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When Father Howard James left Jamaica for England to celebrate 25 years as a priest, he knew little of the awe-inspiring experience in store. James would end up meeting Pope Francis in Rome. For him, it was like "heaven", page 7.



Almost every step in Jamaican-born Omar Holness's sporting life pointed to him becoming a professional soccer player. But Holness's pro career kicked off with a horrible nightmare, as he suffered a massive seizure on the field. He's bouncing back, page 8.

PANIC ATTACK



~ A crackdown on immigration by United States President Donald Trump has sent some Caribbean nationals - legal and undocumented U.S. residents - scrambling in panic, scared they'll be caught in a government sweep that could deport them and shatter their lives, page 5.

'GREEN CARD' CUTBACK?

~ Caribbean nationals who have legally made the United States their home are growing increasingly uncomfortable as some U.S. lawmakers push to cut their numbers. Those hoping to assist relatives by "filing" for them to become U.S. permanent residents worry their efforts will be thwarted, page 2.



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NEWS



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U.S. lawmakers push to limit 'green card' holders ~ Caribbean nationals fear families will be cut off

GORDON WILLIAMS

Caribbean nationals who have legally made the United States their permanent home are growing increasingly uncomfortable as some U.S. lawmakers push to drastically cut their numbers.

A recent proposal by at least two senators aims to slash the number of people from the Caribbean wishing to reside in the U.S.

Now Caribbean Americans hoping to assist relatives by "filing" for them to become U.S. permanent residents or "green card" holders are worried their efforts will be thwarted if the senators' proposal become law.

"A lot of people are very fearful, from what I gather," said immigration attorney K. Omari Fullerton, Jamaica's honorary consul general for Texas. "They're very concerned."

Last month, Republican senators Tom Cotton and David Perdue, reportedly in consultation with the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump, proposed legislation that would cut by up to 50 percent the number of legal immigrants admitted to the U.S.

The proposal includes allowing only immigrants' immediate family members to become permanent residents. That would exclude categories such as adult siblings and adult children from consideration.



Cotton, left, and Purdue

Parents of U.S. immigrants filing the immigration petition would also be cut off if the senators' bill becomes law, unless the parents were ill. In that case, family of those parents would not be allowed public benefits.



Fullerton

unlikely to support it. The reason, according to Fullerton, is that the U.S. needs more - not less - people to sustain its economic power.

"Immigration is the engine of America," he explained. "That's it ... Why reduce (the number of permanent residents)? They should be talking about increasing it because the birthrate in America is low ... If they do that they'll have to start importing people just to come to keep the American talent going."

IMPACT

Thousands of Caribbean nationals with permanent residence cases pending - for themselves and family - are getting jittery. The economic benefits provided to the U.S. by Caribbean immigrants, in areas such as filing fees for

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Caribbean Americans elected to top Democratic Party posts

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Sons of Caribbean immigrants were elected to top posts in the Democratic Party last month in the United States.

Thomas Edward "Tom" Perez, whose parents are from the Dominican Republic, was chosen chairman of the Democratic National Committee (DNC). Michael Blake, whose parents migrated from Jamaica, was elected vice chair.

Perez's father Rafael Antonio de Jesús Pérez Lara earned U.S. citizenship after enlisting in the U.S. Army after World War II. His mother Grace



Perez



Blake

moved to the U.S. in 1930 after her father Rafael Brache was appointed as the country's ambassador to the U.S.

FIRST

Blake, whose parents moved to the U.S. in the 1970s, is a New York state assemblyman. His father Headly was a hospital maintenance supervisor. Mom Hilary worked at a manufacturing plant in New Jersey. Blake attended Northwestern University and was named a fall fellow at the Harvard University Institute of Politics in 2016.

Perez, who attended Brown University, served as assistant attorney general for the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice and secretary of labor from 2013 to 2017. His election on a second ballot made him the first Latino chairman of the DNC.

- Edited from News Americas.



T&T is top Caribbean nation for ISIS recruits

Trinidad and Tobago has emerged the Caribbean nation supplying the most recruits for the terrorism organization ISIS.

A story published in the **New York Times** newspaper last month stated that more than 100 T&T nationals have left the twin island republic to join ISIS in Syria, according to officials of the United States and T&T.

The Caribbean nation has a population of just over a million. In contrast, the U.S. has a population 240 times that of T&T, but only an estimated 250 had joined ISIS up to late 2015, the Times noted, quoting a U.S. House Homeland Security Committee report.

The Times reported several reasons put forward for the heavy ISIS recruitment of T&T nationals. Among them is that T&T law doesn't prohibit nationals from joining the so-called caliphate, which is made up of Muslim extremists. Also, T&T has a large Muslim population, about six percent of the total. ISIS recruits from T&T, according to published reports, are usually disenfranchised youths, criminals or former gang members who have

found the extremist group's message - obtained from websites - favorable.

RESPECT

ISIS, according to a former U.S. official, has high regard for T&T nationals. "Trinidadians do very well with ISIL," John L. Estrada, former U.S. ambassador to T&T, was quoted by the Times as saying. "They are high up in the ranks, they are very respected and they are English-speaking. ISIL have used them for propaganda to spread their message through the Caribbean."

There is concern that ISIS fighters from T&T could be ordered to carry out attacks in the Caribbean. The region, especially U.S. interests there, is believed to be

vulnerable.

U.S. President Donald Trump recently spoke to T&T Prime Minister Keith Rowley about security issues. The U.S., according to the Times, "encouraged Trinidad to tighten its laws, has hosted meetings with Muslim leaders at the embassy in Port of Spain, and paid for several to attend anti-extremism workshops in the United States."



Many ISIS recruits come from T&T.

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NEWS



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Expanded U.S. rules may deport more to Caribbean

WASHINGTON, D.C. – United States President Donald Trump has expanded the nation's immigration rules requiring stepped up deportation of undocumented immigrants from the Caribbean and elsewhere.

In a revised executive order signed last month and captioned "Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements", Trump said U.S. federal immigration law both imposes the responsibility and provides the means for the federal government, in cooperation with the states, to secure the nation's borders.

He said the purpose of the order is "... to repatriate illegal aliens swiftly, consistently and humanely." It also directs

the U.S. secretary of homeland security to hire an additional 5,000 border agents and to "empower state and local law enforcement to support federal enforcement of immigration law, to the maximum extent permitted by law, and to ensure that prosecution guidelines place a high priority on crimes."

On Feb. 17, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency released a list detailing the offenses of 680 immigrants who were recently detained and slated for deportation, adding that 75 percent had criminal convictions.

- Edited from CMC.
★

'Chalkdust' wins historic calypso monarch crown

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad – Dr. Hollis Liverpool, better known as "Chalkdust", won a ninth Calypso Monarch title in Trinidad and Tobago late last month, tying with the Grenadian-born Slinger Francisco (The Mighty Sparrow) for the most wins in the competition.

Chalkdust, a lecturer at the University of Trinidad and Tobago, won the TT\$700,000

(one TT dollar = US\$0.16 cents) first prize with his tune "Learn from Arithmetic", in which he criticized the decision of the leadership of the main Hindu organization here for not supporting an end to child marriages in T&T.

In one of the lines of the tune, Chalkdust reminds the group's leader Sat Maharaj, that "75 cannot go into 14," using mathematics to reach

those opposed to changing the laws here.

Massy Trinidad All Stars won the 2017 Panorama competition as carnival celebrations culminated on Feb. 28 with the traditional street jump-up.

- Edited from CMC. More entertainment on page 11.
★

Haiti's new president, prime minister take oath of office

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti

– Haiti's new Prime Minister Dr. Jack Guy Lafontant was sworn into office on Feb. 24 with President Jovenel Moïse saying his selection was in keeping with his policies of placing competent people to oversee the future socio-economic development of the French-speaking Caribbean community (CARICOM) country.

Moïse, who was sworn into office on Feb. 7 after winning the Nov. 20 presidential election, said he chose Lafontant because he wanted the country to have "a hard-working, competent and united prime minister" who wanted change in Haiti. Moïse



Moïse, left, and Lafontant

called on Haitians to work with him to restore peace and order in the country.

"We want serenity to facilitate the prosperity of Haiti. We have to get the state out of the street, because the country is tired with these incessant and fruitless fratricidal strug-

gles," he said.

In his address, Lafontant, a 56-year-old academic married and father of three, promised to unite the country.

"We will strive to make Haiti a land more than ever conducive to investment and business," he added.

Under the Haitian Constitution, the next step for the new prime minister will be to select

his Cabinet and present himself before the Parliament to obtain a vote of confidence on his policy statement.

- Edited from CMC.
★

U.S. lawmakers push to limit 'green card' holders

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

permanent residents, will be hard to replace if the senators' proposal becomes law, some believe.

"It's gonna affect the country (U.S.)," said Gentle Edwards, a Caribbean American living in Houston, Texas.

"We foreigners basically build this country. The amount of money that we put in the system ... I can guarantee you, the (U.S.-born) citizens do not put nothing, because they

don't have to pay for the green card. They don't have to file for nothing."

The fee to apply to change U.S. immigration status from temporary to permanent is \$1,640. To sponsor a parent, sibling or spouse costs \$535.

Currently, up to a million people are granted permanent residence to the U.S. each year, according to statistics reported by the U.S.-based Migration Policy Institute last year. More than 42 million not born in the U.S. already reside

in the country. The majority are from Canada, China, India, Mexico and the Philippines.

However, thousands come from the Caribbean, with Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica accounting for the most "green card" holders from the region each year.

- Photograph of K. Omari Fullerton by Gordon Williams.
★

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PANIC: Trump's immigration policies scare Caribbean nationals in U.S.

GORDON WILLIAMS

HOUSTON, Texas – A crack-down on immigration by United States President Donald Trump has sent Caribbean nationals - both legal and undocumented U.S. residents - scrambling in panic, with many scared they'll be caught in a government sweep that could deport them and shatter their families.

