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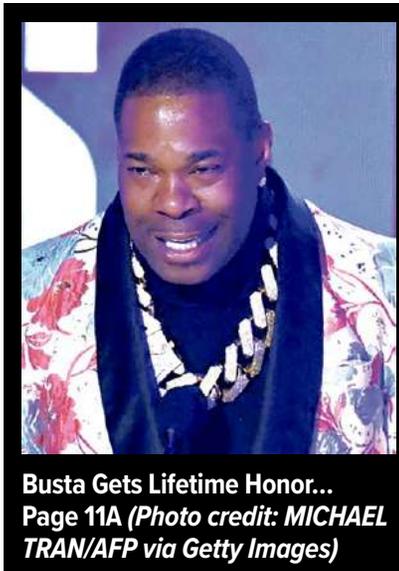
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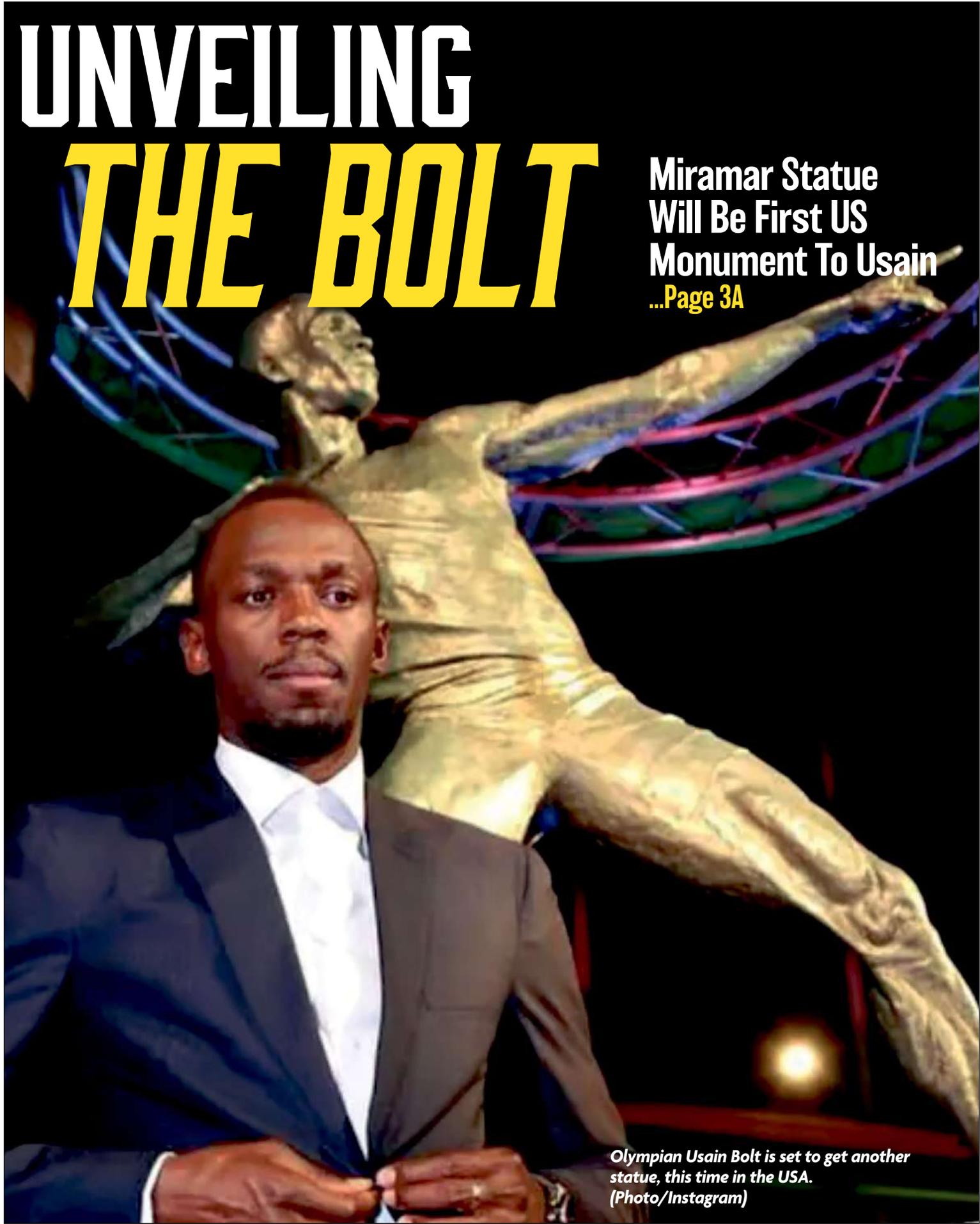


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Olympian Usain Bolt is set to get another statue, this time in the USA. (Photo/Instagram)

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Here Are Some Of The Top Headlines Making Caribbean News This Week:

REGIONAL

The Caribbean Community, CARICOM, turns 50 on America's birthday, July 4th as the body is set to host a Summit in Trinidad & Tobago.

So far, two countries, Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica, have publicly signaled their intention not to proclaim a national holiday to commemorate the anniversary.

The decision regarding the national holiday was among matters discussed at the CARICOM summit in the Bahamas in February of this year, as the grouping celebrates its golden jubilee under the theme '50 Years Strong: A Solid Foundation to Build On.'

CARICOM came into existence with the signing of the Treaty of Chaguaramas on July 4, 1973, when Prime Ministers Errol Barrow of Barbados, Forbes Burnham of Guyana, Michael Manley of Jamaica, and Eric Williams of Trinidad and Tobago signed the accord in Trinidad and Tobago.

The news comes as CARICOM has voiced concern about the recent attack at the Jamaican Consulate in the Haitian capital of Port au Prince. The building – Sun Auto Car - that houses the Consulate, was set ablaze and ransacked by criminal gangs.

As a result, the services offered by the Government of Jamaica in the French speaking Caribbean Community member state have been suspended indefinitely. "CARICOM

strongly condemns this and other such acts which cause damage to property and people. The Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM remains deeply committed to ongoing dialogue and other efforts towards a Haitian-led solution to the ongoing crisis in our sister country, Haiti,"



CARICOM leaders, seen here meeting with US VP Kamala Harris during the US Caribbean Leaders meeting in Nassau, Bahamas on June 2023, will mark 50 years of the existence of the regional body on July 4th. (Getty image)

CARICOM said in a statement.

GUYANA

Guyana's President Irfaan Ali said no action would be taken against the embattled Local Government Minister, Nigel Dharamlall, until the independent investigation into the rape allegations against him is completed.

He said he would respect the decisions of the criminal justice system, adding "it's not a matter of standing, it's a matter of respecting whatever outcome is there.

Police arrested the minister, who has since gone on leave to facilitate the probe, when he presented himself at the Brickdam Police Station in the company of his attorney, Nigel Hughes.

Dharamlall has been released on a one million dollar (One Guyana dollar=US\$0.004 cents) bail, and the 16-year-old child, who has been taken into protective custody by the State, has been assisting investigators. The minister, an executive member of the ruling People's Progressive Party (PPP), has publicly denied all accusations.

Police are awaiting advice from the Director of Public Prosecutions based on the case file that was submitted.

HAITI

Former prime minister, Joseph Jouthe says he has been questioned by an investigating judge into the July 2021 assassination of president Jovenel Moise.

Moise, who would have celebrated his 55th birthday on Monday, was killed at his private residence overlooking the capital on July 7, 2021. His wife, Martine survived the attack, but had to be treated in the United States.

Several former Colombian soldiers have been detained in connection with the assassination and earlier this month, a court in the United States sentenced a Haitian-Chilean businessman to life in prison for his role in the

plot.

A US federal judge in Miami sentenced Rodolphe Jaar, more than two months after the 50-year-old dual national pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit murder or kidnapping outside of the US, as well as to providing material support resulting in death.

Jaar is one of 11 people to be arrested and charged in the US for their alleged role in the killing, which further destabilized Haitian politics and fueled an continuing wave of violence in the country.

Jouthe said he had been summoned to appear before the investigating judge and that he answered questions relating to the assassination.

Meanwhile, Moise's wife, has issued a statement expressing her continued love for her husband on his birthday, describing him as "a father who gave himself totally to his children."

"A President who sacrificed himself to open the eyes of his people. The truth will see the light of day. Justice will be done. Happy Birthday my heart," she wrote.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Chief Magistrate Maria Busby Earle-Caddle says seven questions raised by former FIFA vice president, Austin Jack Warner regarding his extradition to the United States to face a multiplicity of corruption-related charges, were legally grounded and had merit.

In her ruling, the chief magistrate was also critical of the actions of the State and the United States. But Attorney General Reginald Armour, SC, said he is "disturbed" by the ruling even as he acknowledged that he was not fully briefed on the ruling but took specific issue with the Chief Magistrate's findings of fact. He did not identify what he took issue with.

Invoking the sub-judice rule, which prevents parties from speaking about cases before the court, Armour said

all the Chief Magistrate had was Warner's affidavit in support of his application for her to refer his questions to the High Court.

Armour said he intends to meet with the State's legal team to review the chief magistrate's decision. Warner, who served as vice president of the global football organization from 1990-2011, has challenged the constitutionality of an alleged agreement that former attorney general Faris Al-Rawi signed with the US in 2015 before he signed off on the authority for the chief magistrate to go ahead with the extradition proceedings.

JAMAICA

Jamaican writer, Kwame McPherson, has won the overall prize of the 2023 Commonwealth Short Story Prize, defeating nearly seven thousand entrants worldwide for the £5,000 (One British pound=US\$1.27 cents) prize.

The Commonwealth Foundation, in announcing McPherson's win during an online award ceremony, said the winning story "Ocoee" interweaves Caribbean folklore and stories from African American history.

"It centres on an exhausted driver who is pulled over by the police on a lonely road outside Ocoee. As he hears about the terrible history of the town, he also rediscovers a connection with his own past."

The online award event was hosted by Jamaican journalist, Dionne Jackson Miller and featured the 2023 Chair of the judges Pakistani writer Bilal Tanweer, this year's international judging panel, the five regional winners, and 2022 #CWprize winner, Ntsika Kota.

The Foundation said that McPherson, who this year entered the prize for the eighth time, beat off 6,641 entrants worldwide.

- Compiled from CMC



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Miramar Gets Ready To Unveil First US Statue To Usain Bolt

BY CT STAFF WRITER

Some four years after controversy erupted over a USD\$250,000 statue to honor the world's fastest man in the City of Miramar, Florida, Jamaican-born triple Olympian, Usain St. Leo Bolt, will get his first US statue this July.

The statue, located at the Ansin Sports Complex, will be unveiled on Saturday, July 15, 2023. Bolt is set to be on hand for the unveiling as Trinidadian-born NBC announcer, Ato Bolton, a four-time Olympic medalist himself, will provide commentary for the event.

In a press statement, the city said the statue, created by Jamaican artist and sculptor, Basil Barrington Watson, will "serve as a constant reminder that 'Anything is Possible, No Limits.'"

It echoes the words of Bolt himself. The statement added that it aligns with the city's commitment to promoting art in public spaces and parks.

Watson's previous works include the first commissioned statue of Bolt by the Jamaican government, titled "To the World" in 2017.

Vice Mayor Alexandra P. Davis, who pushed the project amid opposition, expressed immense pride in spearheading the erection of the statue,



Miramar's Vice Mayor, Commissioner Alexandra Davis, shared a sneak peek of the Usain Bolt statue on her Instagram account ahead of the unveiling. (Instagram screen grab)

emphasizing its significance as the first monument for Miramar's Art in Public Places initiative.

"I am so proud of this moment as we will soon unveil a statue in honor of the world's fastest man, Usain Bolt who just happens to be Jamaican! I have worked over the last 4 years, first developing the Arts In Public Places ordinance which is funded by developers and then having 4 out of the 5 of us elected on the Commission vote to have this statue built right here in Miramar," she wrote on Facebook.

Davis has said that much of the cost for the project is being

paid by developers.

"I created an Art in Public Places fund that is paid for by developers who cannot provide artwork at their facility," she told SportsMax, adding that payment for the statue is reportedly to be made in four installments.

The public is encouraged to register for attendance at the unveiling ceremony on Saturday, July 15th from 10 a.m. at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/usain-bolt-statue-grand-unveiling-tickets-429355623227> Gates will open at 9 a.m.

The day before the unveiling, on Friday, July 14, 2023, a Fundraising Banquet

& Silent Auction will be held to support the Usain Bolt Foundation and Do the Right Thing, Inc. The banquet, taking place at the Miramar Cultural Center on Civic Center Place, begins at 7 p.m. Attendees can

fundraising-banquet-miramar-miramar-cultural-center-banquet-hall

Bolt, hailing from Trelawny, Jamaica, astounded the world with his exceptional speed, holding multiple world records



Olympian Usain Bolt took to Instagram to issue a special invite to the unveiling and Usain Bolt Fundraising Banquet at the Miramar Cultural Center on Friday, July 14th from 7 p.m. The Banquet will benefit the Usain Bolt Foundation & Do The Right Thing Miramar, hosted by Commissioner and Vice Mayor, Alexandra Davis.

purchase general admission tickets for \$150, VIP tickets for \$250, including a Meet & Greet opportunity, or Limited Platinum VIP tickets for \$500 - offering seating at a table with Usain Bolt. Tickets can be purchased at <https://www.etix.com/ticket/p/8543497/usain-bolt->

in the 100 meters, 200 meters, and 4 x 100 meters relay. As one of the most accomplished sprint runners in history, Bolt's statue will be a symbol of his extraordinary achievements and a new US landmark.



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NEWS



Florida Governor Signs Law Issuing Marijuana Licenses To Black Farmers

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has made a significant move in the state's medical marijuana landscape by signing a bill into law that has far-reaching implications. The new legislation, which went into effect on July 1st, includes provisions that grant medical marijuana licenses to more Black farmers, addressing long-standing concerns over diversity and equity in the industry. This is a significant step towards rectifying historical injustices and promoting inclusivity in Florida's medical marijuana program.

The push for the Black farmer license comes as the number of medical marijuana operators in the state - currently at 22 - is poised to double. The

2017 law required health officials to issue additional licenses as the number of certified cannabis patients expanded.

Additionally, the bill allows registered medical marijuana patients to renew their authorizations through telehealth services. This change eliminates the need for in-person visits every 210 days for the state's 828,000 registered MMJ consumers, offering greater convenience and accessibility for patients. The use of telehealth in the renewal process streamlines the system and makes it easier for patients to maintain their medical marijuana authorizations.

With these recent developments, Florida's medical marijuana landscape



is experiencing significant changes. The inclusion of Black farmers in the licensing process and the adoption of telehealth for renewals demonstrate a commitment to equity, accessibility, and convenience for patients.

But despite the positive developments in the medical marijuana sector, Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody is attempting to block an adult-use legalization effort. Her office has filed a 49-page brief challenging the wording of the Smart & Safe Florida

campaign's ballot measure, arguing that it would mislead voters. The campaign, supported by prominent multistate operator Trulieve Cannabis, aims to bring the issue of adult-use legalization to the state's 2024 ballot.

The Florida Supreme Court will play a crucial role in determining the fate of the proposed adult-use legalization measure. Their approval of the wording is necessary for the campaign to proceed and for voters to have the opportunity to voice their opinions on the matter.

DeSantis (R), a 2024 GOP presidential candidate, has also said he would not federally decriminalize marijuana if elected to the White House - arguing that cannabis use hurts the workforce, inhibits productivity and could even lead to death if contaminated.

At a campaign event in South Carolina recently, a person who said they were representing wounded veterans asked DeSantis if he would "please" decriminalize cannabis as president.

The governor responded directly: "I don't think we would do that."

He then talked about Florida's medical marijuana program that was enacted by voters, saying veterans are "actually allowed access" to cannabis under that model. But he said the issue is "controversial because obviously there's some people that abuse it and are using it recreationally."

- *Rewritten from Mjbizdaily.com*



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Surgeons Remove 'Human Tail' From Guyana Baby



A team of surgeons has achieved a successful removal of a rare "human tail" from a 10-day-old baby in Guyana.

