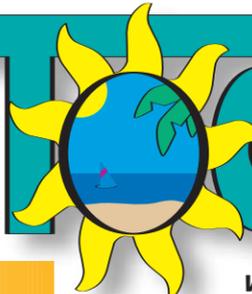


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Vol. 18 No. 11

THE MULTI AWARD-WINNING NEWS MAGAZINE



Under a policy change announced last month, New York State Democratic Governor Eliot Spitzer

says he will issue driver's licenses to Caribbean and other immigrants without regard to immigration status, page 2.



Jamaica's Veronica Campbell overcame a serious leg injury to again prove she's one of the best ever athletes from the Caribbean,

shining at the recent IAAF World Championships of Athletics, page 11.



Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke, who is backed by a strong Caribbean immigrant constituency in New York, is urging United States

President George W. Bush to pull U.S. troops out of Iraq and send them back home to their families, page 19.

PASSPORT FALLOUT



~ Despite frenzied efforts to get passports for United States citizens, and belated protests by Caribbean tourism organizations, the mandatory passport re-entry requirement went into effect this year. Did it help or hurt the lucrative flow of U.S. visitors to the Caribbean?, page 15.

Man on a mission

~ Caribbean-born engineer Glenn Chin heads a NASA team that will deliver 'Harmony' to outer space and expand international access there, page 2.



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Jamaican heads NASA team on space station expansion project

GORDON WILLIAMS

When the "Discovery" space shuttle heads into space this month it will carry a special package 'gift-wrapped' by a Jamaican-born engineer and his team at National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the United States.

Glenn Chin is NASA mission manager charged with delivering a Node 2 module called "Harmony" that will expand the docking area at the International Space Station to accommodate other space programs.

Chin heads a multi-disciplined team of 30 to 40 engineers and technicians at NASA which is involved in the testing, integration and assembly processes that will make "Harmony" ready for launch inside "Discovery's" cargo bay on the morning of

Oct. 23. Once installed at the space station, "Harmony" will serve as a port for space programs from China and a combined 13 European countries.

"Harmony is a module with six docking ports where modules can dock to make the station bigger," explained the 43-year-old Chin, who attended high schools in Jamaica and the U.S. and college at the University of Miami, where he earned a degree in mechanical engineering.

"It's like a six entrance hallway that you can add rooms to...It's actually the gateway to the international partners."

That "hallway" or central building block is 24 feet long and 15 feet wide. It weighs

31,500 pounds.

SIMPLE TASK

It was built in Italy, with fine-tuning at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida, where Chin and his team are based. He was involved in the early design and construction of "Harmony" as part of a special team, which offered NASA insight into the project's progress. That required him to travel to Torino between 1998 and 2000. Other work assignments temporarily took Chin away from the "Harmony" project, but he would later return as mission manager. His task is simple: get "Harmony" ready for launch and make sure it works once it gets into space.

But Chin is confident it will. Discovery's transportation of "Harmony" this month, also called "STS-120", is not the only mission Chin has been involved with at NASA. He has been in charge



Chin



The space shuttle "Discovery" will transport "Harmony" to the International Space Station.

of 16, four of which he has seen through to their launch. However, despite acknowledging a familiarity with the procedures required for the task, Chin said the different types of "payload" he is required to deliver in proper working order keeps the challenge interesting.

"It's pretty routine," he

said. "The processes are pretty much the same. But the differences in hardware for each mission is unique. Each hardware is unique."

So is his background. Chin is one of a handful of Caribbean nationals working at the Kennedy Space Center, which employs some 18,000 workers. He is proud of his heritage and credits his background for much of his success in the U.S.

"That's huge for me," he said. "As a Jamaican I've always been a hard worker, persistent. When I came to the States I realized the opportunities here and went after it."

"I have enough savvy to know you can reach for your dreams in this country."

For the married father of a son, his dreams extend to outer space.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



N.Y. reverses driver's license policy

NEW YORK – Under a policy change announced on Sept. 21, New York State Democratic Governor Eliot Spitzer says he will issue driver's licenses to Caribbean and other immigrants without regard to immigration status.

The change reverses rules adopted four years ago under the previous Republican administration of George E. Pataki.

That administration had made it difficult, if not impossible, for tens of thousands of immigrants to obtain driver's licenses because they could



Spitzer

not prove their legal status.

Under the new rules announced by Spitzer, the state's Department of Motor

Vehicles (DMV) will accept a current foreign passport as proof of identity without also requiring a valid year-long visa or other evidence of legal immigration.

Spitzer said the policy, which does not require legislative approval, will be phased in starting in December and will be tied to new anti-fraud measures. Those measures will include authentication of foreign passports and the use of photo comparison technology to ensure that no driver has

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Miami-Dade cop with Jamaican links wounded in shootout with suspect

A woman with strong Jamaican ties was among four Miami-Dade County police officers shot last month in the line of duty after they tried to stop a man who was reportedly driving recklessly in South Florida.

Officer Jody Wright, 31, a two-year veteran of the force, was hospitalized after being shot in the leg, reportedly by Shawn Labeet, a 25-year-old resident of Margate, who the police later said they killed in a shootout at a condominium complex in Pembroke Pines.

Jose Somohano, 37, who joined the Miami-Dade police in 2003, died from shots the police said were fired by Labeet. Officers Tomas Tundidor, 37, and Christopher Carlin, 34, were also wounded. Family members of Wright

flew in from Kingston, Jamaica following the incident. Her father Dennis Dalley said doctors at Miami's Ryder Trauma Center, Jackson Memorial Hospital, told him that his daughter suffered a gunshot wound to her knee-cap area, which "literally wrecked a number of bones." She is expected to undergo several surgeries, including reconstruction.

Dalley said Wright was saddened by the death of her friend and colleague Somohano. However, he added that he was grateful that she had survived the shooting.

"Thank God's she's alive," he told reporters.

ENCOUNTER

According to the police, the four officers were part of a burglary surveillance detail

assigned on Sept. 13 near an apartment complex in Miami-Dade. The police said they trailed Labeet, driving a red Buick LaSabre, to his home after they noticed he had been driving fast. Once there, Labeet reportedly fled and was chased by the cops. Gunfire was exchanged and the officers were shot. Labeet reportedly took his girlfriend's car and left the area. Tips led police to the condominium in Pembroke Pines where they said Labeet was killed in a shootout.

According to Dalley, Wright was never scared of the possible dangers associated with her line of work.

"(She said) 'what is to be will be,'" Dalley explained. "I'm not afraid. I can't go out there being afraid."



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U.S. lists CARICOM countries among major drug transit states

WASHINGTON – United States President George W. Bush has listed three Caribbean community (CARICOM) states among 20 worldwide as being major drug transit or illicit drug-producing countries.

The list, which was scheduled to be submitted to the U.S. Congress, then published in the U.S. Federal Register, identified The Bahamas, Haiti and Jamaica among those countries.

The Dominican Republic, as well as Venezuela, which has close ties with some CARICOM states, were also listed.

Others on the Majors List are: Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, India, Laos, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru.

“A country’s presence on the Majors List is not necessarily an adverse reflection of its government’s counter-narcotics efforts or level of cooperation with the United



Bush

States,” Bush said in a White House statement.

“One of the reasons that

major drug transit or illicit drug-producing countries are placed on the list is the combination of geographical, commercial, and economic factors that allow drugs to transit or be produced, despite the concerned government’s most assiduous enforcement measures,” he added.

But while The Bahamas, Haiti and Jamaica are on the “Majors List”, the U.S. president said Burma and Venezuela have failed “demonstrably” during the past year to “adhere to their obligations under international counter-narcotics agreements.

“However, the president determined to maintain U.S. programs that aid Venezuela’s democratic institutions”, the statement said.

Caribbean countries named among least corrupt in the world

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC - A new survey by the international watchdog institution, Transparency International (TI), has listed Barbados, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines as among the least corrupt countries in the world.

In a survey of 180 countries, the global coalition listed the countries at number 23, 24 and 30 respectively and said the low perception of corruption among public officials in these islands was only bettered by countries in the developed world where vibrant non governmental institutions kept a close watch on public officials.

Other Caribbean community (CARICOM) countries ranked in the survey were Dominica at number 36, with a score of 5.6 out of 10, followed by Suriname at number 72 with a score of 3.5, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago at 79 and a score of 3.4, Jamaica scoring 3.3 at position 84, Belize at 99 with a score of 3.0 and Guyana

at 123 with a score of 2.6.

Haiti, at 177 and a score of 1.6, was listed in the category of countries where corruption was perceived to be rampant.

POSITIVE STEPS

The agency, whose surveys are heavily used by the international community, credited Dominica, Suriname and Belize as taking positive measures to significantly improve their ratings in the corruption index. It said there was a clear correlation between poverty and corruption with the divide in perceived levels of corruption in rich and poor countries remaining as sharp as ever.

“Despite some gains, corruption remains an enormous drain on resources solely needed for education, health and infrastructure,” said Transparency International Chairman Huguette Labelle.

“Low scoring countries need to take these results seriously and act now to strengthen

accountability in public institutions, but action from high scoring countries is just as important, particularly in cracking down on corruption activity in the private sector.”

TI said fighting corruption was a global issue which required global action, but said developing countries needed to use aid money to strengthen their governance institutions and develop string poverty reduction programs.

“Governments must introduce anti-money laundering measures to eradicate safe havens for stolen assets”, it stated.

“Leading banking centers should explore the development of uniform expedited procedures for the identification, freezing and repatriation of the proceeds of corruption”.

The agency said its survey was based on 14 expert opinion surveys.

Trinidadian man falsely accused of child rape sues N.Y. for \$10M

NEW YORK – A Trinidadian man falsely accused of raping an eight-year-old schoolgirl in Brooklyn has filed a \$10 million lawsuit against the City of New York.

Francis Evelyn, 58, a custodian at a Brooklyn school where the girl said she was raped, said five months after his face was broadcast worldwide as an accused child rapist, he can’t sleep well nor function properly. He said he filed the lawsuit against the city for ruining his life by believing a troubled child with a history of fabricating stories.

“Before, I walked the street happy-go-lucky,” he told reporters.

“Now, you see the eyes,” he added. “People you don’t know, approach you.

“You don’t know what they’re coming with,” he continued. “It could be bad. I’m scared like hell of being out

there!”

Evelyn was cleaning the halls of Public School 91 in the Wingate section of Brooklyn on Mar. 19, just as he had done for nearly 20 years, when cops dragged him out in handcuffs. The girl claimed that for weeks he repeatedly molested her in a basement bathroom.

The school’s respected principal, Solomon Long, was suspended for failing to report other allegations by the girl, which he believed to be unfounded. Long was later reinstated.

JAILED

Evelyn was paraded before television cameras and spent two days at Rikers Island jail before prosecutors rushed to a judge to drop the charges.

The child, who also wrongly accused her father of rape, had no signs of physical

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)

Canada worried over influx of illegal Haitian immigrants

ONTARIO, CMC - Canadian authorities say they have been overwhelmed lately by scores of illegal Haitian and other immigrants from the United States seeking asylum in Canada.

They said that the undocumented immigrants bring forms allegedly sold to them, for up to US\$400 each, by a Haitian group in Florida with the understanding that the documents would entitle them to stay in Canada.

Officials said the arrivals began early last month fueled by the notion that Canada would grant them asylum.



Francis

They said the journey was first suggested by the Jerusalem Haitian Community Center in Naples, which promoted “Information required for Canadian Refugee Status Application” on its website.

Canadian officials said that over 200 illegal immigrants, who also included Mexicans, turned up in Windsor, after crossing the border from Detroit. Officials and refugee advocates said thousands more may be on their way.

Eddie Francis, the mayor of Windsor, said he has faxed a letter to Canadian federal authorities seeking financial help.

“I empathize with the challenges, but we don’t have the ability to manage this. We have never seen anything like this,” he added.

N.Y. reverses driver’s license policy...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

more than one license.

‘COMMON SENSE’

Spitzer said the new policy is a “common sense change” that will improve traffic safety and lower insurance costs for all New Yorkers by ensuring that more immigrants have valid licenses and auto insurance. He said giving more Caribbean and other immigrants verifiable identification will also enhance law enforcement by bringing people out of the shadows.

“The DMV is not the INS (Immigration and Naturalisation Service),” Spitzer said, alluding

to the immigration agency that is now part of the U.S. Homeland Security Department.

New York’s move goes against the national trend. Many states, prodded by demands to crack down on identity fraud, have added requirements that effectively prevent illegal immigrants from obtaining driver’s licenses. All but eight states now require drivers to prove legal status to obtain driver’s licenses, and those eight — Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Washington — have come under pressure to add such a requirement.

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Peter Pestano

U.S. Senate revives bill offering legal status to Caribbean students

WASHINGTON – The United States Senate last month revived a bill that would offer legal status to Caribbean and other students who have graduated from high school here but are in the country illegally.

The move was made after the first effort to advance a piece of broad immigration legislation failed in June.

Senator Richard J. Durbin, the Illinois Democrat who is an author of the student measure, said that he would try to offer it as an amendment to the military authorization bill under debate in the Senate.

The measure would provide a path to permanent legal status for illegal Caribbean students who came to the U.S. before they were 16 years old, graduated from high school in “good standing” and agreed to serve in the military or attend college for at least two years. Both supporters and opponents of the measure said it would serve as a test on whether legis-



Durbin

lation giving legal status to illegal immigrants can pass Congress this year, in light of the strong opposition from conservative voters who defeated the larger bill.

Opponents rejected that bill as an amnesty that would reward Caribbean immigrants who broke the law.

‘NARROWLY TAILORED’
Speaking on the Senate

floor, Durbin described his measure as “narrowly tailored” and said it would help resolve “a very serious recruitment crisis” for the military.

Supporters, who called the measure the Dream Act, said it could pass the Senate because it is intended to benefit young people who grow up in the U.S. and are illegal immigrants as a result of decisions by their parents.

In coordinated action, high school and college students who support the Senate measure staged “teach-ins” and visited lawmakers’ offices on Sept. 19 in Florida, Idaho, New York, Oregon and Wisconsin.

Twenty illegal immigrant students from California went to Washington to lobby for the bill, dressed in white coats and business suits to signify the medical and legal careers they hope to pursue. They held a news conference offering only their first names.



U.S. backs Jamaica's new government

United States President George W. Bush has renewed his country's commitment to strengthening relations with Jamaica.

Last month, the president telephoned new Prime Minister Bruce Golding to congratulate him on his election win and assured Golding of the continuation of ongoing programs of U.S. assistance and collaboration.

Golding conveyed the

appreciation of the Jamaican government and people for the longstanding positive relationship that both countries have shared and noted that his administration would work to further improve U.S.-Jamaica cooperation at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

Both leaders have committed to exploring new areas of mutual interest where cooperation will result in greater levels of development and prosperity for the people

of Jamaica and the U.S.

- Edited from JIS. Golding takes office and calls for new politics of cooperation in Jamaica, while pledging to introduce measures to stamp out corruption and rising crime and drive economic growth in the country, see page 18



Trinidadian man falsely accused of child rape...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

assault, and initially identified her alleged assailant as bald and white. Evelyn is black.

Evelyn said cops grilled him for hours, lying about fake DNA tests to try to force a confession, and offering to cut him a short prison term instead of life if he admitted guilt.

Thrown into a jail cell with seasoned criminals, Evelyn said he stood with his back to a wall all night, praying, as fellow inmates greeted each other and unabashedly used an open toilet.

He said he was strip-searched and left to sleep on a bare mattress in a filthy cell wearing only a “Pampers”, and paraded past inmates who screamed, “Hey, Pops! You raped my sister! I’m

going to cut your throat! Don’t let me catch you in the shower! We gonna shank you!”

Evelyn said when he was finally freed, a cursing correction officer refused to give back \$84 cash he had handed over, then released him with a \$4 MetroCard to take the subway home.

STUNNED

He said when he returned to Brooklyn, he saw his face displayed on front pages of newspapers.

“I was stunned,” he said, disclosing that he walked for miles with his head under his shirt.

“I didn’t want anybody to recognize me,” said Evelyn.

“I can’t go out on the street without having to answer questions,” he

said, “some people said, ‘Hey, you’re the guy who raped the eight-year-old.’ I said, ‘I never raped nobody!’”

Evelyn said though he can return to work at the school, whenever he passes near the building, he trembles. He said he has been living off vacation time and 57 sick days.

“I had two more years to retire,” he said.

“After you work all that time, all that sacrifice, it comes to this?” Evelyn said.

“I want to get over this,” he added. “I don’t want those charges just to be sealed. I want it to be washed away. I want an apology. Come on. Clear my name!”



Grenada-born ex-judge freed from jail in child support case

NEW YORK, CMC – A Grenadian-born former New York State Supreme Court judge has been freed after spending four months in jail for failing to pay \$250,000 in back child support.

Reynold Mason was freed Sept. 19 after his ex-wife, Guyanese Tessa Abrams Mason, agreed to accept \$30,000.

“I am not making any comment whatsoever,” Mason told reporters outside Manhattan Supreme Court.

Mason, who was kicked off the bench in 2003 and had subsequently worked as a real estate agent in Atlanta, Georgia, had told Justice Joan Lobis that he was “dead broke” and could not come up with \$250,000 in court-ordered, delinquent child support payments to Abrams Mason for their three children, ages 17, 15, and nine.

“I don’t feel victory,” Abrams Mason said. “I feel tired.”

LONG FIGHT

She said she fought for four years to get her ex-husband to support their three children.

“We shouldn’t get tired,” she said. “We shouldn’t settle

for less. But I settled because I’m desperate.”

Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Joan Lobis had initially ordered Mason to pay \$75,000 and commit to a payment plan to leave jail. But Mason said he could not raise even \$30,000.

Abrams Mason said she compromised because she needed the money to buy school clothes, pay college application fees for their eldest daughter, and pay higher rent because they faced eviction. Mason said he had only made \$68,000 in 2005 and 2006, compared to \$136,700 annually when he sat on the bench, and that he was borrowing from relatives to get by. He said he declared bankruptcy in order to survive, but Justice Lobis threw him in jail in May after he failed to pay child support for four years.

