BARBADOS has recorded another three cases of COVID-19.

The news came directly from Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley yesterday, via a press conference held at Ilaro Court. This brings the number of confirmed cases to a total of five, since news broke earlier this week of the first two cases – a 48-year-old visitor who arrived in Barbados on March 13 from the United States (US) and a 39-year-old female, a Barbadian who recently returned to the country from the US.

“I regret to have to advise Barbadians that there have been further developments with respect to the virus and the test results. As of midday today, there are three new cases that have been confirmed, two for Barbados and one which we facilitated for a cruise line,” Mottley said of the three additional cases.

“The first case today was the spouse of the visiting female, who was one of the first two people to be tested and found positive two days ago. The gentleman I am told never left her side and was in isolation with her, even when she went into isolation, as soon as the testing was done. It is therefore no surprise to the medical officials that he has tested positive,” the Prime Minister revealed.

THE Democratic Labour Party has made a call to all of Barbados to keep each other in mind amidst the sweeping effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Just before three new cases were confirmed on the island yesterday, the long-standing political party hosted a media conference at their George Street headquarters.

Speaking to members of the media, DLP President Verla Depeiza opened the briefing by commending the government on their handling of the situation thus far and reaffirmed their commitment to work hand-in-hand with the present administration.

“The Minister of Health, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Bostic must be complimented for the calm and decisive manner in which he shared the unwelcome information. We are heartened that the fully-equipped six-bed infectious disease centre at Enmore and the four-bed quarantine facility at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is being put to good use. A former Democratic Labour Party administration spent $1.6 million on personal protection equipment and trained a rapid response team led by Dr. Corey Forde to manage infectious diseases,” she said.

Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley, centre, addressing a press conference on COVID-19 at Ilaro Court yesterday, while, from left, Minister of Tourism and International Transport Kerrie Symmonds, Chairman of Barbados Port Inc. Senator Lisa Cummins, Chief Medical Officer (Ag) Dr. Anton Best and Minister of Health and Wellness, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Bostic.
Nothing matters more than the health, safety and wellness of each member of our staff, customers, partners, suppliers and all stakeholders as we seek each other as part of one shared family. You are all at the heart of every decision made by Guardian Group.

In the interest of taking care of everyone, we have been closely monitoring the updates and guidelines from our local health authorities, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centre for Disease Control surrounding COVID-19 in all the territories of domicile. As the situation unfolds we will proactively make adjustments to our response and inform you of these developments.

The Group has already implemented several measures to reduce risk and ensure safety. Here’s a quick summary:

• We have established a Crisis Task Force which is responsible for the management of the Group’s response and developed a COVID-19 Monitoring and Response Framework aligned to the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO).

• We have identified jobs which can be adapted to telecommuting if our operations become impacted.

• We have increased the frequency of our cleaning programme at all offices, paying attention to frequently touched surfaces. We have installed hand sanitizers throughout our offices for both employees and clients, as well as the availability of gloves for employees who wish to wear them in the course of duty.

• We have restricted all non-essential travel for team members.

• We have placed posters and notices on preventative care throughout our offices for the benefit of our clients, employees and the public.

• Our Health and Safety team will continue to provide relevant, updated and accurate information to all employees, which are guided by official and established sources such as the World Health Organization (WHO), Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and the Ministry of Health.

We know many of you are concerned as there is much uncertainty on how this situation will evolve. While our offices are open to serve you, we recommend that all clients observe the directives and guidelines from the relevant authorities in avoiding close physical contact, practising social distancing and performing the recommended personal hygiene such as handwashing. As part of our continuity process, the following is important information on various ways we can conduct business during this time.

GUARDIAN GENERAL INSURANCE LIMITED
(Motor, Property, Commercial and Marine Insurance)

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To renew your policy or request a quotation please email us at: gglunderwriting.bb@myguardiangroup.com.

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For those clients who have a premium due you may make your payment electronically by utilizing your bank’s online banking facility by choosing Guardian General Insurance Limited as the payee. Third party transfers can also be facilitated by obtaining our banking details from the Accounts Department personnel. Please contact us at gglbarbadosaccounts@myguardiangroup.com

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Phone: 1-246-231-2749

Adrian Nurse Email: Adrian.nurse@myguardiangroup.com
Phone: 1-246-253-8503

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Our fillable PDF Claim Forms can also be accessed via the website:
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Please follow the link:
http://barbados.myguardiangroup.com/guardian-general-insurance/forms/
People over 70 and other high risk groups urged to stay at home

THE people who have been deemed to be in a vulnerable category or the most at risk for catching COVID-19, have been advised to stay at home, to reduce that risk.

The advice came yesterday from Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley, after she revealed that Barbados recorded another three cases of COVID-19 yesterday, in addition to the two confirmed cases announced earlier this week.

What is necessary in accepting that large numbers of Barbadians will get it, is for us to remember that when we last met on Monday, I advised that those persons over the age of 70 really need to listen to our advice and stay home as much as possible. I want to repeat it, because the vulnerable population is where our concern is,” Mottley stated.

“We do know that persons over the age of 70 and persons who have underlying conditions, particularly asthmatics, particular people who are bad diabetics, people who have cardiovascular problems that are of serious concern to their doctors, people who have chronic respiratory disorder, these are the persons who we would wish to consult with your doctor and to have your doctor advise whether you ought to also consider staying at home, as part of the vulnerable population,” the PM indicated.

“If your doctor tells you yes, then I suggest that you get the letter from your doctor and that you share it with your employer if you are working. I have already for those who are public servants, given instructions in the public service for us to deal with those persons who feel that they may be vulnerable, after consultation with their doctor,” Mottley advised.

Barbadians stocking up

PRODUCTS on shelves cannot be replaced fast enough, as Barbadians continue to throng to supermarkets, buying as much items as they can following the recent announcement of COVID-19 being on our shores.

The scene was no different at Channell Supermarkets’ Black Rock location, as several locals have been seen purchasing canned goods and cleaning products in large numbers for over a week now. Supervisor at the location, Roseita Sobers, says that the sizes of the crowds in store have been increasing every day, with no real slow down being predicted in the near future.

“After Saturday, there has just been more and more persons coming in and buying as much items as they can. It's usually busy during the morning time now, but at night time, especially around eight, we see the real crowds coming in,” she said.

With an island-wide shortage of hand sanitizers and cleaning agents being reported from several small and large supermarket chains, Channell’s is no different.

“Sanitizers, bleaches, cleaning solutions and event toilet paper, has been bought quickly by consumers. Vitamins and other health supplements have also been disappearing quickly off shelves. At this point we have not been able to restock on sanitizers, as our supplier currently has no estimated date on when we can expect a replenishment,” Sobers noted.

“Rice has also been a big item for shoppers, as they aim to get as much items which can be stored for long periods inside their homes. One female customer who was seen quickly picking up several canned goods, said she was mostly shopping for her mom at home.

“I just shopping for her so that she does not need to come out. I told her she needs to stay inside as to not risk infection, so I am organising as much things as possible to keep her comfortable for the new few weeks,” she explained.

Prime Minister: COVID-19 is now a global reality

COVID-19 from Front Page

“The second new case was that of a 60-year-old Barbadian who arrived on the weekend, I am told from New York and who developed symptoms soon after arriving in Barbados. We had been monitoring him for a few days and he also has tested positive,” Mottley further noted.

“The third individual is a request from the cruise line, one who has never lived in Barbados and in fact has never been to Barbados. I am told that he was in isolation from the time that they started to feel bad and the cruise line asked us if we would facilitate the testing of him, in order that they may take the appropriate precautions,” the PM added, noting that contact tracing is still ongoing, to track down any persons who were in contact with these persons.

The Prime Minister meanwhile stated that COVID-19 is now a global reality, and it can be expected that numerous persons, even here in Barbados, may come down with the virus.

“We have to come to the reality that there will be a large number of Barbadians who will get the virus. But I want to say to you that the overwhelming majority will only have mild symptoms and in many instances, I am told by the doctors that those mild symptoms will not even present themselves as something that people may even go to the doctor for. There will be a few who will require medical treatment and medical advice and there will even be a smaller number who may be required to be placed into an isolation facility and to have the full serious medical treatment that goes with that primary care isolation facility that we are developing,” Mottley said.

“I have talked the country through this on many occasions for the last few weeks now. That is why a country in an IMF programme is spending $30 million dollars to be able to ensure that we can significantly expand our hospital capacity and our medical treatment capacity, both in terms of primary isolation care, secondary isolation care and quarantine facilities. We are in a good shape to be able to start to face this,” she however assured. (RSM)
THE World Health Organization, on Tuesday, March 17, recommended that persons suffering with COVID-19 symptoms avoid taking Ibuprofen, a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID).

Acting Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Anton Best, speaking at a press conference at Ilaro Court today, noted that the Ministry was alerted to the fact that in some places where NSAIDs were used, patients worsened.

He said: “Right now, the recommendation is to focus on the use of paracetamol for pain and for fever reduction, as opposed to nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, such as Ibuprofen, Voltaren, Cataflam and other drugs in that category [such as] aspirin.”

Barbadians are being advised to avoid using products containing Ibuprofen if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. According to the Barbados Drug Service, over-the-counter Ibuprofen products are:
- Advil 200mg in 2s of a box of 50s
- Advil caplets and tablets 200mg 24s
- Advil Cold and Sinus
- Advil Infant drops 15ml
- Advil Liquid Gels
- Advil Migraine Gel 20s
- Advil PM 30/50 packs of 2s
- Advil PM Bottle 20s
- Children’s Advil Liquid
- Ibufen Liquid
- Ibuprofen 400mg by Health 2000
- Ibuprofen 400mg tablets Bristol 84s
- Ibuprofen Gel Rub
- Motrin Children Elixir 1oz
- Motrin Children Elixir 4oz
- Motrin Infant Drops
- Motrin PM Caplets 20s
- Perofen 400mg by Remedica
- Thornton and Ross Ibuprofen 200mg tab
- Thornton and Ross Suspension 100ml bottle
- Westmead Flamingo
- Ibuprofen 200mg tab 24s

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) announced in a press release the temporary suspension of cruise ship operations in light of COVID-19. This took effect from 12:00 a.m. EDT on March 14 2020.

Presently there are ships in the Bridgetown Port terminating their voyages mid-itinerary, which now have to be berthed and their passengers need to get home safely via scheduled flights and a significant number of chartered flights. This is happening in Ports all across the globe at this moment.

As a homeport, a number of ships begin or end their voyages here in Barbados and as a result, during this suspension period, Barbadians can expect to see some of our home porting ships berthed in the Port as well as offshore for an extended period of time.

Once all passengers have been safely facilitated to return to their home countries, as our own nationals on cruises elsewhere are also being enabled to do, Barbadians can expect to see ships berthed offshore and in Port with their crews.

All ships sail with full medical crews on board and these professionals remain on board at this time and are working closely with the Ministry of Health and Port Health officials to ensure all public health protocols are observed.

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Plans in place to enact virtual learning

IN the event that there is community transmission of COVID-19 in Barbados, the Ministry of Education, Technical and Vocational Training is prepared to enact a virtual learning scenario so that students do not miss out on their education during that time.

Minister of Education, Technical and Vocational Training, Santia Bradshaw announced this during an online consultation on COVID-19 hosted by the Ministry of Education, Technical and Vocational Training recently.

"In the event that we have to move to a virtual learning scenario we have been starting to work with the IT co-ordinators and indeed a number of teachers to start the re-training so that they could start to communicate with students at home online," she said.

"Once we get to that stage as we are taking, we started the training a few days ago. It is continuing today and a majority of the IT co-ordinators have now been retrained and retooled, a number of the teachers have gotten their email addresses, students will also have their email addresses and we are trying to address the scenarios as they arise."

"I think one of the questions that arose when we met with principals was regarding with students who were coming from challenged backgrounds in terms of poor households and what would happen in relation to when they don't have a device to be able to access the learning and we have been in discussions with Senator McConney this morning in a meeting and we are engaging the telecommunications in Barbados as well as to use the Google Suite platform that the Ministry of Education provides to the schools to be able to use across Barbados and to be able to have students access that particular platform even without WiFi connectivity," it was further explained.

She revealed that these discussions are ongoing with providers and she was hopeful and positive that they would be able to reach a decision in the event that they have to close the schools and move to a position where teachers engaged with students online.

Panicking does more harm than good

ONCE more, Barbadians are being encouraged not to resort to a state of panic.

Speaking during an online consultation on COVID-19 hosted by the Ministry of Education, Technical and Vocational Training recently, Czar for COVID-19 Richard Carter highlighted that there was evidence that stated panic during a pandemic caused more harm than good.

"The evidence I have from working in Sierra Leone as a sociologist is that there were loads of consequences of the actions that were taken that fell outside the narrowly medical and we saw evidence of serious abuse, teenage pregnancy rates, particularly among school children, tripled during the period when children were away from school, there were high teens evidence of sexual and gender based violence again as a result of children being in expanded environments but more broadly we saw panic behaviours that interfered with our capacity to manage the epidemic," he said.

Carter believed that Barbadians have been distinguished in their history in being disciplined orderly people, however, evidence showed over the past couple of days of behaviour that has followed that in other metropolitan countries.

"Panic is unhelpful and there have been instances where we see a direct damage to our capacity to actually respond," he said.

"We are currently at stage one which means there have been imported cases and there is no evidence of local transmission, if there becomes and we suspect it might happen, but if we get to stage two, which would be a state characterised by local transmission, where someone without a travel history is getting infected then obviously the whole picture changes, the scenario changes and the response changes."

It is against this backdrop that the Czar stated that there were stages of action planned and plotted by the Emergency Operations Team on the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Government of Barbados, therefore there was really no need to panic.

Every worker important

EVERY worker is important to keep the country running smoothly.

This was stated by Prime Minister, Mia Mottley as she spoke during an online consultation on COVID-19 hosted by the Ministry of Education, Technical and Vocational Training recently.

"If we don't have people pumping gas, we have problems for nurses to get to the hospital and the nurses and doctors not at the hospital we have problems for people who are sick and I don't even mean COVID-19 sick I mean regular sick, if the police not out there taking care of the law and order issues people can continue on to profit out of this, almost every category of worker is essential at this stage," she said.

"And the reason we are speaking to all these people is that the success of Barbados is in the hands of all Barbadians, we work together and close the circle," it was further pointed out.

Mottley noted that she believes children who were slated to sit exams soon were on the front-line of the educational sector and to that extent, whether it is Common Entrance, CSEC or CAPE, it is important for those children not to lose a whole year as that year is a difference between who was working next year and who wasn't.

It is against this backdrop that the Prime Minister assured that they will be measured in their decision when it comes to the future of these children’s education, adding that it is important for them not to be left behind.

She went on to note that we are in danger of only focusing on the losses that we will face as a result of COVID-19 but reminded that their objective in life was to protect the front line workers as the necessity, and it is for this reason that we have a duty to protect and ensure that we minimise it."

"In the event that we have to move to stage two, which would be a state characterised by local transmission, where someone without a travel history is getting infected then obviously the whole picture changes, the scenario changes and the response changes."