The groundbreaking operation took place on June 18th at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corp. (GPHC) in Georgetown, the country's capital.

The baby boy was born with an abnormal spine, which caused the development of a "tail," technically known as a caudal appendage. This appendage is essentially an extension of the baby's spine and spinal nerve elements.

In a statement, the GPHC described the condition as a

"unique presentation" that is not only rare in Guyana but also globally. The emergence of a caudal appendage is a congenital abnormality that typically occurs after birth or during early childhood. Medical literature has documented only a few dozen cases of this condition.

A study published in BMJ Case Reports in 2012 shed some light on the potential causes behind the appearance of a human tail. According to the study, most animal species retain "genetic blueprints" of organs that have been lost throughout evolution. Although these blueprints remain dormant, they are stored in the genetic makeup. In extremely rare instances, these ancestral organs may resurface when the inactive genes are activated again.



Ex-Google CEO Bags Russian Oligarch's Superyacht At Antigua Auction

Former Google CEO Eric Schmidt has made waves in the maritime world with his successful bid for the abandoned superyacht of Russian oligarch Andrey Guryev.

The captivating auction took place in the Caribbean Island of Antigua and Barbuda, where Schmidt emerged as the victor, acquiring the luxurious 267-foot Alfa Nero yacht for a staggering \$67.6 million.

Andrey Guryev, a Russian billionaire who had previously faced sanctions from the US Treasury, originally acquired the

Alfa Nero yacht back in 2014. The Treasury Department claims that Guryev had purchased the vessel for a whopping \$120 million, though he vehemently denies this allegation.

Nevertheless, the yacht ended up abandoned and moored in Antigua, waiting for a new owner to seize its potential.

The sale came after the US removed the Super Yacht Alfa Nero from its sanctions list, leaving the government of Antigua and Barbuda at its owner and therefore able to sell it.

Sir Ronald Sanders, Antigua's ambassador to the United States, confirmed that Schmidt's bid prevailed in a truly "open and competitive manner," according to Bloomberg reports.

The Alfa Nero yacht, crafted by renowned manufacturer Oceanco, is widely regarded as one of the world's most iconic and highly awarded vessels. Its opulent features and amenities offer an unrivaled yachting experience. From the grandeur of a baby grand piano to the

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5A)

New Findings Reveal Forced Deportation Of Windrush Generation To The Caribbean

Britain's King Charles, III joined Caribbean immigrants and others at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, west of London on June 22, 2023, to recognize and celebrate the Windrush 75th Anniversary.

The celebration came as a BBC investigation has uncovered a painful chapter in the history of the Windrush generation, revealing that hundreds of people suffering from chronic and mental illnesses were forcibly sent back to the Caribbean, a circumstance that's now being recognized as a "historic injustice."

Newly declassified documents show that at least 411 individuals were returned to their countries of origin between the 1950s and early 1970s, under a scheme that was ostensibly voluntary.

These people were part of the Windrush generation, immigrants who moved from British colonies to the UK in the years following World War II, named after one of the first ships, the HMT Empire Windrush, to bring Caribbean citizens to

Britain. This year marks the 75th anniversary of their first arrival.

These alarming revelations mirror the well-known Windrush scandal, where hundreds of Commonwealth citizens, many hailing from the Caribbean, were erroneously deported. These findings have ignited calls for a public investigation into the repatriation policy.

The UK government has acknowledged the historical wrongs faced by the Windrush generation and has pledged to rectify them. A government spokesperson stated: "We recognize the campaigning of families seeking to address the historic injustice faced by their loved ones and remain absolutely committed to righting the wrongs faced by those in the Windrush generation."

Surviving family members of those who were repatriated have shared distressing stories



King Charles shares a joke with Alford Gardener, 97, (seated) during a reception for the unveiling at Buckingham Palace on June 22nd. (CREDIT: Chris Jackson/PA Wire)

about the significant emotional trauma they experienced. They allege that their loved ones were abandoned by the state, not given adequate care, and their families were torn apart. There is a growing demand for a formal apology from the British government and a thorough investigation into the policy and its consequences.

This revelation adds another

layer to the complex and often fraught history of the Windrush generation and prompts a renewed look into policies and their impacts on vulnerable individuals, providing yet another reason for the necessity of justice and reform in these matters.

National Windrush Day 2023 marked 75 years since the MV Empire Windrush arrived in the

UK. Celebrations took place at projects and events throughout the country to promote community cohesion and understanding of the Windrush story.

Celebrating the 75th anniversary of both Windrush and the NHS Windrush Day was first announced by the Government in June 2018 to take place on June 22nd each year, to encourage communities across England to celebrate the contribution of the Windrush generation and their descendants.

To date, the UK government has dedicated £3.75 million in funding toward honoring the Windrush legacy, including £2.75 million across five years of the Windrush Day Grant Scheme, and £1 million allocated to the National Windrush Monument.

The Windrush generation - the original pioneers who came from across the Caribbean - helped to rebuild the nation following the Second World War, and they and their descendants continue to contribute to all aspects of British life.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



Ex-Google CEO Bags Russian Oligarch's Superyacht At Antigua Auction

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4A) indulgence of a swimming pool that ingeniously converts into a helipad, every detail of this superyacht exudes luxury and

Google and Alphabet further solidified his prominence in the business world.

The context surrounding this acquisition adds another layer of intrigue to the story.



The Alfa Nero yacht was auctioned off by Antigua & Barbuda.

sophistication.

The decision to sell the Alfa Nero yacht in Antigua and Barbuda was driven by the mounting maintenance costs that accrued during its extended stay in Falmouth Harbor. With expenses amounting to approximately \$112,000 per month, it became imperative for the local authorities to find a suitable buyer who could provide the vessel with the care it deserves.

Schmidt's successful bid for the Alfa Nero yacht is yet another milestone in his illustrious career. Prior to his acquisition, Schmidt served as the CEO of Google from 2001 to 2011, overseeing a period of remarkable growth and innovation for the technology giant. His subsequent roles as the executive chairman of both

The international community-imposed sanctions on several Russian oligarchs, including Andrey Guryev, following the invasion of Ukraine. This event had far-reaching consequences, leading to financial restrictions and altered dynamics among the global elite.

In a surprising twist, Guryev's daughter filed a last-minute injunction claiming ownership of the Alfa Nero yacht. This unexpected legal maneuver added suspense and complexity to an already captivating tale. The involvement of legal proceedings is sure to draw attention as the story continues to unfold.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



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Sentencing Date Set for Mother and Son Involved in Cocaine Conspiracy Linked to Former BVI Premier

The sentencing date has been set for a mother and son who have pleaded guilty to conspiracy to import cocaine in a scheme that allegedly involved the former Premier of the British Virgin Islands (BVI), Andrew Fahie. The case has drawn significant attention as it sheds light on a drug trafficking operation with alleged connections to high-ranking officials.

Under the terms of the plea agreement, Oleanvine Pickering Maynard, the former BVI Ports Authority managing director, has agreed to “cooperate fully” with prosecutors as Fahie’s jury trial is scheduled to begin on July 17th. This cooperation is expected to provide crucial insights and evidence regarding the alleged involvement of Fahie in the conspiracy.

The sentencing for Oleanvine Pickering Maynard and Kadeem Stephan Maynard has been scheduled for August 21. It will mark a crucial turning point in this high-profile case, shedding further light on the extent of their involvement and potential repercussions for their actions.

Maynard’s plea agreement acknowledges and accepts many of the acts that were alleged in the initial affidavit, including conversations between herself and a confidential source who



Oleanvine Pickering Maynard, the former BVI Ports Authority managing director, is set to be sentenced on August 21, 2023 along with her son.

she believed to be a member of the Mexican Sinaloa Cartel. These conversations played a central role in the unfolding of the investigation.

The case revolves around charges of conspiracy to import a controlled substance, conspiracy to engage in money laundering, and attempted money laundering. Additionally, Maynard and Fahie face an additional count of “interstate and foreign travel in aid of racketeering.”

The arrest of Fahie in April of last year marked a pivotal moment in the investigation. US agents, posing as cocaine

traffickers from a Mexican drug cartel, detained Fahie after he allegedly agreed to a US\$700,000 payment to allow traffickers to use BVI ports. This operation involved an undercover informant and laid the groundwork for subsequent legal actions.

The trio, including Maynard, her son Kadeem Stephan Maynard, and Fahie, have been charged with conspiring to import more than 11 pounds of cocaine into the United States and conspiring to commit money laundering. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) initiated the investigation in October, following the work of a confidential informant.

By accepting the plea agreement, the Maynards may potentially avoid life sentences in prison. The agreement sees the removal of charges of conspiracy to commit money laundering and attempted money laundering from the indictment they faced, with leniency recommended at sentencing. However, the success of the agreement hinges on Kadeem’s full cooperation with prosecutors in their case against the former premier.

According to the plea agreement, prosecutors have deemed Kadeem a “minor participant” in the criminal activity, which could result in a two-level reduction at sentencing. Additionally, he has

agreed to forfeit any property obtained through or used in connection with the offense. The court retains the discretion to impose a statutory maximum sentence of up to life imprisonment, along with a term of supervised release.

The Maynards each face a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment of 10 years unless the judge determines they are eligible for the “safety valve” provision, as outlined in their plea agreements. This provision offers the possibility of a reduced sentence if certain criteria are met.

- NewsAmericasnow.com



Senior Cayman Politician Charged With Rape And Indecent Assault

Police in the Cayman Islands has confirmed that a “senior politician” had been arrested and appeared in court in relation to a criminal complaint of a sexual nature dating back to 2000.

The police statement did not name the “senior politician” but media reports named the former premier and speaker of parliament, McKeever Bush, 68, as having appeared in court and

charged with rape and indecent assault stemming from a criminal complaint made in 2000

The police statement said the senior politician had first “attended the Cayman Islands Detention Centre on June 28th and was arrested and formally charged with “rape and indecent assault.”

The West Bay West legislator was charged earlier this

year with two offenses relating to an incident that took place at a Caribbean Tourism Organization reception, (CTO), dinner held at the Ritz Carlton in September. He pleaded not guilty and is expected to stand trial later this year.

- Edited from CMC



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Florida's Draconian Immigration Laws Now In Effect

Advocates are advising undocumented immigrants in Florida to take precautions until they see how the state's new immigration law, which went into effect on July 1st, is applied. Florida now has some of the most draconian anti-immigration laws in the country.

This especially applies to driving in and out of the state. The new law imposes tough criminal penalties on human traffickers, restrictions on undocumented residents, and new employment requirements that will next year include random audits of businesses suspected of hiring illegal workers.

In reference to the human smuggling piece of the law, it says "a person who knowingly and willfully transports into this state an individual whom the person knows, or reasonably should know, has entered the United States in violation of law and has not been inspected by the Federal Government since his or her unlawful entry from another country commits a felony of the third degree."

It makes transporting a minor or more than five undocumented people into the state carries a second-degree felony penalty.

The law also calls for companies with 25 or more employees will have to use the federal E-Verify system when hiring workers. Penalties for employers who don't verify their employees' status could face



Protestors against SB 1718, a new anti-immigration law which took effect on July 1. (Lynne Sladky/AP)

suspension of their licenses to operate.

Additionally, local governments will be banned from contributing money to organizations creating ID cards for undocumented immigrants, and driver's licenses issued to non-citizens will be barred from use in Florida. Undocumented migrants also could face felony charges by displaying a false ID to obtain employment.

Meanwhile, hospitals receiving state and federal Medicaid reimbursements will be required to track how much money is spent on undocumented immigrants in emergency rooms and must ask if a patient is in the

country legally.

And a 2014 law that allowed undocumented immigrants to be admitted to practice law in Florida is now repealed.

The Division of Emergency Management's Unauthorized Alien Transport Program gets \$12 million to continue the migrant-relocation program of transporting asylum-seekers to different places around the country.

OTHER LAWS

Additionally, dozens of other laws passed during the 2023 legislative session are now in effect. They include:

- HB 1, expanding taxpayer-funded vouchers to all Florida

students and eliminating income-eligibility requirements.

- HB 3, prohibiting government investment strategies that consider "environmental, social and governance," or ESG, standards.
- HB 5, eliminating Enterprise Florida, the state's business-recruitment agency. Contracts and programs will be shifted to the Department of Economic Opportunity, which will be renamed the Department of Commerce.
- SB 102, making changes to try to expand affordable housing, including boosting funding for housing and rental programs, providing incentives for investment and encouraging mixed-use developments in struggling commercial areas.
- SB 106, designating \$200 million to help link hiking and biking trails, which are part of the Shared-Use Nonmotorized Trail Network, to a statewide wildlife corridor.
- SB 214, preventing credit-card companies from tracking firearm and ammunition sales through a separate "merchant category code" at gun businesses.
- HB 225, allowing "opening remarks" of up to two minutes on public-address systems before high-school championship events. The change came amid a legal battle about whether a Christian school should have been able to offer a prayer over the loudspeaker before a championship football game.

• SB 240, offering tax breaks for businesses that employ apprentices or pre-apprentices.

- SB 262, placing restrictions on large online companies about collecting and using consumers' personal data.
- SB 264, preventing, with some exceptions, property purchases in Florida by people from China who are not U.S. citizens or permanent U.S. residents.
- SB 266, prohibiting colleges and universities from spending money on diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.
- HB 379, prohibiting the use of the social-media platform TikTok on devices owned by school districts and through internet access provided by districts. TikTok has been controversial because of its Chinese ownership.
- HB 389, allowing school districts to provide free menstrual hygiene products in schools.
- HB 411, changing residency requirements for county school-board members. The bill will require board members to reside in the districts they represent by the date they take office, rather than at the time they qualify to run.
- HB 477, imposing eight-year term limits on school-board members, down from the current 12 years.
- SB 540, allowing "prevailing" parties to recover legal fees in challenges to local government comprehensive growth-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8A)

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Has The 'Time Come' For Linton Kwesi Johnson?

BY DAWN A. DAVIS

It's been almost two decades since his last book was published, so, this latest collection of prose is like the proverbial water to the lost soul in a desert.

Linton Kwesi Johnson's "Time Come" is a selection of prose from the 1970s to today. A voice of reason, protest, power, critique, and struggle, Johnson's time has once again come in this memoirsque tome that celebrates his life and triumphs - not just in his words but also from those who inspired his lifelong activism.

At the Calabash International Literary Festival in May this year, Johnson introduced this latest work to a rapt audience of roughly 3,000 over the weekend, including actress Angelina Jolie, who hung on to his every word as he chatted with Kwame Dawes onstage about his evolution as a poet/writer/performer over the years.

GENESIS

Having graced the Calabash stage several times, Johnson looked quite comfortable in the cushy bamboo chair, with the rhythmic lapping of the Caribbean Sea behind, underscoring his words as he talked about the genesis of "Time Come."

"First thing I would like to say is a big thank to my wife Sharmilla, who is responsible for the book. We were having some discussion about me turning 70 and the book being published posthumously. She felt that was a stupid idea," explained Johnson smiling broadly.

Indeed, we want to thank her too. For without her prodding and pushing we all would have missed out on the creative genius of a life fueled by reggae music,



Author Linton Kwesi Johnson at Calabash 2023 in Jamaica.

sound system culture, and the fight for justice in a radicalized Britain.

With an introduction by Paul Gilroy, noted scholar on cultural studies and the black Atlantic diasporic experience, "Time Come" is set in a class of literature that fearlessly lays bare the struggles of a generation who were not afraid to make their voices heard.

Yes, it is a collection of prose which Johnson has created over his long literary career. But all carefully chosen and positioned to tell a cohesive story of his life, his youth, his maturity and revelations, and the influences that helped concretize his path.

It is organized chronologically in sections highlighting the culture, politics, places, and people that impacted his life. Reggae music, for one, clearly defined and shaped his existence.

"Reggae music was important in sustaining my Jamaican identity when I moved to England at the age of 11," he said reflectively. "As you all know, there was a color bar and we were more or less excluded from British social and cultural life. So, we had to

do our own thing. For the youth of my generation, we were lucky enough to have the sound system. And the sound system provided a basis for social and cultural life. Also, because of the strong African consciousness in reggae music, it kept us aware of our African ancestry and our African roots."