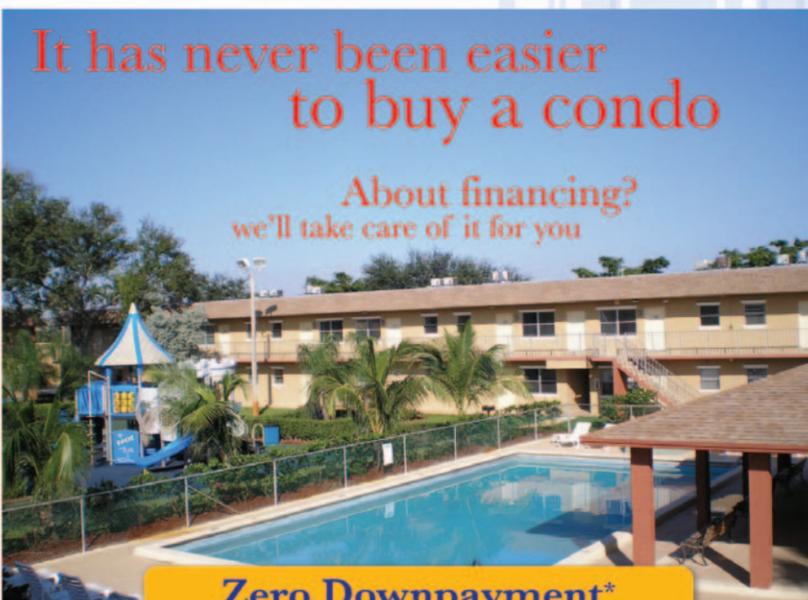
Abrams Mason, who managed her ex-husband’s 1994 campaign to get him elected to Brooklyn Civil Court then the Supreme Court, was instrumental in getting him kicked off the bench when she submitted evidence of alleged ethics violations to the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct.



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U.S. considers compensation for Antigua in gaming dispute

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua, CMC – The United States is considering providing a compensation package to Antigua and Barbuda and other countries following Washington's decision to withdraw its gaming services commitment under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Services (GATS).

A statement by the Barbados-based Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) said that Sept. 22 had been the deadline for completion of compensation negotiations.

"Failing these negotiations with the eight countries seeking compensation – namely Japan, the European Union, Antigua, Costa Rica, India, Australia, Macao and Canada – by the deadline, the matter would have to be referred to arbitration.

"The package offer is not likely to surpass the U.S. Doha Round revised services offer. While this package may not be considered generous compensation, some countries may be more inclined to work with the offer as a starting point for negotiations especially if it is 'sweetened' by other market access opportunities", the CRNM stated.

It noted that in the case of Antigua "with its limited export range, there may be little room for negotiation of

alternative market access concessions with the U.S. if this offer is rejected by Antigua.

"Antigua is still within its rights under the World Trade Organization Dispute Settlement Understanding to pursue compensation or trade sanctions given that, technically speaking, the U.S. is still not in compliance with the WTO ruling in favor of Antigua and will continue to be in that state until compensation and or arbitration is settled regarding their removal of their GATS commitments relating to online gaming".

DEMAND

Antigua has already indicated that it was seeking millions of dollars in compensation and it has also expressed a desire to base sanctions on the suspension of TRIPS obligations and communications services obligations under the GATS.

However, in recent developments, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) has called upon the U.S. government to suspend preferences offered to Antigua under the U.S.-Caribbean Trade Partnership Agreement (CBTPA) and the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA), which together are

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)

Poverty, hunger keep Caribbean behind ~ U.N.

UNITED NATIONS – The United Nations says while the Caribbean and Latin America have made some progress in the global fight in reducing poverty, the region still falls behind much of the world in this pursuit.

The U.N. said in a statement that besides sub-Saharan Africa, inequality remains highest in the Caribbean and Latin America, with about 205 million people living in poverty. It said 79 million live in extreme poverty in which they cannot cover their basic dietary needs.

"Countries of the region face some daunting challenges growing out of the region's failure to make substantial inroads against poverty", stated the

report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The MDGs are part of a Millennium Declaration, signed in 2000 by leaders of 189 countries, which set 2015 as the year for achieving significant advances in, among other things, primary education, gender equality, child mortality rates and environmental sustainability.

The report stated that the Caribbean and Latin America are not moving fast enough to reduce extreme poverty and hunger, noting that the income gap between the rich and the poor has expanded although there has been some progress in some areas.



PLEASE NOTE

Caribbean Today is requesting that, effective immediately, all editorial correspondence be e-mailed to editor@caribbeantoday.com. We appreciate your co-operation. In addition, the deadline for submitting articles to be considered for publication is the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. For example, the deadline for articles for Caribbean Today's November 2007 edition must be received no later than October 20, 2007.

Préval credits peacekeepers for Haiti's stability

UNITED NATIONS, CMC - President René Préval has credited the United Nations Stabilization Mission in his country (MINUSTAH) with promoting stability on his impoverished Caribbean community (CARICOM) nation.

Addressing the United Nations General Assembly late last month, Préval, noted that Haiti is "all too frequently on the U.N.'s agenda because of its problems of insecurity and political unrest.

"I am speaking on behalf of a country that somewhat hasty analysis describes as a 'failed state'," he said, noting that "Haiti is on the way to bidding farewell to that state slowly, patiently yet with determination."

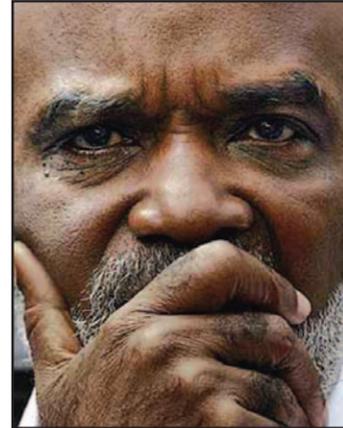
Préval said organized armed gangs that had wreaked violence on the population have been dismantled and there were no longer "no-go" zones that were too dangerous to enter. He said inflation had dipped below 10 percent, while gross domestic product (GDP) is up after 10 years of decline.

The Haitian leader said peace is an "essential condition" that enables the country's political forces to "put an end to their endless quarrels."

'TIMELY' MOVE

In anticipating a one-year

extension of MINUSTAH, Préval said this move would be "quite timely" and served as a reminder that gains in



Préval

Haiti, including victory over insecurity, the holding of democratic elections, improved governance and a strengthened judicial system, were made possible "in large part due to the efforts undertaken by the UN force in the country."

The Haitian president said though his administration is "young, inexperienced and ill-equipped," it has been "courageous and determined in the battle against insecurity." He lauded MINUSTAH for providing the necessary support in restoring security to the impoverished French-speaking Caribbean country.

Préval said Haitians continue to see the presence of foreign armed forces on their soil as a "wound with respect to their national sovereignty," noting, however, that "in practical terms, this is the only formula that is realistic and available at this time that enables Haitians to restore freedom and live in peace."

He said it was up to the Haitian people to benefit from the "period of calm, regroup and reconsider the future with a positive vision, while the country strengthens its cohesion, modernizes its judicial system and improves its ability to take action in favor of economic recovery and sustainable development."



Rapid decline in Caribbean child deaths ~ UNICEF

UNITED NATIONS – The United Nations Children Educational Fund (UNICEF) says new figures show solid progress on child survival, including a decline in the annual number of under-five deaths, in the Caribbean and Latin America.

UNICEF said the decline comes amid a record global low in which child deaths have fallen below 10 million per year to 9.7 million, down from almost 13 million in 1990.

"This is an historic moment," said UNICEF executive director Ann M. Veneman.

"More children are surviving today than ever before," she added.

"Now, we must build on this public health success to push for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals."

UNICEF said rapid declines in under-five mortality have been seen in the Caribbean and Latin America, among other regions.

"The Latin American and Caribbean region is on track

to achieve the child mortality Millennium Development Goal, with 27 deaths on average for every 1,000 live births, compared to 55 per thousand in 1990", the statement said.

PROGRESS

UNICEF attributed much of the progress to "widespread adoption of basic health interventions, such as early and exclusive breast feeding, measles immunization, Vitamin A supplementation and the use of insecticide-treated bed nets to prevent malaria".

"The new figures show that progress is possible if we act with renewed urgency to scale-up interventions that have proven successful," Veneman said.

In addition, she said there is unprecedented support for global health, with increased funding and expanding partnerships, including with governments, the private sector, international foundations and civil society.



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T&T's P.M. laments 'dangerous imbalances' of globalization

NELSON A. KING

NEW YORK - Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Patrick Manning has lamented the "dangerous imbalances" of globalization.

In an hour-long address at the Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn, where he received an honorary doctor of laws degree from one of New York's predominantly black colleges last month, Manning said the current economic paradigm, "anchored in globalization, notwithstanding its obvious benefits, in terms of productivity, has already created dangerous imbalances in and among countries.

"In the midst of tremendous wealth that is being created, the gulf between rich and poor continues to widen.

"The gross domestic product of the 40 poorest nations is less than the wealth of three richest nations in the world," he added.

Manning said that over 50 percent of the world's population lives on less than \$2 a day in a world economy that generates in excess of \$50 trillion annually.

'UNACCEPTABLE'

He said the result of "this totally, unacceptable situation is mass poverty, spawning the myriad problems of hunger, malnutrition, disease, homelessness, illiteracy and child labor," adding that over eight million people die annually "because they are simply too poor to stay alive."

The Trinidad and Tobago

prime minister said that the world's industrial powers continue to "create the breeding ground for the level of disaffection and desperation that produces criminal activity within and across borders."

Manning said other consequences include illegal migration; the "pernicious" trade in illegal drugs and arms; and "the delusion of an ideological solution, which is fuelling a terrorism with a ferociousness, perhaps, unprecedented in human history."

Manning said failure of the "model" in many developing countries has given rise to "an adventurism and left-wing governments, particularly in Latin America.

"Additionally, competition, the struggle to survive and the push to produce continue to take a most disastrous toll on the environment, to the point where the very survival of human civilization on this planet is threatened," he said.

Manning said the "Washington consensus," which "liberalizes" trade and production facing the private sector, has "clearly not worked for the benefit of all humanity."

Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, who, in jest, considers himself a "Trini Jew", presented Manning with a small replica of the Brooklyn Bridge and a proclamation, declaring Sept. 26, 2007, "Patrick Manning Day in Brooklyn".



U.S. considers compensation for Antigua...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

known as the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), if Antigua pursues these sanctions.

CRNM said that MPAA is basing its argument on the grounds that "suspension of TRIPS obligations would infringe the eligibility criteria for CBI benefits.

"The association has cited an eligibility criteria which states that CBERA denies beneficiary status to a country that has nationalized, expropriated or otherwise seized ownership or control of property owned by U.S. citizens or has taken steps to repudiate or nullify intellectual property.

"Further reference was made to the CBTPA criterion that requires that countries meet CBERA criteria in intellectual property rights (IPR) protection".

CRNM said that "in as far

as Antigua continues to benefit from CBI preferences through WTO waiver, the proposed action of retaliation may be completely permissible under international trade law.

"It should be further noted that U.S. recourse in this case has also been empowered by the recent agreement between CARICOM and the U.S. to extend the CBI preferential agreement.

"This decision to extend CBI was the most appropriate course of action for CARICOM (Caribbean community) at that time. However, this potential threat of U.S. retaliation, compromises the political, negotiating and legal manoeuvrability of Antigua.

"In the end, the options available to Antigua in this case are few", stated the CRNM.



U.S. funds Tsunami warning system for Caribbean

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC – The United States is providing just under half a million dollars towards the establishment of a Tsunami and Coastal Hazards Warning System (TCHWS) for the Caribbean community (CARICOM).

Washington, through the United States Agency for International Development/ Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, on Sept. 26 signed a two-year agreement with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) as part of the initiative.

Officials said the \$475,200 grant would help in empowering coastal communities in the Caribbean to prepare for and respond to tsunamis and coastal hazards.

"This assistance complements the multi-million dollar U.S. government support for the creation of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System in the wake of the Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 26, 2004," said U.S. Ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean Mary Ourisman, who signed the accord.

"As part of that effort, the U.S. government provided US\$37.5 million in related support to the Caribbean and Atlantic regions including the installation of seismic monitoring stations in throughout the region."

The station, which is



Ourisman

located in Barbados, became operational in Oct. 2006.

OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of the TCHWS project is to support the establishment of an effective end-to-end Tsunami warning system at the regional and national levels, and to undertake public education and awareness campaigns to

prepare coastal communities for action to be taken when a warning issued.

"We have provided the technological infrastructure and we are now providing our people with the knowledge and skills to respond effectively to such dangers," said CDERA Chairman Dale Marshall, who is also the Barbados minister of home affairs.

"Often we think of the region as one which is only prone to certain types of natural hazards – hurricanes, tropical storms and floods – we tend to forget that there are other natural hazards such as earthquakes and tsunamis which though less frequent, can be much more greater in magnitude and can cause significantly higher loss of human life."

The two-year project will be executed by CDERA in conjunction with the Seismic Research Unit of the University of the West Indies (UWI), the National Meteorological Offices and the Coastal Zone Management Agencies in CDERA participating states.



Antigua's P.M. wants collaborative action on climate change measures

NEW YORK – Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer has called for collaborative action in adapting measures to deal with climate change.

"It would be no exaggeration to say that our collaborative action in this area holds the key to future of entire countries and communities around the globe," Spencer said during a round table discussion at a high-level summit of the United Nations General Assembly last month.

Spencer told colleagues and other delegates that financing effective measures and mechanisms for climate change would be one of the

defining challenges before U.N. in the upcoming decade.

"It's one thing to set up a fund, but another for the monies to reach projects that make an impact in the country. The latter is not happening enough to make a difference.

"Simply put, if we are to implement national climate change action plans, it requires money, technical assistance and training and educating our own local people on strategies



Spencer

for dealing with climate change," Spencer said.

The prime minister noted that financing mechanisms, like the Global Environment Facility (GEF), should prioritize the implementation of projects as opposed to writing reports and other consultation exercises.

In looking ahead to the Climate Change Summit in Bali, Indonesia later this year, the Antiguan leader said future generations will look back to the Bali negotiations and judge the global community in terms of its response to the issue of financing for adaptation.



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~ A Caribbean Today feature

Hispanics in U.S. celebrate heritage

Every year, between September and October, Hispanics celebrate their history, culture and achievements.

It is a time when the United States commemorates the traditions of its residents who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

Sept. 15 was chosen as the starting point of the celebration because it is the anniversary of the Independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico declared its Independence on Sept. 16 and Chile on Sept. 18.

The month-long celebration includes educational events and activities to raise awareness about issues affecting Hispanic Americans in the U.S. In honor of "Hispanic Heritage Month", the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, brought information about restoration of Florida's Miami-Dade and Broward counties.



A child at the John F. Kennedy Library in Hialeah, Florida enjoys the interactive CERP kiosk after a Flamenco performance during "Hispanic Heritage" celebrations.

The Corps participated in local events organized by public libraries. Last month they installed kiosks that described the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), and provided information about how the plan will affect the lives of South Floridians and how everyone has the opportunity to become involved in saving the

Everglades.

The kiosks included images of the Everglades and pertinent ecological facts translated into Spanish. Accompanying children's buttons and print materials for adults and younger readers were also provided.



Miami libraries to present art, cooking, entertainment

The Miami-Dade Public Library System will commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month with a series of programs and exhibitions at branches throughout the Miami-Dade County in South Florida.

Beginning Oct. 2, library visitors will be treated to author presentations, folkloric performances, cooking demonstrations, children's programs, and art exhibitions.

There will also be presentations exploring the history of dance, including the salsa and mambo.

In addition, photojournalist Randi Sidman-Moore explores the joining of cultures in "Lox with Black Beans and Rice: A portrait of Cuban-Jewish life"; children's author Katie Scirba, shares her inspiration for writing "Oye Celia!", a novel dedicated to the legendary Celia Cruz, and the "Colorin Colorado" puppet theater will present tales from Mexico.

All events are free and open to the public. For more information, call 305-375-2665 or visit www.mdpls.org.



MDC offers free events

MIAMI – In commemoration of Hispanic Heritage Month, Miami Dade College will present an array of free events, such as art exhibits, lectures, film screenings, comedy shows and dance classes throughout October at each of MDC's eight campuses in South Florida.

Contact the following campuses for information about events scheduled there:

- Hialeah Campus, 1780 W. 49th St., 305-237-8700
- Homestead Campus, 500

- College Terr., 305-237-5555.
- InterAmerican Campus, 627 S.W. 27th Ave., 305-237-6000
- Kendall Campus, 11011 S.W. 104th St., 305-237-2000.
- Medical Center Campus, 950 N.W. 20th St., 305-237-4000
- North Campus, 11380 N.W. 27th Ave., 305-237-1000.
- West Campus, 3800 N.W. 115th Ave., 305-237-8000.
- Wolfson Campus, 300 N.E. Second Ave., 305-237-3131.



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VIEWPOINT

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Injustice is bigger than 'Jena 6'

We black Americans seem to need a major event or outrage every so often to revive our mass energies in ways that remind of us the 1960s civil rights movement.



CLARENCE PAGE

In the 1980s we had mass arrests at the South African embassy to protest apartheid. In the 1990s there was the Million Man March to redeem black fatherhood and proper role modeling. In 2007 we have the "Jena 6".

Thousands flowed by the busload into tiny Jena, Louisiana, last month. They came to march on behalf of six black youths who were originally charged with attempted murder for allegedly beating up a white youth last December at the local high school in what many describe as a schoolyard fight.

The "Jena 6" case actually began months earlier when three nooses appeared in a tree at the high school. That was one day after black students defied a school tradition that designated the tree to be a whites-only gathering spot. The school principal expelled three white students for hanging the nooses, but the school superintendent reduced the expulsions to a few days of suspension.

Tensions grew as various interracial fights, attacks and angry confrontations, mostly off-campus, in later weeks resulted in young white males receiving slaps on the wrist, at most, while young blacks received school expulsions or criminal charges.

