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Bluerise Chief Technical Officer and co-founder Ir. Berend Jan Kleute (left) and Bluerise Vice-President Engineering Ir. Joost Kirkenier at the OTEC installation at Technical University Delft Process and Energy Lab.

## Jamaica's opposition wins general election as voters tire of austerity

KINGSTON, Jamaica--Jamaica's opposition narrowly won a general election on Thursday, with its message of deep tax cuts and massive job creation winning over voters weary of years of tough IMF-mandated austerity measures.

The Jamaican Labour Party (JLP) led by Andrew Holness was ahead in 33 of the 63 seats with most votes counted, according to the electoral council website.

The sound of airhorns filled the JLP's headquarters in Kingston as a jubilant crowd of supporters in the party's signature green

waved flags and partied to dance-hall music.

"The country wanted to be prosperous. The country wanted to exhale," one supporter told local television, his name drowned out by the celebrations.

Holness, who is expected to be the Caribbean nation's next prime minister, has promised to create 250,000 jobs on the island of 2.7 million people and do away with income tax for many wage earners.

Opinion polls before the election forecast victory for Prime Minister

*Continued on page 14*

## Island set to host SXMusic Festival

By Sanne Rotmeijer

PHILIPSBURG/MARIGOT--From March 9 to 13, 2016, St. Maarten/St. Martin will host the first edition of the SXMusic Festival, a five-day electronic music event with internationally known DJ's, (visual) artists and techno lovers from all over the world.

The festival will take place at various selected venues throughout the island. "Its accessibility,

its vibe and its beaches: St. Maarten/St. Martin is built for a party!"

The Daily Herald sat down with Julian Arbia, the initiator and organizer of the SXMusic Festival in the restaurant of the Mercure Hotel in Nettle Bay. While he excuses himself for the bags under his eyes, he passionately speaks about the festival that he has been preparing now for 14

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## Bluerise looks at Saba for project Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion

By Suzanne Koelega

DELFT--Bluerise, a technical innovation and research company in Delft, the Netherlands, has ambitions to start an ocean thermal energy conversion (OTEC) project in Saba, to generate electricity for the island with the possibility of producing fresh water as well.

Bluerise representatives will be meeting with the Permanent Committee for Kingdom Relations of the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament on March 10 to give a presentation on the Saba ambitions and in what way the project would contribute positively to providing renewable, clean energy for Saba. Bluerise is

currently developing the Ocean Ecopark project for Curaçao's airport building and surroundings.

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### IN BRIEF

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## Richardson: 'Lycée violence reflection of school, social and societal failure'

MARIGOT--Former President of the Collectivité Alain Richardson said Thursday, he strongly condemned the recent violence at the Lycée, calling for a halt to "cosmetic solutions" and for the

State and the Collectivité to deal once and for all with the causes at their roots.

He referred to the shocking incident last week where a group of youths armed with machetes and a gun was able to breach the

Lycée perimeter to settle scores with students, resulting in one student sustaining cuts from a machete. The incident resulted in the establishment remaining closed for two days.

"I strongly condemn this violence and the repeated violation of places expected to be sanctuaries of knowledge and learning,

*Continued on page 10*

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Parties during the meeting.

# CPS, specialists, lab discuss Zika

PHILIPSBURG—The Health Ministry's Collective Prevention Services (CPS) discussed guidelines on handling the Zika virus during a recent meeting with medical professionals including gynaecologists, a paediatrician, internists and representatives of the St. Maarten Laboratory Services (SLS).

Parties informed CPS about testing mechanisms in place and indicated whether additional assistance would be needed.

According to a press release, the discussion was conducted considering that "there is a lack of scientific evidence that Zika causes microcephaly; that there is insufficient evidence that Zika causes Guillian Barré Syndrome or other neurological disorders; there is no scientific data to establish a clear correlation between Zika and genetic abnormalities and that all the literature indicate that there might be an association, but to what extent

still needs to be established and confirmed.

"The advice is to only communicate the facts and eliminate the emotional aspects in what is communicated. The facts should be provided until otherwise scientifically proven," the release said.

Parties also discussed a possible link between microcephaly and Zika. During the first trimester of pregnancy, viral testing is already part of the examination that is conducted as part of the intake process of a pregnant woman. During pregnancy, general practitioners normally request viral lab testing; they will add Zika to the list. This way any pregnant women suspected of Zika that fit the case definition will be tested. When a pregnant woman is confirmed for Zika by a general practitioner, she will be referred to a gynaecologist for specialised attention and further monitoring.

Pregnant women have the same risk as the rest of the population of being infected with Zika, which is transmitted by the bite of infected Aedes mosquitoes. Many women may remain unaware that they have the virus, as they may not develop any symptoms, the release said. Only one in five people infected with Zika develops symptoms and in those with symptoms the illness is usually mild.

The most common symptoms are slight fever and exantema or rash. Other symptoms related to Zika are conjuncti-

tis, muscle and joint pain and general malaise, which begin two to seven days after the bite of an infected mosquito.

Everyone, including pregnant women and women of childbearing age, should avoid exposure to mosquito bites, for example, by wearing long sleeves and long pants, using insecticide-treated mosquito nets and using insect repellents.

Public health authorities also emphasise the need to follow instructions on the label when using repellent. In every home and its surroundings, it is very important to identify and eliminate potential mosquito breeding sites.

Zika is a member of the flaviviridae family and is transmitted to humans by mosquitoes. It is related to other pathogenic vector borne flaviviruses including dengue, chikungunya, West-Nile and Japanese encephalitis viruses but produces a comparatively mild disease in humans.

Additional information about dengue fever, Zika and chikungunya prevention measures, can be obtained by calling CPS at tel. 542-2078 or 542-3003.

# Rosales to act as police chief

BONAIRE—Effective March 1, Chief of Caribbean Netherlands Police Force Hildegard Buitink will retire. From then, until the arrival of a new chief, Jose Rosales the current acting chief, will exercise the "top-cop" function for Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba.

The procedure for recruiting a successor has not yet led to the nomination of a suitable candidate. The corps administrator hopes to conclude this in the short term.

Because of the departure of the chief plus the foreseen departure of the head of business operations, some provisions needed to be made within the management team. In the framework of bridging the interim period until the appointment of the new chief a number of persons were found willing to assist, the National Service Caribbean Netherlands RCN stated in a release.

To allow management to make a collective start at the beginning of March an agreement was reached with the Head of Business Operations that, because of this, she

will resign effective March 1. Starting March 9, Chief Commissioner Simone Steendijk will be included as an additional member of the Management Team for the duration of the interim period.

Steendijk is a former Deputy Police Chief of the unit Oost-Brabant within the Dutch Police. She has extensive experience in the local area police care and the detective department. During the interim-period she will become Deputy Chief of Police.

From March 1 Klaas de Jong will be linked to the Management Team for the duration of the interim period. He has extensive experience in the region, including as acting Chief of Police Caribbean Netherlands.

Besides the strengthening of the business operations within the Force, De Jong will on behalf of the acting Chief of Police-function as the person who can be approached for answers to difficult and frequently asked questions.

# Teachers strike ends in accord

WILLEMSTAD—A summary proceeding filed by Curaçao's Minister of Education, Science and Culture Irene Dick against labour union Sitek to force teachers to go back to work was withdrawn as parties reached an agreement.

Thursday was the fourth consecutive day of their strike after the union members rejected a response from government to a list of grievances. However, Minister of Administration, Service and Planning Etienne van der Horst went to the Sitek headquarters to again meet with board members and afterward addressed those attending the so-called "meeting during working hours."

Although there were a few emotional reactions, the minister was able to clarify certain issues regarding secondary benefits including pensions on which there appeared to have been some misunderstanding. Sitek-president Darius Plantijn thanked Van der Horst for facing the employees and said they would reformulate their list of demands based on his explanations.

The injunction to break the strike was initially still scheduled to be heard in the evening, but by then the agreement had been signed and government dropped the case. Plantijn said they were suspending the action, but if any of the points in the accord are violated the protests will resume.



Sitek members at the meeting during working hours.

# Zoutsteeg closed today from 8:00am

PHILIPSBURG—The section of Zoutsteeg between Canneigeter Street and E.C. Richardson Street will be closed today, Friday, in connection with the open house of Bureau Ombudsman. The closure is from 8:00am to 2:00pm.

The Ministry of Spatial Planning advises motorists to use D.A. Peterson Street to gain access to Canneigeter Street.

# Trench Cleaning on Bush Road Sunday

PHILIPSBURG—Trench cleaning along Bush Road, from Ernest Hotel to Photo Gumbs, will be carried out by Topix Heavy Equipment on Sunday from 9:00am to 5:00pm.

The cleaning is in connection with the maintenance of the storm water drains, according to Ministry of Public Housing, Environment, Spatial Development and Infrastructure VROMI.

The road will not be closed to vehicular traffic during the cleaning exercise.

The Ministry urges motorists and pedestrians to be alert for the cleaning crew.

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## Hefty fine imposed for assault on ex-girlfriend

PHILIPSBURG--A violent assault on his ex-girlfriend cost a 51-year-old resident of Sandy Ground a NAF. 2,500 fine on Thursday.

The Court of First Instance found it proven that Leonard P. Jeffers had cut the woman's stomach with a knife and had attempted to choke her while she was sitting in his car outside a pharmacy. However, it was not considered proven that he also had threatened her life.

The incident, which took place November 23, 2015, left the woman traumatised. She was terrified and told the police her boyfriend of the time had threatened to kill her.

"That's what she said," the defendant said in response to the allegations. "I never used a knife on anyone," the cook by profession told the Judge. "I probably just pricked her. The blood that was found came from my own finger," he explained.

According to the victim, her ex-boyfriend was supposed to pick her up at the pharmacy. Instead, he dragged her into his pickup truck, locked the doors, slapped her face and put his hand around her throat.

"I never pushed her, grabbed her, or anything like that. I would never do that in front of a pharmacy with many people out on the street," said Jeffers, who spent seven days in pre-trial detention.

A medical report cites cut wounds to the belly, cuts and bruises to the victim's face and neck, and signs of strangulation.

The woman ended their relationship after the incident and they never saw each other again, the cook with a morning job in French St. Martin and an evening job at a restaurant in Dutch St. Maarten informed the Court.

Prosecutor Maarten Noordzij said there was insufficient evidence in the case file to consider deprivation of liberty and threats proven, but the remaining charges included strangulation and cuts. Although in itself these facts were "very serious," the Prosecutor did not consider an attempt to inflict severe bodily harm proven.

As it is impossible to impose community service on a resident of French St. Martin, the Prosecutor recommended that Court impose a NAF. 2,500 fine.

Attorney-at-law Geert Hatzmann agreed with the Prosecutor's judicial analysis of the case, but called for a much lower sentence. He also questioned the severity of the victim's traumatising. "The victim may not want a relationship with my client anymore, but she told me she does not want to destroy him either," Hatzmann said.

The Judge found mistreatment in a one-way fight proven and sentenced according to the Prosecutor's demand. The defendant may pay the fine in monthly instalments of Naf. 500.



Budding scientists from St. Dominic High School showed off a number of impressive projects at the opening of the school's internal science fair on Thursday. The projects are expected to be judged today. Photos show some of the many projects on display in the fair.



## Court disagrees with way to settle dispute

PHILIPSBURG--The way in which a 45-year-old suspect had attempted to settle a business dispute did not meet with the Court's approval, it emerged Thursday. Considering theft with violence proven, the defendant was sentenced to two weeks suspended, on two years' probation.

In the incident, which occurred on the parking lot of Tropicana Casino in Cole Bay on December 4, 2015, Clive L. Williams had taken US \$400 by force from the victim.

For months, he had a business dispute with the man concerning the purchase of four rims for his car. He had purchased the rims for \$150. It emerged that the rims

would not fit on the wheels of his vehicle, and Williams wanted his money back. This, however, fell on the seller's deaf ears.

On December 4, the two men were both at the casino. After seeing that the victim was lucky and had won some prize money, Williams took his chance. He grabbed a jack handle from his car and confronted the victim.

In the ensuing fight several blows were exchanged. The victim also sustained a bite wound to one of his arms. Williams pulled at the victim's shirt and some of the prize money fell on the ground. Williams grabbed some of it and took off with \$400. The next day, he went to the police station to hand over \$250, and kept \$150 for himself.

Prosecutor Maarten Noordzij said that "hitting with sticks" on the public road is not the way to settle "failed civil transactions."

Considering the mild severity of this case and the limited amount of violence that was used, the Prosecutor recommended the Court to sentence the defendant to one month suspended, on three years' probation.

According to defence lawyer Cor Merx, the Prosecutor's Office's case should have been declared inadmissible, because a police officer would have informed his client that he would not be prosecuted because he had returned the money. However, as no statement could be found in the case file to sustain this claim, the Judge allowed the case to continue.

In pleading for acquittal and for a much lighter sentence, Merx said his client did not have the intention to commit robbery, but had only taken what was his. The lawyer also denied that his client had used the jack handle as a weapon.

"This is not the way to settle debts," the Judge told the Jamaican restaurant owner, whose establishment is closed temporarily due to problems with paper work. He currently is without an income because he is not in possession of an operating licence for his business.

An application for a licence has been turned down because his client is not in possession of a rental agreement for his business, Merx explained.

Where the case was concerned, the Judge found theft with violence proven, even though the defendant took what was legally his.

## Suspended sentence for knocking out two teeth

PHILIPSBURG--Leonidas A. Friday (46) was sentenced Thursday to a suspended NAF. 200 fine for mistreatment of a man in July 2013.

The Judge in the Court of First Instance found it legally and convincingly proven that Friday had used violence against a much younger person on July 21, 2013. It took so long for the case to reach the Court because the Prosecutor's Office initially had attempted to settle the matter with a financial transaction. However, the defendant did not pay the NAF. 400 fine, after which the case was taken to Court.

The defendant did not deny the altercation, which took place at a gas station, but said he had acted in self-defence. He said the victim, who had been intoxicated, had come at him and had provoked him several

times. "He harassed, attacked and assaulted me," Friday said in his statement.

He had been so irritated that he finally had punched the victim in his face, knocking out two teeth.

The Judge said the older man should have been wiser and should have left. Friday told the Judge he had apologised to the victim afterwards. "Now we are friends," he added.

Friday spent two days and two nights in pre-trial detention. "That was more than enough time," he said. He informed the Court he had not paid any damages to the victim for medical cost, but had not been asked to do so either.

He said he had missed the deadline for payment of the initial fine. He is currently in between jobs.

Prosecutor Maarten Noordzij considered mistreatment proven, as there

were three witnesses of the incident. "Instead of driving away in his car, he stepped out and sought a confrontation. The case escalated and left the victim with two broken teeth and a hematoma. This merited a NAF. 400 fine, or eight days' imprisonment in case of non-compliance," the Prosecutor told.

The Judge found the case proven and said the incident in itself merited a higher sentence. However, it also was taken into consideration that Friday was not the only one to be blamed, as he had been provoked.

Taking into account that he already had spent two days in detention and because it was considered an old case, the Judge decided to impose a suspended NAF. 200 fine, with two years' probation. In case of non-compliance Friday will have to spend four days in jail.

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In connection with International Mother Tongue Day, the University of Curaçao in cooperation with FPI held a national dictation contest in Papiamentu. The three best participants, each with only two mistakes, received a gift from organisers.

# Debating teams ready to compete in Leeward Islands competition

MAHO--Students of schools in St. Maarten and around the region are participating in the annual Leeward Islands Debating Competition (LIDC) hosted at Sonesta Maho Beach Resort and Casino February 25-28.

The St. Maarten team prepared at St. Maarten Academy for hours before going back to the hotel to be in the opening ceremony.

Students will debate a number of topics, including: Legislatively removing corporal punishment will be detrimental to Caribbean societies; The free movement of Caricom nationals is a net positive for the Carib-

bean region; The illegal drug trade has undermined the legitimacy and effectiveness of Caribbean Governments; The Caribbean is not doing enough to combat child abuse; The popularity of skin lightening is testament to the racism/colourism that plagues Caribbean society; and The marginalisation of men has led to the breakdown of Caribbean society.

The event is being hosted by Hyacinth Richardson Educational Awareness Foundation, which has been involved in the competition for 11 years. Participating teams are from Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, the British

Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Nevis, St. Kitts and host St. Maarten.

A different island serves as host each year and the LIDC alliance contributes to the overall economy and tourism of the host country. Medgar Evers College of City University of New

York and LIDC Foundation will serve as hosts for this year's finalists at a weekend exhibition debate at the end of March. The college will be sending observer Milton Lawrence to the debate. The debates begin at 7:00pm and entrance is free every night.

## Debating team leaves to defend title in St. Maarten

ANGUILLA--The debating team from the Albena Lake Hodge Comprehensive School left Anguilla on Wednesday for St. Maarten, to defend the championship title in the Leeward Islands Debating competition which they won last year in St. Kitts. They will compete on Saturday evening.

The chief staff sponsors are Charmaine Rey-Richardson and Joslyn Theophile-Richardson. The team includes leader Zipporah Bannister, Arielle Gaskin, Kevin Thompson, Chadd Hodge, T'arah Niles and Shauna-Kae Lake.

The islands participating are Antigua, Montserrat, British Virgin Islands (BVI), St. Kitts, Nevis, St. Maarten and Anguilla. The debate on Thursday was between Antigua and Montserrat; on Friday evening BVI will compete against St. Kitts, and St. Maarten against Nevis.

On Saturday, the first debate will be between the winners from Thursday and the first debate on Friday. Anguilla will debate against the winner of the debate between St. Kitts and St. Maarten. The topic will be "The Caribbean is not doing enough to combat child abuse."

The final on Sunday evening will be between the two winners from Saturday's debates. The topic will be "The marginalisation of men has led to the breakdown of Caribbean society."



The St. Maarten team members take a moment to pose for the camera as they prepare at their base, St. Maarten Academy, for the Leeward Islands Debating Competition. (Andrew Dick photo)



Team Anguilla is ready to take on the islands with its dynamic speakers.



St. Kitts debate team wants to represent its island well in the competition.

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Law Enforcement Council



# Your help is requested

The Law Enforcement Council invites people residing on Sint Maarten to take part in an anonymous survey called:

**'The protection and security of people and objects in Sint Maarten within the criminal justice system'.**

The Council would like to know more about the experience(s) with the occurrence and handling of - serious and/or concrete - **threats** and **use of violence** against persons or objects in the context of safety **within the legal (criminal) process**.

If this topic applies to you or to someone you know, we kindly request your participation.

The questionnaire can be accessed via the website of the Council in the News section:  
[www.raadrechtshandhaving.com](http://www.raadrechtshandhaving.com)

**The Law Enforcement Council emphasizes that your response is processed ANONYMOUSLY.**

SXM Soca Scene

# Hennessy

FRI. 26<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

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# SZV staff encouraged to be leaders in health sector

PHILIPSBURG--Social and Health Insurance SZV staff were encouraged to be leaders in the health sector during a staff conference held on Friday, February 12, under the theme "Cross the line."

Local and international speakers addressed staff at the conference, which was aimed at personal development, but also had a motivational tone.

During the conference, Interim Director Glen Carty presented Public Health Minister Emil Lee with SZV's 2015-2018 Strategic Plan, in which SZV identifies key strategies towards developing staff, improving customer service, sustainability of the organisation and its advisory role. The Action Plan 3.0, which is currently being executed by SZV, comes from this strategic plan.

Lee was also one of the speakers at the conference. "It was my pleasure and honour to have the opportunity to address the staff and management of SZV on the topic of customer care. As St. Maarten's social and health insurance company, SZV has a vital role in our community. The performance of the staff, management and board towards their customers is closely linked to the future of SZV and their financial health," Lee was quoted as saying in a press release issued by SZV.

Lee also reminded workers of the important role that SZV plays for the community of St. Maarten. "The country, the neediest people depend on you. The health of SZV determines the happiness of many of the country's most vulnerable," he said.

The Minister also gave examples of the hospitality industry where the value of a good review versus a negative review may weigh heavily on a company's reputation and sustainability in the industry. The Minister gave good practice examples of customer service and what it means to go beyond the call of duty and exceed customer expectations, and the positive impact this can have.

Various speakers included Chief Executive Officer of Los Angeles-based company Millisense Everette Taylor Jr., who spoke of customer service versus customer excellence traits and the importance of relentless self-improvement and how management can facilitate this.



SZV staff at the health conference.

"Coming out to St. Maarten for me was an eye-opening experience. I learned a lot from interacting with the people at SZV. The conference was real and introspective, I saw that people want to make a change and that's the first step. Progress is a process, and the executive team seems to be committed to making change.

"A lot of patience will be needed, there's a lot to do. There will be pitfalls, but I think the people at SZV are fully capable of breaking through. I received great feedback and my presentations seemed to resonate with the people at SZV, that's all I can ask for. Everyone was warm and welcoming, I felt at home here in St. Maarten," Taylor Jr. said.

President of the National Association of Recording Industry Professionals (NARIP) Tess Taylor, also from Los Angeles, spoke about success strategies, shared methods of attentive listening and effective communication and its value for excellent customer service levels. "I am impressed by SZV's commitment to improve customer service. It is rare to see an organisation as focused on self-evaluation and positive change as SZV, and one so dedicated that it invests in its staff and their development to enable this change. It has been a wonderful experience for me to meet the people of SZV, who are a sincere and caring group. The health and welfare of St. Maarten's citizens is in good hands when SZV staff approach their responsibilities with such commitment, empathy and professionalism," Tess Taylor said.

Success coach Dr. Erna Mae Francis-Cotton spoke about the change the organisation is going through with the implementation of Action Plan 3.0 and desire

to be part of this change and what is required to achieve personal success and organisational success.

"I am honoured and privileged to have been part of the process of revitalizing the culture of SZV so that it lives out its mission to care for and serve the members of the St. Maarten community," she said. "I applaud the passion and enthusiasm of Mr. Glen Carty and his team for listening to the cries of the public; acknowledging that significant changes need to be made internally, and most of all deciding to make positive and lasting changes at SZV. I believe that SZV is off to a great start in its process of having a great working environment for its employees and excellent customer service," she said.

Speakers emphasised the importance of team work, transparency, communication, commitment and accountability as key drivers for personal success and that of SZV. The conference was deemed by management as "a successful start to positive change" within the organisation.

SZV Management said it recognises the value of its

staff and has committed to facilitate a culture change where SZV can thrive internally, which will automatically resonate to the improvement of the customer satisfaction experience levels. "SZV has made a committed decision to improving the quality of its services and customer service experience by investing in the development of its staff as leaders within the health sector serving country St. Maarten," stated the release.



Discount Furniture on Bush Road donated a table to the University of St. Martin (USM) School of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning (SCELL) on February 11. Discount Furniture management said the business assisted SCELL because it understood their mission. "When people are educated they are better employees, have higher self-confidence and excel in their jobs," the company said. Photo shows SCELL representative Tia Thompson and Discount Furniture Manager Dinesh Vasnani.

## Expedia PartnerCentral App now in French and Dutch

WASHINGTON STATE--The Expedia group, one of the world's largest online travel companies, announced that the Expedia® PartnerCentral (EPC) App, which originally rolled out in June 2015, is now available for Caribbean hotel partners in multiple languages including Spanish, French and Dutch.

The EPC App allows hotel partners to manage their business with Expedia anytime, anywhere. The real-time, critical data helps partners to stay informed and competitive with real-time insights about the market; read and respond instantly to feedback from guests; stay up to date with reservations, arrivals and cancellations; move last minute inventory fast with Sell Tonight; help increase visibility by creating targeted promotions; receive notifications with time-sensitive information; and access data quickly with an efficient single login.

"To drive value to our hotel partners The Expedia group is constantly investing in new technology to help provide partners with better insights and customer service, as well as increase demand," said Demetrius Canton, market management director for the Caribbean. "We're always looking for ways to make it easier for our partners to utilize data and create a better experience for their guests."

Several Expedia group hotel partners in the English-speaking Caribbean have already tested the app and are thrilled with its quick response time and easy usage.

The EPC App is free for download in Spanish, French and Dutch at the Apple App Store and Google Play and requires an iPhone running iOS 7 or higher, or an Android phone running OS 4.1.2 or higher.

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## THERMAL ENERGY CONVERSION...

*Continued from page 1.*

Thermal energy stored in tropical seas can be used to generate sustainable electricity. This energy is produced by utilising the natural temperature difference between the surface water and deep water. The OTEC system transforms the thermal energy into electricity. The system uses pipes into the deep sea and a small installation on land to generate electricity.

It concerns a closed system whereby the water outflow will be pumped back into the ocean at a depth where it does not adversely affect the fragile maritime ecological system, explained Bluerise Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Remi Blokker in an interview at his offices adjacent to Technical University Delft.

The deep sea surrounding Saba is ideal to install the OTEC system. Naturally, Saba's underwater nature and the coral reefs will be taken into consideration during the laying of the pipes, said Blokker.

Because it is completely clean energy, it perfectly fits Saba's vision as an eco-tourism destination and green island. With an OTEC system in place, Saba would be able to supply 100-per-cent-sustainable electricity, with the existing diesel generators as a backup.

The OTEC installation would provide three megawatts of electricity, enough to supply the entire island. The installation also could provide fresh water and

cooling. The system works 24 hours a day, which is an advantage over solar or wind energy, which are limited to the amount of sunlight and wind. Pilot installations in Hawaii and Japan so far have proven successful.

The initial cost of the OTEC system is relatively high and requires a multi-million investment. However, the investment will repay itself in a couple of years, explained Blokker. In the long run it is cheaper than generating electricity in the current manner, via diesel generators. Diesel fuel has to be imported and the transportation cost is high. The transportation of fuel also presents a risk to the marine environment in case of an oil spill. The OTEC system does not require the use of fossil fuel.

Blokker emphasised that the OTEC system would be tailor-made for Saba. "This is an island solution which is meant to work for an island," he said. Surrounding islands also can benefit from this enterprise. Technically, it is possible to transport the electricity via a cable to, for example, St. Eustatius.

A pilot study will first have to be executed in Saba to determine the specifics of this project. Blokker emphasised that setting up an OTEC system was a long-term project that involved a lengthy trajectory of studies, developing and engineering.

The initiative to propose Saba for this project came

from the Second Chamber. Member of the Second Chamber André Bosman of the liberal democratic VVD party had invited Bluerise for a presentation, while Wassila Hachchi of the democratic party D66 had asked to schedule a date for a presentation to the Kingdom Relations Committee.

Bluerise specialises in OTEC and seawater air conditioning (SWAC) for buildings, as well as ocean ecoparks that utilise the ocean resource by means of innovative technologies for desalination, agriculture and aquaculture. The company provides consulting and engineering services to governments, project developers, energy companies and utilities.

Bluerise is active in several areas in the world, including Curaçao where it started to work on the Ocean Ecopark in 2011 together with Curaçao Airport Holding. The project is currently in the developing phase. The objective is to generate energy for the airport and the surrounding area, which includes the free zone Curinde and the data centre CTEX.

The Curaçao project will encompass a number of deep-cold-water applications. The OTEC plant will provide electricity while the Seawater District Cooling system will cool the airport building and surrounding facilities. The intention is also to set up various forms of agricultural and aquacultural companies to grow fresh food and fish.

Ocean Ecopark Curaçao was selected in 2013 as part of the prestigious international innovation platform Sustainia 100 Sustainability Guide as one of the 100 most innovative sustainable and impactful solutions around the world for its positive social, economic and environmental impact on local communities.

Oceanographic explorer and conservationist Fabien Cousteau, grandson of the famous French explorer, conservationist and scientist Jacques Cousteau, is Bluerise's Ambassador. He is an avid supporter of the OTEC system: "OTEC is a clean energy source, a prime example of how to sustainably make use of our oceans without harming the marine environment," he said.



AUC students and Tzu Chi volunteers pose for a group photo at the end of the community service programme on Saturday, February 20.

## AUC students boost Tzu Chi recycling, agricultural prog.



AUC students working hard to prepare a planting bed and transplant seedlings.

CUL DE SAC--Doctors-in-training at American University of the Caribbean (AUC) School of Medicine set aside their stethoscopes and lab-coats for a day to give Tzu Chi Foundation's recycling and agricultural programme a boost on Saturday, February 20.

A total of 19 students joined 13 Tzu Chi members to volunteer for the programme as part of their annual Community Action Day. AUC students volunteered at various foundations and groups in the local

community for their Community Action Days.

For the volunteer activity with Tzu Chi, the doctors-in-training were divided into five different groups and engaged in different stages of the foundation's recycling and agricultural initiative.

The various groups participated in sorting a large quantity of big disposable plastic bottles, cutting and redesigning them to accommodate plants and potted and planted seedlings in the plastic bottles.

Students and Tzu Chi volunteers also prepared agricultural beds and transplanted plants onto them, did some general clean-up of the agricultural area and greenhouse, trimmed trees, weeded and re-used all plant-based garbage by composting them for future use as organic manure for the agricultural project.

The AUC students were very enthusiastic about their assigned tasks and displayed good camaraderie and team spirit during the exercise. "They always stayed focussed and when working, their mindfulness and cooperation was encouraging to Tzu Chi volunteers," observed Tzu Chi volunteer Roger Yee-Fong.

When all the assigned tasks had been completed shortly after noon, all participants enjoyed a vegetarian lunch with drinks, and dessert prepared by Tzu Chi volunteers.

Several group leaders from amongst the AUC students shared their experiences and expressed their deep appreciation and enjoyment of the activity and the spirit of community service that they felt during the exercise.