APATHETIC

His lyricism was deeply influenced by the reggae music poetics of Reggae DJs of his time like Daddy U-Roy, Big Youth, Prince Jazzbo, who wrote and sang about the oppression and inequality of the day. Johnson's own poetry and prose highlights social ills and the apathetic political system as experienced in Britain. So, just as these DJs lyrics were responses to what was going on in Jamaica in the 1970s - unemployment, crime, homelessness - Johnson's own creative lyricism had the same purpose.

"One of my first essays on reggae (Jamaican Rebel Music, 1976) was published in the Black Liberator," he noted. "I don't think anybody else would have published that kind of writing at that time."

"That kind of writing for me was all about learning in every sense of the word," Johnson added. "I come from a Jamaican peasant background. There were no books apart from the bible. As a child I had an avid appetite for learning, and subsequently an avid appetite for books. So reading and writing fundamentally for me was about

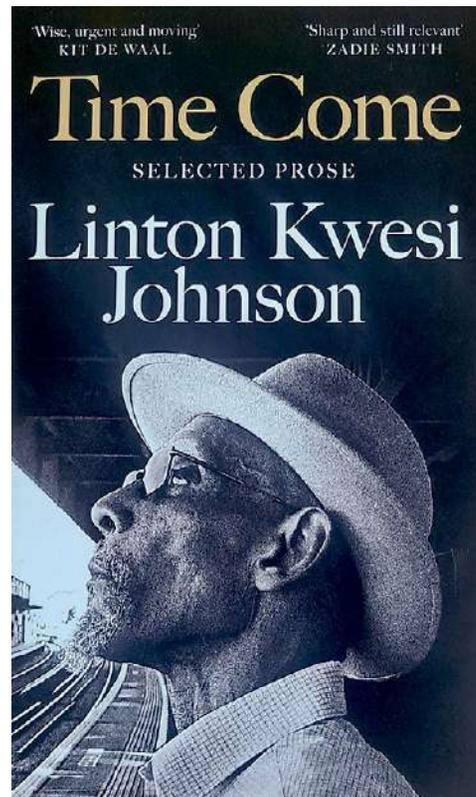
learning. So, my writing is about studying it (racism, culture, history) and trying to make sense of it."

Indeed, what Johnson has done with this collection is bring together the many sides of his prolific writings. From speeches, book introductions, book reviews, lectures, and obituaries, we see brilliant

the Penguin Modern Classics, Britain's largest and most respected publishers. It brought ire from the British literary establishment. Johnson's response? His piece "Writing Reggae - Politics, Culture and Popular Culture," included in "Time Come."

Looking quite matter of fact, but with a knowing smirk, Johnson explained to the tent-full of Calabashians: "There was this alarm amongst the literary establishment, and I'm thinking what's the matter with these people, I've got nothing to do with this. The Daily Telegraph had an article saying Reggae poet has breached the fortifications of the canons of British literature. By way of repost, I wrote that essay to explain the roots of my poetics, where I was coming from as a poet and all the important influences in my work."

"Time Come: Selected Prose," is a brilliant culmination of a life's worth of work that will leave its mark on the next generation of wordsmiths.



Cover of the book, 'Time Come: : Selected Prose,' by Linton Kwesi Johnson and published by Picador, an imprint of Pan MacMillan, 2023.

facets of a man who has lived the black British experience through a Jamaican lens. It is this confluence of cultures and groundings that forced him to write as an unapologetic activist, which earned him unprecedented recognition.

In fact, as he approached 50, Linton Kwesi Johnson was selected as only the 2nd living poet to be included in

Florida's Draconian Immigration Laws Now In Effect

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7A)

management plan changes.

- HB 543, allowing Floridians to carry guns without concealed-weapon licenses.
- HB 637, barring automakers from offering direct-to-consumer or online sales if their vehicles are currently sold through dealerships in the state.
- SB 766, allowing school districts to use cameras designed to capture images of drivers who illegally pass school buses.
- SB 846, banning state colleges and universities and employees from accepting gifts from "foreign countries of concern" — China, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Syria and Venezuela.
- SB 902, placing additional safety requirements on amusement rides. The bill is named after 14-year-old Tyre Sampson, who was killed when he fell from a ride last year in Orlando.

- HB 931, prohibiting colleges and universities from using "political loyalty" tests in hiring, admissions or promotions.
- HB 1035, spelling out various rights of teachers, including a right to "control and discipline" students and to challenge certain directives from school districts they believe violate state law or State Board of Education rules.
- HB 1069, expanding to eighth grade a 2022 law that barred instruction about sexual orientation and gender identity in kindergarten through third grade.
- HB 1259, requiring school districts to share portions of local property-tax revenues with charter schools.
- HB 1285, expanding and making permanent the Florida State Guard, which DeSantis revived last year. The state guard will expand from 400 members to 1,500 members.
- HB 1305, requiring the

Department of Transportation to conduct inspections of the Walt Disney World monorail system. The requirement comes amid a long-running feud between Disney and DeSantis.

- SB 1318, extending liability protections for aerospace companies if crew members are injured or killed in spaceflights.
- HB 1379, directing \$100 million a year from real-estate taxes to the Florida Forever land-acquisition program and requiring a plan on how to improve water quality in the Indian River Lagoon watershed.
- HB 1521, imposing restrictions on which bathrooms transgender people can use at schools and public buildings. It will require people to use bathrooms that line up with their sex assigned at birth.
- SB 1580, establishing a right for health-care providers to opt out of providing services because of a "conscience-based objection"

based on religious, moral or ethical beliefs.

- SB 1604, nullifying agreements reached by Disney and the former Reedy Creek Improvement District board. The Reedy Creek board has been replaced by a DeSantis-appointed Central Florida Tourism Oversight District board.
- HB 7063, providing a wide range of tax breaks, including holding a series of sales-tax "holidays" and creating sales-tax exemptions on diapers. It also will reduce a commercial-lease tax starting in December.
- SB 7064, increasing penalties for adult-entertainment businesses that do not verify the ages and identities of workers. The bill is designed to help curb human trafficking.



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Five Fast Facts About The Immigrant Vs. The LGBTQ+ Community In The US

Is the LGBTQ+ community bigger than the foreign-born immigrant community in the US? Here are five fast facts you should know.

1: By The Numbers

The United States has more immigrants than any other country in the world. Today, some 45 million people living in the U.S. were born in another country, accounting for about one-fifth of the world's migrants, according to the US Census. The population of immigrants is also very diverse, with just about every country in the world represented among U.S. immigrants. For instance, the number of Caribbean immigrants is estimated at 4.8 million of the 40 million.

By contrast, only about 19 million people, or 4.1% of the U.S. adult population, identify as LGBTQ+, according to the latest estimates from Gallup. UCLA's Williams Institute in 2011 found that bisexuals accounted for about 1.8% of the total U.S. adult population. Gay men and



FELICIA J. PERSAUD

lesbians are more likely than bisexuals to be "out," according to the 2013 Pew Research Center survey. Overall, only 28% of bisexuals say that all or most of the important people in their lives are aware that they are LGBT.

2: Where Do They Live?

Nearly half (45%) of the nation's immigrants live in just three states: California (24%), Texas (11%), and Florida (10%). California had the largest immigrant population of any state in 2018, at 10.6 million. Texas, Florida and New York had more than 4 million immigrants each.

In terms of regions, about two-thirds of immigrants lived in the West, (34%), and South, (34%). Roughly one-fifth lived in the Northeast, (21%), and 11% were in the Midwest.

More Caribbean immigrants call Florida home while the second largest group are in New York City.

The majority of LGBTQ+ people live in California and Texas as well, with an estimated 2.6 million and 1.7 million respectively. The third largest group live in New York.

3: How Old Are They?

The immigrant population's median age in 2021 was 47

years, making it older than the U.S.-born population, which had a median age of 37 years. One reason for this difference is that immigrants arrive largely as adults, whereas immigrants' children born in the United States contribute to the younger median age of the native-born population.

Caribbean immigrants are generally older than both

the foreign- and U.S.-born populations. The median age of immigrants from the Caribbean was approximately 50 in 2019, compared to 46 for the overall foreign-born population and 37 for the U.S.-born.

By contrast, many LGBTQ+ people are young adults, ages 18 to 36. A much smaller percentage is 37 to 51, according to Gallup.

4: Income Levels

Immigrant households in 2021 had a median income of \$69,622, compared to \$69,734 for native-born households. In terms of income and poverty, Caribbean immigrants had a median household income of \$52,000.

In 2022, the majority of Americans identifying as

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

Women, Happy Or Unhappy?



Are most people unhappy, or have they captured that elusive, flitting butterfly that was thought to be impossible to catch?

Just recently someone wrote that all Jamaican women are unhappy. That's such a blanket statement to make, for no gender is all "anything."

What is true though, is that more names are given to women, such as miserable, cantankerous, sad, bitter, surly, than are given to men. When last have you heard anyone say this about a man? "What a miserable man." And when last did you hear this said



TONY ROBINSON

about a woman? "She miserable just like her granny."

The fact that someone would write an article saying that Jamaican women are all unhappy, is cause for concern. After all, it's been said that Jamaica ranks among the happiest places in the world, despite all the challenges.

There's even the famous phrase: 'Jamaica, no problem.'

This may not be true all the time, for crosses can be real and devastating, but on the surface, Jamaicans are a happy people, not staying down in the dumps for long. It was Shakespeare who wrote: "Prepare for mirth, for mirth becomes a feast."

Maybe that sums us up, for we do like to eat, and whenever we eat, we're happy. For some reason though, women often put a damper on happiness, and cast

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)



CANNABIS AND PAIN MODALITIES



Exploring the Potential of Medical Cannabis

Pain modalities refer to various approaches and techniques used to manage or treat pain. More people are now using cannabis in various forms, such as oils, edibles, and topicals, to help alleviate pain and improve their quality of life.

Whether you are a patient, caregiver, healthcare professional, or simply curious, watch the latest Conversations on Cannabis virtual forum to learn the pros and cons of using medical cannabis as a treatment for pain.

Watch the conversation.



Follow 'Conversations on Cannabis' on



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What It Will Take to Transform Development Finance In The Caribbean

BY MIA MOTTLEY

In a world beset by rising temperatures, extreme weather patterns, and escalating natural disasters, the urgency of decisive action on climate change and the threat of future pandemics has never been more apparent. Both threats will affect us all.

But the countries between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn – including the Caribbean and Pacific states, and parts of Latin America, Africa, and Asia where another 40 per cent of the global population lives – are currently experiencing loss and damage four times greater than elsewhere.

Looking ahead, better integration with the broader set of public development banks – including national ones, which collectively lend more than two trillion US dollars per year – could further improve the effectiveness of existing lending.

Estimates by economists Vera Songwe, Nicholas Stern and Amar Bhattacharya suggest that the developing world needs at least US\$350 billion more per year of low-cost finance for building resilience against climate and pandemic risks. That would require a near tripling of MDB lending beyond what is currently extended to the poorest.

To that end, we must make the best use of all forms of existing capital available at the development banks. But since not everyone can pursue this option, we also welcome initiatives to redirect allocations of the International Monetary Fund's special drawing rights (SDRs,

the IMF's reserve asset) to multilateral development banks so that they can boost lending. This is one area where the EIB is actively engaging countries like Rwanda and Barbados.

We also should leverage development-bank balance sheets through risk-sharing and risk transfers – an area where the EIB has much expertise. But to get close to a target of tripling lending for climate resilience, development banks will need more paid-in capital.

That is why the updated Bridgetown Initiative includes a call to raise US\$100 billion more for the MDBs.

To make the most of this capital, we will need to modernize how we allocate MDB support. While development banks are right to focus on the poorest countries, 70 per cent of the world's poor people live in middle-income countries that are currently ineligible for concessional and grant-like resources. Worse, millions of people are now at risk of becoming poorer in the wake of a climate disaster or a pandemic.

Short of changing existing concessional arrangements, we need new long-term, low-cost lending instruments to target investments in building resilience among vulnerable populations in middle-income countries. Hence, the EIB recently approved the extension of loan maturities for



Chinese Premier Li Qiang holds a welcoming ceremony for Prime Minister of Barbados Mia Amor Mottley in the Northern Hall of the Great Hall of the People (Photo courtesy Xinhua/Zhang Ling)

sovereign counterparts for up to 30 years, with a ten-year grace period.

Development banks should recognize that in today's world of global shocks, global initiatives are essential to tackle poverty and support climate mitigation, biodiversity, early-warning systems for natural disasters, and pandemic preparedness and response. Success will require sticking to the goal of poverty reduction and growth but moving beyond narrowly focused projects.

The EIB fully supports these aims and is working toward them in partnership with other MDBs. Following a call-to-action last year at COP27, the MDB Climate Group is advocating an approach that addresses resilience at the level of whole countries.

This means focusing on policy, investment, and capacity-building measures that will foster a green transition in accordance with a country's own priorities. Such an approach will allow us to

shift from incremental, project-by-project climate finance to a more comprehensive approach that emphasizes national and global outcomes.

As we navigate the daunting challenges posed by climate change and pandemics, everyone – but especially Europeans and others championing the transition to net-zero emissions – must support expanded financing. With its public-interest model and innovative capabilities, the public development bank system can be the mechanism with which we achieve common global goals. Unless our commitments under the Sustainable Development Agenda and the Paris climate agreement

prevail, we will have failed to alleviate the suffering of billions.

We can achieve a sustainable future only by reforming the financial system, scaling up climate investment, and listening to vulnerable states. With our joint commitment to solidarity, fairness, and mutual respect, we must work together to make the Bridgetown Initiative's transformative vision a reality.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mia Mottley is Prime Minister of Barbados.

- CMC



Women, Happy Or Unhappy?

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

a pall of gloom over situations, a mélange of misery, a cornucopia of crosses, especially when it comes to dealing with men.

It appears as if women are constantly griping over something to do with men, resulting in the men calling them miserable. It also seems as if some women feel guilty about being happy, as if they don't deserve it, and then find some way to crush a happy occasion.

"Lord she miserable, is what happen to her?" To be miserable, you have to be unhappy, and even women call other women miserable. "I could never work with other women, them too miserable.

Misery is simply another word for unhappy, for if you're truly happy, you can't be miserable. Men almost all say the same thing - that their woman is miserable.

Have you ever heard people say a man is miserable? He may be other things, violent, cruel, brutish, aggressive, but rarely miserable. If he's described as such, it's usually qualified by saying, 'like a woman.' "How you so miserable and acting like a woman?"

What makes women so unhappy, and by extension miserable? Maybe it's their high expectations, for many women do tend to harbor lofty expectations when it comes to dealing with men. When those expectations are not achieved, they become unhappy, and with that unhappiness is the manifestation of

misery.

So, when the man says that his woman is miserable, what he really means is that she's unhappy. But no man is going to say, "My woman is unhappy," as that would be an indictment on his ability to make her happy. He thinks it could never be his failings why she's unhappy; it has to be in her genetic makeup why she's miserable. "She come from a generation of miserable women, her mother was miserable, her granny was miserable, and her granny's granny was miserable, so what you expect?"

Many women are unhappy because of guilt, feeling that they have no right to be happy. So as a ray of happiness envelopes them, they reach for some distant memory or situation to put a damper on their happy feeling. A lack of a man in their lives is also cause for unhappiness.

There's an article by Sarah Todd titled: 'It's pretty much a constant, women are more unhappy than men across the world.' It goes on to say: 'For years researchers have puzzled over a phenomenon called the female happiness paradox. Labor economists David Blanchflower and Alex Bryson analyzed global data and concluded that 'women are always and everywhere more unhappy than men.'"

Wow!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tony Robinson can be reached at seido1yard@gmail.com.



Five Fast Facts About The Immigrant Vs. The LGBTQ+ Community In The US

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

LGBT+ made less than \$50,000 in household income.

5: Home Ownership

Immigrant homeownership rates in the United States remain below the rate of native-born households - 46.5 percent vs. 62.9 percent), but the gap has fallen from 22.2 percentage points to 16.4 percentage points. The homeownership rate

among those in the LGBT+ community between ages 22 and 72 is 49%, compared to the overall U.S. general population homeownership rate of 65%.