Prime Minister assured that they will be more mindful of their soldiers in the trenches, stating that they needed to protect the front line workers as the border remained open. "In addition, the actions of the front-line workers at the airport in walking off the job were a manifestation of the psychological discomfort that is shared by healthcare workers and persons across Barbados who may have to interact with the public on behalf of the state. In light of this situation, we again call for government to issue front line staff with care kits in line with what is being done by some local private companies and what has been required by international organisations," she said.

As being done in several countries across the world, she called on financial services, we would expect that Barbados Light and Power Company Ltd. and Barbados Water Authority would not be effecting any disconnections, at least within the next month. Commercial banks, small business financiers – both state-owned and private – should be of one accord with the waiving of these fees and payments for their clients. And we would hope that the hire-purchase agencies would also follow suit. Working from home is a possibility for some businesses and we would expect for some students going forward. We do have that capability but it has now become a necessity, and it is for this reason that we are asking that the Internet service providers show public spiritedness and good corporate citizenship and allow free access with cyber security for the period of social distancing to allow for the loss of productivity to be minimised," it was urged.

Her final note to all Barbadians was to be kind to themselves and everyone.

"Now, more than ever, we need each one of us to be displaying good sense and sober behaviours and it needs to be instilled in us now as a people. It is not time for panicking and hoarding. Buy what you need and leave something for those who do not have the wherewithal and the ready funds to buy in bulk. Limit your own exposure and this applies to officials as well as private citizens. Do not expose yourselves and do not expose others," she said. (MP)
A look at a Barbadian experience abroad

Coping with COVID-19 outbreak in California

By Krystal Penny Bowen

As I WRITE this, it is amazing that in the week of January 20, there were over 200 cases of COVID-19 and three deaths in China and now there are over 170,000 cases and over 7,000 deaths in over 150 countries in a mere eight weeks.

On Tuesday, March 17, the Minister of Health and Wellness, Lt. Col. Jeffrey D.Bostic announced two cases of novel coronavirus in Barbados.

As I come to terms with the gravity of this situation, I was one of the persons watching the international news constantly and waiting for the next shocking announcement. My friend, Kim who is Barbadian is living and working in one of the first American States (California) to be affected by COVID-19. She kept in contact with me throughout her experience, chronicling the confusion, panic buying and scarcity which occurred in the early days of the news of the outbreak.

This is an account of her experience.

Contaminated cruise ship and a sick medical worker

The “madness” of the effects of coronavirus in California started around March 9. According to American media reports, the first 24 cases of confirmed coronavirus came from the passengers who caught the virus while being on the Diamond Princess cruise ship off Japan. The ship had docked off California around March 9. However, one of the first confirmed cases of coronavirus was on March 1, a healthcare worker from North Bay VacaValley Hospital.

My friend who followed the developing news reports started to see a shortage of antibacterial wipes in local stores and online around March 9. She visited a Target store in her area and the business was out of antibacterial sanitising wipes. By March 12, she got notifications of large public venues closing their doors and mass events being postponed due to COVID-19. Her workplace also kept her up-to-date about developments of COVID-19 and how it is affecting the work environment.

In California, as of March 17, there are 392 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 11 deaths. Her workplace as many others is encouraging persons to work from home. Kim also noted the impact on productivity at work due to the outbreak.

She noted the decline of employees in her office (some of them opted to practise social distancing) and the psychological effects it had on her.

Basic essentials scarce

As the media sources reported incidents of “panic buying” across the globe, in California, a similar situation is occurring. In her message to me via Whatsapp on March 17, Kim showed that one of her neighbouring stores was running low on specific items. Her images showed a shortage of cold cuts and poultry.

At this moment, seven counties in the San Francisco Bay are required to “shelter in place” – which is finding a safe location indoors and staying there until you are given an “all clear” or told to evacuate for three weeks.

Over a million school children are at home, the elderly are asked to stay home, bars and restaurants have been closed. As she has lived in California for some time (which can have forest fires and fog), she indicated to me that she has a respirator mask as a precaution.

Acting CMO say: No a cover up by Barbados Government

MANY PERSONS on social media have been accusing the Government of covering up the timeline in which COVID-19 arrived on our shores, however, Acting Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Kenneth George sternly and firmly assured this was not the case.

During an update to the public, George explained that there was an Emergency Organising Committee that worked 24 hours and with the medical officers working very late shifts, the Best dos Santos lab revealed this information in the early morning hours on Tuesday.

Since then, George revealed that they have enhanced their on the ground testing, scaled up their ability to test and did an additional 10 tests yesterday.

“At present we have the facility for 600 tests and we are going to be ramping this up with respect to having those kits available. We have been testing over the last week, to the point where we ran out initially but we got some more,” he said.

George and Czar, Richard Philips went on to provide the community with an update on the two persons who tested positive for COVID-19.

George revealed that they received indication of the positive tests of the patients, both female, in the wee hours of the morning from the Best dos Santos laboratory.

He stated that following this revelation, the two females, who were traveling from the United States have been put in one an isolation unit and the second one in the Paragon facility and added that they were not very ill at that point in time.

“We have tried to indicate to the Barbados public over and over that Barbados was not going to be excluded from the arrival of COVID-19 and I think that on our journey, what we did, we said to the public that we are going to improve our surveillance, however that has shifted as we go to Stage One,” he said.

During this time, he encouraged the public to work with Government and reminded that this was not the first time Barbados was faced with a public health difficulty.

“Let me reiterate, that 80 per cent of the cases will have mild disease and those cases will not be required to interact with the health care facility, there’s an additional 10 per cent who will require more invasive more monitoring and five per cent that will require ventilator support,” he said. (CLJB)

Ministry of Health has begun contact tracing

By Cara L. Jean-Baptiste

BARBADOS recorded its first two cases of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) on Tuesday and Acting Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Kenneth George and Czar, Richard Carter have assured that contact tracing has begun.

During an update to the public Tuesday night, Carter revealed that the JetBlue flight that brought the two persons to Barbados was already known and the Ministry of Health was currently engaging in contact tracing.

George explained that the Ministry was in the early stages of contact tracing.

“This is a methodical way in which we try to go back into the person’s history and see where the contacts were made. So that process has started and we have engaged the airline, we have been upfront and engaged the airline to let them know what our thinking is and they have agreed to work with us,” he said.

“So I think contact tracing is a priority, it is extremely deliberate. We intend to test the persons that were in close contact with those [infected] persons; they will certainly require testing if they have symptoms. What I will tell you is that we are happy to report at this point in time that close contacts have not been symptomatic, so we believe that we have caught these two cases fairly early in the game and we believe that our surveillance is working.”

George went on to urge persons that if they are showing symptoms to access the hotline, 536-4500, and resist going to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Additionally, he noted that there were three polyclinics persons would be able to travel to, the Winston Scott Polyclinic, the Maurice Byer Polyclinic and the Randall Phillips Polyclinic.

George noted that while Barbados did not have all the answers regarding COVID-19, what he was proud of was the Ministry’s preparedness efforts over the last six to eight weeks, as Barbados was one of the first countries to institute testing and announce that they were readying isolation centres.

The Czar went on to note that he was also proud of the fact that the results for the testing of the two persons were received within hours, and not the regular two to three days, as is the case with other places.
BWA Chairman: No sewage leak along south coast

IT is not sewage!

While water flowing along Hastings Main Road in front of Lanterns Mall has spawned fears that the island’s sewage problems are back, Chairman of the Barbados Water Authority Leodean Worrell is saying this is far from true.

Calling into the Down to Brass Tacks programme yesterday, she told the Barbadian public that the water is actually from a burst main, which was being repaired.

The issue arose when a video emerged on social media of a male individual claiming the sewage problem was back as he drove through flowing water along Hastings Main Road between Lanterns Mall and Tapas restaurant; an area which became synonymous for sewage spillage over two years ago.

Terming the video as “irresponsible and reckless”, she said, “this is categorically untrue! It is a burst main and even as we speak it is being repaired. More importantly, what I would like to get across is as a nation, region and world at large, we have never had to face anything like COVID-19 and have a responsibility, first to ourselves, and to everyone else to be impeccable with our words, make no assumptions, resist the urge to take things personally and give of our best,” she added.

She therefore told the poster “who not only made an assumption but decided to circulate it, we must always think of the consequences of our actions, especially when we speak of that which we do not know.”

“It is not a sewage leak, it is a burst main,” she reiterated, insisting at this time citizens must ensure they do not create panic.

New rules for funeral services, burials

GRIEVING families are being assured they will continue to participate in the ritual of saying goodbye to their late loved ones, but with several adjustments in light of COVID-19.

In a release, the Barbados Association of Funeral Directors said according to the CDC, there was no known risk associated with being in the same room at a funeral or visitation service with the body of someone who died of confirmed or suspected COVID-19.

President of the association, Ian Griffith, gave the assurance that during the COVID-19 pandemic, several initiatives will be put in place, including reduced gatherings for viewings.

“Depending on a family’s preference, their loved one can be safely embalmed. Families may choose either burial or cremation as usual. Viewing of bodies should be limited to immediate family members only. Families should be advised to follow the Ministry of Health guidelines as it relates to mass gatherings where funeral services still have to comply,” he said.

Advising the use of social media to stream private viewings and funerals to share with family members and friends, he however urged caution and discretion with this medium.

“I strongly advise funeral providers seek families’ permission before any form of social media sharing,” he said.

Griffith stated that another possibility was shorter funeral services and graveside committals with a grave cover so that families can lay the flowers and then disperse immediately after leaving soil technicians to cover.

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Griffith stated that another possibility was shorter funeral services and graveside committals with a grave cover so that families can lay the flowers and then disperse immediately after leaving soil technicians to cover.

We recognize our responsibility to protect the health of those we are privileged to serve. We will continue to guide families, as we always have, in ways they can meaningfully commemorate the life of their loved one, while adhering to the guidance issued by the Ministry of Health,” he continued.

He urged funeral home staff to remain vigilant about cleaning facilities and ensure they follow recommended healthy habits, such as staying home while sick, washing hands and covering coughs and sneezes.

Vacancy: USAID Development Outreach and Communications Specialist

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission to the Eastern and Southern Caribbean is recruiting for the position of Development Outreach and Communications Specialist (DOCS).

This position is open to eligible CARICOM nationals under the free movement of University Graduates who possess the relevant skills certificate from their home state.

For further information please visit:

https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-era/brb/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.hms

Only best qualified candidates will be acknowledged.

WARRENS DISTRIBUTION BRANCH

Important Customer Update: Change In Opening Hours To The Public 1pm to 4:30pm ONLY with immediate effect until further notice

The management of Collins Limited wishes to advise that with immediate effect, and until further notice, our Warrens Distribution branch is now only open to the public between 1pm and 4:30pm.

Due to the current level of concern over the COVID-19 Pandemic, our team has been experiencing an unprecedented level of orders. This volume of demand now necessitates that we limit our opening hours in order to give staff the chance to fulfill urgent pharmaceutical and medical orders.

Customers may still place orders by phone during normal business hours (8am to 4:30pm) but again, as demand is high, please be aware that your call may take longer than usual to be answered.

Customers visiting our Warrens Branch are also asked to note that we are following the policy of admitting only a limited number of customers at a time in order to help create a safer environment for all.

We respectfully urge customers visiting the premises to maintain a distance of at least three feet from each other, and to queue in an orderly fashion while waiting to be admitted.

We sincerely apologise for any inconvenience caused, and appreciate your understanding as we work to meet your needs.
Editorial

Take necessary precautions

EARLIER this week, it was announced that Barbados was at Stage 1 of its National COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, after recording its first two confirmed cases of the coronavirus.

Just yesterday, the news came directly from Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley that Barbados had recorded another three cases of COVID-19, bringing the number of confirmed cases to a total of five.

It has been acknowledged that the majority of individuals who become infected by the coronavirus experience mild illness and eventually recover. However, for others in a more vulnerable category, it can be quite severe and even fatal. Thus, we need to do all in our power as a nation to avoid the spread of the virus and as individuals to avoid catching it.

According to Minister of Health and Wellness, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Bostic, with Stage 1 of our virus and as individuals to avoid catching it. We should as Barbadians need to take all necessary precautions to ensure that we stay safe. We should have a chat with our children as well, so they too can be aware of the risks.

Other countries are making sure that qualifying students are joining the workforce as soon as possible, while urging their junior colleagues to volunteer.

The Italian government announced the measures on Tuesday, among the emergency steps outlined in the “Cure Italy” decree.

The worst-affected country in Europe, Italy has been paralysed by the coronavirus crisis for much of the past four weeks. Its healthcare system is at breaking point.

More than 3,400 people have died and there are almost 2,500 patients in intensive care units across the country, according to official figures.

The government is hoping that an influx of new, young doctors could help ease some of the pressure.

“The government is hoping that an influx of new, young doctors could help ease some of the pressure.”

EU’s Brexit negotiator tests positive for COVID-19

Michel Barnier, the EU’s Brexit negotiator, has tested positive for coronavirus.

The 69-year-old confirmed that he has COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, in a message posted on Twitter account.

He wrote, “I would like to inform you that I have tested positive for COVID-19.”

“I am doing well and in good spirits. I am following all the necessary instructions, as is my team. I am self-isolating in an apartment near the site and for all those currently in isolation, we will get through this together.”

The news prompted a number of messages of good will, including from European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and EU Council President Charles Michel.

Ms von der Leyen will be tested for COVID-19 following Barnier’s diagnosis, commission spokesman Eric Mamer said.

The pair last met two weeks ago and so far Ms von der Leyen has not displayed any symptoms.

“The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in negotiations between Britain and the EU about a future trade deal scheduled for this week being cancelled. Despite this, the UK and EU did exchange draft legal texts for the future relationship between the two sides on Wednesday.”

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has insisted that he will not ask for an extension to the Brexit transition period, due to come to an end in December, because of coronavirus.

“It’s not a subject that’s being regularly discussed, I can tell you, in Downing Street at the moment,” he said.

“There is legislation in place that I have no intention of changing.”

Negotiations are due to resume next week, but they might not take place in person.

The PM’s official spokesman said, “We of course send Michel Barnier our best wishes.”

“In relation to Brexit negotiations, we have been in conversation with the EU about looking at ways to continue progressing the negotiations.”

“Both sides have shared their texts of potential legal agreements.”

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said the government was still committed to striking a post-Brexit free trade deal with Brussels by the end of 2020.

“The negotiating texts have been exchanged. I would have thought in the 21st century there is scope for this to be done through teleconferencing and remotely – at least for the period it is required,” he said.

“I won’t go any further than the PM at this point. We don’t want to extend, we want to get this done.”

“We don’t want any more uncertainty than we have already had from this process.”
COVID-9 vs the NCDs: Are we learning anything?

ON September 15, 2007, Caribbean Ministers responsible for Health met in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, to discuss a Caribbean-wide approach to tackling the non communica-
able diseases.

“Uniting to stop the epidemic of chronic NCDs” was the conference title, and the Ministers committed their Ministries of Health to a series of declarations designed to reduce the impact of the NCDs on Caribbean populations. To date, some 12 years later, there is little evidence that many of these declarations have been met, and the NCDs continue to decimate our health and finances.

In February 2020 Caribbean leaders, including those responsible for health, met to discuss the Caribbean response to the developing COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the highly contagious nature of this coronavirus, it was generally considered that it would be a matter of when, rather than if, this virus would make its way to our Caribbean shores.

Should the virus get in, the expert-recommended approach was one in which an attempt was made to ‘flatten the curve’, that is, reverse this trend and keep the number of cases per day under control.