It was the local district attorney's decision to charge six black students with attempted second-degree murder, while white students had gone free for other attacks, that touched off the national uproar. The white student who was beaten allegedly taunted blacks with racial slurs and was a friend of the students who had hung the nooses. He was treated and released after a few hours in a local hospital.

EXCESS

I don't make light of anyone's beating, but the attempted murder charge was an excess wretched enough to be a virtual invitation to the Revs. Jesse Jackson and Al

Sharpton, who enthusiastically accepted, leading the march with Martin Luther King III.

Suddenly little Jena became a symbol in many minds of every injustice or racial grievance, real or perceived, that black folks have endured in recent years, from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to the gross disparities between federal sentences for crack and powder cocaine.

The "Jena 6" put real names and faces to Justice Department statistics that show African American men to be three times more likely than white men to face jail once they have been arrested. The biggest disparity is among men convicted of aggravated assault, according to the National Urban League's annual State of Black America report. It found that black men are sentenced to an average of 48 months in jail - almost one-third longer than the average sentence received by white men.

But now that the crowds have gone home and Jena is once again a quiet little oil and lumber town, will the big march have lasting significance, like the movement that helped end apartheid and free Nelson Mandela? Or will it be like the Million Man March: a stirring memory and a great applause line for political speeches, but not much follow-through?

BAD COVERAGE

It was the bad fortune of the "Jena 6" demonstrators that they had to share the spotlight with another media eruption, the latest misadventures of O.J. Simpson. Charged with armed robbery in Las Vegas for allegedly trying to steal memorabilia from his own glory days, Simpson needed no help from bloggers or talk shows to get wall-to-wall coverage.

Simpson returned to T.V. screens like a cheap sequel to a movie you'd rather forget. He reminds us of one of America's most racially divided moments. Simpson's acquittal of double homicide charges gave white Americans a shock that their black friends, neighbors and coworkers have been long acquainted with, the chilling sense of denied justice.

And for black Americans with an eye for bitter irony, Simpson's acquittal showed a strange form of progress, at best: America had progressed enough to let a rich black

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

Girls on girls, what a thing!

Women loving women is as old as time itself, but it never seemed to get the abhorrence as men loving men.

Anyway, these women got the name lesbian from Lesbos, which is a Greek island in the Aegean Sea. History has more than implied that the inhabitants there, especially the followers of the poetess Sappho, were all into free love between each other.

The fact is though, they also dealt with men, but the women loving women part seemed to dominate. The fact is also, anyone who lives on the isle of Lesbos is a lesbian, just as how people who live in Jamaica are Jamaicans and so on. But in this context, and the accepted one, is that female homosexuals are called lesbians.

Way back in my youth, before I knew what all this same sex thing was about, I naively thought that boys liked girls and that was that. The thought of men with men or women with women just never crossed my innocent mind. So, in my wooing days I approached this very attractive young foreign lady and started to give her my best lyrics.

"Don't even bother with those sweet words, they won't work on me, because I'm a lesbian," she said.

"Well, I'm Jamaican, but pray tell, what is a lesbian?" I innocently queried.

"A lesbian is a woman who enjoys the company of women, loves to touch, caress, fondle, kiss and make love to women all the time," was her reply.

TAKE-OFF

This phenomenon seems to be taking off pretty big in our parts, or perhaps they're just creeping out of the closet. More and more we see reports in the press, and even recently there was this huge feature on



TONY ROBINSON

how many prominent schools have fallen prey to this type of sexuality. Locker rooms aren't what they used to be, and no longer are only randy teenage boys predators for our daughters. Now you also have to be careful of the girl next door. She could very well be your future daughter in law.

But it's bound to happen, what with cable TV showing how 'natural' it is for women to love women. Have you watched The L Word? Plus even male magazines perpetuate this by having women in bed pleasuring each other.

That's a big turn on for men, but apart from that, society has always accepted little girls being affectionate towards each other. Girls are allowed to hold hands, hug each other, groom each other, touch, comb each other's hair, and even sleep together in the same bed. We think nothing of it, and it's as natural as a walk in the park. Why, even female roommates are prevalent, without any eyebrows

being raised.

Not so with males though, as no way would society allow two young males to do the things that I just described. So from early, girls are exposed to same gender contact and affection, and sleep over slumber parties are the rage among young teenage girls. Is it any wonder that many of them graduate to become full-fledged lesbians, or am I taking the narrow view? To compound it, women are able to mask their sexual leanings, after all.

"We're only roommates."

Curiously, many of the lesbians that I know very well, confessed to me that they had suffered some sort of sexual abuse while young, usually from a family member.

RESTRICTIONS

The only time men are allowed to show any form of affection towards each other is during sports, especially football when a goal is scored. Then you will see players run down each other, jump on one another, pile on and hug and kiss each other like they're in a Turkish bathhouse. Even the spectators in the stands will join in, clapping and hugging total strangers, just

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

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CARIB Comments

• **“If we can’t work together to build the country, we are going to spend a lot of energy, and we are going to find that we are getting nowhere fast”** - Bruce Golding last month issuing a call for national unity days before being sworn in as Jamaica’s new prime minister.



• **“We are going to watch every move they make, every step they take, every where they go, everything they do”** - Jamaica’s former Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller last month outlining the watchdog role of the People’s National Party as the country’s Opposition to the newly elected government.



• **“I am delighted that Sir John died as a prime minister like an old soldier with his boots on. He retired from government**

undefeated, returned by popular demand and left the scenes for the last time again undefeated” - former St. Vincent Prime Minister Sir James Mitchell commenting on the death of Sir John Compton, prime minister of St. Lucia and his cousin.



• **“He was an outstanding leader in that he represented the spirit and the whole potential of St. Lucia and the Caribbean”** - former Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister

Lester Bird describing the late Sir John Compton as one of the region’s greatest integrationist.



• **“Today I proved to the world that Asafa is back”** - Jamaican sprinter Asafa Powell, who disappointed at the IAAF World Championships of Athletics, confirms he is still the world’s fastest human after smashing his own



world record for the 100 meters last month in Italy.

• **“We will arrest you. I make it plain”** - Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves warning fishermen from neighboring countries last month that they would be ill-advised to venture into Vincentian waters to fish.



Compiled from CMC and other sources.

Injustice is bigger than ‘Jena 6’

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)
man buy his way out of accountability in the way once

reserved for rich white men. But that’s not a good enough standard of justice for

a great people or a great country. As demonstrated by the Rev. Al Sharpton’s fiasco

with Tawana Brawley or the recent bogus Duke University rape case, unequal justice doesn’t always tilt against black folks or Latinos. We simply have been statistically more vulnerable to it. In this increasingly diverse country, Americans should not have to spend another century playing one-downs-manship, competing to see whose race or ethnic group can be the most victimized.

The best legacy for the ‘Jena 6’ march would be a new movement, dedicated this time to the reduction and elimination of unequal justice wherever it appears. I don’t care who leads it, but it shouldn’t be for blacks only.

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Girls on girls, what a thing!

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)
because a goal was scored. After the match and out of the stadium though, it’s back to normal, and not even male pillion riders on bike backs are allowed to hold on to the rider for security. Not so with women, who can exhibit all the affection they want, without being called lesbians, even if they are. There are many reasons why women turn to other women for more than companionship. For one, there’s more affection, and women do love affection. Left to a woman she would have affection all night with a little sex at the end to top it off. Left to a man he would have sex all night, with a little affection at the beginning just to appease her. That’s why foreplay is such a big issue between the sexes, with women crying that it’s never enough and men saying that women want too much.

As a result, many women, tired of the insensitivity and impatience of their men, turn instead to the gentler softer approach of other women.

CONFUSED

Some are confused, and miss the hard male body and often backslide, but eventually they return to the feminine fold and experience the untold pleasures of girls on girls. And don’t think that all lesbians are dykes too, who love to wear men’s clothes and boots. Many are beautiful, sultry, soft sexy women who turn many male heads. That’s another thing, men don’t seem to mind the fact that women are lesbians. Just recently I was in the presence of two of my lesbian friends, two absolutely gorgeous women, and just the thought of what they did behind closed doors started to turn me on. This is perpetuated in books, magazines, movies, T.V. series, where women loving women is accepted and actually proves to be a stimulant to men. Like it or not, it’s a growing trend, and if you can’t beat them, you had better join them. Perhaps more men should become lesbian-like in their lovemaking with their women. Girls on girls, what a thing.

Frankly, the man could very well do without it. But aha, that’s where the lesbians come in. They can go at this foreplay affection thing for hours, bringing untold pleasure to each other. Few men, if any, can match that, or would want to. Remember the old saying, that men fake affection to get sex, while women fake sex to get affection. With lesbians there is no faking, just the real deal, and no man can compete.

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VIEWPOINT

www.caribbeantoday.com

CaribChat

Heart of a champion: Jamaica's Veronica Campbell strikes gold on the track

Jamaica's Veronica Campbell overcame a serious leg injury to again prove she's one of the best ever athletes from the Caribbean. Recently she talked to Caribbean Today's Managing Editor Gordon Williams about her medal winning performances at the recent IAAF World Championships of Athletics in Osaka, Japan, including gold in the 100 meters and silver in the 200 meters and 4x100 meters relay. The following is an edited version of that interview:

QUESTION: You're coming off the World Championships. How're you feeling now, not just physically, but mentally and spiritually as well?

A: I'm feeling great. I think I achieved a lot at the World Championships and I'm pleased with the way I performed. All the hard work I put in paid off. So I'm very grateful.

Q: Coming off the injury, were the World Championships like a shot at redemption for you, to re-establish yourself?

A: Not really. I was hurt last year and I accept that. And I worked hard to get myself back to full form. I was very determined at the World Championships. I was very confident that I would do well because training was going on really good. I was just pleased, just taking each round with confidence.

Q: You had the misfortune of having your coach (American Lance Brauman) not around, incarcerated. What sort of relationship did you have with the coach and how did his absence from your training, personally, affect your preparations going into the games?

A: Despite the fact that our coach was absent, my main aim was to stay focused. I was very determined. He (Brauman) left us with all our programs and our workouts that we had to do. So I could follow the procedures, the workouts, and just stay focused. And I just worked towards my goal.

Q: Is he still your coach and is he still going to be your coach?

A: As for now I think I'll stick with the program I've been doing for a while. It's worked well for me and I think the best thing to stick with what I know, what has worked well for me, not to try something new during the Olympic year (2008).

Q: Your fiancé, Omar Brown, was at the World Championships helping as coach. How did that work out? And what were the advantages and disadvantages, if any, to that arrangement?

A: That went well. Omar did very well. (She laughs.) He

played a really good role as a coach at the World Championships. He made sure I did everything I needed to do to go through each round. He was very supportive. It was fun working with Omar. It wasn't any problem. Everything went well and I just thank God that he was able to help me focus on the World Championships.

Q: Seeing as you have a personal relationship with him, does it make any difference when he is acting as your coach?

A: I know how to separate personal stuff from business. So it was no problem at all.

Q: The 100 meters final, that was possibly the closest finish of all times, or one of the closest...Were there any added expectations seeing that Jamaica expected a gold medal from Asafa Powell and that didn't happen, and now it was your turn?

A: I was not pressured at all. I know what I went to the World Championships to accomplish and that was to win. So I stayed focused, stayed positive, stayed confident and took it each round by round.

Q: When you started the race, you had to play catch-up. What were your thoughts coming out of the blocks and say halfway through the race?

A: I don't remember the entire race, but when I got out of my drive phase I realized that I was not in the front and I realized that I had some catching up to do. But I've learnt to be patient and that helped me to run a very good race and come out on top.

Q: You're saying that your experience helped pull you through what was probably not the best start?

A: Right, and mistakes that I've made before; to have learned from those. And I was able to maintain my composure and execute the race despite having a not-so-good...start. I think the problem in that race was not so much my start, but it was my execution for the first 30 (meters).

Q: But you did not panic?

A: No, I did not panic. If I'd panicked, then that's not a good thing. If you panic then you cannot execute well. You get out of your drive phase too quick and you screw the entire race up. So patience is the best thing when it comes to 100 meters if you don't get a good start.

Q: There's a lot of talk about that, about your mental toughness. How important is that to

you in terms of your make-up as an athlete?

A: It is very important. On top of the physical, you've got to be mentally strong...You can be physically fast or strong, but if you are not strong in the head then you can mess everything up. So mental preparation, being strong, being positive, is very important to me as an athlete.

Q: Is there any special way you go about preparing yourself mentally to compete, especially in these big meets?

A: I think one part, you've got to have confidence in your training. You've got to have confidence in yourself. You just have to believe that you put in the work and you can achieve whatever you want, because the mind is so powerful. As long as you work hard and just focus on you. It's all about you in the race. It's not about all the competitors. It's just about you and your lane. Just know what you've got to do and stay confident.

Q: Do you feel the weight of expectations as Jamaica's leading gold medal hope at major games now?

A: Not really. I'm just trying to maximize everything; my potential and my career. So whenever I go on the track I'm just making sure that I do whatever it

takes to compete to the best of my ability. I don't really feel any pressure because when you try to pressure yourself that can mess everything up. You've just got to focus on what you've got to do and that will take care of everything, all the expectations and everything. I try not to let pressure get to me. I just work on what I have to get done.

Q: You wake up in the morning thinking you're the fastest woman in the world?

A: (She laughs.)

Q: Has it dawned on you yet?

A: Ah, I'd rather skip that question. (She laughs.) I'm blessed. I feel well accomplished. I feel I've accomplished a lot.

Q: What specifically do you believe you have to work on?

A: Right now, I think my last 50 (meters), especially in that race (200) is the main thing I need to work on because I think I executed well (in Osaka), but I was not pleased with the last 50 (meters) of that race.

Q: Your fastest time is 22.05 seconds. American Allyson Felix ran 21.81 to win. Is that beyond you or within your reach?



Campbell trying to stay ahead of the pack.

A: (She laughs.) I wouldn't say it's beyond me. To say it's beyond me that would be negative thinking and that doesn't get us anywhere. I know I have the ability, the potential to do very well...But I definitely know that 22.05 is not my best.

Q: The Osaka schedule was tough. Does that give you any second thoughts about attempting the double (100 and 200) in Beijing (China) at the 2008 Olympic Games?

A: That is too early to determine whether I will double at Beijing. It all depends on the way my training goes. With that in mind, I'll be the defending champion in the 200 meters at the Olympics and then I hope to do very well in the 100 meters. Right now I am not sure, but it's a possibility.



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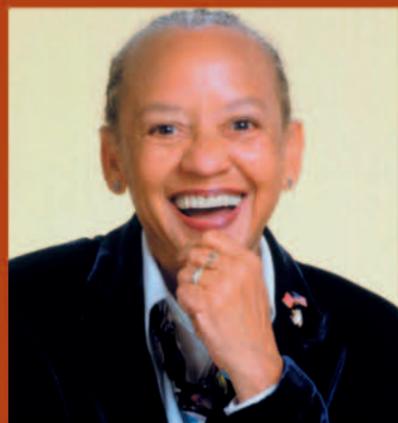
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H E A L T H

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Caribbean spending millions to fight non-communicable disease threat

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC – Caribbean countries are spending millions of dollars treating non-communicable diseases that will continue to present a major challenge to the region if steps are not taken to address the situation, according to Prime Minister Patrick Manning.

Addressing a regional news conference ahead of a one-day special Caribbean community(CARICOM) Summit on Health last month, Manning said that chronic non-communicable diseases were responsible for many deaths in the Caribbean. He said that the economic burden of treating diseases such as diabetes and hypertension would be in the vicinity of \$496.7 million.

Manning said that regional governments had been presented with the findings of a CARICOM Commission for Health and Development during their summit in St. Kitts last year, adding that the report had highlighted that non-communicable disease

had become “a major challenge on our hands.”

NO QUICK FIX

Chairman of the Commission, Sir George Alleyne told journalists that there is no quick remedy to reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases in the Caribbean. He said the region has reached this stage after “decades of exposure to risk factors and their correction will take some time.”



Manning

The risk factors identified by the commission include high blood pressure, obesity, smoking, inappropriate diet and lack of physical activity.

Manning said the cost to Caribbean governments, as well as the social implications were sufficient and necessary

justifications for the summit and that the regional leaders had shown an intention to “embark on preventive action.” He said that his administration had already taken steps towards dealing with the spread of non-communicable diseases making references to the national symposium on health as well as increasing taxes on alcohol and tobacco products in the 2007 national budget.



Alleyne

“These items have been identified as major contributors to high mortality rates caused by non-communicable diseases in this country as well as the Caribbean and other parts of the world,” Manning said.

More on page 27.

New medical school in St. Kitts begins operations in Jan. 2008

BASSETERRE, St. Kitts, CMC – The University of Medicine and Health Sciences of St. Kitts (UMHSS), capable of accommodating 1,200 students, will begin operations here in January next year.

An agreement to charter and establish the university has been signed between Prime Minister Dr. Denzil L. Douglas and Dr. Robert Ross of the United States, a government statement said.

It said that under the agreement, government will grant the university, subject to accreditation by the Accreditation Board, “the

charter for a school of medicine with the right to confer the degree of doctor of medicine and other appropriate degrees, including without limitation, post-graduate degrees to holders of the doctor of medicine degree.

“The government also grants the university the right to establish a pre-medical division with the right to confer appropriate degrees, including without limitation, the degree of physicians assistant, and to engage in all necessary and appropriate activities that are direct or incidental to the operation of a

school of medicine and or such other schools, provided that the holding of the charter shall be subject to the university continuing to be accredited by the Accreditation Board”, stated the agreement.

Under the agreement, the Joseph N. France General Hospital and other public health care facilities would be available to the UMHSS for the training of physicians for an annual fee. It also said that UHMSS would “continuously” provide two scholarships to nationals covering the cost of tuition, books and equipment.

Jamaica is malaria free ~ gov't

KINGSTON, Jamaica, CMC – Jamaica has regained its malaria free status following a turbulent period earlier this year, which saw scores of people contracting the mosquito-borne disease.

The Ministry of Health said last month that there have been no new confirmed cases for the past three months. The last reported case occurred on June 19.