The writer is publisher of NewsAmericasNow.com – The Black Immigrant Daily News. She can be reached at felicia@caribpr.com



Don't Underestimate The Power Of 18 To 35 Year Old In Elections

BY ROGER CALDWELL

There is a new paradigm in American politics, and it starts with the 18-year-old and voting. Very few political experts and elected officials are incorporating the thinking and their strategic messaging in their campaigns. If the Democrats goal is to expand and enhance the numbers at the polls, we must give the 18- to 25-year-olds what they want.

To start with, the Democrats must give 18- to 25-year-olds more opportunities to be on television, town hall meetings, panel discussions, and develop policies, and shows that interest them. It is time for the older legislators to listen and reach out to this voting age group.

Young people who have turned 18 since 2020 are making a decisive impact in the midterm elections and will make a bigger impact in 2024. "Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (Circle)," has estimated that 8.3 million newly eligible young voters participated in the recent midterm election.

It is obvious that these newly eligible voters must be engaged, and the Democrats must reach out to these youngest potential voters. These 18 and 19-year-olds comprise 16% of the 18-29 age groups for

the 2022 midterm election. They include approximately 4.5 million White youth, 3.8 million youth of color, 2 million Latinos, 1.2 million Black, 500,000 Asian and 80,000 Native Americans.

The numbers from Tufts University (Circle), tell us that politics are changing in America and the shift is moving in the direction of the Democratic Party. Getting out the vote will no longer be focused on a typical voter, but going to High Schools, Universities, Clubs, and young people.

"Newly eligible voters ages 18 and 19 are more diverse than the rest of the electorate. While approximately 63% of all U.S. residents over 18 are White, 54% of newly eligible voters are Black and especially, Latino youth make up a larger share of these new members of the electorate," says lead author – Peter de Guzman.

The turnout in the midterm election among young voters was the second highest for a midterm in 30 years, data shows. "We are seeing a really active generation that starts to vote early, as soon as they're eligible to vote, and continue to vote throughout this generation," said CIRCLE Newhouse Director Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg.

There were many issues that the young voters were addressing

in the last election such as gun violence, abortion access, and student debt cancellation. Many young voters think that the Republicans are going in the wrong direction, and Democracy is being challenged every day.

In 2018, the young voters had a historic turnout, and the Democrats can have a historic turnout in 2024, if the young vote is a priority. It is very easy to say that the Democrats don't understand the young people. But it is time to spend money to understand their thinking and get them engaged by hiring them to work with the leadership.

Turnout among 18 – 25 years old must be a priority and it is time to start now around the country. Registering to vote means going out to find them, and young Blacks and young people of colour are motivated by money. Social media and influencers are how the younger generation communicates.

There is power in the young vote, and they need a reason to get involved. Listen to what they are saying, the Democratic leadership must show they care with a plan and funding towards this group.

Editor's Note: Roger Caldwell is the CEO/President of On Point Media Group



HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

AUGUST 6

61

Caribbean  Day

CELEBRATING JAMAICA AT 61

Salute To Jamaica – Jamaica Turns 61

August 6th will mark Jamaica's 61st birthday or anniversary of independence from Britain. The celebration period will showcase many exciting events which allow for the exposure of varied creative talents in Jamaica and its Diaspora communities globally.

Award ceremonies, parades and grand galas will form the zenith of the celebrations on island and in the Diaspora and will be used to help to strategically revitalize and engender the nostalgic Independence celebrations.

Other scheduled activities in Jamaica include: Mello-Go-Roun', Festival Queen Contest, August Mawnin', Festival Song Contest and Street Dances in major towns.

The 61st celebration comes as the Jamaican government says it intends to hold a self-determination referendum in 2024 to become independent of the British monarchy and have its own head of state.

"The time has come. Jamaica is in Jamaica's hands. We have to do it, especially with the transition in the monarchy. My government says we have to do it now," Jamaican Minister of Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Marlene Malahoo Forte, told the media in May.

According to the minister,



Jamaican students, the country's future leaders, sing a hymn at their graduation ceremony at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Clarendon recently. (JIS Image)

Jamaica intends to draft a new constitution and hold an urgent referendum on self-determination as soon as possible, in 2024. In this way, it seeks to become fully independent of the United Kingdom and have its own head of state.

This year's celebration comes as World Bank President, Ajay Banga, on a tour of

Jamaica last month, had high praises for the country's current economic health.

"It is not the same for many developing countries, which took on a great deal of debt when interest rates were low, both international and domestic debt," he noted. "The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as part of the G-20 Common Framework,

are trying to work through how to restructure some of those debts in a way that makes it more palatable and easier for these countries to work their way through."

And as The Planning Institute of Jamaica, (PIOJ), has launched the 'Data 4 Development Online Monitoring Platform,' a centralized data project on the island's national

development progress.

PIOJ Director General Dr. Wayne Henry said the Data 4 Development Platform is intended to serve government, private sector, civil society, academia, regional and international development partners, as well as every single Jamaican.

The United Nations Development Programme, (UNDP), Resident Representative, Denise E. Antonio said, "by offering data on demand which can be visualized in user friendly formats, the PIOJ has not only digitized Agenda 2030 monitoring and evaluation but also curated a fully accessible experience for a wide range of stakeholders."

The data centric platform is plugged into an indicator-based data warehouse which ultimately tracks Jamaica's progress under Vision 2030 Jamaica's National Development Plan as well as progress under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As Vision 2030 and UN SDGs are 98 per cent aligned, the platform serves to measure both in tandem.

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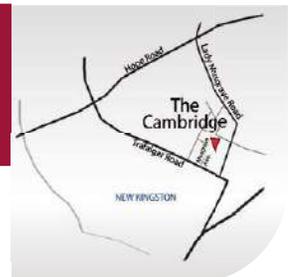
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CELEBRATING JAMAICA AT 61

Christopher Huie's Symphony Of Sensations

BY DAWN A. DAVIS

Can you imagine what it feels like looking down at the earth from space? Jamaican American Astronaut 006, Christopher Huie, can certainly tell you. His recent voyage into space as part of the Unity 25 mission aboard Virgin Galactic's VSS Unity on May 25, 2023, was indeed the journey of a lifetime.

"There's nothing that I've ever experienced that is as majestic and beautiful and just all-consuming as viewing the Earth from space," the Jamaican American marveled, in a recent conversation with Caribbean Today. "It's like this magnetic magnificence that just pulls your full attention, and you can't help but focus on it and just be in awe of its beauty. It's a symphony of an unusual set of sensations and visuals that all kind of come together for just a really awe-inspiring and wonderful experience."

The son of Jamaican immigrants, Huie proudly, and literally, wore his Jamaican heritage on his sleeve as he and fellow astronauts took off for his first flight into space. American-born and bred, he takes his Jamaican-ness seriously. In fact, he credits his Jamaican upbringing for his work ethics and outlook on life.

"My mom was born and raised in Jamaica, and she came to the US when she was a teenager to pursue more opportunities," he revealed. "And so I think I learned a lot from my mom based on the way she was raised. She's a very strong woman and I think it's taught me a lot about sacrifice and hard work at the same time, and the ability to just improvise and adapt to situations."

"My mom raised two kids as a single mom," an emotional Huie added. "So, what was instilled in me was hard work and strong work ethic. But also, the ability to relax and have fun and not take things too seriously, and don't forget where you came from and remember to give back to others."

Huie made sure his mother was there to experience his first flight into space. And although it was a very tense morning for her, he wanted her by his side upon his return.

"She said to me 'my baby's home'... It was the ultimate moment of pride for her, and I was excited to have her there and really see firsthand this experience and enjoy it with me," he revealed.

SUBORBITAL

As an Aerospace Engineer and Mission Specialist, Huie's mission on VSS Unity was to ensure the readiness of the spacecraft for commercial



Jamaican American Astronaut 006, Christopher Huie aboard VSS Unity. (Photo courtesy of Virgin Galactic)



Jamaican American Astronaut 006, Christopher Huie salute to Jamaica. (Photo courtesy of Virgin Galactic)

flight. In fact, Virgin Galactic, part of the Virgin Group, is an aerospace and space travel company, the first venture developing commercial suborbital spaceflights for the thrill seeker looking to go beyond the ordinary tourist destination.

Huie, now the 19th Black astronaut in the world, explained that the Unity 25 mission was the last flight in the test program before commercial operations begin.

"I started in the role as the Mission Specialist which was going through the entire customer experience for our commercial astronauts," he explained. "And so, this was kind of an evaluation of that experience and getting it ready and fine tuning the experience so that our customers have the best possible experience. It was an absolute honor to represent the company and this amazing team who's worked so hard for so many years to make this experience come to life for all

of our customers in the future of commercial spaceflight."

Asked if he always wanted to be an astronaut, Huie

explained that as a youth he wanted to be a pilot, flying extreme aircraft. And of course, being a big Star Trek fan following Captain Picard on the Starship Enterprise must have helped plant a seed. As he matured, his interest took him to the world of aerospace, his passions focused on helicopters and rotorcraft. He pursued that career path for some time then opportunities kept presenting themselves landing him firmly in space as part of Virgin Galactic's Flight Sciences Engineering team leading the External Loads Engineering discipline.

PREPARATION

But how does one prepare to go into space, dealing with weightlessness, and the mix of emotions that surely emerges?

Huie explained: "It's about three days of training before your flight, where you do

gear, getting familiar with the cabin, the seat, meeting your crew, your pilots, and getting familiar with the flight profile and all of the different scenarios that you need to be cognizant of. But the other major preparation point is mental preparation, because it's a big deal emotionally for you and for your family."

Virgin Galactic is now ready for commercial space flight. According to Huie, it's about visiting space like you would any other tourist destination.

"You're going to view the Earth and then come back," he said. "It's so funny or ironic to think about, but right now we're all sitting on the view, we're sitting on the product that we're selling."

So, what's next for Christopher Huie? He will keep pushing the envelope to see how far he can go. But importantly, his goal is to inspire the next generation. And this spaceflight was an opportunity to do just that.

In fact, the University of Maryland Clark School of Engineering graduate cofounded a scholarship program at Virgin Galactic a few years ago, Black Leadership in Aerospace Scholarship and Training, (BLAST), whose mission is to guide more people of colour into science and the space industry by using the inspirational power of space to bring unity, prosperity, and equity to disenfranchised communities and people of colour, the astronaut explained.

"We stand on the shoulders of giants, and we will be the shoulders of the next generation that builds upon this as we take humanity into the spacefaring species," Huie added.



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CELEBRATING JAMAICA AT 61

Keeping Jamaican Culture Alive In Australia

By Dawn A. Davis

Jamaicans are adventurous, they are explorers, never afraid of trying something new including living in a totally different environment from their island home. In fact, Jamaicans can be found on every continent.

Australia is a perfect example. This massive land mass is home to some 4,000-5,000 Jamaicans, including many born in Jamaica and those who claim its ancestry. So, how do we find these Jamaicans who proudly maintain and share their culture?

Meet Dr. Stephanie Fletcher-Lartey, PhD, born in Bamboo in the garden parish of St. Ann, a product of St. Hilda's High School in Browns Town and a graduate of the West Indies School of Public Health who went on to become a successful Public Health Inspector in Jamaica.



L-R: Jamaican Association of Australia Vice President Anna Morris, Her Excellency Shorna-Kay Richards Jamaica's Non-Resident High commissioner to Australia, and Ambassador to Japan and Dr. Stephanie Fletcher-Lartey at welcome reception for the Ambassador in March 2023. (Contributed image)

Today Dr. Fletcher-Lartey is an epidemiologist and has been in Sydney Australia since 2009. And the founding member of the Jamaican Association of Australia she flies the flag high.

"We launched on Jamaica's 50th independence and one of the impetus for the launching of the Association was really to keep the culture alive," Fletcher-Lartey explained.

"The Jamaican culture needed gatekeepers. On various levels, we needed it for ourselves, for our children," she added. "People were worried that we didn't have anything for our children to connect with what's happening in the community that identifies being Jamaican, not just Caribbean or West Indian. We believe we have something very precious, and we wanted to preserve brand Jamaica. So, the Association was born."

Having completed her Master's of Public Health with

distinction at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Fletcher-Lartey Arrived in Australia to pursue a PhD, after receiving a full scholarship from a local university. Today, as an accomplished public health epidemiologist and researcher living and working in Australia, this Jamaican-Australian proudly maintains her roots.

"I'm one of the real true-blue Jamaican-born here, and mi stick wid mi nice proppa proppa patwa," she told Caribbean Today recently.

As an articulate, outgoing, and strong Jamaican, Fletcher-Lartey had no major problems assimilating into Australian society. In fact, the Australians she encountered were friendly, inquisitive, and welcoming. She did, however, feel isolated as a student on this vast continent because there weren't many people from the Caribbean on campus outside of the few black people from Africa or the random African Americans. It was a lonely start, she said. So what did she do? Start to hunt for Jamaicans.

LANGUAGE OF JAMAICA

Jamaica is well known around the world, and it is no different in Australia. But what truly connects this continent to the island is cricket, Australia's favorite sport. Jamaican/Caribbean cricketers such as Michael Holding, Jimmy Adams, and Viv Richards are household names in Australia, as are Jamaica's women's netball teams.

And of course, reggae music is the 'language' of Jamaica. All of these things are conversation starters when Australians realize they are in the presence of a Jamaican.

"Jamaica has a very big name as you would imagine, because we are always punching way above our weight," said Fletcher-Lartey. But no matter how welcoming your new community is, there are always adjustments and growing pains having been uprooted from the familiar, Fletcher-Lartey revealed.

"When I started my PhD in 2009 it was quite challenging to adapt at first. Being far away from home, I didn't have many friends or any kind of support system," she revealed to CT. "And I was broke most of the times, considering I was coming from quite a senior role in Jamaica to coming here on a student stipend, it was a huge adjustment for me. So, as part of that process I experienced things that were uncomfortable."

Fletcher-Lartey recounted

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8B)

CELEBRATING JAMAICA AT 61

Spotlighting Jahnet's Jamaican Cuisine

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

Driving through South Florida, it's hard to miss the flood of Jamaican restaurants that caters to the region's diverse populace. That was not the case when Janet Mastin moved there over 40 years ago.

Mastin, who opened Jahnet's Jamaican Cuisine in 1989, is one of the persons who helped change the South Florida food landscape. Her venture debuted as Jahnet's Jamaican Cuisine and Cocktail Lounge in North Miami.

It expanded to include restaurants in Miramar, North Lauderdale and Pembroke Pines. But by 2009 Mastin sold three of them to launch a natural juice bar in Jamaica. Today, she operates the Miramar outlet with a five-member staff.

Like Aunt I's in Pembroke Pines, Jahnet's Jamaican Cuisine are trailblazers in a competitive market in South Florida, that includes franchises such as Golden Krust, Donna's and Dutch Pot.

In a recent interview with Caribbean Today, Mastin recalled the early, humble days of her restaurant.

"There were not many Jamaican restaurants at the time. I dropped the Cocktail Lounge soon after [because] I did not have a liquor license. We would concentrate on traditional breakfast [like



Janet Mastin, l., of Jahnet's Jamaican Cuisine with her daughter Jahnelle, c., and sister Joan, r. (Contributed image)

ackee and salt fish with ground provisions, fried dumplings, fritters and porridges, hot teas and coffee," she said. "Early

morning option worked for me. The business was successful, and I opened three more stores over the years."

The Jahnet's Jamaican Cuisine menu comprises standard delights from her homeland - curried goat, oxtail, various types of chicken, fish and soups. Mastin does not participate in preparing these dishes but is hands-on in another area. "Natural Juices is another avenue in the food industry which I dabble in. I can say that I personally make and create these juices," she said.

The migration of Jamaicans, mainly from the US

East Coast to South Florida, and a growing acceptance of Jamaican food by the American mainstream, resulted in an emergence of eateries throughout the region during the 1990s.

