THERE is a lot to be learned from the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Most people, when faced with an infection, will try to mount a credible defence – the immune response. The infection and the response may impact almost every organ in the body – this is referred to as sepsis. A heart damaged from long-term ‘exposure’ to high blood pressure is less efficient and may therefore struggle to achieve the appropriate cardiac output required to sustain life. People living with high blood pressure therefore start off at a disadvantage, but may still survive the sepsis of COVID-19, although less likely to do so successfully.

Stating the measures put in place by the public health response was the best outcomes when coupled with COVID-19.

Alleyne gives back to St. Philip community

THE community of Eastbourne, St. Philip received a blessing yesterday when they were presented with food hampers by a son of the soil, Simon Alleyne.

Alleyne, who braved the threatening rain, distributed the hampers to 20 families within the area. The Second Vice President of the Democratic Labour Party and political hopeful for St. Philip North explained that he cared for the community, which was close to his heart and understood the importance of taking care of those in need.

Known for his role in the comedic duo of Rum & Koke, Alleyne explained that the voluntary gesture was just a representation of how much he cared for his community in St. Philip North.

“COVID-19 has affected a lot of families financially, where there are a number of persons who would have been the main breadwinners, but are no longer working. So it is important now at this time that we are able to offer some assistance,” he explained.

Alleyne made the point that some people in need may not ask for help and that was what he realised after speaking to members of the community as he went around. He pointed out that it was particularly difficult for single mothers, who were now at home and had trouble providing for children who were out of school and at home full time, snacking and eating consistently, while playing games or even during online classes.

“I want to inspire other Barbadians, wherever you are. Those who are of the diaspora, if you can send funds or at least assist persons here in Barbados, we would love that. To those already on the ground doing work in communities, I salute you,” said Alleyne.

The DLP representative also saluted and lauded the efforts of all frontline workers who were making the sacrifice to battle COVID-19. He stated that he wished to see Barbados back up and running in the new normal, practising the health protocols of physical distancing while going about their business and also wearing their personal protective equipment.

The hampers contained the equivalent of two weeks’ supply of food for each family and contained items such as rice, macaroni, apples, oranges and various canned foods. Jaime Best and Cecily Straughn were two of the members of the community who received hampers from Alleyne. Best was thankful for the timely aid and gave God thanks for providing for her family. She also stated that she wished to see more persons help those in need as Alleyne was doing.

“I would love to see that happen. He seems a good person and I think that more people out there can come and serve the community just like how he does to help, because there are people out here that are really in need, that are not working just like me. So I think what he is doing right now is a blessing,” said Best.

Alleyne also encouraged the public to step up and help where they could, asking them to contact him via Facebook if they wished to contribute, and that even if it was a box of biscuits or tinned food, it would go a long way to help others. (AS)
Resuming commercial air traffic based on data, not dates

The Barbados Advocate

THE Grantley Adams International Airport remains closed to commercial traffic until June 30, however, this is not a guaranteed date for when airlines will resume flying to the island.

This is according to Minister of Tourism and International Transport, Kerrie Symmonds, who addressed this yesterday during his promised bi-monthly media briefing on the tourism sector.

During the zoom press conference, the Minister was asked to provide an update on discussions that Government was having with airlines that wished to return to the island within a month or so.

“I cannot give you a date on which the airlines will be returning. We have taken a position that the airport remains closed to commercial traffic until the 30th of next month. If the happy circumstances arise that you have significant improvements, and we can feel confident that it is easy to reopen, then that decision will be taken, but until such time we are going to be very guarded on this matter, and go as fast as the data and the circumstances allow us to feel comfortable.

“Going about it phase by phase and step by step gives us an opportunity to protect our people while giving us an opportunity to develop some economic activity, which is absolutely critical to the same people as well,” Mr. Symmonds responded.

Commercial traffic into the island came to a halt from mid-March this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Minister stressed that safety was a priority for Barbados, and any decision taken to reopen the sector will “not be date driven, but rather data driven”.

“I want to make it clear that we have not settled yet on any definitive course of action, not just in Barbados, but across the Caribbean and also with the airlines,” he said, disclosing that Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley and Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, Allen Chastanet, both expressed interest in a regional approach to health protocols for the region until safety was a priority.

Minister Symmonds said that domestic protocols also needed to be settled while there was a common understanding at the regional level, the sovereign state way. In the meantime, life has to go on and we will have to exist with this threat we call COVID-19, until this time comes. So, therefore our [approach] has to be about managing the risk, minimizing the risk and making sure that we can still do business, while we protect people as best as humanly possible,” Mr. Symmonds said.

The airlines understand what we are trying to achieve... Their interest as well is safety. The take away from that meeting is that there is no competitive advantage that anybody has over the other in terms of being safe.'

Noting that regional protocols were also being examined, he said officials were looking at criteria with regard to the data, managing risk and safety protocols. These include possibly implementing a COVID-19 rapid test, which takes between 20 and 40 minutes from the source market, on arrival to the island last week.

Minister Symmonds said that domestic protocols also needed to be settled while there was a common understanding at the regional level, the sovereign state way. In the meantime, life has to go on and we will have to exist with this threat we call COVID-19, until this time comes. So, therefore our [approach] has to be about managing the risk, minimizing the risk and making sure that we can still do business, while we protect people as best as humanly possible,” Mr. Symmonds said.

First surgical procedure performed at QEH’s Enmore Isolation Facility

A BASIC surgery was performed yesterday, May 20, 2020 on a COVID-19 positive patient at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the Enmore Isolation Facility. The patient is in recovery and will be transferred to Harrison Point at the appropriate juncture.

Six-step plan for hypertension highlighted

HYPERTENSION from Page 1

offence any sovereign nation could have in its fight against the viral infection, Dr. Connell lauded Barbados for their stance in keeping its citizens safe.

“The COVID-19 response has brought an end to the uncertainty, to a standstill, and even with some strong voices in economic support of a premature reopening of local and international borders on the very reluctant ears (and eyes) of our society at large. Public health has taken precedence. The lockdown policy was created to ensure the healthiest environment to prevent viral spread and minimize loss.

Going on to say that high blood pressure is not as dramatic a problem in Barbados as COVID-19, despite one-third of the island’s population stricken with the disease, Dr. Connell explained that the burden was most definitely felt by society.

“Now have we secured the healthiest environment to reduce this spread? The high blood pressure environment has been created with socially not-so-distanced access to fast unhealthy food, reduced physical activity, and the emergence of a salty nation. The inability to achieve ‘safe’ school environments now fosters the creation of the next generation for population susceptibility, with high rates of childhood obesity and earlier onset of high blood pressure,” he said.

“With up to six feet suggested as a safe distance between persons under the scourge of the pandemic, Connell pointed on the safety measure as he highlighted a six-step plan, which could help to ease the prevalence of hypertension in Barbados. The plan includes access to healthy foods, increased physical activity, smoking cessation, reduction in excessive consumption of alcohol, reducing added sodium to food and the elimination of trans-fat from diets.

“These risk factors for high blood pressure and other non-communicable diseases would have to be implemented encouraged, easily facilitated and policed by our Government. The social determinants of health are the same drivers influencing risk for both the constant hypertension epidemic in our region and the novel pandemic of COVID-19,” he went on to say.

With COVID-19 constantly teaching nations the world over new responses as the situation remains fluid, Dr. Connell highlighted some of the lessons learned locally from the lessons learned by the viral infection in our own fight against and in dealing with hypertension.

These are: having a strong leadership in the face of a crisis, recognition of the threat, acceptance of the science, the deployment and management of public health interventions, the art of balancing human health with the economy, and the increased testing to pick up what we termed asymptomatic ‘carriers’.

Normal working hours at National Insurance Office resumes

The National Insurance Office (NIO) resumed the in-person business between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., weekdays. Cashier points will close at 2:30 p.m. Services will be provided at the Accounts Department, Collections and the Front Desk of the Customer Service Section. However, customers should still utilize the online and drop box facilities. Customers may also cash and collect cheques and pay contributions.

In keeping with the COVID-19 physical distancing protocols, the National Insurance Office appeals to the public to queue in an orderly manner both outside and inside the building keeping a safe distance of six feet between each person. The public is also advised to wear cloth face masks.
Health and safety a priority before tourism sector reopens

As tourism officials use the present downtime in the tourism sector brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic to strategize on ways to reposition brand Barbados, one critical area of focus is on ensuring the safety and well-being of workers when the sector does reopen.

Minister of Tourism and International Transport, Kerrie Symmonds, acknowledged that a number of health and safety protocols are currently being worked on for the sector. His comments came yesterday, during the launch of the Tourism Recovery Task Force, over the online Zoom video-conferencing platform.

“The truth of the matter is that we cannot seriously talk about reopening the tourism sector and frankly, we cannot move forward the country’s economy unless we have a satisfactory number of health, hygiene and safety protocols, so as to ensure that our workers are safe and that our work environment is as pristine and re-focused to the point where it is exceptionally manageable,” Minister Symmonds remarked.

“The first consideration for reopening the tourism sector in Barbados therefore has to be that our workforce is safe and secure. Thereafter, we are better able to deal with our visitors and to manage in a structured, phased way the reopening and the re-welcoming of visitors into the island, but until when we get the workforce properly looked after and have a set of safety and health and hygiene protocols in place, giving us a degree of certainty, then we cannot get to where we want to get,” the Tourism Minister further stated.

He later acknowledged that health and safety protocols are being worked on not only for Barbados, but for countries across the region by the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO), the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), and these will govern how practices in the tourism workplace are to be carried out when the tourism industry, which has been hard hit by COVID-19, resurfaces.

He stated, “I am going to give you the assurance that within two weeks of today’s date, we are going to come back to you on a similar exercise as we are doing today, with regards specifically to the protocols.”

Pointing out by way of example that the country is about to restart the business of the villa market aspect of tourism, which will help to kick-start the tourism industry, given that it can be done without having to re-commence commercial air traffic as people can fly in on their private jets, Symmonds noted that protocols will however have to be set in place, outlining how workers will be protected. He noted that there may be a two- or three-day period between those departing and arriving to allow for adequate cleaning to take place and there will likely be minimal interaction between visitors and workers.

“The first thing to make this work, is ensuring the welfare and well-being of workers across the industry,” he stressed.

The Tourism Minister also noted that protocols are also being worked on to govern how other aspects of the tourism sector can function in the future. For example, restaurants may have to restructure their seating approach or deliver menus electronically or even engage in more take-away and curbside delivery services.

“These are things we necessarily didn’t do before, but now we are trying to rethink the whole process,” he said, noting that there are no quick fixes and tourism officials will have to continue to thoroughly dis-sect and reassess a number of key areas, before giving any thought to fully reopening the sector. (RSM)

Tourism workers to benefit from e-learning training programme

WORKERS in the tourism sector which has been hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, will have the opportunity to retool, retrain and upgrade their skills via the Barbados Together Continuous E-Learning Programme, which will soon come on stream.

Dr. Kerry Hall, Chairman of the Tourism Recovery Task Force, which was launched yesterday via a Zoom press conference, explained that the online programme, which will get started on Friday, will ensure that workers, many of whom are without jobs now as a result of the pandemic, are equipped with the tools they need to assist in taking the tourism industry to the next level when the sector eventually reopens in the future.

