WHERE even the most modern and internationally renowned medical facilities in the world were caught unprepared when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, our very own Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) was ahead of the curve.

Yesterday a press conference was held to outline the response of the QEH to the COVID-19 pandemic and its strategy for the safe resumption of out-patient and elective surgical services. Juliette Sutherland-Bynoe, Executive Chairman of the QEH explained that there has been a national mandate to isolate the QEH from COVID-19 for as far and as long as possible. She highlighted that by observing the paths taken by China, Italy and others who had been battling the virus long before it reached our shores, the QEH had the opportunity to learn and understand that it was possible to manage the pace of the pandemic, all the while protecting the hospital.

"Part of that reasoning," she said. "QEH on Page 4"
NOTICE OF ANNUAL AND SPECIAL MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS

When: Monday, June 15, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time

Where: Virtually at: https://web.lumiagm.com/221850876

Control Number: Please review instructions below

Password: sagicor2020 (case sensitive)

NOTICE is hereby given that the annual and special meeting (the "Meeting") of the registered holders of common shares (the "Common Shares") of Sagicor Financial Company Ltd. (the "Company") will be held at 11:00 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time (Toronto, Canada) (10:00 a.m. Atlantic Standard Time (Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago) and 10:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time (Jamaica)) on Monday, June 15, 2020 to consider and take action on the following matters:

1. as an item of special business, to consider, and if deemed appropriate, to pass a resolution approving certain proposed amendments to the bye-laws of the Company;

2. to receive the audited annual consolidated financial statements of the Company for the financial year ended December 31, 2019, together with the notes thereto and the independent auditor's report thereon;

3. to elect the directors of the Company who will serve until the next annual meeting of shareholders or until their successors are elected or appointed or their office is vacated in accordance with the bye-laws of the Company;

4. to reappoint the auditor of the Company and authorize the board of directors of the Company (the "Board") to fix the auditor's remuneration; and

5. to transact such other business as may be properly brought before the Meeting or any postponement or adjournment thereof.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Company is holding the Meeting as a completely virtual meeting, which will be conducted via live webcast, where all registered shareholders, regardless of geographic location and equity ownership levels, will have an equal opportunity to participate at the Meeting and engage with the directors of the Company and management as well as other shareholders. Shareholders will not be able to physically attend the Meeting in person. Registered shareholders and duly-appointed proxyholders (as further described below) will be able to virtually attend, participate and vote at the Meeting online at: https://web.lumiagm.com/221850876 (password: sagicor2020 (case sensitive)). Non-registered shareholders (being shareholders who hold their Common Shares through a broker, investment dealer, bank, trust company, custodian, nominee or other intermediary) who have not duly appointed themselves as proxyholder will not be able to virtually attend, participate or vote at the Meeting. Please see below for instructions on how to appoint a proxyholder.

The Meeting is referred to as an annual and special meeting given that the regulations of the Toronto Stock Exchange deem the matter arising under item 1 to be an item of special business. However, please note that all items of business will be transacted at the Meeting. No separate special meeting or adjournment meeting (within the meaning of the bye-laws of the Company) is required to be held nor will it be held for the purpose of transacting the special business.

As a shareholder of the Company, it is very important that you read the management information circular of the Company dated May 1, 2020 (the "Circular") and other Meeting materials referred to below carefully. They contain important information with respect to voting your Common Shares and virtually attending and participating at the Meeting (See "Business of the Meeting" and "Voting Information" in the Circular for more information). As permitted by Canadian securities regulators, the Company is using notice-and-access to deliver the Circular to shareholders. This means that the Circular is being posted online to access, rather than being mailed out. Notice-and-access substantially reduces the Company’s printing and mailing costs and is environmentally friendly as it reduces paper and energy consumption. Shareholders will still receive a form of proxy or a voting instruction form in the mail so they can vote their shares but instead of receiving a paper copy of the Circular, they can access the Circular and all related materials, including the audited annual consolidated financial statements of the Company for the financial year ended December 31, 2019, together with the notes thereto, and the independent auditor’s report thereon and the related management’s discussion and analysis, electronically on SEDAR at www.sedar.com under the Company's profile, at https://docs.tsxtrust.com/2173 or on The Company’s website at www.sagicor.com. For more information about notice-and-access, or if you require a paper copy of the Circular and related materials, please contact TST Trust Company ("TST Trust"), the Company’s Transfer Agent and Registrar, at 1-833-955-1277 (toll free) or 1-647-727-0851 or by email at sagicor@tsxtrust.com. You must contact TST Trust before June 4, 2020 to have the materials delivered to you before the deadline to submit proxies.

The Board has fixed the close of business on May 1, 2020 as the record date for determining shareholders entitled to receive notice of, and to vote at, the Meeting, or any postponement or adjournment thereof. No person who becomes a shareholder of record after that time will be entitled to notice or to vote at the Meeting or any postponement or adjournment thereof.

A shareholder who wishes to appoint an individual other than the management nominees identified on the form of proxy or voting instruction form including a non-registered shareholder who wishes to appoint themselves as proxyholder in order to virtually attend, participate and vote at the Meeting may do so by inserting such person’s name in the blank space provided in the form of proxy or voting instruction form and following the instructions for submitting such form of proxy or voting instruction form. This must be completed prior to registering such proxyholder, which is an additional step to be completed once you have submitted your form of proxy or voting instruction form. If you wish that a person other than the management nominees identified on the form of proxy or voting instruction form virtually attend and participate at the Meeting as your proxy and vote your Common Shares, including if you are a non-registered shareholder and wish to appoint yourself as proxyholder to virtually attend, participate and vote at the Meeting, you MUST register such proxyholder after having submitted your form of proxy or voting instruction form identifying such proxyholder. Failure to register the proxyholder will result in the proxyholder not receiving a control number to participate in the Meeting. Without a control number, proxyholders will not be able to virtually attend, participate, or vote at the Meeting. To register a proxyholder, a shareholder MUST complete the "Request for Control Number" form, which can be found at https://tsxtrust.com/resource/en/75, and submit it via email to tsxtrustproxvoting@em.com by 11:00 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time on June 12, 2020 so that TST Trust may provide the proxyholder with a control number via email. The control number will be a 12-digit number that, together with the password sagicor2020, will allow your proxyholder to log in to and vote at the Meeting online. Without a control number, your proxyholder will not be able to vote or participate at the Meeting. Please review the Circular for further information regarding appointing a proxyholder.

Proxies must be deposited with TST Trust no later than 11:00 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time (Toronto, Canada) (10:00 a.m. Atlantic Standard Time (Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago) and 10:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time (Jamaica)) on June 11, 2020, or if the Meeting is postponed or adjourned, by no later than 48 hours prior to the time of such postponed or adjourned meeting (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and holidays in Toronto, Canada). The chair of the Meeting reserves the right to accept late proxies and to waive the proxy submission cut-off date, with or without notice. Non-registered shareholders should carefully follow the instructions of their intermediaries to seek to ensure that their Common Shares are voted at the Meeting in accordance with such shareholder's instructions.

Dated this 1st day of May 2020.

By order of the Board,

Doddridge D. Miller
Group President and Chief Executive Officer

Sagicor
Legal considerations of pandemic discussed during conference

LEGAL luminaries and health officials from across the globe recently came together to discuss the Legal dimensions arising from COVID-19 pandemic during the Caribbean Court of Justice Academy of Law’s sixth biennial conference.

With presenters from Barbados, Brazil, Guyana, Israel, Jamaica, Singapore, Turkey, United Kingdom, the US and Trinidad and Tobago, the webinar was held to highlight some of the critical issues that could have implications for the region as it relates to the novel coronavirus.

Chairman of CCJ Academy for Law and Legal Proceedings, Keesha Reid, stated that in the latter case, new discussions with the industry stakeholders would be held to prevent the statutory corporation going bankrupt.

Noting the sale of chicken wings has partially funded the corporation’s farming programs since government had slashed its funding due to the economic recovery program, Weir highlighted that the impact of Covid-19, had also hurt the corporation’s revenue.

"I have to be also cognizant of the fact that it will take away cash from the BADMC, and that their cash flow position I would then have to pay weekly attention to. Under the COVID [curfew] period, they would’ve lost sales through the airport store," he stated, reiterating the objective was to achieve balance within the industry during this difficult period.

Meanwhile, a public relations campaign to "sensitize the public to the availability of Barbadian poultry" will soon be launched by the Barbados Agricultural Society.

"We have engaged on a wholesale marketing campaign for local poultry. We have engaged in specials. Our members in some cases have dropped their prices, and we want to ensure that all players in the industry participate in the effort to ensure that despite the fact there will not be as much chicken wings, we will engage in a marketing campaign to convince Barbadians to support the local poultry industry even more," he stated.

On the level of International Law is there an obligation to provide less developed states in the fair share of resources such as medical supplies necessary to combat the pandemic.

"At the level of individual rights, what are the permissible limits to the interference with our civil liberties for our protection and to protect others. The pandemic has thrown the world into economic recession. What is the legal effect on commercial obligations? Should they be treated as merely suspended or wholly terminated? As to the administration of justice, the pandemic has disrupted the operation of our ports. What are the adjustments necessary to ensure a re-sumption while affording a fore hearing in this new normal?" the chairman queried.

The CCJ Academy for Law is one of the two educational arms of the Caribbean Court of Justice, the other is the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers. The latter, founded in 2009, brings together the region’s heads of judicatures, justices of appeal, judges, masters, magistrates, registrars, tribunal members, court administrators and other judicial officers. The CCJ Academy for Law established in 2010 brings together students, academics and professionals to provide informative and innovative perspectives on the rules and roles of law, particularly international law. (JH)

BADMC’s bottom line feeling impact from loss of sales, slash in funding

WITH poultry sales at the Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (BADMC) being snipped from today, alternative streams of revenue for the state-owned enterprise may have to be sought.

Minister of Agriculture and Food Security Indar Weir suggested the two-month suspension on the importation and sale of poultry products by the BADMC as local poultry producers move to sell off their large amounts of stock, was expected to have an impact on the corporation’s bottom line.

Saying the resumption of poultry sales by the BADMC would not be permitted until monitoring and evaluation indicated the sector’s return to normalcy or “we find ourselves in a position

where we have to find some other revenue stream for the BADMC”, he stated that in the latter case, new discussions with the industry stakeholders would be held to prevent the statutory corporation going bankrupt.

Noting the sale of chicken wings has partially funded the corporation’s farming programs since government had slashed its funding due to the economic recovery program, Weir highlighted that the impact of Covid-19, had also hurt the corporation’s revenue.

"I have to be also cognizant of the fact that it will take away cash from the BADMC, and that their cash flow position I would then have to pay weekly attention to. Under the COVID [curfew] period, they would’ve lost sales through the airport store," he stated, reiterating the objective was to achieve balance within the industry during this difficult period.

Meanwhile, a public relations campaign to “sensitize the public to the availability of Barbadian poultry” will soon be launched by the Barbados Agricultural Society.

“We have engaged on a wholesale marketing campaign for local poultry. We have engaged in specials. Our members in some cases have dropped their prices, and we want to ensure that all players in the industry participate in the effort to ensure that despite the fact there will not be as much chicken wings, we will engage in a marketing campaign to convince Barbadians to support the local poultry industry even more,” he stated.

On the level of International Law is there an obligation to provide less developed states in the fair share of resources such as medical supplies necessary to combat the pandemic. 

“At the level of individual rights, what are the permissible limits to the interference with our civil liberties for our protection and to protect others. The pandemic has thrown the world into economic recession. What is the legal effect on commercial obligations? Should they be treated as merely suspended or wholly terminated? As to the administration of justice, the pandemic has disrupted the operation of our ports. What are the adjustments necessary to ensure a re-sumption while affording a fore hearing in this new normal?” the chairman queried.

The CCJ Academy for Law is one of the two educational arms of the Caribbean Court of Justice, the other is the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers. The latter, founded in 2009, brings together the region’s heads of judicatures, justices of appeal, judges, masters, magistrates, registrars, tribunal members, court administrators and other judicial officers. The CCJ Academy for Law established in 2010 brings together students, academics and professionals to provide informative and innovative perspectives on the rules and roles of law, particularly international law. (JH)

Public told: Take ‘Let’s Talk Energy’ online survey

THE public is invited to participate in the Public Sector Smart Energy Programme’s (PSSEP) Let’s Talk Energy online survey.

The programme, which is being executed under the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources, is financed by a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank and grant resources from the European Union.

PSSEP’s Project Manager, Keisha Reid, stated: “The programme involves the implementation of renewable energy generation and energy efficiency technologies.

Ultimately, the programme will reduce Barbados’ fossil fuel dependency; promote sustainable energy; and therefore contribute to the country’s competitiveness, as the country work towards the goal of 100 per cent renewable energy and carbon neutrality by the year 2030.”

Currently, the Ministry is developing a communication strategy for the sustainable energy uses in Barbados, and to learn more about how Barbadians view renewable energy generation and energy efficiency technologies, the online survey Let’s Talk Energy was created.

It may be found at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdHeIAA U0PGYdEc2WCCZOuK DHlckyb5wJ et- 6NyQiQ_l8UWow/view- form. 

The online survey will take about five minutes to complete, and three participants will have the opportunity to win a prize, which includes energy saving LED bulbs and a shopping voucher.
Proactive plan in place to protect public, staff

COVID-19 protocols developed on cleaning for public service

A DETAILED workplace cleaning and disinfecting COVID-19 protocol has been developed for the public service, and it is already in use by some departments.

Director General, Human Resource, Ministry of Public Service, Gail Atkins, made the disclosure yesterday, as she made a presentation on Safe Work; Safe Environment; Safe People, during the Learning and Development Directorate’s Webinar, in which 250 officers participated.

Ms. Atkins explained that the protocol would give direction on a number of aspects of workplace cleaning and disinfecting, such as how to clean frequently touched surfaces, for example, doorknobs, tabletops, counters, light switches, telephones, faucets, among others.

“We will give you information on approved cleaning and disinfecting agents, on the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting the workplace and direction on the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting. We have attached checklists to the protocol, which would be used by the janitorial and housekeeping staff to monitor the cleaning process in different areas, whether lunchroom, bathroom facilities or general areas.

“However, I want to encourage all of us as public officers to maintain an appropriate level of sanitization at our own individual workstations. The reality is that there is now a shared responsibility going forward. We all have a role to play in safe-guarding our own personal protection and safety,” she stressed.

The Director General said this renewed focus on the hygiene and safety protocols and work had been brought about because of the COVID-19 pandemic. She added that the Department of Public Service had developed the protocol in response.

The Ministry of Public Service, she noted, was proposing flexible working arrangements and outlined those being considered as: flexi-time, which some agencies are already operating under; staggered hours; telecommuting; and compressed work weeks.

Ms. Atkins reminded public officers that they must wash their hands and sanitize them regularly, wear face masks, and maintain a distance from others, as a way of controlling the spread of the virus.

Recent COVID-19 protocol has been wise in outlining the strategy to the staff. The initiative of being prepared for every stage of the national pandemic was also birthed by the management of the QEH, understanding that because of the nature of the institution, it needed to be ready even with a day’s notice.

“We recognised you could move from one stage to the next, perhaps in the space of an hour as an institution, we likened ourselves to a cruise ship, not able necessarily to adapt as a ship would. We had to get ahead so that if we were to move or change course, we were already in the process of making the training course by the time the other stage was taking place,” explained the executive chairman.

Sutherland-Bynoe also lauded the efforts of Dr Corey Forde, Head of the Infection Prevention and Control/Indications Diseases Programmes at the QEH, along with his department for moving swiftly and decisively as early as January this year, to alert the QEH to prepare for the possibility of the coming pandemic.

COVID-19 from Page 1

of ensuring that the hospital was insulated, was to ensure that vulnerable patients were not infected,” said the executive chairman.

Expanding further, Sutherland-Bynoe outlined how the insulation plan was also to make sure that the staff of the hospital was not overwhelmed. Many health-care systems were overwhelmed around the world because of the speed at which COVID-19 spread causing the staff to be overwhelmed, a scenario which broke down if there were cases of insufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), ready in use by some departments.

