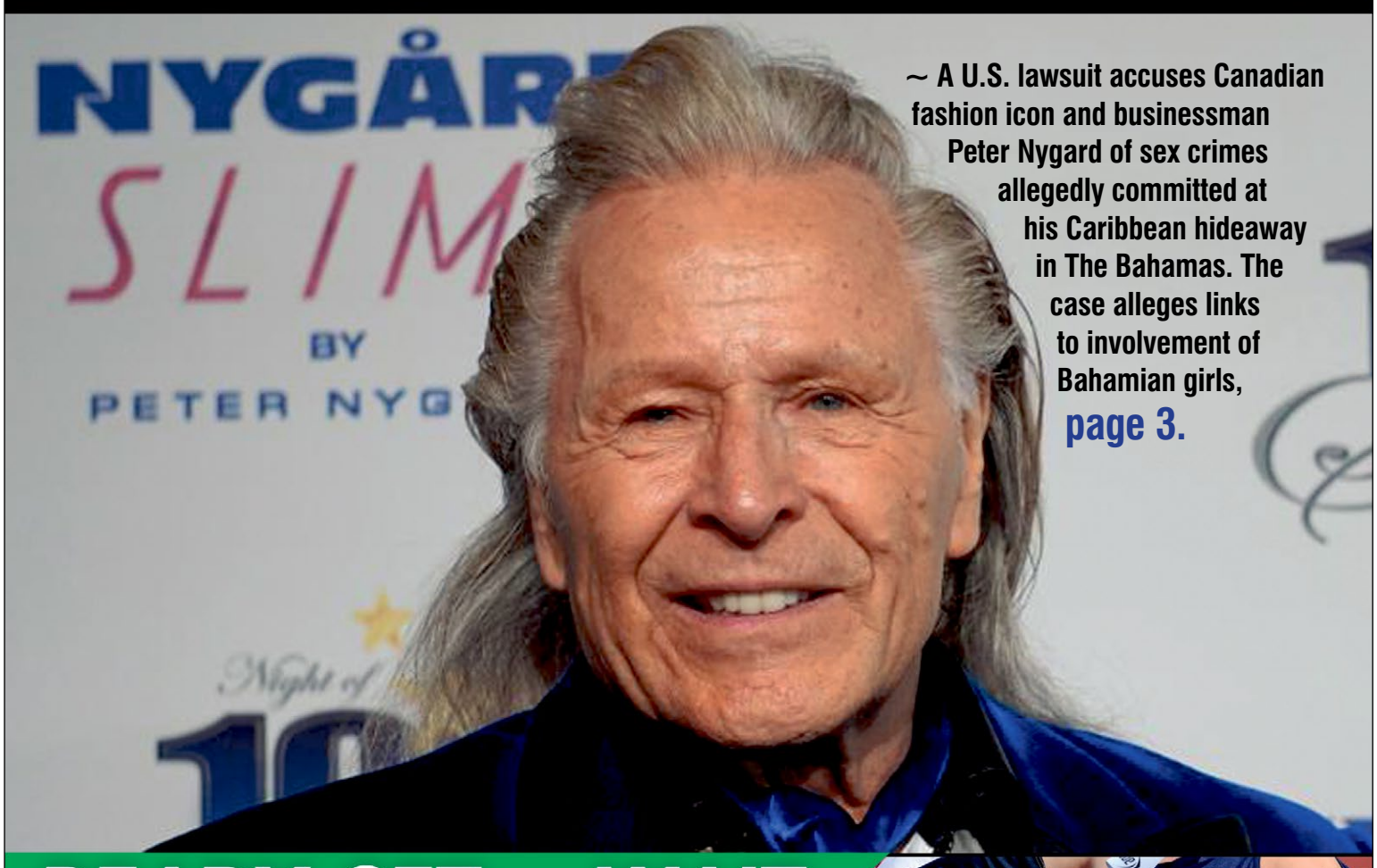
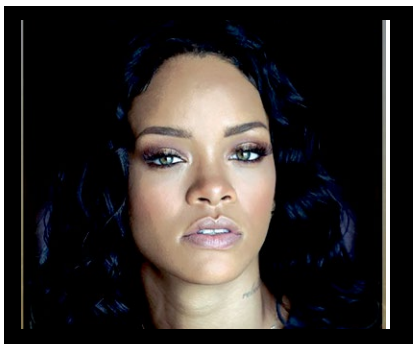
HOUSE OF HORRORS

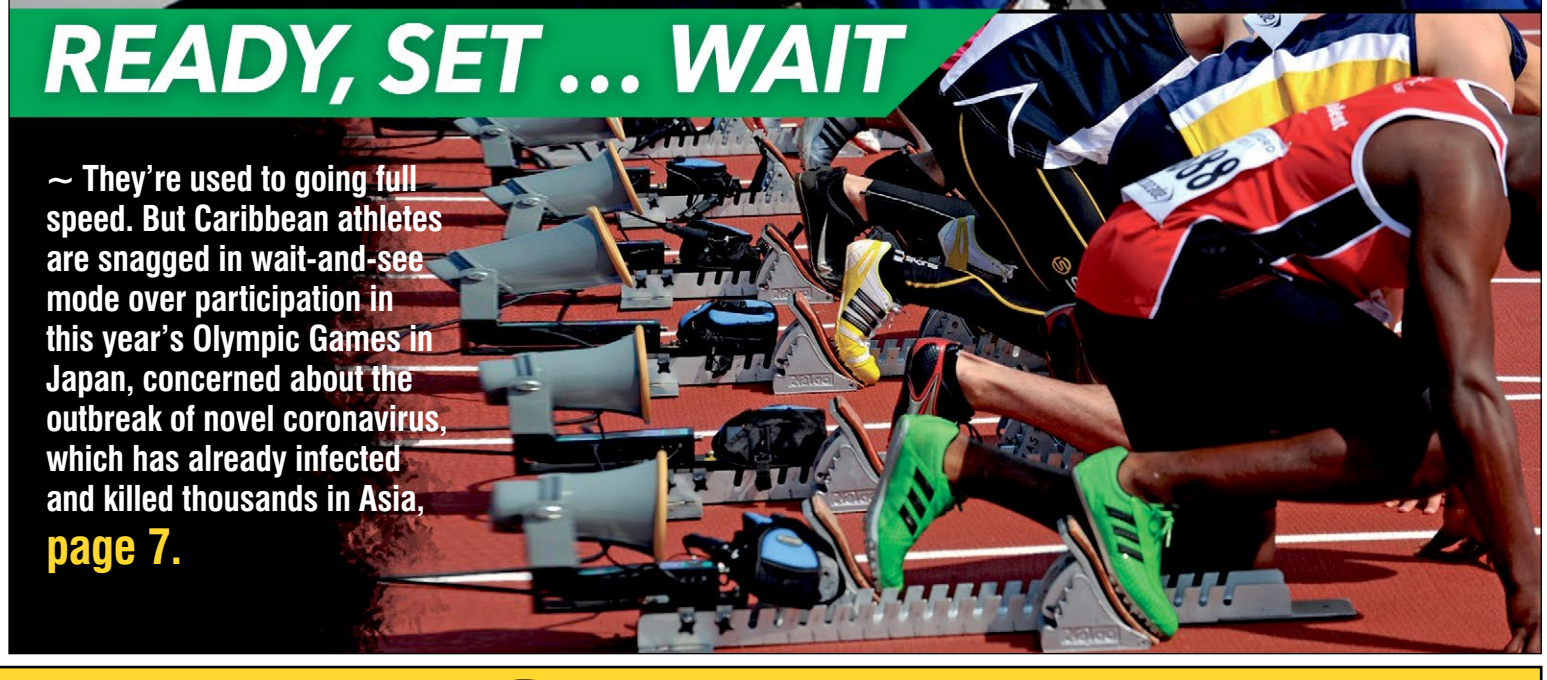


~ A U.S. lawsuit accuses Canadian fashion icon and businessman Peter Nygard of sex crimes allegedly committed at his Caribbean hideaway in The Bahamas. The case alleges links to involvement of Bahamian girls, page 3.

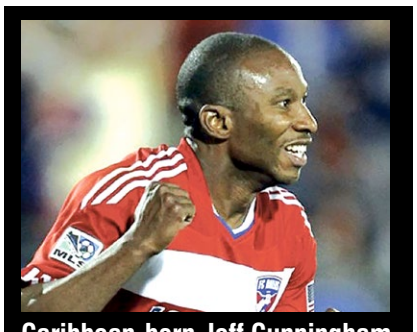


Barbadian superstar Rihanna last month received the President's Award at the 2020 NAACP Image Awards in California. She was honored for lifetime contribution to music, fashion and philanthropy, page 11.

READY, SET ... WAIT



~ They're used to going full speed. But Caribbean athletes are snagged in wait-and-see mode over participation in this year's Olympic Games in Japan, concerned about the outbreak of novel coronavirus, which has already infected and killed thousands in Asia, page 7.



Caribbean-born Jeff Cunningham is on the ballot for possible selection to the National Soccer Hall of Fame in the United States. The former striker with the U.S. national team, who also represented Jamaica, was once the all-time leading goal scorer in Major League Soccer, page 18.

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NEWS

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Trump targets Caribbean immigrants, deploys agents to sanctuary cities

WASHINGTON, D.C. – United States President Donald Trump is deploying elite tactical agents from the country's southern border to target undocumented Caribbean and other immigrants in so-called sanctuary cities, such as New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Chicago.

Sanctuary cities limit co-operation with the Trump administration's heightened effort to enforce immigration law.

The mayors in these cities say they want to reduce fear of deportation and possible family break-up among immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally, so such immigrants will be more willing to report crimes, use health and social services, and enroll their children in school.

However, Lawrence Payne, a spokesman for the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency, said last month that CBP will be aiding the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency "in order to enhance the integrity of the immigration system, protect public safety and strengthen our national security." Payne disclosed that 100 CBP agents will collaborate with ICE in enhancing immigration enforcement activities in New York and Chicago. He said more CBP agents will be deployed soon in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Houston, Boston, New Orleans, Detroit and Newark, New Jersey.

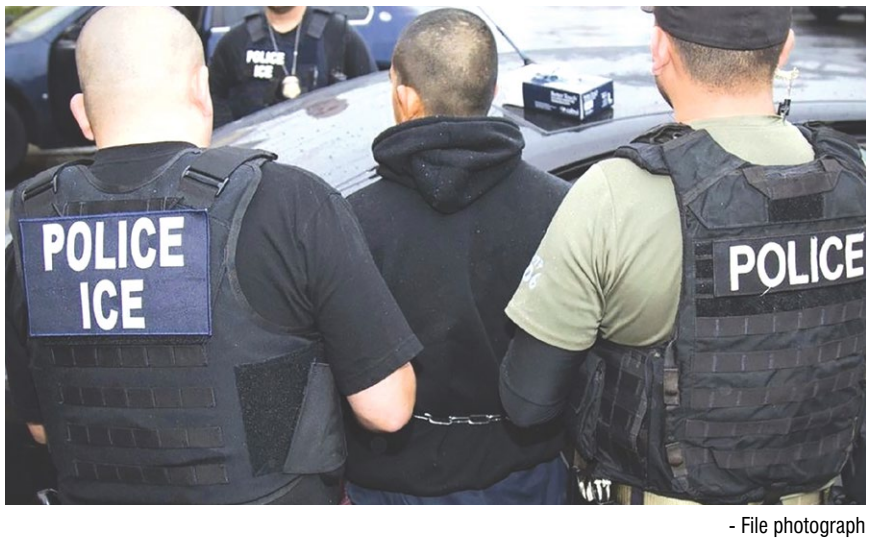
PREVENTION

"As we have noted for years, in jurisdictions where we are not allowed to assume custody of aliens (immigrants) from jails, our officers are forced to make at-large arrests of criminal aliens (immigrants) who have been released into communities," ICE's Acting Director Matthew T. Albence noted in a statement.