Tzu Chi Foundation Commissioner Sandra Cheung, on behalf of the foundation and all volunteers, expressed great appreciation to AUC and its student volunteers for dedicating their time to this community service initiative. Tzu Chi showed its gratitude by presenting tokens of appreciation to all participating volunteers.

"This event is a prime example of the spirit of volunteerism working to create awareness and also to protect the environment," Yee-Fong said.

## VACANCY

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Director Jerry Staring of Aruba's Public Health Directorate has advised closing the vocational school "Scol Practico pa Ofishi" (SPO) at Santa Cruz for the time being. Reasons include an open cesspool and unbearable smell, along with a plague of mosquitoes. Due to the septic problems, the toilets could no longer be used and there was no drinking water available either. Staring says these circumstances combined simply make the situation there too unhygienic.





A group of some 60 people carrying banners participated in *Marcha por La Paz/Walk for Peace* on Wednesday evening. The walk, supported by political party *Helping Our People Excel (HOPE)*, organised by *Fundación Semana Dominicana* as part of its *Dominicano festivities* this week. Participants walked from L.B. Scott Sports Auditorium to the *Rotary Peace Monument* in front of *Philipsburg Jubilee Library*. *Foundation President Homero St. Val* said at the monument it was not the number of people that mattered, but that people came out together for peace. *Mercedes van der Waals-Wyatt of HOPE* called on the gathering to be proactive by speaking out against violence, and working together with the authorities. *Loekie Morales and Jacinto Mock of HOPE* were also part of the walk.

# First speakers TEDx known

WILLEMSTAD--Organisers announced the first three speakers for TEDx Curaçao 2016.

Krishna Doll-Oedjaghir is Marketing and Sales Specialist at Curaçao Air Terminal Service (CATS). She is a marketing expert with experience in sales, branding and strategic product placement who has worked with many different professionals spanning from Asia to Brazil.

The theme of her TEDTalk is the importance of accepting innovations as Small Island Developing States (SIDS). She will focus on bridging the gap between ac-

ceptance of innovation (sub-orbital travel) as a SIDS and the current state of the country on this matter.

Joanne Nicastia has over 15 years of experience in strategic analysis and implementation as well as in risk analysis and arranging project financing. Until recently she filled the position as Senior Director Transactions at the National Investment Bank in Curaçao. Joanne will present her perspective on how some neglected social issues have a significant impact on the financial economic development of the country as well as a destabilising effect on all aspects of society.

Jemya Betrian is a hard-working Muay Thai Boxer. In the past year she was able to train for Mixed Martial arts (MMA) fights. She also fought some MMA matches in Los Angeles. Her dream is to become an Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) fighter one day.

With her inspirational speech she wants to encourage the youth of Curaçao to work hard for the achievement of their dreams. Jemya is always preparing herself for bigger goals and her motto is "success comes when preparation meets opportunity!"

TEDx Curaçao will take place on March 12, 2016, at District 1850 in collaboration with The Movies, hosting a great range of talks around the theme of "Bridging the Gap."

# Port concession still 'hot potato'

WILLEMSTAD--Stevodore Curaçao Port Services (CPS) recently indicated to Minister of Economic Development Eugene Rhuggenaath (PAR) that they will suspend the negotiations for a new harbour concession with government-owned Curaçao Port Authorities (CPA).

Rhuggenaath indicated that CPS' decision is mainly to get clarity. "And they are right. Because of all the public debate taking place at this time, CPS is not clear what is going on and what will happen. These discussions are not doing any good right now," said the minister.

He continues to stand behind the proposal that is currently on the table. "It's a fair deal; a proposal which is in the interest of the people of Curaçao. I am prepared to carry my responsibility, but I do that with any proposal that I bring to the Council of Ministers for approval," added Rhuggenaath.

The proposal is based on a 20-year concession for CPS. After this period there will be a public tender.

The proposal means an end to CPS' monopoly in the harbour. For the duration of the concession CPS retains the right to remain in its current location. Furthermore, CPS will manage the quays and cranes, and will make an investment of Naf. 50 million.

CPA, as supervisor, remains responsible for the quay walls.



The 44 employees of *Aru Casino* that closed its doors mid-December have been without a salary for three months. They expressed their discontent on Thursday with a protest at Parliament. A new prospective owner willing to take over the personnel was supposed to sign a purchase agreement earlier this month, but that did not happen yet supposedly due to some legal details. The deadline has now been set for March 1.



The first *Children's Museum of Curaçao "CHiCU"* will be established in the former home of the late author, artist and translator *May Henriquez*. The reconstruction activities were kicked off on Tuesday. The facility on the terrain of country-house *Bloemhof* is scheduled to open next January. *Henriquez' granddaughter Michelle Capriles* said the house had been empty since her death in 1999. On the initiative of *Esther de Sola and Jora de Jong* it was decided to use it for a place where children are stimulated and can learn in a playful manner.

# Insel from Haiti to Miami again

WILLEMSTAD--Curaçao-based InselAir will resume its operations between Miami and the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince, said Director of International Affairs Edward Heerenveen.

The carrier will start with four flights per week. InselAir was already active on this route, but stopped in 2014 because of competitors who – according to Heerenveen – were operating as budget airlines and thus offering cheap tickets. "Now the prices are stable again so we can return," he added.

The "new" service is also seen as an alternative to the Venezuelan flights that have been significantly reduced due to circumstances in the neighbouring South American country.

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DAILY GAMES	PICK 3	PICK 4
<b>MORNING</b> DRAW # 15343	PRIZE:1 5-6-9	8-8-7-4
2 8-6-3	7-3-6-5	
3 5-0-1	1-7-0-2	
<b>MIDDAY</b> DRAW # 15344	PRIZE:1 1-1-8	3-2-2-1
2 8-5-5	7-8-0-8	
3 6-0-0	7-1-3-6	
<b>SUNSET</b> DRAW # 15345	PRIZE:1 9-3-4	0-4-1-7
2 3-9-6	9-2-5-9	
3 8-6-9	4-8-2-5	
<b>EVENING</b> DRAW # 15346	PRIZE:1 3-2-5	5-7-7-6
2 4-9-4	2-7-3-8	
3 4-3-7	9-0-4-7	

**JACKPOT** DRAW # 665 DRAW DATE: February 23rd, 2016 02 05 21 29 33 03 SUPER BALL JACKPOT FOR NEXT DRAW \$1,590,000

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**'LYCÉE VIOLENCE REFLECTION...**

*Continued from page 1.*

of transmission of values of citizenship, of training and of equipping of our youth with the tools for social and professional success," he said. "Yet it is sad to observe that our school system is increasingly failing to carry out successfully its mission because of lack of material, human and educational resources, lack of autonomy, but also the fact that it remains not adapted to the socio-linguistic realities of our island."

He added he fully supported the Lycée principal for the way the crisis was handled, but also teachers and staff for exercising their right of withdrawal. Many supervisors of the Lycée, and in particular the Collège, had tried unsuccessfully to warn the Collectivité on what they had been observing, he said.

"To the parents, I say show more interest in your children in what they do in school as well as outside. I want to remind them that the family must be the primary educator of our children: live up to your part of responsibility and assert your authority. It is urgent to address these problems



Alain Richardson

that exist in the vicinity of our institutions of learning (Lycée, Collège, primary schools, library, sport parks, etc.). They include squatting on the outskirts of these establishments by persons who have no reasons to be there, drug consumption, illegal trafficking, and harassment and activities of luring of minors etc.

"One fact is certain; all the perpetrators of the attacks as well as a growing number of young persons involved in delinquency acts (robberies, hold-ups, etc.) have been on the benches of these same schools. It is obvious that these youngsters have not benefited or received the knowledge or the values of citizenship and have not received either any training or tools to

equip them to face the social and professional challenges.

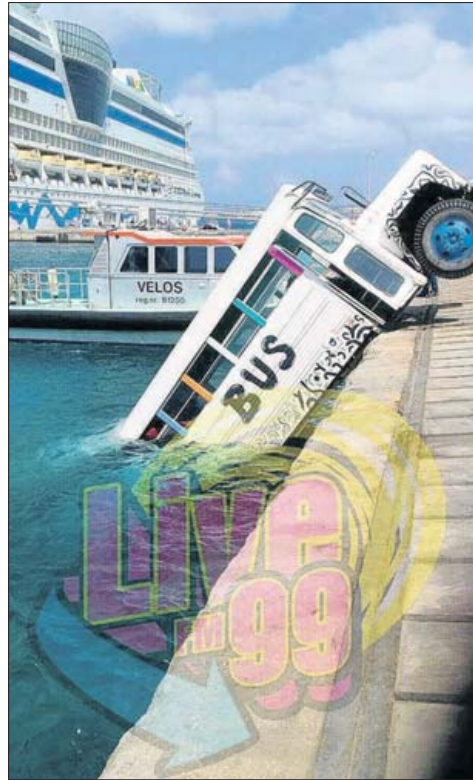
"We are feeling the direct effects of school failure, social failure and societal failure. Gangs, consumption and drug trafficking, carrying and usage of weapons, antisocial behaviour, delinquency and crime feed on school failure, on the marginalisation and exclusion of our young people from the jobs market.

"The State of France and the Collectivité can no longer turn a blind eye and hide behind the cost of effectively treating the roots of these social and societal problems of our youth. The issues of education, training, preparation for citizenship, access to employment and professional opportunities; the issues of empowering and equipping our youth to be more responsible and of valuing them as the greatest asset for the future of this territory demand clear and profound answers.

"The growing numbers of our young people, who fall victim to school dropout and school failure (academic, social and societal), deserve another chance in life before they fall into criminal activities and other violent acts. Those who have already fallen deserve a way out beyond prison. The year, during which I was head of this Collectivité, two of my battles were to have in St. Martin a Centre of the Regiment of Adapted Military Service (RSMA) and a school of second chance (école de la deuxième chance).

"These institutions coupled with the mentorship project that I presented (Le Parrainage) are essential for St. Martin because they are the best tools and policies that can help save our youth who are marginalised because of school and social failure. Unfortunately, the State of France is too concerned about its budget and faithful to its policy of abandoning St. Martin.

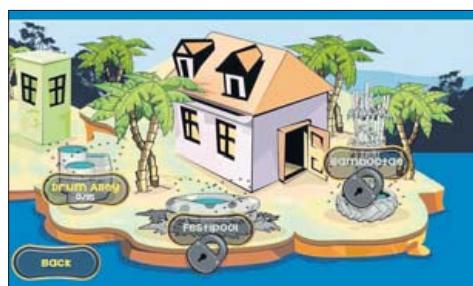
"I encourage our young people and especially our students and pupils, to stay focused on their education, to increase their efforts to succeed despite the difficulties. I say to them: Don't let anyone turn you away from your goals in life, do not be intimidated by those who want to destabilise you and divert you from your way forward, resist the pressure and the call to join gangs and or to use illicit drugs."



A tour bus fell into the water in Bonaire, as the driver tried to run around on the customs pier. Only he and the guide had been inside at the time. They were both unharmed and could be removed from the vehicle without problems.



Curaçao experts say the case of N.L., the young female repeat-offender who was held earlier this week after committing destruction to a home at Koraal Specht, illustrates the lack of proper professional attention for such troubled youths on the island. The 16-year-old girl yelled out that she had been injected with some substance to control her. Police were looking for her since she fled from the Judicial Youth Institute on December 26. When she saw a patrol in Kaya Stilla and started throwing shingles and other materials at the officers as well as passing vehicles. Suddenly she fell through the ceiling and into the home, where ambulance personnel treated her for minor injuries.



Curaçao's Ministry of Public Health has encouraged parents to let their children play the new "Zap-a-Quitto" video game. The app recently launched by Caribbean Public Health Agency CARPHA as part of the fight against the Zika-virus in the region can be downloaded free of charge from Google's Play Store.

**Church's Chicken debuts in Curaçao**

WILLEMSTAD--Strengthening its global presence, Church's Chicken opened the first of four outlets in Curaçao. The newest restaurant, resulting from a deal with quick service restaurant industry veterans "Inversiones VCR 2005" is located at the food court of Sambil megamall, the largest shopping centre on the island.

It will join St. Kitts, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago as part of Church's growing reach throughout the tropics.

"We're very pleased to bring the Church's brand to such an important island destination," explains Bill Schreiber, Vice President of Global Business Development at Church's Chicken/Texas Chicken. "Chicken is tremendously popular throughout the region, and Curaçao is a great fit for our quality products and our future plans for growth both here and in other island nations."

Orlando Navas, Church's Chicken franchisee, agrees with Schreiber. "This location is an exciting beginning to an ongoing expansion," he says. "It shows how in-demand Church's is on the island and we are proud to be of service."

Guests in Curaçao will be able to enjoy Church's signature, hand-battered fried chicken and honey-butter biscuits on any visit to Sambil and at upcoming locations as they open. Church's fans on the island will also have a number of specialty products such as the iconic Mexicana Sandwich, Tex Supreme Sandwich, and Mexicana Wrap. Offered exclusively in international markets, the Mexicana Sandwich features a tasty chicken fillet, crisp greens, juicy tomato slices, onions, a slice of cheese, and crunchy tortilla strips.

"Products available exclusively in the international market are an excellent way to add to the brand experience for Church's, while also maintaining the core tastes for which we are known. The same will hold true as we spread into other Caribbean destinations, although the execution will be unique for each market," added Schreiber.



Curaçao's Public Works Department is having plastic objects installed in the road surface at the approaches to several roundabouts on the island, warning motorists to slow down. Along with clearly visible maximum speed traffic signs, the move is to help prevent damage to cars and so-called street furniture alike.

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Volunteers formed a circle and shared about their experienced in the Tzu Chi Foundation.

## Tzu Chi presents volunteers personal token from founder



Volunteers enjoying the vegetarian delicacies after the event.

CUL DEC SAC--The St. Maarten Tzu Chi Foundation presented its volunteers with a personal token from Tzu Chi Founder Master Cheng Yen during a recent tea party celebration at its L.B. Scott Road location.

The token known as Hong-bao or red envelope is symbolic of Master Chen Yen's best wishes to volunteers for the New Year, and expresses her deep appreciation, gratitude and affinity to Tzu Chi volunteers worldwide for their contribution in developing its four missions: charity, medicine, education and humanistic culture. A total of 34 volunteers attended the celebration and were each presented with a Hong-bao.

The event included an ice-breaker and volunteers sharing their individual experiences being with the Tzu Chi Foundation and what this means to them in an effort to encourage affinity amongst members.

Attendees were also treated to a video presentation highlighting the contributions that the

various Tzu Chi Foundation branches around the world had made in 2015 in Taiwan, Haiti, the Philippines, Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland, Syria, USA, Canada and in other countries.

A second video highlighted the contributions made by the St. Maarten chapter in the local community in 2015. These included the monthly visits to the St. Martin's Home for senior citizens, the annual visit to the Pointe Blanche Prison, participation in the Lion Rudy Hoeve Health and Wellness Fair, participation in the Catholic Cultural Food Sale, the International Coastal Cleanup, the triple celebration of Mother's Day/Buddha Day/Tzu Chi Day, clean up at All Children's Education (ACE) Foundation school, charitable donations to persons in need within the community amongst other charitable works.

A brief history of the origin and significance of the Tzu Chi Hong-bao was also explained following which Tzu Chi Commissioners Sandra Cheung and her husband Kit-Wing

Cheung presented each volunteer with their personal Hong-bao as well as a gift package.

Volunteers were then treated to a sumptuous buffet-style vegetarian meal and desserts especially prepared by the attending volunteers.

Several volunteers said they enjoyed the event. Volunteer Santosh Aaudha Chhabria said it was blissful for him to see Tzu Chi volunteers get together to get to know each other even better than before. "This event was one of the best events for the Tzu Chi family to be more united and enjoy the company of each other. It was a great experience," Chhabria said. "And the best part was that we counted our local and international achievements of love... This event really made a strong mind of all volunteers to be more focussed (so that we can) suggest to our near and dear ones to also join hands and make this family even bigger."

Volunteer Roger Yee-Fong said the event demonstrated Master Cheng Yen's best wishes for the New Year and her deep gratitude to all the Tzu Chi volunteers worldwide for their continuing service to their respective communities.

Another volunteer, Margaret Steeman, who took three guests to experience the event, said one of her guests felt the event had been "impressive" and all three guests were so touched that they decided to donate to help the foundation continue its work in the community.



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# The Isley Brothers at Soul Beach Fest

ARUBA-The Isley Brothers are among the performers tapped for the 16th Annual Soul Beach Music Festival, taking place on Aruba over the US Memorial Day weekend in May.

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductees, along with American Idol's season three-winner Fantasia and R&B singer Miguel, will give main-stage performances during the event, which runs from May 25 to May 30. Additional performers will be announced in the weeks to come.

"It's an honour to host such talented and dynamic artistes on our 'One Happy Island.' Visitors not only experience top-notch performances during Soul Beach Music Festival, but are also welcomed to enjoy Aruba's signature experiences and culture during their stay," said Otmár Oduber, Aruba's Minister of Tourism, Primary Sector and Culture.

The festival's executive producer Mark Adkins added, "This year's multi-generational artistes represent some of the best performers and greatest voices in the music industry. Join us in Aruba and enjoy the stellar Comedy and Music performances combined with 30 events over 5 days plus a lifetime of sensational memories."

The Isley Brothers currently are led by Ronald and Ernie Isley.

## AGENDA

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 Emergency 111  
 Hot Line 108  
 Fire Department 120  
 Hospital 182211/182371  
 Landsradio 182210  
 Post Office 182207  
**St. Eustatius Historical Foundation Museum** 182288  
**Winair Office** 182362  
**Lions Club** meets every 1st and 3rd Wednesday at the "Den" next to the Airport  
**Drug Prevention Foundation** meets every Tuesday 5:30pm at the Golden Era Hotel  
**Coastguard NA&A** 113  
**St. Eustatius National parks:** Gallows Bay: 318 2884  
**SABA**  
**Police Station**  
**The Bottom,** tel. 4163237  
**Emergency** 111/112  
**Hospital**  
**The Bottom,** tel. 4163288/4163289  
**Fire Department Airport** Flat Point tel. 4162210  
**SATEL**  
**The Bottom,** tel. 4163211  
**WINAIR, Airport** Flat Point, tel. 4162255/2713  
**Taxi Service Airport** Flat Point, tel. 160  
**Administration Building** The Bottom, tel. 4163311/4163312/4163313  
**Tourist Office** Windwardside, tel. 4162231  
**Harbour Office** Fort Bay, tel. 4163294  
**Saba Marine Park** Fort Bay, tel. 4163295  
**Nature & Hike Guide** James Johnson The Bottom, tel. 4163307  
**Service Club** Saba Lions Club general meeting every 1st and 3rd Tuesday 8:00 p.m. at Eugenius A. Johnson Center.  
**Coastguard NA&A** 113  
**Red Cross** General meeting every last Monday, 6 p.m., Eugenius A. Johnson Center

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**SERVICE CLUBS**  
**Rotary Club of Anguilla** Meets at Da Vida every Thursday at 6.00 p.m.  
**Soroptimist International** Day Care Centre 4.30 p.m. 2nd Tuesday in each month Tel: 497 3509  
**Lions Club** meets every 1st and 3rd Tuesday at 5.30 p.m. at the Arts and Crafts Center. Tel: 264 235 1280  
**Interact Club of Anguilla** Meets every Friday at 3.15 p.m. at the Albena Lake Hodge Comprehensive School  
**Toastmaster Club** meets every 2nd and 4th Saturday at 6.45 p.m. at La Vue, South Hill



Vehicle on pier with meat with LVV staff Gershon Lopes, Osmand Sprott, Lennard Woodley and Rasheema Arnaud and Veterinarian Sharon Veira.

# 24,751.2 lbs of meat exported from Statia

ST. EUSTATIUS--Government and individual farmers in St. Eustatius sold and exported 24,751.2 pounds of meat to neighbouring islands from April to December 2015. Export to Nevis totalled 15,287.9 lbs., St. Barths 7,258.6 lbs., St. Maarten 2,080.7 lbs., and Anguilla (80 lbs.), St. Croix (25 lbs.) and Curaçao (19 lbs.).

The majority of the lobsters (2,115) and pork (1,555.4 lbs.) were exported to St. Barths. Fifty-two per cent of all exported meat was beef reaching a total of 12,860.6 lbs. with St. Maarten accounting for 323.8 lbs., Nevis

8,946.6 lbs. and St. Barths 3,588.2 lbs.

More than 6,416.3 lbs of mutton 26 per cent of the total export, was sent to St. Maarten (118 lbs.) and Nevis (6,298.3 lbs.).

Although, there are more goats on the island only five per cent of meat exported was goat, totalling 1323.9 lbs. with St Maarten receiving 1,302.9 lbs., Nevis (two lbs.) and Curaçao (19 lbs.). Sheep and goats are the most slaughtered animals, while pigs and cows were the least. For the recorded period, a total of 834 animals were butchered: sheep (377),

goats (243), pigs (112) and cows (102).

Unit Head of the Agriculture and Livestock Department LVV Anthony Reid said the abattoir is the most active department within the unit and is responsible for more than 70 per cent of all activities executed by the department.

From mid-April to the end of December 2015, a total of 834 animals were slaughtered; three were deemed not suitable for human consumption.

In April, July and September, more than a 100 animals were slaughtered each month. The most animals were butchered in July (165) followed by September (161). The least animals were butchered in the hurricane-affected month of August (20).

# Complaint on asbestos filed

WILLEMSTAD--"Fundashon Promove Drechi Humano" (Foundation to Promote Human Rights) in Curaçao has pressed charges against Government-owned holding for the local Isla refinery "Refineria di Korsou" (RdK) and Curaçao Refinery Utilities (CRU) because they have exposed others to asbestos and that is considered a serious offense.

According to the complaint filed with the Prosecutor's Office, the hazardous asbestos materials were removed carelessly. As a result, according to the Foundation, not only the people who were involved in the storage and disposal were exposed, but also tens of thousands of local residents and users of the roads around the oil refinery leased to "Petroleos de Venezuela" PdVSA.

Director José van den Wall-Armemann of RdK said that he is not aware of the complaint.

The situation with asbestos on the Isla grounds is worse than imagined, said Eugene Angelica of the Action Group against Asbestos. RdK allegedly gave the clean-up work to parties who are not certified for such.

The contractor Turbo machine Shop is also said to be linked to coalition party "Pueblo Soberano" (PS) and was supposedly selected through the intervention of then Prime Minister Ivar Asjes. However, the company had no expertise in asbestos removal.

According to the action group this is fraudulent and the cost of Naf. 2 million was split with CRU so that the Supervisory Board of the RdK could be kept out of the deal. CRU manages the Build, Own and Operate (BOO) power plant located at Isla that services the refinery and also produces electricity for local Government-owned utility company Aquallectra.

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**JAMAICA'S OPPOSITION WINS...**

*Continued from page 1.*

Portia Simpson-Miller after she returned Jamaica's heavily indebted economy to growth and low inflation.

Despite its socialist past, her People's National Party embraced spending cuts, wage freezes and harsh fiscal discipline as part of a \$1.27 billion IMF bailout that has lowered the still daunting debt burden of more than 130 percent of GDP. Simpson-Miller, 70, is Jamaica's first female head of state. Inflation hit a 48-year low during her tenure. Falling oil prices freed up government funds in import-dependent Jamaica and the

island's GDP grew 1.3 percent last year, according to the World Bank.

However, unemployment is high at around 13 percent overall, and a whopping 38 percent for the young. While Simpson-Miller is credited with bringing stability, Holness' optimistic message was more popular in the end.

Outgoing education minister Ronald Thwaites questioned Holness' ability to deliver.

"Can those promises be kept? Will they be kept?" Thwaites said in an interview with local television.

Holness criticized the government's adherence to austerity but refrained from sharp rhetoric against the IMF plan on the campaign trail.

He is not expected to significantly roll back the measures that restored investor confidence in Jamaica's chaotic finances.

Holness briefly served as prime minister in 2011 after unrest due to a U.S. attempt to extradite drug kingpin Christopher "Dudus" Coke forced his predecessor to resign. ~ Reuters ~

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**ISLAND SET TO HOST SXMUSIC FESTIVAL...**

*Continued from page 1.*



Julian Arbia (left) and Michael Killam.

months. Julian Arbia is a club co-owner, DJ and entrepreneur from Montreal, Canada.

In 2004, when his parents decided to move to the island and run a hotel, he was introduced to St. Maarten/St. Martin for the first time. "Immediately the idea for a big electronic music event popped up," he explains.

In 2006, he sent a promoter to explore the opportunities on the island. "Back then, however, the time wasn't right. There were not enough locals to support the music. Techno lovers were not yet used to

travel the world for their favourite festivals."

Has anything changed in the past ten years? "Definitely," says Arbia, "the international party scene has truly become global. Moreover, people who grew up with huge techno parties in the nineties are now in their thirties. Looking for intimacy, quality and an eco-friendly vibe, it is this particular target group the SXMUSIC Festival focuses on. The world is ready for it."

So far, people from Japan, Australia, the US, Canada, France and the

Netherlands, among other European countries, have bought a ticket for the festival. New York residents are at the top of the list. An important factor for the success of the festival, according to Arbia, is the direct flight connection between St. Maarten/St. Martin and big cities in North America and across Europe.

What about the locals? Are they ready for an electronic music festival?

"Today we hear electronic tunes in every pop song," says Arbia. "Moreover, our line-up shows internationally known DJ's that produce high quality handcraft sets during the festival. Everyone with an open mind to different music styles can appreciate this."

Despite the international character of the festival, the organisers hope to attract people from the region as well.

In order to lower thresholds, Caribbean residents can buy their tickets with a discount: a 5-day pass for 180 euros instead of 250, a 1-day pass for 55 euros instead of 75. Although tickets remain quite expensive for the largest part of people living in the region, Arbia thinks that one-third of

the expected 3000 visitors will be Caribbean residents.

In the meantime, Michael Killam, Arbia's business partner from Montreal, has joined the conversation. Killam coordinates the organisation of the festival on the island.

"I am responsible for communicating with the venues, selecting the teams and taking care of the realisation of our ideas," says Killam. Arbia adds: "Catering to 150 people is really different from hosting a festival crowd of thousands of people. A festival is a different beast."

Working closely together with the party venues and local personnel, Arbia and Killam expect that the SXMUSIC Festival will contribute to the local economy. "The festival is designed to introduce the island to a new group of wealthy, young tourists. Our goal is to make St. Maarten/St. Martin stand out in the Caribbean!"

Among the selected SXMUSIC Festival locations are Palm Beach in Orient Bay, and Tantra, Le Shore Club, Zoo Rock and Kokomo on the Dutch side of the island. Between these venues a shuttle bus service

will transport the festival visitors.

Arbia explains that he has always focused on organizing the festival on both sides of the island. "It is, after all, one island."

In addition to St. Maarten/St. Martin's accessibility, its bi-national character makes the island unique in the region. "St. Maarten/St. Martin could be more actively promoted as one island with the best of two countries and many different co-existing cultures. Look at cities like New York and Montreal: the best places in the world are melting pots."

Despite Arbia's focus on the island as a whole, he has primarily worked together with French authorities, such as the Saint Martin Tourist Office. Partly affected by the political instability on the Dutch side, but mainly, according to Arbia, because there was not enough time to contact every authority on the island.

"The first edition is always an adventure: it's never perfect, but certainly the most important edition for the continuation of a festival," the organiser explains. "This year we start with

giving the people a taste of what we have to offer. We already have innovative ideas for the upcoming years."

During the conversation, the entrepreneurs from Montreal appear as passionate entrepreneurs with ambitions for the future. "The SXMUSIC Festival is the first big electronic music festival in the Caribbean region. It's truly unique, we don't want to look like anything else. Things are fun when they are different."

Being unique and different, the SXMUSIC Festival seems also somewhat exclusive and serving a wealthy niche. However, Arbia and Killam emphasize the positive impact of the festival on the local community: "By organising this event on St. Maarten/St. Martin we create new jobs and give the island's tourism sector a boost. We want to make St. Maarten/St. Martin the hottest place in the Caribbean, contributing to the global electronic music scene and the island. Then we all win!"

For more information and purchasing Caribbean Residents tickets with discount check the website of SXMUSIC Festival via [www.sxmusicfestival.com](http://www.sxmusicfestival.com).

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# '80/20 law is no problem'

WILLEMSTAD -- "The Governor will receive information about the 80/20 bill in two weeks as requested and then it will continue as normal," said Curaçao parliamentarian for "Pueblo Soberano" (PS) Elmer "Kade" Wilsoe.

The fraction member of the coalition party that in-

roduced the proposed legislation said it is no problem at all to explain why the so-called "quota law" is necessary.

"If that is needed to get this bill to become a law then we will do that. The explanation does not change the reality that in the hospitality industry or in vari-

ous supermarkets most employees are not from local soil," said Wilsoe.

"Someone must be blind not to see that. The fact is that there are more than 20,000 illegal immigrants on this island. The fact is

also that the unemployment rate among young people is 37 per cent."

The 80/20 bill states that 80 per cent of the personnel of every company on the island should be local and only 20 per cent may be

foreigners. Coalition partner PAIS had expressed in a written statement that they are against the bill.

"PAIS just represents the interests of the business owners. They were also against the increase of the

minimum wage by NAF. 0.05 cents per hour.

"The PAIS leader depends on these business owners. Our party does not depend on them so we can fight for the local employees," said Wilsoe.