A flattened curve presents just sufficient cases that the local healthcare system can effectively manage. A significant spike in the number of cases means that a large number of cases descend on our medical services in a short period of time, and overwhelms these services.

As regards COVID-19, great efforts should be made to avoid a sudden increase in cases.

The experience of COVID-19 in China, Italy and other places suggests that significant community efforts, including severe restrictions on individual freedoms, are needed to push the number of infected people down.

Current available evidence suggests that, as far as the NCDs are concerned, we have not been able to ‘flatten the curve’. The Health of the Nation epidemiology study of 2015 found 62% of diabetic patients being treated for diabetes did not have their disease controlled. Similarly, 42% of patients being treated for hypertension did not have their disease controlled. These diseases have overwhelmed the capacity of our primary health care services to provide optimal treatment.

A couple of weeks ago the CEO of our main tertiary institution, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH), noted that the occupancy of beds on the medical wards was 200%. (The Chief Medical Officer’s report of 2006 gave a figure of 120%, prompting the then CMO to state that we need to take urgent action about the NCDs. In practice millions and millions of dollars are being spent on tertiary care in an attempt to find accommodation for these patients who develop disease complications, in Intensive Care Units (ICUs), surgical theatres, stroke units, Artificial Kidney Units, the Accident & Emergency department, and even the morgue. But this also means that our tertiary medical services are overwhelmed as well.)

If, or rather when, COVID-19 does reach our shores, it is advantageous that we keep things ‘flat’. After all, we don’t have a separate healthcare system to deal with this infectious disease, and our NCD situation will not press a ‘pause’ button. Indeed, the experience of Wu-han, China (who have now produced significant epidemiological data) strongly suggests that these patients with co-morbidities/underlying conditions, as the individual NCDs are called, are the highest risks for severe outcomes, including needing intensive care, and death.

We have to take a serious look at the impact of the NCDs on our healthcare capacity. In the NCDs, “health promotion and disease prevention” can flatten the curve.

The NCDs are teaching us that not acting aggressively in a timely manner, tends to lead to a worsening of the situation.

DR. C.V. ALERT, MB BS, DM
FAMILY PHYSICIAN

Please think for yourself

THE more I learn about this COVID-19 National Plan, the more it seems like it will promote the spread of the COVID-19, rather than to restrict it.

I do not think that making things worse was their intent. But they should have known that making things worse is the normal result of a plan that was implemented without any proper critical review.

If I coughed into my hands, I would normally wash them as soon as possible. However, we are told that we must not cough into our hands anymore, but into our elbow sleeves. Fine.

We are told that we should not greet others by a handshake, since that would spread the virus. Fine.

We are told that we must greet others by rubbing elbows. Put another way, we are to spread the virus by rubbing our spittle contaminated elbow sleeves, that we coughed into, on the elbows of those whom we greet.

What logical sense does that make? Clearly none. But we are expected to behave like mindless idiots and simply obey – and spread the COVID-19 to everyone we meet.

Such a question would normally be asked during the critical review of a plan. However, when plans are politicised, they rarely receive proper scrutiny – and this plan appears to have been unnecessarily politicised from the start.

Elderly persons normally hold the elbow of those assisting them to walk. Many also affectionately touch the forearm of the person with whom they converse.

COVID-19 kills about 22% (more than one in five) of infected persons who are over 80 years of age.

My recommendations

Now that we are in Stage 1, let me recommend the following:

1. Vitamin C can boost your immune system, which is critical if you get infected. We seem to be running out of Vitamin C capsules – I could find none after 3 days of searching. Therefore, purchase Vitamin C and any form. I recommend 100 tablets (500 mg) per person. Take one wherever you are going to crowded spaces. If I were to get infected, I would take two each day until I recovered.

2. As an extra precaution, install insect screens at each window that you normally keep open. (you can temporarily use insect mesh and duct tape as a less expensive interim measure)

3. Some person who got infected experienced diarrhea. Therefore, maintain at least 12 toilet-paper rolls per person, in the event that you are quarantined.

4. If you have attended any of our workshops on starting an Internet based business, with no start-up money, then now is the time to ramp-up your business.

If you were discouraged from attending by the extreme political supporters, who were rewarded for their reprehensible behaviour with political appointments, then hopefully you now know that they are, without doubt, the absolute worst of us. Do not be misled again.

5. The Government should consider releasing low-risk non-violent prisoners, with minor offenses, from prison. Examples of minor offenses include: caught with a spliff, stealing food worth less than $10, and owing debts or fines under about $5,000. Inmates can either be released on parole, or they can be released for a few months, and then return to complete the rest of their sentence, once the COVID-19 threat appears to be over. A similar arrangement can be found for persons on remand for minor offenses.

As seen from Italy, this virus can spread quickly. Therefore, if you plan to do any of these things, please do not delay.

GRENVILLE PHILLIPS
II CHARTERED STRUCTURAL ENGINEER
AND PRESIDENT OF SOLUTIONS BARBADOS

LET GOD SPEAK TO US

“Faith is the bird that sings when the dawn is still dark.”

- 2 Thessalonians 2:15

QUOTES FOR TODAY

Rahindranath Tagore (1861–1941)

“Faith is the bird that sings when the dawn is still dark.”

Indian polymath, poet, musician,
and artist

Madeleine L’Engle (1918–2007)

“Faith is what makes life
bearable, with all its tragedies and ambiguities and sudden, startling joys.”

American writer

WORDS OF WISDOM

“Faith is not without worry or care, but faith is fear that has said a prayer.”

The Barbados Advocate
Flow equips its customers with the tools needed to keep connected!

Everywhere Bundle demonstrates company’s commitment to continue to provide customers with superior home internet and mobile connectivity!

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados (March 19th, 2020) – In light of the recent announcement by local Government officials confirming the global pandemic of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) had reached Barbados’ shores, telecoms provider Flow has announced that it will equip its customers with the necessary connectivity tools needed to survive the uncertainty that will follow in the coming days.

Offering its customers connectivity via both home internet and mobile, this bundle will certainly guarantee persons who are stuck at home with unfettered access to the outside world.

The company is giving its customers a 200Mbps home internet connection, supported by FREE upgraded equipment, a Wi-Fi extender along with unlimited local mobile calls and SMS text to any network in Barbados, 3GBs of mobile data and 100 anywhere minutes to the USA, Canada, UK Landlines and any Flow Caribbean network. As a bonus, customers also get access to premium streaming content with HBO GO and they will also receive a free Samsung LTE device.

“We can all agree that the announcement shook us all to the core – bringing our worst fears to life. Looking around at our CARICOM neighbours and witnessing their drastic responses to reduce the spread of the virus certainly poses a threat to our daily routine. This disruption means practicing prolonged periods of self-isolation and social distancing,” said Jenson Sylvester, Country Manager, Flow Barbados.

“Last year we made a promise to our customers to always put them first, and this bundle allows us to do just that. With school closures and warnings to remain indoors, our customers’ homes will be ready to handle the extra demand for connectivity and entertainment,” added Sylvester. Flow is also giving customers ability to virtually sign-up for the Everywhere Bundle website using an online fulfilment form that is available on the company’s website at www.discoverflow.co.

“The only time they will need to physically interact with us will be to collect their free handset at the retail location of their choice or have their in-home equipment upgraded if necessary. The coming days will give us all quite a bit to think about, but we want to make sure being connected isn’t one of the things our customers have to worry about,” said Sylvester.

www.discoverflow.co
Bureau of Gender Affairs aiming to combat domestic abuse

The Bureau of Gender Affairs plans in the coming financial year to do more work to help combat domestic violence in this country.

That’s the word from Patricia Boyce, Director of the Bureau of Gender Affairs.

According to Boyce, they recently formed a national committee on gender based violence, which she said is expected to meet as early as next month. She made the comments while responding to a question from the Minister of Labour and Social Partnership Relations, Colin Jordan, during the recent debate on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure in the House of Assembly.

“One of the plans of that committee is to come up with a programme, a gender action plan on domestic violence and they are also going to be responsible for sensitising the public,” she said.

Meanwhile, she said that the Bureau will also be focusing this coming financial year on men and education and will be putting public awareness initiatives in place in that regard. According to Boyce, this effort is being pursued because there are statistics that show that a lot of males are choosing not to pursue tertiary education, which is quite the opposite where the females are considered.

“What we are hoping to do this financial year is to have a small group session with a number of men to get an idea of why they are not participating within the tertiary level, and then we can look at how we can utilise that information to devise a programme to help more men see the benefits of this tertiary education,” she added.

The Gender Affairs chief’s comments came as she spoke of the heavy workload of the department, which she explained has quite a limited staff complement. In addition to herself, Boyce indicated that there is one researcher officer and one programme officer.

“The amount of work that we need to do or we are required to do, it is difficult and it is challenging if there is only one person. If one person is out and no one comes to replace that person, then the other officer now [their] work doubles,” she stated.

As such, she said they have been engaged in a lot of collaboration with other entities. Among those they have worked with in recent times, she said, is the Samuel Jackman Prescod Institute of Technology. She said they were able to engage around 35 young men, giving them information on what is HIV and how risky behaviour can make them susceptible to the virus.

(JRT)

A SIGN OF THE TIMES: As Government increases its public education drive to inform all citizens on the importance of hygiene during the COVID-19 pandemic, one health institution was seen erecting important public health signs on the site. After visits to the Psychiatric Hospital, Black Rock, had been suspended this week, workers for the institution were seen placing health educational notices at its entrance yesterday morning. These notices advised the public on the symptoms associated with the coronavirus, as well as ways for the general public to help stem the spread of the virus.

FAO warns of impact of virus on school feeding in Latin America, Caribbean

Santiago, Chile – Among the measures taken by the Governments of many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean in the face of the rapid expansion of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is the closure of schools and, therefore, the suspension of school feeding programmes.

These programmes currently benefit 85 million children in Latin America and the Caribbean. For about 10 million, they constitute one of the most reliable daily sources of food.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the suspension of school feeding programmes will pose a challenge to the food security and nutritional status of many children, especially those from the most vulnerable groups.

“In our effort to contain the spread of COVID-19, Governments have decided to suspend school feeding programmes,” said FAO Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean, Julio Berdegué.

FAO pointed out that, for any action taken by governments, all measures recommended by national and international health authorities should be taken into consideration to stop the spread of COVID-19.

“In the context of the current health emergency, FAO is proposing measures to avoid the interruption of school feeding programmes as much as possible, maintaining food distribution, if possible,” explained Berdegué.

FAO called on governments to implement measures to support children whose families have greater difficulties in accessing food, and to provide the nutritional contributions that are usually guaranteed by school feeding programmes.

FAO recommended that:

• Food distribution to the most vulnerable families, establishing delivery times in schools, or through mobile units.
• Increase in the economic allocation of social protection programmes (such as income transfers) by an amount corresponding to the cost of food rations delivered by school feeding programmes.
• Delivery of emergency essential food rations to the most vulnerable communities and territories in coordination with authorised government agencies or international cooperation.
• Exemption from taxes on basic food for families with school-age children, especially for workers in the most affected economic sectors.
• Promotion of at home fresh food delivery, if possible from local agriculture.
• Redistribution of food from school feeding programmes through donations to entities responsible for providing food assistance (such as food banks, social organisations, non-government organisations, churches) during the emergency response phase, under the strict monitoring of security protocols to prevent the spread of the virus.
• Use of digital tools (e.g. georeferenced applications) to improve communication regarding access points for food deliveries, distribution times, and recommendations for the proper use of food, and measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19.
• The establishment of food and nutrition roundtables, in which sectors in charge of school food programmes should participate, may allow the identification of other groups at high risk of food insecurity, such as older adults who live alone or are isolated due to the current situation, to take timely actions to safeguard their nutrition.

All these measures need extensive inter-institutional coordination, under the leadership of the designated authorities in each country, to face this crisis.
TEMPORARY VACANCIES IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE
THE CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT,
MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT

Requires the following:

(i) FLIGHT OPERATIONS INSPECTOR
QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

(i) Must hold a Barbados Air Transport License (ATPL) with not less than five thousand hours as a pilot of an air transport type aircraft.
(ii) Preference will be given to the holder of a degree in Aviation Management or in a related discipline.
(iii) Previous experience in flight operations activities and management would be an asset.

SALARY SCALE:

S7: $85,653.79 per annum (fixed).

(ii) AIRWORTHINESS INSPECTOR
QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

(a) A degree in Airspace Engineering and a basic engineering license; or
(b) Must hold an Aircraft Maintenance Engineer’s License which is either
   (i) type-rated or approved on at least two types of aircraft; or
   (ii) endorsed for Avionics Systems.
Not less than eight years’ experience as an aircraft maintenance technician in an aircraft maintenance facility, the airline industry or the military is required; or
(c) Not less than three years’ supervisory or managerial experience in aircraft maintenance
   (i) including experience in such positions as Lead Mechanic, Quality Assurance Inspector or Duty Engineer; and
   (ii) experience in the maintenance and repair of airframes, power plants and systems of large aircraft over 5700 kg under a continuous airworthiness inspection and maintenance programme; or
   (iii) experience in the provision of maintenance services for smaller aircraft up to the level of annual checks.

SALARY SCALE:

S7: $85,653.79 per annum (fixed).

Closing Date: 2020-04-03

Further details and appropriate application forms may be obtained from:
The Director
People Resourcing and Compliance Directorate
Ministry of the Public Service
E. Humphrey Walcott Building,
Corner Collymore Rock and Culloden Road,
ST. MICHAEL

CIBC FirstCaribbean is committed to working with our clients, in our Retail, Business Banking, Wealth Management and Corporate Banking segments to offer special assistance on a case by case basis for those adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This could include deferred payments; special loan financing and other concessions aimed at helping clients cushion the financial impact of the pandemic on households and business across the region.

Chief Executive Officer, Colette Delaney said the bank was “very conscious of the financial dislocation which the ongoing COVID-19 event will have on our clients across all segments of our business and we are moving to mitigate the effects as best as we can.”

She noted that the special assistance being offered was crucial to ensure confidence and stability in the regional banking sector as it weathered this difficult period.

Ms. Delaney urged CIBC FirstCaribbean clients who may be experiencing challenges to reach out to the bank to see what assistance could be offered to them.

She noted that the bank is committed to offering eligible clients flexible financial solutions including:

• six-month payment deferral on existing loans and mortgages.
• Temporarily revolving or working capital financing options for our Corporate Banking and Business Banking clients.

CIBC FirstCaribbean offers special financial assistance to clients affected by COVID-19

RBC Royal Bank takes action to help Caribbean clients

TORONTO (CANADA) – March 18, 2020 – RBC Royal Bank (RY on TSX and NYSE) (“RBC”) has announced plans to provide financial relief to its Caribbean clients impacted by the ongoing novel coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic.

Effective immediately, most RBC Personal banking clients in the Caribbean will benefit from an automatic three-month payment deferral on credit facilities. Business and Corporate banking clients are also eligible for the relief programme, following individual eligibility assessments with an RBC representative.

Automatic payment deferrals will be applied as of March 17, 2020 and remain in effect until June 30, 2020, or until further advised. To be eligible for the programme, Personal banking or Business and Corporate banking client accounts must be current as of March 2, 2020. Clients who are already participating in RBC relief programmes for other circumstances are excluded from this programme.

