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(Getty Image: Mark Makela)



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Regional Caribbean News Round Up

Here's a synopsis of all the major Caribbean news from the region you can use:

REGIONAL

Sandals Resorts in Barbados, Grenada and Saint Lucia are in a face-off with the government there over some guests disregard for COVID-19 rules or for outbreaks on properties.

In Barbados, the resort on Dover Beach is in a faceoff with the government over “verified breaches” of COVID protocol, Barbados Today reported. The country’s Ministry of Health and Wellness will delist the Sandals Barbados Resort and Spa as a designated quarantine hotel after three tourists who broke quarantine. Two removed their quarantine wristbands and another falsified documents and are being held by authorities.

In Grenada and Saint Lucia, health officials have tied COVID-19 outbreaks to Sandals properties.

The Sandals Grenada is closed until Feb. 3 after several cases traced back to the resort played a role in triggering a partial lockdown of the island in mid-December. The government put restrictions in place after 26 cases nationwide popped up in one day.



Sandals Resorts Gets In Hot Water With Three Regional Governments.

Adam Stewart, the chain’s deputy chairman, told Travel Pulse, a tourism website, that the resort is putting up the guests who had been booked for the Grenada property at other Sandals in the Caribbean that they choose.

LOAN FOR COVID-19 FIGHT

The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the Inter-American Development Bank, (IDB) have signed a US\$50 million loan agreement

to support COVID-19 response projects in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, (OECS) Member States.

The loan will provide economic resources to OECS Member States – Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts Nevis, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The loan agreement signed will finance a program to help reduce mortality and morbidity from COVID-19 and ensure minimum levels of quality of life and health for vulnerable people in the countries mentioned. In addition, it will provide support for Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, (MSMEs).

The news comes as The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) forecasts that the Caribbean will experience positive growth this year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a new report ECLAC said the region will have a positive growth rate of 3.7 percent in 2021 “due mainly to a statistical rebound that will, nonetheless, be insufficient for recovering the economic activity levels seen prior to the coronavirus pandemic (in 2019).”

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Officials in St. Vincent and The Grenadines have been forced to denounce as “fake news,” reports that citizens were advised to evacuate their homes after a volcano, dormant for decades, came back to life and began spewing ash.

The National Emergency Management Organization said that no evacuation order has been issued to any section of the population.

Several media outlets both locally and internationally

reported the fake news, including Reuters, the Dailymail.uk, Euro Weekly, CTV and Independent.co.uk.

NEMO says that all citizens and residents must ensure that any information regarding the La Soufrière Volcano and the current emergency are from credible and official sources only – including NEMO and the UWI Seismic Research Center, (SRC).

“We continue to monitor the ongoing activity at the La Soufriere volcano with assistance from the team of experts from the UWI SRC, led by Professor Richard Robinson and would update the nation of any change in status as soon as this occurs,” the statement on Sunday said.

The government raised the alert level to orange for the volcano La Soufriere, after steam, gas and a volcanic dome, formed by lava that reaches the Earth’s surface, were seen over La Soufriere, located in the northern area of St. Vincent island, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency said. Persons were advised to remain alert and listen to all advisories.

An eruption by La Soufriere in 1902 killed more than 1,000 people.

TURKS & CAICOS

Voters in the Turks & Caicos will go to the polls early this year to select a new government. The House of Assembly in the Turks and Caicos was dissolved on Dec. 24, 2020, paving the way for general elections within 90 days.

Premier Sharlene Cartwright-Robinson, in making the announcement, said that she had advised the territory’s governor to dissolve the House immediately. The Premier, however, did not announce a date for the poll, stating it will be announced this year. General elections were last held in this British Overseas territory on December 15, 2016. The result was a victory for the People’s Democratic Movement, with Cartwright-Robinson becoming the islands’ first female Premier.

GUYANA

ExxonMobile Guyana completed its first year of oil production from the Liza field offshore late last month.

In December, the Liza Destiny Floating Production Storage and Offloading (FPSO) vessel reached full capacity of 120,000 barrels of oil per day and successfully commissioned the gas injection system.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)



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Caribbean COVID-19 Warriors

Caribbean Immigrants Were At All Levels Of The COVID-19 Vaccine – From Co-Creator, To Administering And Receiving It

It was definitely an all-Caribbean American affair when it came to the US' first COVID-19 vaccine administered on Monday, Dec. 14, 2020. Not only were the first person to receive the shot a Caribbean immigrant, but the doctor who administered the shot was also from a CARICOM country and one of the principal scientists who worked on the Pfizer BNT162b2 vaccine, was also born in the CARICOM region.

Pfizer's principal research scientist, Vidia Surendra Roopchand, was born in the CARICOM South American nation of Guyana. Dr. Michelle Chester, the corporate director Employee Health Services at Northwell Health, who administered the shot was also born in Guyana and the nurse who became the first person in the US vaccinated for the coronavirus was Sandra Lindsay, born in Jamaica.

Asked how he feels to be making history as an immigrant and a Caribbean immigrant from Guyana, as part of the team to deliver the first vaccine to possibly help curb the COVID-19 virus, Roopchand told News Americas exclusively that "it was a humbling experience more than anything else!"

"I also feel honored and fortunate that I was able to contribute to the team effort that delivered the first COVID-91 vaccine to the world," added the 53-year-old scientist, who grew up on the tiny island of Wakenaam, located in the Essequibo River in Guyana.

He credits his educational foundation and life experiences in the Caribbean and Guyana. "This is also an American story, I have represented Guyana and Caribbean in this effort but it



Pfizer's principal research scientist, Vidia Surendra Roopchand of Guyana.

is also an embodiment of the of the American dream and the great things that are possible in America," he added.

Asked for his message to immigrants and people of color who because of past history, are hesitant about the vaccine and taking it when it becomes more widely available, Roopchand said that "for every successful vaccine that I have worked on during my career at Pfizer, I have always asked myself the following question. 'Would I take this vaccine, and would I recommend this vaccine to a loved one?'"

"The answer to this question has always been a resounding 'Yes,'" he said. "I will take this vaccine and I will recommend this vaccine to any of my loved ones. My wife is taking it today (Dec. 21, 2020), at her hospital (NYP Bronxville)."

The top Pfizer scientist revealed that the development of the BNT162b2 vaccine has been "thorough and transparent to the regulatory agencies around the world."

"The data has been presented to the leading infectious disease experts in the

world and representatives from the anti-vaccine movement as well," said Roopchand. "The data from the clinical trials are available in the public domain so people can see for themselves what the regulatory agencies had to say. There are also interviews with vaccine recipients which are available."

He revealed that as far as side-effects, vaccinated subjects should anticipate potentially feeling fatigued or experiencing headache, chills or muscle pain shortly after getting immunized. But he said, "that is to be expected."

"It just means that your immune system is working," Roopchand explained, while reiterating that people with allergies to any of the vaccine components should not get the vaccine.

THE DOCTOR

Dr. Chester, the corporate director Employee Health Services at Northwell Health, was born Georgetown, and after migrating to the US, she attended Far Rockaway High School and then Rutgers University.



Jamaican born nurse Sandra Lindsay, left, gets inoculated with the COVID-19 vaccine by Guyanese Dr. Michelle Chester, December 14, 2020 in New York City. (Photo by Mark Lennihan - Pool/Getty Images)

She then went on to work at Northwell Health. "We all should give this vaccine a chance to propel us into the new beginning of ending Covid-19," said Dr. Chester, who will bring congratulations on behalf of all frontline health care workers at the Invest Caribbean inauguration celebration for Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris on Jan. 17, 2021, said she is confident the administration "will put health care on the forefront."

"Our community has suffered greatly," added Dr. Chester. "And I look forward to our community getting the help and support it needs from your administration."

THE NURSE

Nurse Lindsay, 52, a critical care nurse who immigrated to the US 30 years ago and is now the director of critical care nursing at Long Island Jewish Medical Center, part of the Northwell Health network, added that there are many more people like her who need the vaccine, particularly in the Caribbean

American communities.

She attended community college and then to Lehman College in the Bronx for her nursing degree and went on to work at Lenox Hill Hospital in Manhattan and rose through the ranks until she became the director of critical care nursing at Long Island Jewish Medical Center, part of the Northwell Health network, in 2016.

"We are courageous, but obviously, the team is fearful. And so today marks a significant step in eradicating this pandemic once and for all, bending that curve and keeping it down," added Lindsay, who lives in Port Washington, Long Island, NY and has one son and six brothers and sisters. "So, it's important that everyone pulls together to take the vaccine, not only to protect themselves but also to protect everyone they will come into contact with."

NewsAmericasNow.com contributed to this story



Regional Caribbean News Round Up

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

The company began production less than five years after the first discovery of hydrocarbons, which is well ahead of the industry average for deep water developments.

The Liza and Payara developments are in the Stabroek Block, operated by ExxonMobil affiliate Esso Exploration and Production Guyana Limited which holds a 45 percent interest in the Block. Hess Guyana Exploration Ltd. holds 30 percent interest and CNOOC Petroleum Guyana Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of CNOOC Limited, holds 25 per cent interest.

CAYMAN ISLANDS

The speaker of the House in

the Cayman Islands, McKeever Bush, was late last month handed a suspended sentence for three assault charges leveled against him following an altercation at a local bar in early 2020.

When he appeared in court, Bush was actually sentenced to two months' imprisonment on each assault charge to run concurrently, which was suspended for two years. Although the veteran politician was not sentenced to jail, he will have a conviction recorded against him.

CUBA

In the waning days of the administration of Donald Trump, his State Department is still going after Cuba.

Three more Cuban

military-owned companies have been added to its Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List (SDN List). The companies are Grupo de Administración Empresarial SA (GAESA), FINCIMEX, and Kave Coffee S.A.

GAESA is the Cuban military's largest company, which controls large portions of Cuba's economy for the military's benefit.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the addition was made by the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

"All property and interests in property of these entities that are in the United States or in the possession or control of persons subject to U.S. jurisdiction continue to be blocked and

must be reported to OFAC," Pompeo said.

GRENADA

Grenada has signed a Bilateral Debt Agreement with the United States, as part of the Paris Club Debt Service Suspension Initiative that provides for the island to consolidated and rescheduled debt payments that were due between May and December 2020.

The agreement implements the terms of the Paris Club-G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative, of which Grenada is a beneficiary. The Paris Club was formed in 1956 and is an informal group of official creditors whose role is to find coordinated and sustainable solutions to the payment

difficulties experienced by borrower countries.

BAHAMAS

The Bahamas has now been delisted from "Grey list" of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and will no longer be seen as one of the "Jurisdictions under Increased Monitoring."

This decision follows the final assessment and recommendations of the International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG) of the Americas, resulting from an onsite visit to The Bahamas.

- Rewritten and Compiled From CMC, News Americas And Reuters News



NEWS



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Tributes Pour In Following Passing Of Sandals Founder Butch Stewart

Tributes have begun pouring in following the passing of one of the Caribbean's top hotelier's, Sandal's Founder and Chairman, Gordon Arthur Cyril 'Butch' Stewart, OJ, CD.

Stewart, the founder and chairman of the Appliance Traders Group of Companies, which includes Sandals and Beaches Resorts and the Jamaica Observer, died last night in Miami following an undisclosed illness. He was 79.

His son, Adam Stewart, said on the death of his father: "It is with great sadness that I share with you today the passing of my father, Gordon 'Butch' Stewart. This news seems almost unbelievable, since he was as involved and forward-thinking as ever. He chose to keep a very recent health diagnosis private and we respected that wish."