But the open plan facility was built in the 1950s and was not built for the kind of diseases and epidemics which face the world, Sutherland explained that proactive plans were made to fight COVID-19 and for the future of the hospital. One of the precautionary aspects was to build hospital facilities outside of the QEH, which could accommodate patients. As a result facilities were designed and adapted, for the future, adapted at the Blackman and Gropol Primary School and one was newly created at the Point. So far, the QEH has tested several patients who have presented themselves to the emergency department with COVID-19 symptoms, the last being on April 11th.

The QEH developed a three-pillar plan with the focus on staff safety, patient safety and service delivery. The plan would ensure that staff was provided with accurate information on a continuous basis, never lacked supplies including PPEs and was provided for in all aspects. There was also accommodation for staff in isolation centres and counseling provided.

Sutherland-Bynoe also outlined current measures of restricting visitors to protect the patients, a security triage for entry, discharge planning, the redirection of any crowding throughout the hospital and “what if” contingency plans along with simulations. Regarding service continuity, an element of the QEH was addressed where a foundation of support was put together consisting of private labs to conduct COVID-19 tests, private clinics and the use of technology for a Help Desk and telephone or video consultations.

Before the social distancing measures were employed during the early stages of the pandemic, the QEH was wise in outlining the strategy to the staff. The initiative of being prepared for every stage of the national pandemic was also birthed by the management of the QEH, understanding that because of the nature of the institution, it needed to be ready even with a day’s notice.

“We recognised you could move from one stage to the next, perhaps in the space of an hour as an institution, we likened ourselves to a cruise ship, not able necessarily to adapt as a ship would. We had to get ahead so that if we were to move or change course, we were already in the process of making the training course by the time the other stage was taking place,” explained the executive chairman.

Sutherland-Bynoe also lauded the efforts of Dr Corey Forde, Head of the Infection Prevention and Control/Indications Diseases Programmes at the QEH, along with his department for moving swiftly and decisively as early as January this year, to alert the QEH to prepare for the possibility of the coming pandemic.

THE Royal Barbados Police Force is seeking the assistance of the public in locating a missing person.

Missing is Joshua Dexter Nurse, 16 years old, a native of Guyana, currently residing at 64 Buttals Tenantry, St. George. He is a fifth form student of the St. George Secondary School.

Description: Joshua is 5’6” tall, dark complexion, slim build, round head, brown full eyes, thick lips, bulbous nose, medium ears, long arms, black hair and speaks with a Guyanese accent. He was last seen wearing a long blue sweater, red short pants and grey boots.

Circumstances: Joshua has been living in Barbados from last year with his mother Karima Nurse, 41 years of 64 Buttals Tenantry, St. George. On Tuesday 19th May, 2020 about 7:00 am as she was leaving home to go to work, she saw Joshua outside the residence with a bag on his back and school books in his hands. She returned home later that day to find that Joshua was not at home. She asked other members of the family for him but none of them could give his whereabouts. She made additional checks with family members, neighbours and friends but was unable to locate him. The matter was later reported to the District ‘B’ Police Station.

Anyone with information relative to the whereabouts of Joshua Dexter Nurse is asked to contact the District ‘B’ Police Station at telephone number 1 (246) 437-4311, Emergency number 211, Crime Stoppers at 1-800-TIPS (8477), or the nearest Police Station.

Police investigating unnatural death

POLICE are carrying out investigations into the unnatural death of a male which occurred about 11:30 am on Thursday, May 21st, 2020 in the waters off the shore of Long Bay Beach, St. Philip.

Circumstances: Police responded to the area of Long Bay Beach, St. Philip near Sam Lord’s Castle where it was reported, that an unrecognizable and freshly deceased male had been pulled from the water. On their arrival along with ambulance personnel, a check was made of the body which showed no sign of life. A medical doctor was summoned to the scene and pronounced the victim dead.

Investigations into the matter are ongoing.

Anyone who may have information related to this incident is asked to contact District ‘C’ Police Station at 416-8200, Police Emergency 311 Crime Stoppers 1800-8477 (TIPS) or any Police Station.
MEASURES revealed to re-establish confidence in travel and tourism

A RANGE of new worldwide measures have been unveiled to restart the tourism sector.

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) presented the measures designed to rebuild confidence among consumers so they can travel safely once the restrictions are lifted.

The new safe travels protocols provide consistency to destinations and countries as well as guidance to travel providers, operators, and travellers, about the new approach to health and hygiene in the post-COVID-19 world.

The health and safety of travellers and workers is put at the heart of the new global protocols, which have been drawn up by WTTC Members. Based on the best available medical evidence, following guidelines from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), they also avoid the emergence of multiple standards, which would only delay the sector’s recovery.

WTTC President & CEO, Gloria Guevara is therefore calling on governments to adopt them so that they can be implemented globally and restore much-needed confidence in order to restart the Travel & Tourism sector.

“We have learned from the past, especially after the tragedy of 9/11, where the lack of coordination among governments and with the private sector caused long-lasting travel disruption, higher costs and a longer recovery time.”

“Coordination and alignment within the Travel & Tourism sector is vital to ensure that robust global measures are put in place to help rebuild confidence and that they’re jointly embraced by the governments and private sector,” she stressed.

“We are delighted that for the first time ever, the global private sector has aligned around these new Safe Travels protocols which will create consistency across the sector.”

Evidence from WTTC’s Crisis Readiness report, which looked at 90 different types of crises, highlights the importance of public-private cooperation to ensure that smart policies and effective communities are in place to enable a more resilient Travel & Tourism sector.

WTTC, is devising the new Safe Travels protocols following close consultations with its Members, as well as industry associations such as Airports Council International (ACI), Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA), to bring confidence back and set clear expectations of what travellers may face in their next trip.

These will apply across the main industries within Travel & Tourism including hospitality, aviation, airports, cruise operators, retail, transportation, MICE and tour operators amongst others.

“Detailed discussions are taking place with key stakeholders and organisations in each industry within the sector to ensure maximum buy-in, alignment and practical implementation, with hospitality and retail guidelines being released today.”

No new cases

THERE are no newly diagnosed cases of COVID-19 in Barbados today. All 116 tests conducted for the viral illness yesterday were negative.

The number of persons infected since March 16 remains at 90 - 47 females and 43 males. Seventy people have recovered, and 13 remain in isolation. No one was released from isolation today.

The Best-dos Santos Public Health Laboratory has now completed 4,448 tests.

Vacancy: USAID Project Management Specialist (Youth)

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission to the Eastern and Southern Caribbean is recruiting for the position of USAID Project Management Specialist (Youth).

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

For further information please visit: https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-era/brb/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.htm.

Only best qualified candidates will be acknowledged.
PAN American Health Organisation Director, Dr Carissa Etienne has recommended specific policy protection for the most vulnerable in the region.

The regional director explained during a recent virtual press briefing that specific policy was required to protect groups at greater risk due to social barriers, including women, people of African descent, the indigenous population, prisoners, grants and persons with underlying health issues.

“Protecting vulnerable groups is critical to addressing the health, social and economic emergencies and winning the fight against COVID-19. It is necessary because we cannot stop the spread of the virus if we do not focus on all those affected by it, including vulnerable populations. It is also our responsibility because everyone has the right to health, to access testing, treatment, and care, regardless of who they are or where they live,” highlighted the PAHO leader.

Dr. Etienne contended that women, in general, are disproportionately affected by the virus and there had been no change during the pandemic.

“Women in our region face higher disparity, lack of adequate access to health services and are often subject to gender-based discrimination, women make up 70 per cent of the health workforce in the Americas. So that is to say they are on the frontlines and are disproportionately affected by COVID 19,” said Dr. Etienne.

Regarding people of African descent in Latin America, Etienne highlighted that they struggled to access appropriate care in normal circumstances and that it was a reflection of structural discrimination and racial inequity, encumbrance of this inequality, the director put forward that these conditions put them at greater danger of contracting COVID-19, and could face the most severe consequences of the disease.

In addition, indigenous populations, face high rates of food insecurity, Type 2 diabetes and other chronic diseases such as TB and Malaria. The situation places them in the precarious situation of suffering a higher burden of the pandemic.

“When they live in isolation or remote areas, they face challenges from the interactions with non-indigenous groups who may be carriers for COVID-19 and other diseases and at the same time will struggle to access health services in both small villages and large cities,” explained Dr. Etienne.

The director also pointed out that the rapid spread of the virus affected overcrowded and poorly sanitised prisons in the region, thus making it difficult for prisoners to combat the virus. She also stated that the same rang true for migratory, suburban settlements, or in the process of migrating, where access to healthcare services is very often limited.

The final group highlighted by Dr. Etienne was those with underlying health conditions. She stated that this group was particularly susceptible to hospitalisation, severe illness, and death due to COVID-19.

“Unfortunately, almost 221 million people in our region are at increased risk because they have an underlying condition, including people with non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, obesity, and diabetes,” said the director.

Explaining further, she said that the risk for this group was greater not just of contracting COVID-19, but it was raised because of the disruption of management and care of usually manageable diseases due to healthcare services being overwhelmed. (AS)

Policy changes to protect susceptible groups outlined

THE region has many vulnerable groups and the Pan American Health Organisation has encouraged the member states to make changes to protect those most in need.

Speaking during the World Meteorological Organisation’s Virtual Press Conference, Director of the Pan American Health Organisation, Dr Carissa Etienne not only highlighted the vulnerable groups of the Americas, but also offered advice as to where changes could be made to best help during the COVID-19 crisis.

“First, we need to improve access to the public health measures that we know are effective and we need to implement them aggressively especially in areas with a higher risk of transmission. PAHO has issued clear guidance for countries on what works and should be done in each setting. And our teams are actively supporting implementation throughout the region.”

Secondly the director of PAHO encouraged all countries to strengthen their health system capacity, which would better serve vulnerable communities. The need to overcome the structural inequalities that limit access to services was an urgent matter during the pandemic. Dr. Etienne explained that it meant establishing mechanisms that support universal access to health care in virtual or face-to-face delivery, including new tests, treatments, and a future vaccine for COVID-19.

“The region must institute strong social and economic protections to safeguard the most vulnerable. With school closures, distress and economic hardships, and a slowdown of the informal economy, many are struggling to make ends meet during the pandemic. Our region has good examples of successful social protection programs, and we should be using them extensively at this unprecedented time,” expounded Dr. Etienne.

The concern for the vulnerabilities of certain groups is clearly in the focus of PAHO, and Dr. Etienne reiterated the path of the organization was to care for everyone in need, prioritising and acting swiftly, especially where the region has failed before.

“Far too often, we fail to prioritize the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable among us. This must change if we want to stop the spread of COVID-19 and at the same time be ready to face future pandemics. It is only by ensuring human rights for all, when all peoples have universal access to health and it’s socioeconomic determinants, when we guarantee social protection for the vulnerable, and when our economic development addresses the eradication of poverty and the achievement of the sustainable development goals only then will the world be prepared to face future pandemics. But we need to begin this work now,” she urged. (AS)

Reliable weather forecast critical

IN the COVID-19 era, now more than ever before, we need reliable weather forecasts and long-term climate outlooks, says Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Taalas Paslass.

“This is because temperatures and precipitation have a major impact on economy, ecosystems and public health systems, which have been brought to the brink of collapse by the pandemic.”

His comments came during the reveal of the Global Seasonal Climate Update, which states that warmer than average sea surface temperatures across large parts of the globe, in particular during the month of May and June are expected to result in above-normal land temperatures, particularly at tropical latitudes and much of the northern hemisphere. The global warming trend is a contributory factor to this.

The climate outlook is based on global prediction models run by WMO-accredited centres around the world. It widens the traditional focus on El Niño and La Niña to include other climate drivers. It provides information for planners within the United Nations system, governments, disaster managers and decision-makers in climate sensitive sectors.

Country-level information is available from National Meteorological and Hydrological Services and regional information from Regional Climate Outlook Forums.

“Both the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and Indian Ocean Dipole have been in a neutral phase during January-February-March 2020. ENSO is expected to remain in a near-average range in May and June. Despite the absence of El Niño event warming, global average surface temperatures are running at near record levels.”

“The Global Seasonal Climate Update gives a broad overview of what to expect in the coming months. It provides a framework for regional and national climate outlooks and complements additional products such as tropical cyclone season forecasts to ensure that policy makers get the best possible advice, based on the scientific expertise and close international collaboration of the extended WMO community,” Taalas expressed.

“Even ENSO neutral months are warmer than in the past, as air and sea surface temperatures and ocean heat have increased due to climate change and this is having a major impact on extreme events like tropical cyclones and rainfall patterns.”
MASS TESTS OF WUHAN RESIDENTS GATHER PACE

WUHAN has accelerated its campaign to conduct nucleic acid tests on all the city’s residents, with half already tested for the novel coronavirus, local health authorities said.

The city conducted 467,847 nucleic acid tests on Monday, up from 335,887 on Sunday and 222,675 on Saturday, the Wuhan health commission said.

Wuhan, capital of Hubei province, started the campaign on May 14 to look for asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 – people who show no clear symptoms despite carrying the virus – after cluster cases were reported on May 10 for the first time since the lockdown of the city was lifted in early April.

The city had conducted nucleic acid tests on more than 3 million residents before the campaign started, the commission said.

The city and district governments are covering the costs of the tests, so no personal payment is required, it said.

Lu Zuxun, a public health professor at Huazhong University of Science and Technology, said it was remarkable that the city had completed testing on half its residents, demonstrating its capability to contain the virus.

The mass testing effort will help uncover potential sources of infection and reduce the risks as the city further resumes work, production and schooling, he said.

It will also help ease public concerns as the city continues to report new asymptomatic cases each day, Lu said.

A statement issued by the commission said that to minimize cross-infection risks, workers will set up open-air testing sites in residential compounds and remind residents to maintain distance when lining up for the tests.

Spokesman rebuts slander over COVID-19 response, aid to others

CHINA dismissed accusations on Wednesday from some foreign politicians who smeared and slandered its efforts to fight COVID-19, saying such attempts will fail.

Guo Weimin, spokesman for the third session of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, made the comment at a livestreamed news conference in Beijing.

The accusations result from their domestic political needs, trying to shift responsibilities or ideological prejudice, Guo said.

Those politicians have been politicizing the pandemic, hyping claims that the novel coronavirus comes from China and the city of Wuhan or accusing China of trying to step up its geopolitical clout by helping other countries fight the pandemic, Guo said.

The Chinese government has rebuffed such accusations, Guo said, adding that authoritative experts and international organizations, such as the World Health Organization, have also voiced their disagreement. China has lent assistance to other countries with sincerity, Guo emphasized.

China cherishes the support it received from many countries when it was at the height of the outbreak and is supporting other countries hit by the pandemic to the best of its ability, such as by providing materials, sharing disease control experience and dispatching medical teams, Guo said.

China did all this hoping that those countries would contain the outbreak as soon as possible and save more people’s lives, and that the international community would restore order as soon as possible, he said.

Guo said China’s efforts reflect its sense of responsibility as a major country and that “it makes no sense and is very narrow-minded to accuse China of propagandizing or trying to take global leadership.”

Regarding the quality of China’s medical supply exports, Guo said the Chinese government has “zero tolerance” for defective products, and the government departments have adopted strict measures to ensure quality exports.

Doubts over quality had many causes, such as different quality standards in China and other countries and incorrect use of the products, he said, adding that China has exported a large amount of medical supplies, of which only “a tiny minority” had defects.

Guo also dismissed the accusation that China covered up outbreak information, leading to the pandemic spreading in other countries, saying China has briefed WHO and other countries and regions of the outbreak as early as Jan 3, and shared the virus’ full genome sequencing with the international community on Jan 12, soon after it was isolated, he said.

Since suspending departures from Wuhan on Jan 23, China has been sharing COVID-19 information daily in various ways, including news conferences, to help in the pandemic fight, he said.

Xi stresses resolve to eliminate poverty

PRESIDENT Xi Jinping has urged efforts to ensure that the targets and tasks of poverty elimination are completed with high quality amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Not a single ethnic group will be left behind in China’s efforts to build a moderately prosperous society in all respects in the next five years.

Xi made the remarks in a recent instruction on the elimination of poverty of the entire Maonan ethnic group.

The Maonan are the country’s 28 ethnic groups with a small population. About 70 percent of the Maonan, or 64,500 people, live in Huanjiang county, the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

Huanjiang officially withdrew from the national list of impoverished counties this month. Based on the Maonan people’s poverty alleviation situation across the country, the ethnic group as a whole has risen above poverty.