*Skin cancer is on the rise in Aruba, confirmed medical specialist John Kock. There are no readily available exact figures for 2011-2015, but the number of new cases has grown steadily from the average 125 per year he was getting up to and including 2010. He said instead of monthly, four to five patients are now added on a weekly basis, the majority of them ages 50 and older. Less than 3 per cent involves the most life-threatening form "melanoma," which locally affects mainly women age 20 to 40. Too much unprotected, direct exposure to the sun's UV-rays is the primary cause. People with any suspect spots on especially the head, face, ears or neck are advised to see their doctor.*

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Board members of the Anguilla Community Foundation.

## Anguilla Community Foundation holds fundraising event at Government House

ANGUILLA--Governor Christina Scott hosted a fundraising event for the Anguilla Community Foundation at Government House, on Wednesday evening. The Governor welcomed those present saying that she was glad to support the Community Foundation as it will support young people for many decades ahead.

Bonnie Richardson-Lake outlined the work of the Foundation and its achievements since it was started

in 1999. She said that there are three endowed funds – the Mouton Scholarship Fund, the Anguilla College Scholarship Fund and the David Berglund Scholarship Fund. Fifteen students have benefitted from the scholarships during the past few years and over US \$100,000 has been given. She explained that only the interest on endowed funds can be used, and with the lower interest rates in the past few years that has meant less funds available.

There is currently \$315,000 in the endowment fund and \$720,000 in the Management Fund.

Kerlyn Hughes, one of the beneficiaries of a scholarship from the Community Foundation, outlined her experiences and gratitude for the scholarship that enabled her to complete her Master's Degree. "Your generosity helped me to return to Anguilla and to make a difference," she said.

## Flower and Garden Show planned for this Saturday



A display from last year's Flower and Garden Show

Flowering plants growing in a pot or container will also be judged, as well as foliage plants, cactus, oversized plants and miniature gardens. Awards for all categories will be for first, second and third places. The judges will be looking at the overall appearance and impact of the arrangements, the condition of the flowers and plants, artistic design, creativity, originality, balance, shape and colour.

In addition, there will be displays from Workshop Initiative for Support in Education (WISE) school garden displays, professional garden displays and school art. There are many booths in the gardens selling craft, art, local soaps, local jams, books, plants, safety equipment, hot dogs, food and drinks, and vegetables. A hydroponic demonstration is also planned.

ANGUILLA--The Anguilla Beautification Club (ABC) Flower and Garden Show is scheduled for Saturday, February 27, at the Wallblake House and gardens. The Show includes competitions for flower arrangements, plants, garden displays, and art. It starts at 11:00am. The theme this year is "Growing Wild" and

competitors are invited to show their talent and go wild with their displays.

There are several categories for arrangements of flowers including fresh flowers in a vase or bowl; flowers picked in Anguilla; arrangements of foliage; arrangements depicting the theme; fresh flowers and fruit, and single flowers.

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Curaçao experienced some strong winds on Wednesday and a Code Yellow regarding fairly rough sea conditions was also issued particularly for small craft operators. Among other things, a big advertising sign had been blown down at the "Botika Stakamahachi" drugstore. Nobody was hurt in the incident (Extra photo).

**Holland set to lose exports after Brexit**

AMSTERDAM—The Netherlands could lose an annual 4.3 per cent of its 36.7 billion euros in exports if Britain does leave the European Union (EU), according to Dutch trade insurance company Euler Hermes.

The only European Union member state which would be harder hit is Germany, which is set to see 6.1 per cent of its exports disappear if the British vote for leaving the EU on June 23, the company has calculated, according to Telegraaf newspaper.

The trade insurers are often called in to insure global transportation of imports and exports. Euler Hermed expects the United Kingdom to lose 240 billion pounds in investments in the first four years following Brexit.

According to the company's researchers, the total 60 per cent loss of exports will hit just four countries: the Netherlands, Germany, France and Ireland. Companies in the sectors finance, cars, machinery, chemicals, agro-food, textiles and energy will be particularly affected.

Euler Hermes determined its figures on the basis of free movement of capital, goods, services and people between the EU and the UK. Brexit would reintroduce import tariffs and customs forms which would become an obstacle to trade.



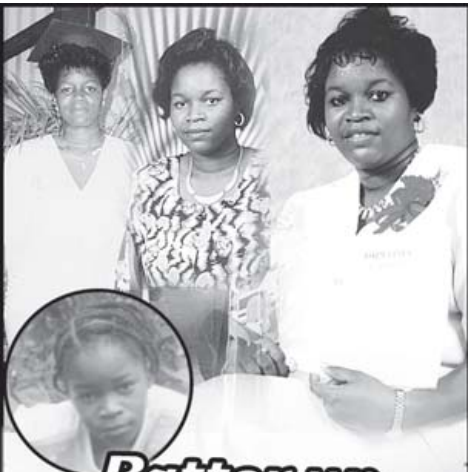
Well-known female repeat offender N.L. was arrested in Curaçao after falling through the roof of a home in Koraaal Specht she wanted to burglarise. Her injuries were not serious, but police believe she was on some kind of drugs. The young lady has spent time in the mandatory drug rehabilitation clinic "Brasami," but keeps escaping as was also the case now.



The four branches of Aruba's "Botica di Servicio" pharmacies from this Saturday will offer free blood pressure and -sugar testing on a monthly basis. The company has been designated by general health insurance bureau AZV as provider of testing materials for diabetes patients regardless of which drugstore they may be registered at. The hope is also to increase awareness about the disease and help identify potential cases at an early stage.

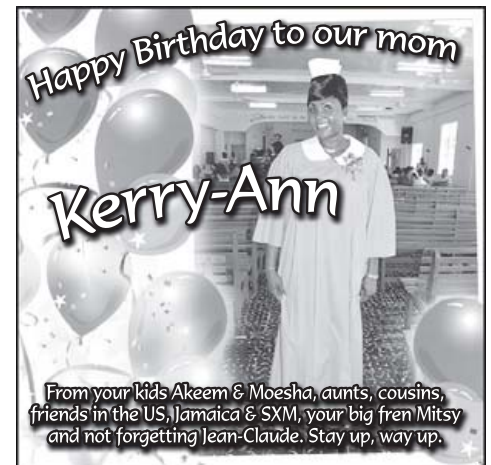
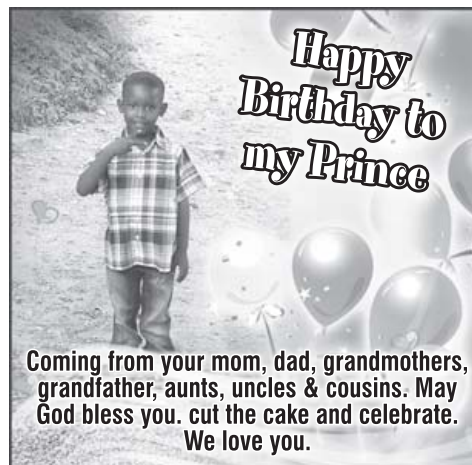
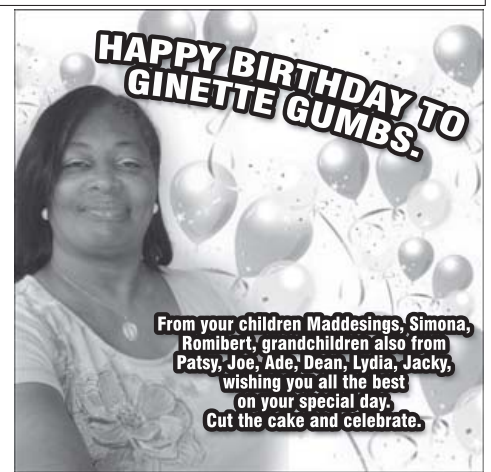
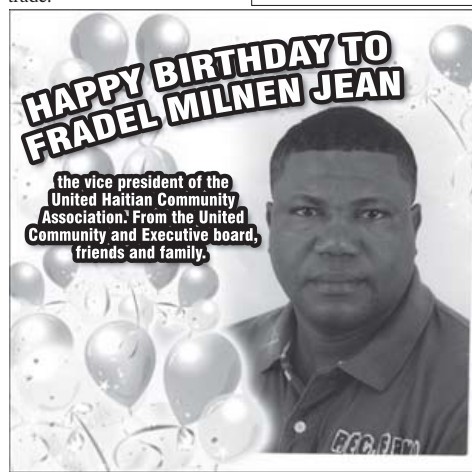


Aruba Airport Authorities (AAA) returned with its second regional Marketing Award from the recent Routes Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Number two was Charleston International and number three Curaçao International Airport. AAA also got an honorary mention in the category fastest growing markets and routes. "Aeropuerto Reina Beatrix" processed 2.8 million passengers last year, an increase of 14 per cent.



**Batter up,  
Baterrrrr  
upppppppp!!!!!!  
It's a home  
runnnnnnn  
You're in the  
40th inning!**

Lots of love from your entire family & friends. Enjoy your special day to the fullest. We love you.





# Sint Maarten Government Info Page

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## MINISTRY PUBLIC HEALTH, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT & LABOR

### DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AFFAIRS & SOCIAL SERVICES

The Department of Labor Affairs & Social Services is embarking on sharing a series of information sessions geared at sensitizing the general public of its tangible as well as intangible products.

Our first session will be hosted by the Social Welfare Unit, highlighting "Material Aid". The session will be held at the **Belvedere Community Center on March 18, 2016 from 6:30PM to 8:30PM.**

If you have always been interested in knowing what the department offers, this is your opportunity to get a comprehensive overview of all services provided and gain insight into the manner in which laws and regulations are utilized to determine eligibility of individuals seeking assistance.

Space is limited, so get there early to secure your seat!

### DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC LICENSES

A request has been filed at the Department of Economic Licenses by **Fig N.V.** d.b.a **Fig** to Operate a **Coffeehouse & Restaurant A** at Le Terrace Unit 114, Rhine Road, Sint Maarten.

**Permission is also requested to make, give and allow music, have shows' dancing and additional closing hours until 4 am.**

A request has been filed at the Department of Economic Licenses by **Last Stop Retail Shop II N.V.**, d.b.a **Great Bay Spirits** to Retail alcoholic beverages at St. Rose Shopping Arcade #6, Philipsburg, Sint Maarten.

A request has been filed at the Department of Economic Licenses by **Rythams N.V.**, d.b.a **The Dream Pool Bar and Lounge** to Operate a Coffeehouse & Restaurant A at Rhine Road #41, Maho Plaza, Sint Maarten.

**Permission is also requested to make, give and allow music, have shows', dancing.**

A request has been filed at the Department of Economic Licenses by **Simpson Bay Sushi N.V.**, d.b.a **Little Bamboo** to Operate a **Coffeehouse & Restaurant A** at Puerto del Sol Building F1, Unit 105, Welfare Road, Cole Bay, Sint Maarten.

**Permission is also requested to make, give and allow music and additional closing hours until 3:00 am**

A request has been filed at the Department of Economic Licenses by **SXM Sushi N.V.**, d.b.a **SXM Sushi** to Operate a **Coffeehouse & Restaurant A** at Rhine Road #41, Maho Plaza, Sint Maarten.

**Permission is also requested to make, give and allow music, have shows', dancing, and additional closing hours until 3 am.**

A request has been filed at the Department of Economic Licenses by **Whisky Bar N.V.**, d.b.a **Café Rembrandt** to Operate a **Coffeehouse** at Madame Estate Shopping Center #15, Madame Estate, Sint Maarten.

**Permission is also requested to make, give and allow music, and additional closing hours until 1 am.**

In accordance with article 21 of the License Federal Ordinance ("Vergunningslandsverordening"), the request with the relevant documents are available for public scrutiny, for a period of **two weeks**, after the publication date of this notice, at the Department of Economic Licenses at the Zoutsteeg # 3, Philipsburg. During that time objections can be entered in writing against the issuance of the requested licenses and or permit.

Sint Maarten,

Department of Economic Licenses

## MINISTRY OF HOUSING, SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Department of Inspection is looking for an enthusiastic, dynamic, experienced and educated professional to fill the following function:

### Technical Administrator (scale 7)

Tasks consist of the following, but are not limited to:

- Provides general administrative and clerical support including mailing, scanning, faxing and copying;
- Opens, sorts and distributes incoming correspondence;
- Sets up a planning for the staff's inspections;
- Performs data entry and scan documents;
- Assists in resolving any administrative problems;
- Answer calls from customers regarding their inquiries;
- Sets up internal technical letters and advices on topics concerning illegal building, building safety, permits and illegal usage of property;
- Coordinates documents between the Department of Permits and the Department of Inspection.

Knowledge and skills:

- 2+ years of hands on administrative support experience;
- Proficiency in MS Word, MS Excel and MS Outlook;
- Good communication skills in the Dutch and English language (verbal & written);
- Ability to prioritize assignments;
- Good attention to detail;
- Must be a team player, service minded result-oriented, accurate and confidential;
- Strong coordination skills.

For more information please visit our website on <http://www.sintmaartengov.org/government/Pages/Employment.aspx> or contact Mr. Henry Ellis, Head of the Inspection department, at ([henry.ellis@sintmaartengov.org](mailto:henry.ellis@sintmaartengov.org))

If you are the right candidate for this position above, please send your application letter and resume to [careers@sintmaartengov.org](mailto:careers@sintmaartengov.org) no later than March 11th, 2016.

## MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND LABOR

Is charged with ensuring accessible, comprehensive and sustainable quality products and services that address the needs of the population in the areas of public health, social development and labor.

Is looking for enthusiastic, dynamic, experienced, innovative and educated professionals to carry out the following functions:

Department of Public Health  
Senior Policy Advisor Health Care  
Senior Policy Environment & Hygiene  
Policy worker  
Administrative assistant

Collective Prevention Services  
Epidemiologist

Department of Social Development  
Policy worker

Labor Affairs  
Job Placement Officer

Department of Labor  
Department Head  
Mediator  
Policy worker

Inspectorate VSA  
Controller  
Complaints Officer

For more information please contact Ms. Shamika de Weever, Personnel Advisor at +1 (721) 5420371.

If you are the right candidate for the positions mentioned above, please send your application letter and resume to [careers@sintmaartengov.org](mailto:careers@sintmaartengov.org) no later than March 7th, 2016.

## Business Licence Card to help small businesses and safeguard consumers



PM Harris said Government continues to meet the demands of the national community.

ST. KITTS—The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis has followed through on suggestions by members of the national community to enhance the ease of doing business locally by overseeing the passage of the Licences on Businesses and Occupations (Amendment) Bill, 2016, in the Federal Parliament on February 19.

The Bill addressed the concerns of several business owners who had reported to the Inland Revenue Department that the legal requirement for entrepreneurs to prominently display their business licence in their respective place of business was proving to be difficult.

Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Dr. Timothy Harris, indicated that Government was cognizant that the system may not have been adequate for all businesses, particularly for professionals and tradesmen who do not operate from a fixed place of business. During the Budget address last December (2015), Dr. Harris announced plans to introduce a Business Licence Card for the appropriate businesses. The Licences on Businesses and Occupations (Amendment) Bill, 2016, provided the necessary legislative changes.

While piloting the Bill through Parliament on

February 19, Prime Minister Harris identified some of the main beneficiaries as “taxi operators, plumbers, driving instructors, architects, street vendors, electricians, surveyors, painters, tutors, and arts and craft makers.”

While the traditional business licence will still be issued on paper, the card represents a durable, portable option that assures the public that the holder of such is a bonafide entrepreneur with a business registered with the Inland Revenue Department.

“So we are responding to a felt need,” Prime Minister Harris said. “It is more a service that is being provided [rather – Ed.] than any intention to, as it were, gather monies. The basic fee ... of EC \$100 is basically to replace the funds that would be expended to get the card done and the administration of this.”

The Prime Minister added that the card will display a photo of the entrepreneur and other relevant information to “provide safeguards to the user of the service and the provider of the service.”

## Income Tax Amendment Bill passes, closes loopholes

ST. KITTS—Reforms in the tax structure of St. Kitts and Nevis are ongoing to ensure it protects the public interest, promotes harmony with national and regional systems, and meets the demands of a globalised economy.

Prime Minister Dr. Timothy Harris is championing these reforms in his capacity as Minister of Finance. One of the recent updates to the tax structure was passed in the Federal Parliament on February 19, in the form of the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2016.

“Economic activities have never been as global as they are today,” Dr. Harris stated, noting that international trade has brought about the removal of traditional national borders. He added that the global integration of national economies has deepened, the mobility of capital has accelerated, and the flow of capital and trade is enormous.

However, the Prime Minister added that smaller economies like St. Kitts and Nevis have a mobile tax base and as such rely heavily

on corporate income and withholding taxes. This also means that the economy is susceptible to the negative impact of harmful tax practices, which Government is attempting to avoid. Last December, Dr. Harris announced that he had instructed the Ministry of Finance, through the Inland Revenue Department, to carry out an assessment of existing legislation and practices in administering the local tax systems.

“This analysis has indicated that these systems are vulnerable to abuse by taxpayers who use different methods to avoid payment of their fair share of taxes to the Government,” Prime Minister Harris said. “Such methods include transfer pricing and other similar earnings-stripping techniques.”

The Prime Minister said the legislation was designed to “provide for all relevant parties to pay their fair share of the withholding tax. In our efforts to provide a level playing field and reduce the potential for the erosion of the tax base,

it has become necessary to amend the Withholding Tax Act to clarify branch and head office arrangements for the purposes of the application of the tax.”

Indemnity protection was also included to provide protection to local companies that pay the tax on behalf of overseas businesses and a new withholding tax rate from 10 to 15 per cent was approved for all businesses. The 15 per cent ceiling for the tax is in keeping with the range set by the Caribbean Community Caricom, of which St. Kitts and Nevis is a member state.

“It is important to note that the changes to the tax system are not new taxes,” Prime Minister Harris stated. “They are designed to remove loopholes in the tax system, broaden the tax base, simplify the process of determining taxpayer obligations and modernise the laws to meet regional and international standards. We are certain that these changes will provide greater clarity for businesses to meet their tax obligations.”



The “Strea Chiki” talent contest for children in Curaçao will be back for its third edition, organisers announced during a press conference. This year boys and girls ages 8-14 will compete in song and dance. Registration closes on March 12 with an informative session at the National Library from 3:00pm to 5:00pm. There will be auditions at the same location on March 19 and 20. The quarterfinals are scheduled for May 28 in the Sambil megamall, while the semi-finals and finals take place at International School on respectively August 13 and November 5. Meanwhile, the intention is for 2015 winner Sophie Torres and finalist Roxenia Rozal (standing behind table) to represent the island at the March 26 “Interscholastic International Idols” competition on St. Maarten.

## PM urges young people to reject life of violence

ST. KITTS—The Government of National Unity hosted a massive Sounds of Peace – Stop the Violence anti-crime concert at the Circus, Basseterre, on Friday evening, February 19.

The massive crowd was thrilled by a packed lineup which included folklore presentations, King Astro, Evolution, The Bacchanalist Band featuring Rucas HE, James Galloway, K-Jah, Shanna, Mod Stoney, Dejour, Mr. Bagnall, Nicha B, Infamus, Natural Mystic and Small Axe Band.

Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis Dr. Timothy Harris spoke to the thousands gathered for the event. After commending the organisers for a job well done, he said, “We are proud of the young people, who are committed to a life of peace and a life of prosperity.”

Prime Minister Harris added that his message was “that your Government will stand with the young people of St. Kitts who want to get on with their lives, who are committed to end

violence – violence in their homes, violence in their communities and violence in the country.”

Prime Minister Harris promised to do all that he can to ensure the continued development of the youth in the Federation saying, “We shall work together and we will mobilise a number of departments of the Government over the next few months to come up with an all-embracing policy that supports the development, empowerment and the success of young people.”

## Liburd blasts Govt. & Deputy Speaker

ST. KITTS—Parliamentary Representative for St. Christopher 2 (Central Basseterre) Marcella Liburd blasted Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Michael Perkins and the Government of Prime Minister Dr. Timothy Harris Wednesday for continuing to undermine democracy in the twin-island Federation.

Liburd, a former Speaker and Deputy Speaker, said the law-making body is there to protect and preserve democracy and the freedom of members to express the views of the people who elected them.

She referred to last Friday’s meeting of the law-making body called to coincide with a planned protest march in Basseterre by the opposition St. Kitts-Nevis Labour Party.

Liburd referred to the meeting chaired by Deputy Speaker Perkins as a “mockery, a travesty and was an

indication of how the Unity Government holds the people of St. Kitts and Nevis in contempt, ridicule and scorn.”

“It was an abuse of the Parliament and an abuse specifically of the item ‘Statement by Ministers,’ which should pertain to issues related to the portfolios of a Minister. It is not to abuse the Opposition and to make scandalous remarks. That is not what Statement by Ministers is about,” said Liburd, during Wednesday’s edition of “Issues” on Freedom FM 106.5.

She said the five-hour-long statements by Ministers were condoned by Deputy Speaker Perkins, who sat in the chair.

[It was – Ed.] “five long hours just to shut out the Opposition from debating the tax measures,” said Liburd, who pointed out that on February 5, the Labour Party applied to the Police

to stage a protest march on February 19. We got a notice for Parliament on the 12th of February. The Government knew we had applied for the protest march,” Liburd told listeners.

She further stated that she had credible information that the state-owned ZIZ Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) has been instructed not to rebroadcast the presentations in the National Assembly by Opposition parliamentarians.

“This never happened under the previous Labour Government. Whenever Parliament was replayed all presentations were rebroadcast whether you were on the Government side or the Opposition – not now,” said Liburd, who added that the behaviour of the Dr. Harris-led PLP/CCM/PAM Government “underscores the vindictiveness and deception that goes on.”



Refugee child.

## Ombudsman warns about 'lost generation' of refugee children

THE HAGUE--Underage refugees in the Netherlands risk becoming a "lost generation" unless the standard of care in asylum facilities improves dramatically, the children's ombudsman has warned.

In a damning report, Marc Dullaert said the system was too slow and offered

inadequate support to children who arrived in the country with emotional or psychological problems. "In some places children have to wait weeks before they can go to school, even though education offers them the structure they need," Dullaert told NOS.

Education Minister Sand-

er Dekker admitted in a letter to Parliament this week that Government had no idea how many of the 12,000 refugee children in the Netherlands were at school, RTL Nieuws reported.

By law children are supposed to start attending classes within 72 hours of arriving, but in practice this is rare.

Dullaert noted that some children were being forced to move up to 10 times a year as the authorities struggle to find a place for their families. "The many moves and poor accommodation facilities mean they are unable to settle," he said. Some families have to wait two years to be reunited, causing "even more damage" to vulnerable children, Dullaert said.

He also expressed concern for underage orphaned children who risk "falling between two stools" when they turn 18. "The risk is that they end up in the Salvation Army's night shelter," he said.

Dullaert called for more efforts to be made to ensure children who arrive from war zones are integrated into Dutch society quickly so they can lead normal lives. "If we don't invest in them we risk having a lost generation on the margins of society," he said.



Oil tanker off Rotterdam.

## Oil tankers queue up, wait for higher prices

ROTTERDAM--Some forty oil tankers are waiting off the coast of Rotterdam for an improvement in oil prices, broadcaster Nos says on Thursday afternoon.

While drilling for oil continues apace, traders are unable to sell sufficient volumes and overproduction has led to full onshore storage tanks, the broadcaster said.

Rotterdam port spokesman Sjaak Poppe told Nos that the number of ships waiting is far higher than usual. Most are not waiting to discharge their loads, but for a better moment to sell, such as rising oil prices.

Other shipping is not being hindered by the stationary tankers because they are restricted to areas earmarked for waiting ships, Poppe said.

## Most job seekers end up on flexible contracts

THE HAGUE--Seven out of 10 unemployed people who got a new job last year, ended up on a flexible contract, according to new figures from national statistics office CBS. Just one in eight job seekers found a permanent job, a drop from one in five 10 years ago, CBS said.

Part-time work is also on the rise. Some 37 per cent of those who found a job had a contract for more than 35 hours a week, down from 42 per cent in 2005. "The fear of having to do part-time work your whole life is becoming a reality for increasing numbers of

people," CNV union leader Maurice Limmen told broadcaster NOS in a reaction.

"A job should provide the reassurance that you'll be able to buy a house or follow a training course, but that reassurance is disappearing," Limmen said.

## Ukraine referendum: should 'yes' supporters vote or not?

THE HAGUE--The "no" campaign may be well ahead in the forthcoming Dutch referendum on the EU treaty with Ukraine, but there is a real risk not enough people will vote to validate it, according to experts at *De Algemeen Dagblad*.

If the vote were held today, the referendum is unlikely to gather enough votes, Peter Kanne of I&O Research told the paper. At least 30 per cent of the electorate have to vote for the referendum to have any legal status.

I&O research indicates around 30 per cent of the electorate are planning to vote on April 6. "We've still got six weeks to go, so it could be exciting," Kanne said. Some 38 per cent plan to vote against the treaty, 32 per cent back it and 30 per cent are still undecided.

The big question among "yes" voters is whether or not to vote at all, the newspaper pointed out. If turnout is less than 30 per cent,

the government does not have to take the referendum into account, whatever the outcome.

GroenLinks youth organisation DWARS, for example, is urging voters to stay at home, a position which Kanne condemns for "belittling" those who oppose the treaty. "The "yes" supporters tend to back D66, GroenLinks and the Labour party, Kanne said.

"These are the very parties which introduced the law making referenda possible. If they start saying

'stay home', you are ignoring the unease and feeding political cynicism."

The Dutch Parliament has already voted in favour of the treaty and the referendum only has an advisory role. Ministers have said they will "look seriously" at the outcome. Home Affairs Minister Ronald Plasterk has urged voters not to think tactically. "Go and vote," he is quoted as saying by the paper. "That is the logical and democratic approach."

## Amsterdam remembers WWII strike for Jews

AMSTERDAM--Amsterdam marked the 75th anniversary of the mass strike in the city triggered by the detention of 427 Jewish men during World War II.

Trams, buses and the metro stopped for one minute at 11:00am, and passengers heard a recorded message from Mayor Eberhard van der Laan about the February strike of 1941. The strike is considered to be the only mass protest against the Nazi round-up of the Jews.

King Willem-Alexander attended a memorial ceremony at the Dockworker statue in Amsterdam at 4:00pm, which was broadcast live on television.

## Children of Amsterdam's crime bosses end up in jail

AMSTERDAM--Almost all the sons of Amsterdam's most notorious crime bosses have ended up with criminal records and half have done jail time, according to research by Amsterdam's VU University.

Researcher Meintje van Dijk used Police, Justice Department and social work files to look into 25 crime families. The investigation focused on 44 children aged 19 to 33, with an average age of 23. She found nine out of 10 sons had been in trouble with the police and half had been jailed for assault or possession of weapons.

One had been killed in a gangland shooting. "This is a very high score and much higher than we would expect based on research into "ordinary criminal families," *De Volkskrant* quoted her as saying.

Daughters are less likely to get involved in crime themselves, but often marry or have relationships with men with a criminal background. "If you look at it cynically, you can say the women from criminal families allow the men to get on with it and profit from the crime just as much," Van Dijk said.

"Criminal parents take their children with them into their world," Amsterdam Police spokeswoman Hanneke Ekelmans told the paper. "The children get completely the wrong idea of what is normal."

Of the 44 children studied, 95 per cent had spent time without their father because he was in jail, 90 per cent had divorced parents and one in three had lost their father in a gangland killing.

## NS should compensate passengers for no seats

THE HAGUE--Dutch national railway company NS should pay compensation to passengers who have to stand because trains are too crowded, according to organisation ConsumentenClaim which specialises in mass claims.

"We think train passengers should be compensated for at least 50 per cent of the cost of their journey for as long as the problems with crowded trains are not solved," Director Stef Smit told BNR Radio on Thursday morning. The organisation accuses the NS of bad management because the problems with crowded trains, which began last September, were avoidable.

The rail company knew in 2014 there would be a shortage of trains between 2015 and 2017, and did not take adequate steps to solve the problem. It should have ordered new trains earlier to replace the old trains being taken out of service and used buses to provide extra capacity.

The NS did not comment on financial compensation in its reaction, according to news site Nu.nl. "We offer a place in our trains, not a seat," a spokesman said. "But, we are doing all we can to give passengers a good journey."

On Monday, the NS introduced buses on some routes during rush-hour. The company is also changing first-class compartments into second class to free up more seats. There was a record number of complaints about overcrowding in 2015, with most of them coming from passengers in Utrecht, followed by Woerden, Hilversum and Amsterdam Central.

# Venezuela Govt. accused of Zika virus cover-up

CARACAS, Venezuela—Venezuelan opposition legislator José Manuel Olivares has added his voice to claims that the country has under-reported hundreds of thousands of cases of the Zika virus currently sweeping the region.

Olivares' assertion joins similar concerns shared by everyone from members of the local medical fraternity to the Health Minister of neighbouring Colombia.

"I hope that President Nicolas Maduro will not continue putting policy and ideology before the health and life of Venezuelans," said Olivares, who also claims that the socialist country lacks the necessary supplies to effectively combat the outbreak.

Olivares, chair of the sub-committee on health in Venezuela's National Assembly, estimates that between 400,000 and 500,000 Venezuelans have contracted the Zika virus.

He recently visited Washington to appeal for aid

from the World Health Organisation (WHO).

"What we did was provide continuity to the declaration of the humanitarian health crisis that the Venezuelan Parliament made," he told *Infobae*.

"This declaration seeks to solve the health crisis in the country, marking a roadmap to seek solutions to the deep crisis of health, lack of medicines, increases in the levels of maternal mortality, cancer mortality, and child mortality."