"It is with deep sadness that I learnt of the passing of one of Jamaica's most brilliant, innovative and transformative business minds, the Honourable Gordon 'Butch' Stewart OJ, CD, Hon. LLD," Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness posted on Twitter.

He said the late entrepreneur was a visionary. "Butch was a man way ahead of his time, he had an eye for details and his ability to market and deliver world class service in any endeavor was tremendously distinctive," said PM Holness. "He was an extraordinary human being with an unwavering commitment to the social good. He has left his unmistakable mark across the region & the world & we shall miss him dearly. This loss is not just Jamaica's it is the Caribbean's."

Former Jamaica Prime Minister, Portia Simpson Miller also sent condolences, adding: "Jamaica has lost one of her finest sons. His family has lost a loving husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather. His workers have lost their leader and motivator and so many of us have lost a friend. My condolences to the Stewart family and the extended work family. Rest in



Invest Caribbean presented the ICN Leadership Awardee to the Hon. Gordon 'Butch Stewart' in 2014 for his investment, commitment, and dedication to the Caribbean. (Sharon Bennett image)

peace Gordon "Butch" Stewart. We will never forget how you changed Jamaica for the better and positively impacted so many lives."

St. Lucia's Prime Minister, Allan Chastanet said "Stewart was never an ordinary man." "He dreamed big, he thought big, he acted big. He was a visionary, a pioneer and a trailblazer," he added. "His son Adam described him as a 'superhero' and I concur because what he did for this region as a whole and for the islands in which he invested was transformative. I am forever grateful for the time we had together and I will forever cherish all that I learnt from him."

"Gordon Butch Stewart has made an indelible mark. He has established himself as not just the standard by which entrepreneurship can be judged, but he has established a brand that has become global and is also the strongest statement that small island states such as Jamaica can make on global scenes, irrespective of their areas of involvement," said Jamaica's Tourism Minister Ed Bartlett. "I think that we can look back on his life and times and draw inspiration from the success that he has had. But I think, most importantly, we can be inspired by his resilience and the fact that

he has started from nowhere, and has ended up as being one of the most celebrated human beings that Jamaica has produced in the last century."

The Jamaica Hotel Tourism Association remembered Stewart as "a tourism industry giant who founded Sandals Resorts, an empire that defined the all-inclusive experience in Caribbean" while Vanessa Ledesma, Acting CEO and Director General of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association said: "Our industry will forever be indebted to 'Butch' for his continued passion for excellence and legendary Caribbean hospitality. His vision has bestowed to the global industry a Caribbean organization that adheres to the highest standards of excellence, celebrates and promotes the region's uniqueness, and invests in the development of our people and communities."

"The Honorable Gordon 'Butch' Stewart was our bold champion who spread across the Caribbean the message that high-end sustainable tourism can enrich our destinations and our people," said Joseph Boschulte, Commissioner of Tourism, U.S. Virgin Islands while Chairman of the Jamaica Tourist Board John Lynch, who worked with Stewart for decades, remembered him

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)

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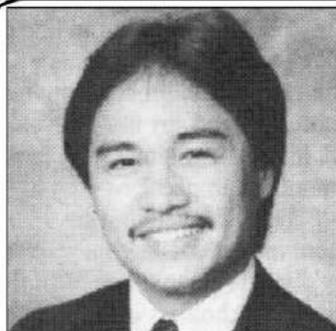
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The US Has Blacklisted These Haitians



Gang leader Jimmy "Barbecue" Cherizier holding a gun while wearing a suit. (Haitian Times Image)

The United States has blacklisted three alleged human rights abusers in Haiti under Executive Order 13818, which implements the U.S. Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act.

The news came ahead of Haiti's 217th independence

anniversary on January 1st, 2020.

Jimmy Cherizier and two former members of President Jovenel Moïse's administration, Fednel Monchery and Joseph Pierre Richard Duplan, have been blacklisted for alleged involvement in a November 2018 attack in the neighborhood of La Saline, in which at least 71 people were killed, over 400 houses destroyed and at least seven women were raped by armed gangs.

Their assets have been frozen. "Cherizier, Monchery, and Duplan are designated [human rights abusers] for being foreign

persons responsible for or complicit in, or having directly or indirectly engaged in, serious human rights abuse," U.S. officials said in the release. "In exchange for executing attacks designed to create instability and silence the Port-au-Prince

population's demands for improved living conditions, gangs receive money, political protection, and enough firearms

to reportedly make them better armed than the [police]."

Rewritten from Thompson

Reuters News Foundation & The Haitian Times



Jamaican Immigrant US Army Private Charged With Murder

A Jamaican-born, US Army Private has been slapped with kidnapping and murder charges related to the death of Corporal Hayden Harris.

Private Jamaal Mellish, 23, and a resident of Brooklyn, New York, has been charged with first-degree murder, first-degree kidnapping, second-degree possession of a weapon without a permit, and second-degree possession of weapons for unlawful purposes. Mellish, a past student of Manning's High School in Westmoreland, Jamaica, is also charged with suppressing evidence.

An unidentified 16-year-old boy has been also charged jointly with him over the murder of Corporal Harris, 20, in Byram Township, New Jersey. His body was found on December 19, 2020.

Reports indicate Harris was last heard from between 8 p.m. on December 17th and 6:30 a.m. on December 18th. He was reportedly headed to Watertown, New York, which is located near to the Fort Drum army base



Private Jamaal Mellish

where he was assigned duties.

Further reports are that Harris was destined to meet Mellish for what has been described as a motor vehicle transaction. It has been theorized that a dispute later developed between the two army men, resulting in Mellish kidnapping Harris and driving the latter's vehicle to Brooklyn, New York. The Jamaican, along with the teenager who was also in the vehicle, then allegedly proceeded to Bryram Township with Harris

as their captive.

Sometime later, he was shot dead.

Harris' body was found with gunshot wounds buried in snow in a wooded area near Ross Road in Byram Township, Sussex County in New York on December 19, US authorities said.

Following a probe, Mellish and the teenager were apprehended, and were charged on December 28th.

Mellish attended Mannings High School in Savanna-la-Mar, Westmoreland, Jamaica where he played football. He represented the school in the DaCosta Cup. He later attended George W. Wingate High School in New York City after migrating and then the ASA College in Brooklyn where he also played soccer for the ASA Brooklyn Avengers.

No official motive has been given for the killing.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



Tributes Pour In Following Passing Of Sandals Founder Butch Stewart

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

for "his passion and vision for tourism in Jamaica and across the wider Caribbean region."

"He will be remembered for his groundbreaking work in growing the all-inclusive concept here and in the Caribbean and we're confident his rich legacy will be preserved," Lynch added.

"His was a virtual lifetime of high performance, devotion to country and the Caribbean and commitment to excellence in the hospitality sector," the Caribbean Tourism Organization added in a statement. "Stewart was a mentor to many, and his contributions have touched almost every sector of Jamaican and Caribbean society. His passing is a great loss to the entire region. He was a true travel and tourism and business icon and his legacy will shape future generations."

Invest Caribbean, the global private sector investment agency of the Caribbean, said the region has lost a tourism giant who believed in and truly "invested Caribbean."

Invest Caribbean presented the ICN Leadership Awardee to the Hon. Gordon 'Butch Stewart' in 2014 for his investment, commitment, and dedication to the Caribbean.

"It is with great sadness I read of the passing of the Hon. Gordon Butch Stewart this

morning. He was truly inspiring to me as an entrepreneur, predominantly because he believed in the Caribbean when many dismissed the region as too small. He created a brand that has become globally synonymous with the Caribbean region at a time when few hotels in the region was owned by any Caribbean national," said ICN founder and CEO, Felicia J. Persaud. "His vision, dedication and commitment to the region and to raising the bar in service excellence in the tourism field was world renown and his legacy will live on to inspire future generations."

At the time, Stewart said of the award: "It is an honor to be considered a leader among those serving and succeeding in the Caribbean. My work here, the companies I have built, the jobs we have created and the people we have served are the best example of what is possible in the Caribbean and why we must continue to invest here at home."

And he added: "the Caribbean region remains a great business investment and still offers 'the single best holiday product in the world.'"

ABOUT STEWART

Stewart was born in 1941 in Kingston, Jamaica. He grew up along the north-coast of the country, where he adopted his

nickname, given to him by an American sailor. As a child, Stewart helped out at his mother's appliance dealership, and at 12, he bought a small canoe he used to catch fish and sell them to the local hotels. He then bought a larger boat which he operated until age 17.

After completing his education in England, Stewart became a salesman and eventually rose to become the sales manager of Dutch-owned Curaçao Trading Company. Stewart later left in 1968 to found his own business, Appliance Traders, Ltd. which specialized at first in importing and selling air conditioning units, water coolers and stoves but has grown to sell almost everything.

In April 1981, Stewart bought two derelict hotels, the Bay Roc and the Carlisle in Montego Bay. The Bay Roc had been abandoned for more than five years when Stewart hired architect Evan Williams to renovate the hotel for \$4 million and reopen it the same year as the Sandals Resort Beach Club, later known as Sandals Montego Bay. Stewart founded Sandals Resorts which was the first company to popularize the sale of all-inclusive holidays in the Caribbean.

Stewart is credited with several innovations in the hospitality industry, most notably building the Caribbean's first

swim-up bar at Sandals Montego Bay Resort in Jamaica in 1984.

In 1985, Stewart opened his second hotel as the Sandals Carlisle which was followed the next year by Sandals Royal Caribbean, "the only resort in Jamaica with its own private island". Over the next few years, Stewart expanded Sandals Resort to Negril in 1988 and to Ocho Rios in 1989. In 1991, he opened a second resort in Ocho Rios near the Dunn's River Falls and also opened Sandals Antigua, his first resort outside Jamaica. He added two more resorts to the Sandals chain in Saint Lucia, Sandals La Toc and Sandals Halcyon Beach, which opened in 1993. Sandals Royal Bahamian in Nassau opened in 1996 and, in 1997, Stewart started a second resort chain geared towards children and families with the opening of a Beaches Resort in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands.

Stewart also founded The Jamaica Observer newspaper in January 1993 and, in 1994, started the Air Jamaica Acquisition Group to buy a majority stake in Air Jamaica. The group paid \$37.5 million for a majority share of the airline; of which, Stewart held a 46 percent stake and became the new chairman of Air Jamaica. Stewart's group sold their shares of the airline back to the Jamaican Government in 2004.

In November 2006, Stewart became chairman of Sandals and Beaches Resorts after appointing his son Adam Stewart as CEO. In 2012, Stewart founded Sandals Corporate University, an adult education program for Caribbean nationals employed by Sandals Resorts, Beaches Resorts and Grand Pineapple Beach Resorts, provided in partnership by Canada-based Ryerson University, Western Hospitality Institute of Jamaica and the Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning. As of 2012, Stewart's businesses employed more than 10,000 people in the Caribbean across various industries including hospitality, restaurant, automotive, retail, and media.

Stewart is survived by his wife, Cheryl, children Brian, Bobby, Adam, Jaime, Sabrina, Gordon, and Kelly; grandchildren Aston, Sloane, Camden, Penelope-Sky, Isla, Finley, Max, Ben, Zak, Sophie, Annie and Emma; and great grandchildren Jackson, Riley, Emmy and Willow.

A private funeral service will be held. Those wishing to share memories, condolences or personal stories may do so at AllThatsGood@sandals.com

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NEWS



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COVID-19 Vaccines Will Not Be Quick Fix For The Caribbean ~ PAHO

It's 2021, and many are looking forward to the restoration of normality, but the Dominican-born president of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) is tempering that expectation.

