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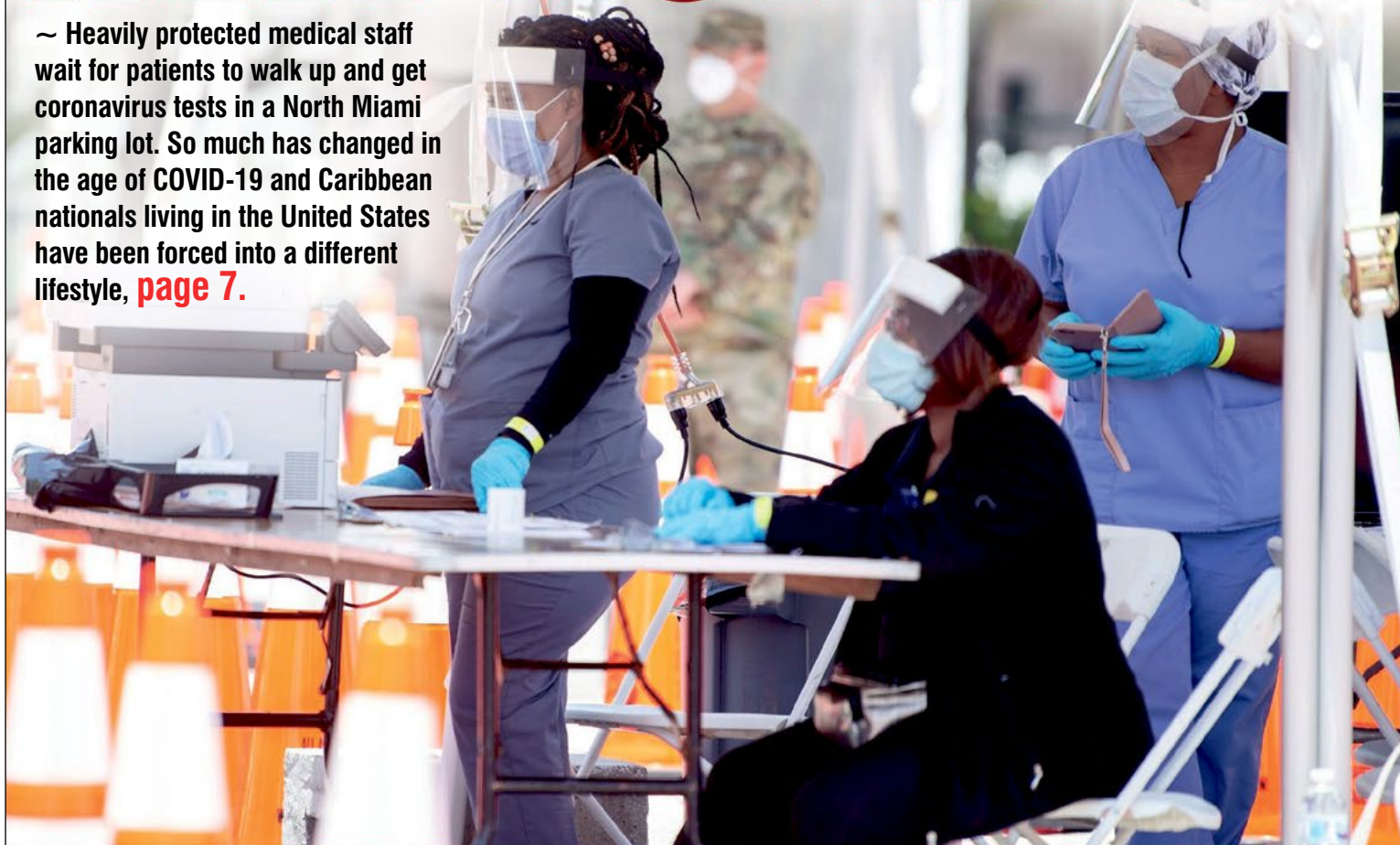
Barbadian star Rihanna and a host of prime time entertainers from the Caribbean are rallying to support those impacted by the novel coronavirus pandemic in the region and elsewhere in the world, page 11.



Trinidadian Austin "Jack" Warner, the 77-year-old former high-ranking soccer executive, has been implicated in a 53-count indictment in the United States. He has been accused in a New York court of receiving up to \$5 million in bribes, page 19.

NEW NORMAL

~ Heavily protected medical staff wait for patients to walk up and get coronavirus tests in a North Miami parking lot. So much has changed in the age of COVID-19 and Caribbean nationals living in the United States have been forced into a different lifestyle, **page 7.**



HARD TARGET



~ People of color in the United States, a category which envelopes the majority of Caribbean nationals, have become disproportionate victims of the dangerous novel coronavirus, early findings appear to show, **page 3.**

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COVID COUNTER: U.S. extends stay for Stranded Caribbean non-immigrants

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Caribbean and other non-immigrants are being allowed to extend their stay in the United States during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, as long as they file their applications in a timely manner.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) last month said the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) “recognizes that there are immigration-related challenges as a direct result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.”

“Generally, non-immigrants must depart the United States before their authorized period of admission expires,” the USCIS noted.

“However, we recognize that non-immigrants may unexpectedly remain in the United States beyond their authorized period of stay due to COVID-19.”

PROCESS

Should this occur, USCIS said non-immigrants can mitigate the immigration consequences of COVID-19 by “timely filing an application for extension of stay (EOS) or change in status

(COS).”

USCIS said it continues to accept and process applications and petitions, and that non-immigrants generally do not accrue unlawful presence “while the timely-filed, non-frivolous EOS/COS application is pending.”

Where applicable, the agency said employment authorization with the same employer, subject to the same terms and conditions of the prior approval, is automatically extended for up to 240 days after the I-94 visa expiration when an extension of stay request is filed on time.

USCIS said the petitioner or applicant must submit “credible evidence to support their request, which USCIS will evaluate on a case-by-case basis.”

However, USCIS said while Visa Waiver Program (VWP) entrants are not eligible to extend their stay or change status, under current regulations, if an emergency such as COVID-19 prevents the departure of a VWP entrant, “USCIS in its discretion



The American government is allowing persons stranded by COVID-19 to stay longer.

may grant a period of satisfactory departure for up to 30 days.

“For those VWP entrants already granted satisfactory departure and unable to depart within this 30-day period because of COVID-19 related issues, USCIS has the authority to temporarily provide an additional 30-day period of satisfactory departure,” the statement added.

- Edited from CMC.



Possible Guyana election result in weeks ~ commish

Guyana may, within upcoming weeks, finally learn who will govern the nation, more than a month after votes were cast in regional and general elections.

According to the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) on April 24, it is hoping to conclude national recount of ballots from the Mar. 2 elections within 25 days.

Vincent Alexander, a government appointed commissioner to GECOM, said, however, the proposal is subject to review, as GECOM will be using the first week of the exercise to observe the pace of the work. The commission met last month to finalize both the operational plan and order for the national recount. Apart from the 25-day proposal,

other aspects of the plan include the participants in the process, location, number of stations and the arrangement which will allow for the votes in Region Four, where both major parties are claiming victory, being tabulated alongside other regions.

CARICOM was scheduled to send a team to observe the recount exercise. The team is expected to scrutinize the process and submit a report.

Both the ruling coalition, A Partnership for National Unity (APNU), and the main Opposition People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) have claimed victory in the elections.

- Edited from CMC.



Ex-Cayman premiere faces charges after bar incident

GEORGE TOWN, Cayman Islands – McKeever Bush, former premier and current House speaker in the Cayman Islands, has allegedly been charged with multiple criminal offenses arising out of an incident at a bar earlier this year.

The police have charged Bush with offenses, including common assault. He appeared in court on April 24 after taking leave of absence from his duties as speaker when the allegations surfaced.

The police, in a statement issued on April 24, while not naming Bush – referred to him as a public figure and stated that a 65-year-old West Bay man was charged with three counts of common assault and one count of disorderly conduct under the Liquor License Law.

The completed case file was submitted to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for

a legal ruling, where a decision was made for charges to be laid.

Following the alleged incident at a bar on Feb. 21, Bush issued a statement, saying at the time of the incident he was disoriented and did not remember what had happened. He said he went to the bar to collect food to take home and was told that he had passed out and fallen. When he was being helped to his feet, he “reacted badly to the very persons who were surrounding me and assisting me.”

Bush is scheduled to re-appear in court on May 15.

- Edited from CMC.



Bush

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Jamaican enters race for mayor of Miami Gardens

Jamaican American Lavern Deer has declared her intention to run for mayor of Miami Gardens, a South Florida city with a significant Caribbean American presence.

Deer was born in Jamaica, but migrated to The Bahamas at age nine. She later moved to South Florida, but has remained connected with the Caribbean American community.

The single mother of a son earned a bachelor's degree in healthcare administration and a master's degree in business administration from Nova Southeastern University in Florida. She is currently senior program project co-ordinator for the Broward County Human Services Department. She served as the 2010

campaign manager for Broward County Mayor Dale Holness, also a Jamaican American.

Deer has facilitated Jamaica's senior women's national soccer team, designing the Reggae Girls Awareness Campaign. She has also chaired the Jamaica High School Alumni Sporting Network Inc.

Miami Gardens has a population of close to 115,000. The city is a 19-mile drive south of Fort Lauderdale.

The election for mayor of Miami Gardens is scheduled for Aug. 18. Up to press time, in addition to Deer, Oscar Braynon, II, Lisa C. Davis and Sharon Pritchett were also in the race for the office.



Caribbean nationals high among U.S. COVID-19 victims

GORDON WILLIAMS

People of color in the United States, a category which envelopes the majority of Caribbean nationals, have become disproportionate victims of the dangerous novel coronavirus (COVID-19), early findings appear to show.

Although precise tracking across the U.S. remained incomplete up to press time, as the pandemic continues to spread infecting more than a million and killing at least 68,000, it has become increasingly clear that blacks and Hispanics have been hardest hit, especially in major urban centers where most Caribbean nationals make their home.

More than four million Caribbean nationals are believed to reside in the U.S. The tri-state area of New York, Connecticut and New Jersey has the highest concentration, followed by areas such as South Florida. By some estimates 35 percent to 40 percent of the black population in the tri-state area are believed to trace their roots to the Caribbean. If the black community is being hit hard by COVID-19, observers estimate, a huge chunk of the Caribbean community has been affected as well.

"So if 100 Afro Americans are dying, 30 to 40 Caribbean nationals are dying," Jamaican



Clare

American Irwine Clare, managing director of Caribbean Immigrant Services in New York, told **Caribbean Today** last month. "We're in the numbers."

By mid-April, unconfirmed media reports indicated that at least 70 Jamaicans had been killed by COVID-19 in the U.S. Clare lost his brother Dwight Clare, who lived in New Jersey, to the virus. He said almost every day he receives a call informing him of "another Caribbean person who has died" from COVID-19.

EPICENTER

In New York City, currently recognized as the epicenter for COVID-19 after recording more infections and deaths for any single destination in the world, the disparity in victims has been most glaring. According to the NYC Health Depart-

ment, through April 6 almost 23 percent of the deaths from COVID-19 were Hispanics. Nearly 20 percent of the deceased were black. By the end of April, close to 13,000 people in NYC had been killed by COVID-19.

In comparison, 10.2 percent of those who died were white and 8.4 percent Asian.

Similar trends are showing up in other states as well. In Michigan, where 14 percent of the population is black, the Department of Health and Human Services noted that 33 percent of COVID-19 infections and 41 percent of deaths were from the black community.

In Chicago, Illinois, home to a significant Caribbean community, COVID-19 deaths among blacks was 58 percent through the first week of April, although 23 percent of the city's population is black.

In Milwaukee, Wisconsin nearly 60 percent of COVID-19 deaths are blacks. The black population in the city is 25 percent. In the state of Louisiana, 70 percent of COVID-19 victims are black.