Last month, Venezuela's Pharmaceutical Federation declared a "humanitarian emergency," announcing that 150 drugs were completely unavailable nationwide.

Some pharmacies had even resorted to selling veterinary medications to people as a last resort, they said.

On February 12, the Government confirmed three deaths related to Zika while also noting an in-

crease in the rare Guillain-Barré syndrome.

President Maduro said officials only confirmed 319 cases of Zika, but doctors have monitored 5,221 suspected cases since February 8. At that time, doctors documented 21 deaths related to the syndrome.

Olivares accused the Government of lying.

"In its first statement about Zika, the Government says it has only 3,000 suspected cases and acknowledges 255 cases of the Guillain-Barré syndrome," he said.

"When one reviews the literature, you realise that one in 1,000 to 2,000 cases of Zika developed the syndrome. That is the statistic.

"This means the numbers don't add up. This is a big lie from the Government because if you have 255 Guillain-Barré cases you cannot have 3,000 suspected cases of Zika. You have to have at least 250,000..."

"From November to the

first week of February there were almost 360,000 cases of fever. We do not know why. They are extras and different from those expected these months. We maintain that there are 400,000 to 500,000 cases of Zika in Venezuela."

His statements echoed concerns expressed by Colombian Health Minister Alejandro Gaviria, who claimed that Venezuela has hidden hundreds of thousands of Zika cases, which could cause major problems for the other South and Central American countries fighting the disease.

Gaviria insists the socialist country is the weakest link in the fight because officials have "no systematic reporting of the data." The lack of data worries Colombian officials because the countries share borders.

The Norte de Santander province of Colombia, which shares a border with Venezuela, has the highest number of Zika cases in Colombia. It also has the largest amount of pregnant women with the virus.

"This is a serious problem," Gaviria said.

In Venezuela, the local medical community has demanded that officials publish all statistics on the Zika virus. The publication of epidemic lists ceased last year.

"The Ministry of Health must be the first to issue warnings about the existence of a public health threat; they cannot be the last one to speak," said Jose Oletta, former Health Minister who now works with the Network to Defend National Epidemiology.

"We already have a weakened healthcare system, which tends to make these problems spread more rapidly. Add to that the lack of information and it's a perfect storm."

Meanwhile, the Venezuelan Society of Public Health claimed surveys from non-governmental organisations discovered "a rise of acute fever in the past six months that could correspond to 400,000 cases of Zika."

China recently confirmed its first Zika case after a 34-year-old man returned from Venezuela. ~ *Caribbean360* ~



American Kari Anne Way (left) and Jamaican Howard Anderson died in the accident. (Photo: Virgin Islands News Online)



Stephen Fossi has until February 29 to pay the fines. (Photo: Virgin Islands News Online)

## Captain fined for deaths of two workmates in BVI boat accident

ROAD TOWN, British Virgin Islands—A New Zealand national in the British Virgin Islands (BVI) has been fined US \$45,000 on each of two manslaughter charges, more than a year after a boat he captained crashed into a reef and killed two work colleagues.

On February 24, a day after he was found guilty, a High Court judge gave Stephen Fossi five days to pay the US \$90,000 in relation to the deaths of Jamaican Howard Anderson and American Kari Anne Way. If he does not pay up by next Monday he will have to spend two years behind bars.

Anderson and Way, both of whom worked with Fossi at the Oil Nut Bay, a residential development located on the eastern peninsula of Virgin Gorda, were among passengers on the inflatable vessel, *The Inevitable*, which reportedly struck a rock in the vicinity of Cow Mouth, near Leverick Bay, on January 24, 2015.

Fossi (43), and three other workmates were also injured in the accident.

The boat occupants had been travelling back to Oil Nut Bay after being out for entertainment, when the accident occurred.

Fossi was at the time employed at Oil Nut Bay as the director of marine operations, a position he held for 10 years. ~ *Caribbean360* ~

## Groningen wins for worst Dutch university slogan vote

GRONINGEN—Groningen University's slogan "Born leaders reach for infinity" has been voted most stupid university catch phrase in the country in an online poll. The poll was organised by a website set up by academics and students with the aim of improving higher education in the Netherlands

Amsterdam University's 'We are U' was second on the list, followed by Leiden's *Excelleren in Vrijheid* (Excel in Freedom). More than 3,200 people took part in the vote.

In the meantime, according to *Het Parool*, Groningen has a new slogan "Think Bold" which as several people have already pointed out, is not correct English.

The platform which organised the competition says the use of slogans shows how "pointless advertising" and branding is in helping turn universities into economic units. "They are based on a vision of a university as a company that needs to be placed in the market, and that leads to money-wasting competition between them," the organisation said. The website team is now investigating the cost of the campaigns.

## McCoy calls for condemnation of 'nasty politics, hate and spite'

GEORGETOWN, Guyana—Former Press and Publicity Officer under the former PPP/C administration, Kwame McCoy said the extent of nasty politics, hate and spite being directed at him and other Afro-Guyanese in the People's Progressive Party, in such "fast and furious manner", must be condemned outright.

McCoy, in a statement Thursday, said he is overtly convinced that the "barrage of political plots" has been designed to make him a victim of the People's National Congress (PNC) —type politics of targeting Afro-Guyanese in the forefront of the PPP for all sorts of harassment.

"The pernicious political persecution and witch-hunt is obvious, active and vicious at this time of our history. No doubt those with their sinister objectives and ulterior motives are set to destroy my character... most Guyanese witnessed last Monday's (February 22, 2016) episode of the kind of political behaviour as displayed outside the Georgetown Magistrate's

Court and to which I have been subjected most of my adult life...political players outside the Court sufficiently exposed the diabolic plan at work," McCoy said in his statement.

Meanwhile, the Former Press and Publicity Officer slammed a *Kaieteur News* article published yesterday under the title 'Kwame McCoy gun butt victim says he was forced to flee Guyana' stating that by printing such a story the newspaper is demonstrating its "anti-PPP loyalty" in collaboration with those in command of an archaic and oppressive political agenda.

"This article no doubt plays into the design to present me as a violent person in the first place. The conviction against my name is currently under appeal and for that reason I don't wish to go too much into details at this time, except to recognise the extent to which some people would go to destroy your character for political gains. The other party in this matter, Mr. Stewart, is absolutely aware that his political stunt paid off because I am the one

who got a wrong deal as a victim of miscarriage of justice," McCoy said.

He also stated that time will reveal the level of the other party's "wickedness". McCoy explained that it was not until the recent Court appearance that he knew who Stewart was (meeting him for the first time).

McCoy further stated that there was never any altercation between himself and Stewart and that it must be noted that the man had no witness to support his claim of a story which allegedly occurred on the busy Durban Street thoroughfare.

"Mr. Stewart used two of his friends to extract money out of me in this matter. I never acceded to his demand because of the certainty of my innocence. One of his friend with whom I share an excellent relationship did confide in me that he was the kind of individual who would make such allegations for the purpose of money...I have never contemplated, initiated or executed a crime," McCoy maintained.



Oil Well.

## Oil exploration activities in Guyana waters intensify

GEORGETOWN, Guyana—Oil exploration efforts have intensified following the discovery of commercial quantities of oil in Guyana's Maritime Zone.

Esso Exploration and Production Guyana Ltd. (EEP-GL) has commenced a meteorological and oceanographic survey in the Stabroek Block, scheduled to be completed during May 2018.

And March 9 will see the commencement of seismic surveys within the Canje block for a period of six months.

Minister of Natural Resources Raphael Trotman told the National Assembly

that there is growing interest in Guyana's hydrocarbons, and as such, Exxon Mobil will also undertake further exploratory drilling of another well.

"The time has never been as propitious for petroleum exploration, as the low prices have led to a high availability, at good prices, of specialised skills, exploratory rigs and equipment, all of which make exploration very encouraging," he said.

The Ministry of Natural Resources will be placing significant emphasis on capacity building during 2016, with the development of a framework for a Petroleum

Agency and the conceptualisation of an institute in collaboration with the Education Ministry.

International Development partners have signalled a willingness to train young Guyanese to assume responsibility to lead the petroleum industry in the decades ahead.

Anticipating the finances that will be garnered from the oil sector, a Sovereign Wealth Fund will be developed. This will protect the economy from the volatile nature of mineral revenues, and help grow and modernise the sustainable non-extractive sectors of the economy. ~ *Caribbean360* ~

## CDB predicts slower growth for region

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados—Caribbean Governments have been urged to speed up legal and regulatory reform amid predictions of slower economic growth for the region, following last year's mixed fortunes.

The advice came from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) which said that overall growth remained sluggish. In its annual review of the performance of regional Borrowing Member Countries (BMCs), the Bank said the global economic difficulties of 2015, including the slowdown in China and its effect on markets elsewhere, had an overall negative impact on the region.

The vulnerability caused by a heavy reliance on overseas markets, as well as the impact of natural disasters such as storms and drought particularly in Dominica and The Bahamas, stymied growth. In some BMCs, the reduction in Correspondent Banking Relationships (CBRs) threatened the financial systems and real economies.

Recovery in the regional tourism market continued last year with most destinations seeing increases in visitor arrivals; and many reported higher numbers



CDB president Dr. Warren Smith (left) addressing the Bank's annual media conference. At left is Director of Economics Dr. Justin Ram.

of the more lucrative stay-over visitors. Along with these positive trends, there was an uptick in tourism-related construction. As a result, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, and the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) each experienced growth of more than four per cent. For some of the larger countries, such as The Bahamas and Barbados, the positive tourism impact on growth was more modest.

At the same time, the region's five major commodity exporters – Belize, Guyana, Haiti, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago – had lower growth than in 2014 as commodity prices fell. Significantly, Trinidad and Tobago grew by just 0.2 per cent. The main reason was a decline in petroleum output, as falling oil prices led to a cut back in some exploratory activities; some oil and gas fields matured; and there were prolonged periods of maintenance activity. LNG output also fell.

The CDB noted that joblessness within the region remained high.

"Many BMCs for which 2015 labour force data were available continued to experience double-digit rates of unemployment. On the other hand, unemployment fell in Jamaica, Belize and also in Barbados, despite that country experiencing public sector layoffs and constrained employment creation in the private sector," it said.

In the area of trade performance, the region's biggest oil and gas exporter, Trinidad and Tobago saw its surplus in 2014 become a deficit in 2015. Suriname's deficit deteriorated on the back of weaker oil and gold prices. These movements also lowered the value of Guyana's exports, but the trade deficit

narrowed due to a reduced import bill.

The non-oil producing BMCs saw reductions in their import bills.

The CDB said that with high debt servicing remaining a big challenge for a number of countries, some continued to see improved performances.

In its overall assessment, CDB said that a number of global uncertainties will continue to impact the Region. It is projecting the region will grow by just 0.3 per cent in 2016, but noted that this growth rate was insufficient to address employment, equality and poverty reduction issues. The Bank said higher rates of economic growth are needed, as well as other measures.

CDB suggested that its BMCs need to be Dynamic, Export-oriented, Competitive, Inclusive, Diverse and Environmentally-resilient economies (DECIDE), in order to achieve rates of growth on a par with other fast-growing developing countries.

"This will require that BMCs focus on private sector led growth; developing educated and flexible workforces, regional integration to maximise gains; Governments becoming business facilitators and efficient regulators; and the region achieving a high level of energy security," it said.

"CDB's 2015/2016 research programme – looking at poverty; helping MSMEs; and improving port operations – will identify a number of policy actions that could advance the region's sustainable growth agenda. In addition, CDB will continue to work with its BMCs to address the other measures identified, helping them towards DECIDE." ~ *Caribbean360* ~

## Bodies of two schoolboys found in forested area

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad—The Trinidad Guardian is reporting that the two bodies found in a forested area in St Augustine on Tuesday evening were identified Wednesday as teenage schoolboys Stephan Singh and Daniel Halls.

In a week in which the national conversation was on troublesome students, particularly teenaged boys and their links to school violence and gangs, how the two came to be target of killers yesterday once again drove home just how real a concern it is.



Trinidad schoolboys, Stephan Singh and Daniel Halls were found murdered.

According to police reports, around 4:40pm Tuesday, residents of St John's Road heard gunshots and alerted the police. Officers responded and

found the bodies of Singh, 17 and Halls, 16. Police said they were told that the teens were seen as part of a group of five entering the bushes and after

the shooting, only the two deceased were found. Singh, a student of Trinity East College, had an empty revolver on him.

Police said they had not ruled out the possibility that the other three people who entered the bush with them were suspects but they were still searching the area for them as possible victims of a crime.

But police said they believed the teens had gone to either purchase drugs or to steal from someone's marijuana garden when they were ambushed and killed. Police also speculated that the two boys may have been set up to be killed by the other three missing people.

In speaking about her son Wednesday, Halls' mother, Joy, referred to the Old Testament admonition handed down to the Jews by God for children to obey their parents lest their lives be shortened.

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Wreckage lays on the ground as utility workers clean up a day after it was hit by a tornado in Waverly Virginia on Thursday.

## Rescue crews, residents comb storm wreckage

WAVERLY, Virginia—Residents and rescue crews on Thursday combed through wreckage left by storms that lashed the eastern United States, killing at least eight people and injuring scores across a number of states, officials said.

The storm system on Wednesday pounded the Carolinas and Virginia with high winds, hail and heavy rain. Flood warnings were in place from Maryland to Maine.

The worst-hit area of Virginia was Waverly, a town about 130 miles (210 km) south of Washington, where a tornado packing winds of up to 110 miles (176 km) per hour carved a path 300 yards (274 meters) wide and nine miles (14.5 km) long.

Two Waverly men and a 2-year-old boy were killed when the twister demolished their mobile home. Their bodies were found about 300 yards (meters) away.

"It's hard to imagine what people went through when the storm was going on last night," Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe told reporters in the town, where streets and yards were filled with debris and downed trees.

Another man was killed near Appomattox. A State Police spokeswoman said that a fifth death was still unconfirmed.

William Brown, 71, of Petersburg, Virginia, said he was knocked un-

conscious when a tree fell on his truck as he tried to escape the storm in Waverly. When he came to, he found that the mobile home he had been next to - and where the victims had been - was flattened.

"Every once in a while God lets us know who is in charge of things," said Brown as he watched a crane try to lift the tree off his vehicle.

National Guard troops were expected to be deployed across the state to clear downed trees and to open roads, officials said. A Virginia emergency management spokesman said at least 40 people had been injured and almost 160 homes or businesses had been destroyed or dam-

aged.

In South Carolina, a man died on Wednesday when he was struck by a falling tree. Tornadoes pummeled Louisiana and Mississippi on Tuesday, killing at least three people.

In North Carolina, Governor Pat McCrory said about 21,000 homes and businesses were without power, but there had been no reports of serious injuries or deaths.

The National Weather Service said the storm system would continue to push northward into Canada on Thursday. Snow and gusty winds were forecast across part of the Appalachian Mountains, the Great Lakes and New England.

## Gunman kills up to four in Kansas shooting spree

KANSAS--An employee killed up to four people and wounded as many as 20 others in a shooting spree that ended at his work site in Hesston, Kansas on Thursday where he was shot and killed by authorities, the local sheriff told reporters.

The gunman opened fire at Excel Industries, after police had earlier received reports around 5 p.m. local time of gunshots on nearby streets which were connected to the workplace attack, Harvey County Sheriff T. Walton said at a news conference.

"This is just a horrible

incident that's happened here," Walton said. "There are going to be a lot of sad people before this is all over."

The shooter killed three or four people, and wounded as many as 20 others, the sheriff said. He said the suspect was driving and shooting from his car before he was killed by authorities inside the Excel building.

A spokesman for the local Via Christi Hospital St. Francis said they have taken in six patients from the shooting, with five in serious condition and one in fair condition. Wesley

## Republican Sandoval withdraws as possible Supreme Court pick

WASHINGTON--Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval, a moderate Republican, took himself out of consideration for appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday as Senate Republicans dug in on their vow not to act on any nominee by President Barack Obama.

Asked if the White House was disappointed by Sandoval's decision, Obama spokesman Josh Earnest told reporters, "He's obviously entitled to make decisions about his own career."

Sandoval's name surfaced as a possible nominee on Wednesday, but Senate Republicans quickly said they still would not hold hearings or vote on any Obama nominee to fill the Supreme Court vacancy left by the Feb. 13 death of conservative Justice Antonin Scalia. Obama's appointee could pivot the court to the left for the first time in decades.

Sandoval, a Mexican-American who was Nevada's first Hispanic governor, did not offer a reason for his withdrawal.

"Earlier today, I notified the White House that I do not wish to be considered at this time for possible nomination to the Supreme Court of the United States," he said in a statement. "The notion of being considered for a seat on the highest court in the land is beyond humbling and I

am incredibly grateful to have been mentioned."

Earlier on Thursday, Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton expressed concern about Sandoval, urging Obama to pick a "true progressive." But Nancy Pelosi, the top House of Representatives Democrat, called it a "good idea" for Obama to consider Republicans as well as Democrats. The Republican-led Senate must confirm any nominee.

Sandoval, 52, was appointed a judge by Republican President George W. Bush before becoming governor. He took a traditional Republican stance backing gun rights but held more moderate views on social issues, supporting abortion rights.

Obama will meet next Tuesday with Senate Republican and Democratic

leaders regarding a court nominee, officials said. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley said they will use the meeting to reiterate the Republican stance that the Senate will not act on any Supreme Court nominee until the next president takes office in January 2017, following the Nov. 8 presidential election. Republicans hope to win back the White House then.

The fight over the nomination got nastier as Grassley accused Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid of "childish tantrums" after Reid called Grassley the most obstructionist Judiciary Committee chairman ever. Reid responded: "A childish tantrum, when we're asking him to do his job?"

## Latino coalition releases policy agenda for election

WASHINGTON--A coalition of some of the largest U.S. Latino organizations on Thursday laid out a raft of policies that, they say, presidential candidates and other politicians must heed to earn the votes of the growing group of voters.

The National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), which includes 40 national and regional groups, recommended policies on everything from economic security, education and comprehensive immigration reform to the environment and health.

For Latino communities and the politicians seeking their votes - including candidates in the November 2016 presidential election - the agenda is a "road map," said Hector Sanchez, the chairman of the NHLA. "For the next four years, this is our guide for collaborating with Congress and collaborating with the White House," he added.

The agenda underscores the growing power of Latinos as a part of the electorate, as presidential candidates have sought to win over those voters on the way to the White House. Latinos are among the nation's fastest growing ethnic groups, and, because of lower voter turnout levels

in the past, represent a portion of some of the largest untapped voters.

The campaigns of both Democratic contenders for the presidency, for example, have recently argued over who actually won the Hispanic vote at last week's Nevada caucus. While former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton won the state overall, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders said that entrance polls show he won Hispanics. The Clinton campaign disputes those numbers.

The NHLA's agenda recommends expanding job opportunities, improving retirement security and increasing support for homeownership.

Under immigration, the group wants to see comprehensive immigration reform - a hot button issue in this year's election. The group wants a path to citizenship, protections for immigrant workers and family reunification provisions, among other items.

"The NHLA also supports addressing the root causes of forced migration and opposes efforts that call into question the citizenship of persons born in the United States," the group wrote in the 2016 Hispanic Public Policy Agenda.

## Italy's 5-Star bids for the big time in Rome

ROME--Italy's anti-establishment 5-Star Movement (M5S) candidate for mayor of Rome made her debut speech on Thursday, promising a break with corruption and mismanagement as the party makes its bid to prove it is ready for national government.

The 37-year-old lawyer and city councillor is running to replace a team of unelected bureaucrats who stepped in after former Mayor Ignazio Marino, from Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's Democratic Party (PD), resigned in an expenses scandal.

"This will not be easy, let's be clear about that," Virginia Raggi, who surveys show has a strong chance of winning, told journalists at the foreign press club in Rome. "We have to govern a city that has been raped for years by bad politics and a terrible administration."

Running the capital would be the biggest test yet for M5S, among the most successful anti-establishment parties that sprung up in Europe during the financial crisis. It is now Italy's second-largest after the PD.

Rome's last two mayors, from the center-left and center-right, both left office mired in scandal. But M5S's record running 16 small local administrations has been blotted by a rubbish crisis in the Tuscan city of Livorno and mafia allegations in a district of Naples, which were seized upon by

opponents as a sign it is not fit to govern.

Rome, where a major mafia trial is raking over years of alleged systemic corruption that reached right up into city hall, would hold far bigger challenges as well as the opportunity of a high-profile springboard to challenge Renzi. Raggi insisted M5S was "more than ready, more than mature," to take on services such as transport and waste collection which are widely deemed inadequate for a major European capital.

Anger at a corrupt and inefficient political class fueled M5S's ascent from its founding by comedian Beppe Grillo in 2009 to reaching 25 percent of votes at national elections in 2013. Tempers have already flared over the mayoral campaign, in which Raggi's most likely opponents are Guido Bertolaso, an ex-civil protection chief who is expected to run for the center-right, and Renzi ally Roberto Giacchetti of the PD.

Bertolaso faces trial in two cases related to his former role as civil protection chief, one of which concerned his handling of the 2009 earthquake that killed 300 people in the central city of L'Aquila. He denies wrongdoing.

The traditional parties are due to hold primary elections for their candidates in early March.



A member from the French prefecture (L) assists migrants who queue to embark on a bus that will take them to Strasbourg after they decided to leave a camp for migrants called the "jungle", in Calais, northern France, on Thursday.

## French judge allows partial demolition of Calais "jungle"

CALAIS, France--A French judge on Thursday upheld a government plan to partially demolish a shanty town near the port of Calais for migrants trying to reach Britain, an official spokesman said.

"The order is applicable, except for common social areas," the spokesman for the Pas-de-Calais prefect's office said. "So it won't be applicable to places such as schools, a theatre and a legal office."

An official deadline expired on Tuesday for at least 1,000 migrants to leave the southern part of the so-called "jungle" camp, on the outskirts of the northern French port town. Authorities have said they will use force if necessary to move them to alternative accom-

modation in a nearby container park and other reception centres.

Their repeated efforts to force their way through the Channel Tunnel or to stow away aboard trucks have disrupted traffic across the vital link between France and Britain, caused tension with the local population and forced French police to maintain a large deployment in the area.

Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said the evacuation would be gradual and that there were sufficient places for all either in the region or elsewhere in France. "Carrying out a brutal eviction in the south part of Calais with bulldozers was never envisaged," he said on Thursday.

Calais mayor Natacha

Bouchart said on BFM TV she was relieved by the decision by the administrative court in the regional capital, Lille. "We will be vigilant about what is going to happen in the coming hours, and extremely vigilant about what happens in the coming days," Bouchart said.

The court did not immediately publish details of the decision by Judge Valerie Quemener, who was responding to an appeal by some 250 residents and nine charity groups for an injunction suspending the evacuation. Maya Konforti, who works with local association Auberge des Migrants, told Reuters the charities would file an appeal with France's top administrative court.

Altogether some 4,000 people are believed to live in the "jungle", down from about 6,000 in September. The authorities would like to see this number fall to around 2,000.

## French teacher to stand trial over charges of making up Islamic attack

MARSEILLE, France--A teacher at a Jewish school in the southern French city of Marseille will stand trial in April after investigators concluded that he falsely reported being stabbed by Islamic State supporters, the prosecutors said on Thursday.

Five days after the Nov. 13 attacks in which Islamic State militants killed 130 people in Paris, Marseille teacher Sylvain Saadoun had said he had been stabbed by three people, one of them wearing an Islamic State T-shirt. "The latest forensics expertise leads us to conclude ... that the most likely hypothesis is self-mutilation," the prosecutor's office said in a statement.

The teacher's account of the events "was not corroborated by the first checks carried out by the rescue workers, nor by the forensic experts," the statement said.

In December, another teacher in a district near Paris said he had been assaulted by an Islamic State supporter, causing classes to be cancelled and an anti-terrorism investigation. Hours later, authorities said the teacher had "totally invented" the attack.

Charges filed against the teacher were dropped due to procedural errors. Both cases caused a stir in France as they occurred at a time of high tension after a declaration of a state of emergency in the wake of the Paris carnage.

### Check this Saturday's The Daily Herald Weekender for:

- AUC Community Action Day
- The return of Jesus Christ Superstar!
- Under the Sea Grape Tree: Neighbors
- Passionate Foodie: La Dolce Vita
- Night Sky: Staying in Synch
- Classic Cars: the Healeys
- Do-it-yourself with Eve!
- Digital Buzz: What's next?

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## Europe's free travel will end unless Turkey halts migrants

BRUSSELS--Europe's cherished free-travel zone will shut down unless Turkey acts to cut the number of migrants heading north through Greece by March 7, European Union officials said on Thursday.

Their declaration came as confrontations grow increasingly rancorous among European countries trying to cope with the influx of refugees. Those recriminations culminated in Greece's recalling its ambassador to Austria on Thursday.

"In the next ten days, we need tangible and clear results on the ground," the top EU migration official, Dimitris Avramopoulos, said after EU justice and home affairs ministers met in Brussels on Thursday. "Otherwise there is a danger, there is a risk that the whole system will completely break down."

EU leaders are now pinning their hopes on talks with Turkey on March 7 and their own migration summit on March 18-19. The two meetings look like

their final chance to revive a flailing joint response to the crisis before warmer weather encourages more arrivals across the Mediterranean.

Seven European states have already restored border controls within the creaking Schengen passport-free zone. More said they would unilaterally tighten border controls unless a deal with Turkey shows results before the two March summits. That deal promises Turkey 3 billion euros (\$3.3 billion) in aid to help it shelter refugees from the Syrian war, in return for preventing their travelling on to Europe.

"By March 7, we want a significant reduction in the number of refugees at the border between Turkey and Greece," German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere said. "Otherwise, there will have to be other joint, coordinated European measures."

Germany has been pushing the Turkey plan hard. Many other EU states are increasingly frustrated and



Refugees carry their children through a national motorway towards the Greek-Macedonian border near the Greek town of Polykastro after ignoring warnings from Greek authorities that the border is shut, as hundreds of migrants set off on the country's main north-south motorway to Idomeni border crossing on Thursday.

sceptical, though. Another 110,000 people have arrived on the continent so far this year, mostly from Turkey via Greece, after more than a million arrived last year.

"The 6th of March, the 7th of March is when you can expect the spring influx to rise. We have until that time to find solutions ... " said Klaas Dijkhoff, migration minister for the Netherlands, which now holds

the EU's rotating presidency.

"If that doesn't lead to lower numbers, we'll have to find other measures and we'll have to do more contingency planning," he said. NATO has agreed to send ships to the Aegean to help fight people-trafficking, and one military official said the aim was to have the mission running before March 7.

The crisis was exacerbated

when German Chancellor Angela Merkel last year waived EU procedures to take in hundreds of thousands of Syrians. Mutual recriminations have sabotaged efforts to share the burden systematically ever since.

"We have no policy any more. We are heading into anarchy," said Jean Asselborn, Luxembourg's foreign minister.

## One million West Africans still stateless

DAKAR--More than 20,000 people in West Africa have gained identity documents in the past year as part of a drive to eradicate statelessness, yet around one million in the region still have no nationality, the United Nations said on Thursday.

Stateless people, sometimes referred to as legal ghosts, are not accepted as citizens by any country, which means they are denied basic rights - leaving many unable to work or access healthcare - and are vulnerable to exploitation and traffickers. Many West Africans are left stateless by laws which prevent women passing their nationality to their children and a lack of birth registrations, the U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR) said.

Around 22,000 people in Ivory Coast, Benin and Mali have received identity documents or birth certificates since the 15-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) signed a declaration in January last year that it would end statelessness. "Thousands of people who, until now, did not have a determined nationality, will come out of the shadows," said UNHCR regional representative for West Africa Liz Ahua.

"Thanks to the reforms currently being implemented in several states in West Africa, these men, women and children will finally be able to obtain a legal identity," she added.

Around one million people are thought to be stateless or at risk of statelessness in West Africa, according to the UNHCR. Yet Ivory Coast, where statelessness helped fuel a decade of civil wars, is the only nation in the region to give an estimate - some 700,000 people - of the number of individuals living in limbo, so the figure could be far higher, experts say.

Several West African countries have adopted action plans to tackle the issue, the UNHCR said. Guinea, Burkina Faso, Liberia and Togo are reviewing their nationality laws, while Senegal is working on a law to protect children from being born stateless. "Thousands of children in West Africa, such as street children, are not declared at birth... they can be easily exploited by human traffickers or forced to work," said UNHCR senior regional protection officer Emmanuelle Mitte.

## "You saved my life": Attack survivors seek solace with Bataclan security man

PARIS--Thirty-five-year-old Didi saved scores of lives on Nov. 13 when Islamic State militants attacked the Bataclan concert hall where he was in charge of security. Now those he saved say they turn to him for solace. They meet, mostly in cafes, just to be together, to chat and support each other.

"It was just surreal to see him show such composure, and be methodical and efficient, and also so human ... we lapped up everything he said, he was our point of reference," says Myriam, a survivor who regularly meets up with him.

And while Didi, an Algerian who asked not to give his full name, says he is no hero, Myriam said meeting him is helping her move on. Like other survivors of the attacks, in which 90 were killed, she sought him out for weeks to say "Thank you."

"It was very important, it was key for me to feel better and move on with life. Being able to say thank



Didi (C), a security guard at the Bataclan concert hall, speaks with Emmanuel Domenach (L) and Frank Auffret, survivors of the Bataclan attack, in a cafe in Paris, France, on Thursday.

you to someone about that night was something really good. To be able to hold someone in my arms and just tell him 'you saved my life'," said the single mother of a 10-month-old baby.