Dr. Carissa F. Etienne, says COVID-19 vaccines will not be an easy, quick fix for the Americas, including the Caribbean.

"While we hope 2021 will usher a new chapter in our fight against this virus, protecting the millions of people in our region with COVID-19 vaccines will be a huge undertaking," Dr. Etienne warned. "So, we must be patient and remain realistic that COVID-19 will be among us for some time. So, our work to control it cannot and must not stop."

Her comments come as researchers from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in the United States say nearly one in four people may not get COVID-19 vaccines until at least 2022 because rich countries with less than 15% of the global population have reserved 51% of the doses of the most promising vaccines.



Dr. Carissa F. Etienne

Low-and middle-income countries - home to more than 85% of the world's population - would have to share the remainder, said the researchers.

Dr. Etienne said controlling the pandemic "will require us to heed the lessons we've learned thus far and to address the challenges that have long held us back: pervasive inequality and underfunded health systems."

Etienne said that, even as vaccines are rolled out, "countries cannot get complacent; they should continue to promote the

appropriate public health measures to control cases, such as mask wearing and social distancing.

"Patients will need to be tested, isolated, cared for, and we must continue to quarantine suspected cases," she urged. "None of this can stop or we risk too many lives. I am concerned about all the work ahead," she added. "It won't be easy nor quick."

The pandemic stands out in both scale and impact, she added.

Since the start of this pandemic, less than a year ago, PAHO said the region of the Americas has recorded nearly 31 million cases and 787,000 deaths due to COVID-19.

"This represents roughly half of all COVID-19 infections and deaths worldwide," Dr. Etienne said.

Rewritten from CMC



Amnesty International Slams Trinidad & Tobago Government Over Venezuelan Migrant Response



Venezuelan migrants in Trinidad.

Human rights group, Amnesty International, has slammed the Keith Rowley government of Trinidad and Tobago for how its dealing with the Venezuelan migrant crisis and for failing to pass refugee legislation that would guide immigration officials and judges on how to deal with cases of Venezuelan migrants.

Louise Tillotson, a Caribbean Researcher at Amnesty International, in a piece titled "Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela: Policies from both governments put lives at risk," says AI, the Caribbean Centre for Human Rights, and more than 20 other organizations have written two open letters to Prime Minister Dr Rowley, asking for his government to recognize the gravity of the human rights violations Venezuelans are fleeing and to find ways to provide protection. "To date, we have had no response to either of our letters," she wrote.

Her article came on the heels of the gruesome report that 14 out of 20 Venezuelans, who left on a boat en route to the twin island republic on Dec. 6th, were found a few days later dead, near the Venezuelan coastal town of Guiria.

It also comes as The United States Embassy in T&T blamed Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and those who back him, for the crisis facing the South American nation.

But Tillotson stated: "While failing to condemn the massive human rights violations in Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago's authorities have prioritized a response focused on 'protecting national security' and 'border protection' rather than finding ways to fulfil its human rights commitments made when it acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol."

She added that the Rowley government "continues to hide behind the excuse that it has no national refugee legislation and argues that those fleeing for their lives are committing 'criminal' offences, an assertion that also contradicts international human rights law."

Late last year, Trinidad and Tobago's authorities sent at least 16 children and an estimated 12 adults back out into the high seas, after they'd arrived in Trinidad and Tobago. The group was later returned to Trinidad but Tillotson said "the image of a baby from that group behind prison bars, published in the Trinidad and Tobago Guardian, begs the question: Can a baby really be a 'criminal?'"

"Those of us who do human rights work document hard and violent material on a daily basis. It is our job to be objective and gather facts. But some days, when we start receiving reports of bodies appearing at sea, bodies of children and adults more than likely fleeing now well-documented, horrific, human rights violations, we stop for a minute to be heart broken," Tillotson added. "It is the responsibility of all governments to implement laws and practices that protect people. Shame on them for failing to do so."

At least 40,000 Venezuelans live in Trinidad and Tobago, the majority fleeing their country's economic crisis, unemployment and lack of basic public services, often traveling in small rickety boats above their capacity, with limited supplies of fuel and food. PM Rowley has said his government intends to introduce stiffer penalties to curb human trafficking and illegal trade.

Rewritten from NewsAmericasNow.com



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Peter A. Webley
Publisher

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These Women Welcome VP-Elect Kamala Harris With Cautious Optimism

BY DAWN A. DAVIS

On January 20, 2021 Kamala Harris will be sworn in as the Vice President of the United States of America, marking a momentous event in the country's history as the highest-ranking female in US politics.

As a Black, Caribbean and Asian-American woman, Harris represents the hopes and aspirations of all minority and ethnic women across the world. Although most welcome Harris' meteoric rise, many are guarded in how they see her ability to make lasting change in a racially and politically divided nation.

Three 'voices' representing Caribbean, Indian, and Latino heritage speak volumes about the impact the former California Senator has already had and will continue to have on women of color.

"It is amazing to have Madame Kamala Harris as the first woman from a mixed background as Vice President, but she is overshadowed by polarized politics," remarked



Kamala Harris

South Florida-based Latina artist/activist Sonia Baez-Hernandez. "She is part of new tendencies of women serving in congress, as governors, as attorney general, some inspired by issues of social justice, gender equality, and others conservative politics. But, even as Harris becomes Vice President, I am forced to interrogate the racist and misogynist society which perpetuate practices of exclusion to those who are socially constructed as inferior."

Baez-Hernandez added: "We live in a society dominated by construction of difference — race, ethnicity, gender, immigrants, disability — inequalities and systemic discrimination impacting those who share these categories."

ABOUT TIME

Also thrilled but cautious is Anthropologist and Researcher Shivani Kaul, who is of Indian heritage like Harris' mother, who was Tamil Nadu. She applauds Harris' achievement but is circumspect about some of the vice president elect's past

policies.

"On one hand it's remarkable that in a country that continues to incarcerate and



Shivani Kaul

impoverish black and brown people at disproportionate rates, a woman with Jamaican and Indian heritage will have a seat at the table in the highest executive office. About time," said Kaul. "On the other hand, I'm wary about her track record in relationship to police reform as Attorney General in California, and mindful that representation in higher office does not equate to a dismantling of white settler and white supremacist state practices and mindsets, nor to a reduction in US-initiated conflicts abroad, Obama being a case in point."

Jamaican Journalist Barbara Ellington, OD, JP, agrees that Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will face many obstacles if systemic issues are to be tackled. Ellington noted that much is already being expected of Harris, primarily because of her background and heritage.

"But, before we exhale, things have got off to a rocky start for President-elect Joseph Biden and herself," said Ellington. "Lame duck President Donald Trump is making every attempt to make their tenure experience even worse obstacles than the Republicans placed in the path of the Obama administration. Against that background, I think Harris will have more than her fair share of hurdles to overcome."

But will Harris be able to jump those hurdles necessary for the work of rebuilding America?

Kaul pointed out that dismantling and community building is slower work and done at family, municipal, and regional level by activists, and occasionally political representatives who have held the government accountable for its own contradictions.

"But I do hope that her vice-presidency and this administration will give a little more breathing room for this kind of work than the previous ones," the anthropologist said, adding, "systemic change is needed, which is difficult to

pinpoint in time or space."

She insists that there are the issues of transformative justice and climate justice, "...which I think are interlinked and should be addressed together with new approaches to land and labor like the Green-Red New Deal."

Ellington is hopeful, but is also realistic about congressional support, or the lack thereof.

The Jamaican journalist noted that long after the euphoria has waned come January 20, 2021, Harris' tenure will only have a positive impact on the USA if the administration gets the full backing of both the House and the senate.

Black people in America should therefore curb their enthusiasm because for countless administrations, African Americans issues have not been a priority, and may not be for Biden-Harris.

NATIVIST

Baez-Hernandez agrees. She explained that "it is crucial to avoid any illusion of a post-racial or post-sexist society, as the nativist Trump administration inscribed public discourse describing congressional districts as a 'rat and rodent infested mess,' along with the continued

devaluation of the African-American vote."

Hence, demonization of the 'other' and the continued attempt to exclude the rights of Black communities, democracy has been fractured in a nightmare a populist autocrat and polarized politics, she added.

But all is not lost, for as Ellington explained, there have been many women leaders across the world who have transformed



Sonia Baez-Hernandez

their countries for the better. So, why not America?

"I expect that as far as the world is concerned, Harris will gain acceptance because unlike

America, women leadership is only novel in America," she added. "Here in the Caribbean we have already had Kamla Persad-Bissessar; Dame Eugenia Charles, Mia Motley and Portia Simpson Miller. And, Germany, India, the UK, Myanmar, Pakistan, Estonia, Argentina, Israel, India, and Bolivia are among scores of countries around the globe that have already had female leaders. And, just look at Jacinda Ardern's progress in New Zealand? America is late to the party!"

Still, Vice-President Elect Kamala Harris is only a step away from the Presidency. The reality is, if President Elect Biden were unable to lead, she would automatically step into his shoes. Is America ready?

"The minute the results were confirmed in her favor, my first thought was that were anything to happen to Biden, VP Harris would be the next president of the USA," said Ellington. "In spite of him having a white American mother, they were not 'ready' for Barack Obama, but he had two terms. Ready or not, this is a likely possibility, so short of assassinating her, they would just have to suck it up."



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Caribbean Today

FEATURE



Caribbean Medical Practitioners Urge Community To Take The COVID-19 Vaccine

BY NELSON A. KING

As many in the global community, including the Caribbean community in New York, express fear, reluctance or hesitancy about taking the COVID-19 vaccine, some Caribbean-born physicians and other medical practitioners are urging Caribbean immigrant to take the vaccine when it becomes available.

In exclusive interviews with the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC), at least three Caribbean physicians – a Trinidadian, a Guyanese and a Vincentian – said taking the vaccine is the right and judicious thing to do.

“It’s important that people take the vaccine,” said Dr. Yolande Thomas-Badal,

a Trinidadian-born internist and Emergency Room physician at Interfaith Medical Center in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, New York, who recently took the COVID-19 vaccine at her hospital. “The vaccine is our first best defense from contracting COVID-19,” added Dr. Thomas-Badal, stating that she took the vaccine, because it “offers protection.

“Also, I have a 91-year-old mother, and I don’t want my mother to be infected,” she said,



Nurse Carmen Ocasio receives her first shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine at the Puerto Rico Medical Center in San Juan, Puerto Rico on December 15, 2020. (Photo by RICARDO ARDUENGO/AFP via Getty Images)

disclosing that “I just got married, on April 13, 2019, and

my husband will be coming up (from Trinidad and Tobago), and

I don’t want him to get infected.

“You have to think of the other people who you’re around,” Dr. Thomas-Badal continued. “Being on the frontline and seeing patients with coronavirus; and, if there’s anything to help me to prevent coronavirus, I’ll do it.”

She noted that “a lot of minorities have underlying medical problems, such as diabetes, cancers, and coronavirus (is) killing a lot of my people.”

Dr. Thomas-Badal said some of her patients are reluctant to take the vaccine, saying that “they don’t trust” it.

But Dr. Thomas-Badal stressed that “education is our best defense.”

Jamaicans.com Founder’s Journey To Finding His Roots

BY DAWN A. DAVIS

Out of Many One People is the national motto every Jamaican embraces - whether Taino, Maroon, Irish, German, African, British, Indian or Chinese. Jamaicans are a people touched by these ethnicities, through blood, through marriage, through circumstance.

The founder of Jamaicans.com, Jamaican-born Xavier Murphy, knows this all too well.