The relief programme is intended to provide flexible solutions and help clients manage through the impacts of COVID-19, such as pay disruption; childcare disruption due to school closures; or dealing with the COVID-19 illness itself.

These measures are an important first step and underscore the resilience of the financial system and the critical role banks play in the economy.

RBC will continue to monitor COVID-19 and the evolving economic conditions in each country and territory where the bank operates. RBC may consider other relief measures, if necessary.

RBC has a long history of standing by Caribbean clients through challenging times and this commitment will continue throughout this crisis and beyond.

RBC offers special assistance to Caribbean clients

Effective immediately, most RBC Personal banking clients in the Caribbean will benefit from an automatic three-month payment deferral on credit facilities.

BANK RATES

COMMERCIAL BANK RATES TO THE PUBLIC AT THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS BY The Central Bank of Barbados.

Valid for March 20, 2020

Notes:

Currency
Belizian Dollar
Canadian Dollar
East Caribbean Dollar
Euro
Pound Sterling
United States Dollar

Buying
1.00000
1.36685
0.73843
2.09411
2.26335
1.98000

Selling
1.00000
1.40990
0.74306
2.18229
2.35865
2.02857

INDICATIVE RATES FOR SOME REGIONAL CURRENCIES AS ADVISED BY THE RESPECTIVE CENTRAL BANKS

N.B.: These rates are not meant to be used for trading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currency</th>
<th>Buying</th>
<th>Selling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BDS$</td>
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<td>0.29713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana Dollar</td>
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<td>Jamaica Dollar</td>
<td>0.01475</td>
<td>0.01475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T &amp; T Dollar</td>
<td>0.29713</td>
<td>0.29713</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

- Contact your Relationship Management Team by telephone or by email.
- Wealth Management Clients:
  - Contact your Relationship Management Team to arrange the earliest opportunity to discuss their specific needs, either by telephone or by email.
- The bank’s clients can also make contact via email. There’s a list of email addresses on the bank’s website at www.cibcfcb.com/covid-19. We also recommend clients to visit us online, at www.cibcfcb.com/locations to find additional contact information for CIBC FirstCaribbean offices in each territory.

The Barbados Advocate
China reports no new local coronavirus transmissions for first time

BEIJING/SHANGHAI – China and the epicenter of its coronavirus outbreak, Wuhan city, have reported no new domestic transmissions for the first time, raising hope that strict containment efforts to stop the spread of the virus are working.

Wuhan, locked down since Jan. 23, is currently the only city in Hubei province still designated “high-risk” and subject to strict travel bans, even as restrictions across the rest of the country have loosened in recent weeks.

The city relaxed quarantine rules slightly yesterday, allowing people to walk in their compounds rather than staying confined to living quarters, state-run CCTV reported.

If no new case is reported for 14 consecutive days, the lockdown could gradually be lifted, the China Daily newspaper said, citing an epidemiologist.

“We expect new cases will cease to appear in mid or late March,” Li Lanjuan, director of China’s State Key Laboratory for Diagnosis and Treatment of Infectious Diseases, told the newspaper.

The number of daily new infections in mainland China fell below 100 for the first time on March 6. Yesterday, there were 34 cases, up from 13 a day earlier. All of yesterday’s cases involved travelers from abroad.

Total infections in mainland China stood at 80,928, with the death toll at 3,245 by Wednesday, up eight from a day before. Wuhan accounted for six of the eight new deaths in Hubei.

No new infections have been reported for 14 days in the rest of Hubei, where authorities said yesterday they would allow entry on certain conditions to people from other provinces.

Focus on imported cases

China’s recent efforts to fight the epidemic have increasingly focused on inbound travelers, amid concern about a second wave of infections from overseas.

New imported coronavirus infections hit a record of 21 in Beijing, data showed yesterday, piling pressure on authorities to screen out infected passengers and isolate suspected cases.

China’s aviation regulator said on Wednesday it would divert some international flights bound for Beijing to other cities. The Global Times said China’s aviation authority had appointed a team of 12 airport firms to help.

Such reports suggest the capital may have reached its limit in screening incoming visitors, a China Daily editorial said.

The southern province of Guangdong reported nine new imported cases, while the financial hub of Shanghai saw two new infections from overseas.

Shanghai yesterday expanded the list of countries from which travelers have to undergo a 14-day quarantine to 24 countries, eight more than previously.

From yesterday, those entering Guangdong after visiting countries with high infection rates will be quarantined for 14 days at home or at a centralized medical center, the official Xinhua news agency said. The far western region of Xinjiang adopted similar measures, Xinhua said.

China’s eastern provinces of Shandong and Anhui, its southwestern city of Chongqing and Wuhan earlier said they would require all overseas arrivals to spend 14 days in quarantine.

China tentatively plans to hold late in April or early in May its annual gathering of parliament, two people involved in preparations told Reuters, after a delay caused by the outbreak, from an initial date of early March.

Tencent profit exceeds 93B yuan last year

CHINASTECH GIANT Tencent announced Wednesday that its profit attributable to shareholders increased by 19 percent year on year to 93.3 billion yuan (about 13.3 billion U.S. dollars) last year.

In 2019, its total operating revenue rose by 21 percent from the previous year to 114.7 billion yuan. During the period, revenue from fintech and enterprise services grew 23 percent year on year to 101.4 billion yuan.

WeChat, Tencent’s social media platform, had over 1.17 billion active monthly users, up 6.1 percent year on year, the company said.

On Wednesday, its Hong Kong-listed stocks were lower by 4.52 percent.

China to donate 4,000 COVID-19 testing kits to Trinidad and Tobago

GOVERNMENT said China has promised to donate 4,000 COVID-19 testing kits to aid Trinidad and Tobago in its fight against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley made the announcement during a media briefing after a special meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday, March 18, 2020.

Dr Rowley said the Chinese government was returning a kind gesture following Trinidad and Tobago’s donation of over 13,000 N95 face masks to aid in the fight against the virus during the Wuhan epidemic.

“I’ve received the following communication from the government of China. It says ‘Once again I wish to express our high appreciation and kindly support for your kind donation of face masks...when we were in dire need. This timely donation is testimony to the strong bonds and true friendship between our peoples’.”

Dr Rowley said the Chinese government will be urgently sending the following supplies gathered from both the public and private sectors:

1. 15 sets of body temperature measurement systems for air and seaports. These are being urgently shipped.
2. Real-time fluorescent RT-CPR testing kits for COVID-19 for 4,000 people. They will be kept at suitable temperatures using dry ice and securely shipped.
3. Protective gear, for example, masks, gloves, coveralls, goggles and more (quantities to be confirmed).
4. The Chinese government said it will also facilitate technical information sharing and would be willing to provide medical expertise and video conferencing with medical professionals in China should the need arise.

Health Minister Terrence Deyalsingh added that an order of 12,000 N95 masks also arrived in the country on Wednesday.

Dr Rowley urged the public to continue to follow health and safety protocols and to prevent the spread of the virus.
Bermuda Government closes ports of entry, schools following confirmed Covid-19 cases

HAMILTON, Bermuda - The Bermuda government has announced the closure of the LF Wade International Airport, the seaport, and schools, as the island reacted to the first two confirmed cases of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Premier David Burt, in a radio and television broadcast, said the airport would close today at 11:59 p.m. for the next two weeks and non-residents will not be landed on the island from Thursday onwards.

He said only returning residents will be allowed on flights to Bermuda between Thursday morning and Friday night and that cargo flights will not be affected.

“The seaport is closed to visiting vessels, but essential cargo operations bringing food, medicine, medical supplies, and other essential goods will continue to arrive in Bermuda.”

Burt said that schools will be closed until April 6 and that while the Bermuda College will not have classes on Thursday and Friday, classes will resume on Monday using the online environment.

He said several government offices such as the National Drug Control and Child and Family Services will remain in operation and that the public bus and ferry services are suspended until April 6.

“Government workers who are not directly involved with the COVID-19 management and operation will work from home until April 6th. Managers will provide guidance to all public officers throughout the course of the day.”

He said that private businesses are encouraged to ask their employees to work from home, if possible. Otherwise, work schedules should be staggered to minimise the number of people in the workplace.

“People, restaurants, and other social establishments are strongly urged to scale down their operations and enforce social distancing. Essential retail outlets will continue to operate such as food and medicines and there will be specific guidance issued to all retail establishments tomorrow following the COVID-19 EMO meeting.”

Burt acknowledged that “these actions are drastic, but we are taking them in order to confirm that there is not community spread of COVID-19 in Bermuda.”

“Bermuda will be impacted financially and socially, however, the health and welfare of our people is the most important consideration. Given that we will have the ability to screen for COVID-19 on the island starting on Friday, we will be able to quickly assess the risk and ensure that we contain this virus.”

He said that there are many questions about the flights the two individuals who were confirmed with COVID-19 travelled on.

“Bermuda should be extremely cautious to protect our community from the importation of the disease.”

Grenada adds USA to coronavirus travel advisory

THE United States of America (USA) will be added to a list of countries on Grenada’s travel advisory which seeks to stop the coronavirus from entering the country.

There will be no announcement of a travel advisory from Grenada at this time. There are currently no confirmed coronavirus cases in Grenada. Grenada is currently on alert to COVID-19.

In its updated travel advisory, the government said Grenadian nationals and residents will be allowed to enter the country but must be self-quarantined for 14 days upon arrival in Grenada.

Effective March 20 at 11.59 pm, if you are not a Grenadian national and in the last 14 days you have been to Iran, South Korea, China, the USA, or Europe, you will be refused entry into the country.

Effective March 21 at 11.59 pm, the USA is added to this advisory as per all the stipulations outlined.

Included in the travel restrictions, Grenadian nationals and non-nationals alike arriving from any other destination outside of the stated list will be screened upon entry and self-quarantined for 14 days.

The government says this action is necessary as widespread respiratory illnesses caused by COVID-19 have been reported in Iran, South Korea, China, the USA, and Europe.

Meanwhile, Grenada’s Ministry of Health says before disembarking passengers must complete a declaration form on their health status.

Pedestrians are also required to check in daily with the Ministry of Health to make sure they are not asymptomatic during their stay in Grenada.

Several Caribbean countries have tightened up on visitor arrivals with several restrictions in a bid to combat the spread of COVID-19.

Rio reports first coronavirus deaths as Brazil closes land borders

RIO DE JANEIRO – Brazil’s tourist mecca of Rio de Janeiro reported its first two coronavirus deaths yesterday, bringing the country’s toll to six, as Latin America’s largest nation closed more borders to foreign visitors.

The state government said the two deaths were a 63-year-old diabetic woman in the hilly interior of Rio de Janeiro state and a 69-year-old man, also diabetic, in the city of Niterói.

President Jair Bolsonaro, who has faced criticism for his handling of an outbreak he initially called a “fantasy,” issued a decree restricting entry of foreign visitors to land borders with Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Suriname and French Guiana. On Wednesday, Brazil began turning away Venezuelans at the border.

Bolsonaro had reported 428 confirmed cases of the virus as of Wednesday evening, more than doubling in three days.

Responding to the latest deaths, Rio Governor Wilson Witzel urged people to stay indoors and to avoid gyms and beaches.

Brazil’s major cities have moved to restrict social gatherings in an attempt to slow the outbreak, with shopping malls and nightclubs asked to close. But the measures remain inconsistent between cities and states.

On Wednesday night, Brazil erupted to the sound of banging pots and pans and shouts of “Bolsonaro out!” with housebound protesters expressing their anger toward the president for the second night in a row.

Brazilians are being instructed to stay home and only go outside to buy food and medicine. Those without symptoms of the virus are being encouraged to self-quarantine and take their temperature twice a day.

Brazil’s President Jair Bolsonaro wearing a protective face mask arrives at a press conference to announce federal judiciary measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Brasilia.

Brazilians are being instructed to stay home and only go outside to buy food and medicine. Those without symptoms of the virus are being encouraged to self-quarantine and take their temperature twice a day.

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Bahamas PM activates partial nationwide shutdown and nightly curfew

- COVID-19 order takes effect 9am today
- Airports will remain open, non-essential intl. and domestic travel discouraged
- Weddings and funerals must be kept under 10 people
- Drive-thrus will remain open during day, construction work will continue
- All officers on vacation, retirement asked to report to work

NASSAU, BAHAMAS – Prime Minister Dr Hubert Minnis has announced a nation-wide partial shutdown for the next 11 days as measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The Emergency Powers (COVID-19) Order, 2020, include a nightly curfew and shutdown of all non-essential businesses and organizations, public transportation and commercial sailing; and all events, parties or gatherings.

At a press conference, Minnis stressed these were temporary measures as all residents must play a role in protecting the health of families and loved ones from the highly contagious virus.

The curfew will be in effect each night from 9pm to 5am, with exceptions to be approved by the commissioner of police.

The order takes effect at 9am today, and will remain in effect until 9am on March 31.

The prime minister said the order will be lifted upon consultation with health officials.

Minnis said: “This crisis is developing daily and the Government of The Bahamas will make adjustments as necessary in the best interest of the public health and safety of the Bahamian people and residents of The Bahamas.

I thank all of those on the frontline of this battle for their courage, compassion and dedication to the health, security and well-being of Bahamians and residents.

He added: “The orders that I am about to announce are very strong, but they will save lives, which is my greatest responsibility as prime minister.”

All establishments, institutions, businesses, offices, stores and organizations will be forced to suspend operations to the general public.

However, doctor's offices, hospitals or medical facilities; medical supply establishments; hotels and airports will remain open.

Wholesale or retail grocery stores and Farmers’ Markets; pharmacies; gas stations; laundromats and wash houses; and commercial ports and related businesses will remain open to the public from 6am to 5pm.

Banks will open between 9am to 5pm.

Drive thru or take away food vendors will be allowed to open from 6am to 7.30pm; and construction companies carrying out any construction work will be allowed to do so from 6am to 7pm.

Establishments that remain open are ordered to restrict the number of customers inside their place of business to allow for social distancing of at least three to six feet from any other person.

The order also mandates every person in such establishments or businesses must maintain the distance themselves from any other such person.

Other establishments or offices, inclusive of public service, shall maintain only essential staff for the performance of core functions while adhering at all times to social distancing with others working remotely.

Governor General CA Smith declared a public state of emergency Tuesday.

In Parliament Wednesday, the prime minister laid the emergency regulations, giving himself and government wide-sweeping powers related to mandatory detention, isolation, curfew, requisitions of building, and criminalizing the posting or sharing of fake news.

The order announced yesterday mandates every person shall remain in the confines of their dwelling home, inclusive of their yard space.

It prohibits anyone from hosting or attending a private party which includes any person from outside of the immediate household of the house occupant; a recreational or competitive sporting event; a wedding which bans ten or more persons other than the bride, bridegroom, official witnesses and the marriage officer; a banquet, ball or reception; any social event; a funeral, except ten members of the immediate family and at least one officiant and essential mortuary staff; or a meeting of a fraternal society, private or social club or civic association or organization.

The order further stipulates that: “no person shall offer for hire or seek to travel on any public transport that is non-essential”.

Visitation to any place of quarantine or isolation station or correctional facility is prohibited; while hospital or residential care visits have been restricted to one person at a time.