Didi, who has not been back to work since the at-

tacks, is constantly on the phone with survivors.

"Without him, I would not be here. He was the one who told me 'go there, get out this way, be careful'," said Franck Auffret, who along with other survivors created the victims' asso-

ciation "Life for Paris".

"Someone tried to shoot me when I was in the street, and Didi told me to take shelter. Otherwise I would have stayed in the middle of the street and I would have been shot," he said as he met with Didi and

another survivor in a Paris cafe this week.

Survivors have launched petitions asking the government to reward the security manager for his acts, and sources at the foreign affairs ministry said they were discussing awarding Didi the Legion of Honour award.

Didi explained that like everyone else, he laid down on the floor, turned off his walkie-talkie and then took advantage of a moment when the attackers were reloading their weapons to tell people to head for the emergency exits. While shots rang out, dozens of people packed into the emergency exit, which led to a small alleyway behind the venue. Didi opened the doors and guided concertgoers to a student residence down the street.

"Helping others and seeing them make progress in their healing process is the thing that's going to help me get better and heal," he told Reuters.

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# French advisers helping Libyan forces in Benghazi

BENGHAZI, Libya-  
French military advisers have been helping coordinate Libyan forces fighting Islamic State insurgents in the eastern city of Benghazi, a senior Libyan military commander said on Thursday.

"The French military group in Benghazi are just military advisers who provide consultations to the Libyan National Army in its battle against terrorism, but they are not fighting with our Libyan forces," special forces commander Wanis Bukhamada told Reuters. There was no immediate French comment.

The French newspaper

Le Monde reported on Wednesday that French special forces and intelligence commandos were engaged in "a secret war" against Islamic State in anarchy-ridden Libya in conjunction with the United States and Britain. France's Defence Ministry declined comment on the report.

Libyan military forces in Benghazi are under the command of General Khalifa Haftar and loyal to the North African country's government based in the eastern city of al-Bayda. A rival armed faction took over the capital Tripoli in the far west in 2014 and set up its own self-declared

government.

Haftar's forces have been advancing against Islamic State in Benghazi, taking back neighbourhoods that had been under militant control for months. Western leaders have been looking at ways to stop the spread of Islamic State in Libya, where militants have exploited a breakdown of state order since the 2011 uprising that toppled Muammar Gaddafi to seize control of some towns. Last Friday a U.S. air strike targeted Islamist militants in the western Libyan city of Sabratha, killing more than 40.

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# Man behind Iran's mass barring of candidates contests assembly vote

TEHRAN--Powerful anti-Western cleric Ahmad Jannati will almost certainly be re-elected to Iran's Assembly of Experts on Friday, putting him in position to play a key role in its selection of the next supreme leader if and when Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dies.

Elections for parliament are also scheduled for Friday, but it is the outcome of the assembly vote that is likely to have a much greater long-term impact, given that it has exclusive power to select, monitor and dismiss Iran's most powerful authority.

Even by the standards of Iran's clerical establishment, Jannati is known for his virulently anti-Western opinions, once accusing the West of having created al Qaeda and describing U.S. forces in Iraq as "bloodthirsty wolves". In remarks echoed by Khamenei, Jannati this week accused the United States and Britain of trying to influence Friday's votes.

"The United States and the United Kingdom were trying to take advantage of the Iranian elections and send their agents and infiltrators into the Assembly of Experts, but God helped us and we managed to identify and block them all," he was quoted as saying by the Fars news agency on Wednesday.

Nearly eighty percent of candidates for the assembly were rejected by the Guardian Council, which has the power to vet laws and candidates. Jannati has chaired the 12-man council since 1988, and has played an active role in disqualifying reformist

and liberal contenders in the past. Among those disqualified from running for the assembly on Friday was Hassan Khomeini, an ally of pragmatist President Hassan Rouhani and grandson of the late founder of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Rouhani and his ally, former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, are both members of the assembly and will run again in Friday's vote.

Made up of 88 Mujtahids or Islamic theologians, assembly members are elected by popular vote to eight-year terms. It has never exercised its right to dismiss a leader, but it has turned into a potential arena for competition between rival factions in Iran's complex

power structure.

The next assembly is expected to choose the successor to Khamenei, given his age -- he is 76 -- and rumoured ill health. The supreme leader has the last say on all state matters, including foreign policy, with constitutional authority over the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government as well as the military and media.

"The assembly vote is very important," said a pro-reform former official running for parliament. "If we want a more moderate approach internationally and domestically, then the country needs a less hardline leader."

Jannati, 89, is a founding member of a religious school in Iran's holy city



Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati (R), a candidate for the upcoming vote on the Assembly of Experts, and Iran's former chief negotiator Saeed Jalili attend a conservatives election campaign gathering in Tehran on Wednesday. The campaign gathering was titled "No to UK Meddling".

of Qom that emphasizes belief in Shi'ite Islam's 12th Imam, of Hidden Imam, who Shi'ites believe will reappear at a time of tyranny and sinfulness to spread the faith across the world. Besides

chairing the Guardian Council, he is a member of the influential Expediency Council, whose members are selected by the supreme leader and which serves to resolve disputes between the

Guardian Council and the parliament.

As a leader of Friday prayers in Tehran, Jannati has criticised Rouhani's attempts to end Iran's global isolation. The cleric also backed the disputed re-election of hardline president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2009. Months of mass protests were crushed by the state security apparatus, headed by the Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and its affiliated Basij militia volunteers.

He responded to the uprising against alleged ballot fraud by recommending opposition leaders Mehdi Karoubi and Mirhossein Mousavi be put under house arrest. In a Friday prayer sermon at the time he said: "What I suggest to the judiciary is to cut their communications, shut their house doors, restrict their moves so they cannot send or receive messages. Their telephone and internet should be cut and they should be imprisoned in their house."

Those measures were put into effect.

# Pakistan's Punjab must enforce law on violence against women

NEW DELHI--Pakistan's Human Rights Commission (HRC) on Thursday welcomed a landmark law passed by the country's most populous province, Punjab, to stop violence against women, but said it would make a difference only if there was "efficient enforcement".

The Protection of Women against Violence Bill 2015, passed in Punjab on Wednesday, criminalises all forms of violence against women, including domestic, sexual, psychological, emotional, economic and verbal. Under the new law, the provincial government will establish district protection centres, residen-

tial shelters and a toll-free helpline for victims of violence.

The law also says family courts must hold hearings within seven days of a complaint being made, and a decision must be taken on all complaints within 90 days. For serious offences, courts can order defendants to wear GPS-linked bracelets to monitor their movements.

"These are all much-needed measures that deserve praise, but it is important to remember that cosmetic and purely procedural changes have not had an impact in the past," the HRC, a leading non-profit organisation, said in a

statement.

"The change in law will only make a difference if there is effective enforcement and the legislature continues to engage with the issue and ensures oversight," it added.

Girls and women in Pakistan face many threats, from acid attacks and "honour killings" to domestic violence, rape and kidnapping, activists say. A study conducted by the Aurat Foundation, a Pakistani women's rights group, in 2013 showed that Punjab province alone accounted for 5,800 crimes against women - 74 percent of crimes against women in the whole of Pakistan.

A poll by the Thomson Reuters Foundation in 2011 ranked Pakistan the third most dangerous country in the world for women, after Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This was based on cultural, tribal and religious practices harmful to women such as acid attacks, child and forced marriage and punishment or retribution by stoning or other forms of physical abuse.

Pakistan has no comprehensive federal law to tackle violence against women, but the HRC said it hoped the action by Punjab's parliament would encourage Islamabad to follow suit.

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# Hamas not seeking a war with Israel, says top official

GAZA--A senior leader of the Islamist group Hamas said the Palestinian movement was not seeking a new war with Israel and insisted a network of tunnels it is digging, some of which have reached into Israel in the past, was "defensive".

Speaking to members of the Foreign Press Association in Gaza, Mahmoud al-Zahar, a

medical doctor seen by many as a hardliner, suggested the prospects of reconciliation with the rival Fatah party of President Mahmoud Abbas were slim, despite years of international efforts to forge unity.

"I think nobody here in the region is looking for a war," said Zahar, 71, who has survived two Israeli assassina-

tion attempts, one of which, in 2003, killed his son.

"We are not looking for any confrontation with Israel, but if they are going to launch an aggression we have to defend ourselves," he told reporters late on Wednesday.

Hamas seized control of Gaza in 2007 after a brief civil war with Abbas's forces. It maintains strict security

over the coastal territory, where more than 1.9 million people live. Zahar is one of Hamas's founders and one of its most senior figures in Gaza, regarded as close to the military wing.

The movement has, since its founding in 1987, advocated the destruction of Israel, seeing all of historic Palestine, from the Jordan River to the

Mediterranean, as its land. However, some of its leaders have indicated in recent years that they would accept a Palestinian state in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, captured by Israel in a 1967 war, in return for a long-term truce with their neighbour. Israel regards the truce idea as a ploy and will not negotiate with Hamas, which the EU and United States list as a terrorist group.

Asked why Hamas was building tunnels, Zahar said they were defensive and sug-

gested they were nothing against the might of the U.S.-supplied Israeli military. "You are speaking about tunnels? You are not speaking about F-35 (fighter planes)? You are not speaking about the nuclear bomb in Israel... The tunnels are a matter of self-defence," he said.

Hamas's armed wing has lost 10 fighters this year in tunnel collapses. In strongly worded speeches, the group's leaders have pledged to pursue the tunnel building, prompting alarm in Israel, which has stepped up efforts to find the tunnels and stop them reaching its territory.



Senior Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Zahar speaks during a meeting with Foreign Press Association, in Gaza City on Thursday.

The heightened tension on both sides has fuelled fears of another war, which would be the fifth since Hamas won Palestinian elections in 2006. The last war, in July-August 2014, left more than 2,100 Palestinians dead, most of them civilians, while 73 Israelis, nearly all soldiers, were killed.

With an Israeli-Egyptian blockade on Gaza making

would never recognise the state of Israel, which Abbas and Fatah have done and want Hamas to do.

"They (Fatah) have no will to achieve an agreement. There is no intention," he said.

The blockade on Gaza and the breakdown of relations with Fatah have created huge strains on the economy in Gaza. Since Fatah controls the budget from the West Bank, it has so far resisted making payments to security forces and other state employees in Gaza who were hired by Hamas since 2007. As a result, Hamas is heavily dependent on support from abroad, including Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Iran. While Saudi and Iran are at odds, Zahar said Hamas was not taking sides.

"We are looking to have good relations with everybody," he said. "We will not play any factor or element in the internal or external confrontation between these countries."



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Het Parket van de Procureur-Generaal van Curaçao, van Sint Maarten, en van Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba (Parket van de PG) is een dynamische en gedreven organisatie die zich – samen met de Openbaar Ministeries (OM) van de landen – inzet om de criminaliteit in al zijn verschijningsvormen te bestrijden.

De Human Resource Manager van het Parket PG ondersteunt en adviseert bij de uitvoering van het HR beleid en de toepassing van HR instrumenten op de gebieden van instroom, doorstroom en uitstroom voor alle medewerkers van het openbaar ministerie. Per 1 april 2016 ontstaat op het Parket PG de vacature van

### Human Resource Manager

De HR Manager heeft intensief contact met de directie en leidinggevenden en spart regelmatig over de verdere professionalisering van de HR afdeling en de gehele organisatie en treedt tevens op als coach en adviseur. Naast de HR taken levert u ook in een breder opzicht een bijdrage op het gebied van organisatie-inrichting en –verandering. U ressorteert rechtstreeks onder de directeur bedrijfsvoering.

Omdat het OM een periode van verdere ontwikkeling doormaakt, zoeken wij een vakvolwassen Hoofd HR met ervaring van organisatieontwikkeling en ervaring met grote organisaties. U bent authentiek assertief in uw optreden en heeft een evenwichtige persoonlijkheid. Voor u is het een uitdaging om vanuit inhoud en verbinding mee te bouwen aan zowel de kwaliteit als de resultaten op HR gebied en ook een bijdrage te leveren aan de 'lerende' organisatie als geheel.

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# Russia, Syrian army pound rebels ahead of fighting halt

BEIRUT--Russian war-planes bombed Syrian rebel-held areas in northwestern Syria and government forces pounded a suburb of the capital on Thursday, ahead of a planned halt to fighting which rebels predicted Damascus and Moscow would ignore.

The "cessation of hostilities" agreed by the United States and Russia is due to take hold on Saturday morning from midnight. But opponents of President Bashar al-Assad say they expect the government to press on with its advance, by branding opposition fighters al Qaeda militants unprotected by the truce.

Damascus has agreed to the deal, as has the main opposition alliance, though it is only ready to commit for two weeks given its deep reservations. But the government and its allies will be permitted to forge on with strikes against jihadist militants of Islamic State and an al Qaeda-linked group, the Nusra Front.

The government also says the agreement could fail if foreign states supply rebels with weapons or insurgents use the truce to rearm.

Fighting in the final days before the truce has focussed on Daraya, a besieged suburb of the capital held by fighters the government describes as Nusra militants but rebels say are from other groups, and on the northwest near the Turkish frontier. Four months of Russian air strikes turned momentum Assad's way in a 5-year-old war that has killed more than 250,000 people, created the world's worst refugee crisis and seen Islamic State fighters declare a "caliphate" in Syria and Iraq.

The multi-sided civil war has drawn in most regional and global powers, with Western countries, Arab states and Turkey forming a coalition against Islamic State while also backing rebels fighting to overthrow Assad. Russia and Iran support him.

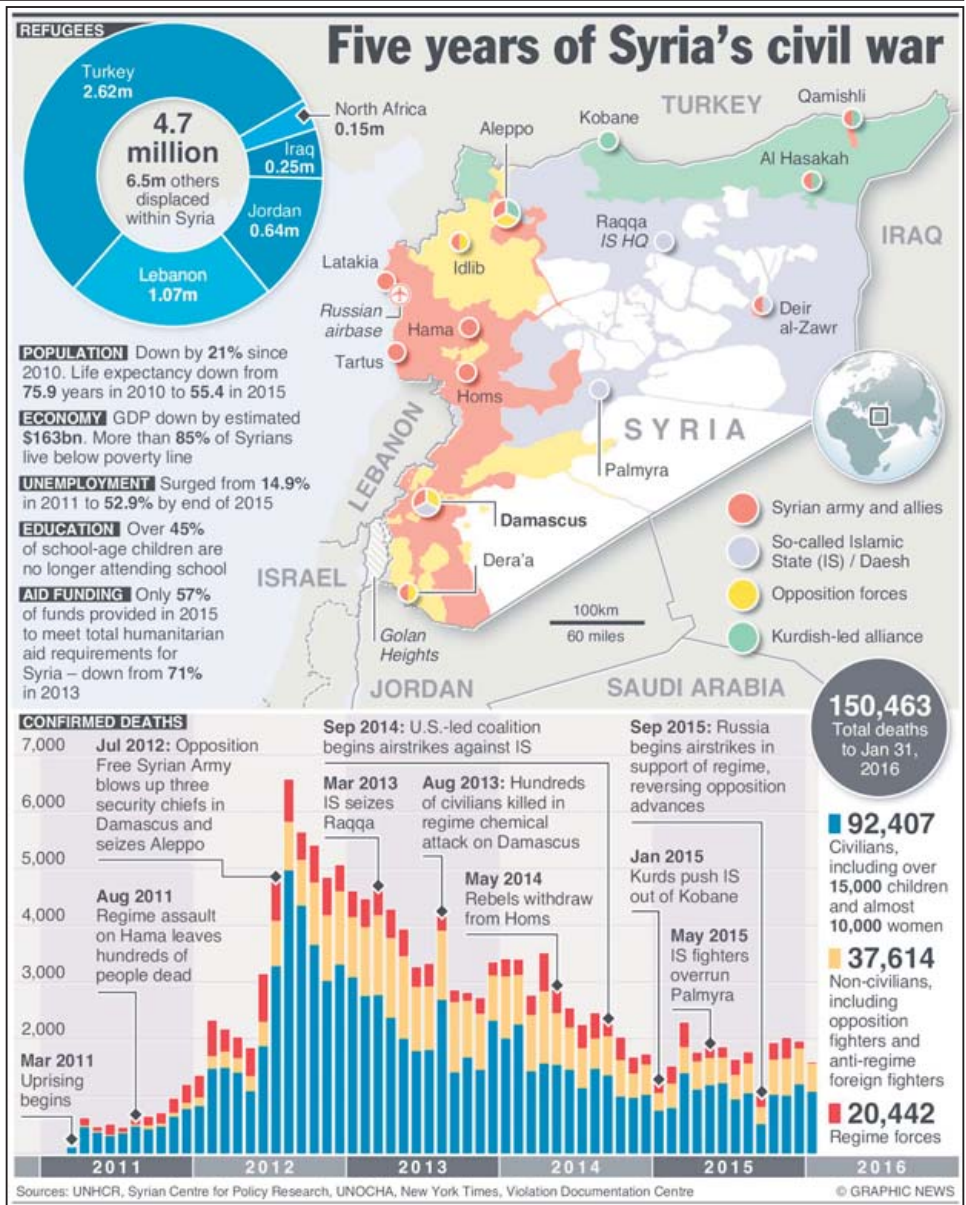
The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a British-based group that monitors the conflict, said army helicopters dropped at least 30 "barrel bombs" on Daraya on Thursday. Assad's opponents say the army drops oil drums filled with explosives and shrapnel to cause indiscriminate harm in rebel areas. The government blamed groups linked to Nusra for firing mortars into residential areas of Damascus, killing at least one person.

A spokesman for rebels in southern Syria predicted Daraya would be the first place where the truce would collapse. "They want to exploit the ceasefire and focus their fire on Daraya to take it. This will be the first breach. We won't accept it," said Abu Ghiath al-Shami, spokesman for the Alwiya Seif al-Sham group, part of a rebel alliance in the south.

A Syrian military source also signalled that Damascus would not cease fighting in Daraya. "There is evidence that the ones there are Nusra Front. They found documents, books, flags that point to the Nusra Front being in Daraya," the military source said. "In any place where there is Nusra Front, we will continue operations."

Fighting has also escalated in the last two days in the northwestern province of Latakia, where Free Syrian Army groups backed by Assad's foreign enemies operate close to Nusra fighters and other jihadists. "The regime wants to try to retake all of northern Latakia before Feb. 26," said Fadi Ahmad, spokesman for the First Coastal Division rebel group, speaking to Reuters from the area.

"The battles are very fierce. Yesterday, there were heavy battles in the part of rural Latakia that is still with us," he said, adding he did not expect the government or its Russian allies to abide by the truce: "Three minutes ago I saw a Russian plane in the sky hitting us here in rural Latakia."



# Indian teen escapes debt bondage, says employer burned his legs

CHENNAI, India--Marimuthu, a south Indian teenager, had no idea the debt bondage he was pushed into last year would lead to serious burns on his legs, forcing him to escape his abusive employer and seek hospital treatment.

After working 15-hour days in a sweet shop with little time off, Marimuthu had a bad headache one day and asked for a break. The shop owner refused, shouted at him and threw a pan of hot oil over his legs, he said. Days later, he ran away.

The 15-year-old is one of nearly 16 million people in India who have been forced into manual labour, trafficked into brothels, stuck in debt bondage or born into servitude, according to the 2014 Global Slavery Index.

Most of them are unpaid or held in debt bondage, like Marimuthu, who was sent to the western Indian state of Maharashtra three months ago from his home in Madurai, in southern Tamil Nadu state.

His mother needed to repay a 20,000 rupee (\$290) debt and agreed to send her son to work at a sweet shop for one year. She was promised a total of 40,000 rupees (\$580), half of which was given to her as an advance to pay off her debt. The rest was to be paid in November this year.

She was told the sweet shop would be in a nearby city, but her son was sent halfway across the country from Madurai in the south to Pundarup in the west. "I started at six in the morning and worked

till nine at night. I worked in a cramped space making sweets through the day and was allowed short breaks for my meals," Marimuthu said.

"I had a terrible headache that day and needed to sit down. The shop owner would not allow it. He verbally abused me before picking up the hot pan of oil and throwing it on me," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a telephone interview. "After I was burned, I was escorted by a co-worker to my room and some of the gram flour paste we use for cooking was applied to cool the wound. The pain didn't subside."

After trying to go on working, Marimuthu finally took the 200 rupees (\$3) he had put aside and ran away, travelling ticketless on trains for two days

to get home. He went to a hospital in Madurai on Feb. 22 for treatment of severe burns on both legs.

"His case was brought to our notice through social workers at the hospital," said A. Kathir of the non-governmental organisation Evidence, who registered a formal complaint with the Madurai police. "We are not confident of the boy getting justice because the crime happened in another state and there are jurisdiction issues."

Marimuthu's case follows a pattern of exploitation in the region, activists said.

"Many adolescent boys from this region are taken to various parts of India to work in sweet shops because sweetmakers from here are famous. The units are all run by owners from this region as well,"

said T. Kuralamathan of non-profit organisation International Justice Mission. "The first crackdown happened when some boys escaped from northern Indian states in 2011 and came back. Since then many boys have escaped and 60 were also rescued by the Tamil Nadu police in subsequent years."

Most boys, like Marimuthu, drop out of school after grade six and start work. Marimuthu said he wanted to finish his studies - but then said his mother had died a month earlier, his father was an alcoholic and he had two younger brothers going to school.

"Maybe I will have to go back to work," after being discharged from hospital, he said.



An armed policeman stands guard at the partially damaged Munak canal, that supplies three-fifths of the water to Delhi, in Sonapat in the northern state of Haryana, India, on Thursday.

## With canal sabotage, protesters vent their fury on Indian capital

GARHI BINDHROLI, India--Indian protesters venting their fury at economic injustice in the country's rural areas were targeting Delhi, a city of 20 million people, when they wrecked its main source of drinking water last week.

As rioting and looting by the Jat rural caste spread across the neighbouring state of Haryana last Sunday, unidentified protesters took over a section of the Munak Canal and tore up its concrete bed with digging equipment. "They made a small hole, and the

water damaged it more," Dhruv Shashwat, an engineer overseeing the repairs near the village of Garhi Bindhroli in Haryana, told Reuters amid a haze of dust and the din of jackhammers, generators and excavators.

The fast-flowing water "cut down" the canal's banks, added Shashwat, who is supervising work by three mechanical diggers, a bulldozer and eight trucks, guarded by three shifts of 50 paramilitary troops. It will take around 15 days to complete the task of re-filling the canal bed with earth and relining it with concrete, as well as fixing the damaged sluice gates nearby, said Shashwat, a state irrigation official.

Of the 19 people killed during the agitation involving the Jats, who make up a quarter of Haryana's population of 25 million, two were shot dead when police dispersed protesters near the sluice gates on Feb. 19.

A local government officer then issued an order to police not to shoot, Shashwat said, and a group returned two days later to sabotage the canal unhindered.

The mob left untouched a bigger, parallel watercourse that irrigates farmers' fields as well as supplying the capital, but whose contents are only fit to drink after being mixed with clear Himalayan water from the damaged channel.

A leader of the Jat community, which is demanding more jobs and college places, denied responsibility for the sabotage. "The government is accusing our boys of a crime we did not commit. They should arrest the perpetrators," said Ramesh Dalal, of the Jat Reservation Movement. "We regret the sabotage."

Delhi's water minister, Kapil Mishra, told Reuters the repair work could be completed within 15 to 20 days "if we work on a war footing".

## Slavery widespread among East Asia migrant workers

LONDON--Forced labour among migrant domestic workers is widespread, with many women exploited even before they have left their home country and later abused by their employers abroad, a survey of modern slavery in the sector has found.

More than 70 percent of 4,100 women surveyed, citizens of the Philippines and Indonesia, said recruiters in their home country had confined them, confiscated their documents, or abused them verbally, physically or sexually.

Many received false information about their future work, wages and living and working conditions, and were told they had built up debts of between \$1,600 and \$1,800 each in the process of getting a job. More than 60 percent of them said their employers then restricted their movements and communications, or abused them.

"We never expected the problem to be as widespread as it is," said Jacob Townsend, CEO of Farsight, an international social enterprise which carried out the survey and released it on Thursday.

"Some (recruitment agents) ... hold women against their will, take their passports, put them in debt and mislead them about the circumstances they will be working in," he added.

The women surveyed were prospective, current or returned domestic workers, interviewed in the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore and Hong Kong. There are between two million and five million migrant domestic workers from Indonesia and the Philippines at any given time, with many returning and re-migrating on a continuous basis, the researchers said.

They said their findings disproved the stereotype of women choosing to work overseas to save money and return home with a cushion of wealth, an idea held by many migrants and foreigners. "This is not temporary migration to save for one's family - it is recurring participation in an overseas labour market to maintain a subsistence income," the report said.

In parts of the Philippines and Indonesia, wives and daughters are now expected to migrate for work, and feel they have no alternative, it said.

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# US proposes sharp ramping up of North Korea sanctions at UN

UNITED NATIONS--The United States presented a draft U.N. Security Council resolution on Thursday that would dramatically tighten existing restrictions on North Korea after its Jan. 6 nuclear test and create the toughest U.N. sanctions regime in over two decades.

The draft, seen by Reuters, would require U.N. member states to conduct mandatory inspections of all cargo passing through their territory to or from North Korea to look for illicit goods. Previously states were only required to do this if they had reasonable grounds to believe there was illicit cargo.

It would close a gap in the U.N. arms embargo on Pyongyang by banning all weapons imports and exports. There would also be an unprecedented ban on the transfer to North Korea of any item that could directly contribute to the operational capabilities of the North Korean armed forces, such as trucks that could be modified for military purposes.

Other proposed measures include a ban on all supplies of aviation and rocket fuel to North Korea, a requirement for states to expel North Korean diplomats engaging in illicit activities, and blacklisting 17 North Korean individuals and 12 entities, including the National Aerospace Development Agency or 'NADA', the body responsible for February's rocket launch.

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guides Korean People's Army (KPA) military drills, in this undated photo released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang.

Power told reporters the new measures, if approved, would be "the strongest set of sanctions imposed by the Security Council in more than two decades."

Several council diplomats predicted a Saturday meeting to adopt the draft but Russian deputy U.N. ambassador Petr Iliichev told Reuters Moscow needed time to study the draft and the earliest likely vote would be next week. The draft was the result of seven weeks of tough negotiations between the United States and China, North Korea's neighbour and main ally.

"This is a very robust resolution," a U.S. official said on condition of anonymity. "Clearly this took a long time

... it was a difficult process."

North Korea has been under U.N. sanctions since 2006 because of its multiple nuclear tests and rocket launches. China and the United States had differed on how strongly to respond to Pyongyang's most recent test, with Washington urging harsh punitive measures and Beijing emphasizing dialogue and milder U.N. steps confined to non-proliferation.

Diplomats said a sharp tightening of restrictions was necessary since Pyongyang has proved its determination to flout at all costs attempts at constraining its nuclear and missile programs. They said they hoped the latest measures would make it harder for North Korea to continue

with that policy, keeping up the pressure on the country's leadership without making the country's impoverished population any poorer.

"Pyongyang has prioritized the pursuit of these massively expensive programs over absolutely everything else," the U.S. official said. "So is New York action going to automatically convince the regime's leaders to cease? I think we're realistic on that point."

However, he added that "this resolution will be felt, it will have an impact ... The DPRK (North Korea) have never been subject to the kind of pressure that is in the resolution."

Power said the measures were aimed at the country's leadership and was "careful not to punish the North Korean people."

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying on Thursday told a regular press briefing "We hope and believe this new resolution can help effectively constrain North Korea from further developing its nuclear missile program."

There will also be further restrictions aimed at making it more difficult for North Korea to press ahead with its nuclear and missile programs. Pyongyang is currently banned from importing and exporting nuclear and missile technology and is not allowed to import luxury goods. The list of banned items will be expanded.

The U.S. official said one of five annexes to the resolution lists 31 ships owned by North Korean shipping firm Ocean Maritime Management Company Limited, which will be blacklisted. Also new, countries will be required, not just encouraged, to freeze the assets of North Korean entities linked to Pyongyang's nuclear or missile programs and to prohibit the opening of new branches or offices of North Korean banks or to engage in banking correspondence with North Korean banks.

## Beijing needs South China Sea defences in face of United States

BEIJING--China "really needs" its defences in the South China Sea in the face of a militarisation process being pushed by the United States, and can deploy whatever equipment it wants on its own soil, China's Defence Ministry said on Thursday.

China and the United States have sparred repeatedly over the past week following reports China is deploying advanced missiles, fighters and radar equipment on islands in the South China Sea, especially on Woody Island in the Paracels.

The United States has accused China of militarising the disputed waters. Beijing, for its part, has been angered by "freedom of navigation" air and sea patrols the United States

has conducted near islands China claims in the South China Sea. Those have included one by two B-52 strategic bombers in November and by a U.S. Navy destroyer that sailed within 12 nautical miles of Triton Island in the Paracels last month.

"The United States is the real promoter of the militarisation of the South China Sea," defence ministry spokesman Wu Qian told a regular monthly news briefing. "China's construction of military facilities on the islands and reefs of the South China Sea is really needed."

The Paracel Islands are China's "inherent territory", he added. "It is China's legitimate right to deploy defence facilities within our own territory, no matter in

the past or at present, no matter temporarily or permanently, no matter what equipment it is," Wu said.

People are being "dazzled" by the endless hyping up by U.S. media of equipment China is deploying in the South China Sea, he added. "One minute it's air defence missiles, then radars, then various types of aircraft - who knows what tomorrow will bring in terms of new equipment being hyped up."