Murphy said knew he had a Chinese uncle in his family tree on his mother’s side and was determined to find him. And, like most Jamaicans, inquisitive and determined, his digging finally led him to Hermede Shim Kong, (Chinese name: Shen Yingqiang), his uncle from the maternal side of his family.



Xavier Murphy

Thanksgiving Day going forth will always be special for Murphy now, for it was on this day, this year, despite the pandemic, that Murphy finally met his Uncle Hermede.

The Zoom virtual event opened on screen, and there they were - two families, thousands of miles apart, meeting for the first time.

Seeing his uncle and his cousins for the first time, a visibly emotional Murphy remarked: “For years I heard about you. I heard that my grandmother had a first child, and I tried to find you. I went to the Chinese Benevolent Association in Jamaica and tried there but didn’t get anywhere. Then I tried Facebook, but didn’t

get anywhere. I then found this company, My China Roots, and they were able to find you. We are so happy to find you and we hope one day that we can come and visit and meet you.”

JAMAICAN FLAG

With formal introductions to the Reid clan, most present on screen, including Shim Kong’s 4 sisters and 3 brothers, Uncle Hermede beamed, then presented his 3 daughters and 1 son in the traditional Chinese way, by age in descending order.

Through a translator, Shim Kong remarked after meeting his long-lost brothers and sisters and their children: “I am very happy to finally meet my sisters. I knew I had a brother but did not know I also had sisters. And my daughters are happy they have finally found their aunts.”

Dressed in a sky-blue suit and striped tie, with the Chinese and Jamaican flags draped



Hermede Shim Kong with two of his daughters

province, China, with his wife, also 94. But he is also Jamaican by birth.

Born in Jamaica in 1926 to a Chinese father who hailed from Shenzhen, and a Jamaican mother, Ruth Deeble-Reid, Shim Kong was taken to China at the age of 3.

Said Shim Kong in a Chinese language article: “When I was very young, I was brought back to China by my father. My father returned to Jamaica, leaving me in China where I lived with my adoptive mother in Shuikuxin Village. I spent my childhood grazing cattle and farming with other local children.”

WAR HERO

His life would take many turns, eventually leading him into battle. A proud war hero today, Shim Kong fought in the Second Sino-Japanese war, which took place between 1937-1945.

In 1944 at the tender age of 16, he was forced to live in a Japan-occupied Shenzhen. But it wasn’t long before he, and some of his peers, joined the Guerrilla forces to fight against the Japanese. His bravery and natural talent were quickly recognized, taking him up through the ranks from Guerrilla fighter, to Naval Lieutenant.

Since retiring in 1985, Shim Kong, determined to leave



Hermede Shim Kong (r) with two friends during the war

behind him, Shim Kong’s erect posture, focused glance, and smooth skin belied his advanced age. He turned 94 years old on December 5, 2020 and lives in the city of Shenzhen, in Guangdong

a positive mark on society, volunteering his time as a teacher and postman. He has not left his beloved China, but Jamaica has never left his heart.

Many years ago, Shim Kong wrote a letter to the president of a Chinese organization in Jamaica at a Portmore, St. Catherine address, inquiring about the Jamaican side of his family, but to no avail. The letter was returned. Even more remarkable, is the fact that Murphy and his family lived on the very street to which the letter was addressed.

“Oh my God, we were this close to finding each other back then,” Murphy exclaimed.

Incredulously, the letter was addressed to a Mr. San Lyn Shim, a close family friend of Murphy’s wife Karen, who is also of Jamaican-Chinese descent. Indeed, both sides of the family have been searching for the other for years, making this reunion ever more meaningful.

In fact, one of Murphy’s cousins, Julian, visited China a few years ago. And, demonstrating the love and strength of family, he too desired to find his Uncle. So much, so that he tattooed ‘Hermede Shim Kong’ on his arm.

Hearing this, Shim Kong remarked: “We are so touched by this. We are so grateful and so glad that we can finally meet. Thank God for that.”

The Reid clan ended the call singing Happy Birthday to Uncle Hermede for his upcoming 94th birthday.

“Keep safe and healthy,” said Shim Kong.

“Yes, said Murphy. “I have to stay safe, because I have to come back to China to see you Uncle Hermede.”



(CONTINUED ON PAGE 18)



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Vol. 32, Number 2 • JAN. 2021

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Fast Facts To Applying For DACA 2020

Based on an order by a United States District Court judge in Brooklyn, NY on December 7, 2020, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has now begun again accepting first-time requests for consideration of deferred action under the DACA or the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program.

Here's how you can apply for the program for the first time as well as seek renewal.

Everyone who submits either an initial DACA application or a DACA renewal application must do so by filling out and submitting the same forms: Form I-821D, Form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization, and Form I-765WS Worksheet.

Note that you must use the latest version of Form I-821D. If you don't use the latest version of Form I-821D, your application will be rejected.

NEW APPLICATIONS

If you are applying for DACA for the first time, you must prove that you initially arrived and established residence in the U.S. prior to age 16. This must be done by providing evidence, such as records showing you attended school or worked in the United States prior to age 16, or that you lived in the United States for multiple years prior to the age of 16.

You also need to include the Date of Initial Entry into the United States - on or about; as well as Place of Initial Entry into the United States - city or port.

RENEWAL

When you're submitting a renewal application, you must fill out all sections of the forms and answer all the questions except those designated "For Initial Requests Only." You must also submit any new documents relevant to your removal proceedings or criminal history that you have not submitted previously.

See Instructions for Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals on the USCIS site for more detailed instructions.

NOTE

Note that in order to file or renew:

You must not have departed the U.S. on or after August 15, 2012, without first having been granted advance parole.

You must have resided continuously in the U.S. from the time you submitted the initial request for DACA up until the present time, and;

You must not have been convicted of a felony, a significant misdemeanor, or three or more misdemeanors, and must not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.

Individuals who receive DACA will not be placed into removal proceedings or removed from the United States for a specified period of time, unless the Department of Homeland Security, (DHS), chooses to terminate the deferral.

DACA EXPIRATION

Find out when your DACA expires by looking at the I-797 Notice of Action under "Notice Type" Or your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) under "Card Expires."

Next, figure out when your optimal "filing window" is. While you can file your renewal at any time, USCIS recommends that you file your renewal application NO EARLIER THAN 150 days before your DACA expires and NO LATER THAN 120 days before it expires. Filing within this window of time will help you avoid having your DACA and EAD expire.

FEE

The fee to request consideration of DACA, including employment authorization and biometric services, is \$495, and cannot be waived.

WHERE TO FILE

Application addresses for USCIS varies by the state you live. Check Direct Filing Addresses for Form I-821D on the USCIS site to determine the exact location to send the completed application.

NOTIFICATION

To receive an e-Notification after USCIS receives your form, complete Form G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance, and clip it to the front of your Form I-821D.

The writer is publisher of NewsAmericasNow



Society Crumbles

This pandemic is exposing the weakness of many societies, with some appearing to be crumbling. Most civilizations or societies through the passage of history, did not just die overnight, but rather suffered a slow demise, a crawling, creeping destruction that moved so slowly that its downward passage was hardly noticed, until too late.

History is peppered with great societies that have died, and no one took notice of the rot, not smelling it, not seeing it, not feeling it, as transgressions became the norm, accepted and enjoyed.

Civilizations such as those of Rome, Greece, Britain, Spain, France, the Mayans and the Incas all ruled supreme at one point. But with the passage of time, came their demise, as they imploded under the weight of their lack of morality and civility.

Some still exist but have taken a lesser role in the World. No longer is it, Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the World, or Spain sending out ships to 'discover new lands.' Others like the Mayans of Mexico and the Incas of Peru have simply died, leaving behind relics and monuments covered with vines and shrub, relegated to footnotes in history.

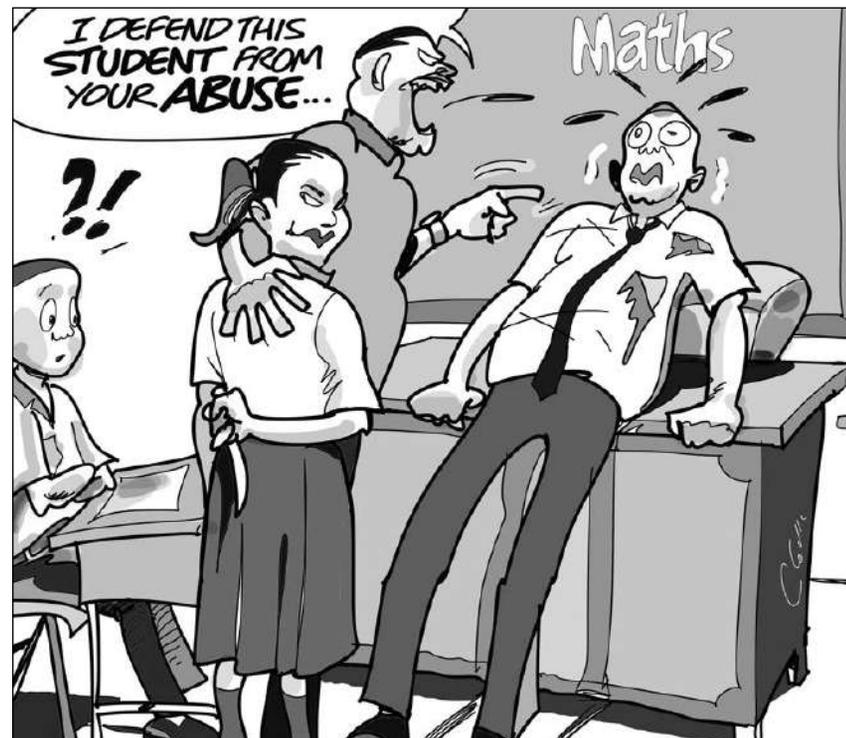
It's a cycle that many people do not take heed of, and you know what they say: "Those who do not learn from the mistakes of history are doomed to repeat them."

But in order to exist in a society, there has to be rules, guidelines, order, stipulations that have to be adhered to. Take away those and the society descends into decay and ultimately dies. The word society comes from social, and the word social comes from the Latin socius, meaning 'friend.' The word society means "the aggregate of people living together in a more or less ordered community."

Let's look at schools, where many are on the path to Hell. The stories of children abusing, threatening and even attacking teachers and other adults could fill a book. Yet, if children are reprimanded or punished, parents rush to their defense and often attack teachers.

All forms of discipline are taken away, and the children know this, so they do exactly as they please, for there are no consequences. Meanwhile, the policy makers talk and talk and talk as the school society dies.

Teachers have chronicled that young children will just spit on the classroom floor just for the heck of it. There are videos of young girls in uniform passionately French kissing in full view of their classmates. Yet, how quickly do many



adults come to the defense of students who abuse and attack teachers? It's no big thing, it's the norm, as society rots. This oozes out into the broader society, where everyone's on edge and angry all the time. There is no loyalty, no compassion, no shame, no integrity, no manners, no following of social rules. All this is reflected on the roads. Road rage is like the pandemic - brutal and lethal.



TONY ROBINSON

The electronic media glorifies some questionable dancehall artists, many who run afoul of the law, making them heroes as they play their music and come to their defense. They are heroes in the eyes of many,

Gods to be revered, worshipped and emulated. So, what do we then expect from the youngsters who dance to the music of Nero, as Rome burns?

Social media is the new god, and the minions genuflect and worship with little regard for anyone in the real world. With bowed heads, they are locked into their smart devices, not realizing that they're really not so smart after all. They will stop and take pictures even as you lay dying in the streets, and then post them on their social media platforms.