Mom and Pop enterprises such as 'Jahnet's' and Aunt I's paved the way for the aforementioned franchises. They remain competitive in cities where their biggest support comes from the sprawling Jamaican community.

These days, Janet Mastin and her daughter Jahnelle focus on producing her line of natural juices which includes cucumber,

cucumber/pineapple and Irish Moss.

She welcomes the growth of South Florida's Jamaican food industry and its healthy competition.

"Everybody seems to be doing well, which is a good thing," Mastin added with a smile.



Traditional Jamaican breakfast served at Jahnet's Jamaican cuisine - ackee and saltfish, calaloo, okra and dumplings. (Contributed image)

Fall Cargo & Shipping

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

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CELEBRATING JAMAICA AT 61

Spotlight On George Yap

BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

Boarding a flight to Miami from Kingston in 1976, George Yap was at a crossroads. Fearing political persecution, he left a good life behind in Jamaica for an uncertain future in the United States.

Today, Yap is the epitome of the American Dream. He and his family own and operate Leasa Industries Company Inc., which he founded in Liberty City 46 years ago.

Located in Industrial Park, Miami, the business is among the largest growers, manufacturers, processors and packers of healthy food products across the Southeastern United States. It services major supermarket outlets such as Publix, Winn Dixie and Sedanos in South Florida, as well as similar stores in Georgia, Alabama,

South Carolina, Tennessee, Alaska and the Caribbean.

Leasa has built its reputation around products, including bean and alfalfa sprouts, specialty sprouts, value-added fresh cut vegetables, bulk vegetables, a soy line of Firm, Veggie, Cilantro, Spicy Tofu, Stir Fry Vegetable Mix, Vegetable Soup Mix, Shallots, Specialty Onions. But Yap has a humanitarian story that is priceless.

Many of the workers who have contributed to the company's success have criminal records. They were drug addicts, thieves and delinquents from broken homes whom he gave a second chance.

"I tell them, 'when I give you a job, I am going to train you to be better than me.' Remember, St. Peter went to prison, and he died a saint,"

Yap reasoned.

Many of the ex-convicts who benefited from his benevolence are Liberty City, which has a history of gang violence. It was the scene of a riot that gained national coverage in 1980.

Some of those troubled souls still work with Leasa Industries Company Inc, where Yap's son and eldest child Andrew is president and CEO.

"I tell them, I don't care about their past. If they are serious, we and God can help make a difference in their lives," the elder Yap, told Caribbean Today.

The 82-year-old Yap knows a bit about personal challenges. The seventh of eight children born to Chinese-Jamaican parents, he learned to read and write English when he was 17 years-old, and never graduated from high school.

Despite a slow start to his education, he became a successful businessman in Jamaica, where his family owned a soda manufacturing company. He also owned several poker machines around the island which allowed him to live comfortably.

Yap's life changed in 1976 due to Jamaica's tense political climate. The socialist government of prime minister Michael Manley imposed a State of Emergency that targeted many of its political



President and CEO Andrew Yap with Founder and Advisor George Yap. (Leasa.com image)

opponents including Ferdie Yap, his cousin. He relocated to South Florida with his wife Enez and, at the time, their two children.

Forced to leave his considerable assets in Jamaica, Yap had \$50 to his name. That was the amount the Manley government allowed out of the country in a bid to save badly needed foreign exchange.

"My sister was in Canada, but it was too cold there, so we went to Miami because the weather was like Jamaica," he said.

Within one year, the Yaps saved enough money to purchase a bankrupt company located in a Liberty City warehouse. After a slow start, Leasa has become a pillar of Miami commerce, bringing in an annual estimate of \$11 million.

In 2007, it won Supplier of The Year Award from the Florida Regional Minority Business Council.

Enez Yap - who worked three jobs to help keep the fledgling business afloat - died in 2005. In addition to Andrew, Allison, the third of the Yaps' four children, is involved in Leasa along with his daughter-in-law, sister-in-law and a nephew.

George Yap long passed the age for retirement but works at his company as an advisor. He has come a long way since that life-changing flight from Kingston in 1976.

"As a businessman, you will always want more but I came here with nothing and started with nothing, so you have to be satisfied," he told CT.



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CELEBRATING JAMAICA AT 61

Integrity Children's Fund Donates Millions To At-Risk Children In Jamaica



President founder of the Integrity Children's Fund, retired Major Karl Chambers. (Contributed image)

Several Jamaican organizations catering to "At-Risk" children from inner-city communities, have benefitted from yearly donations totaling millions of dollars, courtesy of the Atlanta-based Integrity Children's Fund, (ICF).

President and founder of the Integrity Children's Fund, retired Major Karl Chambers, said over the past twenty years, his organization has contributed over US\$70,000 a year to support these institutions.

The organizations include Jones Town Learning Center; Operation Restoration Christian School in Western Kingston; Jacob's Well Basic School in Salt Marsh, Trelawny; Peter's Rock in Upper St. Andrew; and Teamwork Basic School in Montego Bay.

Chambers pointed out that over the past twenty years, the Integrity Children's Fund has contributed in excess of \$153 million dollars to support some 10,000 at-risk students from inner-city communities in Jamaica and Atlanta.

Chambers explained that the Fund's mission was to break the familiar cycle of ruined lives of vulnerable youngsters in turbulent communities like Western Kingston, through education and spiritual redemption.

Operating with over a hundred active volunteers and fundraisers in the United States and Jamaica, the ICF is dedicated to funding programs to correct the plague of teenage illiteracy in Jamaica.



Jamaica Records Significant Increase In Revenue From Export Trade

Jamaica received an estimated US\$325.4 million in export earnings for the first two months of the year, representing a 54.6 per cent increase on the US\$210.4 million earned for January and February last year.

The Statistical Institute of Jamaica, (STATIN), said that the growth was primarily due to a 133.1 per cent increase in the export of 'crude materials' excluding fuels.

It said domestic exports increased by 35 per cent to US\$240.6 million, compared to US\$178.2 million in 2022 and that this out-turn was primarily spurred by higher earnings from the manufacturing and mining and quarrying industries.

Domestic exports accounted for 74 per cent of Jamaica's total outflows.

Re-exports in January and February 2023 were valued at US\$84.7 million, up from US\$32.2 million recorded in the corresponding period in 2022.

STATIN said that the top-five destinations for Jamaica's exports were the United States, Puerto Rico, the Russian Federation, Latvia and the United Kingdom. It said that outflows to these countries



increased by 75.3 per cent to US\$256.1 million.

Meanwhile, Jamaica's expenditure for January and February 2023 increased by 12.9 per cent to US\$1.19 billion. This increase was largely attributable to higher imports of "raw materials/intermediate goods", 'fuels and lubricants' and 'consumer goods', which rose by 3.2 per cent, 20.3 per cent and 13.3 per cent, respectively.

The five main countries accounting for Jamaica's imports

for the review period were the US, China, Japan, Colombia and Turkey.

Expenditure on inflows from these countries totaled US\$773.6 million, a 16.5 per cent increase relative to the corresponding period in 2022. STATIN said the growth was largely due to higher fuel imports from the US.

- Edited From CMC



Tad's Records To Release Jamaica 61: A Musical Tribute to Independence



Tad Dawkins of Tad's Records. (Jamaica Observer image)

Get ready to celebrate Jamaica's 61st year of Independence with an extraordinary reggae album curated by Tad Dawkins, founder of Tad's Records. After the success of the Jamaica 50 compilation, Dawkins has carefully assembled an eclectic lineup of artists for this commemorative project titled "Celebrating Jamaica 61."

Originally slated for release in 2022, the album was postponed due to the pandemic, but the extra time has allowed for an even more captivating musical journey. Featuring national heroes on the cover, this project highlights Jamaica's rich musical heritage through carefully selected tracks.

"We are particularly excited to promote this album in the diaspora, as they are patriotic

and have a deep love for the music and the connections that bind them to Jamaica," Dawkins told the Jamaica Gleaner.

"Celebrating Jamaica 61" boasts an impressive roster of artists, including Dean Fraser, Hezron, Big Youth, Dennis Brown, Gregory Isaacs, Richie Spice, and many more. Each artist brings their unique talent and sound to pay homage to Jamaica's vibrant cultural legacy.

One standout track, "Belafonte Rock" by Dean Fraser, is a special tribute to the late Harry Belafonte, who played a significant role in popularizing calypso music internationally. Fraser, one of the world's top saxophonists, delivers a lively medley featuring Belafonte's iconic hits such as "Day-O" and "Jamaica Farewell."

Dawkins expressed his admiration for both Belafonte and Fraser, stating, "Dean is responsible for 70% of the reggae music out of Jamaica. We are also working on a dub album with Dean, set to release in March 2024. We make it a point to showcase his exceptional talent every two years."

"Celebrating Jamaica 61" will be released on July 28, and on August 6, 2023, Jamaica's

61st birthday.

- Rewritten from the Jamaica Gleaner



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CELEBRATING JAMAICA AT 61

Keeping Jamaican Culture Alive In Australia

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4B)

how she felt overwhelmed and

“My first song, which is called ‘Don’t Give Up,’ is a reggae song. And I chose to do

conduct research and present findings at international conferences. As the visionary



Dr. Stephanie Fletcher-Lartey, (in the black and green), backing Richie Stephens on his set at the Jamaican Music and Food Festival in Sydney, Australia in November 2019. (Contributed image)

depressed. It was these feelings that reawakened her creative spirit. The student started writing poetry and songs about her experiences and has since published about 15 songs, with a substantial following on YouTube.

it in reggae because I wanted my first song to represent me,” said Dr. Fletcher-Lartey

This multi-talented Jamaican is well respected in the scientific and academic communities in Australia, and worldwide, as she continues to

at the Australian-based ARETE Research Global Pty Ltd, a company focused on research, policy, and practice in environmental health, disease surveillance, and emergency management, Fletcher-Lartey is a key voice in international



Dr. Stephanie Fletcher-Lartey (Contributed image)

health. But just as important, she is a Jamaican working to make sure the culture stays vibrant in a land far from home.

“We’ve been partnering quite a lot with the Embassy of Jamaica in Japan, which covers Australia and New Zealand, to host some community-based events that focuses on buying property, how to apply for a passport, how to connect with some of the big organizations like the Registrar General department, citizenship and immigration status,”

the epidemiologist explained.

Fletcher-Lartey noted that there are also Jamaican representatives across the different Australian states who work together to host similar events in their communities.

Her recent election as the Regional Representative for the Asia and Pacific region on the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council builds on that connection. This role means she represents Jamaicans across the region through the Jamaican embassies in Japan, China, and India, adding the voices of Jamaicans in more than 20 countries these embassies represent.

“I am flying the Jamaican flag with great pride. I absolutely enjoy every opportunity I get to talk about Jamaica and to share, whether it’s a song, a Miss Lou poem, or through my work,” added Dr. Fletcher-Lartey.

For more about Dr. Stephanie Fletcher-Lartey, visit: <https://linktr.ee/stephjewels100>.



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Minister Marion Hall Ready For Sumfest 2023 Performance

Minister Marion Hall, formerly known as Lady Saw, is set to make a powerful return to Reggae Sumfest with a unique Sunday service-inspired performance. Hall recently revealed details of her upcoming show, which will feature elements of clean Dancehall infused with a spiritual touch.

Hall, who last graced the festival stage in 2015, will bring an innovative twist to her performance on July 22 at Catherine Hall, St. James. Prior to taking the stage, her team plans to distribute at least 1,000 Bibles to attendees. Hall shared her vision for the opening set, which involves individuals wearing T-shirts that read “kiss out mi Bible” with scriptures such as “seek ye first the kingdom of God and all his

righteousness and everything else shall be added.”

Attendees will be encouraged to pass the Bibles from the front to the back, symbolizing a sanctification of the venue. As the founder of the Holy Ghost Pentecostal church, Hall aims to create a congregation-like atmosphere among the festivalgoers.

During the performance, Hall will call upon the audience to use their phones to turn on the lights and read passages from the Bibles together. She emphasized the importance of everyone being engaged in the spiritual experience, even if they don't have a physical Bible in hand.

With the help of generous donors, including Cedella Marley, CEO of the Bob Marley Group of Companies, Hall was



Minister Marion Hall, formerly known as Lady Saw, is set to make a powerful return to Reggae Sumfest on July 22, 2023.

able to acquire the Bibles. She expressed her desire to obtain more Bibles for the show and encouraged supporters to visit her Facebook page for donation

options.

Apart from the Bible distribution, Hall also teased a song that she will be performing with her newly-formed band. The lyrics reflect her message of spiritual warfare and the triumph over evil forces.

Hall acknowledged the challenges faced by Montego Bay, particularly the development of scamming and other negative influences. She tailored her set to resonate with the people of the town, promising something meaningful for everyone, including the local community and even the Prime Minister.

Hall also invited everyone to join in a worshipful experience at Reggae Sumfest. She assured attendees that they would encounter spiritual fulfilment

and other positive elements during her performance, leaving the devil aware of her powerful presence.

Reggae Sumfest is Jamaica's summer reggae festival held over a week with its main nights from Thursday to Saturday. The 2023 staging dubbed The Return, is scheduled for July 16 - 22 in Montego Bay, Jamaica. Activities include an All White Blitz party, A Sound System Explosion, Beach Party and the main concerts. Among the other artistes confirmed for Reggae Sumfest this year are Chronic Law, Gyptian, Mega Banton, Tommy Lee and Kabaka Pyramid.

- *Rewritten from Dancehallmag.com*



Jamaican American Busta Rhymes Gets Lifetime Achievement Award

The Microsoft Theater came alive as a lineup of talented artists, including Spice, Dexta Daps, and Skillibeng, paid tribute to the legendary American rapper, Busta Rhymes, who received the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2023 BET Awards.

This year's BET Awards aimed to celebrate 50 years of Hip-Hop, honouring pioneers, late legends, and emerging stars in the genre.

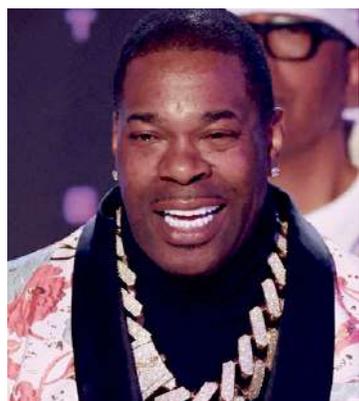
Busta, a 12-time Grammy Award nominee, kicked off the Jamaican segment of the tribute with a captivating performance. Following electrifying acts by Rah Digga, Swizz Beatz, Coi Leray, and others, Busta took the stage, captivating the crowd with his energy. Standing in front of a massive screen displaying images of incarcerated artist Vybz Kartel and DJ Kool Herc, Busta addressed the audience.

“We're here to celebrate 50 years of Hip-Hop. Kool Herc, the founding father of Hip-Hop, is a bloodcl#@t Jamaican! Make sure you know that. And Jamaica is in my blood, so tonight, as we represent Hip-Hop, we're also representing the Dancehall culture!” Busta exclaimed.

As if on cue, the stage transformed into a vibrant display of digital sound system boxes, complemented by a live band, a DJ, and background dancers. Busta seized the moment to rally the crowd.

“All Caribbean people, let's stand up!” he roared, as the opening notes of Dexta Daps' “Shabba Madda Pot” filled the air. Dexta Daps burst onto the stage, delivering an energetic rendition of the track produced by Daseca, just as he had promised his fans.

Daps, who had previously shared on Instagram that he would be part of the group honoring Busta Rhymes, expressed his excitement. He wrote, “@BustaRhymes, you've been breaking necks for decades, and



Busta Rhymes accepts the lifetime achievement award at the 2023 BET Awards on June 25, 2023. (Michael Tran/ Afp Via Getty Images)

you've been my favorite rapper forever. I'm honored to be in the presence of @bet honoring a true legend in the game. Best believe the Caribbean will shake the stage and represent.”

Daps delivered on his promise, igniting the mostly American crowd while Busta provided his full support.