As a result of Trump's recent directives, which includes an executive order that bans travel for immigrants from certain Muslim-majority countries, and widening powers for U.S.



Trump

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officers to round up and deport undocumented residents for offenses including minor traffic violations, some Caribbean nationals have drastically changed their lifestyle.

Those without legal permanent resident status, who spoke with **Caribbean Today** on condition they not be identified, claimed they were shocked by the latest developments. They're now keeping a much lower profile by avoiding public places, especially areas they suspect DHS or



Henry

other law enforcement officers may be present.

"I've never seen anything like this," said a Caribbean national who has been without legal status

in the U.S. for over a decade and is the parent of American-born children. "It's like everything is getting crazy. People are scared what will happen next."

Even those with legal U.S. status have sensed fear in the Caribbean American community.

"What is happening right now is a panic. Nobody here exactly knows what's happening," explained Vin Blaine, a Caribbean national who has held legal U.S. permanent residence for decades.

"They're hearing that even if you have a 'green card' they can put you back (to the Caribbean). So people are worried ... I think people are really, really concerned."

CHANGES

Trump has since sought to roll back part of the travel ban which some interpreted as

applying to legal U.S. permanent residents or "green card" holders. News agencies, including CNN, also reported late last month that a new travel ban planned by the president will not affect permanent residents and those who already have U.S. visas.

However, some Caribbean nationals have already altered

their lifestyle. For example, planned trips which would have taken them out of the U.S. have been shelved by some. Others are considering leaving the U.S. permanently.

"Everybody feels nervous," said Gentle Edwards, a Caribbean American businessman who lives in Texas, which last month became the first

U.S. state to support Trump's initial travel ban in court.

"A lot of people want to go home because they don't know what's gonna be tomorrow and what the man (Trump) is gonna sign. A lot of people (booked) the trip (to the Caribbean) and they cancelled it."

"The general threat is

scary," added Terron Henry, a Caribbean national who owns a restaurant here. "The people around here scared. Everybody is scared."

The travel ban and widespread immigration crackdown does not stop U.S. citizens, including Caribbean nationals

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

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NEWS



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Guyana braces for U.S. immigration policy 'impact'

GEORGETOWN, Guyana – Guyana is discussing the possible effects of the new immigration policies instituted by the administration of United States President Donald Trump.

Director of Guyana's Foreign Service Institute Ambassador Ronald Austin said recent decisions on immigration by Trump "will have an immediate impact on our lives."

"We have to, I think first of all, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and I think throughout the government of Guyana, decide how we respond to the emergence of President Trump and the consequences of his policies," Austin said.

"This is not abstract foreign policy, this is direct consequences of a man who has decided to change the way the United States sees the world, and in particular as far as the immigrant population is concerned in the United States."

Last month, the U.S. Department of Homeland

Security revealed plans for the enforcement of immigration laws that have been deemed aggressive and discriminatory against Muslims. In addition, the new policies expand the Federal government's ability to empower state and local law enforcement agencies to perform the functions of immigration officers.

'EMERGING TRUMP'

Trump was expected to sign a new immigration executive order early this month.

A government statement noted that Professor Ivelaw Griffith, vice chancellor and principal of the University of Guyana, made a presentation to the staff of the Foreign Service Institute titled "The Emerging Trump Administration Foreign Policy and Dynamics Related to



Austin

Guyana and the Caribbean".

Caribbean community (CARICOM) leaders, at their recently concluded inter-sessional summit here, said that they were still anticipating continued good relationships with Washington under the Trump administration.

- Edited from CMC.



Caribbean seeks 'fruitful, mutual' U.S. relationship

GEORGETOWN, Guyana – Caribbean community (CARICOM) leaders say they are looking forward to "continuing the fruitful and mutually beneficial relationship with the new United States administration".

At the end of their inter-sessional summit here last month, regional leaders said they emphasized the importance of the long-standing relationship between the community and the U.S.

"We also recognized the importance of the recently adopted bipartisan, U.S.-Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act of 2016 that seeks to increase U.S. engagement with the governments and civil society of the region," David Granger, CARICOM chairman and host, told reporters.

At the start of the summit, Barbados Prime Minister Fruendel Stuart said 19 Barbadians had been detained

under the U.S. travel ban. He said his administration would be investigating the reports even as he expressed surprise that Barbadians and other Caribbean nationals were being rounded up by American authorities in keeping with President Donald Trump's Jan. 27 order, which was stated it intended to keep terrorists out of the U.S.

Granger told reporters that "we have a very cordial and respectful relationship with the United States."

"A change in CARICOM-USA relationship is not anticipated."

- Edited from CMC.



Granger

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U.S. denies entry to ex-T&T soccer star

Former Trinidad and Tobago soccer star Dwight Yorke was recently denied entry into the United States after immigration officers found he had visited Iran, one of seven Muslim-majority countries falling under a travel ban recently ordered by U.S. President Donald Trump.

According to news reports last month, Yorke said he was "made to feel like a criminal" when he tried to enter the U.S. Yorke was denied entry after U.S. immigration officers

determined he had a stamp in his passport from Iran, one of the seven targeted nations.

Yorke, 45, who was on his way to T&T after traveling to several countries, said he had visited Iran in 2015 to represent the "World Stars" in an exhibition game against the "Iranian Stars". Boarding a flight to Miami from Qatar, he was stopped by airport officials.

"I couldn't quite believe what was happening," Yorke reportedly told the Sun news-

paper. "I have lost count of the number of times I have been to America. I love the country ... I thought 'what is happening here?'"

"They told me there was a visa problem and a red flag had come up against my name because of an Iranian stamp in my passport."

"... The two officials told me if I got on the flight I would simply be deported back to Qatar once I arrived in the States."



PANIC: Trump's immigration policies scare Caribbean nationals in U.S.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

who have become naturalized, from re-entering the country. But that hasn't stopped anxiety rippling through some communities.

"I get a lot of calls from people saying that they are scared of being put back on a

plane, especially at (Houston) Hobby airport," said immigration attorney K. Omari Fullerton, Jamaica's honorary consul general for Texas.

"Even prior to the travel ban (executive order), Hobby airport had been turning back quite a few Jamaicans and they should not be turning them back."

"I've got people who were supposed to travel and literally don't want to travel," said Henry.

RUMORS

Rumors of immigration sweeps have seeped into U.S. communities heavily populated by Caribbean nationals, such as New York, Florida, Georgia, Texas and California.

During his presidential election campaign, Trump announced he would crack down on illegal immigration and suggested a temporary

ban on Muslims traveling to the U.S. He claimed that would help fight terrorism. After being sworn in as president Jan. 20, Trump issued an executive order banning travel of refugees and immigrants from seven Muslim-majority countries – Syria, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. However, the ban was suspended by a New York judge shortly after.

Last month, the Trump administration contested the suspension before the Ninth U.S. Court of Appeals, which ruled unanimously not to restore the executive order. On Feb. 13, a federal district court in Seattle inflicted another major blow to Trump's agenda by extending the temporary suspension indefinitely.

- Photograph of Terron Henry by Gordon Williams.



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'SVG WE COMING!': Diaspora ecstatic over new international airport

NEW YORK – Howie Prince, is the consul general of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines' (SVG) diplomatic office in the United States.

Celia Ross, who shares the office building with him is the U.S. director of sales and marketing at the SVG Tourism Authority.

Both were ecstatic that on Valentine Day, Feb. 14, they would be among several passengers making a historic and romantic journey back to their homeland. Only this time, instead of having to make several stopovers, they would fly directly to the newly built Argyle International Airport (AIA).

"It's the fulfillment of many years of wishful things," Prince told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)** last month, adding: "We can now boast of an international airport, where we can move people and goods and services to bolster our development."

"... (It's) a great prospect from the standpoint of having seamless travel. And to have seamless travel, it's the fulfillment of many dreams."

"With the ground-break-



The new airport in SVG.

ing for hotel development, tourism should take off, agricultural development should take off, and we can see the return of the brain power. The development of the airport can help in our economic development."

ACHIEVEMENT

The international airport is considered a major political achievement of the ruling Unity Labour Party and Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves in particular, who had come

under intense criticism at home over the project, which is six years behind schedule.

Venezuela and Cuba were among countries that helped Gonsalves fulfill his dream of building an international airport in SVG.

Ross said as the SVG tourism representative for many years, the AIA is "definitely a most welcome addition to all the good things the destination has to offer."

"For many years, I have listened to travel agents and



Airport is a major achievement for Gonsalves.

consumers talk about the beauty of the destination and, at the same time, lament the difficulty in getting there because of inadequate airlift," she added. "We expect AIA will boost our tourism industry, bringing many more visitors to our shores ... the international airport will improve the performance of other critical sectors, like agriculture and fisheries."

Chartered flights on Caribbean Airlines and Dynamics Airline were scheduled to leave New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport on Feb. 14 for AIA, returning Feb. 21.

"I think it's a significant

milestone for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and all Vincentians should embrace it, as we move forward," said Lennox Joslyn, chairman of the fundraising committee of Council of St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Organizations, U.S.A., Inc. (COSAGO), a Brooklyn-based umbrella Vincentian group in the U.S.

"I want all Vincentians to move on this (welcome AIA)," added Joslyn, who was born at Diamond, a short distance from AIA.

"Forget about politics," he insisted.

Jackson Farrell, long-standing president of the Brooklyn-based St. Vincent and the Grenadines Ex-Teachers Association, expressed similar views.

"The airport, whether we like it or not, is coming on stream," he said last month.

"When the comrade (Gonsalves) passes on, the airport will still be there. So, let us stop the 'dotishness' and opposition to the international airport."