“The mandate of the Continuous E-Learning Programme is to provide recommendations for planning, coordination and delivery of continuous human resource development programmes; to prepare the frontline workforce for the post-COVID-19 reopening period and beyond; and to outline methodologies to improve service quality in a re-vised tourism and hospitality sector,” Dr. Hall outlined.

“Barbados Together, the e-learning programme, incorporates a number of learning strategies facilitated by technology which will be incorporated with the National Training Initiative,” she further explained, noting that certification of workers is also assured for those completing the training. “One of the biggest objectives of what we are trying to do here, is to make sure that once the industry recovers, we will be achieving a competitive advantage through our people – a renewed, retooled, retrained cadre of professional, technologically savvy, creative, competent tourism direct and indirect frontline workers. That is the ultimate goal,” Hall stressed.

She added, “Now what is also important, is that we would like to reassure, empower and equip our workers to inspire confidence in them that there is a plan in place to respond aggressively amidst the setbacks of the COVID pandemic. One very important thing that we are attempting to do here, is to let our people know, ‘We’ve got you, we’ve got this.’ Because I know there are people out there who are afraid, they are anxious and we must let our people know that we are just not sitting here on our hands. We are using this time to mobilise and to prepare for when the industry bounces back. To give them some reassurance that all will be well in the end.”

The programme meanwhile will include training for tourism leaders as well and will feature webinar sessions focusing on tackling the future of tourism, maintaining physical and mental health, mastering leadership during the pandemic and beyond, weathering change and also workplace safety for tourism employees. (RSM)
Learning second language vital

Spanish class for children launched

THE importance of learning a second language has been underscored on Monday during the official launch of the Conversational Spanish Class, being facilitated by the Embassy of Argentina with the National Library Service.

The virtual class, which was well-subscribed, caters to students 7 to 11 years old and will run from May 18 to June 13, 2020. The launch, held during a Zoom meeting, was attended by Minister of Creative Economy, Culture and Sports, John King; Director of the National Library Service, Grace Haynes; and Ambassador of the Argentine Republic to Barbados, Gustavo Martinez Pandiani, the latter of whom led the first session.

Stressing the importance of learning a second language, the Culture Minister stated: “In today’s world, the demand for bilingual employees is increasing and a candidate who speaks any second language is generally going to have an advantage when applying for a job... Research has shown that young children are ideally suited to learn a second language as the language centre of their brain is still developing... and this makes it much easier than trying to learn it later on in life.”

“Bilinguals tend to be more creative thinkers, show greater reasoning and problem-solving skills than those who have one language. Our Spanish language classes will significantly improve your child’s cognitive abilities, optimise their learning potential and provide numerous personal benefits, such as being able to communicate with someone in his or her language and build lifelong friendships.”

He said his Ministry is “overjoyed” to have partnered with the embassy of Argentina for the Conversational Spanish programme. “It is known that the best way for a child to learn a new language is to hear people speaking fluently. We are pleased that the embassy has given us the opportunity to make this experience possible. Spanish is the second most widely spoken language in the world with more than 400 million speakers in North, Central and South America. It is increasingly common in the global market that only being able to speak English is no longer sufficient and a second language is required, especially in international business, banking, trade and telecommunications.”

Minister King also used the opportunity to thank the parents for their interest in the programme. “From the first day the programme was advertised, there was an overwhelming response. Parents, we are proud that you have taken the opportunity to enrol your children in the programme. It shows that there is a definite community interest in exposing children to different languages.”

Ambassador Pandiani said it was a pleasure for the embassy to put together this programme. “For us it is a great opportunity to help the families and the parents, who probably at this time of the quarantine are wondering how to entertain our kids at home.”

The ambassador explained that the main objective of the programme is to help the boys and girls pedagogically learn Spanish. “We know that the world is going to change after COVID-19 and one of the changes that is coming up is that everybody has to be ready to start new work opportunities and for that, to know a second language is going to be vital.”

“Prime Minister Mottley has been very clear about the need of everyone in Barbados, especially young people, to learn a second language. So we are ready, from the Embassy of Argentina to the administration of Prime Minister Mottley and Minister King, to give the Barbadian people opportunities to learn a second language and if it is possible a third language.”

Director Haynes, while thanking the ambassador and his team, said literacy remains at the core of the mandate at the National Library Service. (JH)

Public to have say on 11-Plus replacement

THE Barbadian public will be allowed to have its say on what alternatives can replace the Barbados Secondary Schools’ Entrance Examination (BSSEE), also referred to as the Common Entrance or 11-Plus Exam.

Giving this assurance, Acting Chief Education Officer, Joy Adamson, said while the preliminary plans to replace the 11-Plus Exam were now on hold due to the impact of COVID-19, “we have to debate, discussion and town hall meetings around this issue”.

She admitted it was difficult at this stage to say whether or not this year’s exam, which had been slated to be the final such test for students transferring from primary to secondary schools, would indeed be the last.

Speaking on Sunday night’s the People’s Business program, Chair of the Education Reform Committee, Dr. Idamy Denn, stated one of the areas being fast-tracked in the restructuring of the education system was how the move from primary to secondary school would take place.

“We were working very diligently on the plans when COVID-19 caused the shutdown as we were at the stage where we were going forward without hearing from the people of Barbados.”

“If we do it in a digital format, we may not get the voice of people who do not have the technology coming through. So therefore, it is obvious that we will have to put off those consultations until we can consult broadly across the nation,” she said.

Denny also highlighted the lessons being taught by the current pandemic. “COVID-19 has made it abundantly clear that we must not be caught in a situation where we have to have an exam in order to move our children across the system. Our current system does not serve the needs of all of our children as it does not cater to multiple intelligences... We have to make sure we address the system, so that every child’s needs can be addressed and we have a wide range of competencies contributing to the sustainability of this island. COVID-19 has also shown us we cannot put all of our eggs in the tourism basket, so we have to adjust the structure of our system to ensure we are developing skills and competencies that help us to diversify our economy,” she added. (JMB)

Not cut and dry

WHILE the concept of remote working has become more popular in the current environment, it will not necessarily translate to a reduction in commercial space being rented.

Chief Executive of Terra Caribbean, Andrew Mallalieu, said while people tend to jump to the conclusion that less people going to work would mean less space, and reduced rents, this may not be the case. Speaking earlier this week during the virtual launch of the 13th edition of The Red Book, which is this year’s annual property directory, Mallalieu noted that if indeed social distancing is here to stay for the foreseeable future, having adequate space will be a priority.

“One should remember there will be a time when we will go back to work and there will be meetings, and there will be things that people want to do on a daily basis, and there will be times when people want to social distance. It may well be that you need more space for less people,” he stated.

His comments came as he said that there have been some real estate properties that have been able to easily adapt in the changing environment. He said that some real estate is designed more for where the market is going, than where it has been. In respect of the latter, he said such real estate is going to have to be internally reconfigured and the infrastructure upgraded to better suit the new direction of the market.

The embassy explained that the concept is one that has been widely embraced and could remain the new normal for a while. His comments came as he said Terra is about to start research in Barbados and other countries in the region in which it operates, on attitudes towards distributed work.

“We’ve seen some offices who have been able, and permitted under the directives to go back into the offices, but have chosen for the time being to take a cautious approach and that of course relates to virus concerns. It looks to us that what is going to happen in most instances, companies will be going back in, but there is... a new normal for a while. His comments came as he said that some offices will have to adjust the structure of our system to ensure we are developing skills and competencies that help us to diversify our economy,” he added. (JRT)
Revamp of justice sector an urgent priority in the region

IT is very clear that the technology modernisation of the justice sector is one of the most urgent priorities, but it is not the only priority.

Word of this from Bevil Wooding, Executive Director of Advanced Performance Exponents Inc. (APEX), a non-profit organisation dedicated to the provision and delivery of technology-enabled solutions and capacity building services to support the development and strengthening of Caribbean court ecosystems.

Delivering one of the presentations featured as part of the Caribbean Court of Justice Academy for Law sixth Biennial Conference Webinar Series, held under the theme: ‘Legal Dimensions Arising from COVID-19 Pandemic’, Wooding sought to give an overview of what has been happening across the region during what he described as “interesting and unprecedented times”.

“One thing has become very clear to me is that we have hit an inflection point. A point which goes beyond how do we deal with the ‘now’ demand of COVID-19, a point that starts a necessary look at what are some of the imperatives when we return to whatever is the semblance of normal that we are all working for.”

He suggested that the current crisis in the last few weeks, in particular, have put the spotlight on issues that are critical not just to the modernisation as it relates to technology, but actually critical to the considerations around fair, transparent and accessible and equitable delivery of justice in the region.

“In a way we are being forced to fast-track changes that many in the sector have been championing for years, and as we are doing so, we have to find and we are actively engaged in looking for ways to transition to what many are considering to be the new normal.”

He noted that for now, there is a need right now to keep our courts open, to keep people safe and to keep the justice system moving. It is against that backdrop Wooding highlighted key areas that have to be addressed.

“The need to migrate from paper-based systems to electronic systems; the requirement to procure and deploy technology infrastructure, software, hardware and related services; the need to develop new protocols for safety, for access to the courts services and to justice generally; and the need to develop new protocols for how we administer our approach to bring this.”

He said there are also requirements to update practice directions and in some cases even legislation. “Of course, with all of the newness that we are being thrust into, a real need to look at the issues of human resource development and human capacity building. Underlying all of that, a requirement to fund it all.”

The executive director explained that there are still some areas that are coming out of the rapid online transition that also must be addressed.

“Evidence management is one of the areas where the concerning technology and ‘let’s get everyone online to at least keep conversation going’. That is not been the case in several jurisdictions where the larger national bandwidth and infrastructure concerns have impeded efforts to get everyone connected and we also get issues where economic considerations have served as a constraint to getting everyone access to devices that are needed to access online services.”

To this end, he opined that while technology is necessary, it is not sufficient.

“But it is also clear that it has an important and crucial role in playing in the ongoing post-lockdown world that we are heading into. So there is this balance that has to be struck in terms of what are the real requirements that demand our attention at this time, and they range from everything from personal safety and well-being, to human resources capacity, to new trial modalities and new conversations between courts and components of the justice sector and internet service providers and digital access.

“These are the things that we are seeing inside of the current movement of rapid online delivery... These are also some of the things that are informing our approach to what is necessary, not just in the immediate term but in the long term, because for all of this to make sense, the transition has to be sustainable,” he said. (JH)

Caribbean ready for psychological health talk

THE Caribbean is well poised to start the conversation on psychological health and safety and putting the requisite standards in place in the workplace.

So says Dr. Sheri McKillop, Vice President of Academics at the University of Fredericton in Canada. She made mention of this during a recent webinar hosted by the Sagicor Cave Hill School of Business and Management, on the topic ‘Psychological Health in the Workplace’.

According to McKillop, Canada is currently the only country in the world to have developed and implemented a standard for psychological health and safety and this, she explained, is being used to help develop a similar standard by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO). She indicated that it is hoped that the ISO standard, which will provide consistency across different countries, will be launched within another year or two.

Meanwhile, as part of the effort to bring the concept to the Caribbean, McKillop said she has been working with the Director of the Inter-American Centre for Social Security, Reginald Thomas, to look at ways to raise the level of awareness. The discussions, she explained, have centred on such things as access to programming, noting that the goal would be to roll it out at a significantly reduced rate to help in promoting awareness.