TRACE

Medical experts and social scientists have traced the worrying trend to lack of services, in- (CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

U.S. deports Haitians, sparks outrage over virus spread

The administration of President Donald Trump last month deported 129 Haitian migrants, although many were possibly exposed to the novel coronavirus while in custody in the United States.

The deportation flight was scheduled for April 23, according to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

More than a dozen deportees reportedly spent time at the Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center in Louisiana. At least two detainees at the center tested positive for COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus and some of the Haitian deportees reportedly shared a bunk with the infected inmates. Reports also indicated that some of the Haitian deportees had started to feel ill.

The **HuffPost** news agency reported that one bunkmate showed symptoms of the virus. The news agency also reported that nearly 50 minors were also scheduled to be on board the flight carrying the deportees.

OPPOSITION

Haitians in the U.S. have blasted the Trump administration's efforts to continue deportations to the French Caribbean nation during the COVID-19 pandemic. They claim if deport-



Trump

ees arriving in Haiti are positive with COVID-19 that would speed up the spread of the virus.

The Family Action Network Movement (FANM), a U.S.-based organization, last month wrote to Haiti President Jovenel Moise, "requesting that Haiti stops receiving all deportations from the United States in order to stop the spread of the deadly coronavirus."

"The deportation flights to Haiti have the capacity to spread COVID-19 not only to Haiti, but also globally," wrote FANM's Marleine Bastien.

Earlier in April, 61 Haitians were deported.

Read FANM's letter to Jovenel Moise in Viewpoint, page 9.



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NEWS



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CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

Caribbean gets Trump ultimatum to accept deportees during pandemic or face sanctions

The United States last month issued an ultimatum to Caribbean and other nations to accept their deported nationals during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic or face diplomatic punishment.

Almost immediately, some Caribbean governments announced their willingness to comply with U.S. demands, even while admitting deportees could endanger their own country by increasing the risk of the virus's spread.

Up to press time, at least one Caribbean nation had confirmed a man deported from the U.S. last month had tested positive for COVID-19, although the U.S. said it will not deport anyone showing signs of infection. The government said no person unfit for travel would be removed from the U.S. by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

However, medical experts have already determined that persons carrying the virus do not always show symptoms

or immediately test positive, although they are still capable of spreading COVID-19.

SANCTIONS

Last month, President Donald Trump announced the U.S. would implement visa sanctions on any nation which denies entry to its nationals who have been deemed undesirable to remain in the U.S. The order is effective through Dec. 31.

Trump claimed countries which refuse or delay entry for deportees are endangering the health of legal U.S. residents.

"Tens of thousands of removable aliens have been released in communities across the country, solely because their home countries refuse to accept their repatriation," Trump declared in an Executive Order on Enhancing Public Safety made public on April 10.

"Many of these aliens are criminals who have served time in our federal, state, and local jails.

"The presence of such indi-

viduals in the United States and the practices of foreign nations that refuse the repatriation of their nationals are contrary to the national interest."

SANCTION

The president's order did not name specific nations. However, according to the order, any nation which refuses to accept deportees, or delays their entry for insufficient reason, must be reported by the secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to the U.S. secretary of state, which will then have seven days to begin visa sanction initiatives on that country. That means consular officers could stop processing visa applications from that country.

Caribbean nations have implemented travel bans in an effort to prevent visitors and their own nationals infected with COVID-19 from entering.

Yet some Caribbean nations

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

Caribbean nationals high among U.S. COVID-19 victims

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

cluding medical and social, plus low income, usually associated with minority-popular communities in the U.S.

In addition, studies show people of color in the U.S.

are usually susceptible to health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, stress and stroke, which make them more vulnerable to COVID-19.

Offi-

cials have not denied the racial disparities in casualties from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We're seeing folks who have struggled before really being hit particularly hard," NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio said during a City Hall briefing last month.

"It's sick. It's troubling," added the mayor, husband of Chirlane

McCray, who is of Barbadian and St. Lucian descent. "It's wrong. And we are going to fight back with everything we've got."

Caribbean nationals have been hit hard in the pocketbook as well by COVID-19 fallout. U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell agreed that before COVID-19 people of color had disproportionately benefitted from working in businesses now shut down. Those jobs are gone and unsure to return.

"It is heartbreaking, frankly, to see that all threatened now," Powell told reporters in late April.

PERSONAL

Clare has called for Jamaica to establish a registry to keep a record of nationals who have died from COVID-19. He hopes other Caribbean nations follow suit.

An informal survey of Caribbean nationals in the U.S. showed that most have heard of at least one person from the region who has died

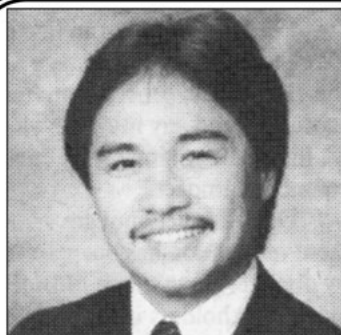
from COVID-19. Well-known Caribbean nationals are among the casualties, including radio personality Gil Bailey, Dr. Roy A. Hastick, president of the Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and businessman Conrad Ifill. Many, including those of the frontline of the COVID-19 fight such as health care workers, are not so well known.

In addition, Caribbean nationals are among those who have lost jobs and businesses during the pandemic. For those who have survived COVID-19 so far, the pandemic in the U.S. is the worst tragedy they have witnessed.

"It's rough," said Clare, who migrated to the U.S. in 1978 and witnessed national tragedies such as the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. "Normally, you know ... it will eventually end. But this thing is not going away. It has left us comatose."



Hastick

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'INVISIBLE ENEMY': Trump stops U.S. immigration from Caribbean

~ President links decision to COVID-19 fight

Caribbean nationals trying to make the United States their permanent home suffered a massive setback last month as President Donald Trump announced plans to stop immigration to the U.S.

Trump issued a statement

on the social media platform **Twitter** indicating he would sign an executive order suspending immigration into the U.S.

In the tweet, the president claimed his decision is part of U.S. efforts to preserve employ-

ment for American citizens as the nation confronts what he called the "Invisible Enemy", believed to be the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which has infected more than a million people in the U.S.,

killing over 62,000 through the end of April.

"In light of the attack from the Invisible Enemy, as well as the need to protect the jobs of our GREAT American Citizens, I will be signing an Executive

Order to temporarily suspend immigration into the United States!" Trump tweeted April 20.

Up to press time it was unclear how many applications for permanent residence would

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)



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NEWS



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Haitian American legislator slams N.Y. cops for treatment of black man

NEW YORK – A Haitian American legislator has strongly condemned what she describes as the “egregious and inhumane” treatment meted out to a 33-year-old black man during a New York Police Department (NYPD) enforcement of the social distancing mandate recently.

Brooklyn Council Member Farah N. Louis, who represents the predominantly Caribbean 45th Council District, told the

Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) that one of the officers used “excessive force” against Donni Wright.

Louis said Wright had a taser pointed at him, was slapped, punched and dragged, before an officer knelt on his hand. He was then handcuffed.

“While white New Yorkers gathered en masse ... in Hudson River Park could be issued a summons or even a mask, a

black bystander near a deli was assaulted,” said Louis. “... This is a dangerous precedent ...”

Louis said she is calling on New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and NYPD Commissioner Dermot Shea to hold the officers accountable.

- Edited from CMC.



NYPD officers subdue Wright.

‘INVISIBLE ENEMY’: Trump stops U.S. immigration from Caribbean

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

be affected by Trump’s order, or if those from certain countries, including the Caribbean, would be more heavily affected than others.

SLOWDOWN

During fiscal year 2019, close to 500,000 permanent residence or “green cards” were granted, according to the U.S. Department of State. Caribbean nationals make up roughly 10 percent of all immigrants in the U.S.

Usually family members

in the U.S. file the petitions for permanent residence. With the president’s executive order, the immigration flow from the Caribbean is expected to slow appreciably.

On April 21, White House officials, which published reports indicated were surprised by Trump’s late night tweet, sought to clarify the president’s comment. The following day, with the public unsure who would be targeted by the president’s order, information became public that migrant farm workers, a key element of consumer food

production in the U.S., and those working the health sector, would not be impacted by the executive order. Hundreds of Caribbean nationals are part of the farm work program in the U.S.

On April 22, Trump announced that only immigrants seeking to become permanent residents would be affected by his executive order, which would be effective for 60 days, after which it would be reviewed. Holders of non-immigrant visas - including tourist, business, student and temporary workers - will not be affected by Trump’s order.

“By pausing immigration, we’ll help put unemployed Americans first in line for jobs as America re-opens,” the president stated. “It would be wrong and unjust for Americans laid off by the virus to be replaced with new immigrant labor flown in from abroad. We must first take care of the American workers.”

More than 30 million U.S. residents reportedly lost their jobs during a six-week period of the pandemic ending April 30.

The president’s decision followed a pattern of directives directly affecting Caribbean immigrants during the pandemic. Several services, for example swearing-in ceremonies for new U.S. citizens and issuing visas, have been put on hold. During his campaign for president in 2016, Trump promised supporters he would slow down immigration.

Unconfirmed reports surfaced last month that non-immigrant visa holders may be targeted by the government next. However, immigration advocates slammed the president’s new executive order.

“This is not about the policy,” read a partial tweet from Ali Noorani, executive director of the National Immigration Forum. “It is about the message

the president wants to send. He wants people to turn against ‘the other’ ... He sees immigrants as the easiest to blame.”

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) also blasted the president’s executive order.

“There are measured and productive approaches to curbing the spread of COVID-19, namely ensuring equal access to testing and treatment; releasing individuals from ICE and CBP detention; and suspending interior enforcement,” Andrea Flores, deputy policy director for the ACLU’s Equality Division, noted in a statement released last month.

“Unfortunately, President Trump seems more interested in fanning anti-immigrant flames than in saving lives. We cannot allow President Trump to exploit this pandemic to advance his racism and xenophobia.”

The migration of Caribbean nationals to the U.S. began around the mid-1940s. More than four million Caribbean nationals currently live in the U.S., according to the Migration Policy Institute. They come mostly from Jamaica, Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago.

- G. Williams



Caribbean gets Trump ultimatum to accept deportees during pandemic

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

quickly announced their willingness to comply with Trump’s demand. Jamaica, for example, was scheduled to accept a batch of deportees in early April, but sought an exemption or delay after declaring its borders closed to incoming travelers in late March as part of its plan to stop the COVID-19 spread. Following Trump’s order, the Caribbean nation accepted about 46 deportees from the U.S. on April 21.

Late last month, Health Minister Dr. Christopher Tufton confirmed that at least one deportee in that batch tested positive for COVID-19.

According to national Security Minister Horace

Chang, Jamaica would try to limit the number of deportees to “between 50 or 60 every two months or so” to allow the country to better manage the influx, including quarantining them.

“There will be controlled re-entry while observing COVID-19 prevention protocols,” Chang explained in a mid-April statement.

Jamaica, up to press time, had recorded close to 500 COVID-19 cases. More than 30 reportedly came from overseas, allegedly from the U.S. and United Kingdom.

- G. Williams



In June, Caribbean Today will spotlight the Bahamas-3000 islands, cays and inlets located in the Atlantic Ocean. With a population of over 385,000 people, this nation continues to influence its Caribbean cousins and The United States mainland, Florida in particular. The Bahamas is located in the same island chain as Cuba, Hispaniola (Dominican Republic and Haiti) and is one of the richest countries in the Americas per capita. Come with Caribbean Today as we focus on the great people of The Bahamas and learn of their contributions to the Caribbean region and the U.S.

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NEW NORMAL: Caribbean Americans change lifestyle to battle COVID-19

GORDON WILLIAMS

Garfield Haughton had big plans for his 50th birthday.