Farrell, who taught elementary and secondary

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

When a priest from Jamaica met a pope at the Vatican

MARIE GREGORY JONES

When Father Howard James left his parish in Ocho Rios, Jamaica for London, England to celebrate 25 years as a priest, he knew little of the awe-inspiring experience in store for him.

James, now 57, was born in London to Jamaican parents who returned to the Caribbean island when he was age two. He grew up in Essex Hall then returned to England to the Westminster diocese for priestly studies. He was the first priest of Caribbean origin to be ordained for the diocese of Westminster. Since then, James has moved between Jamaica and London.

Several years ago he was parish priest in Ocho Rios then had appointments in London, culminating in five years as parish priest of St. John's, Islington. When that term ended, he returned to Ocho Rios.

With this background, parishes on both sides of the Atlantic wanted to celebrate his 25th anniversary as a priest – which occurred on Nov. 16, 2016. The first event was held in Jamaica on Nov. 13. Then James was off to London for another on Nov. 19 attended



Pope Francis, left, greets Father James.

by some 250 guests.

BEST

Still, the best was yet to come. James decided to spend a few days in Rome, the Italian city where he had been received into the church. A priest friend who worked in the Vatican told him he would try to arrange for him to meet Pope Francis, head of the Catholic Church.

Shortly before departing for Rome on Nov. 29, James was informed he would be attending mass with the pope in his private chapel on Dec. 1. He was instructed to take his alb, the white garment worn by a priest, and to be at the Vatican by 6:45 a.m. He set his alarm for 5 a.m., asked for a wake-up call just to be

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

Spring Health

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FEATURE



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Jamaican star aims to kick start pro career after on-field tragedy

GORDON WILLIAMS

CHATTANOOGA, Tennessee – Every step in Jamaican-born Omar Holness's sporting life pointed to him becoming a professional soccer player.

His days growing up in the Caribbean, competing in schoolboy and club leagues, captaining his country at the 2011 Under-17 World Cup, becoming a star at the University of North Carolina, and digesting a steady diet of "the beautiful game" from top leagues around the world on television. It all seemed geared to making his dream come true.

Until Holness's pro debut turned into a horrible nightmare.

Playing in his first match on Mar. 26, 2016 for Real Monarchs SLC, an affiliate of Real Salt Lake (RSL), the Major League Soccer club which picked him fifth overall earlier that year in the MLS SuperDraft, Holness suffered a massive seizure and collapsed on the field, in front of stunned teammates, opponents and home fans at Rio Tinto Stadium in Utah.

To compound matters, the rookie's shoulder was dislocated as those rushing to assist wrestled to restrain him. Nothing similar had happened before and the incident was ruled an "anomaly" by doctors, according to Holness. But for the midfielder, now 22, it could not have been a more disastrous start to his career.

"It was an unfortunate event," Holness told **Caribbean Today** last month as he prepared to play against the United States in a friendly international here.

'GRATEFUL'

Life threatening would have been more accurate. Word and worry spread rapidly across the U.S. and Caribbean. Ryan Thompson, who plays for St. Louis, the Monarchs' opponent Holness had the seizure, was away on



Holness, right, on the ball against the United States last month.

national duty at the time of the incident.

"I wasn't there," Thompson recalled. "But almost immediately after the incident happened people just kept calling. They were really concerned about Omar."

Holness has no recollection of exactly what happened on the field that night, but he remembers asking later and being told his team won the

United Soccer Leagues (USL) game. He was released from the hospital the following day, "grateful to be alive" and vowing to return to action quickly. That turned into a much longer wait.

"I had to sit out about two months, about two-and-a-half months," Holness said.

The good news was that he would be allowed to play again and there have been no

lingering physical or mental effects.

"Relating to the seizure," explained Holness, who turns 23 this month, "they found absolutely nothing wrong."

'MOVED ON'

He claimed he "moved on from" the incident and proved it by finishing 2016 strong. Holness played eight games for the Monarchs in USL and nine for RSL, starting three – a total of 277 MLS minutes.

Today, he's right back where he started. Holness entered RSL's pre-season training camp last month trying

to impress the club enough to break into regular first team soccer as MLS 2017 kicks off this month. He's viewed as both a holding midfielder and

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 17)

When a priest from Jamaica met a pope at the Vatican

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

sure, then hardly slept.

However, when he arrived at the hostel of St. Marta's, where the pope lives, there was a hitch. James had to be checked by security and was asked to produce identification. Residents in many European countries usually carry identification, but in England this is not the custom. A hasty phone call by the guard cleared James for entry.

'IN AWE'

James said he wondered what he would say to the pope

as he sat with another priest and other invited guests in the small chapel. Then suddenly the door opened and there stood the pope. According to James, the pontiff looked so humble the emotion of the occasion caused him to shed tears.

"I was in awe," said James. "He was so very simple and prayerful."

James said he was asked to distribute Holy Communion. He drank from the chalice, the same from which the pope had sipped moments before. According to James, he kept asking him-

self "How could this happen to a boy from Essex Hall, west rural St. Andrew?"

After mass James said he was asked to wait a few moments. Then the pope joined him for a short conversation.

"I rehearsed in my mind what I would say to him," James recalled.

The pontiff kissed him on both cheeks and James said he felt he was in heaven. He told the pope that he was celebrating his silver anniversary and was given a special blessing.

Pope Francis said he

would pray for James, his relatives and friends and asked that the father to pray for him. The entire incident left a lasting impression on James.

"I left the courtyard of the chapel and stopped outside St Peter's on my way back to the hotel and just prayed and thanked God for such an amazing experience," he said.

Story and photographs submitted by Marie Gregory Jones, a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.



'SVG WE COMING!': Diaspora ecstatic over new international airport

V(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

schools SVG before migrating to New York, said his association has been "an integral part" of the Brooklyn-based Friends of Argyle International Airport that has raised funds to assist its construction.

"We have stated clearly that we recognize certain projects purely through the prism of national interest and not as any political partisan objective," Farrell said.

Prince said an overwhelming number of Vincentians in

the diaspora were looking forward to landing at home.

"One stop! SVG we coming!" he exclaimed. "One stop! SVG we coming!"

Last year, the International Airport Development Company (IADC), a private limited liability company wholly owned by the SVG government, said work on the AIA was "winding down."

"Since construction started in August 2008, Vincentians have waited in anticipation of the completion of this project," IADC noted on its website, adding that, after several

missed dates, "completion is on the horizon."

Glen Beache, chief executive officer of the SVG Tourism Authority, said in a statement that the AIA boasts a runway that is 9,000 feet long and 250 feet wide and is "capable of accommodating aircrafts as large as Boeing 747-400's." He said the 171,000 square foot terminal building is designed to accommodate 1.5 million passengers annually.

Beache, a former tourism minister in the Gonsalves administration, said AIA is further enhanced with two jet

bridges, restaurants, bars and other shops – "all designed to provide passengers and airport employees with a pleasant experience."

"Tourism has been the major economic earner for St. Vincent and the Grenadines for the last two decades, and it is expected that the new international airport will increase earnings in this sector, as well as other critical sectors, including agriculture, fisheries," Beache said.

- Edited from CMC.



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Trump's great wall, no problem

In Donald Trump's universe, also known as his mind, there is no doubt that his "Great Border Wall" will keep out all 'bad hombres' from the United States – at least on the southern side of the border.

And there's no convincing his diehard fans, also known as the dummies who voted for him because they want to shut out brown and black immigrants, otherwise. But here's a newsflash Donald: At least one bad hombre – "El Chapo" – is in the U.S. borders and there's no getting rid of him anytime soon.

And yes we all know you were not kidding about your big beautiful wall dream. You reminded us of this on Jan. 25 when you signed your executive order telling officials to begin to "plan, design and construct a physical wall" along the 3,200-kilometer (2,000-mile) U.S.-Mexico border.



FELICIA J. PERSAUD

You reminded us again on Feb. 8 when you insisted at a conference of county sheriffs at the White House: "The wall is getting designed right now. A lot of people say, 'Oh, oh, Trump was only kidding with the wall.' I wasn't kidding. I don't kid. I don't kid."

And you harped on it again on Feb. 11 when you rudely took time out from hosting the Japanese prime minister to tweet: "I am reading that the great border WALL will cost more than the government originally thought, but I have not gotten involved in ... the design or negotiations yet," Trump wrote in a series of two consecutive tweets. "When I do, just like with the F-35 FighterJet or the Air Force One Program, price will come WAY DOWN!"

ADVICE

We get it! But Donald, here's a bit of advice! Not that that you will take it, but here goes anyway: Before you waste time and taxpayer dollars on design and construction, please, please talk to El Chapo. Before you waste \$21 billion of our money – many

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

Police state under Trump is not coming, it's here.

ROGER CALDWELL

United States President Donald Trump campaigned for dramatic change in the



Trump

enforcement of the rule of law in America.

He and his team decided his executive orders will dictate the laws in the land.

In one month, he signed 24 executive orders, and they are attempts to make major changes in U.S. law. The content of these executive orders indicate a lack of respect for civil rights and the U.S. Constitution.

During the week of Feb. 3, Immigrant and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers arrested 600 undocumented immigrants. Many of these immigrants had minor viola-

tions dating back several years and there is no distinction between felonies and misdemeanors.

Under Trump's executive order, he authorized the Department of Homeland Security to hire an additional 10,000 agents. At this point, this is a vague order and immigrants as well as U.S. citizens have been stopped and questioned by ICE.

'NO LIMIT'

"The potential for a police state is clear," said Bill Boyarsky of the Truth-Dig. "There is no limit to what immigration cops could do. Under the order, they would be able to deport anyone convicted of fraud in any official matter before a governmental agency. Or unauthorized immigrants who have abused any program related to receipt of public benefits."

As Trump puts pressure on local police officers and sheriff deputies to work with immigration cops, things are starting to get crazy. ICE agents can use their own judgment to enforce this order and they almost have unlimited power.