“If we can move towards formalising what that looks like across the social security system, it can tie in quite nicely,” she added.

The Canadian professor went on to say that while they believe that the Caribbean is in a prime position to start thinking about psychological health, especially with the stigma around the subject being reduced, which has allowed for greater conversations to be had on the topic.

“We’ve also been in conversation with the University of the West Indies to just have opportunities to come together in a partnership that would have these resources made available. I personally think that while they are Canadian standards, they are fairly generic in sense of workplaces; some of them as I mentioned earlier may be more difficult in certain cultural areas as opposed to more progressive areas,” she added.
The Barbados Advocate

PAHO channelling supplies

THE Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) has been working tirelessly to ensure that the member states not only have access to, but are also able to have the necessary tools to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Ciro Ugarte, Director, Department of Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief, PAHO, explained recently during a media briefing in Havana, that the regional health organisation was working with Caribbean agencies. “We have been working very closely with Caribbean agencies to ensure that the essential supplies are given to the countries in need. We have been able to channel a lot of these supplies from other sources to the Caribbean countries,” said Ugarte.

He also acknowledged that there were still several challenges, but PAHO was working closely with the global supply chain of the World Health Organisation and other agencies. Ugarte explained that the Caribbean was one of the areas of the Americas that has been prioritised and that PAHO had signed an agreement to help maintain that supply.

“We have recently signed an agreement with a security system in the Caribbean to be able to transport the essential supplies and also to have a site in Panama, so we can also distribute from there to the Caribbean and other countries in the Americas,” explained Ugarte, while also highlighting that PAHO had supplied most of the tests in the region through procurement channels and the PAHO Strategic Fund.

Also speaking at the briefing, Dr. Jarbas Barbosa, PAHO Assistant Director, gave the assurance that PAHO was working on the issue of acquiring a vaccine whenever it came about. He highlighted that Mexico and Costa Rica were part of an international team working towards finding a vaccine.

“PAHO has worked with international partners on the issue of the vaccine in order to ensure and guarantee that countries in the region will have access to the vaccine as soon as it is available,” said Barbosa.

The assistant director also contended that there should be no bias as it relates to access to the vaccine.

“All children, of all ages, and in all countries, are being affected but some children are destined to bear the greatest costs in ways that permanently alter the trajectories of their lives. These are especially children living in the poorest households, children with disabilities, children living in institutions and detention facilities. Their continued care is easily put in jeopardy at a time of crisis,” the UNICEF head said.

The radio programmes will feature local experts in the region to discuss COVID-19 and its impact on the socio-economic culture of each island. The experts and callers can ask questions about the topic 24/7.

Radio series for parents on ‘COVID-19: Supporting our children’

“COVID-19: Supporting our Children” is the theme of a six-part radio series presented by UNICEF and Pan American Health Organisation with funding from USAID. The series will be broadcast on 12 stations in the Eastern Caribbean.

The show is targeted at parents, guardians and caregivers of preschool-aged children. The aim of the show is to ensure that their children are protected and enabled and supported through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The topics are fluid because of the changing nature of COVID-19 pandemic, but the topics to date are: Can Social Media Use get out of control? The parent's dilemma; Your Child and You – What I can do now that the day-care is closed; Child Protection and COVID-19; Should I be concerned about child abuse, including Stigma; When Your Child misbehaves – Positive discipline at home; and the Implications for the Mental Health of children.

Dr. Aloys Kamuragiye, UNICEF Representative for the Eastern Caribbean Area, explained that the key direct and indirect COVID-19-related impacts on children and young people in the short and medium-term, resulting from school closure and disruption of education, increased time at home and violence levels, rising unemployment and poverty projected levels, and increased demand for social protection had prompted UNICEF to get involved with producing the radio series.

“All children, of all ages, and in all countries, are being affected but some children are destined to bear the greatest costs in ways that permanently alter the trajectories of their lives. These are especially children living in the poorest households, children with disabilities, children living in institutions and detention facilities. Their continued care is easily put in jeopardy at a time of crisis,” the UNICEF head said.

The radio programmes will feature local experts in the region to discuss COVID-19 and its impact on the socio-economic culture of each island. The experts and callers can ask questions about the topic in our 24/7.”
Research questions effectiveness of drug

THE latest clinical trial by Chinese researchers may disappoint doctors and patients worldwide hoping for the effectiveness of hydroxychloroquine, or HCQ, an anti-malaria and anti-inflammatory drug that has been used in several countries to treat COVID-19 cases.

The randomised controlled clinical trial conducted at 16 designated Chinese hospitals treating COVID-19 cases showed that the use of the drug did not accelerate the removal of the virus among mildly and moderately ill patients.

It was the world’s first multi-center study of its kind to be released in a medical journal to assess the effectiveness of HCQ in treating novel coronavirus infections. A paper about the study was published on the website of the British Medical Journal on Friday.

Compared with standard treatment, the use of HCQ for COVID-19 patients didn’t help bring about a negative virus test result, nor did it shorten the term of the disease, and there exists a higher incidence rate of adverse drug reactions,” said Xie Qing, director of the infectious disease department at the Ruijin Hospital Affiliated with Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine, which led the multi-center research.

She said that the result of the trial did not support use of the drug, which was previously proven effective to inhibit the novel coronavirus through in vitro experiments, has been approved by several countries, including France and the United States, to treat COVID-19 patients.

Late last month, a study about a small sample clinical trial of HCQ on severe cases of COVID-19 published by Brazilian researchers on the Journal of the American Medical Association showed that the drug failed to reduce mortality and could cause heart problems.

In the Chinese study, 150 patients were randomised into two groups. Half of them were treated by the national treatment guideline and the other half were given an additional high-dose of HCQ – 1,200 milligrams of the drug for the first three days and 800 mg for the remaining days.

The research results showed that the rate of the virus turning negative among the two groups showed little difference – 85.4 per cent and 81.3 per cent respectively – after 28 days.

“Moreover, we found that the patients in the two groups didn’t show a statistical difference in the median number of days when their clinical symptoms were alleviated,” Xie said.

Researchers said the rate of adverse drug reactions among the group given HCQ was 30 per cent, higher than the 9 per cent of its counterpart group. The adverse reactions were mainly diarrhea and vomiting.

According to research, compared with standard treatment, the use of HCQ for COVID-19 patients didn’t help bring about a negative virus test result, nor did it shorten the term of the disease.

According to research, compared with standard treatment, the use of HCQ for COVID-19 patients didn’t help bring about a negative virus test result, nor did it shorten the term of the disease.

China cooperating with WHO

CHINA has given all-round cooperation with the World Health Organization and shared its up-to-date experiences in disease control, diagnosis and treatment with other countries since the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak, health experts said on Tuesday.

Sharing epidemic information as early as possible and in the fastest and most transparent manner has been the guiding principle for China when coping with outbreaks of infectious diseases, Wu Zunyou, chief epidemiologist from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said at a news conference.

Since the early days of the epidemic, China has delivered key pieces of information to the world at the earliest possible time, he said, adding that they are timely, open and transparent in information sharing which can mobilise the world to unite and win the battle against the disease.

Wu said China has cooperated with the WHO and other countries that a mysterious pneumonia outbreak was detected in Wuhan, Hubei province, and proposed to organise the investigation continued.

After isolating the virus strain that caused the outbreak on Jan 7, China immediately reported that a new type of coronavirus was identified as the pathogen.

On Jan 12, China also submitted a genome sequence of the virus in World Health Organization’s database, he added.

China’s experiences were of great importance to them and they would adjust their strategies based on those experiences, Wang said.

Wu, from the China CDC, added that some questions brought up during video symposiums, such as the false-negative results of testing and the role of epidemiologic surveys that test antibodies against the virus, might not have a definitive answer.

“However, through communication and the exchange of ideas, both parties have improved their knowledge of the virus, which will boost the global response to the pandemic,” he said.

China has shared disease information in a timely manner, health experts say.

“We have been sharing the latest diagnosis and treatment guidelines as well as our frontline experiences in battling the virus aimed at helping the rest of the world reduce mortality rates,” Wang said.

Wang said the focus of these online meetings had gradually shifted from disease control measures to the treatment of severe cases as more countries reported an increasing number of confirmed infections.

“We were able to hammer out some practical questions that are not included in the official treatment guideline, such as solutions to the lack of respirators and accumulated sputum in airways,” he said.

“During a session with 17 countries from Central and Eastern Europe, the chief public health expert of Poland said...”

The Barbados Advocate Thursday May 21, 2020 • 7
**WHO reports most coronavirus cases in a day as cases approach five million**

**GENEVA** – The World Health Organisation expressed concern yesterday about an increase in the number of new coronavirus cases in poor countries, even as many rich nations have begun emerging from lockdown.

The global health body said 108,000 new cases of infections of the novel coronavirus had been recorded in the past 24 hours, the most in a single day since the outbreak began.

The WHO has come under fire from US President Donald Trump, who accused it of mishandling the outbreak and of favouring China, where the virus is believed to have emerged late last year. Trump threatened to withdraw from the WHO and permanently withhold funding.

Tedros acknowledged receiving a letter from Trump, but declined to comment further.

Tedros said he was committed to accountability and would carry out a review into the response to the pandemic. Such a review was demanded by member states at a resolution this week that was passed by consensus, although the United States expressed reservations about some elements of it.

“I said it time and time again that WHO calls for accountability more than anyone. It has to be done and when it’s done it has to be a comprehensive review, the full view, while declining to say when it will start,” Ryan said.

“WHO has come under criticism for its response, of epidemic control, of developing and distributing vaccines, of improving our surveillance, of saving lives and distributing essential PPE to workers and finding medical oxygen for people in fragile settings without impacting the impact of this disease on refugees and migrants,” he said.

Tedros said he had long been looking for other sources of funding for the WHO, saying its $2.3 billion budget was “very, very small” for a global agency, around that of a medium-sized hospital in the developing world.

In comments that could further annoy Trump, Ryan said people should avoid using the malaria drug hydroxychloroquine to treat or prevent coronavirus infection, except as part of a clinical trial to study it.

“Trump has said he is taking hydroxychloroquine to prevent coronavirus infection,” Ryan said. “At this stage, neither hydroxychloroquine nor chloroquine have been as yet found to be effective in treating COVID-19 nor in the prophylaxis against coming down with the disease,” Ryan said.

“In fact, the opposite, in that warnings have been issued by many authorities regarding the potential side effects of the drug,” Ryan added.

**Greece to reopen tourism season in June, PM says**

**THE Greek tourist season will kick off next month, with international charter flights to popular locations resuming in July, the prime minister says.**

“The tourism period begins on 15 June, when seasonal hotels can reopen,” Kyriakos Mitsotakis said in a televised address yesterday.

“Let us make this summer the epilogue of the (COVID-19) crisis,” he added.

The coronavirus pandemic threatens to ruin Greece’s tourism industry, which is vital to the country’s economy.

The Greek announcement came as EU tourism ministers agreed to do “whatever it takes for the quick and full recovery of European tourism.”

As restrictions aimed at minimising the spread of the virus are gradually eased, many countries are preparing to reopen.