He'd leave his United States residence in late March for his home parish of Manchester, Jamaica and drop a bash on Saturday, April 18 - with music, food, friends and, of course, a big cake.

Then the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic crashed the party.

"Everything changed," Haughton told **Caribbean Today**. "The whole thing had to be called off because of the virus. It was a big disappointment."

Like nearly every Caribbean national in the U.S., Haughton has been forced to overhaul his lifestyle in the face of COVID-19. They've fallen in line with the new normal. The four million-plus Caribbean community in the U.S. has willingly - or under legal orders - complied with the changes after witnessing more than a million infections and over 65,000 deaths linked to the virus in the country by the end of April.

They've become vigilant to COVID-19's symptoms and

familiar with the vocabulary - like social distancing, shelter in place and flattening the curve. They're wiping down groceries before consumption and frequently washing hands, undergoing temperature checks in public and wearing protective gloves and masks. Mostly, they're staying home.

"Tan a yuh yard," has become a rallying cry.

STRANGE

The lifestyle change has expanded across professions, age groups and religious beliefs. Church pews are mostly empty, as services are streamed. Parties evaporated. Home-style cooking, like haircuts and make-up, are in vogue. Sporting competitions, a big attraction in the Caribbean community, have all but vanished during the pandemic.

"COVID-19 has caused drastic change, because my work is done mostly outdoors," explained Paul Young, a Georgia-based former Jamaica international soccer player who now coaches.

Even smoking weed, still illegal in most places in the U.S., may have declined. Experts said the socialization aspects of the practice - including passing a joint or pipe among friends

- can't be done when people are stranded alone at home. But online alcohol sales jumped nearly 400 percent last month as morale dropped and people sought comfort at home.

"Death and hopelessness permeates the air," explained Irwine Clare, a Caribbean American U.S. resident since 1978. "It's quiet. Nobody is about. I've never felt like this before."

Normal isn't expected back anytime soon either. A COVID-19 vaccine won't be ready for another year or more, experts predict. Most U.S. residents believe social distancing and stay-at-home practices should continue. Normal, more than 70 percent in one poll believe, won't return until possibly a year.

To ease the burden, some have implemented counter-measures. The Jamaican Consulate General in Miami, for example, announced

online prayer, counseling and encouragement support services to help deal with COVID-19 challenges. Some have found inventive ways to circumvent hurdles.

"We do virtual training," said Young, "sending players

drills via e-mail that they have to do on their own."

But that has drawbacks.

"It's not the same," said Young, "because you don't know who's doing and who's not doing."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)



Signs on the road signal times have changed.

Stranded in Caribbean by virus, some face frustration, disrespect

*Junior's itinerary, for his first extended return to Jamaica since moving to the United States early 2019, was booked solid.

He and his wife had loads of family and friends to see; a sprinkling of business errands to run. The couple would celebrate Christmas in December, New Year's in January, then Junior's wife's birthday in February, when she also had a function to attend. The rest of the time they planned to soak up the joys of home - sweet home - before returning to still chilly Georgia on Mar. 30.

Then, as Junior prepared to leave for the U.S., Jamaica's government blocked travel to and from the island nation in an effort to stem the rapid spread of the deadly novel coronavirus (COVID-19). His visit turned sour. Junior spent most of his days in St. Catherine, a parish placed under lockdown after a COVID-19 hotspot was discovered at a call center, walking around his house. Anxiety, fueled by uncertainty, crept in.

"It's frustrating," Junior told **Caribbean Today** late April. "Sitting and waiting, wondering what will be next. We don't know what will happen."

OTHERS

He wasn't alone in uncertainty. While the precise statistics

were unknown up to press time, it is believed that many Caribbean nationals who traveled from overseas - mainly the U.S., U.K. and Canada - are now stranded in the region due to government restrictions.

But while much was made about those in places like the U.S. being unable to return to the Caribbean, those stuck in the region remained largely unnoticed.

"I know quite a few people here who want to return (overseas) and can't return," said Junior, who re-booked a flight to Atlanta for May 30, but later learned Jamaica may extend its travel ban, which may force him to change the date again.

"But the Jamaica government seems to only talk about those overseas trying to get home."

Teddy Bailey was also stuck. Bailey came to Jamaica on Mar. 18. He hoped to watch the Boys and Girls Championships, also known as "Champs", possibly the biggest high school track and field meet in the world. He planned to return to New York by Mar. 30 to celebrate his young son's birthday. A few days after his arrival, Jamaica halted commercial flights. There would be no birthday party.

"(My son) wasn't too happy," Bailey said. "We spoke

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)



On August 6, 2020, the island of Jamaica marks the 58th Anniversary of its independence as a sovereign nation. Caribbean Today invites the business community in Jamaica and the United States to celebrate this significant milestone.

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Stranded in Caribbean by virus, some face frustration, disrespect

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

every day and he kept asking if I'm coming back for his birthday. I kept telling him I'd be back. So it was hard when I couldn't make it. For me and him it was a disappointment."

LOCKDOWN

Also frustrating was Bailey's inability to enjoy his trip. Like Junior, he spent most of his time in Portmore, St. Catherine, a sprawling community just outside the capital Kingston. The call center fiasco led to stricter curfews. On the day he spoke to Caribbean Today, Bailey said Portmore had just finished a seven-day curfew, with designated times allowed on the street, and was facing another one for 14 days. By April 22, the day before the country announced it had recorded 233 cases of COVID-19 infections, Jamaicans were only allowed out between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Add tighter restrictions on grocery shopping hours and crowd gatherings and the self-styled "island in the sun" was suddenly no longer fun.

"The biggest frustration is that we're on lockdown," Bailey said.

'STUPID'

It got weird outside too. According to Bailey, once he tried

to get food, but police stopped him.

"The place was 200 meters from the checkpoint and the police would not let us get to the restaurant," he recalled. "They said you were not allowed to leave Portmore and we were in Portmore. The restaurant is in Portmore. That is stupid.

"It's very frustrating that I'm not able to move overseas," added Bailey, who has "already programmed" his mind to leave Jamaica this month. "But I can't even move around here. I can't leave St. Catherine. Even in Portmore, I can't move around ... I'm just locked up inside the grille."

Yet, for some stranded in the Caribbean, moving around may not be such a good idea. Reports surfaced showing people who live in the region verbally - and occasionally physically - abusing persons they believe came from overseas. They accuse them of "bringing the virus." Some demand the "foreign" visitors leave, even though they can't.

HURT

A Caribbean *man who lives in the U.S., but is now stuck in the region, recounted going to visit a longtime friend. The man refused to see him, telling him he should go into quarantine for



Police checkpoints in Jamaica attempt to limit spread of COVID-19.

10 days first. That left him bitter. Caribbean nationals overseas, he said, are on the frontline battling COVID-19. Many have been infected. Some have died, while working to send money to support the region.

"So they (in the Caribbean) are still getting help from people who are suffering abroad," the man said. "Yet still some of them

disrespecting people, accusing them of bringing the virus."

However, some in the region were outraged, admonishing their compatriots for such actions.

"When corona over and when some a oonu want foreigner fi come a oonu yard, a hope the foreigner dem don't come a oonu yard," an angry Jamaican

woman said in a widely circulated social media post. "And when oonu waan guh a Western Union (to collect remittances) or call foreign fi beg nuh money, none a dem nuh fi send nuh money fi none a oonu out ya, because oonu ungrateful."

According to observers, lines to collect remittances "stretched around the block" in Jamaica last month. Those stuck in the Caribbean have found themselves in need as well.

"You keep spending money you never planned to spend," said Junior. "... You didn't budget for all of that."

"It's eating up my funds," added Bailey. "I didn't plan to be in Jamaica this long. So it's getting costly."

The COVID-19 crisis has also sapped the joy of going home.

"I kinda have enough now," said Junior. "Time to move. Everything kinda stale."

- Gordon Williams. * Full names withheld on request.



NEW NORMAL: Caribbean Americans change lifestyle to battle COVID-19

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

The same is true for schools. Virtual learning experience has been applied because classrooms are shuttered. Many students have opted out.

Meanwhile, many parents find themselves out of a job. Others work from home. For those classified as essential services, going outside means going into danger.

"I work at a hospital where people are dying from COVID-19," said *J.R., a Caribbean American financial administrator in South Florida. "But I still have to go in some days and that is a big risk."

Yet Caribbean nationals are adapting. They join longer lines to buy groceries in larger quantities at stores with half-empty shelves, to cut down on visits. But that can mean missing out on the latest supplies, a problem for island people used to fresh meat, fruits and veggies.

COVID-19 has also damaged businesses in the Caribbean community. Owners have been forced to close operations, lay off workers, cut salaries and confront the uncertainty of their own dwindling income. In the six weeks leading up to the end of April, 30 million people in the U.S. lost their jobs.

The government authorized financial relief, but the rollout stumbled. By mid-April, early

funding for small businesses had dried up. The government approved another \$485 billion. That may not be enough either. Several Caribbean nationals who own small businesses and applied for relief told Caribbean Today they had not seen a dime through the end of April.

"We applied for the money just as they said it would be available, but never heard another word," explained *S.P., a Florida restaurant owner who had to close down. "I don't know any Caribbean business owner who received money."

Stimulus checks, worth an average \$2,400 to couples who qualify, have started to come in, but by the end of April many Caribbean Americans had yet to see that money either.

UNPRECEDENTED

Worry over COVID-19, plus an unstable financial outlook, only adds to the stress. The U.S. government attempted to ease the pressure by pushing back the normal April 15 deadline to file income taxes to July 15. Some think that's inadequate.

"They needed to give more time," Trinidadian-born Anthony Bernard, an accountant who identifies Caribbean nationals among his clients, said of the new filing date. "This (pandemic) is unprecedented.

"Yeah, it's a different feeling that they're not rushing

to file taxes by April 15. Most people are thinking about if they're getting paid or if they'll lose their job. (COVID-19) has impacted everybody across the board. People are dying."

Meanwhile, testing for COVID-19 is lagging badly. No one is exactly sure of the total number of victims - dead or alive. The American economy is also shrinking rapidly - by 4.8 percent for the first quarter of 2020. More bad news loom.

"We are going to see economic data for the second quarter that is worse than any data we have seen for the economy," U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said late April.

But President Donald Trump, facing elections in November, is demanding a return to normalcy by "opening up" the U.S. Multiple states have fallen in line. In Florida, home to a large concentration of Caribbean nationals, some businesses, parks and beaches re-opened, even as an NBC/The Wall Street Journal poll found 55 percent feared opening up too quickly would expose them to the virus, which, through April, had infected more than 3.3 million globally, killing 240,000, through last month.

Caribbean nationals are largely in step with most of the U.S. They would like stay-in-place restrictions to stay in place until the pandemic is

over. COVID-19, they know, is highly contagious. There is no cure. Nobody wants to be the next victim. So many, like Bernard, who runs an accounting business, make adjustments.

"We're not letting anybody in," he said of his Miami office. "Most clients send in their (tax) material or drop it off. Social distancing. Whatever they need to do they'll do it ... Now it's a whole other interaction."

Bernard acknowledges the government's near \$3 trillion initial stimulus should benefit individuals and businesses. But he expected more. People like his Caribbean American clients, he said, have become victims of a tragedy they had no part in making, so shouldn't be punished.

"All along people have been paying taxes," Bernard explained. "We didn't create this so they (government) have to step up."

For Caribbean nationals in the U.S., it's the new normal. So Haughton plans to have his big bash next year.

"April 18 will fall on a Friday then," he said, "but I'm still going to celebrate my 50th birthday."

* Names changed because they are not authorized to speak on the record.



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'Stand Up And Be Counted', fill out the 2020 census form

Census Day 2020 came and went this year without a lot of fanfare as it was upstaged by the dreaded new coronavirus (COVID-19) that is spreading death and mayhem across the globe.