"When sanctuary cities release these criminals back to the street, it increases the occurrence of preventable crimes, and more importantly, preventable victims," he added.

In recent weeks, ICE said it has issued immigration subpoenas to authorities in Connecticut, New York City and Denver, Colorado, after announcing it will exercise its "longstanding legal authority to request critical information required to enforce federal immigration law from jurisdictions that adamantly refuse to cooperate local."

In January, in an open letter to his colleagues in the New York City Council, Councilman Carlos Menchaca, chair of the council's Immigration Committee, wrote about "a recent increase in ICE activity in the New York City region."



- File photograph

The U.S. clampdown has spread to big cities.

UPTICK

In recent weeks, he said New York's Immigrant Defense Project (IDP) has received an uptick in reports of ICE arrests or attempted arrests in the New York City region.

"Of the 21 separate reports we received, there are some alarming trends that we wanted to share with City Council Members: reports of ICE using mobile fingerprint devices; reports of ICE making 'collateral arrests', including multiple people arrested at once; ICE agents dressed in jackets or vests that only say 'POLICE'; ICE's ongoing use of ruses to trick people that they are 'police' or NYPD (New York Police Department); (and) an ongoing presence of ICE agents around Kings County Criminal Court," wrote Menchaca, who represents the 38th Council District in the Bronx.

He said he has also received reports of ICE agents in all five boroughs of New York City – the Bronx, Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island.

In addition, Menchaca said there is "an alarming increase of reports of non-targeted immigrants, what ICE calls 'collateral arrests,' meaning arrests of people not pre-identified by ICE."

In the seven years of collecting ICE raids reports, he said IDP has verified over 1,100 raids.

"If you hear reports of ICE raids or arrests from constituents or community members, please feel free to share them with IDP," Menchaca urged the public.

"We do not need confidential information about the individuals arrested. Instead, focus on gathering information about the tactics used by ICE during the encounter," he added.

- Edited from CMC.

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ADVERTISING DEADLINE: MARCH 20, 2020

Man chops ex-wife's kids as she prepares to visit Jamaica

A man who allegedly attacked and wounded his ex-wife's two children with a machete as she prepared to fly to Jamaica for Valentine's Day is being held in a South Florida lock-up without bond.

Dennis Anthony Reid, 47, is facing two charges of attempted murder and two counts of aggravated child abuse for allegedly attacking the children at their Lauderhill home on Feb. 14.

Police and media reports indicate that when Reid went to the house his ex-wife was in the shower. He proceeded to attack the girls, one his 10-year-old daughter, the other his 17-year-old stepdaughter.

Another seven-year-old child allegedly witnessed the attack, but was unharmed. The ex-wife's mother also reportedly witnessed Reid coming from inside the house carrying the machete, which he later threw in the yard before driving away. He later turned himself in to the police.

The reason for Reid's alleged actions were still unconfirmed up to press time. However, it is alleged he was upset after learning his ex-wife had married another man in Jamaica and was planning to fly the Caribbean island on Feb. 14 to see him.

'CHOPPING UP'

According to Lieutenant Mike Santiago, of the Lauderhill police, cops were notified of the incident by a 911 caller who said that "there was an individual chopping up females."

Reid

The reason for Reid's alleged actions were still unconfirmed up to press time. However, it is alleged he was upset after learning his ex-wife had married another man in Jamaica and was planning to fly the Caribbean island on Feb. 14 to see him. Reid, it has been reported, had tried unsuccessfully to reconcile with his ex-wife.

The victims of the attack were admitted to Broward Health Medical Center, reportedly in serious condition.

A judge ordered Reid, who reportedly lives in Lauderdale Lakes, not to try and contact the wounded children.

HOUSE OF HORRORS: Lawsuit accuses Canadian fashion icon of sex crimes at Caribbean compound

Nygard

Fashion icon and businessman Peter Nygard is be-ing accused in a United States court of sex crimes allegedly committed in The Bahamas.

The class action lawsuit has sparked outrage in the Caribbean nation, as some victims are reportedly young Bahamian females. Sharp criticism has also been leveled at influential figures, including politicians and law enforcement officials.

The lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York last month. It alleges Nygard, a Canadian, sexually assaulted 10 females, including some who were, at the time, under age 18. The females were not named.

The lawsuit claims Nygard allegedly used promises of careers in modeling, drugs and money to lure the females to his 150,000 square foot Caribbean compound Lyford Cay, which he built in the 1980s.

The lawsuit also claims some of the women were enticed to attend "pamper parties", where the accused allegedly sexually assaulted them. Several prominent law enforcement and political figures reportedly attended the parties

In addition, the lawsuit noted that some of the female victims were reportedly prevented from leaving Nygard's properties without permission and forced "through a combination of fraud, coercion, psychological force and manipulation, and physical force" to perform sex acts. They were also asked to recruit other women.

BIG NAMES

The complaint listed leading Bahamian political figures, including ex-Prime Minister Perry Christie, Deputy Prime Minister Phillip Davis and Member of Parliament Shane Gibson, among people who, news network CNN reported, allegedly "have a close relationship" with Nygard and "allegedly accepted money from him in exchange for political favors and influence." Caribbean Today could not confirm this.

The men mentioned were not, however, among the defendants named in the lawsuit, which also claimed Nygard allegedly "bribed local law enforcement, at the time, to help him conceal his sexual

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Caribbean countries eligible for H-2A, H-2B U.S. visas

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The administration of United States President Donald Trump has listed five Caribbean countries among 84 worldwide that are eligible for H-2A and H-2B visa programs, which allow American employers to bring foreign nationals to the U.S. to fill temporary jobs.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in consultation with the Department of State (DOS), said Barbados, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines are eligible to participate in the programs in 2020.

However, while the Dominican Republic is only eligible to participate in the H-2A program, not H-2B.

"DHS maintains its authority to add countries to the eligible countries list at any time, and to remove any country whenever DHS and DOS determine that a country fails to meet the requirements for continued designation," USCIS noted in a statement.

FACTORS

Examples of factors that could result in the exclusion of a country or the removal of a country from the list include fraud, abuse, denial rates, overstay rates, human trafficking concerns, and other forms of noncompliance with the terms and conditions of the H-2 visa programs by nationals of that country.

Typically, USCIS said it approves H-2A and H-2B petitions only for nationals of countries that the DHS secretary has designated as eligible to participate in the programs. However, USCIS said it may approve H-2A and H-2B petitions, including those that were pending as of the date of the Federal Register notice, for nationals of countries not on the list on a case-by-case basis "only if doing so is determined to be in the interest of the United States."

USCIS said the list does not affect the status of H-2 beneficiaries currently in the U.S., "unless they apply to extend their status." It also said the list applies to non-immigrants changing status in the U.S. to H-2A or B.

- Edited from CMC.

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Caribbean 'green card' holders face deportation for non-compliance of new U.S. rules ~ *USCIS*

WASHINGTON, D.C – The United States has implemented new rules for Caribbean and other foreign nationals who are permanent residents or "green card" holders.

According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), permanent residents who failed to admit they are immigrants when filing their income tax returns or who failed to report some of their income, could result in deportation.

Male Caribbean permanent residents, between 18 and 25, who also failed to register with the U.S. Selective Service, could also be deported, USCIS said.

On Feb. 24, USCIS began implementing the Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds final rule, denying green cards to Caribbean and other immigrants who may need U.S. government assistance.

USCIS said the final rule also addresses its authority to issue public charge bonds in the context of applications for adjustment of status.

- Edited from CMC. For more about the new U.S. 'final rule' on public charge, see page 5.

✸

Haitian American ends state senate bid, eyes N.Y. City Council

NEW YORK – Less than seven months after he announced plans to contest the 21st State Senate seat in Brooklyn, Haitian District Leader Josue "Josh" Pierre has terminated his campaign in favor of vying for New York City Council in the 40th District in Brooklyn, New York.

The 40th District is currently represented by Pierre's compatriot Dr. Mathieu Eugene, the first Haitian to hold elective office on the New York City Council. Eugene's term of office ends next year.

"After several weeks of deliberation, I have decided to run for City Council in 2021 and end my campaign for State Senate," Pierre, a twice-elected New York State Democratic Committeeman, repre-senting Flatbush, Brooklyn, told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)** last month.

Pierre

" … By running for City Council, I will be able to continue my years-long collaboration with community leaders, activists and non-profit groups who are fighting for affordable housing, education equity, small businesses and a better overall quality of life."

GROWING LIST

Pierre joins a growing list of Haitian-born or Haitian Americans who hold, or are seeking, elective office in New York.

He has served as a Democratic District Leader for the 42nd Assembly District in Brooklyn since 2016, which is represented by Haitian American New York State Assemblywoman Rodneyse Bichotte, daughter of Haitian immigrants, who was recently elected chair of the Brooklyn Democratic Party.

In Nov. 2018, Mathylde Frontus, daughter of Haitian immigrants, was elected as the Democratic representative for the 46th Assembly District in Brooklyn, covering the neighborhoods of Coney Is-land and Sea Gate, as well as parts of Bath Beach, Bay Ridge, Brighton Beach, Dyker Heights and Gravesend.

✸

HOUSE OF HORRORS: Lawsuit accuses Canadian fashion icon of sex crimes...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

crimes," according to CNN.

An editorial published last month in **The Tribune** in The Bahamas, carrying the headline "We Must Concentrate On The Victims, Not The Politics", blasted those believed to be complicit in alleged wrongdoing committed by Nygard and others, and lamented the scars the incident could leave on the Caribbean nation.

"If all of these allegations prove to be true the stench will long lie over The Bahamas for seemingly allowing this abuse to continue for so many years," the editorial read.

"In the filed suit the lawyers' finger of blame for allowing Nygard to prey on young Bahamian women was pointed squarely at the PLP and Bahamian police claiming a cover up of his alleged crimes in return for certain ministers and officers lining their pockets with a share of his wealth."

DATABASE

According to the lawsuit, Nygard had a computer database with information on more than 7,500 women and girls. Attorneys claimed the lawsuit will stop Nygard's alleged acts and give justice to the victims.

"We want these women to know that they are stronger, and their voice is more powerful, than the man who inflicted this horrible alleged abuse," a joint statement issued last month by attorneys Greg Gutzler and Lisa Haba, who represent the Nygard's accusers, noted.

"Peter Nygard's reign of terror has come to an end and we are committed to ensuring that he is brought to justice."

Nygard's representatives claim he is not guilty. According to CNN's report, they argued, the lawsuit "is meant to damage the reputation of Nygard through false statements after he filed a lawsuit against" a hedge fund billionaire.

However, Gutzler and Haba said more than 100 alleged witnesses, "including dozens of victims" have come forward with evidence since they filed a rape and sex trafficking class action lawsuit against Nygard.

- Gordon Williams. Multiple news agencies contributed to this story.

✸

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U.S. denying 'green cards' to Caribbean immigrants needing government aid

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Starting Feb. 24, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is implementing the Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds final rule denying permanent residence or "green cards" to Caribbean and other immigrants who may need U.S. government assistance.

"In light of the U.S. Supreme Court's February 21, 2020 decision to stay the statewide injunction preventing implementation of the Final Rule issued by U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, USCIS will now apply the final rule to all applications and petitions postmarked (or submitted electronically) on or after February 24, 2020," a USCIS statement noted on Feb. 21.