Xi said he was glad to know that the Maonan ethnic group has eliminated its poverty, as the living conditions of villagers have significantly improved.

He called the poverty elimination of many ethnic groups in recent years an important achievement in China’s anti-poverty work.

The Maonan people should consider poverty elimination a new starting point for a better life and continue with efforts to make their lives more prosperous, Xi said.

Given that China has come to a crucial period of securing a decisive and complete victory in poverty elimination, it is especially important to proceed with firm confidence and concrete action, he said.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, instructed authorities at all levels to steadfastly implement the decisions of the CPC Central Committee, overcome the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak, concentrate efforts on addressing difficult tasks in poverty elimination and take multiple measures to consolidate gains.

Representatives of the Maonan ethnic group in Huanjiang recently wrote a letter to Xi, sharing with him the joy of poverty elimination.

Tan Meichun, who once lived hand-to-mouth, with an annual income of 2,000 yuan (US$281), was one of the letter’s writers. She managed to receive much education when I was young, but a dozen of my friends in the town encouraged me to write a letter to President Xi to tell him that our lives have greatly improved with the help of government and how grateful we are,” the 44-year-old said.

Thanks to the local government’s preferential policies to promote fruit crops, Tan and her husband managed to rent 2.3 hectares of land. They started to grow tangerines with a 100,000 yuan interest-free loan in 2015.

In 2018, Tan set up an agricultural cooperative, organizing 60 households, 14 of which were poverty-stricken families, to grow tangerines. Their 18.7-hectare plantation brought in an annual income of about 1 million yuan. Tan said she was greatly inspired and is now more confident about the future after Xi affirmed their achievements in poverty elimination.
UN rejects claim it is using coronavirus to promote abortion

NEW YORK — The United Nations rejected yesterday an accusation by the United States that the world body was using the coronavirus pandemic as an opportunity to promote access to abortion through its humanitarian response to the deadly global outbreak.

The US is seeking some $6.7 billion for its coronavirus response plan and has so far received $1 billion, of which $172.9 million was given by the United States.

A Reuters tally shows the coronavirus, or COVID-19, has infected some five million people globally and caused almost 372,000 deaths.

“Any suggestion that we are using the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to promote abortion is not correct,” UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

“While we support healthcare that prevents millions of women from dying during pregnancy and childbirth and protects people from sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, we do not seek to override national laws,” he said.

In a letter to UN chief Antonio Guterres on Monday, acting USAID Administrator John Barsa said the world body’s plan – announced two months ago – gave sexual and reproductive health services the same level of importance as food insecurity, essential healthcare, malnutrition, shelter, and sanitation.

Washington has long viewed sexual and reproductive health services as a code for abortion.

“The US should not use this crisis as an opportunity to advance access to abortion as an essential service,” wrote Barsa, adding that it was “most egregious” that the plan “calls for the widespread distribution of abortion-inducing drugs and abortion supplies, and for the promotion of abortion.”

The United Nations plan is to help 63 states in and around Africa and Latin America, combat the spread and destabilising effects of the pandemic.

Guterres has raised concerns about inadequate support for poor countries and lamented a lack of leadership by world powers in the coronavirus fight.

US pulls out of Open Skies treaty, Trump’s latest treaty withdrawal

WASHINGTON – The United States said yesterday it will withdraw from the 35-nation Open Skies treaty allowing unarmed surveillance flights over member countries, the Trump administration’s latest move to pull the country out of a major global treaty.

The administration said Russia has repeatedly violated the pact’s terms. Senior officials said the pullout will formally take place in six months, but President Donald Trump held out the possibility that Russia could come into compliance.

“I think we have a very good relationship with Russia. But Russia did not adhere to the treaty. So until they adhere, we will pull out,” Trump told reporters.

His decision deepens doubts about whether Washington will seek to extend the 2010 New START treaty, which imposes the last remaining limits on US and Russian deployments of strategic nuclear arms to no more than 1,550 each. It expires in February.

Trump has repeatedly called for China to join the United States and Russia in talks on an arms control accord to replace New START.

China, estimated to have about 300 nuclear weapons, has repeatedly rejected Trump’s proposal.

The US and other allies and other countries like Ukraine had pressured Washington not to leave the Open Skies Treaty, whose unarmored overflights are aimed at bolstering confidence and providing members forecasting of surprise military attacks.

In Moscow, RIA news agency quoted Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grushko as saying that Russia has not violated the treaty and nothing prevents the continuation of talks on technical issues that Washington calls violations.

The Open Skies decision will be negotiated against a backdrop of US-Russia talks over each other’s countries to build trust.

The officials cited a years-long effort by Russia to violate the terms, such as by restricting US overflights of Russia’s neighbor Georgia and the Russian military enclave in Kaliningrad on the Baltic coast.

In addition, they said Russia has been using its own overflights of American and European territory to identify critical US infrastructure for potential attack in time of war.

Some experts worry that a US exit from the treaty, which will halt Russian overflights of the United States, could give Moscow an advantage and precipitate a full-blown arms race.

The Open Skies treaty, proposed by US President Dwight Eisenhower in 1955, was signed in 1992 and took effect in 2002. The idea is to let member nations make surveillance flights over each other’s countries to build trust.

‘For the cause that lacks assistance, ‘Gainst the wrongs that need resistance, For the future in the distance, And the good that I can do’
Diversifying our economy strategically

I HAVE always held the view that we should hope for the best but always prepare for the worse as best we can. Suffice to say that the world as we knew it before COVID-19 is shelved for the time being; it is clear that what we do today will either ensure our future prosperity or hasten our pending demise.

Accordingly, there has been a lot of discourse about the need to diversify our economy, in particular reducing our dependence on tourism. Given previous and current global shocks, one would have thought by now that we would have heeded the warnings and charted a course to establish other economic drivers. I think that diversifying our economy is not as simple as some may have articulated, and hence I now table for consumption a few pertinent questions that are critical in determining how best to diversify our economy so that we can survive and flourish in the new global order.

What type of services and products (other than tourism related) can we provide that other people and countries will want to buy?

What natural resources do we have that we can use and sell to other people and countries?

What is our level of resilience from current and future global economic shocks or natural disasters?

Can we feed ourselves if we are unable to import our food?

In my opinion the answers to these questions are particularly complex and therefore I will speak to them individually.

Today I would like to look at question 2 as I believe that we have skirted around this for many years and for several different reasons.

There was a time when we were told that our human resource was our greatest asset, particularly as it relates to our literacy and level of education. E-learning has clearly narrowed the gap between us and our competitors, in addition to the fact that our curriculums continue to struggle to meet global demands. So the harsh reality is that our human resource is under serious threat of permanent substitution.

The sun is one other natural resource I think we need to seriously exploit. A country like ours that enjoys almost yearlong solar energy output, should not be trailing behind countries that don’t. I see no justifiable reason why at least one Photovoltaic (PV) panel is not mounted on every other roof top across our communities, accompanied by at least one battery, one charge controller and one inverter that is capable of running the lights in that household.

PV systems are easy to upgrade so starting with the lights shouldn’t put excessive strain on our limited funds if all duties and taxes for residential applications are removed. We can always add more capacity (panels and batteries) and include the appliances etc. as resources become available.

I see several benefits to the aforementioned.

Reductions in electricity bills and fossil fuel imports (less foreign exchange spent)

Households have lights at night even if the power goes out due to mechanical failure or natural disaster.

PV systems to service the lights in a home are relatively small and hence the net loss to the utility company because of the drop in demand is likely to be more manageable for them as they also retool and reposition their business.

Barbados becomes the first Caribbean island to have over 50% PV penetration by 2020.

Companies specializing in the manufacture and or assembly of PV equipment may see Barbados as a favorable destination to set up operations. (more foreign direct investment).

SEAN FIELDS

Need for collective lifestyle change

IT has been said that ‘when the going gets tough, the tough gets going’.

For sure, the road along the new normal is going to be long, full of twists and turns. For many it will be a steeper path than ever experienced. That’s the bad news.

The good news is this: the benefit of isolating the virus, if only because of the vulnerability of some, has again brought this issue into sharp focus. To have or not to have a healthy lifestyle is now the issue of the future. Now, there is no elbow room. Growing anxiety and fear will compound the challenge. Thankfully, this letter writer believes that there are examples of campaigns which Barbados can borrow and adapt.

Pastor Rick Warren, founder of the Saddle Back Church in California, identified and, with the assistance of three professionals, developed a change in lifestyle plan for his church. The plan went beyond exercise and meal plans. It addressed issue of resistance to change. It was scripted and built on five change elements and principles: (1) Building your life on truth (2) Making wise choices (3) Adopting new ways of thinking (4) Including God’s spirit (5) Seeking and building honest community.

Dean Ornish, MD, President of the Preventive Medicine Institute in California, in a leading quote of a book, which was later published, wrote: “Love heals. The Daniel plan will allow you to begin healing at the deepest level because it is based on the power of science, and the power of love.” On the first year after the launch the church members celebrated the collective loss of 240 000 pounds.

Interestingly, discipline, self, and institutional responsibility are successful pillars of the current social distancing goal. This display of pride and industry is a ready-made transferable launch platform.

Warren’s plan demonstrates that it is possible to achieve a collective lifestyle change. Barbados is in crisis. It has more than enough chefs, medical and physical fitness experts, etc. Agriculture, new work-life, the economy are shouting, please help us. So will Barbadians, as the Saddleback church did: face the truth, make wise choices, think differently, and give thanks to the Almighty. Or will Barbadians knowingly postpone their potentially greatest healthy gathering and shebang?

WALTER EDEY RETIRED MATH AND SCIENCE EDUCATOR

EDISON, NEW JERSEY

Mass hysteria

QUARANTINE is a state, period, or place of isolation in which people or animals that have arrived from elsewhere or have been exposed to infectious or contagious disease are placed.

For the first time in human history, an entire country has been quarantined in the form of lockdown.

This is madness. If you test someone and they have a disease or if they are from another country or area that have an outbreak of a contagious disease, then quarantine is justified. Testing everyone and isolating those with the coronavirus would be much cheaper, efficient and effective than national lockdown and curfew.

Studies show that countries that did very little lockdown, if any, had less deaths per million than those with draconian lockdowns. Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York said the 66% of new cases were people who stayed at home. They did not take public transport or do any large gatherings.

Social distancing is not scientific. There is no peer review social distancing studies to support the official guidelines of the so-called medical experts. Social distancing is a 2020 exercise that has gone horribly wrong. Countless will lose their jobs and many currently lack enough food for daily sustenance because of lockdown, curfew and social distancing. The UN World Food Programme estimates that 265 million people will suffer shortage of food due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

There are no peer reviewed studies showing that wearing masks prevents people from catching a coronavirus or flu, but there are many studies showing they do not. This research were carried out over more than 30 years (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340570735_Masks_Dont_Work_A_review_of_science_relevant_to_COVID-19_social_policy)

I don’t see us living like this indefinitely. Businesses won’t be able to survive with a small crowd. Teaching will be less effective without social nearness less than six feet.

This is mass hysteria and it does not work. The empirical data supports that this lockdown does more harm than good.

Are we going to continue to cower irrationally?

BRIAN E PLummer

LET GOD SPEAK TO US

Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.”

— John 3:5

QUOTES FOR TODAY

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882)
American poet and educator

“...He that respects himself is safe from others; he wears a coat of mail that none can pierce.”

Axel Munthe (1857–1949)
Swedish-born medical doctor and psychiatrist

“A man can stand a lot as long as he can stand himself.”

WORDS OF WISDOM

Self Respect

Self-respect for ourselves guides our morals; respect for others guides our manners.
Regional bank committed to supporting tourism sector

Bridgetown Barbados - Despite bleak forecasts for the tourism sector hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, the regional bank is committed to the sector and “will continue to be active” in supporting the Caribbean tourism industry.

Speaking recently during a webinar entitled, “COVID-19 Investment in Caribbean Infrastructure”, Adam Carter, Managing Director and Head, Investment Banking at CIBC FirstCaribbean said the hospitality and hotel industry accounted for “a large part of our portfolio and we will continue to be active in it.”

He said tourism was the “lifeblood of the Caribbean” and the bank would continue to focus on it, putting “time, effort and capital into the sector. That is not changing”. Carter said the bank has had “lots of requests for support and we are helping our clients through this storm”.

Carter said there was a need to improve some of the region’s tourism infrastructure and this could be achieved through Public/Private Partnerships. He added that the region must “do all to improve its marketability so that when borders do re-open we are one of the first destinations visitors will want to come to”.

Fellow panellist, S. Brian Samuel, Head of Public-Private Partnerships, Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), had earlier warned that there may not be a quick rebound in regional tourism, neither long-stay or cruise arrivals. He further cautioned that the region needed to “adjust our tourism away from the mass market” as post-COVID-19 may see less tourist arrivals.

He said the region was likely to see more high-end visitors and addition to travel was expected to rise significantly as the world economy was expected to slip into a recession worse than the 2008/09 one.

Diane Edwards, President of JAMPRO agreed with Samuel, noting that the high-end part of the tourism market will continue and the “challenge for hotels will be what protocols will be put in place to ensure their safety.”

The panelist also noted that the region should continue its push toward renewable energy as well as building up healthcare infrastructure in the region.

The latter point was stressed by Stephen C. Beatty, Global Chairman, Infrastructure, and Chairman, Global Cities Center of Excellence at KPMG. He noted that the region now has a “huge opportunity to transform how healthcare is delivered” by moving away from investing in building traditional hospitals and investing significantly in telemedicine and the technology to deliver it efficiently.

The webinar was moderated by Jon Whiteaker, Editor, IJGlobal.

Amazon trials online food delivery in India

INTERNET giant Amazon is entering the meal delivery business with a trial in four parts of India’s Bengaluru.

The move comes as pandemic lockdowns prompt a surge in online ordering in some places, such as the US. However in India, the two big players in the market have seen significant declines in demand. Uber Eats retreated from the country last year, selling its business to local rival Zomato in exchange for a 10% stake in the Indian start-up.

Amazon has set ambitious plans for expansion in India, where it has invested some $6.5bn. Like rival Walmart, it sees significant growth potential in the fast-growing country.

It had reportedly planned to launch the food business before the lockdown, but delayed after lockdowns and restrictions on sales of non-essential items came into effect.

About 100 restaurants and kitchens are currently involved in the trial in Bengaluru, a tech hub in the southern part of the country. Depending on its success, Amazon hopes to offer the service across the country.

“Customers have been telling us for some time that they would like to order prepared meals on Amazon in addition to shopping for everything from groceries to cloud computing, will be challenging homegrown players Swiggy and Zomato, which currently dominate the food delivery market.

They have both been hit hard by loss of business due to the pandemic. Amazon, which has grown from an online bookseller into a global juggernaut with a hand in everything from groceries to cloud computing, will be challenging homegrown players Swiggy and Zomato, which currently dominate the food delivery market.

Jeff Bezos is the founder and chief executive officer of Amazon.com.

“This is particularly relevant in present times as they stay home safe. We also recognise that local businesses need all the help they can get.”

Amazon, which has grown from an online bookseller into a global juggernaut with a hand in everything from groceries to cloud computing, will be challenging homegrown players Swiggy and Zomato, which currently dominate the food delivery market.

“They have both been hit hard by loss of business due to the pandemic. Amazon, which has grown from an online bookseller into a global juggernaut with a hand in everything from groceries to cloud computing, will be challenging homegrown players Swiggy and Zomato, which currently dominate the food delivery market.

“When we foresee having enough work for all our employees,” he said.
NEW YORK — Global benchmark Brent rose more than 1% yesterday to its highest since March, supported by lower US crude inventories, OPEC-led supply cuts and recovering demand as governments ease coronavirus restrictions on people’s movements.

Oil has slumped in 2020, with Brent hitting a 21-year low below $16 a barrel in April as demand collapsed. With fuel use rising and more signs that the supply glut is being tackled, Brent has since more than doubled.

Brent LCOc1 rose 34 cents, or 1%, to settle at $36.09 per barrel. US West Texas Intermediate crude CLc1 closed up 43 cents, or 1.28%, to $33.92.

In the latest sign the supply glut is easing, US crude inventories USOILC=ECLI closed up 5 million barrels last week. Analysts had expected an increase.