The order does not apply to essential officers of the Royal Bahamas Police Force, Royal Bahamas Defence Force, Fire Services, the Department of Correctional Services, the National Insurance Board, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Environmental Health Services, the Department of Immigration, the Customs Department, waste and sanitation workers, and staff within any hospital or health care or medical facility.

If convicted, anyone who is found in contravention of the order will face a fine up to US$10,000, a prison term up to 18 months, or both.
Queen urges UK to ‘work as one’ in message to nation

The Queen has issued a message to the UK people on the coronavirus outbreak, saying the nation is “entering a period of great concern and uncertainty”.

The 93-year-old praised the work of scientists, medics and emergency staff, but added that everyone has a “vitaly important part to play”.

She said, “Our nation’s history has been forged by people and communities coming together to work as one.”

The monarch is currently at Windsor Castle with the Duke of Edinburgh.

France may extend 14-day coronavirus lockdown, claims ‘idiots’ breaking rules

France is likely to extend its two-week lockdown to try to slow the coronavirus pandemic as the country’s interior minister blasted “idiots” ignoring the order to stay home.

The 15-day lockdown for the entire country, the French government on Tuesday enacted a policy mandating that anyone who leaves their home must have official documentation stating their reason for being outside.

All French citizens were required to download a form with their name, birthday and reason for being outside. If anyone is caught outside without the form, police have been authorised to levy fines.

Even so, news reports have shown groups of people strolling in parks and ignoring the one-metre (3-feet) social distancing rule. French President Emmanuel Macron said the only acceptable reasons for leaving the house are going to the doctor, walking the dog or going for a solitary run.

Some officials have called for stricter limits, and Paris police are considering shutting down riverside walkways, a move Bordeaux has already taken.

Macron yesterday decreed that so many people seemed to take the confinement measures “lightly.”

“When I see that people continue to go to the park, to the beach or to rush into open markets,” it means “they have not understood” the rules of the lockdown, Macron told reporters while visiting the Pasteur Institute for medical research in Paris.

Genevieve Chene, who heads France’s public health agency, said it is likely that an extension to confinement will be necessary. She said that two to four weeks of confinement will be needed for the outbreak to be contained.

“It is likely that it is indeed necessary to extend [the containment measures] in order for the braking to be sufficient,” she said, before adding that France’s outbreak was likely to peak around the middle or end of May. She stressed that the timing depended on how closely people followed confinement measures.

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Access to the entire Mediterranean coast closed because “we are seeing too many people on the beaches,” according to Pierre Dartout.

Castaner also called out the theft of surgical masks from hospitals and said authorities would deal harshly with anyone involved in the “despicable” trade of stealing such protective equipment.

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US jails begin releasing prisoners to stem Covid-19 infections

US jails are to let out inmates as cases of coronavirus infections are being reported in prisons.

New York City is releasing "vulnerable" prisoners, the mayor said on Wednesday, days after Los Angeles and Cleveland freed hundreds of inmates.

Prison reform advocates say those in jail are at higher risk of catching and passing on Covid-19.

There have been more than 9400 cases of Covid-19 and 152 deaths in the US so far, according to estimates.

Globally there are some 220,000 confirmed cases and over 8800 deaths.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said on Wednesday that city officials will this week identify individuals for release, including people who were arrested for minor crimes and those most vulnerable to infection due to underlying health problems.

His announcement came hours after a guard and a prisoner tested positive for coronavirus at Rikers Island prison, where disgraced former Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, 68, is a high-profile inmate.

Weinstein will be moved to a different state prison, an official said on Wednesday.

Other New York prisons, such as Sing Sing, have had inmates test positive for coronavirus and one employee for the state's corrections department has died from it.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department reduced it's inmate population by 600 in the last two weeks, officials said on Tuesday.

"Our population within our jails is a vulnerable population just by who they are, where they are located, so we're protecting that population from potential exposure," Los Angeles Sheriff Alex Villanueva told reporters earlier this week.

The LA County jail system is the largest prison system in the world with an average population of around 22,000 prisoners.

Villanueva disclosed that arrests in the county are also down, from an average of 300 per weekend to only 60 in mid-March.

Cuyahoga County, Ohio, where the city of Cleveland is located, has also released hundreds of prisoners due to coronavirus concerns.

Judges held emergency hearings through the weekend to work out plea deals and other agreements to allow prisoners to be released early or without serving time.

Several states from New York to California are now banning in-person visits. A ban on visits led to a deadly prison riot in Italy last week.

Federal agencies will postpone most arrests and deportations during the coronavirus crisis.

Reform campaigners say prisoners face unique risks, due to a lack of hygiene in overcrowded cells and hallways.

Handcuffed people cannot cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze, sinks often lack soap and hand sanitiser is considered contraband due to its alcohol content.

Iran has already released 85,000 people, including political prisoners, in an effort to combat the pandemic.

The US locks up more of its citizens per capita than any other country, with an estimated 2.3 million people behind bars in federal, state and local prisons.

Some high profile convicts have argued for early release over coronavirus fears.

They include President Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen, 53, financial fraudster Bernie Madoff, 81, and Gilberto Rodriguez-Orejuela, a notorious Colombian drug lord.
The Barbados Advocate

FULL TIME POSITIONS FROM SEPTEMBER 2020

FOOD, NUTRITION & HEALTH
CHEMISTRY & BIOLOGY

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons, for the above Full Time teachers in the Secondary School. Applications with full Curriculum Vitae, copies of certificates, names of two (2) referees and two recent testimonials should be sent to secretary@stwinifredsschool.net no later than Friday 27th March 2020. Only teachers with experience need apply. The school will not be responsible for work permits. Only suitable applicants will be acknowledged.

PRINCE ALBERT II of Monaco has tested positive for coronavirus, a spokesperson for the city-state's palace told CNN yesterday. The status of the ruler’s health “is not worrying at all,” the palace added in a statement. Prince Albert was tested for Covid-19 earlier this week. The 62-year-old is continuing to work from the office in his private apartments and remains in contact with members of his cabinet and government.

The prince is Monaco’s head of state, and one of the world’s wealthiest royals. He was formally invested as the country’s leader in 2005. Monaco, a country with a population of fewer than 40,000 people, had recorded nine cases of coronavirus before the monarch’s diagnosis was announced.

“His Serene Highness urges the people of Monaco to respect the measures of confinement and to limit contact with others to a minimum,” the palace’s statement added.

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“His Serene Highness urges the people of Monaco to respect the measures of confinement and to limit contact with others to a minimum,” the palace’s statement added.

SOUTH KOREA, China and Singapore are among the Asian countries facing a second coronavirus wave, fuelled by people importing it from outside. China, where the virus first emerged, confirmed it had no new domestic cases on Wednesday for the first time since the outbreak began, a major milestone. However it reported 34 new cases among people who recently returned to China.

Singapore also reported 47 new cases, of which 33 were imported – 30 of them returned Singapore residents.

South Korea saw a jump in new cases yesterday with 152, though it is not clear how many were imported.

A new cluster there is centred on a nursing home in Daegu, where 74 patients have tested positive.

Japan reported three new cases on Wednesday. However Hokkaido, the worst-affected Japanese region with 154 cases, is lifting its state of emergency – in place since late February – after officials said the spread of the virus appeared to be ending.

Officials have urged people to remain cautious and stay at home, but said there had been “no surge of infected patients that led to the collapse of the medical environment”.

“We’ve carried out powerful measures on refrain from going out, but from now on, we will move into a stage of reducing risks of the spread of infection while maintaining social and economic activities,” governor Naomichi Suzuki said on Wednesday.

China’s National Health Commission (NHC) reported no domestically transmitted cases in China for the first time since the virus emerged in late December. Some Wuhan residents who have been shut up inside their homes for six weeks are being allowed out, as long as they do not gather in groups. Some businesses have also been allowed to resume work.

In districts which have been cleared as “epidemic-free”, small markets and convenience stores are reopening.

As protection against imported infections, a hospital that used to treat Sars patients has been re-opened in the Chinese capital Beijing to quarantine suspected coronavirus cases. In Hong Kong, new arrivals will have to wear an electronic bracelet to track their movements.

All four countries had all been showing success in controlling domestic cases, but there is concern that increases elsewhere could unravel their progress.

The new numbers signal that the outbreak is far from over in Asia.
Uganda bans weddings, religious gatherings for a month to prevent coronavirus spread

UGANDAN President Yoweri Museveni has announced a ban on large public gatherings including weddings, church and Jumat services for the next 32 days in a bid to help prevent the spread of the virus.

Museveni also announced the closure of schools including universities starting from Friday, citing the need to prevent the influx of cases from countries in the East African region.

“To date, Uganda has not registered any case of coronavirus, but neighbours in the region including Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda confirmed cases of the virus last week, while DRC registered a case of the virus in the region including Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda confirmed cases of the virus last week, while DRC registered a case of the virus.”

Museveni said in a televised address announcing the ban.

Banks, hospitals, supermarkets and markets are not affected by the directive, but those in operation must adhere to hygiene measures and also provide their workers and those that come into their establishment with sanitisers.

The movement restrictions will affect Easter festivities and religious services — but Museveni said it was better for citizens to err on the side of caution.

“The prayers will continue but in homes. The religious leaders can use the TVs, radion stations to continue preaching, His Holiness, Pope Francis, as usual set a good example of enlightenment on this by abandoning his customary preaching in St. Peters' Square and is instead, using the TV,” Museveni said.

Museveni said couples who cannot wait for the ban to be lifted may go ahead with their wedding ceremonies but not more than ten people should be present at such events. The same restriction applies to burials.

However, the Ugandan government will be responsible for the burial of anyone who dies from coronavirus infection, Museveni said, adding that no relation of the deceased will be involved in such cases.

He ordered public transport operators to install hand washing facilities at bus stops and ensure that passengers are disinfected before they get on buses.

“Do not travel unless it is absolutely necessary, if you are using public transport,” Museveni said in his address after a meeting with religious leaders and health agencies in the country on Wednesday.

Uganda was one of the first African countries to impose travel restrictions on its citizens and others travelling from 16 countries it said had a high number of cases of coronavirus, including the US and UK last week. Health Minister Jane Aceng said those who insist on visiting the East African nation from these countries would have to self-quarantine for 14 days at their own cost at home or at a government facility.

Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa have announced some border closure and stopped international flights from virus-hit countries.

Australia and New Zealand ban non-residents from entry

AUSTRALIA and New Zealand will ban entry to all non-residents from today in an attempt to limit the spread of coronavirus.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said his nation's order would come into effect from 9 pm Friday (10 am GMT).

New Zealand’s began earlier – at midnight (11:00 GMT Thursday).

The historic and far-reaching bans do not extend to citizens, permanent residents, or their families.

The two countries leaders’ said they had worked together on the regulations.

Both countries are also requiring everyone arriving – regardless of their citizenship or where they’ve come from – to self-isolate for 14 days.

Australia has recorded more than 600 cases of coronavirus and six deaths, with a sharp rise in infections this week.

New Zealand has seen 28 positive tests.

Morrison said in a televised address announcing the ban.

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SOUTH AFRICA will build a fence along its border with Zimbabwe within a month to prevent people infected with coronavirus and undocumented migrants from entering its territory, Public Works Minister Patricia de Lille has said.

The construction would be part of the emergency measures that the government had decided to take after President Cyril Ramaphosa declared the virus a national disaster on Sunday.

Ramaphosa ordered the closure of most border crossings, but the measure would not be “effective if the fences at the border are not secure, which in many places, they are not”, Ms De Lille said.

A 1.8 metre (5 feet 11 inches) high fence, stretching for 20 kilometres (12.4 miles), would be built on either side of the Beitbridge border, the main crossing between the two nations, the minister said.

The number of people diagnosed in South Africa with the virus has risen to 150 since it was detected about two weeks ago in a South African who had visited Italy.

Hundreds of thousands of Zimbabwean live in South Africa. Many of them fled political violence and an economic meltdown after their government embarked on a controversial land reform programme nearly two decades ago.

South Africa has long attempted to reduce migration from Zimbabwe and other parts of Africa, saying this was necessary to create jobs for its own citizens.

Zimbabwe has not reported any cases of the virus, but President Emmerson Mnangagwa has ordered the close of schools and other educational institutions from next Tuesday as a precautionary measure.

Australian Prime Minister, Scott Morrison.
ARIES (March 21-April 19). The way things feel is not always -- or even usually -- the way things are. This is something to understand and accept today. Hey, you're not always right, and that can be a very good thing.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). They should have listened to you. They didn't. You wanted to say, "I told you so." You didn't. Somehow you may not feel complete about the situation, but you should be proud of your restraint.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You're not sure you should speak the randomness that pops into your head. If you express yourself, not everyone will get you. But the ones who do understand will really click with you in other ways, too.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Challenge your unhelpful thoughts. Some of those thoughts are not only unhelpful; they are also untrue and being big bullies to the other thoughts that need you to give them a fighting chance.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You've a charming chaos about you, so don't be surprised if, as disorganized as you may feel, you always wind up among people who want to help you, if only because it means being near you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). There's a lawless feeling in your spirit today. Though you don't set out intending to break the rules, you're also not very interested in knowing what they are.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). People who exaggerate stories often tend to believe the exaggeration to the point that the inflated version becomes their new mental truth. You can use this to your advantage today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You are the money magnet of the zodiac today, and opportunities will find you wherever you are. You'll use it for good purposes, which may include making a child happy.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Have you been in love? If so, you'll recognize today's nonsensical inclinations as reminiscent of that irrational state of being. And if you've never been in love, today's questionable move may be the first signs of it.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Sometimes it feels like you owe the world everything, even your thoughts. You don't, though you should know that a lot of people are very greedy and will take as much power as you want to give them.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You never know when you're changing someone's life forever for the better by your small gestures of compassion, kindness and interest. To give someone your full attention is an act of generosity.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You've seen it before; someone you know is unable or unwilling to solve a problem even after you point out a solution that is well-within reach. Let this occurrence indicate to you that it really is time to focus on your own situation.
Local artiste signed by Lemongrass as first brand ambassador

LOCAL artiste; singer, songwriter and constantly ascending talent Faith Callender has been signed as Lemongrass’ first ever brand ambassador at their Limegrove location in the Lemongrass’ first ever brand ambassador.

Callender has been signed as constantly ascending talent Faith Callender.

Owner of the Lemongrass restaurant and franchise Saman Golesorkhi with brand ambassador Faith Callender.

Owner of the Lemongrass restaurant and franchise Saman Golesorkhi with brand ambassador Faith Callender.

Reggae on the Hill to be pushed back

One of the biggest events on Barbados’ event calendar has been postponed.

The highly-anticipated four-day Barbados Reggae Festival, which draws thousands of reggae lovers from Barbados, the region and across the world, is one of the major events which have had to halt preparations for the festival which was slated to start next month.

In a release, organisers FAS Promotions noted that the decision was taken following the Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley’s request to postpone all social gatherings with 100 people or more for three months, and the announcement on Tuesday of two confirmed cases of COVID-19 on the island.

“FAS Promotions has postponed next month’s Barbados Reggae Festival until future dates later this year. We will announce the new dates as soon as Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley is available as to when Barbados can resume normal activity.

“We appreciate your support during this difficult period and pray for your safety at this time. We also urge everyone to follow the guidelines.

Ticket holders should retain their tickets as they will remain valid for the new event dates.