Among the lessons to take away from the pandemic is that we must ensure every person in the United States, regardless of immigration status, is counted.

The breakdown in the U.S. healthcare system is a clear indicator of why we need an accurate count of the number of people who truly live in this country in every area. The bleak reality of an inaccurate count is playing out for the world to see in ethnic



FELICIA J. PERSAUD

Among the lessons to take away from the pandemic is that we must ensure every person in the United States, regardless of immigration status, is counted.

communities like Elmhurst, Queens, New York, where the Elmhurst Hospital has been overwhelmed by cases of the virus and has seen several deaths to date.

The population of this community is put at 49.7 percent Hispanic or Latino, 34.2 percent Asian and 7.64 percent black or African American. Some 84 percent of the people in Elmhurst and South Corona speak a non-English language. Only 65.9 percent are U.S. citizens.

LOT MORE

That is what the census numbers from 2010 say. It is likely a lot more since as the census's own data from 2010 showed there was only about a 57 percent to 40 percent rate in Queens in April 2010 and the undercount was real.

So far this year, in Congressional District 6, which includes Elmhurst Hospital, the census response rate according to the census's tracking map, is barely over 33 percent.

In the 9th Congressional District, home to a significant percentage of Caribbean immigrants and represented by Caribbean American Congresswoman Yvette Clarke, the response to date is even lower – at 32.5 percent. That is not good news.

Too often we complain that we are the “underserved

communities”, but the power is literally in our hands and we need to use it. We must quit complaining and start taking

Too often we complain that we are the “underserved communities”, but the power is literally in our hands and we need to use it. We must quit complaining and start taking back the power and that begins with the 2020 census, which will determine funding in our communities for the next decade.

back the power and that begins with the 2020 census, which will determine funding in our communities for the next decade.

IMPERATIVE

It is why it is imperative that, despite the current pandemic and the additional stress it has added to our daily lives, we must ensure we take a few minutes as we are quarantined to fill out the census form on online – whether on a computer or a phone – and avoid someone knocking on your door in this era of social distancing.

If you can post on social media, you can take the census.

In the immigrant community especially, our future in this country depends on us standing up and being counted regardless

If you can post on social media, you can take the census.

of immigration status. Look at the census as what it is – a head count for dollars wherever you live.

It's about saying you are present to receive actual money which goes to providing hospital care for when you need it; funding for fire fighters and police who can show up when you need them; funding schools in your district so your children can get to them and not be crammed into overcrowded classrooms; funding SNAP and Head Start programs for when you or your neighbor needs them; funding for small businesses especially in times of crisis like now, and so much more.

So fill out the 2020 census now at 2020census.gov/. And, as we say at Carib ID, “Stand Up And Be Counted”.

Felicia J. Persaud is publisher of NewsAmericasNow.



Mr. President, stop deportations from U.S. to Haiti immediately or risk catastrophe

The following is an open letter to Haiti President Jovenel Moise written April 21 by Marleine Bastien, executive director the South Florida-based Family Action Network Movement (FANM). According to the Haiti Press Network, 129 Haitian nationals, including 49 minors, were scheduled to be deported to Haiti on April 23. The letter has been edited for length, style and content.

Dear President Jovenel Moise:

Family Action Network Movement (FANM) is requesting that Haiti stops receiving all deportations from the United States in order to stop the spread of the deadly coronavirus.

This request is desperately urgent. Three of the 61 migrants the U.S. deported on April 7 to Haiti – on a flight that raised objections and concerns from several U.S.

lawmakers and human rights advocates – tested positive for the novel coronavirus while in quarantine in Haiti, according to Reuters (news agency). As of April 20, 2020, Haiti officially registered 57 cases of contamination, three deaths and zero patients declared cured, according to Haitian health authorities (Le Nouvelliste). These flights do not only put the deported individuals at risk, but they also threaten to spread the coronavirus in Haiti, a country as you know all too well is ill-equipped to deal with a pandemic which is wrecking havoc in the most powerful nation in the world: the U.S. The deportation flights



MARLEINE BASTIEN

to Haiti have the capacity to spread COVID-19 not only to Haiti, but also globally. Haiti especially is dangerously unprepared to respond to a pandemic given its complete lack of public health infrastructure and inability to provide the most basic care to its citizens let alone respond to a dangerous virus! Haiti lacks ventilators, sufficient intensive care units, and the necessary equipment for medical workers to protect themselves as they treat patients with the virus. Additionally, it is still reeling and recovering from the devastation caused by the 2010 earthquake, Hurricane Matthew in 2016, the imported cholera epidemic, economic and political instability. Haiti's water and sanitation systems are in shambles; many Haitians suffer from malnutrition.

NO CAPACITY

Haiti simply does not have
(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)



effort to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in T&T.

“(It’s) clear that there are forces that do not want to



see the votes recounted for whatever reason” - Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley, chairman of the 15-member Caribbean community (CARICOM) grouping, addressing the delay in finding out the winner of Guyana’s general elections.

• “They are hardened criminals, without faith or law, wild beasts and they will be chased until the gates of hell” - Haiti’s recently appointed Minister of Justice and Public Security Lucmane Déléle vows to tackle the country’s lawbreakers.



• “There is a great deal that we all should have as citizens. And we can’t say that this targets criminals only. It targets anyone and everyone ...

• “Either we return to a globalization of concentration that is authoritarian, and to the same institutional design, or we build a different future” - Alicia Bárcena, executive secretary of the United Nations’ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, ponders life in the region after COVID-19.



• “There is a bounty on my head ... I am not afraid because death is inevitable, and I believe in God” - Retired Justice Claudette Singh, chairman of the Guyana Elections Commission, responds to threats on her life as she presses on with preparations for a recount from the Mar. 2 general and regional elections.



• “So whenever we shut our borders ... it is not something that we wanted to do, it is not something we take pleasure in doing, but the reason for it is to protect you” - Trinidad and Tobago government defends its decision not to re-open its borders to accommodate nationals stranded in Barbados, insisting the measure is part of an overall

That is downright frightening” - Trinidad and Tobago Opposition Senator Wayne Sturge is concerned the Interception of Communication Bill, passed in the Senate recently, will “legitimize spying” on citizens.

• “What this bill does for the first time is that it considered the admissibility of evidence by a judge. Under this law as it exists right now before it is amended there is an automatic admissibility for evidence and you cannot challenge the admissibility of challenge because the statute says the judge must admit the evidence obtained by intercept” - T&T Attorney General Faris Al Rawi disagrees with Sturge.

• “It won’t take long and, hopefully, it has to be in my time to have a woman prime minister in this country” - Grenada’s Prime Minister Keith Mitchell.



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ONLINE ONLY: Cursed COVID-19 pandemic gives romance a terrible beating

Plagues have been around for centuries. They've even been chronicled in the Bible, when locusts, toads, flies, pestilence and diseases tormented mankind.

There were terrible plagues, such as the bubonic spread by flea carrying rats, that decimated medieval Europe. The Spanish flu killed between 80 and 100 million people worldwide in 1918. Ebola in Africa took its deadly toll, as did SARS and swine flu. HIV/AIDS has killed millions over the years. Measles killed over 140,000 last year. Other widespread health problems included scarlet fever, smallpox, polio, cholera and anthrax.

Now this cursed COVID-19 virus is wreaking havoc



**TONY
ROBINSON**

worldwide.

The world is in a crisis of epic proportions that took us all by surprise. Or did it? Ancient prophecies, and even some modern ones, plus the conspiracy theorists, have been predicting this crosses that has descended on us. Some of these prophecies have been attributed to Nostradamus, French physician and reputed seer from the 14th century. Bill Gates, computer pioneer, gave an eerily prophetic speech in 2015 about viral warfare.

SPREAD

COVID-19, has transformed the entire world in a matter of weeks. The origin, it is said, was from people eating bats that were infested with the virus.

People have been eating bats for centuries, so what's different now? But that's just my enquiring mind.

Viruses are smart, resilient. They mutate as they jump from bat to human and then human to



human. COVID-19 ran through China, where it originated, like a whirlwind from hell, and in

a short time thousands were infected with many dying.

That was just the beginning, as air and sea travel swept it through the world. Italy outdid China in infections and deaths, and now the United States is in the grips of a torrent of infections and fatalities.

Almost everything has ground to a halt, cinemas, plays, restaurants, churches, sports, as almost all have been canceled. New York City is a virtual ghost town as COVID-19 sweeps through. The city that never sleeps has gone to bed.

BEATING

Although not officially mandated, romance has taken a beating because of this plague.

Men are reluctant to solicit call girls, for fear of being infected. But give it time, after a

while the ladies of the night will be saying: "Here's a condom and a face mask."

The "other woman" or mistress will also have a difficult time, as her married man boyfriend cannot spend as much time with her as before. Work has been curtailed, so he'll have to self-quarantine in his house and spend time with his wife and children.

"Mommy, how come daddy's home all the time now?"
"Covid 19 clip his wings my dear."

But mark my words, if this thing lasts long enough, after a while people will get used to it and it'll be business as usual.

People will walk with their masks on, won't kiss, with no face to face contact made. Hand washing has now become the order of the day. It will now be challenging for people to forge new relationships.

"We can't do anything until after you've been Covid 19 tested."

There is no dating as we knew it anymore. No more movies, dinner, dancing and romance. Now it's meeting online only. Not even in church can you congregate.

Men who like to watch porn will feel justified in their behavior because it's safe. Lovers who live overseas can't come home to hook up anymore. Long distance relationships are taking a beating.

Romance in COVID-19 time can be most challenging. But people are inventive and innovative. They will find a way.

seido1yard@gmail.com



Trump continues Obamacare attack despite national pandemic

New Black voters break records at Florida polls

JERI YONDER

Donald Trump has made it clear that he will continue his assault on the Affordable Care Act (ACA). His Justice Department will plead with the Supreme Court later this year to end Obamacare and replace it with nothing.

Despite Republican efforts to repeal the historic law, Obamacare celebrated its 10th anniversary last week and serves as the primary health insurance for millions of Americans and has been a lifesaver to people of color and African Americans in particular. African Americans are disproportionately impacted by killer diseases: diabetes, cancer, heart disease and hypertension. Prior to the passage of the law, Blacks also had the highest uninsured rate but with the passage of Obamacare, the uninsured rate dropped significantly because insurers were required to provide affordable plans to communities across the country.

Instead of working to expand Obamacare, Trump and his administration are trying to end it. The President's efforts to destroy the landmark law comes during the worst possible time with the spread of coronavirus. Now, more than ever, people need access to affordable health insurance.



Thornton

"The Affordable Care Act has provided the safety net for our most vulnerable people. And with the coronavirus pandemic, there is great cause for concern if it is degraded in any way," according to Dr. Lauren Thornton, a pediatric anesthesiologist.

Trump and Congressional Republicans have worked openly to cut coverage of the sweeping healthcare law without offering an alternative. Recently, Trump defended his attack on Obamacare, doubling down on plans to rip away protected insurance for 3.5 million Floridians with pre-existing conditions.

But Obamacare does more than just require insurance companies to give policies to people with pre-existing conditions. It gives tax breaks to small companies to help them cover the cost of employee health care and helps young people to remain on their parents' health insurance until age 26. It mandates free preventive care and bans lifetime limits so that insurance companies can't stop paying for care in the middle of a patient's treatment.

"Donald Trump's obsession with destroying the Affordable Care Act shows a total disregard for our health and well-being. Tragically, Trump has absolutely no plan for the millions of Floridians who have health insurance as a result of Obamacare and that will not change," according to Florida



Terrie Rizzo, Florida Democratic Party Chair

Democratic Party Chair Terrie Rizzo.

"Florida has had the highest ACA enrollment in the nation. The disruption of that healthcare is estimated to increase the number of uninsured by 67%," she said.