“The rally in the crude futures is beginning to approach levels in which US shale production declines will begin to slow and possibly reverse as low cost producers attempt to generate revenue,” said Jim Ritterbusch, president of Ritterbusch and Associates in Galena, Illinois.

At the same time, there is evidence of recovering fuel use.

Top US airlines and Air Canada (AC.TO) on Tuesday reported slower ticket cancellations and an improvement in bookings on some routes, though executives said overall demand remained weak.

However, data from the US Labor Department yesterday revealed another 2.4 million Americans filed for unemployment last week, which will affect gasoline demand, according to John Kilduff, partner at Again Capital LLC in New York.

“We’re seeing gains consolidating after another week of bad economic data in the United States,” said Kilduff.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, Russia and other allies, known as OPEC+, agreed to cut supply by a record 9.7 million barrels per day from May 1.

So far in May, OPEC+ has cut oil exports by about 6 million bpd, according to companies that track the flows, suggesting a strong start in complying with the deal. OPEC says the market has responded well.

US senators urge Delta, JetBlue to restore employee hours

A GROUP of US senators is urging Delta Air Lines Inc and JetBlue Airways Corp to immediately reverse their decisions to reduce employees’ hours, calling them contrary to the requirements of taxpayer-funded payroll assistance.

Delta and JetBlue have already received a portion of $25 billion in CARES Act funding, ultimately protecting service workers after their unemployment.

“Delta’s work hour reductions to reduce employees’ jobs, pay and benefits,” 13 senators including Elizabeth Warren and Kamala Harris, all Democrats, wrote to the airlines in two letters.

They said cutting employee hours was potentially illegal.

“Delta’s work hour reductions, which comply with the CARES Act, ultimately protect workers’ jobs,” Delta said in a statement.

JetBlue spokesman Philip Stewart said the move was in full compliance, adding that with flights to many cities suspended or significantly reduced, “there are quite literally no hours for our crewmembers to work in many cases.”

With airlines bleeding cash, Stewart said payroll aid falls short of total payroll needs and that with little new revenue, JetBlue needs to make it last until Sept. 30 so it can preserve as many jobs as possible in October.

United Airlines Holdings Inc rolled back its plan to cut working hours for thousands of union aircraft and passenger service workers after their union filed a lawsuit seeking a halt to the plan.

“You should do the same,” the letters said.

Sito Pantoja of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Flight attendants said: “The undeniable result is workers are involuntarily taking home less money to support their families. A pay cut is a pay cut.”

Macy’s to be ‘smaller company’ as loss to hit $1 billion in first quarter

MACYS Inc said yesterday it could rack up operating losses of up to $1.11 billion in the first quarter, as the department store operator was forced to shut stores due to lockdowns aimed at curbing the spread of the new coronavirus.

“We anticipate that our sales recovery will be gradual and that for a period of time, we will be a smaller company,” Chief Executive Jeff Gennette said on a call with investors.

Shares were up nearly 3% at $5.22 in morning trading.

The global health crisis has forced brick-and-mortar retailers to tap credit lines, lay off employees and suspend dividends and buybacks in a bid to stay afloat amid store closures.

Just this month, several retailers, including J Crew, J.C. Penney and Neiman Marcus Group, filed for bankruptcy after failing to cope with market uncertainties and mounting debt.

Macy’s, which shut all of its 775 stores on March 18, hired investment bank Lazard Ltd to explore options for bolstering its finances, Reuters reported last month.

While online sales have helped, they weren’t enough to offset losses relating to store closures, and from suits to dresses, apparel sales have been “soft,” Gennette said.

However, fine jewelry, kids and home were categories that performed better than others during the pandemic, he said.

Macy’s will continue to monitor consumer behavior and expand its packaged food offerings and more, he said.

The largest US department store operator by sales, Macy’s expects an operating loss of between $905 million and $1.11 billion in the first quarter, and sales of $3 billion to $3.03 billion, down from $5.50 billion a year earlier.

The loss excludes estimated pretax non-cash goodwill and asset impairment charges for the quarter.

The 161-year-old retailer started reopening stores on a state-by-state basis on May 4.

As of this week, about 190 stores of Macy’s and Bloomingdale’s, a chain that belongs to Macy’s, had reopened.

Macy’s expects most stores to reopen by late June, including its flagship Herald Square store, which stretches over an entire block in the heart of Manhattan in New York City.

The company expects to report more details on its preliminary first-quarter performance on June 9 and release its earnings for the period on July 1.

Senator Elizabeth Warren.
The Barbados Advocate

There was no activity today on the Regular Market.

BARSBADOS STOCK REPORT

May 21, 2020

There was no activity today on the Regular Market.

SHARE SUMMARY INFORMATION

Thursday May 21, 2020

<p>| SHARE SUMMARY INFORMATION |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Close</th>
<th>Current Price</th>
<th>Bid</th>
<th>Ask</th>
<th>Bid</th>
<th>Ask</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABY Investments Incorporated</td>
<td>13-Mar-20</td>
<td>$0.15</td>
<td>$0.15</td>
<td>$0.02</td>
<td>$0.30</td>
<td>$0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BICO Limited</td>
<td>11-Mar-20</td>
<td>$3.10</td>
<td>$3.10</td>
<td>$3.10</td>
<td>$3.56</td>
<td>9,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banks Holdings Limited +</td>
<td>09-Dec-19</td>
<td>$4.85</td>
<td>$4.85</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados Dairy Industries Limited +</td>
<td>04-Oct-19</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados Farms Limited</td>
<td>4-May-20</td>
<td>$4.85</td>
<td>$4.85</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable and Wireless Barbados Limited +</td>
<td>21-Sep-17</td>
<td>$2.29</td>
<td>$2.29</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cave Shepherd and Company Limited</td>
<td>25-Mar-20</td>
<td>$4.62</td>
<td>$4.62</td>
<td>$2.50</td>
<td>$4.40</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Caribbean International Bank</td>
<td>18-May-20</td>
<td>$2.48</td>
<td>$2.48</td>
<td>$2.40</td>
<td>$2.47</td>
<td>597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eppley Caribbean Property Fund SCC - Dev Fund</td>
<td>12-May-20</td>
<td>$0.19</td>
<td>$0.19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eppley Caribbean Property Fund SCC - Value Fund</td>
<td>05-May-20</td>
<td>$0.58</td>
<td>$0.58</td>
<td>$0.55</td>
<td>$0.57</td>
<td>1,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goddard Enterprises Limited</td>
<td>19-May-20</td>
<td>$3.25</td>
<td>$3.25</td>
<td>$3.15</td>
<td>$3.24</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance Corporation of B'ados Limited</td>
<td>17-May-20</td>
<td>$3.20</td>
<td>$3.20</td>
<td>$3.15</td>
<td>$3.20</td>
<td>590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Caribbean Media Limited</td>
<td>06-Mar-20</td>
<td>$2.70</td>
<td>$2.70</td>
<td>$1.80</td>
<td>$2.70</td>
<td>6264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sagicor Financial Corporation Pref 6.5%</td>
<td>23-Jun-16</td>
<td>$2.26</td>
<td>$2.26</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sagicor Financial Corporation Limited</td>
<td>29-Nov-19</td>
<td>$2.80</td>
<td>$2.80</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West India Biscuit Company Limited</td>
<td>20-May-20</td>
<td>$31.00</td>
<td>$31.00</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
<td>$31.00</td>
<td>100000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emera Deposit Receipt</td>
<td>10-Feb-20</td>
<td>$0.19</td>
<td>$0.19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL SHARES BOUGHT & SOLD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Close</th>
<th>Current Price</th>
<th>Bid</th>
<th>Ask</th>
<th>Bid</th>
<th>Ask</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 21, 2020</td>
<td>$0.19</td>
<td>$0.19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 normalcy 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.

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

DIVIDEND DECLARATIONS

China escalated, with the Senate passing a bill that could prevent some Chinese firms from listing on US stock exchanges. During the regular session Wednesday, stocks rose as investors considered more developments about states reopening processes.

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 will 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.

BSE NOTICES

The Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. (BSE) wishes to advise that due to non-compliance with Section 4.0.1.3 and subject to Section 3.0.1.5.(1)(b) of the Rules of the Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. trading in the Common Shares of Banks Holdings Limited were suspended effective December 10th, 2019.

The Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. (BSE) wishes to advise that due to non-compliance with Section 4.0.1.3 and subject to Section 3.0.1.5.(1)(b) of the Rules of the Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. trading in the Common Shares of Barbados Dairy Industries Limited were suspended effective December 10th, 2019.

The Barbados Stock Exchange Inc. (BSE) wishes to advise that the BSE and BCSDI have been instituting several procedural changes.

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.

Regulatory Market

Security | Volume | High | Low | Market | Price | Advance/ Change |
|---------|--------|------|-----|-------|-------|----------------|

Deposit Receipts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Security</th>
<th>Previous Close</th>
<th>Current Price</th>
<th>Advance/ Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Emera Deposit Receipt $16.87 $16.67 $0.20

INDEXES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEX</th>
<th>MAY 21, 2020</th>
<th>MAY 20, 2020</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Fixed Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Last Trade</th>
<th>Close</th>
<th>Current Price</th>
<th>Bid</th>
<th>Ask</th>
<th>Bid</th>
<th>Ask</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

GDB Series B 17-Mar-20 $65.00 $65.00 $65.00 $148822
GDB Series D 12-Nov-19 $50.00 $50.00 $50.00 $50.00
GDB Series F 05-Feb-19 $99.00 $99.00 $99.00 $1,947,519
GDB Series I 24-Mar-20 $65.00 $65.00 $75.00 $103,713

NEWS

Stocks dip after another two million file unemployment in US

STOCKS were lower Thursday, giving back some gains that on Wednesday sent the S&P 500 to its highest level since early March. Investors eyed a number of mixed corporate earnings results and economic data releases, along with states’ ongoing reopening processes.

The U.S. Labor Department’s report on initial unemployment claims – a weekly focal point providing more current data on the virus-stricken economy – came in at another 2.438 million for the week ended May 16. While this marked the seventh straight week of declines in the level of new claims, it was still the ninth week that initial claims were in the multi-millions, and brought the total since the week ended March 20 to more than 38.6 million.

Elsewhere, tensions between the U.S. and China escalated, with the Senate passing a bill that could prevent some Chinese firms from listing on US stock exchanges.

Other companies, however, have reported stunning declines in business activity during the pandemic.

---

The Barbados Advocate

12 • Friday May 22, 2020

The Barbados Advocate
St Lucia has recorded no new COVID-19 cases for 18 straight days

ST LUCIA continues to record no additional confirmed cases of COVID-19.

On May 21, 2020, a batch of 40 tests conducted were all negative. This brings the total of national testing to date to 867 tests. Yesterday, Thursday, May 21 is the eighteenth consecutive day since the country has recorded a confirmed case of COVID-19. This is indeed encouraging results for us at the Ministry of Health and certainly for the entire country. However, we should not allow this trend to cause us to become complacent. The reduced numbers in testing this week is attributed to the reduced number of persons accessing care at the respiratory clinics.

“We do note a reduced number of persons with respiratory signs and symptoms. We would like to remind the public that our respiratory clinics remain open. The access of care at our respiratory clinics by persons who experienced flu-like symptoms was one of the key means through which we were able to promptly identify persons who fit the case definition of COVID-19, test, isolate and where confirmed for COVID-19, place individuals into care in a timely manner.”

JetBlue now won’t launch Guyana flights until 2021

JetBlue will postpone the launch of its highly anticipated route to Guyana until next spring. Complications surrounding the global health crisis have forced the low-cost carrier to stop its plans back until 2021.

Challenging period
This A321neo service was due to start flying out of New York’s John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) on April 23rd. Tickets for the Georgetown-bound service even went on sale on September 10th. However, now, Gate Checked reports that the route will now start a year later than expected. With the country’s authorities still trying to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, it will keep its borders closed until at least June 3rd.

Moreover, Guyana’s director general of the Civil Aviation Authority, Egbert Field, states that the nation’s borders will remain shut until there is a significant decline in the virus across the globe. Currently, only cargo planes and aircraft stopping for technical reasons can pass through the country’s airports.

Additionally, even when Guyana does open up again, it’ll take a while for demand to return to the levels that the industry was seeing before the outbreak. Health and safety concerns and quarantine measures could continue to delay progress throughout the year.

Therefore, it makes sense to delay progress to Guyana’s tourism and connectivity prospects, flights are expected to be busy once the aviation industry recovers.

Simple Flying reached out to JetBlue for comment on its plans for the Georgetown route but did not hear back before publication. We will update the article with any further announcements.

Grenada Gov’t welcomes Paris Club debt suspension

PRIME MINISTER and Minister of Finance, Dr the Right Honourable Keith Mitchell, has welcomed the Paris Club Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), which will grant the country suspension of debt service between May and December 2020.

A press release issued by the Paris Club this week confirmed Grenada’s eligibility for the DSSI which will also endorse the G20 and that the “time-bound suspension of debt service” will be effective from 1 May to 31 December 2020.

In late March, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund called on bilateral creditors to provide debt relief for IDA (International Development Association) countries like Grenada, suspending payments on loans and allowing them to use available resources to fight the pandemic. There was subsequent endorsement of this by the G20 and Paris Club, with confirmation this week that Grenada is eligible to benefit from the Paris Club initiative.

Following the Paris Club announcement, the Government of Grenada will be initiating discussions with bilateral creditors for final sign off of the debt service suspension. It is anticipated that up to ECS14 million of Grenada’s debt burden will be suspended through this arrangement. Dr Mitchell said, “Given the significant decline in government revenue due to the pandemic, it is important that we explore all available debt service initiatives and opportunities for concessional financing. With each measure that is approved, government can then use those resources to further improve the healthcare system and mitigate the economic and social impact of the pandemic. I want to assure the nation that the Government remains committed to making fiscally prudent decisions that will see us through this crisis and create a launchpad for future growth and development.”

High hopes
Last September, JetBlue’s director of route planning, Andrea Lusso, shared his excitement of launching to Guyana. In a press release, he highlighted how the airline’s low prices would continue to help travelers connect across Latin America and the Caribbean.

“Guyana service introduces a diverse and underserved destination to the JetBlue route map which will benefit both leisure travelers, as well as those visiting friends and relatives,” said Lusso.

“Just as we’ve done in our South American markets in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, we’re introducing a new, low fare high-quality choice to travelers in Guyana.”

It will be worth the wait

Nonetheless, when the service does start, it is set to be a lucrative route for JetBlue. There are around 209,000 Guyanese Americans, with nearly three-quarters of the community’s members living in New York City.

Additionally, it will only take passengers five hours to travel between the destinations across the Caribbean Sea. Therefore, when matched with Guyana’s tourism and connectivity prospects, flights are expected to be busy once the aviation industry recovers.

JetBlue service will be introduced from JFK International Airport (JFK) to Georgetown (GEO) on September 10th. Tickets for the Georgetown-bound service even went on sale on September 10th. However, now, Gate Checked reports that the route will now start a year later than expected.

There are far fewer JetBlue aircraft in the region now due to global travel restrictions. Photo: Getty Images

Today’s Weather

London 20 Clear
Boston 24 Fair
Montreal 25 Fair
Toronto 20 Clear
New York 15 Fair
Miami 29 Cloudy

International Temperature

High Tide (First) 03:05 HRS
High tide (Second) 16:12 HRS
Low Tide (First) 09:41 HRS
Low tide (Second) 21:21 HRS

Rainfall

Yesterday: 0.0 mm
For the month: 23.5 mm
For the year: 186.5 mm

Sunrise - 5:32 a.m.
Sunset - 6:19 p.m.

Forecast
Fair to partly cloudy, hazy and breezy at times with a few brief isolated showers.

Yesterday’s Temperatures
Max: 32.0 °C
Min: 24.5 °C
J’ca and Canada co-chair int’l meeting on Covid-19 financing

JAMAICA’S Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Kamina Johnson Smith and François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, on Tuesday co-chaired a meeting of the United Nations Group of Friends of Sustainable Development Goals Financing.

The meeting brought together ambassadors from across the membership of the United Nations and featured presentations on the climate finance and COVID-19 challenges from Mark Carney, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Climate Action and Finance, and Mahmoud Mohieldin, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy on Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It served as a timely push to rally the multilateral system to meet the devastating socio-economic impact that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on countries large and small.

Discussions focused on actions needed to support a global economic recovery from the pandemic, including how to integrate climate action and best support developing countries in their efforts to build back better for more resilient societies.