The event which features, Vintage Reggae, the Reggae Party Cruise, Reggae on the Beach and Reggae on the Hill, held on the scenic Farley Hill and culminating with Reggae on the Beach. This year the Hill would have featured award-winning artiste, Koffee, Jimmy Cliff, Richie Spice, Sizzla, Christopher Martin to name a few.

The event’s executive supervisor, Jon Olfa Sand, added, “We are very proud of the Eurovision Song Contest, that for 46 years has united people all around Europe.

“We regret this situation very much, but I can promise you; the Eurovision Song Contest will come back stronger than ever.”

He added that talks were already under way about staging the contest in Rotterdam next year.

The cancellations follow updated guidance from the government calling on people to stay away from pubs, clubs and theatres and to avoid all non-essential contacts and travel.

The Who, Madonna and Miley Cyrus have cancelled live dates due to the COVID-19 outbreak, while festivals such as Coachella and Stagecoach in the US have been postponed or called off.

Radio 1’s Big Weekend is among the other big music events cancelled off by organisations in the UK.

The festival, which had Biffy Clyro, Harry Styles and Cabello on the line-up, was due to take place in Dundee, Scotland from May 22 to 24.

In Hollywood, Disney announced it was shutting down production on many of its live-action films, including “The Little Mermaid.”

The studio has also delayed the release of a blockbuster remake of “Mulan”, which had been due to arrive in UK cinemas on March 27.

Other film releases postponed include “A Quiet Place II” and “Fast And Furious 9.”

The release of the upcoming James Bond movie “No Time To Die” has been pushed back to November, having originally been set to arrive in April.

Glastonbury, Eurovision latest events to be cancelled

Glastonbury Festival and the Eurovision Song Contest have both been cancelled because of the coronavirus outbreak.

A 50th anniversary Glastonbury event was being planned, and the cancellation is being described as a “terrible blow to our incredible crew and volunteers”.

The music festival’s organisers have sent their “sincere apologies” to the 135,000 who had paid deposits.

They also announced 2020 will now be an “enforced fallow year” for the world-famous event.

Sir Paul McCartney, Taylor Swift and Kendrick Lamar were due to headline at the festival, with Diana Ross due to play the Sunday legend’s slot.

Other music acts on the line-up include Dua Lipa, Camila Cabello and Pet Shop Boys, as well as rockers Sam Fender, Blossoms, Haim and Noel Gallagher’s High Flying Birds.

The event’s co-founder Michael Eavis and his daughter Emily said in a Twitter post: “We are so sorry to announce this, but we are going to have to cancel Glastonbury 2020.

“Tickets for this year will roll over to next year.”

Part of a full statement accompanying the post reads, “Clearly this was not a course of action we hoped to take for our 50th anniversary event, but following the new government measures announced this week – and in times of such unprecedented uncertainty – this is now our only viable option.

“We very much hope that the situation in the UK will have improved enormously by the end of June, allowing us to begin preparations again for a return to the site in 2021.

“But even if it has, we are no longer able to spend the next three months with thousands of crew on the farm, helping us with the enormous job of building the infrastructure and attractions needed to welcome more than 200,000 people to a temporary city in these fields.”

Glastonbury, which draws around 200,000 people to farmland in Somerset, was due to take place from June 24 to 28.

It comes as the Eurovision Song Contest 2020 has also been cancelled due to the disease outbreak.

Organisers said in a statement, “It is with deep regret that we have to announce the cancellation of the Eurovision Song Contest 2020 in Rotterdam.

“Over the past few weeks we have explored many alternative options to allow the Eurovision Song Contest to go ahead.

“However, the uncertainty created by the spread of COVID-19 throughout Europe – and the restrictions put in place by the governments of participating broadcasters and the Dutch authorities – means the European Broadcasting Union has taken the difficult decision that it is impossible to continue with the live event as planned.”

The event’s executive supervisor, Jon Olfa Sand, added, “We are very proud of the Eurovision Song Contest, that for 46 years has united people all around Europe.

“We regret this situation very much, but I can promise you; the Eurovision Song Contest will come back stronger than ever.”

He added that talks were already under way about staging the contest in Rotterdam next year.

The cancellations follow updated guidance from the government calling on people to stay away from pubs, clubs and theatres and to avoid all non-essential contacts and travel.

The Who, Madonna and Miley Cyrus have cancelled live dates due to the COVID-19 outbreak, while festivals such as Coachella and Stagecoach in the US have been postponed or called off.

Radio 1’s Big Weekend is among the other big music events cancelled off by organisations in the UK.

The festival, which had Biffy Clyro, Harry Styles and Cabello on the line-up, was due to take place in Dundee, Scotland from May 22 to 24.

In Hollywood, Disney announced it was shutting down production on many of its live-action films, including “The Little Mermaid.”

The studio has also delayed the release of a blockbuster remake of “Mulan”, which had been due to arrive in UK cinemas on March 27.

Other film releases postponed include “A Quiet Place II” and “Fast And Furious 9.”

The release of the upcoming James Bond movie “No Time To Die” has been pushed back to November, having originally been set to arrive in April.

Glastonbury Festival and the Eurovision Song Contest have both been cancelled because of the coronavirus outbreak.

A 50th anniversary Glastonbury event was being planned, and the cancellation is being described as a “terrible blow to our incredible crew and volunteers”.

The music festival’s organisers have sent their “sincere apologies” to the 135,000 who had paid deposits.

They also announced 2020 will now be an “enforced fallow year” for the world-famous event.

Sir Paul McCartney, Taylor Swift and Kendrick Lamar were due to headline at the festival, with Diana Ross due to play the Sunday legend’s slot.

Other music acts on the line-up include Dua Lipa, Camila Cabello and Pet Shop Boys, as well as rockers Sam Fender, Blossoms, Haim and Noel Gallagher’s High Flying Birds.

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Netflix will reduce the video quality on its service in Europe for the next 30 days, to reduce the strain on Internet service providers.

Demand for streaming has increased because large parts of Europe are self-isolating at home due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The video-streaming provider said lowering the picture quality would reduce Netflix data consumption by 25 percent.

However it said viewers would still find the picture quality good.

The change appears to include the UK but Netflix has not responded to the BBC's request for confirmation on this.

### Video quality

The company will cut its streaming bitrates, which influence how clear and smooth videos look when streamed online.

Videos with a higher bitrate tend to look less “blokey” or pixelated, but use more data.

The announcement came afer a phone call with European officicals.

Thierry Breton, the European Commissioner for the Internal Market, had earlier said people should “switch to standard definition when HD [high-definition] is not necessary”.

An hour of standard definition video uses about 1GB of data, while HD can use up to 3GB an hour.

Netflix also offers ultra-high definition 4K video for some of its programmes.

Netflix’s decision to reduce video bitrate by a quarter appears to be a compromise.

“Following the discussions between Commissioner Thierry Breton and [Netflix chief executive] Reed Hastings, and given the extraordinary challenges raised by the coronavirus, Netflix has decided to begin reducing bitrates across all our streams in Europe for 30 days,” the company said.

Commissioner Breton praised the “very prompt action” Netflix took just hours after the phone call, saying it would “preserve the smooth functioning of the Internet during the Covid-19 crisis”.

### Internet usage

Netflix has not yet said whether the bitrate reduction will be applied to other areas such as North America.

Internet usage has been heightened in the last few weeks as more people work from home and avoid going out.

Telecoms giant Vodafone reported a 50 per cent rise in internet use in Europe earlier this week.

Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg said on Wednesday that the platform was seeing “big surges” as users tried to stay connected with friends.

The social media boss said the company typically saw its largest surge in use on New Year’s Eve, but that recent demand had outpaced that.

### Nickelodeon launches new content to help children during virus pandemic

Nickelodeon has launched a site filled with (free) tips, ideas, and video content to keep kids busy at home during the coronavirus outbreak.

The channel launched “Kids/Together”, which uses popular characters and tales from its shows to address what’s going on across the globe. “SpongeBob SquarePants,” “Blue’s Clues & You!,” “Henry Danger,” “Bubble Guppies” and “The Casagrandes” are all featured.

The new content provides “kid-appropriate, kid-directed” information using original short-form videos, downloadable activities and social content. It can all be found on NickHelps.com.

Videos and pictures include SpongeBob practising social distancing, the Bubble Guppies demonstrating proper hand-washing techniques, and Nick Jr. partner Peg + Cat’s activities to keep children engaged and having fun during this time.

### US television shows are donating supplies to local hospitals

FOX’s “The Resident” is doing its part to protect the residents – and other health care workers – at an Atlanta-area hospital amid the spread coronavirus.

Dr. Karen L. Law, who is the programme director of the Internal Medicine Residency Programme at Emory University, posted a photo to Instagram on Wednesday showing off a donation of masks, gowns and other supplies made by the team behind the medical drama.

A spokesperson for Disney Television Studios, which produces the series, confirmed the donation to CNN.

“The entire team @theresidentfox, thank you for this incredibly generous donation of #PPE from your set, including gowns, masks, gloves, and all the things our healthcare workers need to provide safe care for our community during #COVID19,” Law wrote.

Yesterday, I had a serious discussion with the residents about how, though supplies are low, a magical shipment of masks is unlikely to arrive. And yet, a magical shipment of masks did arrive, in the form of this very generous gesture.”

“The Resident,” now in its third season, is filmed in Atlanta and follows the doctors and staff at the fictional Chastain Park Memorial Hospital.

Other television series have also begun making donations to help first responders.

ABC’s "Grey’s Anatomy" is donating gowns and gloves, and “Station 19,” a firefighter-centric spin-off, has donated some N95 masks to the City of Ontario Fire Department and to a firehouse in the Loz Feliz neighborhood in Los Angeles, a spokesperson for ABC European official.

“Station 19” was among the first wave of shows that shut down production last week in response to the pandemic.

“The Good Doctor,” a medical drama filmed in Vancouver, is also working to make a donation locally.

“Filthy Rich,” a satirical dramedy that airs on Fox, will also be making a donation. Though it is not a medical series, the show is planning to make a donation of cleaning supplies and food pallets, a spokesperson for the show told CNN.

“This kind of community support means so much to our frontline providers who are making many sacrifices to staff our hospitals and care for our community,” Law added.

The donations come as hospitals and doctors offices around the country experience supplies shortages as they contend with a growing number of novel coronavirus cases. Some have resorted to making their own equipment.

Top healthcare officials have said that the US does not have enough stockpiled medical equipment – particularly masks, gowns and gloves – to fulfill the anticipated need of the nation’s health care system as the pandemic continues.
Cannes Film Festival postponed

France's renowned Cannes Film Festival has been postponed.

The prestigious film festival is taking precautions as the coronavirus pandemic continues.

Organisers of cinema's largest annual gathering, scheduled to take place May 12-23, said yesterday that they are considering moving the festival to the end of June or the beginning of July.

"As soon as the development of the French and international health situation will allow us to assess the real possibility, we will make our decision known," the festival said in a statement.

Organisers had been extremely reluctant to cancel Cannes. For weeks, its organisers deflected questions and tried to push through its selection process.

However, as the pandemic spread through France, it became all but inevitable that a massive gathering like Cannes would be cancelled. On Friday, France's Prime Minister Edouard Philippe ordered the closure of all restaurants, cafes and cinemas in France to increase social distancing and combat the virus.

Other major film festivals, including South by Southwest and the Tribeca Film Festival, have already been scuttled. However some hope held out that Cannes, taking place closer to summer, might yet continue.
The Smiths hold ‘emergency’ family meeting about coronavirus

WILL SMITH, Jada Smith, and their family are pleading with people to take the coronavirus pandemic seriously, listen to doctors and practice social distancing.

The Smiths, including the couple’s daughter, Willow Smith, Jada’s mother Adrienne Banfield Norris, and Will’s son Trey Smith from his first marriage, took to Jada’s “Red Table Talk” on Facebook, calling it an “emergency” family meeting.

The duo’s son, Jaden Smith, did not participate because he had been travelling and wanted to practice social distancing, especially from his grandmother.

Will broke down the importance of social distancing, using a scenario that could very well happen.

“Imagine that our local hospital can handle 40 respiratory patients at one time. And under normal circumstances, 40 respiratory patients, for that hospital, is a lot. You know, they’ll be at 12 or 15, so they can handle it,” he said. “The way the virus is moving and the reason why we need to practice social distancing and the idea of flattening the curve is if 50 people show up at that hospital at one time, to get 40 beds, right, now you have ten people in critical condition that aren’t going to get help.”

He continued, “And your mortality rate shoots through the roof. That’s the idea of overwhelming the system. So there is a certain amount of people that we can handle nationally to come in with critical respiratory issues at one moment.”

Smith explained the virus is “going to move through humanity,” but that we can slow the rate. “So flattening the curve means not getting to 80 people at one time, we practice social distancing, the virus is going to move through humanity,” he said. “But as it moves through, want it to move through at 30 people at a time for our local hospital, not 60 people at a time for our local hospital, because then we have a real problem.”

Throughout the talk, the family gets facts from Dr. Michael Osterholm, a leading influenza researcher, and also video chats with a 25-year-old girl in Los Angeles who caught the virus and is now recovering at home.
Record-breaking Zane Maloney leads Radical Caribbean Cup

ZANE MALONEY of Barbados is the early leader of the 2020 Radical Caribbean Cup (RCC), following a hat-trick of race wins in the recent opening round at Bushy Park Barbados. On his way to building up a 26-point lead over 2018 regional Champion Stuart Maloney in the five-round series, he also set new Qualifying and Race Records, improving on times set more than two years ago.

After two Free Practice sessions, Qualifying began without Trinidad & Tobago’s Zachary Boodrumin, whose car had developed engine problems which left him on the sidelines for the day. Mark Maloney was the first to complete a flying lap of 61.780s before 16-year-old Zane punched in the first sub-60s lap, then chipped away as the ten-minute session ran its course, breaking the Qualifying Record for a third time with an eventual 57.660s, more than half-a-second better than the previous mark set by his father Sean in 2018.

T&T’s Kristian Boodoosingh, who finished third in the 2019 RCC, was at the sharp end throughout, improving on his previous personal best by six-tenths to line up second, nine-tenths behind Maloney. Brothers Stuart and Mark Maloney occupied the second row, with the returning Saleem Esuf fifth quickest, ahead of Boodoosingh’s T&T team-mate Luke Bhola, another to improve on his PB, by three-tenths. Hampered by a down-on-power engine, Sean Maloney was seventh, with England’s Brian Caudwell eighth and the grid completed by newcomer Raymond Seebarran of Guyana.

Starting from the southern grid, Boodoosingh made a better start than pole man Maloney, taking the lead downhill into the ‘W’s, and retaining it for two laps, until an electrical fault caused his retirement in a similar fashion to his demise in last year’s opening round. As the teenager eased away for a winning margin of 7.8secs, Stuart and Mark Maloney battled race-long, completing the podium in that order, while Esuf and Sean Maloney also tussled in close formation, until a brave challenge at the ‘W’s saw Maloney spin and run on to the grass, while Esuf carried on to finish fourth. Caudwell was fifth, not a points-scorer under the Cup’s invited driver regulations, while Bhola and Seebarran finished sixth and seventh collecting the first points towards the new Nations Cup for T&T and Guyana respectively. Zane Maloney was the first driver to benefit from the additional point for fastest lap with a new Race Record of 58.068s, five-hundredths better than Mark Maloney’s September 2017 mark and also a new Outright Lap Record for the 2.01-kilometre International circuit.