Trump's lack of humanity, overall incompetence and what most deem racist policies make African Americans his most ardent opponents. Polls consistently show that between 93 – 98% of African Americans want Trump out of the White House. And they have voted that way against Republicans, playing a major role in restoring the US House of Representatives to Democratic control in 2018.

More than 60,000 African American Democrats voted for the first time in Florida's March Presidential Preference Primary, that's a very high number for new voters. It's a sure sign that Black Floridians will be showing up on election day November 3, 2020.



Mr. President, stop deportations from U.S. to Haiti immediately

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

the capacity to respond to a pandemic of this magnitude and the potential outbreak could wipe out the island nation.

According to the **Miami Herald** article "Caribbean nations can't get U.S. masks, ventilators for COVID-19 under Trump policy", a spokesperson from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection confirmed that the agency is working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to prevent distributors from diverting personal protective equipment, or PPE, such as face masks and gloves, overseas. Ventilators also are on the prohibited list. Haiti thus may not even be able to procure the needed supplies even if it wanted to.

In light of the serious loss of lives caused by COVID-19, which already claimed more

than 170,000 lives as of April 20, we write to ask you that you not only ask President Trump to put a moratorium on all deportations, but for you to also stop accepting deportees. Immigration advocates in the U.S. and around the world are ready to stand with you in this inhumane fight. We are asking you to act now to prevent further spread of the disease!

As we unite and mobilize to support Haiti in this time of grave crisis, we, the undersigned organizations remain confident that you will heed our calls to stop accepting all deportations from the U.S. and other nations to Haiti, putting our vulnerable nation and others at a greater risk.

Sincerely,
Marleine Bastien



'TOGETHER WE STAND': Caribbean stars strike high note in anti-virus fight

Prime time entertainers from the Caribbean have been rallying to support those impacted by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the region and elsewhere.

While most of the globe is on shutdown, eliminating live events which usually attract large audiences, the entertainers have found ways to join the COVID-19 fight.

Barbadian pop superstar Rihanna, through her Clara Lionel Foundation, last month joined with Twitter & Square Chief Executive Officer Jack Dorsey and rapper Jay Z's Shawn Carter Foundation to provide \$6.2 million in grants for the COVID-19 fight in the Caribbean, United States and Africa. The money is to help buy food, protective gear and medical supplies.

Rihanna, full name Robyn Rihanna Fenty, also donated ventilators to her homeland. Her father Ronald Fenty, who lives in Barbados, received a ventilator after he reportedly contracted

COVID-19.

"I have to say, I love you so much, Robyn," Fenty was quoted by ABC as saying last



Sean Paul

month. "She did so much for me. I appreciate everything she has done."

Rihanna has also received nods of gratitude from other beneficiaries, including Andrew Cuomo, governor of New York, the epicenter of the virus in the U.S.

"I want to thank @rihanna and the Rihanna Foundation for

donating Personal Protective Equipment to New York State,"



Wyclef Jean

Cuomo noted on **Twitter**. "We're so appreciative of your help and that of so many others who have stepped up."

STEPPING UP

Other Caribbean nationals stepped up. A mid-April telethon in Jamaica, which was broad-

cast worldwide, featured input from Jamaican celebrities such as former superstar sprinter Usain Bolt, plus musicians like Shaggy, Sean Paul, Sean Kingston, and the children of late reggae icon Bob Marley - Ziggy, Damian and Stephen. Non-Jamaican entertainers, including Haitian-born Wyclef Jean, Britain's Sting and Cuban-born Gloria Estefan, also pitched in.

Wyclef Jean said "COVID-19 is a very serious issue," revealing family members were among the virus's "victims." "So let's get in front of it," he added.

In his video recording, dancehall star Sean Paul said: "Please continue to follow the social distancing guidelines and give thanks for life."

In his pre-recorded video message, Sting pleaded for help

for Jamaicans on the frontline of the fight.

"Please donate to support your healthcare workers, who are fighting this amazingly courageous fight against COVID-19," the former Police lead said. "Stay at home and donate."

According to the Jamaica government, the telethon raised J\$50 million (more than US\$350,000), which is earmarked to buy ventilators, testing kits and protective gear for medical workers and other frontline staff.

SKEPTIC

However, not all Caribbean entertainers were immediately onboard with the anti-COVID-19 campaign.

Jamaican reggae star Chronixx was allegedly among early skeptics. The "Smile Jamaica" singer noted on **Instagram** he was "not buying the COVID-19 b.s." and said he refused to participate in "the circus." The post was deleted.

Later, Chronixx appeared to

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)

Barbados cancels major festivals due to COVID-19

Barbados has called off two of its most popular celebrations as the Caribbean nation continues to battle the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

There will be no Crop Over festival or National Independence Festival of Creative Arts (NIFCA) in Barbados this. The Ministry of Creative Economy, Culture and Sports announced on April 19 that Cabinet had approved its recommendation to cancel the 2020 edition of the highly anticipated annual festivals, which would be replaced with two initiatives.

"This decision was made in light of ongoing global efforts to contain and manage the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as government's negative short-term projections for the local economy, regional and international travel and trade, and weakened public confidence in attending mass gatherings in the current environment, and immediately thereafter," the ministry stated.

"Cabinet has further agreed that the ministry, through the National Cultural Foundation (NCF), would replace the two major festivals with a national training program in schools and communities, and a wide-reaching campaign to both fund and produce radio, television and



The music has gone silent at 2020 Barbados festivities.

digital content, which would be accessible across multiple delivery channels, including the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation."

MISSION

The ministry added that it remains committed to its mission

"We cannot take our guard down ... We are encouraged but we know very well that there is no certainty as to whether or not we have cases out there in the community" - Jeffrey Bostic

of creating opportunities in the cultural industries and, to this end, the NCF will soon convene a series of stakeholder consultations to discuss ways in which cultural practitioners could participate in, and benefit from, the

programs identified as replacements for the Crop Over festival and NIFCA.

The development came even as the Ministry of Health and Wellness reported that four consecutive days had passed with no new confirmed COVID-19 cases.

"Although this is indeed an encouraging sign, we are not yet out of the woods. We cannot take our guard down ... We are encouraged but we know very well that there is no certainty as to whether or not we have cases out there in the community," Minister of Health and Wellness Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey Bostic said.

He added that public health teams were working to track down any cases which may have gone undetected.

- Edited from CMC.



Caribbean American radio host Gil Bailey dies in N.Y.

Veteran Caribbean American radio personality Gil Bailey died last month from complications caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

He was 84.

Jamaican-born Bailey, who was based in New York where he was called the "President of Caribbean Reggae Music", forged a broadcasting career which spanned half century.

Bailey, who worked up to late March, offered a show which included talk, gospel, reggae and Caribbean oldies music. Along with his wife Pat, who co-produced his show, he launched

his first show around 1970. It became popular and was picked up by several radio stations and later on gilbaileyradio.com.

Bailey was also known for mentoring up-and-coming radio personalities.

Pat Bailey, who died in 2016 at age 77, also offered "Let's Hear It", a call-in talk show.



Bailey

T&T actor, playwright, director dies

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad - Michael Anthony Hall, a prominent Trinidad and Tobago playwright, screenwriter, actor and director, died last month after suffering a massive heart attack on the island of Tobago where he lived, according to his family.

Hall, 71, became widely known as a producer/presenter on the Gayelle television series. He wrote and directed for street, stage and screen since the late 1960s. From 1987 he collaborated in carnival as a mas-maker, working closely with master masman Peter Minshall.

Hall conducted his theater practice in Trinidad through Playwrights Workshop, started in 2003, and his own Lordstreet Theatre "Peoples of the Sea" Company, which he co-founded with Errol Fabien in 1990.

An alumnus of the University

of Alberta and the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, Hall presented the Jouvay Popular Theatre Process (JPTP), implemented worldwide as a performance model for actor training and play-making as well as for personal and community development. He contributed as lecturer and arts facilitator at institutions in the United States and Europe, as well as the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) and The University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine.

- Edited from CMC.



Hall

Court rejects Jamaican dancehall star's murder conviction appeal

KINGSTON, Jamaica – Popular dancehall entertainer Vybz Kartel has lost his appeal against his murder conviction and remains in prison here.

After a near two-year wait, the Court of Appeal handed down a judgment early last month affirming the murder conviction.

The court also upheld the

convictions for dancehall artiste Shawn Storm and two others - Kahira Jones and Andre St John.

The appeal was heard by Court of Appeal President Dennis Morrison, Frank Williams and Patrick Brooks.

In April 2014, Kartel, whose real name is Adidja Palmer, Shawn Storm, given name Shawn Campbell, Jones

and St. John were convicted for the Aug. 2011 killing of Clive "Lizard" Williams at a house in Havendale, St Andrew.

The judge initially said Kartel would be eligible for parole after serving 35 years. His co-convicts were also given mandatory life sentences and have been ordered to each serve 25 years before becoming

eligible for parole.

However, the sentences for the convicted were later reduced. Kartel will now serve 32 years and six months before being eligible for parole.



Vybz Kartel

Antigua/Barbuda cancels carnival in wake of COVID-19 pandemic

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua and Barbuda – The twin-island nation of Antigua and Barbuda has cancelled its premier summer celebration in the wake of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

According to National Festivals Minister Daryll Matthew on April 19, the Cabinet has accepted his recommendation to call off carnival, which was originally scheduled for July 23 to Aug. 4.

"Cabinet looked at the circumstances surrounding the worldwide coronavirus pandemic and agreed that the hosting of



Matthew

the activities at this time would not be in the best interest of

the population in maintaining good health, which is the foremost priority of the government," Matthew said.

"The festival is also expected to be affected by the projected negative economic impact the virus will have on Antigua and Barbuda. It was therefore agreed to cancel the celebrations and advised that the focus should be placed

on the planning of Carnival 2021 which will coincide with the hosting of Carifesta XV here in Antigua and Barbuda."

'NO INTEREST'

Matthew also said "the strong belief that the public will have no interest in attending social and entertainment gatherings during and after the COVID-19 pandemic" was another factor contributing to the decision to cancel the 2020 edition of the festival.

He said the Festivals Commission has produced an Independence schedule for this year,

which will be released when there has been official clearance that the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided.

"We will continue to plan for the Independence celebrations in late October early November in anticipation that the environment would facilitate activities of this nature," Matthew said.

Independence celebrations are expected to be held in the next six months, from Oct. 24 to Nov. 2, 2020.

- Edited from CMC.



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Caribbean creative industry gets relief for setbacks

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) is stepping in with financial help for those in the region's creative industry hurt by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The CDB last month allocated \$100,000 for emergency relief grants being offered through its Cultural and Creative Industries Innovation Fund (CIIF).

According to the bank, this is being offered in light of the loss of revenue by cultural and creative industry (CI) practitioners due to the effects of COVID-19.

Of the allocated funds, \$50,000 will go towards the music sub-sector and the remainder to the festivals and carnivals sub-sector. Relief grants will range from \$2,500 to \$20,000 each.

The grant is targeted at entrepreneurs who can demonstrate loss of income for music, festival and carnival events that have been cancelled as a result of COVID-19.

Applications for grants closes May 20.



Jamaican actress dies at 102

Veteran Jamaican actress Lois Kelly Miller, best known for her role in the Hollywood movie "Meet Joe Black", alongside Brad Pitt and Anthony Hopkins, died last month.

She was 102.

Kelly Miller, a former piano teacher, appeared in 13 national pantomimes in Jamaica.



'TOGETHER WE STAND'...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

have a change of heart. A posting on his social media account urged people to "take all necessary steps to reduce the risks of spreading and being affected by this virus ... Don't take it lightly and don't take anything for granted."

The six-hour telethon was part of a "Together We Stand"

campaign supported by Jamaica's government. The aim was to raise money to assist the Caribbean island's healthcare workers in the pandemic fight.