During the Feb. 3 week of ICE raids, the targeted group was the Latino community. But inside the Trump administra-

tion, there is also a war on Islam.

CHANGE

Blacks in the inner-city have always lived in a police state, so there will not be a major change in their environment. But Trump wants law enforcement to become tougher and more repressive.

It is not a mistake that the new president has included so many generals and high-level military personnel in his Cabinet. In order for Trump to enact his agenda, he needs the military, ICE and police to support and enforce his executive orders.

In the event of a violent protest, or if police are killed, Trump can blame the courts, the media, the protesters and any political opposition. The police state under Trump is not coming, it is here.

On Feb. 7, Muhammad Ali's son, returning from a Black History event in Jamaica, was detained for two hours and asked by border agents if he was Muslim. Even though he had a U.S. passport, he was still detained at an immigration checkpoint at Fort Lauderdale International Airport.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

EYE FOR AN EYE: Paying the ultimate price for ultimate sin

Murders too terrible for the ears and eyes have been taking place from the dawn of time, for the heart of man is wicked.

Wasn't it Cain who killed his brother Abel, as reported in the Bible?

Many names have been ascribed to murder. The difference is, in times gone by, people would pay the ultimate price for murder. Their lives would be taken from them in return. There was a time in the Western world's history when murderers were caught, tried, convicted and executed with no public outcry.

The point is, people paid the ultimate price for their crimes.

Today, murder seems to be going on unabated and, the truth is, murderers are doing their grisly deeds with impunity and laughing at society. Recently, two journalists were killed in the Dominican Republic during their public live broadcast.

Even if they do get caught and sentenced, murderers often enjoy the gift of life that they robbed their victims of. Some sectors of society even object to them being subjected to harsh treatment, citing human rights violations.

Compare that to what violations they foisted on victims.



Even babies and children are not being spared.

PROPER PENALTY

Still, circumstances alter cases. If two men get into a fight and one

punches the other, who then falls, hits his head and dies, it's murder. But that survivor doesn't deserve the death penalty.

If a woman is beaten to a pulp by her man for years and one day she strikes back and does him in, that's also different. Women aren't usually executed anyway, but you get



TONY ROBINSON

my point.

When you have men who treat murder like it's a national sport or bird shooting season, then what do you do with those thugs? Oh yes, some say, send them to jail for a few years where "they will be rehabilitated." More than likely they'll take classes, get immersed in religion and turn good citizens.

Meanwhile the victims are long gone, forgotten by the media, remembered only by close friends and relatives.

EXECUTION

Opponents of execution say it's not a deterrent to murder. Execution is punishment, and if even one man thinks twice about it before he does

the deed, then that's one victim saved. The murderer is taken out of the equation, never to kill again.

Statistics show many killers do so again upon release from prison. And yet, armchair experts make excuses and find reasons and justification why people commit murder. The truth is, he's just a stone cold hard wicked dog-heart killer who has no mercy for man woman or child.

There is the question of executing the wrong person, and that must be a terrible fate for the innocent. Some have been released after many

years, due to DNA evidence exonerating them. DNA should be the deciding factor.

If you don't want to execute them, then do something else, lock them away in solitary for life. Send a message that there are consequences for heinous actions.

Many won't share my views, as we've become civilized, cultured, sophisticated. But guess what, killers don't talk to death, they cause death, and pay no ultimate price.

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VIEWPOINT



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CaribChat

Plenty blame as Jamaica fails to make another soccer World Cup

Vin Blaine, Jamaica's director of soccer, spoke with *Caribbean Today's* Gordon Williams during Jamaica's two-match visit to the United States last month. (Story on page 17.) The following is an interview edited for clarity and space:

QUESTION: 2018 World Cup will mark the fifth straight cycle Jamaica has failed to get to the World Cup. What does that say about Jamaica's soccer progress?

ANSWER: Well, quite frankly it says that there's been no progress. You can't get away from that fact ...

Q: Was the hiring of (former head) coach (Winfried) Schafer a mistake and what does it say about going through all of these coaches ... and still not getting back to the World Cup? ...

A: Well, I think Schafer was a mistake. But you can't know until you hire ... It's kinda difficult when you hire these people to know what they're made of; and they're under a contract. That makes it even worse.

But I think the bringing of

different coaches (is) maybe almost like a quick fix ... Since (Rene) Simoes (who coached Jamaica to the 1998 World Cup) came, and he came with a different plan, and I think if you look at that model, I think maybe going back to something like that would suit us better.

Q: Which is what?

A: ... Taking the local-based players, work with them for a while, and then you choose a few of the overseas-based players ... I think we kinda get out of whack when we started to willy nilly pull players from all over the place ...

Q: ... Schafer being a mistake, what would you say the mistake was?

A: Well flat out I don't believe he can coach and I say that without any apologies. Tactically he was miserable. I don't think the man knew



Blaine

what he wanted ... I don't think that he had the control of the players or the respect of the players. And if you don't have the respect of the players then you are lost ...

Q: Has Jamaica gone too far, in terms of relying on overseas(-born) players at the expense of the local-based players and neglecting them?

A: Yeah ... I think it helped us in the early days (qualifying for the '98 World Cup), but it has not proven that is the perfect model.

... If you're talking about your base and your development of your players at the youth level in Jamaica, maybe it never did us any good ...

Q: ... Do you think it was a mistake on the part of the Jamaica Football Federation (JFF) to stress this emphasis on bringing in overseas-born players, some of them who you couldn't gauge their commitment?

A: I don't think it was a mistake in the beginning ... I think that we lost the perspective that we should have on development first ... It was an

experiment and the experiment went well. But like everything else ... from that experiment you decide what went wrong and you try something else. You build on that. I think what we did, we never looked at the players well enough ...

Q: So the blame lies with the JFF in projecting and prolonging a philosophy, which obviously worked during Simoes's time, but didn't work in the latter part. You'd say that the JFF has to take some blame and some responsibility for that as well?

A: I think they have to. But you also remember that you have to go by the philosophy and the approach of the ... senior coach that you hire.

Q: ... Are you satisfied with the quality, the level of the soccer being played in Jamaica and is this, at this point, a satisfactory feeding chain for the national senior men's program; any program for that matter?

A: No, I'm not satisfied and this is something that is no secret ... But I think (all) the stakeholders ... in Jamaica

right now must shoulder some of the blame ...

Q: ... Leon Bailey is 19 years old. He's playing in Europe in one of the top clubs and in the Champions League. Why is Leon Bailey not playing for Jamaica?

A: Leon Bailey is not playing for Jamaica because of his guardian. Straight up, that's it.

Q: But why?

A: That question would have to go to him, not to JFF. Leon Bailey, to set the record straight, has been invited to the national program at the youth level on several occasions. Leon Bailey has trained at the national level, not with the senior team, in my presence, more than once. So, you will have to ask his guardian why ...

Q: So it's not a matter of talent. You're saying it's not a problem from the JFF's side in terms of communicating interest in the player. You're saying the blame is with (Bailey's) representative, people who represent him?

A: Straight up.



Police state under Trump is not coming, it's here.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

Many civil rights lawyers allege Trump is looking for an excuse to suspend civil liberties under the Patriot Act and citizens can be held in prisons without legal representation.

The police state under Trump is based on hate. President Trump is at war

with every race that is not white in America. Who will win?

Roger Caldwell is a freelance writer for Caribbean Today. His views expressed above do not necessarily reflect those of the publication.



Trump's great wall, no problem

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

paid in taxes by the immigrants you despise – and saddle us with an eye sore that will keep no one out, please have a chat with El Chapo.

El Chapo and his friends in the Sinaloa cartel know all about getting out of walls, over walls and under them. Just last December, Mexican police discovered two new tunnels that officials believed drug traffickers used to sneak from the border city of Tijuana into the U.S. One of them reached to San Diego. It was only the latest tunnel found since 2006.

One of the longest cross-border drug-smuggling tunnels between Mexico and the U.S. was found by authorities in San Diego in April 2016. The 800 meters (874 yards) tunnel was used to transport an "unprecedented cache" of cocaine and marijuana and was the 13th sophisticated secret tunnel found along California's border with Mexico since 2006. And since 2001, U.S. law

enforcement discovered more than 100 tunnels along the border with Mexico.

NO WORRY

El Chapo himself has told you what he thinks of your wall. Last year, before his extradition to the U.S., El Chapo took to Twitter, the communication tool you so love, to reassure Mexicans that they shouldn't worry about your infamous pledge to build a border wall.

"The wall is no problem, I'll knock it down, I'll jump over it or I'll go under it," he wrote last year.

That's the reality Donald. You would do well to listen. Because those "bad hom-bres" are simply singing: "El Trumpeto, Great Wall, No Problem!"

Felicia J. Persaud is CMO at Hard Beat Communications, Inc. which owns the brands NewsAmericasNow, CaribPRWire and InvestCaribbeanNow.



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Caribbean producers get go-ahead for T.V. shows

Three Caribbean film producers have been given the go-ahead to develop pilots for original television series through funding from Flow and CaribbeanTales Media Group.

With \$40,000 funding for each project, production work is expected to begin on “Battledream Chronicle”, a sci-fi/drama animated series created by Alain Bidard based on his feature film; “Heat”, a crime/drama series filmed in Barbados from filmmaker Menelik Shabazz; and “Caribbean Girl NYC”, an ensemble female-driven sitcom from New York-based Guadeloupian filmmaker/producer Mariette Monpierre.

Support for the pilots is part of CaribbeanTales Incubator Program (CTI), a year-round development and production hub for Caribbean and Caribbean diaspora producers to create regional content for the global market.

“We recognize the significant hurdles that Caribbean



A scene from Caribbean Girl NYC.

producers face in financing and producing their content, and getting it out to audiences,” John Reid, chief executive officer of Cable and Wireless, operator of Flow and lead sponsor of CTI, was quoted as saying.