Caudwell and Sean Maloney sat on the front row of the reversed grid for the second race, Bhola and Esuf on row two, with Mark and Stuart Maloney on row three; at the back were Zane Maloney and Boodoosingh, having taken over Fast Parts team-mate Seebarran’s car for the rest of the day. Caudwell made a confident start, holding the lead for six laps, until he was swamped by those behind, only to the retire mid-way round lap seven, Zane Maloney assuming the lead. It lasted only three laps, however, before his uncle Mark squeezed past at the ‘W’s, running nose-to-tail until Zane snatched the lead back at the Esses on the final lap, Mark adding another fastest lap to bring his record to 23.

Based on points scored in the first two races, Zane and Mark Maloney were on the front row for the day’s final encounter. Stuart Maloney and Esuf sat on row two, Sean Maloney and Bhola on row three, with Boodoosingh and Caudwell at the back. Another good start from the pole-sitter saw him take the lead, which he held for four laps until passed by Mark; his advantage didn’t last long, however, Stuart taking the lead just before half-distance in a big shuffle, which also benefited Boodoosingh, who had made good progress from the back of the grid to slot in to fourth behind Esuf. Two laps from home, Esuf’s car switched in to safe mode, so he dropped back and in to retirement, promoting Boodoosingh to third behind Zane Maloney, who had taken the lead from his uncle Stuart on the last lap.

Stormers hit by ‘freakish’ injuries to World Cup winning Boks

CAPE TOWN – Stormers coach John Dobson has lamented the “traumatic” injuries suffered by his Springbok World Cup final stars this Super Rugby season that will also play on the mind of new national team coach Jacques Nienaber.

The Stormers were early season front-runners in Super Rugby before back-to-back losses halted their progress, and they are currently training in isolation in Cape Town with the competition on hold due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The good news is that Bok captain Siya Kolisi is on the mend and four weeks away from fitness after he was injured in the season-opening win over the Hurricanes, but there is little other reason for cheer.

The latest injuries are to scrumhalf Herschel Jantjies (fractured fibula) and prop Steven Kitshoff (pectoral muscle), who are expected to be out for three and four months respectively.

“We had six guys who played in the World Cup and five are now out with long-term injuries. These are all deeply traumatic injuries, nothing to do with load. It is something you can’t explain,” Dobson said.

“It is freakish, because it is not a condition issue. You saw Siya’s tackle, how Bongi’s (Mbonambi) leg got bent back at a ruck, Herschel fractures a fibula … it’s terrible.”

Dobson also revealed that lock and World Rugby Player of the Year Pieter-Steph du Toit is expected to be out for three months after he picked up a hematoma that developed into acute compartment syndrome and put him at risk of losing his leg following the loss to the Auckland Blues on February 29.

“We are not the Stormers we were at the start of the season. Take five World Cup finalists out of any team and it is a struggle. But we have got depth and have shown character.”

The world champion Boks are scheduled to face Scotland in two tests in July, as well as a one-off game against Georgia, though a final decision on those matches will be made next month.

The coronavirus outbreak has shut down sport around the world, with top competitions called off as governments ban mass gatherings and tighten border controls as part of efforts to contain the virus, which has killed more than 9 000 people.
Prince Harry’s Invictus Games postponed to 2021 due to coronavirus pandemic

PRINCE Harry’s Invictus Games is being postponed to 2021 due to the coronavirus outbreak, the organisation announced yesterday.

The Paralympic-style competition for wounded veterans and servicemen and women was due to take place in The Hague, the Netherlands, from May 9-16 in 2020.

“We know that not holding the Invictus Games this May will be disappointing news to the whole Invictus Family, and to all of those involved in the planning and delivery of the Games,” the Invictus Games Foundation said in a statement, according to People magazine.

“We are very appreciative of the continued support of those who have been and continue to be involved in the Invictus Games The Hague 2020, and we remain committed to the recovery of wounded, injured and sick Servicemen and women,” the statement continued. “The current situation is complex and evolving rapidly. Work is now being undertaken with the teams and providers with a view to delivering a successful Invictus Games 2021.”

The Invictus Games has been incredibly important to the British royal, who served in the army for more than ten years, the outlet noted. Just days after welcoming his son Archie in May 2019, he travelled to the Netherlands to kick off the official countdown to the 2020 Games.

“It was during the Invictus Games in 2017 that Harry, 35, and his wife Meghan Markle made their debut as a couple in Toronto. The outlet noted that while the couple has stepped back as senior royals, the Duke of Sussex announced in January that the sporting event was heading to Germany in 2022.

“I am honoured that Germany will take the Invictus Story further, with the sixth Invictus Games heading to Dusseldorf in 2022,” said Harry. “I have no doubt that the German public will get right behind these Games and that every single competitor can expect a warm welcome and an amazing atmosphere.”

For most people, the new coronavirus has caused only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some others, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it could cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

UAE suspends all sporting events, raising doubts about Dubai World Cup

DUBAI – The United Arab Emirates yesterday suspended all sporting events across the country have already been cancelled because of the deadly virus. Dubai World Cup horse race meeting would go ahead this month.

Many professional and amateur sporting events across the country have already been cancelled because of the deadly virus. Dubai World Cup organiser had said the race would go ahead on March 28, only without paid spectators. However, all sporting events, including tournaments and competitions across all ages, have been suspended by the federal sports authority until further notice, state news agency WAM reported yesterday.

Dubai’s government media office did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment.

The UAE’s premier horse racing festival is regularly attended by members of the country’s ruling families. It is one of Dubai’s biggest annual sporting events.

Players cry foul after shock French Open move

MUMBAI – Tennis players around the world have hit out at the lack of communication from the game’s governing body in the wake of the French Open’s shock switch to September from May because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The French Tennis Federation (FFT) on Tuesday said the claycourt Grand Slam at Roland Garros would now take place from Sept. 20- Oct. 4, dates that clash with several other events.

The French Open will begin just seven days after the US Open final in New York, leaving players to contest the claycourt Grand Slam in the middle of the hardcourt swing.

The new coronavirus has killed more than 8,400 people and infected more than 135,000 around the world. The pandemic has also brought the sports world to a virtual standstill.

With players already counting the cost of the tennis shutdown, the decision did not go down well.

Understanding their decision as “selfish” and “arrogant” and added that they showed the players had no say in the running of the sport.

“This is such a difficult time, everyone is being impacted by this catastrophe. Enhancing communication and working together to find solutions should be the priority,” he posted on Twitter.

Pospisil’s views were echoed by other players.

“This is not to call out the ATP but to show the difficulties in this sport,” said American Noah Rubin.

Four biggest events are privately owned, can do what they please. Despite these being unprecedented times, you would think it would promote more communication.

Former world number one doubles player Jamie Murray of Britain expressed his surprise at how FFT’s move was handled.

“I thought the powers that be in tennis were supposed to be all about working together these days?” he said.

Argentine Diego Schwartzman, Sorana Cirstea of Romania and Russian Alla Kudryavtseva all vented their frustration at finding out about the switch from social media.

Former number one Naomi Osaka reacted to the news with a foray into French with her post of “Excuses moi?”, while other women’s players posted memes on social media to voice their confusion and frustration.

Australian Darren Cahill, who coaches former French Open champion Simona Halep, called for more coordination between tennis administrators.

“Players, tournaments, majors, men and women all in a room. Now is a bit early for answers.”

The French Open will now clash with men’s ATP Tour events in Metz, St. Petersburg, Chengdu, Sofia and Zhuhai and women’s WTA events in Guangzhou, Seoul, Tokyo and Wuhan.

Early indications, however, were that it might be the Laver Cup team event, also scheduled for late September in Boston, that proves the trigger for a war between the major stakeholders in the game.

Organizers of the exhibition event, co-created by Roger Federer and counting the United States Tennis Association (USTA) and Tennis Australia among its partners, said it would go ahead regardless – to the consternation of Tenny Sandgren.

“This is so spicy! How you gonna have the event during a slam?” tweeted the American, a quarter-finalist at the Australian Open this year.
Tokyo Olympics chief attended meeting with official who now has coronavirus

TOKYO – Tokyo 2020 Olympics chief Yoshiro Mori attended a meeting on March 10 that included the deputy head of the Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC) who tested positive for the new coronavirus this week, officials said.

Mori, 82 and has lung cancer, has not been tested because he has no symptoms of the virus and does not meet testing requirements, an official from Mori’s office said.

Mori and JOC deputy head Kozo Tashima attended a board meeting regarding the Rugby World Cup. Tashima tested positive for the virus on Tuesday.

At the meeting, about 60 people were in a room and Mori was seated about 10 meters away from Tashima on the opposite side of the table, according to Jun Kusumoto, a spokesman for the Rugby World Cup organizing committee.

Tokyo 2020 Olympics chief Yoshiro Mori

Local health authorities have contacted those believed to be at risk of contracting the virus from Tashima but that does not include Mori, the Tokyo 2020 organizing committee told Reuters.

“He goes to hospital three times a week for dialysis, so if he develops fever or has other symptoms, a doctor will be able to test for it,” the official from Mori’s office said.

Doubts are mounting that the Olympics can proceed as planned given disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic but Tokyo Games and Japanese government officials have said the event will go ahead as scheduled and will not be held behind closed doors.

Hiroshi Iijima, deputy governor of Saitama prefecture, who also attended the meeting decided to self-quarantine and will not return to work until March 23, Ryoji Hiraiwa, a prefectural official said.

Iijima does not have any coronavirus-related symptoms and tested negative after taking a test on Wednesday, he added.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met Mori on March 16, without providing details.

He did not directly address a question about whether Abe will test for the virus.

“Health centers are taking the necessary measures once people test positive for the coronavirus, including identifying who has been in contact with them,” Suga said.

Professional riders grounded with season suspended

PARIS – The coronavirus pandemic has left many professional riders unable to compete or train with the biggest race in the world, the Tour de France, due to start in just over three months.

All cycling races up to the end of April have been cancelled and riders in France and Spain, where many are based, have been explicitly told they cannot train outside.

“An exception is unthinkable, it is clear that the lockdown applies to all, athletes included,” French sports minister Roxana Maracineanu said.

The riders are restricted to a bit of down time, but I’m not training, I’m taking a one-week break,” Trek-Segafredo’s Julien Bernard told Reuters on Wednesday.

“We don’t know when racing will resume, at best at the end of May,” the Frenchman added.

The International Cycling Union (UCI) on Wednesday said once the season resumes it will give priority to “events on the calendar at the date of resumption” and to the five Monuments (Milan-Sanremo, Tour of Flanders, Paris-Roubaix, Liege-Bastogne-Liege and Tour of Lombardy) and three Grands Tours (Italy, France and Spain).

The Monuments, with the exception of October’s Tour of Lombardy, have been postponed, as well as the Giro d’Italia, which was scheduled from May 9-31.

Tour de France organizers have not yet considered postponing the June 27-July 19 event, which is due to finish five days before the start of the Tokyo Olympics.

Bernard believes arrangements will be made for athletes in France.

“For now it’s only two weeks then authorities will probably take measures for professional athletes, so there’s no panic,” he said.

French authorities imposed a two-week lockdown, however, making clear the confinement would likely be extended.

In Italy, where similar measures have been taken, riders can still go out to train, but Under-23 world champion Samuele Battistella said he suffered a barrage of insults on social media for riding his bike in the centre of Bassano del Grappa in the Province of Vincenza.

“I can’t ride with a banner on my back saying ‘I am working,’” the rider from the Veneto region told La Gazzetta dello Sport.

The Italian federation on Wednesday urged the professional riders to stay at home.

“Each of us must sacrifice something that belongs to us, we must give up cycling in the open air, on the roads of Italy,” said president Renato Di Rocco.

Swiss rider Sebastien Reichenbach believes it is wiser to stay at home.

“I would have a bad conscience if I crashed and were to occupy a hospital bed,” the Groupama FDJ rider told Swiss newspaper Le Nouvelliste.

“So I ride on my home trainer and do other physical activities. To be honest I don’t think about the season anymore.”

That approach has been followed by his team mate and Tour de France podium finisher Thibaut Pinot of France, who has been posting pictures of his fishing catches on social media.

F1 cancels August break, could delay 2021 changes

LONDON – Formula One teams must close for three weeks by the end of April in a move that will allow races to be rescheduled during the European summer and help limit the financial impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

What would have been a record 22-round calendar is instead sidelined, with last weekend’s Australian season opener in Melbourne canceled and no racing expected until at least the end of May.

The governing International Automobile Federation (FIA) said in a statement on Wednesday that it was “cancelling” the sport.

The ten teams must instead shut their factories for three successive weeks between now and the end of April.

“The change was supported unanimously by both the F1 Strategy Group and F1 Commission,” the FIA added.

The switch will also help smaller, privately-owned teams survive what threatens to be an existential crisis as their revenues shrink without any reduction in costs.

Multiple F1 sources told Reuters that the teams, FIA and senior Formula One management will discuss further measures in a conference call on Thursday.

That looks likely to involve delaying by a year the introduction of radical new technical regulations planned for 2021.

Teams would otherwise have to devote considerable resources to designing their 2021 cars while also seeking to remain competitive in 2020.

By bringing forward the lockdown, teams can turn off costly windtunnels and freeze development.

Some European countries are in lockdown already as they seek to contain the spread of the virus and many team staff are already working from home or in self-isolation after flying back from Australia.

The lack of an August break will be another blow for employees however, with family holidays having to be canceled and the prospect of a packed second half of the year with races running into December.

British-based Red Bull said they planned to close their Milton Keynes factory on March 27 for three weeks, subject to developments.

While we would all love to return to racing, the severity of this global pandemic is changing by the hour and the impact transcends our sport,” the team said in a statement.

“We therefore agree with the measures being taken to reduce the risk of transmission and will support any further race postponements that are deemed necessary.”

The Spanish, Dutch and Monaco Grands Prix in May are still uncertain but have yet to be postponed or canceled.

Monaco is likely to be canceled if not held in late May, due to the logistical challenges of organizing the race in the Mediterranean principal ship but the Dutch round – a home race for Red Bull’s Max Verstappen – could switch to August.

The sport is also keen to reschedule lucrative races in China, Vietnam and Bahrain.

Swiss-based Sauber, who manage and run the Alfa Romeo team, said they would close their Hinwil factory from March 23 to April 13.
REAL ESTATE
FOR RENT
Apartments
1) Gibbons - 2 bed, 1 bath, furnished - $1,800.00
2) Gibbons - 1 bed, 1 bath, furnished - $1,200.00
3) Yorkshire - 2 bed, 1 bath, semi-furnished - $1,500.00

Townhouses
1) Clermont Green, St. Michael - 2 bed, 1 bath, furnished - $2,500.00
Available 1st February 2020.