"The final rule, published on August 14, 2019 and originally scheduled to go into effect on October 15, 2019, prescribes how the Department of Homeland Security will determine whether an alien (immigrant) is inadmissible, and ineligible to adjust status to that of a lawful permanent resident in the United States because the alien is likely at any time in the future to become a public charge pursuant to section 212(a)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act," USCIS continued.

The agency explained the final rule also addresses USCIS' authority to issue public charge bonds in the context of applications for adjustment

James

of status. USCIS said the final rule includes a requirement that Caribbean and other immigrants seeking an extension of nonimmigrant stay or change of nonimmigrant status "demonstrate that they have not received public benefits over the designated threshold."

OUTRAGE

In response, Caribbean American Democratic Congresswoman Yvette Clarke, daughter of Jamaican parents, blasted the court's ruling.

"As a product of the hopes and dreams of an immigrant family, I am outraged by the Supreme Court's decision to implement the public charge rule – a cruel policy (U.S. President) Donald Trump has crafted to jeopardize the lives of our nation's most vulnerable," Clarke told the **Caribbean Media Corporation.**

"Historically, the United States has served as a place of refuge for individuals around the world seeking to fulfill the American Dream," she added. "Immigrants are our neighbors, our friends, leaders in our communities and even our members of Congress.

"It is disturbing to witness a global leader toying with people's lives, and we must not stop fighting until Donald Trump is removed from office," continued Clarke, an ardent critic of Trump's immigration policies.

In early October, Clarke welcomed temporary injunctions by U.S. federal judges in three states blocking the Trump administration's public charge rule against issuing green cards to Caribbean and other immigrants if they appear to be needing public assistance, such as financial aid, healthcare, food stamps and housing assistance. Judges in New York, California and Washington had issued temporary injunctions against the rule. Several legislators and immigration advocates filed legal challenges to Trump's rule.

But, in a 5-4 ruling late January, the Republican-leaning high court honored the Trump administration's request to set aside a ruling by a U.S. federal judge barring the so-called "public charge" rule while the merits of the case continue to be argued in lower courts.

WARNING

Immigration advocates warned the Supreme Court ruling would shut the country's doors to low-income immigrants and people of color, such as those from the Caribbean.

"I am keeping immigrant families who are wondering how to escape this impossible situation close to my heart today," said Clarke, who voted for Trump's impeachment in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"Having to forfeit basic needs such as nutrition, housing and healthcare to get a green card or receive other lawful status is a sacrifice that no family should have to make.

"This reckless decision will only increase the separation of families and the holes within our immigration system. Lives are at stake and actions have consequences. Donald Trump will go down in history as a corrupt and senseless leader who has put millions of lives in danger as each day passes.

"… We won't give up until we right this wrong."

New York Attorney General Letitia James, who had joined several attorneys general across America in challenging the Trump administration's request, said that she is still in the process of finding a permanent solution to the public charge rule.

"The final rule, published on August 14, 2019 and originally scheduled to go into effect on October 15, 2019, prescribes how the Department of Homeland Security will determine whether an alien (immigrant) is inadmissible, and ineligible to adjust status to that of a lawful permanent resident"

- Edited from CMC.

Lawyers fight Trump's attempt to bar Caribbean asylum seekers

NEW YORK – New York Attorney General Letitia James, as part of a coalition of 21 attorneys general, is fighting back against a new rule by the administration of President Donald Trump that will bar tens of thousands of people from the Caribbean and other places from asylum if they did not apply in a third country while en route to the United States.

In an amicus brief, filed in support of the plaintiffs in Al Otro Lada, et al. v. Wolf, James the coalition argues in support of asylum seekers who have already been trapped at the border for months due to what they call "other unlawful policies of the Trump administration."

The coalition urges the court to uphold a preliminary injunction issued by a lower court that already ruled in favor of the asylum seekers and asserts that the Trump administration is harming Caribbean and other communities across the country by imposing "dangerous and arbitrary asylum requirements on people fleeing violence and persecution."

LAWSUIT

The lawsuit — brought by nonprofit legal services provider Al Otro Lado — seeks to protect the rights of tens of thousands of individuals who have been unlawfully harmed by the Trump administration's "arbitrary changes to the asylum process." The case centers on asylum seekers who sought entry to the U.S. prior to the administration's efforts to implement an interim final rule prohibiting these individuals from seeking asylum unless they applied for and were denied protection in at least one country they transited through prior to arrival.

Joining James in filing the brief are the attorneys general of California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and the District of Columbia.

- Edited from CMC.

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Guyana celebrates 50th anniversary as republic

GEORGETOWN, Guyana – President David Granger is pleased with his country's progress as Guyana celebrated its 50th anniversary as a republic on Feb. 23.

In an address to the nation, Granger said the strides made by the Caribbean community (CARICOM) member state evokes emotions of pride and patriotism among all Guyanese.

"There is satisfaction over the nation's progress over the past 50 years and expectation over the prospects for the future," he said.

The president noted that the 50th republic anniversary is an exciting and encouraging time for Guyanese who can look forward to a higher quality of life in the future. He said the anniversary also marks the dawn of the "Decade of Development: 2020-2029", "which will witness progress in every sector."

According to Granger, among the initiatives of his decade of development plan are the provision of tuition-free education for eligible students at the University of Guyana; energy security, economic growth, constitutional reform and governance, the empowerment of youth and women, widespread infrastructural development and deepening of international relations as well as development for the indigenous people.

"We live in a country that is enjoying high levels of growth and human development and with accountable government and greater equality," Granger explained. "Ours is one in which everyone will be able to enjoy equality before the law, education that is free, employment that is satisfying and an environment that is safe and healthy."

- Edited from CMC.

Caribbean leaders denounce U.S. sanctions against Cuba

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – Heads of government from the Caribbean community (CARICOM) have reiterated their concern over the enhanced sanctions announced by the United States under Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, which strengthen the U.S. economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

In a communiqué issued following the inter-sessional CARICOM meeting here last month, the leaders from the 15-member regional grouping denounced as unjustifiable the application of laws and measures of an extra-territorial nature that are contrary to international law.

The heads of government also expressed their appreciation for the medical assistance provided by Cuba to the the community over the years that helped build their health sectors to the benefit and wellbeing of their people.

- Edited from CMC.

St. Lucia observes 41st Independence Day Feb. 22

CASTRIES, St. Lucia – St. Lucia late last month celebrated its 41st anniversary of political Independence from Britain with Prime Minister Allen Chastanet urging nationals "to shake the habits that continue to drown" the island.

In his Independence Day message, Chastanet said the developments over the past four decades, including building an economy no longer tied to or dependent on an agricultural monocrop, "we must continue to recognize the things that keep us back, the attitudes and modes of behavior which hurt us and eliminate them once and for all.

"We need to apply equal effort to the development of values as we do to fiscal policy and infrastructure. But what are these values? I am speaking here about love and respect for each other and for our country, respect for authority and the laws of our country, tolerance, honesty, discipline and so on."

'TOGETHER'

Chastanet said the theme for this year's Independence anniversary - "Now is the time; let's do this together" - was well chosen and builds upon the previous year, insisting that as an "independent nation we have responsibilities and while outside countries and institutions would give us a helping hand, in the final analysis the task of developing St. Lucia is ours."

Chastanet

Chastanet said he was using the observance of the Independence anniversary to urge all St. Lucians to change their attitudes, adding "let us collectively take stock and recommit ourselves to St. Lucia, to take control of our destiny."

Irwin LaRocque, secretary general of the Caribbean community (CAICOM), in a congratulatory message, noted that over the past 41 years St. Lucia has achieved a considerable level of socio-economic development, which has benefitted CARICOM, in particular, its advocacy in the areas of climate change, disaster management and the need for concessional financing to enhance our resilience.

- Edited from CMC.

Caribbean athletes in wait-and-see Olympic mode as coronavirus spreads

GORDON WILLIAMS

They're used to going full speed. But Caribbean athletes are now snagged in wait-and-see mode over participation in this year's Olympic Games.

Their concerns center on the outbreak and rapid spread of the novel coronavirus, which has already infected and killed thousands.

The Olympics, which every four years offers elite Caribbean stars a platform to command the global sporting spotlight, is scheduled for July 24 to Aug. 9 in Tokyo, Japan. However, like a nervous gymnast on the beam, it's caught in a delicate balance. China, where the virus was first identified weeks ago, is also located in East Asia and already more than two dozen nations, including Japan and the United States, which is home for several top Caribbean athletes, have identified multiple citizens who have contracted coronavirus. It's expected to get worse.

Meanwhile, several international sporting events scheduled for East Asia this year have already been called off. The World Athletics Indoor Championships, another event which attracts Caribbean athletes and which should have been held this month in Nanjing, China, was postponed until 2021. The Chinese Grand Prix auto race, originally scheduled for next month, won't start due to the health scare. South Korea cancelled its K League professional soccer season. Italy's Serie A, suspended some games. The 2020 Olympics could be next.

It's still unclear if Olympic champions Miller-Uibo, left, and McLeod will be allowed to prove they're still number one.

Medical experts already predict the impact of coronavirus - now official called COVID-19 - will likely continue into next year. That makes prospects for the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics in Japan, where a total of more than 15,000 athletes are scheduled to compete, questionable.

Despite a declaration last month by an International Olympic Committee (IOC) member that the Games are "on track," another senior member, Dick Pound, later told the **Associated Press (AP)** that if coronavirus prevents Japan from hosting the Games, the 2020 Olympics will "probably" not be moved to another site, but cancelled.

DILEMMA

Meanwhile, elite Caribbean athletes, most of them professionals, are continuing their Olympic preparations. Some worry that if the 2020 Games are called off, due to the spread of the virus, they will be deprived not just the opportunity to showcase athletic skills to the world, but cashing in financially. Performance in the Olympics can make or break an athlete's career.

Yet even if the Games are cleared to go on, Caribbean athletes will still be confronted with the decision of whether or not they should participate. Some fear coronavirus will leave lingering effects. The general consensus is that a final decision will be almost exclusively influenced by possible health implications.

"Any decisions made, whether you're an athlete, spectator, coach, manager, would be primarily predicated on their wellbeing and that's what we will do," Claude Bryan, a Jamaican-born, U.S.-based agent who represents several top Caribbean track and field athletes, told **Caribbean Today** on Feb. 11.

PRIORITY

Concern over athletes' welfare appeared to have been the driving factor behind the postponement of the World Indoors.

"What we had done prior to the World Indoors, we (management) and the athletes and their coaches were in discussion and agreed that wellbeing was priority," added Bryan, whose clients include multiple Olympic medal prospects from the Caribbean, including defending champions Shaunae Miller-Uibo of The Bahamas (400 meters) and Omar McLeod of Jamaica (110 meters hurdles).

National athletic federations in the Caribbean, which select and send athletes to the Games, appear in lockstep.

"The JOA will continue to monitor the developments of the virus and the safety of all our stakeholders participating in the Games will be paramount to any decision taken," a quote attributed to Ryan Foster, chief executive officer and secretary general of the Jamaica Olympic Association, noted on Feb. 24.

Foster added that up to that date the IOC had "not indicated that the Games will be cancelled."

NO ESCAPE

Yet pressure is mounting. Even if Caribbean athletes do not go to the Olympics in Japan they may not escape exposure to novel coronavirus. Up to press time

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

Online Caribbean education slow, but progress evident

NASSAU, The Bahamas - One of Veola Stewart's life goals was to earn an advanced degree in education. However, when her job posted her to a rural location in The Bahamas several years ago, that goal seemed more out of reach than ever – literally.

The geography of her country, with its more than 700 islands and cays, often makes it difficult for citizens outside of large urban areas to pursue advanced studies. So she opted to continue her studies via the Internet.