Societies all over the world are crumbling and we are experiencing social decay and subsequent demise. Can we halt it?

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New Year's Resolutions The Biden Administration Can Make Right Now

BY BEN JEALOUS

I don't know about all of you, but it feels to me like Christmas came early this year.

Electing a new president and vice president was a gift that 81 million Americans gave to ourselves and to one another.

Every court rejection of Trump's bogus stolen election claims was one more stocking stuffer.

Now the only thing left on my Christmas wish list is a victory in Georgia's Senate races and an end to Mitch McConnell's power-abusing, progress-obstructing reign as Senate Majority Leader.

Actually, that's not quite true. I also want a Biden-Harris administration whose vision and boldness are worthy of the hard work and sacrifices that so many people made to put them in office.

The Democratic Party is a diverse coalition, and we shouldn't expect everyone to agree on the best way to approach every issue. It's natural that we'll have disagreements and debates.

But we can unite enthusiastically behind a broad set of values that we want our leaders to advance: equality, fairness, opportunity and justice for all. And we can agree on the need to move quickly to reverse many of the Trump administration executive orders and initiatives that undermined those values.



Joe Biden and Kamala Harris

That's why leaders from across the progressive movement are thrilled to look forward to the day very soon when Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are sworn in—and to the next day, when they will be in position to start the work they're preparing for now.

We are prepared to support them and fight alongside them, and when necessary to push them toward boldness in advancing policies that reflect our highest ideals and the urgent needs of millions of Americans.

Here are some resolutions that leaders of the Biden administration should make right now to make 2021 a much happier new year than the one we have left behind:

1. Make it a priority to start fixing the federal courts by

nominating fair-minded judges and justices who are committed to protecting civil and human rights.

2. Restore integrity to the 2020 census by reversing illegal efforts by the Trump administration to restrict who gets counted – and who counts when it comes to representation in Congress.

3. Revive the Department of Justice as the nation's primary protector of voting rights and civil rights and move aggressively against state and local efforts to restrict voting rights.

4. Do everything in our power to reunite the children and families separated by the immoral actions of the Trump administration.

5. Empower the Civil Rights Division at DOJ to investigate abuses by state and local law enforcement, use consent decrees to get commitments for reform, and ensure accountability and more just policing through steady oversight.

6. Give stability to millions of immigrant families by fully resuming the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, reversing Trump's Muslim ban orders and policies, reopening the door to settling refugees, and eliminating the public charge rule that discriminates against poor

people.
7. Recognize that religious liberty is meant to be a shield to protect everyone's ability to exercise their religion, not a sword to allow religious claims to justify discrimination or other harms to others.

8. Reverse a Trump executive order that prevented federal agencies, contractors, and grantees from discussing the impact of racism in the workplace or embracing policies to advance diversity and equal opportunity.

9. Issue guidance establishing a necessary use of force standard that allows police use of force only as a last resort.

10. Direct DOJ to explore legal options for limiting or ending the qualified immunity doctrine that insulates police officials from liability for serious misconduct.

Of course, there is much

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11)

Post-Brexit And The CARIFORUM/UK Trade Relations

BY ELIZABETH MORGAN

Recently, I listened to an interview with the British High Commissioner to Jamaica, H. E. Asif Ahmad. He was talking about the potential for increasing trade between Jamaica and the United Kingdom (UK) in goods and services.

Of course, on January 1, 2021, the UK fully exited the EU. This means that the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM)/UK Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), the trade agreement, will take effect.

I agree with High Commissioner Ahmad that Jamaica, and, indeed, the rest of the Caribbean, needs to be looking at how to increase exports to the UK making the best use of the trade agreement. The UK, given its current situation, is also interested in strengthening trade relations, although there seems to be a view that the UK economy is mainly driven by domestic and regional trade. Hence, having a free trade agreement with the EU should be critical.

Emphasizing the need to strengthen external trade, in October, the British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced the appointment of Member of Parliament, Darren Henry, as trade envoy to the Commonwealth Caribbean. I am not clear whether this nomenclature actually means CARIFORUM, including the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Suriname, or just the English-speaking Caribbean. Mr. Henry's mission, I assume, will be to promote trade between the Caribbean and the UK working with the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Department of International Trade.

It seems building climate resilience will be a priority for Mr. Henry with the 26th UN Climate Conference scheduled to be held in Scotland in November 2021. Addressing the virtual 12th Caribbean Renewable Energy Forum, October 28-30, Mr. Henry said that the Department of International Trade will continue to work with the Caribbean states and the private sector to promote opportunities arising from and supporting climate adaptation. He noted that partnerships between the UK, multilateral bodies and the Caribbean countries already have had a direct impact on climate resilience in the region.

Hopefully, Mr. Henry will also be focusing on stimulating trade flows. I gather the UK is interested in doing business with the Caribbean as a region.

DEMAND FOR CARIBBEAN GOODS IN UK

From my reading, it appears that a new generation of chefs with Caribbean heritage are making Caribbean cuisine more main stream in the UK and there is increased demand for Caribbean foods. The UK Caribbean food market is apparently now worth about £100 million. Caribbean foods, sauces, condiments, roots and tubers, teas, gluten-free flours, are cited as an emerging trend by some of the major food chains.

The question is how do Caribbean countries access this market and ensure that they benefit from this trend? This is the role of regional trade promotion agency, Caribbean Export, working in collaboration with national trade promotion agencies, such as Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO), and the private sector.

I note there is also a demand for cosmetics, hair and skin care products.

The Caribbean countries must be able to produce high quality products which meet required standards at competitive prices. They must be reliable suppliers of quantities demanded. The importance of intellectual property rights must also be recognized. Many of the food items and other products from the Caribbean can be produced in larger tropical countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Note that the largest supplier of avocados to Britain has been Israel. Is this the time for Caribbean countries to consider collaborating to service the export market?

EDITOR'S NOTE: Elizabeth Morgan, who writes for CMC, is a specialist in international trade policy and international politics.



SPRING HEALTH

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

With a proven track record now in our 28th year of service to readers in the United States and the Caribbean Basin, Caribbean Today reaches an audience of over 112,000 highly qualified readers. They have median household income of \$68,000 and enjoy a higher disposable income. 19% have a college degree, 32% have some college. In today's economy, our readers are highly esteemed. 59.5% own their own homes. 76% are between 25-54 years of age (readership study conducted by Circulation Verification Council).

Caribbean Today is uniquely positioned to deliver product, retail and services messages to a community with which it is identified. Miami Dade Communications Department ranks Caribbean Today sixth overall out of the 72 publications that it does business with, and number one, as a Black publication.

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Top Caribbean Entertainers Set To Celebrate The US' First Black Caribbean American Vice President

Jamaican-born dancehall star, Flourgon, who in January settled a USD 300 million lawsuit with Miley Cyrus for his 1988 Jamaican chart-topping hit single, 'We Run Things,' is among the top artists set to perform at the Caribbean celebration of the first Caribbean American Vice President, Kamala Harris.



Jamaican-born dancehall star, Flourgon, is among the top billed performers.

On Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend, January 17, 2021, Flourgon will join some of the Caribbean's most notable artistes, dignitaries, and organizations globally to mark another dynamic moment in history

- the pending swearing in of Harris as the first black and female, Caribbean-American US vice-president at the 59th Presidential inauguration.

Invest Caribbean, the number one global private sector, investment agency of the Caribbean, has initiated the Caribbean American Action Network, (CAAN), a collective of Caribbean American and Caribbean organizations, to present a live, virtual,

Caribbean inauguration party under the theme: "Celebrating #CaribbeanAmericanKamala."

It will be hosted by the first Black woman in a James Bond movie, Trina Parks, whose roots extend to Barbados, through her mother, and to Antigua through her grandparents.

Also set to perform will be Barbados' own Soca King, Edwin Yearwood of 'All Aboard' fame; Krosfyah of "Pump Me Up" fame; as well as rising stars, Toni Norville and

Kirk Brown; Jamaican gospel singer Joan Meyers, of 'Can't Even Walk' fame; independent Jamaican artiste Janine Jkuhl of 'Sway' fame, Owen Dalhouse



Soca King, Edwin Yearwood of 'All Aboard,' fame is also set to perform.

who recently released 'Heal the Soul of America;' as well as the famous Fab Five Band, also of Jamaica and Guyanese Menes De Griot and Shanto. De Griot, an African spiritual leader, herbalist, and master drummer who has performed at

the Million Women March and Tribute to The Ancestors, will open the event with a powerful pouring of libation to the ancestors, followed by a group performance on drums.

GLOBAL LIVE STREAM

The live stream will kick-off at 7 p.m. EST on January 17, 2021 on the Facebook, Twitter and YouTube platforms of One Caribbean Television, (OCTV), as well as on Radio 102.9FM in Antigua & Barbuda. On Inauguration Day, OCTV will air the event on broadcast television across the Caribbean.

TOP SPEAKERS

Top speakers bringing messages of congratulations and greetings include Congressman Adriano Espaillat of NY, one of only a few Caribbean born US Congressmembers; the Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, Sir Hilary Beckles; Chair of the CARICOM Consular Corps of New York, Counsel General of Barbados to NY, O. St. E. Mackie Holder; Dr. Michelle Chester, the corporate director Employee Health Services at Northwell Health who delivered the first COVID-19 vaccine in the US, and several Caribbean Diaspora leaders, including ICN CEO and CAAN's founder, Felicia J. Persaud; President of ICN and CAAN co-founder, Dr. Sheila Newton Moses; Caribbean Immigrant Services

founder, Irwine Clare, Sr., O.D.; Global Village Book Publishing, LLC's Aubry Padmore; Coalition for the Preservation of Reggae Music's Carlyle McKetty and Esther Austin of Esther Austin Global.

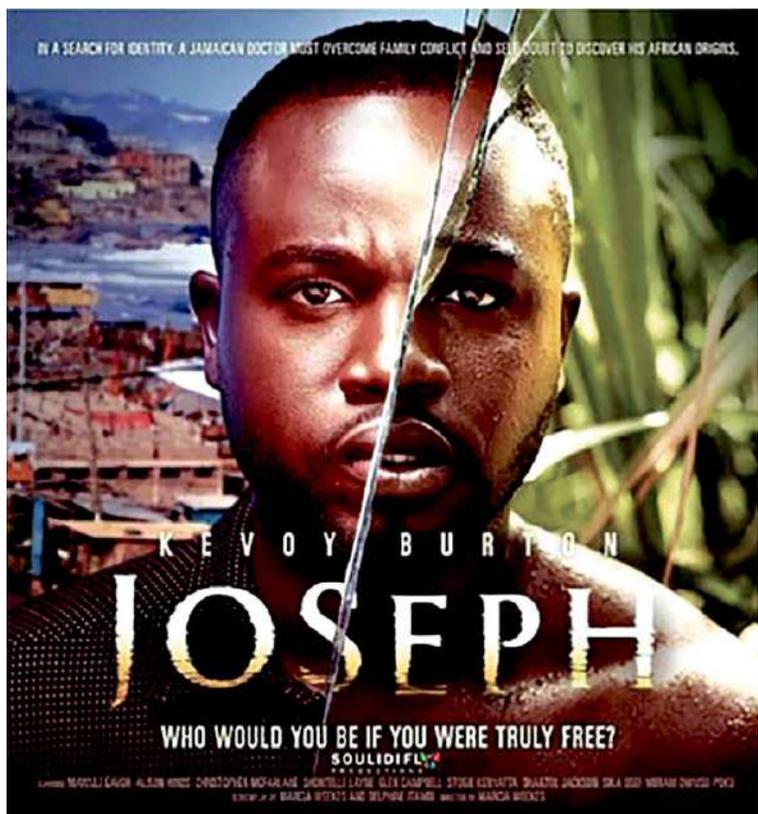
The Vice President-Elect, Kamala Harris, is set to close the event with a message of her own to the Caribbean Diaspora and Caribbean people globally.