Commercial
1) Wildey Business Centre St. Michael - 580 sq.ft. $2,000.00 per month + VAT inclusive of service charges
Available immediately
2) Webster Park First Floor $40,192.00 per month + VAT inclusive of service charges
Available immediately for fit out
Rental rate to be negotiated
4) Lower Estate St. Michael 15,000 sq.ft.
Modern Building Price on request
5) Disaster recovery facility in Lower Estate Office #1 - 1,020 sq.ft. - $4,800.00 per month + VAT Office #4 - 680 sq.ft. - $3,000.00 per month + VAT Office #9 - 340 sq.ft. - $2,000.00 per month + VAT
All inclusive of service charge
Available immediately
6) Green Hill St. Michael
Standalone warehouse 7,224 sq.ft. - $10,000.00 per month
Plus Service Charge
Available 1st February, 2020

FOR SALE
Houses
1) Shrewsbury Gardens St. Philip
3 bedroom, 2 bathroom $375,000.00
2) Jackson St. Michael
3 bedroom, 2 bathroom $427,000.00
3) Ealing Park Christ Church
Fixer Upper
3 bedroom, 2 bathroom, 6, 272 sq.ft.
Price on request

REAL ESTATE
LAND FOR SALE
1) St. Philip
Kirtons
10,208 sq.ft. $175,000.00
2) Casuarina Estates
9,900 sq.ft. $200,000.00
3) Christ Church
Bird’s Eye Ridge 5,449 sq.ft. $125,000.00
4) St. Peter
Maynards Grove 6,591 sq.ft. $195,000.00
5) Christ Church
Rendezvous Meadows
6, 534 sq.ft. $140,000.00
6) St. Thomas
Lot 161 Applegrove Bucks 2.13 Acres $550,000.00
7) St. George
Rowans
11,200 sq.ft. approx $25 per sq.ft.
8) St. Philip
Emerald City 6,000 sq.ft. $220,000.00

Apartment Building
1) Clapham Heights
Unfurnished two storey (3 apartments)
Situated on 8, 305 sq.ft.
Price on request
2) Belleville Main Road (for commercial purposes)
Property on 24, 126 sq.ft. $1.3 million
Floor area - 7,008.41 sq.ft.

OTHER PROPERTIES FOR SALE
1) Eagle Hall
Approx 23,000 sq.ft. of land with buildings, in a prime main road position with parking $1,750,000.00
2) Cottage Heights
3 bedroom, 2.5 bathroom executive style house on 7,738 sq.ft.
$275,000.00
3) Cane Vale
Fairly new development with a 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom house $550,000.00
4) Mangrove Park
3 bedroom, 2.5 bathroom house with a spacious 1 bedroom apartment $250,000.00
5) Oakwood Park
5,189 sq.ft. with a 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom and office $585,000.00
6) Ealing Park
6,256 sq.ft. of land $160,000.00

NOTICES
IN THE REAL ESTATE OF TONY LAMARA WHITTLER
ALSO KNOWN AS TONY WHITTLER, DECEASED
IN ACCORDANCE with Section 36 of the Succession Act, 1970,
notifying any person holding any estate, interest or claim in the land, houses or other property of the above
notified, that any person wishing to contest the above
shall do so in writing to the Executors of said Tony Lamara Whittaker,
together with a copy to the Minister of Finance,
within 21 days of the date of this Notice.

OTHER PROPERTIES FOR RENT
1) Warrens Park
2 bedroom upstairs apartment $1,300.00
2) Ocean City
3 bedroom, 2 bathroom, fully furnished pets welcome $1,800.00
3) Oldbury Terrace
Executive style 2 bedroom, 2 bathroom, fully furnished apartment $1,800.00
4) Maynard
Spacious 3 bedroom, 2.5 bathroom house, $2,500.00
5) Chancery Lane
Furnished 2 bedroom apartment $1,400.00
6) Mount Standfast
3 bedroom furnished house $2,700.00
7) Warrens Heights, St. Thomas
Executive Townhouse
En-suite Bedroom
1 Powder Room
Gated
Security Cameras
Furnished $4,000.00 per mth or Semi-Furnished $3,500.00 per mth
Contact: HT Realty 230-4363

NOTICIE HEREBY GIVEN in accordance with Section 31 of the Trustee
Act, Cap. 250 as amended that any person having any claims against or any
interest in the Estate of Tony Lamara Whittaker
(also known as Tony Whit	laker, deceased now
held by the Executors of said Tony Lamara Whittaker,
who do hereby require to send particulars in writing of any such
interest or claim, to the
said Executors within 21 days of the date of this Notice.

THE COMPANIES ACT CAP. 308 OF BARBADOS
MBAC (BARBADOS) INC
In accordance with Section 367 (4)(b) of the Companies Act Cap. 308 of the Laws of Barba-
dos, notice is hereby given that the Company intends to dissolve.
Dated this 23rd day of January, 2020
Edward J. L. Ince
Director

British racing braces for coronavirus fallout
BRITISH horse racing is preparing itself for tough times ahead after the coronavirus pandemic put jobs at risk and leaving the industry in limbo.

The British Horseracing Authority (BHA) announced on Tuesday that the sport would be suspended until the end of April.

Racing has faced severe crises before, notably during the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001, but COVID-19 poses an unprecedented challenge.

Nobody knows when it will start up again as the pandemic tightens its grip on global sport, wrecking schedules.

"Racing is a significant part of the British economy. It supports 85,000 jobs, generates expenditure of £3.45 billion ($4 billion) and attracts around six million racegoers annually, according to the BHA."

"A lot is at stake for a huge range of people from trainers to their stable staff, owners, breeders, caterers and farriers."

"Cheltenham Gold Cup-winning trainer Jessica Harrington, whose horses are still running in Ireland behind closed doors, expects the industry to suffer and jobs to go."

"The impact on racing will be the same as it is for any business or industry all over the world," she told AFP.

"Racing might be resilient but people will still go to the wall. Owners don’t know when or if their horses will run so do they take them out of training?"

"It will have a trickle-down effect to other businesses linked to the industry such as farriers and catering staff at racecourses."

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BARBADOS STOCK REPORT

March 19, 2020

One security traded firm as 126,395 shares traded on the Regular Market, with a total value of $410,783.75. Goddard Enterprises Limited was the sole security trading 126,395 shares at $3.25.

SHARE SUMMARY INFORMATION
Thursday March 19, 2020

Date                  Close  Close          Decline
13-Jun-19              -      -              -
11-Mar-20              -      -              -
09-Dec-19              -      -              -
04-Oct-19              -      -              -
25-Feb-20              -      -              -
21-Sep-17              -      -              -
16-Mar-20              -      -              -
16-Mar-20              -      -              -
09-Mar-20              -      -              -
17-Mar-20              -      -              -
13-Mar-20              -      -              -
23-Jan-20              -      -              -
28-Feb-20              -      -              -
13-Mar-20              -      -              -
March 19, 2020 March 18, 2020
Close Close          Decline
$0.15 $0.15 -
$3.10 $3.10 -
$4.85 $4.85 -
$3.00 $3.00 -
$0.40 $0.40 -
$2.29 $2.29 -
$4.65 $4.65 -
$2.59 $2.59 -
$0.17 $0.17 -
$0.55 $0.55 -
$0.00 $0.00 -
$3.20 $3.20 -
$2.70 $2.70 -
$2.60 $2.60 -
$3.00 $3.00 -
$17.94 $16.85 -1.09
$0.15 $0.15 -
$3.10 $3.10 -
$4.85 $4.85 -
$3.00 $3.00 -
$0.40 $0.40 -
$2.29 $2.29 -
$4.65 $4.65 -
$2.59 $2.59 -
$0.17 $0.17 -
$0.55 $0.55 -
$0.00 $0.00 -
$3.20 $3.20 -
$2.70 $2.70 -
$2.60 $2.60 -
$3.00 $3.00 -
$17.94 $16.85 -1.09

TOTAL SHARES BOUGHT & SOLD
126,395

* = Security is Trading X-Div  
** = Security is Suspended  
*** = Rights Issued

NOTICES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Cave Shepherd and Company Limited – Directors have fixed March 17th, 2020 as the record date for the determination of shareholders entitled to receive notice of the Annual General Meeting of the Company which will be held on April 23rd, 2020, announce that the put-through of 300,000 shares in Goddard Enterprises Limited at $3.50 set to take place on March 16th, 2020.

PUT THROUGH NOTICES
CIBC FirstCaribbean International Bank (Barbados) Limited would like to announce that the put-through of 100,000 shares in FirstCaribbean International Bank at $2.60 set to take place on March 24th, 2020.

DIVIDEND DECLARATIONS
FirstCaribbean International Bank – Directors have declared a final dividend of point five ($0.005) cents per share to be paid on April 17th, 2020 to Shareholders on record at close of business on March 19th, 2020.

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Goddard Enterprises Limited – Directors have declared a final dividend of point five ($0.005) cents per share to be paid on May 29th, 2020 to Shareholders on record at close of business on April 30th, 2020.

BSE NOTICES

TRADING SUSPENSION
The Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. (BSE) wishes to advise that due to non-compliance with Section 4.01.3 and subject to Section 3.01.5.(1)(b) of the Rules of the Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. trading in the Common Shares of Banks Holdings Limited were suspended effective December 10th, 2019.

The Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. (BSE) wishes to advise that due to non-compliance with Section 4.01.3 and subject to Section 3.01.5.(1)(b) of the Rules of the Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. trading in the Common Shares of Barbados Dairy Industries Limited were suspended effective December 10th, 2019.

The Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. (BSE) wishes to advise that to facilitate the closing of the Scheme of Arrangement effected by way of Section 99 of the Companies Act 1981 of Bermuda involving the transfer of all the issued and outstanding shares in Sagicor Financial Corporation Limited to Alignvest Acquisition II, it has suspended trading in the security Sagicor Financial Corporation Limited.

The Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. (BSE) wishes to advise that, as a result of the approved amalgamation of Cable and Wireless (Barbados) Limited (CWBL) and Cable & Wireless West Indies Limited (CWWI), trading in the security - Cable and Wireless (Barbados) Limited - has been suspended with immediate effect.

INDEXES

TODAY'S TRADING LAST TRADING
Local 1,699.62 1,699.62
Cross-list 1,400.14 1,400.14
Composites 779.15 779.37

MUTUAL FUND

NAV END OF NAV  NAV OFFER  NAV BID  NAV  DATE
13-Mar-20 REPUBLIC CAPITAL GROWTH FUND a 1.3141
13-Mar-20 REPUBLIC INCOME FUND a 1.2114
13-Mar-20 REPUBLIC PROPERTY FUND a 1.0100
13-Mar-20 FORTRESS CARIBBEAN GROWTH FUND a 5.4557
13-Mar-20 FORTRESS INCOME FUND a 0.9250
13-Mar-20 ROYAL FIDELITY STRATEGIC GROWTH FUND a 1.8361
13-Mar-20 ROYAL FIDELITY STRATEGIC INCOME FUND a 0.9247
13-Mar-20 ROYAL FIDELITY SELECT BALANCED FUND a 1.6024
13-Mar-20 ROYAL FIDELITY SELECT INCOME FUND a 1.5831
13-Mar-20 ROYAL FIDELITY SELECT PREMIUM INCOME FUND a 1.5383
13-Mar-20 SAGICOR SELECT GROWTH FUND a 1.36
13-Mar-20 SAGICOR SELECT PREMIUM INCOME FUND a 0.99

NEWS

Latam carriers see ‘bankruptcy pandemic’ risk, Chile opposes bailout

LATIN American airlines need prompt government aid or many of them could go out of business as the global coronavirus outbreak forces widespread flight cancellations, the chief of regional airline association ALTA said on Tuesday.

However, Chile’s economy minister dismissed the idea of providing aid to the country’s flagship carrier, the largest in the continent, ALTA Chief Executive Luis Felipe de Oliveira has been sending letters to governments throughout the region about the “unprecedented” coronavirus crisis, he said in a phone interview, adding that the global pressure from airlines seeking bailouts.

“If the governments do not take drastic and immediate action there could be a bankruptcy pandemic in the region,” he said.

In the United States, where airlines are much more profitable than in Latin America, carriers are pushing for a $50 billion aid package.

Brazil’s government has signaled empathy toward the industry, but did not issue a lifeline that airlines had expected on Monday.

A spokesman for Brazil’s Infrastructure Ministry said details of the aid for airlines were still being worked out on Tuesday.

Chile, home to LATAM Airlines Group (LTM.SN), on Tuesday brushed off incoming LATAM CEO Roberto Alvo’s comments that airlines worldwide will need government help.

“I have heard through social media... that the airline LATAM was asking for government aid,” Economy Minister Pedro Palacio said, according to local outlet Emol.
SWITCHING this summer’s Test series from England to the Caribbean is “an unrealistic option”, says Cricket West Indies chief Johnny Grave.

The three-Test series, set to start at The Oval on 4 June, is in doubt because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Grave is reported as saying a switch was a possibility but he told BBC Sport: “I have not had any discussions with England over whether we can host.

“It would be strange that England can’t have cricket but the Caribbean can.”

He added: “Realistically, without knowing anything about pandemics, if England can’t hold cricket then it almost certainly means the rest of the world can’t hold cricket either. I think it is an unrealistic option.”

Grave did say the West Indies are being as “flexible as possible” to get the series played.

The ECB was set to discuss the possible rescheduling of the season at a meeting yesterday.

England’s Test tour of Sri Lanka was called off last week with captain Joe Root saying the decision was a “relief” because players were distracted, thinking about families in the UK.

The sporting calendar has been decimated by the pandemic with football’s European Championship one of many events already called off.

The first Test in London is set to be followed by matches at Edgbaston and Lord’s starting on 12 and 25 June respectively.

“I have been in contact with [England and Wales Cricket board chief executive] Tom Harrison a few times over the last week,” Grave said.

“The only discussions we have had are, in principle, having flexibility over warm-up games, when the series would start and how many rest days [there would be].

“We have given the ECB assurances that we will be as flexible as we can. We have not had any discussion about not playing them in June.

“We have not had any discussion about playing them later in the English summer. We have not had any discussion about hosting the matches here.”
Record-breaking
Zane Maloney leads
Radical C’bean Cup

By Krystal Penny Bowen

AS THE cases of Coronavirus remain in single digits for most Caribbean countries, including Barbados, the state of California is being affected significantly by the relentless disease.

Before the revelation of the five confirmed cases of COVID-19, Barbadians have responded dramatically by panic buying, crowding popular supermarkets and warehouses to buy stockpiles of toilet paper and household cleaners. Since the news, there has been an impact on critical sectors such as tourism and the small entrepreneurs who rely on this industry. This week a number of cruise ship operators suspended their operations to reduce the spread of COVID-19 on their vessels.

Floating ships and no destination
For those cruise ships which are still on the sea and have confirmed cases of coronavirus on board this has resulted in these vessels having no place to dock and leaving passengers stranded.

Immediate effects
In Bridgetown, which is the capital of the island and a major hub for small businesses which depend on the tourist arrivals for revenue, on Wednesday there was a noticeable absence of vendors and taxi operators along Independence Square and the Independence Arch.

The Barbados Advocate observed less tourist traffic by the neighbouring restaurant, a favourite spot for visitors and only one vendor opposite the Massy store.

Slow down in another city
As highlighted in this publication, California has seen a slow down in activity as schools, businesses and parks closed with state officials urging people to stay indoors, leaving major streets (similar to Broad Street) Market Street and Kearny and Pine deserted.

A young Barbadian, Kim who is living in California, recently shared some dramatic images in her community due to the COVID-19 outbreak. As of March 18, there have been 472 cases of coronavirus in California and eleven deaths.

(See page 6 for more)