Next, the Queen of Dancehall, Spice, joined Busta on stage, greeted by enthusiastic cheers from the audience. The 40-year-old artist performed her hit single, “So Mi Like It,” raising the energy alongside Busta. Spice showcased her signature leg lift while singing and wowed the crowd with a series of twerks, leaving Busta in awe. She culminated her performance with a stunning full ground split on stage, sending the audience into a frenzy.

The stage was then set for Skillibeng, as an ominous synth of piano keys and flashing lights heightened the anticipation. Skillibeng, dressed in all white, burst onto the stage accompanied by a group of energetic backup dancers. The crowd erupted with chants of “Whap Whap” as Busta and Skillibeng took turns delivering segments of Skillibeng's infectious hit.

Cutty Ranks also joined Busta on stage, performing “A Who Seh Mi Dun” to celebrate the Hip-Hop

legend.

For Busta, born to Jamaican parents Geraldine Green and Trevor Smith Sr., receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award was a moment of validation for his three-decade-long journey as a force in Hip-Hop.

In an emotional acceptance speech that lasted over 12 minutes, Busta shared his journey and gratitude. He reflected on being the youngest member of the Leader of the New School group and his initial fears when the group disbanded. Busta spoke about his solo career and the challenges he faced, including being kicked out of the group and finding solace in the studio, where he would effortlessly create memorable verses.

He emphasized his role in pioneering the future of Hip-Hop and the greatness that arises naturally within Black culture. Busta humorously shared his appreciation for the award, saying, “It took so long to gimmi dis!” After the memorable night, Busta took to Instagram to express his gratitude to his supporters and fellow entertainers who made the moment special.

The BET Lifetime Achievement Award, established in 2001, honors industry icons who have made significant contributions to culture through their extensive careers. Busta joins the ranks of Whitney Houston, Diana Ross, Prince, Lionel Richie, and Diddy, who received the award last year.

The BET Awards, launched in 2001, celebrate black entertainers and other minorities in music, film, sports, and philanthropy. Notable winners of the night included Beyoncé, Sza, Chris Brown, Usher, Drake, 21 Savage, Future, Latto, Kendrick Lamar, Coco Jones, and Burna Boy, who was named Best International Act.

- *Rewritten from Dancehallmag.com*

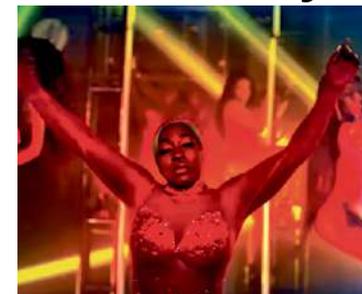


“Go Down Deh” Makes History

Spice, Shaggy, and Sean Paul's hit single “Go Down Deh” has made history.

The single has achieved a remarkable milestone, surpassing 200 million streams on YouTube. The track, which quickly gained global popularity upon its release, was further propelled by its vibrant and fast-paced music video directed by Jay Will. With its impressive view count, “Go Down Deh” stands as the most-watched music video from Jamaica in the past decade and has also achieved significant success in online streaming.

Jay Will, the visionary behind the music video, expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to direct “Go Down Deh” and bring visual life to



A scene from the video, “Go Down Deh.” (Screengrab/YouTube)

such an energetic track featuring three legendary dancehall artists: Spice, Shaggy, and Sean Paul. The original song was produced by Constantin “Costi” Ioniță and was featured on Spice's Grammy-nominated album 10 in 2021.



Get Ready For Skip Marley and Friends In NYC

Tuff Gong, the renowned music and media conglomerate founded by the legendary Bob Marley, and Capital One City Parks Foundation SummerStage have announced exciting additions to the upcoming “Tuff Gong Takeover” concert.

Joining Skip Marley and Friends at the Coney Island Amphitheater in Brooklyn on Sunday, July 9th, will be Trinidad and Tobago Soca royalty Patrice Roberts and Tuff Gong Collective/Universal Music Canada artist King Cruff. This already star-studded event also features performances by Ghanaian rapper Sarkodie and veteran DJ Bobby Konders, with co-hosting duties handled by Shani Kulture, DJ Sparks, and DJ Brooke Bailey from Tuff Gong Radio.

Patrice Roberts expressed her enthusiasm for the event, stating, “Count me in once it is about pushing the greatness of Soca music. I see what Tuff Soca

Radio is doing on SiriusXM, and I appreciate and support their efforts.” The vibrant singer will bring her high-energy show to the Coney Island stage, accompanied by a full band.

London, Ontario-based emcee King Cruff, who is signed to Universal Music Canada through a joint venture deal with Tuff Gong Collective, will make a special appearance during Bobby Konders' DJ set. He will perform some of his singles, showcasing his eclectic style.

Headlining the concert, Skip Marley, Cedella Marley's son, expressed his gratitude for carrying on his grandfather's legacy. Sarkodie, the Ghanaian emcee who gained international acclaim for his reimagined version of Bob Marley's “Stir It Up,” also expressed his happiness in being part of the lineup, celebrating the late and great Bob Marley.



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



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Soca Gold Is Here - Just In Time For Summer Carnival Season



The iconic Soca Gold compilation series, known for showcasing the best in soca music, returns with Soca Gold 2023, just in time for the 2023 Carnival season, including West Indian American Labor Day carnival and Miami Carnival later in the fall.

This latest instalment features eighteen high-energy tracks from some of the genre's

most exciting artists, including Bunji Garlin, Nailah Blackman, and Shaggy.

Arriving at a significant moment in soca music history, Soca Gold 2023 coincides with the 50th anniversary of the genre and the 25th anniversary of the Soca Gold series. The project embodies the ever-evolving nature of soca, offering a forward-looking showcase of

the vibrant mix of new carnival winners, industry heavyweights, and genre collaborators.

"We're thrilled to release Soca Gold 2023, which highlights the incredible talent and creativity propelling soca music forward," expressed company president Randy Chin. "This selection is a testament to the enduring appeal of the genre and its crucial role in Caribbean culture."

The diamond-selling dancehall reggae star, Shaggy, adds his magic to the mix with his contributions "Mood (Road Mixx)" featuring Kes and "Don't Run (Road Mixx)" featuring Skinny Fabulous. Reggae star Romain Virgo also makes an appearance, joining Nadia Batson on the track "Nothing Better." Exclusive tracks on this year's edition include "Memory" by Lyrical and "Push Back" by Ricky T.

Soca Gold 2023 serves as a go-to source for fans of up-tempo grooves and hardcore carnival enthusiasts, marking the perfect kick-off for summer fun.



Julian Marley For Miami Performance



Julian Marley

Grammy-nominated musician Julian Marley and his band, The Uprising, are set to deliver an electrifying performance at the Miami Beach Bandshell on Saturday, July 15th at 8 PM. This highly anticipated event promises to be an unforgettable evening filled with a diverse spectrum of sounds, blending Julian's new music from his album "Colours of Royal" with beloved classic tunes.

Known for his powerful lyrics, Marley's music is an uplifting fusion of reggae, roots, and soulful vibes that resonate with audiences worldwide. His songs are not only a celebration of music but also a platform for spreading messages of unity and positivity. With an impressive repertoire that transcends musical genres, Marley has established himself as a visionary artist, and his future endeavours are expected to carry the same spiritual and moral essence, accompanied by a global mission.

The Miami Beach Bandshell

will be the perfect backdrop for this extraordinary performance, offering a captivating ambiance and a space for fans to come together and experience the magic of Marley's music.

Tickets are \$41.20 per person and can be obtained at <https://miamibeachbandshell.com/event>



Red Stripe Honors Legendary Chaka Demus & Pliers, Konshens

Iconic Jamaican brand Red Stripe celebrated the launch of their new Rum Punch and Rum Mojito canned cocktails during the culmination of Caribbean-American Heritage Month by hosting their DanceHall of Fame event in Wynwood, Miami.

Co-produced with WYNCARIB at Wynwood Marketplace, the event featured legendary Jamaican duo Chaka Demus & Pliers and prominent dancehall recording artist Konshens, as well as the unveiling of mural rendered by local artist, Nate Dee.

As part of the evening's program, emcee and beloved radio personality Slim City led a special presentation honouring dancehall greats Chaka Demus & Pliers and Konshens.

"We want to thank Red Stripe for honoring us as dancehall legends," said Chaka Demus. "I love seeing how music and Caribbean culture bring us all together. We'll never forget where we came from," Pliers added. The legendary duo stole the stage with their swagger and a string of timeless classics,



Legendary Jamaican duo Chaka Demus & Pliers and prominent dancehall recording artist Konshens with their award. (Chemistry IT/RedStripe contributed image)

including "Murder She Wrote."

"This event transported us in time, honouring legends while shining a spotlight on the future generation of dancehall music," said Karla Flores, Red Stripe Brand Director at HEINEKEN USA. "Dancehall is in Red Stripe's DNA, which is why we crafted our latest innovation of ready-to-drink canned cocktails with the vibrant island spirit in mind. The Red Stripe Dancehall of Fame turned up the vibe, bringing together Caribbean culture and beats into an unforgettable night."

The Red Stripe ready-to-drink cocktails are now available in Florida and select markets across the northeast.



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Miami Crowned Bon Appetit's 2023 Food City of the Year

In a culinary triumph, the vibrant city of Miami, known to many Caribbean immigrants, has been declared the prestigious Food City of the Year by renowned publication Bon Appetit.

Recognized for its diverse and eclectic dining scene, Miami's gastronomic offerings have captivated the taste buds of locals and visitors alike. While many cities are celebrated for their signature dishes or culinary styles, Miami stands out as a melting pot of flavours and cuisines. Boasting an array of culinary treasures, this thriving metropolis caters to a wide range of palates. From



Caribbean born Chef Irie Spice was a winner at the South Beach Wine & Food Festival 2022. (Facebook image)

the classic Cuban delights of Little Havana to the swanky establishments and casual beachside bites found in South Beach, Miami has something to satisfy every craving.

Bon Appetit's recognition of Miami as the Food City of the Year highlights the city's culinary excellence and its ability to cater to various tastes and preferences. Furthermore, Miami's

restaurant scene has garnered prestigious accolades, with several establishments being honoured with Michelin stars and James Beard awards, cementing the city's position as a culinary powerhouse. Notably, Miami is home to the acclaimed South Beach Wine & Food Festival, a week-long extravaganza that attracts esteemed chefs from the Food Network and beyond. This highly anticipated event has become a haven for food enthusiasts, offering a unique opportunity to savour delectable dishes and mingle with renowned culinary personalities.

The festival's recent edition witnessed attendees revelling in the festivities and even sharing shots with the iconic Guy Fieri. Miami's crowning as the Food City of the Year not only celebrates its vibrant culinary landscape but also acknowledges the city's commitment to fostering gastronomic creativity and innovation. With its diverse neighbourhoods and an abundance of top-notch dining establishments, Miami continues to be a haven for food lovers, attracting gastronomes from across the globe.



Here Are Two Insanely Great Jamaican And Bahamian Recipes

It's yet another year to salute both Jamaica and The Bahamas as each country celebrate their anniversary of independence from Britain. Jamaica turns 61 and The Bahamas will celebrate its Golden jubilee or 50 years of independence. Here are two recipes you must try.

From The Bahamas Cracked Conch



Cracked Conch

INGREDIENTS

- Oil
- Conch filets - 1.5 lbs
- Eggs - 2
- Milk - ½ cup
- Salt - to taste
- Pepper - to taste
- Plain Flour - 1 cup
- Lime juice - to serve

METHOD

1. Clean conch, removing all dark meat and skin. Leaving only white meat.
2. Tenderize white meat with a mallet until it's thin and flat.

3. Slice the flattened conch into strips.
4. Crack your eggs into a bowl and add the milk, salt and pepper. Beat together to combine fully.
5. Dip each conch strip in the egg mixture to coat fully.
6. Roll in the flour, ensuring the outside of the conch is completely covered.
7. Heat your oil in a pan until hot.
8. Gently add each conch strip to the oil and fry.
9. Cook the conch for 3-5 minutes, until it is golden-brown.
10. Remove the conch from the oil and place on a plate with a paper towel on to soak up the excess oil.
11. Allow to cool slightly, squeeze some lime juice on top and serve with your choice of sides.

- From travelfoodatlas.com

From Jamaica Gungo Peas Soup

INGREDIENTS

- 2 medium Irish potato
- 1 medium cho-cho
- 6 cup water
- 1/2 cup Coconut Milk
- 2 stalk scallion, crushed
- 2 sprig thyme
- 4 small pimento berries

- 1 packet Grace Cock Soup Mix
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon Black Pepper
- 1 can Gungo Peas



Gungo Peas Soup

- 1 cup carrots, sliced.

METHOD

1. Peel and dice potatoes and cho-cho, cover with 2 cups water and set aside.
2. Bring 4 cups water to a boil and add the diced Irish potatoes and cho-cho.
3. Add Coconut Milk, scallion, thyme, pimento berries, Grace Cock Soup Mix, salt and Black Pepper, and simmer until potatoes and cho-cho are tender.
4. Drain Gungo Peas and add to the soup mix along with the sliced carrots.
5. Lower flame and continue to simmer until soup thickens.

To Serve: Soup should be served hot.

- GraceFoods.com



Janelle Monáe Credits Jamaican Food For Her Toned Physique

American singer and actress Janelle Monáe credits Jamaican food for her toned physique, according to her statement at the recent Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute Gala.

The 37-year-old artist stunned attendees as she shed her black-and-white tweed Thom Browne coat to unveil a see-through cage and a bikini-clad, well-defined figure.

Monáe's appearance at the gala, which marked the opening of the "Karl Lagerfeld: A Line of Beauty" exhibition, showcased her two-in-one outfit. With the

assistance of two suited men, her bulky jacket was unravelled, revealing a sheer cone-shaped dress adorned with black sequins and a black bikini underneath. Completing her unique ensemble were a striking white cat bag and platform shoes.

As Monáe made her way up the steps, a reporter inquired about her secret to achieving such a sculpted body. The Grammy-nominated artist responded with a touch of humour, attributing it to Jamaican cuisine and sex!



Red Stripe Dives Into Rum Territory

Expanding its repertoire beyond its signature beer, Red Stripe is diversifying its product range with the launch of two new canned rum cocktails — Rum Punch and Rum Mojito. Crafted to capture the essence of tropical enjoyment amidst the sizzling heat of summer, these beverages signal a significant step for Red Stripe into the realm of rum-based drinks.

Drawing from the Caribbean's rich rum tradition, the new cocktails are infused with genuine Caribbean rum, delivering a taste that's as authentic as it is refreshing. A blend of mango and lime juice is added to the mix, infusing the cocktails with a burst of tropical fruit flavors. The addition of all-natural flavors further enhances the tropical taste experience, offering consumers a sip of island paradise wherever they are.

This exciting venture marks

a new chapter for Red Stripe, with the brand extending its market reach beyond its renowned beer portfolio. Beginning in the spring, consumers in Florida and select markets across the Northeast will be able to find Red Stripe Rum Drinks in local stores.

Each cocktail boasts an Alcohol By Volume (ABV) content of 5.9 percent, ensuring a balance of flavor and potency that's sure to make your tropical drink experience one to remember. Packaged in sleek, slim 12-ounce cans, Red Stripe's rum cocktails bring a sense of Caribbean luxury that's easy to carry and perfect for social gatherings or a relaxing day at home. Get ready to elevate your summer refreshment game with a touch of Caribbean flair from Red Stripe.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



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Peter A. Webley
Publisher

Statewide Advisory For Mosquito-Borne Illness In Place

The CDC and the Florida Department of Health have both issued a statewide advisory regarding mosquito-borne illnesses following the confirmation and recovery of four local cases of malaria in Sarasota County. It is the first time the potentially fatal mosquito-borne disease has been locally acquired in the United States in 20 years, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

Malaria, a disease transmitted through infected mosquitoes, poses a risk to residents across the state. As a precautionary measure, the department advises all residents in the state to take necessary steps to protect themselves, such as applying bug spray, avoiding areas with high mosquito populations, and wearing long pants and shirts whenever possible - especially during sunrise and sunset, when mosquitoes are most active.

Aerial and ground mosquito spraying operations are underway in the affected areas to minimize the risk of further

transmission.