"This is a historic moment for us as Caribbean people in these United States, who have been here since slavery and we are convinced that VP-elect Harris represents the best interest of all Americans, inclusive of those who share her Caribbean ancestry," said the brainchild of the event, Caribbean-America immigrant, journalist, entrepreneur, and advocate, Felicia J. Persaud. "America and the Caribbean region have always enjoyed a positive working diplomacy and no doubt, this will be reinforced, as we now have a strong ally in the White house. We are proud that she is one of us."

Sponsors include: Team Jamaica Bickle, Coalition For The Preservation Of Reggae Music, Global Village Book Publishing, LLC, Esther Austin Global, One Caribbean Television, News Americas News Network, CaribPR Wire, Hard Beat Communications, The Haitian Times and Radio 102.9FM.



Film Of Jamaican Doctor's Journey To Ghana Now On Video-On-Demand



"Joseph," a dramatic feature film about a young Jamaican doctor with a burning desire to re-connect to his family's roots with the Ashanti tribe in Ghana, has come to Amazon Prime and

Vimeo.

The story about Joseph King is focused on a quest to "go home" that creates family conflict. His curiosity about Africa is fuelled even more by a

friend from medical school, who would boast about his homeland Ghana. His stories contradict with what "Joseph" hears and sees about Africa in the media. A serious tragedy, a chance meeting and an unfulfilled promise drive Joseph towards an uncertain destiny.

It is the winner of the 2020 "Best Diaspora Narrative Feature" award at the Africa Movie Academy Awards and was shot on location in Ghana, Jamaica and Barbados and is directed by Marcia Weekes and co-written by Weekes and Delphine Itambi from the Republic of Cameroon. The film includes Caribbean/African actors and artists.

The film is produced by Step-by-Step Productions with assistance from Soulidify Productions, a film company with a mission to produce meaningful, uplifting stories that are entertaining and beautifully told. The company partnered with TRIAL X FIRE, LLC, the distribution branch of Urban Home Entertainment, to release the film to audiences everywhere on video-on-demand.

"Joseph will bring viewers a deeper understanding of how the search for truth can be healing, especially during times of social and political unrest," said BK Fulton, founding chairman and CEO, Soulidify Productions. "This film aligns with 2019's

'Year of Return' and the 'Decade of Return' currently being expressed by African leaders and global influencers as more people search for answers in the present by looking to clues from the past."



New Year's Resolutions The Biden Administration Can Make Right Now

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

more work ahead for the Biden administration and for those of us who want it to succeed, particularly around COVID-19 recovery and access to health care. But these steps will get us off to a good start.

What a joy it is in this holiday season to know that so many policies grounded in bigotry and cruelty will soon be reversed.

What a blessing it will be not to be on the defensive at every moment—and to use our collective expertise, creativity, and heart to imagine, design, debate, perfect, and implement policies that will bring more

fairness, more justice, and more opportunity to all the people in these United States.

Ben Jealous serves as president of People For the American Way and People For the American Way Foundation. Jealous has decades of experience as a leader, coalition builder, campaigner for social justice and seasoned nonprofit executive. In 2008, he was chosen as the youngest-ever president and CEO of the NAACP. He is a graduate of Columbia University and Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar, and he has taught at Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania.



HEALTH NEWS


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Increased Risk Of Violence Against Children, Adolescents In The Caribbean

A new, joint report by three United Nations agencies has warned of increased risk of violence in the home against children and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

“In the time of COVID-19, children and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean have been and continue to be exposed to greater risk of becoming victims of violence in the home, while they also enjoy fewer protection factors,” says the report titled “Violence against children and adolescents in the time of COVID-19” and released by The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the Office of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children.

It warns that estimates point to a prevalence of 55 percent of physical aggression and 48 percent of psychological aggression in child-rearing in Latin America and the Caribbean and added that, in the context of containing the pandemic, protection factors have eroded, while the risk of

violence has intensified.

On the one hand, the report says there is a lower capacity to detect episodes of violence due to physical isolation and the suspension of in-person activities at educational institutions and early childhood development centers; a reduction in states’ social coverage; and the economic crisis, which has had a negative impact on household income levels.

“Compounding all this is the fact that there is limited Internet access and coverage, and the generational gap in knowledge of the digital environment limits adults’ adequate supervision and guidance of children who spend more time online now,” the report says.

Further, the report warns that there has been an exacerbation of the risk factors for children and adolescents to become victims of violence in the home.

These include an increase in reports of violence against women, which is closely tied to the violence perpetrated against children and adolescents; heightened stress and anxiety; the economic impact on childhood and adolescence;

and the fact that both children and adolescents, as well as perpetrators of sexual violence, are engaged in more online activity.

To address violence against children and adolescents within the framework of the response to the COVID-19 crisis, the document proposes recommendations for enhancing the policies, programs and actions that existed prior to the crisis.

The recommendations are: Put children at the center of policies and plans for the economic recovery of countries in order to roll back the increase in poverty and eradicate historic inequities that perpetuate structural challenges, such as gender-based violence and violence against children and adolescents, while at the same time rebuilding trust in democratic institutions; and optimize resources through the alignment of services that, among other things, allow for addressing cases of violence against women, and against children and adolescents, in a coordinated way that expands the number of recipients of public assistance services, that provides specific and differentiated treatment for

populations that were already vulnerable, and that promotes the care economy and the balanced distribution of roles and tasks.

In addition, the report recommends guaranteeing universal social protection for families including cash stimulus, universal health coverage and recognizing childhood protection, mental health and education as essential services and part of a rights-based, cross-sector response; making a sustained investment

in childhood and strengthen services for children’s welfare and protection vis-à-vis all forms of violence; and promoting gender-based labor policies aimed at supporting positive parenting.

The document also proposes involving children and adolescents in creating solutions and opportunities at the community, local, regional and national levels.

- *Rewritten From CMC*



These South Florida Frontline Healthcare Workers Got The COVID-19 Shot



Nursing manager James McCrae, RN, and Roseitta Da Silva, RN, are all smiles while posing for a photo after James received the first COVID-19 vaccine at Broward Health.

Frontline healthcare workers in South Florida have begun receiving the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine including several at Broward Health North.

James McCrae, RN and nurse manager of the Critical Care Unit, was the first frontline healthcare worker at Broward Health North to be vaccinated. McCrae, a veteran who dutifully served in the United States Army, has worked at Broward Health North for more than 20 years, having worked his way up the ranks to now oversee his unit. He was vaccinated by longtime co-worker Rosietta Da Silva, an ICU nurse.

“It felt good to vaccinate James because he’s a great leader and I felt really honored to give him his shot,” said Da Silva. “James has a unique ability to make his staff feel at ease in a high stress environment and leads by example.”

McCrae wanted to be the first to receive the vaccine to show his team they had nothing to fear and that the being vaccinated better protects frontline workers and the community.

“It gives me an added layer of protection after all this time of going into the COVID unit and the unknown,” McCrae said. “With this shot I have a greater sense of security, and also by getting vaccinated I hope I encourage a lot of my staff to get vaccinated as well. That’s one of the reasons I’m proud to be the first at Broward Health North.” Dr. Leon Garner, D.O., an Emergency Department physician at Broward Health North, was the second frontline healthcare worker to be vaccinated.

“We’ve been waiting nine months for this vaccine,” said Garner “Now, a little bit of the fear frontline workers have will be alleviated. It is just a great feeling.”

“Once the vaccines become widely available, I encourage everyone in the community to get vaccinated,” added Garner. “We all still need to take precautions. Wear your mask in public, stay at home as much as you can, but the end is in sight now.”



Successful Women in Business



In March Caribbean Today will spotlight Successful Women In Business. Join Caribbean Today as we showcase these hard working women who have left their mark on the business community in South Florida. If you would like to nominate someone please send your nominees to peter.webley@caribbeantoday.com or editor@caribbeantoday.com

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Caribbean Today

ADVERTISING DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 19, 2021

Healthy Caribbean Dishes To Fit Your New Year Diet

It's a new year and a new month, meaning another opportunity to ensure we renew our vow to healthier eating habits. As we begin this New Year, here are a few healthy recipes from the Caribbean that can help you with your meal planning and make that New Year resolution a little

- Thyme
- Celery
- 2 Scotch bonnet peppers
- Optional provisions:
- Sweet potatoes
- Carrots
- Irish potatoes
- Pumpkin



Warm Corn Soup

easier to fulfill.

Warm Corn Soup

This warm corn soup is packed with flavors and it is from Island Soup Barbados, whose tag line is the "Best Soup On de Rock!"

Ingredients

- 6 Ears of corn
- 27 oz Corn kernels
- 13.5 oz Yellow split peas
- 13.5 oz Coconut milk
- Chives

Method

- Peel and prepare the provisions, if you choose to use them.
- Slice the ears of corn into half-inch pieces.
- Boil two gallons of water.
- Add split peas and boil for 20 minutes or until tender.
- Once split peas are tender, add corn, optional provisions, and salt to taste.
- Cook for an additional eight minutes and add coconut milk.
- Let the mix boil for 10 minutes and then add in the scotch bonnet peppers, along with chives, thyme, and celery to taste.
- Once added, let the soup boil for another 10 minutes.

Callaloo Soup

Ingredients

- 2 bundles dasheen leaves or spinach (approximately 12 ozs.)
- 12 ozs. beef (cubed and seasoned)



Callaloo Soup

- 12 cups water
- 1 lb. tannia or yucca
- 1 tsp. garlic (minced)
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 1 tbsp. salt
- ½ cup chive ½ tsp.
- All-purpose seasoning
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- 2 potatoes (white or sweet)
- 2 cups coconut milk
- 1 tbsp. butter (optional)
- Dumplings
- 1-pound flour
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup(s) water

Method

- Fry and boil fresh meat for ½ hour.
- Cut up dasheen/spinach leaves and wash thoroughly, then add to beef.
- Bring to a boil.
- Add the other ingredients, adjust seasoning.
- Cook until everything is soft.

- You may add dumplings 10 minutes before removing fire.
- For Dumplings
- Combine flour with 1/8 tsp salt and 1/2 cup water and knead to form a smooth dough.
- Cover and allow to relax for ten minutes.
- Cut dough in about 12 pieces and shape into dumplings and add to the soup.
- Serve hot.

- 1 tsp pimento
- 1/2 scotch bonnet pepper, chopped
- ¼ of a pumpkin or butternut squash cubed
- 1 sweet potato, sliced
- 1/2 green bell pepper sliced
- 1/2 red bell pepper sliced
- 1 can coconut milk
- 1 sprig of fresh thyme
- 1 fresh corn, chopped into bite sized pieces
- ½ a bag of frozen Broccoli
- ½ a bag of Spinach

Method

Add oil to a deep saucepan or Dutch Pot.

Once hot, add onions and garlic and cook until translucent. Add black pepper, pimento and grated ginger, scotch bonnet and fresh thyme and stir.

Add sweet potato, pumpkin or butternut squash, and other vegetables.

Top with coconut milk and stir.

Simmer for 15-20 minutes until veggies are all cooked through.

Serve with Jasmine rice, hot.