In responding to views that the crisis would jeopardise achievement of the SDGs, Johnson Smith stressed that, “while the international community may have the course correct, the direction of travel will not change”.

She assured the membership that they should be in “no doubt, the goal remains intact”.

The foreign ministers committed to continue working together to strengthen the multilateral system and to review progress on the COVID19 financing challenge.

The Group of Friends on SDG Financing comprises over 80 UN member states established and led by Jamaica and Canada, focused on mobilising public and private financial resources to support achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Home monitoring device for repatriated Jamaicans soon

JAMAICA – He said that further details on how the home quarantining system will work with the use of the monitoring technology will be provided in another week.

The Government has implemented a controlled re-entry protocol, with persons applying through the JamCOVID website.

Mr. Holness noted that the challenges being faced with repatriation, and what it brings, are not unique to Jamaica.

Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, says the Government is looking into procuring monitoring technology to effectively facilitate home quarantining of residents repatriated under the controlled re-entry programme.

He said that the Government cannot accommodate all persons returning to the island in a State-operated facility.

“We can’t house all the persons who will come in during this period, and, therefore, home quarantining will be a modality we will have to pursue. We are in the advanced stages of developing a home quarantining monitoring solution that involves the use of monitoring devices and this will be integrated into the JamCOVID-19 mobile app,” he noted.

“We have decided upon it. We identified the supplier. We have done some analytical work on it and we are now moving to procure,” Mr. Holness added at a digital press briefing on Monday (May 18).

He said that further details on how the home quarantining system will work with the use of the monitoring technology will be provided in another week.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister informed that more than 9,000 Jamaicans, who would like to return to the island soon, have applied through the JamCOVID-19 website at jamcovid19.moh.gov.jm.

The country’s borders were closed to incoming passenger traffic on March 24 as part of measures to control the spread of the coronavirus.

As a result, thousands of Jamaicans who wish to return to the island are unable to do so.

The Government has implemented a controlled re-entry protocol, with persons applying through the JamCOVID website.

Mr. Holness noted that the challenges being faced with repatriation, and what it brings, are not unique to Jamaica.

“There are over 100,000 ship workers from around the world, who are still on ships at sea, trying to get back to their home countries,” he said.

Guyana: Eight members of presidential guard unit test positive for Covid-19

GUYANA – As result of the presence of Covid-19 in Guyana, the Presidential Guard Unit in conformity with the guidelines given by the Ministry of Public Health conducted random testing on ranks within the department.

Eight ranks of the uniformed section tested positive for the Covid-19 virus, the police said in a statement. The ranks are currently convalescing in quarantine, the police added. This development would mean that the authorities would have to do a lot of contact tracing with the relatives and friends of those who tested positive.
Mexico registers record one-day coronavirus death toll with 424 fatalities

MEXICO CITY — Mexico’s health ministry on Wednesday registered 2,248 new coronavirus infections and an additional 424 fatalities, a record one-day death toll since the start of the pandemic.

The new infections brought confirmed coronavirus cases to 56,594 and 6,090 deaths in total, according to the official tally. Mexico registered its biggest daily increase yet in infections on Tuesday, when it reported 2,713 new cases. Mexico’s highest daily death toll was on 12 May, when health authorities reported 353 fatalities.

Venezuela files claim to force Bank of England to hand over gold

CARACAS — Venezuela’s central bank has made a legal claim to try to force the Bank of England to hand over €600 million (US$1.02 billion) of gold so President Nicolas Maduro’s government can fund its coronavirus response, according to the document submitted in a London court.

The claim follows a request Venezuela made to the Bank of England in April to sell part of its gold reserves there and send the proceeds to the United Nations to help with the country’s coronavirus-fighting efforts. The Bank of England declined to comment on the claim. The Venezuelan central bank did not respond to a request to comment.

Selling off the country’s gold reserves has become one of the Maduro administration’s few options to raise funds due to U.S. sanctions. Venezuela so far has registered 618 coronavirus cases and 10 deaths, but health workers warn the country’s decrepit medical system could be overrun if the outbreak expands there.

Brazil seizes marijuana in nation’s ‘biggest bust’

SAO PAULO — Brazilian police said Thursday that nearly 28 tons of marijuana have been seized hidden in corn in what authorities have called “the biggest drug bust” ever in the country.

The Brazilian federal police say several packages of the drug were underneath the corn being carried in a truck that was stopped by officers on a highway in the southwestern state of Mato Grosso do Sul on Wednesday.

Police say they had started monitoring the truck after suspicions were raised about its driver at a hotel in the city of Ponta Porã at the Brazilian border with Paraguay.

Police say the driver alleged the truck was already loaded when he picked it up. The driver was arrested and will face drug trafficking charges.

FOR CHILLED OR FROZEN STORAGE

Call the Professionals!

Four (4) days free storage for cargo handled ship to cold storage direct.

- One million cubic feet of chilled and frozen space, short or long term, any quantities.
- Facilities to assist small farmers, fishermen and poultry producers.
- Fully HACCP certified food safe facility

Call us today to see how we can help!

www.harbourcoldstore.com • Tel: 430-2100 • Fax: 426-2108

HARBOUR COLD STORE, Harbour Industrial Park, Bridgtown.
Call Maria today at 430-2100
Email: hcs@bicold.com • www.bicocoldstore.com

A division of

The BICO Delivery Team remain on the road every day delivering regular stock & special orders* for delivery within 48 hours.

DON’T GO OUT. WE’LL COME TO YOU!

- Medium Croissant
- Half Baguette
- Large Pain au Roti
- Large Croissant
- Mini Croissant
- Mini Pain au Chocolat
- Cuskatta
- Corned Beef
- Ham & Cheese Basket
- Broccoli Basket
- Chicken & Leek Basket
- Spinach & Ricotta Basket
- Mediterranean Vegetable Basket
- Vanilla Puff
- Raspberry Layer Cake
- Strawberry Layer Cake
- Black Forest Layer Cake
- Cappuccino Layer Cake
- Large Pain au Chocolat
- Fresh Brownies 3.5kg
- Granola & Oatmeal Pie
- Spinach & Ricotta Pie
- French Fries 2.3kg
- Ice Cream (All Varieties)

To place a special order, email homedelivery@bicold.com or call 536-2109

*minimum order requirement

www.bicocoldstore.com • Harbour Industrial Park, Bridgtown.
Tel: 430-2100 • Fax: 426-2108 • Email: homedelivery@bicold.com

/ bicoolcecream
China is set to impose new national security legislation on Hong Kong after last year’s pro-democracy unrest, a Chinese official said yesterday, drawing a warning from President Donald Trump that Washington would react “very strongly” against the attempt to gain more control over the former British colony.

The U.S. State Department also warned China, saying a high-degree of autonomy and respect for human rights were key to preserving the territory’s special status in U.S. law, which has helped maintain its position as a world financial centre.

China’s action could spark fresh protests in Hong Kong, which enjoys many freedoms not allowed on the mainland, after often violent demonstrations of 2019 plunged the city into its deepest turmoil since it returned to Beijing’s rule in 1997.

Trump, who has ratcheted up his anti-China rhetoric as he seeks re-election in November, told reporters “nobody knows yet” the details of China’s plan. “If it happens we’ll address that issue very strongly,” he said, without elaborating.

Zhang Yesui, spokesman for the China’s National People’s Congress, said details of the legislation would be given today when the parliament holds its annual session.

“In light of the new circumstances and need, the National People’s Congress (NPC) is exercising its constitutional power to establish a new legal framework and enforcement mechanism to safeguard national security in Hong Kong, he told a briefing.

Cyclone kills at least 82 in India and Bangladesh, flooding lowlands

KOLKATA/DHAKA – The most powerful cyclone to strike eastern India and Bangladesh in over a decade killed at least 82 people, officials said, as rescue teams scoured devastated coastal villages yesterday, hampered by torn down power lines and widespread flooding. Mass evacuations before Cyclone Amphan made landfall undoubtedly saved countless lives, but the full extent of the casualties and damage will only be known once communications are restored, officials said.

Often violent demonstrations of 2019 plunged Hong Kong into deep turmoil.
Some 10,000 Iranian health workers infected with virus

DUBAI – Around 10,000 Iranian health workers have been infected with the new coronavirus, the semi-official ILNA news agency quoted a deputy health minister as saying yesterday.

Health services are stretched thin in Iran, the Middle East country hardest hit by the respiratory pandemic, with 7,249 deaths and a total of 129,341 infections. The Health Ministry said in April that over 100 health workers had died of COVID-19.

No more details on infections among health workers were immediately available.

Earlier yesterday, Health Minister Saeed Namaki appealed to Iranians to avoid travelling during the Eid al-Fitr religious holiday later this month to avoid the risk of a new surge of coronavirus infections, state TV reported.

Iranians often travel to different cities around the country to mark the end of the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan. Some 10,000 Iranian health workers infected with virus

Man who filmed Arbery shooting video charged in his slaying

SAVANNAH, Ga. – The Georgia man who filmed cellphone video of Ahmaud Arbery’s fatal shooting was arrested yesterday and charged with murder.

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation said 50-year-old William “Roddie” Bryan was arrested on charges of felony murder and criminal attempt to commit false imprisonment. No other details were given. The GBI said in a statement that it would hold a news conference this morning.

Arbery was slain Feb. 23 when a white father and son armed themselves and pursued him after spotting the 25-year-old black man running in their neighborhood. More than two months passed before authorities arrested Gregory McMichael, 64, and his son, Travis McMichael, 34, on charges of felony murder and aggravated assault.

Gregory McMichael told police he suspected Arbery was a burglar and that Arbery attacked his son before being shot.

Bryan lives in the same subdivision just outside the port city of Brunswick, and the video he took from the cab of his vehicle helped stir a national outcry when it leaked online. Bryan’s attorney, Kevin Gough, did not immediately return a phone message Thursday. He has previously insisted Bryan played no role in Arbery’s death.

“Roddie Bryan is not now, and has never been, more than a witness to the shooting,” Gough said in a statement on the case Monday. “He is not a vigilante. Roddie did not participate in the horrific killing of this young man. Mr. Bryan has committed no crime, and bears no criminal responsibility in the death of Ahmaud Arbery.”
Tech firms deploy Bluetooth chips for coronavirus contact tracing in office

OAKLAND, Calif. – Technology companies are developing their own contact tracing systems to help prevent coronavirus outbreaks in their offices as countries begin to ease lockdown measures and a return to the workplace is in the offing.

Silicon Valley company Juniper Networks Inc (JNP.N) plans to equip its about 10,000 workers with an identification badge holders that have a Bluetooth chip that will help to record a worker's movements and interactions in the office, company vice president Jeff Aaron said in an interview.

The system employs Wi-Fi routers and access points from Juniper Network’s Ultra Match technology, which will communicate with the Bluetooth chips on the badges. The data collected will help determine which employees need to be tested and isolate after a colleague tests positive for the new coronavirus.

All U.S. states have eased virus lockdowns, but work-from-home remains the norm in California's tech industry. California has reported more than 86,000 coronavirus cases and 3,500 deaths, the lowest totals in the United States relative to the state's large population.

Mist, which is a small but fast-growing Wi-Fi equipment maker, is selling its new system to other businesses through its annual subscription of US$150 per access point, and about 25 customers are testing it, Aaron said.

He said businesses that are typically reluctant to spend on replacing older technology have indicated that significant funding is available for contact tracing in the workplace.

"They are saying: If this is a reason for me to rip out my old Wi-Fi and put in a Wi-Fi plus BLE (Bluetooth Low Energy) solution and support contact tracing use cases, I can definitely get budget for that," he said.

Aaron said customers could skip the Bluetooth component in its systems, but still see when spaces such as conference rooms become overcrowded by tracking the number of Wi-Fi-connected devices.

Several software companies have announced tools during the pandemic to automate workplace contact tracing and help customers avoid disruptions.

Among other things, companies are using networks more efficiently is likely to increase for retailers because of their financial woes during the pandemic.
Climate change turning Antarctica’s snow green

LONDON – Antarctica conjures images of an unbroken white wilderness but blooms of algae are giving parts of the frozen continent an increasingly green tinge.

Warming temperatures due to climate change are helping the formation and spread of “green snow” and it is becoming so prolific in places that it is even visible from space, according to new research published on Wednesday.

While the presence of algae in Antarctica was noted by long-ago expeditions, such as the one undertaken by British explorer Ernest Shackleton, its full extent was unknown.

Now, using data collected over two years by the European Space Agency’s Sentinel 2 satellite, together with on-the-ground observations, a research team from the University of Cambridge and the British Antarctic Survey have created the first map of the algae blooms on the Antarctic Peninsula coast.

“We now have a baseline of where the algal blooms are and we can see whether the blooms will start increasing as the models suggest in the future,” Matt Davey of the University of Cambridge’s Department of Plant Sciences told Reuters.

Mosses and lichens are considered the dominant photosynthetic organisms in Antarctica – but the new mapping found 1,679 separate algal blooms that are a key component in the continent’s ability to capture carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

“The algal blooms in Antarctica are equivalent to about the amount of carbon that’s being omitted by 875,000 average UK petrol car journeys,” Davey said. “That seems a lot but in terms of the global carbon budget, it’s insignificant. “It does take up carbon from the atmosphere but it won’t make any serious dent in the amount of carbon dioxide being put in the atmosphere at the moment.”

Green is not the only splash of colour in Antarctica. Researchers are now planning similar studies on red and orange algae, although that is proving harder to map from space.

Covid recovery could ‘tip the balance’ for nature

ENVIRONMENTAL scientists have called for the conservation of nature to be at the centre of the economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

With countries still ensnared by the crisis, scientists have urged governments to make plans that “safeguard biodiversity and human health” as they rebuild.

The researchers published an open letter in the journal Science.

“How we emerge from lockdowns,” they say, “will drive a new world economy.”

This is likely to have lasting effects on global biodiversity, the Australian authors argue.

The right long-term plans, from governments and international organisations, could “tip the balance” in favour of nature.

Accidental conservation

There are some striking examples of upheavals that have had unintended benefits for nature.

The catastrophic nuclear accident at Chernobyl in Ukraine, and the resulting exclusion zone around the plant, created an unplanned wilderness that has since been designated an ecological reserve.

“The Colombia Conflict, for example, created unofficial protected areas,” explained Dr Ryan Pearson from Griffith University in Queensland, Australia. “This slowed environmental degradation because people were fearful of entering remote areas occupied by rebels.”

The more recent “post-conflict” increase in deforestation there shows the need for longer-term strategies that can maintain the positive side effects of crises.

The lockdown effect

“There have been many reports of wild animals increasing in numbers and turning up in places they haven’t been seen in a long time,” Dr Pearson told BBC News. “This carries implications that certain species may be benefiting from the absence of human influence during lockdowns or possibly because of reduced pollution, especially in waterways.”

Australia backs technology in new carbon emissions plan

MELBOURNE – Australia’s conservative government on Thursday released a fresh plan to tackle climate change, targeting the use of gas, hydrogen, batteries and carbon capture, while avoiding the contentious issue of setting a carbon price.

Australia, one of the world’s biggest carbon emitters per capita, has struggled for more than a decade to formulate a long-term plan for a low carbon economy amid a politically charged debate between fossil fuel supporters and opponents.

The latest proposal, which the government aims to turn into formal policy by September, is based on driving down energy storage costs to back up wind and solar power, electrifying industrial processes and scaling up hydrogen production.

“At its core, this is about technology not taxes. It means reducing emissions, not reducing jobs and the economy,” Energy and Emissions Reduction Minister Angus Taylor said in a statement.

Green groups, however, oppose the plan for its continued reliance on fossil fuels, like gas and coal. They, along with mining, energy and other big corporations, have argued for the introduction of a price on carbon to drive green investment.

The government, which sees gas- and coal-fired power as needed in the medium term to help back up renewables, is looking to take advantage of Australia’s abundant supply of natural gas.

It also wants to develop an electric vehicle strategy, slash the cost of producing hydrogen and find ways to bring down the costs of carbon capture and storage (CCS), which opponents say is an unproven and expensive technology.

The so-called technology roadmap is designed to help Australia meet its Paris Climate Accord commitment to cut carbon emissions by between 26% and 28% from 2005 levels by 2030.