In Florida, malaria is primarily transmitted by infected Anopheles mosquitoes. The specific cause of malaria in these cases has been identified as the *Plasmodium vivax* species. Effective treatment options are readily available through hospitals and healthcare providers. Individuals residing in the affected area who experience symptoms such as fever, chills, sweats, nausea/vomiting, and headache are urged to seek immediate medical attention.

The department emphasizes the importance of maintaining personal mosquito protection efforts by practicing the "Drain and Cover" approach:

- DRAIN standing water to prevent mosquito breeding.
- Eliminate any stagnant water from garbage cans, house gutters, buckets, pool covers, coolers, toys, flowerpots, or any other containers where sprinkler or rainwater may accumulate.
- Properly dispose of old tires, drums, bottles, cans, pots and



- pans, broken appliances, and any unused items.
- Empty and clean birdbaths and pet water bowls at least once or twice a week.
- Use tarps that don't accumulate water to protect boats and vehicles from rain.
- Regularly maintain and appropriately chlorinate swimming pools, and empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.
- COVER doors and windows

- with screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering your residence:
- Repair any broken screens on windows, doors, porches, and patios.
- COVER skin with clothing or suitable repellent:
- Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and long-sleeved shirts, especially in areas with high mosquito activity.
- Apply mosquito repellent according to the instructions

on the label.

- Use repellents containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol, 2-undecanone, or IR3535 for maximum effectiveness.
 - Utilize mosquito netting to protect infants younger than two months old.
- It is important to follow these tips for repellent use:
- Carefully read and adhere to the directions on the repellent label.
 - Apply repellent to exposed skin or clothing, but not under clothing.
 - Treat clothing and gear with products containing 0.5% permethrin (do not apply directly to skin).
 - Take precautions when using repellents on children, ensuring they are safe and age-appropriate.
 - Avoid applying repellent to children's hands; instead, apply it to your own hands and then transfer it to the child's skin and clothing.



Report Highlights Urgent Need For Emergency Backup Power In Florida Health Centers

As a state frequently exposed to natural disasters due to its geographic location between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico, Florida is susceptible to power outages during crises. A recent report from The Florida Association of Community Health Centers (FACHC) in partnership with Clean Energy Group has revealed that numerous health centers in the state lack essential backup power capabilities, jeopardizing the provision of critical healthcare services to residents during emergencies.

In collaboration with Clean Energy Group, the Florida

Association of Community Health Centers (FACHC) conducted a comprehensive survey to assess emergency backup power capabilities at over 800 community health centers across Florida. The objective was to identify which health centers possessed backup power sources, evaluate the types of emergency power systems currently in use, and raise awareness about available options to enhance resilience.

Sheila Zachow, the Director of Public Relations and Communications at FACHC, emphasized the significance of gathering information about

health centers' operational capabilities during emergencies like Hurricane Ian. She stated: "This is the starting point. We need to gather further information and tie this research into emergency preparedness on all fronts. What are the current capabilities of the health centers in Florida, and what other resources are needed during power outage situations?"

The survey was shared with 50 health centers, representing over 800 sites, and received responses from 32 facilities. The findings were concerning, as they revealed that over 60 percent of the surveyed health centers did not have on-site backup power systems. The primary barriers identified were cost implications and a lack of technical knowledge regarding acquiring such systems. Moreover, the report highlighted that power outages resulted in an average daily revenue loss of \$41,000 for Florida health centers. It also revealed that while 83 percent of the surveyed centers stored temperature-regulated vaccines on-site, only 40 percent possessed backup power to maintain refrigeration in the event of an outage.

To address these challenges, the report presented a technoeconomic analysis that explored the feasibility of using solar energy storage as an emergency backup power solution for seven



Residents had to be rescued from the Avante at Orlando nursing home in Orange County, Florida, as floodwaters from Hurricane Ian rose last year. (John Raoux/AP)

of the surveyed health centers. FACHC plans to continue conducting assessments for interested health centers seeking resilient power opportunities.

Zachow affirmed FACHC's commitment to securing resources to support health centers in their pursuit of developing and implementing backup power systems. She stated, "There's more work to be done. This lets us know that the health centers take this power topic seriously. They are looking for resources, whether it be a different type of power backup or funding. We're hopeful that we'll be able to move a larger percentage of health centers to a place where they have an emergency backup system."

With the report shedding light on the urgent need for

emergency backup power in Florida health centers, efforts will continue to bridge the gap and ensure the resilience of healthcare facilities across the state.

Hurricane Ian struck southwest Florida on September 28, 2022, resulting in widespread power outages that affected approximately 3.28 million residents. Tragically, nearly 150 individuals lost their lives, with some succumbing to the consequences of power disruptions that compromised their access to life-saving medical equipment. Furthermore, weather-related power outages have surged by 78 percent from 2011 to 2021 compared to the previous decade (2000-2010).



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Jamaica's 2023 Visitor Arrivals Pass 2 Million Mark



A visitor at Rock House, Negril, Jamaica. (JTB image)

Fortifying its position as one of the world's leading tourism destinations, Jamaica, despite being on both the US and Canadian government's travel warning list, remains a top destination for visitors globally, passing 2 million in visitors so far this year - from stopover and cruise arrivals.

"The fact that Jamaica continues to outpace visitor arrivals and earnings projections is a testament to the resilience and unwavering appeal of the island's tourism product as well as the

excellent relationships we enjoy with our travel industry partners," said the Hon. Edmund Bartlett, Minister of Tourism, Jamaica. "Monthly stopover arrivals began to surpass 2019 figures as of June 2022 and it is expected that 2023 will show a full recovery in our annual figures, ahead of previous estimates that full recovery would occur in 2024."

For the full year 2023, it is expected that Jamaica will show a full recovery in its annual figures with projections of 3.9 million visitors and foreign exchange

earnings of USD \$4.3 billion, ahead of previous estimates for full recovery in 2024.

Looking ahead to summer 2023, bookings to Jamaica show a 33% increase over the same period in 2019 per ForwardKeys Air Ticket Data as of April 5th, putting the destination on track for a record-breaking summer season. For the upcoming summer travel season, the U.S. represents 1.2 million of the 1.4 million airline seats that have been secured for the period, representing a 16% increase over the island's previous best, recorded in 2019.

Jamaica's top source market for visitor arrivals remains the US, representing approximately 75% of the island's total arrivals. Last year, Jamaica welcomed more than 3.3 million visitor arrivals in 2022, a 117% increase over 2021. Gross foreign exchange earnings for the year totalled over USD \$3.6 billion, representing a 71.4% increase as compared to 2021 and on par with 2019 levels.

"2022 turned out to be quite a successful year for us in terms of recovering arrivals and earnings, due in part to our integrated marketing push throughout the U.S.," said Donovan White, Director of Tourism, Jamaica Tourist Board. "With 2023 already posting robust numbers, we are very optimistic about the outlook for growth this year and beyond."

For more information on Jamaica, log on to visitjamaica.com.



Royal Caribbean Group Slams Back At Belize Opposition

The Royal Caribbean Group, (RCG), one of three parties that have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding the construction of Port of Magical Belize, has retorted a letter sent to it by Opposition Leader, Shyne Barrow, insisting it is fully committed to ensuring "a fair, transparent, and sustainable process in Belize."

Barrow, in a letter to RCG, had said that Belizeans were following the "so-called Portico Definitive Agreement signed secretly between a former Government Minister and Portico Enterprises Ltd ("Portico")."

Barrow said that these revelations of "unethical one-sided offerings in the Portico Definitive Agreement are enough to give one vertigo" and were kept secret from Belizeans.

But in response, the RCG's Vice President of Destination Development, Joshua Carroll, wrote "RCG is fully committed to ensuring a fair, transparent, and sustainable process in Belize, and in each of the destinations we visit around the globe."

"We take this responsibility incredibly serious and conduct

a multi-step due diligence process to ensure that each of our initiatives protects the surrounding environment and benefit's the local community," Carroll wrote on behalf of Chief Executive Officer, Jason Liberty. He said that the RCG has been evaluating the progress of the three port projects situated near Belize City and said the company has chosen to partner with Portico after a review of all three cruise port projects.

Carroll added that "the project, as designed, will have a limited impact on surrounding sensitive ecosystems. Of specific importance, the project will not be impacting the fragile and highly sensitive coral around One Man's Key."

Regarding the Definitive Agreement, the RCG said it was "executed prior to RCG's association with Portico on the Port of Magical Belize, and it is our understanding that Portico is working closely with the government to either amend the Definitive Agreement or execute a new Definitive Agreement to address stakeholder concerns with the existing document."

- *Rewritten from CMC*



Guyana To Hold Talks With American Investor For Sale Of Marriott Hotel

The Guyana government says the National Industrial and Commercial Investments Limited, (NICIL), has been given the green light to hold negotiations with an American businessman regarding the sale of the 197-room Marriott Hotel, situated where the Demerara River flows into the Atlantic, about four kilometres (km) from the center of the capital, Georgetown.

Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo told a news conference that the American investor, Ramy El-Batrawi, founder of the investment group X, LLC, who had made an initial bid of US\$65 million, had now revised his bid to US\$90 million.

"NICIL has completed that evaluation. They have ranked the firm that had a bid of US\$90 million as the number one rank, the highest bid and they have been given the authority to engage in negotiations with that company," Jagdeo told reporters. The government had previously ruled out selling the hotel for less than US\$85 million resulting in two offers for US\$86 million and US\$90 million.

In April, the government defended its decision to sell the hotel, saying it makes economic



Marriott Hotel Guyana (CMC image)

sense as the country prepares for more investments over the next year in its tourism and hospitality industry.

"There is no particular supreme benefit to government owning it. It's better to maximize the money, invest it in something else, back in health care, or maybe in another facility.... It's a pure business decision," Jagdeo told reporters then.

He said the Marriott has emerged as a profitable venture, making a profit and that the government didn't need to own a hotel at that time. He told reporters that the funds gained from the hotel sale could offset more projects and add to Guyana's capital stock.

The Marriott employs an estimated 500 workers directly or indirectly, and Jagdeo made it clear that the hotel has always been 100 percent owned by the Guyana government.

- CMC



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The Bahamas Turns 50 This Year

The Bahamas, an archipelago that is made up of hundreds of islands and cays, turns 50 this year. Celebrations have already begun. The aquamarine, gold and black Flag touched down at Great Harbour Cay Airport as the National Independence Secretariat continued the Golden Jubilee Flag Relay leading up to the country's 50th Independence on July 10, 2023.



The Royal Bahamas Defence and Royal Bahamas Police Force hoist the National Flag on the Berry Islands on June 21, 2023 amid the build up to July 10, 2023.

A Flag Raising Ceremony was held on the Berry Islands the first day of summer, June 21 at the airport where a cross-section of the community assembled in a show of national pride despite the very warm temperature.

The Golden Jubilee Flag Relay ends on New Providence, where the country will celebrate its 50th Independence Anniversary on July 10, 2023 on historic Clifford Park. That same Flag will be hoisted at the national service on New Providence at Clifford Park on July 9, 2023, to usher in the country's 50th Independence on the morning of July 10. The flag relay started May 21 in Governor's Harbour, Eleuthera – 50 days to 50.

HISTORY

The Bahamas was discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Columbus' expedition was backed by King Ferdinand and Queen

Isabella of Spain. Consequently, the islands were initially subject to the rule of the Spanish Government.

Thereafter, the Bahamian islands were ruled by America for a brief period and were finally possessed by Great Britain. After decades of debate and legal transactions, the Islands of The Bahamas were granted self-government by Great Britain in 1964. This was followed in 1969 with the Colony of the Bahamas becoming the Commonwealth of the Bahamas thus opening the door for full independence.

On July 10, 1973, after 300 years of being a colony, The Bahamas made the peaceful transition to nationhood by becoming an Independent Nation. Since the attainment of Independence in 1973, July 10th has been observed as a National Holiday across the archipelago and in Bahamian Foreign Missions.



As the relatives and friends of the five people killed when the Titan reportedly imploded on a daring dive to the Titanic mourn their loss, reports indicate that OceanGate, the parent company of the submersive vessel, has links to The Bahamas.

OceanGate, which since reports of the implosion and deaths has pulled its websites offline, is reportedly registered in The Bahamas, according to the Tribune Newspaper.

OceanGate also featured the University of The Bahamas as a partner and had even offered "The Bahamas Expedition" which had promised "an unparalleled opportunity to dive the depths of the Great Bahama Bank, venturing far beyond the limits of traditional scuba diving."

"This immersive experience allows participants to conduct groundbreaking research on marine life, including sharks, whales, and fascinating deep-sea creatures," the site had said before it went dark. "Explorers will also have the chance to encounter several historically significant shipwrecks that lay dormant in the deep blue waters."

While the exact participation and licensing details of OceanGate's Bahamian expedition remain unclear, it's a testament to the allure of this

unique adventure. OceanGate has in the past fostered a fruitful partnership with the University of The Bahamas. The collaboration focused on the development and execution of submersible expeditions and research-based programs. The initiative aimed to provide unparalleled learning opportunities, facilitate trans-disciplinary research and innovation, and establish networks of field stations and centers of excellence across the Bahamian archipelago, further enhancing the university's commitment to Small Island Studies.

OceanGate's history in The Bahamas traces back to April 2017 when the company embarked on a long-term testing program for their revolutionary Titan submersible. The vessel was put through its paces, ensuring that all operational and emergency procedures were thoroughly validated before launching any expeditions.

Interestingly, OceanGate also explored the potential for collaboration with the Island School in Cape Eleuthera. While



OceanGate CEO Stockton Rush was added to Wikipedia's List of Inventors killed by their own inventions. (Ocean Gate/ Handout/Anadol Agency Via Getty Images)

a formal partnership never materialized, representatives from OceanGate visited the institute a decade ago, sparking discussions about using Cape Eleuthera as a base for their submarines. Though the plans did not progress beyond initial conversations, the concept showcased the region's unique suitability due to its proximity to the underwater wall and its diverse marine ecosystem.

As efforts continue to locate the debris and the world remains captivated by the unfolding events, OceanGate's connections to The Bahamas and their pioneering submersible expeditions add a layer of intrigue to this remarkable story.

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Bahamas Judges Gives Sam Bankman-Fried An Edge Over US Feds

Federal prosecutors in New York have offered to drop several criminal charges against crypto executive Sam Bankman-Fried, at least temporarily, on the condition that they may be tried later if the judge agrees.

The decision to sever five of the 13 charges came after a recent ruling in the Bahamas that allowed Bankman-Fried to challenge the additional charges. During a hearing, prosecutor Nathan Rehn stated that the timing of the Bahamas' decision regarding the new charges, which include bank fraud and bribery allegations, remained uncertain.

Bankman-Fried, who has pleaded not guilty, is scheduled for trial in October, and prosecutors stated that they would not pursue the new charges without the consent of the Bahamas government. Bankman-Fried was extradited from the Bahamas on eight criminal



Sam Bankman-Fried (Drew Angerer/ Staff/Getty Images)

charges related to the collapse of FTX, the cryptocurrency exchange he founded. His defense argued that the US government violated the extradition treaty with the Bahamas by filing additional charges, including bank fraud and a bribery allegation.

Defense attorney Marc Cohen expressed the desire for dismissal of those counts. The

judge, Lewis Kaplan, did not make an immediate ruling and stated that he needed more time to consider the matter.

The defense also requested the dismissal of an original charge related to campaign finance violations, claiming it violated the extradition treaty as well. Prosecutors argued that Bankman-Fried lacked standing to make the argument as it involved diplomatic policy.

Bankman-Fried is accused of misappropriating billions of dollars in customer and investor funds from FTX, characterized by prosecutors as one of the largest financial frauds ever. He has been on bail and confined to his parents' home in Palo Alto, with restrictions on Internet usage.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



Bahamas Government To Pay Millions Of Dollars To Landowners

The Bahamas government is to pay an estimated US\$10 million to people whose land had been taken for public use," Attorney General Ryan Pinder said.

He told the Senate that the Phillip Davis administration would immediately pay the money to "scores" of Bahamians and that successive administrations have failed to compensate landowners for decades.