Mitsotakis said that Greece had shown by its handling of the crisis that it was a bastion of safety, credibility and health.

“It’s a great reputation,” the prime minister said, adding that the country had provided a “hygienic shield in every location of hospitality... our passion that is always inspired by Xenios Zeus”. The Greek god Zeus was god of xenia or hospitality, among many other things.

Greece has been praised for its handling of the pandemic so far, and its relatively low number of coronavirus-related deaths and 2,850 confirmed cases.

“Ww will win the economy war just as we won the health battle,” Mr Mitsotakis said.

To encourage tourism, Greece is also making travel cheaper by temporarily reducing value added tax (VAT) on all transport – flights, bus journeys and rail travel – to 13% from 24%, Mr Mitsotakis said.

The popular Mediterranean destination will also offer rapid sample coronavirus tests to incoming tourists, although it is not clear if these will be made available to all.

Greece has been talking to a number of European countries about the pending tourist season. On Tuesday, Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov said his country would no longer require asymptomatic citizens arriving from Greece and Serbia on business and family trips to be quarantined from 1 June.

The reciprocal agreement is meant to be extended to all tourists from the three countries from 15 June, Bulgaria’s foreign minister said.

Italy said yesterday that all airports could reopen on 3 June for national and international flights. A further 161 deaths and 865 infections were reported by officials, but the number in intensive care units has fallen to 676.

Meanwhile, Greece has said it plans to offer £180 vouchers to its citizens to urge them to holiday in Greece this summer rather than abroad.

**What about the rest of Europe?**

EU ministers broadly backed plans spelt out by the EU’s executive Commission that the bloc’s internal borders should come down in phases:

- Seasonal workers should be allowed across
- Restrictions should be lifted between countries with a similar level of control of the virus
- Eventually all internal borders would be lifted

Social distancing and non-discrimination are a key part of the EU’s plan.

They also called on the Commission to set up a website providing the public with real-time information about restrictions and measures in each EU country.

On Monday, 11 member states – Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain – agreed to a set of rules aimed at allowing travel to resume without minimising the risk of COVID-19 infections.

Any tourists visiting for a member state would not be placed under quarantine and could safely return home, they agreed.
### BANK RATES

**Commercial bank rates to the public at the close of business yesterday by the Central Bank of Barbados.**

Valid for May 21, 2020

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**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.

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## Antigua prepared to acquire Digicel shares

ST. JOHN’S – Antigua and Barbuda has indicated that it is prepared to acquire the shares of the financially strapped Irish-owned telecommunications company, Digicel, if it is unable to provide a service here in the future.

Earlier this week, Digicel Group One Ltd, the Bermuda-based holding company, announced that it had gone into provision liquidation and had also filed for Chapter 15 recognition at US Bankruptcy court in Manhattan.

But a spokesperson for Digicel, which operates in more than 30 markets in the Caribbean and South Pacific, said the moves would not impact the regular operations of the company and were aimed at strengthening the balance sheet.

“It’s important to point out that this will have no impact on our day-to-day operations, our staff, our suppliers, our customers, or any aspect of our ongoing activities – it is business as usual,” the spokesperson said.

But the Chief of Staff in the Office of the Prime Minister, Lionel ‘Max’ Hurst, said he was confident that St John’s would be interested in acquiring the local shares of Digicel.

“I can assure you, I know the Honourable Gaston Browne (Prime Minister) well, he will be the first to step forward to purchase their assets so that APUA (Antigua Public Utilities Authority) can be a more successful provider of telecommunication services.

“I can imagine what will happen thereafter, let’s wait and see that is my guess,” he told radio listeners.

## CIBC FirstCaribbean extends opening hours

AS Barbados moved into phase 3 of the Covid recovery process and more businesses reopened, CIBC FirstCaribbean has extended its opening hours to accommodate customers and facilitate business transactions.

As of Monday 18 May, all the branches that have remained open during the Covid lockdown extended banking hours from 9 am to 3 pm Monday to Friday. Branches at Oistins, Sunset Crest and Broad Street will remain closed until further notice.

The alphabetical system of visiting the bank remains, however, there will now be no division between morning and afternoon for those using the banking services. As long as your letter is on a specific day, you may conduct your banking business between 9 am and 3 pm. There will be no extended hours on Fridays.

CIBC FirstCaribbean has also sought to relieve the burden of fees on senior and junior customers with accounts that cater specifically to these two age groups.

“For clients who may have reached the eligible age, and are single account holders, we are presently updating their accounts to transition them to a seniors account which would not incur maintenance fees. We have completed that process for those 65 and over and are in the process of doing so for those account holders that are 60 and older,” stated Donna Wellington, Managing Director for Barbados.

“However, this would not apply to those accounts that carry multiple signatories, one of whom may be younger than age 60,” she explained.

CIBC FirstCaribbean also offers a junior ‘student’ account that carries no monthly service fee. Called the Sure Start account, it is designed to give children a head start on their savings and teach them to instill a culture of saving and managing money among children under the age of 17. However, an adult is required as a joint account holder to set up the account and it provides for a cash bonus for the account holder on opening. The bank’s clients are encouraged to continue to make use of the digital channels offered by the bank. Seniors can opt for direct deposit of their pension cheques straight to their accounts that will eliminate them having to stand in long lines.

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**Labour Department available to answer queries**

EMPLOYERS and employees seeking to have concerns addressed with respect to Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) as well as Industrial Relations (IR) should continue to contact the Labour Department.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Partnership Relations has advised that the following persons can be reached for assistance with OSH-related matters. They are Chief Labour Officer, Claudette Hope-Greenidge at 836-1505/535-1504 and Deputy Chief Labour Officer, Linda Bowen at 836-1505/535-1505.

For help with IR matters, call Senior Labour Officer, Judamay Williams-Bryan at 836-1510/535-1510 or Senior Safety and Health Officer, Alison Elcock at 826-1513/535-1513.

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**Media**

Wednesday May 20, 2020 • 9

Manager: Ross Perot

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**The Barbados Advocate**

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Jamaican students to sit CXC in July

KINGSTON – Jamaica has reversed an earlier decision and will now allow students to write the Caribbean-based Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) exams in July.

Earlier this month, Jamaica had disagreed with a decision taken by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) on Education that regional students will sit the CXC-administered exams in July.

The decision was criticism by the Jamaica Teachers’ Association, whose president, Owen Speid, castigated CXC for the July exam date, despite what he said was the danger of COVID-19. The Caribbean Union of Teachers (CUT), in a statement, called Caribbean governments “to be mindful not to rush the process for the reopening of schools to facilitate the writing of CXC Examinations, unless they have instituted all measures outlined by the reopening of school protocol”.

The CUT said that it believes the “unfortunate” decision taken by COHSOD places the lives of thousands of students and teachers at risk, as all the issues surrounding the administering of the examinations have not been addressed.

But Samuda told reporters that some schools were ready for the exams and others were not.

He said that the education authorities would do their best “to ensure that we facilitate our students in the best possible way to give the best chance to maximise their potential as they go forward” and that the exams will be done in two modalities – via the Internet and paper-based.

He said the Government took the decision after he spoke with CXC officials.

“I put the case to them that we just need a little more time and they could appreciate that, and I am very happy to say that they accommodated us, perhaps not in whole but in part,” Samuda said, adding “I am very happy that we have finalised the arrangements, and I think ... it might be the best thing to get it behind us and move on to a new year and, I hope, new horizons”.

The Government, through the Ministry of Health and Wellness, will create a sterile area around the port to conduct testing for the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Holness said that the cruise ship workers will be disembarked in groups of 200 every 48 to 72 hours and after testing, they will be taken to the Bahia Principe Grand Jamaica hotel in St Ann where the Government has secured 400 additional rooms.

The 48 to 72-hour period is to allow time for the test results to be made available.

Those who test positive for the virus will be taken to a State quarantine facility, and some crew members with negative results, will be allowed to self-quarantine at home for 14 days from the day they disembark the vessel.

For home quarantine, individuals will be required to consent to have their location geofenced via the JamCOVID19 website and to do video check-in multiple times daily.

Holness said the ship will reparation the largest batch of Jamaicans to date.
THE nation of Suriname holds legislative elections next week despite the coronavirus pandemic, and amid corruption scandals and tough economic times.

Some 380,000 registered voters will cast ballots on May 25 to elect the 51-member national assembly, with safety measures in place to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19.

Suriname, a Dutch-speaking country on the northeast shoulder of South America, has had very few coronavirus cases and only one death.

But while the last of its first 10 cases was reported at the end of March, Health Minister Antoine Elias said that an 11th case, a Brazilian, tested positive on Saturday.

The Brazilian allegedly entered the country illegally alongside eight other men, who are all being held in quarantine.

Until this latest case, all previous infections had been declared cured.

Last week, the government started easing lockdown measures – introduced in March – opening up businesses but keeping land borders with French Guiana to the east and Guyana to the west closed.

Voters will be required to maintain social distances and wash hands at the 649 polling stations, mostly located in schools.

There are 17 parties contesting the 51 seats.

Opposition figures have complained about potential fraud with polling stations being staffed exclusively by members of President Desi Bouterse’s ruling National Democratic Party, and about a bloated electoral roll that allegedly includes deceased people who died years ago.

The independent electoral bureau (OKB) chairwoman van Dijk-Silos demanded that Interior Minister Mike Noeralsim “clean up the list.”

She also called for transparency and demanded that authorities inform the public about virus safety measures.

“People will not show (up) to cast their vote if they have no confidence that when they enter the school premises that they will not be infected,” Van Dijk-Silos said.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, only the Organization of American States and Caribbean Community will act as election observers, with the European Union forced to cancel its mission.

Political parties have been unable to hold rallies due to lockdown measures but have turned to internet debates via Zoom, live Facebook sessions and car parades using loudspeakers.

Campaigning has been overshadowed by a slew of corruption scandals, including involving the central bank, and the dire economic outlook.

The country of fewer than 600,000 people depends heavily on mining and fishing.

President Desi Bouterse of Suriname, which will hold elections soon.

Suriname ready to vote despite virus

US Ambassador on Venezuelan visit to T&T: Rio Treaty was raised with Minister

TRINIDAD – United States Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago Joseph N Mondello has said that the Rio Treaty was recently raised with the Government.

The Rio Treaty, signed in 1947, is an agreement between countries in the Western Hemisphere to provide mutual defense if an act of aggression threatens the peace.

According to recent media reports, the US Embassy had indicated that Government violated the 73-year-old Rio Treaty when Venezuelan Vice President Delcy Rodriguez, along with a delegation, was allowed to enter Trinidad and Tobago on March 27, 2020.

Speaking in Senate last Wednesday, National Security Minister Stuart Young said he had spoken with the US Ambassador recently and no such issue arose.

However, in a statement issued on Tuesday, Mondello said he raised concern about the visit of the Venezuelan Vice President to T&T during a recent conversation with Young.

“Normally I do not comment on private conversations with host government officials. Since the government has spoken publicly about my May 6 conversation with Minister Young, though, I wish to affirm that I expressed concern to the Minister in that conversation about the consistency of Delcy Rodriguez’s visit to Port of Spain with Trinidad and Tobago’s obligations as a party to the Rio Treaty.”

