

NO: 177/19

LAUNCH OF VISION 2020: WE GATHERIN' NEXT FRIDAY

Hundreds of Barbadians are expected to converge in Bridgetown next Friday, February 22, for the launch of **Vision 2020: We Gatherin'**.

It will be held in Parliament's Courtyard and two screens will be set up so members of the public may view the ceremony on Broad Street or by the Palmetto Square Market.

Vision 2020: We Gatherin' is a 12-month global celebration of Barbadian excellence and a recommitment to this country's successful future and core values that have defined us as a people. 2020 has been designated as the year for Barbadians and those who love this country to come home, reconnect with family and friends, and invest in the rebuilding and development of Barbados.

Purposeful Pursuit of Barbadian Excellence is the theme of the year-long celebrations, which is an initiative of Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley. It is designed to reinforce Government's mantra of building the best Barbados together.

Vision 2020: We Gatherin' will comprise structured events at the national level, which will be coordinated by Government with input from its social partners. However, community groups, churches, educational institutions, entrepreneurs, and regional and international persons with Barbadian connections, among others, will be encouraged to produce other events.

The initiative will begin in the north of the island in January 2020, and move southward every month, allowing each designated parish to showcase its icons, social life and the food for which it is renowned. The parish celebrations will culminate in St. Michael in November, and **Vision 2020: We Gatherin'** will climax in December with a Christmas extravaganza for all Barbadians - at home and abroad.

ADD: ATTENTION NEWS EDITOR:

PRIME MINISTER MIA AMOR MOTTLEY WILL DELIVER THE FEATURE ADDRESS AT THE LAUNCH OF VISION 2020: WE GATHERIN' ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22, IN PARLIAMENT'S COURTYARD, THE CITY, BEGINNING AT 6:30 P.M.

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO COVER THIS EVENT.

NO: 178/19

24 HOUR POLYCLINIC SERVICE TO BE LAUNCHED JUNE 1

The 24-hour health care service, to be introduced at two of the island's polyclinics, will be officially launched on June 1.

From that date, patients will be able to access medical care on a continuous basis, Monday through Sunday, at the Winston Scott Polyclinic, Jemmotts Lane, St. Michael, and the David Thompson Health and Social Services Complex, Glebe Land, St. John.

According to the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the initiative is aimed at cutting down on the time patients currently wait to be seen at the Accident and Emergency Department of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital by offering them round-the-clock service at alternative venues.

Services offered will include urgent care, which refers to illnesses and injuries which require immediate care but are not life-threatening, as well as routine care, which may include follow-up care for chronic conditions and health checks.

In a statement today, the Ministry revealed that it would be meeting with the major trade unions and workers' representatives in early March to provide an update on the initiative. The meeting will report on the actions taken to address security concerns and human resource issues raised at earlier stakeholder meetings.

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ADD: 24 HOUR POLYCLINIC SERVICE TO BE LAUNCHED JUNE 1-1

The organizations involved are the National Union of Public Workers, the Barbados Workers' Union, the Unity Workers Union, the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners and the Barbados Nurses' Association.

With the introduction of the 24-hour polyclinic service, the public will be encouraged to visit the Accident and Emergency Department of the QEH primarily for emergency care, which is defined as life-threatening conditions or conditions which need an emergency response.

For all other medical issues, they are encouraged to utilize the polyclinic services which will be fully staffed and equipped to meet their needs. **(JS/BGIS)**

NO: 179/19

TRAINING AND RESEARCH CRITICAL TO BEEKEEPING SUCCESS

The Barbados Apiculture Association (BAA) is working with the Technical Educational and Vocational Training (TVET) Council to develop a set of standards for beekeeping.

BAA President, Damian Hinds, made the announcement in light of plans by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to transform beekeeping into a lucrative and sustainable component of the agricultural sector. He was speaking at the Association's Beekeeping Forum held on Wednesday.

Mr. Hinds noted that the establishment of criteria and guidelines were necessary if the island is to capitalize on this new industry.

Stating that "healthy bees are wealthy bees," he disclosed that the BAA was seeking to set up training and observation centres so individuals interested in apiculture could gain knowledge in proper bee rearing.

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ADD: TRAINING AND RESEARCH CRITICAL TO BEEKEEPING SUCCESS-1

“We intend to leverage our status as a farming organization to source funding for conducting industry and value chain mapping assessments to do research into the testing of honey [both local and imported],” Mr. Hinds said, adding that the Association was involved in plans to establish honey extraction and bottling facilities.