"As colleagues would know and as I have spoken in this place and Senator Rahming was the one who brought this up over and over that the government owes tens of millions of dollars to Bahamians who had their land taken from them for public use and for government roads and different things that are public use things and have never been compensated for that," Pinder told legislators. "I have the assurance and

cooperation from the Ministry of Finance that we will put in a proper plan in place to satisfy all arrears owed on property acquisition matters that are largely due to Bahamians across the archipelago.

"In all communities of this country, everywhere that a new road was built, practically there's a land acquired to do it, and monies are owed to Bahamians for that, and this government will satisfy the decades-old issue of giving the Bahamians what they are constitutionally entitled to receive," Pinder said without indicating how many landowners are to benefit from the payments.

"No other government before us, regardless of administration, has taken on this initiative to satisfy these claims to Bahamians. Madame president, this new day government will take it on,

and we will achieve the goal of satisfying the obligations to those Bahamians," Pinder said, discussing also the status of the government's settlement agreement with Arawak Homes and the regularisation of homeowners in Pinewood Gardens.

"This has been a vexing issue for scores of Bahamians. I am pleased to announce that we have been working diligently and now have provided Arawak Homes with completed files for 55 homes to be conveyed to those Bahamians from Arawak Homes.

"We continue to work on it, and there are 43 files remaining that are being reviewed and completed and verified to provide to Arawak Homes to complete this exercise," he told legislators.



Bahamas-Based Tech Firm Leaps Into Top 10 Of Coveted Global List

Cloud Carib was named #6 worldwide as one of the industry's premier Managed Service Providers (MSP) on the prestigious list Channel Futures' 2023 MSP 501 rankings, demonstrating remarkable growth and industry leadership.

For the past 17 years, MSPs around the globe have submitted applications for inclusion on this definitive listing. This year's list is one of the most competitive in the survey's history, with over 3000 applicants attempting to earn a spot in the top 500. Winners will be honored during a special ceremony at the Channel Futures Leadership Summit this October in Miami, Florida.

"We're extremely honored to be recognized among the world's top 10 Managed Service Providers," stated Tamara Hossack, Senior Vice President of Sales & Marketing for Cloud Carib. "From

securing our debut spot at #160 in 2019 to #33, then rising to #12 last year you can imagine just how extremely proud we are of this team for achieving this year's 6th place ranking."

Hossack added: "This kind of trajectory showcases our commitment to continuous improvement in the managed services landscape for the region."

Cloud Carib Director of Engineering, Network and Voice Services Sean Munroe noted that Cloud Carib's placement ranks them at the very top of the Caribbean.

"Being ranked #1 in the Caribbean is a remarkable achievement and further solidifies our growing presence in the region. Our strategic data centers in The Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, and other key locations have played a crucial role in supporting our client's needs," he remarked.

MSPs that qualify for the list must pass a rigorous review conducted by the research team and editors of Channel Futures. According to a press release from Cloud Carib, it ranks applicants using a "unique methodology that weighs financial performance according to long-term health and viability, commitment to recurring revenue and operational efficiency, growth, innovation and supported technologies."

The release further noted that the MSP 501 has evolved from a competitive ranking into a vibrant group of innovators focused on high levels of customer satisfaction at small, medium and large organizations in public and private sectors. Many of their services and technology offerings focus on customer needs in the areas of cloud, security, collaboration and hybrid workforces.



Government Delays Implementation Of New Passenger Tax

The Bahamas government is to delay the implementation of a controversial passenger tax increase until January 1, 2024.

Government has already tabled the necessary legislation in the Parliament to facilitate the tax that would allow for the tourism enhancement levy of two dollars for passengers arriving or leaving the country. It was due to go into effect in July this year. But Tourism Minister Chester Cooper said the implementation of new passenger tax increases would be delayed to January 1, 2024 after cruise lines lobbied the government to delay the implementation of the passenger tax.

In an interview with Travel Weekly, Carnival Cruise Line president Christine Duffy said she had hoped for a delay in the tax increase.

"They've made certain representations. We've taken those into consideration. The prime minister and I have spoken. We will speak at our cabinet level. One of the issues were that they wanted to be able to recapture all of the taxes from their customers, etc," Cooper said, adding "The

tax does not go into force until January 2024, and that's been a seven-month notice period. So, I don't have anything else to say at this point except that they are important partners as are all of our stakeholders in the cruise business, but our taxes are essential to build roads and schools and docks..."

The government said it aims to nearly triple revenues earned from departing cruise passengers, projecting US\$145 million in revenue in the 2023-2024 budget, up from US\$50 million in the current fiscal year.

Opposition Leader Michael Pintard had criticised the July 1, 2023, implementation date for the passenger tax increases.

"While everyone believes that the passengers who take cruises through The Bahamas should contribute more to our economy, the government must be careful not to raise too much too fast with the effect that the cruise companies are minded to take their passengers to less expensive destinations," he told legislators.

- CMC



Announcement

It's with a deep and saddened heart that I announce the passing of our dear brother

WAYNE MARTIN

Wayne fought a good fight, but went home to be with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Thursday, June 29, 2023 at Tampa General Hospital, Tampa, Florida at 5:21 pm. He was a wonderful son, a loving dad and uncle, and the greatest brother that had ever walked this earth. Words cannot explain how much we will miss him.

The Asencor and Lyle Family



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On Sunday, May 2, 2021, at approximately 9:25 p.m., the above-pictured victim/pedestrian began crossing at SW 184 Street and SW 112 Avenue, Miami, Florida, when the subject vehicle, a Hyundai silver in color, struck and killed him. The driver of the subject vehicle fled the scene without rendering aid and/or reporting the crash.

SUBJECT VEHICLE DESCRIPTION: HYUNDAI SILVER IN COLOR. NO OTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME.

Anyone with information on the above HIT & RUN FATALITY, the whereabouts of the subject vehicle and/or its driver is requested to contact Miami-Dade Police Department Traffic Homicide Detective J. Childers at (305) 471-2425. If you wish to remain anonymous, then contact Miami-Dade County Crime Stoppers at the following:

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ISSUE DATE: 5/11/2021 RN SUPERVISOR: Sgt. Francisco Armendariz MDPD C/N PD210502138114

If this flyer aids in your investigation in any way, please advise Deborah Simons, I.A., of the South Florida Homicide Clearinghouse at 305-471-2400.

Messi Is Expected To Play His First Inter Miami Game This Month

Messi fever is coming to Miami this month! The wait is over as Inter Miami eagerly anticipates the official unveiling of Lionel Messi on Sunday, July 16, at DRV PNK Stadium.

The Argentine legend, who previously enjoyed immense success at Barcelona and in France, is poised to make his MLS debut with David Beckham's franchise.

Messi's impending arrival has ignited a fervour of interest in Major League Soccer, and it was also announced that his close friend and former teammate, and Sergio Busquets has decided to join him in the United States.

Mundo Deportivo in Spain has reported that Inter Miami intends to hold a ceremony celebrating the signings of Messi and Busquets on July

16, following their away game against St. Louis in the MLS.

It is expected that Messi will then make his highly anticipated debut for Inter Miami on July 21, during the Leagues Cup match against Cruz Azul.

Speaking from Argentina, Messi expressed his excitement about his upcoming move to the MLS, stating, "After a few days of vacation, I will begin in my new city, my new club. I am very excited."

In a recent Instagram post celebrating Messi's 36th birthday, Inter Miami subtly hinted at his new shirt number. The team tagged Messi in an Instagram graphic that read "Feliz Cumple" (Spanish for "happy birthday") with the letters "le" designed to resemble the number "10."

However, before the arrival



Soccer great Lionel Messi will play his first game for Miami this month. (Getty images)

of Messi and Busquets, Inter Miami is in dire need of securing points in the MLS. The team has suffered seven consecutive losses

and currently sits 11 points away from a playoff spot. With four upcoming league matches before Messi's debut, Inter Miami risks

falling behind in the race for postseason qualification.

The team's recent 4-1 defeat against the Philadelphia Union only exacerbated their struggles. Although Messi and Busquets may join mid-season, it would be detrimental to both MLS and the league's profile if Inter Miami fails to make the playoffs.

Inter Miami's upcoming matches against Columbus, DC United, Austin, and St. Louis will play a pivotal role in their quest for success before Messi takes to the field. The anticipation and expectations surrounding the arrivals of Messi and Busquets are palpable as Inter Miami looks to turn their fortunes around and make a statement in the MLS.

- *Rewritten from UK Guardian*



Jamaican Wins UFC Fight Night In Jacksonville

Jamaican-born UFC fighter, Randy 'Rudeboy' Brown, scored another win on June 24th during the UFC Fight Night event at Vystar Veterans Memorial Arena in Jacksonville, Florida. Brown defeated Wellington Turman of Brazil in their welterweight fight with a by unanimous decision – 29-28, 29-28, 29-28.

In an intense showdown, Brown showcased his skills right from the start, unleashing a flurry of jabs while advancing rapidly. With his usual rangy style, he landed some solid strikes, keeping Wellington Turman on the defensive. Turman attempted to counter with looping hooks, but Brown's evasive footwork allowed him to slide back and avoid most of the blows. However, Turman found success with low kicks, exploiting a consistent weakness of Brown's due to his long legs and heavily forward stance.

Two minutes into the

fight, Brown unintentionally caused a stoppage after eye-poking his opponent. Once the action resumed, both fighters exchanged blows, with Brown landing a front kick to the stomach and Turman connecting with a straight right to the chin along with several calf kicks. Brown successfully defended a takedown attempt and even tried to turn the tables, but in the clinch, he accidentally landed a knee to Turman's groin. Undeterred, Brown shifted his focus to his kicking arsenal, employing front kicks, leg kicks, and head kicks. In a display of strength and timing, he executed a flying knee in the final ten seconds and closed the round by lifting and slamming Turman to the mat with a body lock. The round was closely contested, but Turman's leg kicks garnered significant reactions from the crowd.

Round two commenced



Randy Brown of Jamaica won over Wellington Turman of Brazil in their welterweight fight during the UFC Fight Night event at Vystar Veterans Memorial Arena on June 24, 2023, in Jacksonville, Florida. (Photo by Josh Hedges/Zuffa LLC)

with Brown utilizing his in-and-out movement to land straight punches and evade Turman's counterattacks. Demonstrating his agility and long legs, Brown effectively defended a takedown attempt and maneuvered Turman's back against the fence in the clinch. From there, he unleashed a barrage of short knees to Turman's thighs and stomach, maintaining control for an extended period. Although Turman attempted to break free and regain the center of the ring, Brown skillfully used his underhook to retain the advantageous position. Despite not moving down in weight, Brown displayed superior physical strength. Turman managed to land a short elbow and momentarily gained a body lock, seeking to force Brown to his knees, but Brown quickly regained his footing.

The crowd grew restless with thirty seconds left in the round, expressing their displeasure with the prolonged

clinchwork. Nonetheless, Brown managed to lift and throw Turman to the ground in the final moments, showcasing his strength once again. Although Turman swiftly returned to his feet, Brown seized the opportunity, leaping onto his opponent's back and threatening with a rear-naked choke until the bell sounded, likely securing the round in his favor.

As the final round commenced, Brown exhibited better volume on his feet, landing crisp shots while Turman pressed forward. Turman attempted a spinning backfist, but Brown expertly timed it and connected with a flying knee to Turman's chin. Turman grabbed Brown's leg in an attempt to secure a takedown, resulting in a clinch. Learning from the previous round, Turman wisely disengaged from the clinch and focused on striking. Throughout the round, Brown's output on the feet slightly diminished, although he still found success

with well-placed strikes.

In the clinch, Turman landed a notable elbow, a strike he executed multiple times in the latter half of the round. Unfortunately for Brown, the impact caused his nose to bleed profusely and his eye to swell significantly. Despite breaking free from the clinch, the visual damage inflicted by Turman had potential implications on the judges' scorecards. Brown reverted to his flowing striking style, landing long-range strikes, but Turman swiftly clinched up again. Just before the final bell, Turman landed another elbow, highlighting his improved performance in the clinch during this round.

But it was too late as Bruce Buffer announced that the decision was unanimous, 29-28 in favor of Randy 'Rudeboy' Brown.

- *NewsAmericasNow.com*



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Jamaican Boxing Legend Returns To The Ring For Historic “Rumble In The Sun”

St. Catherine, Jamaican-born, Canadian boxing legend Donovan “Razor” Ruddock is set to make a triumphant return to the ring in his home country as Triller Sports prepares to globally broadcast the highly anticipated “Rumble in the Sun” boxing exhibition.

The event, scheduled for Saturday, November 11, 2023, at Sabina Park in Kingston, Jamaica, will see the 59-year-old Ruddock face off against World Hall of Fame inductee James “Lights Out” Toney.

Ruddock, a two-time Canadian Heavyweight Champion, has established his legacy as one of the most formidable and relentless heavyweights of his era. Known for fearlessly challenging former undisputed Heavyweight Champion Mike Tyson twice in

1991 and delivering terrifying knockouts against renowned opponents such as Michael Dokes and James “Bonecrusher” Smith, Ruddock’s return to the ring is generating immense excitement among boxing enthusiasts.

The collaboration between Triller Sports and Red Ground Productions will bring this event to life, showcasing the incredible talent and skill of Ruddock on a global stage. Fans can expect an electrifying night of boxing as Ruddock seeks to remind the world that legends never fade; they transform into supernovas.

Not only is “Rumble in the Sun” a showcase of boxing excellence, but it also carries a significant purpose. A portion of the event’s proceeds will benefit The Good Hope Primary School in St. Catherine, the



Jamaican boxing legend Donovan “Razor” Ruddock, r., is set to make a triumphant return to the ring in his home country this November. (Instagram image)

Jamaica Boxing Board’s sports development initiative, and the Life Driven Foundation.

Ruddock, driven by his passion for his primary school and the mission to eradicate violence

through the “Gloves Over Guns” program, sees this event as an opportunity to make a meaningful impact beyond the boxing ring.

As the anticipation builds, fans worldwide will have the opportunity to witness the thrilling clash between Ruddock and Toney, thanks to Triller’s global broadcast on their premier sports and entertainment platform, FITE. This momentous event promises to be a celebration of Jamaican boxing heritage and a testament to the indomitable spirit of Donovan “Razor” Ruddock.

To stay updated on “Rumble in the Sun” and learn more about this historic boxing exhibition, visit the official website at rumbleinthesun.com.



West Indies Great Chris Gayle Throws Out Opening Pitch At Toronto Blue Jays Game



West Indies Chris Gayle throws out the first pitch at the Blue Jays Game in Toronto on June 24, 2023. (Vaughn Ridley/Getty Image)

The Toronto Blue Jays celebrated baseball’s bat and ball sporting cousin on Saturday, June 24, with Cricket Day at the Park, as the team took on the Oakland Athletics. The inaugural event

featured a first-of-its-kind Blue Jays Replica Cricket Jersey giveaway and a visit from West Indies cricket superstar, Chris Gayle.

Known worldwide as ‘The

Universe Boss’ for his prolific power with the bat, Gayle held countless international records across all three cricket formats, most notably at Twenty20 for the West Indies. The generational batsman’s visit to Toronto included batting practice with the team and throwing out the ceremonial first pitch, among other pregame activities.

Gayle was joined at batting practice by former Cricket Canada men’s captain, Rizwan Cheema, and current national team members Hiba Shamshad, Harsh Thaker, and Saad Zafar. In a video shared on Instagram by the Toronto Blue Jays, Gayle expressed his excitement about the event and emphasized his passion for cricket.

Additionally, fans were able to explore a Cricket Canada memorabilia display at section 127, showcasing iconic moments, memorabilia, and offering the opportunity to learn more about the game, while Cricket Canada athletes participated in a postgame ticketed autograph session.

That wasn’t all... fans were able to join in the cricket fun with batting and bowling simulators at section 536, as well as enjoy a design your own cricket bat kids craft corner at section 239. For the foodies, the Outfield District served up a specialty snack and drink – samosas and Dark & Stormy

cocktails.

The event provided a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and learn more about one of the most popular sports in the world while enjoying Blue Jays baseball.

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