Even the Americans have said some of this equipment had been placed there in the past, Wu said.

China claims most of the South China Sea, through which more than \$5 trillion in global trade passes every year. Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan have rival claims.



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## Health experts press for urgent, integrated approach to dengue

BANGKOK--Health experts called on Thursday for urgent action to tackle the "global dengue pandemic", and said the number of cases was expected to spike in some countries this year, partly because of the El Niño weather phenomenon.

The experts, from several organisations, urged governments in the region to support collaborative efforts to combat the spread of dengue in Asia, which had the highest incidence of the disease in the world.

One impetus for the call to action is Sanofi Pasteur's new Dengvaxia vaccine that has received approval in Mexico, Brazil, El Salvador and the Philippines, said Dr. In-Kyu Yoon, director of the Dengue Vaccine Initiative (DVI), adding that other vaccines were in the development pipeline. With dengue experts on its staff and board, DVI - one of the groups behind the call - is part of the Seoul-based International Vaccine Institute and has received support from Sanofi Pasteur to raise awareness about dengue vaccination.

"The dengue problem won't just go away and won't be helped by half measures.

If countries and regions want to tackle the issue effectively, it will take a huge commitment on the part of individual countries and regions, groups of countries, to address it," Yoon said.

Experts have said Dengvaxia is not perfect and does not protect equally against the four different serotypes of dengue, but is a tool that can be part of an integrated approach for prevention of the disease. Other drugmakers including Japan's Takeda and U.S. Merck are also working on dengue vaccines but are several years behind. Sanofi Pasteur said last year studies it had carried out had shown the vaccine protected two-thirds of the participants. Protection against severe dengue reached 93 percent, while prevention of hospitalization due to the disease reached 80 percent in the volunteers, who were aged nine and above, it said in a statement.

"There's a lot of thought that perhaps if we have a vaccine, that we'll be able to ease off on doing other parts of the overall effort, for example, vector control, surveillance, some of these other things," Yoon said by telephone from Colombo,

where he was attending a dengue conference. "The fact is, really it will require all aspects. That is part of the call to action - it needs to be an integrated approach. There is no magic bullet... it is a tool that can be in a country's toolbox."

Dengue - which causes flu-like symptoms and can develop into the deadly dengue haemorrhagic fever - is the world's fastest-spreading tropical disease, with the annual number of cases increasing 30-fold in the last 50 years, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The disease is endemic in 128 countries - compared with nine countries experiencing severe dengue epidemics prior to 1970. Asia has the most cases, with 67 million people infected per year, researchers say.

The experts called on countries, if they register the vaccine for use, to develop and implement vaccine programmes that are monitored and evaluated for safety. They also urged governments to "accelerate effective dengue prevention and control interventions."



Canadian teacher Neil Bantleman (L) waves beside Indonesian teaching assistant Ferdinand Tjong to students as they wait inside a holding cell before their trial at a South Jakarta court, Indonesia, April 2, 2015.

## Indonesia orders re-arrest of international school teachers

JAKARTA--Indonesia's Supreme Court on Thursday overturned the acquittal of two teachers from Canada and Indonesia on charges of sexually abusing kindergarten children at an international school in Jakarta, extended their jail sentences and ordered their re-arrest.

The case, which critics say was fraught with irregularities, has brought the country's justice system under scrutiny and raises doubts about legal certainty in Southeast Asia's biggest economy. The Canadian embassy in Jakarta called the Supreme Court's decision "unjust" and said the case had not been han-

dled transparently.

"The outcome of this case has serious implications for Indonesia's reputation as a safe place for Canadians to work, travel and invest as well as for Canada's long history of cooperation with Indonesia," it said in an online statement.

Canadian teacher Neil Bantleman and Indonesian teaching assistant Ferdinand Tjong were convicted on charges of abusing kindergarten students at the Jakarta Intercultural School (JIS), where the children of many expatriates, diplomats, and wealthy Indonesians are enrolled. The two were origi-

nally sentenced to 10 years in jail but were acquitted in August, 2015 after nearly a year behind bars, and released. At least two school janitors remain incarcerated in connection with the case.

"They have been sentenced again, to 11 years," Supreme Court spokesman Suhadi said by phone, referring to Bantleman and Tjong. The court issued an order for them to be re-arrested.

"It is not clear what evidence the Supreme Court used to overturn the (previous) decision," U.S. ambassador Robert O. Blake said in a statement.



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# Greece says won't cut pensions again to meet EU/IMF demands

ATHENS- Greece's left-led government will not cut pensions again even if its international lenders demand it, the country's labour minister told Reuters on Thursday, saying the income of the weak will be protected.

Athens remains determined to implement existing bailout reforms it has signed up to, however, George Katrougalos said in an interview.

Hanging onto a fragile parliamentary majority, the government wants to conclude its first progress assessment on fiscal targets and pension and tax reforms in order to start talks on debt relief - something it hopes will persuade angry Greeks that their austerity sacrifices are paying off. But International Monetary Fund projections for a wider than expected fiscal gap - seen at 5 percent to 7 percent of gross domestic product by 2018, according to sources close to the lenders - have fuelled speculation Athens may come under strong pressure to slash pensions again.

Katrougalos dismissed such projections as "unreal" and said he hoped the issue would not be brought up during a bailout

progress review with lenders, which he expected to resume "most likely next week" and be wrapped up "within March".

"We hear things, sometimes extreme, through leaks about the IMF which I hope won't be brought to the negotiating table," he said.

"Cutting pensions is a red line for us," he said adding that more than half of Greece's households relied on a pension to make ends meet.

Asked whether Athens would stick to this if the conclusion of the bailout review was at risk, he responded: "It wouldn't be a red line otherwise."

Greece has cut pensions 11 times since it signed up to its first European Union/IMF bailout in 2010, attempting to plug fiscal holes and revamp a fragmented pension system which helped plunge the country into its worst debt crisis in decades. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, who signed up to a third bailout in August despite pre-election pledges of ending austerity, has promised Greece's foreign creditors to cut the pension budget by 1 percent of GDP this year.

But loath to hurt the coun-

try's 2.7 million pensioners again, he has opted for elevating social security contributions of employers, self-employed professionals and farmers, merging pension funds and capping high pensions.

"The planned reform is enough (to meet the target) and guarantees the system's viability up to 2060," Katrougalos said. "The pension pool is much smaller compared with the past, but the income of the weak will be protected."

The overall plan has triggered street protests by self-employed professionals including doctors and lawyers; farmers have been



Greek hospital staff hold a banner depicting a patient during a demonstration against planned pension reforms, in Athens, Greece February 18, 2016.

blockading roads and border crossings for weeks; ruling lawmakers have come under attack by protesters. But the minister said he was

confident the plan would be approved by parliament.

"Lawmakers are convinced about the necessity and the rightness of

the reform. We won't have a problem in passing the bill," said the constitutional lawyer turned politician.

# US judge turns the up heat on VW with march emissions fix deadline

SAN FRANCISCO--A federal judge turned up the heat on Volkswagen AG on Thursday, setting a March deadline for the German automaker to state whether it has found an emissions fix for 600,000 diesel vehicles that is acceptable to U.S. regulators.

U.S. District Judge Charles Breyer in San

Francisco said he wants a definitive answer on the status of a fix by March 24. Noting that VW had admitted in September that its vehicles on U.S. roads were using software to emit up to 40 times legally allowable pollution, Breyer said time was running out.

"Six months is long enough" to determine if

this is a fixable problem, Breyer said. "This is an ongoing problem."

The U.S. Justice Department last month sued Europe's biggest automaker for up to \$46 billion for violating U.S. environmental laws. VW and its Audi and Porsche brands continue to be barred from selling any new 2016 diesel models in

the United States. VW also faces more than 500 lawsuits from U.S. owners.

VW lawyer Robert Giuffra told Breyer at the hearing that the automaker is making progress in trying to reach a settlement with the Justice Department, the Environmental Protection Agency and California Air Resources Board. "We are committed to resolving these matters as quickly as possible," Giuffra said, adding that the diesel emissions issue involves up to 11 million vehicles in 100 countries.

Giuffra declined to offer specifics on the settlement talks, saying the Justice Department had asked VW not to discuss any aspect of the negotiations. VW has said previously it was considering buybacks as part of a settlement, a move that could cost it billions.

Breyer said a settlement may include provisions that are "not the most advantageous for the company," but he added that VW has some difficult decisions to make "in the very near future."

Those decisions will have "serious consequences," he said.

Breyer previously named former FBI director Robert Mueller as a settlement adviser. Mueller has met with VW officials, including the senior engineer responsible for the fix. The judge now wants top VW executives to meet with Mueller as well.

# Police raid Brazilian steelmaker Gerdau

SAO PAULO--Federal police raided the offices of Brazilian steelmaker Gerdau SA on Thursday and summoned its chief executive to testify on suspicion the company evaded hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes.

André Gerdau Johannpeter, the chief executive, agreed to appear voluntarily rather than be arrested under an outstanding warrant, a federal police spokesman said, adding he was one of 22 people police ordered to testify in the case by day's end.

Gerdau, Brazil's largest steelmaker and a family company that has made steel for generations, is suspected of evading 1.5 billion reais (\$380 million) in back taxes, the spokesman said. The raids on Gerdau come as Brazilian prosecutors grow increasingly aggressive in efforts to crack

down on corruption by some of the country's most powerful companies.

Thursday's operation was part of an inquiry, known as "Operation Zealots," into kickbacks by companies through lobbyists to tax officials in return for waiving tax debts and fines. Gerdau said it was cooperating with police. The company said in a securities filing it had legally hired external experts for technical advice but had not engaged in a tax evasion scheme. Its shares closed down 4.7 percent in Sao Paulo trading.

Search and seizure operations were being carried out at Gerdau offices in the cities of Sao Paulo, Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro, Recife and the company's headquarters in Porto Alegre, police said.

In addition to Operation Zealots, which is probing suspected kickbacks at doz-



Andre Gerdau Johannpeter, CEO of Brazil's steelmaker Gerdau, leaves the Federal Police headquarters in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on Thursday.

ens of companies, Brazil for the past two years has been gripped by the far-reaching corruption probe around state-run oil company Petroleo Brasileiro SA, known as Petrobras. Dozens of executives at Brazil's biggest construction companies have been arrested or charged with corruption in that investigation. On Monday, police

again searched offices of Odebrecht, Brazil's largest engineering and construction conglomerate. Marcelo Odebrecht, the company's chief executive, was jailed in June in connection with the Petrobras scandal.

Prosecutors have told Reuters they are inspired by the Petrobras investigation, seeing it as the end of long-standing corporate

impunity. "For the first time important executives who were jailed stayed in jail," Silvio Luis Martins de Oliveira, a Sao Paulo-based prosecutor who last month announced charges of crimes against the financial system against Joesley Batista, chairman of JBS, the world's largest meat company.



# Arctic thaw opens shipping waterways, risks to environment

LONDON--The Arctic is thawing even faster than lawmakers can formulate new rules to prevent the environmental threat of heavy fuel oil pollution from ships plying an increasingly popular trade route.

Average Arctic temperatures are rising twice as fast as elsewhere in the world and the polar ice cap's permanent cover is shrinking at a rate of around 10 percent per decade. By the end of this century, summers in the Arctic could be free of ice.

As the ice melts, traffic of ships carrying cargoes of gas, coal and diesel through the region has increased. Russia, in particular, is keen to expand shipping through the Arctic given its rich natural resources and efforts to cut costs. It aims to cut journey times between Europe and Asia by 30 to 40 percent.

"It is time for regulators to wake up and realise that the Arctic is melting away right in front of us," said Whit Sheard of the Circumpolar Conservation Union (CCU) green group. "Common sense regulations, integrated ocean planning, and explicit protections are all needed before the resources of the region are targeted for exploitation or before it

becomes a major shipping route."

While there is a non-binding agreement in place between Arctic states aimed at Arctic environmental protection, campaigners say there has been no progress on regulating the use of heavy fuel oil (HFO), which is banned in the Antarctic region owing to its toxicity and the polluting emissions it generates. Regulations for the Antarctic came into effect in 2011 after being adopted by the United Nations' shipping agency the International Maritime Organization (IMO). It was arguably an easier sell as less commercial cargo ships such as oil tankers operate in the Antarctic, where fishing boats, cruise ships and yachts predominate.

Any effort to tackle the issue is likely to take some time even after last year's climate deal in Paris, which commits nations to curb emissions. The Paris deal did not set specific targets for commercial shipping, leaving the IMO to take up the charge.

HFO was not the top focus of an Arctic Council meeting on environmental protection earlier this month, leading campaigners to seek more



Snow-covered mountains look over the Isfjord in Svalbard, Norway in this June 1, 2012 file photo.

action. They plan to raise the issue at the IMO's next marine environmental protection committee session in April.

Julie Gourley, senior Arctic official at the U.S. State Department, said Washington, which has the rotating chair of the Council, was "presently studying" the risks associated with HFO and continued to engage with Council

partners to find solutions for Arctic issues.

According to a 2009 study by the intergovernmental Arctic Council, the release of oil into the Arctic's marine environment "either through accidental release, or illegal discharge, is the most significant threat from shipping activity."

Last year, the U.S., Russia and other Arctic nations

signed an agreement to bar their fishing fleets from seas around the North Pole.

Under the Polar Code, which was adopted by the IMO, ships trading in polar regions will have to comply with environmental provisions from January 2017. The code imposed prohibitions on the carriage of oil or oily mixtures from any ship into the sea and prevented

pollution from garbage and noxious liquid substances. But it only "encouraged" ships not to use or carry HFO in the Arctic.

A 2015 study by the CPB Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis estimated that two thirds of the volume of world trade that goes through the Suez Canal could be re-routed via the Arctic route in future. It gave no time frames.

Other analysts are more conservative on how much trade could be re-routed given the recent economic slowdown in China and oil price uncertainty. The Suez Canal, which allows ships to travel between Europe and South Asia, accounts for an estimated 8 percent of world seaborne trade.

The International Association of Oil & Gas Producers (IOGP), representing the global upstream industry, said it had gained extensive experience in the safest and most environmentally sensitive ways of operating in such conditions. "While some parties have called for codes of best practices in the Arctic, as far as the industry is concerned, wherever we do business the same high standards apply," the IOGP said.

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# How America became the love child of Kim Kardashian and Donald Trump

By Lynn Stuart Parramore

After sailing to victory in Nevada and South Carolina and leaving the political establishment gobsmacked, Donald Trump has predicted that he will not only nab the GOP presidential nomination, but deliver the largest voter turnout in

history. Typical trumpety perhaps, but the blustery billionaire is now closer to the White House than many people would have imagined. With breathtaking speed, he has rewritten the rules of campaigning while holding up a middle finger to Fox News, Republican elders and even the

pope. He says things nobody else dares say – from expressing support for fans who roughed up a Black Lives Matter protester to maligning Senator John McCain's military record.

His reality is becoming America's. Do we have the Kardashians, in part, to thank?

With their cartoonish appearances – Trump with his buoyant hair and Kim Kardashian with her outlandish curves – both seem characters from a storybook. They are the king and queen of an American Dreamland, all the more important now that the American Dream has become fantasy for so many people. In an era of growing inequality and foreclosed futures, people can't get what they need, much less what they want.

In a better system, those who take advantage of a rigged set-up wouldn't be

seen as heroes. But when there seems no hope of transformation, watching celebrities who float free from any kind of social responsibility becomes hypnotically compelling. Not only can you be famous doing nothing of value for society, you can even be president! How awesome is that?

Trump and Kardashian have both acted as barometers for how far a person can go and how low a culture can sink. Trump is famous, of course, long before the Kardashians. He was the poster boy for 1980s excess, just as Kardashian became the emblem of same in the naughts. He started grabbing media attention during his ill-fated ownership of a football team, which he ran into the ground while seducing the press with his outlandish claims and boisterous personality. Trump learned then to present himself as the biggest and the best at everything – bankruptcies and business blunders be damned. He may have ridden to success on a train of tax breaks and government largesse, but he became adept at styling himself as the emblem of the free market.

The temporal bridge between Trump and Kardashian is the 1990s – the decade in which reality television exploded, making people with no special talents wildly famous. The shows were loudly denounced as signals of American cultural enfeeblement, but the more the critics sniffed, the more the ratings soared.

Trump and the Kardashians perfected the genre. The Apprentice, hosted by Trump from its inception in January 2004 until 2015, presented the mogul interviewing, and gleefully dismissing, job candidates and went on to become one of the most-watched programs on NBC. In 2007, Keeping Up with the Kardashians flooded American living rooms with what looked like fly-on-the-wall glimpses of the lives of the Kardashian-Jenner family, mainly the antics of daughters Khloe, Kourtney and Kim. That program became one of the longest-running reality shows in TV history, with the 11th season airing last fall.

Reality stars aren't supposed to elevate us or edu-

cate us. They are there to entertain us. So Candidate Trump need not concern himself with the minute details of foreign policy or healthcare. He only has to say, "It's going to be very special," to have the crowd cheer. Kim Kardashian never went to college, but she can make the news instantly whether she is demonstrating how to achieve maximum cleavage or tweeting semi-literate statements about the 1915 Armenian genocide.

Trump and Kardashian share the values of opportunism, image-obsession and materialism, but where they really rise above the celebrity pack is their knack for making oodles of money simply telling the world how awesome they are. And being rich. In 2015, Kardashian ranked 33rd on Forbes' roster of the world's highest paid celebrities. With \$52.5 million in earnings, she beat out both Oscar-winning actress Jennifer Lawrence and former Beatle Paul McCartney. Trump placed 121st on the Forbes 400 list of the wealthiest people on Earth the same year, with a pile estimated at \$4.5 billion.

Surely something magical happens in the rarefied air at that stratospheric level of wealth and fame. Inanity can magically transform into insight; solipsism into social concern; ridicule into reverence. The only skills required to keep the American public's attention are self-promotion and conspicuous consumption. Peers of this realm get a certain immunity from criticism and a pass on gaffes. Exaggeration becomes truth, or, as Trump himself artfully puts it, "truthful hyperbole."

Garish taste and questionable credentials become emblems of connection to ordinary people. Despite a dwelling that looks like the fevered dream of a French monarch, Trump has been called the "people's billionaire" and is considered by many a populist. Celebrity watchers love to remind us that Kardashian is just a "regular girl." She has a daughter! She hangs with her family! Her lack of talent – unless you consider taking photos of your rear end for Instagram a talent – dissolves in the public fascination for such

mundane activities as taking endless selfies (we all take selfies!), even when she is shelling out \$827,000 on gold-plated toilets.

Reality stars are special kinds of celebrities. Not only do they distract viewers from what's missing in their lives as we follow their every move, their association with a genre that ostensibly documents unscripted situations lures viewers into imagining that they are more "real" than other celebrities. They suspend viewers' disbelief more than professional actors, so when they fabricate reality out of whole cloth, the public might just buy it. They seem extra-intimate because they come to viewers apparently unfiltered.

Reality TV thrives on high drama, outsized personalities and loud-mouthed conflicts, so when we see a person linked to the form, we expect and accept these things as par for the course. That's why Trump can get away with denigrating Fox News' Megyn Kelly on the air during a debate. Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush could not. The rules are different.

Kardashian and Trump appear to represent a kind of capitalist abundance and freedom. What they really signify, however, is the imprisonment of the self and a future of further restricted possibilities.

When our connections to each other fall away and our self-absorption intensifies, Americans' chances to act collectively to redefine the terms of our lives diminishes. Trump's loud talk of building walls and roughing up those who get in the way is really the whisper of an authoritarian future where the freedom and abundance are reserved for elites who will protect their privileges at any cost.

The real wall will be around us – to keep us in our place. And we will have helped build our new reality. ~ Reuters ~

*(Lynn Stuart Parramore is a contributing editor at AlterNet, co-founder of Recessionwire and founding editor of New Deal 2.0 and IgoUgo.com. She is the author of "Reading the Sphinx: Ancient Egypt in Nineteenth-Century Literary Culture" and has taught cultural theory at New York University. The opinions expressed here are her own.)*

### UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle

			8					4			
			9	7							2
2		4	3		5						
3	6		5					8			9
				6							
9		8			4					1	6
		9			4	3				2	
4			8	2							
	7			5							

Complete the grid so every row, column and 3 x 3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

Previous puzzle solution

7	3	9	5	8	4	2	6	1			
1	4	2	3	6	5	8	7				
8	6	5	2	1	7	9	4	3			
2	7	4	8	6	9	3	1	5			
9	8	6	3	5	1	4	7	2			
3	5	1	7	4	2	8	9	6			
4	1	3	6	9	5	7	2	8			
6	2	8	4	7	3	1	5	9			
5	9	7	1	2	8	6	3	4			

2/26 DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★ © 2016 by Universal Uclick

- ACROSS**
- 1 Carnivals
  - 6 Carve in glass
  - 10 Up to the task
  - 14 Group of eight
  - 15 In \_\_\_ of; as a substitute for
  - 16 Genuine
  - 17 Thick-skinned horned animal
  - 18 Meriwether and Marvin
  - 19 Good-hearted
  - 20 Abandoned
  - 22 Stupor
  - 24 Put on weight
  - 25 One who lies about idly
  - 26 State without proof
  - 29 \_\_\_ away; dismisses
  - 30 Unknown John
  - 31 Burst
  - 33 Rarin' to go
  - 37 Element whose symbol is Zn
  - 39 Pitcher part
  - 41 Rescue
  - 42 At the \_\_\_ the day; ultimately
  - 44 "Peter \_\_\_" picked a..."
  - 46 Light brown
  - 47 Can wrapper
  - 49 Most recently purchased
  - 51 Child's vehicle
  - 54 Lamebrain
  - 55 Seaisickness
  - 56 Unusual person
  - 60 Bancroft and Jillian
  - 61 Pleased
  - 63 Glide on ice
  - 64 Actress Imogene \_\_\_
  - 65 Touch down on the runway
  - 66 Past or present
  - 67 \_\_\_ over; faint
  - 68 On pins and needles
  - 69 One not to be trusted

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14					15				16				
17					18				19				
20					21			22	23				
24					25								
26	27	28			29								
30				31		32			33		34	35	36
37				38		39			40		41		
42				43		44			45		46		
47				48				49		50			
51	52	53						54					
55								56			57	58	59
60					61	62				63			
64					65					66			
67					68					69			

Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews 2/26/16

**Thursday's Puzzle Solved**

M	A	C	S	T	H	E	F	T	A	B	L	E	
A	S	H	E	R	A	D	I	O	B	R	A	G	
S	E	A	T	E	N	G	R	O	S	S	I	N	G
H	A	T	A	N	D	Y	L	E	E	D	S		
T	O	D	D	Y	D	A	N						
S	T	E	A	D	Y	V	I	C	T	O	R		
P	A	R	T	S	B	R	I	C	K	B	R	A	T
E	B	B	S	C	A	U	L	K	B	E	T	H	
W	O	O	R	A	N	G	E	D	O	G	I	E	
O	X	F	O	R	D	M	A	R	O	O	N		
A	D	D	L	I	V	E	N						
V	A	G	U	E	L	A	N	E	I	D	O		
O	V	A	L	O	F	F	I	G	E	L	A	I	D
T	E	S	T	D	E	F	E	R	O	N	C	E	
E	S	P	Y	R	E	E	D	S	U	S	E	S	

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**DOWN**

- 1 Mustang or Taurus
- 2 Cramp
- 3 "\_\_\_ better to have loved and lost..."
- 4 Go back on a promise
- 5 \_\_\_ unit; small rented personal warehouse
- 6 TV's Pompeo
- 7 \_\_\_ up; tethered
- 8 Bee's follower
- 9 Anjelica of films
- 10 Little Rock, \_\_\_
- 11 Human \_\_\_; person
- 12 Knight's spear
- 13 Firstborn of two
- 21 Bleacher levels
- 23 Impolite
- 25 Ease; slacken
- 26 Sculptor's tool
- 27 Cut of pork
- 28 Give, but expect back
- 29 Go bad
- 32 Higher berth
- 34 Fence opening
- 35 Gabor & others
- 36 Tenant's check
- 38 Enormous
- 40 Singing voice
- 43 Destiny
- 45 Meals
- 48 Snoopy, for one
- 50 Lose strength
- 51 Bite to eat
- 52 Narrow boat
- 53 1/16 of a pound
- 54 June honoree
- 56 Pealed
- 57 Weathercock
- 58 "\_\_\_ Wonderful Life"
- 59 Look for
- 62 Youth



# Waiting for answers on cooking gas issue

Dear Editor,

A much needed relief for the people of St. Maarten was given in the form of a public announcement that was issued on Friday, February 19, from the Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication (Ministry TEATT), indicating that there will be an adjustment to cooking gas.

This adjustment was expected to immediately commence on Monday, February 22; however, according to *The Daily Herald's* publication on Tuesday, a day after the official date of

implementation, businesses were still selling cooking gas at the old prices.

This has my full attention as the people of St. Maarten would have finally seen a drastic cut in cooking gas, and would be able to keep in their pockets, Naf. 20.27 for a 20lb bottle and Naf. 40.04 for a 100lb bottle.

What is happening to the controls? Who is ensuring that the new prices are being implemented by all businesses? Why do households have to continue with the burden of old prices? This is a needed relief for

the consumers and households in general. These are questions I want to pose to the Minister responsible as soon as the Minister decides to find time in her schedule to address Parliament.

Additionally, it has been stated in Wednesday's publication the newspaper that the overall Consumer Price Index and inflation have decreased on average compared to the year 2014. With the public knowledge dropping world market price of oil this behaviour is expected and as a consequence just recent LIAT has agreed to remove their

fuel clause making tickets less expensive. Even utility companies in the region are doing the same. As a Member of Parliament I will like to know what is the Minister of TEATT doing with regard to GEBE and their build up rates? Can the same be done so that the people can feel less burdened with the cost of electricity?

The Minister of TEATT has not found time in her schedule to address consumer protection concerns. The Minister holds a critical function and needs to give an account to the people of St. Maarten on matters that affect them. Cooking gas has not received any decrease for the entire year of 2015 as far as I can recall.

The people of Curaçao pay Naf. 40.00 for a 100lb bottle and Naf. 8.00 for a 20lb bottle of cooking gas. On Bonaire, the cost of LPG is even cheaper with the cost being Naf. 27.31 for a 100lbs bottle and Naf. 7.31 for a 20lb bottle. In St. Maarten, the published price for a 100 lb bottle is Naf. 112.96, while businesses are charging the old price of Naf. 153.00, the published price for a 20lb bottle is Naf. 21.73, but businesses are selling it for Naf. 42.00.

The much-awaited answer to the cries of when will the people of St. Maarten feel a relief after the constant decrease of international oil prices, is still waiting. I have campaigned on the premise to look out for

the needs and betterment of the people and so doing will continue to monitor developments and request that urgent audience of the Minister, hoping that the Minister will honour both

the December 1, 2015 request and the new request that will be sent.

**Leona Marlin-Romeo**  
Independent Member  
of Parliament

*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, said the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. (Jeremiah 29:11)*  
*For my brethren and companion's sakes, I will now say. Peace be within thee. (Psalm 121:8)*  
*It is with deep sadness that we announce the peaceful passing of our beloved son, brother, father, grandfather and friend:*



## Raymond Giraud Antoine

better known as "Monchi" & "Uncle"

Sunrise: September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1961 - Sunset: February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Left to mourn his:

- Mother: Mrs Josephine Antoine – John Baptist (Aruba)
- Wife: Mrs. Evangelista Antoine Jorge (SXM)
- Sisters: Veronica Antoine & Family (SXM), Piola van Heyningen & Family (Aruba), Lucy Irwin & Family (Aruba).
- Brothers: Mathias Antoine & Family (Jamaica) and Raphael Antoine & Family (SXM)
- Children: Janila Antoine & Family (Netherlands), Jeandaline Martina (SXM), and Jordan Antoine (SXM.)
- Stepchild: Arisleidi Martinez (Dom. Rep.)
- Mother-in-law: Maria Ogenia Jorge de Rosario
- Grandchildren: Reighjan "King" Antoine and Chiara Seebaren
- Aunts: Mathilda Felix & Family (Texas) and Yonna Claire & Family (UK)
- Uncle: Joseph John-Baptist (Texas)
- Special Cousins: Chrisma Amantrading & Family (Cur.) and Kiki Amantrading & Family (Aruba)

- Special nieces & nephew: Joel, Corrisse and Anisha
- Goddaughter: Johanna Wever
- Cousins, nephews and nieces too numerous to mention
- Very close friends: Noreen Labega, Irma Woods, Arthur Lugiisse, Sam Hodge, Joseph Dollison, Roland Arrindell, Patrick Lloyd, Fernando Richardson, Carlos Richardson, Claudius Buncamper, Stanley Fanyte, Steven Roberts, Inez Garcia, Marco (Turning Point), Lisa and Milene.

Friends, neighbors too numerous to mention. Raymond was a former employee of I.C.E and Public Works. He was related to the following families: Antoine, John-Baptist, Celaire, Armantrading, Irwin, Van Heyningen, Lourens, Berry, Martina and Jorge de Rosario.

If during our time of grief we have forgotten anyone, please accept our apology, it was indeed done unintentionally. The funeral service will be held on: Friday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016. At: Risen Christ Catholic Church, South Reward Viewing: 1:00 pm. - 2:00 pm. Service: 2:00 pm. Interment will be at: Cul de Sac Cemetery.