“We are honored to help support this program that is enabling the production and monetization of this exciting emerging cultural industry.”

The pilots are scheduled to premier at the annual CaribbeanTales International Film Festival (CTFF).

- Edited from News Americas.



Politics aside, Haitians celebrate 2017 carnival

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti – With the dust now settled on the selection of the country’s president and prime minister, Haitians late last month launched into celebrating its annual carnival.

According to newly elected President Jovenel Moise, carnival provides an opportunity to showcase the talent of the French-speaking Caribbean community country still recovering from the passage of Hurricane Matthew last October.

“The Haitian carnival is an exceptional moment when all the sons of Haiti, all the social strata combined, as well

as the foreign tourists, mix,” Moise explained while urging Haitians to unite to work in love, mutual respect, honor and sincerity.

“This is the time to show the world what we have best at home.”

“One of our greatest pride is our culture. We must protect it. Carnival presents an important part of our culture. Ayibobo for artistes, for our culture. Ayibobo for Haiti,” he added.

Multiple floats and bands took to the streets here during the celebrations that ended Feb. 28.



Karessah wins fourth Dominica calypso title

ROSEAU, Dominica – Gregory “Karessah” Riviere won his fourth calypso monarch title late last month in Dominica.

Karessah, who previously won titles in 2009, 2010 and 2015, romped to victory with his tunes “Minor Key” and “Second Round”. He defeated nine other calypsonians, including former monarch Denison “King Dice” Joseph, who tied



Karessah

with “Daddy Chess” for second place.

The competition was marred by the withdrawal of Garfford Joseph, one of the judges, over his alleged remarks made about “Dice”, who had threatened to withdraw from the competition if the judge remained.

Hundreds of revelers took to the streets here on Feb. 27 in the parade of bands and the festivities, which ended the following day with the traditional street jump-up.

- Edited from CMC.



Rihanna rises rapidly in ranks of hit makers

Barbadian pop star Rihanna, who recently turned 29, has quickly moved up in the ranking of recording artists with the most top 10 hits.

Rihanna’s “Love on the Brain” climbed into Billboard’s Hot 100 last

month, the 30th time she had such an accomplishment. The song moved her



Rihanna

into third place on the all-time list, behind Madonna and the Beatles. In the process, she passed Michael Jackson.

Madonna leads the list with 38 top 10 hits, followed by the Beatles on 35.



BRIEFS

9 Mile Music Festival

Multiple Caribbean artistes are in the announced line-up performers for this year’s “9 Mile Music Festival” to be staged **Mar. 11** at Virginia Key Beach Park in Miami, Florida.

Scheduled performers include reggae artistes Julian Marley, Capleton, Mavado and Sizzla. Also booked for the show are rappers Rick Ross and DMX.

For more information, visit 9milemusicfestival.com.

Ziggy Marley wins reggae Grammy

Jamaican Ziggy Marley’s self-titled record won the 2017 Grammy Award for “Best Reggae Album” last month. Marley finished ahead of Rebelution (“Falling Into Place”), J Boog (“Rose Petals”), SOJA (“Live in

Virginia”) and Jamaicans Sly and Robbie (“Reggae For Her – Sly and Robbie Presents Devin Di Dakta and JL”) and Raging Fyah (“Everlasting”).

Orlando Jazz Festival

Najee, David Sanborn and Norman Brown are among the scheduled performers for the “Orlando Jazz Festival” **Mar. 10-11** at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts in Orlando, Florida.

For more information, visit orlandojazzfest.com or call 844-513-2014.

‘Jazz In The Gardens’

Some of the biggest names in American entertainment, representing a variety of musical genres, will be on stage at the annual “Jazz In The Gardens” show to be held **Mar.**

18 and 19 at Hard Rock Stadium, Miami Gardens, Florida.

Among the scheduled performers are Jill Scott, LL Cool J, Robin Thicke, Common and Herbie Hancock.

Visit www.jazzinthegardens.com for more information.

‘Kaya Fest’ coming to Miami

The first “Kaya Fest”, a festival featuring some of reggae music’s top names, will be staged on **April 22** at the Bayfront Park Amphitheater, downtown Miami, Florida.

Among those scheduled to perform are Stephen Marley and his siblings Ziggy, Damian and Ky-Mani, plus Lauryn Hill, Sean Paul and the Inner Circle band.



Jamaica at 55

On August 6, 2017, the island of Jamaica marks the 55th Anniversary of its independence as a sovereign nation. Caribbean Today invites the business community in Jamaica and the United States to celebrate this significant milestone.

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HEALTH



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Arts support AIDS awareness

In recognition of February as National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Month, AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) partnered with the Center for Civil and Human Rights (CCHR) to unveil "Atlanta's HIV+ Population Now" art sculpture in Atlanta, Georgia. "Atlanta's HIV+ Population Now" is an eight-foot arts installation, designed by local Atlanta artist Matthew Terrell. It shows



the ever-growing problem of new HIV diagnoses in the Atlanta metro area. The piece takes the form of a pyramidal sign, simple text, and interchangeable marquee-style digits.

It will be on display in the lower external courtyard area of CCHR through June 27, "National HIV/AIDS Testing Day".



Who needs an HIV test? Everyone



BOB LaMENDOLA

Don't be surprised at your next annual checkup if your doctor says he or she is giving you an HIV test.

That is what the Florida Department of Health in Broward County hopes every doctor will do.

Department of Health-Broward and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are asking medical providers to include HIV testing as a routine part of all patients' blood tests, just like blood sugar, cholesterol and triglycerides.

Routine HIV testing means more people living with HIV will be diagnosed early, can begin treatment quickly, will be healthier and will be less likely to spread the virus. Also, routine testing will help eliminate any stigma on HIV tests.

"Routine testing means

that everyone would be offered HIV testing as part of our regular checkups. No one should feel stigmatized," said Dr. Paula Thaqi, director of DOH-Broward. "We encourage everyone to ask their doctor for an HIV test."

RECOMMENDATION

The CDC recommends routine testing for all people ages 13 to 65, and others if they engaged in unprotected sex. The CDC began recommending routine testing for some people in 1987 and for everyone starting in 2006.

The CDC and DOH-Broward would like to see routine testing performed by physicians, hospitals (including emergency rooms), clinics and other medical providers.

The way it works is the doctor mentions the HIV test when telling patients what will be covered in their blood work. The test will be done unless the patient specifically declines it – a practice known as opt-out testing.

Not every medical provider participates in routine testing. In recent years,

DOH-Broward has been educating and encouraging providers and institutions to implement routine testing.

A big argument in favor of routine testing is that HIV is spread mainly by people who do not know they contracted it. If they are diagnosed and take medication as directed, the amount of virus in their blood falls to nearly zero – and their chance of transmitting HIV drops by 95 percent.

Preventing the spread of the virus is crucial in South Florida, which has the nation's highest rate of new HIV cases per capita.

"Knowing your HIV status and getting treatment is one of the best ways we know to prevent HIV and keep our community healthy," Dr. Thaqi said. "Everyone can do their part by including an HIV test in their routine health care."

For more information, call 954-467-4700, Ext. 4991.

Bob LaMendola is with the Florida Department of Health in Broward County.



Cuba begins clinical trial of HIV vaccine's safety

HAVANA, Cuba – A therapeutic vaccine aimed at reducing the viral load of patients with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), is currently in phase one of a clinical trial, where its safety is studied.

According to Yayri Caridad Prieto Correa, a researcher from the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (CIGB) here, the nine patients involved in the trial did not show any adverse effects or toxicity, which is the main objective of the phase.

After pre-clinical studies in laboratory animals and tests in the small group of humans, it was shown that the immune response of the organism is enhanced thanks to the use of the vaccine, although Prieto Correa insisted on not creating false expectations. She told the Cuban News Agency that it is a multi-year project, and will take time.

She emphasized that the country's scientific institutions, and in particular the CIGB, should keep the search for vaccine candidates against HIV among its research priorities, although prevention is still the main method of avoiding contagion.

GOAL

She added that the goal is to replace the current tripartite therapy, combining several



Successful testing, but no cure yet.

methods that prevent the development of HIV, highly effective because the retroviral inhibitors block the spread of the virus, but can cause collateral damage and force in some cases the suspension of the treatment for a time.

The proposal presented by Prieto Correa and a team of researchers at the first Congress BioProcess 2017 shows signs of efficacy. However, she noted that it does not cure the disease.

Its administration is carried out simultaneously through the mucosal route, with the use of spray and intramuscular vaccination, and it has been preliminarily verified that it diminishes the viral load in the CD8 cells.

According to the Cuban Ministry of Public Health, 31 years after the first case diagnosed in the country with HIV, transmission by blood and its derivatives and mother-to-child transmission were eliminated.

- Edited from CMC.



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Is your seafood dinner bad for the environment?

Unfortunately, not all companies are upfront about where their products come from and how they were produced - and this is particularly troubling where seafood is concerned.

A new report by Greenpeace, titled "Sea of Distress", could serve as a helpful guide in pointing seafood lovers to those food-service companies that are acting responsibly.

Greenpeace, which is calling for reform, says that food-service companies should be able to ensure the seafood they sell is fully traceable from sea or farm to plate, and does not involve destructive fishing and farming methods or labor violations. Unfortunately, the industry too often incentivizes bad behaviors, the organization says, by offering discount programs for bulk purchasing of seafood, without regard for environmental or social impacts.

There is good news, though. Three major foodservice companies, Sodexo USA, Compass Group USA and Aramark, passed Greenpeace's assessment due to their transparency, sustainable sourcing requirements and advocacy efforts.

Unfortunately, several of



- Photograph (c) kristinav85 - Fotolia.com

Seafood, like shrimp, should be traceable from sea/farm to plate.

the largest food distributors failed the assessment. This is particularly concerning because these companies buy and sell billions of dollars of seafood that is consumed.