The oil and gas industry, big energy users and the Clean Energy Council welcomed the proposals, while anti-fossil fuel advocates said the plan was misguided.
Barbadian docu-film reaches ISA finals

A Barbadian film-documentary has made it through to the finals of the Los Angeles Independent Short Awards (ISA). "The Fire This Time: ArtBarbados," which is written and directed by Alan Springer, focuses amongst other things, on the arts in Barbados and the struggles of Barbadian artists to both show and sell their work.

Filmed in Barbados, Anguilla, St. Maarten and London, the film takes a look at the arts in the Caribbean region, as well as Caribbean artists working in London. It is narrated by two well known calypsonians, Cultural Ambassador Dr. the Most Honourable Anthony “Mighty Gabby” Carter and Keithroy “Mighty Destroyer” Christian.

Springer, who expressed happiness at the film’s success in becoming a finalist, explained it had been previewed in March at the regional drama festival in Anguilla and at the Frank Collymore Hall here in Barbados and had been well received.

“The strategy since then has been to enter the documentary in various international film festivals around the world in search of a distribution deal and in its very first submission, out of 70,000 submissions from 32 different countries, achieved the status of Finalist at the Los Angeles Independent Shorts Awards festival. This means an appearance in the final to be held in Hollywood in late August with a chance to win a monetary prize and a TV distribution deal. Between now and the end of May, the film will be submitted to festivals in Toronto, New York, Dallas, Trinidad, London and Edinburgh, all prestigious festivals with monetary prizes and film and television distribution opportunities,” the film director stated.

Outlining that he has financed and produced the film independently with no help or support from the arts infrastructure on the island other than the artists themselves, Springer said the film was being used as a vehicle to give the arts in Barbados a global profile and expressed his intention of following-up interests in the film by starting a dialogue with international arts’ stakeholders about visiting Barbados for a first hand view of the “tremendous talent on the island.”

Beanie Man, Bounty Killer slated to go head-to-head in next ‘Verzuz’ battle

DJs, musicians and music producers Swizz Beatz and Timbaland have announced that the next iteration of their “Verzuz” series will feature a battle between dancehall heavyweights Beenie Man and Bounty Killer.

The two artists will face off on Instagram Live Memorial Day weekend on May 23 at 8 pm EST. The match up will feature two men with incredible catalogues. Beenie Man has songs like “Girls Dem Suga,” “Who Am I” and “King Of The Dancehall” and won the Grammy for Best Reggae Album for “Exodus.”

Likewise, Bounty Killer has some hops of his own, such as ”Benz and Bimma” and “Look.” In 2002, he was nominated for Best Reggae Album for “Ghetto Dictionary: The Mystery.”

The dancehall showdown is just the latest battle presented by Verzuz. Previously, the series has showcased head-to-heads including RZA versus DJ Premier, Erykah Badu versus Jill Scott, Babyface versus Teddy Riley, Ne-Yo versus Johnta Austin, and most recently, Nelly versus Ludacris.

Cannes rolls out drive-in cinema

CANNES, France – The Riviera resort of Cannes should have been playing host to the world’s biggest names in film. Instead, with its annual film festival postponed and the red carpet rolled up, locals made do with a drive-in cinema in a beachfront car park.

As dusk fell, the audience settled down in their convertible sports cars and family run-arounds, popcorn on the dashboard and children hanging out the windows, to watch Steven Spielberg’s 1980s Classic “E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial.”

With cinemas, theatres and restaurants still closed as France cautiously unwinds its coronavirus lockdown, people were content to watch a movie outdoors on a balmy evening on the Mediterranean coast.

“You’ve got to make the most of the moment. It makes up for things a bit,” said one woman. She had driven to the Palm Beach with her grown-up son, who sat next to her wearing a face mask.

The 51 vehicles allowed to the screening were parked in every other space and staff wearing face-shields scanned barcodes on tickets.

The Cannes Film Festival was originally scheduled to take place from May 12-23. Beyond the star-studded screenings, production and distribution firms head to the Cote d’Azur to complete deals.

It is not the first time the festival has been postponed. Its inaugural event in 1939 was cut short after the opening screening of the “Hunchback of Notre Dame” because of Germany’s invasion of Poland the next day.

It was also interrupted in May 1968 as a student revolt and labour protests swept across France.

Cannes mayor David Lisnard said it was the town’s way of paying homage to cinema, and to show that “we miss the movies.”

California to give guidelines for restarting televeision, movie production

LOS ANGELES – California on Monday will roll out guidelines for the resumption of production of Hollywood movies and TV shows, but Governor Gavin Newsom announced that Los Angeles County would likely be excluded in the first phase.

Newsom told a film and TV industry roundtable on Wednesday that the guidelines would “allow counties that are in better condition than some of the others, to be able to move forward and... allow some movement in your industry.”

Movie and television sets shut down in mid-March due to the coronavirus epidemic. Because of the challenges of social distancing on sets, Hollywood is expected to be among the last industries to come back.

Newsom said that Los Angeles County – the home of major movie studios and television networks – would likely “be a few weeks behind potentially everybody else” before it can meet California’s criteria on testing, deaths and hospitalisations that would allow production to restart.

Ted Sarandos, chief content officer for Netflix (NFLX), said the streaming platform had resumed filming in countries like South Korea, Iceland and Sweden, where strict testing and contact tracing was underway.

Netflix was paying crews on all of its shut down shows, resulting in a $150 million plus commitment, Sarandos told the livestreamed event.

In the United States, filmmaker Tyler Perry is expected to be the first to get going with plans to shoot two television series at his vast studio compound in Atlanta, Georgia in July.

The timeline is much longer elsewhere. Actor Jon Huertas, who plays Miguel Rivas on the NBC series “This Is Us,” said on Wednesday that the show may not resume production until January.
Hosts of ‘The Talk’ announce list of 2020 Daytime Emmy Awards nominees

The nominees for the 2020 Daytime Emmy Awards were unveiled by the hosts of ‘The Talk’ – Sharon Osbourne, Sheryl Underwood, Eve, Carrie Ann Inaba and Marie Osmond – yesterday.

CBS lead networks by a large margin with 57 nominations, “General Hospital” for shows with 23 and daytime–newcomer Kelly Clarkson picked up an impressive two nods for Best Talk Show and Best Talk Show Host for the freshman season of “The Kelly Clarkson Show”.

Jeopardy’s Alex Trebek, who has been battling stage four pancreatic cancer, is a two–time nominee this year for best game show and best game show host, positioning the beloved icon to pick up his second consecutive win.

This year the telecast will leave the digital realm for the first time in five years and return to television, airing on CBS June 26 in a two–hour special.

On Yesterday’s episode of CBS “The Talk@Home”, the five hosts took turns announcing this year’s nominees – which included their own show – from individual Zoom streams.

General Hospital came out on top for show nominations with 23, however, “Days of Our Lives” and “The Young and the Restless” were right on the heels with 22 and 21 nominations respectively.

For networks, CBS (which is coincidental) led the way for networks with 57 nominations, followed by digital juggernaut Amazon Prime Video with 55 nominations.

Singer/songwriter Kelly Clarkson certainly made her mark in daytime this year with The Kelly Clarkson Show which got two nominations.

She will be up against some stiff competition, however, with “The Ellen DeGeneres Show”, “GMAL: Strahan, Sara and Keke”, “Live with Kelly and Ryan” and “The Talk” all vying for the Best Talk Show (entertainment) award.

On the informative talk show side, nominations were given to “Rachael Ray”, “Red Table Talk”, “The 3rd Hour of Today”, “Today Show with Hoda” and “Jenna” and “The View”.

“CBS Sunday Morning”, “CBS This Morning”, “Good Morning America”, “Sunday Today with Willie Geist” and “Today Show” picked up nominations for Best Morning Show.

“Now more than ever, daytime television provides a source of comfort and continuity made possible by these nominees’ dedicated efforts and sense of community,” said Adam Sharp, President & CEO of National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (NATAS) in a press release.

Adding, “Their commitment to excellence and demonstrated love for their audience never cease to brighten our days, and we are delighted to join with CBS in celebrating their talents”.

Cancelled, renewed 2020 US broadcast network television shows

IT'S that time of year again: Time to learn if your favourite TV shows are coming back!

Every year, television executives at the five US broadcast networks – ABC, CBS, The CW, Fox and NBC – decide which shows to bring back for another season, which ones to say goodbye to for good and which new dramas and comedies will get the coveted green light. And with coronavirus shutting many productions down early, a complete picture of which stars we should expect to see grace our TV screens in the upcoming 2020–21 season has gradually emerged.

ET unveils an annual TV Cheat Sheet, your ultimate one–stop shop for all the renewals and cancellations from the major broadcast networks so far. Check it out:

ABC

Renewed:

20/20 – Season 20
A Million Little Things – Season 3
American Idol – Season 4
The Bachelor – Season 25
Black-ish – Season 7
The Conners – Season 3
Dancing With The Stars – Season 29
The Goldbergs – Season 8
The Good Doctor – Season 4
Grey’s Anatomy – Season 17
Mixed-ish – Season 2
The Rookie – Season 3
Shark Tank – Season 12
Station 19 – Season 4
Stumptown – Season 2
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire – Season 2

Cancelled:

Bless This Mess
Emergence
Kids Say the Darndest Things
Reef Break
Schooled
Single Parents

Final Season:

Fresh Off the Boat

How to Get Away With Murder
Marvel’s Agents of SHIELD (returns Wednesday, May 27)
Modern Family

New Shows Premiering in 2020–21:

Call Your Mother

CBS

Renewed:

All Rise – Season 2
The Amazing Race – through Season 33
Blood & Treasure – Season 2
Bob Hearts Abishola – Season 2
Bull – Season 4
Evil – Season 2
FBI – Season 3
FBI: Most Wanted – Season 2
MacGyver – Season 5
Magnum P.I. – Season 3
Mom – Season 8
NCIS – Season 18
NCIS: Los Angeles – Season 12
NCIS: New Orleans – Season 7
The Neighborhood – Season 3
SEAL Team – Season 4
Survivor – through Cycle 42
S.W.A.T. – Season 4
Undercover Boss – Season 10
The Unicorn – Season 2
Young Sheldon – Season 4

Cancelled:

Broke
Carol’s Second Act
God Friended Me
Man With A Plan
Trophy

Final Season:

Criminal Minds
Hawaii Five–0
Madam Secretary

New Shows Premiering in 2020–21:

B Positive
Claws (Silence of the Lambs prequel)
The Equalizer (starring Queen Latifah)

The CW

Renewed:

All American – Season 3
Batwoman – Season 2
Black Lightning – Season 3
Charm’d – Season 4
DC’s Legends of Tomorrow – through Season 7
Dynasty – Season 4
The Flash – Season 7
In The Dark – Season 2
Legacies – Season 3
Nancy Drew – Season 2
Riverdale – Season 5
Roswell, New Mexico – Season 3
Supergirl – Season 6

Cancelled:

TBA

Final Season:

The 100 (returns Wednesday, May 20)
Archer
Supernatural

New Shows Premiering in 2021:

Kung Fu (returns of 1970s David Carradine series)
The Republic of Sarah
Superman & Lois
Walker (Walker, Texas Ranger reboot starring Jared Padalecki)

Fox

Renewed:

9–1–1 – Season 4
9–1–1: Lone Star – Season 2
Bless the Harts – Season 2
Bob’s Burgers – Season 11
Family Guy – Season 19
Duncanville – Season 2
Hell’s Kitchen – through Season 20
Last Man Standing – Season 9 (third on Fox)
Legends of Tomorrow – Season 6
The Masked Singer – Season 4
Mental Samurai – Season 2
The Resident – Season 4
Simpsons – through Season 32
So You Think You Can Dance – Season 17

Cancelled:

Almost Family
BH90210
Deputy
Flirty Dancing
Outmatched

Final Season:

Empire

New Shows Premiering in 2020–21:

Call Me Kat (starring Mayim Bialik)
Filthy Rich (pushed from 2019–20 season)
The Great North
Housebroken
LA’s Finest (acquired from Spectrum Originals)

Final Season:

NCIS

Renewed:

The Blacklist – Season 8
Brooklyn Nine–Nine – Season 8
Chicago Fire – through Season 11
Chicago Med – through Season 8
Chicago P.D. – through Season 10
Good Girls – Season 4
Law & Order: SVU – Season 24
Making It – Season 3
New Amsterdam – through Season 5
Superstore – Season 6 (without America Ferrera)
This Is Us – through Season 6

Cancelled:

The InBetween
Southside

Final Season:

Blindsight
The Good Place
Will & Grace

New Shows Premiering in 2020–21:

The Kenan Show
Untitled Law & Order: SVU/Elliott Stabler Spinoff
Untitled Ted Danson Comedy
Young Rock
**Mindy Kaling co-writing ‘LB3’ was ‘meant to be’, says Reese Witherspoon**

Mindy Kaling is co-writing “Legally Blonde 3” and Reese Witherspoon couldn’t be more thrilled. It was announced this week that the “Mindy Project” creator is joining forces with “Legally Blonde” star Reese Witherspoon and “Pitch Perfect” writer Dan Goor to pen the script for the third installment of the classic romantic comedy.

Witherspoon took to social media earlier this week to express her delight at the news and confirm that her alter ego, Elle Woods, is also on board. “Great news alert!!! Some things are just meant to be! I’m SOOO excited to have @MindyKaling and @DanGoor writing Legally Blonde 3!!” she wrote, alongside a picture of Kaling recreating one of Elle Woods’ looks from the movie. “This is #ElleWoodsApproved!”

The Oscar-winning actress will surprise her role as Elle Woods. President of Warner Bros. Entertainment, Michael T. Jones, turned Harvard Law graduate she created in 2001’s “Legally Blonde”.

The 2003 sequel “Legally Blonde 2: Red, White & Blonde” ended with Elle setting her sights on the White House. Kaling shared the news on Instagram, expressing her excitement at the chance to work with Witherspoon, her “Wrinkle in Time” costar, again. “So excited to be reunited with my friends @ReeseW, Lauren Neustadter and @dgoor to work on this movie.” She added, “Elle Woods is so iconic, proving you can be girly and smart at the same time. Bend and snap people!”

Witherspoon initially confirmed “Legally Blonde 3” was in the works in 2018, tweeting a clip of herself in the character’s trademark pink bikini, floating on a lilo in a swimming pool. The caption simply read: “It’s true...#LegallyBlended3.

**‘Justice League’ flop being re-cut by Zack Snyder after fan campaign**

THREE years after the original “Justice League” film came out, Zack Snyder says he is cutting his own version of the movie.

The 54-year-old director left the production of the original movie before it was finished because of a family tragedy. Joss Whedon, the director of “The Avengers” and “Buffy The Vampire Slayer”, was brought in to complete the superhero movie, but fans complained he made it too light-hearted.

A campaign to #ReleaseTheSnyderCut kicked off on social media on the 2017 film’s release, with fans calling for what they believed was Snyder’s darker vision for the movie.

Snyder revealed his plans during a live online commentary of his film “Man Of Steel” with British actor Henry Cavill.

The filmmaker also tweeted, telling his 734,000 followers: “This is real”. Snyder told the Hollywood Reporter the re-version, which he’s working on with his wife and producing partner Deborah, will be “a new experience” and “an entirely new thing”.

He says he has not watched the original film. The new cut will feature new dialogue, which will be recorded with original cast members including Ben Affleck, Gui Gadot and Jason Momoa.

The re-cut movie—which could be up to four hours long—will stream on HBO Max in 2021. There is also the possibility it could be released in instalments like a TV series.

**CW to recast ‘Batwoman’ after Ruby Rose exits series**

RUBY ROSE is done as “Batwoman”.

The actress has decided to leave the CW series after one season, leaving the network and studio Warner Bros. with the daunting task of recasting the iconic role. (CNN, like Warner Bros., is owned by WarnerMedia.)

“I have made the very difficult decision to not return to ‘Batwoman’ next season,” the “Orange is the New Black” alum said in a statement.

Rose said it was “not a decision I made lightly,” adding thanks to producers Greg Berlanti, Sarah Schechter and Caroline Dries for “this incredible opportunity.”