“Article 20 of the Rio Treaty makes it unambiguously clear that all measures imposed by the Organ of Consultation – like the travel restrictions on Ms Rodriguez – are binding on all treaty parties, whether or not they voted in favor of such measures,” he said.

Haiti nears 600 cases of COVID-19; 22 dead

President thanks Madagascar for making decision to provide assistance

PORT-au-PRINCE, Haiti – Haiti continues to record significant numbers of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases as the French-speaking Caribbean Community (CARICOM) country yesterday reported that 63 new persons have tested positive, bringing the total to 596.

In addition, the Ministry of Public Health said that one person died from the virus, bringing to 22, the total number of deaths since the country reported its first case of COVID-19 on March 19.

The Ministry said the majority of the new cases were men, accounting for 59.6 per cent.

It said that the number of active cases in Haiti, excluding death and recovery, now stands at 553 with the number of suspected cases at 2,270, while 269 people have been hospitalised and 933 cases under quarantine at home, a decrease case of 397 from the previous day.

Meanwhile, President Jovenel Moise has welcomed the decision by Madagascar to provide assistance to the island.

“I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, you are imposing the African voice in the scientific world. Madagascar enhances the African pharmacopoeia by imposing the virtue of our medicinal plants and traditional work of African researchers.

“We hope to count on the solidarity of Madagascar which has made available to us the Covid-Organics,” Moise added.

Madagascar said that the “Covid-Organics” has been developed by the Malagasy Institute of Applied Research and its President, Andry Rajoelina in a video conference with Moise said, “We have pushed our research through Artemisia, combined with several other plants, which has already proven itself for several years.

“Re this for the reason that our researchers have pushed research through medicinal plants,” said Rajoelina, who is convinced that COVID-19 can be treated with a traditional drink made from artemisia’s leaves.

But the World Health Organisation, (WHO), has warned the country against using the drink without having it tested properly.
**Bolivia probes officials over ventilator deal after outcry**

LA PAZ – Bolivian authorities yesterday fired the country’s health minister and launched a probe into potential corruption after officials allegedly bought ventilators at inflated prices, underscoring the global challenge to prevent graft amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Press reports on the steep premium paid for the ventilators, bought at US$27,683 each, sparked social media backlash against the South American country’s government, which received Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) funds to purchase the devices in May.

Bolivian state prosecutor said in a statement yesterday that four health ministry officials had been detained over the scandal and that some officials abroad and intermediaries involved in the deal would also be investigated.

Health minister Marcelo Navajas was also detained in relation to the case, the head of the country’s police special forces told reporters. A warrant was issued last week and later in the day Navajas had been dismissed from his post.

“I will seek jail and order the full weight of the law against those who have taken a single cent. Every penny of corruption must be returned to the state,” caretaker President Jeanine Áñez had written on Twitter late on Tuesday.

In televised comments, she said that she had ordered a thorough investigation “no matter whom it brings down.” Reuters was unable to reach the health minister for comment.

The scandal emerged after Bolivian officials purchased 170 emergency respirators from the Spanish firm GPA Innova, using IDB funds.

Reuters could not reach the Spanish firm for comment, though its chief executive told Bolivian media that the ventilators had been sold via a third party.

The IDB said in a statement yesterday it was conscious about “possible irregularities in the purchase of respirators” made by Bolivia’s health ministry using financing from the bank.

The lender said earlier in May it had financed the country’s purchase of the ventilators as part of $82 million in funding for Bolivia to fight against the spread of the coronavirus.

**Murders in Mexico reach record levels in first four months of 2020**

MEXICO CITY – Homicides in Mexico hit record levels in the first four months of 2020, climbing by 2.4% from the same period last year, official data showed yesterday, dealing a setback to the government’s efforts to restore order.

President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador pledged to bring down gang-fueled violence afflicting Mexico when he took office in December 2018, but homicides hit a record level in 2019 and have continued to climb even during the coronavirus lockdown.

In the first four months of this year, 11,535 murders were registered, up from 11,266 homicide in same period last year, preliminary data from the Health Ministry showed yesterday, dealing a setback to the government’s efforts to restore order.

**Venezuela’s military to escort Iranian fuel tankers, defense minister**

CARACAS—Venezuela’s military will escort Iranian tankers bringing fuel to the gasoline-starved country as soon as they enter its exclusive economic zone, Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino said yesterday.

His comments came after Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido said the shipment should “alarm” Latin America.

Both OPEC members are U.S. adversaries whose oil industries are under U.S. sanctions. Trump administration spokesmen say Washington is considering a response to the shipment.

“The tankers – Fortune, Forest, Petunia, Paxon and Clavel – are carrying around 1.5 million barrels of fuel, and passed the Suez Canal in the first two weeks of May, Reffinitiv Eikon data show. They are expected to arrive in Venezuela between late May and early June.

“When they enter our exclusive economic zone, they will be escorted by Bolivarian National Armed Forces boats and planes to welcome them in and thank the Iranian people for their solidarity and cooperation,” Padrino said on state television, adding that the government was in touch with Iran’s defense minister.

Guaido said the fact President Nicolas Maduro’s socialist government is importing fuel shows its mismanagement of the country’s oil industry. Venezuela’s refining network has 1.3 million barrels per day (bpd) of capacity, but has collapsed after years of underinvestment.

“We are very concerned for the safety of Venezuelans, and of Latin America as well, due to this attempted Iranian presence on Venezuelan soil,” said Guaido, who leads the opposition-held National Assembly and is recognized as the rightful president by dozens of countries, including the United States.

**Brazil coronavirus outbreak worsens, cases could soon be second highest in world**

RIO DE JANEIRO – Brazil’s coronavirus outbreak worsened yesterday and the South American nation could soon have the second-highest number of cases in the world as the Health Ministry reported 888 new deaths and nearly 20,000 new cases in a single day.

Brazil could soon have more coronavirus cases than any nation in the world except the United States. Russia currently has the second highest number of cases.

Brazil’s confirmed case tally now stands at 291,579, according to the Health Ministry. On Monday, Brazil overtook Britain to become the country with the third highest number of infections and registered a daily record of 1,179 deaths on Tuesday.

President Jair Bolsonaro has been widely criticized for his handling of the outbreak. The far-right former army captain has long snubbed social distancing measures, arguing instead for the re-opening of the economy.

He has also become an increasingly strong advocate for the malaria drug hydroxychloroquine as a possible remedy for COVID-19, despite warnings from health experts of risks.

Yesterday, the Health Ministry issued new guidelines for wider use of anti-malarial drugs in mild coronavirus cases.

Interim Health Minister Eduardo Pazuello, an active duty army general, authorized the modified protocol after two trained doctors left the ministry’s top job under pressure to promote early use of chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine.

“We are at war with an enemy,” Bolsonaro tweeted to explain the government decision to put forward the drugs without proof of their effectiveness.

Brazil’s coronavirus death toll now stands at 18,859.
Arise, Sir Tom: veteran hopes queen is not ‘heavy’ with the sword

LONDON – Captain Tom Moore, who became a national hero in Britain after raising more than 33 million pounds (US$40 million) for the National Health Service in the run-up to his 100th birthday, is to be knighted.

Moore becomes “Sir Tom” after a special nomination from Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

The World War Two veteran raised the record sum by painstakingly completing 100 laps of his garden with the aid of a walking frame, becoming a symbol of British endurance in the face of the adversity of the coronavirus crisis.

Moore said it was an outstanding honour and that he was looking forward to meeting Queen Elizabeth, 94. “I hope she’s not very heavy with the sword,” Moore said. “By then I might be rather a poor old weak soul.”

A knighthood is bestowed by the monarch tapping a sword on the recipient’s shoulders. Asked what he will tell the queen, Moore said: “Any discussion between me and the queen will have to be kept secret.”

UK’s Cambridge University cancels face-to-face lectures until summer 2021

CAMBRIDGE, England – Britain’s Cambridge University became one of the first in the world yesterday to announce that all its lectures would be delivered online over the next academic year because of the coronavirus outbreak.

The university, which shut its campuses to students in March after the British government introduced a strict lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19, said lectures would be delivered virtually until summer 2021.

“All mass lectures – so really big lectures involving a lot of students – will not happen face to face but will be put online,” said Graham Virgo, Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education.

As many students as possible would return to campuses and the ‘supervision’ system of group teaching within the small colleges that make up the university would continue with social distancing regulations in place.

Swedish antibody study shows long road to immunity

COVID-19 toll mounts

STOCKHOLM – A Swedish study found that just 7.3 percent of Stockholmers developed COVID-19 antibodies by late April, which could fuel concern that a decision not to lock down Sweden against the pandemic may bring little herd immunity in the near future.

The strategy was championed by Chief Epidemiologist Anders Tegnell, whose recommendation for voluntary border measures against the virus, rather than a mandatory lockdown like those imposed by many other countries, has divided opinion at home and abroad.

Sweden’s strategy of keeping most schools, restaurants, bars and businesses open even as much of Europe hunkered down behind closed doors exposed it to criticism with death rates running far higher than in Nordic neighbours, even if much lower than in countries such as Britain, Italy and France that shut down.

The number of COVID-19 patients in intensive care in Sweden has fallen by a third from the peak in late April and health authorities say the outbreak is slowing. However, Sweden has recorded the highest number of COVID-19 deaths per capita in Europe over the last seven days.

The antibody study sought to look into the potential for herd immunity, a situation where enough people in a population have developed immunity to an infection to be able to effectively stop that disease from spreading.

The findings were roughly in line with models predicting a third of the Swedish capital’s population would have had the virus by now and where at least limited herd immunity could have set in, the Swedish Health Agency said yesterday.

“It is a little bit lower (than expected) but not remarkably lower, maybe one or a couple of percent,” Tegnell told a Stockholm news conference. “It squares pretty well with the models we have.”

However, the herd immunity concept is contested for the novel coronavirus and the extent and duration of immunity among recovered patients is equally uncertain as well.

The study drew on some 1,100 tests from across the country although only figures for Stockholm were released.

Johnson & Johnson to stop selling talc baby powder in US and Canada

JOHNSON & Johnson will stop selling its talc Baby Powder in the United States and Canada, it announced on Tuesday, saying demand had fallen in the wake of what it called “misinformation” about the product’s safety amid a barrage of legal challenges.

&J faces more than 19,000 lawsuits from consumers and their survivors claiming its talc products caused cancer due to contamination with asbestos, a known carcinogen. Many are pending before a U.S. district judge in New Jersey.

“I wish my mother could be here to see this day,” said Crystal Deckard, whose mother Darlene Coker alleged Baby Powder caused her mesothelioma. She dropped the suit filed in 1999 after losing her fight to compel J&J to divulge internal records. Coker died of the cancer in 2009.

In its statement, J&J said it “remains steadfastly confident in the safety of talc-based Johnson’s Baby Powder,” citing “decades of scientific studies.”

LUXEMBOURG – Luxembourg began mass testing for COVID-19 this week with the goal of covering all of its 600,000 people as soon as possible to stave off a second wave of infections following the easing of lockdown measures.

The diagnostic tests are voluntary, building up from around 1,500 daily tests to 20,000 a day next month. The aim is to test everyone in the Grand Duchy, in contingents and in some cases several times.