"I am a product of online education," Stewart explained. "… I wouldn't have been able to achieve my goal without it, as there wasn't any institution at the graduate level on my island."

Online instruction is the latest stage in a centuries-old evolution. Today, some of the benefits are the same – distances overcome and different lifestyles accommodated. Despite these advantages, the adoption of online education in the Caribbean has been slow.

To address this challenge, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) developed an online course where instructors can learn to design and teach their own online courses. Stewart completed the course in 2017 and is working to become an online professor with the University of the West Indies.

TRANSITION

Samantha Roach, an educator from Trinidad and Tobago, credits the course with increasing her knowledge of online feedback and assessments, online teaching tools and strategies for developing curriculums for Internet-based courses.
She has been a first-hand witness to the transition in Caribbean educational institutions toward more online-based instruction, as the college where she works has begun to offer classes entirely via the Internet in several departments. While she was already certified in managing and facilitating online learning, she took the IDB course to gain "the foundational skills necessary to build an online class that creates a sense of community."

Since then, she has led an initiative at her college to offer an associate degree entirely online. She has also gone on to train other teachers in Internet-based instruction and to help craft an institutional online-learning policy. Roach currently focuses on developing the curriculums for certification programs offered fully online.

Edited from a CMC feature provided by Inter-American Development Bank.

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Caribbean nationals hit by Trump's ban on trusted traveler programs

GORDON WILLIAMS

International travel for thousands of Caribbean nationals living in New York just got harder.

The administration of President Donald Trump has banned new applications by the state's residents for trusted traveler programs (TTP), which allow passengers returning to the United States quicker passage through immigration and customs checkpoints.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), under the direction of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), early last month announced its policy in response to New York's Driver's License Access and Privacy Act, or "Green Light Law", which the federal agency claims bars it from getting information from the state's Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

The "Green Light Law" went into effect in Dec. 2019. It allows undocumented immigrants, including many from the Caribbean, to apply for a driver's license in the state, but prevents U.S. immigration authorities from accessing information provided by those applicants.

Global Entry has been suspended in New York.

PROTECTION

The president and CBP claim New York's law protects undocumented immigrants who may have committed serious crimes and endangers national security.

"Without access to this information, CBP cannot properly complete security checks for Trusted Traveler Program applications and renewals submitted by New York residents, greatly increasing our security risk," the agency noted in a statement last month.

To become a member of TTP, including Global Entry, NEXUS, Sentri and Fast, American citizens and permanent residents must pass a U.S. government background check, which sometimes takes months. Global Entry, for example, allows member-ship, which is provided for a fee, for five years. Members, like those traveling from the Caribbean, are allowed to avoid long immigration lines when entering the U.S.

The Trump administration's new policy bars new Global Entry applicants from New York. Renewals are also not allowed. State residents whose applications were being processed will be refunded fees paid to the government.

TSA

Not mentioned in the new DHS policy is the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) TSA PreCheck™ program. TSA PreCheck™, therefore, will still allow travelers who live in New York to avoid lengthy security screenings when going through airports on their way out of the state.

"Travelers currently enrolled in DHS trusted traveler programs will continue to receive TSA Pre-Check™ status," a TSA statement noted.

But that too could change, according to Ken Cuccinelli, acting DHS deputy secretary, who called the "Green Light Law" "dangerous." In addition, Trump, prior to a mid-February meeting with New York Governor Andrew Cuomo to discuss the TTP suspension, demanded the state end pending law-suits has filed against the president.

Some interpreted the president's statement as a possible quid pro quo, meaning if New York dropped the lawsuits against the president he would lift the TTP suspension. Trump, however, claimed the suspension of TTP is aimed at protecting the U.S.

"He (Cuomo) must understand that National Security far exceeds politics," Trump declared.

Following Trump's meeting with Cuomo, the governor's office announced that New York will offer federal investigators access to information of certain TTP applicants applying for driver's license on a case-by-case basis. New York, however, was adamant it would not relinquish information on driver's license applicants who may be undocumented immigrants.

"We are never going to give them that," a Cuomo representative told CNN television network.

In addition, New York's attorney general said she will sue the federal government to lift the suspension on TTP.

'ANTI-IMMIGRANT'

The CBP's decision followed the president's State of the Union address early last month when Trump criticized cities "where radical politicians have chosen to provide sanctuary for these criminal, illegal aliens."

Cuomo called the Trump administration's new policy "pure politics." and "anti-immigrant."

Others in the state, including Caribbean roots representatives, have expressed outrage. Yvette D. Clarke, who has Jamaican parents, last month teamed up with Kathleen Rice, a fellow U.S. congresswoman from the state, to send a letter to Chad Wolf, acting DHS secretary Chad Wolf protesting the Trump administrations decision, which they claimed would impact "roughly 50,000 to 80,000 New York State residents with applications pending and another 150,000 to 200,000 New York State resident per year, who are trying to renew membership" in Trusted Traveler Programs.

"This is of great concern and unacceptable to many of our constituents," the letter also noted.

Meanwhile, frequent Caribbean travelers were not pleased the new policy targeted New York, home to the most Caribbean nationals in the U.S. A Jamaican man, who said he was planning to apply for Global Entry, told **Caribbean Today** he was "surprised" when he learned about the Trump administrations decision as he had become tired of the long lines at airports in New York, where he lives. However, he said it would not affect the frequency of his international travel.

"Look, I know it means standing in long lines," the Queens resident said, "but I guess that's what we'll have to do. So we just have to make the best of it."

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Caribbean athletes in wait-and-see Olympic mode as coronavirus spreads

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

infections had spread rapidly. The number of people infected may have alreadu surpassed 100,000, according to some estimates. More than 2,700 have been confirmed dead, mostly in China. It shows no immediate signs of slowing down either, and up to press time there was no known vaccine to prevent it.

Medical experts in the U.S. believe coronavirus will be around into 2021 and the Centers for Disease Control is preparing for a possible pandemic in the U.S., where a significant number of the Caribbean's elite athletes live and train.

Meanwhile, coronavirus may not be the only health worry for Caribbean athletes if they participate in the 2020 Olympics. Concerns have also surfaced about possible high level radiation in Japan, the fallout of a 2011 earthquake which triggered a tsunami that created the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster, roughly 130 miles northeast of Tokyo.

Global environment group Greenpeace recently issued a report that identified "hot spots" of dangerously high radiation in Fukushima. Radiation levels recorded at the J-Village sports camp in the prefecture were measured at more than 1,700 times than before the earthquake, according to the report. That means anyone staying in that area during the Olympics would possibly be exposed to more radiation each day than they would normally in a year.

CONCERN

For now, however, it appears the main concern for the Olympics is novel coronavirus. Up to last month no final decision on the fate of the 2020 Olympic Games had been made.

"I do not know of a timetable," Bryan said.

The latest word from Olympics organizers is that no consideration for postponement or cancellation of the Games has been considered, although Toshiro Muto, chief executive officer, had earlier said he was "seriously worried" about the coronavirus's impact on the Games.

"There's no case for any contingency plans of canceling the Games or moving the Games," IOC member John Coates said on Feb. 14, quoting advice from the World Health Organization. Pound told AP a final IOC decision on the fate of the 2020 Olympics can come no later than late May.

For now, Caribbean athletes are ready, set, but not quite ready to go. At this time, it's wait-and-see.

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Vol. 31, Number4 • MAR. 2020

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Trump's travel ban is pushing to make America white again

On Jan. 31, the same day the administration of United States President Donald Trump issued a proclamation on National African American History Month 2020, which partly stated: "our great Nation is strengthened and enriched by citizens of every race, religion, color, and creed," the administration also brazenly issued a travel ban on various nationals from several African and predominantly Muslim countries.

Trump

As of Jan. 31, nationals from Nigeria, Eritrea, Sudan and Tanzania seeking visas to join their spouse, children or immediate relatives as permanent residents or "green card" holders and live in the U.S., will be banned. The ban also prevents immigrants from Sudan and Tanzania from applying for the Diversity Visa Lottery, which grants green cards to as many as 50,000 people a year.

FELICIA J. PERSAUD

The only exception is for those who are eligible for special immigrant visas, based on aiding the U.S. government.

The U.S. government claims the affected countries fell short of its security standards, including passport technology and failed to share information on criminals and terrorist suspects. But the claim clearly does not hold water as the U.S. State Department claims nationals from the same countries can still apply for B1/B-2 visitors and business visas.

AFRICA'S IMPACT

It is interesting to note that Nigeria and Eritrea account for 14 percent of all green cards issued annually to African nationals, according to the Migration Policy Institute and the U.S. Census Bureau says Africa has the fastest-growing number of immigrants in the U.S., with Nigerians making up the largest group within this population.

Nigerians are also among America's best-educated immigrants. In 2017, data shows 61 percent held a bachelor's degree or higher, nearly twice the rate for the US native-born population and for the foreign-born population as a whole while 54 percent worked in the arts, business, management and sciences, compared to 39 percent of the native-born Americans.

The only rationale that makes sense lies in Trump's own hardline pro-white, anti-brown and anti-black immigration agenda. Remember the leaked Jan. 2018 Oval Office conversation in which Trump allegedly asked of Haitians and African immigrants: "Why are we having all these people from

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

Black History Month 'a necessary and conscious action' ~ *Barbadian reverend*

NEW YORK –The Barbadian-born rector of St. Paul's Church in the Village of Flatbush, Brooklyn, New York says the celebration of Black History Month in the United States is "a necessary and conscious action.

"It is of vital importance that we know our heritage and our plethora of contributions to the development and growth of this society," said the Reverend Sheldon N.N. Hamblin, whose Episcopal/Anglican Church is in the Diocese of Long Island in New York and a member of the Worldwide Anglican Communion.

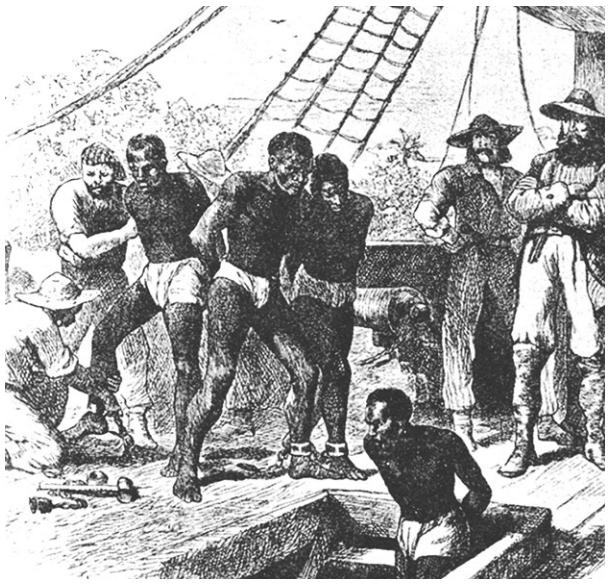
"Coming out of some 400 years of the African Transatlantic Slave Trade and a tumultuous history, the struggle of the black race is further compounded by the erroneous teaching and racist ideology that nothing black is essentially good.

"Indeed, 'we have come this far by our faith' and our unrelenting struggle to overcome all of the injustices and hindrances to our growth and potential development," said Rev. Hamblin, who also serves on the board of the Episcopal Urban Caucus and Union of Black Episcopalians in New York.

"For too long, we have been dehumanized in spite of the significant contributions we have made to this nation's economy, scientific advancement and infrastructure. It is, therefore, paramount that we acknowledge and celebrate our black heritage or black identity."

POWER

Additionally, Hamblin, who serves as a trustee of the Estate of the Diocese of Long Island, said "it is imperative that we enlighten others – especially those who are not of our constitution and those of us who have been brainwashed beyond the realm of common sense and reason – to understand the power and dignity of our blackness."