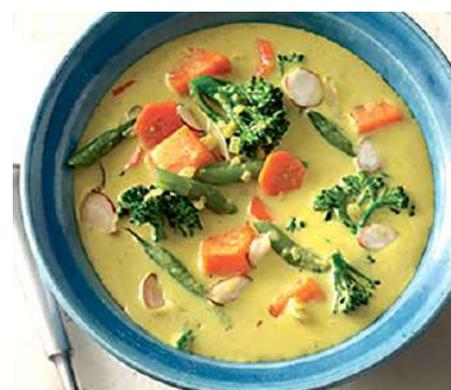
All Recipes From NewsAmericasNow.com



Vegetable Rundown

Ingredients

- Vegetable oil
- 1/2 Onion, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, peeled and diced



Vegetable Rundown

- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 teaspoon grated ginger

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Jamaican-American Makes History In Miami-Dade

A Jamaican-American lawyer has become the first African American appointed to represent District 8 in Miami-Dade County.

The Miami-Dade County Board of Commissioners appointed Danielle Cohen Higgins, a civil law attorney, to fill the commissioner seat vacated by new mayor Daniella Levine Cava.

She was selected by a 10-1 vote in a special meeting on Monday, Dec. 7, 2020. The process took only about 10 minutes as commissioners decided to make the appointment rather than hold a special election for district residents.

Cohen Higgins was considered a frontrunner from the get-go among a list of seven

contenders.

“I was optimistic, but very cautious, understanding that in the world of politics, anything can happen at any moment,” she said afterward, adding, “There was no other candidate in District 8 that was more prepared to run an election than I was.”

Cohen Higgins had filed to run for the seat a year and a half ago, anticipating the turnover and a special election. But commissioners decided to make an appointment rather than hold a special election.

TWU Local 291 President Jeffery Mitchell congratulated Higgins, noting she “...has gone above and beyond to engage her community and learn about their issues and concerns.”

“Our leadership and our



Danielle Cohen Higgins

members at TWU Local 291 have been impressed with her tenacity and commitment to the job and we have no doubt she

is the right choice for District 8,” he added. “We look forward to working with her to advance the mobility challenges we are facing in Miami-Dade County today.”

Cohen Higgins was born at Jackson Memorial Hospital after her family immigrated to Miami Dade from Jamaica. She grew up in South Dade, living in what is now Section 8 Housing and lost her father at the age of 8.

She was raised by a single mother and went on to graduate Sunset Senior High School and later the University of Florida, becoming

the first person in her family to attend and graduate from college.

In 2006, she earned her Juris Doctorate from Florida State University School of Law and was admitted to the practice of law at the age of 24. In 2009, she opened her own civil litigation law firm, Cohen Law, with the mission of providing excellent yet cost efficient legal services to small business and individuals.

She is a former board member for the South Florida American Heart Association and also served as a Young Ambassador to the Miami Children’s Health Foundation.

Higgins is married and is the mother of two children.



Jamaican Couple Get Chance To Legalize Status After Living In A Church Sanctuary

An undocumented Jamaican couple who had been forced to live in a church sanctuary in Philadelphia for two years to avoid deportation, now have a chance to legalize their status in the US.

Clive and Oneita Thompson said last month that the federal government is dropping its deportation case against them. In 2021, they can return to their South Jersey home and the lives they abandoned in August 2018.

The couple had been living at the Tabernacle United Church in Philadelphia but have been living in the US for more than a decade and a half. They had been ordered by immigration officials to return to Jamaica because they overstayed their visas.

“It’s a little bit like a Christmas miracle,” the Rev.

Katie Aikins, Tabernacle’s pastor, told the paper.

“My whole heart is ready to go,” Oneita, 48, said in an interview from inside Tabernacle United Church in University City.

“I’m joyful, a joyful moment, with tears,” Clive, 61, told the paper. “Here we are, walking out of the church. We’re going to go back and live the American dream.”

The Philadelphia Inquirer reported that the termination of their removal order allows the couple to seek permanent residency in the United States, a process now underway.

Clive Thompson came to the US on a visa from Jamaica in 2004 after a gang member murdered her brother and threatened their lives. Their request for asylum was denied.



Clive and Oneita Thompson

With deportation proceedings ended, the Thompsons are eligible to legally live and work in this country through the connection

to their daughter Angel, who became an American citizen in May. She filed a “Petition for an Alien Relative,” sponsorship for her parents, which allows them

to adjust their status.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



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Over 5,400 Caribbean Immigrants Deported In 2020

Over 5,400 Caribbean immigrants were deported back to the region this year, latest U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) data analyzed by News Americas show.

The End of Year data – just released – put the exact number at 5,214. The majority, or 1,835 were deported back to the Dominican Republic. But the number was lower than last year when 2,186 Dominicans were deported.

The second highest number or 1,583, were sent back to Cuba, which saw a spike from the 1,179 deported in 2019.

Haiti received 895 deportees back this year – the third highest in the Caribbean region and an increase from the 690 sent back last year.

Jamaica received 523 deportees back this year – the fourth highest in the region. However, it was less than last year, when 751 Jamaicans were sent back by US ICE.

Other countries received far less with Guyana – 84, Belize with 78; the Bahamas, 76, and Trinidad and Tobago with 73 – being the only countries in the region to receive a higher number of deportees.

In 2019, the number of deported sent back was slightly lower at 5,383, a NAN analysis

showed.

Here’s the number of deportees the other countries received:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| St. Lucia | 10 |
| St. Vincent and the Grenadines | 8 |
| Antigua & Barbuda | 6 |
| Grenada | 6 |
| British Virgin Islands | 5 |
| Netherlands Antilles | 4 |
| St. Kitts & Nevis | 3 |
| Turks & Caicos | 3 |
| Suriname | 1 |
| Bermuda | 1 |

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Peter A. Webley
Publisher

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The Islands Of The Bahamas Win Several Top Travel Awards

The Islands of the Bahamas is celebrating after winning number of awards to wrap up an unprecedented 2020.

Officials announced they won awards from Travel + Leisure, Condé Nast Traveler and the Caribbean Journal. “We are thrilled to have The Bahamas recognized in so many awards, despite the difficult year our tourism industry faced,” said Ministry of Tourism Director General Joy Jibrilu. “These awards certify that The Bahamas remains a favorite among travelers, and we are eager to continue to welcome them back in the new year.”

Travel Weekly’s Magellan Awards Recognizes The Bahamas’ Still Rockin’ Campaign

The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism & Aviation’s Still Rockin’ campaign was awarded the best destination advertising/marketing campaign in Travel Weekly’s Magellan Awards. In the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian, the campaign highlighted The Bahamas’ 14 major islands unimpacted by the storm, which contributed to the country’s record-breaking year of 7.2 million visitors in 2019.

Additionally, the Ministry’s From The Bahamas with Love campaign was awarded silver in the Destination Marketing TV Commercial category. The digital campaign was voiced by Lenny Kravitz, with the message that together we can get through difficult times and get back to normalcy. The TV spot brought hope to the homebound with images of The Bahamas’ crystal-clear water.

Travel + Leisure Awards Bahamian Islands in World Best Awards –

The Abacos, Harbour Island, The Exumas and Eleuthera were recognized in Travel + Leisure’s World Best Awards in the Top 25 Islands in the Caribbean, Bermuda, and The Bahamas category. Andros’ Kamalame Cay Resort was awarded in the Top 100 Hotels in the World and Top 25 Caribbean Resort Hotels categories.

The Bahamas Awarded in Condé Nast Traveler’s 2020 Readers’ Choice Awards

Four Bahamian hotels were recognized by Condé Nast Traveler’s Readers’ Choice Awards. Kamalame Cay, Rosewood Baha Mar, Grand Hyatt Baha Mar and SLS Baha



The Bahamas won several travel awards to wrap up 2020.

Mar were included in the Top 15 Resorts in the Atlantic Islands category.

Caribbean Journal’s Caribbean Travel Awards Recognizes The Bahamas in Three Categories

In Caribbean Journal’s 7th annual Caribbean Travel Awards, The Bahamas was awarded Innovative Destination of the Year for its continued flexibility throughout the pandemic and

setting a standard for destination entry practices. Additionally, Nassau’s Lynden Pindling International Airport was named Caribbean Airport of the Year and Graycliff was recognized as the Caribbean Restaurant of the Year.

The Bahamas Takes Home 13 Awards in Scuba Diving Magazine’s Readers Choice Awards

The Islands of The Bahamas was recognized in this year’s Scuba Diving Magazine’s Readers Choice Awards, with

placements highlighting the destination’s vast dive offerings across 700 islands and cays. The country was voted number one for Best Big Animals, placed in the top five for Best Overall Destination, Best Cave Diving, Best Snorkeling and Best Value and in the top ten for Best Wreck Diving, Best Wall Diving, Best Advanced Diving, Best Photography, Best Shore Diving, Best Macro Life and Best Health of Marine Life.



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A Marriott Four Points Sheraton Airport Hotel And Resort Is Set For Guyana



The Beepats have announced a Marriott Four Point Sheraton Airport hotel and resort for Guyana.

A Marriott Four Points Sheraton Airport hotel and resort is set to be built near the airport in the South American CARICOM nation of Guyana.

Beepats Distributing Company says they have partnered with Arthur Warren Consultants, who has secured a Letter of Intent from Marriott’s 4 Point Sheraton for the project. The 100 acre multi-million-dollar resort is set to be located near the Cheddi Jagan International Airport and earmarked to have an official water amusement park accompanied with a bevy

of activities such as ATV trails, bicycle trails, ziplining, and a lazy river and blue lagoon.

The Beepats believe that the airport hotel and resort will be able to be a hub for eco-tourism where visitors can launch visits to all of Guyana’s other interior locations.

Guyana’s new oil industry, and the promising expansion of the tourism industry, has the country ready to expand its hotel sector.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



This Caribbean National Has Won A Miss Olympia Title

A Caribbean born national is the new holder of the 2020 Miss Olympia Amateur title in the Women's Figure category.

Jamaica's Kristen McGregor won the competition after the week-long 2020 NPC Worldwide Amateur Olympia competition concluded in Orlando, Florida on Saturday, Dec. 19, 2020.

She finished eighth at the IFBB World Professional Championships in Tarragona, Spain from November 1-3, 2019.

In 2019, McGregor also won the IFBB Diamond Cup in St. Maarten in July where she won her pro card.

"I have a mouth full of words that can express this journey but all I will say with such a journey and such an achievement is that any success takes 3-5 years to be successful and it's not and will not be achieved on self, I or me but a team that is on the same vision and path as you," she said on Instagram while thanking her team of coaches and support staff.

McGregor is a former track athlete and personal trainer, who holds a bachelor's degree in Sports Science from the University of Technology.

- NewsAmericasnow.com



Jamaica's Kristen McGregor won the Miss Olympia Amateur title in the Women's Figure category.

A New Year Contract Extension For This Jamaican Striker



Jamaican striker Jamille Matt

The New Year has started well for Jamaican striker Jamille Matt. He has secured a contract extension with the Forest Green Rovers, ensuring he will stay at the Gloucestershire club for a further 12 months.

The 31-year-old, who has made 23 appearances for Rovers since moving to the West Country from League Two rivals Newport County, has been Forest Green's lead marksman so far

this season, with nine goals in all competitions, having started every league game.

Matt has formed a great partnership with Aaron Collins, with the duo bagging 14 goals between them. Newport currently leads the table, one point above second-placed Forest Green.