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Low Tide (First)         9:07 HRS
High tide (Second)  15:33 HRS
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Michigan flood displaces thousands

MIDLAND, Mich. – Floodwaters have overtaken dams and forced the evacuation of about 10,000 people from communities in central Michigan, where the governor warned that Dow Chemical Co.’s hometown could end up under 9 feet of water and said the state will investigate the dam operators.

No injuries or fatalities related to the flood have been reported, city spokeswoman Selina Tisdale said.

The river topped a previous record of 33.9 feet (10.3 meters) set during flooding in 1986, the National Weather Service said. Its flood stage is 24 feet (7.3 meters), and it was expected to crest by day’s end at about 38 feet (11.6 meters). The Weather Service urged anyone near the river to seek higher ground following “catastrophic dam failures” at the Edenville Dam, about 140 miles (225 kilometers) north of Detroit, and the Sanford Dam, about seven miles (11 kilometers) downstream.

Midland City Manager Brad Kaye said yesterday that the Sanford Dam is overflowing but the extent of structural damage isn’t yet known.

If the entire dam structure were to fail, “there would be a much higher surge that will come down the river and that could raise the level much more quickly than what we’re seeing right at the moment,” Kaye said.

Michigan is under a state of emergency order to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The state has been a national hot spot for COVID-19, with more than 52,000 cases and 5,000 deaths, but Midland County has had fewer than 80 cases and under 10 deaths. Still, residents were advised to take precautions and schools set up as shelters spaced cots to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

US arrests two men wanted by Japan over ex-Nissan boss Carlos Ghosn’s escape

BOSTON/WASHINGTON – U.S. authorities yesterday arrested a former U.S. Army Special Forces soldier and another man in Massachusetts wanted by Japan on charges that they enabled the escape of former Nissan Motor Co boss Carlos Ghosn out of the country.

Former U.S. Green Beret Michael Taylor, 59, and his son, Peter Taylor, 27, are accused by Japanese authorities of helping Ghosn last year flee to Lebanon, his 2019 escape.

Prosecutors said Peter Taylor traveled to Japan the day before Ghosn’s escape and Michael Taylor and Zayek arrived the next day with large black boxes that appeared to be for music equipment.

They said all three met with Ghosn, who after entering a hotel room with Michael Taylor and Zayek hid in one of boxes. The box was taken to an airport and loaded on a private jet headed for Turkey, prosecutors said.

Ghosn two days later announced he was in Lebanon.

The Taylors were arrested after a U.S. law enforcement learned Peter Taylor had booked a flight from Boston to Beirut departing Wednesday with a layover in London, according to court papers.

Following their arrest, the

Under-reporting earnings breach of trust and misappropriation of company funds, all of which he denies.

Prosecutors said Peter Taylor, who was out on bail at the time, fled to Lebanon, his predecessor could be in trouble if the probe could be directed against Biden. The Prosecutor General’s Office gave no further details.

Trump last year pressured Zelenskiy to investigate the Bidens in a phone call that triggered his impeachment.

Zelenskiy, who carefully avoided taking sides in the U.S. impeachment inquiry, said his predecessor could be in trouble over the nature.

They governed the country in such a way that they could face many twists and convictions, said Zelenskiy, who has repeatedly accused Poroshenko of corruption, accusations the former president has categorically denied.

The recordings don’t appear to contain anything that would incriminate Biden or his son and were seen by some observers as a political effort to help U.S. President Donald Trump’s re-election bid.

The Ukrainian investigation was opened on treason and abuse of office charges, indicating it was mostly directed against former Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko. Poroshenko rejected the tapes as a fabrication by pro-Russian forces in Ukraine.

Floodwaters have overtaken dams and forced the evacuation of about 10,000 people from communities in central Michigan.
FRANCE, which has long been sceptical of the growing power of US tech giants, is seeking to bypass Apple and Google for a smartphone app to help trace people infected with the novel coronavirus.

The move, which leaves France relatively isolated in Europe alongside Britain and Norway, reflects a growing concern about how such apps should be structured, who has access to sensitive data and their effectiveness.

A number of countries have already deployed “contact tracing” apps on smartphones that track a person’s contacts and alert them if need be, generating vital information to help contain outbreaks and slow the spread of the virus as nations ease lockdowns and get back to work.

These apps can be based either on a decentralised or centralised architecture.

A decentralised architecture keeps the information about whom a person has been in contact with on the smartphone.

If the person declares themselves to have been infected by the coronavirus, then those people deemed to have been in close contact for an extended period receive a notification to isolate themselves and get tested.

In a centralised system the data is managed by an authority, say a national health service, that would have access to the data to ensure those who are in contact with the disease are exposed are indeed followed up.

To become an effective tool for public health authorities, a contact tracing app has to be widely used — experts say by at least 60 percent of the population — but also provide them with needed information about who is getting sick as well as where, which can be important for taking quick measures to close hotspots.

Decentralised apps that make use of the Bluetooth radios on smartphones can be built so they do not even record the location of where people are in contact.

Nations cannot easily go around Apple and Google and develop their own apps as Apple in particular makes it difficult to keep Bluetooth enabled in its operating system.

People would need to keep the app open at all times, an inconvenience that would likely lead to many people not having it running on their phones.

**Systems rolled out**

So far Apple has resisted pleas from governments in other countries for help to get around that technical issue.

While the European Commission has not yet taken a formal position on the options, it acknowledges a decentralised system is better on data privacy grounds.

“If both approaches can be in conformity with data protection laws, from a point of view of minimising the collection of data, the decentralised approach is preferable as less data would be stored” on a centralised server, a Commission spokesman told AFP.

Several European countries are expected to roll out contact tracing apps in June, which should provide some indication as to the best strategies.

France hopes to have its app in operation on June 2, and the official leading its development has said it will work very well on an iPhone despite Apple’s lack of cooperation.

The technology arm of Britain’s National Health Service has been testing its centralised system on the Isle of Wight since May 5 and plans to unroll it nationwide in the coming weeks.

Germany has opted for a decentralised system compatible with the Apple/Google initiative that it hopes will be ready in several weeks.

Italy, which has also gone for a decentralised system, should have its app ready by the end of May, Innovation Minister Paola Pisano told the Corriere della Sera daily on Monday.

In Austria, the Red Cross has launched an app based on a centralised model that has 600,000 users, but it is expected to evolve into a decentralised application.

Switzerland is currently testing its decentralised app.

**Man sentenced to death in Singapore via Zoom**

A MAN has been sentenced to death via a Zoom video call in Singapore, as the country remains on lockdown following a spike in Covid-19 cases.

Punithan Genasan, 37, received the sentence on Friday for his role in a drug deal that took place in 2011.

It marks the city’s first case where such a ruling has been done remotely.

Human rights groups argued that pursuing the death penalty at a time when the world is being gripped by a pandemic was “abhorrent”.

The vast majority of court hearings in Singapore have been adjourned until at least 1 June, when the city’s current lockdown period is due to end.

Cases which have been deemed to be essential are being held remotely.

“For the safety of all involved in the proceedings, the hearing...”
Actors Julia Roberts, Hugh Jackman and Millie Bobby Brown are among the celebrities who will turn over their social media accounts to health experts to share facts and promote a science-driven approach to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

Roberts, who won an Oscar in 2001 for “Erin Brockovich,” kicks off the project today by interviewing Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. The #PassTheMic initiative is organised by global nonprofit ONE Campaign which aims to spotlight “health and economic experts ... discussing a global response to the global COVID-19 pandemic.” The emphasis is on data, science and facts.

According to ONE, the stars will turn over their social media accounts for one day to frontline workers, health, economic and other experts. In the interview with Roberts on her personal social media account, Fauci says the main problem to solve is “the extraordinary health disparities” between countries.

“Right now, if you take southern Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, parts of Asia, South America and even parts of the Caribbean as areas that don’t have the healthcare system to be able to respond the way one can respond in New York or L.A. or New Orleans or Chicago, we have really a moral responsibility for people throughout the world,” Fauci said.

Many of the participating celebrities have a big social-media footprint. Roberts, Jackman and Brown have a combined total of about 71 million followers on Instagram alone.

Other celebrities taking part in the campaign include Penelope Cruz, David Oyelowo, Sarah Jessica Parker, Rann Wilson and Shailene Woodley.
Players’ mental health at risk during shutdown

WITH soccer suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, players are worried about their careers and some have become depressed and are grappling with self-harm, the PFA’s director of player welfare has said.

Professional soccer has been suspended since March and with no clear date set for a return, Michael Bennett says the uncertainty has led to anxiety, the Times here reported.

“They don’t know if they’re going to go back to football, they don’t know if the football season will start again, they’re not sure what’s going on,” he added.

“There are financial situations with clubs furloughing players, there is deferal of wages. We’ve got a number of players who are living from pay cheque to pay cheque and this is having a real impact on them emotionally.

“Also health issues – if we do go back to the season, can it work? Will it work? What about my family? All those sort of what if questions kept coming up.”

The Premier League hopes to restart the season in June with matches to be played without fans at stadiums, while the second-tier Championship clubs will vote this week on how to conclude the season.

Uncertainty over players’ return as clubs reopen

NEW YORK – NFL team facilities began to reopen for non-player staff on Tuesday, though the league’s chief medical officer told reporters it remains unclear when players could return.

All 32 clubs closed in March amid the coronavirus outbreak that scrubbed the professional sports calendar and sent players, coaches and personnel into lockdown.

The NFL outlined protocols for reopening earlier this month that included social distancing precautions, with the Dallas Cowboys, Pittsburgh Steelers, Atlanta Falcons and Indianapolis Colts among the teams that opened their doors on Tuesday, according to US media reports.

“We’ve really taken an approach that we want to do this opening in a very phased, progressive, civilised fashion,” Allen Stills, the league’s chief medical official, told reporters.

“I’ve sort of used the phrase that we want to walk, then jog, then run as we think about how to reopen our facilities.”

Under the league provisions, clubs can start by allowing 50% of non-player staff to return and coaches are not allowed. Still said it was unclear when and how players could return, however, as the league targets a Sept. 10 start to its season while many parts of the country remain on lockdown.

“Obviously bringing players back in and doing football activity presents many challenges and a lot of medical issues to work through,” said Stills, who said that the NFL was “not putting dates on the calendar at this point” in regard to June mini-camps.

Coordinating testing of players and personnel is also a concern, with Stills saying the league would ensure “that we’re in no way affecting the supply of tests” regionally or nationally.

Professional sports have slowly begun crawling back to life across North America, with golf and NASCAR putting on fan-less events on Sunday, and Major League Baseball hoping to salvage its season.

NFL set to lose $5.5 billion if it plays to empty stadiums

New York – NFL teams stand to lose a combined $5.5 billion (5 billion euros) in stadium revenue if the 2020 campaign is played without any spectators, according to a Forbes magazine estimate.

The magazine, which annually values each NFL club, said the amount teams would lose with no spectators due to the coronavirus pandemic equals 38 per cent of total NFL revenue from the 2018 season, the latest from which figures are available.

That includes lost revenue from ticket sales, parking, sponsors, food and drinks and souvenir sales.

It’s uncertain whether or not fans will be able to attend NFL games, with state shutdown regulations against large crowds and possible medical advances likely to impact such plans.

The league announced its 2020 schedule earlier this month. It opens September 10 when the Houston Texans visit the reigning Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs.