Starting with the African Transatlantic Slave Trade, the struggle of the black race has continued today.

He urged blacks not to allow others to demarcate their heritage, race and ancestry.

"Irrespective of our origin, be it Africans from the African continent, African Americans coming out of slavery, Caribbean Americans and Haitian Americans coming out of slavery, we share a common ancestry," said Hamblin, who migrated to the U.S. in 1995. "There are no lines drawn to demarcate our kind of blackness.

"Our heritage is the same; our ethnicity is undeniably one of pride, dignity and royalty," added Hamblin, a member of the Black Clergy Caucus in the Diocese of Long Island. "We share a royal heritage – a heritage distorted by the sin of slavery.

"Consequently, the need for us to tell and to share our stories must not be undermined. Ironically, the stony the road we've trod is the strength of our race, for we have not been defeated by the dehumanizing forces that have been unleashing their venom against us for centuries. Indeed, we will ultimately prevail; we will regain the respect and fairness that is intrinsically ours."

'OUR SONG'

Hamblin stressed that "even though many of us from the African diaspora are on many levels still learning what it means to be black, especially in these United States of America and in this 21st century, we have a song to sing and a story to proclaim, and that must be one unified harmonious song!

"Our forefathers and foremothers have willingly or unwillingly passed on the baton. It's ours to arrange the music

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

MISMATCH: When age difference in relationships is more than just a number

Many young women still buy into the notion that they can marry a much older man and still expect to have a balanced meaningful relationship and live happily ever after.

TONY ROBINSON

Conversely these old guys are drawn to these young women.

The reasons are often as clear as the bank account of the old man and the hot cute body of the young woman. What she lusts after and what he desires are two different things that ultimately lead to the same conclusion - a mismatched union.

But *caveat emptor* - buyer beware - there should be a limit. Five years, seven years, even 10 years older should be acceptable. But don't push the boundaries and marry a man who is the same age or close to that of your father. Unless, of course, you have ulterior motives - the fat bank account, nice SUV and fancy townhouse that are the hallmarks of the old guys.

When a woman marries a man who is 20, 25 or 30 years older than she is, she's asking for trouble. When she's 25 and he's 45 that's cool, they make a lovely couple, say their friends. But the years add up disproportionately.

BORROWED TIME

When she turns 35, he's now 55, still okay. She then hits 45 and he brushes 65. Both add a decade, but those 10 years are vastly different.

Then she touches 55, she's still elegant and attractive, if she takes care of herself. But he's now 75, the twilight years. At 60 she's still looking good, but he's now 80, living way past the allotted three score and 10, basically living on borrowed time.

I recently encountered this couple where the woman was in her 30s and her husband was an Englishman in his 60s. She was young looking, slim, pretty and appealing. She could pass for a woman in her 20s. He, on the other hand, looked every bit of his over six decades on Earth. But they seemed happy and he absolutely adored her - an adoration perhaps born out of extreme gratitude for landing such a hot, young Jamaican woman. Maybe she was the one who was grateful for landing such a foreigner of future security.

In a few short years he'll be approaching the bedpan era, when

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

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VIEWPOINT

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CARIB Comments

"It is disturbing to witness a global leader toying with people's lives and we must not stop fighting until Donald Trump is removed from office" *– Caribbean American Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke is outraged at the administration of President Donald Trump's decision to prevent Caribbean nationals seeking public assistance from gaining permanent United States residence or "green cards".*

"In order to avoid the planned bloodshed, the Government takes the opportunity to inform, the population and the carnivalists in particular, that it has been decided to cancel the carnival in Port-au-Prince" *- A government statement, prompted by violent upsurges in Haiti's capital, puts an end to this year's carnival celebrations in the Caribbean nation's capital.*

"Caning will not return to this country. We are not about to introduce measures that are draconian, in order to solve the problems that we have failed to solve" *– Jamaica's Minister of Education, Youth and Information Karl Samuda, says his government will be utilizing counseling, among other interventions, to address social challenges affecting the education sector.*

"This is perhaps one of the worst things that is happening throughout the region. It's one of the negative things that they have taken up from, as we would say, over and away" *– Caribbean community Chairman and Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley laments the increasing cases of substance abuse among young people in the region.*

- Compiled from various sources.

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Black History Month 'a necessary and conscious action' ~ *Barbadian*

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

and direct the orchestra in this symphony called 'The Struggle for Perfect Freedom'."

Hamblin said this euphonious melody and harmony of voices will still every voice that is opposed to blacks' advancement and the realization of their "fullest God-given potentials." He said black identity, like all others, is "powerful and vibrant and full of vitality and love.

"The tumult and tempest of our past must not serve as hindrances to where we should go. We must not be satisfied with laying down our burden until we have finished the work left by our forefathers and foremothers for us to do."

In invoking a revolutionary refrain, he proclaimed "long live Black History Month," stating that the month serves as "a tapestry on which our history of over 400 years is displayed and is a reminder of where we came from, where we still are and the flexuous path we have to take to overcome and ultimately dispel the darkness that is still determined to reign after 400 years."

- Edited from CMC.

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MISMATCH: When age difference in relationships is more than just a number

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

everything goes south. Meanwhile, she'll still be relatively young and sprightly. What's going to happen down the line?

Yet, if marrying a much older man is so bad, what about a young lusty hot-bodied man marrying a much older woman 20 or 30 years older? President Macron of France married his schoolteacher, who is over 25 years his senior.

I do not recommend that. When he's 65 she'll be 90 years old. Sacre bleu. Pardon my French.

seido1yard@gmail.com

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Trump's travel ban is pushing to make America white again

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

shithole countries come here?" In 2017, at another Oval Office meeting, Trump reportedly told his national security team, that once Nigerians saw the U.S. they'd never "go back to their huts" in Africa.

He also later spoke of taking in immigrants from great European countries like "Norway."

NO COINCIDENCE

Now less than three years later, Nigerians find themselves facing a travel ban along with several other African nations.

Coincidence? I think not!

With November approaching, Trump and his racist hardliners like Stephen Miller are on a mission to deliver on their Make America White Again (MAWA) agenda, which has been the theme of the Trump campaign and governance from day one.

The naturalized immigrant voter in this country has only one recourse come Nov. 2020: Vote or they may find they are soon the victim of a draconian xenophobic policy to push a white nationalist agenda and "rid" the country completely of the black and brown immigrants "infecting" their "pure, white, Christian nation."

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

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'PULL UP!': Rihanna receives NAACP Image Award

Barbadian singer, fashion and beauty mogul Rihanna last month received the President's Award at the 2020 NAACP Image Awards in California.

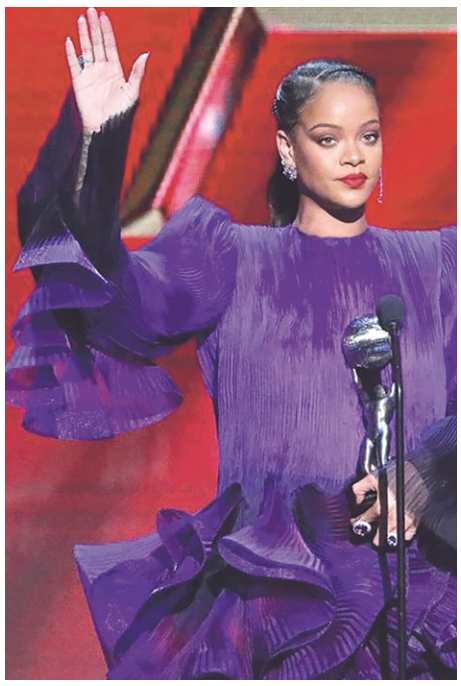
Rihanna was honored for lifetime contributions to music, fashion and philanthropy. The award was presented to her by Derrick Johnson, president and chief executive officer of the NAACP, which says it recognizes "a special achievement and distinguished public service."

While she is best known for hit songs like "Umbrella" and "Like A Diamond", plus the nine Grammy awards earned by her music, Rihanna has also blossomed in the beauty and fashion industry. In 2019 she launched "Fenty", the first woman to create a luxury brand, under the French conglomerate LVMH.

Rihanna has also, through her Clara Lionel Foundation, funded education, health and emergency response programs globally.

VOICE

In addition, she has been a voice for causes such as civil rights, which she underlined in her acceptance speech.



Rihanna says thanks after receiving her award.

"If there's anything that I've learned (it's) that we can only fix this world together," said Rihanna.

She urged the audience to rally their friends to such causes.

"They want to break bread with you, right? They like you? Well, then, this is their problem too," Rihanna said.

"When we're marching and protesting and posting about the Michael Brown Jrs. and the Atatiana Jeffersons of the world, tell your friends to pull up," Rihanna added.

In a statement issued last month, Johnson praised Rihanna for her accomplishments.

"Rihanna has not only enjoyed a groundbreaking career as an artiste and musician, but has also distinguished herself as a stellar public servant," he said. "From her business achievements through Fenty, to her tremendous record as an activist and philanthropist, Rihanna epitomizes the type of character, grace, and devotion to justice that we seek to highlight in our President's Award."

Rihanna tweeted she was "super honored" to be chosen for the award.

American rapper and music mogul Jay-Z was last year's recipient of the President's Award.

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Women dominate T&T's top calypso monarch prizes

Terri Lyons, singing about the decision of Britain's Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle to leave the royal family, won first prize as women calypsonians swept the three top spots of the Trinidad and Tobago Calypso Monarch competition last month.

Lyons, whose tune "Maghan my Dear" a social commentary on the decision of Prince Harry to marry Markle, a black woman, won the competition ahead of a former monarch Karene Asche and Heather McIntosh. She picked up the TT$800,000 (one TT dollar = US$0.16 cents) prize.

In a competition in which the calypsonians were asked to perform two songs for the first time in many years, former monarchs Duane O'Connor, Dr. Hollis Liverpool (Mighty Chalkdust) and Winston Peters (Gypsy) placed fifth, sixth and seventh, respectively. Brian London, who earlier won the National Extempo Competition, placed fourth, while defending calypso monarch Ronaldo London placed last in the 12-member race.

Lyons

The Calypso Monarch competition is one of three major events at Trinidad and Tobago Carnival celebrations.

- Edited from CMC.

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Homegrown artistes sweep T&T's international soca monarch contest

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad – Performers from Trinidad and Tobago swept the top places in the Caribbean country's "International Soca Monarch" competition during last month's carnival celebrations here.

Neil "Iwer" George won the TT$1 million (one TT dollar = US$0.16 cents) first prize in the Power Soca category with his tune "Stage Gone Bad", while the United States-based Devon Martin, better known as Lyrika, placed second with his song "Rukshun"

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)

Fort Lauderdale food, wine festival Mar. 18-22

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida – Culinary creations and libations from more than 100 local restaurants, spirit brands, wineries and breweries will highlight this month's "Greater Fort Lauderdale Food & Wine Festival".

The event will be held Mar. 18-22 throughout Broward County, Florida.

"The Greater Fort Lauderdale Food & Wine Festival is a fantastic event, which is helping to elevate and redefine the destination's flourishing culinary scene," Stacy Ritter, president and chief executive officer of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, was quoted as saying in a recent press release promoting the event.

"The success of the inaugural event was no doubt a testament to our epicurean offerings and reflects the transformation that's happening throughout the destination."

A listing of festival events is below:

Mar. 18, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. - Cocktail Confidential: A Spirited Affair at Sistrunk Marketplace & Brewery, 115 N.W. 6th St., Fort Lauderdale.

Mar. 19 - "Catch the Love" dinners at Mastro's Ocean Club in Fort Lauderdale, Sardelli Italian Stea-khouse in Hollywood, Capriccio's Ristorante in Pembroke Pines and Café Maxx in Pompano Beach. Visit ***www.gflfoodwine.com*** for individual restaurant menus, prices and to purchase tickets.