As it relates to environmental concerns, such as the impact of the use of various pesticides on honey bees, the BAA President said it was their intention to meet with the relevant parties to discuss and find solutions to this and other challenges.

The need for an environment favourable for bee rearing was also highlighted by Chief Agricultural Officer, Lennox Chandler, who explained that a component of the upcoming national beekeeping programme would focus on the growing of certain types of plants, not only on farms, but also within communities.

“It is my understanding that bees prefer certain hosts or that beekeepers prefer bees to forage and feed on certain hosts, so what we’re going to be doing in this programme is encouraging the planting of certain plants around the island,” he told participants at the forum: He added that the Ministry was looking for ways to supply some of the preferred plants to the public either free of cost or at reduced rates.

(NP/BGIS)

NO: 180/19

DEADLINE FOR G.I.V.E. SCHOOL COMPETITION NOW MARCH 8

The deadline for the **G.I.V.E. School Competition**, being hosted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Partnership Relations, has now been extended to Friday, March 8.

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ADD: DEADLINE FOR G.I.V.E. SCHOOL COMPETITION NOW MARCH 8-1

Additionally, the Instagram challenge has been slightly adjusted, with students now required to post their entries to **#givesuccess246**.

The G.I.V.E. School Competition started on Monday, January 28, and targets primary and secondary school students.

G.I.V.E. is an acronym for **Great Attitude, Initiative, Values** and **Excellence**. The objectives of the Ministry's G.I.V.E. Programme are to improve employer and employee attitudes in the public sector; and to promote standards of appropriate behaviour in the workplace.

The G.I.V.E. School Competition aims to capture the attention of students, while exposing them to the principles of the G.I.V.E Programme. It is also expected to provide a forum for schools to share their views on the programme, and present ideas on how it could be enhanced.

The theme for both the poster competition and the Instagram challenge is **G.I.V.E Today: Success Tomorrow**. Students of primary and secondary schools will be required to portray, in the form of a poster, what the subject means to them. The Instagram challenge will require secondary students to create a video, no longer than 30 seconds, or use photos depicting the subject. Additionally, students will be required to post the videos/pictures.

To be eligible for the competition, entrants must be 8 to 11, 12 to 14, or 14 to 16 years old.

Prizes will include laptop computers, tablets, gift vouchers for books and art supplies, and other G.I.V.E promotional items. **(JG/BGIS)**

NO: 181/19

BRA ACCEPTING JANUARY PAYE PAYMENT WITHOUT PAYMENT ADVICE

The Barbados Revenue Authority (BRA) is advising employers that their January 2019 Pay As You Earn (PAYE) payments due in February 2019 will be accepted without the requisite electronic payment advices.

This move is to accommodate corporate and business taxpayers, in light of the new requirement to upload a breakdown of the PAYE for all of their employees in the Tax Administration Management Information System (TAMIS).

When filing the January 2019 PAYE returns, employers are currently asked to use the Bulk E-filing option and upload their required completed Microsoft Excel file. A template of the Excel sheet is available for download on the BRA website at bra.gov.bb.

The other options of utilizing either the web form on the TAMIS website or the XML schema will soon be made accessible. **(BRA/BGIS)**

NO: 182/19

MINISTERS' DIARY

Thursday, February 21

8:30 a.m. - Minister of Labour and Social Partnership Relations, Colin Jordan, will deliver remarks at the consultative workshop on the Human Resource Development Strategy in the Main Conference Room of the Administrative Building, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Cave Hill, St. Michael.

8:45 a.m. – Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley will deliver the feature address at the opening of the Barbados Association of Office Professionals' Annual Conference at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, Two Mile Hill, St. Michael.

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ADD: MINISTERS' DIARY-1

Friday, February 22

6:30 p.m. – Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley will deliver an address at the launch of Vision 2020: 'We Gatherin' in Parliament's Courtyard, The City.

NO: 183/19

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S DIARY

Tuesday, February 19

11:00 a.m.

- Her Excellency the Governor-General will receive the High Commissioner-designate of the Republic of India to Barbados, His Excellency Mr. Mahender Singh Kanyal, to present Credentials.

Wednesday, February 20

11:00 a.m.

- Her Excellency the Governor-General will visit Centenarian, Mr. Gileon Lescar Carrington, at Crab Hill, St. Lucy.

Saturday, February 23

10:00 a.m.