The absence of spectators would hit some teams harder than others, but none more than the Dallas Cowboys, who would lose $262 million in stadium income – more than the total revenue of any other NFL franchise and a huge chunk of their $950 million total revenue.

New England Patriots would lose $315 million from total revenues of $600 million while the New York Giants ranked third at $262 million lost from $519 million in total revenue.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 24th of 31 teams on the list with the $119 million in lost revenue of $401 million, would expect a major jump in ticket sales and associated income after signing six-time Super Bowl champion quarterback Tom Brady.

And the two bottom teams on the list, the Los Angeles Chargers and Las Vegas Raiders, are set to move into new stadiums with vast boosts in ticket sales and associated income to be expected from the venue switches.

The Raiders figures would show $77 million in lost revenue from a league-low $357 million total, but those figures came in Oakland while the team is set to play in a brand new 65,000-seat, $1.8 billion stadium in Las Vegas in 2020.

The Chargers, second-worst in the report with $99 million lost in revenue from a $375 million total, are set to move from a smaller venue into a new $1.5 billion stadium with 70,000 seats for regular NFL games.

The Los Angeles Rams, set to drop $121 million off total revenue of $401 million, would also make the move into the new stadium.

NSC reopens with enhanced health, safety measures

AS the country begins to lift coronavirus restrictions, the National Sports Council (NSC) is one of the places that has opened its doors once again.

Its office at the Wildey Gymnasium and its facilities have re-opened for business as of Monday, May 18, 2020, with opening hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

However, as many are discovering, the return is anything but normal as back to business is not back to business as usual.

In an effort to manage some of the still existing protocols and in keeping with their “improved sanitisation and social distancing practices,” they are asking that members of the public call their office at 535-9861 or email at nsc.barbados@barbados.gov.bb, before visiting the physical office and facilities.

With members of the public need to visit the offices and facilities, they will be required to:

1. Wear a face mask upon entry.
2. Sanitise hands upon entry.
3. Submit to a temperature check.
4. Maintain a six foot distance between other members of the public and staff.
Brady gathers new Bucs teammates for workout on prep field

TAMPA, Fla. – Tom Brady isn’t letting the coronavirus pandemic—or NFL rules against players working out at team facilities—keep him from preparing for a new season with his new Tampa Bay team.

Brady gathered some of his Buccaneers teammates on a high school field early Tuesday for a throwing session. Brady wore a Buccaneers helmet and an orange jersey over his shoulder pads. The informal, players-only workout at Berkeley Preparatory School lasted two hours, according to The Tampa Bay Times.

It’s not unusual for quarterbacks to organise passing workouts before training camp, but the pandemic has changed normal routines. Teams have had to rely on virtual meetings instead of traditional offseason programs as the NFL tries to make plans for a 2020 season, possibly without fans at stadiums.

Because of the pandemic, which has forced social distancing and sheltering at home as the new rules, any gathering of players is notable—especially one involving Brady, a six-time Super Bowl champion with the New England Patriots. Brady, 42, signed a two-year, $50 million contract with the Bucs in March.

After signing with the Bucs, Brady asked for phone numbers of his teammates. He apparently made use of that list to organise Tuesday’s workout.

It was an encouraging sign for fans on the same day NFL teams began opening facilities to a limited number of personnel. The facilities are still off-limits to all players, except for players undergoing injury rehabilitation.

Center Ryan Jensen practised shotgun snaps to Brady on the practice turf football field.

Though he’s the newcomer, Brady was in charge, according to the newspaper. Brady walked through a route with receiver Mike Evans, demonstrating for the veteran and other players exactly where to make their cuts.

Quarterbacks Blaine Gabbert and Ryan Griffin also threw passes.

Among other players attending the session were receiver Scotty Miller, tight ends Cameron Brate and O.J. Howard and running back Dare Ogunbowale.

Teams cannot organise such workouts, but the Buccaneers did not publicise Tuesday’s session. There was no immediate reply from the team to a request from The Associated Press for comment on the workout.

Tuesday’s session went better than Brady’s attempt to work out privately at a Tampa park last month. After he was told by a security guard that the park was closed and he had to leave, Brady received an apology from Mayor Jane Castor.

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Cash or health?
Resumption will show game’s priorities: Millman

SYDNEY – The timing of professional tennis’s return will reveal whether the tours and federations are more interested in making money or looking after the health of players, Australia’s John Millman said.

The professional game has been suspended since March because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the International Tennis Federation, WTA and ATP have put back plans for a resumption until August at the earliest.

Millman, a 16-year veteran of the ATP Tour and ranked 43rd in the world, says even that would probably be premature.

“I feel as if it’s probably too early to return to competition. I think even then it would probably be premature,” the world number 14 told British media.

“It would have to be a merger of equals because that’s what we are. I wouldn’t see how, right now in today’s age, it would be allowed to be called anything that is the case,” Millman said.

As many as seven associations run different parts of tennis in the world. Besides the ATP and the WTA Tours, the sport is also controlled by the International Tennis Federation and the boards of the four Grand Slam tournaments.

“For me, for my comprehension, I don’t understand how it wouldn’t be of equals because if we are then talking about that, would it be literally saying we are worth less than our male counterparts?” the world number 14 told British media.

“We are still postponing instead of fixing a date and venue and getting to work? I can’t wait to win this fight,” said Millman.

Former European amateur super-heavyweight champion Pulev, who was due to meet Joshua at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London, said Joshua was not acting like a real world champion.

“I see how people are afraid of me and are trying to face someone else first before me,” Pulev said.

“I don’t have to do it for him (Joshua) to have his second match against Ruiz Jr. Everything was against IBF’s rules, but I compromised.”

Pulev, known as “The Cobra”, said there was no chance for a compromise.

“I wouldn’t accept it,” Pulev said. “I can’t understand why we are still postponing instead of fixing a date and venue and getting to work? I can’t wait to win this fight.”

MUMBAI—British number one Johanna Konta feels a merger of the women’s governing WTA tennis body with the men’s ATP makes sense but stressed it must only be on equal terms.

Roger Federer last month called for a merger between the two organisations with the Women’s Tennis Association chief Steve Simon and Association of Tennis Professionals Tour Chairman Andrea Gaudenzi writing to suggest the suggestion.

Konta, who sits on the WTA player council, has joined some of her fellow women professionals in calling for an equal position in any combined body in the future.

Konta wants ATP/WTA to be a merger of equals

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Joshua has also said that a blockbuster fight with Fury, who is set to meet Deontay Wilder in a rematch later this year, would not come until next year, following a seventh round stoppage win in February, was needed to determine a single dominant figure in the division.

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Zinedine Zidane expressed admiration at both the physical and mental form in which his Real Madrid players have returned from the coronavirus lockdown and vowed they would give everything to win a trophy.

"The players have worked well from home and that's why they have come back on great form, this is going to be crucial," Zidane said of their individual training plans.

"This week has been great because even working in small groups we can go further, work better, and next week will even better."

Real are two points behind Barcelona in Spain's La Liga and the 12-time European champions also trail Manchester City after the first leg of their Champions League quarter-final.

Frenchman Zidane led Madrid to three Champions League titles in his first tenure at the helm of the club and hopes to win something in his first full season back in charge.

"After almost 60 days everyone is happy to get back here and catch up with each other, and to play some football, which is what all they love," said Zidane.

"We'll do everything to be ready for the restart and with eleven games to go we want to give it absolutely everything to win something."

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Swiss legal chief faces sack over meetings

A SWISS parliamentary commission Wednesday decided to open proceedings that could see the country's attorney-general dismissed as part of an investigation over a number of alleged secret meetings with FIFA president Gianni Infantino.

The commission voted by 13 votes to four to initiate a case against Michael Lauber. It is "due to a well-founded suspicion of serious violation of the duties of his office intentionally or by gross negligence", explained the president of the commission, Andrea Caroni.

If, at the end of the procedure, the commission finds that the suspicions are confirmed, it will submit a proposal for dismissal to parliament which will decide on the sacking.

Otherwise, the procedure will be closed, the commission said in a statement.

Lauber came out of the building, where Wednesday's proceedings were held in private, "ready to collaborate with the commission", explained the president.

"If, at the end of the procedure, the commission finds that the suspicions are confirmed, it will submit a proposal for dismissal to parliament which will decide on the sacking."

Lauber said they were dealing in speculation and had a constant disregard for all the facts and extenuating circumstances.

FIFA has never denied the meetings between Infantino and Lauber, explaining that they were intended to show that the international football federation, which has the status of complainant in certain procedures, was "ready to collaborate with Swiss justice".

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Lauda with me ‘in spirit at every race’, says Hamilton

LEWIS HAMILTON said Niki Lauda is with him "in spirit at every race" as the six-time world champion hailed the Austrian F1 legend on the first anniversary of his death.

Three-time champion Lauda passed away just before last year's Monaco Grand Prix at the age of 70.

As well as his battles on and off the track, Lauda played a key role in persuading Hamilton to leave McLaren for Mercedes seven years ago.

"With Niki, bringing me to a team, convincing me to come to a team that at the time had a lot of success to come. I am grateful for the opportunity and forever love Niki," said Hamilton.

"I know he is with us every race in spirit." Hamilton, speaking in a video tribute released by the world champions on Wednesday, admitted it was still tough to discuss the impact of Lauda, 12 months after his death.

"Niki is someone who I miss and who I think we all miss dearly," said the British driver.

"Probably the most fond memories I have are from my first conversations. We started talking some time in 2012 and I just remember being home during the day, having a call from Niki and he is trying to convince me to come to the team."

"It was very cool to have a call from a world champion and an icon like Niki."
The Barbados Advocate
Thursday May 21, 2020 • 21

BARBADOS STOCK REPORT

May 20, 2020

One security traded firm as 100 shares traded on the Regular Market, with a total value of $3,100.00. West India Biscuit Company Limited was the sole security trading 100 shares at $31.00.

SHARE SUMMARY INFORMATION

Wednesday May 20, 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Security Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Close Price</th>
<th>Change Price</th>
<th>Bid Price</th>
<th>Ask Price</th>
<th>Size</th>
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<tr>
<td>ABV Investments Incorporated</td>
<td>13-Mar-20</td>
<td>0.15</td>
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<td>3.10</td>
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<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1,817</td>
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<td>Barbados Farms Limited</td>
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<td>2.29</td>
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<td>Cave Shepherd and Company Limited</td>
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<td>West India Biscuit Company Limited</td>
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<td>8,080</td>
<td>10,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL SHARES BOUGHT & SOLD: 100

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

NOTICES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Barbados Farms Limited – Directors of Barbados Farms Limited (BFL) hereby notifies its valued Shareholders that it wishes to withdraw the previously published record date of March 26th, 2020 for the determination of shareholders entitled to receive notice of the Annual General Meeting of the Company. Once the country returns to some degree of normality and BFL is in a position to have its Annual Report together with the notice of meeting printed and mailed within the statutory timeframe, it will advertise a new record date for determining Shareholders entitled to receive notice of the 35th annual meeting of shareholders.

Sagicor Financial Company Limited – The Board of Directors, of the parent company of Sagicor Financial Corporation Limited, has fixed May 1st, 2020 as the record date for those shareholders entitled to receive notice of the Annual General Meeting of the Company to be held on June 15th, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this will be a virtual meeting, details of which will be included in the shareholder package.