Batwoman, which is filmed in Vancouver, British Columbia, wrapped up its freshman season just days ago. The series, like many others, was forced to curtail its production amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The CW, in announcing its programming schedule for the 2020-2021 season earlier this week, said the show is not expected to return with a second season until 2021. “Warner Bros. Television, The CW and Berlanti Productions thank Ruby for her contributions to the success of our first season and wish her all the best,” the three companies said in a joint statement Tuesday, adding they were “firmly committed to Batwoman’s second season and long-term future.”

They said they anticipate casting a new lead “in the coming months.”

Rose was injured during production of the first season but her departure does not appear related to that incident.

A new contender in the now-crowded streaming market, HBO Max launches on May 27.

Snyder originally led the 2017 film but left the project to be with his family after his 20-year-old daughter Autumn took her own life.

The first film, which was two hours long, was a critical and commercial flop. Justice League is based on DC Comics’ characters Batman, Wonder Woman, Aquaman, The Flash, Cyborg and Superman.
**Jude Law expecting his sixth child with new wife**

Jude Law is set to become a dad for the sixth time with new wife Phillipa Coan.

Recent photos see the star’s 32-year-old psychologist wife with a noticeable bump while out shopping in North London.

Law already has five children with three previous partners.

The “Alfie” star was previously married to actress Sadie Frost, but the pair divorced in 2003.

They have three children – Rafferty, 23, Iris, 19, and Rudy, 17.

Both Rafferty and Iris are models.

He also has a ten-year-old daughter called Sophia with model Samantha Burke, and a five-year-old daughter called Ada with singer-songwriter Catherine Harding.

His new wife’s pregnancy comes months after Law revealed that he would “absolutely” be open to having more children.

“The Talented Mr Ripley” actor said, “I love it, so absolutely why not? I’m very lucky to be involved with someone I’m madly in love with.

“The idea of having more children would be just wonderful.

“We have an incredibly stable and healthy, wonderful family existence and that involves my kids who are young adults... and then the younger ones are just so much joy and so much fun.”

The couple were first spotted together in 2015, and were married at the Old Marylebone Town Hall in central London in May last year – three months after the actor announced their engagement.

They shunned showbiz pals and invited only close family to the low-key ceremony.

**Chelsea Handler returning to stand-up after six-year hiatus**

CHELSEA HANDLER is finally returning to stand-up comedy, because she now feels she finally has ‘something important to say’.

The outspoken comic and TV host, 45, is set to grace the stage in a new comedy special after a six-year hiatus, following her 2014 Netflix special “Uganda Be Kidding Me”.

Handler posted about the development on her Instagram account yesterday, captioning a news clipping with, “Hold on to your banana bread, I have a real announcement I will be returning to stand-up with a special on @hbomax! I didn’t want to return to stand-up until I had something important to say. I do now,” Chelsea concluded.

**DESPITE their numerous Hollywood credits, it turns out that brothers Chris and Liam Hemsworth have never acted together on screen.**

However that has now changed, as the Australian siblings have joined up (albeit via Zoom) with a host of other celebrities to read Roald Dahl’s “James and the Giant Peach”.

The brothers play the hero’s villainous aunts – Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker – in the first episode of the much-loved tale.

The story, which was originally written by Dahl to entertain his daughters, will be raising money for both Roald Dahl’s Marvellous Children’s Charity and Partners in Health, which are fighting coronavirus around the world.

Led by Oscar-winning filmmaker Taika Waititi, stars including Meryl Streep, Ryan Reynolds and Benedict Cumberbatch will tell the story in full across ten episodes.

All actors will perform from their own homes, allowing a tantalising peak into their living rooms, offices and kitchens around the world.

The line-up of readers, from the world of film, TV, fashion and music, have over 40 Emmys, Grammys, Oscars and Tony award wins between them.

Other actors lending their storytelling skills include Cate Blanchett, Cara Delevingne and Lupita Nyong’o.

Waititi narrates the book and improvises sound effects throughout each chapter.

The New Zealander was recently announced as the writer, director and executive producer of two original Roald Dahl animated series for Netflix.

He’s also developing an original series based on “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” and an original show about Oompa-Loompas.

Speaking about the project, Waititi said, “This wacky, wonderful tale is about resilience in children, triumph over adversity and dealing with a sense of isolation which couldn’t be more relevant today.”

A former fighter pilot, Roald Dahl wrote 20 books for children during his career, and one of his books is sold every 2.5 seconds.

Roald Dahl’s daughter Ophelia set up charity Partners In Health in 1987, and following the writer’s death in 1990, his wife Felicity set up the Marvellous Children’s Charity in his name.

Speaking about the project, Ophelia said, “It will raise critical funds that will allow Partners In Health to invest in local health systems that deliver high-quality, dignified care to fight this disease.”

“We’re so grateful to Taika Waititi and the Roald Dahl Story Company for pulling together this extraordinary initiative and amazing array of talent. It will undoubtedly help in the fight against the long-standing health inequities we see in many parts of the world.”

Every donation made to Partners in Health will be matched by the Roald Dahl Story Company and partners.

Roald Dahl’s Marvellous Children’s Charity provides specialist nurses to seriously ill children in the UK and Partners in Health is helping fight COVID-19 in some of the most vulnerable communities around the world.

The first episodes of James And The Giant Peach, With Taika And Friends are now available on the Roald Dahl YouTube channel, with new episodes released every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
Ariana Grande reflects on Manchester bombing ahead of anniversary

Ariana Grande sent a heartfelt message to fans ahead of the third anniversary of the Manchester Arena bombing.

The pop star had just finished playing at the venue on May 22, 2017, when a terrorist detonated a homemade explosive device, killing 22 people.

Writing on Instagram, Grande shared a message of solidarity with the victims.

"Not a day goes by that this doesn’t affect you and all of us still," the 26-year-old wrote.

"I will be thinking of you all week and weekend.

Acknowledging “the sadness and tremendous heaviness of the anniversary”, she added, “My heart, thoughts, prayers are with you always.”

The star signed off with a black heart and a bee emoji. The bee, representing Manchester’s industrial past, became a symbol of hope in the wake of the attack.

Grande, who said she suffered PTSD as a result of the atrocity, returned to Manchester last year to headline the city’s Pride festival.

Memorial plans
The bombing was carried out by Manchester-born Salman Abedi. The youngest of those who died was eight years old. Almost 1 000 people were injured.

The terrorist’s brother, Hashem Abedi, was convicted of murder earlier this year for his role in planning the attacks. His sentencing has been postponed due to travel restrictions in place due to the coronavirus.

The pandemic has also affected plans for this year’s memorial to the victims, with social-distancing measures putting a halt on church services.

It means Manchester Cathedral will have to broadcast two services on its Facebook page, urging people to log on at home rather than attend in person like previous years.

“Before the restrictions, it was really important we had connectedness and reached out, family and friends, but also the wider community, to come together,” said Figen Murray, whose son Martyn Hett died in the attack.

“We can’t do that this year. It’s going to be very strange.”

“I normally a really robust and resilient person, but I’ve had so much time on my hands. I’m struggling a bit. I can’t have people to visit, it is very raw. I have noticed I am very reflective, I dream a lot.”

Instead, Hett’s family and friends will join a group chat on the video conferencing app Zoom, raising a toast to the 29-year-old PR manager from their homes.

Mrs Murray said, “Zoom will do this year. Since the pandemic, we have all had to adapt and I think that shows how strong the human spirit is.”

Brian Austin Green opens up about split with Megan Fox

BRIAN AUSTIN GREEN has opened up about parting ways with his wife of nearly ten years, actress Megan Fox.

On his podcast, “…with Brian Austin Green,” the “Beverly Hills, 90210” alum said he and Fox have been separated for months, after realising they’d grown apart.

“It’s not something you go into a marriage considering," Green said of their split.

Green and Fox have been married since 2010 and have three children together.

Green said Fox first confided in him that she felt that she would like to spend time apart last year, after she returned from several weeks of filming a project.

“She said, ‘You know what, I realised while I was out of the country working alone, that I feel more like myself and I liked myself better during that experience. And I think that’s something that might be worth trying for me’,” he said.

“I was upset about it, but I can’t be upset at her and I wasn’t upset at her because she didn’t ask to feel that way.”

Fox has recently been spotted by paparazzi spending time with musician Machine Gun Kelly, whom Green said seems like a “nice, genuine guy,” adding “they’re just friends at this point.”

“It’s really important to me that people don’t treat anyone like a villain or a victim in this situation,” he said.

Green said it is his and Fox’s intention to continue to vacation and spend holidays as a family with their children.

Fox will next be seen in the family film “Think Like a Dog”, Green was last seen in the “90210” revival series, “BH90210,” which was cancelled after one season.

“I will always love her and she will always love me," Green said.

He added, “Who knows if this is the end of the journey. We have a lot of life left. So the paths have sort of gone in separate ways for now. They could come back together. They may not. We don’t know.”

Sia reveals she adopted teen boys who were ageing out of foster care

IN an interview with SiriusXM’s “The Morning Mash Up”, which aired on Tuesday, Sia shared that she grew her family last year.

“I actually adopted two sons last year," she said. “They were both 18.”

The singer explained that the 19-year-olds were ageing out of the foster care system and expressed her love for her new sons.

She also said they are both struggling with being quarantined in the midst of the worldwide pandemic.

“They are both finding it pretty difficult, one more so than the other,” Sia said.

“But they’re both doing things that are like really good for them right now. That are really helpful. They’re really doing a lot of educational stuff that’s good for them.”

In a GQ profile about Diplo that published in February, Sia mentioned that she was a mom.

She also shared that much of her relationship with the famed music maker “is just being spent trying not to have sex so that we wouldn’t ruin our business relationship, because he’s super-duper hot.”

“This year I wrote him a text, and I said, ‘Hey, listen, you’re like one of five people that I’m sexually attracted to, and now that I’ve decided to be single for the rest of my life and I just adopted a son, I don’t have time for a relationship….” If you’re interested in some no-strings sex, then hit me up,” Sia told the publication.
Lori Loughlin ‘Scared’ after agreeing to plead guilty, serve jail time

LORI LOUGHLIN is coming to terms with her decision to plead guilty for her role in the college admissions scandal, sources tell ET.

Yesterday, the US Attorney’s Office in the District of Massachusetts announced that the 55-year-old actress will plead guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, mail fraud and honest services wire fraud.

The couple is accused of paying $500,000 in bribes to get their daughters, Olivia Jade and Isabella Rose, admitted to the University of Southern California as recruits for the crew team, though neither of them had ever participated in the sport.

“Lori is doing OK,” one source tells ET of Loughlin’s current mindset.

“She’s hanging in there.”

Meanwhile, another source tells ET that Loughlin deciding to plead guilty has been one of the most difficult decisions of her life and that she’s “scared” concerning what’s to come.

If approved by the court, her plea deal states that she will serve two months in prison and two years of supervised release, pay a $150,000 fine, and complete 250 hours of community service.

Meanwhile, under his proposed plea deal, Giannulli will serve five months in prison and two years of supervised release, pay a $250,000 fine, and complete 250 hours of community service.

“Just thinking about the reality of the situation is frightening for her,” the source says. “She is also terrified for her husband who will serve longer than she will.”

“She truly believes she was looking out for her children’s best interest and giving back to the school,” the source adds. “Pleading guilty was never part of the plan. Lori sees herself as a good person, so coming to terms with the huge mistakes she’s made and the fact that she will do time, is crushing for her.”

According to the source, the entire ordeal has changed Loughlin’s relationship with her daughters.

“They were always a close-knit family but they are more bonded than ever before,” the source says. “The girls have matured a great deal and Lori now accepts them both individually for who they are and who they want to be.”

“They have grown up a great deal and matured a great deal and Lori now accepts them both individually for who they are and who they want to be.”

A teacher spotted the book and other Potter novels in a school skip and took them out before storing them in her loft.

First edition of Harry Potter book found in skip sells at auction for £33,000

A FIRST edition Harry Potter book has sold for £33,000 at auction – after being found in a skip.

The rare hardback copy of “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone” was salvaged from the skip at a Buckinghamshire school, and was sold with four other novels from the series that were also discovered dumped.

The Philosopher’s Stone paperback first editions went for £3,400 and £3,000 respectively.

A teacher spotted the book and other Potter novels in a school skip and took them out before storing them in her loft.

and it just seemed awful to throw them away, so I picked up about five Harry Potter books. I thought they might be useful for my children or grandchildren in the future. It was better than seeing them burnt.”

Jim Spencer, head of Hansons’ Library Auction, said, “I’m delighted for our vendors. It was marvellous to see the Harry Potter books do so well and spark such intense bidding.

“I always thought the Philosopher’s Stone hardback first edition might surprise us. I put on a humble estimate due to some damage to the binding.

“We had lots of interest, particularly from America, in what was a special Harry Potter-themed library auction.

“We sold a multitude of books for several clients, some signed by JK Rowling.

“Another highlight was a Philosophers’ Stone paperback first edition in pristine condition which made £6,500.”

First edition of Harry Potter book found in skip sells at auction for £33,000

A FIRST edition Harry Potter book has sold for £33,000 at auction – after being found in a skip.

The rare hardback copy of “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone” was salvaged from the skip at a Buckinghamshire school, and was sold with four other novels from the series that were also discovered dumped.

Two Philosopher’s Stone paperback first editions went for £3,400 and £3,000 respectively.

A teacher spotted the book and other Potter novels in a school skip and took them out before storing them in her loft.

and it just seemed awful to throw them away, so I picked up about five Harry Potter books. I thought they might be useful for my children or grandchildren in the future. It was better than seeing them burnt.”

Jim Spencer, head of Hansons’ Library Auction, said, “I’m delighted for our vendors. It was marvellous to see the Harry Potter books do so well and spark such intense bidding.

“I always thought the Philosopher’s Stone hardback first edition might surprise us. I put on a humble estimate due to some damage to the binding.

“We had lots of interest, particularly from America, in what was a special Harry Potter-themed library auction.

“We sold a multitude of books for several clients, some signed by JK Rowling.

“Another highlight was a Philosophers’ Stone paperback first edition in pristine condition which made £6,500.”

First edition of Harry Potter book found in skip sells at auction for £33,000

A FIRST edition Harry Potter book has sold for £33,000 at auction – after being found in a skip.

The rare hardback copy of “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone” was salvaged from the skip at a Buckinghamshire school, and was sold with four other novels from the series that were also discovered dumped.

Two Philosopher’s Stone paperback first editions went for £3,400 and £3,000 respectively.

A teacher spotted the book and other Potter novels in a school skip and took them out before storing them in her loft.

and it just seemed awful to throw them away, so I picked up about five Harry Potter books. I thought they might be useful for my children or grandchildren in the future. It was better than seeing them burnt.”

Jim Spencer, head of Hansons’ Library Auction, said, “I’m delighted for our vendors. It was marvellous to see the Harry Potter books do so well and spark such intense bidding.

“I always thought the Philosopher’s Stone hardback first edition might surprise us. I put on a humble estimate due to some damage to the binding.

“We had lots of interest, particularly from America, in what was a special Harry Potter-themed library auction.

“We sold a multitude of books for several clients, some signed by JK Rowling.

“Another highlight was a Philosophers’ Stone paperback first edition in pristine condition which made £6,500.”

First edition of Harry Potter book found in skip sells at auction for £33,000

A FIRST edition Harry Potter book has sold for £33,000 at auction – after being found in a skip.

The rare hardback copy of “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone” was salvaged from the skip at a Buckinghamshire school, and was sold with four other novels from the series that were also discovered dumped.

Two Philosopher’s Stone paperback first editions went for £3,400 and £3,000 respectively.

A teacher spotted the book and other Potter novels in a school skip and took them out before storing them in her loft.

and it just seemed awful to throw them away, so I picked up about five Harry Potter books. I thought they might be useful for my children or grandchildren in the future. It was better than seeing them burnt.”

Jim Spencer, head of Hansons’ Library Auction, said, “I’m delighted for our vendors. It was marvellous to see the Harry Potter books do so well and spark such intense bidding.

“I always thought the Philosopher’s Stone hardback first edition might surprise us. I put on a humble estimate due to some damage to the binding.

“We had lots of interest, particularly from America, in what was a special Harry Potter-themed library auction.

“We sold a multitude of books for several clients, some signed by JK Rowling.

“Another highlight was a Philosophers’ Stone paperback first edition in pristine condition which made £6,500.”
Lana Del Rey: ‘I’m not glamorizing abuse’

AWARD-WINNING singer and songwriter Lana Del Rey has confirmed that her latest album will be released September 5 and has hit back at critics who, she claims, have “crucified” her.