Dr. Eva Lewis Fuller, director of health promotion and protection in the ministry, said the three-month period had been critical, as it indicated that the ministry had “broken the back” of the disease. She said this was done by interrupting the transmission through various strategies, which included active searches and a beefed

up vector control program. Persons traveling to Jamaica are no longer required to take anti-malaria prophylaxis. The Centre for



Malaria-carrying mosquito

Disease Control in the United States, as well as the World Health Organization, had recommended the drug.

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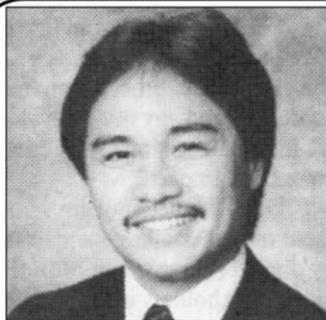


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Young pilot given top Jamaican honors

Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett has proposed conferring the title of ambassador for tourism for Jamaica to pilot Barrington Irving following his successful historic solo flight around the world.

During last month's World Flight Adventure Gala, held in Captain Irving's honor at the Florida Memorial University in the United States, the Jamaican minister announced that this honor was in addition to the Jamaica national honor, Order of Distinction (O.D.) Rank of Commander, to be conferred on the Jamaican-born pilot at King's House in the Caribbean nation.

In praising the young aviator, Bartlett told almost 400 well-wishers attending the gala that Irving

had now joined the ranks of many other deserving Jamaicans who had accomplished notable areas of ingenuity.

'INSPIRATION'

Irving, a 23-year-old senior majoring in aerospace at Florida Memorial University, used his single engine plane called "Inspiration" to fly around the world, making him the first black and the youngest aviator to achieve the feat.

On June 23, Irving completed his mission, which took 97 days, carrying him more than 26,000 miles and across many countries since he took off from Miami in March.

Earlier this year, during Jamaica's 45th Independence celebrations, Irving and his family were guests of the

Jamaican government during a four-day visit to the island. Born in Kingston, Irving was raised in Miami Gardens, and has been using his successful mission to encourage young people to resist negative influences and work towards their dream. Irving also established an aviation learning center, at the Opa-Locka Airport in South Florida.



Irving

IMMIGRATION KORNER

Question: Should I replace my "green card" even though it has no expiration date?

Answer: Yes you should, officials of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) say. The agency is proposing a new rule that would terminate "green cards" or permanent residency documents that have no expiration dates, according to a recent notice in the Federal Register.

If the rule becomes final, it would enable USCIS to update cardholder information, conduct background checks, and electronically store applicants' biometric information. The new card will be a modern version with greater security, be more tamper-resistant, and will have an expiration date requiring that the card be periodically renewed.

The rule proposes to require permanent residents with Permanent Resident Cards ("green cards") without expiration dates and who have not already applied for new cards with an expiration date to apply during a 120-day filing period that would be established by a final rulemaking.

The "green card" holder can get a new "card" by filing Form I-90, along with the filing and biometric fees. Currently, the total cost is \$370 and includes the filing fee of \$290 for the I-90 and an \$80 biometric fee for photographs and fingerprints.

Applicants can e-file on the USCIS website using the form, but they will receive a notice to appear in person at a

U.S. wants resident aliens to turn in old 'green cards'

USCIS facility for photographs and fingerprints.

PURPOSE

Permanent Resident Cards (Forms I-551) are issued to permanent residents to serve as evidence of immigration status, registration, identity and employment authorization. They also serve as entry documents upon return from trips outside of the U.S.

Officials of the USCIS insist that a card that is too old, with out-of-date photographs, cannot effectively serve these purposes. And, they added: "Replacement of the outstanding permanent resident cards without expiration dates is critical to the national security mission of USCIS".

Since August 1989, Permanent Resident Cards have been issued with a 10-year validity period, at which point the cardholder is required to apply to renew the card. Prior to August 1989, "green cards" were issued with no expiration date and these are the immigrants the USCIS is targeting. They estimate the number is around 750,000 nationally.

Meanwhile, officials also encourage eligible residents to consider applying for naturalization as well.

The answers provided here are for information purposes only, and do not create an attorney-client relationship, nor are they a substitute for legal advice which can only be given by a competent attorney after reviewing all the facts of the case.

Jamaica's first lady commissions 'Lunch for Literacy'

NEW YORK - Jamaica's early childhood and primary education programs are soon to benefit from a feeding program to be commissioned by First Lady Lorna Golding.

Speaking with reporters in New York last month, Golding, wife of Prime Minister Bruce Golding, said she will be introducing a "Lunch for Literacy" program to benefit Jamaican students, especially at the early childhood and primary levels.

She was among scores of first ladies from around the world at the launch of the global health and literacy initiative by Laura Bush, wife of United States President George W. Bush, held at the Pierpont Morgan Library and Museum, in midtown Manhattan.

"This was a very informa-



Jamaica's First Lady Lorna Golding attending a global health and literacy initiative in New York last month

you are not able to read and when you can read, you're sure to enjoy much better health," Mrs. Golding said.

Noting that, "you cannot learn unless you are well fed," Mrs. Golding said that the lunch for learning project would provide a proper nutrition program for the target groups through well equipped canteens in a presentable environment for dining, "and a child would be motivated to come to school because the menu was going to be a good one today."

Training for the chefs for the feeding program will be provided by the HEART Institute.

- JIS

tive meeting. I knew always that literacy goes with health. When you have bad health,

Rains pepper 'Jamaican Jerk Festival', but fail to dampen its spice, spirit

FITZGERALD SMITH

Torrential rains shortened its duration, but could not dilute the spice and spirit of the sixth "Jamaican Jerk Festival" held in South Florida last month.

Despite the early finish, the annual festival, which promotes the traditional Caribbean method of "jerk" seasoning food ranging from meat, seafood, desserts and vegetables, still managed to serve up a winner in its "Jerk Cook-Off" and provide a feast of entertainment for the thousands who showed up at Markham Park in Sunrise on Sept. 23.

First time entrants "The Dental Place", a team led by Jamaican-born South Florida dentist Dr. Sharon Jefferson won the "jerk" cook-off and

the coveted "Dutch Pot" trophy, plus a cash prize. According to Dr. Jefferson, who declined to reveal her secret winning recipe, her team did its homework and was confident of success.

"We knew who we were going up against," the elated winner told Caribbean Today. "And even if we didn't win, we were going to come out looking good."

DROVES

The festival, a production of Riddims Marketing and



Variety is the spice of life. It also helped to spice up the different plates of food at this year's "Jamaican Jerk Festival".

Jamaica Awareness Inc. and presented by Air Jamaica, attracted dozens of vendors. Drove of adults and children lined up throughout the day to get their hands and mouths on the various jerk treats, includ-

ing jerk chicken, fish, yam, shrimp, and even ice cream.

Several local and international restaurants and businesses turned out to compete. The jerk feast was accompanied by entertainment featuring cultural dancers, folk singers, poetry readings and a musical treat by Byron Lee and the Dragonaires. Other activities, which made the event a success, included dominoes, cricket and netball competitions, wine tasting and games for the children.

"The overall turnout for the event was excellent and we are happy," said "Eddy" Edwards, chief executive officer of Riddims Marketing.

CUT SHORT

However, Edwards explained that the rains, which came later in the day, curtailed

the event and prevented one of the main performers from going onstage.

"The park had to be closed prematurely because of rain and Alison Hinds, who was scheduled to perform, could not," he said.

Rain or shine, the jerk pits and grills are expected to light up again next year for another festival, said Edwards. Caribbean patrons are already looking forward to it.

"With the upset among South Florida chefs, I think I will have to compete next year," said Dr. Jefferson with relish. "But the underdogs will forever be prepared."

Fitzgerald Smith is a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.

TOURISM / TRAVEL

www.caribbeantoday.com

U.S. visitor arrivals in the Caribbean dip as passport re-entry requirement takes toll

ELEANOR M. WILSON

In spite of belated protests mounted by Caribbean tourism organizations, the much-maligned Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) went into effect last



Smith

January. Its mandatory passport requirement for re-entry into the United States resulted in a five percent decrease in U.S. visitors

across the region January through April.

This issue has been a hot topic at Caribbean conferences for months now.

However, not everyone is blaming the WHTI for the decline. When approached, Caribbean tourism officials and executives in the industry responded with thought provoking observations and opinions on the downward spiral.

The Bahamas, so close to the U.S. east coast for convenient getaways, has felt the pinch. Arrivals decreased 11.7 percent the first four months of 2007 against the same period in 2006, in spite of an aggressive campaign by the Nassau/Paradise Island Promotion Board that reimbursed passport fees to more than 8,000 visitors. On the bright side, length of stays increased from 6.4 to 6.6 nights and hotel revenue posted a 0.3 percent gain.

Jamaica suffered a 13 percent decrease in U.S. stayover arrivals January through April, a particularly bad blow now that there are 1,200 more rooms to fill than were available in 2006. During January to April last year, arrivals increased 16.9 percent.

Basil Smith, director of tourism for Jamaica, commented: "Cruise ship bookings are also down, although cruise passengers are not required to produce passports on re-entering the United States until June, 2009. Destinations exempt from the new rule (USVI and Puerto Rico) are showing decreases as well. I think this indicates that other factors are in play here, such as a declining U.S. economy."

The U.S. Virgin Islands hotel occupancy does show a 6.5 percent drop in U.S. guests January through March against that period in 2006.

While popular St. Thomas slumped, St. Croix visitors increased 9.4 percent, with a 23 percent jump occurring during the second quarter. Was that due to an existing island promotion, off-season rates, or visitors switching their usual Caribbean destinations to one where no passport was needed?



Issa

OFF TARGET

Some target markets have been hit worse than others by the regulation and application backlog. John Lynch, executive vice president of sales worldwide for Sandals Resorts, estimated that the Caribbean overall would lose -10 percent of its business in the first half of 2007. He said the high cost of passports is especially impacting the family and mass markets - package tours and students on spring break. Sandals caters strongly to honeymooners, who traditionally celebrate the momentous occasion with a trip abroad.

One sure industry sign of 'traveler angst' is advance bookings occurring closer and closer to departure dates.

"This was our first red flag last fall," said Mike Norton, former vice president for sales at Air Jamaica Vacations who is now at Sandals Resorts. "People aren't as sure about spending their money. So the visitor slowdown becomes an economy issue as well."

Norton also had a question: When those massive backlogged applications are finally filled, will regular Caribbean visitors return to the region, or go to Europe or Asia now that they have the entry document that has always been required there? The luxury market seems to remain constant through wars, recessions and passport dilemmas.

"My guests at Round Hill Resort are seasoned travelers who already have passports," Josef Forstmayr observed, "so we're not experiencing any significant occupancy change."

He did express concern that the U.S. accounts for 70 percent of Caribbean visitors,

"...a huge market we cannot afford to lose. We all need to take a much more aggressive approach to overcome this passport obstacle, and the joint Caribbean Hotel Association/Caribbean Tourism Organization is working toward that goal."

PROMOTION

SuperClubs didn't wait for those organizations to pave the way. At first announcement, the marketing division correctly perceived the WHTI as a huge problem and initiated its own promotion to circumvent the issue. When guests book "Passport Included" for a minimum four nights, documented new or renewed passport costs are deducted from the all-inclusive package rate. At \$97 for adults, \$82 for children and \$67 for renewals, a family of four reaps an impressive reward.

As of Sept. 9, approximately 6,000 SuperClubs guests had taken advantage of this promotion. The latest Oct. 31, 2007 expiration date is now undergoing quarterly review. According to Chairman John Issa, it will probably be extended again for at least two months, covering travel through Dec. 2008.

"We are proud of this success," said Issa. "Not only have we helped travelers obtain passports, but during the first month of the initiative, bookings increased 15 percent at our six Jamaican properties, while all around us, Caribbean hotel occupancy levels were dropping significantly."

Hoteliers were hesitant to predict what kind of winter season they're facing. That late booking syndrome is still in effect. Esmeralda Perez, marketing director for Puerto Rico Hotel & Tourism Association, where passports are not required but numbers are down, reported that it is too early to forecast for leisure properties.

"...But I can tell you that Puerto Rico is looking at a very healthy group and corporate booking chart," he said. "This is an excellent indicator that the season will be good."

MIXED BAG

A random sample of U.S. Virgin Islands hoteliers

Caribbean tourism confab targets 'Next Generation'

"The Next Generation: Learning From The Past, Preparing For The Future" will be the theme of the 30th annual Caribbean Tourism Conference (CTC) to be held this month in Puerto Rico.

The business meetings will be held Oct. 19-21 and the conference sessions Oct. 21-24.

For the third year in a row, conference participants will earn continuing education credits through George Washington University for attending the CTC master classes. Master classes involve in-depth study of topics affecting the tourism industry using case studies and best practices. They are designed for travel agents as well as general delegates.

Other scheduled program highlights include hotel and site inspections for travel agents, destination spotlight presentations for agents, specialized workshops, and the Condé Nast Traveler "My Caribbean Essay Contest" and the Travel + Leisure "Youth Congress".

TOURS

In addition, there will be guided product tours for delegates, media activities pre-

sented by the host venue and other Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) member countries, and awards events - including the "Fifth Annual Travel Writer and Photographer Awards" and the "Third Annual Creativity in Travel Awards" for travel agents.

A series of business meetings involving ministers and commissioners of tourism, the board of directors and various CTO committees will precede the conference beginning on Oct. 19, with the conference opening keynote address taking place on Oct. 21.

The conference is the Caribbean region's premier caucus of tourism decision-makers and an important event on the calendar of tourism practitioners and individuals doing business with the Caribbean.

This year, CTO expects to host over 600 tourism industry officials representing Caribbean governments, hotels, airlines, cruise lines, travel agents, tour operators, strategic partners and media representatives from around the world.



St. Vincent's tourism sector making contribution ~ minister

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC - St. Vincent and the Grenadine's tourism sector pumped over EC\$350 million (\$131 million) into that Eastern Caribbean country's economy last year, an official has disclosed.

Minister of Tourism Vincent Beache said the sector accounted for more than 60 percent of the country's gross domestic product in 2006 and after a sluggish performance in the early part of this year, should end 2007 in an even better financial position.

"We have a slight decline in stay over which is something I don't like to see," Beache, who was in Barbados last month as part of a regional tourism thrust, told the **Caribbean Media Corporation**. "We also have a slight decline in same day visitors which is expected because of the high airfares."

"In our yachting sector, which is always our biggest sector, we are up about 14 to 15 percent approximately so that as usual is a big strength

for us, but we also need to look at our cruise ship passengers that have been up and continue to rise.

"As a matter of fact for this upcoming season we are on point to have the biggest season we ever had so things are on the up and up in tourism in St Vincent and the Grenadines."

COMMON THRUST

He identified the need for a common Caribbean marketing thrust where the region could be offered as a common destination.

"It is time we realize that we are really not in competition with each other, that every other country in the world wants the tourism dollar and they are going for it," Beache said.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 16)



Beache

POINT OF DIVERSITY



Jamaica Tourist Board's Regional Director Clive Taffe points out Jamaica's diverse offerings to some 80 travel agents from major markets in the United States during a recent mini-tourism trade show at the Half Moon Conference Centre in Montego Bay, Jamaica. The four-day event was organized by the Jamaica Tourist Board and the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA), with support from Air Jamaica. Looking on from the head table are JTB's Marketing Representative Wayne Sterling and JHTA's First Vice President Evelyn Smith.

TOURISM BRIEFS

• Delta flies weekly to Bonaire

Tourism Corporation Bonaire has announced that beginning **Feb. 9, 2008** Delta Air Lines will launch a weekly non-stop flight from its Atlanta hub to Bonaire.

Delta Air Lines flight 371 will depart Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport Saturdays at 10 a.m. arriving at Bonaire's Flamingo International Airport at 3:10 p.m. The return flight 370 will depart Bonaire Saturdays at 4:15 p.m. arriving in Atlanta at 7:55 p.m.

• ...and St. Kitts too

The St. Kitts Tourism Authority has announced that Delta Air Lines will commence a new non-stop flight from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport to St. Kitts, the first time the airline will offer serv-

ice to this Caribbean island.

The flight will operate once a week on Saturdays, beginning on Feb. 16, 2008. Delta's flight 373 will depart Atlanta at 11:15 a.m. and arrive at St. Kitts's Robert L. Bradshaw International Airport at 4:05 p.m. The return flight 372 will depart St. Kitts at 4:55 p.m. and arrive in Atlanta at 8:05 p.m.

• Hyatt to open in Port of Spain

In December, Hyatt Regency will open its newest hotel in Port of Spain, Trinidad.

The 428-room hotel will be located in the heart of Trinidad and Tobago's capital city and financial epicenter.

Compiled from several sources.



St. Vincent's tourism sector making contribution ~ minister

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15)

"When you go to Europe you can get one package that will carry you to France, Spain, Italy, Portugal and yet their countries are a lot farther apart than we are in the Caribbean yet within the Caribbean we don't have one package that can carry you to Barbados, St. Vincent, St.

Lucia and Grenada.

"Not one package is there and one of the things about travelers and potential travelers is that they love nothing better than when they return home they could say that they visited more than one country on that trip," he added.



U.S. diplomat denies negative fallout of WHTI

RAWLE TITUS

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada, CMC - A United States diplomat says there is no evidence that new travel regulations announced recently by Washington were affecting the tourism industry in the Caribbean.

Washington said that U.S. citizens traveling to the Caribbean had to be in possession of a valid passport in order to re-enter the country.

The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) first came into effect in January, but was relaxed to accommodate travelers whose passport applications were taking longer than expected in light of the high demand for the travel document.

But the move by the U.S. was criticized by tourism offi-

cials in the Caribbean who said that the move would seriously damage the industry that provides employment for a significant amount of people and is a major revenue earner. However, Karen Jo McIsaac, charge d'affaires at the U.S. embassy here, said the authorities have not seen any noticeable decline in visitor arrivals ahead of the Oct. 1 implementation date of the new measures.

"You will have to ask the immigration authorities for the actual numbers of people going in and out, but we have not really seen a decrease as far as I can tell," McIsaac told the **Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC)**.