"They are going to be the ones on the frontline leading the race," said Wyclef Jean said.

- G. Williams



Sofrito salsa and tostones - a delightful Cuban treat

This month we journey to Cuba and spotlight the delicious sofrito salsa and tostones, that can be served as a snack or an appetizer.

Here's how you can make it at home:

INGREDIENTS

Tostones

- 2 green plantains
- vegetable oil (for frying)
- salt

Salsa

- 2 tomatoes, diced and seeded
- 1/4 cup small diced onion
- 1/2 avocado, small diced
- 3 cloves garlic, press
- 3 culantro leaves, minced
- 1 tbsl. white vinegar
- salt to taste
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

METHOD

Salsa

Combine all ingredients, except olive oil and avocado, in a bowl and stir together until well combined. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes to let flavors develop.

Right before serving, add avocado and extra virgin olive oil, stir gently until well



Sofrito salsa and tostones

combined.

Tostones

Peel plantain and cut diagonally into one-inch slices. Fry the plantain slices over medium heat, until golden in color and softened. Drain them in a plate lined with paper towels.

If you don't have a tostonera, which is a press for making tostones, take a paper bag and place a plantain slice on it. Fold the bag over on the plantain slice and, using a can,

saucer or whatever you have on hand, press down on the plantain slice to flatten.

Dredge the flat plantains in a bowl of salted water and drop back into the frying pan. Stand back because it will spit at you.

Fry until golden and crisp, transfer to a plate lined with paper towels and sprinkle with salt.

Serve with sofrito salsa.

- Edited from News Americas.



Settle for steamy Guyanese chicken chow mein this weekend



Chicken chow mein

A simple easy dish would be great this weekend. How about Guyanese chicken chow mein?

Here's how to make it, according to Althea Brown of Metemgee:

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pk dried Chow Mein noodles
- 3 tbsp. oil
- 1 1/2 lbs. boneless chicken thighs
- small onion (thinly sliced)
- 2 cups frozen mixed vegetables or 1 carrot (julienne)
- 1/2 head of broccoli (speared)
- 1 cup petite green beans (cut into two-inch pieces)
- 1 cup fresh or canned sweet corn
- 1/2 head of cauliflower (speared)
- 1/2 green cabbage (thinly shredded)
- 5 green onions (shallot, scallions) finely chopped

TO SEASON WITH THE CHICKEN

- 1 tablespoon dried thyme
- 1 tablespoon cassareep or soy sauce
- 3 cloves of garlic (chopped)
- 1 tsp. brown sugar

- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1 tsp. mustard
- You can also add 1 tbsp. ketchup (if you like)

METHOD

Follow the instructions on the packet to cook the noodles, then drain and set aside.

Cut chicken into one-inch chunks. Then season with thyme, cassareep or soy sauce, garlic, brown sugar, salt, mustard, black pepper and ketchup (if you're using that).

Set aside and let marinate for at least five minutes, but the longer the better.

Then, in a skillet large enough for the noodles, warm oil on medium heat. Add onions and cook until onions are translucent and soft. Then increase heat to high. Next, add seasoned chicken and sauté until chicken is fully cooked, stirring once or twice to ensure it doesn't burn.

Add vegetables and cook for another five minutes, constantly turning for even cooking. Add the peppers and cook for three

minutes.

Add the drained noodles to cooked chicken and vegetables and toss together.

Finally, add the cabbage and green onions to the noodles and toss together. Remove from heat and serve hot.

- Edited from News Americas.



What to do if you suspect you're COVID-19 infected

Anyone with concerns about coronavirus should call their healthcare provider, according to the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

It's unclear whether pregnant women have a greater chance of getting severely ill from coronavirus, but the CDC has said women experience changes in their bodies during pregnancy that may increase their risk of some infections.

In general, COVID-19 infections are riskier if you have underlying health conditions such as diabetes, chronic lung disease or asthma, heart failure or heart disease, sickle cell anemia, cancer (or are undergoing chemotherapy), kidney disease with dialysis, a body mass index (BMI) over 40 (extremely obese) or an autoimmune disorder.

EVALUATION

If you have no symptoms,

please don't ask for testing or add to backlog of calls at testing centers, clinics, hospitals and the like, experts say.

People who have this small cluster of important symptoms - fever and anything related to the lower respiratory tract such as cough and difficulty breathing - should reach out to be evaluated.

If you have insurance and looking for a provider or someone to call or connect with, there's a number on the back of your insurance card. If you go online, there is information for patients.

No insurance? Start with the state health department or the local community health centers. Some states have a 1-800 hotline number to call. If there is a testing and assessment center near you, notify them that you're coming.

- Edited from CNN.



Cuba offers drug to treat COVID-19

Cuba has created a drug which the Spanish-speaking nation claims can treat victims of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

However, at least one Caribbean nation isn't ready to accept the antiviral drug Interferon Alpha 2B, even as virus infections rapidly increased across the region and relief supplies were being blocked by the United States government.

According to reports, Interferon Alpha 2B has been used and been effective in

treating patients infected with viruses similar to COVID-19.

But Jamaica, a close ally of Cuba, has declined an invitation to use the drug. The government claimed Interferon Alpha 2B had not received global approval and that it would continue talks about the drug with Cuba.

Meanwhile, the U.S. last month blocked COVID-19 test kits from arriving in Jamaica, according to the government.



Have You Paid Your Property Taxes?

As a result of the Coronavirus (COVID - 19), the property tax payment deadline is extended from March 31 to April 15, 2020. Payments must be submitted electronically or postmarked by April 15. Any unpaid taxes and assessments become delinquent on April 16. From April 16 through May 31, 3% interest is added to the gross tax amount due plus advertising costs and fees. From June 1 through June 14, 4.5% interest is added to the gross tax amount due plus advertising costs and fees.

Your home is one of your most valuable assets, and the Miami-Dade County Tax Collector wants to help you understand the consequences of not paying your property taxes.

- Property taxes became delinquent on April 16th.
- If your taxes remain unpaid on June 15th, your taxes will be sold as a Tax Certificate.
- A Tax Certificate represents a lien that is sold to the investor that will accept the lowest rate of interest for your taxes. The interest will be included to the amount that you owe.
- If your taxes remain unpaid for two years after a Tax Certificate has been issued on your property, your property could be sold at a future date.

To avoid additional charges and interest, and the potential risk of losing your property, your payment must be in our office by June 12, 2020. Mailed payments must be in the form of a cashier's check or money order. Postmarks will not be honored for delinquent taxes.

You may pay in person at: **Miami-Dade Tax Collector**
200 NW 2 Avenue, Miami, FL 33128
(Cash Payments are accepted)

The Tax Collector's Public Service Office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Please note the office will be closed in observance of the legal holiday, Memorial Day, Monday, May 25, 2020.

On-line payments (e-checking and credit cards) will be available for real estate and tangible personal property through, Sunday, June 14, 2020 11:59 p.m.

(Funds must be available for immediate withdrawal for e-checking from a regular checking account)

Credit Card Payments are accepted online. Visa, MasterCard, and Discover are accepted.

(A non-refundable convenience fee of 2.21% will be applied to each credit card transaction)

For additional information, please call 305-270-4916.



Caribbean ally Al Tucker dies

Albert "Al" Tucker, recognized as a key ally of South Florida's Caribbean American community, died last month at age 64.

Tucker was the vice president of the Fort Lauderdale Visitors and Conventions Bureau, with responsibility for multi-cultural affairs. He was credited with building cultural friendships in the ethnically diverse areas of Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties.

Tucker was also known for his work in helping to secure the World Junior Netball Tournament in Broward

County. In a statement, the Greater Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce Inc. and the Greater Caribbean American Cultural Coalition Inc. noted that the Caribbean community had "lost a friend, an ally and one of the most constructive, progressive and productive public servants."

Hazelle Rogers, the Jamaican American mayor of Lauderdale Lakes, said Tucker "has left an indelible mark on our lives. He left us to carry on the legacy of respect, value and unity."



Jamaica's new L.A. consul

Joy Stephenson-Laws, a health attorney in California, has been appointed Jamaica's new honorary consul in the city of Los Angeles, California. She succeeds Lorna Johnson, who left the post in January.

Stephenson-Laws, who hails from Sherwood Content in Trelawny, emigrated to the U.S. more than 40 years ago, earned a bachelor of arts degree from Loma Linda University and a juris doctor from Loyola University. She is founding and managing partner of the healthcare industry litigation firm Stephenson, Acquistio & Colman.



'Black Enterprise' founder dies

Earl Graves Sr., son of Barbadian Americans and founder of the first black-owned magazine in the United States which focused on African American entrepreneurs, died last month in New York. He was 85.

Graves, who was born in Brooklyn to Earl Godwin and Winifred Graves, both children of Barbadian immigrants, reportedly suffered from Alzheimer's disease.

He attended Morgan State University, graduating in 1958 with a degree in economics. He worked in politics, including the campaign of eventual President Lyndon B. Johnson and as an administrative assistant to Senator Robert F. Kennedy. Graves was later named to the advisory board of the Small Business

Administration (SBA).

While at the SBA, he developed the idea for a magazine to focus on African Americans in business.

That led to "Black Enterprise" magazine being launched in Aug. 1970.

Graves was awarded the NAACP Springarn Medal, the highest award for African Americans, in 1999. Morgan State University named its business school the Earl G. Graves School of Business and Management.



Graves, Sr.

Two Caribbean stalwarts die

Two Caribbean American stalwarts died last month in the United States.

Grenadian-born Dr. Roy A. Hastick, president, chief executive officer and founder of the Brooklyn-based Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CACCI), died in New York after complications related to

the novel coronavirus. He was 69.

Jamaican E. Leopold Edwards, recognized as a towering figure in the Caribbean American community in the U.S. for more than seven decades, died at his home in Maryland. He was 95.



N.Y. group dedicates 2020 to legacy of Marcus Garvey

NEW YORK – The New York-based Institute of the Black World 21st Century (IBW), says it will be dedicating this year to the life and legacy of Jamaican National Hero and Pan-Africanist Marcus Mosiah Garvey.

IBW President Dr. Ron Daniels said Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL), "which rapidly developed into the largest mass-based organization of people of African descent in the history of the U.S. and globally."



Garvey

"The UNIA-ACL was completely financed by black people," Dr. Daniel said, noting that, in 1920, Garvey took "the extraordinary step of convening an International

Convention of the Negro People of the World, which attracted more than 2,000 delegates from Africa, the Caribbean, Great Britain, France and the U.S."

"The convention began with a rally at Madison Square

Garden, which drew some 25,000 attendees," he said.

"In commemoration of the anniversary of this amazing feat and the vision and accomplishments of Marcus Mosiah Garvey, IBW is declaring 2020 'The Year of Marcus Garvey' and urging black organizations in the U.S. and the Pan African World to join us in mounting a year-long educational campaign to teach our people about this remarkable leader and to rekindle a spirit of self-support for Black organizations and institutions in his memory," Daniels said.



Social Security offices close, but services available online, via phone during pandemic

Local Social Security offices are closed to the public for in-person service.

The decision was made to protect the population served by Social Security - older Americans and people with underlying medical conditions - and the agency's employees during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

However, Social Security

said it is still able to provide critical services. Its online services remain available at www.socialsecurity.gov. Local offices are still able to provide services over the telephone.

If you need help from Social Security:

- First, use the online services available at www.socialsecurity.gov/online. You can apply for retirement, disability and Medicare benefits online, check the status of an application or appeal, request a replacement Social Security card (in most areas), print a benefit verification letter from anywhere and from any of your devices.

ANSWERS

Social Securing is able to answer Social Security questions online, without having to speak with a Social Security representative in person or by telephone. Visit Frequently Asked Questions at www.socialsecurity.gov/ask.

- If you cannot conduct your Social Security business online, check online field office locator for specific information about

how to directly contact your local office. Your local office still will be able to provide critical services to help you apply for benefits, answer your questions, and provide other services over the telephone.