IMPROVEMENT

"Carting Away the Oceans", a separate assessment by Greenpeace of the nation's largest supermarkets, has shown vast improvement over the past eight years, with the majority of grocery stores across the country now receiving passing scores.

"The foodservice industry, which accounts for nearly half of all food-dollar spending outside the home every day,

must follow the lead of several grocery retailers and work to provide sustainable, ethical seafood," says David Pinsky, Greenpeace oceans campaigner.

To access the full report and learn more about ethical seafood, visit Greenpeace.org.

When dining outside your home, you may give the food on your plate less consideration than you do at home. But these meals count, too. As a consumer, you can make a considerable impact by choosing companies that are doing the right thing.

- Edited from StatePoint.



Sweet, tangy citrus marmalade...yum

MINNA LaFORTUNE

• 1 gallon water

Method

Put all the fruits to soak overnight.

Add sugar and put to boil. Lower the heat and allow to simmer until the fruit skins are tender.

One of the many joys of living in the Caribbean is the opportunity to make your own jams, jellies and marmalade from the abundant fresh fruits available for harvest, such as guava, jimbaly, June plums, pineapple, grapefruit and oranges.

It was always a special pleasure to make them in large batches and bottle and share them with family and friends. Two of my favorites are guava jam and citrus marmalade. I love to make them because of their taste. The taste of guava is complex, yet delicious, and the same is true for citrus marmalade.

I love citrus marmalade on buttered whole wheat toast paired with a cup of coffee. So here's my recipe.

Ingredients

- 3 medium oranges (finely sliced)
- 1 large lemons (thinly sliced)
- 2 tangerines (finely sliced)
- 1 pound white sugar



Citrus marmalade

Allow sugar to become a thin to medium thick syrup. Allow to cool to room temperature.

Bottle in a sterilized bottle and refrigerate.

Serve with toast!

- Edited from News Americas. Minna LaFortune is a trained Caribbean caterer.



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JWOF confab, scholarship luncheon set for April 8

The Jamaican Women of Florida (JWOF) will host its annual "Women's Empowerment Conference and Scholarship Luncheon" next month in Miami.

The event is scheduled for **8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 8** at Jungle Island, 1111 Parrot Jungle Trail.

JWOF is also accepting applications for its "Powerful Women ... Next Generation" scholarship, which is awarded to first or second generation Jamaican American female high school students attending college in the fall of 2017. The scholarship is valued at \$1,000 yearly for four years.

Scholarship applicants must be a resident of South

Florida with a high school graduating grade point average of 3.5, which must be maintained throughout the tenure of the scholarship. Candidates will be required to demonstrate commitment as a volunteer in community projects by performing a minimum of 40 hours per semester.

The scholarship application deadline is Mar. 16. The scholarship will be awarded at the luncheon.

For more information on luncheon and/or scholarship, visit www.jamaicawomenof-florida.com, e-mail Jwoflora@gmail.com or call **561-320-1391**.



South Florida community forum to address Trump's U.S. immigration policy changes

A community forum, to address recent changes in United States immigration policies, will be held this month in South Florida.

The discussion, to be led by attorneys Dahlia Walker-Huntington, Wayne Golding, Adriana Kostencki, Berger Singerman and Oliver Langstadt, is scheduled for **6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Mar. 16** at the Urban League of Palm Beach County, 1700 N. Australian Ave., West Palm Beach.



Walker-Huntington

The forum is being hosted by the Caribbean Bar Association (CBA) and F. Malcolm Cunningham, Sr. Bar Association, and co-sponsored by the Venezuelan American National Bar Association and the Haitian Lawyers Association.

It will address changes in immigration policy by the administration of recently elected U.S. President Donald Trump and provide advice to the public. The aim is to help



Golding

dispel misinformation that has reportedly struck fear in the heart of South Florida's immigrant community.

According to a recent press release issued by the CBA and the Cunningham Bar, it is important to arm the immigrant community with accurate information about the changes in immigration policy and knowledge of their rights within the context of the new immigration policies and laws.

The event is free and open to the public. To make a reservation, visit caribbean-barassociation@gmail.com.



World Bank appoints new Caribbean director

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The World Bank has appointed Tahseen Sayed Khan as the new country director for Caribbean countries.

She will be responsible for maintaining a solid partnership with the countries to address their development and financial challenges.

"It is an honor for me to be working in the Caribbean," Khan said. "I look forward to deepening our engagement with governments, development partners, civil society,

and the private sector, to boost inclusive growth and reduce poverty in the Caribbean."

Khan, a Pakistani national, was previously country manager for Albania in the Europe and Central Asia region. She joined the World Bank in 1997 as a social sector specialist in South Asia



Khan

and has since held various positions, including as lead education specialist, operations adviser and country manager for Nepal.

She holds a master's degree in law and diplomacy, specializing in development studies, from Tufts University Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in the United States.

- Edited from CMC.



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MASTER BLENDER



- Photograph by Derrick Scott

The Embassy of Jamaica last month paid tribute to Appleton Estate's Joy Spence, center, at the start of her international tour to celebrate 20 years as master blender of some of the finest rums in the world. Spence, who works with Jamaica-based Appleton Estates, is credited with creating several new rum blends. Jamaica's Ambassador to the United States Audrey Marks, left, lauded Spence for pioneering work during a presentation held in Washington D.C. Sharing in the occasion is Catherine McDonald, J. Wray and Nephew's global brand public relations manager.

- Edited from JIS.

FANM gala Mar. 11

FANM, the South Florida-based support organization which assists low income families, will hold its annual gala at **6 p.m. Mar. 11**.

The theme of the event, to be held at the Miami Marriott Biscayne Bay Hotel, 1633 N. Bayshore Dr., Miami, is "Building Strong Communities: One Family at a Time".

For more information, call **305-756-8050**.

'True Blue Weekend'

Alumni of two top Jamaican high schools will host a weekend of sports and entertainment this month in South Florida.

The St. George's College Old Boys Association of Florida, Inc. and The Jamaica College Old Boys Association of Florida, Inc. will stage the 13th annual "True Blue Weekend" **Mar. 24-26**.

The event will continue to honor the legacy of Dennis Ziadie, who coached both St. George's College and Jamaica College to win one of the major Jamaica high school soccer competitions, with the Ziadie Cup. Events of the True Blue Weekend include:

Mar. 24, 8 p.m. - The True Blue Kick-Off Party at Grand Cafe Restaurant and Lounge, 12389 Pembroke Rd., Pembroke Pines.

Mar. 25, 11 a.m. - True

Blue Soccer Fest at Vizcaya Park, 14200 S.W. 55th St., Miramar.

Mar. 26, 11 a.m. - True Blue Brunch at Roun a Goosey, 11635 Red Rd., Miramar.

For more information, visit <http://www.trueblueweekend.com>.

'Woman of Distinction'

Bahamas Deputy Consul General Sandra Carey will be among those recognized as "2017 Women of Distinction" this month at a ceremony to be held in South Florida.

- Compiled from various sources.



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~ A CARIBBEAN TODAY SPECIAL FEATURE

STUMBLING BLOCKS: 5 errors that can undermine your new business

Half of new United States companies fail in their first five years, according to Gallup. Expand the timeframe out to 10 years and the failure rate reaches 70 percent.

That's not surprising, says Randy H. Nelson, an entrepreneur who has built companies. The skills it takes to start a business aren't necessarily the same as those it takes to keep that business afloat.

"Many entrepreneurs have the gumption to take that dramatic first step of sparking something into creation, but too many lack the perspective to reflect on what's needed for the next step," says Nelson, author of "The Second Decision – The Qualified Entrepreneur". He says entrepreneurs often make five mistakes that threaten to put their businesses at risk.

• **Insistence on autonomy**

- An Inc. magazine study once said that a trait most entrepreneurs share is their desire for autonomy, which is great starting out, Nelson says. But after the startup phase, the company steams into the growth

phase, becoming more complex and more vulnerable to industry and economic trends. At that point, an entrepreneur's insistence on autonomy can hinder the company's ability to respond quickly and intelligently to challenges it faces.

"In the growth phase, you simply can't do it all, and it's foolish to keep believing you can," Nelson says.

• **Unwillingness to build structure, cultivate expertise or delegate** - Many entrepreneurs will need to surround themselves with a strong executive team – or at least a steady right-hand individual – to ensure the company's success, Nelson says. But too many business owners fail to create the kind of structure that produces good leadership decisions within a managerial team.

The entrepreneur needs to know the employees and where their strengths lie to put them to good use, he says.

• **Lack of financial leadership** - Entrepreneurs by definition take risk when they make



- File photograph

Making the right business calculations is key.

the decision to start their own business. In the area of financial leadership, which includes tracking cash levels and trends, financial covenants, metrics and expenses, entrepreneurs who are not financially literate and active will need the direct support of a financial expert to ensure they receive the advice and input needed in their organization.

The Small Business Administration has estimated

that up to 60 percent of businesses owe their demise to a lack of cash. Other sources have this number as high as 90 percent.

• **Reacting unwisely to boredom** - Starting a business proved exhilarating. The day-to-day operation of it may pale in comparison. A bored entrepreneur can create significant troubles for the business, Nelson says.

"Things are going to get

up-ended in a hurry, because many bored entrepreneurs either start new companies or abruptly make changes in their current companies to keep their own level of excitement high," he says.

"Of course, entrepreneurs are to be celebrated for their guts and desire to innovate. But when a serial entrepreneur habitually and almost obsessively looks for new sandboxes to play in, what happens to the existing company or companies often isn't very good."

• **Failure to engage in self-examination** - Entrepreneurs need to be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, the same things they gauge in their employees.

"You need to set aside your probably abundant self-confidence and take stock of what you know, what you're good at, and what skills you still need to master in your leadership role," Nelson says.