"There are a large number of American visitors and Grenada particularly does not focus on the U.S. and so a larger number of your tourists are still coming from Europe and other areas but it has not appeared to have the kind of

effect that was feared," the U.S. diplomat said.

POSSIBLY LOSS

A study, conducted by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), on behalf of the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), found that the region stands to lose an estimated US\$2.6 billion in earnings and more than 188,000 jobs at risk.

"And we are not hearing the kind of complaints that we heard before the rule went into effect in January that it was going to destroy the tourism sector. I don't think it did," said the U.S. charge d'affaires.

"People continue to come especially because again a number of the other islands have always required U.S. visitors to have passports. Grenada was the one that didn't so that was where I sort of expected a difference but it does not seem to have had a negative impact," she added.



U.S. visitor arrivals in the Caribbean dip...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15)

revealed a brisk February/March, but lagging Christmas holiday bookings so far, which they attribute more to higher airfares imposed for that period. Issa had no doubts.

"SuperClubs' winter is looking very strong, with solid bookings through the season," he said. "Our upscale Grand Lido properties always do very well in winter, and the high accolades lavished on recently renovated Breezes Runaway Bay are generating new business plus returning guests."

The temporary use of passport applications as re-entry documents was scheduled to expire on Sept. 30, now that the summer rush has subsided and the backlog is supposedly under control. Yet unless there is a last-minute renewal of that format, U.S./Caribbean visitor arrival statistics for the next six months should turn up some revealing percentages.

Eleanor M. Wilson is a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.



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B U S I N E S S

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U.S. call centers expand rapidly in Caribbean

NEW YORK – A number of American corporations say call centers in the Caribbean are rapidly expanding in the face of low-cost customer service in the region.

The corporations say declining communication costs, warm hospitality, and better relations with United States customers have also contributed to call center expansion in the region.

“The islands all seem to be really positive as opposed to the surly attitudes you have in some of the other places,” said Robert Goodwin, manager of AOL, a unit of the Dulles, Virginia-based Time Warner Inc., which has a call center in St. Lucia.

“It’s cheery weather, it’s cheery people,” he added in a statement issued here.

Goodwin said while AOL still uses call centers in Asia and other countries, the Caribbean has been more competitive, noting that several regional governments have been offering tax and other incentives to attract more companies. AOL said Jamaica, for instance, offers “free zone” status that permits owners to send home 100



Caribbean call centers are now a big attraction.

percent of their earnings that are earned tax-free.

GLOBAL NUCLEUS

Industry experts said Jamaica is one of the leading call centers in the Caribbean, with about 14,000 employees, making the region a new global nucleus for call centers.

Barbados, Trinidad, and Dominica have also devel-

oped call centers dedicated to customer service.

Philip Cohen, an industry consultant, said while the region has taken a relatively small share of the call market, it is significant for its relatively small population.

“You put a call center with 100 people in Barbados, and that’s a God’s gift,” he said.

“With 100 people in

India, you can’t even see it,” he added.

David Kreiss, the Atlanta, Georgia-based owner of KM2, a collections and call-center firm that holds the AOL contract in St. Lucia, said he has opened a new call center in Barbados and is planning on further expanding once more fiber optic cables are installed.

Philip Peters, chief executive of Coral Gables, Florida-based Zagada Markets, said Caribbean

call centers have increased from 11,300 in 2002 to 55,000 today, generating \$2.5 billion in economic gain. He lauded the region for its high-quality service.

“They have a history of troubleshooting with Americans without getting upset,” he said.



Build on gains of 1970s, IMF tells Caribbean

WASHINGTON, CMC – In the face of less supportive external conditions, a top International Monetary Fund (IMF) official has called on regional countries to build on the gains they have made since the 1970s.

Speaking on the topic, “The Global Outlook: Implications for Latin America and the Caribbean”, John Lipsky, the IMF’s first deputy managing director, told the 40th annual meeting at the American Association of the Chambers of Commerce in Latin America (AACCLA) that “this is the time to underscore the impor-

tance of good fundamentals.”

He identified three areas in which he said much can be accomplished: investment and productivity; fiscal policy; and financial market development.

“The region’s recent growth, while strong relative to its own history, still lags other developing regions,” Lipsky said.

“Moreover, faster growth is a necessary condition in order to make more meaning-

ful reductions in poverty.”

By necessity, Lipsky said this will have to be achieved through a combination of increased investment and faster productivity growth. But he said additional progress is possible, noting that the region’s productivity growth from 1990-2006 was some two percentage points per year slower than that of emerging Asia over the same period.

He said investment ratios in the Caribbean and Latin America are also “substantially lower” than the developing country average — by some

six percentage points of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

But the IMF official said there have been encouraging recent developments in increasing and diversifying trade in the region. He said regional fiscal policy improvements have been notable recently, including increased primary surpluses.

But Lipsky said more needs to be done to reduce the dependence of public revenues on commodities, noting that current spending also seems to be taking precedence over public investment.



Lipsky

Jamaican heads oldest U.S. minority trade grouping

NEW YORK - A Jamaican has become the first Caribbean national to head the oldest minority trade association in the United States.

Maria Kong, who resides in Florida, was elected president of the 35,000-member National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB) at its 60th annual conference in New York City.

Kong also became only the second woman to lead the trade association.

Her election comes at a time when African Americans and other minorities are losing their homes to foreclosure at an alarming rate.

“As real estate professionals, we have an obligation to keep the dream of homeownership alive,” said Kong, who owns the Lauderhill, Florida-based firm, Markon Realty and Management Company.

“Seven-hundred homes owned by African-Americans in foreclosure status is unac-

ceptable and erodes the fragile stability of our communities,” she added.

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

She said during her two-year reign she would embark on among other things, a major national marketing campaign to brand the name of NAREB, significantly increase the membership base and forge new partnerships to increase opportunities for members.

Founded in 1947, NAREB, which has 84 chapters throughout the U.S., seeks to “address the need to secure the right to equal housing opportunities regardless of race, creed, or color,” Kong said.

“Since its inception, NAREB has consistently advocated for and supported legislation to ensure fair housing for all Americans,” she added.



Business links key to CSME

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, CMC – Investment and collaboration between private sector agencies in the Caribbean community (CARICOM) is pivotal in making the dream and goal of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) a reality, says a senior regional parliamentarian.

Barbados Deputy Prime Minister Mia Mottley told a gathering of business people here that there were opportunities for expansion of trade in all CARICOM countries and that those opportunities should be carefully sought out using partnership to ensure their success.

“The fact that we have worked together within the Caribbean community to establish a single market last year in less than 20 years...and the fact that we continue to work towards the beginning of the framework for a single economy next year is also indicative of the commitment we have to working with each other,” she said late last month.

The minister of economic affairs and development, who led a Barbados investment delegation to Georgetown, said Guyana was ripe for investment from other member CARICOM countries.

“We are cognizant that even though Guyana has had its economic difficulties we have every confidence that this country has the resources and capacity to, with its people, to lift those of us from the rest of the Caribbean community simply by using the scale of resources, the scale of expertise and the commitment to be able to want to do it,” she said.

The minister said Guyana had food and renewable energy potential that could be realized using resources from the other Caribbean countries.

“Agriculture is one of the key areas that is a low hanging fruit,” she said, noting that the region needed to move to new production measures to boost production in the agriculture sector.

Over 30 Barbadian businessmen visited Georgetown last month as part of the trade mission.



U.S. seeks closer relationship with Muslim groups in Caribbean

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC – Muslim leaders from several Caribbean islands last month attended a ceremony hosted by the United States aimed at improving relations and “cementing ties of friendship”.

A statement issued by the U.S. Embassy here said that Ambassador Mary Ourisman hosted an “Iftaar banquet” for the Muslim leaders from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, St. Lucia and St. Kitts and Nevis.

“One of our country’s greatest strengths is the diversity and richness of our many religious traditions: Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, people of many faiths, and even some of no religious affiliation at all live together peacefully and in a

climate of mutual respect,” the ambassador said.

“On this special evening we recognize our Muslim friends in the Eastern Caribbean. We celebrate the millions of Muslims we are proud to call American citizens. We honor the many Islamic nations that America is proud to call friends. And we renew the ties of friendship that should bind all who trace their faith back to God’s call on Abraham.”

‘SPECIAL’

The statement quoted the secretary of the Barbados Muslim Association (BMA) Sulieman Bulbulia as saying that the event was a “special and significant gesture” and marked a “defining moment in the establishment of what

we hope will be a mutually beneficial relationship between your embassy and us”.

Bulbulia said events like the Iftaar “goes a long way in building a climate of trust, cordial relations and correcting feelings of antagonism and mistrust.

“While we may not agree with all the policies and programs of the American government and while there are some who will use these disagreements to promote a theory of a clash of civilizations, cultures and faiths, tonight by our gathering we promote instead a dialogue among civilizations, cultures and faiths based upon mutual respect and tolerance,” he added.

P.M. Golding makes unity call as he takes office in Jamaica

KINGSTON, Jamaica, CMC - Orrett Bruce Golding took office as Jamaica’s eighth prime minister on Sept. 11, pleading with his predecessor to join hands in a new politics of cooperation, while pledging to introduce measures to stamp out corruption and rising crime and drive economic growth in the country.

The 59-year-old leader said the Sept. 3 general elections, in which his Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) ended 18 years in Opposition when it secured a narrow victory over the Portia Simpson Miller-led People’s National Party (PNP), demonstrated the need for a paradigm shift from competitive politics to nation-building initiatives in governance.

“In our two pairs of hands (he told Simpson Miller who was seated in the audience) rest so much of the hopes of the people of Jamaica. We have a choice. Those hands can engage in hand-to-hand combat or we can join those hands together to build a nation that is strong, just, peaceful and



Golding takes the oath of office.

prosperous. I want to sit down with you, Portia.

“Let’s talk about Jamaica. Let’s talk about the dream that I believe we share for a Jamaica whose people are at peace with each other, where equality and justice reign supreme, where every child can go to a good school and every adult to a decent job, where everyone might not be rich, but no one has to be poor,” he said.

ANTI-GARRISON

Speaking after taking the oath of office before Governor

General Professor Kenneth Hall and in the presence of thousands of people on the grounds of King’s House – the governor general’s official residence - the new prime minister said the garrison-type politics which characterized political life here should be a thing of the past.

“We must retire the culture where one set of

Jamaicans speak of ‘the government dem’ as if it were a hostile, alien force. I want to see a new order in which all the people will regard the government, no matter which party forms it, as ‘our government’,” the prime minister said.

Pledging that he would be the chief servant of the people, Golding said within the first 100 days of his administration, policy initiatives would be developed to point the way towards how government could protect the rights of the people; reduce crime; create an educated, productive workforce and attract investments that could provide “real jobs.” He said policy papers would also be created to improve transparency and accountability in government while eliminating corruption; move towards a strong Parliament and more effective political representa-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 19)

T&T general elections Nov. 5

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC – Prime Minister Patrick Manning has announced Nov. 5 as the date for general elections in Trinidad and Tobago.

In a brief statement to Parliament on Sept. 28, Manning said that Nomination Day is Oct. 22.

This will be the first time that Trinidadians will vote for a 41-member Parliament. In the

last 36-member Parliament, the People’s National Movement (PNM) controlled 20 seats with the remainder going to the United National Congress and the minority Congress of the People (COP), a breakaway faction of the UNC.

T&T ready to vote, page 25.



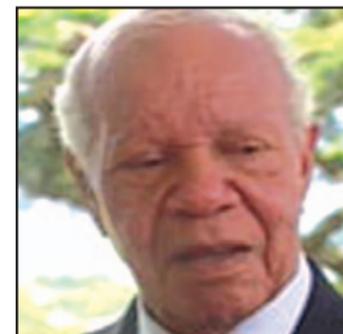
Sir John Compton, St. Lucia’s ‘Father of the Nation’, is dead

CASTRIES, St. Lucia - Sir John Compton, St. Lucia’s “Father of the Nation”, died early last month at age 82, plunging the country he led for over 30 years into two weeks of mourning declared by the government in his honor.

Acting Prime Minister Stephenson King was sworn in on Sept. 9 as the island’s new prime minister.

Sir John became the country’s first prime minister after leading St. Lucia to political independence in Feb. 1979. He led the country from 1964-1979, 1982-1996 and from Dec. 2006.

He served as chief minister, premier and prime minister at various periods. He returned from political retirement to lead his United



Compton

Workers Party (UWP) to a stunning victory in last December’s general elections.

NO ‘MARATHON’

However, when Sir John led the UWP back into the corridors of power in December, he made it clear

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 19)

Ex-ruling party official wins Opposition primary in Antigua

ST. JOHN’S, Antigua, CMC – A former member of the ruling United Progressive Party (UPP) has gained the Opposition Antigua Labour Party’s (ALP) backing as the party sets about choosing candidates to contest the next general elections in Antigua and Barbuda.

ALP officials confirmed that Dean Jonas had secured 148 of the 314 ballots cast last month to select the candidate for the St. George’s constituency.

Jonas defeated attorney Alincia Williams Grant, who received 105 votes, while businessman Kendall Samuel got 62 votes.

He later told the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) that he was confident of defeating the incumbent Dr. Jacqui Quinn-Leandro in the polls scheduled for 2009.

“I’ve really worked hard to gain the confidence of the people of St. George’s,” he said.

Though Quinn-Leandro opted not to comment on the ALP candidate’s statement, she said she welcomed the challenge.

“The people of my constituency will decide who can

best represent their interest, who can best champion their cause, who can best mediate on their behalf,” she said.

“I think that democracy is alive and well in the country. I really think that the people of St. George’s will have to decide. We have a very healthy democracy in Antigua and Barbuda and I certainly welcome any challenge – it doesn’t matter who it is,” she added.

Jonas had served as UPP public relations officer until he left the party in 2004.

“I grew up in the Antigua Labour Party. I left the Antigua Labour Party to join the UPP because like many young persons in Antigua who grew up in Antigua, I saw one party in power for the past 30 years and many of us simply wanted a change in government,” he said.

“Yes I did, in fact, leave and join the UPP simply because I wanted a change. There were many young persons like myself who just wanted to see something different – different but better – but what we got was different and worse.”



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POLITICS

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Congresswoman Clarke lashes Bush's Iraq war plan

FITZGERALD SMITH

Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke, who is backed by a strong Caribbean immigrant constituency in New York, is urging United States President George W. Bush to pull U.S. troops out of Iraq and send them back home to their families.

Clarke, whose parents are Jamaican, said in an address to the media last month shortly after the president's Sept. 13 nationally broadcast speech to Americans, that the Bush administration seems too focused on the war in Iraq and should pay more attention to the issues of the nation.

"Clearly, this administration favors spending our hard-earned money on sending Americans into a hot desert and harms way than on building a stronger country at home," said Clarke, who represents the 11th Congressional District in Brooklyn.

"There are 37 million Americans living below the poverty line. Six million children across America do not have health care, including 384,000 children in the State of New York yet, just weeks ago, when Democrats in Congress passed programs that would have cost only a fraction of the president's war request to help fight poverty and to guarantee health insurance for children, the president threatened to veto these bills, claiming they are too expensive. Now the president is requesting an addi-

tional \$50 billion from the American people to continue staying-the-course in this war," Clarke added.

NEGATIVE RESPONSE

The president's highly anticipated speech incited negative responses from Democratic leaders and U.S. Senate hopefuls alike, all expressing their dissatisfaction with the president's plan to continue pursuits in the war-torn Middle Eastern country. This plan, he noted, is the result of a successful strategy implemented some months ago, which allowed U.S. troops to maximize efforts and further progress.



Clarke

"Eight months ago we adopted a new strategy to meet that objective, including a surge in U.S. forces that reached full strength in June," Bush explained. "(Last month), General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker testified before Congress about how that strategy is improving."

According to the president, because of this strategy the situation in Iraq is improving and the U.S. stands current with its goal of securing the Iraqi population; a goal which he also says will eventually require less U.S. forces.

"It will soon be possible to

bring home an Army combat brigade, for a total force reduction of 5,700 troops by Christmas," he added. "And...by July, we will be able to reduce our troop levels in Iraq from 20 combat brigades to 15."

TURMOIL

However, Clarke added that although reports indicate improvements in Iraq, particularly in the Anbar province, the majority of the country remains in turmoil.

"For Iraqis, the cost of the war has meant great suffering," the congresswoman said. "The president began the war under the premise of helping the people of Iraq, but after all this time, they remain in great trauma."

According to her, recent reports have also indicated that actions taken by the Bush administration to restore order to Iraq have made little difference. Additionally, she said, there have been at least 27,564 Iraqi deaths due violence because of the war, raising the question of whether or not the war was doing more harm than good.

"All of the lives, time, and money invested on the war, and the Iraqi government has earned what would be a dismally failing grade in any classroom," she said.

Fitzgerald Smith is a freelance writer for Caribbean Today.

P.M. King rejects call for early general elections in St. Lucia

CASTRIES, St. Lucia, CMC - Prime Minister Stephenson King has ruled out the possibility of early general elections to obtain his own mandate from the people of St. Lucia.

King, who was sworn in as prime minister recently following the Sept. 7 death of Sir John Compton, made this position clear as the country prepares for a by-election in the Micoud North constituency that was represented by the late prime minister.

Speaking prior to leaving the island to address the United Nations General Assembly last month, King



King being sworn in as prime minister.

said the current mandate of the government is still fresh,

and early general elections is not anywhere on the cards. Instead, he said the focus of his administration is on doing the job it was elected to do.

"The mission of the government is to ensure that we implement the vision of Sir John as we move on with the business of the country," King told reporters

"In terms of the timing of a general election that is far from my mind, what is on my mind now, is to fulfill the promises that were made in the last general election."

Sir John Compton, St. Lucia's 'Father of the Nation', is dead

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18)

that he was not there for a "marathon." Sir John was off the job since May when he suffered a series of small strokes and handed over day-to-day running of the government to King. It was reported that he was also battling other complications, such as diabetes, and a long-standing heart condition.

The decision to go with King as head of the government was agreed to by all 10 elected members of the ruling UWP.