- If you already have an in-office appointment scheduled, Social Security said it will call you to handle your appointment over the telephone instead. If you have a hearing scheduled, the agency will call you to discuss alternatives for continuing with your hearing, including offering a telephonic hearing. Our call may come from a private number and not from a United States government telephone. Remember: Social Security employees are not allowed to threaten you or ask for any form of payment.

- If you cannot complete your Social Security business online, call 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778). A list of automated telephone services is available online at www.socialsecurity.gov/agency/contact/phone.html.



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~ A CARIBBEAN TODAY SPECIAL FEATURE

U.S. slows COVID-19 aid for some Caribbean nations

The United States slowed and, in some cases, shut down delivery of vital medical supplies for multiple Caribbean nations needed to battle the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which poses a mounting threat to the region.

Several reports surfaced last month that the U.S. had blocked several shipments to the region.

Under the Defense Production Act signed by President Donald Trump on April 3, the U.S. government has exerted greater control over material needed in the COVID-19 fight. That includes halting exports of medical supplies.

The U.S. order was intended to "prevent the export of N-95 respirators, surgical masks, gloves and other PPEs (personal protective equipment)." Trump announced the supplies were needed "for domestic use" in the U.S.

SEIZURES

The U.S. reportedly seized a shipment of \$12,000 in PPEs destined for health workers in the British Virgin Islands (BVI), including surgical masks and gloves. However, according to BVI Office of the Governor, the U.S. later agreed to allow the

shipment.

Cayman Islands should have received eight ventilators and 50,000 masks which were bought in the U.S. That shipment was reportedly stopped in Miami. The U.S. later released the shipment.

Other nations were not so fortunate. A shipment of test kits was blocked from

before that was blocked.

Caribbean nations have reportedly been in diplomatic negotiations with the U.S. in an effort to secure the shipments.

TRAFFICKING

During a media briefing of Trump's Coronavirus Task Force last month, the president appeared to link the blocking of PPE and other medical equipment shipments to places like the Caribbean with the U.S. fight against the illegal drug trade.

"Well, what we're doing, we have a tremendous force out there, a naval force, and we're blocking the shipment of drugs," said Trump.

"So maybe what they're doing is stopping ships that they want to look at. We're not blocking. What we're doing is we're making sure; we don't want drugs in our country."

Up to press time, many Caribbean nations had recorded COVID-19 infections. Some, including Barbados, The Bahamas, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guyana, St. Maarten, Martinique and Jamaica, have reported multiple deaths.



Shipments bound for the region have been blocked.

landing in Jamaica, according to Dr. Christopher Tufton, the Caribbean island's health and wellness minister.

A shipment of PPEs scheduled to land in The Bahamas was returned to Miami, Florida. Up to press time the Caribbean nation was engaged in diplomatic discussions with the U.S. with the aim of getting the shipment released.

Barbados was expecting a shipment of 20 ventilators,

Caribbean economy faces worst slowdown after COVID-19

The Caribbean could face the worst economic contraction in its history due to the fallout from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, according to new report.

"Assessing the Effects of COVID-19 to Plan the Recovery", a new report published by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), has warned that the pandemic will herald a projected -5.3 percent drop in activity this year.

A contraction of this magnitude would mean going back to the Great Depression in 1930, when there was a -5.0 percent drop, or 1914, when growth plummeted -4.9 percent.

"The effects of COVID-19

will cause the biggest recession that the region has suffered since 1914 and 1930," said ECLAC Executive Director

Alicia Bárcena during a virtual press conference from ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile.

NEGATIVES

"A sharp increase in unemployment is forecast, with negative effects on poverty and inequality."

The report is ECLAC's second study in tracking the



Bárcena

economic and social effects of the coronavirus crisis in Latin American and Caribbean countries. The first was issued earlier in April.

Prior to the pandemic, the United Nations said the region had reported nearly seven years of low growth, averaging less than 0.5 percent.

The impacts of COVID-19 include a reduction in international trade, falling commodity prices, lower demand for tourism services and a drop in remittances, sent home from workers abroad, the U.N. said.

- Edited from CMC.



Pandemic will impact Caribbean remittances ~ financial expert

DENVER, Colorado – A senior official of WorldRemit, the London, England-based digital money transfer company, says overall remittances to the Caribbean will be severely impacted this year as a result of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Daniel Canning, managing director for the Americas, including the Caribbean, at FinTech, said late last month that while it is too early to

understand the full impact of COVID-19 on remittance flows to the Caribbean, "we expect that overall remittances will be impacted in 2020."

Canning, who is based at WorldRemit's office here, gave no figures but told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) that his company is "seeing an increase in new customers and sending patterns from the digital channel, as customers opt for the convenience and safety of

sending money directly from their computer or smart phone." WorldRemit currently services Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Puerto Rico, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and Turks and Caicos Islands.



No need to repay U.S. relief money ~ Treasury

Caribbean nationals and all other legal residents of the United States will not have to repay the government for money received by individuals as relief during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.

The money was allocated as part of a \$2.2 trillion government stimulus package.

Those who make up to a certain amount - \$150,000 for married couples \$75,000 for individuals - are scheduled to

receive \$2,400 and \$1,200, respectively. An additional \$500 payment will be made for each child.

Speculation circulated on social media indicated that the relief money would be taxed next year. However, the U.S. Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Service confirmed last month that the money would not have to be repaid in next year's tax filing.



T&T businessman falls to virus

NEW YORK – Prominent Trinidadian businessman Conrad Ifill, whose Conrad's Famous Bakery has been a fixture in Brooklyn, New York's Caribbean community for decades, died last month after contracting the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

His Trinidadian wife Faye Ifill, an elementary school teacher in New York, told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) that her husband died at Mount Sinai South Nassau Hospital in Long Island. Ifill was 81.

She said Ifill was first admitted to the hospital on April 3 and tested positive for COVID-19 two days later. He developed breathing complications.

Ifill said her husband, who owned two outlets of Conrad's Famous Bakery on Utica and Church avenues in Brooklyn, was born on June 10, 1938 on Fun Rose Street, off the main Coffee Street, in San Fernando,

Trinidad. She said Ifill "loved baking" and had "a generous heart."

A note on the bakery's website stated that "Conrad's Famous Bakery has been baking bread for over 31 years" and that Ifill, the founder and owner, "quit his Computer Data Processing job on Wall Street (in lower Manhattan, New York) to pursue his dream of opening a Trinidadian Bakery."

As an adult, Ifill migrated to the New York and pursued a career in the computer data processing and accounting.

"However, he was not satisfied with this career path and decided to quit his job and pursue his dream of owning a successful Caribbean bakery, featuring Trinidadian favorites," the website added.

- Edited from CMC.



Walk-up testing site opens in North Miami Beach

MIAMI-DADE – A new testing site for the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has opened in North Miami Beach.

The site at Holy Family Catholic Church, 14500 N.E. 11th Ave., is available for walk-ups by appointment only.

Testing is available to individuals of any age, with or without symptoms, who believe they may have been in contact with someone who tested positive for the virus.

"I'm pleased this new testing site is now available for residents who can't utilize the drive-through testing sites because they don't have a car but believe they may have been infected and want to get tested," said Miami-Dade County's Haitian American Commissioner Jean Monestime.

For appointments, call 305-499-8767. For more testing sites, visit miamidade.gov/coronavirus.



Jamaica consulate offers help

Prayer, counseling and encouragement needed to deal with the challenges of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic are being offered by the Consulate General of Jamaica in the Southern United States.

A team of volunteers, including pastors, psychologist and life coach, are being made available by appointment to address individuals' concerns.

The volunteers are: Reverend Horace Ward, senior pastor

of the Holy Family Episcopal Church in Miami Gardens (Horace.ward@gmail.com); Pastor Norman Hemming, of the Cooper City Church of God (norman_h3@yahoo.com); psychologist Dr. Joan Muir (jmuir@drjoanmuir.com); and life coach Craig Duncan (duncancraig777@gmail.com).

For more information, visit the consulate's website at www.jamaicacgmiami.org.



TOURISM/TRAVEL



www.caribbeantoday.com

Caribbean tourism will rebound after pandemic damage ~ U.N.

MADRID, Spain – The United Nations' World Travel Organization (UNWTO) has noted the tough times the Caribbean and tourist-dependent countries are undergoing amid the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, but predicts the industry will rebound soon.

"Tourism may have been brought to a near-standstill by COVID-19, but the industry – which accounts for 10 percent of global GDP (gross domestic product) – finds itself in a unique position to help put the global economy back on its feet, once the pandemic has passed," noted UNWTO, which is monitoring the crisis from its Madrid headquarters and collaborating with other U.N. agencies on ways to mitigate its impact.

"COVID-19 has impacted travel and tourism like no other event before in history," said UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili.

However, Pololikashvili also emphasized that tourism, which employs one in 10 workers worldwide, and has a track record for resilience during the 2008-2009 financial crisis and the 2003 SARS outbreak, is also well-



Suitcases aren't going anywhere right now, but travel industry should recovery.

placed to lead future recovery.

KEY

The U.N. said political and financial commitments are key to ensuring that tourism can lead wider economic and social recovery.

According to UNWTO estimates, global international tourist arrivals in 2020 could fall by 20 percent to 30 percent compared to last year. That translates into a loss of \$30 billion to \$50 billion in spending by international

visitors, the U.N. said.

In 2009, on the back of the global financial crisis, the U.N. said international tourist arrivals fell by four percent, while the SARS pandemic in 2003 led to a decline of just 0.4 percent.

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTC), an industry group, said that up to 75 million tourism-related jobs are at immediate risk.

- Edited from CMC.



U.S. urges citizens to stay away from Haiti

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti – The United States has urged its nationals not to travel to the French-speaking Caribbean community (CARICOM) country of Haiti because of the high level of crime, civil unrest and kidnapping.

"Violent crime, such as armed robbery and carjacking, is common. Kidnapping is widespread. Kidnappers may use sophisticated planning or take advantage of unplanned opportunities. Victims have included US citizens," the U.S. Department of State declared in a statement issued early last month.

The department warned that demonstrations, tire burning, and roadblocks are frequent, unpredictable, and can turn violent.

"Local police may lack the resources to respond effectively to serious criminal incidents. Emergency response, including ambulance service, is limited or non-existent," the statement added.

The statement by Washington followed one issued by the U.S. Embassy here urging the government of President Jovenel Moïse "to meet the needs of the Haitian people by urgently addressing public security, restarting economic growth, and organizing free, fair, and credible legislative elections as soon as technically feasible."

CAUTION

Washington said travelers are sometimes followed and

violently attacked and robbed shortly after leaving the Port-au-Prince international airport.

"The U.S. Embassy requires its personnel to use official transportation to and from the airport. Robbers and carjackers have



Moïse urged to address issue.

attacked private vehicles stuck in heavy traffic congestion and often target lone drivers, particularly women driving alone," the statement explained.

"The U.S. government has limited ability to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens in some areas of Haiti. US government personnel are discouraged from walking in most neighborhoods. Only adult family members over the age of 18 are permitted to accompany U.S. government employees assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince."

- Edited from CMC.



Jamaica offers free online training for tourism workers

Jamaica has launched a free online training program for tourism workers affected negatively by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

The Jamaica Centre of Tourism Innovation (JCTI), in partnership with American trade associations the National Restaurant Association (NRA) and the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI), plus Jamaica's Human Employment and Resource Training-National Service Training Agency (HEART-NSTA Trust) will deliver online training and certification courses.

With global travel coming to a halt during the COVID-19 crisis, approximately 75 percent of Jamaica's tourist sector has become unemployed. While most of the workers are expected to be re-employed in a few months, Jamaica is trying to fortify the industry.