DIVIDEND DECLARATIONS

Goddard Enterprises Limited – Directors have declared a final dividend of point five ($0.05) cents per share to be paid on May 29th, 2020 to Shareholders on record at close of business on April 30th, 2020.

COVID-19 PROCEDURAL UPDATE

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 contagion affecting the island, the Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. (BSE) and the Barbados Central Securities Depository Inc. (BCSDI) have been instituting several procedural changes.

Kindly note that effective May 18th, 2020, the BSE and BCSDI re-opened and resumed normal office hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Please also note that we have implemented digital temperature checks for all persons entering the building. These checks are being conducted on both staff and clients alike by trained personnel.

While we acknowledge that every person with fever may not be COVID-19 positive and that some individuals may present without symptoms, please note that any person with a temperature reading of 100? F (37.8? C) or over will be denied entry to conduct business within our offices.

We wish to thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation, however, we must emphasize that this is a necessary step for the protection of staff and clients alike.

TRADING SUSPENSION

The Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. (BSE) wishes to advise that due to non-compliance with Section 4.013 and subject to Section 3.01.5(A)(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 4.013 and subject to Section 3.01.5(A)(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.

NEWS

Bank of England paves way for negative interest rates

The Bank of England governor, Andrew Bailey, has paved the way for negative interest rates in a dramatic move that illustrates concerns inside the central bank that the impact of the coronavirus lockdown will be longer and deeper than expected.

Bailey said central bank officials were actively considering all options to help see the economy through a deep recession and told MPs that it would be "foolish" to rule out cutting the cost of borrowing to below zero.

The move came after Britain sold a government bond with a yield, which indicates the interest paid, of -0.003%.

Only last month Bailey in effect ruled out cutting the Bank’s own lending rate from 0.1% to below zero. However, the deepening crisis has persuaded the Bank that it needs to consider all tools available to make credit cheaper for embattled businesses and households.

The move would be unprecedented in the Bank’s 325-year history and would leave only the US Federal Reserve among major central banks to rule out negative rates.
CHELSEA striker Olivier Giroud and goalkeeper Willy Caballero extended their contracts till the end of the 2020/21 season, the Premier League side announced on Wednesday.

Giroud, 33, forced himself back into Frank Lampard's plans just prior to the shutdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic and scored the Blues' last goal in a 4-0 win over Everton in March.

The former Arsenal striker came close to leaving the club in January in a bid to further his case for a place in France's Euro 2020 squad after falling behind Tammy Abraham as Lampard's first-choice forward. However, Giroud started Chelsea's last three Premier League games and also scored in a vital 2-1 win over Tottenham in February.

“Since I have been back at Chelsea, Olivier has been brilliant as a professional and as a man in general,” said Lampard. “He has great qualities to help the squad both on and off the pitch, not only with his talent but with the example he sets every day and the experience he brings to our young squad. I am very pleased that will continue next season.”

Caballero's new deal will keep him at Stamford Bridge until months before his 40th birthday.

“I am delighted to continue my journey and adventure at Chelsea,” said Giroud. “I can’t wait to get back to playing and enjoying competitive football with my team-mates.”

The Argentine briefly displaced the world’s most expensive goalkeeper, Kepa Arrizabalaga, earlier this year after a series of costly errors by the Spaniard.

“Kepa had claimed his place by the time the Premier League was suspended, but Lampard also hailed the important of Caballero’s experience.

“I trust in Willy, he trains brilliantly and is a great professional,” Lampard said.

“He stepped into the team earlier this year and showed his quality, and his experience is invaluable in the dressing room. I’m delighted he will be with us next season.”

Chelsea goalkeeper Willy Caballero has signed a contract extension.

Chelsea have extended striker Olivier Giroud’s contract till 2021.

Chelsea have extended goalkeeper Willy Caballero’s contract till 2021.

I, Mr. F.O.G., does got these lines back up and mess up the environment.

Fat Child, got Mr. F.O.G., low, yeh!

But we all got a part to play in keeping your sewer network clean.

I hope they would've got those lines back up and mess up the environment.

We will let the experts battle the menace day and night.

Call José José at 427-1935 to have your grease traps cleaned.
**Aries** – This is a great time to approach someone you have long respected and admired. Your tact, intelligence and enthusiasm will make a great impression on them. Accept an opportunity to work for this accomplished person; you’ll learn a great deal from them.

**Taurus** – A lucrative job will be awarded to you. Having a second source of income will allow you to save up for an exotic journey, hopefully next year. Meanwhile you’re limited to short trips for essentials. While browsing through brochures, don’t be surprised when you become inspired to learn a language.

**Gemini** – Take this opportunity to overhaul your image. Changing your business name, getting a new logo or updating your general appearance are all good options. People will treat you much differently after making a small alteration. It will feel like you’ve started a fresh chapter. A legal matter will be decided in your favour, allowing you to move forward with a business plan.

**Cancer** – A passionate romance will command all your attention. It feels so good to get lost in your amour’s arms. In the past, you were reluctant to discuss your sensual desires. All your defences will vanish with this partner. Instead of feeling judged, you’ll be worshipped. Your intuition is stronger than ever.

**Leo** – Working as part of a team will be rewarding. Although you’re loaded to the fingertips with creative talent, you sometimes have difficulty knowing your strengths and weaknesses. Getting feedback from trusted friends will give you the courage to act, sing or play music. A business or romantic partnership is yielding much fruit.

**Virgo** – Are you looking for a new professional challenge? This would be a great time to apply for work involving publishing or education. Your flexibility, intelligence and communication skills are well suited to these types of work. Don’t hesitate to pursue the top job. Give yourself a reward for taking better care of your health.

**Libra** – If you’re currently in education, you’ll get a great grade on a paper or test. Give yourself a reward for your hard work. Have you been thinking about going to university? Apply now; your chances for securing a spot through a prestigious institution are high. Someone will ask you for help with a creative pursuit. Giving them lessons will be beneficial for you both. You’ll gain valuable teaching experience, while they’ll develop their natural talent to a new and unexpected level.

**Scorpio** – Your business or romantic partner will receive wonderful financial news. Don’t worry; you’ll get your fair share of the profits. After all, you’ve been integral to your other half’s success. Take this opportunity to add items to a cherished collection. Reviving a family tradition will make you feel settled and secure.

**Sagittarius** – Getting engaged or married may seem a long way off but it will pave the way to long-term happiness. Abandon independence for intimacy. Do you already have a partner? Your other half will encourage you to get an advanced degree. Taking this advice will put you on a rewarding path. You’ve been blessed with a sharp intellect.

**Capricorn** – If you’ve been looking for work, you’ll get at least two offers that excite your imagination. If you’re a free agent, you should accept both these jobs. They’ll bring a steady stream of income that allows you to purchase some cutting-edge equipment. Do you want to work for one company?

**Aquarius** – Are you in the market for romance? You’ll meet someone special via a popular dating app. The object of your affection will play hard to get at first, which is just the way you like it. You’ll have fun trying to win their heart. Social distancing in the early stages will add an extra level of excitement and anticipation.

**Pisces** – This is one of the best times of the entire year to find a new home. A beautiful place that’s within walking distance of the town centre is within your budget. Snap up this property; it won’t be on the market for long. Creating a tranquil haven will cause your imagination to soar. Don’t be surprised when you finish an ambitious creative project after moving.
Two recoveries, no new cases of COVID-19

TWO people will be released from isolation today after recovering from COVID-19. This drops the number in isolation to 13, and increases the number of recoveries to 70. There were no new positive cases among the 155 tests carried out yesterday.

The number of confirmed cases therefore remains at 90. There have been seven deaths and the Best-dos Santos Public Health Laboratory has now completed 4,322 tests.

President of the Barbados Olympic Association (BOA), Sandra Osbourne.

WIDE REACH

BOA President: Pandemic will have ripple effect

Two cases of COVID-19 are recoveries, bringing the total recoveries to 70.

There were no new positive cases among the 155 tests carried out yesterday.

The number of confirmed cases therefore remains at 90.

The Best-dos Santos Public Health Laboratory has now completed 4,322 tests.

President of the Barbados Olympic Association (BOA), Sandra Osbourne.

President of the Barbados Olympic Association (BOA), Sandra Osbourne says in the current landscape, COVID-19 has caused widespread cancellations and postponements of sporting events across the globe, which will have a knock-on effect through 2023.

Osbourne was at the time speaking during the Caribbean Court of Justice Academy for Law’s Sixth Biannual Conference Webinar Series, held under the theme: Legal Dimensions Arising from COVID-19 Pandemic, where she explained that not only will COVID-19 have an impact on the staging of events, but also on commercial contracts.

She noted that contracts of every sort would be affected as a result of the pandemic. "From host city contracts, to broadcast and TV rights contracts. There is a whole host. There are the downstream activity that result from many of the sporting events such as accommodation and transportation and security and so on. So that this is an area that is certainly very topical.

"The postponement of Tokyo 2020 to 2021 has already resulted in other major event organisers having to move their events to 2021 into 2022 to avoid clashing with the Olympics and this in turn has caused dates in 2021 and 2022, long secured in some cases as much as seven years in advanced have to be renegotiated to new dates that make sense for all the major stakeholders. Of course there is the inability of athletes and clubs to fulfill their obligations under their contracts and the financial challenges as you can imagine are significant."

In short, she explained that some other risk mitigation strategies may not completely cover losses or the deferment from revenue.

"Within this maestrosi however there are signs of solidarity within the sporting community in attempts to renegotiate, but inevitably negotiations will get difficult given what is at stake. The commercial impact of the cancellation, delays and postponement will no doubt generate many cases before the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) and the very relevant question will be whether COVID-19 is indeed a force majeure event."

The BOA President explained that this international body, recognised for the resolution of commercial disputes and disciplinary matters in sport and the body of case law relating to sport and the body of case law which CAS has developed, form the core of what is known as Lex Sportiva. It is a final court, except for a limited right of appeal. The force majeure clauses generally stipulate that non-performance or delayed performance of a contractual obligation that arises due to an event, which is beyond the reasonable control of the performing party, would not constitute a breach of the contract.

Osbourne observed that unlike many of the English cases where the force majeure event is specifically mentioned, such as war, pandemic, natural disaster or whatever, some contracts would have a clause that merely says that parties can be relieved of their obligation in the event of a force majeure.

"I think that it is clear that any body who is seeking to rely on force majeure has to come within the narrow confines of the principles."

As such she said there are a few relevant observations to be considered.

"First of all, the question of foreseeability. Is this global pandemic a foreseeable event given the fact that we’ve had SARS, H1N1, and Ebola and the warnings that we have had in the past about a pandemic never being at the global level? But of course one can argue I would submit that this pandemic has had a ripple effect in terms of lockdowns and curfews and cessation of economic activity except for essential services and the impact in itself is unforeseeable even if the event itself was."

She also noted that governmental interventions have already been made in terms of whether the governments’ restrictions and closing of borders and quarantines are matters made by law or are recommendations and therefore the party’s position in terms of what has to be done.

"So inevitably the strength of any case in my view will lie in the argument that COVID-19’s far reaching impact, rather than the pandemic itself, results in force majeure and we in the sports community look forward to how this will unfold in relation to the many events that formed the basis of contracts within the sporting world,” she said.