Early last month doctors in Martinique, where Sir John had been airlifted for medical treatment, determined that there was nothing more medically they could do to improve his condition, leading to the

decision to return him home on Sept. 5. He died on Sept. 7.

A state funeral was held for the late leader last month.

Sir John leaves to mourn his wife Lady Compton and five children.

Compiled from CMC reports.

Jamaica names 18-member Cabinet

KINGSTON, Jamaica, CMC - Prime Minister Bruce Golding named an 18-member Cabinet.

Following is the full Cabinet:

- Prime Minister, Minister of Planning, Development and Defense - **Bruce Golding**
- Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade - **Dr. Kenneth Baugh**
- Minister of Finance and the Public Service - **Audley Shaw**
- Minister of National Security - **Derrick Smith**
- Attorney-General and Minister of Justice - **Dorothy Lightbourne**
- Minister of Industry and Commerce - **Karl Samuda**
- Minister of Education - **Andrew Holness**
- Minister of Tourism - **Edmund Bartlett**

- Minister of Agriculture - **Christopher Tufton**
- Minister of Energy, Mining and Telecommunications - **Clive Mullings**
- Minister of Water and Housing - **Dr. Horace Chang**
- Minister of Labour and Social Security - **Pearnel Charles**
- Minister of Transport and Works - **Michael Henry**
- Minister of Health and Environment - **Rudyard Spencer**
- Minister of Information, Culture, Youth and Sports - **Olivia Grange**
- Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister - **James Robertson**
- Minister in the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service - **Don Wehby**
- Minister in the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service - **Dwight Nelson**

P.M. Golding makes unity call

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18)

tion and eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy and waste of public resources.

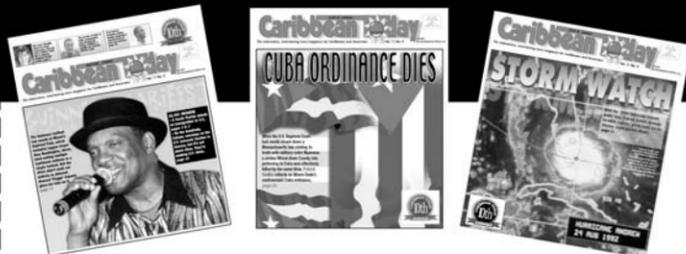
"I ask the Jamaican people to appreciate that the commitment we intend to honor during the first 100 days are, of necessity, those which do not require a significant outlay of government expenditure," Golding said.

"The financial constraints and fiscal challenges that we face are well known and the medium and long term solutions will have to be pursued over time," he said.

However, the new prime minister sought to assure the nation that even in the face of

the challenges that his government would face, it intended to honor campaign commitments to abolish the payment of school tuition fees and fees at public hospitals. Concerning the vexed issue of corruption, Golding pledged to make a difference by implementing stiff penalties for violators. He also noted that the government would introduce whistleblower legislation to protect persons who provided information on wrongdoing on the part of public officials and would also review the libel and slander laws of the country.

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Caribbean Today

Ex-Surinamese military dictator among 25 to be tried for killings

PARAMARIBO, Suriname, CMC - The highly anticipated trial of 25 people implicated in the Dec. 1982 extrajudicial killing of 15 political opponents of the then military regime is to start on Nov. 30, sources close to process here have revealed.

"I can confirm that the Military Court has decided to start the 8 December Trial on Friday November 30," said spokesperson, Marjory Sanches.

Surviving relatives and human rights organizations, in a first response, voiced relief with the announcement of the trial date.

On Dec. 8, 1982, 15 political opponents of the military junta, led by then army commander Desi Bouterse, were tortured and ultimately executed by military officers. Amongst the victims were union leaders, journalists,

scholars, lawyers and university professors.

APOLOGY

In 2000 the Court of Justice ordered the prosecutor general to start a criminal investigation into the extrajudicial killings after relatives put forward a request in order to block the limitation to prosecute the case. In June a court handed down a ruling ordering the prosecution of 10 suspects who were fighting a legal battle to be taken off the list of suspects in relation to the extrajudicial killings. In March the former military dictator publicly apologized to the surviving relatives of dead.

"I am apologizing to all the surviving relatives," said Bouterse at a meeting with youth to mark the 27th anniversary of his successful 1980 coup.

The former army chief

had also called for amnesty for the alleged suspects in the extrajudicial killings which led to an international boycott of his

administration and a withdrawal of military support from the United States and the Netherlands.

Bouterse said the entire Surinamese community should be part in seeking the truth of that "dark chapter in Suriname's history." The former dictator said he wanted to tell the young people his side of the story since, according to him, representations of the events back then by political opponents were false.



Bouterse

T&T's attorney general refuses to testify

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, CMC - A tribunal set up to investigate allegations of wrong doing against embattled Chief Justice Satnarine Sharma failed to hear testimony from Attorney General John Jeremie as well as two top business executives who have all been implicated for their alleged role in the efforts to remove the head of the Trinidad and Tobago judiciary from office.

The three-member tribunal headed by retired Privy Council Judge Lord Mustill, as well as St. Lucian jurist Sir Vincent Floissac and Jamaican Dennis Morrison, had invited Jeremie to make an appearance before them on the penultimate day of the public hearings late last month.

President George Maxwell Richards had suspended Sharma from his duties on June 13, 2007 until the hearing and determination of the impeachment proceedings.

Sharma had been accused

by Chief Magistrate Sherman McNicolls of trying to influence his decision in the case against former Prime Minister Basdeo Panday, who was on three charges of failing to declare a London bank account to the Integrity Commission for three years while he was head of government in 1997, 1998 and 1999.

McNicholls found Panday guilty of the charges.

LETTER

Senior Counsel Douglas Mendes, who is representing Jeremie, submitted a letter to the secretary of the tribunal along with a statement, dated July 28, 2006 that the attorney general gave to High Court Judge Humphrey Stollmeyer. Justice Stollmeyer had been



Sharma

appointed by the Judicial and Legal Service Commission to investigate a land transaction deal involving McNicolls. In the letter Jeremie said he "refer to the observation made by the chairman of the tribunal that an imputation has been made by counsel for the chief justice that the attorney general has been a willing and active participant and possibly the instigator of a cynical plot to wreck the trial of Mr. Panday".

The attorney general said there was no truth to these allegations and that he found no evidence of alleged conspiracies and as a result could not assist the tribunal other than to refer to statements he previously made. But Queen Counsel Geoffrey Robertson, who is leading Sharma's defense, said that it would be in the best interest of the attorney general to testify and explain his role in the matter.

The Bahamas is richest in Caribbean ~ website

ST GEORGE'S, Grenada, CMC - The Bahamas has been ranked as the richest country in the Caribbean by a Canadian website - *Aneki.com*.

The site, which derives its information from numerous sources, including United Nations agencies and the United States' Central Intelligence Agency's World Factbook, ranked The Bahamas at number one with a \$21,300 per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Trinidad and Tobago was ranked as the second richest with a GDP of \$19,700, a position which would usually have been held by Barbados, which now ranks at number three with a GDP of \$18,200.

Aneki.com ranks Antigua and Barbuda as fourth, with a GDP of \$10,900; St. Kitts and Nevis, fifth with a GDP of \$8,200; Dominican Republic, sixth with a GDP of \$8,000; St. Lucia, seventh, with a GDP of \$4,800; Jamaica, eight, with GDP of \$4,600;

Cuba, ninth with GDP of \$3,900; and Grenada, 10th with a GDP of \$3,900.

EXEMPTIONS

Under its ranking, Guyana and Suriname, which are Caribbean community (CARICOM) countries, were put with the South American states, placing sixth and ninth respectively.

In the category of richest countries in the world, Luxembourg came in first with \$68,800 per capita GDP. Equatorial Guinea, United Arab Emirates, Norway, Ireland, United States, Andorra, Iceland, Denmark and Austria followed in descending order on the list.

The sites also put heart disease as the leading cause of death; cancer as second; respiratory infections and lung disease as third and fourth; and HIV/AIDS as fifth. Traffic accidents were ranked at number 10.

Bermuda names Dame Lois country's first National Hero

HAMILTON, Bermuda, CMC - Government has announced that former Opposition Leader Dame Lois Browne Evans will become the country's first National Hero and the May 24 Bermuda Day holiday will be renamed National Heroes Day.

The new combined court and police building in Hamilton is also to be named after Dame Lois, who died earlier this year, government said.

A bronze statue or bust in the likeness of Dame Lois will also be erected at the new building, according to Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs Wayne Perinchief.

In a press release, Premier Ewart Brown said: "Dame Lois long believed there was a need to instill national pride in our people. I share that belief, and in a very strong way this government has made Dame Lois' wish come true.

"She would have never chosen herself for this sort of adulation. I'm proud we could do it for her because she did so much for all of Bermuda."

FIRST LADY

Dame Lois was Bermuda's first female barrister, Bermuda's first female attorney general, and the first woman to become Opposition leader in a British Commonwealth country when she became leader of the now ruling Progressive Labour Party (PLP) in 1968. She served as

leader until 1972 and again from 1976 to 1985. The PLP won power for the first time in 1998.

Dame Lois died on May 29, shortly before her 80th birthday, and was laid to rest at the Anglican Cathedral

during a specially called national holiday on June 6. More than 1,000 people attended the church service.

Perinchief asked the public for their suggestions on how best to commemorate the life of Dame Lois and her contributions to Bermuda back in July. By Aug. 17, 101 submissions had arrived at the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs. Among the most popular was a national public holiday in honor of Dame Lois and naming the new court and police building after Dame Lois. Those recommendations were accepted by Cabinet.

Perinchief said: "The public response has been highly gratifying in recognizing the achievements of Dame Lois and reflects the profound respect for a Bermudian trailblazer who fought for honor and justice."



Dame Lois

Jamaica vows to handle abuse allegations against cops

KINGSTON, Jamaica, CMC - Prime Minister Bruce Golding has called for the establishment of a single independent body that will investigate all cases of abuse and unlawful conduct by members of the security forces in Jamaica.

Golding met with Attorney General Dorothy Lightbourne, as well as the solicitor general, the chief parliamentary counsel and officials from the Ministry of Justice, to discuss the issue in light of the increased number

of allegations of abuse and unlawful conduct against members of the security forces by the public.

A statement issued here on Sept. 22 said that Golding has called for a report to be submitted to him outlining the legal and administrative steps required to establish the authority.

"This report will take into account the existence and respective roles of the Police Public Complaints Authority, the

Civilian Oversight Authority, the Bureau of Special Investigations and the Office of Professional responsibilities and recommend appropriate changes," Golding said.

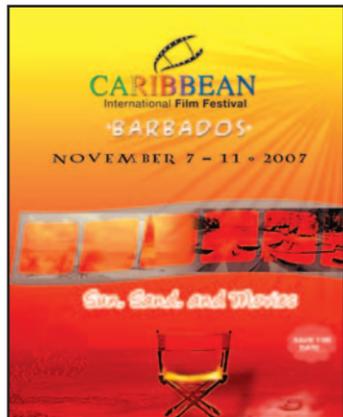
"The government will do everything possible to strengthen and support the police in combating crime and in the lawful execution of their duties. However this cannot be at the expense of the constitutional rights of the people."

'The Harder They Come' to highlight Caribbean Int'l Film Fest Nov. 7-11

A special screening of the classic Jamaican film "The Harder They Come" will be among the highlights of the Caribbean International Film Festival next month in Barbados.

The festival, scheduled for Nov. 7-11, will parade feature-length and short films, and music video entries from the region and internationally.

"The Harder They Come", credited with being Jamaica's first feature film, was written, produced and



directed by the late Perry Henzell, who will be honored

at the festival. The screening of the film will be accompanied by a special screening of "The Making of the Harder They Come".

For more information about the festival, the events, industry accreditations as well as volunteer and sponsorship opportunities at the festival, visit the official website: www.caribbeaninternational-filmfestival.com or email info@caribbeaninternational-filmfestival.com.

Winkler and 'Dog War' set for Miami book fair

GORDON WILLIAMS

Caribbean people still remember him as the man behind "The Lunatic". Jamaican-born author Anthony C. Winkler is perfectly sane – of course – but his latest novel "Dog War" is so funny, it borders on crazy.

So next month Winkler, armed with his hilarious tale of a Jamaican woman struggling with her cultural and religious beliefs, and the testing times she faces with her employer's dog, will be among several authors from the region expected to be present at the Miami International Book Fair from Nov. 4-11.

This year's fair will carry a new feature, "the Translation Market", dubbed as "a world literature and translation summit". Yet it is the accomplishments of authors like Winkler that will give the fair - and its base in downtown Miami - a familiar Caribbean feel. Winkler and others believe the world is more ready than ever to embrace Caribbean literary works.

"Yeah, I think there is a greater opening," he said.

It's been long overdue, despite the region's shortcomings.

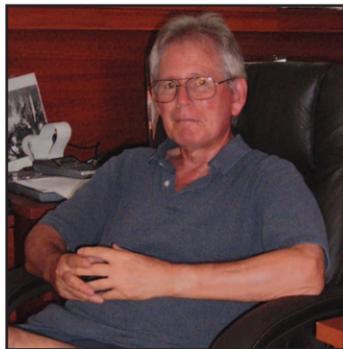
"One of the things that surprises me about the West Indies is that we have two Nobel Laureates in literature," Winkler explained. "I think that's astounding when you think of such small populations compared with some of the bigger countries and the poverty, and the lack of facilities."

SUCCESS SIGNS

Yet Winkler seems to have the answer for the Caribbean's literary success. Despite years of colonialism, he explained, the region still managed to wriggle free with

its own creative independence, unburdening itself from the weight of expectations originating elsewhere.

"I think it is the lack of a strong literary tradition that



Winkler relaxes in his Atlanta home.

gives us (in the Caribbean) the freedom to experiment as writers," said the 62-year-old novelist and textbook writer.

"Because we don't have a Shakespeare looking over your shoulder. And you don't have someone who is such a wonderful example and you can't cope."

Winkler's "Dog War", like his other works such as "The Lunatic", "The Painted Canoe", "Going Home To Teach" and "The Duppy", reflects the Caribbean experience. It is about the region's people and, although crafted with every writer's goal to reach the widest possible audience, it is written with Caribbean people in mind as well.

"The writer wants to strike a universal note," he said. "...We always want to write to the widest possible audience."

But, cut to the core, Winkler is enjoying himself with his writings, hoping that the reader comes along for a fun ride.

"No, I don't just write for Jamaicans," he explained last month from his home in an Atlanta, Georgia suburb. "I

write mainly for Jamaicans because I am Jamaican. But really, when it comes down to it, I write for myself. If I like it, I figure somebody else will like it."

"Dog War" will certainly get many people's attention. And Winkler is pleased that more and more Caribbean people are trying to write, especially Jamaicans, who he believes are capable of excelling at anything they attempt.

"One of the things I will say about Jamaicans and every field they get into, writing included," he explained, "when they good, they good. They really good."

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.

Putting pen to paper

The following Caribbean authors (with some their works listed) were also invited to the 2007 Miami International Book Fair:

- **Opal Palmer Adisa** – "I Name Me Name: Lola" and "Until Judgment Comes: Stories About Jamaican Men"
- **Jane Bryce** – "Chameleon: Short Stories" and "Caribbean Dispatches: Beyond the Tourist Dream"
- **Oonya Kempadoo** – "Tide Running"
- **Philip Nanton** – "Caribbean Dispatches: Beyond the Tourist Dream"
- **Geoffrey Philp** – "Grandpa Sydney's Anancy Stories"
- **Howard Pitterson** – "Spectre of Seven"
- **Kim Robinson** – "Out of Order!"
- **Marina Salandy** – Brown "Caribbean Dispatches: Beyond the Tourist Dream"
- **Robert Edison Sandiford** – "Shouts from the Outfield:"

'Umbrella' covers Rihanna with MTV music awards

Barbadian-born singer Rihanna used her hit single "Umbrella" to snare two coveted honors at last month's MTV Music Video Awards in Las Vegas, United States.

"Umbrella", a collaboration featuring American rapper Jay-Z, won the coveted "Video of the Year" award, plus "Monster Single of the Year". Justin Timberlake was the VMA's big winner, with four trophies.



Rihanna

ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS

• Carnival hits Miami on Oct. 7

The colorful and exciting culture of the Caribbean will again be on show in South Florida during the 23rd staging of the Miami Carnival on Oct. 7.

The event, featuring costume parades and live music bands, will run from **noon to 11 p.m.** at Bicentennial Park in downtown Miami and the city is claiming that the festivities embody the unity of the diverse cultures that it represents.

The event will kick off with a parade of bands and costumes and feature Caribbean and international food, beverages and arts and crafts. Top Caribbean performers are scheduled for the event. For more information, call **305-653-1877** or visit www.MiamiCarnival.net.

• Vincentian entertainers join global campaign

Entertainers in St. Vincent and the Grenadines last month joined regional agriculturists and non governmental organizations to support a global move to halt the current

round of negotiations for Economic Partnership Agreements between African Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP) and the European Union (EU).

More than a dozen Vincentian entertainers were scheduled to perform at a five-hour concert, organized by OXFAM, the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) and the Windward Island Farmers Association (WINFA), which is part of the global "Stop EPA Day" activities organized to focus attention on the EPA negotiations which must be concluded by the Dec. 2007 deadline.

• Cuba, Suriname strengthen cultural links

Suriname and Cuba have signed an agreement, which government officials say will strengthen cultural cooperation between the two countries. The pact will facilitate exchange programs for artists and technical personnel.

Compiled from CMC and other sources.

'Space' dominates artist's exhibition opening Oct. 11

For the first time in close to a decade, art enthusiasts will get a chance to see the works of the Dominican Republic's Julio Susana in the United States.

The painter, sculptor and professor's last American exhibit was in Coral Gables in 1999. He returns to that South Florida city this month to unveil his newest collection of paintings at the Mila Hajjar Gallery.

The exhibition runs from Oct. 11 through Nov. 8.