Mar. 20, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. - "GFL on the Rise: An Elevated

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)

BRIEFS

Sandals concert in South Florida

The Sandals Foundation will bring its annual concert from the Caribbean to South Florida this month. The show, which is expected to feature special guest Protoje & The Indiggnation, is scheduled for **8 p.m. Mar. 28** at Toejame Backlot in Miami's Wynwood Art District.

For more information, contact the Sandals Foundation at ***foundation@grp.sandals.com.***

St. Lucia Jazz Festival

The 2020 St. Lucia Jazz Festival will be staged **May 7-9** on the Caribbean island.

The St. Lucia Tourism Authority and Jazz has announced a performance line-up which includes artistes from the region, United States and United Kingdom. Festival organizers have also scheduled "Artists In Education", which includes music classes and performances with local students.

- Edited from various sources.

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Caribbean musical icons set for Miramar stage in April

Two of the Caribbean's biggest musical icons are scheduled to perform next month in South Florida.

Jamaican Grammy-nominated pianist Monty Alexander and his band The Monty Alexander Trio will pay tribute to his compatriot Ernie Ranglin on April 18 at the Miramar Cultural Center. Showtime is 8 p.m.

Ranglin, a master guitarist, will be honored at the show.

Alexander

Ranglin

Alexander and Ranglin share a special friendship. They have recorded several albums together and worked as studio musicians in the then developing Jamaican music scene in the early 1950s.

Since then, their musical paths have crossed on several occasions as both, rated among the best in the world, have ascended to the pinnacle of their craft.

LOVE

"We want to show Ernie Ranglin some love and let him know how much we treasure him and his contribution to Jamaica's music," Eddy Edwards, chief executive officer of Riddims Marketing, Inc., who has partnered with the Miramar Cultural Center to present the Monty Alexander Concert, noted in a press release to promote the event.

"The moment we mentioned the idea to honor Ernie to Monty, he was all in. We think there is no better way to show appreciation to Ernie since his recent retirement."

For ticket information to the concert, visit ***www.miramarculturalcenter.org*** or call the Miramar Cultural Center box office at **305-602-4500.**

✹

'All Eyes' on USVI carnival

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS - A celebration of the United States Virgin Islands' (USVI) culture, cuisine, history, music and people will be the highlight of the American Caribbean territory's carnival this year.

The theme of "Carnival Virgin Islands", to be staged from April 4 to May 3 in St. Thomas, is "All Eyes on We for 2020".

According to the USVI Department of Tourism's Division of Festivals, several new events have been added to the festival, including j'ouvert warm-up, "Rum, Powder and Mas".

"The events we've planned should ensure that people of all walks and stages of life are engaged in the carnival," Ian Turnbull, the division's director, was quoted as saying in a recent press release promoting the event.

Additional attractions for the season include the Soca Monarch Village, food fair and Cultural Day, where groups and individuals celebrate different aspects of Virgin Islands tradition and culture. The Children's Parade on May 1 and the Adults' Parade on May 2 will remain key fixtures for this year's celebrations.

For more information about Carnival Virgin Islands, contact the USVI Festivals team at ***usvifestivals@usvitourism.vi.***

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T&T soca king marries long-time sweetheart on Valentine's Day

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad – Trinidad and Tobago's "King of Soca" Machel Montano last month married his long-time partner Renee Butcher in a civil ceremony at the newly renovated Parliament building on Valentine Day.

Among those attending the ceremony, officiated by Pastor Clive Dottin of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, was T&T's Attorney General Faris Al-Rawi.

Montano, who has had a long list of musical hits, wore a white suit, while his bride wore a white two-piece pants and off the shoulder top outfit with a trail attached. She wore a colorful flower hair piece.

The guests, friends and relatives of the couple, were also dressed in all white.

Media photographers were not allowed on the compound and the staff at the Parliament building, called "Red House", lined the balcony on the top floor with their cameras in hand to record the event.

Machel Montano, right, and his bride Renee Butcher.

Montano was scheduled to perform at his annual "Machel Monday" last month, with the theme for the occasion being "The Wedding".

- Edited from CMC.

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Haiti's cancels carnival; gov't cites violent clashes in capital

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti – Haiti late last month cancelled carnival celebrations here following violent clashes between members of the Haitian Armed Forces (FADH) and members of the National Police of Haiti (PNH) demanding that the authorities accept the formation of the Haitian National Police (SPNH) union.

The clashes also involved persons demanding the resignation of President Jovenel Moise and members of the Haitian Armed Forces.

The clashes took place in the Champ de Mars area on Feb. 23 in the capital, where gunfire was heard most of the day.

In a statement, the government said it condemned "these acts of violence and acts which violate freedom and democracy." It questioned the rationale behind the attacks, indicating it was possibly aimed at driving the country into chaos, despite the commitments and decisions of the authorities to respond to the demands of the police officers.

- Edited from CMC.

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Fort Lauderdale food,wine festival Mar. 18-22

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

Culinary Experience" at The Atlantic Hotel & Spa, Ocean View Terrace, - 601 N. Fort Lauderdale Beach Blvd., Fort Lauderdale Beach.

Mar. 21, noon to 5 p.m. - "Grand Tasting". Live cooking demonstrations, tastings, live music at ArtsPark Hollywood, 1 North Young Circle, Hollywood.

Mar. 22, noon to 5 p.m. - "Family Day & Food Drive" presented by Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital at ArtsPark Hollywood. Suggested donation of one new/unwrapped toy.

To purchase tickets for any event, visit ***www.gflfoodwine.com*** or Facebook: ***www.Facebook.com/GFLFoodWine/.***

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Homegrown artistes sweep T&T's soca monarch contest

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

and Olatunji Yearwood placing third with "Thankful".

In the Groovy category Jesse Stewart (also known as College Boy Jesse) won the TT$500,000 prize with his tune "Happy Song", followed by Marvin Davis (Swappi) with his tune Jumbie Head. Third place went to Andre Holder (Ding Dong) with the song "Outside".

Defending Power Soca monarch Grenadian Hollis Mapp, better known by his sobriquet "Mr Killa", did not participate in the competition after expressing disappointment at the preparations for the show. But the competition attracted singers from St. Lucia and Grenada.

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PUDDING AND SOUSE: A Barbadian Saturday tradition

Pudding and souse

In Barbados, pudding and souse is a traditional Saturday lunch. The souse is essentially pickled pork and the pudding is steamed sweet potato.

Here's how you make it:

INGREDIENTS

Souse

- 2 lbs. pork shoulder cut into one-inch pieces or the traditional ear, snout and tongue cut into bite-size pieces.
- 1 large onion, diced
- 2 cucumbers, grated
- Scotch bonnet pepper (or chili of your choice), finely diced
- Juice of 3 limes
- Chopped fresh parsley

Pudding

- 1½ lb. grated sweet potato
- ½ tsp. thyme
- ½ tsp. marjoram
- 1 tsp. chives, chopped
- Scotch bonnet pepper (or chili of your choice), finely diced
- Pinch of sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 2 tsp. oil
- 2 oz. butter
- Browning

METHOD

Souse

Clean and wash the pork. Boil the pork in salted water, until tender.

Combine the cooked pork with the grated cucumber, onion, pepper, lime juice and parsley. Add salt to taste.

Refrigerate and serve cold with the pudding.

Pudding

Combine the ingredients in a mixing bowl. Browning gives the pudding a characteristic dark brown color, but can be omitted.

The pudding may be steamed in a bowl over a pot of boiling water, or baked in a greased baking dish until an inserted skewer comes out clean.

- Edited from News Americas.

Red peas soup, a Jamaican favorite

Soups in the Caribbean come in all kinds and flavors, some with meat and others without. They are as diverse as the people of the region. In Jamaica, red peas soup is a favorite. Here's how you make it:

Red peas soup

INGREDIENTS

- 3/4 lb. pig tail (cut in pieces)
- ½ lb. stew beef (cut in pieces)
- 3/4 lb. red peas
- 1 ½ pack Grace cock soup (optional)
- ½ lb. flour
- 4 tbls. cornmeal
- ½ lb. yam
- ½ lb. sweet potato
- 2 stalks scallion
- 1 sprig thyme
- 1 green scotch bonnet pepper
- ½ lb. pumpkin
- 1 small dasheen (to thicken soup)
- 1 pack coconut powder
- 2 pegs garlic
- 10 pimento seeds
- ½ cup vinegar

METHOD

Soak peas overnight. On day of cooking, pour vinegar on to the pig's tail and beef and wash with water.

Boil pig's tail for about five minutes to get rid of excess salt.

Rinse peas and place in a pressure cooker with pig's tail and beef and enough water to cover for about 10 minutes. Remove pressure cooker from fire and check peas and meat for tenderness.

Dice pumpkin and dasheen and add to pressure cooker with meat and peas along with garlic and pimento seeds. Pour about six cups tap water in the pressure cooker and continue to boil.

Remove from heat and allow the cooker to cool, then open.

Use the flour and cornmeal to make dumplings. Peel and slice yam and sweet potato or any other ground provision you like, add to the pot. Mix the coconut cream in a cup of warm water and add to pot.

Continue boiling until all ingredients are tender. Add, cock soup, scallion, thyme and scotch bonnet pepper. Cover and allow food to cook for another five minutes. Stir regularly to prevent sticking.

Remove from heat and enjoy!

NOTE: The pig's tail and beef can be skipped if you are vegetarian.

- Edited from News Americas.

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GETTING READY: PAHO preps Caribbean for lab diagnosis of coronavirus

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) says it is preparing eight Caribbean countries for laboratory diagnosis of novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

On Feb. 12, PAHO said virology experts at its headquarters here have traveled to the Caribbean to ensure laboratory specialists are trained and equipped to identify and respond to potential imported cases of the new coronavirus.

Up to press time the coronavirus had killed more than 2,600 people and infected close to 100,000 worldwide. The Caribbean had reported no cases, however training in the region began in Suriname, followed by Barbados and Haiti, and was scheduled to continue in Jamaica, Belize and Dominica, PAHO said. Experts will also travel to The Bahamas and Guyana to complete this initiative in the sub-region.

In addition, PAHO said the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) in Trinidad and Tobago has informed its laboratory is ready to respond to the coronavirus.

"As one of the world's most popular tourist destinations, the Caribbean must prepare to detect and respond quickly to imported cases of COVID-19" said Yitades Gebre, PAHO's representative for Barbados and the eastern Caribbean countries.

Testing is key to identifying the virus.

"Providing countries with the reagents and knowledge needed to perform early diagnosis is key for outbreak response and protecting our populations."

TRAINING

During the training, PAHO said laboratories, which include both national influenza centers and flu labs, are provided with the diagnostic materials required to test for COVID-19. This includes primers, probes and positive controls. According to PAHO, participants are then trained in the main tests, adding that protocols are available to carry out a practical exercise of molecular detection.

PAHO said the laboratory training in the Caribbean formed part of an overall initiative to ensure that 29 laboratories were ready to detect COVID-19 in the region by Feb. 21, with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia serving as the regional reference laboratory.

The laboratories selected for training are those that already provide testing for influenza, PAHO said. According to PAHO, this means that instead of developing a laboratory from scratch, the protocol, recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) and PAHO for testing for COVID-19 can simply be added to countries' existing protocols for influenza testing.

- Edited from CMC.

Florida requires U-18 girls get parents' permission for abortions

The state's new law would make decisions on teen pregnancies more difficult.

The Florida Legislature last month passed a bill which will require girls under age 18 in the state to get permission from their parents before they can have an abortion.