- *Edited from News and Experts.*



Tips to save, spend wisely

On the heels of hefty spending, the New Year is the best time to take stock of personal finance habits and make beneficial changes for the year ahead.

Here are some useful tips and tricks to spend and save wisely in 2017:

Think long-term - Don't neglect the future. It's never too early to save for retirement. The sooner you start, the better off you will be.

Invest through a company-sponsored plan if possible. If not, look into IRAs that can help you grow your wealth exponentially.

Create categorized funds - Consider the 52-week savings challenge. Sticking to this plan results in a tidy sum saved at the end of the year, as well as any interest you've earned.

Creating a savings account for a specific purpose is a perennially sound savings strategy. Look for banks that are fee friendly, which allows you to open an Online Savings or Money Market account with no minimum and no monthly maintenance fee.

You can deposit money easily through e-check deposit, direct deposit and you'll earn interest compounded daily on your savings. In addition, putting this money in a separate account allows you to track your spending against the account balance.

Use shopping apps - It is

incredibly easy to save money with a little online research. With a few minutes effort, you'll find discount codes, loyalty programs or cash back websites that track your purchases and reward you for the extra step of navigating through their shopping portal instead of going straight to the big name retailers' websites.

Reap rewards - While no personal finance expert would advocate running up credit card bills one can't afford, savvy consumers know how to take advantage of credit card reward programs for hotel points, airline miles or just straight cash in their pockets.

"Use credit cards that reward you for the things you buy the most," says Diane Morais, chief executive officer and president of Ally Bank, the direct banking subsidiary of Ally Financial Inc.

There are often offers for opening a new credit card with a minimum spend. If you don't want to open a new account, check your current credit cards for promotions or cash back offers, which can add up quickly on everyday purchases.

With a little homework, savvy consumers can make 2017 the year they spend strategically and save more.

- *Edited from StatePoint.*



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Jamaica loses, wins soccer friendly matches in U.S.

GORDON WILLIAMS

CHATTANOOGA, Tennessee/HOUSTON, Texas – Jamaica's senior men's soccer team scored contrasting results in two friendly international games played last month in the United States.

Jamaica lost 1-0 to the U.S. on Feb. 3 in Chattanooga, but reversed that misfortune on Feb. 16 by beating Honduras 1-0 in Houston.

Despite fielding a largely young, inexperienced team for both games - made up primarily of Jamaica-based talent and professionals from North America - the Reggae Boyz looked for encouraging signs going into the two games. They had failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, but have reached the semi-final round of Caribbean Cup and will play in this summer's Gold Cup, a U.S.-hosted tournament for teams in the Caribbean, North and Central America (CONCACAF). Jamaica believes it accomplished that target.

"The performance was credible," said Vin Blaine, Jamaica's director of soccer after the Honduras game. "The two games were very good. Two different styles of the teams and the team performed creditably."

Jamaica's captain JeVaughn Watson called the experience invaluable.

"We learned a lot from both games," Watson said. "We played against two good

teams; two powerhouse teams in CONCACAF and I think we gave a good account of ourselves."

NO SURPRISE

Jamaica's showing didn't surprise their opponents. Prior to the first game at Finley Stadium, U.S. national coach Bruce Arena heaped praise on the Caribbean nation.

"I've always thought they've had good teams," said Arena. "They certainly have a talented group of players ... I have greatest respect (for Jamaica)."

The U.S., Honduras and Jamaica were all missing key players due to club commitments. In addition, many players present were still in pre-season condition. Bitter cold temperatures in Chattanooga didn't make it comfortable for players either. The Americans dominated that game and a 59th minute goal by Jordan Morris secured the win.

Jamaica played better in warmer Texas and a 71st minute goal by Damion Lowe ensured victory. It also produced satisfaction.

"We can build and move forward," said Watson.

The U.S. is gearing up for final round of CONCACAF World Cup qualifiers. The six-team tournament, which also includes Trinidad and Tobago, resumes this month. T&T plays Panama on Mar. 24 and Mexico on Mar. 28.



SPORT BRIEFS

Florida netball classic

Multiple schools from the Caribbean are expected to participate in the Jr. Florida Netball Classic Mar. 31 to April 1 at Joseph Carter Park in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

West Indies face England, Pakistan

The West Indies cricket team will play a series of limited overs matches against England and Pakistan in the Caribbean this month and next. The schedule is as follows: W.I. v. England – Mar 3 and 5 in Antigua and Mar 9 in Barbados; W.I. v. Pakistan – Mar.

31 and April 2 in Trinidad and April 7, 9 and 11 in Guyana.

Caribbean fails in U-20 soccer bid

All five Caribbean nations, which played in qualifiers last month, failed to advance to soccer's Under-20 World Cup. Antigua and Barbuda, Bermuda, Haiti, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago were eliminated from the CONCACAF group stage in Costa Rica.

- Compiled from various sources.



Jamaican aims to kick start pro career after on-field tragedy

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

one who can attack as well. Although he failed to register a goal or assist last season, he knows he can make an impact immediately.

"I'm very confident that I will break through into the team ... that I will stake my claim," said Holness. "I will do what's best for me and what's best for Real Salt Lake."

He said the RSL staff, which includes former Jamaica internationals Tyrone Marshall and Andy Williams, believes

in him.

"Their confidence within me is high," Holness explained. "I can see that. They trust me and they trust me as a player – on the field and off the field. So it's just time. Time will tell."

He's backing himself as well. Holness hasn't announced any outlandish 2017 targets, like number of games played, goals and assists, but he said not doing better than last year's output would be a "disappointment."

"I want to improve everyday," he said.

Holness has put last year's setback behind him. In front is a new season, with RSL and national team opportunities awaiting.

He refuses to ponder the reasons for the seizure and setback, which could have ended his career and life before both really got underway.

"God makes these things happen," said Holness. "It's just to recover from it."



CARIBBEAN CHAMPION



Jamaican-born Patrick Chung, left, breaks up a pass during last month's Super Bowl. His team New England Patriots beat the Atlanta Falcons to win the National Football League championship. For Chung, the son of reggae singer Sophia George and music producer Ronald Chung, it was his second time as champion with the Patriots. He attended Rancho Cucamonga High School in California and the University of Oregon.

Son of ex-Caribbean soccer star determined to rise

CHATTANOOGA, Tennessee – Nearly two decades ago, a United States national coach called Jamaica's Onandi Lowe the only soccer player in the Caribbean, North and Central America (CONCACAF) he had little clue how to stop.

Lowe, a huge man with deceptive speed and ball skills, played mostly striker. But he could beat opponents in many ways, the coach declared after witnessing "Nana" blast a long range free kick into the U.S. goal.

Today, another Lowe is wearing Jamaica's colors - Onandi's son Damion. The physical resemblance is striking.



Damion Lowe

The son even answers to dad's nickname.

But comparisons mostly stop there. While Lowe Sr. was a key in Jamaica's run to World Cup 1998 and widely acknowledged as one of the most gifted players in the Caribbean, his son is still trying to frame his own legacy.

Damion starred at a U.S. college and was selected eighth in the first round of the 2014 Major League Soccer (MLS) SuperDraft by Seattle Sounders F.C. Yet at 23 he grapples with disappointment after suffering a hip injury and

missing almost his entire rookie season. First he was loaned to Seattle F.C. 2 in 2015 and later Minnesota United F.C. Both clubs played in a league below MLS, North America's top competition.

NEW START

This season Lowe secured a contract with Florida's Tampa Bay Rowdies, another second tier club. Although he's convinced his talent deserves a higher level, reality has taken hold.

"I think I'm doing well enough to be in a MLS team," he explained prior to facing the U.S. in an international friendly here. "I'm not right now. So, I just have to go out there with Tampa and do my best ... That's where I am."

It's not where the 6' 3" defender expected to be when Seattle invested heavily in him. Lowe never made a first team appearance for the club, which won MLS Cup in 2016 as the injury stalled his progress. When he returned to fitness, the decision to play was out of his hands.

"I did enough in some instances, at some point in time in my time at Seattle in order to get into the (starting) 11 or get into the (match day squad of) 18," he said. "But it's the reality of (soccer) again. Sometimes you just don't get what you want."



Onandi Lowe

NO GRUDGE

Lowe said he holds no grudge against Seattle, where he was projected as a starter before the injury. He's happy with his 2016 stint at Minnesota, where he played 27 games and scored two goals.

"I had a really good season," said Lowe.

Jamaica agreed, selecting him for Caribbean Cup qualifiers last year. A rash tackle and ejection left some observers comparing Lowe's temperament to his dad's. But he senses the opportunity to kick his higher-level ambitions into gear.

"It means a lot (playing for the national team), because you never know who's watching," said Lowe, who on Feb. 16 scored in Jamaica's 1-0 win over Honduras in a friendly international in Texas. "One game can change your whole life, can change your whole football career ... Because nothing is guaranteed."

Lowe listens when dad speaks - criticism or encouragement - but the final reaction remains his.

"I try to be independent, not cocky, but just try to figure things out on my own," he explained. "Because at the end of the day it's my career and I have to set my own path and stuff. But he (dad) is there guiding me."

- G. Williams



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~ A CARIBBEAN TODAY SPECIAL FEATURE

PortMiami's record year nets \$33M in state grants

MIAMI, Florida – Last year was a big one for PortMiami.

Following another record-breaking year for cargo and cruise passengers, \$33 million in Florida state grants have been allocated to PortMiami by over the next five years.

The good run of fortune is being viewed as another important step to help the port better respond to the next generation of cruise and cargo business.

PortMiami had a 14 percent increase in its containerized cargo in 2014-15, and another two percent increase in fiscal year 2015-2016 for a total of 1.03 million TEUs, which are the equivalent of a standard 20-foot container.

Approximately 4.98 million cruise passengers sailed through PortMiami, a new world record.