Earlier this year, Susana exhibited "Colores de mi Tierra" ("Colors of My Land") at the Secretaria de Estado de Cultura in Santo Domingo. He's returning to the U.S. with "Fiesta de Colores Tropicales" ("Festival of Tropical Colors") at Mila Hajjar.

works, about 30 paintings and 25 drawings, will be displayed, including titled works "Construction in Space" and "Love in Space".

"This work is innovative, and very creative," the artist said in a recent press release. "It's figurative, incorporating elements in space."

Susana, who describes his work as "his imagination flourishing in art," has enjoyed favorable review from Latin American critics. La Prensa called his paintings "eloquent" and "passionate", classifying him as an "outstanding figure of Dominican art."

Mila Hajjar Gallery is located at 32 Giralda Ave., Coral Gables, FL 33134.

For more information, visit www.juliosusana.com.

SPACE

The artist's most recent

Jamaica's Powell breaks 100 meters world record

RIETI, Italy, CMC – Jamaican Asafa Powell majestically smashed his own world 100-meter record in a sizzling 9.74 seconds at the Rieti international track and field meeting last month.

Lined up against a moderate field in only a qualifying heat, Powell sped out of the blocks and dominated the event, slicing 0.03 seconds off the previous best of 9.77 seconds, which he has run on three occasions.

Aided by a legal 1.7 meters-per-second following wind, Powell finished ahead of Gambia-born Saidy Ndure Jaysuma and St. Kitts and Nevis's former world champion Kim Collins, who recorded 10.07 seconds and 10.14 seconds, respectively.

The record was a mild consolation for Powell's huge disappointment just weeks before at the 11th IAAF World



Powell finishes his world record run.

Championships in Japan, when he finished third behind American Tyson Gay and Derrick Atkins of The Bahamas. But the big Jamaican appeared re-energized by his feat and embraced the moment.

"Today I proved to the world that Asafa is back," Powell said after the race on Sept 9.



Barbadian crowned English pro cricket's MVP

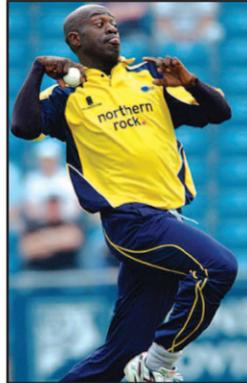
LONDON, Sep 24, CMC – Ottis Gibson has won a major award in Britain.

The former Barbados and West Indies all-rounder has been named the winner of the inaugural Professional Cricketers' Association Most Valuable Player award.

Gibson helped Durham to secure two major domestic trophies with a number of match-winning performances. The 38-year-old gathered 723 runs and collected 116 wickets in all competitions, but he scored 578 runs and snared 80 wickets – including 10 for 47 against Hampshire – in the County Championship proper. He also won the man-of-the-match award for his three for 24 –

also against Hampshire – in the limited-overs trophy final.

Gibson leapt well clear of his nearest rivals – the Pakistani leg-spinners Mushtaq Ahmed and Danish Kaneria – as he also claimed the PCA Bowling MVP award. Gibson ended the season with 735.97 points, 135.67 clear of Mushtaq and 178.49 ahead of Kaneria.



Gibson

REWARDING

"Certainly for me, the last couple of years spent coaching has made a difference to my approach to the way I play now," Gibson told the BBC.

"Sometimes you may search a lifetime for what you might consider is perfection. If I look back, this year has certainly been that way. It has probably been a perfect season

for me.

"I've bowled well without any pressure, and when I go on the field I always try to make a massive contribution to the team. It's a team effort and I've led the bowling attack this year, which is what was required."

The Most Valuable Player award was launched by the PCA this year to provide a more reliable and accurate means of assessing a player's performance, rewarding each run, wicket and catch.



'Soca Warriors' remain on top in region's soccer

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, Sep 19, CMC –Trinidad and Tobago's "Soca Warriors" remained on top of the Caribbean Football Union's (CFU) soccer rankings, collated from the September rankings released by soccer's world governing body FIFA last month.

Below is the Caribbean listing, with the world ranking in brackets:

1. Trinidad and Tobago (64)
2. Cuba (71)
3. Haiti (83)
4. Jamaica (96)
5. St Vincent & the Grenadines (97)
6. Guyana (103)
7. Barbados (109)
8. Antigua & Barbuda (131)
9. Bermuda (135)
10. Dominican Republic (139)
11. Suriname (143)
12. St Kitts & Nevis (146)
13. Grenada (162)
14. St Lucia (163)
15. Bahamas (168)
16. British Virgin Islands (179)
17. Turks & Caicos Islands (181)
18. Netherlands Antilles (182)
19. Dominica (186)
20. Cayman Islands (188)
21. Puerto Rico (195)
22. Anguilla (197)
23. U.S. Virgin Islands (200)
23. Montserrat (200)
23. Aruba (200)

Bajan racehorse connection hoping for Kentucky Derby success

ETOBICOKE, Canada – One of Canada's leading trainers Mark Casse is hoping top Barbadian rider Patrick Husbands lands success in a major race in North America soon.

Casse, who is the number one trainer for Barbados-based Canadian businessman Eugene Melnyk, has notched up several major wins in Canada with Husbands and says he was eyeing the prestigious Kentucky Derby.

"I see us maybe possibly winning the Kentucky Derby and those things and nothing would make me happier than to have Mr. Husbands sitting on top of him with the roses," Casse told CMC Sports.

Recently, Husbands guided Marchfield, a Melnyk-owned, Casse-trained three-year-old colt, to victory in the Breeders' Stakes.

Melnyk, a prominent



Husbands after won of his many successes in Canada.

racehorse owner in North America, has developed a trend of naming his horses after communities in Barbados.

'GREAT RIDER'

Husbands rode his first Kentucky Derby last year, getting the leg up aboard Casse's Seaside Retreat, but finished down the field.

"I don't think there's anybody better. He's a great

rider," Casse said of Husbands recently.

Casse, whose stable is based at the Woodbine race-

fortunate. Right now we are leading again this year. Last year we won the Sovereign Award," Casse said.



Barbadian jockeys fight to the finish. Jono Jones gets up on the rail with Essential Edge to beat Sealy Hill with Husbands by a neck in the CAN\$351,600 Canadian Stakes last month at Woodbine in Toronto.

track, said the current season had gone well and was anticipating more success for Melnyk and his connections.

"Right now we've been

"I hope to see Eugene win his first Sovereign Award as leading owner this year and possibly leading breeder.

"That's big, it's big for us to be that (leading breeder) in Canada but I think Eugene and myself and Laura Melnyk – she's a big part of it also – I

hope to see us not just in Canada but in all of North America."



...Husbands claims Triple Crown after Sealy Hill wins appeal

ETOBICOKE, Canada, CMC – Sealy Hill, the champion three-year old filly, was reinstated the winner of the Bison City Stakes, after the Ontario Racing Commission upheld the connections' appeal at a hearing late last month.

Sealy Hill, with top Barbadian jockey Patrick Husbands aboard, was disqualified after winning the CAN\$250 000 event on July 1 this year at the Woodbine racetrack.

Stewards had ruled that Sealy Hill, owned by the Barbados-based Canadian

businessman Eugene Melnyk, had impeded Quiet Jungle at the eighth pole. The race was awarded to Street Sounds with Sealy Hill relegated to third.

Husbands and Sealy Hill's trainer, Mark Casse, appealed the decision and arbitrators, after hearing evidence from Husbands on Sept. 26, overturned the stewards' decision.

TOP JOCK

The decision gave Husbands a remarkable 18th stakes win for the season, the most by any jockey this sea-

son at Woodbine and handed him the Triple Crown.

"I am happy and proud about it. It was a hard blow to Eugene and it was a hard blow to myself and Mark Casse who is also the trainer," Husbands told CMC Sports.

"This is the filly that was the first to win the Triple Crown. Last year I went close, I won the first two legs of the Triple Crown (but) I rode the last leg and got beaten. So now I got the chance to win all three races and they took away one from me which was uncalled for.

"Everybody knows it was tough being on the (witness) stand and getting questioned over and over but it turned out in my favor."

Sealy Hill, named after a small community in Barbados, claimed the Triple Crown after winning the \$500 000 Woodbine Oaks on June 10 and claiming the final race, the Wonder Where Stakes, on July 28. The Ontario Racing Commission said it would release the reasons behind their decision some time in the future.



SPORT BRIEFS

• WICB, Stanford 20/20 strike deal

The West Indies Cricket Board and the Stanford 20/20 Board of Directors have agreed to a five-year franchise deal that will allow the Stanford 20/20 regional tournament to become part of the WICB's annual cricket calendar in the Caribbean, along with the one-day and four-day tournaments.

• Millionaire backs Grenada's sailing fest

The millionaire who led Britain's America's Cup challenge in 1983 is backing Grenada's efforts to raise the profile of its premier sailing festival.

Investor Peter Desavory has agreed to a three-year contract with festival organizers to be title sponsor of the Grenada Sailing Festival scheduled for Jan. 5-29, 2008.

Compiled from CMC and other sources.



CARGO AND FREIGHT

www.caribbeantoday.com

~ A Caribbean Today advertising feature

Christmas rush is on for cargo shipping to the Caribbean

GORDON WILLIAMS

The peak season for sending goodies to the Caribbean for Christmas is already here.

According to sources in the cargo shipping industry, October unofficially marks the start-up period for thousands of barrels and other containers to be sent to the region.

"Christmas is the busiest time," explained Guyanese-born Brian Edun, business development manager for Laparkan cargo shipping, southeast region, which serves areas in the United States ranging from North Carolina, Georgia, Texas, Louisiana and Florida.

Sources said the period runs roughly from Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, but they also advise customers that if they want their goods to reach in time for

the peak of the festive season, they should make sure the containers are shipped no later than the second week in December. The high volume of

to ship later than two weeks into December to avoid the Christmas backlog."

BULK

Most deliveries to the region take anywhere between three days and two weeks. An estimated 70 percent of the containers sent to the Caribbean leave the U.S. between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31. And while most countries in the region are served directly by cargo shipping agencies in the U.S., three countries attract the most volume.

"The majority goes between Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad," said Edun, "with Jamaica ahead."

The rising volume of shipments to the region over the years has also led to increased competition among the shipping agencies, with many offering specials during the busy season. According to Edun, Laparkan, for example, is offering two barrels of foodstuff, worth \$250 each, to two lucky winners selected each month from those who ship to Jamaica through the company between

October and December. While the promotion originally tied in with this month's 10th anniversary celebration of Laparkan's business with Jamaica Trading Services, a brokerage firm, it was stretched further to capitalize on the seasonal rush.

"We decided to extend it as a Christmas special," Edun said.

BUSY BUYING

Caribbean people tradi-

tionally like to take advantage of the Christmas rush as well. Many travel from the region to buy goods from popular U.S. wholesalers like Costco, Sam's Club and BJ's, which offer good deals especially at certain times of the year like the post-Thanksgiving period.

Caribbean residents also take advantage of special events in the U.S. to visit the country and shop for goods to be sent (CONTINUED ON PAGE 24)



Many more barrels like this one will be packed with goodies and sent off to the Caribbean in time for Christmas.

shipments during the season can lead to heavy delays at ports across the region and possible delays in delivery.

"A lot of the West Indians leave everything for last," Edun said. "We ask them not

Standards officials seize container of counterfeit goods in Grenada

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada, CMC - Government officials here say they have seized a 40-foot container packed with household supplies which violated the island's labeling and advertising standards.

Grenada Bureau of Standard Director Simeon Collins said the container, which was shipped directly from China to Grenada, had products that were extremely dangerous for human consumption.

"In recent times we have all become aware of the dangers of these counterfeit products and when our inspection officers came across the container it was immediately decided to confiscate the goods," he said late last month.

A large shipment of toothpaste was among the goods, the official said.

FAKE

Collins said based on the guidelines set out for identifying Chinese-produced counterfeit toothpaste, inspectors at the Port realized that the toothpaste in the container was fake.

"The only English words on the label were a website address and made in Egypt, Uganda or South Africa and we knew immediately that they were not good for human use," he said.

He said there were also mosquito coils, soap, nuts, raisins and preserved fruit with no English written on the labels.

Collins said a decision was taken to issue a warning letter to the importer who said he was unaware of Grenada's importation rules and regulations.

"This is his first offense, so we did not take a decision to stop him," Collins said.

DESTROYED

The Bureau of Standards official said that the seized goods would be destroyed in a form that would ensure that they did not find their way back on the market.

"We will be working with the Grenada Solid Waste Management Authority to ensure that all the goods are totally destroyed," he said, while explaining that the bureau had learnt from a recent incident in which some goods which were buried found their way back on the market.

"We will do what it takes to make sure that they are not in a condition for human use."



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~ A Caribbean Today advertising feature

Banana farmers raise shipping concerns over new trade deal with Europe

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent, CMC - Regional banana farmers have charged that their concerns are not being addressed in the current draft of the new Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) to be implemented by the European Union from next January.

Renwick Rose, coordinator of the Windward Islands Farmers Association (WINFA), told an audience at a "Stop EPA Day" rally here last month, that the EPA draft being presently negotiated by regional governments missed the critical issue of developmental assistance from the Europeans. He said developmental assistance should be the underpinning of any agreement negotiated on behalf of the region's people.

"Secondly, they say that regional integration is part of it, we have proposed that you can't have access to regional markers when there is no shipping between the islands," Rose said.

"We have to rely on the banana boat if we want to ship intra regionally and this is not working out good. We have proposed that, as part of the EPA, there should be an investment in a regional shipping line with refrigeration facilities."

ASSISTANCE

The WINFA official said regional farmers also needed financial and technical assistance in order to assist them with developing the capacity to take advantage of any trad-

ing opportunities that might open up in Europe.

"Right now we in WINFA, the farmers, have been investing in a small joint agro processing project, we

He said he believed the regions' best interest was not represented in the current draft and to foster the region's development special and differential treatment provision



Cargo shipping between the islands need improvement.

are the registered Fair Trade producers for banana, but we want to have fair trade smoothie, jams, juices and jellies, but to meet European standards there are certain rigid standards," Rose told the hundreds of farmers, representatives of non governmental organizations and Vincentians gathered for the event.

"We want the necessary financial and technical assistance to develop that capacity."

Christopher Sinckler of the Caribbean Policy Development Centre, who also addressed the rally, said there were a number of "major issues to be resolved and there are still some concerns and questions whether the regions are going to meet that January 31st deadline."

Christmas rush is on for cargo shipping to the Caribbean

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23)

home. Carnival is among the main attractions.

Yet Christmas is not the only time Caribbean people ship goodies home. The period just before school opens in the region - mainly August - is popular. Easter is another busy period for shipping. They also target special events in the region - like Cricket World Cup 2007 - to stock up on goods via shipping.

Meanwhile, Edun explained that while the busiest season for shipping to the Caribbean has just kicked off, he has no doubt it is already welcomed by the people from the region.

"Families in the Caribbean look forward to the stuff," he said.

Gordon Williams is Caribbean Today's managing editor.



Crowley introduces faster service to Caribbean islands

Beginning this month, Crowley Maritime Corporation's liner services group will enhance its service to the Caribbean islands with the addition of two new, bigger, faster container ships - the "Eclips" and "Ocean".

Each ship offers more capacity and twice the number of reefer plugs - about 160 - than the "Sea Gale" and "Sea Cloud", the ships they are replacing.

Running at about 18.5 knots, the new ships are about two knots faster, which should result in even better transit times and schedule integrity.

"These new ships will benefit our customers in a number of ways," said Rudy Leming, Crowley's vice president of Caribbean islands services in a recently issued press release by the company.

"First, we're going to be better equipped to handle customers' need for space during the peak season and beyond - this includes reefer cargo, because we'll have about twice the number of shipboard plugs. Second, the speed of the vessels will allow us to provide improved schedule integrity with earlier southbound arrivals in St. Thomas and St. Croix, plus we're able to add a northbound stop in St. Thomas to offload Trinidad and Barbados cargoes."

Crowley's weekly, fixed-day Caribbean islands service

includes vessel calls in Jacksonville on Tuesdays, Port Everglades Thursdays, St. Thomas Sundays, St. Croix Mondays, Trinidad Tuesdays, St. Vincent Thursdays, Barbados Thursdays, and St. Thomas northbound on Fridays before returning to Jacksonville. Relay services from St. Thomas is provided to Anguilla, Antigua, Montserrat, Nevis, Saba, St. Barts, St. Eustatius, St. John, St. Kitts, St. Maarten, Tortola and Virgin Gorda.

RELAY

Relay service from Barbados includes Martinique and Guadeloupe; while relay service to Canouan, Bermuda and Tobago is provided as needed from St. Vincent, Jacksonville and Trinidad respectively.

Crowley's Caribbean island services allow customers to ship groceries, department store merchandise, building materials, refrigerated and frozen goods, household goods, vehicles and Freight of All Kinds (FAK) in a variety of equipment including 20-foot standard and 40-foot standard and high-cube containers, reefers, flat racks and other specialized equipment.

Jacksonville-based Crowley Maritime Corporation, founded in San Francisco in 1892, is a privately held family and employee-owned company.



Port Louis Grenada launches sailing festival

More than 200 persons from Grenada and the rest of the Caribbean joined the Port Louis Grenada Sailing Festival team and new sponsors Port Louis Grenada at the Victory Bar, for the biggest pre-event celebration in the history of the festival last month.

Among those in attendance were Minister of Works Brenda Hood; Minister of Private Sector Development Einstein Louison; festival Chairman Jimmy Bristol and his team and Peter de Savary, chairman and founder of Savvy Grenada.

Cocktails and champagne were followed by speeches as Hood, Bristol and de Savary all endorsed the festival and committed to developing it into one of the best in the world. Both government and the festival committee members compli-



Peter de Savary, chairman of Port Louis, second left, is joined by, from left, Vivian Burkhardt, Miss Grenada World 2007; Jennifer Hosten, and Grenadian yachtsman Peter "Champie" Evans, during the launch of the sailing festival.

mented Port Louis Grenada for making a long term commitment - three years - to sponsoring the event.

The Port Louis Grenada Sailing Festival is scheduled

for Jan. 25-29, 2008.

Port Louis Grenada, a creation of de Savary, is an EC\$1.5 billion maritime village and marina.