After becoming one of 12 new players signed by head coach Mark Cooper in the summer, the six-foot, four-inch

Matt made an impression in the opening matches, securing a point with his first Forest Green goal against Walsall and scoring a hat-trick on Rovers' visit to Scunthorpe United in October.

His most recent goal came in a 1-0 win over fellow promotion chasers Carlisle United on December 19. Rich Hughes, Forest Green's director of football said: "Since joining the club, Jamille has shown his value both on and off the pitch. He has been excellent in leading the line for us and has also been a positive influence within our group. We are delighted to be able to announce this extension and we look forward to the rest of this season and beyond."

Matt, who has also played for Blackpool, Fleetwood Town and Plymouth Argyle, spent two years at Newport before joining Forest Green.

He helped Newport to the League Two play-off final in 2019 and scored in their famous 2-1 victory over Premier League side Leicester in the FA Cup in the same year.

Rewritten from CMC



Four West Indies Stars For Abu Dhabi T10



Veteran Chris Gayle will play in the Abu Dhabi T10

Four West Indies stars are set to join the Abu Dhabi T10, which gets underway from January 28th to February 6th at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi.

Veteran opener Chris Gayle, 41-year-old joins Windies teammates, Andre Russell, Dwayne Bravo and Sunil Narine, for the tourney

"The shorter the format, the more exciting the game becomes. I can't wait to play at the Zayed Cricket Stadium again, watch out Abu Dhabi – a Gayle-storm is coming," Gayle was quoted as saying in a statement.

The was rescheduled last month due to the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, and Aref Al Awani, General Secretary of Abu Dhabi Sports Council, said

the event remained high on the region's sports agenda.

"Although we have hosted numerous local and international cricket events in the past, our commitment to host the second season of Abu Dhabi T10 enhances our gold star portfolio of world-class destination sporting events," he said. "It builds upon and expands our profile for bringing together the top athletes in world sport and offering elite competition and unparalleled entertainment value."

Eight teams will do battle in the tournament, which is in its fourth year.

- Rewritten from CMC



Legend Sir Viv Blames "Amateurish" Fielding For West Indies Failure

Legendary West Indies former captain and batting maestro, Sir Vivian Richards, has blamed "amateurish" fielding for the current failure of the team today.

Speaking against the backdrop of the recent 2-0 whitewash on the Test tour of New Zealand, Sir Viv said the lapses in the field were clear signs the concentration of West Indies players was also lacking.

"When you hear that you're playing at that particular level, the catches that we are dropping are amateurish stuff because you cannot have a team that maybe cannot put bat to ball on a regular basis and continue to be dropping all those catches," said Sir Viv, the only West Indies captain to never lose a Test series.

"If it's one thing you do, is make sure you continue to concentrate as hard as you can so you can see right around the board that we are not concentrating as well as we should," he added in a radio interview in Antigua & Barbuda.

West Indies suffered a chastening tour of New

Zealand, losing the three-match Twenty20 International series, 2-0, before also going down by the same margin in the Test series.

Sir Viv was also critical of the way Alzarri Joseph, the youngest member of the regular attack, was being utilized, contending he needed to be introduced earlier.

"I think sometimes he should even have the ball before Jason (Holder) because you can't be having a young man like that at that particular stage and not using him," pointed out Sir Viv, the finest batsman of his time. "So, I just don't believe he's being handled particularly right at this time."

Joseph, 24, was one of the heroes of the West Indies Under-19s side that won the 2016 ICC Youth World Cup in Bangladesh. He made his international debut later that year and has so far taken 32 wickets from 13 Tests and 48 from 28 One-Day Internationals.

- Rewritten from CMC



Haitians Marked 217th Anniversary Of Independence

Haitians in South Florida were among those globally marking the 217th anniversary of the country's independence from France, on Jan. 1, 2021.

While many served Soup Joumou to mark the occasion, the Governments of the United States and Canada offered congratulations to the government and people of Haiti.

"On behalf of the Government of the United States and the American people, I send greetings to the people of Haiti as you celebrate the 217th anniversary of Haiti's independence," said US Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo in a statement on Dec. 31.

"Haiti's long history as a nation demonstrates the resolve of the Haitian people in overcoming adversity in the hope of a brighter future," he

added. "On Haiti's Independence Day, we recognize the indomitable spirit that is the strength of the Haitian people, and we stand with them in the face of political, security and economic challenges."

Canada also joined the United States in commemorating Haiti's Independence Day.

"Today, we join Haitian communities in Canada and around the world to celebrate Haiti's Independence Day," said Prime Minister Justin

Trudeau in a statement. "The strong relationship between Canada and Haiti has deep roots, whether thanks to our close people-to-people ties or our



shared language."

He added: "On the world stage, our two countries work together toward shared goals, including through the United

Nations, the Organization of American States and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie," he continued. "Canada has a longstanding

commitment to Haiti, and we will continue to provide support so that all Haitians have the opportunities they need to thrive."

PM Trudeau also said that the more than 165,000 Canadians of Haitian origin call Canada home, "making our neighborhoods more vibrant and our communities more prosperous" and urged all Canadians "to celebrate the important contributions the Haitian-Canadian community makes to our country."

Haiti gained its political independence on January 1, 1804 after Jean-Jacques Dessalines, a former slave, led the revolutionaries at the Battle of Vertieres on Nov. 18, 1803, where French forces were defeated.



Caribbean Medical Practitioners Urge Community To Take The COVID-19 Vaccine

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

"A lot of people want to wait to see what happens (with the COVID-19 vaccine), but, sometimes, we just can't wait," she urged. "We have to

find a way to boost people's confidence. It's good that the President-elect (Joe Biden) took it (vaccine) and encouraged people to take it."

Dr. Thomas-Badal said that, after taking the vaccine, she had

a "slight induration" in the area where it was administered, or a hardening and "felt a little tired the next day," but it was gone after that.

"It's an education thing," she emphasized. "People have

to be educated. You have to sit with people and explain how it (vaccine) works. We have to explain to others and even family members. I want to get back to where we were – to gather, to sit and eat. It may take a while, but I'm glad we have the vaccine."

Dr. Clifford Young, a Vincentian-born attending physician at Woodhull Medical Center in Bedford-Stuyvesant and SUNY Downstate Medical Center and University Hospital in Central Brooklyn, in the heart of the Caribbean community in Brooklyn, NY, said that, while "Black people in this country are fearful of this vaccine, this vaccine is safe."

"I looked at the data, and the vaccine is safe," he accentuated. "Caribbean people and Blacks should take the vaccine. We have the most morbidity and mortality; so, we should take it (vaccine)."

Dr. Young, who also has a private medical practice in the Canarsie section of Brooklyn, added: "We suffer the most, we're an at risk-population, and we should be at the head of the line."

He disclosed that his brother, James Young, a radiographer at Kings County Hospital in

Central Brooklyn, took the vaccine last week.

"Should we be fearful of the vaccine? And the answer is 'no'," Dr. Young said. "When my turn comes, I'll take it."

Guyanese-born Dr. Leslie Ramsammy, a St. George's University School of Medicine in Grenada-trained physician, said the Caribbean community should "embrace the vaccine and marvel at the efforts that the world's scientists have created."

"It's important to get outside of our politics and see humanity as a species," said Dr. Ramsammy, who has a private medical practice in Freeport, Nassau County, Long Island, a New York City suburb. "The vaccine will benefit the world. In the meantime, social distancing and masks remain effective."

The Atlanta, Georgia-based US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said it has currently authorized and recommended two vaccines are to prevent COVID-19: Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine and Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine.

- Edited From CMC



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Count-Down Begins To The 59th Inauguration



Workers construct the stage for the presidential inauguration at the US Capitol in Washington, DC, on December 1, 2020. The inauguration of Joe Biden as the 46th US President will take place on January 20, 2021. (Photo by MANDEL NGAN/AFP via Getty Images)

In 14 days from today, Jan. 5, 2021, President-elect Joe Biden is set to be sworn in as the 59th President of the United States. “The inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris represents the beginning of a new national journey,” Pili Tobar, the communications director for the Presidential Inaugural Committee, said in a statement.

Biden is planning on including a lighting ceremony commemorating the American lives lost to COVID-19 as part of the events for his inauguration.

The vigil will be held the day before his inauguration at 5:30 p.m. at the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, according to the transition team.

“It is important that we honor those who have died, reflect on what has been one of the more challenging periods in the nation’s history, and renew

our commitment to coming together to end the pandemic and rebuild our nation,” USA Today quoted the transition team as saying.

It will also include a “virtual parade across America” consistent with crowd limits during the coronavirus era, organizers announced Sunday.

Following the swearing-in ceremony on Inauguration Day on Jan. 20 on the west front of the U.S. Capitol, Biden and his wife, first lady Jill Biden, will join Vice President-elect Kamala Harris and her husband in participating in a socially distanced Pass in Review on the Capitol’s opposite front side. Those are military traditions where Biden will review the readiness of military troops.

traditional presidential escort with representatives from every branch of the military from 15th Street in Washington to the White House. That, the Presidential Inaugural

Committee says, will be socially distanced too, while “providing the American people and world with historic images of the President-elect proceeding to the White House without attracting large crowds.”

The parade event will be televised and feature “diverse, dynamic” performances in communities across the country, the inaugural committee promised. Participants will be announced in coming weeks.

“We are excited about the possibilities and opportunities this moment presents to allow all Americans to participate in our country’s sacred inaugural traditions,” said Presidential Inaugural Committee Executive Director Maju Varghese said in a statement.

- *Rewritten from USA Today and Detroit News*



Black Cuban American Proud Boys Leader Banned From D.C.



Black Cuban American Proud Boys leader, Enrique Tarrío, at rally with Trump supporters to declare the 2020 Presidential election results a fraud on November 14, 2020 in downtown Washington, D.C. (Photo by Andrew Lichtenstein/Corbis via Getty Images)

Henry “Enrique” Tarrío, the Miami-born, Black Cuban American President of the right-wing group, Proud Boys, has been banned from Washington, D.C., ahead of the pro-Trump protest there on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021.

Tarrío, 36, an entrepreneur who took over the leadership from Proud Boys founder Gavin McInnes on November 21, 2018, was on Tuesday banned from the nation’s capital after he was accused of vandalizing a Black Lives Matter banner at a historic black church and found with high-capacity firearm magazines when he was arrested. He was charged with destruction of property and possession of high-capacity firearm magazines.

The order bans Tarrío from entering the District of Columbia, with very limited exceptions – to meet with his attorney or appear in court. It comes a day after he was arrested arriving in Washington, D.C., ahead of protests planned by supporters of President Donald Trump to coincide with the congressional vote expected in the Senate today to affirm Joe Biden’s election victory.

Tarrío was arrested Monday by the Metropolitan Police Department and accused of burning a Black Lives Matter

banner that was torn down from a historic black church in downtown Washington last month. And one of the Black churches that was targeted last month, Metropolitan AME Church, filed a lawsuit on Monday in D.C. Superior Court against the Proud Boys and Tarrío.

According to the criminal complaint, when police pulled Tarrío over on the warrant for vandalizing the Black Lives Matter sign, officers found two unloaded magazines emblazoned with the Proud Boys logo in his bag that have a capacity of 30 rounds each for AR-15 or M4-style weapons.

Tarrío lives in Miami and was raised in a Cuban family in Little Havana in Miami. He was the Afro-Cuban president of the Miami chapter of the group and worked with and also serves as the Florida director of Latinos for Trump.

Tarrío has said in the past that the group would continue in the same direction by following a new set of by-laws. His next hearing is scheduled for June, according to WAMU.

- *NewsAmericasNow.com*



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