Governor Ron DeSantis was expected to sign the bill, passed by a 75 to 43 margin in the House of Representatives, into law.

The new law expands the previous legislation, which only required for girls to notify their parents they were getting an abortion. Now they will have to get the go-ahead from their parents.

"What we are talking about is a child, and here were are talking about a child who is carrying a child," Republican Rep. Erin Grall, who sponsored the bill, told the media. "By including parents in this decision we empower the family. It is the critical backbone of our civilized society."

OPTION

The bill has a provision that will allow a girl to ask a judge for a waiver from the law in cases of abuse, incest or when involving a parent could cause more harm than allowing the procedure. Opponents of the bill argued that asking minors to negotiate the legal system when they are already scared and ashamed could drive them to illegal abortions.

"We are codifying into law that someone else can force a girl to have a child she does not want to have," Democratic Rep. Susan Valdes said. "I worry that many girls will, when deprived access to a safe termination of pregnancy, take the risks of finding an unsafe, dangerous and untested method of terminating their pregnancies.

Republicans argued that children need a parent's permission to go on a school field trip and can't go to an R-rated movie without a parent or guardian, so it makes no sense to make a life-altering decision on their own.

Florida will join 26 other states in requiring that at least one parent give written permission authorizing a doctor to terminate the pregnancy of a minor. Doctors who perform abortions without the parental consent of a girl under 18 would face up to five years in prison for a third-degree felony.

- Edited from a story published by the Associated Press.

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Health department urges Florida residents to get early flu shots

The Florida Department of Health is encouraging unvaccinated residents of the state to get flu shots as soon as possible.

According to the department, vaccination is the best way to prevent the flu and its potentially serious complications.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States estimates that, nationwide, for the 2019-2020 season so far, there have been at least 6.4 million cases of influenza. That's more than 55,000 associated hospitalizations and approximately 2,900 related deaths.

"With this year's flu season in full swing, it is critical that adults and children get the flu vaccine to protect against infection and help prevent the spread of seasonal flu to others," said Florida's Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez.

"By getting a flu shot now, you will protect yourself, as well as your family and friends."

SPREAD

"Influenza is a contagious virus that can spread rapidly in our communities and cause severe illness resulting in hospitalization or death," said Florida Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees.

"Getting vaccinated is the best way to avoid the flu; it reduces the spread of the virus and can also help make illnesses less severe for those who do still get sick."

The flu vaccine is recommended for persons six months and older, including pregnant women. Individuals at most risk for getting severely ill from the flu are young children, pregnant women, people with certain chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease or lung disease, and people aged 65 years and older.

It takes approximately two weeks after vaccination for your body to develop protection against the flu. The CDC recommends getting a flu vaccine every year because flu viruses evolve quickly, and last year's vaccine may not protect against the current year's strain. Even if the vaccine does not fully protect against the flu, it may reduce the severity of symptoms and the risk of complications, the CDC noted.

LOCATIONS

Flu vaccines are offered at health care providers' offices, clinics, county health departments, pharmacies, schools, college health centers and from many employers.

The Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County offers flu vaccines for children and adults. The children's vaccine is free. For an appointment, call **786-845-0550**. For flu vaccines you may also contact your private provider or contact 211 for a Federally Qualified Health Center near you.

Good health habits like washing your hands can help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like the flu. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub. Covering the mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing may prevent those around you from getting sick. Clean and disinfect commonly used surfaces in your home, school or office.

~ A CARIBBEAN TODAY SPECIAL FEATURE

History comes alive through Jamaica's landmarks

Devon House

Jamaica is promising holiday travelers a destination where history comes alive. Below are some of those attractions on the Caribbean island:

DEVON HOUSE

In Kingston is the Devon House mansion. Completed in 1881 by Jamaica's first black millionaire George Stiebel, it showcases 19th century architecture and houses a library, gaming room, grand Wedgwood ceilings and carved fanlights above the doorways.

SHAARE SHALOM SYNAGOGUE

One of four "sand floor synagogues" remaining in the world. Built in the 17th century by descendants of Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition, the synagogue, located in Kingston, is a museum of Jamaican Jewish history.

PORT ROYAL

Populated by Taino Indians before it was founded in 1518 during Spanish rule, Port Royal was once the largest Caribbean city and center of trade and cargo shipping in the region. Today, the town which once lured pirates, earning the nickname of the "wickedest city on earth," is a fishing village on the outskirts of Kingston. A 1692 earthquake sunk several structures that have been preserved underwater.

FALMOUTH

The cruise port in the historic town of Falmouth was founded in 1769. It has a bustling market and relics from the era of the island's booming sugar industry. It's the best example of preserved Georgian architecture in Jamaica.

ROSE HALL GREAT HOUSE

Located in Montego Bay, Rose Hall Great House is one of Jamaica's most famous "haunted" locations. The Georgian-style mansion is the property's centerpiece and was built in 1742.

For more information about Jamaica, visit ***www.visitjamaica.com.***

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BVI installing new visa system at multiple ports of entry

TORTOLA, British Virgin Islands – A new system to monitor entrance is being implemented in the British Virgin Islands (BVI).

According to the Ministry of Labor and Immigration, the process involves installing the Border Management & Electronic Visa System across various ports of entry throughout the BVI.

According to Labor and Immigration Minister Vincent Wheatley, the initiative is historic.

"(It) will change the way we think about the borders of the British Virgin Islands and how we protect them," Wheatley said. "… I think this project is very important for the Immigration Department and for the territory as a whole."

The new system costs $6 million. Once in place, transactions at the ports of entry are expected to be conducted quicker and allow authorities, through real-time technology, to prepare for persons such as celebrities or criminals coming into BVI.

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Bahamas shows record visitor arrivals despite hurricane impact

NASSAU, The Bahamas –The Bahamas welcomed more than seven million visitors last year, despite the setback caused by the passage of Hurricane Dorian, which swept through the archipelago killing at least 70 people and causing damage in excess of $3.4 billion.

"It is with great pride and pleasure that I report The Bahamas' strongest tourism numbers in history," Tourism and Aviation Minister Dionisio D'Aguilar said recently.

"We look forward to building upon the success of our marketing efforts and continuing the momentum in 2020 as we show the world that The Bahamas continues to be open for business and has so much to offer visitors," he added.

GROWTH

According to the authorities, the hurricane's impact has not slowed the country's tourism growth, noting that since 2009 The Bahamas has continuously seen a steady increase in air and sea arrivals with a 52 percent increase in the last decade.

According to the Department of Immigration, Port Authority and Customs, by the end of 2019, foreign air and sea arrivals had totaled more than 7.2 million, a nine per cent increase from 2018. Stopover visitors alone were the highest in recorded history at 1.78 million, with Americans accounting for 1.45 million.

The authorities said The Bahamas expects to see the trend of increasing arrivals by air continues as major airlines, including United, British Airways and Delta, have increased their airlift to Nassau for 2020.

- Edited from CMC.

✹

Royal Caribbean implements counter-coronavirus protocol

MIAMI, Florida – The Miami-based Royal Caribbean Cruises says it has implemented several measures to protect guests and crew from spreading novel coronavirus.

"To comply with guidance from CDC, WHO and other public health authorities around the world, we are implementing several global measures to protect guests and crew," noted Royal Caribbean Cruise Ltd. in a statement issued last month referring to the Atlanta, Georgia-based United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization.

"These measures are intentionally conservative and apply to anyone boarding our ships, guests and crew alike."

Until further notice, Royal Caribbean Cruises stated, all ships in its fleet will have health screening protocols, regardless of nationality, denying boarding to any guest who has traveled from, to or through mainland China, Hong Kong or Macau in the past 15 days; any guest who has come in contact with anyone from mainland China, Hong Kong or Macau in the past 15 days; and all holders of China, Hong Kong and Macau passports.

SCREENINGS

In addition, there will be mandatory specialized health screenings performed on guests who are uncertain about contact with individuals who have traveled from, to or through mainland China, Hong Kong, or Macau; and guests who report feeling unwell or demonstrate any flu-like symptoms. Guests presenting with fever or low blood oximetry in the specialized health screenings will be denied boarding.

The cruise line said all guests who are denied boarding due to these restrictions will receive full refunds.

The cruise line cancelled eight China sailings through Mar. 4 on Spectrum of the Seas, its only ship currently home-ported in China.

- Edited from CMC.

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SPRING HEALTH

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

With a proven track record now in our 28th year of service to readers in the United States and the Caribbean Basin, Caribbean Today reaches an audience of over 112,000 highly qualified readers. They have median household income of $63,000 and enjoy a higher disposable income. 19% have a college degree, 32% have some college. In today's economy, our readers are highly esteemed. 59.6% own their own homes. 76% are between 25-54 years of age (readership study conducted by Circulation Verification Council.

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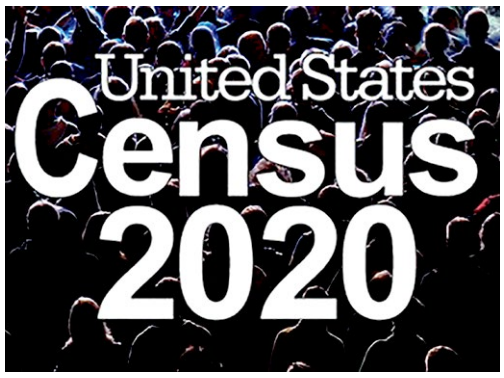
Caribbean immigrants in U.S. can self-identify on 2020 census

For the first time in the history of the United States Census, Caribbean immigrants and those with Caribbean ancestry will be able to self-identify on the 2020 census forms.

This means that persons from the Caribbean region will now be able to write in their nationality or ancestry while also choosing the race group they identify with. For example, under the category "Black or African American" on census forms, black Caribbean nationals will now be able to choose the race group while writing in for example Guyanese, Jamaican or Haitian.

The option comes 12 years after Carib ID, the group founded by Caribbean immigrant entrepreneur and advocate Felicia J. Persaud, begun lobbying for better self-identification on U.S. Census forms for people from the region and those with roots there.



Time to stand up and be counted.

'PROGRESSIVE'

Persaud called it a "progressive" resolution to the problem of lack of self-identification for Caribbean immigrants on past forms and now hopes that those from the region who live in the U.S. and those with Caribbean roots will take full advantage of counting themselves present in this census.

"Data on Caribbean nationals in the U.S. is currently sparse based largely on the fact that this bloc has had no previous opportunity to self-identify in the past but have been lumped in with the African American, Asian American or Other communities," she said.

"Hopefully this goes a long way in making sure we count in 2020 so we can receive the respect we deserve as a huge economic and political bloc in this country and our communities and businesses that have been dismissed because of a lack of economic data, can begin to thrive. Let's stand up and be counted."

RESEARCH

The form's re-design was based on a 2015 NCT research on race/ethnicity aimed at improving the question design and data quality for race/ethnicity, while addressing community concerns over the past several years, including the call for more detailed, disaggregated data for the diverse American experiences, census officials have said.

The U.S. Census kicked off its 2020 national promotional campaign in January ahead of Census Day, April 1, 2020.

The 2020 census counts the population in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories – Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Each home will receive an invitation to respond to a short questionnaire – online, by phone or by mail by mid-March.

- Edited from News Americas.

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Haitian American community activist among JM honorees

Haitian American community activist and social worker Marleine Bastien has been named among African-American Achievers Award Honorees for 2020 by JM Family Enterprises, Southeast Toyota Distributors and JM Lexus.

Bastien, executive director of Family Action Network Movement (FANM), was recognized for community service in South Florida.