Management and staff of Emerald Funeral Home would like to extend our deepest sympathy to the bereaved families. May His Soul Rest in Eternal Peace



# MP Lake has it the wrong way round

Dear Editor,

Member of Parliament Maurice Lake missed a big part of the story in his press release, which I will explain.

Within a 10-year span NV GEBE had seven director changes (2006- 2016). Three of the changes were temporal/interim directors with limited decision-making powers. For the past months GEBE has been functioning with a temporary director with no power. There are vacancies for Financial Director, Technical Director and Managing Director for the longest awhile. The truth of the matter is the Supervisory Board can only nominate candidates for the positions, but it is only the Government can appoint persons as directors. There candidates for those position on Government's desk pending a decision since last year.

Government, in the meantime, has decided to send home the board of NV GEBE, which can only make a bad situation even worse. A company that is the cornerstone of the St. Maarten economy will have, in the height of the tourist season, no supervisory board and no stable director at the helm.

In addition to all of this confusion in the company, GEBE has to buy a new engine this year to keep pace with the demand for electricity on the island. Even though Government approved the purchase it cannot happen without a permanent director and a supervisory board in place. All of this confusion is an

accident waiting to happen. Government has created a frustrating situation which can have explosive consequences.

You mentioned about nine projects in your press release that need to be executed. How are all those projects that you mentioned going to be executed with no director in place or one with limited authority? The workers' needs on all levels are neglected as a result of no one being in charge. Are you aware that our CLAs expired since last year?

At the moment NV GEBE is on automatic pilot with no one in charge of it. Management blames the Supervisory Board, and the Supervisory Board blames Government, which results in Government blaming the management. This goes round and round; the question is when is all this going end?


Mr. Lake is a supporter and coalition partner in this government with the responsibility for Ministry of Public Works which included GEBE; this put him in a position to do something about this mess. If he wants NV GEBE to start investing back into the community and executing projects he has to take decisions. He has to start by appointing a Financial Director and a Technical Director. Those are the two most crucial positions needing to be filled urgently. If people in the Ministry are not cooperating, just give them a vote of non-confidence.

Mr. Lake should not issue another press release

complaining about lack of action on the part of NV GEBE. He is in charge and has the responsibility to do something about it. All the chaos in GEBE was brought about by Government's inaction. If he wants a sense of tranquillity in NV GEBE he has to take some action. His next press release to the public should be to let us know when NV GEBE director(s) are going to be appointed. Then and only then can we talk about projects that need to be executed. I am looking forward to an early response from you on this urgent matter MP Maurice Lake

Antonio Brown

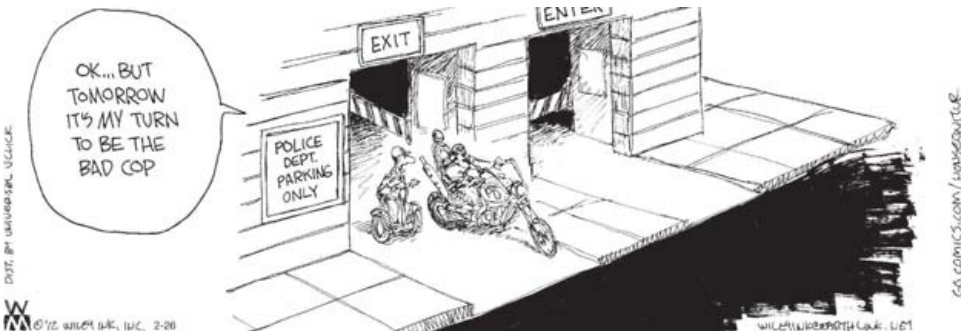
*Thank you*



The family of the late  
**Imelda Augusta Richardson - Carti**

would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone that has kept our family in their prayers, thoughts and has expressed their sympathy in our time of bereavement.

Thank you and God bless.



# HOROSCOPE

By Nancy Black

**Today's Birthday (February 26)** – Advance professionally this year. Social expansion pays. Reach a personal goal (after 3/8), before shared financial changes (after 3/23). Income grows over the next two years (after 9/9), with Jupiter in Libra. Partnership sparks newly (after 9/1), opening new personal options (after 9/16). Follow your dreams.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

**Aries** (March 21-April 19) – Today is an 8 – Collaborations produce results. Work together. The more you do, the more you discover that needs to be done. Coordinate strategies and plans. Avoid silly arguments. Someone else gets through where you can't. Make promises.

**Taurus** (April 20-May 20) – Today is a 7 – Navigate chaos at work. A difficult situation is making you stronger. Don't take big risks now. Do what you know works. Take a traditional approach, with trusted methods. Support loved ones with upsetting circumstances.

**Gemini** (May 21-June 20) – Today is a 6 – Slow down and relax. Manage a startling development. Deal with changes without complaining. With an emotional response, let someone else speak for you. Upgrade your equipment if necessary. Someone's saying nice things about your game.

**Cancer** (June 21-July 22) – Today is a 5 – Finish a home project that has dragged out. Work on an improvement that provides more support. Explore clever ideas online. What you need doesn't need to be expensive. Repurpose something under-utilized. Enjoy the results.

**Leo** (July 23-Aug. 22) – Today is a 7 – Opportunities arise through communications, with Mercury sextile Uranus. You're spurred to action. Knowledge and expertise provides profits. Invest in newer technology (without touching savings). Outdoor diversions delight. Talk about what you'd love to see happen.

**Virgo** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) – Today is an 8 – Financial conditions seem unsettled. Don't let a big change destroy your domestic tranquility. Wait to see what develops. Rely on the wisdom of your elders. Present your argument tactfully. Accept help from those with experience.

**Libra** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) – Today is an 8 – Slow down to navigate surprises. Something doesn't go as planned. Use clever tactics. Shrewd decisions sidestep a controversy. Get help with details. Talk about dreams and intuition, with Mercury sextile Uranus. Share insights with family.

**Scorpio** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) – Today is a 5 – Peace and quiet soothe your spirit. Process emotions. Avoid chaos and controversy. Consider and let go of something from the past. An amazing development requires a second opinion. Maintain a mystery. Neither borrow nor lend.

**Sagittarius** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) – Today is an 8 – Provide leadership in a group controversy. Listen to all considerations. Offer advice only if asked. This is the test. You're especially clever, with Mercury sextile Uranus. Inventiveness, creativity and inspiration come easily. Create solutions.

**Capricorn** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) – Today is a 6 – Brainstorm and reap creative abundance, with Mercury sextile Uranus. Ask questions. Listen to your intuition. A study date is both productive and fun. A brilliant insight shatters an illusion. Children surprise you.

**Aquarius** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) – Today is a 7 – Make a commitment. Conserve resources, and be adaptable. Heed an excellent idea from a friend, with Mercury sextile Uranus. Communication opens unexpected doors. Share your knowledge and inspiration. Form a new creative partnership.

**Pisces** (Feb. 19-March 20) – Today is a 6 – Surprising news causes some confusion. Listen to intuition. Don't let a critic get you down. Talk with people you trust. Keep respectful. Collaborate. You're in the eye of the storm. Clean up later. Friends help.



**Speak your mind**  
By Queenie

**SEND LETTERS TO**  
P.O. BOX 828  
FAX +599 5425913  
or e-mail  
[queenie@thedailyherald.com](mailto:queenie@thedailyherald.com)

**Dear Queenie,**

A friend of mine is getting married and invited me to be in her wedding party.

The thing is, the man she is marrying is a total jerk. He has no education and bad manners, he can't hold a job and he takes out his troubles on her – he says whatever goes wrong is her fault and never because of anything he has done or not done or done wrong.

Queenie, how do I refuse her invitation without spoiling our friendship?—**Disapproving friend**

**Dear Disapproving,**

I am not sure you can have it both ways. You could try telling her you have a prior commitment that you simply cannot get out of, but your friend may well see through that excuse.

On the other hand, if you tell her what you have told me your friend probably will resent your “judgmental attitude” and the righter you are, the more she will resent it.

You might want to consider being there for her on her wedding day and praying that you are wrong about her fiancé.

**Only notices of fund-raising events for non-profit or educational organisations will be placed in the Events/Notices column. Notices/Events should be sent to [notices@thedailyherald.com](mailto:notices@thedailyherald.com) in the format used on this page. Do not send fliers or press releases to this address.**

**NOTICES****VKS BIVAK**

The Commander of the Voluntary Corps of St. Maarten (VKS) announces they will be having a BIVAK starting Friday, February 26 of from 4:00pm and ending Sunday February 28 at 3:00pm. On Friday the VKS will be camping out on Emilio Wilsons Estate and on Saturday in Cay Bay on both days the VKS will be making use of the streets.

**Youth leaders**

Oranje Community School is looking for youth leaders. If you are interested call Olivia Jacobs or Valeria Richards at number 586-7948 for an appointment.

**Youth Development**

Youth Development Center Foundation offers sewing, fashion design, nail technology, make-up, massage and facial classes as well as it's girls mentorship program... persons interested in these programs can call 580-6796 / 0690 26.93.66 or email: [Ydc.sxm@gmail.com](mailto:Ydc.sxm@gmail.com)

**Old License Plates**

Support the Museum by donating your old license plates to the foundation. Plates can be dropped off at the museum in Speetjens alley directly across from the notary. Tel: 542-4917.

**Old License Plates**

Donate your old license plates to the St. Maarten Animal Welfare foundation and help animals of St. Maarten. Drop off at their logo shop at Dock Maarten (Chesterfield parking lot) or call 55 33 020.

**Recruiting Members**

Junior Chamber International Leaders, Innovation, Vibrant of Equality (JCI LIVE Soualiga) meets at the University of St. Martin starting 7:00pm every last Wednesday and are recruiting members. All interesting persons please contact [jlivesouliga@gmail.com](mailto:jlivesouliga@gmail.com) or call 588-1833 for more information.

**Yoga for Seniors**

Philipsburg Jubilee Library is offering free “Gentle Yoga” classes for persons 50 plus on Mondays from 10:00 to 11:00am. For registration and information call: 5533020.

**Volunteers Needed**

Community Outreach Mentorship and Empowerment Center (COME) is looking for volunteers in the following areas: Adult Literacy Teachers, Cooks (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) and an all-round person. For more information call 542-2575 or email: [comecenter2012@gmail.com](mailto:comecenter2012@gmail.com)

**Gardening Program**

Community Development, Family & Humanitarian Affairs (C.D.F.H.A.) is now registering persons/families for their new Backyard Gardening Program. For further information and to register persons can contact the various Community Help Desk's at: Hope Estate 542-2802, Cole Bay 5444302, Dutch Quarter 520-3418, St. Peters: 548-4633 or the main office at the Vineyard Building: 542-1122/ 542-9925

**Volunteers Needed**

Walichi Basketball Association is looking for volunteers, especially high school students in need of volunteer hours. Volunteers in the categories of graphic design, photographers, video editors, kitchen helpers, table scorers and all around volunteers for the Ladies Basketball Championship and upcoming Interscholastic Basketball Championship. For more information call 581-8502 or [walichibasketball@gmail.com](mailto:walichibasketball@gmail.com) .

**Music School**

Andante Music School is registering students of all ages for the new Music school year 2015-2016. For more information call 520-1030 or 542-0727.

**Jiu Jitsu, Kickboxing Classes**

BJJ and Muay Thai Kickboxing classes are offered for children and adults at Renzo Gracie St Maarten. Pre-registration required for children classes. All classes take place at SXM BJJ 15 Wellington Rd. 2nd Floor. Cole Bay. For more information call 580-3894 or email [info@sxm-bjj.com](mailto:info@sxm-bjj.com)

**Female Soccer Team**

FC Soualiga is looking for ladies to join its female soccer team. Practice takes place at Raoul Illidge Sports Complex in Cay Hill every Tuesday and Thursday, 7:00-8:30pm. Contact [fcsoaliga@gmail.com](mailto:fcsoaliga@gmail.com), phone number 559-7482, Facebook: FC Soualiga, or visit during practice hours, if interested.

**Volunteers Needed**

Beyond Kultura is seeking volunteers to organise, write project proposals, just be a hands-on person with lots of creativity to help out in projects. Call for an orientation meeting on 527-1223 or email [beyondkultura@gmail.com](mailto:beyondkultura@gmail.com)

**Steel Pan Classes**

Adults and children 5 and over are advised to register for steel pan afterschool classes at Dow's Musical Foundation. Registration forms can be collected at A.Th. Illidge Road 48, Lower Princes Quarter, St Maarten (behind Fingos Paper and Oduber agencies). For more information call 542-6971.

**Support Group**

Women of Destiny Support Group for single mothers meets on the second Monday of every month at Christian Faith Ministry love hall in Dutch Quarter at 7:30pm (purple church). Tel. 587-6553.

**Dance Classes**

Dance Theater of St. Maarten will be registering students ages 3+ for classes. For detailed schedule and new tuition rates, visit our website [www.dancesxm.com](http://www.dancesxm.com), e-mail us at [info@dancesxm.com](mailto:info@dancesxm.com) or call 520-6914.

**Free HIV testing**

St. Maarten AIDS Foundation is offering free and confidential HIV testing at its office Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 9:00am to 12:00pm. Results are available in 15 minutes. If these hours are not convenient call 553-2626 to make an appointment. The office is on the second floor of the Blue Point building in Cole Bay (across from Tropicana Casino). Parking and entrance at the back of the building.

**Volunteers Needed**

St Maarten Red Cross is looking for volunteers. Interested persons can visit their building or call 545-2333 or 586-5330 for more information.

**Positive Thinking**

Brahma Kumaris St. Maarten invites persons to its on-going free meditation and Positive Thinking courses at Raj Yoga Centre, 16 Front Street. Call 524-2554 or 542-0541 for more information.

**Community Reading Class**

Organised by the Salvation Army at Union Road #59, Cole Bay, every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 2:30-4:30pm.

**Programme for Alcoholics**

Al-Anon is a non-profit 12-step programme in partnership with Alcoholics Anonymous available for persons, family and friends of persons who may have a problem with alcoholism. The support group meets at Red Cross on Airport Boulevard every Monday and Friday, 6:00-7:00pm. For information call 527-1343.

**Opening Hours**

St. Maarten National Heritage Foundation informs the general public that the museum opening hours are Monday-Friday, 10:00am to 4:00pm.

**Foster Parents Needed**

Foundation Judiciary Institutes Windward Islands (FJIWI)/Stichting Justitie Inrichtingen Bovenwinden (SJIB), is looking for foster parents: permanent foster parents, weekend/vacation foster parents and emergency/crisis foster parents. For more information 542-3449. Email inquiries can be sent to [sjib@sintmaarten.net](mailto:sjib@sintmaarten.net).

**HOPE Meetings**

HIV/AIDS support group HOPE is inviting all HIV positive persons to attend their monthly meetings. For more information contact Dr. Gerard van Osch, tel. 544-5374, during office hours.

**Volunteers Needed**

St. Maarten Animal Welfare Foundation is seeking volunteers during the morning hours for special activities. For more information call 520-8887.

**Volunteers Needed**

Les Quatre Pattes/PAWS animal association has several opportunities available for those seeking to help the animals on the island. Volunteers willing to help call 0690-34-04-07 or 552-0407.

**Animal Volunteer**

Animals R Friends Foundation needs volunteers 15 years and older who are not afraid of handling animals for various tasks: feeding cats and dogs, walking dogs, guest-speakers for ARF, lesson materials for schools, etc. For more information call at 556-1191/527-0527/520-7365/526-0113 or e-mail: [arf\\_sxm@yahoo.com](mailto:arf_sxm@yahoo.com).

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# It is a man's world (again) in the Oscars best picture race

LOS ANGELES--From abandoned astronauts to testosterone-fueled Wall Street traders, dogged reporters and frontiersmen bent on revenge, it is a man's world in the best picture race at Sunday's Oscars with women again taking supporting roles.

The Oscars have not seen a female-led film win best picture in a decade, since "Million Dollar Baby" starring Hillary Swank won the top accolade in 2005.

The #OscarsSoWhite backlash that took place this year after no actors of colour were nominated has overshadowed much of the coverage of Hollywood's awards season. Yet the male-dominated race is indicative of the larger

gender gap in Hollywood, observers say.

Male stars from Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hardy to Christian Bale and Matt Damon anchor the frontrunners for best picture this year in Wall Street misdeeds film "The Big Short," pioneer-era revenge tale "The Revenant," Boston Globe's Catholic Church probe "Spotlight" and space adventure "The Martian."

"Brooklyn" and "Room," both female-driven films and whose leads are both nominated for best actress, are included in the pack, but neither film is predicted by awards pundits to win the best picture contest.

"A woman's film is always harder to get made at a stu-

dio," veteran film producer Lynda Obst told Reuters. "They (studios) have never been convinced that a female market 100 percent exists."

That is despite the box office success of big budget films with female leads, including Jennifer Lawrence in "The Hunger Games" franchise, Shailene Woodley in the "Divergent" series, Scarlett Johansson's "Lucy" and newcomer Daisy Ridley in "Star Wars: The Force Awakens". But studio executives attribute the success of those films to the popularity of the star actress rather than the strength of the female movie-going audience, said Obst, who has produced films such as "Sleepless in Seattle" and "Interstellar".

According to a study published this week, women made up only one-third of speaking characters in 414 Hollywood movies and TV shows in 2014. "Award shows can only be a reflection of the material out there," said Katherine Phillips, professor of leadership and ethics at Columbia Business School.

Much of the problem, Phillips said, lies in movie studios sticking to business models that have worked in the past, leading to "history repeating itself over and over again." Films with popular male leads tend to do well on average at the box office, so the formula is replicated.

"The film industry has been lazy," Phillips said. "You have choices to make and there are easier choices, lazier choices and sometimes harder choices to make about diversifying what you're showing people."



The cast of "Spotlight" (from left) Billy Crudup, Brian d'Arcy James, Mark Ruffalo, Rachael McAdams, John Slattery, Michael Keaton and Liev Schreiber, hold their awards for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture as they pose backstage at the 22nd Screen Actors Guild Awards in Los Angeles, California January 30, 2016.

# Dying dad, sick son booted off plane to applause return home

SEATTLE--A boy on a vacation with his dying father was back home in Arizona on Thursday, days after the 7-year-old suffered a dog allergy attack and the family was removed from a flight home to applause from passengers, his mother said.

The trio was at the tail end of a bucket-list vacation to the U.S. Northwest so the boy's father, George, who has terminal throat cancer, could visit family, when the child suffered a severe allergy attack from being near a dog brought on the plane, she said.

"Shame on you for being so cruel," Christina Alvarado wrote on Facebook after her family was taken off a Monday flight from Bellingham, Washington to the Phoenix area.

She told local broadcaster KING5 that her son, Giovanni, broke out in hives and began scratching soon after the family boarded the flight. The family alerted a flight attendant, who

"smirked" and said that dogs are on every flight, Alvarado wrote on Facebook. As the family left, a number of the 151 passengers onboard the Airbus 319 applauded, she said.

Allegiant Air, the subsidiary of Las Vegas-based Allegiant Travel Company that operated the flight on which the family was traveling, said in a statement that the family was told to leave the plane and rescheduled over safety concerns for the boy. The company said it apologized to the family for the inconvenience and booked them on a new flight that landed at Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport late on Wednesday. The family is not seeking

compensation from the airline, Phoenix broadcaster ABC15 reported. But Alvarado said the incident forced them to reschedule his cancer treatments and ruined what could be one of their last family trips. "I am sad this has to be a memory with my dad," Giovanni told KING5.

Chris Janelli, Executive Director for the Center for Canine Behavior Studies in Connecticut said the incident might be indicative of the relationship people have with their pet companions. "Perhaps the stewardess and the passengers were saying, dogs have as much a right to fly as somebody who is allergic to them," Janelli said.



TV 15 (local)  
Channel 115 SXM Cable

Friday, February 26

- 8:00am SXM Daily News (rr)
- 8:30am Primetime with Beverly Hyman
- 9:00am Caribbean Newsline
- 9:30am Caribbean Workout
- 10:00am Program on HIV
- 11:00am Music Videos
- 5:00pm Music Videos
- 5:30pm Caribbean Newsline
- 6:00pm Music Videos
- 7:00pm DCOMM
- 7:30pm SXM Daily News
- 8:00pm Music Videos
- 9:00pm Music Videos/Robbie's Lottery
- 10:00pm Caribbean Passport/Caribbean Lottery
- 10:30pm Transparency TV
- 11:00pm SXM Daily News (r)
- 11:30pm Caribbean Newsline



BVN (Dutch/Flemish) TV  
Channel 122 SXM Cable  
Channel 23 WTN

Friday, February 26

- 12:00pm VRT Journaal
- 12:30pm Van Gils & Gasten
- 1:15pm Rot op naar je eigen land
- 1:55pm Tussen Kunst en Kitsch
- 2:40pm Binnensteubuiten
- 3:05pm NOS Journaal
- 3:10pm Sesamstraat
- 3:25pm Sesamstraat 10 voor...
- 3:40pm Uki
- 3:45pm Het Klokhuis
- 4:00pm Jill
- 4:15pm Blokken
- 4:40pm Thuis
- 5:05pm Dagelijkse kost
- 5:25pm Een Vandaag
- 5:50pm NOS Sportjournaal
- 6:00pm VRT Journaal
- 6:45pm De Wereld Draait Door
- 7:35pm NOS Journaal
- 7:55pm Weerbericht Europa/Afrika
- 8:00pm Flikken Rotterdam
- 8:55pm TV Show
- 9:40pm Studio Sport Eredivisie
- 10:10pm Nieuwsuur
- 11:00pm Weerbericht Amerika/Caribiën
- 11:05pm Jinek
- 11:50pm Iedereen beroemd



TV-CARIB (local)  
Channel 10 WTN

Friday, February 26

- 6:30am Facing the Day
- 7:00am TV-Carib Informer (r)
- 7:40am Noticias en Español (r)
- 12:05pm Viewpoint PJD2
- Program Rotation
- 5:00pm Playtime
- 6:30pm In Depth with Andrew Bishop
- 7:00pm Fitness with Bella
- 7:30pm Talk Art
- 8:00pm TV-CARIB Informer
- 8:40pm DCOMM
- 9:00pm Live Lottery Drawings
- 10:00pm Noticias en Español/Que Farandula!



TeleCuraçao  
Channel 130 SXM Cable  
Channel 8 WTN

Friday, February 26

- 6:00am Morgan Mainta - TCFM
- 6:30am Mòru Bon Dia
- 9:30am Ban Hals e Standarte
- 10:00am Tòsti - TCFM
- 11:00am Vive la Salud - Zika
- 11:30am Freelands Properties
- 12:00pm Cafè CNN
- 12:30pm TeleNotisia Mèrdia
- 1:00pm Bo 'Tra'i Mèrdia
- 3:30pm Teatro te den bo Kas
- 5:00pm Hoben Positivo (r)
- 6:00pm Herensia - George Curiel
- 7:00pm Party Time (r)
- 7:30pm Ban Hals e Standarte (r)
- 8:00pm TeleNotisia
- 8:45pm Extra Plus
- 9:00pm Wega di Number Kòrsou
- 9:10pm Partispashon di Morto
- 9:15pm Prinses Wilhelmina Fonds
- 10:00pm Before & After Magazine (r)
- 11:00pm TeleNotisia (r)

# Graffiti artist turns Jerusalem market into colourful canvas

JERUSALEM--A smell of spray paint drowns out the odour of fresh fish and meat as night falls on bustling Mahane Yehuda, a food market that is one of Jerusalem's most popular shopping sites.

From early morning until late evening, the Israeli market's narrow, covered alleys are packed with local shoppers and tourists pushing their way past packed stalls in search of the best fresh produce or juicy kebabs. But after dark, when the stall owners shut up shop for the night and roll down their metal shutters, the closed storefronts become a personal canvas for 22-year-old artist Solomon

Souza.

In the past year, Souza, helped by his friend, Berel Hahn, who came up with idea, has painted about 140 shutters with graffiti-style murals of characters that have inspired him, ranging from biblical heroes to former Israeli prime ministers.

Souza's tools for this night's job are about a dozen spray-paint cans and his smart-phone. His glance alternated between the phone, depicting Lucy Aharish, a popular Arab-Israeli news anchor, and the three-metre-high (10 feet) version of her he was creating, one spray at a time.

Mahane Yehuda market, which over years has

experienced a number of deadly Palestinian attacks against shoppers, is also one of Jerusalem's hottest night spots, with bars open and music echoing through the walkways until dawn. Souza lifts the face mask he wears against the fumes, the straps of which squish down on his skull cap worn by orthodox Jews.

"I've had nightmares about this," the former Londoner, said softly with a smile. "So many shutters."

Souza and friends who help him, seek out store owners to get permission to paint their shutters, but sometimes they approach him and may ask for a painting of someone spe-



Ultra-Orthodox Jewish men (L) walk past artist Solomon Souza, 22, as he spray-paints a portrait on the metal shutter of a closed storefront in Mahane Yehuda, one of Jerusalem's most popular outdoor markets on Thursday.

cific, such as a famous rabbi or family member. Others have given him free rein.

A few stalls down from Aharish's portrait, Souza chose to paint Si Ali Sak-

kat, a former mayor of Tunis who helped save Jews during the Nazi Holocaust.

Souza works for free and said he looks to share his sources of inspiration and

to add life to the market. He hopes to bring in other artists to help fill the remaining 200 or so shutters.



The international jury for the 66th Berlinale International Film Festival pose for photos prior to a news conference in Berlin February 11, 2016. Pictured are (L-R): British author Nick James, French photographer Brigitte Lacombe, German actor Lars Eidinger, Jury President actress Meryl Streep, British actor Clive Owen, Polish director Malgorzata Szumowska and Italian actress Alba Rohrwacher.

# Streep says remark taken out of context

LOS ANGELES--Oscar-winning actress Meryl Streep on Thursday said her "We're all Africans" comment was taken out of context, writing in the Huffington Post about the controversy she sparked up amid Hollywood's ongoing diversity debate.

Streep, who earlier this month headed up her first international film jury at the Berlin Film Festival, said her comments to an Egyptian reporter during a press conference about whether she was familiar with cinema from Africa and the Middle East, were "distorted."

"I was not minimizing dif-

ference, but emphasizing the invisible connection empathy enables, a thing so central to the fact of being human, and what art can do: convey another person's experience," Streep wrote.

The furor over her comments came amid an uproar in Hollywood over this year's all-white Oscar acting nominees for a second consecutive year, sparking the #OscarsSoWhite discussion. The actress also added in the piece entitled "Setting The Record Straight From Berlin" that she was not asked at the press conference about the all-white jury at this year's

festival.

"I did not 'defend' the 'all-white jury,' nor would I, if I had been asked to do so. Inclusion -- of races, genders, ethnicities and religions -- is important to me, as I stated at the outset of the press conference," she said.

The comments from the three-time Oscar winner, one of the most admired actresses of her generation, quickly went viral and made headlines around the world as some critics expressed disappointment. Others at the time said her remarks were taken out of context.

# BBC culture allowed star to commit sex crimes, but leading staff unaware

LONDON--Britain's globally respected broadcaster, the BBC, was told on Thursday it was guilty of serious failings in its handling of Jimmy Savile, a celebrated TV and radio showman revealed after death to have been one of Britain's most prolific sex offenders.

Warnings about Savile's conduct went unheeded for decades, a damning report by a former judge said on Thursday. It found no evidence of a cover-up by the BBC as an institution, however.

The report said there had been - and still was - a prevailing, macho culture at the publicly-funded broadcaster in which staff were fearful of making complaints, especially about its top stars known internally as "The Talent". That

meant senior managers were kept in the dark, concluded the report's author, former Appeal Court judge Janet Smith. But a lawyer for Savile's victims called the findings a "whitewash" and implausible.

The Savile scandal burst into public view in 2012 when British police said Savile, one of Britain's best-known celebrities, had abused hundreds of victims, mainly youngsters, over six decades until his death aged 84 in 2011. Some of the abuse took place at hospitals where he was renowned for his charity work. He was knighted for the latter. The revelations plunged the BBC, funded by an annual licence fee and known around the world for its news and dramas, into crisis and prompted

allegations the broadcaster had covered up his crimes.

"It seems to me that the BBC could have known," the broadcaster's director general, Tony Hall, told a media conference. "Just as powerful as the accusation 'you knew', is the legitimate question: 'How could you not have known?'"

The Smith report concluded Savile had abused 72 victims in relation to his BBC work over almost 50 years. These included eight rapes, including of a boy, 10, and a girl, 13. The youngest victim was eight. Smith said there had been five missed opportunities to uncover his misconduct and that of fellow BBC personality Stuart Hall, who was jailed in 2013 for child sex crimes.

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# Scandal-hit CONCACAF votes for reform package

ZURICH-- Scandal-plagued CONCACAF, the soccer confederation for North and Central America and the Caribbean, on Thursday voted for wide-ranging reforms after being warned by its lawyers of serious consequences if it failed to change its structure.

Miami-based CONCACAF, one of the six confederations within FIFA, has been at the centre of the scandal at world soccer's governing body, which has seen 41 individuals and entities indicted by the U.S. Department of Justice.

FIFA is due to vote on its own reform plans on Friday, before electing a new president to replace the banned Sepp Blatter.

Representatives of CON-

CACAF's 41-member associations were given a briefing by the body's lawyers in Miami earlier this month where they were urged to back a comprehensive reform package.

The lawyers warned of difficulties with broadcast partners, sponsors and banks, FIFA itself and the risk of government action, including possible disbandment, if change was not enacted.

After a lengthy debate on minor details of the reforms, CONCACAF delegates, gathered in a Zurich hotel, voted unanimously for the reform package.