- Her Excellency the Governor-General will attend the National Agricultural Exhibition (Agrofest), at Queen's Park, Constitution Road, St. Michael.

NO: 184/19

SHORT-TERM ACTION PLAN IN PLACE FOR COW ITCH PROBLEM

A short-term action plan has been devised, and will be implemented starting tomorrow to address the cow itch situation at Blackman and Gollop Primary School.

During discussions this morning at the Staple Grove, Christ Church school, Minister of Environment and National Beautification, Trevor Prescod, and Acting Minister of Education, Technological and Vocational Training, Senator Lucille Moe, agreed that the cow itch situation needed an emergency response and work would be carried out to minimize the impact on the school.

Minister Prescod said: "Tomorrow, Saturday, February 16, at 9:00 a.m. work will be carried out to the eastern side of the school. What we have finally agreed on is that we would scrape the surface of the entire land. The arrangement is that we would not go below four inches of soil, so that we can remove all the seeds, the pods and plants in their entirety..."

"And to dig a number of trenches away from the eastern side making sure the trenches are deep enough and place the material in those trenches, and then the trenches will be covered over by mould or whatever material we deem is necessary to make sure that we keep [the cow itch] material as far down as possible...."

Senator Moe, speaking about what would occur after completion of the work on Sunday evening, said: "Once that work is completed, clearly the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training will ensure that the school and its environs are properly cleaned, because of course our first priority is always to the children, the staff and the other workers at the Blackman and Gollop Primary School.

ADD: SHORT-TERM ACTION PLAN IN PLACE FOR COW ITCH PROBLEM - 2

“Now we know that this is not a long-term solution; it is certainly a solution for the short-term, but we can’t afford to have any more loss of school time, certainly not at this time of the year.”

Noting that this was the most viable action plan at present, Minister Prescod stated that the suggestion of burning the cow itch, whether controlled or otherwise, was not advised by the Barbados Fire Service.

According to Fire Officer, Earnle Fields: “Burning is not a viable option simply because the seeds are not going to be displaced. They are going to drop to the ground and the whole cycle is going to return, so you will have new plants and the cycle remains. In addition, the wind factor from burning would scatter the irritants of the cow itch.”

A decision was also made to address the cow itch situation on a national scale and to seek to implement a long-term solution that is not harmful to people and the environment.

Also participating in the discussions were Principal of the school, Petrona Holder; Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training, Dr. Romel Springer; officials from both ministries; the Barbados Fire Service; PTA President Lester King; owner of Staple Grove Plantation, Om Prakash; and Engineer Consultant, Abdul Pandor. **(SF/BGIS)**

NO: 185/19

PRINCE OF WALES AND DUCHESS OF CORNWALL TO VISIT BARBADOS

Their Royal Highnesses, The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall will pay an official visit to Barbados on Tuesday, March 19, as part of a Caribbean tour.

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ADD: PRINCE OF WALES AND DUCHESS OF CORNWALL TO VISIT BARBADOS - 1

During the visit, they will participate in several events, including a parade and wreath-laying ceremony at the Cenotaph in National Heroes Square and a reception at which they will be able to interact with a cross-section of Barbadians.

The Prince will also visit the Nidhe Israel Synagogue, observe a demonstration on this island's hurricane preparedness mechanisms and meet teams involved in responding to recent natural disasters across the region. He will learn more about the work of the Prince's Trust International on the island, a charity which he founded in 1976, and meet some of the beneficiaries.

Meanwhile, The Duchess, who is President of the Women of the World Festival, will attend an event for Barbadian women of influence and pay visits to the Derrick Smith School and Vocational Centre and the Maria Holder Diabetes Centre.

Commenting on the upcoming visit, Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley said: "We welcome this visit by Their Royal Highnesses to our home. It serves to buttress the relationship that we have as a member of the Commonwealth, of which Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is the head. Indeed, it demonstrates the continued links the Royal Family has maintained with Barbados over the years. Quite recently, we had the visit by His Royal Highness Prince Henry of Wales on the occasion of the island's 50th Anniversary of Independence Celebrations. However, none stands out more, in my mind, than that iconic moment in 1975 when Her Majesty The Queen visited Barbados to bestow a knighthood on our only living National Hero, the Right Excellent Sir Garfield St. Auburn Sobers."

During the Caribbean tour, Their Royal Highnesses will also visit St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, St Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, Cuba and the Cayman Islands. (II/BGIS)