Bastien was born in Haiti where she volunteered most of her young life. She came to Florida as an adult and began volunteering at the Haitian Refugee Center. She has a master's degree in social work from Florida International University and worked for years at Jackson Memorial Hospital as a medical social worker with children and families where she became an advocate for patients' rights.

Bastien has also championed the cause of women, children and Haitian families through her advocacy in areas such as immigration and human rights, HIV/AIDS, breast cancer and domestic violence. Through FANM, Bastien helps to provide services such as immigration assistance, health access, housing and education.

Bastien

The official ceremony for Bastien to receive her award is scheduled for next month.

Other 2020 honorees are Traci Young-Byron - arts and culture; Ken Roland - business and entrepreneurism; and Danni Washington - education.

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Jamaica's CG announces activities

The Consulate General of Jamaica in Miami has announced the following activities in South Florida this month:

Mar. 5, 6 p.m. - Jamaica citizenship welcome reception hosted by the consulate, 5581 W. Oakland Park Blvd., Lauderhill.

Mar. 6-8 - Access To Jamaica hosted by the consulate, 5581 W. Oakland Park Blvd. Times and Saturday: **7 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Sunday 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

Mar. 21, noon - Jamaican Women of Florida's annual Women's Empowerment Conference and luncheon, Jungle Island, downtown Miami. For more information, visit ***www.jamaicanwomenofflorida.org.***

Nominations open for Jamaica honors

Nominations are being accepted for the Jamaica National Honors and Awards for 2020.

The nomination forms and guidelines are available online through the Chancery of the Orders of the Societies of Honor, Office of the Prime Minister (***www.opm.gov.jm***) or through the overseas locations of the Jamaican Foreign Missions.

The deadline for submission is **Mar. 27.**

✸

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TOKEN OF APPRECIATION

- Photograph by Derrick Scott

Devon Brown, left, president of the Cedric Titus Old Students Association, Jamaica Chapter, accepts a token of appreciation from Belver Williams-Niblett on behalf of the the school's former Principal Elette M. Fletcher during the 10th annual Valentine's Day Gala of the North America Chapter of the Cedric Titus Old Student Association last month in New Jersey. Fletcher was recognized for 34 years of service to the school. Williams-Niblett was the school's first head girl.

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Caribbean-born player on U.S. Soccer Hall of Fame ballot for 2020

GORDON WILLIAMS

Caribbean-born Jeff Cunningham is on the ballot for possible selection to the National Soccer Hall of Fame in the United States.

Cunningham, a former striker with the U.S. national team who also represented Jamaica, was once the all-time leading goal scorer in Major League Soccer (MLS), the top professional competition in the U.S. and Canada.

He is one of 42 retired players on the 2020 ballot, joining the likes of former England international David Beckham, Thierry Henry of France and multiple Americans - male and female.

Voting, which begins on Mar. 18, is done by past and present coaches of the U.S. men and women national teams, plus those currently coaching in the top leagues, management level representatives of those leagues, some media members and Hall of Famers. A player must earn 66.7 percent of the votes to be inducted.

To become eligible for election into the Hall of Fame, a player must have been retired for at least three calendar years, but not more than 10, played at least 20 full international games for the U.S. or at least five seasons in a U.S. first division professional league.

Cunningham

'DESERVING'

Caribbean nationals who got a close up look at Cunningham during his playing days told **Caribbean Today** his Hall of Fame credentials are beyond doubt.

"Absolutely," said former Jamaica international Tyrone Marshall, who played with and against Cunningham in MLS. "If you look at Jeff's career and what he has done, I think he deserves the recognition."

"That's without question," added another former Reggae Boy Omar Cummings, who also played against Cunningham in MLS.

"Jeff was easily one of the most dangerous persons on the field. I always feared when Jeff was on the field. He always created goal-scoring opportunities, sometimes out of nothing. Even towards the end of his MLS career he was still one of the most dangerous persons on the field."

"Jeff is more than deserving (to be in the Hall of Fame)," said Damani Ralph, another ex-Jamaica International who broke Cunningham's MLS rookie goal-scoring record. "He was one of the players who put in the work to help establish MLS."

CAREER

Cunningham, now 43, moved to the U.S. as a teenager and played college soccer at the University of South Florida, where he scored 41 goals and tallied 36 assists. He was selected in the 1998 MLS draft by Columbus Crew and scored eight goals, tying the then rookie record. In 2002, Cunningham was named to the MLS Best XI.

On Aug. 27, 2011, Cunningham scored his 134th career goal to become the all-time leader in MLS. He played for multiple teams and in multiple leagues in North America during his career. He also played professionally in Guatemala.

Cunningham represented Jamaica in a friendly international against Ghana in 1999. He became a American citizen in 2001 and was capped 14 times for the U.S., scoring once, against Denmark in 2009. According to Marshall, he deserved more international opportunities.

"Skillfully he was one of the better guys in the league and full of pace," said Marshall. "… He could beat you off the dribble and he could run past you.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 19)

Jamaica only Caribbean nation in men's top 50 soccer rankings

Jamaica is the only Caribbean nation to break into the top 50 nations, according to the latest ranking of men's teams released by soccer's world governing body FIFA.

The Reggae Boyz now sit at 48. Curacao, at 80, is the next best nation from the region. Haiti (86) is the only other Caribbean team in FIFA's top 100.

Belgium is the world's number one ranked nation. Rounding out the top five, in descending order, are France (2), Brazil (3), England (4) and Uruguay (5).

Other Caribbean nations were scattered between Trinidad and Tobago, at 105, Antigua and Barbuda (tied at 126 with Togo), St. Kitts and Nevis (139) and Suriname (141).

Rounding out the top 200 were Dominican Republic (158), Grenada (159), Barbados (162), Guyana (166), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (167), Bermuda (168), Belize (170), St. Lucia (176), Puerto Rico (178), Cuba (179), Montserrat (183), Dominica (tied for 184), Cayman Islands (193) and The Bahamas (195).

✸

T&T to play Canada in soccer

Canada will host Trinidad and Tobago's senior men's soccer team in a friendly international this month.

The match will kick off Mar. 27 at Westhills Stadium in Langford, British Columbia.

✸

New T&T coach vows playing style to match Warriors' talent

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad - Trinidad and Tobago's new head men's national senior soccer coach vows to change team's style to match the players' talent.

Former England international Terry Fenwick recently took over from Trinidadian Dennis Lawrence. He criticized T&T's playing style and vowed to change it and get better results. The Soca Warriors' only appearance at the World Cup was in 2006, when Lawrence was a player.

"I think the past administration was playing a style of football that clearly doesn't work and sticks out like a sore thumb, based on the results that we've seen," Fenwick told the media recently.

"I've got to change that. We've got to start playing a style of football (soccer) that suits the players that we've got. And we've got some terrific players; we need now to play to their strengths."

Fenwick

T&T will attempt to once again rebuild their profile under Fenwick, after experiencing a wretched run last year. The Warriors went 14 matches without a win to mark their worst patch of form in recent history. The only success was a 15-0 crushing of minnows Anguilla in November.

The run of form resulted in the sacking of Lawrence in December and Fenwick, who signed a two-year deal as his replacement, said an overhaul was now necessary to move the national program forward. He said there would be phased introduction of new players to freshen up the squad.

✸

Caribbean earns soccer U-20 World Cup qualifying spots

Several Caribbean nations kept their hopes alive of making it to soccer's Under-20 World Cup in 2021 by topping qualifying groups in regional play which ended last month.

The Dominican Republic and Barbados secured first-place finishes in their respective groups to advance to the Caribbean, Central and North America (CONCACAF) round and a chance to qualify for the World Cup.

Host Dominican Republic clinched top spot in Group B after defeating Grenada 1-0. Barbados won Group D following a 3-0 victory over Cayman Islands in Puerto Rico.

Guadeloupe also qualified for the CONCACAF round after beating host Curacao 1-0 in Group C. Central American nation Nicaragua won Group A.

The four group winners will join other nations to play in groups at the CONCACAF final round of qualifiers in Honduras, June 20 to July 5. Several Caribbean nations, including Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, will play in a group tournament if they can advance to the final CONCACAF round, from which the World Cup finalists will be decided.

The next edition of FIFA's U-20 World Cup will be held in Indonesia.

✸

Jamaica international facing criminal felony charges in U.S.

Jamaica international soccer player Darren Mattocks is facing two felony charges in Pennsylvania, news agencies reported last month.

Mattocks

Mattocks, a 29-year-old striker who played for F.C. Cincinnati during the 2019 Major League Soccer (MLS) season, scoring three goals, has been charged with one count of a false, fraudulent or incomplete insurance claim and another count of theft by deception in Carroll Township.

While Mattocks reportedly trained with the club during the first leg of preseason in Arizona, he was absent from the second leg preseason training in Florida.

Even before his legal woes began, Mattocks 2020 tenure with FC Cincinnati looked bleak.

"To be honest," then FC Cincinnati head coach Ron Jans said in a recent conference call, "he's not into the plans."

Mattocks was scheduled to return to court late last month for a formal arraignment, court documents noted.

The striker has played in 182 MLS games, scoring 37 goals. He has 18 goals in 49 internationals for Jamaica.

✸

Caribbean-born player on U.S. National Soccer Hall of Fame ballot for 2020

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18)

"It's hard to say (why he didn't play more for U.S.). Jeff's style of play, I don't know if the U.S. was ready for his style. As a striker he would give you that burst, but was not the focal guy. He would run behind. He was misunderstood. He didn't have that chance to fully showcase his talent (for U.S.)."

Just ahead of the 2011 MLS season, and just two goals shy of breaking the league's scoring mark, Cunningham lamented his lack of recognition in U.S. soccer, including financial compensation.

"The system," he told Caribbean Today then, "isn't fair … I'm not gonna grudge a next man for what he has ... But at the same time ... all the people (that) deal with the contract thing, you know, didn't do me right over my career."

Back then, even some North American colleagues seemed to agree, believing Cunningham was shortchanged in more ways than one.

Jeff has done it," said Matt Reis, a U.S. international goalkeeper who entered MLS the same year as Cunningham, said in 2011.

"He maybe hasn't gotten enough credit as he's deserved, but anybody in the league and anybody that knows soccer knows his quality."

Maybe the Hall of Fame voters will finally agree.

✸

RIDE ON SAMMY: Ex-Windies captain to receive Pakistani citizenship, nation's highest civilian award

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan – Former West Indies cricket captain Darren Sammy is to become an honorary citizen of Pakistan and receive that country's highest civilian award, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced.

Sammy

In a post on **Twitter**, the PCB said President Arif Alvi will confer the Nishan-e-Pakistan award on the 36-year-old St Lucian here on Mar. 23, for his "invaluable contribution to cricket" in Pakistan.

Sammy will be the first cricketer to receive the honor. He had been among the first foreigners to agree to tour Pakistan when the PCB sought to bring the Pakistan Super League (PSL) final to the country in 2017, eight years after a deadly attack on the Sri Lankan team bus outside the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore caused the country to be blacklisted as an international cricket venue.

'LOVE'

Sammy is currently in Pakistan participating in the PSL as captain of the Peshawar Zalmi, which he has represented from the inception of the tournament. The team's owner Javed Afridi, who described Sammy as "the most loved and cheered foreign cricketer in Pakistan," said the franchise had put in a formal request to Alvi for the honorary citizenship for the allrounder.

Pakistani politician Ali Muhammad Khan took to Twitter to congratulate Sammy.

Sammy said his contribution to Pakistan was not for personal gain.

"My love for Pakistan is natural, my contribution to this country is pure," he explained. "I don't need a passport to show my love for this country. All the players who have supported this step have contributed to where we are today.

"It is good that it has been recognized, but I didn't do it for myself it is for my affection with the people and for the love I get from here."

✸

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