FUTURE

But even with these accomplishments, the future looks even brighter.

The positive performance report comes as PortMiami starts to receive the bigger ships that are already transiting via the expanded Panama Canal. Some \$1.3 billion were invested to dredge and widen PortMiami's shipping channel to, complete a new port tunnel



The port sees bright future.

to speed vehicular traffic, acquire four Super-Post-Panamax cranes and build an on-port rail link.

The port is now big ship ready, according to those who manage it, and they anticipate continued growth as some of the world's largest ocean carriers have formed alliances and deployed bigger vessels for their international shipping routes.

Additionally, cruise line partners have also announced their plans to expand business at the port.

Meanwhile, MSC Cruises plans to homeport its MSC Seaside in Miami beginning in the winter of 2017. Sir Richard Branson's Virgin Voyages is also scheduled to bring one of its three new ships to PortMiami and start offering seven-day vacations to the Caribbean in 2020.

- Contributed.



Barrels containing marijuana discovered at Antigua port

JOHN'S, Antigua – Antigua law enforcement officials said that more than EC\$1 million (one EC dollar = US\$0.37 cents) worth of marijuana was found late last month at the Deep Water harbor here.

The Office of National Drug and Money Laundering Control Policy said that the drugs had been found in two barrels and that, up to press time, no one had been arrested as a result of the discovery.

The agency said the barrels

arrived here from the United States to an address in Antigua and that the discovery was made during a joint operation between the ONDCP and Customs and Port Authority officers.

The marijuana weighed 252 pounds. Officials said the barrels also contained personal effects.

- Edited from CMC.



Port Everglades gets shipment...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

container was off-loaded at Crowley's terminal at Port Everglades, it was trucked south to MIA and transferred into air cargo containers and placed on a Centurion Cargo flight bound for Amsterdam on Feb. 2.

"This new program will help to strengthen Port Everglades' position as the leading perishables seaport in Florida," said Steven Cernak, Port Everglades chief execu-

tive and port director, was quoted as saying, "and will give shippers more options."

"This integrated ocean-to-air cold chain solution will offer customers the most efficient way to speed perishables to new markets," added Frank Larkin, Crowley's senior vice president and general manager for logistics.

- Edited from submitted press release.



P.M. invites investors to embrace project changing former SVG airport into new city

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent – Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves has informed St. Vincent and Grenadines nationals that Trinidadian Derek Chin, chair of MovieTowne, has expressed interest in the site of the decommissioned E.T. Joshua Airport.

However, Gonsalves wants other investors on board with the project as well.

"I'm hoping that as a consequence of this conversation (with Chin) that interested local investors would come," Gonsalves told radio listeners recently.

The government has already announced plans to build a new city at the airport site and Gonsalves said he is disappointed in the slow reaction of the private sector here to the initiative.

"You know, I find that too many times that we put these calls out and a number of local investors they just hang back," the prime minister said. "It's like many of them hang back when we are talking about — local and even regional — about buying



The E.T. Joshua Airport.

equipment for the ground handling out at Argyle and building the cargo terminal. But we eventually went and did all of those things ..."

REPAYMENT

The government has said money from land sales at the old airport would help repay the EC\$700 million (one EC dollar = US\$0.37 cents) cost of the new Argyle International Airport (AIA) that was opened on Feb. 14.

Gonsalves said Chin is in the process of completing a complex in Guyana "and I understand he wants to go to Grenada. He is talking there, so he is, obviously, building out a regional brand. And apartment complexes, offices, shops — you know what I mean.

"But I need to have a magnet, which grounds it, and the big magnet, which is grounding that is the acute referral hospital. Well, that is one big magnet, but you need to have a couple of them. At least, that is the concept."

MOU

He said his government, however, has a memorandum of understanding with Chin in relation to consideration for an entire complex, including a plaza, MovieTowne, and a boutique hotel.

"These are the concepts which we are talking about, but nothing has been agreed upon because there are some practical things," Gonsalves explained.

He said huge sums of money will be spent on infrastructure, including the construction and installation of roads, electricity, sewerage systems, drains, telecommunications systems, and water, in keeping (with) the master plan.

Gonsalves said the MOU that his government has signed with Chin is "non-binding."

- Edited from CMC.





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U.S. assists T&T in money laundering, terrorism fight

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad – The United States is providing Trinidad and Tobago with assistance in combating money laundering and terrorism financing, the U.S. Embassy here announced last month.

According to embassy, John Murphy, an economic crime advisor from U.S. Treasury, was assisting the T&T government as part of Washington's ongoing partnership with the government building capacity in the security sector.

"This technical assistance is based on an agreement signed between the United States and Trinidad and Tobago in August 2016," the embassy noted. "The U.S. Department of Treasury Office of Technical Assistance Economic Crimes Team, funded by the Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, provides capacity and technical assistance in anti-money laundering and counter financing of terrorism in various countries."

The embassy said that

during Murphy's stay, local stakeholders established a T&T Financial Crime Working Group to implement anti-money laundering and counter financing of terrorism procedures.

PROCEDURES

The embassy said Murphy, a specialist in financial crimes, began his work with U.S. Treasury's Office of Technical Assistance in 2012, with projects in Africa, Central America and the Caribbean. Most recently, Murphy served as the team lead in Ghana and Jamaica.

Prior to his work overseas, Murphy was a subject matter expert/advisor for the U.S. Department of Justice, Asset Forfeiture and Money Laundering Section in Washington, D.C. and served 21 years as a law enforcement officer with the New York City Police Department in both the Organized Crime Investigation Division and the Joint Organized Crime Task Force.

- Edited from CMC.



U.S. congratulates Grenada on Independence anniversary

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The United States has congratulated Grenada on its 43 years of political Independence, saying that the Caribbean island has "much to be proud of."

In his Independence message, U.S. Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson alluded to St. George's University, saying that Grenada should be proud. He described the university as "a world class and multicultural center of international education that draws students from 140 countries, showcasing the welcoming spirit of Grenada."

Tillerson also said that Grenada's participation in the Caribbean community (CARICOM), the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Organization of American States (OAS) and regional initiatives on energy and security demonstrate the island's "strong democratic traditions,

respect for human rights, and commitment to improving the lives of its citizens.

"We share a vision for a secure and prosperous Caribbean region, as well as a commitment to deepening our engagement as demonstrated by the recently approved United States-Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act of 2016," he said.

"As you celebrate another year of Independence, know

"As you celebrate another year of Independence, know that the people of the United States wish you a joyful day and a continuation of the friendship between our countries" - Tillerson

that the people of the United States wish you a joyful day and a continuation of the friendship between our countries," he added.

Grenada was granted Independence on Feb. 7, 1974, under the leadership of the late Sir Eric Matthew Gairy, who became the first prime minister.

- Edited from CMC.



HAITI'S PRESIDENT



Jovenel Moise, right, was last month sworn in as Haiti's 58th president, taking the oath of office in Parliament in front of legislators and foreign dignitaries, including those from Caribbean community countries. The 48-year-old businessman succeeded Michel Martelly after being elected in November. At left is his wife Martine.

U.S.-Caribbean coast guard raid nets \$125M in cocaine

SAN JUAN Puerto Rico – Two days after four Guyanese nationals were arrested, United States Coast Guard officials said that drugs estimated \$125 million had been seized during a joint operation involving Caribbean Coast Guard officials in international waters of Suriname.

The cocaine, weighing 4.2 tonnes, was offloaded at Coast Guard Sector San Juan, Puerto Rico and followed the night time interception of a fishing vessel in international waters. Officials here said the seizure was the biggest in the Atlantic since 1999.

"The excellent coordination between the U.S. Coast Guard, and international law enforcement agencies prevented this major drug shipment from reaching our communities," said Capt. Robert W. Warren, Coast Guard Sector San Juan commander, in announcing the operation.

"We appreciate our continued partnerships with the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard and St. Vincent Coast Guard. Our collective efforts are working to secure our region's maritime borders and



Some of the drugs seized in international waters off Suriname.

protect our citizens from this threat."

JOINT PATROL

The Coast Guard said that the Feb. 18 exercise resulted in the smugglers being taken off a 70-foot fishing boat and facing prosecution by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Virgin Islands. According to the Coast Guard, the San Juan-based Sentinel-class fast response cutter Joseph Napier detected the fishing boat Lady Michelle north of Paramaribo, Suriname in international waters. The Coast Guard boarding team detained the four crewmen, and found bales that tested positive for cocaine.

A T&T Standard Patrol

class Coast Guard cutter, based out of Staubles Bay, Trinidad, was on a joint patrol with the Napier and provided safety and escort assistance at the scene.

The Napier took the Lady Michelle under tow until relieved by the Vigilant, a medium endurance cutter based out of Port Canaveral, Florida.

The Vigilant towed the fishing vessel to its port of registry, the island of St. Vincent, and transferred custody to the St. Vincent Coast Guard.

The operation was the latest result of multi-agency and international law enforcement efforts led by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) office on St. Croix, and assisted by DEA Barbados office, and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force and the British National Crime Agency (NCA).

- Edited from CMC.



Phillips set to replace Simpson Miller as PNP boss

KINGSTON, Jamaica – Former Finance Minister Dr. Peter Phillips has emerged the lone candidate to replace the 71-year-old former Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller as president of the main Opposition People's National Party (PNP) in Jamaica.

The PNP, in a statement issued last month, said that

Phillips, 67, was the only person named when nominations for the post of president closed at noon Feb. 10. It said Phillips, the Member of Parliament for East Central St. Andrew, had been nominated for the position.

The PNP said it expects Phillips will be declared elected by acclamation, as the fifth president of the PNP, when the

party holds a special delegates conference on Mar. 26.

Last month Simpson Miller, who led the PNP into defeat in the last general elections held in 2016, announced she would step down from the position on April 2.

- Edited from CMC.