The reforms will separate a representative Council, charged with policy formulation, from a General Secretariat, which will handle

day-to-day business matters.

A new independent Ethics Committee will be formed and a series of positions will be held over on committees for independent figures without links to the game.

The CONCACAF Council will include three non-voting independent members and all elected officials will be subject to a 12-year term limit.

"Today is a landmark day for football governance in CONCACAF, we fully understand that it is the start of a long journey but today is a very important day," said Canadian Soccer Association president Victor Montagliani, a member of the CONCACAF Executive Committee.

"The membership came together to make significant changes -- yes, organizational changes but also an opportunity for cultural change too," he said.

The last three CONCACAF presidents have all been indicted by the U.S. Department of Justice as part of its probe into corruption in the game.



The annual Caribbean Gems Elementary Schools Inter-School Swim Meet will be held in Cole Bay Sunday.

## Caribbean Gems School meet set for Sunday

COLE BAY—The Caribbean Gems Elementary Schools Inter-School Swim Meet will be held at host Carib Swim Team pool in Cole Bay Sunday.

Schools can enter two teams consisting of up to 16 swimmers each in grades one to six. The competition will be divided into boys and girls and by age

brackets of seven and under, eight to nine, and 10 and up.

As the meet is sponsored by Caribbean Gems there will be no swimmer registration fee, but a \$1 entry fee will be charged for parents and fans.

There will be 20 events including 4 x 25m freestyle relay, 25m backstroke,

100m, 50m and 25m freestyle, 50m back stroke, 50m and 25m breast stroke, 25m butterfly and 4 x 50 freestyle relay.

Medals will be award to the top three in each event. Food and drink will be on sale.

Warm up starts at 8:00am and the first swim is set for 9:00am.



St. Maarten Soccer Association (SMSA) President Sudesh Singh and General Secretary Danae Daal, are in Switzerland to take part in the CONCACAF and FIFA Congresses.

## St. Maarten represented at the FIFA Extraordinary Congress in Zürich

ZÜRICH- St. Maarten Soccer Association (SMSA) President Sudesh Singh and General Secretary Danae Daal, traveled to Switzerland on Wednesday to take part in the CONCACAF and FIFA Congresses held on Thursday and Friday. The CONCACAF Extraordinary Congress took place on the Thursday and members voted on reforms, including revisions to the CONCACAF's statutes. (See related story.)

On Friday St. Maarten

will also be present for the FIFA Extraordinary Congress. During this Congress, members of FIFA will vote on the new draft FIFA Statutes that will strengthen how international Football is governed. Also a new FIFA President will be elected.

Currently St. Maarten is only a member of CONCACAF. One of the main goals of the SMSA is to begin process and apply for FIFA membership.

# MLB announces new slide rule and pace-of-game changes

NEW YORK-- Rolling slides to break up double plays will not be permitted starting with the 2016 season according to new regulations adopted on Thursday by Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players' Association.

The World Umpires Association also approved the banishment of so-called block slides after New York Mets shortstop Ruben Tejada suffered a broken leg on a takeout at second base in last year's playoffs by Los Angeles Dodgers infielder Chase Utley.

MLB and the players' union also signed off on two new pace of play initiatives designed to help speed up the game.

According to the new sliding rules, a runner is required to make a "bona fide" attempt or an umpire can call the runner and the batter out.

"A runner will be specifically prohibited from changing his pathway to the base or utilizing a "roll block" for the purpose of initiating contact with the

fielder," the new rule states. Potential violations will be subject to instant replay review, as will "neighborhood play" calls, which previously were exempted from replay review.

A bona-fide slide occurs when a makes contact with the ground ahead of the base, is in position to reach

the base with his hand or foot and attempts to remain on the base without changing his path to initiate contact with a fielder.

The pace of play program is being expanded from last year to include timed 30-second visits to the mound by managers and coaches and a reduction

by 20 seconds of broadcast breaks between innings.

MLB said last year's pace of game directives, which included the batter's box rule and decreased break time between innings and pitching changes, resulted in the average length of games falling to 2:56:14 from 3:02:21.



There will be a meeting for baseball players age 10 to 13 that want to sign up for high performance training at Coach Tony Rombley's Baseball International School. The meeting will be at the Little League Ballpark Wednesday at 6:00pm. Rombley already operates a BIS baseball academy in Aruba. BIS will soon expand to include other age groups.



Mercedes Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton of Britain speeds his car during the fourth testing session ahead the upcoming season at the Circuit Barcelona-Catalunya in Montmelo, Spain, February 25.

## Hamilton hails 'fantastic' car as first test ends

BARCELONA-- Triple Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton hailed his 'fantastic' Mercedes after wrapping up the first pre-season test with another 99 laps before lunchtime on Thursday.

"It's been an incredible week of testing for us because we've done more mileage than we ever had before," the Briton told reporters at the Circuit de Catalunya before handing over to German team mate Nico Rosberg for the afternoon session.

Rosberg did 86 laps on medium tyres and said the car felt quick as well as reliable, even if Mercedes will not start exploring its true pace until next week's second test. "Before we came here the team were talking about doing 800km a day and I was thinking they are crazy. I've never done that in the past...I've never had a week like this when the car has just kept going on and on and on," said Hamilton.

### MCNEILL

Continued from page 52

out there and play again tomorrow."

McNeill moved into a three-way tie at the top after twice saving par with 10-foot putts on his outward nine, and producing another impressive par-save from 18 feet at the short 15th.

"It just seemed like when I got on the green I made it, or if I didn't make it, it was close to going in," said McNeill. "I don't know how many one-putts I had, but it felt like quite a few."

Northern Ireland's world number three Rory McIlroy and fifth-ranked American Rickie Fowler, who head a strong field at PGA National, were among the late starters on Thursday.

Hamilton did 342 laps in total, 156 of them on the first day when the car was still fresh out of the garage. That works out at 1,592km, more than five race distances at the Spanish Grand Prix circuit.

With the V6 turbo hybrid power units now in their third year, reliability has been much better across the field than it was a year ago with far fewer red flags to stop the track action.

Even so, champions Mercedes have far outstripped their rivals in mileage terms, a better benchmark at this stage than outright pace because cars can have different fuel loads.

Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen was fastest on the final day, ahead of Red Bull's Daniil Kvyat.

"The car looks fantastic," said Hamilton. "Obviously we don't know the pace of the car just yet but what we can say is that it's gone the distance and that's half the battle."

McLaren's Fernando Alonso, a double champion who had a nightmare 2015 due

to the under-performing Honda engine, had his spirits lifted on Wednesday when he managed 119 laps.

They dropped again on Thursday, with the Spaniard managing only three laps in the morning and unable to set an official time due to a water leak in the Honda power unit that occupied the mechanics for the rest of the afternoon.

"Today was disappointing after starting the first couple of days of the test so positively," he said. "It's not a major problem and will be fixed in time for next week's test."

Ferrari, closest rivals to Mercedes last year, have looked quick with Sebastian Vettel fastest in the first two days and Finnish team mate Raikkonen sounding happy enough as well.

"I am sure it's going to be a better car than last year's," he said. "We are happy so far even if we know there are still a lot of things to do."

The season starts with the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne on March 20.

## AIBA plan for pros in Rio is farcical, says Briton Smith

LONDON-- A proposal to allow established professional boxers to compete in the Olympic Games in Rio this year is farcical, one of Britain's leading boxing administrators said.

Ching-Kuo Wu, head of the International Boxing Association (AIBA), said on Wednesday he wanted to see top-ranked pros like Floyd Mayweather competing for gold medals, possibly as soon as this year. The AIBA organises the Olympic boxing matches.

The AIBA executive committee would still need to approve Wu's plans. And Robert Smith, general secretary of the British Boxing Board of Control, says those plans are unworkable.

"I can't see how it would work to be honest," Smith told Reuters on Thursday. "Are you really going to put in Floyd Mayweather against some little boy who has qualified through the Olympic system in Rio? There is a gulf in class and ability."

"It's farcical to think this could happen in time for Rio. How can you just click your fingers and just sort it out now?"

Amateur boxers are selected for the Olympics in various ways, including the world amateur championships and continental qualifying tournaments in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe.

Pros with less than 15 bouts are eligible to enter the qualification process under current AIBA rules, but Smith said it would be unfair to invite experienced professionals.

"At the present time you have boxers going around

the world trying to qualify for the Olympics. Are you going to say, 'thanks very much but goodbye, we are going to have somebody else'," said Smith, whose organisation has overseen professional boxing in Britain since 1929.

Smith also doubts professional world champions would want to jeopardise their careers by taking part in three-round contests that bear little resemblance to professional bouts.

"Is a professional boxer going to drop everything to go and fight in the Olympics? Pros take three rounds to warm up. It's a different discipline," he said.

"I wouldn't have thought anyone who's already been there, done it, been a world champion, wants to go back and jeopardise what they've already achieved."

Under Wu's leadership, the AIBA set up the semi-

professional World Series Boxing in 2011, in which boxers can earn money fighting for city-based teams. He was also helped introduce women's boxing to the Olympics in London four years ago.

"It is an IOC policy to have the best athletes in the Games," he said on Wednesday, "and of the international federations, AIBA is probably the only one without professional athletes in the Olympics."

While reaction was lukewarm at best, the British Amateur Boxing Association (BABA) left the door slightly ajar.

"The proposals have the potential to broaden the talent pool from which we are able to select boxers and we look forward to hearing more about them in due course," it said in a statement.

## Sunderland wonderland would be five wins, says Allardyce

ENGLAND-- Manager Sam Allardyce has set second from bottom Sunderland a target of five wins from the rest of the season, starting at his former club West Ham United on Saturday.

Allardyce joined Sunderland in October with the club yet to win a Premier League game this term and has guided his players to six victories including a 2-1 defeat of Manchester United earlier this month.

"We have got to find a minimum of five wins...between now and the end of the season to be safe," he told a news conference on Thursday.

"We've won three, drawn two and lost two in our last seven, which has been the best run since I've been here."

Allardyce took over at West Ham when they were relegated in 2011 and won immediate promotion back to the top flight.

He left the Londoners at the end of last season when his contract expired, amid complaints from some fans about the team's playing style.

Slaven Bilic, manager of seventh-placed West Ham, has praised Allardyce for the work he did at Upton Park and believes Sunderland can avoid the drop.

"Sam got us up straight away and stabilised us in the Premier League so he did a great job here," said Bilic.

"Sunderland are very organised, they are showing not only the quality but the character. There is still a long way to go for them but they have a big chance to stay in the league."



Golden State Warriors forward Harrison Barnes (40) drives past Orlando Magic guard Elfrid Payton (4) during the first quarter of a basketball game at Amway Center in Florida. Warriors won 130-114. (Reinhold Matay-USA TODAY Sports.)

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## Global game missing 'Tiger' factor, says top executive



File photo of Tiger Woods before he needed back surgery.

FLORIDA- While exciting young guns Jordan Spieth, Rory McIlroy and Jason Day have been pivotal in drawing a wide audience to the game, the sport is missing the 'Tiger' factor when it comes to 'fringe fans', says a leading golf executive.

Tiger Woods, the greatest player of his generation and arguably of all time, has not competed since August after enduring setbacks in his recovery from back surgeries and has not set a timetable for his return to the PGA Tour.

"You can never replace Tiger Woods, just like you can't replace Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, and Gary Player," Ken Kennerly, executive director of the PGA Tour's Honda Classic which is being played this week, told Reuters.

"Tiger, it's difficult to replace him. In my opinion, without him in the game, we're missing something.

"Tiger Woods is still Tiger Woods, and when he showed up at the Wyndham Championship last year in August and played well, and was (in

one of the last couple (of) final groups ... the (television) ratings were off the charts."

Woods had his best tournament in nearly two years at the Wyndham Championship in North Carolina where he flirted with the lead but missed several birdie opportunities in the final round before finishing four strokes behind winner Davis Love III.

"Does it minimize the negative impact that Tiger has by not participating? Probably a little," said Kennerly, who is also a golf executive with sports management company IMG.

"He still delivers that fringe fan that golf needs. We saw it directly when Tiger hurt himself and couldn't play last year's Honda Classic ... the spike in ticket sales we normally get leading up to the tournament had softened a little bit.

"What does that mean in dollars and cents? Probably a couple of hundred thousand dollars that we did not see, that would have come through the gates because people still wanted to see Tiger. He is still

an enormous asset for this game."

While the timing of 14-times major champion Woods' return to the game is still unknown, Kennerly is excited by the impact already made by American world number one Spieth, second-ranked Australian Day and third-ranked McIlroy of Northern Ireland.

"Luckily with Rory and Rickie (Fowler) and Jordan and Jason Day, and Bubba (Watson) and Adam Scott, and all these guys ... we have great young players that are certainly carrying their own weight," Kennerly said.

"Look at Rickie Fowler, what he's done this year. They (Spieth, Day and McIlroy) came out very boldly with talk of the next 'Big Three', and then Rickie rebounded.

"He made a statement at HSBC and then at Phoenix a couple of weeks ago where he almost won."

American Fowler fought off a late charge from McIlroy and Belgian Thomas Pieters to win the European Tour's Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship last month before losing out in a playoff with Japan's Hideki Matsuyama for the Phoenix Open two weeks later.

Those performances lifted the 27-year-old Fowler to fourth in the world rankings, prompting speculation about the development of a 'Big Four' of young guns along with Spieth, aged 22, Day (28) and McIlroy (26).



File photo of United States goalkeeper Hope Solo (1) making a save against Costa Rica. United States defeated Costa Rica 5-0. Now Solo is considering skipping the Rio Games due to Zika concerns. (Jerome Miron-USA TODAY Sports.)

## US soccer's Solo, worried about Zika, says may skip Rio Games

WASHINGTON- - Renowned U.S. soccer player Hope Solo said Thursday she was unlikely to join her teammates for the Rio Olympic Games without more information about Zika as she hoped to have children and was concerned about the virus' health effects.

"Until I know more, I don't feel like I can make a really informative decision... If things stood as they are right now, I probably would not go," she said in an interview on CBS' "This Morning" program.

Solo, the 34-year-old goalkeeper who helped the U.S. Women's team capture the World Cup last summer, said she was not yet making a final decision. She was hopeful the spread of Zika could be contained in the months leading up to the start of the Games in August in Brazil, where the mosquito-borne virus has been linked to thousands of birth defects.

The United States Olympic Committee has said people concerned for their health should consider not attending the Games.

"I hope we get some clear, concrete answers very soon," she said. "I'm a little skeptical to be honest ... it's scary, and I have a lot of reservations about going to the Olympics," Solo added, pointing to Wednesday's World Health Organization's warning that the Zika outbreak would likely worsen.

WHO declared the outbreak an international health emergency on Feb. 1, citing a likely strong relationship between Zika infection during pregnancy

and microcephaly, a birth defect where an infant's head is smaller than those of other babies of the same gender and age. Scientists were also studying a potential link to Guillain-Barre, a neurological disorder.

Brazil said it has confirmed more than 580 cases of microcephaly, and considers most of them to be related to Zika infections in the mothers. Brazil is investigating an additional 4,100 suspected cases of microcephaly.

Scientists are scrambling to better understand Zika, with results from a major study expected in May, just ahead of the Rio Games' start in August.

In the meantime, U.S. health officials have offered guidelines, and President Barack Obama separately on Thursday signaled hope for a vaccine.

## UEFA opens way for a woman to sit on executive committee

ZURICH-- At least one woman will be elected to the executive committee of European soccer's governing body UEFA for the first time in May, delegates decided at an extraordinary Congress on Thursday.

Women's soccer is growing in popularity around the world, and proposals to give women more say in the running of the sport were part of a package of measures drawn up by global governing body FIFA last year in the wake of a huge corruption scandal.

UEFA delegates voted to revise their statutes and reserve at least one position for a woman elected at Congress and not co-opted by the executive committee, as has been done in the past.

The first woman likely to be elected at the Congress in Budapest in May will be Karen Espelund of Norway, who has been a co-opted member of the executive since 2011.

Only one member from any country can sit on the executive committee but the statutes were changed to allow two members to sit from each country, if one is a woman.

The decisions were taken on the eve of a FIFA congress to approve an overhaul of the sport's governance and elect a successor to the organisation's president Sepp Blatter, who this week lost an appeal to overturn a ban for ethics violations. There will be six women on the new FIFA council.



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# FIFA aims to start afresh with vote to replace Blatter

ZURICH-- Crisis-hit world football governing body FIFA faces one of the most important days in its 112-year history when it elects a new leader on Friday hoping to usher in a fresh era after decades of tawdry controversy.

Delegates from more than 200 countries will vote for a new president to succeed Sepp Blatter, two days after the disgraced Swiss and European soccer chief Michel Platini lost their appeals against bans for ethics violations.

A wide-ranging set of reforms, which are designed to prevent corruption, will be voted on before the FIFA election and are expected to be passed. They include term limits for top officials and disclosure of their earnings.

Whoever takes over from Blatter, who ran FIFA for 17 years like a globe-trotting head of state, will inherit a very different job with the focus on crisis management, after dozens of international soccer officials were indicted in the United States last year for racketeering, money-laundering and bribery.

Asian Football Confederation (AFC) president Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa is the bookmaker's favourite with UEFA's Swiss general secretary Gianni Infantino a close second.

Jordanian Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein believes he is still firmly in the race however, while Frenchman Jerome Champagne and South African Tokyo Sexwale will hope to make an impact.

There was little indication on Thursday, though, that the vote would be anything other than a two-horse race between Sheikh Salman and Infantino.

"I am feeling good and very positive. The support I am receiving fills me with confidence," Infantino told Reuters.

A spokesman for his Bahraini rival said: "Sheikh Salman is very confident about tomorrow's vote."

The CONCACAF confederation for North and Central America and the Caribbean opted against endorsing a candidate and delegates suggested that support within the region was divided.

With no block vote from those 35 delegates, Africa's decision now looks set to be the decisive factor.

African countries make up more than a quarter of the 207 football associations

eligible to vote. On the final day of campaigning, there were sharply conflicting versions of how they would cast their ballots.

While the vice-president of their continental federation said virtually all would back Sheikh Salman, several delegates told Reuters the African vote would be split.

Infantino has said he was confident of winning more than half of the African votes, while Liberian soccer chief Musa Bility predicted the possibly unlikely scenario of 27 of the region's votes going to Jordan's Prince Ali.

"The world is waiting and watching -- this is the biggest milestone in the history of FIFA. It will decide if FIFA goes ahead as we want or if it spirals down," Prince Ali told delegates.

Former anti-apartheid militant turned businessman and politician Sexwale described FIFA as broken and a damaged brand, though he also referred to some of those felled in the scandal as "friends we have lost".

Infantino repeated his promise to offer each of FIFA's members \$5 million to invest in the sport over four years, more than doubling the \$2.05 million each federation got from 2011-14. He said this could be achieved "easily" by tackling the cost structure of FIFA.

Bahrain's Salman was again more cautious, though, speaking of a 'realistic' increase in funding.

"For me, if the numbers are right, we can increase -- but I am not ready to mortgage FIFA's future in winning an election."

French outsider Champagne took a shot at Infanti-

no's globe-trotting campaign by saying the election had been "unbalanced".

"I did not have a private jet to visit you, take a photo and then tweet and say I have got the endorsement," he said to laughter from delegates.

Prince Ali told UEFA delegates if he won the election he would appoint a European as his secretary general but did not offer up a name.

FIFA was plunged into turmoil by the corruption scandal that broke last year, beginning with a dawn raid to arrest delegates at a Swiss luxury hotel.

Criminal investigations led by the United States and Switzerland have spanned dozens of countries, focusing largely on the awarding of lucrative broadcast and marketing rights to the world's most popular sport.

They are also examining the process by which FIFA awarded the next two World Cups to Russia and Qatar.

Acting FIFA president Issa Hayatou appealed to FIFA members in what he called one of the most important weeks in the history of global football, calling on them to back the package of reforms on governance.

"I urge each of you to support the reforms in full here this week, and then to implement them to their entirety at home," Hayatou said in an address aimed at the six confederations that run soccer around the world.

"This will send a strong message that we have listened and that we are taking the action necessary to give football the foundation, and protection, it needs for the future."



Liverpool's Joao Carlos Teixeira in action with Augsburg's Paul Verhaegh during their Europa League Round of 32 Second Leg match at Anfield, Liverpool. Liverpool won 1-0 and advance 1-0 on aggregate.

## EUROPA

Continued from page 52

after James Milner's early spot kick and survived a nervy finale at Anfield.

There was no such tension for Tottenham who eased past Fiorentina 3-0 with strikes from Ryan Mason and Erik Lamela plus a Gonzalo Rodriguez own goal wrapping up a 4-1 aggregate win.

It was an unsurprisingly easy stroll for Valencia, who took a 6-0 first-leg advantage into the return against Rapid Vienna and continued their recent upturn in form with a 4-0 win that secured a 10-0 aggregate thrashing.

Valencia boss Gary Neville endured little but misery in his first months in Spain but his team have now won four games in a row and inflicted Rapid Vienna's joint-worst home loss in Europe.

Borussia Dortmund reinforced their status as the clear bookmakers' favourites to win the trophy with a 1-0 victory at Porto to complete a 3-0 success over the two legs.

The prolific Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang was behind Dortmund's early winner with his shot cannoning down off the bar and going in off Porto keeper Iker Casillas for an own goal.

Holders Sevilla, who are chasing a third straight title, lost 1-0 to Molde in Norway, but their progress had been effectively assured by a 3-0 first-leg win last week.

Sevilla's Spanish rivals Villarreal ousted Napoli thanks to an extraordinary Tomas Pina goal that can-



St. Etienne's Oussama Tannane in action against Basel's Behrang Safari during their Europa League match at Geofroy Guichard Stadium, Saint-Etienne, France. Basel won 2-1 and advance on away goals after 4-4 tie on aggregate.

celled out Marek Hamsik's opener for the Italians.

Pina's cross from wide on the left looped over Napoli keeper Pepe Reina before nestling in the top corner to earn Villarreal a 2-1 aggregate win.

Shakhtar completed a superb 3-0 win at Schalke 04 to go through by the same score on aggregate, while Bilbao's Sabin Merino scored an 81st-minute equaliser as they drew 1-1 at home to Olympique de Marseille and went through 2-1 overall.

Lazio beat Galatasaray 3-1 in Italy with all four goals coming in 14 second-half minutes as Marco Parolo, Felipe Anderson and Miroslav Klose netted for the Serie A side, who went through 4-2 over the two legs.

Bayer Leverkusen's Karim Bellarabi again proved decisive in their tie with Sporting Lisbon as the German international, who scored the winner in the first leg, netted two more in a 3-1 victory that secured a 4-1 aggregate success.

Thursday, February 25, second leg		
FC Basel	-	St Etienne 2-1
Basel win on away goals after 4-4 on aggregate.		
Porto	-	Borussia Dortmund 0-1
Dortmund win 3-0 on aggregate.		
Manchester United	-	Midtjylland 5-1
United win 6-3 on aggregate.		
Molde	-	Sevilla 1-0
Sevilla win 3-1 on aggregate.		
Napoli	-	Villarreal 1-1
Villarreal win 2-1 on aggregate.		
Tottenham Hotspur	-	Fiorentina 3-0
Hotspur win 4-1 on aggregate.		
Athletic Club	-	Olympique Marseille 1-1
Club win 2-1 on aggregate.		
Bayer Leverkusen	-	Sporting 3-1
Leverkusen win 4-1 on aggregate.		
FK Krasnodar	-	Sparta Prague 0-3
Prague win 4-0 on aggregate.		
Lazio	-	Galatasaray 3-1
Lazio win 4-2 on aggregate.		
Liverpool	-	FC Augsburg 1-0
Liverpool win 1-0 on aggregate.		
Rapid Vienna	-	Valencia 0-4
Valencia win 10-0 on aggregate.		
Schalke 04	-	Shakhtar Donetsk 0-3
Donetsk win 3-0 on aggregate.		
Lokomotiv Moscow	-	Fenerbahce 1-1
Fenerbahce win 3-1 on aggregate.		



## Double debut delight as Rashford rescues United

LONDON-- Manchester United flirted with calamity before coasting into the Europa League last 16 as debutant Marcus Rashford helped them overcome an early blow with two goals in a 5-1 home victory over Midtjylland on Thursday.

United, who secured a 6-3 aggregate win, looked on their way out when Pi-one Sisto gave the Danes the lead but an own goal by Nikolay Bodurov, Rashford's double, an Ander Herrera penalty and a late goal from Memphis Depay saw them safely through.

They will be joined in Friday's draw by one of the most appealing last-16 lineups in recent seasons with Liverpool, Tottenham Hotspur, Borussia Dortmund, Valencia, Villarreal and holders Sevilla among those marching on.

Athletic Bilbao, Lazio and Bayer Leverkusen also progressed.

Louis van Gaal's United side looked set to endure another frustrating night when they fell behind to Sisto's opener, a superb jinking run and sharp finish from the edge of the area after 28 minutes putting the visitors in control.

After last week's surprise 2-1 first leg success, the Danes seemed to be head-

ing for a famous upset but four minutes later a Memphis cross was turned into his own net by Midtjylland's Bodurov and the muted fans inside Old Trafford came to life.

Juan Mata had a penalty saved but United kept coming forward and Rashford's first goal arrived in the 63rd when he lashed Mata's pull-back into the net before he gave United the lead on aggregate with a sharp first-time finish 12 minutes later.

Herrera slammed home from the spot with two minutes remaining and Depay drove in a fifth in stoppage time.

"It was a great performance. The fans will have enjoyed our attacking football," said under-pressure Dutchman Van Gaal, whose struggling side have been accused by pundits and former United players of dishing up boring football this season.

Five former European champions were among the contenders in the first knockout round of the continent's second-tier competition, which since last season has carried the added incentive of a place in the Champions League for the winners.

The Europa League is almost certainly Liverpool's

best hope of competing with the continent's elite next term but the five times European Cup winners, who have fallen off the pace in the Premier League, were made to sweat in a 1-0 win over Augsburg.

Having played out a goalless draw in the first leg, Jurgen Klopp's side spurned several chances

*Continued on page 51*



Ander Herrera scores the fourth goal for Manchester United from the penalty spot against FC Midtjylland during their Europa League Round of 32 Second Leg at Old Trafford, Manchester, England Thursday. United won 5-1 to advance 6-3 on aggregate.

## Velon announces deal to screen riders' power data

LONDON-- Armchair fans could soon be fed performance data from the world's top riders during races after professional cycling organisation Velon announced a "game-changing" deal for the sport on Thursday.

Velon, a commercial collaboration of 11 top World-Tour teams, pioneered the use of live on-bike camera footage at last year's Abu Dhabi Tour, and says a 10-year agreement with Infront Sports & Media will further revolutionise coverage of cycle races.

In theory, television viewers will be able to dial up technical data such as pedal RPM, VAM (climbing speed in metres per second) and power output as the likes of Tour de France

champion Chris Froome and Alberto Contador attack climbs.

Previously such technical information would only be available to team staff.

"The first phase of the partnership will enable live race data to revolutionise the fan experience," Velon, established in 2014 to boost cycling's marketability, said on their website ([www.velon.cc](http://www.velon.cc)).

Performance data has been a thorny subject and often a source of suspicion in a sport which has suffered a chequered history of doping scandals.

Briton Froome's dominance in some of the toughest terrain on last year's Tour raised eyebrows in some quarters, prompting his Team Sky outfit to re-

lease his performance data from one devastating attack on Stage 10.

Froome, who had to contend with rumours of doping, went a stage further after the race, undergoing physiological tests at a London laboratory and publishing the results.

Velon said the data available during television coverage would include various streams, although quite what would be publicly visible on TV screens would be subject to discussions with riders, teams, event organisers and the governing UCI.

Team Sky boss Dave Brailsford wrote to UCI president Brian Cookson this year calling for a standardised procedure for the sharing of performance

data. Velon says its new deal is a step in that direction.

"Riders really want to get their data out as it aids transparency and believability in their abilities and accomplishments," it said.

"But we fully understand the need for race and rider sensitivity to make sure neither are compromised."

Velon CEO Graham Bartlett said it was good news for fans.

"Just imagine how great it will be for fans to see the performance of the riders as they follow races on their screens or see them at the race," he said.

"Cycling fans will be able to better engage with the riders and get a much better experience."



George McNeill tees off on the 9th hole during the first round of the Honda Classic at PGA National. (Peter Casey-USA TODAY Sports.)

## McNeill in early tie for lead at blustery PGA National

FLORIDA-- American George McNeill relied on a red-hot putter in blustery conditions as he moved into a share of the early lead in the opening round of the Honda Classic at Palm Beach Gardens in Florida on Thursday.

A double winner on the PGA Tour who has missed the cut in each of his five starts this season, McNeill made a welcome return to form by firing a three-under-par 67 on the challeng-

ing PGA National layout.

The 40-year-old, whose most recent victory came at the 2012 Puerto Rico Open, mixed six birdies with a lone bogey and a double at the par-four 11th to end the round level with Irishman Shane Lowry and Swede David Lingmerth.

Former PGA Championship winner Jason Dufner opened with a 68 while five-times major champion Phil Mickelson was one of six under-par 67 on the challeng-

winds gusted up to 30 mph (48 kph).

"It's a good start to the tournament," left-hander Mickelson told reporters after a round that included four birdies on his front nine and two bogeys after the turn.

"I got off to a great start with a birdie on my first hole and played fairly solid golf throughout. I let a couple slide on the back (nine) but I can't wait to get back

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