"The Caribbean is the most tourism-dependent region in the world and tourism accounts for nearly 11 percent of global GDP," Jamaica's Minister of

Tourism, Edmund Bartlett was quoted as saying last month.

"... There is no better time than now for them to re-tool and upskill. It is a smart investment in staying resilient, which will pay handsome dividends when the tourism sector returns to normal."

COURSES

More than 6,500 users have registered since the program launched. Classes were scheduled to begin late last month.

The 11 online courses are aimed at honing tourism workers' skills and improving their qualifications. Courses are being offered in areas such as: laundry and guest room attendants, kitchen steward porters, food safety, hospitality, Spanish, sanitation, and banquet and restaurant servers.

All courses will include certification examinations.

For more information, visit <https://tef.gov.jm/jamaica-centre-of-tourism-innovation/>.



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SPORTS



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Caribbean U.S. college players get chance at NFL careers

Two players with Caribbean connections could be rookies on teams rosters in the National Football League (NFL) this season.

Last month, the New York Giants drafted Jamaican-born Matt Peart, an offensive lineman who played college football for the University of Connecticut.

The Cincinnati Bengals also signed Bermudian Devwah Whaley, a running back who represented the University of Arkansas.

Peart, 22 and originally from Kingston, attended Governor's Academy in Massachusetts. The 6' 7", 318-pound lineman was selected in the third round, 99th overall. He appeared enthusiastic to join the New York team.

"Just watching them on the TV," he told the team's website, "just the culture and everything the Giants stand for was something that was appealing for me as a young kid."

The 22-year-old Whaley



Peart



Whaley

was not selected in last month's draft, but was picked up as an unrestricted free agent and could take to the field with Joe Burrow, the Heisman Trophy winner and

number one overall selection, if he makes the final roster cut.

Whaley endured two largely injury-affected seasons in his junior and senior years with the Razorbacks, the worst team in the power-packed Southeastern Conference in 2019 with a 2-10 overall record. He was mostly used as a blocking back and for short-yardage plays and had only 69 carries for 278 yards with four touchdowns in 2019. Whaley also caught 16 passes out of the backfield for 141 yards.

The Bengals struggled too and was the worst team in the NFL last season with a 2-14 record.



Caribbean netball stars to get COVID-19 pay

CANBERRA, Australia – Caribbean stars like Jamaican Jhaniele Fowler-Reid and Trinidadian Samantha Wallace, who compete in the Suncorp Super Netball League in Australia, will benefit from a decision to extend the government's JobKeeper payment to international players.

The Australian government recently instituted a \$1,500 fortnightly payment for eligible employers to help insulate themselves from the disruption in business caused from the onset of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

While international stars would not be normally eligible for the payment, the league and the Australian Netball Players Association recently agreed to extend the benefit to the foreign players to keep them on the same level as their domestic counterparts during the ongoing crisis.

The fourth edition of the league, Australia's premier professional netball competition, was supposed to get underway May 3, but the COVID-19 out-



Wallace

break forced organizers to delay the start until June 30.

Wallace was voted most valuable player in last season's grand final when her New South Wales Swifts defeated Sunshine Coast Lightning.

Jamaican stars Shamera Sterling, Kadie-Ann Dehaney, Jodi-Ann Ward, Romelda Aiken and Shimona Nelson also currently play in the league.



Holder wants to focus on all formats of Windies cricket

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad – All-rounder Jason Holder says he does not want to be pigeon-holed as only a Test player, but believes he has a contribution to make to West Indies cricket in all three formats.

The 28-year-old, who has led West Indies in Tests for the last five years, emerged recently as one of the world's leading players in the longest format, where he has been ranked as the number one all-rounder for over a year now. And though Test cricket is where he has managed to make his mark, Holder still thinks his skills and knowledge can be helpful in the white-ball versions.

"I don't want to just segregate myself and pigeon-hole myself to one particular format,"

he explained. "Yes I'm the captain for the Test team but as I've crossed formats for a number of years, I think my sole focus has been on West Indies cricket, ideally in all three formats, not only in Test cricket."

Until last September, Holder also captained the one-day international (ODI) side, having led the unit since 2014. Following a dismal World Cup in England last July and another series defeat to India the following month, Holder was relieved of responsibility for the ODI side.

He led the West Indies in 86 ODIs, winning only 24 matches and losing 54. He averaged nearly 28 with the bat and took 101 of his 136 one-day wickets.



Carifta Games pushed back to next year in Bermuda

The 49th edition of the CARIFTA Games, the premier regional showcase for junior Caribbean track and field talent, was postponed from last month due to the novel coronavirus pandemic and will now be staged April 2-5 next year in Bermuda.

Guyana, which was set to host the 50th edition of the meet in 2021, has been invited to prepare for the 2022 Games.

The decision to postpone the Games to next year was made after talks between the Bermuda

National Athletics Association and the CARIFTA local organizing committee, as well as the Bermuda government and the Caribbean CARIFTA countries.

Initially, 27 countries planned to send teams to Bermuda last month, but Antigua and Barbuda pulled out before the decision to postpone the Games was made by Bermuda officials because of the spread of the pandemic.



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U.S. accuses T&T's Jack Warner of corruption

NEW YORK – Trinidadian Austin "Jack" Warner, the former high ranking soccer executive, has been implicated in a 53-count indictment in the United States.

The 77-year-old Warner, once a powerful vice-president of FIFA, the game's world governing body, and a perennial head of the sport's continental governing body CONCACAF and the Caribbean Football Union (CFU), has been accused in the U.S. District Court in Brooklyn, New York of receiving up to \$5 million in bribes.

Charges against Warner include wire fraud, money laundering and racketeering. Prosecutors allege the crimes took place between 1998 and 2011.

CONSPIRACY

The indictment alleges Warner, "together with others, conspired to use their positions to engage in schemes involving the solicitation, offer, acceptance, payment and receipt of undisclosed and illegal payments, bribes and kickbacks."

"Although the defendants and their co-conspirators also helped pursue the principal purpose of the enterprise, the defendants and their co-conspirators corrupted the enterprise by engaging in various criminal activities, including fraud bribery and money laundering, in pursuit of personal and commercial



Warner

gain," the indictment continued.

"The conspirators also participated in the corruption of the enterprise by conspiring with and aiding and abetting their co-conspirators in the abuse of their positions of trust and the violation of their fiduciary duties."

NOT ALONE

Warner is among several former soccer officials and media executives charged by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), sparking yet another scandal in the global soccer community. Former Brazil federation president Ricardo Teixeira, and Guatemala football chief Rafael Salguero, were among those implicated.

Warner has dismissed the

latest legal development in the U.S. as "stupidness," according to a T&T media house.

Warner, a former Cabinet minister in Trinidad and Tobago, resigned from FIFA, CONCACAF and CFU at the height of the infamous cash-for-votes scandal in 2011. He was named in a similar DOJ indictment in 2015, also charged with "wire fraud, racketeering and money laundering", but has so far successfully avoided extradition to face those charges.

- Edited from CMC.



Caribbean-born players earn top cricket honors

Two Caribbean-born players were among those receiving major international cricket honors last month.

Barbadian Jofra Archer, a fast bowler who plays for England, was named among Wisden's five "Cricketers-of-the-Year". Archer, 25, made his international debut in 2019, helping England win the 50 overs World Cup and the Ashes Test series against Australia.

Archer was born and raised in Barbados. He qualified to represent England through his father. He represented the West Indies at youth level, but chose

Gayle, Sarwan in war of words

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – Ramaresh Sarwan has slammed as "scandalous allegations" claims by Chris Gayle that he played a key role in the Twenty20 superstar's abrupt recent departure from Caribbean Premier League franchise Jamaica Tallawahs.

In a statement issued late last month, the former West Indies cricket captain Sarwan "categorically denied" he was involved in any decision making to end Gayle's tenure at the Kingston-based Tallawahs in preparation for the upcoming season scheduled to begin in August.

Sarwan served as a member

of Tallawahs' management team last season.

In an emotionally-charged three-part video on April 27, Gayle launched a scathing attack on Sarwan, labeling him a "snake" and blaming him for his exit from the Tallawahs. Gayle accused Sarwan of vindictiveness.

After returning to Tallawahs last year following two seasons with St. Kitts and Nevis Patriots, Gayle said he told then assistant coach Sarwan he was not experienced enough to be head coach. He claimed Sarwan was upset by the assessment, but the Guyanese again denied this was true.



BRIEFS

World Champs moved to 2022

The IAAF World Championships in Athletics, a showpiece event for elite track and field athletes including Caribbean stars, has been moved from Aug. 2021 to July 2022 in Eugene, Oregon, United States.

The announcement followed the shifting of the 2020 Olympic Games to 2021 in Japan due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

COVID-19 kills ex-J'can bobsledder
Sam Clayton Jr., one of the first Jamaicans to participate

in bobsledding, died last month from complications of the novel coronavirus.

Clayton Jr., 58, was reportedly working with the railroad when he was recruited to participate in Jamaica's bobsled in Oct. 1987. Although he did not make his nation's Olympic team, Jamaica's participation gained global fame through the movie "Cool Runnings". He later went on to work in the reggae music business, becoming a sound engineer.

- Compiled from various sources.



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Archer

to play for England in 2019.

He took 20 wickets at 23 runs each to help England win

the World Cup, bowling the super-over to beat New Zealand in the final. In the Ashes series, Archer took 22 wickets at 20 runs apiece as England drew the series 2-2 to retain the urn.

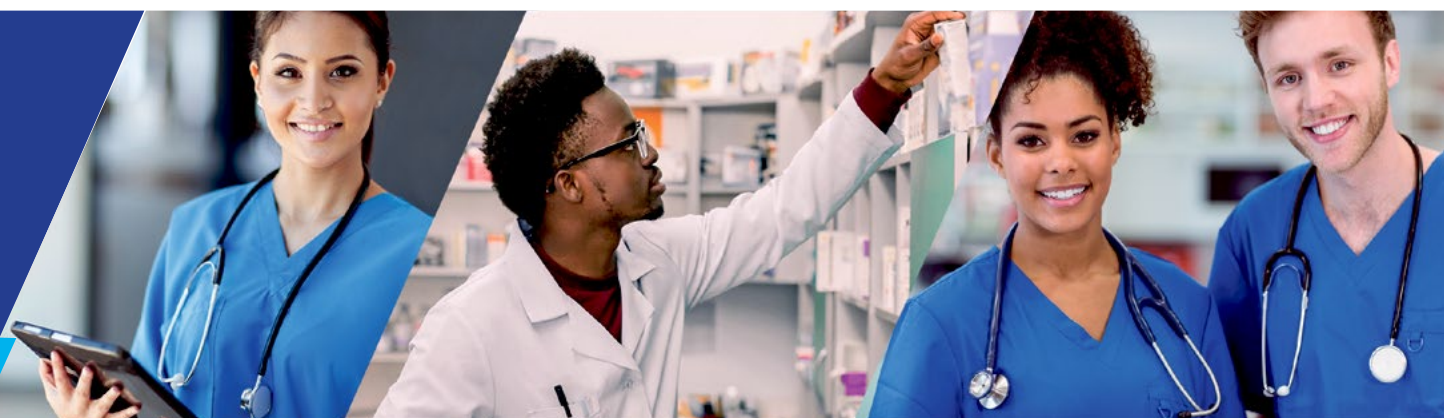
Three Australians are also in that category, including Marnus Labuschagne, Pat Cummins and Ellyse Perry, along with Simon Harmer of South Africa.

Meanwhile, Andre Russell of Jamaica was voted Twenty20 "Player-of-the-Year" while representing the West Indies in the shortest form of the game.



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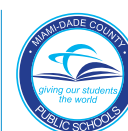
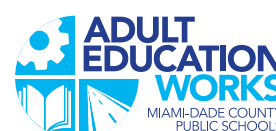
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