The 34-year-old “Born to Die” singer released a lengthy statement on Instagram yesterday, addressing criticism her music has received, including accusations that she is “glamorizing abuse”.

Del Rey, whose real name is Elizabeth Grant, is well-known for her themes of tragic romance in songs such as “Ultraviolence” and “Summer Time Sadness”. She hit back at the double standards in the music industry, saying artists such as Doja Cat, Ariana Grande, Camila Cabello and Beyoncé “had number ones with songs about being sexy, wearing no clothes” and “cheating.”

She continued, “I’m fed up with female writers and alt singers saying that I glamorize abuse when in reality I’m just a glamorous person singing about the realities of what we are all now seeing are very prevalent emotionally abusive relationships all over the world.”

She did not name any specific critics in her post.

Del Rey said that she thinks it is “pathetic” that her music, which has detailed her “sometimes submissive or passive roles” in relationships, led to accusations she has “set women back hundreds of years.”

“She has to be a place in feminism for women who look and act like me – the kind of woman who says no but men hear yes – the kind of women who are slated mercilessly for being their authentic, delicate selves,” the post continued.

The singer opened up about her past relationships, saying that she has been “honest and optimistic” about her experiences.

She hit out at poor reviews she has had in the past, and said she was deemed “literally hysterical” in her first two records.

Del Rey ended the statement by announcing that her seventh album, released in September, would detail some of the feelings she touched upon in her Instagram post. Her next two poetry books would also explore these themes further, she added.
**SPORTS**

**Manchester United say pandemic has cost them £28m so far**

Manchester United has said the coronavirus pandemic has cost them an initial £28m – and expect the final figure to be far higher.

United revealed their third-quarter results to 31 March yesterday.

Chief financial officer Cliff Baty said they are set to hand back £20m in TV revenue to broadcasters even if the Premier League season is completed.

They lost £8m over the final three weeks of March, when they had three matches postponed.

A total of 11 United matches have been postponed because of the pandemic.

Speaking in a conference call after the latest financial results were released, Baty explained that Premier League television broadcasters would get £20m back from the club because of changes in dates and kick-off times resulting from the pandemic.

The club has also said there are enough tests available to make a difference in their training, as the virus, with making sure there are enough tests available for fighters, judges, commission-
ners and anyone else involved on site. He said 60-70 people may be tested on fight day alone, using tests that can give results in a couple of hours.

While pre-pandemic fights were held in the 16,000-seat MGM Grand Garden, Arum said the fights will be held in a conventional area or ballroom at the hotel. There will be no media allowed, at least at the beginning, he said, because of the logistical difficulty of testing more people.

Arum’s Top Rank has a long-term deal with ESPN for fights that before the pandemic hit were on the main network and streaming service ESPN+. The network also combined with Fox to televise the pay-per-view of the Tyson Fury-Deontay Wilder heavyweight title card in February that was Top Rank’s last card.

Arum said he talked to Fury yesterday and that plans are under-way to hold the rematch – probably somewhere outside the US – late this year. He said there are also still plans for a highly anticipated lightweight title unification fight between Vasilly Lomachenko and Teofimo Lopez by the end of the year.

**Boxing set for June 9 return in Las Vegas**

Las Vegas – Add boxing to the list of sports on the comeback trail.

Promoter Bob Arum said yesterday he plans to stage a card of five fights on June 9 at the MGM Grand, the first of a series of fights over the next two months at the Las Vegas hotel.

A second fight card will be held two nights later, with ESPN televising both cards, kicking off twice weekly shows at the hotel in June and July.

No fans will be allowed, and Arum said fighters and everyone else will be tested at least twice during fight week for the new coronavirus. The fights are pending approval of the Nevada Athletic Commission, which meets next week to consider the events, along with two cards that the UFC plans to stage at its facility in Las Vegas.

They are also pending the reopening of the MGM and other Las Vegas hotels, something that is widely expected to happen in the first week of June, though no dates for a second phase of easing virus restrictions have been announced by Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak.

“Once we get those fights in and UFC gets its initial fights in, both of us will ask for additional dates,” Arum told The Associated Press. “The key was getting enough testing, and we’ve got plenty of testing in Nevada to hold our events.”

In addition to Arum’s fights, British promoter Eddie Hearn said this week he plans to hold fights beginning sometime in July from the backyard garden of the family mansion outside London where he was raised.

Hearn told The Athletic that the first fight card is tentatively set for July 15.

Golden Boy promoter Oscar De La Hoya has also talked about returning with a July 4 card, though he has offered no details.

UFC returned to action earlier this month with cards in Florida, including a pay-per-view event, that took place without fans.

Arum declined to say who would be fighting on June 9, saying ESPN wanted to make the announcement after the fights are approved. But he said the cards would feature the same quality of fighters who were on ESPN before the shutdown of sports around the world.

The cards would be expanded to three-hour shows, Arum said, and feature a main event, a co-
main and three supporting fights.

“These will be the same guys we were going to have before to the extent possible,” he said.

“Guys like (Olympic medalist) Shakur Stevenson and others who would have been fighting on our cards.”

Stevenson was set to headline a Top Rank card in March at Madison Square Garden when it was called off at the last minute because of the pandemic.

Another Top Rank fighter, Ireland’s Michael Conlan, was to fight in New York on St. Patrick’s Day, but Arum said Conlan won’t be on the upcoming cards because he’s unable to travel from Ireland.

Arum said fighters and cornermen will be tested when they arrive in Las Vegas the week of the fight and will be housed on a ‘bubble’ floor at the MGM Grand. They will be allowed out only to eat at an approved restaurant in the hotel or to train at the Top Rank gym.

Fighters will also be tested the night before they fight. The dou-
ble tests should eliminate the issue the UFC had when a fighter tested positive and was removed from the UFC 249 card, Arum said.

“Our protocols will be much more stringent than UFC had in Florida,” Arum said. “In ours you wouldn’t have a fighter testing positive the day of the fight or the day before.”

Arum credited Jim Murren, the former MGM CEO who leads a state task force dealing with the virus, with making sure there are enough tests available for fighters, judges, commission-
ers and anyone else involved on site. He said 60-70 people may be tested on fight day alone, using tests that can give results in a couple of hours.

While pre-pandemic fights were held in the 16,000-seat MGM Grand Garden, Arum said the fights will be held in a con-
vention area or ballroom at the hotel. There will be no media allowed, at least at the beginning, he said, because of the logistical difficulty of testing more people.

Arum’s Top Rank has a long-term deal with ESPN for fights that before the pandemic hit were on the main network and streaming service ESPN+. The network also combined with Fox to televise the pay-per-view of the Tyson Fury-Deontay Wilder heavyweight title card in Las Vegas.

**Cruz, Love, McCourty brothers among Ali award finalists**

Los Angeles – Nelson Cruz of the Minnesota Twins, Kevin Love of the Cleveland Cavaliers, and brothers Devin and Jason McCourty of the New England Patriots are among the nomi-
nees for the Muhammad Ali Sports Humanitarian Award.

The other finalists announced Wednesday by ESPN are Maya Moore of the Minnesota Lynx and WWE wrestler Titus O’Neil.

Finalists for the humanitar-
ian team of the year award are the Denver Broncos, Los Angeles Dodgers, New York City FC and Sacramento Kings.

The awards honour athletes, teams and sports industry pro-
fessionals who are using sports to make a difference in their communities.

This year’s awards will com-
bine with The ESPYS, which will air on June 21.
NFL studying helmet face guard that works like surgical mask

ATLANTA — With an eye toward getting back on the field during a pandemic, the NFL is working on a helmet face guard that might provide the same level of protection as a surgical mask.

Atlanta Falcons president Rich McKay, who heads up the league’s competition committee, said the issue was raised during a conference call about a month ago.

“A lot of players have played with a clear shield to protect their eyes,” McKay said Tuesday during a video conference call with Atlanta media.

“This would be extended even further.”

Thom Mayer, the medical director of the NFL Players Association, said league engineers and sports equipment company Oakley are testing prototypes of a modified face mask that might contain surgical or N95 material.

“I had suggested that we should consider novel and emerging ways to handle the helmets and the face masks and the spread of the virus” to use it, Mayer said on a podcast with ESPN’s Adam Schefter.

“These guys got the bit between their teeth.”

Work on the face mask is far enough along that “there will probably be a prototype” to check out a prototype.

“I haven’t seen anything like that,” Oliver said Wednesday. “I would have to look into it to see what it looks like.”

Oakley is already creating visors that some players use on their face masks. The company also has developed durable eyeglasses for the military that are designed not to fog up - technology that may prove useful in its latest project.

The new coverings would likely have to cover the entire face mask.

“They’ve got some prototypes,” Mayer told Schefter. “Some of them, when you first look at them, you think, ‘Oosh, no’ because you’re not used to seeing it. You’re just not used to seeing it. But they’re looking at every issue you can imagine, including when it fogs up. What do we do with that? But these guys are used to dealing with this stuff.”

McKay said he expects the new face masks would quickly gain acceptance, assuming they meet two main standards.

“They’ve got to be comfortable for the players,” he said. “And they’ve got to be safe.”

While McKay has never been a fan on the tinted visors that some players already use, he’s learned to accept that look.

“I understood that some players needed it because of their eyes,” McKay said. “In this instance, if this is what the doctors in the medical field think is needed, then we should look into it.”

Tretter said the NFL is “probably going to look a little different this year,” and modified face masks might be part of the changes.

“You kind of have to think outside the box. Just because it is an idea does not mean things are definitely going to happen, but it’s something we need to look into and you need to understand it.”

Falcons cornerback Isaiah Oliver’s case was held in abeyance when the league begins its preseason schedule in August, according to a conference call about the NFL’s virtual offseason program starting next week.

He can also meet with teammates and coaches.

The Cowboys, who lost sacks leader Robert Quinn in free agency, signed Smith to a one-year contract last month despite his uncertain playing status. Smith was reinstated after meeting with NFL commissioner Roger Goodell on a video teleconference last week.

The Cowboys still have a suspended pass rusher under contract in Randy Gregory, who is seeking reinstatement. Gregory was indefinitely suspended in February 2019 for violating the NFL’s substance-abuse policy, his fourth league suspension coming about a month after he had been reinstated by Goodell.

Goodell said to the Cowboys late in the second round of the 2015 draft after testing positive for marijuana at the NFL combine.

NEW YORK — The National Hockey League and its players union are discussing plans for an expanded 24-team playoffs to return from its coronavirus shutdown, according to multiple reports yesterday.

The league, which shut down its 2019-20 campaign March 12 with just over three weeks of the regular season remaining, plans to talk with the NHL Players Association (NHLPA) about the idea, according to ESPN and Canada’s Sportsnet, citing unnamed sources.

The top four teams in the Eastern and Western conference standings — as determined by points percentage among the top four, along with those teams have played different numbers of games — would receive a first-round bye while clubs ranked fifth through 12 have a best-of-five playoff series.

That would leave 16 teams to compete in a regular NHL best-of-seven playoff format to determine the conference winners and a Stanley Cup champion.

No spectators would be permitted at any contests, which would include a three-game mini-tournament among the top-seeded clubs so there would be no concern about a longer layoff than lower-seeded rivals in the last 16.

The tournament could impact playoff seedings among the top four, allowing for possible changes that could have come over the final weeks of the regular season, the same rationale for having an expanded playoff format.

The plan covers a resumption format but not such details as hub cities, virus testing for players and officials and travel issues for talent across national borders.

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said Monday that the league is considering eight to nine cities for possible hubs where multiple teams would play.

Only two hubs likely would be used if the NHL and NHLPA approve the plan, one for the East teams and the other for the West clubs, the reports said.

Under the proposed format, the East top seeds would be Boston, Tampa Bay, Washington and Philadelphia and the West top seeds would be defending champion St. Louis, Colorado, Las Vegas and Dallas.
NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Vanderbilt has removed the interim title, making Candice Storey Lee the first woman to become an athletic director in the Southeastern Conference.

With Vanderbilt’s announcement Wednesday, Lee now is among only five women and the second black woman in charge of a Power Five program. Daniel Diermeier, who takes over as Vanderbilt’s chancellor on July 1, said Lee is the “living embodiment” of the university’s values and aspirations.

“Candice is perfectly positioned to lead our athletics program to new heights of success on and off the field of play,” Diermeier said.

“She has the drive, creativity, and perseverance to help elevate our student-athletes, and the entire Vanderbilt Athletics program.

The 41-year-old Lee, a former Commodores basketball captain, was named interim athletic director Feb. 4 when Malcolm Turner resigned after one year on the job for the former NBA G League president. That made Lee the first woman to run athletics at Vanderbilt, and she said she was incredibly honored and could not be in this position without the support of Vanderbilt’s leadership, coaches, staff and fans.

“There are challenges ahead and much uncertainty about what college athletics can and should look like during a pandemic, but I firmly believe that anything is possible if we all work together,” Lee said.

Tennessee’s Joan Cronan was the only other woman to have been at least an interim AD at an SEC school, the conference said. She was the interim for the Volunteers for approximately three months in 2011. Cronan and Bev Lewis at Arkansas both were in charge of women’s departments when both schools had separate athletics departments.

Lee joins Carla Williams at Virginia as the only black women athletic directors at a Power Five school, with Sandy Barbour at Penn State, Jennifer Cohen at Washington and Heather Lyke at Pittsburgh the other women ADs.

As a four-year letter winner for Vanderbilt’s women’s basketball team, Lee graduated with a degree in human and organizational development in 2002. She also received her master’s degree in counseling from Vanderbilt in 2002, and in 2012, Lee earned her doctorate from Vanderbilt in higher education administration.

She became Vanderbilt’s senior woman administrator in the athletics department in 2004 and deputy athletic director in 2016. In that role, Lee ran the day-to-day operations and also oversaw both football and women’s basketball for the Commodores.

Lee is a former member of the NCAA women’s basketball rules committee, former chair of the NCAA Division I women’s lacrosse committee and a former chair of the SEC Senior Woman Administrators. Lee also is on the board of the directors for the YWCA of Middle Tennessee and on the SEC Executive Committee.

Susan R. Wente, Vanderbilt’s interim chancellor and provost, said Lee hit the ground running after being appointed interim athletic director earlier this year.

“We will look back and see this decision as a major turning point for Vanderbilt athletics, and our entire university,” Wente said.
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. Their calm patience will be greatly appreciated.

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.

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.

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? Joining the ranks of a well-established corporation will be profitable.

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.
TAKING CARE OF TOURISM WORKERS

SOME workers in the tourism sector who have lost their jobs have already had access to counselling services and many more will have their mental well-being looked after, when the Tourism Ministry gets started on its Barbados Together Continuous E-Learning Programme.

Gail Springer, HR specialist working with the Tourism Recovery Task Force set up to aid with the management of the present COVID-19 crisis and also assist in transforming the local tourism sector, acknowledged the above recently.

“I believe that many of the managers and leaders in the sectors have been in close contact with their employees and some of them have already been given access to counselling etc. Our programme is taking that a bit further, so in that candid conversation, we are going to...

Risk assessments critical

ALL employers are being urged to carry out risk assessments and ensure their workplaces meet strict occupational safety and health criteria beforehand, to minimize the risk to workers of exposure to COVID-19.

Without such controls, the International Labour Organization (ILO) says that countries face the very real risk of a resurgence of the virus, and putting in place the necessary measures will minimize the risk of a second wave of contagion contracted at the workplace.

Director-General Guy Ryder therefore emphasised that the safety and health of the entire workforce is paramount today.

According to him, “In the face of an infectious disease outbreak, how we protect our workers now clearly dictates how safe our communities are, and how resilient our businesses will be, as this pandemic evolves.”

“It is only by implementing occupational safety and health measures that we can protect the lives of workers, their families and the larger communities, ensure work continuity and economic survival,” he added.

In particular, the ILO noted that risk control measures should be specifically adapted to the needs of workers at the frontline of the pandemic. These include health workers, nurses, doctors and emergency workers, as well as those in food retail and cleaning services.

GOOD PRACTICE: With Barbadians taking every precaution to ensure that they control the spread of COVID-19, Government agencies are doing their part to make sure that they take care to keep their surroundings clean. One such organization is the Sanitation Services Authority (SSA), where recently this worker made sure that this truck was in tip top shape.