FEATURE

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Trinidadians get ready to vote for new government in November

PETER RICHARDS

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad – Prime Minister Patrick Manning leads his ruling People's National Movement (PNM) into Nov. 5 general elections hoping to avoid a repeat of the 1995 situation when he made the bold remark that his party would "win alone or lose alone".

It lost. This time the cards appear to be in the PNM's favor, even though the newly formed Congress of the People (COP) party, headed by the former Central Bank Governor Winston Dookeran, is likely to provide the biggest challenge to Manning's hold on government in this oil-rich Caribbean community (CARICOM) nation.



Dookeran: Ready to rumble.

"We are ready to rumble," said Dookeran, who is a former political leader of the main Opposition United National Congress (UNC).

A poll conducted by the Barbados-based Caribbean Development Research Services (CADRES) indicated that the COP poses the primary threat to the ruling party. The poll has not been made public here, but CADRES director and political analyst Peter Wickham, speaking on television here last month, said that a huge majority of eligible voters favor a change of government from the incumbent PNM.

CHANGE FAVORED

The **Express** newspaper, which said it had obtained a copy of the poll, said that with an estimated five percent margin of error, the poll has revealed that 68.7 percent favored a change in government.

The UNC, which has entered into an alliance with a number of small political parties, has been trying to reach an accommodation with the COP, but their efforts have been rebuffed. COP Chairman Roy Augustus said the party, a breakaway faction of the UNC that is promising the electorate "new politics", would not be distracted by the "antics" of the UNC.

Former Attorney General Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj, whose resignation and accusation of corruption led to the downfall of the UNC government in 2001, has also appealed for the two main Opposition groupings to unite in an effort

to defeat the PNM.

"All things are possible in the fullness of time. The forces united against the PNM, whether those forces be officials or individuals, will come together," said Opposition Leader Kamla Persad Bissessar, a deputy UNC political leader.

The UNC and its alliance partners have not named a leader to take them into the elections, relying instead on a Council of Leaders. The leadership grouping includes former Prime Minister Basdeo Panday, who was in court last month trying to reverse a decision by the Parliament last year to take away the Couva North seat he won in the 2002 general elections following his conviction on charges of failing to declare to the Integrity Commission, a London bank account he held while he served as head of government.

Panday has successfully appealed against the conviction, and while the High Court has ordered a re-trial, the 72-year-old veteran politician is facing a number of other charges dating back to the 1995-2001 period when his UNC formed the government.



Persad Bissessar: The forces will come together.

Panday, who has already indicated that he intends "dying with his booths on", has brushed aside calls for him to remove himself from the political fray and allow for a possible united Opposition front. Some media reports have gone as far as to suggest that financiers of the party are behind the moves to get Panday to step down.

NEW SYSTEM

The elections will be the first since voters would be given an opportunity to elect 41 instead of 36 parliamentarians, and all three main political parties have said they are confident of winning sufficient seats to govern for the next five years.

In the last general elections, the PNM won 20 seats with the UNC winning the remaining 16. But the Opposition has been split, with Dookeran's faction lending support to the Manning administration in passing critical pieces of legislation to deal with issues such as crime that is likely to be a major platform agenda in the campaign.

Manning will lead a new slate into the elections, having discarded or lost to resignation, illness or court charges,

nearly half of his current legislators. But Manning has told supporters, some of whom have openly rebelled outside the party's headquarters in favor of some incumbents, that the new crop of candidates represents a changing of the guard.

Manning has already outlined a blueprint for taking this twin-island republic "into developed country status by 2020" and has told supporters that the socio-economic benefits that they are now reaping are not as a result of luck. He has pointed to successive PNM government's decision to open the markets and liberalize the economy, provide tax concessions to manufacturers and cut back on social sector expenditure.

But the Opposition parties have accused the government of spending lavishly on high-rise buildings in the capital and other projects including a rapid rail system that Persad Bissessar said had been plagued with corruption.

CONTROVERSIES

The campaign has already turned up a few controversies. Manning has wondered aloud how the COP has been able to move from "black and white advertisements to full color full pages" and said he is prepared to allow for the scrutiny of his party finances once the other political parties agree to do the same.

COP has itself taken to the airwaves on the issue of campaign financing and the party's campaign manager Gerald Yetming, the former

finance minister in the UNC government, has raised concerns over media advertisements purporting to come from "independent organizations" bashing the Opposition parties.

The Opposition parties have also questioned Manning's decision to call the polls on Nov. 5, five days before the Hindu festival of lights, Divali.

Despite indicating that the "date incidentally had been determined a long time ago," Manning will have to ward off criticism that he was insensitive to the Indo-Trinidadian community for having the campaign in the midst of their religious festival.

Satnarine Maharaj, the

secretary general of the Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha, the largest Hindu organization here, reminded Manning of what transpired when he held called the 1995 general elections before an East Indian festival. He lost.

The 1.3 million population of Trinidad and Tobago is almost evenly divided between the two main races here – the Afro and Indo-Trinidadian. The Electoral Boundaries Commission (EBC), which is spending an estimated \$3.6 million in preparing for the Nov. 5 poll, said more than 980,000 people would be eligible to vote. It did not give a breakdown regarding race.



Maharaj: Calling for unity.



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Guyana pleased with settlement of maritime dispute with Suriname

TERRENCE ESSEBOOM

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, - In 1957 Sir Shridath Ramphal, then a youthful employee in the Legal Affairs Ministry here, drafted the license permitting California Oil to drill for petroleum in the Corentyne river which separates Guyana from neighboring Suriname.

In 2007 - a half-a-century later - Sir Shridath boasts that Guyana finally "won gold" following the ruling of the Hamburg-based Court of Arbitration which gave the country a 85 percent stake of the disputed area, finally settling the long-standing maritime dispute between the two states.

But the two Caribbean community (CARICOM) countries "will forever be neighbors," Sir Shridath said at a press conference in Georgetown last month as he encouraged continued cooperation between both.

Sir Shridath, a former commonwealth secretary general, said the historic maritime ruling "was a good day for CARICOM and the rule of international law," demonstrating that "the only lasting path to the resolution of conflict is lawful process and peaceful means."

CONFUSION

A great deal of confusion

emerged last month when Suriname President Ronald Venetiaan declared victory for his country asserting that under the award, Guyana gained 51 percent and the Dutch-speaking nation 49 percent of the controversial oil and gas-rich maritime area.



Venetiaan

In reality the tribunal gave Guyana "approximately two-thirds of this area...and one-third to Suriname," said Paul Reichler, one of experts who pleaded Guyana's three-year case before the five-man tribunal.

"The disparity is even greater in Guyana's favor when we consider the most important part of the area in dispute...where significant deposits (of oil and gas) are believed to exist. In that part of the area of dispute, Guyana received 85 per cent and Suriname only 15 percent, a ratio of five to one in Guyana's favor," Reichler added.

Suriname had also claimed victory on the basis that monetary compensation was not given to Guyana for the June 2000 expulsion of the CGX oil rig by Surinamese military gunboats from the disputed area.

Reichler challenged these

claims, noting that "Guyana did not pursue monetary compensation as a remedy for Suriname's offence against the CGX rig, contenting itself with a request for the condemnation that the tribunal has now issued."

Venetiaan also claimed that Guyana's President Bharrat Jagdeo, in a correspondence, proposed joint development of the offshore hydrocarbon resources between the two countries.

"There is nothing in Jagdeo's letter to Venetiaan extending the hand of friendship that even mentions, let alone proposes, joint development of offshore resources," Reichler said when questioned by the local press.

The president said in his letter: "I wish to reiterate to you my commitment, and that of my country men and women, to cooperating with you and the people of Suriname towards hastening the development of our two countries through cooperation for our mutual benefit."

Continuing it said: "We do have the mechanism in place to realize our goal of learning and benefiting from the experience of each other. I am, therefore, confident that you will

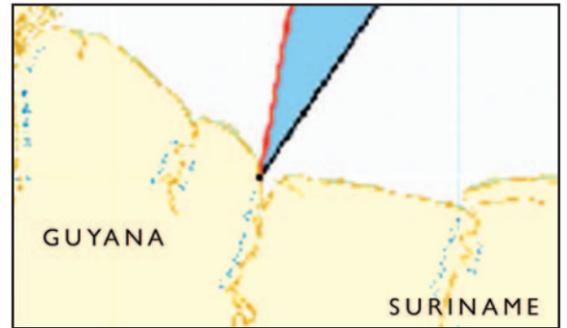
agree with me that the Guyana-Suriname Cooperation Council should be provided with the necessary mandate and political support it requires to accelerate cooperation between our countries."

FINAL WORD

The initial confusion of interpretation of the ruling has not troubled Guyana's legal team, and according to Reichler, Guyana has no intention of approaching the tribunal for any clarification on the matter.

"The tribunal will not be approached by Guyana for any clarification but I cannot speak for Suriname. The ruling is final, but it must be made clear that questions to clarify certain things can be asked but no arguments can be made. It means that it cannot be appealed," Reichler said.

When Guyana undertook arbitral proceedings against Suriname, the Guyanese government had six goals, said Jagdeo. These include: establishing that the rule of international law, not the rule of force, holds sway in CARICOM waters and more specifically in the maritime areas of



Area disputed by Guyana and Suriname.

Guyana and Suriname, and to draw the boundary between the maritime areas of Guyana and Suriname in a manner that would be binding on both countries for all time and acknowledged by the international community.

In addition, the country wanted "to confirm that the line of the boundary would be influenced, above all, by the principle of equidistance for which Guyana had long contended and for which Guyana's national law provides, and to secure Guyana's sovereignty to the resources of the sea-bed on its continental shelf on the basis of an internationally recognized maritime boundary."

The Guyana government also wanted all licensees to "return to the offshore area where they were exploring



Jagdeo

for oil in June 2000, when they were forced at gunpoint by a Surinamese naval vessel to abandon their activities and evacuate the area".

The final objective was "to achieve all this in a manner which allows Guyana and Suriname to cooperate as good neighbors and CARICOM partners in the development of their countries," the president said when he addressed the nation on Sept. 20 to announce the tribunal's award.

FAVOR

The Court of Arbitration ruled in Guyana's favour on all six counts.

"When I say that on all these central issues Guyana's interests and objectives are met, I do not mean to be triumphalist. That, in any event, would not be a proper posture for our country to adopt. In fact, the award is in the interest of both our countries and the wider Caribbean," Jagdeo

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 27)

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FEATURE

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Caribbean launches assault on non-communicable diseases

PETER RICHARDS

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad – Edwin Carrington, the secretary general of the Caribbean community (CARICOM), had a simple message for regional leaders who gathered in Trinidad last month for a special summit:

“Let us all seize this opportunity to leave a legacy of a healthier region by making this historic summit memorable for setting in motion the structure by which we not only stem the tide but truly unite to stop the epidemic of non-communicable diseases in the region.”

Now, six years after agreeing that “the health of the region is the wealth of the region”, Caribbean governments have launched their assault on chronic non-communicable diseases (CNDC) that they all agree cost them millions of dollars annually to treat and have affected the socio-economic development of their countries.

At the end of their special summit on health, the regional leaders issued a “Declaration of Port of Spain” supporting the concerns raised in a 123-page report by the Caribbean Commission on Health and Development (CCHD) that warned “a healthy population is an essential prerequisite for the economic growth and stability of the Caribbean”.

Carrington had said that the challenge of the summit

was to come up with a blue print for an integrated prevention strategy targeting the three main risk factors: unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and tobacco use.



Arthur

STRATEGIES

In the declaration, the regional leaders have accepted the main recommendations of the CCHD which include strategies to prevent and control heart disease, stroke, diabetes, hypertension, obesity and cancer in the region by addressing their “casual risk factors of unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use and alcohol abuse and strengthening our health services”.

The Caribbean leaders said they are convinced that the burdens of CNDCs “can be reduced by comprehensive and integrated preventative and control strategies at the individual, family, community, national and regional levels and through collaborative

programs, partnerships and policies supported by governments, private sectors, non-government organizations and our other social, regional and international partners”.

In its report submitted to Caribbean governments nearly two years ago, the CCHD, chaired by Sir George Alleyne, the chancellor of the University of the West Indies (UWI), noted for example the high cost to regional governments for treating two non-communicable diseases, hypertension and diabetes. It said that the cost of hypertension and diabetes in Jamaica for one year was approximately \$58 million “and this did not include any estimate of the economic value of the lives lost.”

“Multiplied throughout the Caribbean, this cost implies a tremendous drain on the economies,” the report said, suggesting also that “the Caribbean must seriously address the rising epidemic of obesity, which is the common factor associated with an increased risk of chronic non-communicable diseases.”

REMOVING MYTHS

St. Kitts and Nevis Prime Minister Dr. Denzil Douglas, who has lead responsibility for health in CARICOM, said that it was also important for the region’s population to move away from various myths that prevent efforts at developing strategies to meaningfully deal with CNDCs.

He told the summit here that many Caribbean people were of the opinion that chronic diseases were a problem of rich countries, while the facts show “non-communicable disease account for more than half the burden on disease and 80 percent of the deaths in the poorer countries which carry a double burden of disease.”

“If the known risk factors are controlled, at least 80 percent of heart disease, stroke and diabetes and 40 percent of cancers are preventable, and in addition there are cost effective interventions available for control,” he said.

The summit was told that the prevalence of CNDC in the Caribbean “is the worst in the Americas” and, according to CARICOM Chairman Owen Arthur, who is also the Barbados prime minister, “it is clear we are failing to properly control the factors which engender these diseases.”

“It is also clear that despite valiant efforts at the domestic level, a coordinated regional partnership and pro-

gram is now required if we are to make the significant advances required,” he said, noting that the Caribbean spends half of its health expenditure on treating CNDCs.

“These costs are projected to spiral at a time when we face competing claims for our limited resources. Failure to act can imperil our very lives, not to mention the future of the community as we know it,” Arthur said.

TAX ATTACK

As part of the new initiatives to deal with CNDCs, the governments have agreed to introduce higher taxes on



Carrington

tobacco and alcohol as well as “support the immediate enactment of legislation to limit or eliminate smoking in public places, ban the sale, advertising and promotion of tobacco products to children, insist on effective warning labels and introduce such fiscal measures that will reduce accessibility of tobacco”.

In addition, they said the public revenue derived from tobacco, alcohol or other such products would be employed towards preventing CNDCs, promoting health and supporting the work of national commissions on CNDCs that would plan and coordinate the comprehensive prevention and control strategies.

Trinidad and Tobago’s Prime Minister Patrick Manning told the summit that his oil-rich island had long adopted strong fiscal measures to deal with alcohol and tobacco related diseases particularly after the CCHD report had indicated that the country needed nearly half a billion dollars annually to treat diabetes and high blood pressure.

“When therefore the government of Trinidad and Tobago took the opportunity to set alcohol and tobacco further away from the reach of the population, there were many who did not even now fully understand the

choices before us,” Manning said.

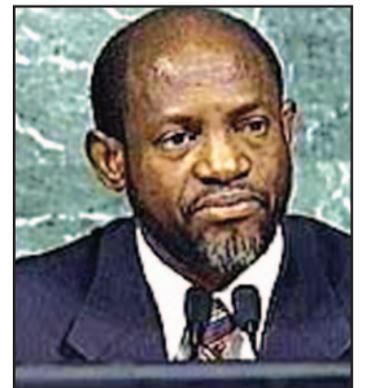
“We did it on the basis of what had to be done in the interest of the national community. What is more we recognise clearly that in treating with the problem, additional measures and strategies must be implemented.”

PLANS

The Caribbean countries have agreed to establish by mid-2008, comprehensive plans for the screening and management of chronic diseases and risk factors “so that by 2012, 80 percent of people with CNDCs would receive quality care and have access to preventative education based on regional guidelines”.

In addition, physical education will be re-introduced in schools and where necessary provide incentives to ensure that “our education sectors promote programs aimed at providing healthy school meals and promoting healthy eating”.

The regional countries have also agreed to work closely with a number of Caribbean institutions including the Jamaica-based Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI) that would be used as a focal point for providing guidance and public education as part



Douglas

of the strategy to “enhance food security and our strong support for the elimination of trans fats from the diets of our citizens.”

“Our support for the efforts of the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery to pursue fair trade policies in all international trade negotiations thereby promoting greater use of indigenous agricultural products and foods by our populations and reducing the negative effects of globalisation on our food supply”, are also strategies outlined by the regional leaders.

- CMC



Guyana pleased with settlement of maritime dispute with Suriname

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26)

said in his address last month.

Sir Shridath, who has encyclopaedic knowledge of the historic controversy, reminded the press that Guyana’s claims to the once-disputed maritime area were not trumped-up.

“In 1977 our Maritime Boundaries Act asserted the equidistance principle that the tribunal upheld, and of course, it is the same principle that Suriname is adopting in its eastern boundary with French Guiana,” Sir Shridath recalled.

The minority parliamentary Alliance For Change (AFC) in a statement over the weekend said the “historic and legally binding decision now allows for the Governments of Guyana and Suriname to forge economic and social development activities, including natural resource exploitation of the sea bed for the mutual benefit of their respective countries and people.

“This award must be seen

by all as a positive instance where the resolution of disputes can be settled in a dispassionate and peaceful manner. The entire region, CARICOM and the world at large must acknowledge and celebrate this occasion as a triumph for the rule of international law,” the AFC said.

The ageing Sir Shridath counseled that last month’s maritime award has opened up “a new era in Guyana’s development.” This, however, will bring new challenges said the former chief negotiator for CARICOM.

“Oil has been a mixed blessing where its gains are not sensitively managed. But there are models of best practices from which Guyana can benefit as we stand poised on the cusp of that new time. It is not too early to prepare for the challenges it will bring,” Sir Shridath said.

- CMC

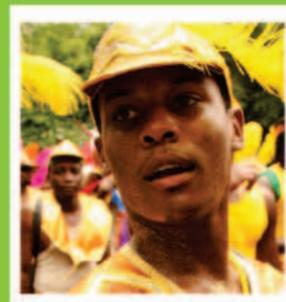


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